



Infidelity to Exoneration of the Wives: Redefining Morality through the Optimality Lens

Kanak Kanti Bera*

Abstract

The psychological process of 'moral' decision-making by 'women' in select modern Indian English narratives has been looked at through the lens of Optimality Theory or OT, as proposed by McCarthy, McCarthy and Prince, and Prince and Smolensky. In R. K. Narayan's *The Guide* Rosie chose to atone for her 'sin' of adultery. Buddhadev Bose's Maloti in *It Rained All Night* got entangled in an immoral extra-marital affair but had a repentant silent confession to her husband, so did Maitrayi in *Na Hanyate (It Does Not Die)* but without any element of deception. Every act of deception, if any, issues from intricate psychological motivations involving both utilitarian needs and a breach of moral instructions. Then, subsequent decisions resulted from moral dilemma, where a number of warring constraints or motivations must have been fighting for dominance. Pitted against choices of sexual gratification and loyalty to husband, Maloti chose to commit the 'sin' of adultery, since it was impossible for her to fulfill both requirements together. Here only OT can resolve efficaciously the conflict of contradictory principles, before the human cognitive system dissolves it into a 'decision.' By distilling the element of morality through the Optimality filter, the paper explains the 'decision' (that leads sometimes to a 'sinful' act) optimally.

Keywords: Moral Decision, Motivational Psychology, Sin, Utilitarianism, Deontic Reasoning, Optimality Theory.

* Associate Professor, Panskura Banamali College (autonomous), Purba Medinipur, West Bengal

Introduction

Concentrating on the select modern Indian narratives, the paper analyses the virtue-vice binarity in the cognitive process of ‘moral’ decision-making in the framework of Optimality grammar, proposed by Prince and Smolensky, chiefly a phonological theory.¹ Interestingly, in the chosen moral decisions, a subsequent revelation or honest confession invariably follows the initial deception, and Optimality Theory (henceforth OT) aims to showcase the radicality of this contrastive human behavior. In R. K. Narayan’s *The Guide* Rosie chose to atone for her ‘sin’ of adultery. Buddhadev Bose’s Maloti in *It Rained All Night* got entangled in an immoral extra-marital affair but had a repentant silent confession to her husband, so did Maitreyi in *Na Hanyate (It Does Not Die)* but without any element of deception. Apart from the literary content, it ventures into morality and psychology. Though the subject of study here is literary, purely psychological is the method of such decision-making where various aspects like deontics, morality and social responsibility, utilitarian self-needs, cognition and even emotions are involved in the process. But for the sake of a deeper scientific insight into the research problem and its analysis, the paper resorts to linguistics, and this psychological issue has been sorted out through the application of a phonological theory as the theoretical framework.

Smolensky (1986) and Smolensky and Legendre (2006) rightly expected that, besides its applicability to syntax or semantics, OT can be adequate as an analytical model even outside linguistics. Accordingly, since its inception in 1993, OT has been applied effectively to a few other non-linguistic fields like traffic rules (Boersma 436), legal dilemma in the Talmud² (Dresher8), to the song structure and text (Gilbers and Schreuder 1), to the choice of words and simulated annealing (Biró 1) and others. OT being applied to morality, psychology and cognition, Jones (320, 367), Mikalsen (1), Biró (1) and Parker and Parker (254) bear even greater relevance to this study. With the help of this theoretic model, Jones (320, 367) analysed the kinship system types that differ cross-culturally. Additionally, his analysis depended much on the assumptions of human cognition and an evolutionary psychology. In his thesis Mikalsen described OT in non-linguistic terms with a goal of

comparing it to other psychological theories. In order to account for diverse food taboos and the dynamics of religious rituals, Biró resorted to OT as his theoretical model. Coming to OT analysis of morality, Parker and Parker acknowledged, “The notion that Optimality Theory could be invoked to evaluate moral decisions was first suggested to us by Amalia Gnanadesikan” (254). Applying OT, they analysed the interaction between religion and morality in ethical decision-making. The review above unambiguously confirmed about the absolute non-existence of any study whatsoever on the application of OT grammar to the analysis of a literary issue.

