

**Goa Behind the Curtains:**  
**A Psychoanalytic Study of Characters in Select Goan Texts**

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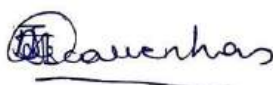
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I hereby declare that the data presented in this Dissertation report entitled, "Goa Behind the Curtains: A Psychoanalytic Study of Characters in Select Goan Texts" is based on the results of investigations carried out by me in the Discipline of English at the, Shenoi Goembab School of Language and Literature, Goa University under the Supervision of Assistant Professor 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 the dissertation.

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## COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation report "**Goa Behind the Curtains:**  
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out by **Ms. Janet Juanith Mascarenhas** under my supervision in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Arts** in the Discipline of English at  
the **Shenoi Goembab School of Languages and Literature, Goa University**.



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## ABSTRACT

*"Unexpressed emotions will never die. They are buried alive and will come forth later in uglier ways." - Sigmund Freud*

Literature has the ability to portray life in its truest form using the power of words. Words can be used to awaken and also dampen one's soul. This dissertation is titled 'Goa Behind the Curtains: A Psychoanalytic Study of Characters in Select Goan Texts'. It uses the Freudian Psychoanalytic theoretical framework, to study selected characters from *Karmelin*, by Damodar Mauzo *Poskem: Goans in the Shadows* by Wendell Rodricks and *Shadow of the Palm Tree* by Vatsala Mendonca, all of whom are Goans from different walks of life and have written on Goa. It seeks to study the role of the unconscious on the conscious. Nick Morgan says *"Your unconscious mind dominates your behavior"*. The dissertation explores these minds that are troubled and reflect in the behaviours of the characters. The study using the Freudian psychoanalytic theoretical approach to critically analyse the characters in the selected novels, simultaneously speaks of the Goan cultural history in the texts. These aspects of culture influence the behaviour of the characters with their effects on their minds. As a result most of them struggle balancing their id and ego that is their unconscious and conscious worlds. The life of the authors reflect in their work and in the study through their personal experiences, knowledge and their unique thoughts.

**Keywords:** Goa, Psychoanalytic, Culture, Religion, Desire, Adoption

## CHAPTER I

### A GLANCE INTO PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY AND GOAN LITERATURE :

#### AN INTRODUCTION

*"The conscious mind may be compared to a fountain playing in the sun and falling back into the great subterranean pool of subconscious from which it rises." - Sigmund Freud*

#### 1.1 Introduction

*"The novel is the one bright book of life." – D. H. Lawrence*

The novel is a book that can tell a fictional or non-fictional story, inspired from reality or reality hidden in bits and parts. In the author lies the power to write a good story. The novel on the global and temporal scene, is considered to be the preeminent of the literary genre and the very essence of literature. The word Literature comes from the Latin word 'Litera' that means familiarity with the written word or letters. It is a literary matter that is either written, oral, visual and speaks of the human condition, their thoughts, experiences, emotions and so on.

It is the written work of a specific culture, subculture, religion, philosophy or the study of such written work which may appear in poetry or in prose. (world history.org) The name has traditionally been applied to those imaginative works of poetry and prose distinguished by the intentions of their authors and the perceived aesthetic excellence of their execution. Literature may be classified according to a variety of systems, including language, national origin, historical period, genre, and subject matter. (Britannica)



According to Merriam Webster it is writings in prose or verse especially : writings having excellence of form or expression and expressing ideas of permanent or universal interest "literature stands as related to man as science stands to nature" —J. H. Newman. It is also defined as the body of written works produced in a particular language, country, or age. (Merriam-Webster)

Goan literature refers to the literary works that come from the state of Goa. It includes poems, stories, dramas, novels and so on. The literature from Goa encompasses within itself the Goan culture, the emotions of the people, their experiences, their lives, joys, sorrows and so on. It is written and carried forward by the Goans living in Goa and also those who do not reside in the place but come from Goan origins including those who just love Goa for what it is, what it was and what it will be. Goan literature is not only restricted to the state language Konkani. The Goans use different languages to speak and write. They mostly use English, Hindi, Portuguese, Marathi and Konkani, the state's mother tongue which itself is written in five scripts with more than fifty different dialects. Goa is said to be a place where art is worshipped in all its forms be it in music, singing, painting, dancing, or writing. Amitav Ghosh commenting on Goa said "Goa is such a literary place."

The narrow strip of land between the Sahyadri mountain range and the Arabian sea is called the Konkan region. Here lies Goa, the smallest state that is a dot on the map of India. This small territory of Goa has a rich history. The now little Indian state is said to have been reclaimed from the sea and dates back to the stone and mesolithic ages. It was once ruled by the Kadamba dynasty, the Vijayanagara empire, the Bahmani sultanates, the Bijapur Sultanate, and even the Adilshahis to name a few. All wanted Goa for its location and natural ports, pleasant climate and fertile and rich soil. It was once and still seen as a



little heaven on earth. The Portuguese were the last who ruled Goa for four centuries until Goa fought for its freedom and became an Indian state. Goa's unique traditions and culture is a result of its history. These involve, like most cultures, good as well as bad aspects. Myths and superstition existed and carried on. The culture is reflected in the arts, architecture, songs, folklore, customs, rituals and so on. All these leave their imprints on the written literature in Goa. It is said that Goa lost a lot of its literature with the conquests and battles the various rulers had to win Goa and also majorly by the Portuguese who banned speaking and writing in the language making Portuguese compulsory. Goa now in recent days has begun adding on to its literature. It thrives along with its few old literature and a rich oral narrative history tradition.

The first written work in Goa was written in stone as rock engravings. The Konkani Bharata is a 16th century epic and one of the oldest pieces of Goan literature in Konkani. Goa was the first place in Asia to have the printing press that was brought by the Jesuits. Initially to be taken to Abyssinia but due to some reason was not allowed to leave India. Goa and India's first ever printed book was from this printing press in Konkani titled 'Doutrina Christam' (Doctrine of Christianity). The different dialects of Konkani, English, Marathi are the three languages mostly used in Goa by the people. Goan literature in Konkani is a mix of different other words from other languages. Some of these remain the same in the Romi script and do not change when used in English translation. A significantly large amount of Goan literature was lost with the battles fought to win Goa and additionally more during the Portuguese inquisition. Goa still along with its few remnant old literature continues to thrive with a rich oral history narrative tradition. Goan literature includes the Goan culture, the emotions of the people, their experiences, their lives and so on. The literature is carried forward by the Goans living in Goa, those who do not and those who just love Goa for what it is, what it was and what it will be.

Goan society like the surrounding state societies are mostly patriarchal where the male and female don't stand completely at par. Three novels from Goan Literature are selected as part of the dissertation study. *Karmelin* by Damodar Mauzo, *Poskem* by Wendell Rodricks and *Shadow of the Palm Tree* by Vatsala Mendonca. These novels are written by Goans and all reflect the Goan culture. They capture the essence of the region weaving cultural elements into the narrative. They offer the readers an insight into the traditions, customs, and the way of life in Goa. They reflect the history of the place and all that it has accumulated in its culture in the background. Along with these good and bad developments comes the psychological developments of the characters in the novels that they go through. *Karmelin* by Damodar Mauzo, is fascinating with the strong voice of the author through a woman within the harsh reality of culture, society and religion at the time when there wasn't any other literature on the topic it sheds light on. It may not be the truth of all Goans but it was to a considerable amount of Goans. *Poskem* by Wendell Rodricks and *Shadow of the Palm Tree* by Vatsala Mendonca have similar themes to *Karmelin* and still are unique in their own way. 'Goa Behind the Curtains - A Psychoanalytic Study of Characters in Select Goan Texts' is the title framed for this study. The Goan culture that affects the behaviour of the characters in the text is explored here. It delves into the psychological aspects of the lives of the main characters using the Freudian Psychoanalytic theoretical approach as the theoretical framework.

The stories in these novels portray the culture, tradition and religion through societies rules and regulations, biasness, hypocrisy, goodness, selflessness, selfishness, hatred and so on affecting the characters. These reflect in their behaviour and actions. All the three novels have similar themes. The importance of the study arises in it exploring the unexplored in Goan Literature. The culture and the beliefs hidden behind the curtains are mentioned and spoken of with their effects on the characters' lives. The cultural guidelines



change for different characters and are given a voice in the narrative. These topics had once become controversial issues as they were new thoughts within a very reserved world.

*Karmelin* is a Sahitya Academy Award winning fictional novel in Konkani by Damodar Mauzo, originally published in 1991. It was published by Sahitya Academy in 2004 and a translated copy was published in 2013. Karmelin is the titular character, a girl who after losing her family to an epidemic is brought up by a loving uncle and a rude aunt. She is doted on by her uncle and falls in love with her cousin. Her aunt doesn't like her and breaks her relationship with her son. Karmelin is forcefully married and has to bring up her child all alone with no monetary, emotional or physical support from her husband and in-laws. This is her story on how she is bound by cultural values and circumstances that do not make life any easy for her instead makes her suppress her dreams and desires. She goes on to work as an ayah in Kuwait and is continued to be sexually exploited. During the phase her mind is in a turmoil of what all she was robbed of in her life and wonders if she really likes the desire she achieves when doing the act. She however doesn't wish the same life for her daughter.

*Poskem* is a fictional novel in English by Wendell Rodricks, published in 2017. It is the story of a mother and her four children whom she gives up for adoption. The novel follows the lives of the four children. 'Poskem' is a goan word (derived from the Portuguese) that refers to adopted. These children were mostly treated as servants while also posed as the family children. Many of these unfortunate children were abused and tortured while however, some had loving adoptive homes and were blessed with good families.

*Shadow of the Palm Tree* is a fictional novel in English by Vatsala Mendonca, published in 2018. It was shortlisted for First Book Club - Jaipur Bookmark 2018. It



follows the story of the generations of the Abreu family and the family curse. It is told through the memories of the characters. It is a story of identity and survival, love and sacrifice, forgotten history and cultural conflicts.

Though fictional novels, they reflect the real life scenarios and are based on them. The study aims to critically analyse and understand the novels with the psychoanalytic theoretical framework by Freud applying it to these three novels. It aims to present this idea in order to carry forward this area of research. In the growing Goan Literature field, it also aims to create more critical matter to the selected Goan texts in this area of the topic adding to Goan literature and literature as a whole.

The term 'psychoanalytic criticism' was first introduced by Dr. Sigmund Freud, a famous Austrian neurologist. It was first used for psychological therapy. It then spread to other fields of study including literary studies as one of the different approaches to literature. The idea behind psychoanalysis revolves around a concept that one's actions are determined by their ideas that are prestored of the recurrent events.

This theory is based on the presumption that human beings have unconscious desires, memories, thoughts and even feelings that result in their behaviour. Freud was inspired by Dr. Josef Breuer, his senior, friend and partner. It is a comprehensive framework that Freud developed to explain human behaviour, personality development and mental processes. At its core it posits that unconscious motives, and conflicts, often stem from one's early childhood experiences. They believed he shaped human thoughts, emotions and behaviours. Freud believed that these unconscious drives, including impulses and desires, influence various aspects of human life such as relationships, dreams, and even slips of the tongue.

Psychoanalytic criticism analyses the unintended message. This is done by analysing the unconscious elements within a literary text. It can be done to read and understand the characters and also in turn the author's mind. It gives a clear picture of a text and then can be understood better.

Psychoanalytic criticism focuses on the personality of the author. It examines their personality through their literary work, personal experience, life events, desires, asking questions regarding the author's attempts to reveal their hidden desires, emotions and the cultural codes that force them to do so. Freud noted that writers of his era presented certain common features in their writings. He then goes on to say that the characters from the Shakespearean or ancient Greek dramas exhibited the same psychological struggles they saw in people around them. This highlights the fact that inspiration for a work of art comes from reality.

Literature did not always allow a writer to present a variety of characters in certain literary works with its form that kept improvising with time. Freud introduced 'psychoanalysis' to explore the nature of a persons, characters or author's psyche by analysing the hidden and deeper meaning of a text and the fictional characters created in it.

Freud was a big name in his day. His theory was used by several people. Freud's works and theories faced a great deal of criticism though he was a leading figure in the world of psychoanalysis. Many negatively criticised it and also came up with alternatives adding on to it and some against it.

Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic theory of personality argues that human behaviour is the result of the interactions among three component parts of the mind: the id, ego, and superego. This "structural theory" of personality gives importance on how conflicts among the parts of the mind shape behaviour and personality. These conflicts are



mostly unconscious. According to Freud, personality develops during the beginning days of childhood and it is critically shaped through a series of five psychosexual stages - psychosexual theory of development. Freud's ideas have been criticised because of his singular focus on sexuality as the main driver of human personality development.

Language plays a key role in expressing hidden feelings, desires, and emotions according to Freud. He argues that language and the unconscious are closely related to each other. He says that the unconscious portion of the mind consists of several desires, sex drives, fears, dreams, and anxieties which were not expressed in a direct way because society does not accept such norms. Freud denies this and says the unsaid, hidden, and deeper feelings, emotions, and desires can be revealed through language and its different varieties. Freud presented a structural model of human personality. He studied the three major aspects that are responsible for creating human reactions. He pigeonholed human personality into Ego, id and the superego. Psychoanalysis, in this regard, greatly depends upon these three parts to analyse someone's personality or the way someone behaves.

The id, according to Freud, is one of the most important parts of the human personality based on primitive impulses like hunger, thirst, the desire for gratification and anger. Humans are born with their id, and it allows them to acquire their basic needs. The biological needs are the basic physical needs while the instinctual needs are the natural or unlearned needs, such as hunger, thirst and sex. Id is the unconscious part of the mind; that acts instantaneously without giving much thought to what is right and what is wrong. It is directly related to the pleasure principle that is the concept that all of one's needs must be met and gratified immediately. It compels humans to seek anything that feels good at a particular time without considering any restrictions of the situation, time or place. Freud



believed that id has the power to influence the ego and can as a result can easily manoeuvre human's behaviour to attain self-pleasure.

The ego is the logical and the conscious part of the mind which is associated with the reality principle. This means it balances the demands of the id and even the superego in the context of real life situations. The ego is conscious and keeps a watchful eye on the id through proper reasoning of an external environment. It is a very significant part of the human's personality that aims to maintain a balance between conscience (superego) and impulses (id). The ego scaffolds on the reality principle, and understands the desires and needs of other people. It knows that being impulsive is equal to being selfish and can hurt people sometimes.

The Superego is related to the social or the moral values that an individual inculcates as he matures. It acts as an ethical constraint on behaviour and helps an individual to develop his conscience. As the individual grows in the society, he learns the cultural values and the norms of the society which help him to differentiate between the right and wrong. The superego is the moral part of human personality, representing conscience. The development of superego relies on ethical and moral restraints placed on every human being by his/her caregiver. Not only does it influence human personality, but also dictates his/her moral beliefs. The superego is synonymous to the good angel sitting on the shoulder, telling people to control their ego's behaviour. There is always a conflict between these three fundamental structures of the mind. The efforts put-in to attain the balance between these define the way one behaves in the external environment

Freud, the famed psychoanalyst, also believed that behaviour and personality were derived from the constant and unique interaction of conflicting psychological forces that operate at three different levels of consciousness/awareness: the preconscious, conscious,

and unconscious. These were according to him the three levels of the mind/consciousness. He believed that each of these parts of the mind played an important role in influencing one's behaviour.

The first level of consciousness is known as the conscious state. It is made use of to take in inputs from the senses, analyse the information, and then make decisions based on the information. The conscious mind consists of what one is aware of at any given point in time. It includes the things that one is thinking about in the present, whether it's in the front of the mind or the back. If one is aware of it, then it is in the conscious mind.

The next level of consciousness. It is the subconscious also known as the preconscious and is where dreams come from. It is considered the storehouse of all remembered experiences, impressions that are left on the mind by such experiences, and tendencies that are awakened or reinforced by these impressions. Every experience ever had, every thought, every impression lives in the subconscious mind and influences the patterns of thought and behaviour far more than realised. The subconscious holds information that is just below the surface of awareness. Individuals can retrieve such information with relative ease, usually referring to these as memories.

