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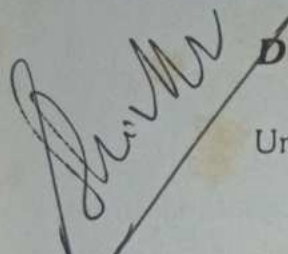


THE ASSOCIATION FOR ENGLISH STUDIES OF INDIA

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The Indian Journal of English Studies, is the research journal of the Indian Association for English Studies (Established in 1940), now renamed as the Association for English Studies of India. It invites scholarly articles on World literatures in English, Teaching of English as a Second Language, Literary and Critical theories, Bhasha literatures and Indian Literature in English Translation. Articles submitted for publication must conform to the format prescribed by *M.L.A. Handbook* (Sixth Edition). The journal is published annually in December every year and it considers the papers read in the previous All India English Teachers' Conference for publication. However, articles can be submitted directly to the Chief Editor by the end of August every year. It is priced at Rs. 200/-.

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Editorial

TRANSLATE OR PERISH

The concept of Indian literature is open to debate, not withstanding the laudable attempt by Sahitya Akademi to publish all the regional literatures of India under that title in its journal, *Indian Literature*. Indian literature is a multilingual literature. And it is in this sense Oriya literature, Bengali literature, Telgu literature, Tamil literature, Kannada literature, Urdu literature and so on are written in the respective languages. (It is another matter that Hindi literature is written in the Devnagari script). The question is that how can readers of a particular language read the literature written in another language unless it is translated into that language which they know. For instance, how can a Bengali read Oriya literature or a Tamil read Kannada literature without that literature being translated into his/her language. Even when that is done, the problem is not fully solved. That is because if one literature is translated into another regional language, then the people belonging to that language will read it not other people who know different languages of India. But if a regional literature is translated into English, all the people who know English all over the country irrespective of regions will read it.

There is another angle of this equation. That is, it is true that literature presupposes a language and it is also equally true that language is hinged upon a culture. It is in this sense, that Oriya literature, Bengali literature, Gujarati literature, Marathi literature, Tamil literature, Telgu literature, Kannada literature and Urdu literature are grounded in their respective cultures. But these cultures are not isolated cultures, they belong to a larger culture - that is Indian Culture. The great rivers of our country - Ganga, Jamuna,

Narmada, Sindhu, Kaveri, Brahmaputra and Mahandi - are our common links. Water is the generic force. It's sacred to us. In our great epic *The Mahabharata* Sanjay describes to Dhitarashtra what *Bharatabarsha* means - the whole country from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. The culture being one we are divided by languages, which became the medium of literatures.

Now how to make a pan Indian literature, the one like Sanskrit which once upon a time was a vibrant literature - now almost reduced to the language of rituals. Which literature can take the place of Sanskrit now ? Not any of the regional literatures nor even Indian English literature alone. Therefore, we need all the regional literatures in English translation along with Indian English literature together to make pan Indian literature, which can be offered as a course in the Indian Universities to make our younger generation aware of Indian tradition, culture and identity. That will be an anti-dote to the ugly regionalism which is raising its head like a wounded tigress to devour us. Now it is time to translate our literature, our thought or perish.

In this issue we have included scholarly papers on British literature, Canadian literature, Indian English literature, Bhasha literature, Comparative literature, Literary Theory, Translation Studies, Indian poetics and World literature in English. A new feature on *Editors' response to a poet* is included along with an interview with Indian English novelist Shashi Deshpande. Care has been taken to give due representation to the papers presented at the last AIETC held at Nagpur in 2008 and the papers received from the Life Members of the Association (AESI) in time. We have also included here the Presidential Address of Prof. H. H. Anniah Gowda delivered at the forty-fourth session of All India English Teachers' Conference held at B.H.U. Varanasi in December 1999.

BIJAY KUMAR DAS
Chief Editor

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I'm still waiting for you

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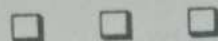
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SHAKESPEARE: THE SEER OF THE OCCULT

Manoj Das

Shakespeare is not a person, but a continent rich with wondrous landscapes unfolding scenes and situations vast in their range and 1200 characters of different shades and hues, glorious and ludicrous, usual and unusual. Sri Aurobindo pays him a unique tribute when, from a certain point of view, he brackets him with Valmiki, Vyasa and Homer and calls him elsewhere "a seer of life". He says, further that Shakespeare's "way indeed is not so much the poet himself thinking about life, as life thinking itself out in him through many mouths, in many moods and moments. . ."

At the moment we focus on only one aspect of the enigma that is life as presented by him - the occult forces that exercise their influence on human life, even play with it, known or unknown to us. Alas, Shakespeare declares his faith in this in unambiguous terms through the enigmatic Hamlet, "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy!" I further confine myself only to the darker drama enacted by them rather than the auspicious.

What is the *modus operandi* for such forces to infiltrate our life? One opening that they spy out easily is our ambition. What an irony when the great self-styled lovers of Roman democracy kill the ambition-incarnate, Julius Caesar. What then? Well, ambition has been dislodged from its prize mansion, but where does it go? It jumps onto and takes possession of those very noble Romans who slew him, "as he was ambitious". Nervous though after their bloody action, Cassius exposes this phenomenon when he jubilantly exclaims, "How

many ages hence shall this our lofty scene be acted over in states unborn and accents yet unknown!"

But the most striking example of the devastation that can be caused by ambition when it is exploited by the 'impish elements of the occult world of course is Macbeth. A castle generally remains well-guarded; but on a festive occasion the doors are thrown open to a multitude of guests. It is then that there is the possibility of some untoward and unwelcome strangers entering it, along with the invitees. The human personality too is like a castle - guarded by cautious intelligence and common sense. But when our emotions run festive, the caution is slackened. It is then that the weird and the strange trespass into our being. That is what happened to Macbeth, the able general and cousin of King Duncan. He is elated for his success in crushing a rebellion, when the three witches, the impish elements of the bizarre plane, ignite his dormant ambition and work havoc in his life. The moment of success could be a dangerous moment indeed. In fact, Shakespeare displays an uncanny capacity for deciphering several supra-physical laws. Like our visible actions preceded by resolutions getting formed in the invisible domain of thought, every physical event is preceded by its invisible blueprint. The blueprint is alterable till a certain moment; Providence keeps ways open for a man to retreat from a proposed action if it is something degrading for him. Along the dusky passage of his castle, a little before he would assassinate his celebrated guest, the king, Macbeth is aghast to see an aerial dagger showing him the way. The spectre was a warning to him - giving him a chance to realize the horror of his proposed action and withdraw from it. But he lets the chance lapse. Next, he sees on its blade gouts of blood "which was not so before". That means the assassination has already become a fait accompli at the occult plane; Macbeth had voted against himself. Belief in the supernatural was common in Shakespearian England. But while the others employed it to arouse awe, Rasa Bhayanaka as we call it in Indian dramaturgy, Shakespeare employed it as expository of unknown laws at work in our life.

But for letting us know the unknown he does not take recourse to the supernatural always. He knows that no man is a single entity. The pity is, one commits a blunder under the pressure of one part of his being, for which the whole man must suffer. "Glamis hath murder'd sleep, and therefore Cawdor shall sleep no more! Macbeth shall sleep no more!" Needless to say, Glamis, Cawdor and Macbeth constitute the same person. While the name Macbeth represents the original individual, Glamis and Cawdor are titles - representing ambition and vanity. It is the superficial Macbeth that had committed the murder, but the real Macbeth has no escape from the consequences. Murder of King Duncan being described as the murder of sleep of course has its own significance. In fact, it is a multiple murder: murder of a guest, murder of a benefactor, murder of a relative and murder of one's king; but the crime is most heinous because it is the murder of sleep - sleep symbolizing faith and trust, apart from its qualities listed by Macbeth himself.

Evil, Shakespeare knew, need not necessarily manifest through supernaturally embodied agencies like the witches. There are human beings who could serve as its perfect instruments. When Desdemona meets Othello in Cyprus after a turbulent voyage and the two lovers, safe from the agitated Venetian society, are in a mood to freely give vent to their ecstasy, Iago observes them quietly, standing in a corner of the stage. His simple and precise soliloquy says it all about the almost detached function of mischief :

O you are well-tuned now!

But I will set down the pegs that makes this music,

As honest as I am.

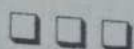
What a statement on the destructive propensity of the evil! Pure wickedness can be honest to itself, for it does not suspect itself. Iago, the mischief-for-the sake of mischief-incarnate, cannot but be born of its author's sure knowledge that there were infra-logical forces at work through human beings, forces that find satisfaction only in ruining the beautiful. If such malevolence could be found in many in

variant degrees, it could find its full embodiment once in a while in a rare phenomenon that was Iago.

Vast is the scope and function of the occult laws. Their role, in the ultimate analysis, like all other happenings in life, contribute to the growth of the consciousness of the characters concerned, sooner or later, provided we believe that life is a continuous progress passing through cycles of birth and death towards its goal fixed in the calendar of the unknown. Life is a tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury could be the experience of Macbeth who had pursued his agenda of ambition in a determined way, but the experience is an invaluable gain that his psychic, the indestructible core of his being, cannot but preserve so that he transcends the spell of ambition in his next incarnation. This inevitability of the growth of consciousness, through disastrous state of affairs into which a confederacy of the evil and the wicked throws man, is clearly articulated by the poor old king, the gullible Lear, when he finds himself in the open in a stormy night. He realizes what he could never have realized had he died as the whimsical proud ruler he was. His consciousness has expanded enough to embrace in it the misery of his subjects:

Poor naked wretches wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads, and unfed sides,
Your looped and windowed ruggedness, defend you
From seasons such as this? O I have ta'en
Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp;
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
That thou mayst shake the superflux to them,
And show the heavens more just.

The king was not to get that chance to use his "superflux" for the needy in that life, but life goes on !



ON CAMUS'S THE MISUNDERSTANDING

B. N. Patnaik

This paper attempts to study of some dialogues in Albert Camus's play *The Misunderstanding* from the point of view of conversational discourse analysis. It is based on the premise that the dialogues in a play and conversation in day-to-day life are linguistic phenomena of essentially the same type, and as such theories of conversation are in principle applicable to dialogues in a play. The theory that the paper uses to study the dialogues is Grice's theory of conversation. The exchange selected for study is between Martha and Jan, and we believe the same is potentially theoretically interesting because in a certain sense, it is of a deviant nature.

I

We might start with a brief outline of Grice's theory. This theory first appeared in print in 1975, and soon it impacted many fields, most significantly philosophy of language, pragmatics, discourse linguistics, and linguistic stylistics. Attempts have been made by scholars to bring precision and almost formal rigour to the theory, but in our assessment, the fundamental insights in the first articulation of the theory have remained unchanged in its subsequent articulations.

For the rationalist Grice, conversation is rational, cooperative behaviour. The "cooperative principle" is at work when humans are engaged in conversation - this is the basic principle of conversation.

Grice posits four maxims: those of quantity, quality, relevance and manner. Well-formed conversations have to satisfy the requirements of these maxims. The speaker can violate a maxim, sometimes deliberately, but only when the hearer concludes that the speaker has violated one or more maxims, irrespective of whether or not the speaker actually did so, he tries to make sense of the violation.

In purely informal terms, the quantity maxim is about the amount of information to be provided by the speaker (although "speaker-hearer" is a more appropriate term since the speaker becomes the hearer as the hearer responds to him, we will continue to use the more familiar terms "speaker" and "hearer") at a certain stage during the exchange. The information provided as response to a query or an observation during an interaction must be neither too much nor too little. Providing more information than necessary would be as unhelpful as providing less information than necessary. In the event of the former one has the task of filtering out the vital information from a bulk of talk, and theoretically it might not be a trivial task since pieces of information do not carry any tags indicating their value for the relevant query or observation. In the event of the latter, one would have to create information in order to supplement what is provided, and there is never any certainty that the created information might not be misleading.

The maxim of quality is about the dependability of information provided to the addressee. This information must not be such that it is without evidence, and it must be such that the speaker believes it to be true. This is in some sense the most important of the maxims, because unless it is satisfied, conversation would hardly be possible. In ordinary circumstances if one does not believe that the other is honest with him, the two could hardly talk for any length of time. Thus failure to observe this maxim almost amounts to failure to observe the cooperative principle itself. One problem with this maxim is that dependability is at least partly a matter of the

hearer's attitude to the speaker, and not a property of the material provided, and as such there is little possibility of an objective evaluation of the contribution of the speaker as far as dependability is concerned. Since our present aim is not to critique Grice's theory, we leave this matter here.

The maxim of relevance is about being relevant; the speaker's contribution must satisfy the requirement that it be relevant. The maxim of manner is about the style of the contribution: the language must be direct, brief and clear. There are other maxims as well, for example, the politeness maxim, requiring that one's contribution be polite.

It is not that maxims are not violated or that violations necessarily terminate an interaction. Consider a very simple case: some person, X, knows where Y lives, but when Z asks him about Y's residence, he says little about it but embarks on a discourse about how bad a person Y is. Now the hearer knows that the speaker has violated the maxims of quantity and relevance both, but he knows that he has observed the cooperative principle since he has not opted out of conversation. He is also aware that the speaker knows where Y lives, and further that he is not a person who talks irresponsibly. Given these (among others, which we ignore), he might conclude that the speaker has deliberately violated these maxims in order to suggest to him in a manner, such that it is not lost on him, that Y is currently in a bad state of mind or is actually a terrible person, and that Z's meeting with him would be unpleasant to him, for which reason, he should avoid meeting him. Thus Grice maintains that understanding utterances in real life interaction is not just a matter of language ability, but also of reasoning ability .

The above account for well-formed discourse, in other words, normal, day - to-day, cooperative talk. But it is reasonable to assume that not all such interaction is helpful; people cheat, misguide or misinform, sometimes without intending to do so, etc. Such

conversation might be viewed as "deviant", under the assumption that humans are in some sense basically reasonable and cooperative, a perspective that seems to underlie Grice's thinking on conversation. Other kinds of deviation are conceivable - for one instance, an interaction between A and B in which every response is irrelevant to every input, the kind of interaction that is unlikely to be encountered in natural situations. We will not be concerned with such interaction here.

Now how does one study deviant talk, if one considers Grice's model to be best suited to study well-formed talk? It is a pertinent question in the present context since the paper aims to study some deviant talk in the proposed sense of the term. One wonders whether this problem is similar to the familiar one of deviant sentences in the context of sentence grammar: if grammar characterizes well-formed sentences, then how would one study ungrammatical sentences? Is there then the need of a model specifically designed to deal with ungrammatical sentences? The answer that was given in the nineteen sixties in generative linguistics and has been widely accepted is that there is indeed no need for a theory of deviant structures; the theory of well-formed structures is fully adequate to deal with the ill formed ones. This is a completely satisfactory proposition since deviance makes sense only with respect to the well formed. Ungrammatical sentences can therefore be characterized only in terms of the system that characterizes the grammatical ones. The approach that is considered reasonable for the deviant sentences can be expected to turn out to be so for the deviant conversations as well.

II

Camus's play "The Misunderstanding" is a tragedy of miscommunication. Here we consider the conversation between Jan and Martha. Jan is Martha's elder brother, but he had left home when Martha was still a small child, and after twenty long years when they met, it was only Jan who recognized his sister. Martha could

not recognize her brother; neither did the mother, her son. During the years Jan was away, his mother and sister had taken to crime; they had become killers. They owned a hotel, where they would occasionally drug a guest who had just come, had come alone, and had no acquaintances in the town, and throw him into the depths of the river at night. Martha had dreams of getting out of her dull and cold surroundings and go to a bright and sunny place where colourful flowers blossomed and where one could walk quite a distance on the coast without meeting anyone. For her dream to be realized she needed money, and it was by killing the unsuspecting guests at their hotel and stealing their money that she was raising this money. Jan had absolutely no idea of the fact that his sister and his mother had become murderers. It is in this context that the brother and the sister would become the prey and the predator. Jan had done well, had earned good money, and had married. He had a loving wife. He had returned home to share his prosperity with his sister and his mother, and make them happy. He wanted to give them a surprise, so he didn't want to tell them right on arrival who he was. He would tell them only on the following day. His wife had come with him, but he would introduce her to his family only on the following day. He had put her up in another hotel for that night. She was very unhappy and frightened too; she had a strong and disturbing feeling that something might terribly wrong during that night of their separation.

Jan told Martha that he came from a bright, sunny place, where lovely flowers of many colours bloomed, and where to find some serene quietness. He said he had money, and that he had come alone and that he knew no one in that town. He happened to say precisely those things that would entice his sister to kill him. He surely said all these and more by way of suggesting that he had arrived to bring comfort and happiness to her life - only the announcement that her dream was going to become reality would come on the following day !

He also asked her personal questions: about whether they had lived a somewhat lonely life all those years, whether the place wasn't rather dull, etc. She disliked such questions; she told him quite clearly and firmly that they were inappropriate for a guest to ask her; she related to him only as a hotelkeeper would to a guest at the hotel, and as such there was no room for any personal talk between them. But he was asking her those questions, he would tell her, because he was just trying to reach out to her. He was exploring possibilities of establishing connections with her probably with the hope that this would make the declaration of his identity on the following day natural and easy. Martha resisted Jan's efforts knowing that it would be easy to harm a stranger rather than an acquaintance. "It's easier to kill what one doesn't know", her mother had observed (79)". Thus Jan and Martha were both acting with respect to each other, pretending to appear what they were not: Jan was not a stranger to Martha, and Martha was not just the hotelkeeper to Jan, she was his potential killer. Jan and Martha spoke to each other alone only three times, the last exchange was very short indeed, and once more in the presence of their mother. As mentioned earlier, we are concerned here with only the former. Jan lied to her when he gave her wrong information about himself as she made routine entries in the hotel register about him as the guest. He said his name was Karl, and that he was a Czech, that he was born in Bohemia, although he came to their hotel from the coast. One wouldn't of course know whether every single piece of information he gave her was false, but that does not affect our understanding of the meaning of the interaction. Then he asked those personal questions by way of reaching out to her, and she pointed out to him how he was behaving inappropriately, etc. The second time they met, they talked mostly about how wonderful the coast was from where he had come, and how dreary the country town was where Martha lived. In course of their conversation, Jan mentioned that he had money. Later Martha came with tea which was drugged and soon left after exchanging a just few words with Jan.

III

How does Grice's theory of conversation deal with the interaction between Jan and Martha? Jan's answers to Martha's questions about his identity, etc. satisfy all the maxims except quality, but Martha has no basis for doubt. Therefore from Martha's point of view, no violation of the maxim takes place, and needless to add, no implicatures are generated. The utterance is assigned its literal meaning.

Consider now the following interaction:

(1) Martha: ...And where are you going?

Jan: I've not decided. It will depend on a lot of things.

Martha: Then do you propose to stay here?

Jan: I don't know. It depends on what I find here.

Martha: That doesn't matter. Is no one here expecting you?

Jan: No, I couldn't say anyone's expecting me (89).

Interestingly, Jan's last two responses were understood differently from what Jan arguably meant. In the first of these he in all probability had in mind the way he would be accepted by his mother and sister, but her sister interpreted it in a broad sense, as one ordinarily would. When Martha in her last question above, used the word "here", she didn't have her house alone in mind, but when Jan responded, he did with reference to precisely this unintended reference of that word, but he very well knew what Martha had meant when she used that adverbial of place. To that extent Jan wasn't being cooperative, but it was part of his decision to pretend for that day. Considering that Martha was already seriously considering killing him, her questions arguably had a hidden agenda, but Jan, the guest, had no reason to be read any hidden meaning into the hotelkeeper Martha's words.

A little while later, Jane asked a personal question to Martha, and she felt offended. Their conversation on this theme is interesting

from our point of view; we consider here only the first question and part of its longish answer, which is (2).:

- (2) Jan: But... [He hesitates.] Isn't your life here a bit dull at times? Don't you and your mother find it very lonely?

Martha [rounding on him angrily]: I decline to answer any such questions. You had no business to ask them, and you should have known it. I can see I'll have to warn you how things stand. As a guest in this inn you have the rights and privileges of a guest, but nothing more. Still, don't be afraid, you will have every attention you are entitled to. You will be very well looked after. . . But I fail to see why we should go out of our way to give you special reasons for satisfaction. That's how your questions are out of place. It has nothing to do with you or whether or not we feel lonely... (91).

Jan here introduced a new topic into his conversation with Martha in order to prolong the same, without which reaching out to her would obviously not be possible. She wasn't interested, but wouldn't discontinue the conversation either, which for her, as the innkeeper, would be inappropriate behaviour towards the guest. Besides she wouldn't like him to feel offended and leave, which would upset her plans. Now, Jan's introducing a new topic in the conversation was quite legitimate, even considering the fact that Martha had shown no interest in interacting with him at a personal level. He had a covert reason for it, but even without it, it was by no means improper. However, he didn't introduce an impersonal topic such as politics or culture; by asking her clearly personal questions, he violated the maxims of relevance and manner. What he asked was by no means relevant to his position as a guest there, and by asking personal questions that were clearly uncomplimentary to the addressee, he violated norms of polite behaviour. What he said was rude, inviting justifiably angry response from Martha. But by now quite characteristically, she tempered her reproach with the assurance that he would be well looked after. On the surface what she said

satisfied the requirements of quantity, relevance and manner maxims - she said exactly what needed to be told, and she was not impolite. This was precisely how Jan interpreted her words. It would not have significantly altered things had he figured out that her reassuring words were a means for her to persuade him not to leave the hotel. He would have felt encouraged to make efforts to reach out to her as part of his strategy to make acceptance of him by his sister easier the following day. There was no way he could have connected her words to her sinister motive.

The last time Martha and Jan conversed was when she had just brought him a cup of tea. He mildly protested that he hadn't asked for it. She told him that the attendant might have heard him wrong, and that he would not be billed for that tea. Then the following exchange took place:

(3) Jan: ...I'm glad you brought me some tea. Very kind of you.

Martha: Please don't mention it. What we do is in our interests.

Jan: I can see you are determined not to leave me with any illusions!

But frankly I don't see where your interest comes in, in this case.

Martha: It does, I assure you! Sometimes a cup of tea is enough to keep our guests here (108).

With that she went out. The tea was drugged, and there was of course no truth whatsoever in Martha's explanation that there was some misunderstanding with regard to the order for the tea. To Jan's routine polite words, Martha responded with equally polite expressions. Her second sentence is interesting: overtly it is just a polite expression - she refused to accept the compliment that she was considerate, saying that in doing what she did, she was merely being self-centred instead. There was a covert meaning, which was in her mind. Her statement was more to ease her conscience than

warn him. This time Jan asked for clarity, assuming that she had transgressed the manner maxim unintentionally. It was one thing to discourage him from trying to be personal with her, but it was quite another to assert that what she had said was merely an acknowledgement of her self-centredness. Her last sentence, which would have appeared rather odd to one, did not appear to be so to Jan; in any case, before he could respond, she left. His monologue after she left shows that he looked upon the tea as a welcoming gesture on her part. In terms of Grice's theory, Martha flouted the quality maxim, but in Jan's assessment there was no violation.

This brings out a feature of the maxim of quality. For the hearer to assess its satisfaction, he must make use of information that may not be available in the words of the speaker. And if he has no access to the information needed, he would just not notice that the speaker has flouted the maxim of quality. This is often the basis of miscommunication. Both Jan and Martha were victims of each other's half-truths and double talk, but neither was aware of the same, because neither had the required information about the other for the purpose. This also shows that miscommunication is basically the function of the hearer's failure to recognize the speaker's deliberate flouting of the maxim of quality.

In concluding the discussion, we draw attention to the fact that our analysis has failed to bring out the deviant nature of the pieces of conversation under study - the deviant (it must be stressed, in the intended sense) talk appears indistinguishable from well-formed talk. The question then arises as to whether the method to study well-formed talk is inherently incapable of studying deviant talk. Our answer is still in the negative.

One recognizes the deviant nature of the sentence "Pigs fly" from one's knowledge of the world. If there were someone in the world unaware of the limitations of a pig, he would not treat this sentence as deviant. The knowledge of the world is the crucial

consideration in this case. Therefore from someone's failure to notice the oddity in the sentence, it does not follow that a different approach is needed for the study of such semantically (or pragmatically) deviant sentences. The same holds for the deviant conversation too. One notes that without the necessary background information or contextual knowledge, it would be impossible for the hearer to recognize the speaker's flouting of the maxim of quality. In real life conversation this might have consequences ranging from the trivial to the serious. The same is true of the world of the play too. It is just that in this particular play of Camus the consequences of the miscommunication between Jan and Martha are intensely tragic.

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A CENTURY OF INDIAN DRAMA IN ENGLISH

Prema Nandakumar

Indian Drama in English has generally few takers at the doctoral as well as seminar levels which surprises me as there is plenty of it for a researcher. Its run began almost with the start of Indian writing in English, when Michael Madhusudhan Dutt published *Is this Called Civilisation* as early as 1871.

The first significant dramatist is, of course, Sri Aurobindo. Steeped in English and French literatures, a student of Latin and Greek which necessarily calls for a study of the great dramatists like Aeschylus and Euripides, he chose the Elizabethan cast for his dramas. Like Shakespeare he worked upon themes that interested him. Five of his plays have come down in their entirety. His *Vasavadutta* is an English re-telling of Bhasa's play, *Pratijna Yaugandharayana*; *Rodogune* is drawn from Syrian history by Appian and inspired by the French dramatist Corneille who has written a play on the theme; *The Viziers of Bassora* takes a tale from the *Arabian Nights Entertainments* and reworks the story exquisitely as an Elizabethan play; *Eric* is from the Swedish Sagas; and *Perseus the Deliverer* draws from the Greek legend of Perseus and Andromeda.

In all his plays (including the unfinished ones like *The Prince of Edur*) Woman power is to the fore. *Vasavadutta*, *Anice-al-Jalice* in *The Viziers of Bassora*, *Aslaug* in *Eric* and *Andromeda* in *Perseus the Deliverer* are all bold figures whose romantic thoughts do not come in the way of their being achievers. *Rodogune* is the sole

exception, just as Ophelia is the sole exception in Shakespeare's plays of a heroine who feels, looks and acts helpless and reaches a tragic end. This approach was the result of his own orientation in thought that the future of India (and the world) lay in the redemption and rise of womanhood.

Take *Perseus the Deliverer*, for instance. Since the whole of Syria prefers to be blind and will accede to the killing of two innocent prisoners, alone Princess Andromeda will challenge the dark God Poseidon. Since she can expect no help from her royal parents or the citizenry, she realizes that her strength must come from within, and this alone will be the true conquering strength. The woman of awakened India too has to prepare herself thus. Sri Aurobindo writes in one of his essays:

"Strength can only be created by drawing it from the internal and inexhaustible reservoirs of the Spirit, from that Adya Shakti of the Eternal which is the fountain of all new existence."

Sri Aurobindo gives dramatic shape to this spiritual action where Andromeda is vouchsafed the vision of Athene. Even as the little princess Andromeda proclaims to the gods above in no uncertain terms, "I Andromeda, / Who am a woman on this earth, will help / My brothers", Athene appears, "a beautiful marble face amid the lightnings". "I am she / who helps and has compassion on struggling mortals", says Athene, and pleased with Andromeda's bold stand, answers her, "Go, child, I shall be near invisible". The brief encounter leaves Andromeda a changed woman, as Diomedes observes:

"What is this, princess ?

What is this light around you? How are you altered
Andromeda!"

Andromeda is a fine dramatic heroine, full of human emotions like laughter and tears, despair and hope. Her unconscious moralisings have a charming simplicity within the framework of dramatic action, giving elbow room for dramatic irony. Thus tells

Andromeda to Smerdas:

"Alas, poor human man!
 Why, we have all so many sins to answer,
 It would be hard to have cold justice dealt us.
 We should be kindly to each other's faults
 Remembering our own. Is it not enough
 To see a face in tears and heal the sorrow,
 Or must we weigh whether the face is fair
 Or ugly ? I think that even a snake in pain
 That afterwards, 'twould bite me!"

The lines, "Why, we have all so many sins to answer, / It would be hard to have cold justice dealt us" reminds one strongly of the lines spoken by Sita Devi to Hanuman in Ashoka Vana. The battle is over, Rama has won, and Ravana has been killed. Hanuman comes to her and gives the message jubilantly. Then he asks her how he should punish the rakshasis who have been guarding Sita Devi in the grove and tormenting her all the time. She says:

Paapaanaam va subhaanaam va vadhaarhaanaam drindhama

Kaaryam karunamaryena na kaschid naaparadhyati

The noble ones should always have compassion, as there is none who has not committed a mistake at sometime or other ! The scene in which Andromeda and Cepheus converse privately is one of the most charming cameos presented by Sri Aurobindo. King Cepheus gradually reveals his short sight and dotage, while Andromeda the woman suddenly grows out of the child princess. When her playful remonstrances fail to convince the king, she speaks firmly as if Cepheus is already of no account :

"Father, you'll understand this once for all,
 I will not let the Babylonians die,
 I will not marry Phineus."

Eminently worthy of the stage, Sri Aurobindo's plays have often been staged with great success by the students of Sri Aurobindo Ashram's Mother's International School in New Delhi. Rabindranath Tagore's plays were written in Bengali and won immense popularity on the stage in Shantiniketan. It is good that almost all his Bengali plays are now available in an English version. This is also the place to mention that he wrote a symbolical play, *The Child* in English.

Among significant dramatists of early Indo-Anglia were Harindranath Chattopadhyaya and T.P. Kailasam. Kailasam took up Puranic themes and transformed them into powerful English plays. Bhasa's *Pratima Natakam* comes to us as *The Burden* and gives an unforgettable portrait of tragic Bharata when he returns to Ayodhya to find his father dead and brother banished. The scalding theme of Ekalavya's tragedy is dealt with in *Fulfilment*. Though he used only prose for his English plays, Kailasam used a mixture of prose and verse for his play *Karna: the Brahmin's Curse*. His poetry lines, again, are Shakespearian while his imaginative vision of Draupadi's passion is on wings when he uses blank verse:

"'Twas royal Drupada,
Obsessed of hate, in rite of hate did force
The sacrificial fire to yield him triplets, tongues
Of flame in me and brothers two, with but
A single purpose in our lives; the burning of
This house to less than cinders. . .
I am but flame ! Although you see me in
A woman's frame! And all assembled here
Are food for me - a flame begat of hate;
A flame brought forth to burn this house
Of cold cold moon !"

According to L.S. Seshagiri Rao, Kailasam has "the besetting sin of excessive alliteration and love of jingle". Here are a couple of them:

"With their forbears and fathers taking sides in this fatal feuds, with the Sabha itself serving to sever and not secure their bond of blood. . ."

"Blessings my budding bowman! But you will never bloom into a better until you better the bearing of your body whilst at bowcraft."

However, when delivered dramatically, these tricks did create the appropriate mood of the moment on the stage.

An almost forgotten woman dramatist of yesterday is Bharati Sarabhai who wrote two important plays, *The Well of the People* and *Two Women*. *The Well of the People* is poetic, symbolic, Gandhian. *Two Women* is realistic and explores the problems of womanhood. Between them the two dramas present a few major types of Indian womanhood. In the former we are in a village; in the latter the scenes are in a sophisticated city-house.

The Well of the People is based on a true story published in *Harijan* edited by Mahatma Gandhi. An old lady had been saving money for a trip to Benaras. She could not go and instead built a well in the village for the public, which could be used by the Harijans also :

"the Indian outcaste
 Harijan, banned of man, like lonely chatak,
 (That rain-thirsting eternally thirsty bird)
 Crying for water of equal men. All men
 And women alike can come, drink and drink
 Here at my well with Harijans, she said."

The play ends with the old woman fallen prostrate from old age and weakness. Is she dead or alive ? Anyhow, by willing the money meant for the holy trip to build a temple well in her village, she has successfully accomplished the silent revolution in man's weeded soul. Moral, economic and political regeneration are sure to follow.

Two Women is about Anuradha and Urvashi. Anuradha is very sensitive, while her husband Kanak Raya is a westernized egotist. Here is a typical note in his approach to life as he speaks to Anuradha :

"... It is our western standard of living and entertaining that has made us get on, don't you see ? And mind you, we could never have done it in the old joint family house. It impresses people: the way I take you out with me, the way you dress and talk English, the fact that I took you to Europe. In short we ... are ... like. ... them. That goes a long way. That keeps them straight with us. Beat the British at their own game, has been my policy all along."

Anuradha vainly tries to reason with him:

"Can we not look again with new eyes on this old country ? Do we not feel here something as though a child, a divine child could come to us ? If you were able to see, you would know that new life is born now."

The conversations in the drama are polite but always shot with bitterness. Anuradha wants to leave for the Himalayas, and we see the inspiration of Ibsen's *The Doll's House* in this turn in the action. The other woman in the play is Urvashi, a devotional singer. Her ascetic denial of life has also not led her anywhere. Neither self-pity as in the case of Anuradha nor a flight from action as it was with Urvashi can help the modern woman. To be able to find God where you are is the supreme existential act. All would be well if we realized this truth and made the most of the given circumstance.

In the last forty years many playwrights have made a firm mark in Indian writing in English. They may not be a legion but we have bright names like Asif Currimbhoy who dealt with a variety of themes that directly affect the modern Indian. He could use bold strokes as in *The Refugee*. On how people have to make a new home for themselves in alien climes once they become refugees. For Sen Gupta it was Partition in 1947. For Yassin it is the Bangla Desh war.

The conclusion is unnerving. "Politics is the inescapable reality of our lives. Yassin must find out for himself that there is no getting away from it." Other themes used by Asif Currimbhoy are Dalai Lama's flight from Tibet, Patel as a Home Minister or Kathakali's effect on a practicing doctor.

Gandhi and his movement make easy themes too as in Prema Sastri's *Gandhi: Man of the Millions*. It does ask a few bold questions. Was Gandhi right in neglecting the good of his own children? As when Harilal becomes a Muslim and challenges his father for disowning him even as he keeps talking of Hindu-Muslim unity. And tells Gandhi bitterly: "Your heart is crowded with words. There is no place for me. They call you the father of the nation. You were never a father to your children." Yet another area of interest for the dramatist has been the vanishing breed of Maharajahs in India. Priyachari Chakravarti's *Maharajah's Prayer* (1981) was successfully staged in Papua New Guinea. The play takes us back to the days of the East India Company and the blossoming of nationalism in the subject nation.

In the 'seventies and 'eighties Girish Karnad zoomed on our horizon with *Muhammad Bin Tughlaq* and *Hayavadana*. His *Nagamanadala* achieved telling success in the United States. Now there was a free interaction between Bhasha theatre and English language plays through translation. Karnad says that he began with an attraction for the French dramatist Jean Anouilh, and some European dramatists. In his childhood he had watched both Therukoothu and Yakshagana as well as the Parsi Theatre which taught him the immense possibilities of stage lighting. Karnad draws freely from folk lore.

Dattani is entirely on his own and is totally theatrical. He captures the middle class ethos perfectly. His drama makes for good reading matter and effective stage direction. The drama *Where There is a Will* has a ghost as a character. But Dattani has asserted that his intention is not to produce a farce. As for the language, he says:

"Should the play be read in classrooms, I sincerely wish that English language teachers and staunch Wren & Martinites will not dismiss my syntax as bad English, or worse still, as incorrect. While knowledge of the rules of grammar is important, the richness and variety of the spoken word is a study in itself."

The play *Dance Like a Man* has been inspired by the lives of the dancers Chandra Bhaga Devi and Krishna Rao and reveals the constant conflict between the artist and the society. The conversations sound very cynical. And dangerously realistic too! As how artistes debase themselves for gaining this foreign trip or that sabha chance. *Bravely Fought the Queen*, *Final Solutions* ... they are plays which can be read and taken up again for reading. *Final Solutions* is actually a prophetic play which was written much before the Babri Masjid controversy of 1992. As Alyque Padamsee said of this play on the communal problem that it is about "transferred resentments."

Like Karnad, Vijay Tendulkar who passed away recently has given us plays which bring English close to the Bhasha theatre, through translations. For half a century, Tendulkar has been a very prominent playwright, and a popular one too, for he can go right into the heart of the problem, the ills that besiege our society. *Sakharam Binder* and *Silence! The Court is in Session* are unforgettable experiences. *Kamala* is, of course, based on the incident when an Indian Express reporter bought a girl from Bombay's flesh market to expose the market itself. The play is an indictment of the sensationalism which our press pounces upon without bothering about the psychological trauma faced by the victim herself. This is also true of all his plays which are based on stark reality for he wants us to see life as it is and not as we wish it to be or close our eyes and live in ivory towers. As he said to a young admirer a couple of years ago :

"I personally don't bother about people who haven't seen life. They close their eyes at the sight of suffering as if it doesn't exist. The fact is that life is dark and cruel, it's just that you don't care for the

truth. You don't want to see it because it might make you uncomfortable. If escapism is your way of living then you will fail to see the truth. I have not written about hypothetical pain or created an imaginary world of sorrow. I am from a middle class family and I have seen the brutal ways of life by keeping my eyes open. My work has come from within me, as an outcome of my observation of the world in which I live. If they want to entertain and make merry, fine go ahead, but I can't do it, I have to speak the truth."

And our own times. Speaking of our times, Manjula Padmanabhan easily comes to our mind. Though it won the Onassis Prize in 1997 and dealt with the current problem of the sale of organs, the play *Harvest* is full of what is known as *bhivatsa rasa* in classical aesthetics which makes you turn away in horror if not in disgust. *Hidden Fires* comments upon how we have come to live with violence and that it is stalking us always as a shadow. Her *Mating Game* which was produced in 2004 is on the nadir of morality we have reached with the sensationalism of live television shows.

Soon the twenty first century would be a decade old. Between the first decade of the twentieth century and now, Indian drama in English has reaped a rich harvest. Sure, we are faring well and faring forward too!



MONISM VERSUS PLURALISM IN CRITICISM AND CULTURE

Rajnath

Monism and pluralism are terms which are extensively used in several disciplines in humanities and social sciences. In recent times with the emergence of deconstruction and postmodernism, pluralism has taken centre stage but the opposition between the two is far from over. Confining myself to criticism and culture I seek to examine the nature and function of monism and pluralism, the conflict between them, and their points of convergence.

I

Twentieth century is the age of criticism. A distinctive feature of the age is the emergence of critical movements. Till the end of the nineteenth century we have individual critics rather than critical movements comprising critics of the same persuasions. Starting with Russian Formalism which remained largely unknown until the 1950's, we have seen critical trends emerge one after another in quick succession. In the first half of the twentieth century, criticism was preponderantly formalistic but in the second half it slowly yielded place to interdisciplinary criticism. By the turn of the century formalistic criticism was relegated to the background.

In his essays on "Travelling Theory" and "Travelling Theory Revisited" Edward Said has demonstrated how theories lose their original complexion as they travel "from person to person, from situation to situation, from one period to another". (Said, 1991, 226) This holds for several critics and critical movements in the twentieth

century. The pluralism of the Russian Formalists disappears from French structuralism and deconstruction, of Eliot from the New critics, of Marx from the Marxists and of Said from his followers.

The Russian Formalists differentiate between the genres which call for different critical methods and tools for their analysis and evaluation. While they focus on rhythm and imagery in their examination of poetry, in their studies of prose fiction, their focus is on plot construction, characterization, point of view, etc. Take, for example, Boris Thomashevesky. On the one hand, he examines rhythm which is generated by verse form in *Russian Versification*, on the other he studies different components of the novel — plot construction, characterization, etc.—in his essay on "Thematics." Comparing "prose literature" (read prose fiction) and poetry Victor Shklovsky writes: "the plot of prose literature is the counterpart of rhythm in poetry" (Bann and Bowlt 39). In his essays on "Art as Technique" and "*Tristram Shandy* and the "Theory of the Novel" he has studied linguistic defamiliarization in poetry and thematic defamiliarization in prose fiction.

Despite some important links between Russian Formalism and French structuralism, the latter does not set much store by the genre. Levi-Strauss who pioneered French Structuralism was influenced by Vladimir Propp, the author of *Morphology of the Folktale* and Roman Jakobson, whom he met in New York during World War II. Jakobson never loses sight of the differences between literature and non-literature as well as the ones between the genres. In his *Modern Russian Poetry* he clearly states that "the object of the science of literature is not literature but literariness . . . that is, that which makes a given work a work of literature" (Lemon and Reiss 107). His famous distinction between metaphor, a similarity-based device and metonymy, a contiguity-based device have been found exceedingly useful in the studies of poetry and fiction respectively. His sixfold division of the factors involved in verbal communications is further

proof of his pluralism. The six factors- - addressor, addressee, context, message, contact, code- -are inalienably present in all verbal communications but the emphasis shifts according as the function that language is made to serve. For instance, in poetic function which characterizes verbal art, the emphasis is on message by which Jakobson means utterance i.e. its sound pattern, diction and syntax.

In Roland Barthes, who imbibed the influence of the Russian Formalists via Levi-Strauss, the pluralism of Jakobson's thinking is missing. Barthes' not very distinct literary codes- -proiretic, hermeneutic, semic, symbolic, and referential—which were formulated several years after Jakobson's factors/ functions do not sufficiently distinguish between different literary constructions. Barthes has used the term "écriture" which is writing in general. It is écriture that he is really concerned with rather than its specific manifestations in literature. His distinction between work and text as also between readerly and writerly text does not help us much in distinguishing literature from non- literature. His general codes derived from Saussure's structural linguistics, group literature with other products like clothes, furniture, food, etc.

As we move from structuralism to poststructuralism, we notice that the Russian Formalists' critical pluralism has been replaced by critical monism. It is a strange fact that while there is so much talk about pluralism in postmodern culture, critical approach remains monistic. Not only the generic differences but also the ones between literature and non-literature have been obliterated. For the poststructuralists, literature is no different from history, psychology, philosophy, linguistics and other disciplines in humanities and social sciences. Literariness ceases to be the exclusive property of literature. With poststructuralism we veer round to the other extreme from Russian Formalism. The separation of ordinary and literary language so much emphasized in Russian Formalism is replaced by a single

language which is used by all irrespective of the discipline to which they belong and the mode of their writings.

For Derrida and the other deconstructionists ordinary language does not exist while for the reader-response critics, particularly Stanley Fish and Jonathan Culler, the same language becomes ordinary or literary depending on the strategies of reading and reading conventions used by the reader. Derrida finds his freeplay, decentering, and aporia in all the texts that he studies. Almost like the New Critics locating their favourite critical terms in the works they take up for analysis, Derrida discerns aporia which is the cornerstone of his deconstruction in all the texts with the important difference that the former confine themselves to literary works whereas the latter does not set any such limits. Derrida finds his deconstruction at work in Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics*, as well as Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, and Joyce's *Ulysses*. Reader-response critics go a step further and can convert any ordinary statement, even an ensemble of proper names, into literature.

II

When the Russian Formalists were engaged in their critical theory and practice, in Anglo-American criticism T.S. Eliot and I.A. Richards were emerging on the scene. As a major poet and critic Eliot exercised a decisive influence on both poetry and criticism. Richards was essentially a theoretician and, though a founder of practical criticism, he did not go beyond poetry in his studies.

Like the Russian Formalists, Eliot and Richards believed in the separate identity of literature. Richards has persistently and systematically demarcated literature from non-literature grouping the latter with science. His chapter on "The Two Uses of Language" in *Principles of Literary Criticism* draws a clear line of demarcation between the emotive use of language and its scientific use, which is

reminiscent of the Russian Formalists' twofold division of language. Eliot is less theoretical and more practical than Richards. He writes extensively about poets, dramatists, and novelists. His three major concepts—tradition, impersonality and unification of sensibility—applied exclusively to literature mark it off from all that is not literature.

Eliot is a peculiar blend of monism and pluralism. That he is a monist is evident from the fact that he can appreciate only those writers who have a sense of tradition, are impersonal and whose writings are informed by the unification of sensibility. He sees no good poet between the metaphysicals and the moderns, as they all suffer from the dissociation of sensibility. Although a monist at one level, Eliot's criticism has a strain of pluralism. Besides distinguishing between literature and non-literature, he does not ignore the differences between the genres and therefore treats them differently. His analysis of poetry focuses on imagery, of drama on characterization and of prose fiction on beliefs.

The New critics who shaped under the influence of Eliot and Richards did not fail to distinguish between literature and non-literature but overlooked generic differences. They hold on to single critical concepts and look for them in all the literary works under examination. Brooks' irony or paradox, Empson's ambiguity, Tate's tension, Blackmur's gesture and Ransom's texture are laid down as exclusive criteria for the explication and evaluation of literary works. Take, for example, Cleanth Brooks. He will find paradox in every work he studies, whether it is Shakespeare's *Machbeth*, Wordsworth's "Immortality Ode", Tennyson's "Tears, Idle Tears" or Eliot's *Waste Land*. For Brooks there is hardly any difference between drama and poetry, or between Donne's poetry and Wordsworth's. A poet must have the qualities of metaphysical poetry or else he will be dismissed.

The New critics reduce all literary considerations to the considerations of language. Tate's observation on language is shared by all the New Critics." In the long run," he writes "whatever the

poet's 'philosophy' . . . by his language shall you know him, the quality of language is the valid limit of what he has to say" (85). But the New Critics go beyond this in further reducing literary considerations to a particular quality of language identified as paradox, ambiguity, tension, etc. No wonder Brooks pronounces in the very opening sentence of his *Well Wrought Urn* that "the language of poetry is the language of paradox" (1) and goes on to demonstrate the presence of paradox in all the works he studies in the book. While the New Critics acknowledge the difference between literature and non-literature, neither the generic differences nor the differences between different kinds of writing in the same genre have been paid attention by them.

The critical monism of the New Critics made them vulnerable to the charges levelled against them by the Chicago Critics. In their manifesto, *Critics and Criticism* published in 1952, R.S. Crane and Elder Olson launch a scathing attack on Cleanth Brooks and William Empson respectively. The charge brought against them is identical: that they are doubly monistic in reducing literature to language and language to certain formulas.

As against the New Critics who draw on Coleridge, the Chicago Critics advert to Aristotle and base their criticism on his *Poetics* and other works. Aristotle has accorded language unduly favoured by the New Critics the fourth place in the hierarchy of the four intrinsic components of tragedy—action character, thought, diction. And, secondly, he does not begin with language or any of the four components but with the emotional effect that determines the selection as well as the handling of the four components. Aristotle's doctrine of the four causes—formal, material, efficient, and final—has the potential for further development into pluralistic criticism. Catharsis which is the emotional effect of tragedy is the final cause, the intention or purpose to which are related other causes—the formal cause which is the object of imitation, the material cause which in the case of literature is language and the efficient

case which is the writer, the agent of literary creation. Although the four causes go together, in different forms or periods different causes may be emphasized.

Making use of Aristotle, the Chicago critics have evolved their own critical pluralism. In the manner of Aristotle they seek to identify the writer's objective in the work and analyse it in the light of that objective. As Crane says, "the first business of practical criticism, in dealing with a given work, must be to ask what were the *literary* problems the writer was faced with, why these were problems for him in relation to his overall *literary task*, and what *literary reasons* or justifications may be found for what he actually did in solving them" (Crane II 209). As is evident from this citation, there is a problematic emphasis in their critical writings. They are aware that the objective that a writer sets himself in a particular work will generate problems regarding the choice and handling of the material and each writer will resolve them in his own way. Instead of foisting their critical formulas on the writers and their works, a' la the New Critics, they move on the lines of the writers and elucidate and evaluate their works in terms of their objectives.

The Chicago Critics take for granted the distinction between literature and non-literature, an area they share with the New Critics, but unlike the latter they pay due attention to the genre. Their analysis differs from genre to genre and work to work focusing on a different element each time. Olson analyses Yeats' "Sailing to Byzantium" in terms of its imagery whereas Crane focuses on plot construction in his study of Fielding's *Tom Jones*. Being pluralists these critics avoid sweeping generalizations which characterize the New Critics.

The Chicago Critics' pluralism which we have examined in some detail was short-lived. As we move beyond them, monism returns. Northrop Frye, the most celebrated critic of the 1950's and author of the monumental *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) is looked upon as a pioneer of structuralism in English and suffers from the

same weakness as the French structuralists. Despite paying attention to the genre, he remains basically monistic. Broad differences between the genres have been set forth, but we are given the impression that all tragedies or all comedies are alike. In there no difference between a tragedy by Sophocles or Aeschylus and the one by Shakespeare? Tragic protagonist for Frye is "superior in degree to other men" but how about tragedies which have as protagonists the average or below the average men such as Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and Eugene O' Neill's *The Hairy Ape* ?

After Frye Anglo-American criticism merger with European criticism. Stylistics was an offshoot of Russian Formalism and French structuralism. Reader-response criticism and deconstruction were international movements with several members from European countries.

III

Monism-pluralism binary which we have examined in formalistic criticism also informs interdisciplinary trends in criticism. Marxist criticism which has taken precedence over other interdisciplinary critical trends is also characterized by a movement from pluralism to monism. Marx's pluralistic vision was reduced to monism by his acolytes. No wonder Marx blurted out towards the end of his life: "All I know is that I am not a Marxist." (Quoted in Singer 38). An avid reader of literature of all kinds, he was exceedingly fond of Shakespeare whom, according to Edmund Wilson, he knew by heart (Wilson, 243). As Marx and Engels speak in unison and jointly influence Marxist criticism, we can take it that what Engels says of Shakespeare is also Marx's opinion. Defending Shakespeare against Roderich Benedix, Engels avers that "there is more life and reality in the first act of the *Merry Wives* alone than in all German literature and Launce [in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*] is alone worth more than all the German comedies put together" (Marx and Engels 260).

Among the poets Marx was a great admirer of Homer. His daughter Eleanor reports that in his private discourse with Marx, Baron von Westphalen "filled Karl with enthusiasm for the romantic school and whereas his father read Voltaire and Racine with him, the Baron read him Homer and Shakespeare—who remained his favourite authors all his life" (Quoted in McLellan 20). Homer was a product of the slave-owning society, the most backward society by the Marxist standards, and Shakespeare, a product of the feudal society, the second most backward society by the same standards.

Marx does not allow his literary taste to be influenced by his philosophy. He offers a general explanation for his enjoyment of writers like Homer and Shakespeare. "Certain periods of highest development of art," he writes "stand in no direct connection with the general development of society nor with the material basis and the skeleton structure of its organization" (Quoted in Wilson 243). This flies in the face of Marx's philosophy, which does not worry him. Marx accepts Homer, Shakespeare and other writers he enjoys as they are without any attempt to convert them into Marxist thinkers or dismiss them because they do not conform to his philosophy.

Marx's honesty as a thinker which we have discussed above is missing from the Marxists, especially those of the early phase. Granville Hicks was one of the frontline Marxist critics of America in the 1930's. With a rigid application of Marxist standards he arrives at startling conclusions. He admires John Dos Passos but dismisses T.S. Eliot whose poetry, as admitted by him in the postscript to *The Great Tradition*, he had actually enjoyed but could not say so as it was against the spirit of Marxism. He laid down a threefold criterion to identify "the perfect Marxian novel" with the point of view of "that of the vanguard of the proletariat."

