NEW LITERARIA-
An International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities
Volume 2, No. 1, January-February, 2021, PP. 270-280
ISSN: 2582-7375
DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.48189/nl.2021.v02i1.029
www.newliteraria.com

Unmasking the Facade: A Critique of Disguise as a Colonial and Patriarchal Tool

Saikat Sarkar

Abstract:
Disguise, when used with an agenda, yields itself to a multi-layered interpretation. This can range from the psychology of vigilante superheroes donning a mask to the historical institution of colonialism which disguised itself as civilizational mission. Postcolonial critics, on the other hand, has unmasked the nefarious agenda of the colonizers. Critics like Fanon, Nandy, Viswanathan have critiqued the use of disguise to show its debilitating effect on the colonizers. Nandy and Viswanathan have analysed how colonial education was deployed as a masking device to hide the hidden aim of exercising control on the natives. Fanon has shown how the natives have psychologically internalized the mask to negotiate with the politico-cultural pressure created by the colonizers. The tool of disguise is also relevant in multiracial America wherein the Blacks, as is shown by Du Bois, have had to hide behind a split-self using it as a mask to cover up their damaged identity. Relatedly, women reeling under imposing patriarchal regime have taken recourse to using masks/veils as a coping up device. Feminist thinkers have exposed the hypocrisy encoded in patriarchal narrative.

This paper proposes to look at disguise as a tool and also as a literary trope. Beginning with the construction of heroes of comics it aims to traverse a multifarious critical domain to analyse how in the hands of postcolonial and feminist critics disguise or mask has been decoded to expose the prevalent discursive construct and how it can also be used as a strategic defence to survive in a society which refuses to understand.

Keywords: Disguise, Colonialism, Veil, Split-Self.

The secret identities of superheroes have been an integral aspect in the lives of these saviors and to find a mysterious Bruce Wayne and a rather homely Peter Parker to be the real faces behind Batman and Spiderman has been a key ingredient in our fascination for them. The practice of cladding the superheroes in masks began with Lee Falk's popular comic strip *The Phantom* which shows a costumed figure who fights crime and operates from the fictional African country Bangalla.[1] The current Phantom is the 21st in the line of crime fighters, a custom originated in 1536 when the father of a British sailor, Christopher, was killed by pirates. Swearing an oath to fight evil on the skull of his father's murderer, Christopher started the legacy of the Phantom that would be passed from father to son. The costume for this figure is a mask and body hugging purple colored spandex vest. Unable to see the real face behind the guise and beguiled by the seemingly unending continuation of his life led the people to give

the mysterious figure nicknames such as "The Ghost Who Walks", "The Man Who Cannot Die" and "Guardian of the Eastern Dark", believing him to be immortal.

Unlike many fictional costumed heroes, the Phantom does not have any supernatural powers, but instead relies on his strength, intelligence, and fearsome reputation of being an immortal ghost to defeat his foes. The 21st Phantom is married to Diana Palmer, whom he met while studying in the United States; they have two children, Kit and Heloise. Like all previous Phantoms, he lives in the ancient Skull Cave, and has a trained wolf, Devil, and a horse named Hero. He is trusted by the African people and is seen as a messiah who comes at the right time to save the situation. It is likely that that our readers would have fond memories of the comic strip which used to be serialized in a leading Bengali daily, *Ananda Bazar Patrika* for more than a decade. The poet Nirendra Nath Chakraborty, who was working with *Ananda Bazar* back then, is credited with a fit Bengali name for the figure, *Aranyadeb*[2]. But no matter how wonderful it felt to have a messiah it is possible to trace a classic colonial scheme beneath this savior act.