The primary question is about the applicability of OT to moral decision-making, as narrated in the modern texts selected in this study. A decision is not always made rationally (though assumed so by ‘rational choice’ theory)³ —had it been so, a systematic arrangement of principles could have been prescribed and obeyed. Decisions are not always induced by personal interest and emotions. Had it been so, concept society and social responsibility must have broken down. Neither the decision is always steered by one’s sense of social responsibility, nor solely by his faith in religious doctrines. Had it been so, individual entity of man would have been at stake. As Collins argued, to attach different weight to principles and to balance these principles in an observer-specific way calls for the application of OT in order to analyse decision-making scientifically.

At this juncture, we need to have a look at the relevant constraints. They relate to different concepts, factors, ideology and moral standards, like religion, psychology, utilitarian philosophy, biology, law etc.

Constraints Relating to Religion and Morality

As any decision is an objectified statement about our moral character, religious morality (that is an allegiance with the divine decrees) is always assigned an important role to play in our cognitive system. Like Catholic Christianity, religions prescribe some divine laws (*e.g.* cardinal virtues, capital virtues or theological virtues) regarding one’s own behavior. A moral decision claims that in private or public

behaviors these virtues once acquired would guide action and fight away all evils.

The study paying special attention to the revelation and confession too, it is much pertinent here to refer to the stance of religion in this respect. Christianity holds that, a person's sincere repentance and confession of his/her sin, lamentations over the inability to obey God's laws by his or her own efforts demonstrate his/her acceptance of God's mercy and benevolence.

As per the Christian theology, anybody's life on this earth has been given to him/her only as loan to live by Him, and is expected to follow His path till his physical death. While a virtuous path leads to the final salvation, the path of sin (that is, some deviation from the path of virtue) takes one to hell. Following the arguments above, OT constraints can be constructed as mentioned below (these constraints based on only the chief categories) —

- (1) CARDVR One should acquire the cardinal virtues to fight evil
- (2) CAPITVR One should acquire the capital virtues to fight evil
- (3) THEOVR One should acquire the theological virtues to fight evil

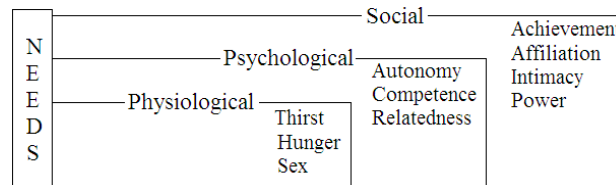
Under these categories there are certain virtues. Each of these Constraints can be specifically referred to with the mention of the virtue in particular like—

CARDVR_[FORTITUDE], CAPITVR_[CHASTITY], THEOVR_[FAITH]

Constraints Related to Motivational Psychology

Motivational psychology centers on what motivates one and how. In this study, the motivational forces serve as OT constraints. Following the descriptions of Reeve, Eysenck and Keane, Sternberg Rumelhart et al., such forces can be termed as 'needs.' Need means 'any condition within the person that is essential and necessary for life, growth and well- being.' (Reeve 77). It has its three-tier hierarchy (Fig. 1):

Fig. 1: Motivational Forces or Needs (Reeve 8)



The two lower levels consist of the basic human needs that are inborn, but the social needs are acquired. Non-fulfillment of the two low level needs causes damage to the personal well-being, whereas that of the other to the social life and interpersonal interaction. Feelings and emotions are always the by-products of needs, depending on their fulfillment or non-fulfillment. Feelings are associated very closely with these needs being mere projections of the latter. The higher the need-tiers, the more acute the feelings. Fulfillment of psychological or social needs brings happiness and all attractive feelings, but repulsive feelings like anger, aggression, envy arise from their non-fulfillment. But the point worth mentioning is that Reeve (8) found emotions and needs quite separate as entities but equal as potential motivating forces.

- (4) PHYND Physical needs are to be fulfilled to avoid damage to body
- (5) PSYND Psychological needs are to be fulfilled to avoid damage to mind
- (6) SOCND Social needs are to be fulfilled to avoid damage to interpersonal interaction

Each of these constraints can be specifically referred to with the mention of the need in particular, like

PHYND[SEX], PSYND[AUTONOMY], SOCND[POWER] and so on.