Christopher Caudwell, a leading British Marxist critic of the 1930's, is not as orthodox as Hicks in the application of Marxist

principles, but he does not come anywhere near Marx in honesty and sincerity. Examining modern poetry which for Caudwell begins in the fifteenth century and continues to the present day and includes writers like Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Pope, Caudwell comes to the conclusion that "modern poetry is capitalist poetry" (49). He finds "sham individualism" in the plays of Shakespeare, especially his tragedies. This individualism, he argues, is the outcome of Elizabethan culture centered on the court which allies itself with the bourgeois.

Although Caudwell admits that Shakespeare also shows the decline of the feudal structure and anticipates the later development of society, he cannot help examining Shakespeare from the Marxist perspective only.

Unlike Marx, Hicks and Caudwell do not enjoy literature as literature. They do not realize that a work of literature is primarily an aesthetic construct, not a political document. In both critics Marx's catholicity is reduced to orthodoxy, his pluralism to monism.

Another important trend in interdisciplinary criticism which emerged in the second half of the twentieth century is postcolonial theory pioneered by Edward Said. As in the case of Marx, Said's cultural pluralism is reduced to monism by those who have followed in his footsteps. In *Orientalism* Said takes exception to the Western representation of the Orient as the inferior Other. He finds this derogatory attitude very often hidden as a sub-text which needs to be unearthed and foregrounded. This is the task that Said has set himself.

"Resistance" is a key word in postcolonial studies. Said makes it clear in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (2003), and elsewhere that resistance is not rejection: it is only a phase which must result in reconciliation. This is the reason why he sets himself in opposition to Occidentalism which is an inverted form of Orientalism. If he is against Orientalism, he is equally against nativism, as both drive a wedge between the West and the

rest. He rejects out of hand Jalal Ali Ahmad's *Occidentosis* which "blames the West for most evils in the world" (Said 1994 : 267).

Said is for cultural pluralism. He believes that culture in its pristine form is only a figment of the imagination. Cultures are so intertwined that any attempt to polarize them is doomed to failure:

Cultures are too intermingled, their contents and histories too interdependent and hybrid, for surgical separation into large and mostly ideological oppositions like Orient and Occident (Said 1996 : xii).

As Said is against the compartmentalisation of culture, he is dismissive of thinkers like Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington who seek to divide and distance cultural formations.

In Said's theory, as in postmodernism, there is a contradiction between his attitude to culture and his critical attitude. Although a strong advocate of cultural pluralism and multiculturalism, in his response to literature he becomes monistic. He treats novels, poems, plays, even opera in the same way and explores them for the manifest or latent colonial subtext. Although he says that the colonial content is only one aspect of the text, which cannot be the basis for its literary evaluation, it does become his sole critical preoccupation not allowing him to distinguish between texts, genres, and periods.

Said's most significant contribution is cultural pluralism which has been reduced to monism by his followers despite his warnings. Like Marx, Said is also unhappy about the attitude of his followers, especially those in the Middle East who look upon him as the spokesperson of the Islamic world. In his postscript to the 1995 edition of *Orientalism* he tells us how "*Orientalism* has in fact been read and written about in the Arab world as a systematic defence of Islam and the Arabs" (331), which is not his intention. Such an approach further widens the gap between the East and the West, which he wants to bridge.

Said has made it clear that resistance is critique which is clarification and enlightenment but in the third world post-colonial theorists have taken it as rejection and sought to move away from Western culture and go native. They may not be as vitriolic in their attack on the West as Jalal Ali Ahmad but they look upon it as nothing but a harmful influence and therefore deserving of rejection. We should now turn, they argue, from Western classics to Oriental classics and from Western criticism to Oriental poetics. A movement like nativism in India is an example of this new attitude. Said wants the West and the East to go together without any attempt at hegemony whereas his followers would reject the former in an attempt to establish the superiority of the latter.

IV

R.S. Crane who laid the foundation of critical pluralism in Anglo-American criticism did not go beyond criticism to culture. This was possibly because critical attention at that stage was focused on the text and anything outside the text was reckoned irrelevant. In an essay on "History versus Criticism in the Study of Literature" published as far back as 1935 Crane has decried psychological, historical, sociological, and moralistic critics saying that they convert criticism into other disciplines. That he shuts criticism off from culture is evident from his remark on criticism in terms of "ethical culture." "It is not criticism," he writes "but ethical culture when we use them [poems and novels] primarily as means of enlarging and enriching our experience of life or of inculcating moral ideals" (Crane 1 :12). Culture is concerned with what is denied to criticism by Crane.

Matthew Arnold hits the nail on the head when he says that in the age of science literature is a substitute for religion. I.A. Richards pursues this line but he overshoots the mark when he views literature as an agent of mental equilibrium in an age when people have lost faith in the magical view of the universe which includes religious beliefs. Eliot undermines this new paradigm of Arnold and Richards

when he asserts in "Religion and Literature" (1935) that the greatness of literature can be judged only by religious standards. But what Arnold, Richards, and the later Eliot have in common is the interrelation between literature and life which the New and Chicago Critics have denied.

Arnold and Eliot have written extensively about culture. Despite their divergences, they have in common the superiority of Western culture. Speaking of the moral perfection which results in "the inward peace and satisfaction" Arnold writes in *Culture and Anarchy* :

No people in the world have done and struggled more to attain this relative moral perfection than our English race has. For no people in the world has the command to *resist the devil, to overcome the wicked one*, in the nearest and most obvious sense of those words, had such a pressing force and reality (246).

Compare this with Eliot's remark in *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* :

It is only when we imagine our culture as it ought to be, if our society were a really Christian society, that we can dare to speak of Christian culture as the highest culture: it is only by referring to all the phases of this culture, which has been the culture of Europe, that we can affirm that it is the highest culture that the world has ever known (33).

For both Arnold and Eliot the highest culture exists or can exist only in Europe, in England, to be precise. This is what Said has termed Eurocentrism which he disparages and which, in his opinion, ought to be resisted. This is cultural monism which glorifies the culture of one country or continent only and views with contempt the cultural practices of the rest of the world. This cultural attitude, biased as it is, refuses to acknowledge the wide variety of cultural formations in

the world and the legitimacy of their existence. But within a cultural segment as well, the kind of homogeneity that we look for and valorize results in cultural monism. What we do in actual practice is to idealize our own sets of values and place them before others as universal values to which all must adhere. Normally, it is the strong, the rich, the powerful who arrogate to themselves the authority to morally and culturally legislate for the rest of the society.

We make sweeping generalizations about our professional, political, academic and other commitments without realizing that others may feel and think differently. How often we do we hear those in the teaching profession, in bureaucracy, in the legal profession, and elsewhere assert that theirs is the best profession. This self-righteousness ignores the simple fact that different people set themselves different objectives and therefore will choose different professions keeping in mind their objectives.

Postmodernism has its own limitations, but one good thing it has done is to undermine cultural monism. It is difficult to account for the contradiction between cultural pluralism and critical monism in poststructuralism and postmodernism. In the realm of culture the very centre which spawns monism is dissipated in these movements but in the domain of criticism all texts are reckoned identical and approached in the same manner. One may not subscribe to the rejection of reason in postmodernism, but cultural pluralism it has given rise to is salutary. No wonder there is so much debate on postmodern culture. Even during the heyday of modernism, modern culture was hardly discussed, as modernism was more a technique, a method than a culture and also because it was the culmination of the Enlightenment with the supremacy of reason. Postmodern culture breaks new ground. It has challenged the long hegemony of monistic culture premised on ill-founded universals which were at their best during the Enlightenment. Postmodernists have taken up cudgels against the universals which, they argue, have done grave injustice to

the marginalized—the female, the blacks, the third world, the gays etc. Decentering and aporia which are important terms in Derrida's critical repertoire run contrary to universals which are the product of reason and logic. Reason and logic are double binds. If, on the one hand, they are related to justice, on the other they lead to injustice to the weak and the marginalized who are denied these faculties.

Drawing on Derrida's philosophy, Richard Rorty has evolved his concept of relative morality which varies from person to person. Terry Eagleton is dead right when he says that "for a thinker like Rorty what counts as a legitimate reason or a valid idea will be determined for you by your way of life itself" (54). Individual variations were not permitted in traditional culture with the result that more often than not individuals were stifled within, though outwardly they acquiesced in its norms and values. Postmodern culture gives individuals liberty to gratify their desires provided they meet certain conditions. Rorty divides writers and thinkers into two categories, those who are for "private perfection", and those who are engaged in a "shared social effort" for the improvement of our institutions and practices. Rorty tells us how the two opposed attitudes can be combined:

The closet we will come to joining these two quests is to see the aim of a just and free society as letting its citizens be as privatistic, "irrationalist" and aestheticist as they please just as long as they do it on their own—causing no harm to others and using no resources needed by those less advantaged (12).

The shared norms are minimal and observing them individuals are free to do what they want. They have only to ensure that they use their own resources and do not harm others, in other words, their freedom does not interfere with others. This relative morality, Rorty finds best embodied in literature, or philosophy which is "a kind of writing."

Literature keeps the alternatives open. It is difficult to lend credence to Bakhtin's division of literature into authoritarian and democratic, as good literature is always democratic. It is only when literature degenerates into propaganda that it becomes authoritarian. Agreement with the writer's beliefs is never a precondition for the enjoyment of literature. A non-Christian can enjoy and appreciate Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Eliot's *Four Quartets* and a non-Hindu Indian classics like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharat*. The writer presents his beliefs as *his* beliefs which are given only a temporary assent by the reader in the act of enjoyment. As I.A. Richards has said, the question of true or false does not apply to literary beliefs, as they are presented as the writer's emotive attitudes, not his logical affirmations. This makes it possible for the reader to give temporary assent to literary beliefs which are diametrically opposed to each other. One can enjoy at the same time a Christian and a non-Christian work. This is not possible outside literature.

As has been said above, the New Critics have been charged with critical monism by the Chicago Critics but in a sense the latter are also monistic: They confine themselves to the formalistic approach. This is what Wayne C. Booth, a later Chicagoan, implies when he speaks of "The disguised monism of professed pluralists" (200). Formalistic critics from Russian Formalism to deconstruction rightly focus their critical attention on the text, but while concentrating on the text a critic can make use of the findings in various disciplines like history, politics, psychology, philosophy, ethics, etc. In a recent essay I have arrived at the conclusion based solely on the textual evidence, that Harry in *The Family Reunion* and Celia in *The Cocktail Party* come to India. If I simply ignore the words which are pointing outside the text and refuse to take the help of history, geography and theology, I shall miss a great deal which throws significant light on the text. Edward Said's brilliant analysis of Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* which has become a classic of postcolonial criticism makes use of politics, history and geography to explain the subterranean colonial content which has escaped the attention of Western critics. Lionel Trilling's

essay on Wordsworth's "Immortality Ode" is another fine example of interdisciplinary criticism.

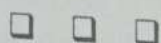
Criticism and culture will have to exercise some restraint. Even reader-response critics, who give the readers/ audience a great deal of freedom to interpret the text the way they want, feel that there is a limit to which freedom can go. No reader will take a tragedy for a comedy and vice versa as the reading conventions of these forms will exercise control on his response. Speaking of Marxism and feminism, Eagleton writes: "You could not be Marxist and clamour for a return to slavery. Feminism is a fairly loose collection of beliefs, but however loose it is it can not include worshipping men as superior species" (36). What Eagleton is driving at is that there is a limit to which individual variations can be permitted. If criticism cannot give total freedom nor can culture. For all the advocacy of cultural freedom, there is a limit to which freedom can be allowed. Even Rorty who believes in "private perfection" has laid down certain norms to be followed by all, norms which will restrain their freedom.

In the present world of globalization and multiculturalism, monism does not have a place, but absolute pluralism will result in anarchy. What we need is restricted pluralism which will combine freedom with restraint.

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MULTICULTURALISM AND THE CULTURAL REFUGEES : SOME RECENT INDIAN WRITINGS IN THE U.S.

Nila Das

Let me begin on a personal note. Some time back, at an international conference on the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the U.S. organized by MELUS-INDIA, I had occasion to listen to a few papers on America's contemporary leaning towards cultural globalization. I remember specially two papers, one on the appearance model Madonna as signifier, and the other on *Bhangra* in the Americas, both written by U.S academics of Indian origin. I never knew commercial stance of any media model, or any form of market catching music/dance on the U.S. stage or in the clubs could invite such intellectual attention as to highlight them as America's culture signifiers in a conference on American literature. I wondered if the papers indicated new avenues of defining and discussing literature in the Age of Mega-Mix.

Of course, a literary discourse is enriched when made interdisciplinary, and a discussion on literature remains incomplete without a survey of the critical assessments and interpretations. Before moving on to the Indian American creative writers let us have a glimpse of the recent writings of the Indian academics in the U.S. regarding presentation of India in the postmodern multicultural American art forms.

The paper entitled "Madonna as Signifier of Ethnic Post-modernity" (Rahul Goirola, University of Washington, Seattle) argued that Madonna's "Chameleonic" appearance in multi-ethnic, multi-

cultural dresses and make up renders her "the most elusive commodity that United States can culturally claim in the dawning millennium of trans-national capital and globalization." The paper claimed that each "new face" that the appearance model chooses gives her an umbrella of cultural identity, and by shifting from one umbrella to another, the model creates a "hegemonic body discourse" thereby a cultural discourse, "re-worlding the world through manipulative media carnival." As an illustration the speaker specially mentioned that in her Ray of Light project, Madonna puts on *bindi* and *salwar kameez*. To add to the variety, she wears the hair of a Geisha girl, and thus goes multi-cultural and global in her American appearance. The speaker was visibly inspired that on one of the cover designs of Rolling Stone magazine, the model appears as the Hindu goddess Laxmi. All these prove that "she pursued Eastern thought". It is an admirable site of the Asian culture specific images being used in the visual forms in the present multicultural U. S.

That has been a matter of opinion. The speaker's reference to the American star's fancy appearance as goddess Laxmi, reminded me of the graceful masks of the goddess that the *Chau* dancers of Bengal and Orissa wear with all religiosity and reverence. While the scholar talked about the American model's "body discourse". I thought of the Kathak dancers whose body movements combine Muslim and Hindu cultures to aesthetic heights. I was not sure if the scholar, who carried an Indian name and presumably an Indian identity, shared my memories, and was conscious of the difference..

I had serious objection to the speaker's core argument that cultural identity is a ready at hand umbrella one can get under and leave at whim, and that multi-culturalism is an assemblage of diverse cultural fragments, a cultural collage so to speak, that can be marketed the way the U.S. model does. As it is, the combine of the Indian traditional dress, the *bindi* and the Japanese hair style is too queer to make any unified Eastern look, or to make an aesthetic site of the

multicultural harmony involving Japan, India and, America. Madonna's *Ray of Light* sold well in the U.S. because it has been strikingly out of ordinary, and evolved sensational contrasts that the American audience cherished.

I disagreed with the speaker's reading that by selling her Indian-Japanese-American appearance the model gave ample evidence to pursuing Eastern thought. To me she rather did the opposite. Her *Ray of Light* appearance, and the very choice of the image of goddess Laxmi, a sacred idol of a community not her own, for exclusive commercial self projection, rather toed the line of the mainstream American "hegemonic cultural onslaught" that the Native Americans and the Afro Americans often protest against. The Indian goddess is an exotic image to the average American, and that is what the model needed for drawing audience. It is widely known that such outrageous cultural onslaughts are being systematically steered by global trade technocracy. In course of my series of dialogue with the Native American faculty and students at the University of Iowa, I have been repeatedly told of the stiff Native American resistance to the increasing use of the Native deities by the U.S. commercial agencies. What shocked us at the MELUS conference was the academic support to the commercial device, provided by an Indian American scholar in the name of upholding America's cultural globalization.

When I referred to the MELUS paper and our reaction to it at a global conference in the U.S. a visibly agitated Euro American professor raised her voice and said, "What's wrong with Madonna going Indian in her fancy appearance?" An Afro American professor sitting in the third row gave me a nod appreciating our reaction. The Madonna paper made the house divided. The issue taken up has not been whether original/unique cultural identities are weakened, diluted and lost in contact with the other cultures, but in which mode and motif the multicultural contacts are being made in the U.S.

This brings me to the other MELUS paper I mentioned at the beginning. Entitled "Cultural Difference and the Popular: The Diaspora Narrative of *Bhangra* in the Americas" (Harveen Sachdeva Mann, Loyola University, Chicago), the paper analyzed how the blend of as differing art forms and cultural elements as Punjabi folk music and dance, English lyrics, African, Caribbean and Western popular music, hip-hop, reggae, rack, the performance styles of the appearance models like Super-cat and Madonna, makes the contemporary *Bhangra*, manufactured in the U.S., a global cultural composite art form. The speaker highlighted that the mixes, beats and specially the increasing use of the more familiar Western styles in pop *Bhangra* encourage exchange of cultures. And that is all that matters.

American *Bhangra*, the speaker said, specially "allows second and third generation South Asians in the West to situate themselves in more complex transnational ways than are available to them locally." By emphasizing the "transnational" identity of the up coming generation of the South Asian Americans, the paper made it evident that the American *Bhangra*, the new "narrative" of the Indians in the U.S., is not really diasporic. It does not intend giving the new generation Indians a feel of their cultural roots. Rather it attempts situating them in a fictive culture without locale. As far as the multicultural art form is concerned, the paper did not enter into any aesthetic analysis of the pop *Bhangra* as a composite art, but rather gave much space to its marketing and distributing possibilities that would make the *Bhangra* reach wider international audience.

When asked if the majority American audience accept the multicultural *Bhangra* as an emerging form of American music and dance, the speaker answered in the negative. At a global conference in the U.S., I referred to the paper and asked the same question to the august gathering of American academics from various disciplines, including those who argued in favor of multi-cultural art forms. The

response, as expected, came strongly in the negative. An American faculty member pointed out that he visited a *Bhangra* show I had been referring to, in New York. To him it was an Indian dance. *Bhangra* itself was an Indian term. The show was exciting.

It is widely known that for all the ballyhoo over America's cultural globalization, the mainstream America hardly promulgates multiculturalism as its ideal/ideology. Multiculturalism is not clearly established as a policy at the federal level either. Rather there is a growing trend of sharp anti-multiculturalism in the U.S. on the ground that multiculturalism undermines national unity, hinders social integration, cultural assimilation, and leads to the fragmentation of the society into several racist, ethnic and other "sub-national cultural groups". Basically an "anti-Western ideology", it "attacks the identification of the U.S. to the Western Civilization", says Samuel P Huntington, the American political scientist known for his *clash of civilization* theory. Multiculturalism in the U.S. is an "across the board assault on the Anglo-American heritage" observes the U. S. academic Pat Buchanan.

At the MELUS conference, when the writer of the pop *Bhangra* paper, who originally belongs to Punjab, was asked the obvious question, if the Punjabis, to whom *Bhangra* is a social ritual/ceremony, accept this multi-cultural, multi-form collage as *Bhangra*, she replied in the negative.

-- Why the Indian name tagged at all?

-- It catches audience.

Neither American, nor Indian, nor African, nor Caribbean, not owned by any racial/ethnic community or by any country as it's culture signifier, the transnational, multicultural pop *Bhangra* in the U.S. symbolizes cultural fragmentation, dislocation, a collapse of the "normative cultural unity", rather than multicultural solidarity, cultural integration and harmony. Geared to cultural dislocation, no art form

can initiate the creator/composer and the audience to any larger cultural re-location, or "composite cultural identity". A mega mix, pop *Bhangra* signals the emergence not of an alternative ideology, but rather of a problematic situation worth serious concern.

The two MELUS papers of the Indian American faculty told us, in un-lettered words, of multiculturalism as a living experience in the U.S. and of those caught in it. Both the papers, in their respective ways, took us to a new brand of Indians in the U.S., a large section made by the second and third generation immigrants, born in the U.S. or in Australia, or Africa, who have grown up in the U.S., who speak American language, think the American mainstream way, who are reasonably comfortably cushioned and are ever on the run for better placement. They are conscious that culturally discriminating U.S. treats them as the "other", but do not feel themselves trapped in identity crisis because of the "otherness". Rather they enthusiastically wear their "otherness" to win space, and happily join in the fray of multiculturalism steered by the U.S. commercial/managerial machinery for it fetches them the visibility they cherish.

Regarding cultural identity, the new brand of Indian Americans carry Indian names, but are as aliens to the Indian value system, the Indian cultural heritage, as they are to any other culture. They are not keen on discovering their Indian cultural roots either, as a large number of new generation Native Americans pronouncedly are. The upcoming Indian Americans belong to the late twentieth century "special generation of cultural refugees", as Professor Catherine Stimson (courtesy Meena Alexander) calls them. The cultural refugees have their life course and mental space contoured by multiple migrations/uprooting. They are at home in several continents, in exile from all. They have otherness tattooed all over them, and yet are unable to come to terms with it. Deprived of their birth right to have a sound cultural anchorage in the community they are born in, and un-trained as they are to reach any culture in depth, they go multicultural, and fail to have any larger cultural re-location, or viable cultural integration.

In this brand of new Indian Americans one can include a good number of Non Resident Indians, the self chosen exiles, more interested in making their American present, and American future than in acting as India's unofficial cultural ambassadors in the U.S. More often than not multiculturalism in their art and literature is geared to suiting the palate of the mainstream America, no matter if it is at the cost of negative stereotypical images of India, the third world country.

II

Let us have a glimpse of multiculturalism in the recent creative writing of some new brand American Indians. We begin with Meena Alexander's *Fault Lines* (1993) a fascinating memoir cum fiction that vibrates with touching memories flowing through poetic images, sharp socio-political analysis merging in deep philosophic reflections, as Meena, the person and the persona, strains her every nerve to relate her Indian childhood, African adolescence, British university life, and American present to answer the invariable query in every glob trotting cultural refugee's "transnational hybrid" mind: "Who are we? What selves can we construct to live by? How shall we mark out space?" (174) "What is there to drop back: inside /outside, mind/body, East/West" (20) ?

Memory takes the Indian American narrator back to her ancestral Tiruvella house in far away Kerala. A house of emotional bonds, it is a soothing shelter to her wandering mind, cut adrift if not way lost in contrary thoughts, experiences, realizations. Back, for a while, in the "magic of childhood", her imagination flies to the large house of the expanded family with a variety of visitors, and a series of "loose yet formalized functions". To an Indian an ancestral house stands for an institution that roots one not merely to a geographical site, but to a life way, oriented to a value system believed in and lived by people through generations.

It is said that being born in a country is not all or enough to know the country. For all her emotional attachment to her grandparents, parents, and relatives in India, Meena, knows that her Indian cultural heritage is too precarious to set her on to a steady life way and life view. She is, in a sense, an outsider to what she interprets as Indian history and tradition in her West trained outlook. She prefers being the "Other" in what she considers to be a stereotypical traditional Indian set up. "After all my life did not fall into the narratives I had been taught to honor, tales that close back on themselves, swallowing its own ending, birth, an appropriate education.. an arranged marriage to a man of suitable birth and background somewhere in India" (2). Cushioned at her Manhattan home, she cherishes highlighting her psychic resistance to the life ways and customs accepted and appreciated by her ancestors including her own parents. Incidentally, her parents stayed abroad for years, and had exposure to the other cultures no less than the narrator has. The difference in the thought pattern of the two generations is a critique in itself.

The memoir remains virtually silent on the impact of Sudanese culture on Meena's life and thought. Rather the narration highlights that Sudan had made Meena realize herself as the "other" in a different way. For all her active involvement in the students movements related to the current political situation in Sudan, she knew she was an outsider. She had always been looked upon as an "expatriate Indian child" too distant and different to share the Sudanese ordeals.

Another major distancing factor had been her fluency in the high pedigree British English she had been compelled to learn as her mode of "survival" in a foreign land. English alienated her not only from the Sudanese young folk she had been growing up with, but also from her own mother tongue, the language of the rich culture of her ancestors. "As I became a teenager, I realized the forked power

in the tongue I had acquired: English alienated me from what I was born to" (116). Meena has a mixed reaction to the alienation. At times she tries to rationalize her refusal to learn the Malayalam script. The script would have confined her to an "exclusionary canonical language", and would have forced her to "face up to the hierarchies of a traditional society" (119). At other moments she endorses that her vernacular stores the ancestral wealth of wisdom that continues sustaining her ancestral community. The utterances in Malayalam cannot be transmitted in English. "Why would I ever... turn those words of the language where I lived and moved my inmost being into English that could never carry that emotion, that would only distort it?" (121) The ambiguous standpoint, her "fault line" makes her shaky to tread what would have been her natural inroad to a cultural ground.

Meena's days in England made her conscious of what she "actually was, a female creature from the third world, with no discernible history" (141). The stereotypical image of Indian womanhood created and nourished in the West marked her with an inherent inferiority she had never experienced in Sudan. The persistent assault on her "human dignity, identity and sense" made her violent "from within". For all her cultivated ease with the Western ways and taste she decided to break with her Dutch fiancee.

In America, while frequently shifting locale with her Euro American husband, Indian American Meena found it hard to orient herself to the life pattern of her adopted nation. "I did not understand what it meant to keep house in this inconstant fashion, to hold on, to keep going. Often I did not recognize myself, I felt I had lost my soul: that it was sucked into the vortex of an Otherness I had no words for" (104) Living in the contemporary U.S. is to live in a nation given to transnational exchange in global trade and digital culture. "The old notions of exile, that high estate are gone; smashed underfoot in the transit lounges, in the supermarkets, video parlors

of the world History is maquillage. No homeland here." (193). The harsh reality of getting along in the U.S teaches her that to be a person with multiple cultural anchorages is to find oneself hyphenated in every respect. "Everything that comes to me is hyphenated. A woman poet, a woman poet of color, a South Indian woman poet who makes up lines in English, a postcolonial language A third world woman poet, who takes as her right the inner city of Manhattan" (193).

One of the touching events the memoir records is the dialogue Meena overhears between her child Adam by her American husband, and her Euro American neighbor. The neighbor asks the child,

"So what you, child?"

Adam, shy as ever had just looked at him.

"You American, child?"

"No", said my son very boldly.

"Indian, then. You Indian, child?"

Adam shifted his weight, "No." I was growing tense. What did my first-born wish for himself? Some nothingness, some transitory zone where dreams roamed, a border country without passport or language?" (172).

Deeply disturbed as she has been, over the socio-cultural anchorage of her son, multicultural Meena does not find any answer. Her poetic mind craves for a homeland that is neither India she has in her memory, a land "touched by hierarchy, and authority, and the great weight of the centuries" (199), nor the U.S. with its "dazzling quickness, its breathless exhilaration" of a culturally collusive present. The homeland of her dream does not have a geographical locale. "After all for such as we are the territories are not free. The world is not open. The endless space... is worse than a lie" (199). The memoir ends where it began. What remains in the mind of the audience is a

set of soul -searching queries that Meena raised at the beginning of the book,

"Night after night, I asked myself the question, what might it mean to look at myself straight...? How many different gazes would that need ?" (2) "What could I ever be but a mass of fault, a fault mass ?" (3) " That's all I am, a woman cracked by multiple migrations. Uprooted so many times she can connect nothing with nothing " (3).

III

Let us read an Indian American creative writer of the second generation, a cultural refugee born and grown up in the very heart of America. Amita Vasudeva's miniature story "Journal Entry" (*Our Feet Walk The Sky*, 1993) begins, " Passing, I guess I've always pretty much passed as white. Not white in the color, white in culture - outwardly only. Why was it so easy to pass? Because I made an effort not to deny or refute any assumptions people had about me. I never really talked about my heritage when young" In the story she does not narrate much about her heritage, but rather about the "ever present fear" the children of ethnic descent still have in the U.S., the fear of not being accepted, being cast off, ignored, and ridiculed. A school going kid she tried to avoid the issue of being "different". She hated being thought of as "different".

Yet difference is what gives her an identity both in America and in India, the land her parents came from. Now matured, having gone through varied experiences in the U.S. for being the "other", she believes she has come to terms with the new identity in her own way. "I prefer to be recognized as distinct from the white bland mass of non-color and homogeneity that surrounds me. I hate it when people, especially recent Indian immigrants, think of me as a totally assimilated American because I'm not - and I don't make any claims to be".

A multicultural American, the narrator describes her

composite cultural situation, "There are certain situations where I am completely American and feel natural and comfortable and good about it-because after all I was born and raised in the U.S. And there are of course times at home with my family, or with Indian friends when I can dress Indian, be around Indian people, and feel just as comfortable". Some unuttered questions stare at the narrator. Does cultural identity imply just being 'comfortable'? Can one root oneself on a cultural ground, even a multicultural ground, by moving in and out of a cultural life way and thought pattern at one's whim or choice? The narrator enters a self justifying note, "But being Indian or American is not a choice I can make according to different situations, because there is no denying the fact that I am both... I'm being what I am".

That certainly is a bold self-assertion largely missing in the writings of the first generation Indian Americans, the diasporans all given to finding their bearings in the unfamiliar new land. The celebration of the emergence of the multicultural identity, "I'm being what I am" in "Journal Entry", however, fades out in the poem "To my Grandmother" by Amita Vasudeva herself. The poet's sensitive response to the complex cultural situation of the new generation Indian Americans spins a different inner story. Multicultural life in America is a trapped situation

I want to speak with you Mathaji
To let the rhythm of the
Punjabi words roll off my tongue
To tell you who I am
To tell you how I think
To tell you

I long to know how you think
I long to exchange ideas with you.
But I am trapped by my English Only

Tongue that keeps me from explaining
I am shut off from you by my English Only
Ears that don't always understand.

Not merely language, though language is a major cause of cultural alienation, persistent living in a culturally transitory zone makes one trapped in multi dimensional Otherness.

IV

Culture unfolds itself differently with different people. In India, the Sanskrit terms used for culture are *krsti* and *samskriti*, denoting a total attitude to life that an individual and a community inherit, sustain, cultivate in the dynamic process of living and ever moving onward. History of human civilization confirms that each culture enriches itself in continuous dialogue with other cultures. Contact with the value system, the thought patterns, and life ways of other people in terms of mutual respect, and appreciation, widens one's perspective, betters human understanding, and brings about cultural integration, the chore point of multiculturalism. As the Chinese American author Amy Ling observes, each voice arising from different cultures "is valid and valuable. And the more open we are to listening to these diverse voices, the more enriched and enlarged our own lives will be." The basic point is one needs to recognize one's own voice, before listening to the voice of the others.

It is often said in India that as in physical movement, in one's life course too one cannot move onward unless one has the back foot firm on the ground. One cannot go multicultural unless one has a firm anchor line in one culture. "You need to understand where you come from in order to understand what you must do or how you can move from the present to any future" says Afro American playwright August Wilson. Many recent American writers share the view. This is not an anti-multicultural standpoint History confirms that in the on going process of inter-cultural dialogue, some broad, distinctive cultural features of a particular people continue unchanged

for a considerable long period. Cultures have been probably the most stable historical phenomena. To remain a cultural hybrid is to condemn oneself to perpetual cultural alienation.

In India it is believed that mere knowledge of culture is not culture. Culture lies in actual practice. Culture implies culturing of one's own self (*atmanam samskurute*) by disciplining, refining and widening one's *śenē* and sensibility, responses and perspectives. Literature is part of culture, a medium that enables one *culturing oneself and culturing others*. May be the Indian American cultural refugees too will find their cultural ground, and their cultural location in a wide cultural synthesis, through their creative and critical writings, their performing arts and films. May be their constant encounter with cultural fragmentation, dislocation and the multicultural mega mix will act as a process of culturing themselves. It is for time to speak.

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STORIES ACROSS CULTURES : A CRITIQUE OF JHUMPA LAHIRI'S *UNACCUSTOMED EARTH*

Sonali Das

London-born writer of Indian origin, Jhumpa Lahiri, is a well-known face on the literary circle today. Her first work, a collection of nine short stories, *Interpreter of Maladies*, won her the 2000 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, besides winning the PEN/Hemingway Award, *The New Yorker* Debut of the Year Award, an American Academy of Arts and Letters Addison Metcalf Award, and a nomination for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize. It was translated into twenty-nine languages and became a bestseller both in the United States and abroad. This was followed by a novel, *The Namesake*, which consolidated her position as a writer writing about Indian immigrant experiences in America. *The Namesake* captures the theme of a Hindu Bengali family's immigrant experience in Boston, the clash of lifestyles, cultural disorientation, the conflict of assimilation, and paints the portrait of an Indian family torn between the pull of their Indian traditions and the American way of life. Lahiri returns to the short story format in *Unaccustomed Earth*. A collection of 8 short stories, the book revisits the themes of identity and acculturation and grapples with the challenges of immigration and exile.

Interviewed by Mukund Padmanabhan of *The Hindu*, about the common theme in her works, Lahiri said, "I continue to remain interested in writing about this world" and "as long as I remain interested and inspired to write about this world, I should keep doing it. To me the essential element in writing is to truly care and to be interested in what you are writing about" (1). She said that she does not think that the common theme is a confinement in any way.

Jhumpa Lahiri writes about highly qualified, professionally successful Indian Americans. But there is the aching loneliness of the outsider in a foreign land that is familiar to immigrants everywhere, in all stations of life. The eight stories of *Unaccustomed Earth* expand upon the epigraph from "The Custom House" by Nathaniel Hawthorne, which suggests the transplantation of people from their origin into a foreign soil, makes them more flourishing. According to Hawthorne, human fortunes may be improved, if men and women 'strike their roots into unaccustomed earth'. But Lahiri said about the choice of epigraph in the earlier cited interview that, "I was struck by that passage when re-reading *The Scarlett Letter*. It just happens to represent a body of experience, the body of experience of the characters in the book".

The stories in *Unaccustomed Earth* are divided into two parts: Part One contains five stories, including the title one, and the second contains three stories, revolving around the same two protagonists, Hema and Kaushik. Lahiri carry forward the stories, both stylistically and thematically, where she left off in her award-winning debut collection, *Interpreter of Maladies*. The stories feature middle class professional, often academic, mostly Bengali families or individuals in suburban or campus US, and are narrated from the perspective of children or adults who have grown up outside India. The stories revolve less around the dislocation Lahiri's earlier Bengali characters encountered in America and more around the assimilation experienced by their children- who while conscious of and self-conscious about their parents' old-world habits, vigorously reject them in favour of American lifestyles and partners.

Each of the five stories in the first section is self-contained. The title story, *Unaccustomed Earth*, for instance, is about a retired Bengali father, recently widowed, who visits his daughter, Ruma, now a mother, in Seattle. Ruma is yet to cope with her mother's death. She is little hesitant to take up her father's responsibility, especially when she is pregnant. While the father harbours a secret in his heart, "a sedate, autumnal relationship" (Khair 61) with a widowed Bengali woman, Mrs. Meenakshi Bagchi. Ruma discovers her father's new found love and his zest for traveling only after his

departure. The story presents the emotional distance between father and daughter, which prevented them from sharing each other's emotions with each other.

He (Ruma's father) did not want to be part of another family, part of the mess, the feuds, the demands, the energy of it. He did not want to live in the margins of his daughter's life, in the shadow of her marriage. He didn't want to live again in an enormous house that would only fill up with things over the years, as the children grew, all the things he'd recently gotten rid of, all the books and papers and clothes and objects are felt compelled to possess, to save (53).

A moment earlier, he (Ruma's father) imagined his grandson, Akash one day turning his back on his parents, Ruma and Adam, as he did on his father. A sense of nostalgia grips his mind.

He imagined the boy years from now occupying this very room, shutting the door as Ruma and Romi had. It was inevitable. And yet he knew that he too had turned his back on parents, by setting in America. In the name of ambition and accomplishment, none of which mattered any more, he had forsaken them (51).

The sense of loss overwhelming.

In the second story, "Hell-Heaven", the Bengali-American narrator, Usha, realizes how little thought she gave to her mother's secret love for a regular family visitor, Pranab Kaku, when her own heart is broken by a man she had hoped to marry. The story presents difference between mother's - daughter's attitude to life, which the mother finally accepts: "she had accepted the fact that I was not only her daughter but a child of America as well" (*Unaccustomed Earth* 81-82). The third story, "A Choice of Accommodations" is again about a Bengali immigrant(second generation), Amit Sarkar. His attempts to turn his friend, Pam's wedding into a romantic getaway with his wife, Megan, takes a turn. She suspects him of having an affair with Pam during his academic days at Langford. Amit refutes the charges, but admits of having a crush on Pam. This story is about a couple, who despite years of marriage, lacks complete faith in each other.

In "Only Goodness", another failed relationship is shown, this time between a brother and a sister. Sudha, the elder sister, first introduces her brother, Rahul, to alcoholism, later on tries to free him of this habit. She wants to give an American upbringing to her kid brother, which she did not get in her childhood, by buying toys, setting up room for him, putting a swing set in the yard, etc. But as he enters college, she introduces him to alcohol, a habit he acquires disastrously. Sudha moves to London to study Economics, and eventually marries an Englishman, much older than her. Rahul goes away from his home and her life for some years. Later, when she gets a letter from him, she immediately responds and invites him to her home in London. The story is about a sister and her guilt conscience, who tries to renew her attempts to free her brother of the drinking habit, for which she is solely responsible. Since 'old habits die hard', Rahul's boozing nature not only spoils his life, but compels Sudha to force him out of her house when he nearly kills her son, Neel, by leaving him in the bath tub. The last story of Part One, "Nobody's Business" is again about a Bengali immigrant, a "a pretty and smart and thirty and Bengali and still single" (*Unaccustomed Earth* 174) lady, Sangeeta Biswas, or Sang. She stays with Paul and Heather, her room mates, and is constantly proposed by suitors for marriage. Even Paul, her room mate, is in love with Sang (though never expressed). But she rejects all of them and falls in love with an Egyptian, Freddy, whom she adoringly calls, Farouk. But this relationship ends bitterly with the entry of a second woman, Deirdre Frain.

Part Two titled, "Hema and Kaushik" contains three interlinked stories of loss and love, revolving around two people, Hema and Kaushik, children of two very different Bengali families thrown together, on and off across the years, by the accident of immigration. The first story of the trilogy is narrated by Hema, where she describes how her family threw a farewell party for Kaushik and his family, when they left for India. The two families lost contact thereafter, which Hema recalls, "for years our families had no contact" (227). Then on one fine morning Dr. Choudhuri (Kaushik's father), calls up and informs that they are returning to Massachusetts and

would like to stay with Hema's family, till they find a house. With their return to Massachusetts, Kaushik re-enters into Hema's life. The second story of the trilogy, "Year's End", which is narrated by Kaushik, begins with: "I did not attend my father's wedding. I did not even know there had been a wedding until my father called early one Sunday during my final year at Swarthmore" (252). This shows the gap between father-son relationship. The story reveals the painful homecoming of Kaushik to the Massachusetts house where his beloved mother, Parul, had lived before succumbing to cancer. Unknown to him, his father had married an old-fashioned woman, named, Chitra, a mother of two daughters, Rupa and Piu, and a widow. Kaushik is reminded of his mother, when Chitra comes out of his mother's kitchen. However, Kaushik feels sympathetic for the daughters, since they have also moved to a new city like Kaushik did in his childhood, and are being forced to accept a replacement for a dead parent.

The third part of the trilogy is narrated partly by the omniscient narrator, and partly by Hema herself, and is set in Rome, where Hema and Kaushik meet again, decades after they had first met. While Kaushik travels across continents, working as a photo journalist, Hema is on the look out for the last vestiges of Etruscan culture. Soon Kaushik has to move to Hong Kong to join in his new job of a photo editor for an international news magazine, and Hema is to go back to India to marry Navin, a Professor of Physics at Michigan State. They meet at Edo and Paola's house, where they had gone for lunch. They could instantly relate to each other, since they are known to each other since childhood. To Hema, Kaushik seemed the same "a quite teenager in a jacket and tie, refusing her mother's food" (311).

Although Hema is engaged to Navin, she lets herself to Kaushik. They spend night together, but never discuss their future. The day before Hema is to leave for India, Kaushik asks her to come with him to Hong Kong, and not to marry Navin. But Hema rejects his favour, since in her opinion, though "he had told her not to marry Navin, but he had not asked her to marry him" (323). They separate again, this time permanently, for Hema leaves for India where she

starts a new life with Navin; while Kaushik leaves for Hong Kong, where he drowns himself and dies. The story ends with a sense of waste of love and loss of life. This trilogy is like a moving novella. It is perhaps the best part of *Unaccustomed Earth*.

Lahir presents the immigrant Characters with insight and precision. She highlights the sense of loss they feel for being uprooted from their culture. A note of nostalgia runs through her stories taking the older generation immigrants back in the memory lane. The sense of loss is overwhelming. The back of emotional integration with their new country makes them feel like on inside outsider.

Cultural displacement is once again Lahiri's theme in her third work, *Unaccustomed Earth*. To Ashima, the mother who has been transplanted from Calcutta to Cambridge, in Lahiri's novel, *The Namesake*: "being a foreigner,...is a sort of lifelong pregnancy—a perpetual wait, a constant burden, a continuous feeling out of sorts. It is an ongoing responsibility, a parenthesis in what had once been ordinary life, only to discover that that previous life has vanished, replaced by something more complicated and demanding" (*The Namesake* 49-50). Post-9/11 world has become even more suspicious and difficult for immigrants. In the light of this, Hawthorne's statement that, "Human nature will not flourish,..., if it be planted and replanted, for too long a series of generations, in the same worn-out soil. My children...shall strike their roots into unaccustomed earth" (Epigraph of *Unaccustomed Earth* taken from Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Custom House"), sounds ironical. Uprooted from their own soil to start anew, the characters are faced with questions of identity, issues of guilt and intricacies of relationships. Throughout this work, the sense of struggle continues to cross across continents, without regard for boundaries, collective histories or individual intentions.

What makes Jhumpa Lahiri's writings relevant and poignant, is her ability to depict the gulf that separates the immigrants not only from their homelands, but from their own flesh and blood—parents from children, first generation from second generation. While the parents try to retain their Indianness, even in America, by creating their Little Indias, the children feel home in America. This creates

tensions and communication gaps. Lahiri is a narrator subtly in tune with her poised and highly sensitive characters. She deftly handles the emotions of her characters and the powerful tensions coiled beneath the surface. Some writers write completely outside of their own experience. Others write more on the margins of their own experiences. Lahiri considers herself to be the second kind of writer.

Lahiri's characters are immigrants from India and their children, either American-born or American-reared ones. They are the ones who face cultural assimilation more severely. They straddle between two cultures—unable to accept any one (Indian or Western) culture fully. The children are mostly emotional outsiders, completely at home in neither culture. As in *Interpreter of Maladies*, all Lahiri's characters have the common nationality to bind them. The title, *Unaccustomed Earth*, not only refers to the foreign soil where the characters find themselves, it also refers to unfamiliar emotional region through which the characters are compelled to travel. Most of the emotions are related to loss—of a parent, a partner, a brother, or an ideal. Apart from presenting the stories across cultures, Lahiri depicts the emotions that the characters undergo while travelling across cultures. Human nature may not flourish in 'unaccustomed earth', as Nathaniel Hawthorne believes. Rather it may lead to a loss of one's identity.

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KIRAN DESAI'S *THE INHERITANCE OF LOSS* : A DIASPORIC ARTICULATION AND MULTICULTURALISM

Krishna Singh

Kiran Desai, the winner of the prestigious Man Booker Prize, 2006, for her second novel *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) explores colonial neurosis, multiculturalism, modernity, immigrants' bitter experiences, insurgency and the game of possession, gender-bias, racial discrimination, changing human relations, impact of globalization, *Isthal Puran* type delineation of the North East of India, post colonial chaos and despair, ethno-racial and historical relationships between people from different cultures and backgrounds. The present paper endeavours to analyse Kiran Desai's diasporic experiences and multiculturalism. Desai is an Indian citizen but a Permanent Resident of America. More than twenty years time, she has spent in the West; however she still holds on to Indian passport, struggling to get American citizenship. Increasingly she, too, is unsure that she would really want to surrender her Indian citizenship. In an interview she reacted, "I feel less like doing it every year because I realize that I see everything through the lens of being Indian. It's not something that has gone away-it's something that has become stronger. As I've got older, I have realized that I can't really write without that perspective" (wiki / kirandesai). During Jaipur Literature Festival, in an interview she expressed her pleasant experience: "It's best time to be an Indian writer... I do know that present day India isn't really my subject." (*The Times of India*. Jan. 22, 2007) It was only when she began to writing about the immigrant

experience in New York that she realized she would have to return to India. But she finds India has changed, it belongs to the Indian author living in India. The subjects belong to them. She goes back to India of the 1980s. It is this feeling of being caught between two continents that creates "in-between ness" which infuses the novel. At times it appears to rejoice in the intermingling of cultures; at others it seems to inspire a wistful melancholy. But, "re-discovering her Indian-ness was vital to her, she tells Laura Barton." (*Guardian*, Thursday, October 12, 2006) Love of the country and country men, its culture, history, traditions, socio-political ramifications, identity crisis, loss of culture, exile, immigration problems, loneliness, alienation, nostalgic reminiscences, dislocation and disillusionment, longing for better life, better relations, and love are dealt with a cold eye and a warm heart which endorse Kiran Desai a post colonial "traditionalist" diasporan rather than "assimilationist", struggling to maintain her original culture and identity. Consequently, she makes the novel an Indian treating subjects concerning Indian life in India as well as in abroad. She superbly elaborates all these in a highly experimented English -i.e. uses Indian slangs, dialectic words, abuses of various regions, vulgar and obscene expressions, colloquial vocabulary-introduce an element of naturalism; highly congenial to portrait the image and sensibility of India.

Politically, India was hit by insurgency. It imposed a big threat to law and order. Entire novel is set in the backdrop of insurgency rising in the North East- i.e. GNLF movement which disrupted the normal life, tourism, business and peace. Out of fifty- three Chapters of the novel more than eighteen Chapters are exclusively devoted to describe insurgency to highlight the dismal picture of the region. Poverty, unemployment, socio-economic backwardness, xenophobia, discriminatory policies and the Government's apathy to seek remedies are deeply rooted in the separatist movements rampant in the whole country. No part is spared; it's alarming and anticipates disastrous consequences: "Separatist movement here, separatist movement there, terrorists, guerillas, insurgents, rebels, agitators, instigators,

and all they learn from one another, of course-the Neps have been encouraged by the Sikhs and their Khalistan, by ULFA, NEFA, PLA; Jharkhand, Bodoland, Gorkhaland; Tripura, Mizoram, Manipur, Kashmir, Punjab, Assam..... " (128-129). The close nexus among these makes the political problem more grim and intractable. Desai curtly blames the policy makers for these violent movements: "This state making, the biggest mistake that fool Nehru made. Under his rules any group of idiots can stand up demanding a new state and get it, too.. it all started with Sikkim. The Neps played such a dirty trick and began to get grand ideas-now they think they can do the same thing again." (128) "Not one truthful politician in the whole country. Yes, our parliament is made of thieves, each one answerable to the prime minister, who is the biggest thief of them all" (Hullabaloo. P20). The genesis of GNLF Movement is narrated by a man clambered up on the bench :

"In 1947, brothers and sisters, the British left granting India her freedom, granting the Muslims Pakistan, granting special provisions for the scheduled castes and tribes, leaving everything taken care of, brothers and sisters Except us. EXCEPT US. The Nepalis of India. At that time, in April of 1947, the Communist Party of India demanded a Gorkhaland, but the request was ignored... we are laborers on the tea plantations, coolies dragging heavy loads, soldiers. And are we allowed to become doctors and government workers, owners of tea plantations? No ! We are kept at the level of servants" (158).

"Gorkhaland for Gorkhas" (7) is the motto of the movement; the activists work on universal guerilla fashion. Kukri sickles, axes, kitchen knives, spade or any kind of firearm they look for to make the movement more and more violent to force the Government to grant statehood. Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram and Punjab were on fire with the assassination of Indira Gandhi; and Sikhs with their *kanga*, *kachha* etc, still wishing "to add a sixth K, Khalistan, their

own country in which to live with the other five Ks " (108). Socio-cultural and political identity and quest for autonomy furthers and kindles the fire of agitation. Indian Nepalese are "fed up being treated like the minority in a place where they were the majority.. They wanted their own country or at least their own state, in which to manage their own affairs" (9). Gyan's involvement in the separatist movement is the reflection of young Indians' deep rooted frustration, for which Gyan even sacrifices the love of Sai. A feeling of "martyrdom crept over him" (175) and he was overwhelmed and swayed by this vortex. Arson, looting, strike, *bundh* and the violent reactions were the commonplaces of the time. The novel opens and ends with insurgency. In the opening Chapter Jemu's house is seized and a hunting rifle is plundered ; Chapter fifty two ends with Biju robbed by Gurkha mercenaries and chased by dogs in the jungle. The partition of India and the emergence of Pakistan is indeed, Desai poignantly reacts: "First heart attack to our country, . . . that has never been healed" (129).

The novel portrays the Indian society as poverty stricken; moreover illiteracy, unemployment, xenophobia, cultural conflicts, traditional values, customs, practices; and multiplicity of languages, religions, faiths constitute the very structure of the society in which the novelist is deeply interested. Though she draws a dismal picture of the Indian society, she has a humanistic approach-even characters i.e. Jemu, Sai, Gyan, Biju, Cook, Lola, Noni, Booty, Potty and Bela all are helpless and feel inferior by their subject position - Desai, very candidly and humane manner treats them. Poverty is the root cause of GNLF movement and migrancy. Gyan's involvement in GNLF movement and frustration caused by the extreme polarities he witnesses between the poor and the rich brings drastic changes in his attitude and love. He is upset to undertake long walk in the cold for the small amount of money the Judge paid him. It maddened him that: "People lived here (Cho Oyu) in this enormous house and property, taking hot baths, sleeping alone in spacious rooms.. cutlets and peas dinner.. " (162). He is born of poverty and proudly Indian-

his family's house still made of mud with a thatch roof. Cook and Biju epitomize the distress of common men. Biju migrates to America because he is badly hit by poverty; he bears every kind of exploitation for the sake of money. Cook renders yeoman services to Jemu. On the contrary, Jemu humiliates and kicks the Cook. It pained Sai's heart to see how poverty has worked on Cook: "A poverty stricken man growing into an ancient at fast-forward. Compressed childhood, lingering old age There was age in his temperament, his kettle, his clothes, his kitchen, his voice, his face, in the undisturbed dirt, the undisturbed settled smell of a lifetime of cooking, smoke, and kerosene" (19). Cook advises Biju : "Just make sure you are saving money" (18). So that they might overcome poverty. Sai's journey from Dehradun to Darjeeling notices the panorama of village life and India looks as old as ever; realistic description arrests our attention: " Women walked by with firewood on their heads, too poor for blouses under their saris... .It was early in the morning and the railways tracks were lined with rows of bare bottoms... .defecating onto the tracks, rinsing their bottoms with water from a can" (30). *Chapatis, jalebis, samosa, fish, chips, pakora, tea, chhang, laddoos, chooran, srikhand, fresh milk etc.* figure in regular meals of the society gradually experiencing transition and replacing them with *Angrezi Khana* . But all over Kalimpong modernity began to fail.