The final level of consciousness is known as the unconscious. This is made up of thoughts, memories, and primitive/instinctual desires that are buried deep within oneself, far below conscious awareness. Even though not aware of their existence, they have a significant influence on behaviour. Although behaviours tend to indicate the unconscious forces driving them, it can't readily access the information which is stored in the unconscious mind. Throughout childhood, one gathers many different memories and experiences that form the beliefs, fears and insecurities that they carry later in life.



However, most of these memories cannot be recalled. They are these unconscious forces that drive behaviours.

A significant part of Freud's Psychoanalytic theory deals with dreams and their role in human life. Freud believed that dreams are the royal roads that lead us to our unconscious mind. Dreams are the reflection of our repressed desires, hidden in our subconscious minds. Dreams are the symbolic fulfilment of human desires and unfulfilled wishes.

Freud asserted that dreams contain symbolic texts that one needs to decipher when the watchful ego is alert and at work, even when a person is dreaming. However, deciphering the ego's message is not an easy task as it censors or scrambles the messages due to the peculiar functioning modes of the unconscious mind to increase the obscurity. The purpose of dreams is to translate forbidden wishes and taboo desires into a non-threatening form through condensation, displacement and secondary elaboration. Condensation refers to the joining of two or more ideas. Displacement is the transformation of the person or object that one is concerned with into something or someone else. Secondary elaboration is the unconscious process of turning the wish fulfilment images or events into a logical narrative.

Freud believed the three parts of the mind are in constant conflict because each part has a different primary goal. Sometimes, when the conflict is too much for a person to handle, his or her ego may engage in one or many defence mechanisms to protect themselves or an individual. These defence mechanisms include: Repression, Denial, Projection, Displacement, Regression and Sublimation. Repression is where the ego pushes disturbing or threatening thoughts out of one's consciousness. Denial where the ego blocks upsetting or overwhelming experiences from awareness, causing the individual



to refuse to acknowledge or believe in what is happening. Projection here the ego attempts to solve discomfort by attributing the individual's unacceptable thoughts, feelings, and motives to another person. Displacement when the individual satisfies an impulse by acting on a substitute object or person in a socially unacceptable way (e.g., releasing frustration directed toward your boss on your spouse instead). Regression as a defence mechanism, the individual moves backward in development in order to cope with stress (e.g., an overwhelmed adult acting like a child). Sublimation is similar to displacement, this defence mechanism involves satisfying an impulse by acting on a substitute but in a socially acceptable way (e.g., channelling energy into work or a constructive hobby).

Freud believed that one's personality developed through different stages during which pleasure seeking energies within the id become focused on certain erogenous areas. An erogenous zone is an area of the body that is sensitive to stimulation. There were also five stages in psychosexual development of a child. These included the oral, anal, phallic, latent, and genital stages. The erogenous zone that was associated with each stage served as a source of pleasure. Libido was also known as the psychosexual energy and was described to be the driving force behind behaviour. The Oral stage is from one's birth to around one year and the erogenous zone is the mouth. The anal stage occurs from one to three years and the erogenous zone is the bowel and bladder control. The phallic stage is from three to six years with the genitals as the erogenous zone. The latent stage takes place from the age of six to when puberty strikes but the libido is inactive. The final stage is the genital stage that begins with puberty and ends with the death of a person and during this lifetime their sexual interests can mature.

The Oedipus and the Electra complex are other key concepts within the psychoanalytic theory proposed by Freud. The Oedipus complex is named after Greek

mythology, and refers to a child's unconscious desire for the opposite-sex parent, along with accompanying feelings of rivalry and hostility towards the same-sex parent. According to Freud, boys experience the oedipus complex during the phallic stage of psychosexual development, when they develop sexual desires for their mothers and begin to view their fathers as rivals for their mother's affection. They may then feel guilty or fearful of retaliation from their fathers, leading to the development of the superego and the internalisation of societal norms. The Electra complex was however proposed by the Freudian disciple Carl Jung. It is essentially the female counterpart to the Oedipus complex. In this scenario the girls experience unconscious desires for their fathers and harbour feelings of jealousy towards their mothers. Like the Oedipus complex, the Electra complex is believed to occur during the phallic stage of development. Freud himself later acknowledged that the girl's psychosexual development might not mirror the boy's experience as closely as initially thought, but he didn't fully develop the concept of an electra complex.

Freud also came up with the Freudian slip named after him. It is an unintentional error in speech, memory, or action that is believed to reveal unconscious thoughts, desires, or motives. These slips are considered to be manifestations of the unconscious mind breaking through into conscious expression.

### 1.1.1 Importance and Reasons for the Proposed Research

The importance of the study arises in it exploring the unexplored in Goan Literature. The culture and the beliefs hidden behind the curtains are mentioned and spoken of with their effects on the characters' lives. The cultural guidelines change for different characters. This will be highlighted in the study. It is important as it will add on



to the literature from Goa and the research gap. It will delve into the characters' minds and lives influenced by tradition, culture, myth and religion that result in their actions.

### 1.1.2 Scope and Limitations of the Research

#### Scope:

There are limited critical studies of psychoanalysis in Goan literature. The research done during the course of this dissertation will explore the theory of psychoanalysis through the Freudian approach. These aspects will be studied and analysed in relation to the characters from the selected Goan texts. It will focus on the lives of the characters, their minds, behaviours, desires and so on. It will be seen how tradition, myth, superstitions, religious beliefs, that make up culture hand in gloves with society, play on the characters mind influencing their lives. All three texts have similar themes that are relevant to this day in certain ways. This will also be touched upon through the characters' experiences.

#### Limitations:

The study limits itself to the three novels in fiction from Goan literature. It restricts itself to the main characters from the selected texts. They lack critical studies previously worked on with the psychoanalytic theoretical framework and thus will be analysed from this perspective. It will be a detailed study on the selected characters' character development. All the characters are not bound to experience the same scenarios amid the different texts. Culture binds them with its effect on their lives. The study is constricted to time limitation, previously published work, lack of resources, page limit and availability of study material.



## **1.2 Research Problem / Question**

The psychoanalytic theoretical approach has been used widely to study literature. It has also been used broadly in the western countries in English literature as well as American literature. Research has also been done analysing the relation of psychoanalysis with gender and culture referring to different places. Studies have been done on how they influence lives of people portrayed in different novels and also in real life. The chosen texts from Goan Literature have not been critically studied under the psychoanalytic theoretical framework. They have also largely not been much critically researched. The study aims to do a psychoanalytic study of the characters in the selected novels and the effects of culture as an influencing factor binding the novels.

## **1.3 Relevance and Necessity of the Proposed Research**

### **1.3.1 Necessity in the field of Language and Literature**

This study aims to document the unconscious and conscious minds of the characters in the selected texts using literary expressions. "Great literature is simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree." Ezra Pound. Literature is open to different interpretations. Meaning changes and evolves with time as in the selected texts. What affected the past in the novels, in some aspects also affects the present in different ways. The study is crucial in providing a comprehensive overview of representative literary works from Goa. It underscores how these expressions have literary value due to their potential of articulating trauma, preserving memories and racial

discourse prevalent prior to, during and after the liberation of Goa from the colonial Portuguese rule.

The study focuses on analysing the characters in the selected texts in a psychoanalytic study as a watershed moment in the process of stepping into the impacts of culture. Finally, it will add on to Literature by filling in the research gap as texts from Goan Literature that have not been critically explored in the psychoanalytic study field.

### 1.3.2 Relevance to the Society

“If literature didn’t inspire empathy and compassion, it would be virtually useless.” says Alice Walker the author of *Colour Purple*. The selected three texts speak out loud the elements of society and culture as a whole in the shadows. These aspects result in the characters’ behaviours. Though society may have moved on from the time in the novels it still lags behind in evolving and creating a better environment. They span across many years highlighting the political and social scenarios, the lifestyle of the people in different eras that affect the next generation. These issues created controversy and there was commotion created by the public with these facts being voiced out. This study will create further awareness and speak on these customs and issues in the texts that were once faced and still faced today.

### 1.4 Objectives of the Research Proposed

1. To use the Freudian psychoanalytic theoretical approach to critically analyse the characters in the selected novels.
2. To study the Goan cultural history in the texts as an influencing factor in the characters behaviour.



3. To explore the effects of the unconscious mind in the conscious world.
4. To examine the use of psychoanalysis by the authors in their texts as a reflection of their personal experiences

## **1.5 Literature Review**

### **1.5.1 Researchers and Research in the Selected Field**

Goa is a dot on the map of India. It is not only known for its scenic tourism but rather also for its people who have fared well and made the state proud in different fields. Lorna Cordeiro, Patricia Rozario, Sonia Shirsat, Remo Fernandes, Lata Mangeshkar, Hema Sardesai are some famous names in the musical industry. Wendell Rodricks in the Fashion Industry, Damodar Mauzo, Eunice D'souza, Lambert Mascarenhas, Sheno Goembab, Manohar Rai Sardesai are a few important names in the literary field.

The state has come a long way since its independence from the Portuguese. The Goan culture, tradition, customs, language, art, cuisine, music, folklore, and other such aspects is a blend of the different rulers who ruled Goa once. Goa is famous for its art from different eras. All art during the previous dynasties are classified as Indian art. This Indian and Indo-Portuguese art is found in Goa in the fields of architecture, food, paintings and so on. These culturally unique aspects are carried down for generations and reflect Goan life and its rich history since ages. Religion, caste, myth, superstitions and other such beliefs also came down. All this is combined as a whole as Goan elements. This is then called Goan literature. Goan literature pertaining to the state of Goa mostly written by Goan writers is a slowly growing field with translations in English from Konkani, Marathi and even Portuguese. This study aims to add to this field of study.



*Karmelin*, an award winning novel by Damodar Mauzo revolves around the life of Karmelin. She loses her parents and brother to typhoid at a young age and is then brought up by her uncle and her father's sister who does not like her presence. It is like a bildungsroman novel that follows closely on her personal life before marriage, after marriage, after giving birth and bringing up her child. It speaks of her struggles to make ends meet in Goa and when she moves to Kuwait. Mauzo tells a tale of sexual exploitation, machinations within the family, caste conflicts, the lives of maids all told in an enthralling novel.

*The Shadow of the Palm Tree* by Vatsala Mendonca is a book that narrates a story with each main character narrating the story from what they have experienced. The book focuses on the Abreu family and its successive generations. The family curse is believed to be the cause of their sad state of life. It is claimed to have begun when the Portuguese joined the slave trade with the Europeans. The family claim to often hear the word 'Destino' lingering in the air. This sound haunts them and all the Abreu women are known to succumb to the curse.

*Poskem* by Wendell Rodricks follows the life of four Poskims in Goa. 'Poskims' in Goa were the children given up by poor parents to be taken care of by wealthy families. They would be brought up by the families along with the other children from the house. Some of these children were lucky and received a good life while not all did and were allowed to school as mostly these children were used as free adopted servants. The book begins with the four meeting and sharing a table at a restaurant. It tells each of their story and in the end it is revealed only to the readers that they are all siblings and their mother is in the same restaurant. They however though they bond well and realise that they are all poskims never come to know that they are siblings. A unique part of the book is that the

author includes real tested recipes throughout the book and stories inspired by real poskims.

The three books have common aspects as they speak on different traditions in Goa and the lives of the Goans following or rather trapped within their narrow boundary. Religion, myth, caste, class, gender, all play an important role and influence the characters minds and actions. The restrictions change from gender to gender and the females have separate rules compared to the males. The authors have however bravely given voice to the female and male characters equally and have spoken of their inner thoughts including their thoughts on their sexuality. These fictional novels are all based on reality and speak of many real life issues that people had and sometimes still go through in the Goan community. A major part of them can be said to be and have psychological aspects.

A psychoanalytic study refers to a work that includes or involves psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis is a theory and also therapy and a method where a patient talks about their dreams, experiences, early childhood, hurt feelings and so on that lie in the unconscious mind. It is based on the belief that people possess unconscious feelings, thoughts, desires and memories. Sigmund Freud is the father of psychoanalysis. He was a physiologist, psychologist, medical doctor, and influential thinker of the early twentieth century.

Online resources such as the Internet, online library catalogue and online databases such as JSTOR, Scopus, Google Scholar, project muse, SAGE Journals, have been used for research and the important ones are mentioned in this literature review. The most beneficial of these being JSTOR and Google.

In the Global Journal Inc. Volume 17, Mahroof Hossain writes in the abstract to his study, that Psychoanalysis is one of the modern theories that are used in English literature. It is a theory that is regarded as a theory of personality organisation and the dynamics of



personality that guides psychoanalysis (Hossain 40). It is known that the closest connection between literature and psychoanalysis has always been deployed by the academic field of literary criticism or literary theory. Among the critical approaches to literature, psychoanalysis has been one of the most controversial and for many readers the least appreciated (Hossain 40). This psychological interpretation has become one of the mechanisms to find out the hidden meaning of a literary text (Mahroof Hossain 40) The goal of psychoanalysis was to show that behaviour which was caused by the interaction between unconscious and unconsciousness (Hossain 40)

Nancy J. Chodorow says, In a similar vein, Chodorow makes a case for Freud's theory as necessary for feminism. No other theory links sex and gender, the creation of sexed and gendered beings, social constellations and their unconscious underpinnings as productively as psychoanalysis (168), and by aiming to make these structures conscious, it is a "theory of human nature with positive, liberatory implications, a theory of people as active and creative" (Scheurer 15)

The psychoanalytic approach focuses on deciphering how the unconscious mind governs conscious processes in ways that interfere with healthy psychological functioning. The key concepts which are used in Psychoanalytic criticism include but not limited to unconscious, repression, sublimation, super-ego, id, Infantile sexuality, Oedipus complex, libido, oral, anal, and phallic, transference, projection, Freudian slip, dream work, displacement ,etc.

Freud also had controversial views on women, believing that their lives were dominated by sexual reproductive functions. He even wrote, in 1925's 'The Psychological Consequences of the Anatomic Distinction Between the Sexes' that 'women oppose change, receive passively, and add nothing of their own'.... His theory was unfairly based



on a model where there was no place for femininity unless directly related to masculinity. Women were viewed as forever feeling morally inferior to men, who were said to have more developed superegos than women. This, according to Freud, was a problem that could never be resolved.

The theory has been applied and studied with many literary works. The Colour Purple is one such example. The Colour Purple is an epistolary novel by American Alice Walker. The protagonist Celie subdues in her sub-conscience the trauma she has been through since being a little child. She carries it growing up and is continuously tortured in her present life too as a result the heap kept increasing. She is chained by her fears and cannot voice herself out and doesn't even know who she herself is. Shug also helps Celie to verbalise her feelings about Albert openly and to separate from him (180-83). When Shug takes Celie to her house in Memphis, described by Celie as "big and pink and look sort of like a barn," in order "to love you and help you get on your feet" (188, 190), she provides Celie with a literal and psychological womblike "holding environment" in which Celie flourishes. (Charles L. Proudfit 06) Celie's sub conscience and reality find their way out eventually in the fictional story. The theory in the story has been studied not only from the perspective of Celie as a character and her mind but also the other characters in the novel. It brings an understanding of the different races, caste, different ways of life and so on.

The novels of the English DH Lawrence have also been studied with respect to the same theory in a similar way. In his novel Sons and Lovers, his dreams and fantasy are poured down on paper to the audience whom he hoped to sympathise with by examining, and if possible, imbibe his confessions. (110) Lawrence's psychoanalysis therefore embraces his works of fiction. The audience/artist's participation is judiciously utilised

through the medium of book. His target to entertain and teach, learn, cure, achieve and dominate, are in line with the aim of any fiction writer which the World Book, Vol. 7, has confirmed that, (Mbanefo 114) Since we have pinned down the tool of a writer to acquire immune experiences, D.H. Lawrence could be said to be more direct and sincere in his literary outputs. Psychoanalysis of his fiction is easier achieved through looking at him from the neurotic point of view. The originality of *Sons and Lovers* could be inferred from the fact that the book is a maiden design of its author (Mbanefo 113)

The area however remains unexplored in Goan literature in context to the three texts I have selected. The study aims to study the characters' emotions/feelings and actions as a result of their consciousness on different levels be it the id, ego or superego. Some also bring about the Oedipal Complex and the Freudian slip. Keeping this theory in mind this study aims to bring out how religion, tradition, myth, beliefs, rituals and culture as a whole play on the minds of the characters.