Constraints Related to Utilitarianism

Utilitarianism, propagated by Jeremy Bentham in the early 19th century, radically changed the concept of morally. The morality it propagates is based on the motto: ‘the greatest good for the greatest number.’ A course of action in any situation is held right if it can yield more benefits than harms for everyone affected. Utilitarianism

justifies even the conventional vices like theft, lies, manipulation, or deception, provided the course of action produces maximum benefits (for everyone ideally or for the maximum number of people concerned).

Utilitarianism prescribes straightforward method for decision-making on the basis of immediate gains and benefits for the maximum. This process of selection of the fittest course of action is very much like the OT process of election:

- i) Put in a situation to make a choice, various probable courses of action (= OT candidates) are first identified by the cognitive system;
- ii) Benefits and harms of each are taken into account instantly (= weighing and ranking of the OT constraints);
- iii) The course of action providing the greatest benefits is selected (= benefit is ranked the highest).

Thus, the philosophy works through the following constraints:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| (7) MAXBNFT | The Benefit caused by action is maximum |
| (8) MAXHARM | The Harm caused by action to anybody is maximum |
| (9) *HARM | Ideally there is no Harm to anybody |
| (10) *BNFT | There is no Benefit for anybody |

Constraints Related to Biology and Law

Biologically, man is an animal; therefore, law is necessary to curb animality and enforce humanity. Since our birth, we are confronted with challenges to our biological processes of adaptation and evolution, different threats to our survival and 'growth.' In this context, we also share a psycho-biological instinct of self- and species preservation, as Proverbio (244) contended. And significantly this preservation and survival policy depends a lot on man's biological preferences. Preferences are highly variable because, one may prioritise species over self, but the other otherwise. Nevertheless, as per common knowledge, an OT view of species-

preservation strategy (SELF put aside) might be presented by such rankings of constraints as the following:

OFFSPRING>>AMOROBJ (SPOUSE>>LOVER⁴)
 >>PARENT>>RESTOFSPECIES
 (NEWBORN>>PRESLEGALO>>RELATIVE>>FRIEND>>NEIGHBOUR>>OTH)

It's more propositional than absolute, as it is highly relative and variable. For our OT analysis here, we require not more than these following four constraints:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| (11) PRESSELF | One should always save him/herself |
| (12) PRESAMOR _[LOVER] | One should always save his/her fiancé/fiancée |
| (13) PRESAMOR _[SPOUSE] | One should always save his/her spouse |
| (14) PRESLEGALO | One should always comply with legal obligations |
| (15) PRESSPEC _[OTH] | One should always save Others |

In fact, biologically 'preservation' is parasitic of the urge for 'growth,' since the former is the primary condition for adaptation or growth. So, the quality of 'growth-seeking' is a biological requirement that can ensure 'preservation' in a more effective way.

Law is indispensably associated to biology in that the very concept of a civilised society necessitates restraining many of the biological instincts that would have been rampant otherwise. As for example, polygamy is biological, but needs to be curbed by law. Instead, society has an overreaching interest in the institution of marriage and its stability. Therefore, even in America extra-marital affair, polygamy and adultery have been made cognisable, valid ground for granting divorce irrespective of whatever might spur the adulterer (Amato and Previti 602). But, if one refuses to meet his friend on a certain day as agreed upon, or attends no parties thrown by his colleagues it's never cognisable. Such acts may not have social licenses. Social license cannot assure legal license always, for example, a teacher punishing her student. So, the two useful constraints to explain this legal and social licenses would be:

- (16) LICENSELAW The decision or act must be licensed by Law
(17) LICENSESOC The decision or act must be licensed by Society

Now let us turn to the process of constraint ranking and deontic reasoning. Turning to the point of markedness-faithfulness contrast in the constraints, let me connect phonology to decision-making. As in phonology, in decision-making too, the constraints mentioned so far can be classified into—

- Faithfulness constraint: (demands responses to the external/idealistic factors)
Ideal Input = Real Output (input-output uniformity is demanded)
However difficult the output action is, the ideals when strictly complied with can only ensure social or spiritual ‘validation.’
- Markedness Constraint: (demands responses to the internal/self-centered factors);
Ideal Input $\neq$ Real Output (context-specific compromise is demanded)
Paying little attention to the ideal, it intends to make the output action easier, more convenient for material/utilitarian ‘growth.’