The novel is a brilliant study of Indian culture-the culture in its transitional phase. Changes are brought out by "colonial neurosis", craze for the Western values, manners, language and glamorous life style; impact of modernization, consumerism, globalization and deep rooted reaction to indigenous values which failed to sustain life. Characters feel inferior, bounded and defeated by their Indian heritage confronted with colonialism; consequently, they develop grotesque complexes which mar their mutuality and reciprocal relationship. Jemu, Lola, Pixie, Noni, Biju, Cook, Sai, Gyan all are generic, reflect the pain of transition. Notwithstanding, political freedom, cultural slavery is directly manifested through these characters. They are in a "to be or not to be" position; fail to assimilate

new culture and give up original culture in totality. There remains identity crisis which most of the Indians face despite postcolonial reactions in which endeavour is to revitalize indigenous culture and its values. Jemu originally belongs to Piphit, goes to Cambridge for higher studies, selected in I.C.S.; becomes a judge. In this entire process of making, he goes on adopting the West as a model of excellence; he sacrifices his nativity. He even changes the name of his *desi* wife Bela to Nimi; condemns her for her socio - cultural practices; whereas, Sai, the grand daughter is commended because she is Westernized Indian brought up by English nuns. Jemu is the finest example of an Anglophile-" being a foreigner in his own country..." (29) Jemu and Sai are type of "estranged Indian living in India." (210) Gyan also satirizes: "You (Jemu and Sai) are like slaves, that's what you are, running after the West, embarrassing yourself." (163) Biju stands for young crazy men of the Third World who dream a plan to go to the West for money making; unflinchingly, they sacrifice original culture and social conventions. When Biju gets full timer waiter position in New York, he sends reactions to his father: "Uniform and food will be given by them. *Angrezi Khana* only, no Indian food, and the owner is not from India. He is from America itself." (14) "He works for the Americans", the Cook reports the contents of Biju's letter to everyone as a thing of pride and high honour in the society. Gyan is also intimidated by Jemu's affluence, very English accent and superior ways. Lola, Noni, Pixie and Mrs. Sen are also camouflaged by British ways. Lola advises her daughter Pixie to leave India because "India is a sinking ship... *the doors won't stay open for ever..*" (47).

Immigration problem is one of the most striking problem. Most of the Indians and Third World citizens face such problem in Europe and America. Desai herself has spent more than twenty years in America, she still holds on Indian passport; struggling to get American citizenship ; increasingly, she, too, is unsure that she would really want to surrender her citizenship. It was her own experience and intimate talks with immigrants in America she could highlight

the problem so emphatically. Biju, Saeed, Harish Harry, Saran, Jeev, Rishi, Mr. Lalkaka and thousands of Africans, Latin Americans and Asians working in American and Europe exemplify the bitter experiences of the immigrants. Father Booty is another example of illegal immigrant who lives in India for forty- five years, while he has the visa for two weeks only. Later he is forced to leave the country. Biju spends his early days working as waiter in New York soon there was "green card check" (16) on employees. He was relieved by the manager, who advised him: 'just disappear quietly.. .' (16) Saeed applied for the immigration lottery each year, but Indians were not allowed to apply hence Biju continued to doze authorities, moving from one ill paid job to another for thirty years. He is frightened to see the lot of illegal immigrants: " ... there were those who lived and died illegal in America and never saw their families, not for ten years, twenty, thirty, never again." (99) He is overwhelmed by fugitive role, nostalgic reminiscences and racial discrimination ; soon he is disillusioned by the West. Immigrants' painful experience is embittered by racial discrimination. Biju, whose hopes are very lofty; he feels ecstatic when selected to work in New York; soon he encounters with the working conditions, racial discrimination and immigration laws; he is enlisted as "shadow class" (102), discovers authentic colonial experience how Third World natives are exploited and humiliated in the West: "They drew the lines at crucial junctures" (23) and " on the top, rich colonial, and down below, poor native; Colombian, Tunician, Ecuadorian..... Above all, the restaurant was French, but the below in the kitchen it was Mexican and Indian." (21) Even the glamorous image of the West changes into hatred: "There was a whole world in the basement kitchens in New York." (22) "... the habit of hate had accompanied Biju, and he found that he possessed an awe of White people, who arguably had done India great harm." (77) Jemu also experiences racial discrimination against Indians while he was studying in England and thereafter too. Gyan and GNLF activists find Delhi has adopted discriminatory policies against Gorkhaland.

Nature and landscape description occupies large canvas of the novel; though it extends from Manhattan to Himalayas, it is central to Piphit, Kalimpong, Cho Oyu, and Darjeeling. Topography, scenic beauty, variety of vegetation, changing colours of the sky, patches of clouds, rain, mist, mountain tops, *Teesta* river, thick forests, cluster of houses, vapour, ice, zig zag roads and seasonal changes etc define nature in the novel. It is sensuous beauty which delights the novelist very much, simultaneously, it is contrasted with rising insurgency and its violent out break disrupting normal life. Her treatment of nature is highly poetic and Wordsworthian finding deeper import in it. The novel opens with nature description: "All day, the colors had been those of dusk, mist moving like a water creature across the great flanks of mountains possessed of ocean shadows and depths. Briefly visible above the vapor, Kanchenjunga was a far peak whittled out of ice, gathering the last of the light, a plume of snow blown high by the storms at its summit." (1) Desai's observation is very keen, acute and specific; even the different parts of a tree embody sensuous beauty as well as represent the psychic conditions of the inhabitants: "Kanchenjunga glowed macabre, trees stretched away on either side, trunks pale, leaves black, and beyond, between the pillars of the trees, a path led to the house." (19) Sometimes, she juxtaposes and blends together various objects and presents an elaborate portrayal, free from "pathetic fallacy" (phrase coined by John Ruskin to signify fidelity between object and its delineation). The vicinity of Cho Oyu is marked by it :

"...a wetter climate, a rusty green landscape, creaking and bobbing in the wind. They drove past tea stalls on stilts, chicken being sold in round cane baskets, and Durga Puja goddesses being constructed in shacks... paddy fields and warehouses... to the right, the *Teesta* River came leaping at them between white banks of sand. Space and sun crashed through the window. . . . By the river bank, wild water racing by, the late evening sun in polka dots through the trees, they parted

company. To the east was Kali pong barely managing to stay on the saddle between the Deolo and the Ringkingpong hills. To the west was Darjeeling, skidding down the Singalila mountains... not a street light anywhere in Kali pong, and the lamps in the houses were so dim you saw them only as you passed... forest making ssss tseu tsts seuuu sounds." (30-31)

Her involvement in nature and landscapes of India confirms her unending interest and diasporic articulation. Unlike Wordsworth, Desai hardly tries to divinize nature or feel the presence of God anywhere. She investigates parallel development in changing seasons and incidents of violence: " *The incidents of horror grew*, through the changing of the seasons, through winter and a flowery spring, summer, then rain and winter again. Roads were closed, there was curfew every night, and Kalim pong was trapped in its own madness. You couldn't leave the hillsides; nobody even left their houses if they could help it but stayed locked in and barricaded." (279) Nature is, here, subservient to human emotions and actions; gives force and meaning and aesthetic beauty as well. *The Sunday Express* has eulogized Desai's portrayal of nature and landscapes and masterly use of language: "Descriptions of the mountains and the people of Kalim pong, the changing seasons and the inner mindscapes of her characters are mesmerizing; her use of language is virtuoso, and her ideas sparkle." (Courtesy: Internet)

The novel is essentially a study of losses-loss of culture, loss of identity, loss of human relations. Loss of emotional binding, loss of human values, loss of rationality, loss of peace and harmony, loss of human beings' faith in each other etc. Sense of loss is an integral part of every character's life; they are insecure, and unmoored, struggling to survive in the modern world, unsure of whether they will ever see the benefits of globalization; characters unnecessarily feeling inferior due to their Indian heritage. Historical events have deep personal import that last people's life-time and even beyond.

Jemu who originally hails from Piphit; goes to Cambridge for higher studies, selected in I.C.S. and becomes a judge. He is so much impressed and immersed in Western values, he loses his original Indian identity and feels "foreigner in his own country." (29) He is one of those ridiculous Indians who can't rid themselves of what they had broken their souls to learn and whose Anglophilia can only turn into self-hatred. These Indians are also unwanted anachronism in post colonial India, where long-suppressed peoples have begun to awaken to their dereliction, to express their anger and despair ; GNLf movement is an outburst of that reaction and Gyan's xenophobia is rooted in it. Jemu can't free himself from "colonial neurosis". (46) He envied the English. He loathed Indians. He worked at being English with the passion of hatred and for what he would become, he would be despised by absolutely everyone, English and Indians both." (119) Jemu loses peace by the arrival of Sai and Biju and GNLf activities; strongly misses the glorious past and Mutt for whom he laments loudly. Due to insurgency North East loses three Ts: "Tea! Timber! Tourism!" (225) Sai also loses indigenous cultural values. In the process of academic learning in a convent school Western Christian values enter into her blood. Though she remains "full of contradictions." (30) She also suffers from identity crisis. The biggest loss she feels profoundly is the love of Gyan. Biju who goes to New York with bright hopes, soon discovers authentic colonial experience how Third World poor natives are exploited and humiliated in the West: " They drew the lines at crucial junctures" (23) and "on the top, rich colonial, and down below, poor native; Columbian, Tunisian, Ecuadorian... Above all, the restaurant was French, but below in the kitchen it was Mexican and Indian." (21) White man also shout : " *Uloo ka Patta*, son of an owl, low down son-of- a- bitch Indian." (23) Even the glamorous picture of the West changes into hatred: " There was a whole world in the basement kitchens of New York." (22) He also faces tough and discriminatory Immigration laws in America, fails to procure green card; listed "shadow class" (102) of illegal immigrants in New York and spends

thirty years time dodging the authorities, moving from one ill-paid job to another. His bitter experiences in America and home-sickness compel him for home coming. Even in his own country he finds total loss of peace, law and order. He is robbed by GNLF activists and chased by dogs. Biju emerges as a generic figure, represents young crazy men of the Third World who dream a plan to go to the West and face tough ordeals there. Lola, Noni, Pixie and Mrs. Sen are also trapped by British ways. Lola advises her daughter Pixie, a BBC reporter: "Better leave (India) sooner than later... India is a sinking ship. Don't want to be pushy, darling, sweetie, thinking of your happiness only, but *the doors won't stay open for ever...*" (47) Lola and Noni are publicly humiliated by Pradhan of GNLF, violate the dignity of genteel women while both the sisters go to complain against encroachment in Mon Ami. Loss of dignity and dreamland (Mon Ami) make them helpless. Father Booty who runs a dairy in Kalimpong, spends forty five years as an illegal immigrant, while he has the visa for two weeks only. Later he is forced to leave the country. Consequently, he lost "every thing but his memories." (257) Gyan sacrifices the love of Sai for his Gorkhaland. Cook loses his honour when he is cruelly beaten by Jemu on the missing of Mutt. Almost all of Desai's characters have been stunted by their encounters with the West.

Kiran Desai makes the novel Indian-both by content and form. Whether its topography, idyllic beauty or the elaborate description of insurgency, description of mountains, mist, changing seasons, Kalimpong, Cho Oyu, Darjeeling, Piphit, immigration problem, culture conflicts, the inhabitants or the inner mindscapes of characters, Desai frees herself from the stereo typed Euro - Centric models and honestly and independently depicts India. Her use of language is another powerful technique to create the manifest sense of Indian-ness. She prefers American English and tries to make it Indianized. She has encountered with American and British writers of English and studied creative writing at Columbia University.

Subsequently, she has experimented a lot with the language. Use of popular slangs, dialectic words, abuses of various regions, vulgar and obscene expressions introduce an element of naturalism; Indian vocabulary, Indian metaphors and imagery etc are highly supportive to fillip the portrayal of picture and sensibility of India. Indian vocabulary creates a congenial atmosphere to transport the reader into that realm where India resides.

Every chapter in the novel begins with topical line, italicized; thereafter, the novelist elaborates and illustrates the topic. Chapter One *All Day* introduces major characters, secluded life in Kalimpong, Kanchenjunga, Judge, Sai, Gyan, Biju Cook, Mutt, insurgency in North East and romance of Gyan and Sai. Chapter Three *All the Way in America* elaborates immigrants' bitter experiences, disillusionment and racial discrimination. Chapter Seven *Oh, Grandfather more lizard than human* focuses on Jemu's character - dehumanized and Anglophile. Chapter Nine *Oh my God* introduces Lola, Noni and their craze for the West and changing identity. Chapter Fifteen *In Kalipong* topography and scenic beauty of the region is highlighted. Chapter Twenty *Gyan and Sai* deals with love and insurgency. Chapter Twenty Seven *Moody and restless* expresses the unrest of Gyan. Chapter Forty *The Incidents of horror* grew portraits the increasing insurgency in Kalimpong.

Use of popular slangs, dialectic words, abuses of various regions, vulgar and obscene expressions are frequently used: *nakhara*, *pakora*, *huzoor*, *chhang*, *mia-bibi*, *mithai*, *pitaji*, *Angrezi Khana*, *salwars*, *kamala ha !*, *Baap re !*, *laddoos*, *dhotis*, *jhora*, *pallu*, *Budhoo*, *choksee*, *Neps*, *Namste*, *aiyiye*, *baethiye*, *khaiye*, *dhanayawad*, *shukuria*, *chapattis*, *jalebi*, *haveli*, *tika*, *chokra*, *murga-murgi*, *bania*, *dhobi*, *hubshi*, *haat*, *atta*, *srikhand*, *kundan*, *peepal*, *choolah*, *rasta roko*, *phata phat*, *Bilkul Bekar*, *Jai Gorkha*, *Saag*, *bhai*, *Goras*, *ghas phoos*, *goondas*, *sukhtara*, *susu*, *fucking oil*, *her*, *chooran*, *jamun*, *lalli*, *roti-namak*, *gadhas*, *murdabad*, *parathas*, *tamasha*, *chappals*, *desi* etc. Even full length expressions figure significantly: "*Humara kya hoga, hai hai, humara kya hoga*" (8) "*Bar bar karta rahata hai*" (11) "

O! Yeh ladki zara si deewani lagti hai..." (51) "Angrez ki tarah. Angrez Jaise." (105) "rasta roko" (107) "Gas maar raha hai" (217) "Jai Gorkha" (7) etc. Abuses and vulgar expressions : "Sooar ka bachha, " "uloo ka patha" (23) "sala" (148) "bepkhuph" (182) "bhenchoot" (287) "sala machoot" (289) and "gadhas" (297) etc. Indian imagery and metaphors are also used: " cheeks like two Simla apples" (262) ; the technical terms also get place-i.e. "24 k" (45) Obscene descriptions read like a blue film; for Desai they are not obscene or pornographic. She narrates them very candidly. Jemu's sex with his wife Bela reads like this: "...he clamped down on her, tussled her to the floor, and as more of that perfect rose complexion, blasted into million mates, came filtering down, in a dense frustration of lust and fury-penis uncoiling, mottled purple-black as if with rage, blundering, uncovering the chute he had heard rumour of-he stuffed his way ungracefully into her." (169)

Whenever she tries to emphasize an expression, she adopts four different methods :

- (1) Size of the letter/ letters goes on increasing: "00000!" (49)
- (2) Use of capital letters: "But I don't NEED to go. / Oh, but you MUST." (154)" Except us. EXCEPT US. The Nepalīs of India." (158) "BECAUSE I'M BORED TO DEATH BY YOU, THAT'S WHY." (163)
- (3) Number and size of the letters go on increasing: "paaaaaWWW (49) "twe tweeeeeee twooo' (50)
- (4) Use of italics: "Because of people like you!" (164) "...three Ts: Tea ! Timber ! Tourism !" (225) "You are the one who is stupid" (304)

Use of Periphrasis: "Indian foreigner" (220) - Father Booty who spends forty five years in India. And "first heart attack to our country." (129) - partition of India.

Use of Hyperbaton: "Mutton curry mutton pulao vegetable curry vegetable pulao... .." (207) - busy restaurant waiter speaks.

Rhetorical Questions: " And are we allowed to become doctors and government workers, owner of the tea plantations ? " (158) - a GNLFF activist addresses the crowd and answer is implied.

No Punctuation: for fast action, Desai does not use any punctuation. e.g. "Cups plates beds chairs wiring light fixtures,..."(43)

Desai uses crispy, terse, pithy, broken and cryptic sentences; and interestingly, she too has frequently used elaborate, detailed, run on lines, poetically gifted to describe nature and landscapes. Sonali Das finds the instances of " transliterations and situation modified language." (*The Critical Endeavour*. P. 42)

Multiculturalism is an important characteristic of the novel. Desai takes a skeptical view of the West's consumer-driven multiculturalism which is confined to the Western metropolis and academe, doesn't begin to address the causes of extremism and violence in the modern world. Nor economic globalization become a route to the prosperity of down trodden. She even disagrees with the writers like Zadie Smith and Rari Kunzru, whose fiction is optimistic of hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combination of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies and songs. Even in the post colonial world – colonial neurosis and racial discrimination continue. People from Asia, Africa, Latin America working in U.S.A. are treated as second rate labourer, enlisted as "shadow class" (102). Biju who goes to New York with bright hopes, soon discovers authentic colonial experience how third world poor natives are exploited and humiliated in the West: "They drew the lines at crucial junctures" (23) and "on the top, rich colonial, and down below, poor native; Columbian, Tunisian, Ecuadorian..... Above all, the restaurant was French, but below in the kitchen it was Mexican and Indian" (21). White men also shout: "*Uloo ka patta*, son of an owl, low down son-of-a-bitch Indian" (23). Even the glamorous picture of the West changes into hatred: "There was a whole world in the basement kitchens in New York"(22) "the habit of hate had accompanied Biju, and he found that he possessed an awe of White people, who arguably had

done India great harm" (27). Even Jemu, while studying in England was hit by racial discrimination and cultural alienation. Multiculturalism is not confined to the metropolis of the West, India itself presents a glittering example of multicultural society which since ancient time had been a very secular, democratic, humane and cosmopolitan. It is characterized by two important features: universal acceptance and universal tolerance. It is here, where the people from every ethnic community and group not only get shelter but also love, honour and recognition. Jemu, Biju, Sai, Cook, Gyan, Lola, Noni, Booty, Potty, Mr. and Mrs. Mistry belong to different cultural backgromids. All live in peace and harmony. Multiculturalism is the legacy Desai inherited from her parents and grand parents. Her maternal grandmother was a German; grandfather was a refugee from Bangladesh. Her paternal grandparents came from Gujrat; and her grandfather was educated in England. Both of her novels manifest her reactions to multiculturalism through characters and depiction of social milieu. Although she has not lived in India since 14, she returns to the family home in Delhi every year. She maintains convivial attitude to all cultures and mildly exposes the vanity and hypocrisy prevalent in them.

The Inheritance of Loss was the result of eight years' work, writing of broken people, difficult lives; writing not just about India but Indian communities in the world. It was quite difficult, emotional experience for Desai, because she was devastated and sad by the end of the book where "loss" predominates. Binnie Kirshenbaum has rightly commented about the novel : " A nation's tragedies, great and small, are revealed through the hopes and the dreams, the innocence and the arrogance, the love betrayed and the all, too, human failings of a superbly realized cast of characters. Kiran Desai writes of Post colonial India, of its poor as well as its privileged, with a cold eye and a warm heart." (Courtesy: Internet.) Dhanyasree M rightly comments: "Indian Diasporic writing inherits success once again while Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* attains the esteemed Booker Prize for 2006" (/other celebrities/ Kiranndesai.html). Rediff.com enlisted Kiran Desai one among "Women writers of Indian

diaspora who create big impact" (rediff.com/news). Desai also illustrates B.K.Das's proposition regarding the history and recent development in diasporic discourse-with affiliation to, "postmodernism and postcolonialism The choice for twenty first century man is either he has to take the whole world as his home or else, he will become a homeless wanderer" (*The Critical Endeavour*. Pp 22 &32). Desai is caught in three different worlds; moving from one country to another, articulating diasporic experiences-love, longing and losses as well as multiculturalism which she has witnessed and assimilated from her familial relations and metropolis.

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"THE OTHER SIDE OF SILENCE": RE-POSITIONING DRAUPADI IN THE SHORT STORIES OF MAHASWETA DEVI AND SHASHI DESHPANDE

Anupama Chowdhury

A re-survey of the hidden sub-texts of the Indian epics may present startling revelations regarding the lives of the queens depicted in these. This re-assessment may speak volumes of their blue-blooded marginality which we usually tend to overlook in the grand narratives of the epics. There lies a paradox between their powerful images as queens as reflected in the "grand narrative" and their powerlessness as "gendered subalterns" revealed in these "meta-narratives". From time immemorial patriarchy has imposed on women the idea of what they should be and how they must behave. Even myths have been created as well as interpreted from the male point of view. Whether they are queens of the Royal families or the mothers and wives from ordinary households, the images of women have always been fashioned according to the male imagination. The women writers today are exploring these myths to interrogate them and to provide articulation to the marginalized and repressed. In this process, popular patriarchal texts are rewritten and challenged from all possible perspectives. This includes recasting of an entire range of male-conceived women characters and their reframing from a woman's point of view. As B K Das in *Twentieth Century Literary Criticism* rightly observes:

Feminist Literary Criticism primarily responds to the way woman is presented in literature. It has two basic premises: One, woman presented in literature by male writers from their

own viewpoint and two, woman presented in the writings of female writers from their point of view. The first premise gives rise to a kind of feminist criticism known as phallocentrism and the second premise leads us to another kind of feminist criticism known as Gynocriticism. (88)

Thus, the gynocritics show how the "image" of woman in literature is invariably defined in opposition to the "real person" whom literature somehow never manages to convey to the reader. They also expose how literary representations of women repeat familiar cultural stereotypes in most cases. What had been shrouded in the mist of silence for so long thus finds voice. This reminds us of Helene Cixous' observation in "The Laugh of the Medusa" - "when the 'repressed' of their culture and their society returns, it's an explosive, utterly destructive, staggering return" (256).

The much acclaimed Sahitya Akademi Award winners, Mahasweta Devi and Shashi Deshpande have recreated Draupadi, "re-positioning" her in their stories. In a thought provoking article, "Telling Our Own Stories", Shashi Deshpande makes an appreciable comment:

Our epics and Puranas are still with us and among us; ... Over the years they have been reinvented, reshaped and regionalized. Myths continue to be a reference point for people in their daily lives and we have so internalized them that they are part of our psyche, part of our personal, religious and Indian identity. (86)

In their analysis both the writers have given meaningful interpretation of the character from the gender perspective, making the readers hear the silences in the sub-text of the life of the renowned queen of the Pandavas. The stories reveal a shocking reality- whether she is "Draupadi" of the epic or "Dopdi" from this contemporary society, the conditions of her subjugation and exploitation remain almost the same. Though both the characters in the stories of the writers mentioned above are victims of patriarchy, yet their reactions to their particular situations stand starkly apart from each other. Widely different in their themes and

writing style, both the authors deal with the inner female psyche and "break out the snare of silence" by "writing from and toward women, and by taking up the challenge of speech which has been governed by the phallus" (Cixous, 251). Both Mahasweta Devi's "Draupadi" (translated into English by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak) and Shashi Deshpande's "And What Has Been Decided?" recreate Draupadi from the Mahabharata. This paper is an attempt to critically analyze the two stories from a feminist perspective and to make a comparative study of how both the writers articulate the so far unheard voice. All references to the texts are from Spivak's translation of Mahasweta Devi's "Draupadi" and the penguin edition of Deshpande's story included in *Collected Stories*, Vol. II. The first section of this article analyzes Devi's story while the second part focuses on Deshpande's re-positioning of Draupadi.

I

In an interview with Radha Chakravorty in August, 1999 (cited in Chakravorty), Mahasweta Devi disclaimed all awareness of theoretical concepts and confessed that her sole purpose of writing is to bring about a social change. In the preface to *Bashai Tudu* she claims-

An anger, luminous and burning like the sun, directed against a system that cannot free my people [...] is the only source of inspiration for my writing. (xx-xxi)

In "Draupadi" myth and history interact blurring the borderline between fact and fiction. The internationally acclaimed postcolonial theorist Spivak's interpretation of the central character as the "gendered subaltern" and the analysis of the story from the postcolonial viewpoint have been widely appreciated both at home and abroad.

Set against the backdrop of the peasant rebellion against the wealthy landowners in the Northern region of the West Bengal district, this story depicts the capture and the horrifying brutal rape of a tribal woman, Dopdi Mejhen. Devi uses both the versions of her name, juxtaposing "Draupadi" and "Dopdi" and this makes the story multi-dimensional. The central character is a female rebel involved in the active participation in the Naxalite movement in the late 1960s. Her husband

Dulna, who was her partner in the rebellion and whom she loved more than her own blood, gets fired by the .303 gun while trying to quench his thirst in the spring. After his death Dopdi continues the undone job of her husband, making the violent message "Ma-ho" come true. Her determination not to utter the names of her comrades in this mission even in the face of direst situation deserves our admiration: "I swear by my life. By my life Dulna, by my life. Nothing must be told" (265). As the story begins the First Livery shows utter surprise at the fact that a tribal can have such a classical name (do they have any right to possess such names?). Though Draupadi is "wanted", yet her name does not feature in the list of names of tribal women. Thus Mahasweta Devi consciously plays with this "unlisted name". Perhaps it will be worth noting that the third person narrative uses the classical version of the name mostly and prepares the ground for interrogating the situation in which "Panchali" was placed when she was married to the five Pandavas in the epic. Devi re-creates the denuding episode of Draupadi. In our patriarchal society, from time immemorial, women are deprived of their independent status. We may refer to the famous book by Manu where the renowned law-giver opined that women will be subordinate to their fathers when still unmarried, to their husbands after marriage and to their sons in old age. Yudhisthira, Draupadi's eldest husband, after losing all material possessions in the game of dice bets her only to lose the game again. The exulting enemy Chief orders that she should be presented before the assembly either clothed or unclothed. Since she is married to five husbands, which is immoral, the concept of honour and dishonour does not apply in her case. Arguing thus, he tries to disrobe her but Draupadi is guarded of her honour by the divine intervention. This reminds us of Duryodhana's thoughts voiced so well by Deshpande in "The Last Enemy" -

A woman with five husbands- he could never understand how they could call her virtuous. He himself had never been able to look at her without having lewd thoughts of her giving in to all the five at once. (16)

Mahasweta Devi names her protagonist after the classical character but makes this illiterate, poor, tribal woman more powerful than her counterpart from the epic. After she gets trapped and caught in the jungle, Dopdi is brought to the police camp. Devi's matter-of-fact tone stands as a sharp contrast to the incredible incident that follows immediately afterwards:

Draupadi Meihen was apprehended at 6:53 PM. It took an hour to get her to "camp". Questioning took another hour exactly. No one touched her and she was allowed to sit on a canvas camp stool. At 8:57 Senanayak's dinner hour approached and saying, "Make her. Do the needful", he disappeared. (267)

Following Senanayak's orders Dopdi is violently and brutally raped by the military guards again and again. Her breasts are bitten raw, her nipples torn. Her swollen lips bleed profusely. She becomes unconscious when her body can endure no more. But as soon as she gains her consciousness she hears the mockery of the guards who again resume their duty of "making her." In a language that brings tears in our eyes and questions humanity on the face, Devi describes the episode breathtakingly:

Opening her eyes after a million light years, Draupadi, strangely enough, sees sky and moon... Trying to move, she feels her arms and legs still tied to four posts. Something sticky under her ass and waist. Her own blood... Incredible thirst... How many came to make her? (267).

A compelled "spread-eagled still body", Draupadi waits for the end of this terrific torture. In the Indian scenario, the Dalits and the tribals, as a whole Community, are discriminated against but the situation of women belonging to these communities is even more pathetic. In order to teach the members of these communities a lesson, the women who suffer the triple oppression of caste, class and gender are made easy targets. Marginalized and repressed, these "gendered subalterns", to use Spivak's phrase, bear silently all forms of exploitations. Originally a

Gramscian term for the subordinated consciousness, "Subalternity" was popularized by the postcolonial theorists like Ranajit Guha, Homi Bhabha, Spivak, and others. The subalterns represent the marginalized, repressed and the peripheral. Denuding Dopdi and raping her is the summit of her political punishment for daring to raise her voice against the social injustice. When Senanayak orders that Draupadi be presented before him, she first surrenders meekly. But there is an immediate twist in the situation when she tears off her cloth and insists to go to him unclothed. She stands before the officer in the bright sunlight fully naked, in defiance of the violent torture she underwent. Her refusal to be clothed stands as a symbol of political resistance as well as the challenging of the patriarchal norms. With bruises and gaping wounds all over her body and her mouth bleeding, she states in a shrill, high-pitched and sarcastic tone that mocks patriarchy-

What's the use of clothes? You can strip me, but how can you clothe me again? Are you a man... There isn't a man here that I should be ashamed. I will not let you put my cloth on me. What more can you do? (269)

Shivering with an indomitable laughter she confronts Senanayak with the horrid spectacle of her violently raped body, spits blood on his white shirt and challenges him to "counter" [meaning military encounter] her. Though bodily violated, she succeeds in her mission and the officer, fully armed, is for the first time terribly afraid to stand before the "unarmed" target. I fully agree with Spivak's observation in her Foreword to the translation of the story-

It is when she crosses the sexual differential into the field of what could only happen to a woman that she emerges as the most powerful "subject", who, still, using the language of sexual "honour", can derisively call herself "the object of your search", whom the author can describe as a terrifying super object- "an unarmed target". (252)

Thus, though Mahasweta Devi reworks on the ancient story, her protagonist dares to challenge the code of conduct that patriarchal

norms have imposed on women. The modern counterpart therefore shows an indomitable courage and is silent no more. The story goes beyond the realm of mere bodily exposure where the "fully clothed officer stands 'exposed' in every way" (Jain, 95).

II

Shashi Deshpande's "And What Has Been Decided?" is a psychological probe into Draupadi's experiences as a woman, her pining for Arjuna, her pangs of being married to five husbands and her inhuman plight when she is used as a pawn in the game of dice which Yudhishthira plays to ensure his final victory. Through her stream-of-consciousness technique, Deshpande gives us a glimpse of the inner psyche of this "re-positioned" Draupadi, who, unlike her counterpart in the *Mahabharata*, questions patriarchal norms which most of the times brings immense suffering for women-

Right. Wrong. Only words. You can use them any way you want. Or so it seems to me... I knew it then, that men and women speak different languages (242).

India is a land of contrasts. It is an irony that on the one hand we worship Mother Goddesses, and on the other, our own mothers are exploited mercilessly. Our culture and heritage have mythologized woman as "Devi", but she has also been humiliated time and again as a human being. This pedestal theory, which worships women from afar, removes her from the normal realm of human emotions and feminine sexuality. The "phallogentric" Indian society deprives a woman her freedom of choice through imposition of sanctions that are only used against her and never against men. Deshpande has repeatedly stated that her writing comes out of her own intense and long suppressed feelings about what it is to be a woman in our society and the conflict between her idea of her own self as a human being and the idea that society has of her as a woman. The epics, created and interpreted by men, also uphold the traditional patriarchal norms and mould our consciousness vis-à-vis the same perspectives. Shashi Deshpande rightly observes in *The Stone Women* :

The fact is, we don't start with a picture of ourselves on a clear slate. Already inscribed on it are things told to us by others, there is what we read, what we gather from the ideas and expectations around us, what we imagine and dream. Myths form a large part of this baggage we bring to our self-image. How we see ourselves, collectively or individually, depends greatly on myths. They are part of the human psyche, part of our cultural histories. (86)

"And What Has Been Decided?" weaves a **spectacular** plot out of the variegated themes- the disinheritance of the Pandavas, injustice suffered by Draupadi, Kunti's order to her sons that Draupadi be shared among all five of them, her relationships with her sons and the daughter-in-law, Krishna's amiable nature and the impending war. In the "Swayamvara" Draupadi had chosen Arjun, disguised as a Brahmin, as her future husband but as she laments- "that was not to be my destiny. I became the wife of five men..." (239). While her heart pines only for Arjuna, her body is shared by all five. She has to live a marital life having no physical or emotional space for her own self. But she accepts her lot and "hammered my [her] heart into submission" (243). Women's duties as good daughters, chaste wives and sacrificing mothers are well defined in the Indian patriarchal system. Wifedom and motherhood have been accepted as pivotal roles for women in our conservative society. Sex is always a secret and kept out of discussion and women are expected to be only passive partners fulfilling the desires of their male counterparts. Though the society pressurizes a woman to be passive, Draupadi, expresses her erotic urges like a man in a powerful language. Her words ring in our ears long after we finish reading the story-

How can you imagine the hunger's of a woman's heart? Hungers that for me are never satisfied? I am Yudhisthira's queen, not his beloved.... And Bhima treats me like a fragile precious flower he is afraid to pluck. He cannot see the woman in me, the woman hungry for love, for passion... (243).

Deshpande's Draupadi thus by articulating the silence of the classical character dethrones the long-ruling myth of femininity. Beauvoir's

observation in her epoch making book *The Second Sex*, merits our appreciation- "It is not by increasing her worth as human being that she will gain value in man's eyes; it is rather by modeling herself on their dreams" (68). Though, in the *Mahabharata*, Draupadi "models" her life as per the demands of her five husbands and mother-in-law, Deshpande makes her protagonist speak out against this unjust demand of the male-dominated society. Kunti's words had shattered the romantic inclinations and emotional attachment of Draupadi for Arjuna by compelling her to live with five men and training her impulses to satisfy their desires. Thus she was reduced to an object, a pleasure-giving commodity for her husbands. The situation makes her vulnerable because though the scriptures allow polygamy for men, it is prohibited for women. It will be perhaps interesting to note that Sita and Savitri are accepted as predominant models of reference for purity and chastity for wives in our society even now but Draupadi is excluded from this list. Rendered in the form of monologue, this story also voices the queen's resentment against Yudhisthira for using her as a wager. Draupadi, re-located in Deshpande's story, challenges the "Dharmaputra's" assertion of never doing any wrong in his life by retorting back- "When you gambled me away" (238). She was tossed as an object between the two parties in the assembly hall- the Pandavas gambling her away and failing to protect her honour and the opponents humiliating her and trying to disrobe her. The grand narrative of the *Mahabharata* keeps silent on this issue of female exploitation by the pervading patriarchal norms. Violence against women in our country has many forms and intensities. It can be both physical and psychological. The wounds of the latter category are deeper and remain forever. I would like to quote a very significant observation by Malini Bhattacharya on this issue -

In our country, the violence that starts by exploiting the silence of the female foetus even before it is born, spreads out in various forms ... This violence is sometimes overt, but not always visible or recognized. But it is always linked with women's disempowerment. (7)

The narrative presents Draupadi's sense of being wounded by the behaviour of her husbands who neither had the power to protect her honour nor the willingness to avenge her humiliation. She challenges masculine prestige by being contemptuous of their abilities and making fun of them. To Krishna she says in a tone that exudes sarcasm and bitterness-

I thought, Krishna, that an oath is an oath, a promise is a promise. I imagined these things are meant to be kept, whoever they are made to. I did not know that promises made to women mean so little... (240).

Thus Draupadi, as depicted in Deshpande's short story, gives vent to her feelings in a language that is simple, direct, close to the speaking voice, and yet forceful. As the story ends, she realizes that though she was held responsible for instigating the Pandavas towards the decision of waging war against the Kauravas, it was already a foregone conclusion. The story thus makes the so long unheard feminine voice audible. In an interview with Joel Kuortti Deshpande rightly pointed out that "there is a kind of deafness in the gender barriers" (33) - the males fail to understand the female psyche because of the difference in their mental wavelength. The writer was much impressed by Iravati Karve's *Yuganta* which rendered the characters of the *Mahabharata* from fresh perspectives and view-points. As she confesses, Karve's interpretation made the characters more real and plausible. The same holds true for Deshpande also. Her story makes Draupadi all the more human, identifiable with millions of Indian women suffering from the burdens of patriarchy. In her afterword to *Shakti*, Shashi Deshpande gives a new dimension to the concept of empowerment-

What we need is to make ordinary women understand the possibility of power, of being able to control their own lives. And to have this power, not as mothers, not as devoted wives, but as ordinary women, as humans. (319)

Thus, though the male writer of the *Mahabharata* placed the Royal queen in an ambiguous situation by depriving her of any power to control her

life, and yet portraying her as the princess and the beautiful queen of five valiant kings, Deshpande makes her come out of her shell and interrogate this ironical position.

In both the stories the protagonists struggle to assert their individual selves against the patriarchal domination. The agony and suffering of these characters stand as a remarkable contrast to the male interpretation of the character of the classical Draupadi. Both Devi and Deshpande write through their bodies inventing the impregnable language that submerges, cuts through and gets "beyond the ultimate reverse-discourse, including the one that laughs at the very idea of pronouncing the word "silence" (Cixous, 256). In their narratives they raise a number of issues and interrogate that which has been blindly accepted till this day. Their narratives make the texts open-ended, viable for multiple interpretations and reject the traditional meanings. Thus the ideals of the traditional concept of "womanhood" and "femininity" have been critically re-examined in these texts under discussion and "Draupadi" in both the stories emerges as a "new woman" who is bold, assertive and confident. In this era of "Post-feminism" we dream to remould this society and go beyond the male/ female politics. We may perhaps best conclude with the excerpt from "Telling Our Own Stories" -

What is this Dharma? Is it the same for me [women] as it is for the men? Draupadi asked just such a question in the assembly after her husband wagered her and lost. Where do I fit into all these games of yours, she asked.... Today we are still searching for the answers. (95)

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SYNCRETIC CULTURE IN NASREEN'S *LAJJA* AND THAROOR'S *RIOT*

V. Pala Prasada Rao

While elaborating on the issue of representation, Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978) expresses doubt whether a true representation is ever possible. "If all representations are embedded in the language, culture and institutions of the representer then we must be prepared to accept the fact that a representation is implicated, intertwined, embedded, interwoven with a great many other things besides the 'truth' which is itself a representation" (272). Despite the inherent pitfalls involved in a representation, it is incumbent on an intellectual to deconstruct the socio-religious issues without any prejudiced mind and offer some pragmatic or ideal solutions to social problems. This is precisely what Taslima Nasreen's *Lajja* (1994) and Shashi Tharoor's *Riot* (2001) seek to do.

The novelists are convinced that a work of art is a powerful tool in the hands of a creative writer who, in his wishful thinking, seeks to modulate and bring about a positive change in the existing pattern of society. With absorbing plot of her novel, *Lajja* (1992), Nasreen is keen on to unravel the relations existing among the people in Bangladesh before and after the demolition of Babri Mosque in 1992. The story revolves round the Duttas – Sudhamoy, Kironmoyee and their two children, Suranjan and Maya who live in Bangladesh all their lives. Though they are terrorized at every moment by Muslim fundamentalists and hooligans, they refuse to leave the country. When the Babri Masjid was torn down, the lunatic fringe from the Muslims attacks Hindus and their temples leaving them bereft of hope.

Maya's abduction in the presence of her parents by the Muslim hooligans brings about a sea change of attitudes towards the country. Sudhamoy feels cheated like many other Hindus for he is compelled to leave the country he likes most. The dominant motif of the novel is the consequences of religious fundamentalism on the hapless minorities. Nasreen strives to show how communal violence has been generated by the lunatic fringe in all communities, how innocent persons are duped into serving the ulterior purposes of communalists, how extremist elements in the communities infuse tension and hatred for their own ends at the cost of inter-communal harmony.

Like Nasreen's *Lajja*, Sashi Tharoor's *Riot* deals at length with the controversy of Babri Masjid before its demolition. India's multiple identities are a cause of the much of the hatred between the communities and perhaps nowhere has this been made plainer than in the controversy over the Babri mosque. The novel is set in 1989 during which the Ram Sila Poojan took place. The novel offers transcripts of conversations with a historian Mohammad Sarwar, who seeks to explain the roots of sectarian hatred and the Hindu community leader, Ram Charan Gupta who strokes the flames of the same hatred. The I.A.S. Officer, Lakshman and the I.P.S. Officer, Gurinder Singh, who vow to protect the pluralistic character of India, throw light on the controversy of the Babri mosque which is discussed at the backdrop of an American, Priscilla Hart's death during the riot in the wake of Ram Sila Poojan. On the surface level, she appears to be a victim of a communal riot between Hindus and Muslims. But at the deeper level, the mystery of the murder becomes elusive in the context of communal riots. The theme of the novel goes beyond a usual communal riot and seeks to examine issues of complex nature such as religious fanaticism, cultural collision and above all, the trajectory of history which is suffused with syncretic practices.

The novelists take us to the historical past - unpleasant at times, but revealing and instructive. Nevertheless, their instruction is

rarely direct but fairly implicit. They try to offer an insight into the nature of fanatic forces that have masterminded a human tragedy of great dimensions. Nasreen proclaims in *Lajja*: "It is disgraceful that the Hindus in my country were hunted by the Muslims after the destructions of the Babri Masjid. I am not afraid of any challenge or threat to my life. I will continue to write and protest prosecution and discrimination". (Taslima Nasreen. X). Besides offering incisive insights into human nature and throwing light on the cobwebs of communalism, these novelists showed a variety of ways and means through which the evil forces can be checkmated.

One of the various ways to fight communalism is to make people conscious of the common heritage in the realm of religious thoughts. It is often thought that there is no confluence of Hinduism and Islam and that they have been all along at loggerheads. It is reasonable to assume that there are areas of collision because no two religions are completely in tandem with each other. Buddhism and Jainism were essentially the offshoots of Hinduism but they are locked in internecine quarrels – both spiritual and mundane. But there are, indeed, areas of convergence. In *Lajja*, Debabrata, informs that Bade Ghulam Ali "even today sings Hari Om Tatsat (164). In spite of being a Muslim, Bade Ghulam Ali's songs are pervaded by the spirit of Hari Om Tatsat which is said to be the threefold name of Brahman. He empathizes himself with the Hindu religious beliefs thereby ruling out the fanatic's objections. It is pertinent to note that the Vedas start and end with the Vedic incantation, which has the power to yield spontaneous meditation and initiate a purification that eventually awakens the Kundalini, the innate divinity in man. The word, 'Om' written in Sanskrit is equated with 'Ali' written in Arabic.

Nevertheless, the communal forces insist on the purity of culture and strive to show that the religions are inimical. With the same faulty understanding, a Muslim Leaguer in *Tamas* peevish: "It's

the age-old enmity between the Hindu and the Muslim. A kafir is a kafir." (Bhisham Sahni. 168). Similarly, Kanshi Ram in *Azadi* muses in a humorous vein on "the glory of the Vedic civilization" (Chaman Nahal. 17). However, people's culture at large, particularly the peasants', is composite. Their language, artistic traditions and people's beliefs, customs besides religion constitute important ingredients of a culture. It happens that people of the same religious faith speak different languages and belong to different geographical location and historical tradition and hence is their belongingness to different milieu. Realizing this fact, Suranjan wants Bengali to be considered indivisible in character. More than religion it is Bengali culture, which brings about remarkable affinity among them. He states: "No religion had created this race and he wanted his people to know no communal barriers and live together in perfect harmony" (Taslina Nasreen. 25). In consonance with her argument, she privileges the narratives of Sudhamoy, Niranjana and others in order to shed light on their suffering and pain of the minorities. The novelist has firm faith in secularism and hopes that it can be the panacea for most of the ills that Bangladesh has been inflicted with. Though the secularism of the characters is defeated, the secularism of the novelist survives.

It is true that there were long centuries in India where people of different religious ideas and cultural values lived together in peace. During the centuries, attitudes of tolerance for each other's religious faith developed and a process of symbiosis and cultural pluralism resulted. This was primarily due to two factors. First, practical sultans and Hindu kings realized the need for accommodation, and along with military and aristocratic forces evolved ways of living together and common styles of life. In Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India* (1991) Col. Bharucha elaborates how Parsees were accorded entry into India and how they "prospered under Muslim Moghuls" (Bapsi Sidhwa. 40). Secondly, at the mass level, there were innumerable Sufis and Sants (saints) who pioneered equalitarian and universalistic values

and practices, which established ties among communities rather than dividing them along sectarian lines. In *Riot*, the History Professor gives a long list of Sufi saints who tried to bring about some synthesis between the Hindus and Muslims.

Ram Charan in *Riot* tries to problematise the issue by imposing monolithic view of history. The "narrative" (my emphasis) he seeks to impose overrides those of others. It can be seen that knowledge in postmodern era can no longer be legitimated or sanctioned according to the great "narratives" that have shaped western knowledge, like the notion of progress embedded in the Enlightenment, or the notion of social liberation through history embedded in Marxism, or the release from unconscious trauma posited by Freudian theory. In her *The Politics of Postmodernism* (1989) Linda Hutcheon regards such narratives as "violent and tyrannical in their imposition of a totalizing pattern and a false universality on actions, events and things" (61). Shashi Tharoor through the character of Sarwar aims to privilege and utilize local narratives to explain things for he sees knowledge can only be partial, fragmented and incomplete. This is regarded as a radically new form of epistemological freedom, resisting the dominance of overarching patterns, which appear to ignore the details and experiences of differences in their effort to construct patterns, which make sense of the world on a grand scale. The expression of local narratives can be found in syncretic practices whose utility has long been grossly ignored.

Indeed, syncretism, which refers mainly to the mutual acceptance of elements of two religions, is an age-old social fact. Conceived this way, syncretism conveys the fusion of religions by identification of gods, taking over observances, or selection of whatever seems best in each other. This is evidenced in *Riot* in which the History Professor descants on the syncretic tradition in India: "A number of Muslim religious figures in India are worshipped by Hindus

... Nizamuddin. Auliya, Moinuddin Chishti, Shah Madar, Shaik Nasiruddin ..." (Shashi Tharoor. 64).

The Professor in the novel challenges the assumption that only one dominating mode of signification can be valid. Talking at length about the syncretism of Hindu-Muslim relations, he narrates very intriguing story of Ghazi Miyan who is worshipped by Hindus and Muslims alike in North India. He was a warrior for Islam and was described as the nephew of Mohamed of Ghazni. As a soldier he went about his business in slaying infidels and smashing idols. He died as a martyr on a jihad. The Professor gives an explanation why the Hindus worshipped Ghazi Miyan who apparently had attacked them. On the day of his wedding he went forth to protect his herds and herdsmen from the marauding Hindu king, Sohal Deo. It reminds one of Krishna, the Protector of cows. For Hindus, the cow is a symbol of sacredness and hence, they worship Ghazi Miyan who rescued the cows.

The Professor tries to study the "communal history" in a way so as to destabilize it. It is amazing to see how syncretic tradition evolved in his name. Soon after his death, Ghazi Miyan was canonized in popular memory. Hindu women pray at his tomb for a male child of his qualities. Songs and ballads are sung to him. In fact, in one of the popular ballads, it is Krishna's foster mother, Jashoda, who makes "a dramatic entry into the wedding celebrations of Ghazi Miyan, drenched in the blood of cowherds slaughtered by Raja Sohal Deo, and solicits him to rise to the defence of the cows" (Shashi Tharoor. 65-66). Incensed, Ghazi Miyan casts aside his bridal finery and proceeds to do battle against "the killer of the kin", a Hindu king.

In India, the Hindu-Muslim syncretic trends were not limited only to Sufism and Bhakti movement which were aimed at amalgamating the two streams of religions. There were some other sects, which fully adopted the local systems into their fold. The

Islamits were one such sect, which bloomed very much the Indian way. They would accept the truth of every religion and interpret Islam as the latest effort to support and revitalize the ancient truth that had been imparted to humanity. They stressed that every community and every book had its own share of truth and no book of religion should be ignored for one's search of truth and wisdom. It was mainly the Khoja branch of Ismailic religion that used the eclectic tradition of Islam to understand the Indian ethos, attitude and tradition.

It needs to be realized that in the country the peasants have to fend for themselves and encounter Nature's vagaries. Under such circumstances all of them irrespective of their caste and creed cultivate the habit of venerating some deity. In *Train to Pakistan* (1975), the novelist gives a graphic worship of a local deity by all communities stressing the importance of syncretic culture. The three-foot slab of stone is the "local deity, the deo to which all the villagers – Hindu, Sikh, Muslim or pseudo Christian – repair secretly whenever they are in special need of blessing". (Khushwant Singh. 10-11). In Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas* (1987) Richard also talks at length on the shrines of ancient pirs (saints) where people light lamps at night. Showing a place to his wife, he explains: "It has the tomb of a Muslim saint where they hold a fair at the advent of spring ... The fair lasts for fifteen days" (Bhisham Sahni. 37). But the inexorable binary logic brushes aside syncretic tradition. The truth about the binary structure of the religions - Hindu and Muslim - ignores the interstitial space. In other words, the binary system suppresses ambiguities or interstitial spaces between the opposed categories. Contemporary post-structuralist feminist theories have demonstrated the extent to which such binaries entail a violent hierarchy. Much contemporary post-colonial theory has been directed at breaking down various kinds of binary separation in the analysis of colonialism and imperialism.

The magnitude of syncretism cannot be minimized in the secular states with multi-ethnic background. In these countries while, on the one hand, the 'unity in diversity' cliché is patronized, on the other the inclination to seek similar roots of diverse ethnic entities too is encouraged. True, religious synthesis may have positive connotations as a form of resistance to cultural dominance, as a means of establishing a national identity or as a link with a lost history. However, in the face of rabid communal elements and ideologies syncretic practices are losing ground to orthodoxy and pure religion: "A rigorous and scientific history can only help reclaim the history" (76) as a celebrated post-colonial critic, Frantz Fanon puts it in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961). It is necessary to use the insights gained by the study of historical experience in order to demolish the myths generated by colonial and communal historians. No matter how laudable the cause, whether it is about defending minorities, fighting communalism or protecting human rights, unless contending viewpoints are allowed to be aired, it degenerates into propaganda. The minorities need to be treated with decency and fairness. Indeed, the novels advocate the need to alter public culture which will change for the better when syncretic practices are imbibed.