The research in this field aims to explore and focus on how gender, tradition, myths, superstitions and beliefs, become an influencing factor in the development and lives of the characters using the Freudian psychoanalytic theoretical approach through the selected Goan texts. Similar research and studies have been done with other western texts with gender and culture referring to different places. Studies have also been done on how they influence life in the day and also in the day today and remain largely unexplored in the Goan literary scenario.

Goan literature in the literary field is slowly evolving. The multilingual aspect of the state makes it more challenging. People speak Konkani that include different dialects, English, Hindi, Marathi, and Portuguese. Goan Literature has books in all these languages. Translators are then required to translate the work and even after which the books are not



available or either out of print that makes it more challenging. There are a few award winning texts and many are yet to be written and acclaimed. Many await publication be it the dramas by the Christians and Hindus or the songs, poetry or even the oral histories not yet documented.

In Interrogating modernity, gendering 'tradition': Teatr tales from Goa by Rowena Robinson on Sage journals, the paper speaks of the tiatr in Goa, a form of drama. The paper examines the modern and traditional in the tiatr. Family relations, gender and tradition are said to be common topics especially displaying ways required to protect them. Thus offering a glorified representation of the accepted typical and traditional goan woman along with her immurement in the family. The paper argues that the different voices that give different modern and contemporary ideas that surface during this process are worth holding as they are traces of alternative though suppressed reminders of the ideology that was dominant.

Glenis Mendonca in her thesis for the degree of doctor in philosophy in english speaks of *Karmelin* by Mauzo in chapter 4 titled, Discovering Feminism through a close reading of select konkani novels. She writes on Uncovering Patriarchal and Hegemonic Structures through a Feminist Reading of *Karmelin*. She speaks of how the titular character Karmelin is a victim of circumstances and patriarchy, and how her sexuality is given voice to. The author's openness to sex-talk, in *Karmelin* subverts patriarchy through a self-exploration of sexuality. She is also said to become a Christ-like sacrificial model. She goes on to highlight how strong women characters are pitted against male characters with weaknesses.

Another research paper was published titled; Subverting the Diasporic Tradition: A note on Damodar Mauzo's *Karmelin*, presented at the National Seminar on 'Contemporary

Konkani Novel: In Translation and In Transition', Organised by Braganza Institute, Panjim, Goa. (28-29 Sept. 2007)

At a three days International Conference organised by Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies Saurashtra University, Rajkot (Gujarat), Comparative Literature Association of India (CLAI), CIIL and Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi on 'Expanding Territories: Comparative Literature in 21st Century' on 29 to 31st March, 2010 a paper titled, Diasporic Dimensions in Damodar Mauzo's *Karmelin* and Bharati Mukharjee's *Wife: A Comparative Study* was published by Barvekar and Rajashri. (Oct2012, Vol. 3 Issue 4, p99-104. 6p.) The paper attempts to compare the trauma of displacement faced by the women protagonists of Damodar Mauzo's *Karmelin* and Bharati Mukharjee's *Wife*. The study of these two novels provides meaningful variations on the diasporic theme.

A paper in Jstor speaks of when Karmelin in conflict says; "If my husband had given me only as much love as this Arab, things would not have come to such a pass, and further; Comparing Nissar with Jose is like comparing an elephant with a goat. How can I ever weep over my husband's death". She also assures herself that sleeping with him can help get her the money she has come to work for; "have come to make money here. And well, He is my boss anyway." This conflict in different instances through her conscience and subconsciousness with the influence of culture, religion, responsibility and so on in her mind is what the research aims to study. Similarly in *Shadow of the Palm Tree* and *Poskem* which have not yet received critical attention except for some reviews and descriptions that can be found in their recent publications. They remain untouched in terms of a literary theory based research or nothing much as far as my search on the internet sites, databases or catalogues in my research.



The three Goan texts when analysed using Freud's Psychoanalytic theory will bring out clearly the unconscious thoughts in the minds of the characters and will help build connection with the realities of the time and their effect on their conscious lives.

The research will examine the traditional guidelines that confuse and grow on the conscience of the characters while they struggle to maintain a balance with their unconscious desires and the real world. This will be studied by understanding the situation they are in, their actions and thoughts through their id, ego and superego the three stages of the mind's consciousness according to Freud. Studying texts using the psychoanalytic framework helps in understanding the characters and empathising with them. It brings out their inner reality and links their actions and words. The stories may be fictional but are based in reality. As "It's in literature that true life can be found. It's under the mask of fiction that you can tell the truth" Gao Xingjian.

Ogene, S. Mbanefo says that in applying psychoanalysis to fiction, an individual's personality can be decoded and analysed if the scholar can expose to scrutiny the fiction by which goals and dreams, feelings and devotions are made. The art of fiction serves as a confession of the writer who may not know it, but is telling the whole world the dark sides of his mind. In the ideas of Adler here paraphrased, the neurotic is nailed to the cross of his fiction. The neurotic is under the spell of a fictional life plan. This fictional life plan starts from the childhood days when the individual begins to repress certain thoughts and feelings; he grows up as a neurotic person and seeks to overcome all these feelings. What strikes his mind is to achieve! To arise! To conquer! It is this feeling that leads to telling lies, creating imaginary characters, constructing bridges, solving arithmetic equations, dreaming, and patterning of one's behaviours (Ogene, S. Mbanefo 99)

The research will analyse and speak of the characters' lives, their depression, emotional struggles, emotional trauma, victories, achievements and so on. It will help understand in a better way how they may have thought and felt and in turn understand the real life characters who may have inspired them.

### **1.6 Formulation of the Hypothesis**

The dissertation aims to study the characters of the selected texts from Goan literature within their cultural background using the Freudian Psychoanalytic theoretical approach. It studies the effect of culture on the characters and its effects on their emotions, behaviour and lives. It will portray the depth of culture is and its biasness. It will also explore the role of the minor characters and society in the growth of the major characters throughout the novels.

### **1.7 Research Methodology for the Proposed Research**

The proposed research will consult several sources, research articles, books and so on to study the topic. An in depth reading and critical analysis will be done of the three primary texts. University library resources and other library resources will be used along with online internet resources.



## 1.8 Research Design

### 1.8.1 Chapterization

Chapter I - 'A Glance into Psychoanalytic Theory and Goan Literature: An Introduction' will provide an overview on the topic. It will include the theoretical framework. It will also consist of an introduction to Goan culture and literature keeping in mind the selected texts. It will include and state the importance and reasons for the proposed research, the scope and limitations of the research, the research problem/question, relevance and necessity of the proposed research, necessity in the field of language and literature, relevance to the society, objectives of the research proposed, literature review, researchers and research in the selected field, formulation of the hypothesis, research design and the chapterization.

Chapter II - 'Peeking into Karmelin's Life and Mind: A Study of Damodar Mauzo's *Karmelin*' will comprise a summary and background to the novel *Karmelin* in english translation by Damodar Mauzo. comprises the details of the author, background to the text, and a summary and analysis. It will consist of a character analysis of select characters and incorporate a psychoanalytic analysis of them.

Chapter III - 'Examining The Lives of The Goan *Poskim* in Wendell Rodricks' *Poskem: Goans In the Shadows*' comprises the details of the author, background to the text, and a summary and analysis. It will consist of a character analysis of select characters and incorporate a psychoanalytic analysis of them.

Chapter IV - 'Dark Truths Within a Family: An Exploration of Vatsala Mendonca's *Shadow of The Palm Tree*' comprises the details of the author, background to the text, and a summary and analysis. It will consist of a character analysis of select characters and incorporate a psychoanalytic analysis of them.

Chapter V - 'Conclusion' concludes the study and is a short culmination of the entire study. It consists of the findings of the study and concludes the hypothesis or the aim and objectives. It also contains the interviews sent out to the authors Damodar Mauzo and Vatsala Mendonca.



## **CHAPTER II**

### **PEEKING INTO KARMELIN'S LIFE AND MIND : A STUDY OF**

#### **DAMODAR MAUZO'S KARMELIN**

*"Great literature is simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree." Ezra Pound.*

#### **2.1 The Author**

Damodar Mauzo is a Goan short story writer, novelist, critic and scriptwriter. He writes in the Konkani language, the mother tongue of the Goans. He is from Morjim Goa. He draws inspiration from nature, society and life around him.

He has several different forms of writings that are published to his credit. He has authored short fiction like *Gathon* (1971), *Zagranna* (1975), *Rumad Ful* (1989), *Bhurgim Mhugelim tim* (2001) and *Sapan Mogi* (2014). He has ventured to lengthier works of writing with novels like, *Sood* (1975), *Karmelin* (1980), *Tsunami Simon* (2009) and *Boy Unloved* (2024). In Children's books he has written, *Ek Ashillo Babulo* (1976), *Kani Eka Khomsachi* (1977) and *Chittarangi* (1995). He has even explored biographical writing with *Oshe Ghodle Shenoy Goembaab* (2003) and *Unch Haves Unch Mathem* (2003). In July 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Mauzo delved into a virtual book launch and released a book of short stories, *Tishttavni* via an online session.

Damodar Mauzo's works have been translated from Konkani into various Indian languages including the western languages English, Portuguese and French. The novel

*Karmelin* was translated into twelve languages- Assamese, Bengali, Maithili, Nepali, Gujarati, Marathi, Sindhi, Punjabi, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, Hindi and English, after being published by Sahitya Akademi. The novel *Tsunami Simon* has been translated into English and published by Ponytale Books. *These Are My Children* is a collection of short stories translated into English and published by Katha Publications, New Delhi. *Teresa's Man and Other Stories from Goa* has been published by Rupa Publications, while *Rumadful* got translated as *Mirage* by the Margao-based Cinnamon Teal Publishing house, in 2014. The same book is also translated into Marathi as *Shantaterche Ghann*, published by Srishti Prakashan. The novel *Tsunami Simon* was published in translation into English by Ponytale Books and launched in 2013. Rajkamal Prakashan published *Sapanmogi*, a collection of stories, into Hindi as *Swapnapremi* in 2022 Penguin has published a collection of stories called *The Wait under its Vintage imprint* (2022) Mauzo's novel *Jeev Divum Kai Chya Marum* was published in Kannada as *Jeeva Kodale, Chaha Kudiya* by Bahuvachana Publishing House in Bangalore (2021) and into Marathi by Majestic Prakashan as *Jeev Dyava ki Chaha Ghyava* in 2022. *Boy Unloved* is translated by Jerry Pinto into English and published by Speaking Tiger publishing company.

Damodar Mauzo is the recipient of numerous literary awards. In 1973 he was awarded the Konkani Bhasha Mandal Literary Award for *Gathon*. In 1973 Goa Kala Academy Literary Award for *Ganthon*. In 1976 Konkani Bhasha Mandal Literary Award for *Zagranna*. In 1977 Konkani Bhasha Mandal Best Drama Manuscript Award for *Nillem Nillem Sovnne Ek*. In 1978 Goa Kala Academy Literary Award for *Kanni Eka Khomsachi*. In 1983 the Sahitya Akademi Award for *Karmelin*. This is the most famous and most translated novel. In 1997 he received The Best Dialogues Award at the Goa State Film Festival for the film *Shitoo*. In 1998 Katha Award for the Story *Minguel's kin*. In 2003 Janaganga Puraskar for *Bhurgim Mhugelim Tim*. In 2005 he bagged The Best Screen-Play



Award at the Goa State film festival for the film *Aleesha*. The list goes on with numerous awards such as in 2006, the Goa State Reward for Cultural Excellence at the National Level by the Directorate of Art and Culture, Government of Goa, in 2007 the Goa State Cultural Award by Directorate of Art and Culture, Government of Goa, in 2011 Vishwa Konkani Kendra's Vimala V Pai Sahitya Puraskar for *Tsunami Simon*, in 2013 Goan Achievers Award conferred by The Navhind Times and Viva Goa, in 2014 The Best Dialogues Award for the film *O Maria* at the Goa State film festival and in 2016 Podar Ratna awarded by R.A.Podar College of Commerce and Economics, Mumbai, In 2022 he was honoured with the 57th Jnanpith award the highest literary award in India.

Mauzo is also an activist and was an active participant in the Goa Opinion Poll in 1967. He was also a member of the Konkani Porjecho Avaz (1985-1987) movement. He has been a member of the Executive Board and Finance committee of the Sahitya Akademi in New Delhi for the term 2003 - 2007. He is the co-founder and co-curator of the annually held Goa Arts and Literature Festival. He is also a founding member of the PEN-South India, an international writers collective.

The Karnataka police in June 2018 informed the Goa police that Mauzo's life was under threat from the right wing terror organisation Sanathan Sanstha after which several writers and activists got together to support Mauzo and together called for a ban on the Sanathan Sanstha. These things did not stop him from freely expressing his thoughts and he continues to do so expressing his creative voice in his work.

## 2.2 Background to the Text

Damodar Mauzo's *Karmelin* (1981) a Sahitya Akademi award winning novel was published by Sahitya Akademi in English translation from Konkani by Vidya Pai. This English version was published at Wellwish printers, New Delhi.

The Novel is a bildungsroman novel as it tells the life story of the titular character *Karmelin* as she grows and experiences and lives life. It is her story of childhood, adulthood, marriage and motherhood. The story delves deep into her thoughts and is a narration of her helplessness to her circumstances and exploitation in all ways including her sexual exploitation. The novel is set in Goa when it was under the colonial Portuguese rule and later shifts to its liberation struggle period and after its liberation. The uprising at Margao, Operation Vijay conducted in Goa and the storming of bridges and other activities that Goa faced including the opinion poll, are seen throughout the text. It is a fictional story inspired from reality and told in utmost simplicity. The story reflects reality and visualises the goan scenario from the day that many instances still remain the same to this day.

*Karmelin* was written at a time when the topic of sexual exploitation in Goa was not yet taken up and considered a taboo to even speak of. The author Damodar Mauzo thus faced several issues when the book was published as a result and received hate from many who accused him of defaming a section of society. The story speaks of Goans who sought jobs in Kuwait after the Portuguese colonialism in its colonies had begun to end and as a result many goans had to re-shift. While many Goans came back to Goa, others shifted to Canada, London, Australia and so on from places like Peru, Tanzania to name a few. These people who went to work in Kuwait mostly worked as domestic helps and faced abuse and many were sexually exploited while some even worked as prostitutes and earned a lot of wealth. These people mostly came from poor backgrounds and very difficult circumstances.



### 2.3 Summary and Analysis

*Karmelin* is the story of the titular character Karmelin who is the first child to her parents. She also had a little brother named Francisco in her hometown Suravalli. When Karmelin was a little child typhoid plagued their village and along with several other villagers took with it Karmelin's parents and her brother. Karmelin's mother had requested a neighbour of theirs to send a message to her sister in law, also the sister of her husband to take Karmelin as they were all not well, however there was no message back from there. It is when everyone died except Karmelin that her uncle shouted at his wife and brought the orphaned Karmelin to his home. He fell in love with her instantly and doted on her as his own daughter, the one girl child he always wanted. Their son Agnel too loved his cousin and they played, studied and ate together.

Karmelin studied in a new school. She was a smart child and scored mostly full marks better than Agnel and that made her adopted father whom she now called Paai that means father in konkani very proud of her. Maai however did not seem impressed and loved Agnel the most. As time passes by Agnel falls in love with Karmelin and so does Karmelin. They go for outings together and get intimate at times. Mai notices this and at marriage time advises him to marry a girl who comes from a good household with a good financial background and can give a good dowry. Agnel marries the girl of his mother's choice for the good dowry and does not confess or stand up for the love he had for Karmelin neither for the promises he made to her. Karmelin is heartbroken and when her father finds a boy for her to marry she marries him silently for the sake of her father even though she does not like him. Karmelin faces a lot of issues in her married life from her husband and her mother and sister in law. She is exploited and reduced to a slave and sex machine.