Thus, motivational forces or needs can be classified as either dealing with internal factors or the external. The external forces include social, religious and ethical norms where compliance ensures ‘validation.’ But the physical, psychological, utilitarian forces are internal, intended for the material ‘growth’ only. Those relating to the external are idealistic, intending to make the person live up to the highest moral level. They can be labeled as the ‘faithfulness’ constraint. As for examples, the constraints relating to religion and morality can be categorised as the faithfulness constraints, since it’s normally taken for granted by the authority that these virtues should there be ingrained naturally in any person born as human. Conversely, the internal needs (or motivational factors) mostly guide to the behavioral well-formedness in mundane life and its well-being removing the oddities and difficulties that are less favored by the common people. They are markedness constraints. Utilitarian

constraints and those pertaining to physical and psychological needs, for examples, can be put down as markedness constraints.

On one hand, many of the above-mentioned motivators are conflicting; on the other hand, neither can be absolute. Consequently, human beliefs about what is, and is not, the right course of action are neither complete nor consistent. Thus, context-specific reasoning is mandatory that systematises these motivators through a syllogism based on deontic propositions (Green et al. 27, Ray et al. 829, Staller and Petta U27), that centre on concepts of ‘obligatoriness’ and ‘permissibility.’

“Deontic assertions concern what one ought to do, may do, and ought not to do” (Bucciarelli and Johnson-Laird 159). Therefore, all the ethical, philosophical, religious, legal and even biological principles are included in the deontic system. Deontic principles vary in their consequences, both for abiding by them and for violating them (Evans and Twyman-Musgrove 811). As in phonological OT, deontic reasoning functions here as the constraint-ranking mechanism in the moral act of deciding a course of action between/among alternatives.

All the cases of deception taken up for analysis from the Indian narratives are non-optimal from religious stand-point, since any such deception involves lies and therefore violates the divine norms of honesty, integrity and humility. But deontic reasoning often asserts that a ‘sinful’ act may be permissible if it is obligated by something more serious. Utilitarian philosophy tries to justify ‘sin’ on its practical utility for the maximum. Thus, the ‘sinful’ act is hardly an evil straightway; rather, behind it, there is always a conflict among diverse motivating forces or ‘CONstraints’ in Optimality terminology.

In Buddhadev Bose’s *It Rained all Night* (published in 1967), Maloti the woman made a decision to cheat upon her husband Nayanangshu in order to satisfy her sexual needs with his friend Jayanto, where her loyalty to husband must have denied her need fulfilment. After the adultery was committed, she became even more

conscious of the seriousness of the act, and silently confessed the sin of betraying her husband to the latter.

(Abbreviations in the Tableau: W for Maloti the central Woman; H for Nayonangshu the husband; L for Jayanto the Lover)

Pitted against choices of sexual gratification and loyalty to husband, Maloty chose to commit the ‘sin’ of adultery, since it was impossible for her to fulfill both requirements together. From the religious perspective, Maloti’s act of adultery for the sake of sexual gratification is non-optimal or sub-harmonic, and the act is to be considered a ‘sin.’ First let’s see how, in this course of behavior, various constraints are ranked with descending power matrix. The following constraint hierarchy may be proposed:

MAXBNFT >> PRESAMOR_[LOVER] >> PRESSELF >> . . .
 .>> CARDVR_[JUSTICE]

Table 1: Tableau showing the OT mechanism in Maloti’s ‘sinful’ choice

Constraints ►								
Input: ‘W deceived neither H nor L’								
Candidates (warring to be Output) ▼	MAXBNFT	PRESAMOR _[LOVER]	PHYND _[AUTONOMY]	PRESSELF	PRESLEGALO	LICENSESOC	*HARM	CARDVR _[JUSTICE]
a) W deceived both H and L	*!	*			*!		**!	**!
☞ b) W deceived only H					*!	*!	*	*
c) W deceived only L	*	*!	*!				*!	*
d) W deceived neither H nor L				*!		**		