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CROONING OF A DIFFERENT DRUMMER : VALMIKI'S 'JOOTHAN'

Vandana Pathak
Urmila Dabir

A writer is born in a society which has got certain traditions. The life style of the people in that social set up is decided by the prevalent religious ideas, rituals, philosophy, modes of thinking and behaviour, its manners and etiquettes etc. These form the raw material of the writers in their creative efforts and the writers support them, appreciate them or attack them in their works of art. Taine in his seminal 'History of English Literature' mentions race, moment and milieu as the three factors that mould literature. For Taine, race is defined as the innate and hereditary dispositions we bring with us into the world. It is a distinct force that can always be recognized despite the vast deviations the other two forces produce in us. Milieu is seen as the accidental and secondary tendencies that overlie our primitive traits, the physical or social circumstances that disturb or confirm our character. It includes all external powers that mould human character. Moment, finally, is what Taine calls the "acquired momentum". It is indeed the accumulation of all past experiences, but as critics such as René Wellek have pointed out, it is more importantly the situation of a particular time of the history of a nation or a race, the *Zeitgeist*. Taine applies his ideas about society to literature. For him a work of literature is a transcript of contemporary manners, a representation of a certain kind of mind. Behind each document there is a "man." One studies the document in order to know the man. But Taine is not a biographer; when he writes "man," he means not the individual author but the author as a representative of his race, surroundings, and epoch (Netscape 2006).

The Dalit Movement articulates a new understanding of Indian society. This society is an amalgamation of diverse trends. In a society, there are many groups and sub-groups. In spite of apparent similarities within sub groups in the same society, there is a lot of cultural diversity. Dalit autobiographies are socio-cultural-historical documents. "There can be no people without a Culture. Their Culture may be too simple, or complexly un-understandable, or primitive, and of values foreign to many. But No People can be without a Culture. Every People, every society, every group and every sub-group has a culture of its own, similar and common in many respects with the proximate people, or the group of which they are a sub-group. That is the Social Reality World over." (dalitindia 2006) Culture can be defined as the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement recorded collectively. Taylor defines culture as "Culture or civilization taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complete whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." (qtd in Digambar 33) Culture means the customs, institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people or group. Dr. Ambedkar has said, "We don't pay any attention to our life, duties and culture. On introspection, the terrible conditions will be obvious and Dalit writers will have to be vigilant and make efforts to keep safe our values of life and cultural values..... I urge all writers to highlight all values of life and cultural values through different genres of literature." (qtd in Valmiki 72-75) He further added that they should not restrict themselves merely to their objectives but make it broader based. Omprakash Valmiki, a leading Dalit writer and critic in Hindi, has depicted various nuances of Indian culture, especially the culture of his own community in his life story. They have been interwoven well into the main narrative. Yet when these cultural overtones are analyzed, they throw a significant light on the culture of the chuharas' community and cultural hegemony in the Indian society.

Taking inspiration from Dr. Ambedkar and the social reform movement, many Dalit writers began to express their experiences, anger

and hatred explicitly raising venomous attacks on the so called traditional culture that dehumanized all lower caste people. Dalit autobiographies portray the various conditions that thwarted (their) lives brutally and with simmering discontent, hoped to reconstruct a new culture where in equality, brotherhood and freedom would prevail befitting human dignity and spirit. *Joothan* is Omprakash Valmiki's autobiography originally written in Hindi. It has been translated into English by Arun Prabha Mukherjee. It dwells upon the various aspects of his personal life and the life of his community in general. The writer belongs to the Valmiki (sweeper) community. The untouchable caste names were stigmatized and in their battle for equality and dignity, these names given by their oppressors were discarded. Valmiki or Balmiki was widely adopted as a caste name by the Chuharas of Punjab and western Uttar Pradesh under the influence of Arya Samaj. It was a rejection of and a protest against the Hindu authority. It was a beginning of assertion of their human identity and of their human rights. Valmiki confesses that in school and college many 'pejorative comments' were made about his surname. Some people admired it as an act of courage. He says, "They argued that when an untouchable, a person from a caste considered low, uses his caste name as his surname, with a feeling of self assertion, he is being very brave. One gentleman has ripped this argument to pieces: 'What is so brave about that? ...After all he is a Chuhara, his surname spares us the hassle of asking what his caste is' " (*Joothan* 124). Valmiki's wife Chanda has never got used to this surname. She prefers to use the family's 'gotra' name 'Khairwal.' In writing this autobiography at a young age, Valmiki has mapped a new territory and broken a new ground. He has also proved beyond doubt, as has been pointed out by Arun Prabha Mukherjee that 'the subalterns can speak.'

The title of the autobiography '*Joothan*' is retained in the English translation. The Hindi word '*Joothan*' means the leftover food in a patta given to the lower caste/class people to eat. In some ways, it is a symbol of demeaning existence imposed on the Dalits. Arun Prabha Mukherjee says that the title encapsulates the pain, humiliation and poverty of

Valmiki's community which not only had to rely on Joothan but also relished it (Joothan XXXI). Valmiki gives a detailed description of collecting, preserving and eating Joothan. Thus, an inhuman, animal like, subservient existence was imposed on the lower caste people right from their birth. If these lower caste members had to depend even for their basic requirements on the upper castes, their acquiescence was complete and it suited the Hindu ideology well.

The alienation, isolation and marginalization of Valmiki's community is seen in its place of residence, their work and occupations, their way of life and the language used by the upper caste persons for them. One look at the surroundings of Valmiki's home is enough to show the marginalization of his community. Valmiki grew up in a village near Muzzafarnagar in Uttar Pradesh. His house was adjacent to Chandrabhan Taga's cowshed. Muslim weavers lived next to it. A pond acted as a partition between the Chuhara dwellings and the village. On one side of the pit, were the high brick walls of the Tagas. At a right angle from there were the clay walls of the two or three homes of Jhinwars. On the edges of the pond were the homes of the Chuharas. All the women of the village, right from young to old, would use the open place to shit. The purdah observing Tyagi women also did the same. This place was a virtual shit yard. Their place in the social set up was made very clear to them through this kind of an arrangement. The chuharas were so used to living in the shit yard since ages that they never felt like confronting the authority of the upper caste persons about it, perhaps they found nothing wrong in it and lacked the necessary courage for confrontation. The Chuharas did all sorts of work for the Tagas to make both ends meet. This included cleaning, agricultural work and general labour. They had to work with out pay most of the time. Yet they dared not refuse it. They were never called by names. If a person was older, then he would be called 'Oe Chuhere'. For a younger person 'Abe Cuhere' was used. They were always abused and sworn at. Different registers were used for people belonging to different communities. They were never given any respect. Savarna children also addressed them in a similar manner and no one from the family or elders bothered to correct them. That was the prevalent culture.

Untouchability was rampant in the society. It was considered all right to touch dogs and cats or cows and buffaloes. Yet if one happened to touch a Chuhara, one got contaminated or polluted. The Chuharas were not seen as humans. It was very difficult for them to get rid of this stigma or to make others forget it. They were acclimatized to this life of indifference, humiliation and insult. Valmiki has used a kaleidoscopic range of personal experiences to bring out this discrimination. On his admission to school, the headmaster Kaliram called him and ordered him to clean all classrooms and the play ground. He obeyed these orders for two days. On the third day, he took his seat in the class. The headmaster came there and pounced on his neck. Omprakash says, "As a waif grabs a lamb by neck, he dragged me out of the class and threw me on the ground. He screamed: "Go sweep the whole play ground..... Otherwise I shove chilies up your arse and throw you out of the school" (Joothan 5). "The upper caste people forget caste or untouchability while imposing corporal punishment or in committing rapes on Dalit women" (Rani 108). The teacher's language became more abusive and vile for the underdogs of the society. Unknowingly he had continued the tradition of Dronacharya and his true culture came to fore. This was enough to make young Valmiki realize that he had a tough struggle ahead of him and that the system would be hostile to him in all his efforts to better his lot. The reinforcement of this feeling came soon on the footsteps of the first experience. On another occasion, the teacher was teaching them about Dronacharya and Ashwathama. The master with tears in his eyes said that Dronacharya had fed flour dissolved in water to his famished son in lieu of milk. The whole class had responded with great emotion to this story of the *Mahabharata*. Omprakash Valmiki had the temerity to stand up and ask, "So Ashwathama was given flour mixed in water instead of milk, but what about us who had to drink *mar*? How come we were never mentioned in any epic? Why did an epic poet ever write a word on our lives? (Joothan 23) The teacher screamed that the darkest kalyug had descended upon them and scolded him for daring to talk back. The teacher ordered him to stand in the *murga* or rooster pose. He

ordered a boy to get a long stick. "Churrerke, you dare compare yourself with Dronacharya... Here, take this, I will write an epic on your body. He rapidly created an epic on my back with the swishes of his stick. That epic is still inscribed on my back" (Joothan 23). The writer confesses that he too has felt inside him the flames of Ashwathama's revenge. The questioning of such myths shows Valmiki's growth of Dalit consciousness at an early age. Dalit writers have used myths on a large scale. They can identify easily and find an affinity with certain mythical characters. Karna, Eklavya, Shambuk, Kunti, and Jarasandh are frequently referred to and assume symbolic overtones in their works. Omprakash's father protested loudly against the mean treatment given to his son in the school and addressed the teacher as 'Dronacharya's aulad.' The same mythical symbol stood for two different things in two different cultures. For Valmiki's father, the teacher, like Dronacharya in Mahabharat, was a typical symbol of caste hegemony.

Valmiki's father did not think twice before prostrating himself before the village Pradhan for his son's school admission. Yet on his son's suggestion, he opposed the tradition of 'Johar'. The newly wed couple along with mother-in-law went for Salam to all those houses where the mother-in-law worked. They were given some tit-bits as gifts by the Savarna people. Omprakash Valmiki was against it. On his suggestion, his father got rid of it in his elder son's marriage. Actually, this 'Johar' was a modus operandi of the upper caste people to break down the self respect of the newly weds. They wanted these lower caste people to beg forever and continue to think of themselves as inferiors. The son had become instrumental in developing the Dalit consciousness of his father. Education had made Omprakash realize the snare associated with this custom followed after a wedding.

Dalit autobiographies reveal the life of these people at the grass root of the society as miserable and difficult. In order to cope up with their mind-numbing life, they always needed some sort of an emotional and spiritual anchor or solace. This was found in the continuation of age

old customs and traditions, rites and rituals. Whether it was a wedding, a birth or a death, it was essential to worship the gods in the community. If some one forgot or omitted to do so, there was a possibility that some thing terrible might happen to him. As Valmiki grew up in this atmosphere, after reaching the age of discernment, he would at the time of puja, sit outside or wander around. His father was very disturbed and told him about the beliefs of his ancestors. Whenever in the quiet of night he (Valmiki) heard the drum that summoned the spirits and the songs in some neighbouring house, he was disturbed. When the process of making some one a bhagat started, the drum would be played and the singing would go on for a month and a quarter. When anybody got sick in the basti, instead of treating him with medicines, people tried things like getting rid of the evil spirit by tying threads, talismans, spells and so on. All such ceremonies were performed at night. When the disease was prolonged or got serious, then puchha or exorcism would be performed by calling a bhagat, a kind of a sorcerer, who would be accompanied by a drummer. The drummer would play dholak with two or three other singers. Their song was an invitation to the Devta who would enter the body of the bhagat and make him sway. The visiting spirits are called paun. The people of the community also worshipped Kalwa and Hari Singh most widely. Mai Madaran was also considered important. Valmiki became rational as he grew up.

Although the people of the 'basti' were Hindus in name, they did not worship any Hindu gods and goddesses. At Janmashtami, it was not Lord Krishna, but Jahapir, another God was worshipped or they worshipped the spirits. It was not the eighth day, the ashtami, but on the morning of the ninth day of worship, the navami that this puja was performed. In the same way, during Deepavali, it was not the goddess Lakshmi but Mai Madaran who was worshipped and offered a piglet. Some people prepared halwa and purris as offering. The people of the community instead of blind emulation of the Hindus worshipped their own gods and goddesses. Their festivals coincided with all Hindu festivals. Such festivals and celebrations break off the monotony of life and make

it more festive and colorful. In the dreary deserts of their lives, these festivities are like a pleasant oasis.

In the month of Ashrah, a puja was performed at the Mata temple. There was a tradition of offering piglets, cocks and rams to the Mata. One man wanted to sacrifice a piglet. Valmiki's father and brother were busy so they could not accompany the man to sacrifice it. Pitaji had tied up the mouth and the feet of the piglet with a cord. He ordered Valmiki to go with the man. The man's wife smeared the floor with cow dung. Another had drawn a square on it with flour. The man ordered Valmiki to put the piglet on that spot. He handed over a knife to Valmiki and with Mata's name uttered loudly, asked him to sacrifice the pig. Valmiki had never sacrificed any animal as he had found it repulsive. He was not able to kill the piglet properly. The piglet was hurt and in severe pain and the people put it on the fire alive. At that moment Valmiki felt as if blisters had erupted all over his body. He ran away from there. He had seen many animals being sacrificed till then but then on those occasions, he was either on the periphery or not involved at all. His being a party to such a sacrifice for the first time in life made him realize its horrendousness and strengthened his resolve to stay away from such things in life.

Similarly on the Dussehra day, in a maidan near the cantonment, some festivities took place. Valmiki went there with Surjan to see them. A huge buffalo was tied to a post in a corner. A band was playing and some people tried to dance to its tune. A musalman in red underpants entered the ground. His head was covered with a turban and round his neck was a garland of marigold flowers. His forehead sported a red mark. He had a kukri in his hand. A Brahmin priest threw vermilion, rice, turmeric on the buffalo. He smeared its horns with turmeric and recited some Sanskrit verse in a loud voice. The soldiers fired in the air. Simultaneously, the buffalo was butchered. The musalman who sacrificed the buffalo (but for his red underpants) wore his turban, tika and garland as per the Hindu tradition. A great wave of excitement had spread in the crowd and people began to dance, shout and scream. Cocks and rams

were being butchered in another part of the field. The entire atmosphere was 'frightful, a festival of murders.' The offerings of animals in the name of Shakti puja and to Goddess Durga in the society are very disturbing. Such animal sacrifices are observed in almost the entire country. Valmiki points out that animal sacrifice in Dehradun and surrounding area was very common. In Garhwal, buffaloes were annually sacrificed at the temple of Kheravadni Devi. Buffaloes were sacrificed at this temple on a day after Diwali. The Kalinka fair is organized under the auspices of the Development officers of Borokhal (Garhwal) and Malda has been the site of 2500 to 3000 animal sacrifices. The district administrators, MLAs and political party leaders are present at these traditional fairs organized in the name of religious rituals and the fulfillment of vows. The sacrifices are carried out in their presence and liquor is sold freely at the fair. The ancient Kalinka fair is regarded as an exquisite example of the cultural unity of Garhwal-Kumaon region. Women come to the fair adorned in traditional costumes and ornaments. Men dance to folk tunes with axes in hand. The fair is a mirror of this region's culture and civilization.

Valmiki was always uninterested in the matters of worship. His father would always explain to him the beliefs of his forefathers and ancestors. It did not have any effect on Valmiki. Valmiki, on the other hand, felt very frustrated on such occasions. Something boiled within him. So his father thought that he had become a Christian. He wanted to proclaim loudly that he was not a Hindu. In a long attack on Hinduism, he questions, "If I were really a Hindu, would the Hindus hate me so much? Or discriminate against me? Or try to fill me up with caste inferiority over the smallest things? I also wondered why one has to be a Hindu in order to be a good human being ... I have seen and suffered the cruelty of the Hindus since childhood. Why does the caste superiority and caste pride attack only the weak? Why are the Hindus so cruel, so heartless against Dalits?" (Joothan 41)

Surprisingly Valmiki, a bibliophile, had not heard about Dr. Ambedkar till his admission in DAV College. He had read many books on Gandhi. His friend introduced him to Dr. Ambedkar through

the medium of a book. In the library of Ordinance Factory Training Institute at Bombay, he had read Pasternak, Hemingway, Victor Hugo, Pierre Louis, Tolstoy, Pearl Buck, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Stevenson, Oscar Wilde, Emile Zola, Romaine Rolland along with Ravindranath Tagore and Kalidasa. Along with his friend Sudama Patil, he saw many plays at Bombay. He saw 'Natsamrat', Vijay Tendulkar's 'Sakhram Binder', 'Gidhare', 'Khamosh Adalat Jari Hai', 'Haivadan', 'Moruchi Mavashi' and 'Asharh Ka Din' etc. Prominent actors like Amrish Puri, Amol Palekar, Sunila Pradhan, Sulbha Deshpande and Shriram Lagu had acted in these plays. Culturally, he was an enlightened person much ahead of other people in his community. His Dalit consciousness reached fruition with Daya Pawar, Namdev Dhasal, Raja Dhale, Gangadhar Pantavane, Baburao Bagul, Keshav Meshram, Narayan Surve, Vaman Nimbalkar and Yashwant Manohar.

His cultural world had changed completely after his arrival in Bombay. His company had also changed and as a result, his social and cultural development was taking place at a phenomenal speed. It was in this period that he met one Vinayak Kulkarni. His daughter was Savita. Savita was attracted to Valmiki. A day before the Deepavali festival, on Chaturdashi day, Mrs. Kulkarni invited Valmiki to their place at 4 a.m. As per the tradition of Maharashtrian Brahmins, the woman of the family gives a massage and bath to the male members of the family in the sacred morning hours of Chaturdashi. Mrs. Kulkarni gave him an oil massage with a fragrant paste and bathed him in hot water. Valmiki was invited whereas his friend, another regular visitor of the family, was not called. From his friend, Valmiki learnt that Maharashtrian Brahmins didn't mix up with Mahars and touch their dishes. They followed caste discrimination. They treated all Dalits in a similar manner. There was obviously some confusion. The Kulkarni's were confused because they thought Valmiki was a Brahmin surname. The writer took initiative and told Savita the truth about him. Valmiki himself has described the effect of his revelation. On this revelation, suddenly "the distance between us had increased. The hatred of thousands of years had entered our hearts.

What a lie culture and civilization are" (Joothan 98). In villages, the division took place on the lines of touchability and untouchability. The scenario at Dehradun was very bad and it was worse in Uttar Pradesh. Yet in a metropolitan city like Mumbai, well educated people indulged in such discriminating behaviour. He felt a 'fountain of hot lava erupting within him.' Later on, his marriage was fixed without his consent. He wanted to see the girl. At that time, in their (Valmiki) community, there was no custom of showing the prospective bride. The elders decided against it. The boy and the girl had to obey the decision. The mediator was completely trusted. The writer did not like it and fixed his own marriage with Chanda. His protest was obvious and he went against the wishes of his family in this matter.

Language reflects culture. It serves as an index of culture. Valmiki has used many registers of Hindi in the original Hindi edition of the autobiography. Many new words are used in the Hindi edition. The translator Arun Prabha Mukherjee has pointed out, "Yet no translation is a replica of the original and every translation involves a loss..... The speech and conversations of Valmiki family and villagers are both in local dialect, but with distinct variations, a linguistic equivalent of the social distance between them. The difference between the adult narrators's literary Hindi and the dialect attributed to his childhood self poignantly mark the emotional and physical distance. Valmiki has traveled from illiteracy to literacy, from the village to the city" (Joothan XXXIX)

In Dalit literature in Marathi, these Dalit autobiographies are called *Atmakathane*, *Atmakatha* or *Swakathane*. A *Swakathan* is written at a very young age. At the center stage in this genre is 'we'- the community. The life of the people in the community is described in detail. The 'I' in the story is an integral part of it and acts as an instrument to convey the agony, pain, struggle and protest of his people to the world at large. The main aim of Dalit literature is to create awareness about their marginalized existence in the minds of readers. Yet in the description of personal and communal life, cultural overtones creep into the narrative. These cultural overtones are necessary to impart a touch of reality to the narrative. Valmiki has described the life of the people in his community

in his autobiography 'Joothan'. 'Joothan' was written at a young age and in the true spirit of a Dalit autobiography, his community with its marginalization is at the centre stage of the narrative. The milieu has shaped it and the spirit of the age, Dr. Ambedkar's philosophy of life has given this life meaning and momentum. Thus, Taine's theory can be applied to this autobiography to understand its nuances. Valmiki has depicted the culture of hard-work and rest, honesty and simplicity, achievements and celebrations. He looks at it from a different point of view and reinterprets it according to his own capability. The consciousness of Valmiki was shaped by none other than Dr. Ambedkar and other stalwarts in the realm of Dalit literature. This awareness, enhanced and enriched by his personal experience, observations and acumen mirrors the culture of his society vis-à-vis the culture of the dominant upper castes of the Indian society in 'Joothan'. This culture is a reiteration of the cultural hegemony prevalent in the society. Perhaps conscientious, educated and vigilant people like Valmiki would form a 'cultural brigade' of sorts to preserve and enrich a culture and values of their own community and subgroup and evolve a society in which the tree, plants, beasts and birds worshipping Hindus will accept Dalits as their own brethren with open arms.

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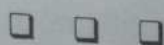
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A JOURNEY TOWARDS SELF-DISCOVERY IN MARGARET LAURENCE'S *A BIRD IN THE HOUSE*

**Shruti Khanna
Surekha Dangwal**

Margaret Laurence a pioneer storyteller, a prairie writer holds a considerable standing in Canadian literature. She is well known to recreate the feelings of traditions and her power to portray larger-than-life positive characters exacting from ordinary people, easily ignored in literature, like old women, single women, and introverts. She presents the intricacies of the lives of such people which usually do not fascinate us. A mark of Laurence's exceptionally creative power is the way in which unforgettable portraits of her women protagonists delve deep into their "inner self" introspecting in terms of self-examination who had been misled to feel that the quest of life is in ambition, wealth, power and their status in life. But through the examination of their own 'self' they discover that "meaningful pattern" is "somewhere else". And through their journey of self-discovery they quest in search of that "somewhere else". As Jasbir Jain puts it: "In the case of a woman, there is also a separation between the constructs of 'self' and 'identity'. Self is both a personal and cultural construct. Actually the self comes into being as the individual negotiates her cultural inheritance and reframes it, perhaps through a conflictual process, to meet her requirements. It is this conflict and the choices it compels which forge the self" (135).

A Bird in the House one of the famous Manawaka novels, epitomizes her socio-cultural connections in the life of the woman

protagonist Vanessa MacLeod and how she approaches her life with all emotional, cultural and psychological conflicts and completes her search for personal identity. The relation between culture and self is quite prominent in this novel as, "The female psyche can be studied as a product of construction of cultural forces" (Showalter 27). Laurence admiringly delineates it as a "fictionalized autobiography," (Stouck 252) consisting a volume of eight stories which are much more interwoven. *A Bird in the House* is thus, Laurence's semi-autobiographical work. "Vanessa is thus Margaret's alter ego." (Powers 327) Apparently, Vanessa's family the Connors comes from the Simpsons and the MacLeods based on the Wemysses, the ancestors of Laurence.

A Bird in the House comes up as a series of eight episodes strung together as serialized memories of Vanessa. Efforts have been made in the present paper to contextualize how Vanessa comes out of the dilemma of identity and through self-discovery how she completes her journey of self-actualization and self-assertion. Jasbir Jain observes that "looking beyond given roles and positions, creating space within given structures, questioning accepted traditions, the bildungsroman becomes a way of growing into self-awareness..." (71). The novel is Vanessa's voyage towards self-discovery, "Cumulative-rediscoveries, of revaluation" (Powers 327) and her innumerable experiences of life. The theme of the novel is after exorcizing guilt and fear of the inherited past how Vanessa attains "inner freedom", her quest for it and coming in terms with her past she gratifies her 'self' and attains self-actualization. Maslow defines "self-actualization implies the full use of talents, capacities and potentials. A most outstanding quality of the Self-actualizing person is the transcendence or dichotomies, so that opposite qualities are integrated and expressed by the same behavior" (Dicaprio 421). Vanessa through a ritualistic journey with the reconciliation of her past comes to know about her 'Self' and her origins. In the novel Vanessa shows most of the tenets of self-actualization.

Vanessa MacLeod as a girl child of six and till the end of the novel a woman of forty years is a strong woman. Laurence, portrays in her Canadian dimensions. The novel presents three generations of women—Vanessa, her mother Beth and her grandmothers- Connor and MacLeod. Vanessa since her childhood detests her grandfather Connor's repressive, authoritarian figure. And through flashbacks and moving within time past and time present she accepts and understands him and discovers him as immortal who still "proclaimed" in her veins. Self-revaluation makes her realize that she herself possesses his characteristics of strength and courage. Vanessa narrates her adventures, experiences as she remembers them. In a sustained retrospective view she calls her memories which makes "revaluation" possible "the adult narrator learns from what the child experienced and failed to understand....This throws a great deal of stress upon the narrator, who has been learning throughout the book the very process of re-valuating [the young] Vanessa's Judgments (Powers 328).

Vanessa's Grandfather Connor plays a substantial part having a dominating influence in her life. The novel begins and ends with him. Grandfather Connor's authority in the house is inevitable and he wields a powerful place, which cannot be challenged. His wife, daughters and granddaughter Vanessa long to escape and to get free from his control "But the only form of escape open to them is through silence and finally death, for his wife, or through voluntary commitment to another male protector, for his daughters" [Brydon]. Vanessa devoided of free expression says, "I felt, as so often in the Brick House, that my lungs were in danger of exploding that the pressure of silence would become too great to be borne... But I did not say anything. I was not that stupid." (67-68) Vanessa finds herself another way of expressing her feelings, with her artistic sensibility she pens down her stories and take silence as a tool of her survival. Her artistical representation of stories shows her great power of creativity. "Maslow found in all healthy people questing for self-

actualization a quality which he termed - creativeness "...Creativeness in terms of attitude or spirit. Being less inhibited, less bound, less restricted or enculturated self-actualizers can be more spontaneous, more natural, more human" (Dicaprio 401).

The beginning of the first episode "The Sound of the Singing", shows Vanessa's persona completely inflicted by Grandfather Connor's house when she admits, "that house in Manawaka is the one which, more than any other, I carry with me" (11). Vanessa pensively calls it as a "massive monument" (11). The rest of the episodes show how this house gradually turns into a monument. For Vanessa, "it is not the physical presence of the Brick House that exists as the monument to her grandfather, it is the memory of it and the active recollection of the house and all that transpired within its walls that becomes monumental-and the subsequent rendering and organizing of those memories artistically" (Riegel 71).

Vanessa for the first time comes face to face with mortality and realizes the unpredictable actions of the life and death. When her mother accidentally has a miscarriage, Vanessa recognizes: "Their sadness was such a new thing, not to my actual sight but to my attention, that I felt it as bodily hurt, like skinning a knee, a sharp stinging pain. But I felt as well as obscure sense of loss. Some comfort had been taken from me, but I did not know. What it was". (28) Vanessa gradually develops a sense of self-recognition. Her grandmother MacLeod attempts to give her an insight to change the way Vanessa perceives such atrocities of life and death and to soothe her, she instills in her mind that "what happens is God's will. The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away". (48) Grandmother MacLeod herself refuses to practice as she still cannot forget her dead son Roderick who was killed in the War. But as far as Vanessa is concerned she seems to follow this notion all her life to console her 'self' at the time of mishaps. Grandmother MacLeod keeps the memories of

Roderick alive which keeps her away from her living son, Vanessa's father. She recalls her grandmother MacLeod "sleeping with her mouth open in her enormous spool bed surrounded by half a dozen framed photos of uncle Roderick and only one of my father." (103) And when Vanessa's mother Beth gives birth to a baby Grandmother MacLeod names him after her dead son, to pass on her son's memory to the next generation.

Vanessa abhors a sense of order in death and she believes that such an order offers no consolation and comfort which one requires when the loved one is no more with them. She detests: "I felt that whatever God might love in this world, it was certainly not order." (61). Here Vanessa echoes the views of Margaret Laurence how Margaret felt after the loss of dear one's Margaret recalls the "pain is so great, although possibly unacknowledged, that you have nothing to lose; you are fearless because you don't care what anyone says or does to you" (Dance on the Earth 57). Vanessa also realizes that the grief of dead should not consume the lives of those who are living. Vanessa's efforts to maintain order does not necessarily result in best solutions, life is unpredictable and change is constant. Therefore, she completely rejects the notion of following any kind of order. She says accidents can happen to anyone and she emerges as a powerful individual. She is like those self-actualizing people who "focus on problems outside of themselves. Further more, they are capable of approaching their own lives with a problem solving orientation" (Dicaprio 397).

Vanessa feels lifelessness has enveloped the environment of her house and has turned it into a languid place to dwell, where everyone lacks vitality, vigour and have become inactive bodies without power to enjoy the radiance of life. Vanessa describes the house, "like a museum full of dead and meaningless objects, vases and gilt-framed pictures and looming furniture, all of which had to be dusted and catered to for reasons which everyone had

forgotten". (78) She feels that dead people still belong to the house. Vanessa memorizes, "the unseen presences.....I knew to be those of every person, young or old, who had died, including uncle Roderick who got killed on the Somme, and the baby would have been my sister if only she had managed to come to life." (46) Here Vanessa thinks house as a place of death.

Other than her Grandfather Connor, the other prominent person in Vanessa's life is her father, a doctor who shares good relations with her. His death for Vanessa brings a devastating change in her life. Instantly everything changes. She was only twelve when she lost her father. She remembers, "I was seventeen..." and years later "I grieved for my father as though he had just died now." (107) Loss of her father is closely associated with the loss of MacLeod house. She recalls her memories, "when it was no longer ours, and when the Virginia Creeper had been torn down and the dark walls turned to a light Marigold, I went out of my way to avoid walking past, for it seemed to me that the house had lost the stern dignity that was its very heart". (106) She comments "everything changed after my father's death". (105)

Vanessa petrified with her father's death and coming to terms with it, she seemingly turns out to a grown up girl who gains a level of maturity, which is evident in her words when she consoles her mother. "I stayed close besides my mother, and this was only partly for my mother, my own **consoling**. I also had the feeling that she needed my protection. I didn't know from what, nor what I could possibly do, but something held me there. (103) Indeed, it is a sense of responsibility that comes to Vanessa after she goes through this tragedy. Her estrangement leads her to "... alienation, with which Vanessa is closely associated. It is a principal feature of Vanessa's developing self-recognition, her moving from Innocence through Experience of the recognized evil of the world and on to the state of Higher Innocence-a progress prominently portrayed by John Milton, William Blake, and Henry James" (Powers 331).

Death being the focal point of each of the episodes gradually develops her power of recognition of her 'inner self' and her realizing morality of a being, helps her evolve as an individual. What Jung refers to as "Individuation, becoming one's own self." (Jung 121). Vanessa pines for wholesome growth. Laurence shows her deep insight in portraying the psychology of a small child Vanessa and how the loss of her father effects her sensibility and emotions pensively all through in her life. Wendy Browns argues, "when we organize around identity, or what she names our "wounded attachments", we are compulsively repeating a painful reminder of our subjugation and maintaining a cycle of blaming that continues to focus on our oppression rather than to seek ways to transcend it " (10). But, Vanessa finds out an affirmative way of proceeding towards the accomplishment of her 'self' by recalling such painful experiences and finally healing her wounded self. "Freud suggested that a compulsion to repeat traumatic events from the past was motivated by our desire to gain control over and thus master the event". (Moya 322) Thus, the retelling of events helps Vanessa come out of her "wounded attachments", and helps her in organizing her actions and choices.

Vanessa detests moving to the Brick House "I don't want to live there. Not with him". (161) That very thought of going there and living with her dominating and irascible grandfather Connor disturbs her. She says Brick House "...was a fine place for visiting. To live there, however was unthinkable. This would probably never have been necessary, if my father **had not** died suddenly that winter". (161) Vanessa rejects even the idea of following religion that pretends to soothe and provide condolence after death. "Self-actualizing people are not revolutionaries, radicals, anarchists, or against their culture; they do not adopt any extreme movement, nor do they identify unquestioningly with culture... they easily react against them"(Dicaprio 242). In response to the visit of the local church minister , she reacts, " what I thought chiefly was that he would speak of the healing power of prayer and all that, and it would be

bound to make my mother cry again. And in fact it happened in just that way, but when it actually came, I could not protect her from this assault I could only sit there and pray my own prayer which was that he would go away quickly". (103-104) Vanessa out rightly rejects even the concept or belief of afterlife. About the hymn "Rest beyond the river" she says, "I knew now what that meant. It meant nothing. It meant only silence, forever". (105) And Vanessa believes that there is no place called heaven.

In all her stories death is glorified and romanticized. Vanessa mentions, "the death scenes had an undeniable appeal, a somber splendor, with (as it said in Ecclesiastes) the mourners going about the streets and all the daughters of music brought low." (66) All the loss she bares in her childhood she tries to reconcile by her own 'self'. Vanessa ruminates death: "I had not known at all that a death would be like this, nor only one's own pain, but the almost unbearable knowledge of that other pain which could not be reached nor lessened." (80) Though an inexperienced young child Vanessa witnesses her grandfather Connors deep sorrow at his wife's death. He comes to Vanessa for sympathy and says about his wife that "she was an angel. You remember that" (83) even then Vanessa shows no sympathy for her grandfather and is astonished at his reaction to the death of grandmother Connor "...he did a horrifying thing he gathered me into the relentless grip of his arms. He bent low over me and sobbed against the cold skin of my face". (79) She shows no feelings, emotions or sympathy as one can expect for a desolated grandfather. Vanessa puts it, "even I, in the confusion of my lack of years, realized that this would have been an impossibility. He was, in some way, untouchable. Whatever his grief was he did not want us to look at it and we did not want to look at it, either. (83) It was for the first time when she witnesses the death of a loved one it is very painful for her to accept the reality that she would never be able to see her grandmother again. She is shocked "I still could not believe that anyone I cared about could really die." (80)

Vanessa's inseparable memories of her childhood and the incurring loss of her loved ones creates an indelible impact on her mind. Aggrieved on it, she tries to find out a way of condolence to her own 'self', Vanessa's incredulity towards death and being an alienated child develops her self-perception and self scrutinizing power, which makes her mature early and a person thriving for self-fulfillment. "The values of self-actualizers are predicated on their philosophical acceptance of their natures and of human nature as well as of social and physical reality" (Sahakain 391).

After aunt Edna's Marriage she goes away to live with her husband Wes Grigg. Vanessa then twenty desperately desires of her own freedom from the Brick House, like her aunt. She says, "I wandered how long I would have to wait" .(178) And then a ray of hope comes in her life with the advent of a young airman named Michael. And because of him the opposition between Vanessa and grand father Connor strengthens, the drift between the two widens to a level, that she confronts him and comes in terms with him, which possibly results in the required denouement. Vanessa gets furiously annoyed when Grandfather Connor comments on Michael and affirms, " I' ll bet a nickel to a doughnut hole he's married. That's the sort of fellow you've picked up, Vanessa." (184) Vanessa abruptly argues with him, "I shouted at him, as though if I sounded all my trumpets loudly enough, his walls would quake and crumble". (184) It also throws light on what Vanessa's mother had said to her about her irascible, authoritarian old grandfather. Her mother said, "It's like batting your head against a brick wall which suggests the title of the final story "Jericho's Brick Battlements" and describes Vanessa's final battle against him.

Vanessa gets distressed with the thought that grandfather Connor is proved right. She detests "in those months that followed, I hated my grandfather as I had never hated him before. What I could not forgive was that he had been right, unwittingly right, for I

did not believe for one moment that he had really thought Michael was married." (186) This also identifies Grandfather Connor's Soundness of judgment, his prudence and his age old experience. After finishing her high school Vanessa goes to the university in Winnipeg for her further studies, she says, "now I was really going. And yet in some way which I could not define or understand, I did not feel nearly as free as I had expected to feel". (187) Here Vanessa's persona desires to acquire an integrated identity rising above all dilemmas present in her life. She thrives for wholeness of her 'self'. "The 'self' to be equivalent to the psyche or total personality...total unity is the self" (Hall 124).

At the age of ninety four when Vanessa's grandfather Connor dies Vanessa for the first time attends a funeral. She comments "I could no longer expect to be protected from the bizarre cruelty of such rituals". (188) As Vanessa was now a grown up girl of twenty, she detested such rituals as they actually offered no clear explanations about what the dead person really was. Such rituals mentioned only the good, important things. Vanessa could not react emotionally or was grief stricken, she had no emotions for him: "I could not cry, I wanted to, but I could not". (189) After looking at his dead face, she was not moved: "I was not sorry that he was dead. I really imagined that he was immortal. Perhaps he even was immortal, in ways which it would take me half a life time to comprehend." (189) Indeed, Vanessa proves him immortal with his impact on her life and, she has inherited from him his characteristics of strength courage and self-belief.

The apparent hatred of Vanessa for her grandfather Connor after his death becomes sublime and in later years makes her realize that his influence on her and her life was indelible and inseparable she finds "my own voice carried some disturbing echoes of my grandfather." (159) She accepts him as he was. And gradually with years flying away, Vanessa comes back to Manawaka. She has married and has two kids. Vanessa now forty, goes to the Manawaka

Cemetry and sees the graves of her parents as she came here twenty years later. She asserts" I remembered saying things to my children that my mother had said to me, the clichés of affection, perhaps inherited from her mother".(190)

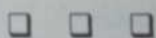
Vanessa with time finds a way of reconciliation with her past and her grandfather. Her acceptance and understanding leads her to feel like an independent being. She remembers, "I had feared and fought the old man, yet he proclaimed himself in my veins."(191) Vanessa succeeds and rejoices her consequent freedom and her self-knowledge, "Vanessa triumphs, but not through defeat of grandfather Connor. She triumphs over her self and by granting him his victory. (Powers 335) Vanessa acquires a new meaning to her 'self'. In the real Maslowian sense... "[T]he greatest attainment of identity, autonomy, or self-hood is itself simultaneously a transcending of itself, a going beyond and above selfhood. The person can then become relatively egoless" (105).

Vanessa accepts her ancestry and with this acceptance and understanding her quest for her individual 'self' is fulfilled. Spontaneous expression of her inner desires recover her fragmented psyche and it transcends to sublimation. By the artistical representation of her memories past and present, Vanessa fulfills her journey towards self-discovery which she deliberately aspires for all through her life. As Coomi S Vevaina explores it, "discovery of Self helps the quester understand the transpersonal dimensions of the human psyche, overcome alienation from others, and arrive at the phenomenological realization that 'self' is indeed a place" (22). Vanessa attains that "place". Her self-transformation resulting through psychological complexities which she faces all her life, changes her persona as a "whole." She realizes and accepts her grandfather Connor, as he was. With her self-discovery Vanessa feels that "her personal voice is an amalgam of the voices of her family, resisted yet finally claimed on her own terms of being"(Brydon 194) .

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RESEARCH NOTE

INDIAN POETICS AND ENGLISH STUDIES :
SOME REFLECTIONS

M. S. Kushwaha

Though Indian poetics (which means practically Sanskrit poetics) is no longer a closed book to Indian scholars of English (some of them like V. K. Chari, Krishna Rayan or Kapil Kapur have done significant work in this field) and the English Departments of some Indian universities have introduced it into their courses of study, the majority of English teachers are still sceptical about its relevance to English studies. To them, it is a wilful encroachment on their territory. What, they would say, is the relationship between Indian poetics (which is not only of the Indian origin but also a thing of the bygone past) and the English literature that originates from the west ? But such a question stems from shallow thinking. It ignores the fact that English literature is no longer a monolithic structure; it includes also Indian English literature. Secondly, it forgets the significance of 'tradition' (brought out convincingly by T. S. Eliot in "Tradition and the Individual Talent") and fails to realize 'the presentness of the past'. As a matter of fact, we still suffer from the colonial mentality that not only decries but resists all that is Indian. It does not believe in the intelligence of an Indian mind, and depends entirely on western thinkers for guidance. While the west is firmly rooted in its tradition (beginning with Plato), we Indians are completely cut off from our literary tradition beginning with Bharata. The British marvelously succeeded in making us strangers to our own culture and literature. There can hardly be a greater irony than the fact that we treat foreign literature as our own and our own literature as foreign.

This uprootedness of Indian scholars of English has rendered their literary criticism "derivative and imitative". To remedy this pathetic state of Indian literary criticism, some enlightened Professors of English thought of acquainting Indian students and teachers of English with Indian critical tradition. The introduction of Indian poetics into English studies is a step in this direction. It is also part of the on-going process of widening the horizon of English studies.

Indian poetics has had along and rich tradition from Bharata to Panditaraja Jagannatha. It is full of numerous insights that are relevant. To dismiss it simply as a thing of the past is not fair. Aristotle's *Poetics* was composed almost about the same time as Bharata's *Natyasastra*, but we do not discard it as antiquarian. We still read *Poetics* without raising any question about its antiquity, but we harp on the datedness of Indian Poetics. Does it not reflect our colonial mindset ?

It is said that Indian poetics is form of a culture which is totally different from the west. How can it apply to western literature ? No doubt, literature or criticism is culture bound, but it also contains elements that transcend space and time . This is the reason why Shakespeare is enjoyed in India and the reading of *Shakuntalam* of Kalidasa transports Goethe into ecstasy. When Aristotle is understood and appreciated by an Indian student, why not Bharata who is far closer to us in sensibility ? There is no point in complaining about the barrier of language. We do not read Aristotle in Greek, nor Horace in Latin. We depend on translations. Most of the texts of Indian poetics are also available in good translation both in English and modern Indian languages. Besides there are good histories of Sanskrit poetics by S. K. De and V. P. Kane, and host of critical and expository works in English. There is no dearth of material for an inquisitive student. In fact, those who grumble about the difficulty of the subject do not want to put in the necessary labour. They always prefer the beaten path, and raise a storm whenever a new course of study introduced.

The misplaced emphasis on the applicability of Indian poetics is motivated by the same desire to resist it. These scholars do not raise this question of applicability when they study Sidney, Dryden, Coleridge, Wordsworth or Arnold, all of whom are prescribed for study. Why this question is raised only in the case of Indian poetics? How many of Indian scholars have applied Western critical theories in their practice of criticism? We talk glibly of deconstruction, but how many of us have actually applied it? The so-called 'New Criticism' is reality easier to apply (and there has been an emphasis on its application by the exponents), but I have not across any Indian critic who has applied it the way Cleanth Brooks does in *The Well Wrought Urn*. In fact, it requires *Pratibha* or talent on the part of a critic to apply a theory; all are not competent to do it. For no theory can be mechanically applied. Indian English criticism still lacks in theoretical speculation that gives rise not only to new insights but also provides today for practical application. Most of our criticism is descriptive, and centres around the analysis of theme and characters. Indian poetics can help us in building up an infrastructure for critical inquiry. It has been primarily interested in the aesthetic appeal of literature, and can provide useful insights into the 'literariness' of a work. Though it may sound paradoxical, Indian poetics is more practical than Western criticism. Indian aestheticians never make a statement or propound a concept without illustrating it with suitable examples. An intelligent scholar can apply them to extended or full length works without any difficulty. The concept of *alamiteras*, *Vakrokti guna*, *riti disas* (poetic blemishes) and *aucitya* – all are meant for practical application. (poetics blemishes) and *aucitya* – all are meant for practical application. There is nothing nebulous in Sanskrit poetics; way concept s test - oriented and text-based. Why do we clamour for application instead of applying them ourselves? But for this a proper understanding of Indian poetics is obligatory. Knowledge is prior to praxis.

A scholar has emphasized the need of adapting Sanskrit poetics to modern criticism. There is no harm in such an exercise provided it does not militate against the intrinsic nature of Sanskrit aesthetics. Infact, Sanskrit poetics has never been averse to changes and modifications. The history of Sanskrit poetics marked by debates, new challenges and counter - currents of thoughts. But who will bell the cat ? Sanskrit scholars are neither willing nor competent enough to undertake such an exercise. This has to be done by an English Professor who can look at Indian poetics from the perspective of modern criticism. But he or she has to be equally well-urged in Sanskrit aesthetics. For a valid criticism or modification of a subject, a through knowledge of it is a prerequisite. The introduction of Indian Poetics to English students is desired to serve exactly this purpose. If i to make them competent to evaluate Indian aesthethics, and effect changes, if necessary. For future of Sanskrit poetics, to my mind, lies with the scholar of English, not the Sanskrit pundit. He alone, with his intimate knowledge of modern literature and criticism, can rejuvenate the fossilized riches tradition of Indian poetics. In turn, Indian poetics would provide him with not only necessary roots but also a new perspective for looking at the western literature and thought. Only then would we be in a position to judge properly. For, as kipling has sad, "What should they know of England who only England know ?"

Appendix : A Bibliographical Note :

Though there are English translation of the work of almost all major Sanskrit aestheticians - Bharata, Bhamaha, Dandin, Anandavardhana, Kuntaka, Ksemendra, Masumata and Visvanatha, it is not advisable to approach them directly; they are written in a style that may repel or discourage a beginner. He can gather fairly good information about these aestheticians from *Aestheticians* published by the Publications Division, Government of India (Delhi, 1983). Other sources of general information about Sanskrit

aestheticians and their works are S. K. De's *History of Sanskrit Poetics* (Calcutta : Frima K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1960) and P. V. Kane's *History of Sanskrit Poetics* (Delhi : Motilal Banarasidass, 1971). For a general introduction to major theories and concepts of Indian poetics, the readers are advised to consult the following works :

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An Eclectic Survey, Concentrating on *Rasa*.
2. Raghavan & Nagendra (eds.) : *An Introduction to Indian Poetics*. (MacMillan, 1970) A Comprehensive Collection of essays on various aspects of Sanskrit poetics, including major theories, by eminent Sanskrit scholars.
3. Seturaman, V.S., ed. *Indian Aesthetics : An Introduction* (MacMillan India, 1992).
4. Tiwary, R.S. *A Critical Approach to Classical Indian Poetics* (Delhi : Chaulchambha Orientalia, 1984)
5. Vijayavardhana, G., *Outlines of Sanskrit Poetics* (Varanasi : Choulchamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1970).
6. Chari, V. K. *Sanskrit Criticism* (Honolulu : Univ. of Hawaii Press, 1990)
7. Krishna Chaitanya, *Sanskrit Poetics* (Bombay : Asia Publishing House, 1965) Offers frequent parallels from Western thinkers.
8. M. S. Kushwaha (Ed.) *Indian Poetics and Western Thought* (Lucknow : Agro, 1988).



PROLIFERATION OF LITERARY THEORIES : A NOTE

H. S. Lal

To think of literature without various theories, is not possible. Criticism, today, has become a "forced field of knowledge" and it has made itself a 'socio-cultural discipline.' We are in the 21st century, and since 1960's, the world of literature is dominated by various theories which have come down to the market place of subculture.

In this paper, an attempt has been made to study cross-cultural-intellectual relations between the western and non-western theories. Our blind acceptance of contemporary European theoretical assumptions and denial of our heritage, rich traditions and *Poetics*, is a matter of serious consideration. It is time to ask : discuss whether the western critical spectrum is universal or parochial ? The changing design of critical ideals that form schools, groups and categories, contest each theory; each critical movement annihilates past theories and impose its queer ideologies on us. The critical world of the west is re-writing itself and it acts as an "endless diabetical substitution. ... Because the western thought is a quest, essentially for power, not truth, it is violent and usurpatory. It preys on its predecessors" (Paranjapee 79).

The post-modern critical enterprise presents a scenario of boxing with many groups vying for control. It presents a picture of a stock exchange "with several brokers trying to outshout and out bid one another in an attempt to corner the market. . . . It is the perfect market place for ideas (Paranjapee 80). The so called thinkers and

philosophers of contemporary criticism are like good brokers and they sell their ideas in our market; we teach their ideas, study them and promote their products as good consumers and buy their ideologies. We like the western market of ideas and philosophy, because we are willingly trapped by Eurocentricism; because we have deliberately ignored our rich *Poetics* and we are unable to formulate any theory of our own to compete the western theory. Our mind is pre-occupied with the glamorous world of Europe. Because, we intellectuals, look for alluring world and we accept blindly, the superiority of the western theories.

From structuralism to the theory of cyber-text, we have accepted a kind of most unsystematic and non-coherent schools of thought that have brought onslaughts on literature. We seek to study the relationship between history, culture and literature, but our study is disrupted by replacement of notorious critical ideas. The whole spectrum seems to be hostile to convention, tradition, system, universal facts, literary truth and lasting values of life.

Before we unveil the mask of new ideas, it becomes necessary to examine the validity of conventional form of criticism. The word criticism is derived from Greek word *Kritikos* that means judgement; but criticism as term got due recognition in the age of Dryden. The theory of judging literature was rejected by modern critics. In modern context, it is an activity aimed at investigation, interpretation, explanation and analysis.

What is the relevance of the aesthetic of contemporary criticism? A conscious artist has every right to pose this problem and practitioners of new theories cannot be skeptical about such grave inquiry. In the beginning of the XXth century, modern criticism begins with Imagism and Pound's pronouncement of three fold principle, in 1912, which were directed towards a search for adequate language, and adequate form of communication of emotions and ideas.

Imagism, was used as a method of dispersonalisation of emotions. T. S. Eliot viewed criticism as disinterested endeavour of critical faculty. His works : *Tradition and Individual-Talent* (1919), *Rhetoric and Dramatic Poetry* (1919), *The Function of Criticism* (1923), *The Use of Poetry*, *The Use of Criticism* (1933) *After Strange Gods* (1934) provide theoretical and practical criticism. As a critic he theorizes principles of literature, examines individual writers and discusses religion, culture and christian values. His theory of "objective correlative" is a mile stone in the history of criticism; it stems from his theory of impersonality. He anticipated structuralism and observed, if "poetry is a form of communication, yet that which is to be communicated is the poem itself and only incidentally !be experience and the thought which have gone into it" (Eliot 30) . Eliot changed the taste of his age as he laid stress on the correction of taste. I. A. Richards is another critic of modernistic criticism. His main works - *The Foundation of Aesthetics* (1921) *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923) *Principle of Criticism* (1924) *Science and Poetry* (1925), *Practical Criticism* (1929) and *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1936) display his interest in Psychology and his involvement with the close study of the text; In his criticism he mentions about two uses of language - Scientific and emotive. According to him a poem has its personality and, adequate use of words is needed for adequate appreciation of a poem. Though there are six senses in which the imagination is needed; but to him it means a kind of production of vivid images. His idea of language, revolutionised the whole area of criticism. He gave his own theory of metaphor and classified it as tenor and vehicle.

The word "New Criticism" was derived from Ramson's work *The New Criticism* (1941). The notable critics of this school are Cleanth Brooks, William Empson, R. P. Blackmur and, Allen Tate, who elucidate the theory of ontology ; they try to study words on the page without the study of socio- cultural and economic background. To them the interplay of determinate, with indeterminate meaning

and the relation between structure and texture is more important. The new criticism treats a poem as a work of art. Biographical details are out of place, and the significance of the author doesn't have any concern with the poem; the new critics emphasised the role of language which became a nexus in structuralism and in the theory of deconstruction.

Thus, the criticism, from 1912 to 1950 presented rational theories about culture, myth, tradition, texture, words, art of communication and mode of presentation. The critics of modern criticism laid stress on objectivity, faith in reason and enlightenment, which were invalidated by contemporary theories.