No matter how mindful and understanding Phantom is, the situation can be read as a white man acting as the messiah for the ignorant, helpless and hence needy black people of Africa. Though the Phantom is created in the mid-twentieth century and he is an American it is still valid to infer that the creator had the colonial situation in mind. And though in the mid-twentieth century colonialism, in its old shape, had stopped operating, the United States of America was emerging roughly at the same period as the most lethal neo-colonial power who would rule the world economy and purportedly act as the savior to many third and fourth world nations over the next few decades. Falk's intention becomes clearer when one takes a look at Mandrake the Magician, another comic strip hero created by him. Mandrake, a European magician is assisted by Lothar, a prince of an African kingdom. One may take note that Lothar is no ordinary African, but a "Prince of the Seven Nations", a mighty federation of jungle tribe, who relinquishes his aspirations to be king and helps Mandrake fight criminals instead. Lothar is the embodiment of physical strength and when he first appeared he was shown to have a very muscular and well toned torso and was dressed in a short pant and leopard skin. Though from the mid 1960s Lothar is given a full length trouser, he is still shown wearing shirts with leopard print, thus underscoring his atavistic orientation.

One may again find some associated childhood memories of Mandrake in this part of the world as he too had a successful run as a translated comic strip in *Ananda Bazar Patrika*. But herein again it is possible to detect another classic colonial archetype. In the hierarchy of the human race the Black man has always shown to belong to lower rung as compared to white man since the white man can exercise the intellect and reason, faculties that lie beyond the grasp of black folk. They, however, are superior in physical power and thus can be connected to the sub-human species such as the primates. Lothar, despite being a prince, always has to rely on Mandrake's superior intellectual capacity and has to be commanded by his 'friend' to act upon things. The point of speaking at length on comic strip heroes is that through these two examples[3] one gets to see that even the otherwise benign comic strips (which are predominantly designed for the children, though no less enjoyed by the adults) can be found to carry coded meanings in a disguised form.

The idea of disguised meaning is associated with the institution of colonialism which was camouflaged under the guise of an enlightening mission. It was Edward Said in his seminal work *Orintalism* (1978) who brought to our attention the strategic construction of the orient by the west. Such construction was not only erroneous, but also heavily embedded with political

ploy. The construction of the orient as a negative space which is almost diametrically opposite to the west was needed for the colonialists to legitimate their presence in these non-European countries. The whole project of colonialism, a money-making and exploitative institution, was disguised as an educative mission. Said, using Foucauldian concept of discourse, showed in his book how, through the percolation of certain cultural parameters, the west was able to register its cultural and civilizational supremacy over the orient. This created a lack in the minds of the colonized who not only faced severe economic and political exploitation but also found them to be wanting in many other areas.

Gauri Viswanathan, a favorite student of Said, in her well-known book *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule In India* (1989) has argued that the empire had been instrumental in giving birth to English Literary Studies as an academic discipline to be taught in the universities. She shows how the colonizers had made used of the Gramscian concept of hegemony to perpetuate their dominance through the spread of their 'enlightened' cultural and literary texts. The intertwining of British education with their governmental policies cannot be overlooked:

> As the history of Orientalist education demonstrates, a curriculum may incorporate the systems of learning of a subordinate population and still be an instrument of hegemonic activity. Indeed the point of departure of this book is its argument that both the Anglicist and the Orientalist factions were equally complicit with the project of domination, British Indian education having been conceived in India as part and parcel of the act of securing and consolidating power. (Viswanathan 167)

Viswanathan looked at the British education imparted to the natives as a huge representational system which would bolster their ideological domination. She critically observes:

> The introduction of English literature marks the effacement of a sordid history of colonialist expropriation, material exploitation, and class and race oppression behind European world dominance. The English literary text, functioning as a surrogate Englishman in his highest and most perfect state, becomes a mask for economic exploitation [of] successfully camouflaging the material activities of the colonizer… (10)

Masks of Conquest is an important text which shows how craftily the Imperialists used their own cultural parameters and coded the whole thing in the name of education.

However, there are two areas which can incite the interest of a curious reader. The first of which is related to the Imperialists themselves. One may very well ask if all the Imperialists felt the same about the enlightening mission and whether they did have any plan of enabling the natives to gain a sense of cultural independence in the long run. It seems that the attitude towards the educational policy was anything but homogenous among the imperialists. Viswanathan herself cites the words of Thomas Munro in 1922:

> Besides the necessity for having good native advisers in governing natives, it is necessary that we should pave the way for the introduction of the natives to some share in the government of their own country. It may be half a century before we are obliged to do so; but the system of government and of education which we have already established must some time or other work such a change on the people of this country, that it will be impossible to confine them to subordinate employments. (183)

The second is related to the question of native agency. Did they attempt to resist the colonial cultural control or did they simply accept? Though Viswanathan does not dwell on

this aspect of native resistance one can find the intriguing history of native resistance to colonial ideological domination in Ashis Nandy's *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (1983). Nandy presents an absorbing account of the subtle, "unheroic" modes of resistance by which educated Indians turned "the West into a reasonably manageable vector within the traditional world views" (xiii).