She embraces motherhood with her baby girl Belinda who is her world. She is exploited by her husband's roommate Rosario. After nearly losing their house and all source of income with her husband having long lost his job and wasting all the wealth from the house due to addiction to excess alcohol consumption, she steps up for the welfare of her child. She begins sewing clothes then working in the fields and finally moves to Kuwait. Here too she is sexually exploited by her employer nevertheless she silently suffers and earns for her family.

Damodar Mauzos book *Karmelin* thus explores the journey of Karmelin the titular character and her associations as she journeys ahead in life and as her character grows. This study employs a psychoanalytic lens and aims to delve into the character of Karmelin using the Freudian psychoanalytic theory as the underlying framework. *Karmelin* by Mauzo presents to its readers a tapestry of human emotions and experiences woven into the lives of its characters. He adds layers of psychological aspects that complicate the plot and the character of Karmelin. This dissertation seeks to unravel through a psychoanalytic lens the unconscious motivations, desires, and conflicts that drive Karmelin's actions. The concepts of Psychoanalysis offer valuable insights into the psychological dynamics portrayed in the book. Applying these concepts to the text gives a deeper understanding of the characters inner worlds and the underlying themes of the narrative.

Karmelin is a character that grows with time physically, mentally and emotionally. Karmelin losing her happy family to typhoid is the beginning point of her trauma. She struggles to live in a normal family that accepts her as their own. She is a character whose mind is portrayed as she struggles to understand her identity and survive as per the expectations laid on her by her adoptive family, society and religion. She is portrayed to be mature and realise the difference in attitude towards her and Agnel the child of her



adoptive parents not only because she is a girl but also because she is adopted unlike Agnel who is their biological child. Karmelin represses all the hurt she receives in her subconscious and tries to live a beautiful life in the present. Her desire is awakened when Agnel falls for her beauty and she too falls for him. They bring about a goan tradition wherein a child from a family was married to a cousin from the maternal side of the family. Agnel doesn't stand up for their love as he gets married to the girl of his mothers choice. She continues repressing her grief as she is expected to and marries the man her adoptive father chooses for her even though she finds so many faults in him at many instances and knows deep down in her conscience that she doesn't want to marry him.

One of the notable aspects of *Karmelin* is its portrayal of the interplay between tradition and modernity in Goan society. Through Karmelins struggles with societal expectations and her own desires, Mauzo offers a nuanced reflection on the tensions that arise when traditional values clash with contemporary realities. The novel delves into the complexities of love and relationships in a conservative society. Karmelin's forbidden forced sexual intercourse that further violated her already violated body and soul.

Karmelin is a character that constantly doubts herself and also accuses herself. Her conscience faces a battle between the id, ego and superego constantly. Though the id helps in satisfying her needs materially her ego and superego awaken her conscience that is shaped by societal norms, cultural beliefs and moral standards. She thus blames and questions herself after her id had led her to satisfy her needs.

She is a victim of circumstance and losing her family at a young age traumatises her. She can never really accept a new family wholeheartedly though she has an uncle who dotes on her as his own daughter. The troubles that never leave her make her question her identity. She becomes emotionless and cannot cry. She only cries when she sees someone

else crying. Her repressed loss and emotions haunt her and traumatise her in unexpected ways.

Karmelin unconsciously compares the men in her life. She compares them for the hurt each one gave her, the pleasure they gave her sexually and their good and bad deeds towards her. She compares Agnel, Jose, Bostianv, Rosario and Nissar. "Karmelin felt a twinge of envy, if only it had been Bostianv who was her husband instead of Jose!" (Mauzo 125) "Suddenly Karmelin realised that she had never experienced so much pleasure with either Agnel or Jose." (Mauzo 145) "each tryst with Nissar gave her more pleasure than the three bouts of making love had done that day!(with Jose on their first anniversary)... Karmelin realised that she was comparing Jose with Nissar. Jose! Who couldn't even hold his own against ordinary mortals! Comparing him to Nissar was like holding up a goat against an elephant" (Mauzo 18) Sometimes when she realises that she is comparing, she feels bad about it but cannot help thinking of how her life would have been if not as how it was. Other times she justifies it for the wrong that's happened to her and then later feels bad about justifying to herself.

She also compares Nissar to Jose, keeping aside and ignoring that he uses her for his sexual satisfaction without her verbal consent. Even though she feels guilt for not rebuking him she is also grateful to him. "I'm really lucky, most Arabs treat their servants worse than dogs. They change Ayahs every year, it's just that Nissar is different." (Mauzo 06) She also wonders if she is good in bed after Nissar complimented her and revealed to her his thoughts on why he loves sleeping with her and not getting bored but instead keeps looking forward.

She doesn't feel grief when her son passes away nor did she take much interest in the beginning to take care of him. Her thoughts and conscience question her morality and



at the same time tells her that she is not so pure and chaste to fear working in Kuwait and worry of being used sexually by an arab.

Karmelin is said to even get used to his visits and begins to look forward to it. She and Nissar develop a bond where they satisfy each other and Nissar doesn't spend his money on other women as he says that no one else satisfies him like she does. She lives without threat to life and the fear in her is suppressed especially the ones received from the stories she heard of the Arab men. She is afraid after a long time when she confronts his anger as Robert tries to contact her at Nissar's place. It is then that her subconscious begins becoming conscious and she starts feeling afraid. She used to always obey him in silence and not protest in order to not upset him.

The theme of love does not only compensate for the male partner, physical and material aspect but also the theme of motherhood, sisterhood and friendship runs parallel. Karmelin is a devout mother and her concern for her child Belinda whom she raises as a single parent despite having a husband and a family is a major background in the text. In the everyday psychological scenario most mothers don't want their children to have their bad experiences. Karmelin cannot bear to think of her child living the life she had. She wants her child to study a lot, have true love in all its purity and have the best she can give her. Karmelin constantly fears Belinda will be exposed to the life she lives to earn for their livelihood. She doesn't allow her to come for a holiday to Kuwait and even slaps her at the end of the novel when she wishes to come to Kuwait and work like her. She however is unaware of the dark reality and dreams to become self independent and take care of her mother. Karmelin's slap on Belinda can be seen as the defence mechanism of Displacement where her negative feelings from her job in Kuwait and her conflicting sexual desires and exploitation are vented out on poor Belinda with a slap. Displacement is also seen in other

parts of the novel. Karmelin is upset with herself and these negative feelings that lie within her she blames as a result on Jose. She feels that if he had been like Bostianv and supported her and their daughter she wouldn't have to work or come after him to Pali and as a result would not have been sexually exploited. Similarly Mai blames Karmelin for the ill health of Pai. Karmelin's sister in law and mother in law vent their frustration on her. Jose too vents out on Karmelin.

Sublimation is seen when Karmelin feeling defeated by circumstances with the addition of her abandonment by her adoptive mother after the marriage, the dismissal of her husband on the accusations of his mother, his sister and so on added with complete exploitation she then tries hard to channel the remaining energy she has into doing something productive and improving the standard of life for her and her daughter Belinda and also helping out Isabel and her family for helping her out.

Damodar Mauzo employs the dream vividly in *Karmelin*. Karmelin day dreams often during the day and also at night. She dreamt of a beautiful life after marrying her cousin Agnel who had helped her dream. These wishes, dreams and desires never get fulfilled. After marrying Jose for the sake of her adopted father she dreams the dream he showed her of a beautiful life they would build and live in together. She is upset with him years later for making her dream of a dream that would never really come true as he spoils the little that they had too. She then struggles to survive and dreams for a better future for herself and her child Belinda. She dreams of a life she would be able to afford after earning for herself and her daughter whom she adores. Karmelin has many sorrowful memories that haunt her. Her dreams and what she wishes along with the little good she received come to comfort her in her dreams.



Karmelin once lived in a happy family as a child complete with the love and care of both parents. Her little brother Francisco was her companion and she played with him joyfully. This beautiful life of hers in the past that had some-what had built up with Pai who adored her as the daughter he always wanted. Agnel too loved her and they played and studied together until teenage years distanced them and eventually they fell in love. All this was destroyed too and she was married to someone she didn't want to marry but did so to not be a burden on the ones she loved. She was instructed by her adoptive mother not to come too often back from her marital house as her father was not well and that they wouldn't be able to do more for her. Karmelin realised that she could never actually have the real parental love ever again and she also couldn't seek support like others with their parents and decided not to come back for the sake of her beloved father's health. Her dreams bring along the image of her father to comfort her "It was Paai who drifted into her dreams... Paai, who stood there with his arms outstretched, calling her to him. Karmelin rushed into his arms and hugged him tight." (Mauzo 109) Karmelin dreamt of pai again on the last night she was to spend at her father's house. The dream is used as a foretelling or foreshadowing of what will happen. It can also be seen as Karmelin's fear of what would happen if she didn't leave the home as mai had instructed her to. On the funeral day when she recollects this dream she thinks to herself, "Those eyes must have been seeking me..of course! Paai wouldn't go away without bidding me adieu! There he is peering out through the slits, from the corner of his eyes..." (Mauzo 123)

Karmelin who lived in the house of her uncle and aunty and called them mai and pai could never really give them that position due to various reasons. She knew Mai did not like her and she feared that Pai too would one day behave angrily or not love her as his daughter. Though Mauzo doesn't write this fact down straightforwardly in his novel, he

uses a dream to show this hidden fearful thought that Karmelin dreads. He then writes that "Karmelin woke up with a start, her body bathed in a cold sweat." (Mauzo 91)

It is interesting how the author Mauzo uses different aspects of the Freudian Psychoanalytic theory and merges them together. For instance he uses nature to describe Karmelin's emotions, desires, life and sexual arousal that is followed by the blending of physical intercourse in a dream based trance state with nature's intoxication and the human touch. Karmelin who is intoxicated with nature dreams of herself enjoying nature's bliss and is aroused by it to such an extent that she doesn't realise when her husband's roommate Rosario begins making love to her. When reality strikes her she is not able to move away and shivers with pleasure. She is appalled with herself as she is not able to rebuke or berate Rosario and instead when she thinks of those moments again she savours the pleasure from the thoughts. "Sure enough she did fall asleep...suddenly she began to dream... she had become a part of this environment, this lovely patch of land out here in Pali... she saw herself tramping up and down over the hillocks... she rolled exuberantly in the fresh green grass, turning into a little child for a moment, then becoming a young girl in the first flush of youth... She came down to the stream to bathe. She took off her blouse and lay down in the stream... the water flowed over her bare body, it was as though someone was stroking a peacock feather lightly over her breasts... she stood up in the stream and began to run through the water becoming one with the stream till she reached the beach by the ocean. As she trudged through the sand someone grabbed her and drew her behind the bushes. His hand, which had been resting on her shoulder, slipped down and fondled her breast... her body was trembling, a fire seemed to course through her veins... and then suddenly she woke up... but what was this, she wasn't awake... she was dreaming still ... her he was! Right on top of her...it took her a while to realise that it was Rosario by her side and by the time she realised this fact, Karmelin was so aroused that



she was in no condition to repulse his advances. Her mind was in a turmoil but her body quivered with pleasure till that orgasmic moment and kept quivering for a long while, even after Rosario got up and left her side. She didn't forget to button her blouse before she fell asleep again, though." (Mauzo 143 144 145) in these words it is evident of Mauzos blending of nature and intercourse but he also adds the cultural or moral aspect in the state of ego as Karmelin, even in that state still buttons her blouse before sleeping again. This scenario also highlights the Freudian slip as she unconsciously desires satisfaction that she receives from Rosario through the thoughts of nature and Agnel. Her id or instinctual behaviour is responsible for her savouring the pleasure despite the guilt that approached her. The second time Rosario comes she is not asleep but has closed her eyes and doesn't stop Rosario though she can hear him. She enjoys this time too and realises that neither Agnel nor Jose gave her that much pleasure. She is horrified with herself and regrets later. She decides to move back to Goa with Jose and Belinda.

Karmelin, who is afraid of the Arab doesn't stop him from touching her. She had heard stories and was instructed of such behaviour. Over time she gets used to the visits of her boss and even begins looking forward to it. Karmelin is exploited at various times in her life. She feels ashamed that she has been sexually violated but she's disgusted even more with herself for not raising a voice against the men who dishonour her body. She consoles herself as if she had raised a voice; her existence would be a question.

Her ego or rather super ego that is responsible for making her feel guilty is the culture or tradition deep within her. Something within her doesn't allow her to take care / nourish her younger son. She was not really happy with him being named after her beloved and virtuous pai. She cannot even send him to Isabel to take care of him while she works as she did not want her son whom she believes is of sin to trouble her. She also

however feels guilty for not taking care of him who is also a part of her as much as he is of her violator.

Karmelin's story ends just like Mauzo's other stories. It doesn't have a happy nor sad ending. It ends abruptly giving the reader to think or not on what must have happened. Her tale represents the women who like her went to Kuwait in search of jobs. While it may have fared well for some it did not for many like Karmelin. She stands out for her honesty, kindness, staying true to herself, being a good mother and other such qualities. She is portrayed a sacrificial being who sacrifices herself for the ones she loves and as a result she is deprived of her desires and is also exploited. She goes on to wonder if that was what she wanted from her husband or lover and instead received it from her exploiter who then paid her treating her as a commodity. She can never really be happy ever and her mind is in a turmoil forever.



## CHAPTER III

### EXAMINING THE LIVES OF THE GOAN *POSKIM* IN WENDELL RODRICKS'

#### *POSKEM: GOANS IN THE SHADOWS*

*"If literature didn't inspire empathy and compassion, it would be virtually useless."*

Alice Walker

### 3.1 The Author

Wendell Augustine Rodricks (28.5.1960 - 12.2.2020) was a Goan origin fashion designer born in Mahim, Bombay to a Goan couple. He was also an activist for LGBTQ rights and an author. He has authored three books of different genres that include *Moda Goa History and Style* (2012), *The Green Room* (2012) and *Poskem* (2017).

After completing his education in St. Michaels school, he took a graduate diploma in catering, then joined as assistant director of the Royal Oman Police. He pursued fashion designing later and graduated with a degree in fashion designing in Los Angeles and established his own fashion label in 1990. He was honoured with the Padma Shri in 2014, Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres in 2015.

A very creative person, he had multiple talents too. He enjoyed playing music, singing, dancing and even cooking. In his book *Poskem* he weaves the narrative with recipes. He was always connected to his roots in Goa, the unique culture and lifestyle. Rodricks represented Goa in the clothes he designed and also the books he published. He earned the title 'Guru of Minimalism' after he incorporated the yogic calm South India

and the spiritual side of southern India into his clothing at IGEDO [Ingenious Gracious Encouraging Dignified Outgoing] that stood apart from the bright colours and rich embroidery that india was known for.

### 3.2 Background to the Text

The etymology of the konkani word '*poskim*' comes from the konkani word '*possunk*' that translates to adopt, to raise or to bring up. According to the Konkani Dictionary; '*poskem*' means (adopted daughter) and '*posko*' means (adopted son) '*posko-bapui*' means adopted father and '*poski-avoi*' means adopted mother. (Goan Konkani Dictionary)

It is the word used for children adopted or given to wealthy families by the poor who couldn't afford to bring up their children in Goa. A few of these '*poskims*' were the illegitimate children of the landowners who impregnated tenant women on their land. (Of Crioulos and Poskim) Some of these children were brought up in loving families along with the other children in the house. However not all these adopted children received loving and caring families. Most were treated as unpaid labour and servants in the house unjustly. Some referred to their adoptive parents as father and mother, while others referred to them as Godparents similar to Charles Dickens' portrayal of adoptive guardians who are patrons rather than parents.

Some '*poskim*' were actually adopted for the need of servants. So it was preferred to adopt someone who did not have a family or was very poor or other reasons which would force them to stay at the master's house and serve at all times. The African slaves in



Goa who with time remained as servants and were also called '*poskim*'. These Poskim doubled as nannies.