The western theory, after the end of modern criticism in 1960, takes a turn and shifts to various strategies of critical ideas. The theory of language and text, propounded by structuralists and practitioners of deconstruction, rocked the world of literary theory. The origin of structuralism belongs to Ferdinand de Saussure's idea of the sign as a union of "Signifier and the signified." Saussure did not highlight the historical development of language. His ideas are recorded in *Course in General Linguistics* (1916). He sees language as a synchronic system of signs, and he "reduced language to a set of propositions based upon formal relationship that define and exist between various elements of language" (Nayar 21). Saussurean approach construes arbitrariness, relational and systematic ideas of language. The meanings are arbitrary and there is no natural relationship between the word and meaning.

The publication of structuralistic theory in *Yale French Studies*, in 1966, made it influential, and the movement flourished during 1970's and 1980's. Its leading-spokesmen were Seymour Chatman, Jonathan Culler, Claudio Guillen and Gerald Prince.

Structuralism defined literature as a "system within and in relation to other systems, in a particular culture, all of which are based upon the linguistic model (Nayar 23) The theory lays emphasis

on the process of "meaning production." Structuralism flourished with *Russian Formalism*. The *Prague School* and the School of Semiotics found some new strategies of the analysis of language and meaning. Mikhail Bakhtin attacked the formal aspects of language stressed by Saussure. To Bakhtin, language was dialogic. To him, sign meant as an active component of speech in social context. Roman Jakobson who hails from *The Prague School* (inaugurated in 1926 as the *Prague Linguistic Circle*) presented a model of communication with numerous elements. Semiotics, study signs and significations. Following Saussurean theories it analysed social and cultural life; it also studied how signs signify in text. Roland Barthes took a post structuralist turn. His two works : *The Death of the Author* and *Mythologies* helped him shift his position. He defined myth neither "a lie nor a confession but as an inflexion." He regarded language as an autonomous system. He observes that text (literary) is opaque and unnatural. His significant work *The structural Analysis of Narrative* presents a mode of reading literary and cultural texts.

Deconstruction theory is another strategy of denouncing structuralistic's analysis of language, literature and meaning.

Jacques Derrida is the most influential thinker of the contemporary western world. He produced three seminal works: *Of Grammatology*, *Speech and Phenomena*, and *Writing and Difference*. He demolishes the boundaries between Literature and non-literature. He discarded the notion of signification and identity. In 1966, at a Conference held at John Hopkins University, he presented a paper entitled : *Structure, sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences*, in which he criticised some tenets of structural theory and brought out his own new strategy of deconstruction. He defined his theory as an act of detecting opposite meanings. Deconstruction is concerned with close textual analysis. In deconstructive process we can locate three stages : it analyses binary oppositions, what appears privileged is actually "undercut by the suppressed term of hierarchy."

Derrida opines that meaning is never present in the sign. In this way he shifts his inquiry from language to *écriture*, the written and printed text." Moreover another critic Newton Graver's assertion is that Derrida gives more emphasis on rhetoric than logic. He seeks to liberate language from its traditional concept. Paul de Man, Geoffrey Hartman, J. Hills Miller and Harold Bloom hailed the movement of deconstruction as an institutional phenomenon.

Paul De Man is a member of the Yale School of deconstruction. He developed a critical practice of reading texts. His version of deconstruction theory is best understood in his use of irony. Irony has many layers of meaning; it overtly states meaning and covertly states other meaning. De Man feels that basically language is ironic.

The critical survey right from structuralism to the theory of deconstruction, presents the new strategies of meaning. The theory of text, meaning and reading practiced by thinkers of these schools, present a highly specialized discourse of criticism. The strategies of meaning and language, after 1970's, shifts to the politics of sex, culture, history, anthropology, technology, colonial and post colonial studies of repression, exploitation and class struggle.

Feminism, though is a literary movement, finds its origin in the women's movement in 1960 that was a political force. Some writers like Mary Wollstonecraft in *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), J. S. Mill in *The Subjection of Women* (1869) and Friedrich in *The Origin of the Family* (1884) debated the role of women against oppression. The political movement aimed at the equality of the sexes. The practitioners of Feminism as a literary movement focused on the importance of Canon of women's writing. The image of women always appeared in the writings of male authors. Therefore, there should be a criticism to set norms of writing from the feminist point of view. The women writers felt a need to uncover the ideology of patriarchal society in literature and art. The main

practitioners are Virginia Woolf, Simone de Beauvoir, Juliet Mitchell, Elaine Showalter, Ellen Moers, Elizaretsky and Helene Cixous. The feminist critics have different assumptions which vary with ideological and social contexts. The critics think that actual fight is between man and women and the battlefield is the literary texts that produces social biases. A woman is always perceived as an adjunct to the male. The social conditions, biological distinction and sexual position make a woman a woman, and resultantly she symbolizes weakness, fragility, feeble mindedness and patience. Virginia Woolf in her work *A Room of one's own* (1929) analysed the gender biases. Patriarchal institutions deny text to a woman, and when a woman decides to write, she is compelled to use the language and its structure used by male authors. According to Simone de Beauvoir a woman has no identity of her own.

The literary movement of feminism presented a forum for women and promoted sisterhood. But there was a complete silence on the issue of non-heterosexual relations. Homo-sexuality is treated as a criminal activity and heterosexuality is regarded as a norm. Politically a lesbian was always marginalised. Lesbians were victimized and harassed. The Lesbian and Gay studies have its centres in USA and now it has become a liberating movement. Its origin begins with the Stonewall Riots in 1961, when the police raided the Stonewall Tavern in New York. Many Lesbians fought for their right. In London, at the *London School of Economics*, on Nov. 13, 1970, Gay Liberation Front decided to fight against legal and religious oppression.

The movement of Feminism paved the way for lesbian theory. The publication of *The History of Sexuality* by Foucault presented the radical aspect of sexual performance, and homosexuality became a good subject for academic discussion. The writings of Gloria Anzaldu, James Baldwin and Cherrie Morga became good texts of the movement. The radical feminism produced radical lesbians.

Nonetheless contrary to the morality of sex, the lesbian theory seems to justify unnatural relationship between a woman and a woman.

Because of the Lesbian movement the sexuality becomes a significant part of social identity. Some critics feel that relation between a woman and a woman may not be always sexual. According to Adrenne Rich, the term *Lesbian Continuum* seeks to cover the whole range of woman-woman relations that refers to a kind of female friendship. The Lesbian studies have incorporated different areas: sociology, film, structures, narrative theory and politics. The writers who shaped Lesbian theory in different contexts are D. A. Miller, Judith Butler, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick.

From Lesbian and Gay theory we move to Freud who left a great impact on the western Literary theory.

The theory of psychoanalysis is a study of dreams, desire and repressed desire. Some critics feel that the theory of psychoanalysis is the "spoiled child of a realistic age." Hoffman in his work *Freudianism and the Literary Mind* (1945) observed that this theory influenced criticism in such areas as language, biography, explanation and myth.¹⁰ Jacques Lacon looks back to Freud with a different angle; the repressed desire has a structure like a language and he does not accept the general view that the unconscious is merely instinct; he assumes that words have a trace of desire as well as the "patterns of repression of that desire." He emphasised the role of the unconscious. He analysed three elements - the ego (which is conscious) the super ego (which is conscience) the id (which is also unconscious). The unconscious is the part of mind. The elements contained by it are either repressed or sublimated. Freud also lends stress on libido that stimulates our sexual desire. The key thinkers of Psychoanalytical theory are Ernest Jones, Marie Bonaparte, Norman Brown and Nancychodoron.

Regarding psychoanalysis, Herbert Read very rightly puts some relevant questions as what general function does psycho-

analysis give to literature, and does psychoanalysis explain the process of poetic creations.

In the field of literary theory the claim of history begins with marxism. Marxism presents glaring aspects of socio-economic culture. As a socio - economic theory it reinforces that literature has to be studied in the light of social and economic conditions of our age.

Trotsky, a very renowned thinker, liked Shakespeare, Dante and Goethe because they portrayed class positions in their works. Fredric Jameson in his works : *Marxism and Form* (1971) and *The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991) presents the concept of classical marxism that adheres to various dimensions of cultural studies. His capitalistic theory denotes - market capitalism as realism, and imperialism as modernism. Terry Eagleton in his works *Criticism and Ideology* (1976), *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (1976), and *Function of Criticism* (1994) assumes that all imaginative production is a social production. He gives great significance to social groups like clubs, coffee houses, and other kinds of public places where people express their ideas freely. The marxist thinkers of Frankfurt School, as Adorno and Max Horkheimer focus on cultural industry, linked with the idea of commodity production and cultural goods that belong to this system. A music album is not different from a Sofa, or a chair, or a dining table.

Post colonial studies and its theory finds its origin in the text of Frantz Fanon, Aime Cesaire and Albert Memmi. The term "post-colonial" refers to people who were colonised by European powers. The word "post-colonial" reflects the conditions of the decolonised nations. In this way, we study a kind of chronology from colonial time to post-colonial period. The post-colonial theory tries to study the European construction of the East. The Europeans, particularly the French, British, American and Italian authors present a negative world opposite to the western world.

O. Mannomi, in his work *Prospero and Caliban*, depicts -the psychological process of colonialism and notoriously asserts that

European thoughts should be imposed on non-western world. In his works - *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963), *A Dying Colonialism* (1965) and *Black Skins and White Masks* (1967), he presents some striking features of colonialism. Fanon feels that the psyche of the colonised is always presented as inferior.

Edward said is a real spokesman of post-colonial theory. His concept of theory can be understood in the context of his Orientalism. A born Palestinian, who immigrated to Egypt in 1947, graduated at Princeton, completed his Ph. D. at Harvard, finally settled in U.S.A., always fought for Palestinian cause. He remained between two cultures for two decades and finds himself always "in and out of things." It is very difficult to study his theory in a systematic way because of the bulk of his works. His main representative works are: *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (1975), *Orientalism* (1978), *The World, The Text and the Critic* (1983), *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), and *Reflections on Exile and other Essays* (2000), that analyse and present various ideas about authors, text and art of criticism. His first work *Beginning* points out three points: linguistics, historical and political circumstances of the texts, vocabulary, grammar and conventions. There are six chapters and each chapter has a subject, and in the final chapter he mentions about Giambattista Vico, the eighteenth century Italian philosopher, who finds authors bound by traditional knowledge and cultural limits. The first book avoids the socio-political dimension of texts. In *Orientalism*, Said talks about western concept of Orient that presents the discourse of denigration. He concentrates on the "Near Orient-Islam" and the Arab world. He traces the development of Oriental discourse from the writings of Ernest Rehan, Flaubert and Silverstry. The western nations and their culture cannot be understood outside the text of imperialism. Imperialism is a major force that determines the areas of modern culture. Simultaneously another thinker of post-colonial studies is Homi K. Bhabha who raises the issue of colonial identity. Aijaz Ahmad is another strong critique of this theory who argues that contemporary

literature and theory should be studied in the light of political conditions of the world. We cannot overlook the dangerous role played by English literature in India. It's study helped colonialism to appear as a great enterprise. The text studied by the natives, naturalized imperialism. The English literary text, functioning as a surrogate Englishman in his highest and most perfect state, becomes a mask for economic exploitation. "English studies always projected colonialism as a humanistic prize."

The time has come to strip of the colorful threads of the western theory and analyse post modern literature in the light of Indian canons. If the European literature can be analysed in the frame work of Russian, French, Roman, American and Grecian theories, why not Indian aesthetics should be applied to our study of novels, poetry, drama, prose and story written by European writers. It's high time to formulate standards of Indian theories. We should subjugate and assert that *Sanskrit Poetics* has a wide range, and it offers the most inspiring and significant analysis of all important genres. There are literary critics as Bharata, Bhama, Anand Vardhan, Mammata, Vamana, Jamini and Gautama whose theories have highlighted the importance of suggestion, sound, style, grammar, speech and language. Jamini and Sabra focus on primary meaning (abhida) and metaphorical meaning. The Dhavani theory differentiates poetic meaning from conventional meaning. There is a third kind of language known as suggestion (Vyanjana). The style is known as *Riti*. In western theory the style includes the structural (phonological metaphorical and (semantic) features of language. Bhamaha describes style as "special disposition of vocables (visista padrachna) that means arrangements of phonetic and syntactic units (Chari 76). Jaimini in *Mimamsa-sutra*, gives a significant principle of interpretation. According to him three axioms can be found as autonomy of verbal meaning, its impersonality and unity of meaning (Chari 134).

Let us formulate our own canons of writing based on various schools of Indian theory. We can study the text and analyse the verbal structure of the language. We should reconstruct theories as the School of Alamkara theory, Indian theory of suggestions and theory of Indian Dramatics. We can construct new schools of theory based on Abhinavgupta's principles of emotive connotations, Bhartata's theory of dramatic emotions, and Bhartrhari's concept of meaning.

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EXPLORING NATURE IN KAMALA MARKANDAYA'S *NECTAR IN A SIEVE* : AN ECOCRITICAL APPROACH

Akhileshwar Thakur

The present paper seeks to critically analyse Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* from an ecocritic's view point and explore Nature in the novel in an ecocritical perspective. The paper also intends to argue that the novel is a wonderful testament of the fictional representation of Nature and that it also demonstrates the symbiotic relationship that binds the natural environment and the human community.

Further the paper seeks to establish that the novelist's implicit care and concern for environment - the air, water, soil, plants, birds and animal life in different forms around us - as evidenced in her fictional narrative may earn her the epithet of an 'invisible environmentalist'.

The economic impact of British colonial rule was ruthless on traditional Indian agriculture. It not only commercialized it but brought in its wake tenancy in farming, rural indebtedness, untold poverty and extreme wretchedness. The cruel consequences of the unjust land-revenue policies could not end, rather continued even after independence, till the 50s of the 20th century. In this backdrop Kamala Markandaya wrote her first novel *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954) which is remembered as a tragic tale of an unfortunate tenant farmer Nathan residing in colonial south India. The narrator is Rukmani who reveals the miseries and sufferings of her husband and her children. The life of this peasant family gradually falls in the vicious trap of poverty and degradation on account of the failure of crops

due to flood on the one hand and drought on the other and certain other related problems. The fortune of this hapless family turns from bad to worse when two of Rukmani's sons leave her and never return and as other two sons die in course of their struggle for survival confronting poverty and hunger. Their heart-rending tale does not end here. Driven by the cruel fate or hostility of the landlords, the peasant family has to relinquish the land which was their only hope and which they were cultivating for decades and also to which they were deeply attached. In utter helplessness they migrate to a city where they become petty workers. The dialectics of hope and fear work here as well and the long deprivation and exhaustion of the weathering life culminates in the death of Nathan, the quintessence of love and life for Rukmani. Thus the hapless peasant family and specially Rukmani comes to know that for them nectar of life is lost in the sieve of relentless poverty and exploitation.

The novel is appealing to modern readers for its sensitive and moving portrayal of the strength and endurance of a woman struggling with forces beyond her capacity and control. It is a story about the resilience of the human spirit and the importance of values, integrity and 'Karma'. Added to it critics have also seen in it the juxtaposition of oriental and occidental view points and attitudes to life as represented by Rukmani and Dr. Kenny respectively.

However, the central connection to all is her respect for nature's inherent energy and vitality and belief in benign nature as a necessity for the survival and growth of human life. Also is a mild and silent resentment against the recklessness and selfishness that man is showing in his blind material quest. Man must reverse the present trend of progress and have an unflinching faith in the symbiotic relationship between human community and Nature.

Nectar in a Sieve, though it is primarily a fictional articulation of the travails of a tenant peasant family, it indeed proves to be a critical statement by the author on the imperative of concern for the natural environment. Kamala Markandaya seems to imbibe the great

tradition of Edmund Burke, Kant, Wordsworth, Emily Bronte, Emerson and Thoreau or fall into the company of Kalidas, Bhash, Nirala, Pant and Tagore to understand that nature is an inseparable part of human societies and human societies cannot survive without having an intimate liason with her.

It is for this reason that Markandaya's novel has natural environment as its backdrop. She reminds us of the centrality of the natural environment in the life of human beings. This awareness and this concern have been narrated through the ruminations of the principal character, Rukmani, who, after her marriage to Nathan, goes to his village on a bullockcart. She captures the landscape so appealingly that the prose narrative borders to a poetic image from Nature:

For six hours we rode on and on along the dusty road, passing several villages on the way to ours, which was a good distance away. Half way there we stopped and ate a meal: boiled rice, dhal, vegetables and curds. A whole coconut apiece too, in which my husband nicked a hole with his scythe for me so that I might drink the clear milk. Then he unyoked the bullocks and led them to the small pool of water near which we had stopped, giving them each a handful of hay, poor beasts, they seemed glad of the water, for already their hides were dusty. The animals, refreshed, began stepping jauntly again, tossing their heads and jangling the bells that hung from their red-painted horns. The air was full of the sounds of the bells, and of birds, sparrows and bulbuls mainly, and sometimes the cry of an eagle, but when we passed a grove, green and leafy, I could hear minahs and parrots. It was very warm and unused to such a long jolting, I fell asleep (*Nectar in a sieve* 3 - 4).

The novelist clearly articulates throughout and later her intrinsic fascinations for blue skies, tender trees, the brook, wide

stretch of water etc. as myriad manifestations of nature forming part of human life.

Earth, the most obvious manifestation of nature, is portrayed as a regenerative force sustaining human life. It is perceived and represented in feminine form. It is interesting to observe the conception of life and its growth and its parallelism with the process of the evolution of plant life:

The soil here was rich, never having yielded before and loose so that it did not require much digging. The seed sprouted quickly, sending up delicate green shoots that I kept carefully watered, going several times to the well nearby for the purpose. Soon they were not delicate but sprawling vigorously over the earth, and pumpkins began to form, which fattening on soil and sun and water, swelled daily larger and larger and ripened to yellow and red until at last they were ready to eat, and I cut one and took it in (8-9).

The earth showers its generosity when there is rich harvest and peasant family feels elated and enchanted to see the ripening of the paddy in the fields. Earth's kindness is gratefully accepted as it sustains life and bestows strength to man.

Every object or manifestation of nature seems to possess the secrets of life. Nature is represented to be the repository of enigmas which remains beyond the realm of human knowledge. Human beings ought to understand the secret of nature if they want to understand the secret of life.

... the beans, the brinjal, the chillies and pumpkin-vine which had been first to grow under my hand. And their growth to me was a constant wonder—from the time the seed split and the first green shoots broke through, to the time when the young buds and fruits began to form. I was young and fanciful then and it seemed to me not that they

grew as I did, unconsciously, but that each of the dry hard pellets I held in my palm and within it the very secret of life itself, curled tightly within, under leaf after protective leaf for safe keeping, fragile, vanishing, with the first touch or sight. With each tender seedling that unfurled its small green leaf to my eager gaze my excitement would rise and mount winged wondrous... There have been many sowing and harvesting but the wonder has not departed (12-13).

Thus nature is perceived as a regenerative force radiating happiness with its bounty. The novelist compares the process of the growth of plant life with its human counterpart in spiritual terms like the sowing of seed disciplining the body and the sprouting of the seed uplifting the spirit. However, Markandaya is not oblivious of the wrath of nature which human being are fated to face. She knows that nature is not only a regenerative force but also one with an infinite power of destruction. It is conceptualized as a trained wild animal, if not treated wisely has the ability to be destructive. Untamed nature is represented to be treacherous and ruthless. The novelist explicates this in the musing of her narrator, Rukmani:

Nature is like a wild animal that you have trained to work for you. So long as you are vigilant and walk warily with thought and care, so long will it give you its aid; but look away for an instant be heedless or forgetful, it has you by the throat (39).

She also communicates movingly the pathetic picture caused by the fury of nature due to incessant rains causing floods. What could perhaps be a common sight even in contemporary rural India has been strikingly communicated by the novelist:

... In the village the storm had left disaster and desolation worse than on our own doorstep. Uprooted trees sprawled their branches in ghastly fashion over streets and houses, flattening them and the bodies of men and women indiscriminately. Sticks and stones lay scattered widely in

angry confusion. The tannery stood, its bricks and cements had held it together despite the raging of winds; but the worker's huts of more flimsy construction had been demolished. The thatch had been ripped from some, where others stood, there was now only a heap of mud with their owner's possessions studding them in a kind of pitiless decoration... There was water everywhere, the gutters were overflowing into the streets. Dead dogs, cats and rats cluttered the roadside or floated starkly on the waters with blown distended bellies (42).

Another dimension of the fury of nature is demonstrated through the occurrence of famines due to drought, a common problem plaguing our present society. The failure of rains bring untold suffering to the peasants and it is touchingly conveyed through the wistful recollections of Rukmani :

Each day the level of the water dropped and heads of the paddy hung lower. The river had shrunk to a trickle, the well as dry as a bone (72).

The novel also pleads for a mutual respect to be shown to all creatures in the universe. There are distinct instances in the narrative that point out to a bio-ethical principle which emphasizes the harmonious understanding between humans and animals. There are two clear episodes pertaining to this approach. One, when Nathan evokes his wife Rukmani about the harmlessness of the snakes if left undisturbed. Another is more vivid and detailed and is betrayed in the following dialogue between Rukmani and Carter where she shows her concern for the heartlessness of man in his treatment towards animals.

Rukmani

- "I see one of them has a large raw patch on its shoulder. . . . , "the animal is not well," I say to the man.

The Carter shrugs

: "What can I do?"

Rukmani

- The bullock with the sore patch. The raw patch
..... had begun to fester, more skin had been
eaten away and trickles of blood were running
down the edges.

The Carter says

: "This animal will soon be fit for nothing.. .",
he muttered to himself. "Heaven knows when
I shall be able to afford another"(140-141).

The above discourse displays the moral indignation of the novelist and her silent condemnation of the insensitivity and lack of empathy for the sufferings of animals. The novelist probably utters her plea for the idea that life consists essentially in a process of interchange between animal world and human race. In fact there should always be a compassionate link between the two seeking unity and harmony as they are mutually dependent.

Kamala Markandaya, in her descriptions of situations and use of metaphors, displays her acute awareness of the diverse dispositions of nature. She in her dialoguing narrative as well as in descriptions of situations compares divergent human traits with that of myriad objects of nature. Expressions like, "her friendliness, her smile, were warming like the sun on old limbs gentle as the rain on parched earth (173) ; "our last child, conceived in happiness at a time when the river of our life ran gently" (102); "Pumpkins, round and fleshed like young woman" (105); "Sunshine is meant for men, darkness for bats and snakes and jackals and other such creatures" (118); "we called our daughter Irawaddy, after one of the great rivers of Asia, for all things water was most precious to us" (15) and many more amply demonstrate her deep appreciation of the natural environment. Her attachment to and appreciation of nature is ubiquitously visible in her elemental approach to everything that she sees and encounters.

Man's emotional and existential attachment to land is another serious and central concern of the novelist. This again shows that nature is created as an integral part of human life. The novelist's concern becomes clear in the lament of Rukmani :

To those who live by the land, there must always come a time of hardship, of fear and of hunger, even as there are years of plenty. This is one of the truths of our existence as those who live by the land know that sometimes we eat and sometimes we starve (134-35).

People who live on land have external bond with the land and they cannot live except by the land. When they are displaced, they get sick and they long for land. Rukmani and Nathan, who when deprived of their land due to their failure to pay revenue etc., migrated to a city, kept thinking of returning to the land :

With each passing day the longing for the land grew; our plans were forged against a background of the brown earth and the green fields, and the ripe rustling paddy, not curiously, as they were, but as we had first known them. ...

And at the same time, keeping pace with those longings, our distaste for the city grew and grew and became a sweeping, pervading hatred (167).

This deep longing for land not only reminds us of harnessing the land for sustenance and survival, but also of protecting it, replenishing it so that the cycle must continue. The novelist probably creates an impact of devotee to the land for ecological or like reasons.

Kamala Markandaya's belief in the sublimity of nature is more than evident in the novel. She seems to consider nature as sublime and beautiful. The myriad manifestations of nature and various constituents of environment are beautiful and they foster aesthetic delight to human beings. The novelist expresses her sense of wonder and excitement at the beauty of nature. On many occasions like a poet, she personifies nature for expressing its different propensities. Towards the end of the novel when Nathan is on his death-bed the novelist shows a tender and tranquil aspect of nature :

Midnight approached. The time of in-between when it is neither day nor night when nature seems to pause to sigh and turn and prepare for another day (188).

Also a greater part of the novel reflects the ugly impact of industrialization on the life of villages. She displays her unhappiness on the dislocation and deracination due to the exploitative encroachment of industry on the lives of villages. The novelist seems to be strongly convinced that the growth of unplanned industry marginalizes the subalterns by displacing them from their lands and ruining their very source of livelihood. The recent problems in many states pertaining to the construction of big dams, SEZ and consequently a massive displacement of people are hazardous not only to the poor peasants but also to the environment as a whole. The whole chapter IV of the novel argues the relative advantages and plights and agonies of such a marginal human community. In the novel 'tannery' symbolizes the ugly face of 'industry' as a constant sources of pains to the people as well as natural environment of villages. Rukmani's ruminations bear witness to this sordid reality :

...but for us as we were, and others like us, there could be only resignation and resentment. There had been a time when we, too, had benefited -- those days seemed very remote now, almost belonging to another life -- but we had lost more than we had gained or could ever regain (134).

It is not that the novelist is unrealistic and she is not accepting the inevitability of change. What she resents is fast, abrupt and detrimental change. About the beginning of the 'tannery', the symbol of industrialization, disturbs the villagers. The novelist, in the distressing voice of Rukmani, talks about the rising prices, industrial pollution and disruption to the tranquillity of the rural landscape. Replying to Kunti's query Rukmani says :

...Already my children hold their noses when they go by, and all is shouting and disturbance and crowds wherever you go. Even the birds have forgotten to sing, or else their calls are lost to us (29).

The novelist, thus, resents the ill-effects of unplanned urbanization as it leads to the growth of unhygienic conditions in the towns. The ultimate effect of this change is the loss of man's connection with and respect for nature, the ultimate benefactor of humanity. She sadly reflects at this loss in the beginning of chapter XX :

For in the towns there were the crowds... But for us, who lived by the green, quiet fields perilously though these were to the town, nature still gave its muted message. Each passing day, each week, each month, left its sign, clear and unmistakable (115).

Her sharp resentment against the demoralizing impact of industrialization also highlights the disorganizing effects of urbanization. Her distaste for such a progress reflects her anguish at the catastrophic environmental problems which is the result of unplanned and uncared industrialization which unfortunately is spreading its tentacles even at the cultivable land and peaceful villages.

As such, Markandaya's fictional narrative goes on to indicate the emerging consciousness for the protection of the natural environment. Her narrative also seems to be significant in the sense that, though written 1950 s, it is representative of the times which have become more acute now. Another outstanding feature of the novel is that it brilliantly communicates the idea that man and nature are interlocked and the survival of humanity depends on the ethical treatment of nature. Any thoughtless approach or any disregard to the sanctity of nature and its functioning may lead to colossal loss in the relationship which would jeopardize the movement of humanity.

Indeed life consists essentially in a process of interchange between the life substance and the environment. Man's life depends upon and is conditioned by all that surround him and sustain him. Man's duty is to constantly remind himself -- in individual and collective life -- of environment and ecology. Markandaya's fictional

statement seems to be in unison with Richard Lannoy's views expressed in *The Speaking Tree* that 'this direct association of man's constant effort to preserve the environment and consequently to be preserved by it is a cyclic process seeking unity between environment and man' (Choudhary 172).

So, undoubtedly, Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* can rightly be considered as a text that brings to the fore the environmental concerns and ecological problems which is so acute in our times. And in the same vein the creator of this superb fictional narrative may earn the epithet of, to use an expression of Gadgil and Guha 'an invisible environmentalist'.

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FEMALE CONSCIOUSNESS IN SHASHI DESHPANDE'S *THE BINDING VINE*

Ashok Kumar Bachchan

Feminism is by no means a monolithic term. A critical analysis of the patriarchal modes of thinking aims at the domination of the male and the subordination of the female. The patriarchal theology teaches women to internalise this concept in the process of their socialization. It brings to the fore the concepts of gender which are man-made. According to Simone de Beauvoir, the history of humanity is a history of systematic attempts to silence the female. She says, "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman. It is civilization as a whole that produces this creature" (295). Great literature, preoccupied with the andocentric theology, focuses on the male protagonists providing secondary roles to females.

Shashi Deshpande, in *The Binding Vine*, portrays her middle-class female protagonist's predicament in a male-dominated society. She conjures up a woman's vision of life which is expressed partly through the consciousness of Urmila (Urmil, the female protagonist, and partly through the consciousness of other female characters like Vana. Urmila's friend, Mira, the mother-in-law and Shakutai. Urmil, the narrator in the novel, is a clever, educated woman working as a lecturer in a college. She has married a man of her own choice against the choice of her parents. Her problem is that being financially emancipated and having confidence in herself as she works outside, she has developed a kind of super ego in herself which denies her to submit before her husband. Deshpande's earlier heroines have maintained a long silence. They are able to unshackle themselves

only within a limited purview of their own lives. Unlike the other heroines, the heroine of *The Binding Vine*, Urmila has a supportive family. She loves her husband and is happy being married to him. Protest comes to her only when she decides to fight another woman's battle.

The *Binding Vine* begins with Urmila just recovering from the sudden death of her one year daughter. She fights with the memories but also realizes that forgetting is a betrayal: "I must reject these memories. I have to conquer them. This is one battle I have to win if I am to go on living. And yet my victory will carry with it the taint of betrayal. To forget is to betray" (21). On the other hand she has also the realization of the responsibility of her only living son, Kartika, who needs her love. Urmila reacts bitterly to have a framed photograph of Anu on the wall :

I don't need a picture to remember her. I can remember every bit of her, every moment of her life. How can you imagine I need a picture...? (68)

Shakutai, the uneducated dependent mother of Kalpana asks Urmi, 'How many children do you have ? (60) Urmi feels guilty when she mentions that she has only a son and she has lost a daughter.

Urmila fights in favour of a young girl, Kalpana. She is shocked to see that everybody wants to hush up the rape case :

Okay, she was raped. But publicizing it isn't going to do anyone good. It's going to mean trouble for everyone-the girl, her family (88-89).

The police officer is also of the same view. What difference it would make whether the victim died of an accident or rape :

Think of the girl and her family. Do you think it'll do them any good to have it known the girl was raped? She's unmarried, people are bound to talk, her name would be smeared (88).

Even the mother of the rape victim does not want the case to get registered. She feels that it would blacken her daughter's name and the fear as to who would marry her second daughter? The mother does not want the rapist to be punished; instead she blames the girl for the beastly act :

If you paint and flaunt yourself, do you think they'll leave you alone ? ...It's all her fault (146-147).

Urmila decides to fight Kalpana's case in spite of the fact that her mother wishes her daughter's death. Kalpana and her family gain popularity whereas her aunt's husband, the accused, gets a shock and feels the trap closing in on him.

Mira, Urmila's mother-in-law had died in her child-birth. She had four years of loveless marriage leading to her "dislike of the sexual act with her husband, a physical repulsion from the man she married" (63). Sex had become like the sting of a scorpion to her. Her husband had least understanding and she could never speak to him of her desire. She has no other option but to express her desire in her poems which she writes in her diary. Urmila wants to expose the evils of society and to encourage women to express themselves strongly.

Urmila's satisfactory married life gives her enough courage to fight for the cause of another woman who has not been so lucky. According to her, marriage is necessary for a woman. Even Kalpana's mother, who is suffering from poverty and ill-treatment by her drunkard husband, feels the same and wants to push her daughter into this kind of savagery. We find that there is a difference in the attitude towards women as compared to that of men. Urmila's mother has not been a doting mother for she sends Urmila away to her grand parents' house leaving her alone with Amrut, Urmila's brother. Urmila has always felt this.

The vulnerability of a girl child and the subsequent social stigma is something which affects the rich and the poor alike, Urmila's mother confesses her own inability to protect her when she

was young and vulnerable. She was sent to her grandmother's house in Ranidurg while she was a child. The reason for this separation is a puzzle to Urmi herself luni tells the truth:

Do you know why we -- why your Papa sent you away to Ranidurg ?..I was frightened of you, Urmi, I was two young. I was not prepared to have a child. And you were not easy, you used to cry all the time. I did not know how to soothe you. Diwakar was good with you, he was better than me,' but Papa said, 'How could you leave her alone with a man !' Diwaker ! He had been with us since I was a child, that's why mummy sent him to help me, he was so gentle, but Papa said, 'He's a man (199).

Shakutai states : "why does God give us daughters"(60). Her statement is symptomatic of the normal oppressed woman's reaction to femininity. The vulnerability of the girl child is clearly brought out by the conversation and relationships within the family. They have no protection against sexual vulnerability. The vulnerability of the girl-child is clearly brought out by the conversation and relationships within the family. In case of Kalpana her mousi's husband was the culprit. Kalpana's mother requests Urmi :

Take her, Urmi, take her away with you, I can't look after her. I don't want her. I'll only destroy her like I did Kalpana. Take her to your house, keep her there. I'm not fit to look after her (191-92).

Shakutai's husband although a father of three children, has actually abandoned her and is living with another woman. If he had lived with Shakutai, her sister, Salu's husband would have never dared to touch Shakutai's daughter, Kalpana, or cherished the dream of marrying her. As she had no protection, Kalpana is raped by him and is fatally injured. Whatever happens, it is the woman who suffers. Salu, who is an embodiment of love and submissiveness, goes home, finishes her cooking, gives her husband breakfast, puts a match to her kerosene-drenched body and commits suicide.

It is love which makes women vulnerable. Urmi loves Kishore even though separation gives an opportunity for the thought of another relationship to come to her. She realizes that she has married a man "who flits into my life a few months in a year and flits out again, leaving nothing of himself" (164).

According to Shashi Deshpande a marriage based on fear can never be happy. A marriage in which the girl's feeling or choice is not taken into consideration can be equally disastrous. This is made clear through Mira's example. She died after giving birth to Kishore, Urmila's husband. Urmila finds from Mira's diary that her mother-in-law was subjected to rape in marriage. She could know that her father-in-law had seen her at a wedding ceremony and at once fell in love with her. The marriage was settled but it was a disaster for Mira. Her husband's second wife, Akka, is moved to tears after going through her poems about a newly-married couple. It is clear from Mira's diary that she disliked sexual act with her husband. She hates the very word 'love' :

How I hate the word. If this is love it is a terrible thing. I have learnt to say 'no' at last, but it makes no difference, no difference at all. What is it he wants from me ? I look at myself in the mirror and wonder, what is there in me ? Why does it have to be me? Why can't he leave me alone ? (67).

Urmila realizes that her mother-in-law is raped by her husband. "What has happened to Kalpana happened to Mira too" (63).

Mira's diary mentions her meeting with the rising poet Venu who later became a grand old man of Indian literature. When Mira gave him some of her poems to read, he remarked. "Why do you need to write poetry ? It is enough for a young woman like you to give birth to children. That is your poetry. Leave the other poetry to us men" (127). This is also a kind of brutality because "even to force your will on another is to be brutal" (133). This reflects the agony of a creative woman in an andocentric world.

This is a scheme which deprives women of the power of communication and imagination. Cora Kaplan says :

To be a woman a poet presents many women poets with such profound split between their social, sexual identity and their artistic practice that the split becomes the insistent subject, sometimes overt, often hidden or displaced, of much woman's poetry (70).

Mira, uses language as a means to her redemption, may be treated as "a demand for access to and parity within the law and myth-making groups in society" (71). She uses her pen as a weapon to save herself from abuse, anonymity and mutilation in the prison house of her husband.

It is ironical that Urmi reads Mira's poems as a hunter to find out the real self of Mira. Every time while reading the poems she is filled with the excitement of a hunter. But very soon this relationship changes. "It is Mira who is now taking me by the hand and leading me" (135). The title of the novel, *The Binding Vine* has been borrowed from one of the poems of Mira which is about the womb-piercing joy of her pregnancy -- the binding vine of love.

The poems of Mira haunt Urmila so much that she decides to resurrect her by publishing them. Vana is enraged to know this plan. She feels that Urmila is a traitor who will destroy the prestige of the family by publishing Mira's poems. "It is as if the knowledge of what her father did, of what he was, has threatened something, disturbed the inner rhythm of her being, so that there's a sense of disharmony about her" (181). The male-oriented society nourishes women in such a way that they start looking at the world and interpreting it from the male point of view.

Shashi Deshpande makes an attack on the custom of arranged marriages. To Urmila, "the back of the bride's neck nervously waiting for the first night, looks like a lamb's waiting for butcher's knife to come down upon it" (63). An arranged marriage is

an absolutely cold-blooded affair because in such a marriage the girl's feelings are ignored and she suffers throughout her life.

Mira's husband represents the man passionate sexual predicament. That is why he loves Mira at first sight and in one-sided emotion weds her. He never succeeds in developing an emotional bond of love between them. His love for her is dual in its nature, bending towards the sex instinct.

Urmila and Kishore represent the silky smoothness of adolescent sexual relation between them. Their relation is based on infatuation and they are unable to continue it. The joyous feeling of love becomes stale after losing the strength of love wrapping herself in the hard shell of ego. Urmila realizes that she never asks Kishore anything :

When he goes away from me even in our few days together,
I never reveal my heart, my longing to keep him by my
side... Fixed forever in our places, face to face the two of
us, like Siva and his nodding bull (82).

Though she tries to search the feeling of love again in her relation with Dr. Bhaskar but it also turns out to be the end of a transitory relation. Nisha Trivedii writes:

Ego instinct and sex instinct in love work for short time in the life of a man and then they turn to be painful and confusing if love is not based on mutual understanding (149).

Love as a social instinct has also been presented in *The Binding Vine*. The true symbolical import of the title is also based on love. It is brought out by the following lines of Mira's poetry who dies in the prime of her youth in desperation of her sexual relation with her husband.

The Binding Vine binds different human relations, keeps them intact and carries forward the life of a human being. Urmila remembers in the end of the novel:

I think of Vana, heavily pregnant, sitting by me holding my hand during the pains before Kartik was born. I remember Kishore's face when he first saw Anu, I think of Akka crying for Mira, of Innu's grief when Papa told her about his illness, of Papa's anguished face watching her, of the touch of grace there was in Shautai's hand when she covered me gently at night while I slept, of the love with which she speaks of her sister, of Sandhya...

Is this it, 'the spring of life' Mira was looking for ? (203)

In the end of the novel, we find the realization -- altruistic quality of social instinct of love. It has been the main source of teaching in almost all the spiritual scriptures of India since the Vedic age down to our times. The *Bhagwat Gita* preaches that if we love our fellow equally and unselfishly, we can reach above the petty problems of our individual life, and ultimately a glorious way of salvation comes to us. This is also the message of sublime love embedded in *The Binding Vine*, adopting which people can find even today a way of peace in their undisturbed, unemotional and chaotic life.

We come to the conclusion that Shashi Deshpande is an Indian feminist writer who does not go to the extremes because she knows that "the wails of anguish or thunder of curses or growls of anger not by themselves turn into great literature?" (109). It is clear that in the creative female world of Shashi Deshpande all men are not villains. Urmila's husband is good to her and she is also fully satisfied with him. Yet she gets the realization of her own caste --the *Stri Jati* - and struggles to bring its truth before the society. This embodies the female consciousness of the personality of Urmila. Other protagonists of Shashii Deshpande seek their own salvation. In *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, Saru fights to bring the husband-wife relationship on an equal footing where there is no hierarchy of oppositions like superior-inferior, high-low and man-woman. In *Roots and Shadows*, Indu is worried about her large family and her

resolution to overcome her own personal crisis. In *That long Silence*, Jaya copes with her own suffering, silence and surrender and wins her freedom as an individual. Contrasted with all other protagonists of Deshpande, Urmila is concerned with the redemption of her own caste. Urmila's efforts to publish Mira's poems aims at discovering the strangled voice articulating woman's silent discourse, deciphering the coded language and liberating the imagination of women from inferior to exterior. It means that Deshpande converts a muted woman into a talking woman and provides strength and means to articulate the silence of women.

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HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS IN SHASHI DESHPANDE'S *SMALL REMEDIES* : A CRITIQUE

Vinod Kumar Singh

Shashi Deshpande is a novelist of uncommon gifts. In novel after novel, she has emphasized the futility of segregating past and present, tradition and modernity, ambition and responsibility and men and women. She has not remained static in her themes and characters. She has repeatedly repudiated any kind of labelling of her fiction in terms of gender, politics or ideology. Social criticism has remained the pivot of her fiction. Commenting on the otherness of her fiction, M.K. Naik observes:

Her writing is clearly part of Indian literature, and emerges from her rootedness in middle-class Indian society. Understatement is the hallmark of her work; she never indulges in verbal pyrotechnics, her lucid prose never attracts attention to itself by using Indian words. Nor is she interested in the exotic aspects of India; there are no Maharajahs, tiger hunts and holy men in her work (85).

Shashi Deshpande herself says in an interview with Lakshmi Holmstrom :

... I am different from other Indians who write in English, my background is very firmly there. I was never educated abroad. My novels don't have any Westerners, for example. They are just about Indian people and the complexities of our lives. Our inner lives and our outer lives and the reconciliation between them. My English is as we use it, I

don't make it easier for any one really. If I make any change it's because I think the novel needs it not because the reader needs it (26).

In her novels, Deshpande depicts the agony, anguish and conflict of the modern, educated middle class Indian women caught between patriarchy and tradition on the one hand and individuality, self expression and independence on the other. She says, "I know women better than I know men, so perhaps my books are more about women, and that's about it" (Dickman 32). Her career women "are not satisfied with the rhetoric of equality between men and women but want to see that the right to an individual life and the right to development of their individual capabilities are realised in their own lives" (Mies 32). Being a woman, Deshpande feels more for the female characters and can understand better the mundane reality and the complex structure of man-woman relationship. Thus the theme of relationships is a part of Shashi Deshpande's larger social outlook. She is essentially a humanist. Her feminism is rooted in the socio-cultural ethos of India, which embraces modernity with a traditional outlook. In an article of her own, Deshpande mentions that she is interested in issues related not only to women but extended to all humanity. She says:

My writing has been categorized as 'writing about women' or 'feminist' writing. In this process, much in it has been missed. I have been denied the place and dignity of a writer who is dealing with issues that are human issues, of interest to all humanity (Jain 37).

She denies any attempt on her part to write propagandist literature. She says in an interview with Stanley Carvalho :

I hate to write propagandist literature. I think good literature and propaganda do not go together. Any literature written with some viewpoint of proving something rarely turns out to be good literature. Literature comes very spontaneously

and when I write I am concerned with people (*The Sunday Observer* 11 February, 1990).

A Matter of Time clearly suggests that Shashi Deshpande is now moving away from the preoccupation with the female psyche in the total framework of human relationships. It may be that she was oppressed by a sense of *déjà vu* and in order to get away from it she expanded her fictional imagination to encompass even those experiences which traditionally do not belong to fiction. It is the desire to explore the human condition beyond the relationships that exist in the traditional Indian family system. In *A Matter of Time*, Deshpande achieves, to a great extent, her desire, she once expressed in an interview with Vanamala Vishwanatha, to reach a stage where she "can write about human beings and not about men or women (*Literature Alive*. Dec. 1987). Thus *Small Remedies* marks the beginning of yet another phase in which the focus shifts from family to individual, male as well as female. Commenting on this after the publication of her latest novel *Moving On* (2004) she concedes that 'in these later two novels I have been much more interested in getting to know the male characters more. It is becoming increasingly clear to me that we cannot isolate the female experience. What men are and why they are the way they are a part of it'. (*The Hindu*, Sept. 5, 2004) This is a remarkable statement and could have been made only by a writer who is so seriously committed to an art, which is closely wedded to the human condition. A diehard feminist cannot see beyond the narrow prism of her woman-centred vision and it is for nothing that Shashi Deshpande occupies a unique position in the galaxy of the contemporary Indian English novelists. Meenakshi Mukherjee is probably right when she says:

While accepting the Sahitya Akademi Award about a decade ago Shashi Deshpande had expressed her importance with reviewers who routinely used words like 'sensitivity' and 'sensibility' if the writer happened to be a woman. She said she herself thought of her work in terms

of strength. Unfortunately the stereotype of a frail and intense novelist writing mainly about women's victimhood has dogged her too long. The reason for this unfair labelling is not far to seek. Shashi Deshpande's early novels were published just at the time the post-Midnight's Children generation of writers was becoming big news. Since she refused to play by global rules, she could not be included in this league. The only other exportable slot the media could think of was the Champion of the Oppressed Women. But anyone who has read her novels carefully knows that her special value lies elsewhere—in an uncompromising toughness, in her attempts to do what has never been attempted in English, her insistence on being read on her own terms and a refusal to be packaged according to the demands of the market (*The Hindu*, May 7, 2000).

In her own simple way, Shashi Deshpande has given an entirely new dimension to women writing in India and it is really sad that not only reviewers but even respectable critics have failed to gauge the uncommon strength that this novelist possesses. *Small Remedies* only confirms what Deshpande has herself said about her relationship to market-savvy feminism.

If *Matter of Time* is a step in the direction of metaphysics, *Small Remedies* takes us to the world of music and although the central focus is on the life and struggles of a woman musician, she is used more as an organising principle rather than as a 'heroine' in the conventional sense. The technique is similar to the *Binding Vine* where major issues of the novel spring from the posthumous and unpublished poems of the dead Mira. In the *Small Remedies* a journalist Madhu Saptarshi is planning to write the biography of Savitribai, a doyen of the Gwalior *gharana*. This provides an opportunity to the novelist to meditate on the art of writing biographies. Several options open up before Madhu but she realizes

that she cannot adopt the chronological method which remains the most popular method for biographers. This method demands complete detachment and objectivity and also neutrality almost like a historian. But Madhu is not cast in the traditional mould of a biographer because she is aware that life is not just identifiable dates and verifiable events in a person's life. Life is a continuous flow creating a palimpsest with events and emotions piled upon one another but never congealing or concealing anything. Another point is that once Madhu accepts the assignment and meets her 'subject', she feels that she has become so involved with her that she cannot play the role of a mere biographer. Everything that Savitribai tells Madhu triggers some of her own long-forgotten memories and the experiences of the bai's daughter Munni. Thus the biographical project of Madhu turns out to be in part at least an autobiographical project. Madhu realizes soon that by writing Savitribai's biography she would be able to purge or purify or clarify some of her own unsettling experiences. She rightly feels euphoric about her project and confesses: "Relationships swirl about me in long endless tapes that bind everyone in a confused inextricable tangle. I have never seen anything like. I enjoy it (Despande 2001 : 105). This confession is truly amazing in the face of Savitribai's chaotic, sprawling life which Madhu is called upon to organise. Then there is Munni, Madhu's childhood mate and Savitribai's daughter who is discarded by her mother in her search for eminence and respectability. Madhu's difficulty is compounded because Savitribai is so taciturn, so miserly with words:

What's troubling me now is the material that Bai is offering me. She is not good with words. She rarely gets the right words and she is not careful with them, either. Precision is not her strong point, though there is no paucity of words, she is fluent enough. In fact, she is sometimes too garrulous and I have to grope my way through the density of words to get at her meaning. At times she leaves blanks.... And

she forgets, very often she forgets words, names, connections (61).

This is a difficulty which with her journalist's training Madhu can easily overcome. But there is another kind of difficulty which is incomprehensible to her. As a child Madhu had been a neighbour of Savitri and she had befriended her daughter, Meenakshi. At that time Savitri was a married Hindu woman belonging to a large joint family. All that has changed now. Savitribai's rebelliousness had fascinated Madhu initially because the Bai was the symbol of a courageous woman who could defy caste, family and social norms to pursue her ambition and establish her identity. But what continuously nags her is Savitribai's self-centredness, her uncaring attitude towards her daughter from the earlier marriage and her studied indifference towards her new Muslim partner. The most puzzling aspect of the Bai's character, according to Madhu is her effort to black out her present for which she had abandoned her past.

Another character that temporarily fascinates Madhu is her aunt and activist Leela who has married a person outside her Brahmin caste "who lived most of her life in a chawl among sooty mills and shit-pocked roads among men and women who had little beauty in their lives" (219-20). Leela offers a sharp contrast to Savitribai and also her daughter Munni who ends up as Shailja Joshi. Try as she might to steer clear of her personal memories of mother, aunt, in-laws Madhu is enveloped by those memories and all her attempts to observe clinical objectivity of an ideal biographer comes to naught. Savitribai and Leela are the two independent-spirited women who dared to be different and broke away from shackles of their tradition-bound families to seek fulfilment in public life. However, "in portraying the struggle of these women for identity, Deshpande waves no feminist banners, launches into no ribald diatribes. She drives her point home with great subtlety and delicacy (*India Today*, 3 April, 2000).

One might say that *Small Remedies* is thus not a relationship novel like its predecessors. While it is true that this novel is apparently different in tone, tenor and ethos from her earlier novels, Shashi Deshpande does not ignore relationships. Meenakshi Mukherjee observes:

Of the four remarkable novels I have read in recent times that deal with music—Vikram Seth's *An Equal Music*, Salman Rushdie's *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, Bani Babu's Bangla novel *Gandharvi* and now *Small Remedies*, Shashi Deshpande, I think, faces the toughest challenge. This has to do with incompatibility between the discourse of Hindustani and the English language (*The Hindu*, 7 May, 2000).

Small Remedies in its design and intention is metafictional in that it touches upon the problems of writing a book and unlike earlier novels it touches upon certain events in the larger outside world such as the Bombay riots, for example. But these themes are not included for topical purposes or as occasions to wax eloquence on the virtues of communal living. They are introduced to suggest how human relationships on the wider social canvas are vitiated and poisoned by such occurrences. However, it must be conceded that *Small Remedies*, like its predecessor *A Matter of Time*, signals the novelist's desire to test her creative powers on a wider scale. And there are enough hints in the novel to confirm it. There are relationships beyond family kinship, beyond caste, community and religion which are given sufficient space in the novel. Joe and Leela, Tony and Rekha, Hari and Lata enliven the dark world in which Madhu has been thrown by Providence. There is also a suggestion of a higher relationship, relationship with divinity and this relationship looms large over all the relationship in the novel which can be read as a celebration of relationships. Madhu herself needs this umbrella of relationship because this alone can relieve her of that emptiness

which her son's death has caused. She confesses that without relationship she would have been swallowed up by that emptiness.

If Madhu remains intact, it is because of such relationships. When she comes to Bhavanipur in connection with her biography assignment, she is welcomed by Hari and Lata who take care of her needs and requirements. Tony and Rekha visit her to comfort. The world of *Small Remedies* is a very humane, very responsive world. Relationships swirl around Madhu. Perhaps in none of her earlier novels the wife-husband relationship has been so touchingly described as in *Small Remedies*:

To see Som [Madhu's husband] is to remember. In his face in his eyes, I see my own grief, my guilt, my anger. In his silence I hear my own questions that ricochet off the soft walls of my mind, leaving sharp points of piercing pain. We are like the twins, mirror-images reflecting each other's physical selves, each other's souls (107).