Native agency plays an important role in the formulations made by the noted cultural critic Homi K. Bhabha who contended that rather than accepting passively the meanings ascribed by the imperial center the colonized remains critical and questions the occidental paradigms. However, since the political and economic supremacy of the imperialist is established beyond doubt the colonized cannot take on the paradigms headlong. Instead, he assumes the guise of imitating, or, to use Bhabha's coinage, mimicking. Coerced to copy the colonizing cultural values the colonized appears to mimic but underneath the apparent acceptance assumes an attitude of both mockery and menace, "so that mimicry is at once resemblance and menace" (Bhabha 86). Disguise in this case becomes a political tool to help the oppressed counter the dominant discourse. However, the colonizer is not always able to take up a countering stance and rather becomes the recipient of a psychological disintegration when pitted against a persistent cultural encoding.

In this regard one is reminded of the Martinican psychiatrist and black, post-colonialist thinker Frantz Fanon's famous work *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) where Fanon shows the stages through which the black person gradually accepts his own inferiority in relation to the white culture and then starts donning a white mask to pose like a white person. But this poseur act does not take him anywhere since he is never accepted as a white man. The result is that he is trapped in a limbo. Fanon studied the French society of the 1950s and its cultural influence on its colony Martinique, a Caribbean island. A student of psychiatry Fanon was interested in the psychology of racism and his book discusses the psychological attitude assumed by the black people to respond to the social and cultural pressure created by white supremacy. From the language used by the black people to the sexual preferences made by black men and women, Fanon shows how a sense of interiorized racism negatively affects their minds and they end up doing great disservice to their own race.

Though Fanon was talking about the impact of French imperialism in the 1950s his contention sounds similar to that of the African American social theorist W E B Du Bois's formulation of the 'double consciousness'; a phrase he used to describe the living condition of the black people in the United States of America in the late 19th century. In *Souls of Black Folk* (1903) Du Bois defines double consciousness as an experience of living under a veil. He says,

> It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness,- an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.
>
> The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife - this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He does not wish to Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He wouldn't bleach his Negro blood in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a

> Negro and an American without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of opportunity closed roughly in his face. (8-9)

This sense of having a split personality compelled the black in the late 19th and early 20th century USA to live in a disguise much in the same manner that it did force a black to live in Martinique in the mid 20th century. These are social disguises that a person has to put on in order to survive. But as we have found in our short discussion of colonialism disguise can be strategically put on to serve political purpose.

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon rips apart a well-known work of his time *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization*, by Dominique-Octave Mannoni who wanted to analyze the mind of the native and the white colonial based on his experience of Madagascar under French rule in the 1930s and 1940s. Though Fanon found this study erroneous in many counts in one aspect he agreed, at least partially, with Mannoni when he talked about the colonizer having a Prospero complex, a tendency which makes the colonizer wish to lord over the natives. The name Prospero is taken from Shakespeare's last play *The Tempest* which tells the story of Prospero, the rightful Duke of Milan, his banishment, his arrival and subsequent reign on a savage island, and his plot to restore her daughter Miranda to her proper place in Milan. The story line is reflective of an archetypal story of a colonial encounter – a European arrives at a 'savage' place and domesticates it to impart to it a sense of enlightened living. Initially Prospero assumes the guise of a benevolent master and cajoles Caliban, a native inhabitant of that island, to teach him the art and trick of surviving in that island in lieu of the language he brought with him.