*Poskem - Goans in the Shadow* (2017) is Wendell Rodricks third book. It is also his first and only work of fiction. It is set majorly in Goa and moves along with the characters to the areas where they move. The author journeys the reader on a shamefully silenced and hidden world of Goa's '*poskim*'. It is a story based on the factual tradition of young children being adopted into wealthy Goan families.

Wendell dedicates the book to the *poskim* of Goa and says it is especially to Rosa. Rosa is Wendell's neighbour in his new home in his home town Colvale, Goa. Wendell speaks of her in his autobiography titled *Green Room*. He says he had promised Rosa that he would write a book on the *poskim* at her funeral.

Wendell begins his book *Poskem* with a prologue. It is divided into five parts. The first four parts narrate the story of the four '*poskims*' in different segments, one chapter for each one's story. The fifth part consists of just one chapter and is the story of the four '*poskims*' biological mother. It ends with an epilogue followed by credit to the owners of the recipes in the book and acknowledgements. The book is filled with illustrations by Mario Miranda that add on to the Goan atmosphere in the novel. The story is told using a narrator's voice constantly in the background.

### 3.3 Summary and Analysis

In the beginning of the novel it is not revealed to the reader that the four *poskims* are siblings. The four *poskim* themselves are not aware of this fact. In the Prologue all the '*Poskim*' coincidentally meet at 'Hanuman Soda ice-cream parlour' (Wendell 13) it is set in the Mapusa Market, Goa 1984. All the four characters place the same order though they

arrive at different times and end up sitting on the same table as all other seats were occupied. While everyone gets along and has a conversation, Alda not only avoids a conversation but also avoids making eye contact with the others. She is however the most observant in her silence and notices that all of them peculiarly had the same 'square shaped fingers with a mild, dark ridge on the left thumb.' She also notices that they all had the same honeyed Muscatel wine-coloured brown eyes. She doesn't say anything about it however. The other three get along well. They are happy to know that they all love cooking. They eventually all bid farewell and go their ways and never know of their relations. Their stories are then told in the following chapters as a flashback. The prologue is written as an event that happens much later in time. The book ends with an epilogue that beautifully highlights and connects to the prologue. It concludes the full book and reveals the truth of the *poskim* being siblings and their mother whose story is narrated in part five. Wendell weaves together their stories and completes them yet they never get to really know their biological family. They unite under the word *poskim* and later are known as being siblings too in chapter five. The epilogue connects to the prologue and it is almost the same thing written in a revealing manner. Thus tying the loose ends for the readers. The book's background speaks of the Portuguese being overcome by the Indians followed by Goa's freedom struggle.

Alda was left by her mother at the gates of the Souza Corriea family. She was then adopted as a toddler. Growing up she notices how she is treated differently compared to the rest of her siblings. She doesn't get to go to school like the others and does all the household chores along with the other servants. Including grazing the animals. She is not allowed to eat with the family on the table she sets and eats in the kitchen with the other servants. She would sleep in the storeroom also with the others. Her character loves her



adopted family but when she notices differences begins questioning her mind and represses those thoughts and continues loving them as her own.

Alda is introduced to two words when still a child and they remain with her forever. First '*Mestizo*', second '*Poskem*'. It is revealed to her that the family she calls her own yet she had always felt different was not actually her family and that she was adopted. In addition to that this family is not also purely Goan and is of mixed descent. They are looked down upon by others in the village as people did not like those who slept with the coloniser.

Alda is touched by the gentleness and love the family's son Mauricio showers her with. She falls in love with him as he makes love to her. It is her id that makes her see the good in everyone. It doesn't allow her to realise the consequences of sleeping with the boy of the house (her step brother) and going with the flow and rush of emotions. She doesn't learn to read inbetween the lines.

His mother is the first to notice the lust/love in his eyes and sends him away to London as she notices Aldas changing body. She hides her pregnancy from the rest of the family. When Aldas water breaks, she takes her in the kitchen and locks the doors. She stuffs her mouth with a handkerchief. She fills a copper basin with water and drowns the infant in it after it is born. Her son's features in the infant doesn't hinder her nor the fact that that is her own grandson. She had told the gardener to dig a hole to plant a coconut tree two weeks earlier in a far corner of the estate in which she now buried the infant covered in a small sheet. Alda watches this in sorrow and her emotions get frozen forever in time making her heart a hard stone. She enters the world of insanity as everyone calls her *pishem*<sup>2</sup> *poskem*. It is revealed here that society's culture and the accumulation of its

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<sup>1</sup> Mestizo - a man of mixed race, especially one having Spanish and indigenous descent.

<sup>2</sup> Pishem - Mad

imposed norms and guidelines to be the exemplary citizen is ingrained so deep within their being that she doesn't even hinder in committing a crime in murdering an innocent child that is her very own grandson. Murder too is wrong according to custom but the thought of her family's honour getting hurt with a pregnancy outside of marriage between children from the same home troubles her more. Alda's tormented mind has witnessed the murder of her just born baby. Her emotions are further repressed and this shock silences her from the world.

She creates an imaginary world of her own and escapes into it. Here she befriends the animals, birds and even the insects that live around her. They each have a name. They, unlike the humans, did not have multiple faces and were true friends to her. Wendell continuously hints at Alda's dream world using phrases such as; 'Alda rose high into the air on the wings of the bulbul she had befriended.', 'Bulbul Benedict, fly me to the valley near the jambool trees. I left my herd of goats there.' Alda is left alone in the house with the patriarch and a spinster sister after the whole family migrates to Lisbon. She is unhappy as she says 'Why did God allow this? The devil mama Annie left the two worst blood behind.' She is rebuked and scolded by Papa Souza Correia for everything and nothing is ever perfect however much ever she does. Her food however is loved. The sister Filomena hates her for this as didn't know how to cook. 'Alda graduated from the storeroom floor', to the room above as many rooms were empty after the family moved out. (Rodricks' 70 71) Trauma and grief rob Alda of her purpose to live yet she lives a meaningless life. Her world of solitude is her creation of escape where she finds solace.

When Alda sees Filomena in love with Saby she decides to steal him from her and avenge the death of her baby whom she had named Nascimento. She lures him to have sex



with her. Here again is brought out the frailty of the human soul that depends on the id and gets lured easily.

Filomena is broken and her heart is 'turned to stone'. (Wendell 76) She decides to kill Alda first and then Saby. 'Each time Filomena devised a plan, it was foiled.' (Wendell 76) Alda curses Saby for boasting to a villager that he had sex with her and it leaves him lifeless for five months. Wendell also here brings out the mythological belief of Goans in the curse. Filomena on the other hand is 'infested solely with demons' in her world of insanity unlike Alda who has a beautiful world. One night she is taken to the river and a boulder is tied to her legs and she is drowned. It is said that Alda told the creatures of the sea 'to eat her rotting flesh and soft bones but to leave one fingernail as a reminder of what happens to evil families' Her step dad comes to her bed one night and tries to molest her. She is horrified with him but doesn't let him know that she is awake and pushes him off the bed when he freezes and can't have sex with her.

When the patriarch of the family passes away Alda is left alone and now has the whole house to herself. Over time Alda finds an African-Goan boy named Tommy who is molested by the master of his cousin Grazietta. Alda comforts him and makes friends with him. She even takes revenge for him and sets a trap to kill the man. Everyone in the village is happy when he dies and says he must have died with the power of all the curses he must have received torturing the people under him. His house also remains haunted and no exorcist can cleanse it. All the family moved out from that place.

Alda's story portrays grief to great extent. The author portrays many instances where she is used as an object. Alda lives the emotion of being foolish on purpose in-order to live peacefully. She is so exhausted, has lost joy in living and has lost faith and trust in everybody. She represses all her grief and pain. She however is aware of these repressed

emotions and purposefully withdraws herself to her imaginary world where she finds true friendship and loyalty. Contrasting the oedipal and electra complex here Aldas step father tries to molest her physically. She also falls easily in love with her step brother. This very closely resembles the Goan tradition where one daughter in a house is married to her cousin from her maternal side family.

Revenge is bad according to society and forgiveness and acceptance is expected. Alda couldnt save her baby from the claws of infanticide. Due to her medical and emotional condition she could do nothing. This haunts her and the repression is so much that she withdraws from everything and finds meaning and talks to birds and animals in a fantasy world. She is called '*pishem* '*poskem*'. '*Pishem*' translates to mad. She could no longer show her emotions. She is frustrated when she comes to know of a young boy violated till blood seeped from him. She avenges the boy by murdering his abuser in a clever act causing him to kill himself and leaves no traces of herself so there is no suspicion of her. She also takes her revenge on the family's daughter by taking away Filomena's boyfriend from her as her mother had taken away her child. These instances show Aldas id acting opposing her ego and superego and satisfying the hurt sentiments within her. The Freudian slip can be seen in her to some extent when she unconsciously notices strange events and spies on to find out what was happening, as in the case of Filomenas and her boyfriend's secret meeting she is said to have appeared from a room with a closed door.

Liana is the next character and the only child of the Trindades, a wealthy family who live on the Altinho hill of Panjim. The childless Trindade couple find her in a basket at their doorstep. They believe that she is a blessing in disguise to their prayers. She was showered with love and affection and was very dear to the family.



As she grows she notices that her features did not resemble that of her parents. The truth is revealed to her soon after. Her parents Henry and Marceline tell her the fates of many poskim too and they tell her not to listen to anyone who may bully her. They tell her that they raised her as their own blood and that she will always be their baby so not to listen to them and not to let the loose talk hurt her. She is grateful for her family and recalls the words of another Posko who had said that she was like him but lucky to have the Trindades as a family. Her character shows no childhood trauma and has a blissful and grateful childhood.

She falls in love with a Portuguese cadet Luis Miguel after he asks her for a dance. They overcome all odds and get married despite the political turmoil in Goa due to the liberation that posed as an obstacle. After she moves to Portugal with her husband and gets married, her father believes he has done his duty and cannot bear the separation from his only daughter under the stressful circumstances. He passes away but Liana is not informed until a few months.

She gives birth to a son. Many years after her marriage her husband still loves her and adores her unchanging glowing beauty even after many years and giving birth. Liana's story is a balance of almost everything. She is in a society accepted person where the id ego and superego work in their respective domains in the appropriate scenarios. She is an example of a happy peaceful mind that does not need any defence mechanisms to cope up. Her mind too is not confused in the unconscious, subconscious and conscious worlds. She doesn't have dreams that haunt her and is a peaceful character.

Nascimento is the only male character Wendell writes about. He was left as a child at the Bishops palace. Rita Maria, who gave piano lessons in the same villages nearby, was summoned and requested to look after the boy. *"We have a young boy of three who was left*

*in our care. He is severely undernourished and his mother pleaded with us to care for him and find him a home. Do you mind taking the child home and raising him? He sings all day and loves to slumber in the kitchen.*" (Wendell 46) were the words of the Archbishop to her to which she kindly accepted. She saw the little child's face and embraced him and took him for a treat. She now would have eight children with the addition of Nascimento.

Her husband Jose Filipe was hesitant and initially not happy as now they had to work harder to feed 10 mouths. As time breezed by Filipe was filled with joy as he noticed Nascimento displayed a remarkable sense of taste. He wished to be a chef like his father and both his parents sent him to bombay to pursue a career in culinary arts. He makes his parents proud, excels at his career and is loved by his superiors and colleagues not only for his creativity but most of all for his loving and kind nature.

He starts his own family with a girl named Rosa of Afro-Goan descent. They are overjoyed with the birth of their daughter Petulla. Their happiness however does not live long as Petulla dies in an accident and Rosa, unable to bear the pain reliving those tragic moments again and again, moves into depression. 'I must be strong for her. For us'. (Wendell 119) He is devastated but doesn't let the pain engulf him. Rosa hallucinates thinking of the ladies who said she may have killed her child and commits suicide seeing her baby and following her. Nascimento still stays strong. He channels his grief to bring positive outcomes from his work. He is selected for training in France and does well.

Nascimento is a very strong character. Unlike the portrayal of the three '*poskim*' he is the only '*posko*' and also the only one who knows his truth. He stands calm during the turmoils in his life and faces them bravely. He does the best he can and converts pain into success. He represses his grief and projects it in accomplishing great heights in his career. His character is a very composed one. Here too the id, ego and superego are in balance and



so are his levels of consciousness. The ego helps him cope with the loss and achieve success despite the raging storm in his life. He is aware of his childhood as he was quite grown when he was adopted for the second time. His acceptance is remarkable as it helps him in his grief. He uses the defence mechanism subconsciously to distract himself from grief and do something positive.

Sita is the last '*poskem*' Wendell speaks of. She is given to the Naik family. It is revealed that she is the eldest daughter of the mother of the four poskim and in fact the elder sister of Alda, Nascimento and Liana.

She is well cared for and never really finds herself different from her adoptive family. Her story gives a flashback about how her Adoptive family was burnt alive by some anti Portuguese people while the family slept with no help from the neighbours. Wendell uses magic realism when he states that the Gau Purush Protected Sita, her adoptive aunty Shanti and brother Shiva. They move to Poona and are given a good education by Aunty Shanti who raises them.

Shanti notices the growing attraction among Shiva and Sita. Sita and Shiva however try hard to repress their unconscious romantic love to the best they can as they are siblings. They try hard to not bring it into their conscious real world but the instinctual energy through the id makes it tougher for them and barely helps them. They were sublime and followed cultural practice with their ego to the best they could.

Noticing the developments Shanti recalls the world of the poskims 'She was waiting to confront her nephew about a malaise that is often kept secret in Goa. Uncles marrying nieces. Young men of the home sleeping with Poskim.' She reveals to Shiva that Sita is adopted. He then reveals the truth to Sita, his '*poskem*' sister whom he had fallen for. They both feel light as the guilt that had started to build was released. Unlike Alda's

step mother who forbids their union and kills the baby, Shanti allows their union and supports them along their journey. Shiva and Sita are able to pursue a guilt free relationship and start a family. They get married and give birth to a pair of identical twins and have a satisfied happy life.

Sita tries to find her past and is the only sibling who is able to find out her origins and past. However she is never able to find out about her parents and siblings. She only learns that she has two sisters and one brother. Aware of the truth however, she still fails to recognize her siblings as they meet co-incidentally at the Mapusa market restaurant for ice-cream.

Shanta is the mother of the four *poskim*. Her story is narrated at the end of the book in part five. After her husband's death she struggled to nourish her children and herself. Her story highlights the pain of her as a single, poor mother with no help whatsoever. The only person who helped her was a man who had fallen for her looks though he never started a relationship with her. His jealous wife however spread rumours against her and she had to leave the village. The person whom she was selling her house for some money also cheated her and left her penniless and houseless. No one helped her or gave her work or accommodation as she had with her four small children. She sends away her children as '*poskim*' with a broken heart when she can't nurture them by herself anymore. She began to work to survive but died soon after with a cobra bite. In the short description of Shanta Wendell tells of the pain a mother went through that gave rise to similar situations where children were put up for adoption. Shanta is seen as using practicality and choosing her children before her. She is a rational character who realised if her children lived with her they would die as she was not able to feed them. She gives



them away with grief and doesn't suicide but begins working. So she may have intended to get them back someday.

Through the elder lady in the village it is revealed that the family of the four '*poskim*' were known for their beauty, intelligence, cooking, loving and caring attitude. These reflect in them and are what connects them making them similar. They also shared the same colour eyes and fingernails. Only Alda is fully aware of her surroundings and recognizes these similarities between them and doesn't say a thing. Alda, though reserved to herself after the traumatic devastating experience, was still very observant and intelligent but lost interest in socialising.

Society in Goa is a major reason for the way people think. These beliefs are given importance and allowed to enter the mind which result additional trauma mostly just as how Liana's parent's feared the harm society's taunts will have on their child, Alda's step mom kills her grandchild and separates Alda from her son in order to not spoil their image in society. She is then called '*pishem poskem*' by the society who don't really bother to know her story. Sita's neighbours allow their family to be burnt ignoring facts and believing in rumours, her dad too was allowed to drown believing that god was calling him. Shanta too was accused of stealing a woman's husband by false rumours that were spread intentionally that made her leave the village. Rosa sinks deeper into depression with the taunts and accusation of the people in her building and gives up her life. These are a few examples of how society plays an important role in the characters' lives and minds and impacts their decision making. They are the reason why they repress emotions, desires, feelings that then make it hard to control after some time. These make way to their dreams and disturb their conscience.