The tableau shows how Maloti decided in favor of love or against loyalty to conjugal relationship. The constraint-ranking in the tableau shows that she attached more importance to physical love and sex drive than to morality (as the motivator that led her to be disloyal to Nayo her husband). Actually, in performing this ‘selection task’ (Wason 135), she followed the deontics:

- Physical love and sex drive have obligated moral negligence;
- Moral negligence has prohibited conjugal loyalty;
- Prohibited conjugal loyalty lead to adultery
 - = Physical love and sex drive have prohibited conjugal loyalty.
 - = Physical love and sex drive led to adultery (Deception).

Beside benefit and love, the psychological need for autonomy is ranked very high.

Maloti cannot easily get rid of the stigma of ‘sin,’ because, as per the deontic assertion, whatever is obligatory may be permissible (Hilpinen 1, Lewis 5, van Fraassen 417). But, neither prohibited conjugal loyalty nor physical love and sex drive obligated her adultery.

Importantly, the revelation comes through a sincere silent confession on the part of the ‘sinner’ herself. Here the husband represents the religious standard, or simply the society itself Maloti had a tryst with eventually. Confession signifies that she was going through penance for her disloyalty: she started wishing she were loyal to her husband. The tableau below can present the new way she had now prioritised the constraints accountable for her moral behavior, free from all vices.

Table 2: Tableau showing the OT mechanism in Maloti’s confession of ‘sin’

Constraints ►	CARD	VR _{hus}	PRES	*HAR	MAX	PHYN	PRES	LICEN	PRES
Input: ‘W deceived’									

<i>neither H nor L'</i>								
Candidates (warring to be Output) ▼								
a) W deceived both H and L	**!	*!	**!	*!				*
b) W deceived only H	*	*!	*				*!	
c) W deceived only L	*		*!	*	*!			*!
☞ d) W deceived neither H nor L						*!	**	

Thus, at the time of revelation through a silent confession to Nayan, Maloti ranked her constraints quite differently. As failed to materialise her ideal of love, the constraint PRESAMOR_[LOVER] would rank very low or be inapplicable. But on the other hand, the sincerity and honesty with which she silently accepted her faults points out the strength of her new urge to protect her marriage (*i.e.* the constraint, PRESLEGALO). With the realisation of her guilt in betraying the husband for the sake of an impossibility, she started conforming to the virtue of justice, *i.e.* what she should have done to him. Thus the ranking has now been quite opposite:

CARDVR_[JUSTICE]>>PRESLEGALO . . . >>MAXBNFT . . .
.>>PRESAMOR_[LOVER]

While Maloti's decision to betray her husband came almost as a response to the time-bound biological call, in Maitreyi Devi's *It Never Dies* Maitreyi's attachment to her lover Mircea was carried on for a long time.

(Abbreviations in the Tableau: W for Maitreyi the central Woman; H for Maitreyi's husband; L for Mircea the Lover)

The tableaux below can tell the story about the nature of deception and its evilness

Until the ripples of the Romanian novel by Mircea Eliade *La Nuit Bengali* or *Bengal Nights* (published in 1933) reached Bengal to disturb Maitreyi and her life, she had been living with her husband a long, happy conjugal life, their ‘life together, full of tenderness and joy and desire.’ Did she hide the past from the husband? Nothing is clearly mentioned in her novel *It Does not Die* (published in 1974) that presents her own version of her love affair with Mircea. Even if the truth was hidden, is this a ‘sin?’ In fact, such decision to hide the truth about her deep attachment to Mircea was obligated by no danger of death but motivated by some other needs of hers. In spite of the element of deception, as the ranking of constraints demonstrate, the ‘sin,’ from the woman’s perspective, has its justification through the high ranking of the social, psychological needs that obligates her utilitarian decision not to hurt her husband’s emotions by revealing the truth.