The mention of Prospero is significant in this context since his creator had mastery in using characters in disguise. It is interesting to note that amidst the gallery of powerful Shakespearean characters it mostly his remarkable heroines who are remembered for their antics in their disguised avatars. From Portia (in *Merchant of Venice*) who assumed the guise of a man to talk Shylock out of his communal rage and vengeance for Antonio to Rosalind (in *As You Like It*) who disguised herself as a boy to protect herself from potential sexual threats when she decided to flee to the Forest of Arden when banished by her uncle and to Viola (in *Twelfth Night*) who is stranded, after a shipwreck, in an unknown land Illyria and has to disguise herself as a man to survive; Shakespeare is a master of using characters in disguise. Women in disguise outnumber the men[4] in the Shakespearean world but if we look a little closer the reason behind this seems a less intriguing.

Since in his time women were not allowed to act in the plays it gave Shakespeare the opportunity to robe the boy actors who were playing women in the plays in male disguise and, thereby, evoke a sense metatheatricality. Coined by Lionel Abel[5] the term metatheatre signifies a dramatic ploy used by the playwright to comment back on his/her own play. A metatheatrical play draws attention to the literal circumstances of its own production, such as the presence of the audience or the fact that the actors are actors. In other words, such plays lay bare their own device and go against the classical concept of verisimilitude. Richard Hornby has noted five techniques that are principally used in metatheatre. These are ceremony within a play, role-playing within a role, reference to reality, self-reference of the drama, and play within a play. Shakespeare's use of the device was useful for him as it gave the boy actors playing roles of women opportunities to act as boy/man again. It also underscored that the theatre is about disguise – it is about role playing and all the actors who are playing parts on the stage point to the audience the numerous role playing that one has to perform in daily lives.

The plays which use disguise as a significant part depend on a sense of self-reflexivity as the audience is expected to patronize the multiple acts of disguise that is happening on stage, the theatre. This provided Shakespeare to make use of in-house jokes and add layers of meaning to his texts and all the while question the apparent divide between appearance and reality. This is something that postmodern art also does. Postmodernism calls to question our understanding of reality as it is not simply out there but is constructed for us. Such construction happens through language. Literary texts are also constructed by language and hence the conventional difference between art and reality is not as tenable as it does appear. In *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-conscious Fiction* Patricia Waugh defines metafiction as

> a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality. In providing a critique of their own methods of construction, such writings not only examine the fundamental structures of narrative fiction, they also explore the possible fictionality of the world outside the literary fictional text. (2)

This "fictionality" of the world has become a site of contention in the recent critical debates. If the world out there is fictionalized then it bespeaks of a human agency. If we accept this then we also have to accept that our understanding of the world is, in reality, guided and maneuvered by some powerful people.

In our discussion of the coded manner of colonial operation we have seen how the imperialists were powerful not only because they had, at their disposal, the power of the military but also because (and chiefly so) they were able to prove to the colonized their cultural and social superiority over them. Such sense is engendered through the establishment of social discourse(s)[6]. One may argue that the apparently simple word disguise is overcharged with meanings beyond our ordinary understanding. For quite a while we have talked about certain social aspects of disguise, how it is used by the superheroes, the colonizers and by the Shakespearean heroines and we do understand the motive behind these guises. Secrecy, self-protection and hegemonic rule seem to be reasons behind the assumption of disguises. But don't we use disguise in everyday life, don't we "prepare a face to meet the faces that we meet" (Eliot 4)[7]? Disguise can be seen as associated with deception. Think of the ritual of Halloween where children usually dress up as bizarre figures and the festival of carnival where people of all ages take part using costumes – these age-old traditions talk about the human impulse for deception.[8]

Aristotle opined that humans have a general tendency to imitate. More recently John Suler, psychology professor at Rider University in New Jersey, carried out an experiment with costume choice where he gave his students the task of choosing costumes for their friends. He found that the chosen costume, in most cases, signified the opposite of what the person was for whom the costume was chosen. For example, for a quiet student the choice of costume was flashy and colourful. Suler felt that the reason behind this is may be because our personality operates in polarities, there is our conscious self that we show to others but we also possess a hidden self which is inclined to things that are quite opposite. Shakespeare was interested in the idea that people are not always what they seem and often have contradictory impulses. In plays such as the *Taming of the Shrew*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, [9] his characters often use disguises to enact themes of human deception and ambivalence.