The novel encompasses within its fold many other problems, not just individual's but problems of history, religion, politics, etc. but transfiguring all this there is affirmative vision of serenity and humanity. The climax of this serenity and humanity when Hasina, the pious Muslim who sang Malkauns with the same concentration and involvement as she offered namaz, starts her concert with the Devi stotra whose each stanza ends with the words *bhikshami dehi*. Bhajans constitute an essential part of her musical repertoire unlike Savitribai who never sings bhajans.

Small Remedies touches upon deeper feelings and emotions, feelings and emotions which have no tangible shapes, which cannot be described in terms of known experiences and events. The totality of human condition can never be adequately expressed in words. Man concerts, prayers and rituals to create meanings of the complexities of life but they are small remedies 'to counter the terrible disease of being human'. 'The only remedy' the novelist concludes

'is to believe that tragedies, disasters and sorrows are part of the scheme—if it can be called that... you get the happiness, you've got to accept the sorrow and the pain as well. You can't get the one and escape the other.... We all know the philosophy of duality—life and death, day and night, sorrow and happiness. It sounds good, it sounds right and when we speak of it, we nod our heads and agree that this is the truth of life. But when we're in the process of living, when the going is good, can we really make ourselves believe this? Will we concede, even to ourselves, that the sinister other of happiness is waiting for us round the corner? Basking in the bliss of family life, would I have to let myself think: *this is not forever, this happiness is ephemeral, it is illusory*? No, ... (81).

These are dark thoughts and cannot be brushed aside. But at the same time such thoughts should not turn us away from life. We need remedies, big or small, in our journey through life, otherwise this journey would become unbearable. This is the truth of the epigraph to the novel taken from the *Rig Veda*:

Father of the earth,
protect us;
Father of the sky,
protect us;
Father of the great and shining waters,
protect us,
—To which God shall we offer our worship?

Small Remedies is not one story but a string of stories, stories of broken and disjointed lives, sad stories, in fact. And much of the sadness of these lives arises from the denial of unsavoury experiences, of the past that may disfigure the present. The narrator who narrates these stories has her own story, equally sad and disjointed, to bear upon these stories. She has lost her only son, she has lost her way in life. But she realizes that no experience should be blotted out from

life. For long time she conceals her own past from her husband, fearing that it might destroy her present bliss. It is only when she comes clean of it that she experiences some semblance of wholeness. She cannot reconcile herself to Savitribai's denial of her past, of her Muslim lover, her daughter Munni. Can such self-imposed amnesia be a remedy for the ugly present? And the answer is an emphatic no. The novel concludes on a note of affirmation.

How could I have ever longed for amnesia? Memory, capricious and unreliable though it is, ultimately carries its own truth within it. As long as there is memory, there's always the possibility of retrieval, as long as there is memory, loss is never total (324).

As Meenakshi Mukherjee rightly observes :

In *Small Remedies*, Deshpande is attempting much more than she did in her earlier novels.... But none of them gathers up... in one large sweep, the plurality, diversity and contradictions of our contemporary culture.... It is not easy to incorporate so many social nuances in an introspective novel dealing with abstract questions. But then 'a fascination for what is difficult' has always been Shashi Deshpande's forte (*Ibid.*).

This seems to me a valid interpretation of *Small Remedies*.

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VIKRAM CHANDRA'S *RED EARTH AND POURING RAIN* : A STUDY OF MYTH

Rabinarayan Sasmal

The novelists of the last decade of twentieth century are obsessed with their own generation and contemporaneity. The young artists are intensely aware of their entire culture. These novelists encompass metropolitanism, cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism in their works. As a novelist Vikram Chandra has enjoyed critical acclaim to a striking degree for his debut novel *Red Earth and Pouring Rain* (1995). He was awarded the prestigious David Higham Prize for fiction and the Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best First Book in 1996. The book is Indian in its feel. Like Sashi Tharoor, Chandra has tried to reinvent the ancient myth in the context of modern times. The grand narrative of *Red Earth and Pouring Rain* looks back to the classical past of Indian heritage, the roots of our living.

Vikram Chandra transports the readers across multiple centuries and continents and intermingles history, myth and contemporaneity. The historical adventures of Benoit de Boigne (1751-1830) of Savoy in France, the German Walter Reinhardt (1720-1778), the Irish George Thomas (1756-1802) and Sikander of 19th century are placed in the frame work of the story. Its architectural design has been taken from the great Indian story, the *Mahabharata*. From the beginning the story weaves into its texture epic grandeur of Indian classics. Abhay, back in India after attending college in California becomes the link between these two separate worlds. Disturbed and alienated he shoots and seriously wounds an old white-faced monkey that has been stealing food from his parents' gardens for years. As a

result of this wound, the monkey recalls his past life and states that he is the reincarnation of a nineteenth century Brahmin poet named Sanjay Parashar. Deprived of his human voice, the monkey, Sanjay actually typewrites in order to communicate. Three important Hindu deities arrive on the scene : Yama, Hanuman and Ganesha and because of the divine interference. Yama could not take the life of the white-faced monkey. A vital contract is signed between Yama and Sanjay, the old monkey. Yama agrees to certain commotions. That is, Sanjay will, stay alive only if he is able to entertain an audience with his story-telling. .

Red Earth and Pouring Rain is an epic fiction. Chandra states it in an interview with Albertazzi:

As I wrote it, *Red Earth* summed a novel quite remarkably out of fashion. I mean, its form comes from the stories of the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayan* which my mother and aunts used to tell me when I was small. This type of spiralling narrative, with its just a positions and unexpected meetings, is as an ancient Indian form (72).

The book is a celebration of not only life but the eternity of "the eater and the eaten". The underlying structure of this book comes from a very old Indian story-telling tradition of the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* in which narrators are present within narratives. Meenakhi Mukherji comments that Chandra's fiction represents a commodification of Indianness for Western consumption.

The novel's mythical pattern of writing enhances its grandeur. Both in conception and expression it has followed the pattern of great Indian epics. *Red Earth and pouring Rain* is divided into five books like (1) The Book of war and Ancestors, (2) The Book of Learning an Desolation (3) The Book of Blood and Journeys, (4) The Book of Revenge and Madness, and (5) The Book of the Return. The *Ramayana* has seven Cantos and the *Mahabharata* has eighteen Parbas. Like any other myth it is a narrative of a real life

experience of the past. Northop Frye defines myth in the following manners :

By a myth... I mean primarily a certain type of story. It is a story in which some of the chief characters are gods or other beings larger in power than humanity. Very seldom, it is located in history : its action takes place in a world above or prior to ordinary time, in illotempore, in Mircea Eliade's phrase. Hence, like the folklore, it is an abstract story-pattern. The characters can do what they like, which means what the story-teller likes : there is need to be plausible or logical in motivation. The things that happen in myth are things that happen only in stories; they are in self-contained literary world (163-64).

Hence, myth is a story of unknown origin handed down from generation to generation. In *Red Earth and Pouring Rain* we have characters from *Puranas*, *Vedas*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayan*. The role of Hanuman in the *Ramayan* is indispensable. It is he who led Rama to Lanka to rescue Sita from the clutch of Ravana. The passage (stone bridge) to Lanka was possible for his endeavour. Here, Sanjay the humanised monkey is as important as Hanuman in the *Ramayan*. In the *Mahabharata*, during Kurukshetra war, Sanjay plays a vital role. He interprets the warfare of Kurukshetra to Dhritarastra with the blessings of Vyasa. Sanjay could see in his inner eyes the great war sitting at home. Ram Mohan's chanting of slokas refer to the *Bhagavad Gita* as -

Dhritarastra Uvacha -

Dharmakshetre Kurukshetre Samaveta Yuyutsavah

Mamakah Pandavasraiva kim akurvata Sanjay ...

Dhritarastra said -

Gathered on the dharma plain of Kurukshetra

O Sanjay, what did my sons and the sons of Pandu do ?

(245)

In this novel the protagonist Sanjay entertains the audience through stories of his previous birth. The very ideas of birth and rebirth are mythical. The Hindus believe in the idea of rebirth. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Lord Krishna said that soul is imperishable and anybody who is born must die and the vice versa (Jatasyahi druba Mrutyu, Dhrubam Janma Mrutasya cha). At the time of immolation, Janvi, the princess of Bejagarh said to her sons, "Remember Death is nothing" (244). She sat on the pyre and killed herself. Sanjay chanted an ancient song in Sanskrit from the *Gita* to remember the invincible soul, as :

Nainam Chindanti Sastrani nainam dahati pavakah,
Nacainam Kledayanty apo na sasayati marutah ...
Weapons do not cut it, fire does not burn it,
water does not moisten it, wind does not dry it (245).

Janvi sacrificed her life. Sanjay sacrificed his tongue to Yama for immortality. This myth of sacrifice is as old as the creation. Adam and Eve sacrificed paradise for hell. Ekalabya sacrificed his right thumb to Dronacharya, the Guru. Rishi Aruni sacrificed his son Nachiketa to Yama. Rama was ready to sacrifice one of his eyes while worshipping Goddess Durga to kill Ravana. King Bali, Harishchandra and even Karna are great for their sacrifice.

The birth of Sanjay, Sikander and Chotta is mysterious. They are the "Laddoo - children" (136). Uday Singh offered laddoos of the necromancer of Hansi to Janvi and conveyed the message of Thomas :

Tell her to eat them, one at a time, to put each one whole into her mouth. Tell her she will have sons. Tell her she will have sons worthy of their mother. Tell her she will have sons who will face the world. Tell her to have sons (131).

Karna and five Pandavas were born mysteriously. It was an unbelievable truth. Even Jesus Christ was born of the blessing of God. Shanti Devi took one laddoo and became pregnant with Janvi. Janvi gave birth to Sikander and Chotta and Shanti Devi bore Sanjay,

the old white -faced monkey. Sanjay has been appearing again and again in the earth by the blessings of Yama. Sanjay is reincarnated in the form of a monkey now. Change is the go of life. The imperishable soul takes a new body. Lord Krishna says:

Basansi Jirnani Yatha Bihaya,

Nabani Gruhnati Naraparani

Tatha sarirani bihaya jirna

Nyanani sanjati nabani dehi (*The Gita*).

(As human being accepts new cloth and throws out the old one, similarly soul takes new body leaving the old one)

Sanjay is old and wounded. Yama has appeared. Sanjay will take a new form. This is the life cycle -birth-death-birth. To remember the previous birth is not new in Hindu mythology. Lord Krishna could see and show past, present and future. The great Hanuman lives age after age and remembers his past and future.

The Hindus believe in Dharma and Karma. According to the Karma of previous life, a man enjoys his status in the next life. Yama too instructs the humanised monkey about the core philosophy behind karma and dharma. Yama says :

Karma and Dharma, those are mechanical Laws sewn into the great fabric of the cosmos, you understand, mysterious in their functioning ,. there is no predicting the results of those deadly calculations, each deed producing a little burst of karma to be weighed in those inscrutable balances ; who knows, who can understand the subtle ways of dharma but you've undoubtedly been a bad monkey, Sanjay . Instead of attending to monkey dharma you have haunted the dwellings of humans... (12).

This is the secret of work. Our present life is the result of the karma of our previous life and our next life depends on our karma of this birth. Sanjay admits that "for the bad karma I accumulated during that life, no doubt, I have been reborn in this guise" (10) . People

believe in "the existence of after-life and the necessity of karma in moral action" (253). Ram Mohan tells the members of his family that all sins are neutralised in one-bath in the Ganges. He says: "Scriptures say that Gangaji is our mother, and he who bathes in her waters is washed of all karma" (205).

In *Red Earth and Pouring Rain*, Chandra presents Sanjay's two deaths. Yama offered him "eternal life" (481) and granted what he wished, i.e. "never to die ... hard as stone ... stronger than machines" (424). He was disgusted with human life. That is why he wished to be reborn not as a human but as an animal. Then Sanjay "felt the last cord break, the last spark of desire leaving him, it was the hardest, but the bond of pride then vanished and he was free" (489). In the second time, his monkey life comes to an end. He is seriously wounded by Abhay. He is no more able to entertain the audience. The last story is told by Abhay about his American life, its values and his relationship with his lady-love Amanda. During story telling bombing takes place and Saira is wounded. She is taken to All India Medical Institute for treatment. All are disturbed. Sanjay, the monkey, feels weak and paralysed. The bond is broken. The white-faced monkey passes away. Abhay takes the body of the animal and "lowered Sanjay into the waters, and the steady current beating against my (Abhay's) thighs carried him away quietly" (519). At his death-bed Yama was not there except an old man with fine white hair and golden eyes sitting behind him. Sanjay could recognise him. This old man was Dharma who is the friend of man and woman. Sanjay said to him, "You are Yamam Dharmam, and you are our father" (492).

In all five parts of the book the story begins with Hindu gods, Ganesha, Hanuman and Yama. The reference is made to other gods in the novel like "Shiva and Parvati and Vishnu and Laxmi and even Brahma" (63). When Sikander is wounded in the battle field, Goddess Kali appears to save him. Sikander expresses his experience as: "It seemed then that Kali was holding me in her arms, cradling me in

her arms, my head on her breast ..." (391). Uday Singh, a pious hero dies in thirsty but does not drink water from the peasants. He experiences the role of fate in his life. He has fought many battles. He believes "there is a secret hand, a blind god of chance who decides victory and defeat" (93) and goddess Kali dances on these field with her black face and red tongue. Chandra writes about dark-skinned Asuras, Urvashi, Menaka and Apsaras of Indra . The book has reference to Hiranyakashyapu, his sister Holika and the little Prahlad . The latter proved the omnipresence of god. Chandra praises the oneness of "this Brahman" (103) .

The most important of all is the title of the novel which moves from micro- cosm to macrocosm .It mirrors the spirit of the fiction. 'Earth' and 'Rain', one physical and the other non- physical, are inseparable from each other like body and soul. Earth is the place of human activities and water is the source of all beings. It bears the message of Upanisadic philosophy of the existence of human life. The Universe is constituted of Panchabhutas (five elements) --- *Kshit, OP, Tez, Maruta and Byoma* (earth, water, air, fire, space). 'Red' stands for fire and emotion; 'earth' for soil and flesh; 'pouring' for sky and air; and 'rain' for water and blood. The characters like Hanuman, Ganesha and Yama are from the space. The word 'and' in the title of the book connects earth and heaven, human and divine, body and soul and finite and infinite.

Chandra has combined history and myth in his fiction .It has a positive ending as it emphasizes the all conquering power of art :

Then we will sit in circles and circles saying, bless us, Ganesha : be with us, friend Hanuman, Yama, you old fraud, you can listen if you want; and saying this we will start all over again (520).

An entire aesthetic evolves round the artistic tapestry', be it mythical or historical or contemporary)

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CHANGING PATTERNS OF RELATIONSHIP IN *THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS*

L. M. Joshi

The *God of Small Things* portrays the Indian society from the seventies onwards but having been written in the late nineties, it also throws light on the significant changes that took place in the interactional relationship between the higher and the lower castes during these periods. *The God of Small Things* dwells on the rigidity of the caste system and highlights the fact that the concept of caste is so deep rooted in the Indian psyche that even the modern educated people find that they have not been able to break completely free from its shackles.

The novel presents a realistic picture of contemporary Indian society. It is "a story about love and brutality" (Butalia 28). The relationship of an upper-caste Syrian Christian divorcee, Ammu, with the untouchable Velutha forms the central motif of this novel.

The God of Small Things is a satire on the Indian caste system, prevalent in the South Indian Syrian Christian community of Kerala in the seventies and eighties. As Nishi Chawla has observed:

Arundhati Roy lives in a time of disintegrating social and religious forms and values. Instead of choosing to 'rise above' her circumstances, she articulates and analyzes, sometimes in coded form, specific problems of her age and native place with an unusual reflexivity, which provokes and sustains debate ... (347)

The novelist seems to suggest that though many people belonging to the lower castes got converted and embraced Christianity, they could not be assimilated into the mainstream of Christianity. The Christians had adopted the idea of caste from the traditional Hindus. In caste practices, purity and pollution were "far more important than *Karma and Dharma*" (Khushu Lahiri 113) among the Hindus as well as the Christians. Conversion to Christianity is the first of the three solutions that Anand gives in his novel *Untouchable* for the eradication of untouchability. Bakha after facing the humiliating treatment from the higher castes is momentarily drawn to Christianity. When Colonel Hutchinson sympathizes with him and tells him that Jesus Christ "sacrificed himself to help us, for the rich and the poor, for the 'Brahmin and the Bhangi'", (120) his wife Mary Hutchinson speaks disparagingly of the untouchables, he runs away from them. Anand does not portray the pathetic plight of untouchables converted to Christianity like Arundhati Roy. Ayemenem and Kottayam have a large number of converted Christians. Though, they had been assured that their condition would improve after conversion it had only worsened. Roy depicts their pathetic condition when the Britishers first came to Malabar. Velutha's grandfather, Kelan, along with a number of other outcastes, like the Paravans. Pelayas and Pulayas had changed their religion and converted to Christianity. Though "they joined the Anglican church to escape the scourge of untouchability" they were still treated as untouchables and found that they had merely jumped from the frying pan into the fire. As Arunchati Roy writes, "they were made to have separate churches, with separate services, and separate priests. As a special favour they were even given their own separate Pariah Bishop" (74). This novel depicts the long lasting consequences of the caste system in the relationship between the higher caste Syrian Christians and the untouchables. The novel presents in a sympathetic manner the plight of the underprivileged section of society due to the hypocrisy, indifference and callousness of the wealthy upper caste community.

The effect of the strict observation of the notion of purity and pollution is highlighted in Pappachi's interaction with the untouchables like Velutha and Vellya Paapen. As a young boy, Velutha was not allowed to enter from the front of the House. He entered from the back entrance of the "Ayemenem House" (15), as Ammu's father Pappachi did not allow *Paravans* into his House. As Roy writes, "Nobody would. They were not allowed to touch anything that Touchables touched Caste Hindus and Caste Christians" (73). The way Pappachi treats the *Paravans* shows how deeply rooted this concept of pollution was in the traditional Indian society and how it affected inter-caste relationships even after independence.

Mammachi's interaction with the untouchables like Vellya Paapen and Velutha show that the concept of purity and pollution was deeply rooted in her mind as well. In Ayemenem, the untouchables were not allowed to touch anything that the "Touchables" (77) touched, Ammu's mother Mammachi remembered at time in her girlhood "when paravans were expected to crawl backwards with a broom, weeping away their footprints so that Brahmins or Syrian Christians would not defile themselves by accidentally stepping into a Paravan's footprint" (73). Mammachi remembers that in her girlhood days, for fear of being polluted by the *Paravans* like Vellya Paapen and others, the higher castes compelled them "to put their hands over their mouths when they spoke" (74). This is because their polluted breath was to be diverted away from those higher castes whom they addressed. When Vellya Paapen comes to know about the close relationship of his son Velutha and Ammu and imagines "what his untouchable son had touched, mere than touched" (78), he becomes afraid and informs Mammachi about what he saw, "The story of the little boat that crossed the river night after night, and who was in it. The story of man and woman, standing together in the moonlight. skin to skin" (255). He asks for forgiveness and tells Mammachi that he would, "kill his son with his own bare hands. To destroy what he had created" (78). When Vellya

Paapen comes to return Mammachi his glass eye, she stretches her hand to take the thing the Paravan gives to her but when she comes to know about the love affair of his son with her daughter, she pushes him away from her. Vellya Paapen is surprised to have been touched by Mammachi, " Part of the taboo of being an untouchable was expecting not to be touched" (256).

The concept of purity and pollution had not come to an end by the seventies though it had decidedly become more flexible. Its influence is clearly evident in the interaction between Mammachi and Velutha. Though Mammachi has appointed Velutha a carpenter, she does not encourage him to enter the House except when it is absolutely necessary. She also thinks that Velutha should be grateful to her because she has allowed him to enter the factory compound and "touch things that Touchables touched" (77). But it is also true that she does not mind touching the Paravans from a distance if it became necessary. This is evident when she allows Velutha to touch the things of her House in order to mend them. When Mammachi thinks about the love affair of Ammu and Velutha and realizes that the *Pravan* must have touched her daughter intimately, she nearly vomits. She thinks that Ammu has defiled "generations of breeding and brought the family to its knees." She thinks that people would defame her family on all public occasions, "They'd nudge and whisper" (258) and the consequences of this pollution would remain from generation to generation. Her rigid attitude is further evident when she meets Velutha after coming to know of his love affair with his daughter. She abuses and shouts at him telling him to get out, "'If I find you on my property tomorrow I' ll have you castrated like the pariah dog that you are! I will have you killed'" (184). She spits on his face, "Thick spit, It spattered across his skin. His mouth and eyes" (284). Velutha is greatly humiliated due to the belief of the upper castes that the Paravans are impure.

The belief in the concept of pollution is further evident in the attitude of Inspector Thomas Matthew. His interaction with the

lower caste Velutha shows that he is also guided by this rule of purity and pollution. The caste-ridden society punishes him brutally for defiling the high caste woman, Ammu. The police do the work of punishing, they are "only history's henchmen sent to square the books and collect the dues from those who broke its laws" (308). Inspector Thomas Mathew drags Velutha from the "History's house" (304) and beats him brutally to death as he has broken the rule of purity and pollution. He finds himself compelled to touch untouchable and to collect false evidence of his crime, which is a great humiliation for him. He thinks that he had to do this to preserve the purity of the future generation, for his "Touchable wife, two Touchable daughters - whole Touchable generations waiting in their Touchable wombs" (259). In this way Arundhati Roy has highlighted the hypocrisy of the caste system.

The notion of purity and pollution was so deeply rooted in the Indian psyche that Ammu and Velutha's relationship itself could not remain untouched by it. When Velutha was a boy of eleven, he would bring "intricate toys" (74) for Ammu. He held them in his palm and used to give them to Ammu without touching her hand in order not to defile her. In her childhood days Ammu was also taught to take things without letting her fingers touch his palms. The novel also touches upon the idea of untouchability through the dream of Ammu. She dreams of the man without footprints, "He left no foot prints in sand, no ripples in water, no image in mirrors. She could have touched him with fingers, but she didn't" (216). The symbol is repeated at least six times. The relationship between the high caste Ammu and the Paravan Velutha is doomed from the start and lasts only thirteen days. While Velutha loses his life due to being brutally beaten up by the police, Ammu is subjected to the trauma of being forcibly separated from her children.

The interaction between the Marxist Comrade K.N .M. Pillai and Velutha is also affected by the rules of purity and pollution. Comrade Pillai is in favour of the eradication of untouchability as is clear from his Marxist views. However, in real life he is a hypocrite

complex, yet still believes in caste restrictions like Motichand in *He Who Rides a tiger*, who says that he is bound to act according to social norms. As Pillai knows that all the "Touchable" workers in the factory dislike Velutha's position "for ancient reasons of their own" (121), he asks Chacko to sack him only in order to get their votes. Pillai resembles a "feudal lord" (66) of the past who is as much caste-conscious as the bourgeois.

In *The God of Small Things*, Arundhati Roy has depicted a decrease in the observance of the strict rule of purity and pollution that she witnessed among the educated higher caste people in Indian society. The orthodox attitudes regarding pollution had started becoming more liberal. Ammu represents the liberal and educated section of society, one who does not believe in this notion. In her childhood days Ammu was taught to take things without letting her fingers touch Velutha's palms, but later on Ammu finds solace, peace, joy and fulfillment in surrendering herself to Velutha. Her modern and daring attitude reveals a radical change in the previously existing orthodox attitudes regarding purity and pollution.

Ammu does not encourage her twins to follow the rules of purity and pollution as is clear from Velutha's relationship with her children. This also shows that no such idea of discrimination existed in the minds of the children. As M.B. Gaijan has observed, "Velutha taught the twins, boating and fishing. The kids enjoyed their learning because they didn't know 'what was untouchability'" (166). When Velutha tells them that he will mend their boat, Estha "wrapped his legs round him and kisses him" (213). The twins paint his nails with the red cutex that Ammu has discarded. Velutha not only entertains the children but the children also touch and tickle him, "Rahel lunged at his armpits and tickled him mercilessly. Ickilee, Ickilee, Ickilee" (177). He is "The God of Small Things" (220). Velutha's bare back becomes the symbol of parental security for Ammu's twins, Rahel and Estha, "She knew his back. She'd been carried on it. More times than she could count" (73).

The interaction between Estha, Rahel and Kuttappen indicates that the notion of purity and pollution had begun to change. Estha and Rahel go to the house of Velutha without any idea of being polluted by going there. They also meet his brother Kuttappen and allow him to touch their "grizzled boat" (210).

Chacko is an Oxford graduate and a typical product of western education. He is "self proclaimed-Marxist" (765). He does not believe in untouchability and the caste system. Having been educated in England he is completely free from the pollution complex. Chacko has appointed Velutha and the Marxist leader, asks him to sack Velutha because he is an untouchable and is defiling the workers in the factory by his presence. Chacko defeating him, ""But I'm sure he's just experimenting, testing his wings, he's a sensible, Comrade. I trust him "(278).

Comrade Pillai's interaction with Velutha shows that even Marxism is not able to break the inhuman caste restrictions imposed on the lower castes. This is clear from the incident of Velutha going to Comrade Pillai for Justice, when he is insulted and spat on his face by Mammachi. Instead of sympathizing with him he tells Velutha, "But Comrade, you should know that Party was not constituted to support workers's indiscipline in their private life" (278). Marxism, which fights for a classless, casteless, and exploitation- free society, does not come to the rescue of Velutha who is humiliated by the high caste Mammachi only because he happens to be a Paravan, an untouchable. Unlike the Marxist Iqbal Nath Sarshar in *Untouchable*, Comrade Pillai is guided by caste considerations. This is evident from the fact that he does not refute the allegation of the attempted rape of Ammu in the F. I. R. Lodge by Baby Kochamma and even denies to the police the fact that Velutha was a member of the Communist party.

The discriminations of the untouchables by the society is also reflected when Comrade Pillai advises Chacko to get rid of

Velutha. On the one hand, the Marxists demand that untouchables must be treated with dignity, their name be called without their surname, and they must be given the same status as other workers and students, and on the other, he, in spite of being a Marxist, advises Chacko to sack Velutha because his workers resent him being their boss in the pickle factory. The hypocritical attitude of the Communists is evident in the portrayal of Comrade Pillai who though outwardly condemning any discrimination based on caste is in favour of maintaining the *status quo*.

The discriminatory attitude of the higher castes is also clear from Inspector Thomas Mathew's statement", You people, 'first you spoil these people, carry them about on you head like trophies, then when they misbehave you come running to us for help' " (21). Baby Kochamma realizes that what the inspector is saying about Velutha is true. The untouchable Velutha has to pay with his life for daring to touch the high caste Ammu, thereby breaking one of the major caste taboos. The police who are also caste conscious feel that it is incumbent in them to "collect the dues from those who broke its laws" (308), that they carry "Responsibility for the Touchable future on their thin but able shoulders" (307).

These incidents reveal that while many restrictions were imposed on the lower castes, the higher castes enjoyed many privileges and looked down upon the untouchable who are brutally ill treated by the higher castes. In *Untouchable*, the higher castes proclaim that the untouchables ought to be "wiping off surface of the earth! " (41). In *The God of Small Things*, they succeed in wiping off Velutha whose death is meant to serve as a "lesson for future offenders" (336). This incident highlights the fact that any low caste person daring to break the restrictions imposed on him irrespective of whether he happened to be a Marxist or not would meet the same tragic fate as Velutha.

The total lack of sympathy in the higher castes for an untouchable becomes evident when Baby Kochamma and the police

instigate Estha to lie that it was Velutha who had abducted them. Baby Kochamma's unsympathetic and callous attitude towards the untouchables is clear from her belief that Velutha has not paid too heavy a price. She dismisses the whole unfortunate incident, saying, "As ye sow, so shall ye reap"(31).

While in *Untouchable*, the inhumanity and ugliness of the caste system is reflected in the oppression and exploitation of the untouchables by the higher castes, in *The God of Small Things*. Arundhati Roy condemns the caste system by drawing the readers attention to the hapless fate of not only Velutha but the innocent twins as well. At the same time, the fact that the discriminatory attitude of the higher castes towards the untouchables had started changing is evident in the attitude of Ammu and Chacko, and to some extent in the attitude of Mammachi and Reverend Ipe as well.

Constitutional provisions after independence ensured that caste restrictions on the untouchables be loosened. Inspector Thomas Mathew is aware that the law in independent India does not discriminate between the higher and the lower castes. He is depicted as being afraid of the consequences of having brutally beaten up a man who is not only innocent but also happens to be an untouchable.

The liberal attitude of Iqbal Nath Sarshar and Biten, in *Untouchable* and *He Who Rides a Tiger* respectively, is also reflected in the portrayal of Reverend E. John Ipe, Punnyan Kunju, Ammu's grandfather, who opens a school for the untouchable children. He is reminiscent of the mission lady who admits Lekha to her school despite her low caste in *He who Rides a Tiger*.

However, Chacko resembles the modern bureaucrats, political leader and affluent industrialists who due to their vested interests finds themselves compelled to transcend caste consideration. He is materialistic rather than idealistic, and patronizes Velutha because he manages his factory so well. His liberal attitude varies from that of the idealistic Biten in *He Who Rides a Tiger*. He feels

that it is in the interest of the higher castes to learn to put up with the untouchables who had started becoming aware of their rights and breaking all the prohibitions which they felt were unjust and discriminatory, "we can't solve the problem by sending all the Paravans away. Surely we have to learn to deal with this nonsense' ! (279). Thought as leader of the Communist party, Comrade Pillai was the patron of the right of the untouchables but in reality; he is a hypocrite who pretends to be a liberal Hindu espousing the cause of the downtrodden. He is totally unlike the poet Iqbal Nath Sarshar in *Untouchable*, being a calculating politician and not an idealist with a visionary egalitarian attitude like the Marxist poet.

In *The God of Small Things*, Arundhati Roy presents the changing attitude of the lower castes who have started openly defying the society by breaking all the restrictions hitherto imposed on them. In this novel the untouchables are depicted as wearing clothes of their choice, giving up their old caste names, having free access to public places and interacting freely other castes on equal terms.

That the status of the untouchables was beginning to improve as a result of their acquiring formal education is clear from Arundhati Roy's portrayal of Velutha, "the titanic figure stands out as the representative of the untouchables in the novel" (Surendran 67). He succeeds in breaking the restrictions formally imposed on the untouchable denying them free access to education. He is depicted as an enlightened individual who is well aware of his rights. He is far ahead of Bakha, in *Untouchable*, who, even though he had a great desire to read and write could not do so and of Kalo in *He Who Rides a Tiger* who is self educated. After passing his High School examination from a school meant for untouchables, he put his skill to a good use by making intricate toys. When he was fourteen, Johann Klein, a carpenter from Bavaria had come to Kottayam and spent three years with the Christian Mission Society, conducting a workshop for the local carpenters. The training he received in the workshop helped Velutha to become an accomplished carpenter though by

birth he was merely a humble Paravan. Velutha emerges as a representative of the educated untouchables who due to their education and training were succeeding in rising to higher positions in society.

Being a low-caste Paravan, Velutha is prohibited to engage in various activities. However, he openly defies all the unreasonable restrictions imposed on the lower castes by the traditional society. His rebellious and defiant attitude against the dominance of the higher castes was evident not so much in "what he said, but the way he said it. Not what he did but the way he did it" (76). His father feels that his assertive manner resembled that of the "Touchables" rather than the Paravans as he had a dignified gait and walked with his head held high. He does not like his father's subservient attitude towards the higher castes as a result of which he decides to leave his home. Velutha is thus depicted as being ahead of Bakha in *Untouchable* and even Kalo in *He Who Rides a Tiger* in openly breaking caste taboos both by his attitude and behaviour.

The caste system in South India prohibited the association of any high caste Syrian Christian with an untouchable like Velutha, let alone eating and drinking with him. Most of the high-caste orthodox Syrian Christians like Baby Kochamma, Mammachi, Pappachi and Kochu Maria follow the traditional rules of feeding and commensality. They believed that food touched by a Paravan would defile them life after life. How traditional the caste-ridden society in south Indian was, even during the seventies, is evident from the attitude of Kochu Maria, who contrary to Bamni, the Brahmin cook woman, in *He Who Rides a Tiger*, thinks that her food and kitchen would be defiled by the touch of Vellya Paapen, Velutha's Father. She shuts the kitchen door at his face letting him get drenched in the rain. That there was no question of eating and drinking with the untouchables is clear from Baby Kochamma's advice to Estha and Rahel to remain at a distance from Velutha.

Even while the relationship of Ammu and Velutha is at its height they are well aware that "for each tremor of pleasure they would pay with an equal measure of pain" (335). Ammu also feels that Velutha's arms were "the most dangerous place she could be" (338). The love affair between them shows that they cannot totally ignore the fact that society would not be able to accept such an alliance. Even the interaction of these two assertive individuals is shown to be affected by the social norms of the community. The brutal manner in which Velutha is killed in the police lock up shows the hypocritical moral code of the higher castes who cannot tolerate such an intimate relationship between a wealthy high caste woman and an untouchable.

That more liberal interactional patterns have started emerging in recent times regarding intercaste alliances is evident from the example of Ammu who not only gets married to a man who does not belong to her caste and her community but also goes so far as to establish an intimate relationship with the untouchable Velutha. The ban on intercaste marriages was somewhat relaxed as the modern educated youth did not believe in this restriction and wanted to choose their own life partners irrespective of their caste. The inter caste love relationship between Ammu and Velutha can be regarded as the culmination of the secret love that Lachman feels in his heart for Sohini in *Untouchable* but which could not be openly expressed in the rigid society of pre independent India, Velutha in *The God of small Things* – is depicted as going far beyond both Lachman and Biten in expressing his love towards a lady of a different caste even though he cannot get married to her. Though he is fully aware that society does not accept such a relationship he continues it for a fortnight thereby breaking the ultimate social taboo.

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A GIANT LEAP FROM NEUROSIS TO PSYCHOSIS : AN APPRAISAL OF SONIA FALEIRO'S *THE GIRL*

G.A. Ghanshyam
Devasree Chakravarti

*You come into the world alone and you go out of the
world alone yet it seems to me you are more alone
while living than ever going and coming.*

- Emily Carr

The theory of Freud generated a lot of interest not only in the medical and scientific circles but also influenced the literary scene as well. Writers like James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, etc. utilized the Freudian and Jungian concepts of human psyche in their works. The advent of the psychoanalytical theories proved to be a boon especially for the portrayal of the inner workings of the mind, play of the unconscious, the anguish and the turmoils of the characters. The repressed fears and insecurities that are an integral part of our modern life now found representation in the new literatures of the world.

Psychoanalysis has thus proved to be a useful tool in the hands of the Writers and critics who have exploited it fully in their works and theories. Influence of these theories based on psychoanalytical concepts has created an interest in characters that are neurotically dispossessed or have an inclination towards psychosis. In fact :

Neurosis reminds us of the fact that there is a seamy side to our civilization. Society compels every individual to repress his instinctuality and that way forego the chances of deriving pleasure in the act of living (Rajeshwar141).

According to Erich Fromm alienation is, "a mode of experience in which a person experiences himself as an alien." (Kaufmann, 1970: xxiii) This self-alienation due to the individual's inability to assimilate oneself with the others or due to the negative influence of certain painful circumstances in one's life results in the development of psychological disorders like neurosis and psychosis. Mental illness like neurosis, a result of repression of certain desires and emotions that in turn influences the mind degenerates and digresses to psychosis that affects the whole personality of the person.

Sonia Faleiro, a new and upcoming writer in India, has taken her first steps into the genre of psychological fiction with her maiden novel *The Girl* (2006). A story of a neurotic character, an alienated and sensitive soul who is unable to bear the continuous onslaught of pain and loss finally loses balance, and in a psychotic state of mind accepts death over life. The Girl is any girl who is alone, depressed and sad, nervous and tensed in living a lonely life, tries to live a dream of security but ultimately betrayal pushes her over the edge to succumb to a loss of all hope in death.

Faleiro in delineating the character of the Girl has given to her nature shades of neurotic behaviour from an early age itself. Prone to inwardness the Girl is self-alienated and introspective, and inclined towards slight influences of psychotic behaviour. A bit sadistic in her attitude she takes pleasure in hurting herself without any apparent reason. As a child she had once slit her right ankle on a dare and was not in the slightest bit terrified of her act. While her friend screamed and fainted, the Girl merely, "watched and bit her nails." (104) Again at the age of thirteen she drank the cleaning liquid, which made her very sick and nauseated. No explicit reasons are given by the author for the Girl's erratic behaviour but glimpses of the pain and isolation can be traced lying hidden beneath the narrative. Though living in a joint family, with her mother, grandparents, uncle, aunt and cousin, yet the Girl appears distant

and unattached. Her only attachment in the family is with her mother who dies in a car accident at the beginning of the novel. Alienated and alone by nature, the Girl is totally isolated and lost after her mother's death. "Mother is dead. I am dead" (62) Her mother was her only confidante, companion, and the real family she knew and cared for. With her death the Girl loses herself in a world full of strangers even in the midst of family. In her death, she wishes death for herself but feels helpless and lost, "what kills me now, slowly eating away at my pitiful shoal of joys, is that I will not die" (60).

Faleiro observes in an interview, "The trauma of losing a loved one is always the same. The intensity never lessens." (Faleiro, www.soniafaleiro.com/press.htm, 2006) Escape from the place of loss does not necessarily ensure an escape from grief. Isolated in her grief, the Girl represents the isolation, fear, bewilderment and a sense of loss, which is symbolic of women living in a patriarchal and materialistic society that has no place for such sensitive and emotional souls.

In the rigidly-formed and tradition-bound societies like India the repression one has to put up with is usually very severe and the resultant suffering often assumes pathetic proportions for sensitive individuals (Rajeswar 141).

The strength as well as the vulnerability of the Girl is beautifully played out in the pages of the novel wherein she hopes for a life of love and security but losing all hope succumbs finally to a total annihilation of the 'self'.

Alone in her world, the Girl yearns for companionship and love, a touch of familiarity, a glimpse of recognition from someone. She waits eternally :

... in anticipation of finding someone who looks forward to talking to me. Who will laugh gladly when I pull their arm and distract their eyes away from their work, saying to them with petulance, with a smile: 'listen to me!' (72)

The crumbling down of the family structure, loss of love and deprivation of the emotional needs of an individual gradually pushes the individual towards imminent destruction, especially in the case of a woman. "A woman can neither achieve a total relationship nor can she be totally self-sufficient" (Wattal, 1995 : 17). Incapacitated by her lack of family and friends, the Girl is unable to find fulfillment in herself.

Though she feels, "I give love when I receive it, I am grateful for what I have. I know I will die. And I do not want to die alone." (83), yet in reality neither does she fully respond to love around her nor is her love reciprocated in full measure when she gives it. Love eludes her leaving her wounded and in pain every time she reaches out in a gesture of hopefulness. She fails to come out of her self-imposed isolation.

The Girl's alienation becomes so much a part of her psyche that she is unable to relate to anybody or reach out and hold the hand held out in friendship. She completely fails in forming any kind of social relationships having never had the opportunity to do so from her childhood days.

She was home schooled, you know, and hadn't ever had any friends. Really. Not one. That was part of the reason she seemed awkward and disjointed sometimes, unhappy when forced into small talk, delving into a fit of depression if invited for a meal by one of the church ladies- she felt it the equivalent of inviting strangers to watch her bathe (123).

Loneliness is the malaise affecting the very core of the Girl's being. Faleiro thus in her novel, "... explores the lonely comers of loneliness. Not an urban loneliness but a more inevitable and universal one that can unsettle anyone, anywhere..." (www.soniafaleiro.com/press.htm).

The Girl is a lonely creature floating aimless, rootless and homeless in a world full of people, yet all alone in the crowd. Displaced from the familiar world of her ancestral home at the Rua, she ponders on her loneliness sinking deeper and deeper into an increasingly unbearable and more depressive and isolated state of mind.

My childhood home on the Rua de Amelia Barreto is no more. Mere wreckage of forgotten lives amidst palm trees and overripe fruit. From where I sit, staring at the emptiness of the sea, there is no one but me. It is unbearable, this utter loneliness (94).

When loneliness surrounds oneself from every comer living becomes an ordeal. With each new day the Girl's neurosis progresses steadily towards psychosis. Fear grips the heart and the person becomes a prisoner of his/her own fears and hallucinations. The Girl also faces this gradual transformation in her psyche. The lack of relations and an emotionally deprived life makes her a nervous wreck. Even the slightest sound startles her and fills her heart with dread and misgivings of danger. Living alone she becomes prone to silent musings, "You ask a lot of questions when you live alone. And the magnitude of the answers only increases with every hour of every day that they are received with silence." (95) Terror grips her very soul and she becomes a victim of fear psychosis, imagining even friends to be strangers and strangers to be enemies. Her phobias increase so much so that:

As soon as the shadows lengthen, the potential for evil seems to increase. It's because I live alone that I am so paranoid, scared of things families in Azul would never be intimidated by (95-6).

The only hope that takes shape in her heart is her love for Luke, an alien like herself, footloose and without any roots. In an otherwise empty life Luke's love is her only anchor that she has.

When you have nothing and suddenly life gives you something precious it's a natural instinct to hold on to this only link with all your life. The Girl also becomes very possessive of her love and is scared terribly of losing Luke. Even a moment of his absence fills her with all kinds of pessimistic feelings of loss and abandonment.

The Girl had always been a victim of solitude but the arrival of Luke and his departure from her life, only made her acutely aware of her own isolation. The Girl's paranoia about Luke's abandonment of her are not all ill founded, for he does leave her not once but twice. The first time Luke leaves, the Girl sinks into depression but her instinct of survival being stronger at the time she survives from the trauma. But betrayed for a second time, breaks her into pieces. She is, "... left behind to deal with my love, to resent, and finally to get over it the way I had the first time" (101).

A victim of depression and unstable psychological state, the Girl finally decides the only way out, and that is death. According to Freud it is 'Eros' the life instinct that works primarily in man, in creation as well as sustains it. In normal circumstances 'Eros' influences and works upon the human psyche but in case of an imbalance like in the Girl's character it is the death instinct 'Thanatos' that promises to provide a release.

In the manner of the neurotic characters of other Indian women novelists like Dimple in Bharati Mukherjee's *Wife* or Maya in Anita Desai's *Cry, the Peacock*, the Girl also reaches the very edge of life. "From neurosis they have taken a giant leap into psychosis with a final act of violence" (Rajeshwar 144-5). The final act of violence can be directed towards someone else as in the case of Dimple or Maya who kill their husbands in a fit of intense psychotic trauma losing all grips on reality or like the Girl who directs her final act of violence towards herself by committing suicide.

In the last moments before her death, the Girl visualizes and records her death in a step- by-step precision and detail in her diary.

Her portrayal of death by drowning in the sea reflects the pleasure that she takes in her final act of violence, and the satisfaction that she derives from it. Though she does not plan when to finally kill herself, yet her diary reveals how she is going to do it that is her plan to drown herself. Reading her words it seems that she is cherishing the final moments of death in her mind, the agony, pain and helplessness that will ultimately free her from the shackles of imprisonment in life, bondage of pain, grief and loneliness. And in a final plea for sympathy she says, "So before you condemn me, think of my fear and then multiply by two" (115).

Every person has different ways of dealing with life's problems and difficulties. Some compromise and adjust to situations, some rebel and fight back, while sensitive souls like the Girl succumb in failure. Faleiro commenting on the Girl's final act of denial of all hope by choosing death over life says:

I think different people deal differently with loss. And 'The Girl' is really about loneliness and the extent that some of us will go to overcome it. That's the purpose for the suicide by the protagonist - the feeling that she could not overcome loss ; that she could not be alone again. It's a feeling that sometimes all of us feel. (Faleiro, www.dnaindia.com/report.asp?NewsID=1012300)

The Girl is thus a sensitive portrayal of an individual's sense of intense insecurity, loneliness and dissolution. The inability to adjust and compromise to the prevalent situation, and break out of the self-imposed exile pushes the Girl into the doldrums of despair and depression. The 'self' always finds identification not in itself alone but in its association to 'others'. This emotional dependency on pre-established codes of living, of fitting into the mould of roles dictated by society is not fulfilled in the case of the Girl resulting in a sense of total loss and annihilation of the 'self'. Thus Faleiro creates

an intriguing tale of loss and loneliness through her expert and deft handling of the narrative:

... a world of loneliness, rejection and indifference...
 We get involved in a gripping story that unfold in bright colours and emotive images that live in the mind...
 Sometimes unpleasant and often juiced for their vividness, and pathos, but always fresh, adventurous, powerful, gripping and reflecting the inner turmoil (Herald, www.soniafaleiro.com/press.htm).

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TRANSCULTURATION ACROSS LITERATURES : A GLOCAL PERSPECTIVE

Bhagabat Nayak

Every creative writing is a sort of translation of author's ideas, thoughts and feelings. As language is the vehicle of communication of emotions, feelings, thoughts and ideas, every translator is involved in the practice of 'change into another language, retaining the sense'. While approximating the 'word for word' or 'intention for intension' the translator discovers or invents an exact 'carry over' of language through divergent cultures. Most translations are the linguistic study of 'patterned behaviour' of language and strict application of culture based theory. The strict application of linguistic and cultural nuances in the judicious interpretation of a text to create a new version in the target language not only replaces the old culture in the S.L. text but also rejuvenates the other culture in T.L. text in the process of analysis, interpretation and creation. In case of transference of language the translator obeys the call of S.L. but when he transfers culture to T.L. he makes multi-disciplinary studies and delves into several layers of meaning in the socio-cultural matrix through his constructive endeavour. In linguistic translation the translator needs his competency in linguistic understanding but in translation of culture specifics he makes an attempt to domesticate them in target culture and generates a context through the text in target culture. In translation of culture specificities the translator goes through several layers of meaning which encircle the context in S.L. culture and T.L. culture. If translation is like that of a cow that stops giving milk after the death of the calf, a new straw-stuffed shape with the hide of a calf is made and with its smell milk trickles out.

Now the translator bears the responsibility to take care of the cow and avails the opportunity to make the stuffed calf to convince the cosmopolitan audience with the translation of cultural wares.

Translation is of two types-linguistic and cultural. Apart from this there are translation of visual art, music etc. In all kinds of translations the translator maintains his linguistic ability and cultural inwardness. The translation of a particular literary work operates outside the periphery of the language in which it is written but he keeps an open mind and willing ear for its culture without any bias. Broadly speaking the translation is not strictly linguistic but cultural. This is why "Translation has been a major shaping force in the development of world culture, and not so study of comparative literature can take place without regard to translation" (Bassnett and Lefevere:12). Translation study promotes the study of culture in the intertextuality of both literature or texts by involving languages. Although "the business of a translator is to report what the author says, not to explain what he means" (Longfellow 65), the reader of the translated text makes a delightful voyage across the geographical, historical and cultural spaces in the study of literature. While translating a literary text, the translator generally follows Dryden's rules - 'Metaphrase' ('word by word' which is called as *bhasantar*) ; 'paraphrase' ('parawise' which is called '*bhavantar*'); and 'imitation' (liberty to follow other which is called '*rupantar*'). But in the process of translation, transcreation and transliteration the translator remains careful for the langue (the rule of the language) while using a word for a word. The translator mostly remains cautious for the translation of culture specific words as every language is culture enbeded and each culture is different from the other. The translator needs to understand the history of culture of both the S.L. and T.L. before translating a literary text or a work of art.

Translating culture is translating consciousness. For a translator learning script may not be on practical help but much care

is needed for the transparency of culture. As a noble parasite the translator extracts the S.L. text in order to universalize the culture of the target language. In a syncretic process he becomes a creator, bridge-builder and flag-bearer of one culture and carries social purpose for the other. The cultural untranslatability creates the greatest hazards as some culture specific words are highly sensitive, repulsive and resistant to other cultures. This gives chance to socio-cultural zealots like Islamic Talibans, Hindu Senas and Christian Hamas who often create obstacles through their protests or *fatwas* (holy war) against the translators. In interlingual, intralingual and intersemiotic process 'translation is seen as an empowering act....a life force that ensures a literary text's survival' (Gentzler 192) and helps for the establishment of higher, artistic and universal literature. In multilingual and multicultural countries like Canada, France, Switzerland, India and many other countries translation plays essential role as a bridge-builder in the making of nation. In the socio-cultural matrix of new world order, "Through translation nations define themselves and in doing so they define others" (Das 68-69). Translation is not merely limited to literary texts but it involves the cultural activity, study of colonialism, postcolonialism, literary history, semiology and deconstruction covering the areas like cultural hybridity, globalization, identity construction, minority languages and questions relating to comparative literature.

In translation activity transculturation is an important aspect. The translator bears the moral responsibility with a definite range of knowledge and ability to internationalize a culture through literature. Culture is a 'national possession' but it does not need stagnation. It has its internationalization through constant migration, trade, commerce and translation. Transculturation is different from linguistic translation because it is expressive, informative and emotive. If linguistic translation is called as overt translation; the cultural translation is called covert translation. Andre Lefevere rightly states :

A literary culture with a high self-image screens out whatever does not fulfil its requirements or else changes it in such a way as to make it acceptable....if the potential literary culture does not have all that much of a self-image, it will not dictate any terms at all (236-237).

As culture is in a state of transition, it is in dire need of renewal and expansion through translation. In translation the replacement of cultural words with suitable and functional equivalence is necessary. Susan Bassnett opines that "The emphasis always in translation is on the reader or listener...The translator can not be the author of the S.L. text, but as the author of the T.L. Text has a clear moral responsibility to the T.L. readers" (23). Through translation literature transcends beyond the geographical and historical boundaries. In the past through translation Greek and Latin culture had spread to Europe and had influenced Arabic, Turkish and Persian cultures across the parts of Asia and Africa. Similarly the translation of Sanskrit and Pali texts helped in the transmission of Hindu Culture in South East Asia.

Culture carries the ingredients of a civilization. It is formed on the sediments of anthropo-sociological history. Every literature is based on the cultural palimpsests of a society or a nation which rather helps to build up a syncretic world culture for better global order in translation. While most translations involve human language commonalities ; in reality it helps for analysis, interpretation, involvement and replacing of linguistic and cultural resources in the comparative study of literatures. The translator uses culture as an 'operational unit'. In J.C. Catford's view "Translation is an operation performed on language: a process of substituting a text in one language for text in another" (1). The source language text has a cultural gloss with philosophical ideas in the target language. In translation of culture specific words and in author-text-triangle "the text controls the reader's response, while the reader lends his own complexion to the text" (Das 13). The translator often aims at cultural

pollination through his translation but fails to translate the essence and ingredients of culture in fear of cultural amalgamation, or pollution in "extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiation" (Bhabha 9).