Table 3: Tableau showing the OT mechanism in Maitreyi’s initial choice of suppression

Constraints ►								
Input: ‘ <i>W</i> <i>deceived</i> <i>neither H nor</i> <i>L</i> ’								
Candidates (warring to be Output) ▼	SOCND _[AFFILIATION]	PSYND _[RELATEDNESS]	MAXBNFT	PRESAMOR _[LOVER]	LICENSESOC	CAPTVR _[CHASTITY]	CARDVR _[PRUDENCE]	THEOVR _[FAITH]
(a) W deceived both H and L	*		*	*	*	*	*!	**
☞ (b) W deceived only H						*		*!
(c) W deceived only L		*	*!	*		*		

(d) W deceived neither H nor L	*							
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Then, why did she finally reveal it at all? Her confession to her husband about her emotional attachment to foreigner is all honesty and sincerity, and in a way her genuine cry from the core of her heart for true love and respect for the husband, his family and society.

Table 4: Tableau showing the OT mechanism in the revelation of Maitreyi's secret

Constraints ►								
Input: ' <i>W</i> <i>deceived</i> <i>neither</i> <i>H nor L</i> '								
Candidates (warring to be Output) ▼	THEOVR _[FAITH]	CAPITVR _[CHASTITY]	PRESAMOR _[LOVER]	CARDVR _[PRUDENCE]	LICENSESOC	MAXBNFT	SOCND _[AFFILIATION]	PSYND _[RELATEDNESS]
(a) W deceived both H and L	**	*	*	*!	*	*	*	
(b) W deceived only H	*!	*						
(c) W deceived only L		*	*			*!		*
☞ (d) W deceived neither H nor L							*	

In these two cases of confession, it has been observed that the validation-seeking faithfulness constraints are ranking high,

defeating the ‘growth’-seeking markedness constraints that were prioritised at the time of deception. Significantly, faithfulness constraints when ranked high, as for example, at the time of genuine confessions, are not succumbing to any obligation. Rather they come to exercise their power over the other needs and utilitarian motivations, when the person concerned (here Maloti or Maitreyi) has ‘acquired’ some deeper knowledge of higher truth.

The case of Rosie in R. K. Narayan’s *The Guide* (published in 1958) is concerned with a more serious act, that is infidelity to husband and adultery. It was all a lustful act of infidelity taking place when the tour guide Raju was allured into her hotel bedroom during the period of historical research work by her husband Marco. Starting from this point, the immoral relationship continued for some long time until Raju was convicted of forgery.

(Abbreviations in the Tableau: W for Rosie the central Woman; H for Marco the husband; L for Raju the Lover)

Rosie kept deceiving and cheating upon her innocent and all-credulous husband Marco for long. For this act of adultery and deception, the following constraint ranking can explain the nature of the ‘sin’ concealed by the immoral wife all along from her innocent husband:

Table 5: Tableau showing the OT mechanism in Rosie’s ‘sinful’ choice

Constraints ►								
Input: ‘ <i>W</i> <i>deceived neither</i> <i>H nor L</i> ’								
Candidates (warring to be Output) ▼	PHYND _[SEX]	PSYND _[RELATEDNESS]	MAXBNFT	PRESAMOR _[LOVER]	SOCND _[AFFILIATION]	CAPITVR _[CHASTITY]	PRESAMOR _[SPOUSE]	THEOVR _[FAITH]

a) W deceived both H and L	*					*		*
 b) W deceived only H						*	*!	*
c) W deceived only L	*	*	*	*!	*			*
d) W deceived neither H nor L	*		*	*				

Here the high ranking of the physical and psychological needs, along with a utilitarian approach, accounts for such deception through a selfish ‘growth’ has been intended by an individual. But significantly the social constraints also go hand in hand with them, all together leading to the act of hypocrisy and deception.