We can argue that Shakespeare anticipated in his plays some of the concepts of what Freud would fully develop later. Freud has argues that we are divided personalities; we

have the propensity of not only hiding ourselves from others externally but also to masquerade our true feelings and emotions. Disguise is actually a defensive measure for us; we transform what is socially undesirable and unacceptable in us into things that are approved by the society. This masquerading of desire ensures that there is always the potential of another version of us. We disguise ourselves to be someone whom we can't be in our lives. But this deduction doesn't hold well for everyone and for every situation. Sometimes people are coerced to assume disguise. Many Jews had to disguise themselves as Christians during Hitler's reign and many women belonging to the Islamic religion have to live behind veils. We will now talk about these two instances of coerced disguise.

When World War II ended the death count of European Jews went up to six million, one million of which were children. The Jews, every one of them, were considered "parasitic vermin" by the Nazis and were subjected to the most brutal genocide the world has ever seen. Thousands of Jew children, however, survived because they were either hidden from the outside world or disguised as Christians. At the beginning of the war there were 1.6 million Jewish children in German territories and when it ended more than 1 million of them were dead. Even those who survived carried the burden of the trauma as they had to live without parents or grandparents or siblings. Initially the Jews were denied civil rights, forcibly compelled to live within ghettos and were made to wear a badge containing a yellow star which physically demarcated them. From 1941 when Hitler ordered mass murder Jews were slaughtered either by mobile killing squads or by being put into death camps which were getting set up one by one. The children, deemed unfit as 'useless eaters' were targeted and they became easy victims in the hands of the SS officers. To cite one example one can take the example of Auschwitz. An estimate suggests that 2,16,00 children were deported there. But only 6,700 of them were selected for forced labour, leaving the others to be sent to the gas chambers. When the camp was liberated on January 27, 1945, Soviet troops found just 451 Jewish children among the 9,000 surviving prisoners.

Though hiding was a choice but many Jewish families did not opt for it since it was not sustainable and it meant leaving dear ones behind. For Jewish children the other option was to disguise themselves as Christians. But this entailed a very careful execution. They had to be extremely careful to camouflage themselves before neighbours, classmates and the police. Even a momentary behavioral or linguistic lapse could expose them.[10] To pass as Christians the Jews required false identity papers which were very difficult to obtain. Moreover, since the German police was constantly examining papers they always had to live in constant fear. Still, disguising as Christian was not easy. One Jew custom was circumcision and even in the bleakest of times the Jews kept this practice up. The Germans inspected the male genitals to detect the Jews and for this reason many of the Jew boys were disguised as girls for as long as it was physically possible. Many Jew children were sheltered by Catholics in Poland, France and Belgium. A number of Muslim families in Albania and Yugoslavia also offered them protection and shelter. The children had to learn rituals and adapt to the new lives. But, despite these it was unavoidable that these children[11] who survived the genocide were scarred for life.

Though hardly anything compares with the Holocaust in terms of the degree of unimaginable brutality and it becomes quite difficult to talk of anything else after that, a Muslim woman is one example of a patriarchally designed confining costume imposed on women. Though this is not as simple as it looks from outside but, in line with Judy Mabro, one can say that the Eurocentric view of Europe's south-eastern neighbors has for centuries been one of fascination and repulsion, one in which a western lifestyle was of necessity superior and in which "veiled women were necessarily more oppressed, more passive, more ignorant than

unveiled women" (Mabro 3). In *The Woman in the Muslin Mask* Daphne Grace cogently argues the same; "Although the veiled woman remains a stereotyped image of patriarchal oppression in 'western eyes', the literature of the 'Middle Eastern' woman reveals contradictory and paradoxical symbolisms of the veil" (67).