In translation of culture based words the translator always remains careful for under-translation and over-translation. The translator needs enough comparative knowledge of the cultural history of the S.L. and T.L. For this the translator makes a tight-rope walking between two cultures. In translation of culture specific words the translator does not always need to 'plod on' word by word or sentence by sentence method but needs to render his views 'intention by intention'. Sometimes translators skip over the untranslatable culture-specific words, phrases and idioms in their translations. But these words need specific references, explanation and footnotes in order to acquaint the readers of the T.L. text. In case of cultural untranslatability it appears that the words are highly charged with sensitive feelings and emotions which can have ideas of pollution of ideas. For this the translator needs to take very pragmatic steps in the use of comparative stylistics with the help of intersemiotics or infinite jargons. Culture has a great civilizing force that influences the people of other linguistic and cultural groups through translation. Translation of culture means the translation of civilization. If a translation fails to transfer the subjective and emotive aspects of culture it cannot be a good literary text. The translator discovers and invents words of equivalence suitable to the socio-cultural matrix of target language. This makes the translator's task theoretically innovative and politically crucial in the act of defining the ideals of a society itself. With an insight into the historical, social, political, philosophical, psychological and cultural aspects of life in a literary work the translator plays an interpretative role between two languages and two cultures. Besides universal and timeless elements in every literature cultural specificities play an important role which the translator undertakes seriously.

A translator can be an assimilator or a manipulator of culture. In the role of the former he makes the S.L. culture 'go-native' and 'appear-native' in multicultural international society but in the role of the latter the translator creates a 'double-consciousness', or 'false consciousness or causes a cultural collapse in the inter-civilizational alliance through the T.L. text. In translation the translator asserts the autonomy of culture in the S.L. and tries to validate its identity and plenitude in other linguistic entity since culture establishes the "ideas of the nature of social relationship" (Williams 311). In his translatorial skill he becomes an interpreter of one culture before the readers of another culture through the T.L. text. In his hermeneutic method he tries successfully to make an equivalence in the T.L. text without making it subservient to the original or making the original subservient to the translated one. Besides universal and timeless elements in every literature culture specificities play important roles which a translator undertakes very seriously. In translation of culture specificities sometimes there is an encounter between two cultures and the politically dominant culture influences the politically weaker one. While Greek, Latin, French and English have their influence on new literatures, the wind also flows from the east to the west through the translation of Sanskrit and Arabic texts. In the post-colonial context every culture is translated into other languages in the global literary village. In translation of great literary works there is a cross-cultural exchange and hybridity of culture that helps for the spread of a new literary canon, the secularization of writing. In transnational and post-national situation there is frequent transculturation between the West and the East, the local and the global which helps the postcolonial writers to be stimulated by many European literatures and the western writers to be influenced by the non-western writers in the notion of 'Empire writes back'.

The glory of a literary text depends on its successful translation of cultural ethos into other languages failing which it will be confined to a definite locality. Translation is an essential tool for

comparative study that lays emphasis on the 'roots' and 'spirit' of the nation. Translation is always a shift, not between two languages but between two cultures and two encyclopedias. The translator takes into account the rules which are not strictly linguistic but broadly cultural. Successful transculturation helps for the national as well as international integration and makes possible the study of comparative literature. Henry Remak rightly states :

Comparative literature is the study of literature beyond the confines of one particular country, and the study of the relationship between literature on the one hand, and other areas of knowledge and belief, such as the arts (e.g. painting, sculpture, architecture, music), Philosophy, history, the social science (e.g. politics, economics, sociology), the science, religion etc. on the other. In belief it is the comparison of one literature with another or others, and the comparison of literature with other spheres of human expression (Stallknecht and Franz 3).

Through translation one can discover the wealth of a literary text in the comparative analysis and interpretation of culture. The analysis of a culture in translation helps for the dialysis of another culture. In the recent context new literatures are influenced by the major western literatures or in stimulation of their cultural past or neo-cultural present in race, gender ideology, politics and national response. Today "Translation has been a major shaping force in the development of world culture and no study of comparative literature can take place without regard to translation" (Bassnett and Lefevere 12). In translation any cultural amnesia or nostalgia cannot make a good study of comparative literature. While translating the culture embedded words the translator needs to reappropriate them in T.L. In global and local literatures there is frequent transculturations and syncretization cultures. As a result, "Comparative literature seems to have emerged as an antidote to nationalism, even though its roots went deep into national cultures (Bassnett 21).

Theories of translation studies have their genesis and formulations in the west but today we have their native grapplings. The concept of loyalty to the original in the western intellectual tradition or in eastern cultural tradition is based on the question of transparency of culture embeded meaning while 'carrying over' them from S.L. to T.L. Without translation comparative literature is untinkable. Translation promotes to the comparative study of literature. In comparative study of literatures culture becomes the focal point. Translation favours to understand cultural specificities and generic similarities in the intertextuality of texts. The main purpose of translation is to promote the study of literature in highly disciplined system across geographical, historical and cultural boundaries. Translation underlines all literatures of the world in the branch of comparative literature which broadens our critical perspective in the discovery of certain dominant trends. In comparative literature transculturation not only frames 'World Literature' or 'Universal Literature' but also promotes for the growth of multicultural societies. Even within the national boundaries transculturation in translation promotes for national integrity and for a national literature. But beyond the national boundaries it promotes multicultural societies and internationalization of a culture in greater sense. In this context B.K. Das rightly remarks, "If comparative literature is a reaction against narrow nationalism in the west, in India it is directly linked with the rise of modern Indian nationalism" (125). Comparative literature broadens our critical perspective in the discovery of certain dominant trends in culture. Since comparative literature involves the study and practice of translation, the study of comparative literature succeeds on the success of transculturation.

The job of the translator is interlingual and intercultural but in transculturation often either consciously or unconsciously he remains involved in cultural politics. This kind of involvement of the translator sometimes becomes constructive or catastrophic when the

culture of the S.L. dominates the culture of the T.L. or vice versa. But any kind of subordination or domination becomes cannibalistic when the translator as a comparatist translates the culture of S.L. text to the T.L. text. Susan Bassnett rightly observes:

The image of translation as cannibalism, as vampirism, where by the translator sucks out the blood of the source text to strengthen the target text, as transfusion of blood that endows the receiver with new life, can all be seen as radical metaphors that spring from postcolonial translation theory (155).

In inter-cultural activity he maintains the balance and walks on the razor's edge in his job of translating a culture from (source) to 'target' language without any attempt to idealize one as superior or inferior in his service to the both. He can not parodise or propagandize any culture as many cultures are peripheral, insular and not reciprocal to other cultural commonalities. The translation of certain religious, spiritual and conservative cultures are extremely difficult to translate. The translation of certain political cultures are also difficult. Transculturating the 'motives and intentions' in Babu culture, firingri culture, or the political culture as expressed in Orwell's 'Big Brother', 'Double speak', 'Newsspeak', or Gurbachov's 'Perestoika' and 'glassnost' may be unintelligible in target language. Sometimes the translator raises the ire of the readers of both the S.L. and T.L. texts for inappropriate translation.

Translation of religious, spiritual and seamless communications are in the culture of a language community. But when they are translated into another language it becomes difficult to translate and unintelligible for the non-native readers. A.K. Ramanujan rightly gives the example how "Two people sit together and there is perfect understanding. Like in the old Indian poem the guru was silent; the disciple was silent; and still every thing was said" (23). Performing the English translation of Kalidas's *Abhijnana*

Sakuntalam before the English audience may be unintelligible when Shakuntala cries before going to her in-law's house because it expresses the emotive aspect of family culture in India. Drinking of Sura (wine) in Omar Khayyam's *Rubayat* is accepted in its native culture as it leads to the Keatsean world of forgetfulness but it is not accepted in the other cultures. In Indian context translating *Baishnab Padaboli*, Tamil *Sidha* poetry, Jayadev's *Geet Govinda*, religious *bhajans*, *abhangs* and sacred *dohas* may not be faithfully successful in other cultures as they are related to faith; and it is not always possible to translate faith. The transcreation of Tagore's *Gitanjali* became successful because of his successful translation of its intention for the global readers but the translations of spiritual ethos in the works of Shankara, Chaitanya, Tukaram, Nanak and Kabir for the foreign readers may not be an easy task. As a result cultural, racial, hegemonistic, philosophical, emotive and psychological aspects are often translated without a 'feel'. The readers of T. L. fail to have clarification over the obscurities in S.L. culture. Secondly, linguistic formations are found culture embeded. For example, 'owl' in Indian context symbolizes 'ill-fortune' but in English culture it is the symbol of wisdom. Similarly, 'bull' in English context is the symbol of endurance but in Persian context it is rudeness. Translation of erotic expressions in Vatsayan's *Kamasutra* or translating *rasa* in Lord Krishna's *Rasa Krida* as 'love play' lacks the emotive as well as cultural ethos which are rooted with the native land.

Culture is now considered as a source of art and literature. The practice of transculturation in translation is found largely in the English writings of Australia, India, Canada, Caribbean nations, New Zealand and African countries. In their postcolonial situation the writers of these nations make culture as an essential ingredient for their writing. They translate culture as material for use and criticism of life. Kenneth Womack rightly remarks in the following lines:

Culture studies manifests itself in a wide array of interpretative dimensions, including such intersecting fields

of inquiry as gender studies, postcolonialism, race and ethnic studies, pedagogy, ecocriticism, the politics of nationalism, popular culture, post modernism and historical criticism, among a variety of topics. Concerned with the exploration of a given culture's artistic achievements, institutional structures, belief systems and linguistic practices, culture studies highlights the interrelationships and tensions that exist between cultures and their effects upon not only the literary works that we consume, but also the authentic texts of our lives (Wolfreys 243).

In the postcolonial context globalization has radically changed the notion of culture as a metaphor of identify. The postcolonial writers living abroad or shuttling among the continents are transculturating the local culture into global or global into local in their writings. Their literature's identity comes through nationality and culture. It is observed "Postcolonialism (often post-colonialism) deals with the effects of colonization on cultures and societiesHowever, from the late 1970s the term has been used by literary critics to discuss the various cultural effects of colonization" (Ashcroft 186). Postcolonialism has established identity of new literatures due to the **positioning** of culture in its translation or commodification of culture in literary transactions. The translation of cultures of the communities, groups and ethnic identify render to the global culture today. Large number of diasporic writers of African and South Asian origins are settled in Europe and America. In assimilation of their nostalgia for the cultural past they are translating their cultures in their racial, philosophical, political and national responses. Both in creative writings or translated works culture is invested as a material resource. In reaction to the transculturation there is cultural 'export' and 'import'. In multicultural societies both the high culture and low culture have **resistance** to each other. However, transculturation in translation helps for the establishment multiculturalism that national

culture in multicultural countries. Creative works of the Third World writers are the translations or transcreations of native cultures which leads to cultural 'aporia' to "both mark and loosen the limit" (Derrida 1976 : 35) in one's cultural identity.

In the global literary space translation is done in hyper-communicative methods. This favours to the growth of a global culture in international lingua franca. Orality was the nurturing support for literature once. Today oral texts or pieces of unlettered literature are translated with new vigour. Translation of cultural past in these literary works provide a "gladiatorial contest over the ownership of meaning" (Ashcroft 1989:59). The eminent African 'listener-authors' like Chinua Achebe of Nigeria translates the 'ilu' or 'Igbo' culture in *Things fall Apart* (1958) and *Arrow of God* (1964); the writer follower of oral-tradition like Wole Soyinka of Nigeria translates Yoruba culture in the *Forest of a Thousand Daemons* (1968); and Gabriel Okara, the gentlest poet of Nigeria does to "Ijo" culture in his poetry and novel, *The Voice* (1964); the Somali novelist Nuruddin Farah translates the oral tradition : and the Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'O translates his native 'Gikuyu' culture in the *Devil on the Cross* (1982). Many Caribbean writers like Derek Walcott, Edward Kamau Brathwaite and John Hearne translate the creole, patwah and mongrel cultures of Caribbean island nations. George Lamming, the Barbadian writer translates the creole culture in his novel *The Pleasure of Exile* (1960) theorizing Caliban's curse in Prospero's old myth "Christen language a fresh" (118). Some of the writers from India and other Asian nations translate their native cultures in their creative works. The English novels of Mulk Raj Anand like *Untouchable* (1935) and *Coolie* (1936) translate the dalit culture ; R.K. Narayan translates the South Indian Culture in his Malgudi novels; and Raja Rao translates the 'tempo of Indian life and Gandhian culture in *Kanthapura* (1938) in the pre-independence era. Most recently Bharati Mukherjee, Jhumpa Lahiri, Kiran Desai, Chitra Banerjee Devikaruni translate their native Indian culture in

their novels. Asian English writings of dissident Turkish writer Orhan Pamuk showcases Turkey's multicultural (Kurdish, Jewish, Armenian, gypsy and Anatolian Muslim cultures) elements in his novels; Taghi Modarressi, the Iranian born writer lives in the United States transcreates his Persian novel into English as *The Pilgrim's Rules of Etiquette* (1989); Monica Ali, the Bangladeshi writer writes about Bangla culture in *Brick Lane* : and Afghan writer Khaled Hosseini writes about Taliban culture in Afganistan's war torn society in *The Kite Runner* (2003) and *Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007).

The translation of native or national culture into English as a pale and livid corpse is brought back to life with the 'infusion' of Raja Rao; 'emulsion' of Achebe, 'blood transfusion' of John Pepper Clark; and 'surgical transplantation' of Gabriel Okara. Now most African writers like Ngugi, Achebe and Okara translate their native cultures in their creative works. This kind of cultural translation in their creative works inject the 'blackblood' into the foreign language's "rusty joints" (Thiong'O7). A controversial category of writers living in Britain like Salman Rushdie of India. Linton Kwesi Johnson of Jamaica, David Dabydeen of Guyana, Timothy Mo of China, Kazuo Ishiguro of Japan and Ben Okri of Nigeria are translating their local cultures as materials in their writings. The 'Fourth World' writers like Colin Johnson of Australia writes about aborigin culture; Ruby Spillerjack of Canada writes about Canada's native (Cree) culture: and Witi Jhimera of New Zealand writes about the traditional male dominated 'hui' culture in his novel *The Matriarch*. Apart from the transculturation of native culture to supplant the international culture of these writers many diasporic writers in their in betweenness neither able to forsake mother culture nor ready to forgo their mother-tongue in a more holistic language, English.

Transculturation in Indian English literature is in two *avatars*- one written in English, and the other translated into English. In both the forms of writing; apart from creative outlook of the authors there

are the translation of linguistic, religious, and cultural materials which contribute to the formation of a literary democracy. Translation in India provides substantive understanding of local and religious cultures. Although, translation practice began in India after independence, in creative endeavours and academic discussions it started erasing regional and geographical boundaries, and the boundaries of national cultural borders across the world.

India is a multi-lingual and multi-cultural country. In 'Bhasha' literatures transculturation is a common feature. In her inter-lingual and intralingual dynamics each regional or local culture has some commonality with the other. Although these regional cultures are mutually influenced or influenced by the foreign cultures they contribute to the growth of national culture. Indian epics like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are translated in different Bhasas appealing to the readers of regional cultural mindsets with little changes or additions. We find a cultural mix in Vyasa's *Mahabharata* or Balmiki and Tulsi Das's *Ramayanas* when they are translated in regional languages. There are a good number of translations in 'Bhasa' literatures in which social, philosophical, religious and political cultures are translated into English with new vigour. The translations of Tagore's *Gitanjali*, Dinabadhu Mitra's *Nila Darpan*, Syed Waliullah's *Lal Shalu*, Bibhutibhusan Bandopadhyay's *Pathar Panchali*, Tagore's *Rakta Karabi*, Jibanananda Das's *Banolata Sen*, Saratchandra's *Dev Das*, Haribansh Rai Bachchan's *Madhubala*, Chandu Menon's *Indulekha*, Anantha Maurthy's *Samskara*, Fakir Mohan's *Chhaman Atha Guntha*, Gopinath Mohanty's *Paraja*, Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar*, O.V. Vijayan's *Khasak*, Maheswata Devi's *Hajare Chaurasir Ma* and *Stranyadayinee* and Indira Goswami's *Shadows from Kamakhya* have transculturations in translations for national and international readers. Translations of important writings in 'Bhasha' literatures like that of Manik Bandopadhyay and Maheswata Devi in Bangla, R.R. Borade in Marathi, Dalit writer Bama in Tamil. O.V. Vijayan in Malayalam, Fakir Mohan in Oriya and few others

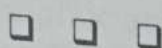
write on the regional cultures which are translated into other languages. As a result culture of the communities, groups and ethnic identity in the regional and local level renders the culture at the global level.

Transculturation is bipolar – it translates literature along with the culture in which the text is embedded. Since cultures are no longer insular, literatures based on such cultures have also become global. Hence, transculturation is now a new field of study for bringing literatures together through apt translations.

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STEPHEN GILL'S INDIAN IMAGINATION IN *THE FLAME*.

Sudhir K. Arora

Stephen Gill's *The Flame* offers a Janus approach to power. In Roman mythology, Janus who is a god of doorways and passages is depicted with two faces on opposite sides of his head. The head is one but the two faces are in opposite direction. Vying for power is the passion that men long for. The goal is one-Power but the paths are different. In Hinduism, two paths-*gyan* (Knowledge) and *bhakti* (Devotion) - have been suggested in order to realize God or the Ultimate Reality. *The Gyan marg* leads to more and more confusion while *the bhakti marg* requires complete devotion and hence, no question of confusion arises. But, *the gyan marg* offers choices which allure a man to astray. The proverb "Nothing succeeds like success" becomes his ideal. He wishes for power at any cost. Shakespeare's excerpt from *Hamlet* "There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so" (*Hamlet* 1141) is used to justify the ends without taking means into consideration. Gandhi's theory of the purity of means along with the ends is thrown into dustbin. *The Gyan marg* creates an illusion which makes a man see power through materialism while *the bhakti marg* removes illusion of materialism and reveals the true power that lies in peace which is the result of spiritualism. For the dynamics of power, a game is being played with the mask of messiah. Power even at the cost of destruction is the game which is being played on the name of *jihad* or holy war. Satan has appeared once again in Paradise but this time he has come in the disguise of the messiah. He has come with more weapons to get more power with

the intention of ruling over the world. The paradise is not safe as he is causing destruction with the disciples whose brains he has washed out. He has hypnotized some men who are turned into maniac messiahs. These maniac messiahs follow the command of Satan who dances on the dead bodies of innocent men. They open "Pandora's Box with the fingers of science and technology, using the muscles of fanaticism to spread the dust of the untold brutalities for the sake of their macabre pleasure" (*Preface* 24).

These maniac messiahs take pleasure in crushing the peace-loving people. They shed their blood with which they grow the flowers on the path. In his *Preface to The Flame*, the poet states: "The flowers that grow on both sides of that path are fed with the tears of the helpless children and widows. To reach their other world, they walk over the ground that is concreted with the blood of mothers. Walking on this path, they dream of entering the domain of bliss. Intelligent people may not find logic here, but the life of brutalities is more real for terrorists than the life they see around in their daily life" (*Preface* 25). They are mad after power, to the extent, that they never care for the cries of the innocent people whom they make their target in order to create obstacles on the democratic path. Mark the excerpt:

Car bombs, mobility and might
have become the toys of the robots
who know how and when
to free their unfed tigers
from the cages of depravity (102).

These power thirsty messiahs attack the citizens of peace with the destructive toys. They have become robots who cannot be controlled as they are being manipulated by Satan who is vying for power to become God. The poet in Gill goes into their psyche in order to know the motive behind this destruction. He asks:

Who can tell
what it was

they wanted to achieve
and the glare of which beliefs
lured them
for a tango with the agents of carnage
on the mountain of emptiness (94).

While walking on *the gyan marg* (the path of knowledge), they come to know about the power of the nuclear and deadly weapons. Out of their lust for power, they are tempted to use them against the peace-loving people. They plant these deadly weapons on the path where the devotional people move for spiritual power. The poet in Gill cries when he sees these messiahs snuffing out the flickers of his inner blaze:

With knowledge
easy money and weight
they become maniac messiahs
to snuff out the flickers
of the inner blaze (102).

Power makes them blind. They cannot tolerate freedom as their intention is to enslave the humanity. They play with the lives of innocent people and do not feel any prick in conscience while killing them. Killing others becomes their pastime. The poet states:

Breathing the stink of ferocity
for pastime
they still the nightingale of freedoms
uprooting the tree where the bird sings (102).

Satan allured Eve to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree. He tempted her stating that the eating of the fruit will give her knowledge. What was the result of temptation ? They ate the fruit. Both Adam and Eve were expelled from Paradise. The poet believes that it is never too late to mend. The path of knowledge is not bad but it should be trodden with the constructive imagination. But, the destructive imagination gets the upper hand and the maniac messiahs

become the destroyer of peace destructing everything whatever comes on the way. The poet is not hopeless as he still believes that these maniac messiahs will realize one day that they have chosen the wrong path. He is sure that one day, they will come back and follow the path of non-violence that will make them powerful spiritually. Mark the excerpt for the poet's belief in the Flame who will make the comeback of these tutored and misdirected men possible:

You wait
within the shoreless mansion
of your patience
for these prodigals to return (134).

Now, come to the other face of Janus. This face, though the same, differs because of its constructiveness. The main motif of this face is also to gain power but it believes in power from inside which comes only through peace- peace of mind. The peace of mind leads to spiritualism. The other face i.e. the *bhakti marg* reveals light that comes from the lamp which has the oil of spiritualism. When there is the talk of spiritualism, the name of India obviously comes on the lips. India is the land that has the spiritual climate which gives birth to *sanyasis*, *sufis*, *bhakts*, *seekers*, *rishis*, *munis* etc. India is India because of spiritualism. It is her spiritualism which is the very strength of her culture. It is she who has given birth to great persons like Buddha, Guru Nanak, Mahatma Gandhi and many others who contributed in ameliorating pain and suffering from the world. It is her spiritual power that moulded Ashoka towards peace and religion. It is by virtue of the influence of scriptures and the basics of Indian culture that a man like Gandhi could stand on his feet to fight against evil with the unique weapons of truth and non-violence. He is the spiritual physician whose prescription of truth and non-violence is needed not only in India but in every country of the world. It was Lord Buddha who left his palace where he could lead a happy and comfortable life with his beautiful wife Yashodhara but he chose to renounce the world for the sake of searching the way that will save

humanity from suffering. It was he who ultimately found desire as the cause of suffering. It is India who attempts to get power through spiritualism. The ultimate goal of life is to realize the Supreme Soul and get *moksha*. India talks of soul. It is she who sent Swami Vivekananda for spreading the message of Hindu religion which is universal in nature.

Spiritualism is the very breath of India. Stephen Gill himself admits her influence on his mind when he was a child. In Preface to *The Flame*, he states: "As a child, I used to feel that India was the safest place in the world, because it is tolerant and religious. Most of the holy persons were born in this subcontinent. During those days, Mahatma Gandhi, an apostle of peace and tolerance, was assassinated. I saw Hindus, even old people, crying like children when they heard the news over the radio. I heard people saying that India has become an orphan-it has lost its father. I used to hear also that India, the birth place of Buddha, Guru Nanak and other spiritual physicians, is the safest place in the globe" (Preface 14).

Gill's statement in the *Preface* that : "I discovered that physicians are needed where sickness prevails. The subcontinent of India has produced a number of spiritual physicians, because that area needed to be healed" may stun any sensible reader of India. It is possible that he may begin to think that Gill is anti-India but it is not so because he himself admits that he has roots in the centuries old culture of the subcontinent of India. What he comments, it seems to me, is the result of his predicament that he faced while living in Delhi. In the Preface, he asserts: "When I was growing up in New Delhi, there were no dangers from suicide bombers, but from crowds or stabbers. Our home was also the target When I think of those days, I still shudder and think that there must be a purpose for which I have been saved from uncouth killers. I have experienced their stings. I know what fear is in the jungle of helplessness. I know what hope is when there is no hope" (Preface 26). The statement reveals the fact of Gill's mental state. This tragic impression is too indelible to wipe out for him. But, the positive impression which is imprinted on his

heart is equally deep and profound. To say that he does not respect Indian culture and traditions is wrong. His Indian imagination can be traced in his devotional attitude which he has displayed in *The Flame*. What he means by the Flame purely reflects his respect for spiritualism. He dedicates the book *The Flame* to "the eternal flame which knows no occupation, faith nor complexion and cannot be imprisoned within human bonds. It has engulfed millions, whose names can be traced in every age and land. This flame is known to engulf mortals even today, melting unknown metals into one" (*Preface* 28). *The Flame* recalls Gill's Indian devotional imagination which he has sharpened with his perspiration.

It is Indian tradition to begin any task with the invocation of God or *istha devta*. Gill invokes the Flame calling her imperishable harmony, nirvana, mother, driving force etc. He likes to follow the path of a sufi when he says: "I wish to swing / under the wings of our affinity / on the steps of a sufi" (137). It is the Indian tolerance that makes him pursue his "odyssey / through the barren region of the moor" (152). He is purely Indian in his imagination when he talks of not being tempted by gold and bodily pleasures because of his smell of lilac which is "more animating / than their tempting promises" (152).

The poet in Gill while invoking the Flame calls her nirvana as she helps in "restraining / relentless brutalities / and manna for those who hunger / for the morsels of equity" (33). Nirvana is the stage that everyone longs for. When a man controls himself and avoids any brutalities, he comes to the stage of nirvana. As the Flame is nirvana, he aspires for the stage. In his devotional song, he prays for peace and equality for all. The poet is the lover of peace and believes in giving a hand to those who fall. In his prayer to the Flame, he asks for her "driving force that lifts / spirits from the ditches" (36). The Flame is the creation, the meaning of which can be deciphered only when there is peace. The poet prays:

You are the creation
 whose meaning is perceived
 through the glasses
 of peace (36).

Bhakti cult and *sufi-cult* are almost the same in connection with devotion. The devotee forgets himself and is lost in love with his or her *ishtha devta* or god or goddesses. Mira did not care for the world. She used to see Krishna everywhere. Those who believe in *sufi-cult* love God like a lover. The poet in Gill has the feeling of *sufi-cult* in him and is much influenced by the *bhakti-marg*. While lost in love for the Flame, he sees her in different forms. Like a lover, he appreciates the beauty of her eyes. While praising the beauty of her eyes, he is lost in them. Eyes become retreat for him and in them, he sees the mystic flames. While staring into the eyes, he stays there and enjoys a feast of peace. Mark the excerpt for the beauty of the eyes of the Flame.

Your eyes
 a seaside retreat
 where mystic flames reign
 and
 nature courts the night's favor
 for a feast of peace (37).

While sharing his feeling with her, he becomes so intimate that he wishes "to recline under the canopy" where rough diamonds of her eyes radiate calmness. Her hair seems to be clouds which dispel "the ghost of despair" (45) from his mind. He becomes highly romantic when he calls her eyes mysterious. The smile of his beloved Flame will take his life. Mark the excerpt for highly romantic touch:

Your look
 mysterious
 a knife so sharp
 your smile
 takes my life (122).

This lover-beloved relationship between God and devotee is the very life-breath of Indian culture. In the *Gitanjali*, Tagore, the devotee loves God as a beloved loves her lover. Traces of this inclination are quite visible in *The Flame*. There is a play of hide and seek between the lover and the beloved. The poet in Gill loves the Flame from the very core of his heart. Though they do not meet face to face, it seems that they are not apart. He compares himself to a spark that can neither be called fully flared nor fully blown out. Note this mysterious relationship of the poet with the Flame:

What an impenetrable mystery
we do not meet
yet are never apart.
I am a spark
that neither fully flares
nor fully blows out (115).

Moreover, some poems in *The Flame* are more devotional than rational as the poet seems to be praying to the Flame. He feels "the restlessness of the cloud" in him and sees "the lighting of thunder" in the Flame. It is she who can kindle "the fire of trust" which will give "a fervent of hope" (42) to him. He realizes that the Flame dwells in his veins in mysterious manner to "sweep away the cobwebs of despair" (42). In the peaceful world of his dreams, the light from the Flame will weed out "the spite / the dark / the frowning evil / the war / the misery / the hard days" (110). Hence, he prays to her for her presence.

Mark the tone of prayer:

We need the grace of your presence
to weed out the bigotry
the cruelty
the fanatic howls
the fear
the sickness

and for mosaic to refine its gem
for equality to shine (110).

The light from the Flame will instill "a dynamo of drive" (125) in him. It is his Indian devotional imagination that inspires him to sing a song in her honor. He sings the song that demonstrates the Flame as a binding force in life. Life without her will be futile. It is she who makes life shine with her light. Mark the song for the miraculous magic of integration that the Flame possesses:

Flame
is the binding force
for families, planets
every atom
and every part of every individual.
Life disintegrates
where the rays of flame
do not reach (135).

The poet in Gill reveals his intention of composing songs in her service. Creation is there where peace reigns. Where peace reigns, the dove flies without fear. Where dove flies without fear; there is spiritual regeneration.

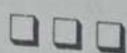
Where the dove flies without fear
and the lilies of justice
blossom for all
that domain of yours
assures a comforting niche .
for the songs I write
for you (146).

As he writes song for the Flame, he will like to be a mad prophet or a spiritualist. Hence, he asks her to accept him because he is "a lamb unclaimed" that needs "a good shepherd" (129).

The Janus approach to Stephen Gill's *The Flame* demonstrates that the poet Gill is in favour of the *bhakti marg* or the path of devotion. The path of knowledge also leads to the goal of power but it corrupts man by tempting him to adopt the destructive means. The destructive path is nurtured by the blood of the innocent people. The maniac messiahs also realize the fact somewhere in their mind but are forced to tread the path of destruction because they have sold their soul to the common enemy of man for the sake of gold and power. The poet in Gill also recommends for power-power of soul that can be achieved only through walking on the *bhakti marg* or the path of devotion. This is the path where there is creation for peace. Gill, who had been a part of the united India, is somewhere influenced by the Indian devotional imagination in spite of his being settled in Canada. The Indian soil is fertile enough to produce the crop of spiritualists who guide the people to lead a happy and peaceful life. However, it cannot be denied that on the same earth, many wicked people, *rakshash* and demons dwell but, in the end, they are killed as every wicked man has somewhere the seed of his own destruction. The darkness may remain throughout the night but not for ever as it has to give the way to light-light of day. The poet in Gill is hopeful and well- equipped to fight against evil. With the light of *The Flame*, he is on his mission not only of spreading peace in the world but also of making people conscious of the flame i.e. spiritual power that protects against all evils.

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CODE-SWITCHING AND CODE-MIXING IN BIHAR

Samir Kumar Sharma

Code-mixing and Code-switching are two types of linguistic mixing. Code-mixing is the use of elements, most typically nouns, from one language in an utterance predominantly in another language. Code-switching is a change from one language to another in the same utterance or conversation. These linguistic phenomena take place only in bilinguals or multilinguals. Only those persons who are bilinguals can switch from one language to another language; a monolingual cannot. It is because such bilingual code-switching is more noticeable than other kinds of sociolinguistic variations that is so commonly examined in sociolinguistic theory and research.

The notion of code in Semiotics refers to (a) a set of shared rules of interpretations and (b) a meaning making potential (Bouissac 125). Code is a set of Conventions for converting one signaling system into another. This subject matter is related to Semeiotics and Communication Theory. In Phonetics and Linguistics such notions as encoding and decoding, are sometimes encountered (Crystal 78). In Sociolinguistics code is used as a natural label for any system of communication involving language. The linguistic behavior referred to as code-switching is seen in bilingual speakers between standard and regional forms of English or between English and occupational and domestic varieties. Code-shifting involves the transfer of linguistic elements from one language to another : a sentence began in one language, then makes use of words or grammatical features belonging

to another. Such mixed forms of language are often labeled with a hybrid name such as Spanglish, Franglais, Singlish, Hinglish etc.

Code-mixing and Code-switching in Indian context can be labeled as *Hindlish* and *Hinglish*. When a speaker starts speaking in English but before completing the sentence starts speaking in Hindi —

See. 1 took a loaf of bread usmethoda namak milaya aur khalia (... spread some butter on it and ate) — this, behavior is code-switching. And when a speaker speaks English but includes' Hindi words to his sentence such as —

Oh ! I can't walk with this "Jhola" in my hand - (Jhol--an old fashioned bag) this behaviour is called code-mixing. This type of communication is possible only when the person who wants to communicate his message and the person who is to receive the message are bilinguals. The successful communication will be possible if the sender of a message has an idea, thought or piece of information in mind and he wishes to transmit to someone. He encodes this as a message in suitable medium of expression. Sender transmits the message to the Receiver. Receiver perceives the message and seeks to extract (decode). Sender's thought from the message. Receiver does this by applying rules of interpretation in order to infer Sender's, thoughts or intentions. In so far as Receiver guesses correctly. Receiver as decoded the message that Sender transmitted. And we can say that Sender and the Receiver are familiar ,with the terms, idioms and proverbs of two or more languages. For example - one speaker was speaking in English in a meeting which was attended by people "who could understand, and English and Hindi both. The speaker was speaking on the arrangements to be made for the successful conduct of the meeting of the Senate. He said "We have to make such arrangements so that Ki Parinda bhi par na mar sake,"

And the message was received by the people well.

The process of code-switching and code-mixing is often viewed negatively by monolinguals. The monolinguals consider that code-switching will dilute the language therefore code-switching, is incorrect, poor language or incomplete mastery of two languages. Whatever the importance the monolinguals attach to chaste language, these days for bilinguals or multi linguals code-switching has become a regular practice. Not only in communication but also in literative - for example in Bacon's essays and in many other writers code-mixing can be easily identified. The Hindi writers also put Urdu, Persian, English or Sanskrit words to give expression to their thoughts and this practice is being encouraged allover the world.

Multilingualism is a natural way of life for hundreds of millions all over the world. There are no official statistics but with around 5,000 languages co-existing in fewer than 200 countries it is obvious that an enormous amount of language contact must be taking place: and the inevitable result of languages in contact is *multilingualism* (Crystal 360). Therefore in common speech code-switching and code-mixing cannot be simply avoided. Multilingualism manifests itself in many ways. There are many situations that force people to take the help of more than one language for proper communication. Sometimes political decisions cause annexation, resettlement, military acts that can have immediate linguistic effect. People become refugees and have to learn the language of the new homes. Sometimes people wish to live in a particular area because of its religions significance or leave the area because of its religions or other oppressions. In either case they have to take the help of more than one language. Some people desirous to identify with a particular ethnic culture or social group usually communicate in more ,than one language and also facilitate the learners to switch or mix the codes. Economic reasons or natural disasters also sometimes contribute to code-switching and code mixing.

Several sociologists and sociolinguists have given 'code' a restricted definition for example, codes are sometimes defined in terms of mutual intelligibility (e.g. the language of a private or professional group). But the most widespread special use of the terms is in the theory of communication codes proposed by the British sociologist Basil Bernstein (1924 -2000). His distinction between *Elaborated and Restricted* codes is part of a theory of the nature of social systems, concerned in particular with the kinds of meanings people communicate, and how explicitly they do this, using the range of resources provided by the language (Crystal 79). Code is a meaning potential that enables certain kinds of meanings to be made, (in language, in the ways, we dress, in our eating rituals, in the; visual media etc.). Code has its grammar - a significant potential for constructing meanings. A code is also a systems of signs with context and expression (Bouissac 126). Traffic lights are the better examples of this. A traffic light is part of a communication system, it does not matter whether the signals are selected by a police man or a mechanical device. An automatic temperature control system is also a communication system in which, the encode is a device in the living, room and the decoder another device in the basement. The human factor may be essential in language, but not in communication generally (Gleason 374). M. H. Gleason defines code in terms of an arbitrary, prearranged set of signals. A language is merely one special variety of code; and the science of linguistics deals, in its strictest delimitation, only with this & aspect of communication (ibid).

Now a days language which is being used is not the pure language of Dr. Johnson. There was a time when language change (either by code-mixing or by pidginisation or creolization) was considered to be corrupt and the scholars at that time put stress on purification and codification of language i.e. to fix prescriptive rules of correct usage and to stop language change. In the eighteenth century writers like Swift and of Johnson vehemently opposed the, idea of language change. In *Dictionary of the English Language*,

Dr. Johnson considered all linguistic change 'an evil'. In the Preface to his *Dictionary* he stated :

"tongues [i.e. languages], like governments, have a natural tendency to degenerate; we have long preserved over constitution, let us make some struggles for one language" (Schendl 6).

Not only in England but also in America Benjamin Franklin believed that with the degeneration in language society also degenerate. In India language is being mixed up by regional, professional and funky codes that are media-triggered, Mrinal Pandey, editor. *Hindustan* once observed :-

"The change isn't culture driven. It's pushed by the market."

There can be a long debate on the 'purity' or 'degeneration' or 'enrichment' of languages but what happens with most of the bilinguals is that they reveal, in their interaction with others, their attitudes, identity, and functional preferences and talk about language change. Code-mixing and code-switching are such strategies that have received attention in the recent years. Code-mixing which is generally considered to be the transfer of linguistic elements of language into another, involves units at intersentential and intrasentential levels, as in Hindi/English.

"bhai Khana Khao (brother, food eat) and let us go" (Bright 185).

In several bilingual communities, code-mixing and code-switching has resulted in restricted (or not so-restricted) additional codes of communication and a mixed language is born out of that mixing and they are also given specific names to mark their formal and functional distinctiveness such as Hinglish or English.

Code-switching and code-mixing becomes a natural habit of those who live in a society where many languages are spoken. What I have personally felt in Bihar is that a child's mother language is either Bhojpuri or Maithili, or Angika or Bajjika or Magahi as they

are, the languages spoken in different parts of Bihar, and then he (the child) learns Hindi because the language of the home (Bhojpuri, Maithili etc) differs from that of the language of the surroundings larger social group or from that of the education system. In such a situation a child can hardly avoid becoming bilingual and must succeed in the school language in order to benefit from the education system. These days a debate is also going on regarding the language of the school. Some scholars think that English should be introduced from class I, some think that English should be introduced from class III or class VI. The situation today is that in most of the government and Private Schools Hindi is the medium of instruction and in some of the convent schools, English is the medium. Nowhere education is imparted in mother tongue rather mother tongue remains the language to be used in family only or in a very limited society. But some of the scholars are of the opinion that children should first be taught all subjects in mother tongue. Then the school language should be introduced gradually, and may either take over completely or both languages may continue to be used side by side. Many researches were conducted by eminent research groups such as Skuntabb - Kangas and Toukornaa (1976) that gave their reports in favor of mother-tongue teaching (Malmkjaer 59).

A child's language is closely associated with its cultural identity and it can be very disturbing for a child suddenly to have to switch to a new language at the same time as he is being introduced to the new cultural norms which inform the school system and to that system itself and to all new information he is required to assimilate at school.

Code - switching between class dialects has become commoner since the growth of industrial communities, is likely to have existed, if only on a limited scale, in any period when there was a distinctive language spoken in court or government circles. In an extreme form, it is seen in the widespread bilingualism in French and English during the earlier part of the Middle English period (Samuels 120).

Wherever and whenever two languages come in contact, code-switching is a must.

It is quite natural for bilinguals to mix the languages when communicating with other person who also speaks both languages. The immediate reason for this mixing is that the bilingual may have forgotten the term for something in the language he is currently speaking and use the other language's term instead; or the other language being spoken may not have a term for a particular concept the bilingual wants to refer to.

In other cases, a word which is similar to both languages, or a name, may trigger a switch. A bilingual can also choose to quote the speech of another person in the language the person was speaking, even when the bilingual is engaged will speaking another language. Language mixing can also be used to express emotion, close personal relationships and solidarity, and to exclude a third person from part of a conversation.

Code-switching can, take place at various points in an utterance: between sentences, clauses, phrases, and words. It is governed by different bilingual community but although the norms differ, and although the reasons for the switch are diverse, there is some evidence that the switching itself is guided by a number of constraints imposed by difference structure between the languages involved.

Code-switching can often happen within a single sentence (and at numerous points within a sentence. Among the most interesting cases of this start of code-switching are those in which a speaker mixes distinct (mutually unintelligible) languages a situation that often arises in bilingual areas such as Patna in Bihar. In the following example. Hindi is mixed with English-

"This universe is guided by cheti." (If the meaning of chiti is not known meaning the will not be received)

In cases of Code - switching, the speaker is in effect using two distinct language varieties at the same time. We can contrast this situation with that of borrowing. When speakers of one language borrow words from another language, the foreign words come to be used as regular vocabulary. For example, when a speaker of English says, "They have a great deal of *Savoir-faire*" (Akajiri 291). We might recognize that the term *Savoir-faire* was originally borrowed word from French.

Similarly if a Hindi speaker speaks "Suo motto aap doshi hain" or "yah niyam to ultra virus ho gaya."

'Suo motto' and 'ultra virus' are loan words.'

Code switching can be classified into four major types-

1. Tag-switching - In question tags certain set phrases in one language are inserted into an utterance -
It's nice day, hana ? (Isn't it)
2. Intrasentential switching - switches occur within a clause or sentence boundary -
3. Intersentential switching - A change of language occurs at a clause or sentence boundary, where each clause or sentence is in one language —
Sometimes I am so fed up ki bahut gussa aata hai.
4. Intra - word switching - A change occurs within a boundary, such as station - (plural of station in Hindi)
Filen (plural of file)

In Bihar the cases of code-mixing and code - switching are very interesting as there are many languages like Bhojpuri, Magahi, Maithili, Angika. Vajjika etc and every language its own typical words that are rooted to its culture. Sometimes the parameters of grammar are thrown to winds -

- (a) etna jor se kam kar ki result achha mile.
- (b) Albalaib ? Atna narbhasaila se kuchcho noi ?

An example is Bihar's ex-CM Smt. Rabri Devi's statement on Laloo Prasad Yadav's railway budget.

Sabse best budget hai

Sabse best.

Bhojpuri Hindi or Bhojpuri English can be identified in the speech of Laloo Prasad Yadav. Shekher Suman, Amitabh Bachchan (while on screen) Raghubansh Prasad Singh etc. There was a time when Biharis were notorious for atrocious gender sense and shoddy pronunciation but the same trails have become the tour de force of their conversation.

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ACQUIRING COMMUNICATION SKILLS THROUGH WORLD WIDE WEB

S. K. Tripathi

The human beings have been gifted with the faculties which are above any other creature. The art of communication is one of them and it roots from the birth of an individual. A baby coos and cries in order to let the mother know what it needs. As a person grows old, he gets exposed to the process of communication- that of sending and receiving messages to and fro another individual. Whatever may be the field of interaction, one has to acquire communication skills to communicate effectively just to move on to the trek to success.

When the term communication skills come in mind, we always tend to associate it with fluency- a term used for smoothness and proficiency in the use of language in the transmission of ideas towards others. But, this refers to the verbal form only. The counterpart of verbal form is the written form, and so, one must be proficient in both the forms to become an effective communicator. There is no denying the fact that all are not effective in communicating. We all have pretty good idea about what we want to let others know, but most of us do not have the right idea about how to do it. Here arises the need to improve one's communication skills.

Besides the traditional resources - blackboard and text-books - as the means to acquire proficiency in the target language and improve one's communication skills, a bewildering array of technological devices have emerged under the umbrella of

Information and Communication Technology and they are being used in language courses and to support language learning. ICT offers a wide range of language learning opportunities from radio, slide/film projectors, record/cassette players, ACD players, CD/DVD ROMs to the latest gadgets like Mobile Phones, Personal Digital Assistant (PDA), iPod and above all computer.

Computer Assisted Language Learning drew heavily on practices with programmed instruction. Throughout the 1980s, CALL widened its scope, embracing a range of new technologies, especially multimedia and Information and Communications Technology. The development in multimedia technology, which is perhaps the most promising for language learning, is the Internet Multimedia of the World Wide Web. The Internet Multimedia does not require any special hardware in the present age as most multimedia systems already include excellent sound and video cards, stereo speakers, earphones and microphones. Today developments in Internet multimedia are often supplied by software called plug-ins that handles multimedia tasks via Internet browsers, such as Netscape Navigator, Microsoft Internet Explorer and Mozilla Firefox. Plug-ins are widely available for download on the World Wide Web and are most often inexpensive or free. They provide sound and video on demand, in either real time (live feed) or deferred time (for later use). The creation of World Wide Web and Hyper Text Markup Language (HTML) have developed a new generation of technology and produced new authors. Information about the markup language and its corresponding protocol Hyper Text Transfer Protocol (HTTP) is widely available on the World Wide Web, in many books written on the subject, in news papers, magazines and even on television. Most of this information is free and support on and off the Internet is easy to obtain as "HTML is a tool for the planet and not exclusively for the relatively narrow purposes of language learning" (Rod 1998). These are the important advantages which HTML possesses over the previous systems used to devise and design CALL applications.

Further, HTML is extremely flexible and its editors/ converters are also widely available either as freeware or at a nominal cost.

Besides the tools and techniques, the stack of information available on the Web provides teachers and learners easy access to language learning resources like never before. Online journals, News Papers and Magazines provide useful material for language learners; while teachers can find lesson plans, ideas, exercises, assessment tools, and other materials for use in their classes. The World Wide Web's capability for its interactivity makes it especially exciting as a resource for language teaching and learning. Online language tutorials, exercises, and tests are available to anyone who has access to the Web. This availability makes Web based language learning quite attractive to both the instructors and the learners. Teachers can even create their own interactive language learning activities on the Web, which allow them to adapt the activities to their own courses and the students.

Using Web based activities, a wide range of basic language skills can be enhanced. Vocabulary practice, grammar lessons, comprehension exercises, reading and writing tasks and pronunciation exercises can be done, and also created, on the Web and made interactive in a variety of ways. Online discussion-boards are good way to hold class discussions and create reading and writing activities for the students. *Dave's ESL Cafe* provides many examples of this kind of activity. With discussion boards, teachers can post a question or place a subject to start discussion and every response is displayed on the board. Students can reply to the original question or to other responses, or they can create a new thread of discussion. Such discussion-boards can be created easily using a *Common Gateway Interface* script (CGI is a method of processing input from HTML forms) and HTML. *WWWBoard* is a free CGI script and is available for download on the Web, as from *Matt's Script Archive*. Another site *Scripts For Educators* offers an array of free scripts along with

the links to several helpful online classes and tutorials on the use of scripts. Online writing assignments or discussions can also be created through a Weblog or Blog. Students can set up their own free Web sites using these tools and create Weblogs easily using a basic Weblog host like *Blogger*. They are just required to get themselves registered as user of Weblog host and to follow the simple guidelines to set up a Web page. Once created, they can use their Blog as an online journal to submit course work, to create a portfolio, or to have an online discussion.

Games and exercises designed to help students learn new vocabulary are easily put on the Web. A typical Web based vocabulary activity might be a matching exercise. In this exercise, words or phrases are matched with definitions via a pop-up menu created with a Web form. Students may click on the bottom of the page to see the correct answers. Any online form used for interactive activities such as quizzes and vocabulary and grammar exercises will require either a CGI script or *Jawa Script*. Jawa Script is an information collection and feed back tool that is used to make Web pages interactive. Familiar examples of Jawa Script on Web pages are alert boxes that pop-up to alert the user to an error or for an instruction; status bar text that runs along the bottom of the Web pages and the text that appears in place of an image when the cursor is held over it. Though Jawa Script is more complicated than HTML, it is, nevertheless, possible to find free Jawa Script that can be cut and pasted into the HTML code of a web page. Further, Many online tutorials exist to guide people how to use previously written Jawa Script, along with various activities related to language learning. A free Jawa Script package that enables users to create a variety of online interactive activities is available at *Hot Potatoes Half Baked Software*.

Listening comprehension exercises, such as fill-in-the-gap exercises done while listening to an audio, can be performed nicely

on the web. Students download and listen to a short audio piece and fill in missing words in the provided text. They are asked to answer short comprehension questions about the text and audio and write a short essay. Then the answers are emailed to an instructor for assessment. *John's ESL/EFL Resources* has several listening comprehension exercises created with Real Audio and Jawa Script. *Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab* provides excellent examples of how audio files can be used for listening comprehension. This site offers listening exercises which combine Real Audio files with Jawa Script quizzes. Audio clips can be put into web pages to provide exercises for listening comprehension, pronunciation practice and vocabulary development. A basic tutorial for putting audio on the Web pages can be found at *Duke University's Centre for Instructional Technology*. The newest technology in audio on the web is Streaming Audio which provides real time playing of clip files. More information on Streaming Audio, including links, tutorials, and product reviews can be found at *Streaming Media World*.

Online exercises that use Jawa Script are limited in their interactivity as they can only provide a way for the students to check their own answers. Teachers may want to test their students online and do their assessments. It is, but, possible to develop online tests which students may fill out and submit online to the teacher for grading and feed back. The answers go via email to the instructor, who can correct the work and send feed back directly to the student. This type of online assessment can be done through the use of HTML forms and CGI script. CGI is the standard method of processing input from HTML forms. CGI collects the information from the submitted form and sends it, usually via email, to whosoever is collecting that information. *Robert Godwin-Jones' Language Interactive* provides several free CGI scripts along with instructions on how to use them.

Indeed Web based Computer Assisted Language Learning calls for a shifting role of traditional classroom hierarchy to a more balanced relationship between teachers and their students. Web based CALL requires self-study (for autonomous learning), teacher-led instruction (for organized, monitored, and administered learning), and small-group discussions (for interactivity). It allows students to have most control over the direction of their learning by controlling their time, speed of learning, autonomy, choice of topics and even their own identity. Online programmes also offer immediate feedback as the computer tells right away which answers were wrong, allowing the students to go back and fix their mistakes, and thus saving their time as otherwise they have to wait for their teachers to do the same. Learners and language instructors can now use the basic tools of Discussion- Boards and Weblogs, HTML, Jawa Script, Real Audio, and CGI scripts to create engaging, interactive, and functional materials for language learning and teaching.

Pedagogically, the advent of new technologies and approaches in combination with the traditional technologies, applications and approaches is highly encouraging. Unlike Language Lab, which emphasized speaking and listening, and CALL, which emphasized reading and writing, World Wide Web has the potential to serve all of the four basic language skills - reading, writing, speaking and listening. Course-sites give students the opportunity to practice their reading and writing skills. Sound-bank and audio clips and files allow students to concentrate on their oral skills; while interactive discussion boards and databases improve the discursive skills of the group or individual learners. Now, World Wide Web is used as an electronic classroom for language teaching and Internet training and also as a support for the traditional classroom. It is now up to the language teachers and learners to explore the remarkable potential World Wide Web possesses.

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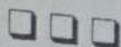
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TEACHING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN INDIA

Meena Prasad

The liberalization of the Indian economy ushered in all kinds of reasons to learn the English language. While earlier in the century students who had specialised in English joined either teaching or the civil services, now a whole new spectrum of job opportunities has opened up. There are now call centres that need trainers to equip their employees with communication skills, there are multinationals who have been recruiting marketing staff who needed to be taught spoken English, there are medical transcription centres which need efficient translators and reporters. Those desirous of immigration to the west needed professional help for clearing tests like the IELTS. Hence, the avenues where ELT came to be required in India are unlimited today.