Importantly, Rosie realised her mistake only when Raju’s fraud came to light and was to be convicted. Then Rosie’s mission for ‘growth’ had a setback, and decided to go back to her husband. Rather than realisation, it may be termed as a greater feat of deception on her part. Probably Raju could see into this side of Rosie, when he said, “Neither Marco nor I had any place in her life, which had its own sustaining utility and which she herself had underestimated all along.” (Narayan 199). Let us first introduce the constraint ranking for it first, then followed by discussion:

Table 6: Tableau showing the OT mechanism in Rosie’s ‘realization’ of the ‘sin’

Constraints ►								
Input: <i>W deceived neither H nor L</i>								
Candidates (warring to be Output)	MAXBNFT	PSYND _[RELATEDNESS]	SOCND _[AFFILIATION]	PRESAMOR _[LOVER]	PRESAMOR _[SPOUSE]	PHYND _[SEX]	CAPITVR _[CHASTITY]	THEOVR _[FAITH]

▼								
 a) W deceived both H and L						*	*	*
(b) W deceived only H					*!		*	*
(c) W deceived only L	*	*	*	*!		*		*
(d) W deceived neither H nor L	*			*		*		

Like Rosie, Maitreyi had her confession too but with a major difference: Rosie had her realisation as a utilitarian and opportunist, the other with a complete devotion to her husband. The husbands here were no less than the epitomes of poetic justice: one held the devotee in his embrace, the other refused to accept the deceiving elf. In spite of her final realisation (though apparent only), Rosie definitely kept justifying her adultery all through on ground of Marco's impotence. Maitreyi was definitely more sincere in revealing the truth than Rosie, because the former did it spontaneously without any great obligation, but the latter was obligated to do so by her psychological urge to purge off the guilt to some extent and also to continue her marital relationship with Marco. Different motivations accounting for such difference have been aptly captured through the respective sets of constraints and their different ranking for the confessions by these two wives. It shows that, while Maitreyi went for 'validation' ranking the faithfulness constraints higher, Rosie still was running for only 'growth' though the satisfaction of the well-formedness or markedness constraints.

In the given four literary texts, OT has successfully explained the complex processes of moral decision-making (in favor of deception and then confession). As claimed above, behind such acts, necessarily there are a number of constraints or reasons fighting for

dominance; and one kind of constraint arrangement leads to some certain act. By showing that contradictions are produced by different constraint hierarchies, the model has accounted for contradictory nature of human behavior (as evident in the cases of Maloti, Maitreyi or Rosie followed by the final revelations of their guilt). Thus, optimality framework has efficaciously resolved the situations when contradictory principles interact in a complex manner before the human cognitive system translates it into a final decision.

By distilling morality through an OT filter, 'decision' (that often leads to a 'sinful' act) has been explained optimally. Sin as a religious concept is synonymous with any kind of deviation from the divine path of 'truth.' But the deontic way of reasoning challenges the very basis of this concept by raising the question: is the deception 'sinful' when it saves a life but causes no harm to anybody? Re-defining the concept of 'sin' or any course of behavior that is biblically non-optimal, it is proposed that, deception or disloyalty itself being never sufficient for sin, though necessary, should not be directly correlated or equated with 'vice.' Thus, logic has here been scientifically supported by science represented by OT.

Here OT has resolved efficaciously the conflict of contradictory principles before the human cognitive system dissolves it into a 'decision.' Sin as a religious term is synonymous with deviation from the divine path of 'virtues.' What if the 'sin' is forced by an obligation? Is anything immoral always immoral, in every context and situation? By distilling the element of morality through the Optimality filter, the paper has explained the process of 'decision'-making optimally. Re-defining the concept of 'sin,' it has thus shown that, any non-optimal course of behavior like deception or disloyalty itself is necessary but not sufficient always to be called sinful or to be directly correlated to 'vice.'

Endnotes

- i. Optimality Theory-Some useful Information:
OT Mechanism works through the three central principles: **GEN**, **CON** and **EVAL**.

GEN stands for the **GEN**erator or the productive function of the grammar that generates or determines the set of a number of *candidates* for each underlying form (input).