All the four adopted fell in love but only three got married. Alda is tortured however. Shanta is seen as easy prey after the death of husband. As a sexual being, fooling and robbing her of all their wealth. While all love cooking and express themselves through it, it is only Nascimento who is portrayed to take it professionally. Aldas findings in experimenting with cooking is what Nascimento learns while studying much later. That brings out the fact that he could see it as an option to work because he was a male.



## CHAPTER IV

### DARK TRUTHS WITHIN A FAMILY : AN EXPLORATION OF VATSALA

#### MENDONCA'S *SHADOW OF THE PALM TREE*

*"It is only a novel... or, in short, only some work in which the greatest powers of the mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour, are conveyed to the world in the best-chosen language"* — Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*

#### 4.1 The Author

Vatsala Mendonca is a Goan author born and raised in Bombay. She is a journalist, author, editor and scriptwriter. She did her post graduation from the Bombay University in English literature. She started her career as a copywriter and then moved into journalism. The novel *Shadow of the Palm Tree* took her four years to write while simultaneously doing a day job. She says she was doubtful that her book would be published as it's a very crowded creative space.

Mendonca was born into a family with a rich Goan literary background. She is the granddaughter of Naciment Mendonca and daughter of professor Edward Mendonca, both big names in Goan literature. The name Vatsala is said to have positive meanings in Indian culture. It means loving, tender, kind, loving, fond of, devoted to, affectionate towards offspring; and child-loving. She was named Vatsala after her grandfather's last posthumously published epic titled *Vatsala*.

Naciment Mendonca, her Grandfather was a lawyer and poet. Vatsala is the titular character in his last epic. She is a beautiful temple girl who as customary at the time was married to the hibiscus. She was destined to live life alone if not lonely. She falls in love with a handsome rishi who was meditating and she does everything she can to seduce him but being a rishi unfortunately he is unmoved by her charms. She is driven mad by her lust for him and she poisons the milk given to him as an offering. After consuming it he dies. She is repentant and as his body is laid on the funeral pyre she also jumps in and so in death unlike life Vatsala and her lover are united.

Edward Mendonca, her father, was a poet. He held a Phd in Portuguese and was a professor of English literature at St. Xaviers College Mumbai. He brought up his children with love for Goa by narrating them stories of his beloved homeland and bringing them to Goa for vacations. He wrote poems for his wife and for his daughters Shanti and Vatsala.

Vatsala collected these unpublished poems and along with her fathers incomplete auto-biography that was titled '*Inside Myself*' published them all together retaining the same name *Inside Myself* as the title. She has authored another novel titled *When God Died* while *Shadow of the Palm Tree* is her debut novel.

Vatsala in an interview with Frederick Noronha reveals that she loved to hear stories from her neighbourhood. She says she was obsessed with these kinds of dark stories of Goa. She had heard of a family that was said to be haunted by the ghost of a slave, another woman with the evil eye, and even of exorcisms that took place.

Salvador is an Abreu in the novel and is a lawyer and poet. He wrote poems that gained him a secret admirer who decided to marry him regardless of knowing the family's ancient curse and disapproval of her family. He wrote poems for his beloved whom he could never marry as she was their helper. These instances in Vatsala's life of a man



writing good poetry for his loved ones, fascination with dark myth n stories in the neighbourhood, and also the profession of a lawyer seem to have been inspired as traits in the novel from her personal life.

#### 4.2 Background to the Text

Goa was a colony of the Portuguese. The Portuguese had many other colonies apart from Goa. They had colonised over 50 countries around the world that spread across South America, Africa and Asia. the portuguese were involved in the Slave trade. The Novel *Shadow of the Palm Tree* portrays this in the background.

The Goan society in the early Portuguese rule consisted of slaves mostly of African descent. Fragmented information on Africans in Goa have been found in Portuguese sources and in travelogues by the Dutch, English and French visitors. The slaves were the social underdogs<sup>3</sup> who provided cheap labour. A comparatively small number of slaves were state owned and were employed in the galleys and also in the gun-powder manufactory in Goa. Most slaves were owned by the Portuguese who invested huge amounts in slaves they acquired from Japan. The native Goan were also known to own slaves. Slaves were obtained from different parts of Asia and Africa. In the very beginning slaves arrived in large bulk from Macau, Japan, East Africa and Bengal where the native agents captured people from the interior areas and sold them to the Portuguese traders visiting those regions. The slave trade by the Portuguese in Japan and Macau halted when the Jesuit Missionaries who were entrusted with the task of preaching christianity found it difficult to convince the natives of the Christian love at a time when they experienced the barbarities of the slave traders. Who were co-religionists of the

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<sup>3</sup> Underdog - a loser or predicted loser in a struggle or contest; a victim of injustice or persecution

missionaries. Laws were then enacted after the Jesuits brought pressure on the administration banning all illicit forms of slavery practised by the Portuguese in the lands of the far east. 'The slave traffic then concentrated on East Africa. There is no way of checking the number of slaves that arrived from there every year. One single frigate, for instance, that came from Mozambique to Goa in 1683 had brought 207 negroe slaves. They had been purchased by different persons at Goa and some belonged to the crew members of the *Frigate*<sup>4</sup> who enjoyed the privilege of bringing in a fixed number of slaves duty free while others had to pay a freight charge of five 'xerafins'<sup>5</sup> per slave.' (80,89 Medieval Goa a socio economic history)

The slaves also constituted the wealth of the Portuguese. It was calculated from the number of slaves they owned. Enslaved Africans were brought to Goa as labour to work in the forts, factories and for other manual tasks. The Portuguese also recruited a significant number of African soldiers in their calvary and deployed them along the western Indian ocean in territories they controlled. The men also served their masters as guards, domestic helpers, and dockyard workers, They were also required to do all kinds of tough, menial jobs or to help in the construction works. Their most common occupation was to carry water from the Bangany spring and to bear palanquins and parasols<sup>6</sup>. The male slaves were also employed by their masters to punish their enemies and rivals. The female slaves served in the households as domestic slaves and also in other Portuguese establishments managed by the Portuguese missionaries and nuns. They also attended to their female owners and nursed their children if necessary. The more attractive ones were engaged in selling stitch-work and pickles along the city streets. Many of them also sold liquor around

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<sup>4</sup> Frigate -In the 17th-19th centuries, a frigate was a three-masted, fully rigged sailing ship

<sup>5</sup> Xerafins - a silver coin current in Portuguese India before the 19th century

<sup>6</sup> Parasols - a lightweight umbrella used as a sunshade



the town and made money through prostitution. The female slaves were also used by their owners as intermediaries to convey messages to their secret lovers and to gratify their sexual desires in many other ways by evading the watchful eyes of their over jealous husbands, who sought to guard their wives as vestal virgins and kept them confined within their house walls. The Portuguese gentlemen were no less guilty in this regard. In a Jesuit report it was noted that there were innumerable portuguese who brought droves of slaves and slept with all of them.

The slaves were often subjected to the most cruel treatment if they displeased their masters, and there were instances of slaves being beaten to death and buried in the backyards. Most slaves received little or no care at all if they fell sick. The slaves could not easily run away from their cruel masters, as there was an official slave retriever in the pay of the municipality and it was not easy to escape the vigilance of those who guarded the passages to the mainland. The preaching and the influence of the catholic church was the only solace and source of mitigation to their sufferings.

The law did not allow the native Goans to be enslaved by the Portuguese. But there is a documentary reference to low caste Natives called Kunbis<sup>7</sup> being deported in masses to Ceylon now Sri lanka to cultivate lands there. There however is no definite evidence to conclude that Goan natives were included in the number of Indian slaves that were sent to Portugal in the yearly trips of the Indiamen.

Historically, traditional African healers held pivotal roles within their communities, serving as custodians of medicinal wisdom, spiritual guides, and cultural pillars. Herbalists, armed with extensive knowledge of local flora, used plants to heal ailments. Diviners, as spiritual healers, interpreted signs and invoked ancestral spirits for guidance.

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<sup>7</sup> Kunbis - a Goan local tribe people

Witch doctors, believed to possess supernatural powers, countered malevolent forces. Bone setters addressed physical injuries, blending skills with spiritual remedies. Midwives ensured safe childbirth with traditional knowledge. Circumcision ritual practitioners marked passages to adulthood. Rainmakers influenced weather for agricultural prosperity. These healers, deeply intertwined with cultural beliefs, embodied a holistic approach, addressing physical, spiritual, and communal well-being. Their roles reflected a symbiotic relationship between the mundane and the mystical, shaping the historical narrative of African societies.

Traditional healers, while revered for their healing prowess, faced the dual-edged perception of wielding both restorative and potentially malevolent powers. In history, curses associated with these healers were often rooted in the fear of their spiritual abilities. Some communities believed that a healer, if wronged or displeased, could employ their mystical knowledge to inflict harm through curses. The mystical aura surrounding these figures, coupled with cultural beliefs, contributed to a complex tapestry where healers were not only healers of ailments but bearers of a spiritual power that, when misaligned, could manifest as curses with perceived consequences in the lives of those affected.

*The Shadow of the Palm Tree* (October 2018) is a family saga set in the Goa of the mid 1920s. It revolves around the Abreus a Goan family and its deep links to the family of a Mozambique slave Imaculada. The curse of this slave is very strong and destroys the lives of the successive generations of the family.

The novel is structured into three parts. Each chapter in these parts is a narration of the viewpoint and experiences of a side of the story of a character. The author has given each character a voice to speak their mind and reveal what happened as they saw it.



Each book has a title and an epigraph. Book I is titled 'The night she died...' *"For what is it to die but to stand naked in the wind and to melt into the sun? And when the earth shall claim your limbs, then shall you truly dance."* is the quote that is followed by Kahlil Gibran as an epigraph. Book II is titled 'Leaving home...' *"A man's home is his stage. Others walk on to play their bit parts. Now and again a soliloquy, a birth, an adultery."* is the quote that follows by Karl Shapiro as an epigraph. Book III is titled, 'The return...' *"If you cannot get rid of the family skeleton, you may as well make it dance."* by George Bernard Shaw is the quote that follows as an epigraph. The book is a dedication to her husband and three children. The cover page designed by Sanjeev Nair paints the picture of the title in a vivid and explicit description.

#### 4.3 Summary and Analysis

The novel is set in Goa in the mid 1920's. It revolves around the Abreu family and speaks of the shadow of sadness cast over them. The cause of this is said to be traced back to the 1700s. Reflecting the Goan past in the 1700's the Abreu family converted to Christianity and joined the most lucrative European Christian enterprise at that time, the slave trade. It was a career choice that brought with it status, prestige, wealth, jealousy, and also unfortunately a curse that echoed down through the generations of the Abreu family. The moment Immaculada, a traditional healer from Mozambique entered the Abreu home, her destiny met with theirs. She vows that no Abreu would ever know happiness and over the years no Abreu ever did.

Imaculadas story is narrated through the memories of her descendant Claudinha who also lives in the Abreu home. She is a strong character and does not appear much in the plot. 'She was born Nifagrese<sup>\*</sup> in the Kampiripiri village of Mozambique.' (Vatsala 33)

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<sup>\*</sup> Nifagrese - Imaculada's name given by parents

She was the daughter of a respected healer in the village. Nifa grew up in a happy home with her parents learning all that her father taught her. Their family was attacked by a group of evil men which she describes were of all colours, 'white, black and brown' (Vatsala 34). A short, fat, brown man who was in charge shot dead her father, raped her beautiful mother and killed her too.

They led her away and took her for a slave without even allowing her to bury her parents. 'She also kept herself alive because she had a baby growing inside of her.' (Vatsala 36) She vowed no one had touched her making a man believe in the Immaculate conception and got the Goan name Imaculada. She was stripped of her clothes at the public auction but was not scared and did not try to cover herself like the others. No one bid for her even though they could get two slaves for the price of one. She was finally bid for by the short, fat, brown man who is revealed to be Tomas Abreu. 'As he paraded her down the street he was proud. Villagers looked on him with envy. They now knew he was a rich man.' (Vatsala 36) She is also said to be a strong woman who gave birth to her child all alone with the help of no one. She screamed with no sound and softly cursed the Abreus that the curse ran down generations. She cursed them that 'Just as she had never known happiness here, no woman of this family ever would.' (Vatsala 38) A dark, malevolent shadow is then said to have come over the Abreus that as Imaculada's child came to the world the child of Tomas in the womb of his wife Ela died.

Imaculada was respected for her strength and kindness in the village and was always ready to help everybody without taking any money. She would accept other gifts in the form of food or house supplies which she would then offer to the needy and poor. Imaculada is said to have died only after teaching her daughter all she knew and to bring



her granddaughter to the world. This sort of a tradition went on and their daughters only gave birth to daughters.

The future generation characters in the novel consist of the sister Rosa, her brother Salvador and his wife Teresa (Mae<sup>9</sup>), and their children Miguel, Luis, Joseph and Anne. Imaculada's descendants are Aurora and Aurora's daughter Claudinha. Esperanca is the illegitimate daughter of Joseph whom Claudinha adopts. The story is narrated through the memories of Anne, Claudinha, Joseph, Luis, Miguel and finally Esperanca all through different years.

In many rich Goan families one daughter would not be married and kept to take care of the house and property. This role is played partly by Rosa in the Abreu's present story. She however was married and then with a bruised relationship left the house of her husband within a year of their marriage. Salvador was a lawyer and a poet. His longing for the unattainable tortured him. No one wanted to marry him fearing the curse until... Teresa (Mae) fell in love with his poetry and decided to marry him fully aware of the curse and against the wishes of her family. Over the years she suffered feeling no purpose to her existence. Her husband did not care for her and was faithful in love to Aurora. She also had no role in the household, the property and household was controlled by Rosa. She only found solace in the coconut grove in the *Shadow of the Palm Tree* where she could be at peace.

In every goan 'bhatkars'<sup>10</sup> house, as per the custom the family should have one doctor, one lawyer and one priest in the house. Salvador and Teresa's eldest son Miguel was selected to be the priest. He was selected as his father felt he was the least intelligent

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<sup>9</sup> Mae - Mother

<sup>10</sup> Bhatkar - Landlord

of his sons and not because he possessed some celestial calling or ecclesiastical leaning. Luis the second son was gifted with much of his father's brilliance and went on to become a lawyer like his father. Joseph the youngest son became a doctor and migrated to Mozambique after im-pregnating a girl. All their sons were conceived in a cottage across the river. They were envied by the villagers for having three boys continuously as it was looked on as a great thing and good fortune. Their youngest and last child was conceived at their home. Unfortunately it was a girl. She would be looked down upon as a '*titem*'<sup>11</sup> and be blamed for the family's ill fortune. She would have no suitors willing to marry her for the bad luck they perceived she would carry. She was named Anne on their family's patron saint St. Anne, the maternal grandmother of Jesus. Teresa loved her dearly as she was born of real love. She believed her to be a beautiful gift she would treasure. In Goa the girl born after three boys was called '*titem*' that maybe meant spot. She was believed to bring bad luck or fulfil a dark destiny from the cradle to the coffin. It was the greatest curse a girl could be born with in Goa. believed to bring great misery to the man foolhardy enough to marry her. As an index of the lack of courageous Goans, she was inevitably left a spinster. Tia Rosa made sure Anne felt her to be the cause of her mother's death. Not just because she committed suicide but also because she died on the day of the feast of St. Anne also the day of Anne's birthday. She was told that her mother did not deliver her for two days bearing the pain so that she could be born on the feast day of St Anne. After her mother's death her birthday and the feast of St Anne was never celebrated again.