Muslim scholars are divided over the Qur'anic association of the burqa since the *Quran* does not directly recommend burqa. It recommends modest attire for both men and women and though it wants the women not to dress in a revelatory manner it does not advocate a confining attire like the burqa.[12] this confining nature of the burqa has created controversy in many countries across the world. France, which has a policy against using external religious symbols in public places, got into a conflict with the resident Muslims many of whom felt the burqa to be a part of their cultural tradition and deemed it to be their choice. Critics like Hannah Rydh underscores the limiting attribute of the burqa as she notes that for some women it "can never be repeated too often that the veil is no mere fashion, it is a wall which materially and spiritually is debarring its bearer from developing intercourse and opportunity for co-operation with the men in a world crying out for co-operation" (cited by Grace 148-49). But the flip side should also be taken into consideration. Grace contends that the "veil, although seeming to define invisible borders and impose rules of space and sexual difference… nevertheless allows some women *increased* physical mobility within their social and spatial world" (203). One, however, has to accept the repressive nature of this imposed guise in the final consideration:

> Repressive rules, customs and superstitious beliefs have been used for millennia to exploit, subjugate and degrade women in every culture. Women have been 'veiled' by their own minds, by the fear and distrust they have been forced to experience. They have lived under the shadow of assuming the masks placed upon them are natural, that the illusions of limitation are real. (Grace 215)

The veil (*purdah*) as disguise, whether imposed or otherwise, is layered in its significance and belies any attempt to interpret its import in a simplified way.

Disguise is a social act performed in personal and collective level for different purpose. I have not talked here about the instances of disguises that we find in the mythological and epical texts[13] but have concentrated exclusively on some of the social and cultural aspects of it. We partially with Viola, the disguised heroine of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* when she says "Disguise, I see thou art a wickedness,/ Wherein the pregnant enemy does much" (84). But it is more than that. It can be used by people to serve wicked purpose but it can also be a strategic defense, a much needed tool to survive in a society which refuses to understand.

Notes

1. Though it is a fictional place Bangalla, in the 2009 miniseries made on The Phantom, is shown to be a small island nation located in the Malay Archipelago.
2. The Bengali word *Aranyadeb* can be translated as the Lord of the Jungle in English.
3. Another example of such colonial scheme apparent in fictional character is the figure of Tarzan, created by Edgar Rice Burroughs. The stories of Tarzan have the colonial undertones of having a white European man entrusted with the responsibility of bringing order to a savage world. Both Tarzan and the Phantom operate in Africa, a continent which has long been cast as the dark other of the enlightened Europe.
4. One instance of a male character assuming disguise in Shakespeare is that of the Duke of Vienna in *Measure for Measure* who goes undercover to mix up with ordinary people to understand their living condition.

.

5. In *Metatheatre: A New View of Dramatic Form* and *Tragedy and Metatheatre: Essays on Dramatic Form* Abel describes metatheatre as reflecting comedy and tragedy at the same time, where the audience can laugh at the protagonist while feeling empathetic simultaneously.
6. The word 'discourse' is associated with the celebrated 20th century French post-structuralist thinker Michel Foucault. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin explain;

> For Foucault, a discourse is a strongly bounded area of social knowledge, a system of statements within which the world can be known. The key feature of this is that the world is not simply 'there' to be talked about, rather, it is through discourse itself that the world is brought into being. It is also in such a discourse that speakers and hearers, writers and readers come to an understanding about themselves, their relationship to each other and their place in the world (the construction of subjectivity). It is the 'complex of signs and practices which organizes social existence and social reproduction'. (70 - 71)

7. The line is taken from T. S. Eliot's oft quoted poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" which has become a landmark in modern literature. The poem talks about the ironic yet sad romantic desires of a middle-aged American man of the early 20th century, his loneliness, self-depreciation, his sense of being a social misfit and his futile wish to escape. This poem was the first poem in the first published volume of poems by Eliot, *Prufrock and Other Observations* (1917) though this was not the first poem that Eliot wrote.
8. In India we find the custom of using masks in various dance forms; ranging from the classical dance form of *Kathakali* to the *Chhou* dance, a folk dance from the district of Purulia in West Bengal.
9. *The Taming of the Shrew* is a play that makes use of a lot of disguises. Initially it is a tinker, Christopher Sly, who is dressed up in the finery of a Lord and is made to believe him to be one. Then in the play enacted before him Lucentio disguises as a Latin teacher to woo Bianca (Hortensio also disguises as a piano teacher for the same purpose, though abortively). Lucentio's servant Tranio disguises as Lucentio to talk to Bianca's father Baptista. Lucentio and Tranio later disguise an old pedant as Lucentio's father. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Puck magically transforms the head of Bottom into that of an ass. Though this is not a conscious choice, but such disguise helps serving a bigger purpose, that of resolving the conflict between the fairy king Oberon and his queen, Titania.
10. For example when a German indicates three with his fingers he uses the thumb, the index finger and the middle finger whereas for a non-German the used fingers are usually the index finger, the middle finger and the ring finger. A slight slip as this could spell doom.
11. It is estimated that compared to adults, 33% of whom could survive the War, a maximum 11% of children could outlive the atrocities perpetrated on them.
12. Modern day Muslims, who believe in the Quranic association of the burqa, take recourse to the *Hadith* or collected traditions of life in the days of Muhammad the prophet. But others object as the *Hadith* describes 7th century Arabian life, which should not be imposed on modern day Muslims in an unqualified manner.