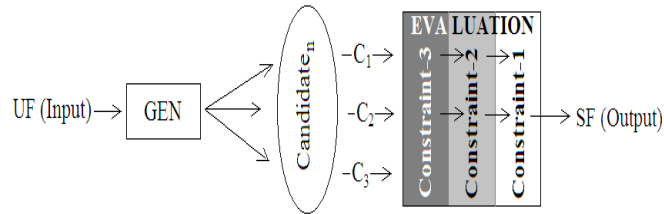
CON stands for the **CON**straints, rather a set of constraints present in every grammar that are: (i) Universal; (ii) ranked; (iii) Violable; and (iv) conflicting.

EVAL stands for the **EVAL**uator, *i.e.* the mechanism to evaluate the respective grammaticality of each and every candidate by the ranking of **CON**straints, following the principles that:

- No Candidate (abbreviated below as $C_1 / C_2 \dots C_n$) can satisfy all the constraints;
- Optimal Candidate is the one that satisfies the most dominating constraints in the hierarchy.

Graphically the whole process can be captured as in the Figure 2, where the constraint ranking has been assumed as: Constraint 3 >> Constraint2 >> Constraint1.

Fig. 2: OT Mechanism of GEN, CON, EVAL: Input-to-Output



The whole process of this constraint conflict and their ranking to determine the optimal candidate is represented by an OT tableau:

Table 7: Model OT tableau representing Constraint Ranking and Candidate election

/input/	Constraint-1	Constraint-2	Constraint-3
OutputA	*!		
☞ OutputB		*	
OutputC		*	*!

Let us explain the essential elements including the signs and symbols used in an OT tableau (always remember that, in the tableau an empty white cell means complete satisfaction of the constraint concerned by the candidate):

- a. Crucial elements
 - (i) Input [*i.e.* the underlying form, used as the raw-material here]
 - (ii) Output [*i.e.* probable surface form called Candidate]
 - (iii) Constraints [*i.e.* structural requirements, often abbreviated here as Con₁, Con₂, Con₃, ..., Con_n]
 - (iv) Asterisk (*) [that indicates ‘violation’ of the Constraint concerned]
- b. Other indicators which make meaning more specific for the reader
 - (i) Exclamation marks (!) [that means ‘fatal violation’ of the Constraint concerned]
 - (ii) Grey-shaded cell [meaning non-applicability of the Constraint concerned]
 - (iii) Pointing finger (☞) [It indicates the winning candidate or the optimal output form]

We can see in the tableau above that, three output forms or the ‘candidates’ (sometimes abbreviated as C₁ / C₂ . . . C_n) are fighting to be the winning candidate. But the OutputB (second candidate) gets elected as the grammatical output because, in the given instance the ranking of the constraints is like—Constraint-1 >>Constraint-2 >> Constraint-3—where the Constraint-1 is most powerful and Constraint-2 dominates the weakest Constraint-3. Given that, OutputB is the optimal candidate, as it satisfies the most powerful Constraint-1 but OutputA seriously violates it. Though both have satisfied Constraint-1, OutputB is preferred over OutputC because the latter violates the last two constraints, while the former satisfies the Constraint-3.

Originally, OT grammar is highly a non-linear phonological system working through constraint ranking. It works through constraint ranking and its hierarchy. Grammar must reconcile the conflicting forces of faithfulness and markedness. Kager (1999) talked about the conflict between the markedness and faithfulness, resulting from their ranking in the optimal candidate winning over the other candidates. The way constraints are ranked determines the winning candidate, as shown below:

Table 8: Ranking Con₂>>Con₁>>Con₃ leading to the election of CandidateA

/input/	Con-2	Con-1	Con-3
☞ CandidateA		*!	

CandidateB	*		
CandidateC	*		*!

- ii. The Talmud, written in Tannaitic Hebrew and Aramaic, contains opinions and lessons of the pre-Christian era rabbis on law, ethics, philosophy, customs and so on. The entire Talmud consists of two collection of writings, Babylonian Talmud and Jerusalem Talmud. In Jewish law the Talmud provides foundation for all behavioral codes.
- iii. Rational Choice Theory discusses the selection process based on a complete and transitive preference out of many available choice alternatives. In determining preferences, the rational agent considers all ready information about probabilities, consequences, costs and benefits involved. Thus, it is a consistent act of choosing the self-determined best choice.
- iv. LOVER here refers to either fiancé or fiancée

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