Anne is a very poignant character by Vatsala Mendonca. She is the one who questions her birth, existence and identity. After her mothers death she can feel her presence only at the coconut grove. Her character speaks from her mind quite often. She is made to believe that she is the reason for all the unfortunate things that happen as she is

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<sup>11</sup> Titem - A girl born after three consecutive boys and considered a curse



a tithem. This plays on her mind and she cries to herself for being the cause for her mother's death. She is also however aware of the family curse and like the others is scared. She dreams of her mother being troubled by Imaculada and can't rest peacefully. She awakens with a start quite often after these nightmares that are her fears visualised haunt her and somehow find a way into her consciousness. It is through these dreams that her troubled mind is portrayed.

Claudinha secretly loved Joseph in the way her mother had loved Salvador. She knew that they could never be one and never reciprocated her feelings to him. He however falls in love with a girl and consummates with her before getting married. They are never allowed to get married because of the difference in social status. He is sent abroad by Tia Rosa and Claudinha offers to bring the child to this world as her own, accepting it secretly for the love of Joseph's presence in it.

Similar to other cultures in Goa too intercourse without marriage was forbidden under religion and custom. It was also restricted for one to get married within a caste of the same status. After Joseph goes abroad, the girl is the one who has to think of the child and bear the society's cruel behaviour and remarks. She withdraws to herself and becomes a nun and never returns to her poor family or the family of the good caste husband.

Vatsala Mendonca in her novel gives voice to the memories of selected characters from whom the story is narrated. All characters are unique. All do not have the same experiences though they stem from the same root and family. Experiences are subjective in nature. Most of them repress their desires, dreams and longings so much in their unconscious that it plays subconsciously in their reality. They dream of these dreams and fears. Imaculada's curse has ingrained a deep sense of fear in these characters. Fear and belief runs very deeply in the veins of the Abreus that they can hear the word '*Destino*'

which they believe is said by Imaculada herself. They even believe that she never left their home in spirit even after she had been dead for over a hundred and seventy years. Tia Rosa regrets about a ritual they should have done when Immaculada died so her spirit wouldn't haunt them. Belief in the spiritual world is typical to many cultures here in Goa. Luis says 'our family was deeply superstitious about spirits. Though it was said that there were always dark restless spirits lurking around the home, some benign, others malignant, it was Imaculada who reigned supreme over our spirit world. And so it was only Imaculada we feared.'... always there, never seen, heard only when yet another tragedy befell...(Mendonca 105 106) They believed that Imaculada took permanent residence in their home as a spirit to fulfil her curse. These thoughts are carved into their subconscious and they are not able to rest or live in peace. Because of these thoughts that plague them they feel the presence of Imaculada around whenever there is a harsh wind or unpleasant atmosphere.

Salvador, Teresa, Aurora and Rosa, are characters who all repress what they actually feel towards each other so much that they can feel the weight of the others emotion on their present. They deny their desires to themselves projecting a different reality that then leads out rumours that come to be so true because of its hideous nature. Salvador consciously pens down his emotions on paper and Teresa with Aurora's permission collects the thrown away poetry on the floor of her husband's study to satisfy her wifely desire and void. Aurora was the only one permitted to enter his study and take care of his meals and other duties at home instead of Teresa, his wife. Aurora was the person who was subconsciously always present as the third person in their marriage. Salvador couldn't love Teresa as he had not accepted her wholeheartedly due to his love for Aurora. He is a character guided by the Ego and instructed by the superego. Salvador and Auroras love is described as Platonic love that was deeply spiritual. However when



Salvador came home drunk, 'she bathed him as a child... her face would change...for those few moments she was free to touch him as much as she wanted. He, too, was content only at that time of the day. His drunken condition allowed him to be completely dependent on her to shut out the rest of the world. Aurora would lean his face against her chest as she rubbed his back. Her thin dress would get so wet that it was no longer a cover. That's what she wanted. To feel his skin against hers. He would lift her wet shift and burrow into her welcoming chest. Soft sounds of pleasure would escape his lips. Often a shout of passion as her hand disappeared into the water'. (Vatsala 47,48) this is narrated from Claudina's memory as she spies on her mother. It is only in the inebriated state that they come together as his ego and superego fail to suppress the pleasure that lies within his id.

The novel shows the elements of psychoanalysis in clear words that express the emotions of the characters. These are everyday instances that reflect the state of mind of the characters. Salvador is said to have felt the presence of Aurora in their marriage that he could not consummate his wedding with Teresa in their house and had to go to his cottage where he wrote, across the river from their house. Teresa is happy when for the first time her husband makes love to her willingly at their home ignoring the presence of Aurora in the other room. She doesn't allow Aurora's sick cry to stop their bliss while doing the act and thrusts herself into her husband deeper to lure him and he gets lost in pleasure. Teresa is delighted in the birth of her child born of love even though she is a *titlem*. Teresa could feel the hatred of Aurora and Rosa the day after their night of intimacy by their behaviours, nothing is said nor spoken. Teresa feels their jealousy through their actions that vent out their emotions as in displacement. Aurora and Rosa are characters who don't receive love fully in a marital relationship. They are said to envy Teresa for what she had and they didn't. Teresa was aware of Rosa's jealousy and miserable bitterness especially

after her past. Rosa had always wanted to start a family and have a home of her own, a husband and children. This dream remained a dream due to Imaculada's presence. She had always only waited to have a union with her husband just as he had accepted her fat dowry. Goans are portrayed by the author just as in those days and till today. Dowry is an essential part in the marriage traditions. The bride's family feel obligated to give dowry said to be gifts to the boy's family. Whether Rosa felt Imaculada's presence made the dowry seem more enticing than her is not clearly mentioned.

Culture and tradition during marriage is also narrated in the lives of Joseph and Maria. Joseph had begun to love Maria. It was only with her that after the death of his mother that he could speak without stammering. His fear was calmed by her presence. They mate in the church sacristy during the final days of lent and also outside of the sacrament of marriage. The novel uses the rain to show the anger of God indirectly on their deed. Their union was however forbidden by Rosa and his elder brothers not just because they were from two different castes but also because of the difference of status of the families. His love for Maria did not encourage him to fight for them, rather he left for Mozambique and Maria became a Nun. Joseph is thus a character who doesn't choose to face reality. Years later he starts a family there. Many Goans believe and follow in the caste system when it comes to marriages whether Hindu or Christians. The text mentions how deeply rooted culture was in the psyche of the characters, that even with the acceptance of a new religion, Goans still believed and followed the old caste system.

Claudinha the daughter of Aurora and a descendant of Imaculada is the one nanny kind of figure in the text. She takes care of all the Abreus and is a background saviour to all. She is a strong character and is said to be the reason for trying to calm Imaculada down. Claudinha secretly loves Joseph and is hurt when she comes to know he is in love



with Maria and has conceived with her. She volunteers to raise, accept his child from Maria while taking care of her during her pregnancy in a convent. Everyone is fine with this arrangement. Claudinha however steps up for Maria for her love for Joseph. She believes if not with her then at least a part of him in someone else instead of an abortion and condemned life in society. It was known in Goa that these children like Claudinha known as *poskim* would mostly not be married and sometimes be the bastard child (illegitimate child born outside of marriage) of the bhatkar or even bear the bastard child of the bhatkars family. Along with her already broken heart she is ready to take on another duty that society will taunt her for.

Claudinha is the one that comforts Anne when her fears approach her in her dreams. She calms her down and relaxes her, unlike tia Rosa who keeps reminding Anne that she is a *titlem* and it is her destiny that she was born with that has caused these bad events along with Imaculada. Anne says; "I was the child who had come into this world to fulfil a dark destiny from the cradle to the coffin"... Being a *titlem* was the greatest curse a girl could be born with in Goa. She was fated, it was believed, to bring misery to the man foolhardy enough to marry her. As an index of the lack of courageous Goans, she was inevitably left a spinster.' This is seen in Anne's life when Carlos's family forbids him to even consider marrying Anne as she was not only a *titlem* but an Abreu *titlem*. He had in-fact, not even had the courage to stand up for her even once. He told his fiancée that his relationship with Anne was one just for sexual gratification. 'Strangely if a son was born after three girls, he, a *titlo*,<sup>12</sup> was considered a welcome addition to every family. This harbinger of good fortune would receive enticing marriage proposals from the time he entered his teenage years. (Vatsala 22,23) this brings out how society and sometimes it's the family members themselves who help in strengthening these fears in the minds of the

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<sup>12</sup> Titlo - a boy born after three consecutive girls.

characters and people in real life. These fears that Anne may not show publicly are actually eating her from within and result in her getting dreams like hallucinations similar to Joseph. Anne says that in her dreams she saw her *mae* Teresa running in fear of the savage spirits that surrounded her. To this Claudina would tell her that Imaculada could never harm her anymore. She says "I fell asleep in my bed of phantoms. Just as sleep claimed me, *mae's* last moments would slither into my subconscious. I would be held captive again." Joseph on the other hand daydreams and replays the incidents of how he found *Mae* and what if he had reached there earlier or what if Claudina had summoned them earlier and things like that. He says that *Mae's* death was a suppurating abscess on the family psyche. (Vatsala 61) if the dreams result in Anne not being able to study or concentrate on anything, Joseph begins to stammer and cannot speak comfortably nor express his thoughts clearly for years as their minds are in a turmoil.

Vatsala through the use of the character of Aurora tells Luis the history of the Abreu family. The history of ages before that was told down to generations and remembered by Imaculada's descendants. She sees in Luis his father Salvador and tells him that he truly was his father's son which he takes as an insult. This decision is purely his superego that distinguishes the bad and good. It is revealed through the character of Luis is revealed that the Abreus were once Hindus. The author goes on to portray Goa's history where many converted to Christianity either for benefits, fear or love. The narration of Luis begins with him saying that he felt strangely liberated the night *mae* died and he was expecting it since the time he had known of his family's dark history. He says he felt lighter from anxiety that it had happened as Imaculada had foretold. Guilt plays a role in the Abreus' lives and disturbs their sleep and peace as these repressed thoughts haunt them. They can't get over it and it torments them.



Luis, unlike Joseph and Anne, is shown to be very different and indifferent towards those around him. When he could no longer keep the truth to himself, he tells Joseph only to realise that he had known as *mae* had told him. When Miguel goes abroad with the prospect of a better future, he is offered by his hosts to choose one of his daughters for a small sum of money. A little convincing and he accepted the offer gladly. He to some extent resembles Tomas Abreu. He even says that his hidden libido reappeared. The Abreu men are displayed as having a strong instinctual energy that they succumb to when the ego and superego are at rest. Their guilt too doesn't get in the way. Some time later he goes on to live an immoral life according to society; drinking, sleeping with girls at the bar and following the circle of immorality. He even falls in love-lust with a bar girl. When her father tells him to marry his daughter, he refuses her and says that she was just a bar dancer and he was an Abreu. Like his ancestor Tomas he too had not cared much for morals and got lured easily acting on instinct with the id in him. He falls in trouble for this. He proposes to the daughter of a judge and they get married. She was pursuing a doctorate in philosophy and he began making a career in politics, writing for magazines and speaking up for Goa. He is called a communist by the authorities and is arrested. He writes a lot in prison and much of it gets published. His past is revealed to his wife and his wife stops meeting him in prison. He catches pneumonia in prison and no doctor is provided for his care and he eventually dies. He mostly lived on his id till he fell into great trouble when trying to balance the real world. Later he learns to live with his ego and some amount of superego and achieves as per the societal standards. However the id is still stronger in him as he does what he feels appropriate in speaking against the atrocities towards the Goans in Goa by the Portuguese.

Miguel, the eldest brother sent to become a priest, drinks alcohol and slowly gets addicted to drinking huge amounts. His mind too is in a conflict. He is tired of the ego and

superego and follows his id and vents out. He believes that if he hadn't been sold to the Jesuits, he would have been living the life of a bhatkar in Goa as he was the eldest son. He narrates how his father sold him for a small amount and then gave huge amounts of gifts to the seminary and the gifts kept coming over the years. He says he was never interested in becoming a priest but did so to keep his promise to his mother. He too, like Luis, relies on his instinct the id when he is drunk. When a girl steps into his bed, he gets lured and talks of his libido and that they were intimate. His ego or superego can't intervene as they are tiny aspects compared to the id. He is so drunk that he doesn't realise that she had staged everything so she could rob him that he realises only much later. She had taken a lot of money from him, he was thrown out from the seminary and later it is that he comes to know that she had started a business with that money and would serve sexual service to the sailors who docked the port. When he returns to the Abreu home, he continues drinking in bouts and is carried away when Esperanca, Maria and Joseph's daughter who eyed him one night sleeps in his bed and seduces him saying she was waiting for him ever since as a woman. It is then that he can't stop and mates with her on pure instinctual libido. Claudinha stops him and questions his morals and if he realised that he was having sex with his niece. This shows the electra complex to some extent except that here it is her uncle and she wasn't aware of the fact. It is only after Claudinha shouts at Miguel that she comes to know the truth and is told of her real family and even then she does feel guilty and feels it was right. *"Even when I learned of our actual relationship, it seemed right. Even though Claudinha insisted it was wrong."* (Mendonca, 255) it is revealed that she doesn't really want to know or care for her real parents or grandparents and treats Claudinha as a 'poskem', belittling the same woman who took charge of making her her own and bringing her up. In her character it is shown the exhaust of trauma. She holds the



repressed emotions of the older generations and seeks satisfaction for herself being selfish in-order to be happy.

Anne on the other hand, unlike Esperanca, feels disgusted remembering her coupling with her father. The Electra complex with her is shown as the literal proposal but just that she says she did it to take revenge from her father and put him to guilt avenging her mothers emotions, pain and death. She cannot close her eyes and seek pleasure while Carlos, the man who was smitten by her, made love to her. She feared she would see the face of her father if she closed her eyes. Teresa, Annes *mae* had left a letter for her that Claudinha had given to her when she had become older. She had felt *Mae's* pain after reading it and had decided to take revenge from her father. When her father did not recognize her and thought she was Teresa his wife and made love to her and then in his drunken intoxication he screamed out Aurora's name. Anne wondered if he did the same thing while with her mother. She then reveals it was her and when he recognises her he says sorry to Teresa and asks for forgiveness and feels disgusted with himself . There is so much spoken of when characters are not controlled by their ego and superego. Their desires, dreams, unfulfilled wishes are all revealed from their unconscious through their id.

Anne lost in her guilt says "Shut up", to an unknown presence "Shut up. Leave me alone. Leave my family alone, what have we done to you? Why do you hate us so?" to which she says she got a fitting reply. "Destino" (Vatsala 144) Anne unlike her mother as Luis had said and she came to understand later does not let Imaculada allow herself to give up and suicide. "More importantly I could not give Imaculada the pleasure of claiming another one of us." (Vatsala 232)

## CHAPTER V

### THE CONCLUSION

*"A classic is a book that has never finished saying what it has to say."*

— Italo Calvino, *The Uses of Literature*

#### 5.1 Conclusion

The three novels stand out on their own and explore different aspects of Goa. They are yet very similar in themes and settings. In their background the Goan freedom struggle is depicted. It also portrays the before and after liberation and its negative impacts that made their lives more difficult. They bring out unique stories inspired from Goan reality that weren't explored at the time they wrote. They explored themes of love, jealousy, sexuality, patriarchy, motherhood, family life, in-laws interference and so on.

Mauzo's *Karmelin*, Wendell's *Poskem: Goans in the Shadows* and Vatsala's *Shadow of the Palm Tree* all tell the plight of the girl in a goan culturally tightly knit society. Their life before marriage and after are both difficult. Karmelin, Alda, Aurora and Maria are not allowed to marry the ones they love. Liana and Teresa however get this chance. Supporting characters like Isabel portray the consequences of doing the right thing. These ladies cannot or are rather not allowed to speak their grief and as a result learn to repress these emotions from early childhood. This as a result affects their mental health and strains their lives in the present. All their desires and unfulfilled wishes in the form of the id force themselves onto their present world that the superego has created.



This was not restricted only to the girls however. Joseph and Agnel too aren't allowed to marry the one they chose. This shows how the elders make the decisions for the younger and impose it on their lives despite their unhappiness. Their silent obedience to these wishes and repression are a testament to the distress that is passed down through generations.