13. Instances of disguise are abound in the western and eastern mythological texts such as that of Zeus and Hermes coming to the home of Baucis and Philemon disguised as ordinary peasants and of Indra coming to Ahlya disguised as her husband. The epics are also replete with instances of disguise. In the *Mahabharata* we find the episode of the Pandavas disguising themselves when they take shelter in the court of king Virat as part of their agreement with Duryodhan. In *Iliad* we find Patroclus going to war disguising himself as Achilles and getting killed by Hector, an incident which prompted Achilles to take part in the war and that changed the whole course of the Trojan war.

References

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. (2004) *Key Concepts in Post-colonial Studies*. London: Routledge.

Bhabha, Homi K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.

Du Bois, W. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folk.* 1903. Ed. B. H. Edwards. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007. Print.

Eliot, T. S. (1963). *Collected Poems 1909 – 1962*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World Inc.

Grace, Daphne. (2004). *The Woman in the Muslin Mask: Veiling and Identity in Postcolonial Literature*. London: Pluto Press.

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. 1952. London: Pluto Press, 2008. Print.

Hornby, Richard. *Drama, Metadrama, and Perception*. Cranbury, Ontario: Associated U P, 1986. Print.

Mabro, Judy, ed. (1991). *Veiled Half-Truths: Western Travellers' Perceptions of Middle Eastern Women.* London: Taurus.

Nandy, Ashis. (1983). *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*. New Delhi: Oxford UP.

Shakespeare, William. (2004). *Twelfth Night, Or What You Will*. Ed. Elizabeth Story Donno. The New Cambridge Shakespeare. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

Viswanathan, Gauri. (1989). *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule In India.* New York: Columbia UP.

Waugh, Patricia. (1984). *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-conscious Fiction*. London: Routledge.

Bio-note

Dr Saikat Sarkar is an assistant professor in the PG Dept of English, Midnapore College (Autonomous). Before this he was a tenured faculty at the PG Dept of English, Bankura Christian College. He is a PhD and has written his doctoral dissertation on the cultural influence of the *Bible* on the novels of Toni Morrison. A recipient of US Department of State fellowship, Dr Sarkar has participated in NEH Summer workshop in Rochester, NY in 2011. Dr Sarkar has co-edited critical volumes *The Posthuman Imagination: Literature at the Edge of Human* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2021), *Humanism and After: Literature's Journey from Humanism to Cyber Culture and Other Forms of Posthumanism"* (Avenel Press, 2020). He has published twelve research articles and nine book chapters on Black American Literature,

Black British Literature, Popular Culture, Shakespeare Adaptations, Indian Partition writing and Indian English Drama, Indian Science Fiction in national journals and edited volumes. Apart from these Dr Sarkar is actively engaged in translation projects and has published his translations of tribal folk literature, partition narratives and Indian English poetry in anthologies. Dr Sarkar has edited noted academic research journals named *Wesleyan Journal of Research* (a multi-disciplinary peer-reviewed journal) and *Appropriations* (a peer-reviewed national-level journal of English literary studies) and has been acting as reviewer for peer-reviewed national-level journals like *Post-Scriptum* and *Post-colonial Interventions*. His recent area of interest is concerned with posthumanism in cultural texts, science fiction and translation studies.

Mail id: saikat.sarkar@midnaporecollege.ac.in