Mauzo's *Karmelin* created a big buzz in the locality as many condemned and accused Mauzo of defaming the Goan Catholics in the novel. They demanded a ban on his book. Mauzo was however supported by those who understood its worth and the power of the truth and challenged the accusers who eventually gave up. The novel runs deep into the shadowy truths of sexual exploitation hidden by lies for a better life. Exploitation is also seen through the circumstance and the interference of not only society but also the family and in-laws. The latter however was considered a taboo to speak on but the other wasn't and instead ignored as a personal matter. It gives a voice to those hurt sentiments and endless struggles by the poor people who grappled for a decent lifestyle among dire circumstances. It also gives hope of goodness that some people reach out to those in need despite their own problems creating a balance in the narration.

Wendell's *Poskem* similarly quickly spread word in the media as it spoke of adopted children kept under the wraps. The book delves deep, throwing light on the concealed truth. It offers a balance between happy as well as tragic narratives within the journey of the four characters who brought change. Wendell may have wanted to highlight that life does have its obstacles. The ill-effects of society and stories that are shunned away are perfectly represented in *Poskem*. It also enlightened traditional beliefs and superstitious notions prevalent in Goan villages as well. Jerome Marrel, the partner of Wendell Rodricks' was glad and impressed to know that *Poskem: Goans in the Shadows*

was being used for an academic study. He however unfortunately couldn't add on to the sent questionnaire as he said he wasn't in Goa at the time Wendell wrote. He mentioned that they did not really discuss much about it among themselves.

The novel *Shadow of the Palm Tree* was received well and intrigued the people of Goa's lesser known past. The book echoes generations of Goans and mixed histories of the Portuguese colonial rule on the Goans and the Africans. The narrative is told through the memories of the characters giving a medium of expression to their emotions, fears and grief. The different characters through the different passing generations and the changes with time are also reflected.

Tradition suppressing modernity can be seen throughout the three novels. They all have characters who fight against oppression, exploitation, patriarchy, circumstance and injustice. Karmelin from Mauzo's *Karmelin*, Alda from Rodricks' *Poskem* and Theresa from Vatsala's *Shadow of the Palm Tree* all have spiteful in-laws. They also have all mentioned the coconut tree or the palm tree as a symbol of peace. Karmelin, Alda, Liana, Nascimento, Sita, Claudinha, Esperanca are all adopted and have their own battles to fight. These stories help relate to what one sees and hears around themselves as they are so steeped in reality of the days gone by and the day today.

Heres what the authors of *Karmelin* and *Shadow of the Palm Tree*, Mr. Damodar Mauzo and Mrs. Vatsala Mendonca have to say;

## 5.2 A Conversation with Mauzo

"Whenever I get some genesis, the first thing that comes to his mind is if I can capture it in my literature, in my writings and accordingly all my stories are born of that



desire to write something that has not been said earlier. To write something hidden by the society." Damodar Mauzo promptly replied when I asked him his inspiration behind his novel. He went on to narrate the background to his novel, and also how he came up with the characters and plot in his novel *Karmelin*. He is a man who has done extensive research and met dozens of people to get the background for his story. He said he wanted it to be something that is a mirror to society.

He recounted that until the 1960's a number of Goans were working in the east of Africa when Goa was still a Portuguese Colony. Around the time of Goa's liberation other African countries also gained independence. It was then that the local African people were hostile to the Goans as they viewed them too as the outsiders, hands in glove with the colonisers whom they despised. The Goans felt troubled and sensed discomfort as they could lose their livelihoods as many locals didn't want them to work for them so most Goans left. Many returned to Goa and their ancestral homes while those who were uncertain relocated to the UK, Canada, Australia, and other different countries. The money that came from the east of Africa, was stopped suddenly and the families in Goa depended on that income. There was a decline in the economic field. That was also precisely the time the Gulf countries became rich and there was a growing demand for domestic workers. It was around this same time he says around the late 60's and early 70's Goan women, especially from the lower class came to the Gulf mainly Kuwait at the time in search of jobs and they often worked as domestic helps. Mauzo notes that women wouldn't go abroad alone earlier but due to the crumbling circumstances as the ones mentioned in the novel they chose to. They were told that the income was really good over there especially after conversion to the Indian rupee.

Over time he says he found the use of the term 'Kuwaitkann' derogatory in its use and was intrigued to know why they were snubbed by the people. He wrote that he ran a store in the day and that all his customers respected him and even confided in him for most things be it the bhatkar, mundkar or common people as it was a very social time back then he says and he sympathised with them. The people in Majorda where he stays were mostly catholic and that's what features in his stories. "You'll find this sympathetic tone in my story" he said

The story of Karmelin is a tale of what Mauzo saw around him and heard. He went on and narrated that there was a girl of about fifteen years old who must have been in the eighth or ninth standard. She would come with a brand new PSA cycle that spoke highly of her status. She always came surrounded with friends and was good natured. He recounts that she would buy a cadbury bar or sometimes a coke bottle and share it. He says "it triggered in my mind, how can a school going child have so much of pocket money?" he also heard people saying that she didn't have to worry about spending as her mother is a 'kuwaitkann' and it triggered him further. Once when she came after a gap of nearly three weeks of not coming, he casually asked her and was told that her mother had come back and she was busy. She had left the day before and had refused to take her along and had even said that she would never go to Kuwait when she had offered to work instead of her after her SCC. so that is how he said he began probing into it and started questioning people and hearing their stories. He says sometimes he preferred visiting them instead of calling them so he could understand the environment around and as he said read inbetween the lines of what is tried to be hidden. Most of them were men who spoke of the women working there. The women he spoke to were middle aged. He could feel their hindrance as they shared all the fancy good stuff about the good lifestyle and good employers but no one spoke of the negative stuff directly about themselves or others.



He met a lady who had come down from Kuwait and was close to their family. She was the one who narrated to him a lot in detail but again nothing negative of herself but about the others including the sexual atrocities faced by women. She came from a troubled family too, where her husband was a taxi driver. He was addicted to alcohol consumption and mistreated her and others that left her with an unhappy life. She is also the one he says who narrated to her that once she was locked because she used the phone and then the phone was also locked separately. There are many incidents like these that are real, he says. She had said that her boss was good and that his wife would go every Friday to her maternal home and their son worked in the U.K., they had a car and didn't like her conversing with the driver. So she also had spoken of the Friday holidays and the Sundays when they went to mass and met other Goans. It was like a reunion and some would get letters written and sent home. Some of them would send parcels with the one who was going back to Goa. he recollected that he spent more than four hours that day and it was dark yet he took down notes and felt he was through with his research.

Mauzo then disclosed that initially he had two stories in mind, one of a boss taking sexual advantage of an ayah and the other of a mother working in Kuwait. He is a short fiction writer and until then he had only one novella. So when he realised the similarities coming about he decided to combine them and then was born *Karmelin*, his debut novel that won him the Sahitya Akademi Award.

When asked if he intended to add a psychological perspective he replied, "I think every writer has it. I don't have to make an attempt to add it." he added on to getting influenced that "no writers can be influenced by other writers but you get ideas. They make you think, you may think. But your language is yours, your thoughts are yours, your convictions are yours, your commitments are yours." he says that he doesn't presume or

judge a person who does bad rather sympathises with them and brings about the circumstances that may have made them bad. He believes that is how a writer should be.

Mauzo says that he never thought about what people and society would say after the publication of the book as when he was writing, he wrote it for his conscience and not for that of the others. He is a man who lives to what he says and is guided by his conscience. He even shared that he refused to accept the Jnanpith Award at the hands of the Prime Minister as he disliked the man. He said, "If I am wrong, let others say you are wrong. As long as I am true to myself I don't bother about others."

He also shared an incident that hurt him as a friend of his rebuked him saying that *Karmelin* was written to spoil the name of the Catholics as he believed it degraded the catholic women. It hurt more he said as there were many who supported the ideology but had not read the novel only spreading hate based on rumours. He then said that he was supported by a Catholic priest who stood up for him and started publishing it and brought about clearly the intended message.

*Poskem* he says is a good account of the lives of the 'Poskim' in Goa. Mauzo proudly says that he released the book. He added that he also wanted to write on the same matter but did not as he had nothing new to add nor anything different. *Karmelin* in fact has a passing reference he noted as she too is adopted. He also said that he hadn't read *Shadow of the Palm Tree*.

*Karmelin* he mentions was written in 1978 and first published in 1980. He joyfully shared that the novel has been selected by the Indian Novel Collective among the first ten choices to be re-published as an Indian classic tale. His simplicity, humbleness, confidence and above all belief in the truth no matter the circumstance speak volumes about the exemplary man that he is. These qualities of him reflect in his novel in different aspects.



### 5.3 Through Vatsala's Pen

"Goa was my inspiration but not the Goa that glistens on the tourist map of India. The Goa that catalysed my story is one that has a rich tapestry of customs, traditions, even superstitions as well as a dark history" Vatsala Mendonca writes answering my questionnaire. She says that though Goa could be argued to be the longest held European colony in the east, there is so much people don't know yet from the presence of African slaves to the atrocities of the inquisition to the caste system that is still rooted in society.

She revealed that she never intended to add a psychological perspective and just wanted to tell a story about a Goan family that was involved with the Portuguese slave trade.

She writes "Every member of the Abreu family is affected by what each one believes is the family curse. This leads the reader to question the existence of the curse itself or if a belief when strong can become reality." She goes on to recollect an old saying that stayed on with her as she wrote the novel "If we are to live in harmony with the universe, we must all possess a powerful faith in what the ancients used to call 'fatum' or fate and what we currently refer to as destiny.

When asked about an author who may have used psychoanalytic criticism and may have influenced her work she mentioned the American classic, *The Scarlet Letter: A Romance* by Nathaniel Hawthorne. She says "Though set in the 17th century it spotlights how morality has been (and will always be) defined by men. The protagonist Hester Prynne is a poor orphan girl who conceives a child out of wedlock. The psychological impact being branded an adulteress has on Hester echoes through the novel. Her lover, a sanctimonious minister, eventually succumbs to his guilt. Though Hester is offered a

chance of a better life in Europe with her daughter, she chooses to return to New England where she resumes wearing the scarlet letter.”

Vatsala’s involvement with the subject or theme of the text dates back to her childhood quest for history. She recollects the summer holidays in Goa while the family had a fun time, she collected stories such as; “A once palatial home that was said to be haunted by the ghost of a murdered slave. A woman with the evil eye. An annual exorcism.” “I have used all these stories in my novel.” she wrote.

She says she was most fascinated with the presence of an African woman in her family home. She received answers years later she says while researching the ‘*Siddhis*’<sup>13</sup> of Karnataka. They were believed to be the descendants of maroon<sup>14</sup> slaves from Goa. It was then she says that she first learned that the Portuguese had brought slaves to Goa from their colonies of Mozambique and Angola.

Vatsala’s extensive research on the theme is noticeable in her minute detail. She shares that while researching she came across documents that revealed “that as early as 1555, so just a few decades after the Portuguese landed in Goa, the transportation of slaves began. By the end of the sixteenth century there were regular trips being undertaken that provided Goa with gold, silver, ivory and black slaves who the Portuguese called ‘*cafre*’.” She further adds on that “Over the centuries not only did a few Goan families join the slave trade but even had African slaves in their homes.”

Vatsala feels that every writer writes to be read. She acknowledges the fact that every reader may not love or like their work but they do like a favourable response to their

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<sup>13</sup> Siddhis - native Indians of African origin

<sup>14</sup> Maroon slaves - runaway slaves



hard-work. She writes "I was so impassioned by my theme that I just wanted to get the facts right and tell a good story that my readers would find gripping."

She gladly shared a story she came across while researching and that stayed with her of the Convent of Santa Monica, established in 1598, and the first nunnery of the East. There were eighteen widows admitted in the first batch of inmates. One of these was Dona Filipa Ferreira from Thana who joined the nunnery with her daughter. They brought to the convent 200 slaves as part of their patrimony. "It is hard to imagine cloistered nuns needing so many slaves". Another story she shared is the role black slaves played during the Inquisition that is the subject of her second novel *When God Died*. She goes on to narrate "The Jesuits staged mass baptisms on January 25th, the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. To ensure the numerical success of the baptisms, for days before the feast Jesuit priests would meander through the streets accompanied by their largest and strongest African slaves. On their bidding, the slaves would effortlessly grab hold of any recalcitrant Hindu and smear his lips with a slice of beef making him an untouchable among his own people. This ensured he would attend the baptism, his conversion to Christianity assured."

Vatsala replied that she had read both Damodar Mauzo's *Karmelin* and Wendell's *Poskem*. She remarked "Mauzo is a legend in his own time" displaying her admiration of him. She joyously shared "I was particularly delighted that he released *Shadow of the Palm Tree* at Sunaparanta in 2019." She also shared her thoughts on the two novels.

*Karmelin* she says "is a novel in which the protagonist struggles to overcome the destiny of her birth and her marriage. The psychological toll society takes of her is heart-wrenching. *Poskem* shone the spotlights on a subject not known outside Goa. In the stories we see that the destiny of birth once again impacts the lives of the poskem." Vatsalas words were very enriching and gave a deeper understanding of her novel.

These interactions echoed the study, especially how the authors' lives were so much a part of their novels. It brings out the reality of society which comes about in the novels realistically and how society plays an important role in the characters lives and the life of people today till date. The dissertation explores the minds that are troubled and as a result reflect through the behaviour of each of the selected characters. The study using the Freudian psychoanalytic theoretical approach to critically analyse the characters in the selected novels, simultaneously speaks of the Goan cultural history in the texts. These aspects of culture influence the behaviour of the characters with their effects on their minds. As a result most of them struggle balancing their id and ego that is their unconscious and conscious worlds. The life of the authors reflect in their work and in the study through their personal experiences, knowledge and their unique thoughts.



## APPENDIX

### Questionnaire

To Damodar Mauzo

I

- i. What was the inspiration behind your novel *Karmelin*?
- ii. Did you intend to add a psychological perspective?
- iii. Any author who may have used psychoanalytic criticism and may have been influential in your work?

II

- i. How did you get involved with the subject or theme of *Karmelin*?
- ii. Was the concept, theme or background explored at the time you wrote?
- iii. What were your thoughts before, while and after writing and publishing the novel? Did it bother you how society would react and what was the response?

III

- i. Could you share some stories you came across while researching for *Karmelin* or anything you'd like to share.
- ii. Have you read *Poskem* by Wendell Rodricks and *Shadow of the Palm Tree* by Vatsala Mendonca? What are your thoughts on these novels?

To Vatsala Mendonca

I

- i. What was the inspiration behind your novel *Shadow of the Palm Tree*?
- ii. Did you intend to add a psychological perspective?
- iii. Any author who may have used psychoanalytic criticism and may have been influential in your work?

II

- i. How did you get involved with the subject or theme of *Shadow of the Palm Tree*?
- ii. Was the concept, theme or background explored at the time you wrote?
- iii. What were your thoughts before, while and after writing and publishing the novel? Did it bother you how society would react and what was the response?

III

- i. Could you share some stories you came across while researching for *Shadow of the Palm Tree* or anything you'd like to share.
- ii. Have you read *Karmelin* by Damodar Mauzo and *Poskem* by Wendell Rodricks? What are your thoughts on these novels?



## To Jerome Marrel

I

- i. Something about Wendell and his book *Poskem*
- ii. Did Wendell intend to add a psychological perspective?
- iii. Any author who may have used psychoanalytic criticism and may have been influential in Wendell's work?

II

- i. Wendell wrote that Rosa, a neighbour, inspired the book. Does her story reflect in the characters in the book and any other incident that may have inspired the subject or theme of *Poskem*?
- ii. Was the concept, theme or background explored in other forms at the time Wendell wrote?
- iii. What were Wendell's and your thoughts before, while and after writing and publishing the novel? Did it bother Wendell or you how society would react and what was the response?

III

- i. Could you share some stories Wendell may have shared with you while researching for *Poskem* - Goans in the Shadows or anything you'd like to share.
- ii. Have you read *Karmelin* by Damodar Mauzo and *Shadow of the Palm Tree* by Vatsala Mendonca? What are your thoughts on these novels?

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