Teaching of English Language

The developments that have taken place in ELT Methodology in the West took some time to reach Indian classrooms. The evolution of ELT in India, in any other EFL country is linked with factors that are not pedagogic alone. Today English can not be termed a foreign language in the Indian Context, but in time past, it was a foreign language and its teaching had to be cognizant of all factors, pedagogic or otherwise be complete without taking into account the fluid nature of the position of English in Indian society.

ELT took time to take root in India. The causes behind this gap are three:

1. Only around the year 1980 did English achieve adequate attention from policy makers, administrators and teachers. Due to its chequered history in the country, its complete importance was realised more than three decades after independence.
2. Apart from a One-year course in teacher training for school teachers, no formal teacher training is given to new recruits or practicing teachers. There are orientation courses and refresher courses for teachers in general, but no course deals with ELT. It is only recently that the British Council has introduced CELTA and other such programmes; these are quite expensive, teachers do not want to spend money on them and their institutions rarely sponsor them.
3. The examination system is more achievement oriented rather than performance oriented, leading to an emphasis on grades and positions rather than issues of fluency or proficiency. Indirectly, the teacher remains in many classrooms even today, the facilitator of examinations rather than of linguistic or communicative proficiency.

In spite of the slower rate of evolution, English language Teaching in India has been widening in its approach and methods. The result is that there is an increasing tendency, scope and intent of reaching the end of the ELT cone. At its own eccentric pace, ELT in India is today in step with the rest of a world today. Where the issue of methodology is concerned, ELT seems to be in three transient stages according to the different levels of the paradigm and its demands:

1. The first level is that of the institutions run by the government, mainly primary, secondary and high schools. Since the primary goal of these institutions is to provide education at affordable and subsidised levels to the public, ELT teaching can not be placed at the widest end of the cone for the basic reason that the teachers there do not have much access to latest research'

and materials for reasons economic as well as geographic. Most of these institutions are the sole providers of education in rural and remote settings where they can fulfill adequately the basic requirements alone. In the urban locales the planning bodies are now moving towards up gradation through teacher training, syllabus modification and improved resources. In another decade or so, this level of EL T should be more communicative in nature with language and literature fully integrated.

2. At the second level are those institutions that are semi-government or are run by private managing bodies, assisted through government funds. These also include undergraduate colleges and postgraduate universities. Growth and development can be seen here in spurts. In some classrooms, teachers have reached the widest end of the cone, are aware of learner needs and adjust methodology accordingly and use a judicious blend of interaction and communication in the class. In others, an observer feels caught in a time warp with pure talk-chalk lectures that are mostly teacher-centred. The positive observation is that there are practising teachers between these two poles, who are trying to change their teaching practice and are looking at alternate methodology. Just as there is a mixed bag of teaching practice, the institutions also range from indifferent to proactive. While there are places where even a small audio player is not accessible, there are administrators who have invested heavily in state of the art, perfectly equipped language laboratories.
3. The third level comprises pure private sector academies that undertake to make learners proficient English users within a stipulated period, of course by charging a fixed amount of fee. Since time means money for them, they are equipped with the latest materials like interactive, multimedia software. Jobs in the academic area are few and far between, so an

increasing number of qualified teachers find their way to these places. The teacher profile gets younger and younger, resulting in increasing amounts of innovation and experimentation where methodology is concerned.

While teachers belonging to the first level are content to remain followers, the second level is being influenced by the third. When learners are in a rush as they need part-time employment or have an IELTS to clear, they often join academies in addition to their undergraduate classes. This creates a ripple effect and the ripples can be felt in three ways:

- I. Young teachers who work in undergraduate colleges work part-time at these academies. At the academy, they use the latest teaching aids and materials since the purpose is to achieve fluency at the earliest. At their regular place of work, their teaching methodology undergoes a transformation because they tend to use the interactive, task-based and communicative methods more than the usual lecture methods used there normally.
- II. On taking into account the roaring business the academies are doing, the administrative bodies of undergraduate colleges are coming to realise that a whole untapped market needs to be explored. Along with their regular degree classes, they are gearing up to introduce revenue-earning courses in the field of English proficiency, open to the public. This leads to a spill over effect in the undergraduate classes too as some teachers would be common to both courses and the same campus sees a lot of innovative teaching.
- III. Parents of learners form an important component of the teaching paradigm in India. Earlier, any kind of change in courseware or teaching methodology would result in stiff opposition from them and the administrative body would

recommend the continuation of age- old practices. Observing the winds of change resulting from the acceptance of the global status of English, parents today encourage innovation and experimentation in the classroom.

After attending interactive classes at the academy, learners search such stimulation in their regular classes too. This is a radical change, especially if one looks into the past. When communicative language teaching was introduced in India in the 1980s, it was a dismal failure for the first few years because of the lack of the right context. This context stands established in India today, so learners are receptive and are actively encouraging more learner-centred classes.

The context of the whole teaching situation started changing around the year 2000. Socio-economic factors played a major role in this change that is dynamic even today. The liberalization of the Indian economy led to the entry of many international brands into the learners' mindset. Call centres, shopping malls and trade fairs, all need young personnel, fluent in English. There is a mushroom growth of institutes and academies of the third category above, offering the whole range of proficiency in English from clearing the IEL TS to speaking fluently. The Internet has played a major role in creating a resource-rich environment by giving a wide range of exposure to English. Becoming web-savvy has emerged as the need of the day and this is possible only through English. These are just a few of the factors that have created a panacea for the deadlock that CL T had found itself in.

Today, in India, a whole new generation is coming up; a generation that travels a lot in countries where English is a first language, works in places where English is the lingua franca and as a result, carries home to other generations the same English as a medium of communication. Unless the context is supportive of upgrading English performance of the teacher - which should be

inclusive of communicative competence- no teacher training or upgrading of methodology can be productive and fruitful. This is a significant conclusion that can be drawn from the Indian situation.

The results of all the changes listed above stand reflected in the classrooms where CLT is still practised. The whole process of curriculum change is riddled with cumbersome and time consuming procedures in India, so in spite of the limited success of CLT, it has not been removed from courses. This, in the long run, has been for the better because while on the one hand, the teachers have been able to familiarize themselves with its approach and methodology; on the other hand, the changed and changing context has encouraged its growing success today. Since learners are a part of the whole context, they are aware of the growing need for proficiency, both linguistic and communicative, in English. Today, more and more students take up part-time work (that requires fluency in English) along with their studies, this was earlier an aberration, now is the norm.

Translation and Teaching of English Literature

The 'Eng.Lit' classroom makes sorry picture due to the social conditions like poverty, casteism, literacy, and colonial history. A typical 'Eng.Lit.' class in India is an overcrowded room with inadequate sitting and lighting facilities, and students come to the class with mistaken hope of improving English language than hoard information of the canonical English writers. For many Indians even today, English is a 'kalpavriksha' a tree from Indian mythology with magical power to bestow anything imaginable on the fortunate one- glamour, power, prestige, social status, money etc, The language vs. literature debate is very much alive and kicking in India.

Due to faulty teaching methodology and not very competent teachers at the school level, the students come the literature class with inadequate linguistic abilities and feeling of awe and fear of the language. The curriculum is inelastic and allows no space of innovation for the motivated teachers. It teams up with examination

system that seems to have replaced the educational system along the problem of overcrowded classroom in stifling the desire to change the situation. The students can clear the examination without reading the prescribed texts as it easily possible in the present examination system. It tests only the writing speed and the memory of the victim. The prevalent methodology in the classroom is the very old fashioned 'chalk and talk' method that involves delivering very undramatic monologues to the huge and silent classroom.

The dismal condition can also be attributed to the massive bureaucratization of education system in India and insidious neglect of the system by its politicians, the decision-makers, and the dominant middle class, which is extremely self-centered and callous. The remedies may lie in the macro level of State planning and some violent and fundamental changes are urgently needed.

So, what role can an activity like translation play in such a gloomy scenario? Dingwaney and Maier (1996) have discussed the possibility that translation itself might offer a method for making students aware of the organizing principles at work in their readings of "Third World" texts, thereby enabling them to read the "other". Indeed, translation is not a cure for all the ills of the Indian situation. Yet, it can play a very important strategic role in the effort to contextualize English Literary studies in India. Dr. Devy in his remarkable essay, "Translation Theory: An Indian perspective" (1993) has pointed out that unlike Western culture which thinks that translation is a sort of Fall from the Paradise, Indian literary traditions do not show the anxiety or reservations about recycled texts and some of the most sacred texts in Indian cultures. are rewriting of Sanskrit texts. The Indian consciousness, according to Devy, is "translating consciousness which find code Switching" dialect Switching and language Switching extremely common. Hence, translation is typical to multilingual and multiethnic societies like India and already occupies a crucial place in the culture. It will be

extremely interesting to think about the nature of such an activity for pedagogical purpose.

Translation is not merely mechanical transfer of propositional content from a text in one language to another but is rather a complex combination of interpretative expertise and creative skills. It is not only art of decoding a text which is a critical activity but also an art of encoding a text in another language which requires creative ability. Thus, the translator is not just a laborer as is commonly perceived but is a person with bilingual literary and linguistic competence.

Translation is also a way of making connections. It connects not only two languages and cultures but also across space and time. This capacity of translation to make connections has very significant implications for literary studies in multilingual multiethnic societies like India. It is interesting to examine the potential of translation in such a context.

Vanmala Vishwanath in her essay, 'Literary Translation: A Technique for Teaching Literature in the Bilingual Countries: (1998)' has drawn attention to the fact that translation can play a significant role in imparting literary competence in a bilingual context. In first place, it provides an attractive alternative to the notorious 'chalk and talk' approach to teaching of literature and language ubiquitous in India and facilitates more participative and creative engagement with the literary text. It makes the students focus on the specificities of the text and sharpen their interpretative skills. As Michael Riffaterre (1985) has pointed out the literary translation is an act of finding equivalences for "literariness-including presuppositions" or conventions that induce literariness to linguistic activity. This activity helps the students to be aware of conventionality of the text in question and this leads to acquisition of what is termed as literary competence. Prof. Widdowson in his well-known essay, "The Teaching, Learning and Study of Literature" has distinguished between the study and the learning of literature. The study is action, which leads to knowledge and extends

awareness, and learning is knowledge that leads to action and develops proficiency. For Widdowson, learning literature means acquiring the ability of creative reading. Translation is indeed one of the best ways of developing this ability.

Moreover it can also help students to improve their linguistic competence and facilitate acquisition of English especially those who come the classroom with insufficient linguistic skills. Translation was once considered as mechanical and uninteresting activity that -does not help much in acquisition of language proficiency. However, after the works of people like Widdowson (1979) the role of translation in language teaching was considered more favourably. It is indeed, a learner centric activity. It is an activity that is mercifully not one of those examination-oriented activities that are carried out in Indian classroom. What's more, it can make learning literature more enjoyable, which is of crucial importance.

Apart from being an excellent task for studying a literary text, it is also very important as it allows the student to creatively explore the possibilities in one's own language. It allows the student to discover the similarities and differences in 'meanings' of the text. It demonstrates how meanings are always context specific and yet have a universal dimension. In discovering the other the student gets opportunity to discover self. It is thus a far more useful and insightful approach to the study of English literary texts in the Indian context than the various versions of the New Criticism with their monolingual text-centric; approach to the study of literature.

It can sensitize the students as well as teachers to a very important fact: that the study of English literary text is not carried out in a cultural vacuum. It can confer some sort of continuity with the linguistic and cultural context in which the student is located. This feeling of continuity can help reduce the feeling of alienation that usually haunts the students of English literature in countries like India.

Consequently, it can be seen that translation has not only immediate benefits to the students but also vital significance in the social and cultural context of teaching and learning English Literature in India. Translation is a creative and intimate encounter between two languages and cultures. It allows one to connect and explore. It provides insights and links creativity and critical thinking. It should be seriously introduced at school level as well as at the graduate and post-graduate levels. How to implement it and, accommodate in the syllabus and examination system remains to be discussed, but the important question is, is there a willingness to change? Though change is resisted, everywhere it is nowhere resisted as strongly as in India. Though we can accept translation in theory, are we willing to translate it into practice? Translation Theorists have talked about the difficulties while translating, but no difficulty can be compared to that of translating theory into practice especially in India. In such a situation the well known saying "tradduttore, traditore" assumes ironical connotation works connotation.

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IMPERATIVES OF ELT: A LAYMAN'S APPROACH

Subhash Chander Sharma

India's association with English has been a long, multifaceted and cosy one. But its teaching and learning have proved tricky, thanks to a host of factors like professional incompetence of the teacher, lack of enthusiasm among students, faulty system of examination and a general deterioration in education standards. What has, however, made the task of English language teaching/ learning (to be subsequently referred to as ELT/ELL) really problematic is the methodology of teaching English, in our schools and colleges.

The present paper, based on personal experience of teacher in English over 15 years at school, college and the university level. It is hoped that some of the imperatives of ELT/ELL incorporated herein will come handy for the teachers and learners of English alike. An attempt has been made to approach the process of ELT from a layman's points of view and keep the discussion free from the pedantic jargon associated with the pedagogy of teaching and learning a second language (to be subsequently termed L2).

Imperatives of ELT.

Clarity of Goal(s) of ELT:

The first and the foremost imperatives of success in any academic enterprise is the clarity of vision about its goals. In case of English in India, the first question to be addressed is the aim(s) of ELT. That is, whether English is to be taught as a language of utility or of literature. About the purpose of English teaching in India, the Official language Commission in 1956 had said :

Since we need knowledge of English for different purposes, the content and character of that as well as method of imparting it have to undergo a change. English has to be taught, hereafter, principally as a language comprehension rather than as a literary language.

Given the multilingual character of our country and growing importance of English as an international tongue, the observations of the Commission are quite pertinent. English in India serves useful purpose of communication and interaction among people with diverse linguistic denominations and thereby acts as a unifying factor. Further, knowledge of English, nowadays also enhances avenues for employment in trade, tourism, education and industry. Hence, the focus of ELT in India must primarily be on its functional aspects wherein development of comprehension and communication skills becomes more important. K. R. Srinivas Iyengar quotes Mulk Raj Anand whom Gandhiji once told in the matter of English in India :

The purpose of writing is to communicate, isn't it ? If so, say your say in any language that comes to hand. In a certain situation, a language chooses the man as much as that man chooses a language (IX).

And in the present times, it is English that comes handy as a vehicle of communication, interaction and learning both at national and international levels. So the focus on ELT in India be such as it is taught as a language for functional and comprehension purposes rather than as tool for learning the nuances of English literature.

Restructuring of Syllabus:

As a corollary to the functional imperative of ELT, it is also imperative to restructure the syllabus of English at school and college level so as to attain the goal of functional proficiency in English. The syllabus should be so graded that starting with the basics of English language at the lower level, gradually the elementary form of literature may be introduced in the form of interesting and instructive short stories, anecdotes, essays and poems. Writing of popular writers like

Tagore, Narayan, Ruskin, Shakespeare, Dickens, Wordsworth etc., written lucidly, may be chosen to capture the imagination of the young minds. As language is an over learned skill, the prescribed literary pieces should become the springboard for the simultaneous study of language and grammar. Teaching of grammar is an important aspect of teaching/learning any language. Formal grammar presents facts/rules about a language, functional grammar illustrates their correct usage in language. Grammar does not exist in isolation or apart from a language. In a way, language is grammar.

As language is an over acquired skill, the ability in a language grows by practice - constant and consistent - and not merely by knowing rules of grammar and cramming its vocabulary. The knowledge of English must be imparted through appropriately structured syllabus which can be done only by an able teacher. This brings us to the next imperative of ELT the competence of the teacher.

The Competence of the Teacher :

Truly speaking, the (in)competence of ELT teacher is one vital issue which, if addressed properly, will, in turn, overcome the concomitant problems like ELT methods to be adopted, lack of teaching aids, apathy of students etc. The fact is that all paraphernalia and teaching strategies are rendered useless if the teacher is incompetent whereas a competent teacher can make things happen without them. Specialized training and knowledge are required to develop linguistic competence among ELT teachers, which are simply not there. Most L2 teachers remain ignorant of the new approaches, latest aids and tools, and the changes taking place in the pedagogy of teaching/learning. The ELT teachers teach L2 not as skill subject as it ought to be but merely as a knowledge subject to help manage their students get through the exam. Consequently, at the end of a course, students acquire little or no proficiency in linguistic skills like speaking, reading and writing. Frankly speaking, many ELT teachers are themselves lacking in these skills.

It is in this context that the UGC sponsored Orientation Programmers and Refresher Courses for L2 teachers become functionally important. They are a must for EL teachers to hone their linguistic skills and update the knowledge of their subject. In this regard M L Tickoo's views are worth quoting:

In the hands of a teacher appropriately trained, a structural syllabus can be an effective tool for teaching English. Implying an activity method, it demands initiative, resourcefulness and imagination on the part of the teacher. It keeps the young learner keen and active... I is indeed a delightful sight to see a class buzzing with activities like the bee-hive as it gainfully learns by doing and speaking (Velayudhan 2).

ELT as a Learner centered Exercise :

It would be no exaggeration to say here that in most classrooms in India learning of English language is an extremely boring, even painful experience. Here is what actually happens in ELT classrooms. There is the teacher and a text book (nowadays even guides). He reads a few lines from the text, translates them in learners' mother-tongue, summarises the remaining lesson in the vernacular and the ELT exercise is over. The students sit through the class like dumb driven cattle with practically no initiative or involvement. As such they learn nothing of the four basic language skills- listening, reading, writing and speaking- the four sine qua nons for learning any foreign tongue. In her write-up, "Developing Reading Skills" Yamini Lukmani hits the bulls eye when she writes.

If one calculates the average amount of time given per student in every English class to speak, read or write, one finds that it is minimal. At best two or three students answer a few questions taking about five to seven minutes of the class period. The rest of the time, the teacher holds the stage, the class. This division of time appears

disproportionate and not conducive to learning (Velayudhan 96).

The ELT teacher must remember that language learning is a two-way process in which involvement and participation of the students (the target group) is absolutely essential. As a matter of fact, one can learn something only by doing. This is possible only when correct methodology of ELT is adopted. So the learner-centred imperative of ELT, in turn, brings us to the most important imperative of correct methodology.

Methodology of ELT :

The history of language teaching, especially the L2 has been characterized by a search for more effective ways of teaching it. In India English has been formally taught in the country for the past two hundred years. Yet controversy over its teaching methodologies persists. Till recently a majority of EL teachers used the traditional Grammar-Translation method which though useful at the preliminary stage, does not generate the habit of original thinking in English among students. Even now this method continues to be adopted due to shortage of time and pressure of exams. As a result no attention is paid to developing four language skills. The entire exercise is geared up to pass the exam. The sole goal of EL teacher is reduced to completing the syllabus and telling "imp" questions. Which is why the standards of English are falling in our educational institutions.

"A method", maintains WF Mackey, "determines what and how much is taught (selection), the order in which it is taught (gradation), how the meaning and form are conveyed (presentation), and what is done to make the use of language unconscious (repetitive)" (5). A number of methods and approaches proliferated in the twentieth century- the Grammar-Translation, Direct, Structural-situational, Audio-lingual- to name only a few. These methods were replaced by newer and more innovative ones. They are still in use in one form or the other in the teaching of L2. But nowadays

communicative method is in vogue for being effective and learner-centered.

Given the ground reality in India, the teacher, to begin with, may start ELT with Grammar-Translation Method. The first language as a reference system is indispensable for the aid of L2 learner. But dependence on learner's mother tongue should not be too much and for too long. So the EL teacher by and by, can switch over to Bilingual Method. This approach provides the most direct form of access to possible meanings by using oral mother tongue equivalents of unknown words or structures. Commenting upon the efficacy of this method, Prof. M. Aslam writes:

The mother tongue equivalents are given to prevent students from getting empty responses. Learning, thus, becomes a mental gymnastics and not a mechanical process as in earlier structural approaches. Once the students have developed a sufficient command of the target language, mother tongue is completely withdrawn and the exercise becomes monolingual (65).

As a next step, Functional Approach or Communicative language Teaching should be adopted. It focuses on the process involved in learning a foreign language rather than the product. It aims to develop communicative competence which implies ability of a learner to use language effectively and appropriately in social contexts and situations. In this way language is acquired rather than learnt consciously. In the classroom teacher facilitates language acquisition through problem solving activities and assignments to be accomplished by learner's participation and interaction. No textbook teaching is done. Learners are actually involved in the process so as to develop their linguistic competence spontaneously and naturally. Thus CLT is preferable to other approaches as it is learner centered, uses language primarily as a medium of communication, focuses on the form of language, turns classrooms into resources, teachers into

guides and makes the process of L2 acquisition spontaneous unconscious, participatory and interact ional.

Conclusion :

Finally, we can say that the teaching of English is not something that "you do the tough and master the easy". But the reverse seems true. The four components of teaching a language- the learner, the teacher, the class and the syllabus- if properly organized and coordinated , English teaching and learning can be effective.

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ORHAN PAMUK'S *THE NEW LIFE* : A POSTMODERN LOVE STORY ?

Santwana Haldar

The New Life (1994), the fourth novel written by the Turkish Nobel Laureate (2006) in literature Orhan Pamuk, is a unique amalgamation of detective story, mystery, philosophical discourse, passionate love story and razor-sharp observation of contemporary life. It is also an example of innovation in the technique of novel-writing. Referring to 'novel' as a foreign art, the protagonist in *The New Life* offers an apology on behalf of his creator :

This newfangled plaything called the novel, which is the greatest invention of the Western culture, is none of our culture's business. That the reader hears the clumsy-ness my voice within these pages is not because I am speaking raucously from a plane which has been polluted by books and vulgarized by gross thoughts; it results rather from the fact that I still have not quite figured out how to inhabit this foreign toy.

The protagonist in the novel explains to the readers his inability to get his narration adjusted to the form of novel which is initially a western form. A witty way indeed, to offer an apology for the clumsiness of the novel that has been deliberately introduced through the atmosphere of the Turkish hinterland-the statues of Atatürk, the provincial administration building, greasy bars, small towns and their market places signifying the western influence on an ancient eastern civilization with a stunning evocation of a nation suspended between east and west-and the technique of metaphysical thriller with its

protagonist obsessed with a magical book that prompts him to delve into the nature of time, self and death. What adds to the 'clumsiness' of the novel is the passionate love story that has been inserted through the complicated rendering of the details in the life of the protagonist. The present article intends to show how the novel is based, initially, on a plot of disappointed love and jealousy,

The novel starts with its narrator's announcement that his whole life had been changed after reading a book that worked its influence on every aspect of his identity, the light surging from the pages of the book having endowed his intellect with "brilliant lucidity" enabling him to recast himself. The seriousness with which he describes the "light" adds a mysterious touch to the novel, and the readers are tempted to apprehend some sort of spiritual experience that is likely to have overwhelmed the narrator. The narrator, however, does not speak about any unearthly feeling; he rather informs that the next day he fell in love and love was "every bit as devastating as the light that surged from the book" (16) and that his life had gone off the track. The narrator, a university student, met the girl Janan, another student of the university, and as he discloses, he first saw the book in the hands of that girl and purchased a copy of the book in a store while returning home. He read the book immediately and felt an urge to leave his old world to get at the new life suggested in the book. After describing some mysterious incidents--a man carrying a pink plastic bag shot Janan's lover Mehmet but could not kill him--and delivering some confusing remarks on time and space the narrator leaves his home and takes a series of bus journey, apparently in search of the new life described in the book he had read. He met Janan in one of the buses when he was eagerly praying to the Angel: "Silence fell for a brief moment, and I observed that the light was growing denser... Suddenly that same impatient desire rose once more from deeper depths and besieged my entire body, the desire to be both here and there. It seemed as if I heard several words, I shivered and it was then, my beauty, that you came

through the door, my Janan" (59). The two started a journey together and the narrator learnt from her that she had actually attended her lover Mehmet in the Kasimpasa Naval hospital after he was shot and that he was to be discharged in a day or two as the wound was not serious. But when Janan went to the hospital the next morning, she found that he had taken off and vanished. Janan was sure that Mehmet had gone to that realm described in the book. The narrator could now feel that Mehmet was still loved by Janan who was actually in search of him. The narrator's hidden anguish is revealed in his words: "I was her *traveling* companion on her journey to that realm; we were to support each other in rediscovering that place.. It was not wrong to think that in our quest for the new life two heads were better than one. We were not merely traveling companions but soulmates; we were each other's unconditional support" (65). The narrator continues to give running commentary of the journey and often goes back to the past in course of the commentary-and sometimes it appears to be a dream even. The narrator and Janan often talked about the angel and also about Death "through words that were fragile and flimsy like the friable things Janan bargained for at market stall" (66). Janan also told him about her experiences with other men. The narrator's obsession for her was not however lessened any way. The poignancy of his passion is revealed in such remarks: "Sometimes, when my arm burst into flames at the very touch of her arm, sometimes waiting all night for her head to fall on my shoulder (please God let it!), sometimes going rigid in my seat for fear of disturbing the strands of her hair on my throat, I counted her breaths reverently and with awe, wondering about the meaning of some sorrow fleeting by on her brow.. And then hours later..., I realized that the lavender-scented sultry garden cradling my head had all along been her neck" (71). Yet, he could feel that she was all along thinking about her love for Mehmet who had left her and the only option for the narrator was to construct "fantasies of joining together what was in (his) dreams with Janan's dreams of the new life" (74).

The narrator's commentary included their conversations, the scenario as seen through the bus windows and also the movies, mostly love stories, displayed on the movie screens of the TV inside the bus. "At the end of the third month of our journeys, Janan and I must have seen more than a thousand kissing scenes?" (78). At last the narrator also kissed Janan in the way the actor and the actress were doing on TV. And he felt a strong agony, and his deep yearning became "the whole world, a new world". "I was waiting, my eyes moist, my body sweating: I was hankering for something without knowing what it was, when everything blissfully exploded, not too fast, not too slowly, and then abated and dissolved" (79). The blissful explosion in his heart coincided with a road accident that claimed several lives. The narrator and Janan went out of the bus and met a dying couple. The dying girl called Janan an angel and in her role as the angel, Janan joined the girl's hand with the dead young man's hand as seen in the films, and then the girl died. Janan searched the pockets of the dead couple and brought out their identification papers and marriage certificates. The narrator and Janan started a new life together as Mr. and Mrs. Kara using the identity cards of the dying couple. They reached Dr. Fine's estate where Mr. and Mrs. Kara were expected and Dr. Fine accepted them cordially. It is gradually revealed that Mehmet, whose actual name was Nahit, was the only son of Dr. Fine who lamented that the book had taken his son away from him. "If my son had the strength and the willpower to resist the ruse perpetrated by the Great Conspiracy and had not allowed himself to be taken in by a mere book despite his great intellect, he would have felt the creativity and strength I feel today, surveying the land from these heights" (135). Having read the reports of the investigators employed by Dr. Fine to look into his son's activities the narrator feels that Mehmet alias Nahit was not actually killed though he is believed to have been killed. The narrator finds that Dr. Fine's investigators wrote about young fellows who were misguided by the book and they described the activities of Mehmet and his beloved.

not suspecting that Mehmet was the other name of Nahit. Seiko, one of the investigators, wrote about the narrator also. Seiko rendered the narrator as an abject victim of entrapment: Janan had walked close to him several times in the hallway, carrying the book in her hand. She also gave him a sweet smile and had been aware of him watching her and "pretending that she had to put down what she had in her hand so that she could rifle through her bag for her wallet, she had placed the book on the table" (165) before him and after ten seconds or so her delicate hand had spirited it away. The poor fish (the narrator) was sure to take the bait and the two of them placed the book free of charge at the sidewalk stall on his route. Describing the incident Seiko commented about the narrator that he was a dreamy kid with nothing special to recommend him. The comment led the narrator towards self-analysis: "Why had I not ever confessed to myself that I had bought and read the book as a means of getting to the beautiful girl?" (165). It is obvious that the revelation made him rather humiliated: "What was truly unbearable, however, was the fact that while I was gazing at Janan with open admiration, staring at her without even being aware that I was staring, while the book lied on my table like a timid magic bird-that is while I was living the most entrancing moment of my life-not only was Mehmet watching the two of us, in the distance there was Seiko, watching all three of us" (165). The coincidence that he had accepted with joy, turns out to be mere fiction constructed by someone else and he suffers from a feeling of being marginalized.

The narrator, yet, is unable to keep him away from Janan. When he meets her, he tries to forget that he had fallen into a trap and justifies his love for her:

I kissed Janan on the lips like some young husband back from a long trip.....I loved her so much I thought nothing else was important. If life presented a rough spot or two, I was the seasoned traveler who had the courage to take things in my stride. Her lips smelled of mulberries. The

two of us, we were the two people who were meant to hold on to each other, turning our backs on the summons of a dogmatic and unattainable life and all those who tried to distress us with their self-sacrifices, all those esteemed and passionate fools who try projecting their obsessions on the world, all the people who had slipped off the course of their lives, lured by ideas that have been thought of some place far away. When two people have shared great dreams, when they've been comrades from morning to night for months on end, when they have covered such great distance together, what could possibly be the impediment to their forgetting the world in an embrace, O Angel ? And most of all, what could stop them from becoming their authentic selves and finding that unique moment of truth?

The ghost of the third lover (169).

He is so much obsessed by the girl that he becomes jealous that the girl still loves another man and plans to take action against the man. Leaving Janan, who has been ill, at Dr. Fine's home the narrator starts his journey to find out Mehmet. After a long search-fantastic details of the search are offered-the narrator comes face to face with Mehmet who has now undertaken the job of copying the book that changed his life and has taken the name Osman. At this stage the narrator reveals that his name, too, is Osman and he demands that he killed the other Osman alias Mehmet alias Nahit. He now comes back to Dr. Fine's and learns much to his dismay that Janan has left. He, too, leaves and returns his home. He makes a thorough search of Janan and finds her nowhere. After the journey is over, the narrative ceases to be fantastic. The narrator informs the readers of his happy family, his daughter and his wife. He also confesses this time that he was moved not by the book but by Janan who, he found later, had married a doctor and settled in Germany. The narrator says, "my life had gone off the track at a young age on

account of love-if you notice Reader, I am sentient enough not to claim it happened on account of the book" (244).

Having made thorough investigations in regard to the writer of the book that influenced so many young men, the narrator finds that the book was written by Uncle Rifky whose murder was reported at the beginning of the novel. The narrator meets Rifky's widow and collects some classics such as Ib'n Arabi's *The Seals of Wisdom*, Dante's *La Vita Nuova*, Rilke's *Duino Elegies* which were read and used by Rifki in his own work where loneliness, angels, series of disasters, reading in trance, love's influence on mind and body and such other topics are described. He finds that "some of the scenes in *The New Life* as some expressions and some fantasies were either inspired by things in those books or else had been .lifted outright" (256). It is thus revealed that the book that was accused of misleading some young men was entitled *The New Life*. The narrator Osman also recalls, in a flash, that his uncle Rifki, who had written some children's books, once told him that he would write a book with Osman as his hero. This revelation clarifies why the narrator felt that the book revealed his own life.

Towards the end of the novel the protagonist tries to be friendly with the sensitive readers with his confession that he "had become a broken man before the age of thirty - five" and yet he was able to pull himself together and to bring some order into his mind by virtue of reading. He read voraciously, he says, but never gave anaesthetic dimension to his sorrowful life. With a rather satiric tone he differentiates his view from that of some writers who interpret 'misery' as beautiful and sublime, calling it 'Chekhovian', and try to give an impression that the anguish of the sufferers has elevated them to a more sensitive and refined state than that of the persons who are happy with "life's ordinary pleasures" (243). The narrator despises "those exploitative writers who make a career out of accommodating these readers' need for consolation" (243). Addressing the readers he says that he became something of a

bookworm to forget Janan and to pass the time pleasantly. Describing the magic of the classics on him he tries to be intimate with the readers with his confession that sometimes the books he read in rapid succession "had set up some sort of murmur among themselves" (244) transforming his head into an orchestra pit "where different musical instruments sounded out" and the process helped him to endure his life and even prompted him to write on the topic of love. For, he repeats, his life had gone off the track at a young age on account of love. Whatever he says about love, he assures the readers, comes from his limited but intense experience, and hence it does not matter if some of his ideas appear to have derived from other books. "Love is the urgency to hold fast to another and to be together in the same place. It's the desire to keep the world out by embracing another. It is the yearning to find a safe harbor for the human soul" (245). These ideas about love make it clear that Pamuk's *The New Life* is about love, or to be specific, about the impact of love on an idealist youth : the protagonist felt an urgency to hold fast to Janan – the book was only a plea to come close to her-and to start a journey together with the hope of getting at a safe harbor for the soul, a place away from the factual world of day-to-day existence. The protagonist's failure to get at such a harbor is a rude shock for him and yet he manages to overcome the shock, getting him adjusted to his old world through continuous reading of good books which together create a magic world for him enabling him "to see the world not through the keyholes we call our eyes but for an instant through the logic of another sort of lens" (255).

The protagonist's disappointment is that of an idealist when confronted with the hard reality of life. As a grown-up person he is disappointed when he finds that some of Rifki's ideas and images in his book were borrowed from other books; this disappointment is similar to his disappointment in his youth when he found that the angel of his dream was not the angel she seemed. He still tried to believe that what did not look pure at first sight was in fact "the sign

of a profoundly enchanting secretor a unique significance" (260). He made up his mind that "all could be solved through the intercession of the angel" (260) and tried to trace the source of 'angel' in Rifki's book. Having noted similarities between the 'angel' in Rifki's book and the 'angel' in Rilke's *Elegies*, the narrator made researches on the source of Rilke's concept of angel and traced the influence of the Koran in Rilke's work. "Aside from trivial differences such as the Koran referring to angels as a separate class of beings, or that the fiendish crew in Hell was also considered to be of angelic descent, or that the Biblical angels provided a stronger connection between God and His creatures, there was little else to prove Rilke tight about his distinction concerning the angels of Islam versus those in the Christian heaven. ..even if Rilke were not alluding to Archangel Gabriel appearing to Mohammad 'on the clear horizon,' witnessed by the stars 'running their course and setting' at the very moment between the darkness of night and the light of day, as it is told in some of the verses in the surah called Al Takwir, Uncle Rikfi, when he was in the process of giving his book its final shape, could have been thinking of the divinely revealed Book in which 'everything is written'" (261-62). He was so much engrossed in the thought of angels having absolute beauty that he not only searched the religious scriptures and the classics but also the photocopies of angels used in packets for caramels. In a flash of memory provoked by the silver candy dish given to him by his aunt Ratibe – it was the same dish in which he was offered caramels in his childhood and the caramels helped him to remember forgotten matters-the narrator suddenly remembered that he was offered New Life brand caramels on the wrapper of which there were the trademark angels, seven in all, sitting politely on the each letter of 'new life'. With the information that New Life Caramels were a product of Angel Candy and Chewing Gum, Inc, in 18 Bloomingdale Street, Eskisehir, he made an immediate decision to go to Eskisehir with the intention of talking directly to the candy man why the picture of an angel was put on the wrapper of the caramel. He took a bus for the destination and after arriving there

learnt that Angel Candy and Chewing Gum had closed down their operations in Eskisehir and the founder of the company, a gentleman by the name of Sureyya, had moved fifteen years ago to Malatya. In Malatya he learnt that the company had thrived for a final couple of years some fourteen years ago. He also learnt that everything had had come to an end when the well-advertised fruit-flavored products produced by a big international company were seen on TV. His investigations further revealed that like people who used to flee the plague once upon a time, the gentleman called Sureyya and his family had fled to farther East "as if they were trying to escape from the gaudy consumer products with foreign names which, thanks to the support of advertisements and TV, arrived from the West and infected the whole country like a deadly contagious disease" (212).

The narrator's next destination was 'Ray Hill Street' where he met the octogenarian gentleman Sureyya who greeted him cordially. When asked about New Life Caramels, the old man went on explaining how the Western people had learnt about Chess from Persia and then making some minor changes in the set presented Chess back to the people of the east. "Today we were struggling to understand our own sensitivities through their rational methods, assuming this is what becoming civilized' means", he says. Commenting on Dr. Fine's mistake the old man observed that the doctor was a materialist putting his trust in things, assuming that he could prevent the dissipation of the spirit inherent in objects by preserving them, and having realized that lost souls could not be saved through preventing loss of, objects, he had restored to terrorism. The situation had suited the Americans fine, he said further, and the Turkish were "at the end of the autonomous history that pertain cd to colonized lands" (282). Finally, the old man came to the point of angel that he took up as his trademark and told that the -image of angel came to him from the film *The Blue Angel* where the actress Marlene Dietrich played the role of the heroine a woman of easy virtue sincerely loved by a school teacher. The narrator felt that for a

while he was not there the vision of his youth enveloped in the light that surged from Rifky's *The New Life* gliding past in front of his eyes "like the blazing lights on a wondrous ship disappearing inaccessibly into the darkness of the night" (284). Coming back to the present the narrator realized that the old man was blind and he had not understood it during the six long hours of conversations with him. [The narrator now tries to defend him throwing a challenge on the readers' intellect, asking the contemptuous reader when the angel was first mentioned in the novel and such other textual questions. This is a 'unique way to establish a relationship between the author and the reader.'

The novel ends with the narrator's realization that one has to accept both the good and the bad aspects of life—accident as well as luck, love as well as loneliness, joy as well as sorrow. The old man's long lecture did not offer the narrator any expected result and he confesses that he arrived at the end of all the adventures, voyages and mysteries he could possibly invent for himself. He feels relieved that he has no further hope and desire to attain the meaning and the unified reality of the world, the book and his life. A postmodernist stand is suggested in the remark that prompts the reviewers to trace the influence of Borges in Pamuk's work. The last bus journey described in the novel—this time it is a journey from the town of Son Pazar to the narrator's own town—makes the narrator overwhelmed with memories. The bus was one of the noisy old Magirus buses that Janan and he used to take and he felt that his past and future appeared in the purple and leaden colors on the screen where the lovers who misunderstood each other wept in a movie. He again asks the readers not to draw out of his pain the dignity of being human which all readers can share. He had desired to set him apart from others, he says, and he thought himself to be someone special with a goal that was entirely different. This is a crime, he knows, and yet he does not believe the moral of his story: "my life story remained merely my own individual tale and failed to assuage my pain" (290). The narrator was deeply moved by this "merciless conclusion" of his

journey and was weeping uncontrollably to the music on the radio. The fellow passengers watched him and looked troubled. An old peddler, who had also been peering at him, came forward to console him and offered him a pouch of mints that carried the trade name 'BLISS', as if he were a little boy. The old peddler said, "Today we are altogether defeated. The West has swallowed us up, trampled on us in passing. They have invaded us down to our soup, our candy, our underpants; they have finished us off. But someday, someday perhaps a thousand years from now, we will avenge ourselves; we will bring an end to this conspiracy by taking them out of our soup, our chewing gum, our souls. Now go ahead and eat your mints, don't cry over spilt milk" (291). Surprisingly, the narrator who had insisted on the individual nature of his pain did not object to this 'universal' pain he was thought to have suffered from. He even says that perhaps he had been looking for such a consolation and after taking his meal he had a good sleep. Next morning he woke up when the bus stopped at a modern restaurant and he was rather delighted to have some westernized food. Suddenly he felt an intense longing for his home, his wife and his daughter. After he boarded the bus again, he was reminded of the refrain that was rising from his tired soul "What is Life? A period of time. What is time? An accident~ What is accident? A life.. A new life" (294). It was a "magic moment of equilibrium between the light inside the bus and the light outside" (294) and in that moment his eyes were dazzled by a bright light and he beheld the angel. "The angel was so close to me and yet how far", he says and explains that the profound and powerful light kept him from what the angel looked like for sure. He is yet confirmed that the angel looked nothing like those in the Persian miniatures, nor like ones on the wrappers of the caramels, not anything like the photocopied angels. The angel was not even like the girl of flesh and blood he had desired so long. For a moment he yarned to say something to the Angel but could make no sound. Gradually, he came to realize that the angel was "as pitiless as it was distant and wondrous" and that "it was only a witness and could do nothing

more"; he felt "the unbearable power of what was merciless and inevitable" (295). The novel ends with a vision of accident as the narrator saw two trucks passing each other, fast approaching on a collision course with their bus. The narrator remembers the past accidents and the anticipation of peace following the accidents he had lived through years ago. He also remembers, "the passengers who were neither here nor there sitting blissfully, as if sharing together time that had come out of paradise" (295). The narrator visualizes an image of accident, the stillness of the morning broken with "happy screams and thoughtless cries" and the travelers "on the threshold between the two worlds as if discovering the eternal jokes existent in a space without gravity" (295). He knows that some passengers in the back seats will remain alive but he being ensconced in the first seat in the front, "would be instantly transported into a new world", though he has "no wish for death, nor for crossing over into the new life" (294). The narrator's zeal for life in all its intensity in the face of imminent death and the cruelty of chance which is unavoidable overwhelm the readers who almost identify them with the narrator in spite of the narrator's repeated denial of sharing universal feelings.

The novel has a complex texture, its journey motif suggesting the protagonist's search for identity as well as an idealist's search for the mysteries of life. At the beginning of his journey he sincerely wished that his 'dear angel' would descend from the sky and reveal to him the secrets of his heart and life (51) -and at the same time the journey also suggests a search for the real meaning of time. Since the narrator found the remark "Time is three-dimensional silence" in Rifky's book, he made desperate attempts to understand the dimensions of time. All these ideas overlapping one another make the novel clumsy, but the narrator returns to the topic of Love every now and then. The angel, bliss, still point in time, all these refer to the protagonist's concept of ideal love. The magical pocket watch invented by a farmer suggests a simple approach to love that is equated to bliss. "It was just a pocket watch, but one sensitive to

bliss; it stopped when you were happy so that your blissful hour could persist for all eternity; and conversely, when you are in despair, the small and big hand speeded up tremendously, making you remark how quickly time had passed and how your sorrows had ended in the blink of an eye" (92).. Thus when the narrator saw Janan dancing with a high school boy, he felt desperate out of jealousy and reflected, "Time according to the watch that gauged happiness must have been going full speed ahead" (93). The narrator and Janan were then moving in the town of Gudul and the narrator said to a dealer in the market, "If life is a journey; I have been on the road for six months, and I learned a thing or two... I had read a book and I had lost my whole world. I had set out on the road 10 find a new world. What had I found?.. I fell silent for a moment and pondered, but I didn't know what I was saying when I blurted out: "Angel". And as if waking up from a dream, I began to look for you in the crowd, suddenly having remembered: Love" (93).

The New Life belongs to that category of fiction which is a radical 'departure from what is loosely called regular fiction and also from the grand narrative of Modernist era. Pamuk reminds one of Jorge Luis Borges who was the innovator of postmodernist prose technique that both incorporates and challenges the history, cultural climate and the world view of a particular country². Borges's stories read like historical articles and at the same time they blur the boundaries of fact and fiction. The characters in his stories are as much products of the interior world, the world of imagination, as of the outer world. A similar comment is applicable to the characters in Pamuk's fiction. Pamuk has chosen a protagonist for his novel *The New Life* who is obsessed with love for a particular lady who loves others and yet the novel does not lapse into sentimentality thanks to the protagonist who absorbs the world outside perceived by him. It is not possible to separate the narrator from contemporary Turkey. To quote Douwe W. Fokkema in this context: "Instead of discussing the various options open to him in a detached and intellectual way, as

the Modernist did, the postmodernist assimilates and absorbs the world that he perceives, without knowing or wanting to know how to structure that world so that it might make sense" (49). The post-modern critics such as Jameson, Hutcheon, and McHale took interest in the power of narratives. Brian McHale suggests that modernist fiction is epistemological, that is, concerned with problems of knowledge and understanding and the postmodernist fiction is ontological, that is, concerned with the creation and interrelation of worlds of being. Steven Connor's comment on McHale's observation is rewarding in the context of Pamuk's novel. Connor says, "To move from epistemology to ontology, from world-witnessing to world-making and world-navigation, is to recognize that the problems of knowing are both intensified and transformed when the very acts of seeing and understanding are themselves taken to generate new worlds or states of being"³. The narrator in *The New Life*, an ardent and obsessed lover, prefers world-making to passive world-witnessing. That is why he is always for making new life. As he says, "It is better to say a couple of words rather than remain silent. What good is it to keep our mouths shut, for heaven's sake? Why passively watch life grinding down our bodies and souls like a merciless train slowly proceeding to its destination?" (245). Considered from all these aspects *The New Life* may be called a post-modern love story.

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THE THEME OF *SONS AND LOVERS* : TRIAL AND FULFILMENT

A. K. Tripathy

Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* was preceded by A Collier's *Friday Night*, a drama in three acts written in 1909. The play embodies an experience that was to find its full articulation in the novel about three years later. Lawrence felt strongly about the peculiar domestic situation he himself had known and he had a poignant awareness of the tragic implications of that situation. It was a situation that was undoubtedly personal; but it had also a sense of universality about it and typified the tragic plight of man in the modern industrial society. Fully convinced that this situation and the experience that went with it- had great aesthetic potentialities, Lawrence sought to visualize them in all their concreteness. A Collier's *Friday Night* was precisely an effort in this direction. Human psyche is a bewildering tangle of experiences. For aesthetic use a significant experience has to be disengaged from the intricate maze so that it may be perceived in all its clarity and precision. Lawrence wanted to define with the utmost degree of exactness the situation and the experience that were to form the texture of his fictional world. Hence his experiment with the theme in A Collier's *Friday Night*.

Quite appropriately, the play was written in meticulous conformity to the classical unities of time, place and action. The scene throughout the play is the kitchen of the Lamberts' house. Characters come in and go out and we gradually become aware of the nature of their relationship with each other. The background of the kitchen is suggestive of the social and economic status of these

people and the mode of their life. The entire action is compressed within a few hours of the earlier part of the night. Within such a short span of time there was altogether no possibility of suggesting a process of growth and development in the characters or any significant change in their relationships. In the play, therefore, they are presented with a hardened attitude towards each other. They betray a singular lack of flexibility and stick firmly to their positions. This fixity about characters means a sense of fixity about the situation of their life as well.

The playwright deliberately keeps the action within well-defined limits and we see how hate and love, the two primordial human emotions, operate within this restricted frame. The areas of their operation, however, are clearly demarcated and there is no overlapping. The major figure against whom the hostility of the family group is directed is the collier, Mr. Lambert. His wife, son and daughter represent an attitude of irrepressible resentment and annoyance. Howsoever hard he may assert his position as the master of the house, Mrs. Lambert and her two children treat him as an outsider whose coming home throws the normal tenor of their life disturbingly out of gear. Another figure who earns rather undeservingly the hostility of the mother is Maggie Pearson, the object of Ernest Lambert's love and adoration. Side by side with this area of hate, there is the area of love and characters engaged in the love-game are Ernest and Maggie, and Nellie Lambert and Eddie, the latter playing their parts in this game off the stage. Then there is the abnormally possessive love of Mrs. Lambert for her son, Ernest. She would not let her husband or the daughter eat the grapes she has brought for her son knowing that he has a special fondness for them. We see her a little later remonstrating with Ernest for his having kept away from home till late in the night for nothing more than meaningless chatter with Maggie. In the situation that Lawrence has chosen for the play, the Lambert children are presented as grown-up lovers.

The central situation in the novel, *Sons and Lovers*, too is the same that the play *A Collier's Friday Night* has. But Lawrence here introduces four children, three sons and a daughter, and we find shades of variation in the relationship between the father and the children. The children again are shown in a process of growth from early childhood to the adult stage and in this process their attitude towards their father undergoes perceptible modification. The youngest son, Arthur, is particularly fond of his father and waits anxiously for Walter Morel's return after the day's work in the pit. But as he grows old, the influence of the mother causes a rupture in the relationship between the father and the son and Arthur also begins hating his father as his two elder brothers do. In the novel Lawrence shows love turning into hate for which there was no scope in the play. We also find a sense of fluidity in the relationship between the father and the children. Though the mother has taught them to hate him, they cry and weep one day when the father is late in returning home and the mother tells them that while going to the pit he had said threateningly that he would not be coming back. As Walter is having his bath, Paul views his naked chest and limbs with a sense of intense admiration and becomes instinctively aware of his identity with the hefty, well-built collier. He is after all a part of that flesh. While in the play the characters were shown with a hardened, stiff attitude, here in the novel there are suggestions of shift and ambivalence.

The relationship between the husband and the wife too reveals the same kind of ambivalence. Gertrude's attitude to her husband alternates between hate and love and she continues cherishing the fond memory of what Walter's spell had meant to her. There are occasions when, notwithstanding her hostility to Walter, she cannot help reminiscing about the days of happy love she had spent with him.

The presence of more than one son in the novel serves yet another purpose. Lawrence invests William's death in the prime of

his youth with great significance. The grown-up boy feels the natural urge for a satisfying relationship with a girl of his own age. But the mother who is afraid of losing her hold on the son tries with all her might to prevent him from entering into the kind of relationship he yearns for. The son is unable to liberate himself from the stranglehold of the mother. That alone could have given him the sort of fulfilment he needed. The strangulating grip of the mother ultimately kills him.

The second son, Paul, escapes death; but the impact of the mother means havoc in his life as well. Ernest in *A Collier's Friday Night* had only one girl as his love. Paul in *Sons and Lovers* has two girls, Miriam and Clara Dawes, coming into his life one after the other. We know how Miriam and Clara represent spiritual and physical love respectively and neither of the two relationships proves satisfying to Paul. If Paul is unable to have a sense of fulfilment in love, it is very much a case of his own failure. The influence of the mother has caused a split in love and Paul is incapacitated from viewing it as an integrated experience. This split in his psyche is the essence of his tragedy and this, Lawrence felt, was the tragedy of thousands of men and women in the industrial west. In his letter to Edward Garnett, he writes, "It is a great tragedy, and I tell you have written a great book. It's the tragedy of thousands of young men in England – it may even be Bunny's tragedy. I think it was Ruskin's, and men like him" (48).

The play, as the title suggests, is the story of a collier with the collieries, though invisible, constantly haunting the conspicuousness of the characters. To make the collieries a significant reality Lawrence makes each of the members of the Lambert family keep the kitchen fire alive by throwing coal into it. The collieries are a significant reality in the novel also. But along with the drab and dismal landscape of the collieries we have also the background of nature, whether in the form of the kitchen-garden of the morels with flowers blossoming in intoxicating profusion or Willey Farm, the country-house of Miriam.

The novel thus has a broader landscape and Lawrence not only shows the wholesome and restorative influence of nature on characters, but also the sinister expansion of industrialism with the consequent shrinkage of rural England and the heart of man.

The theme which Lawrence had handled in *A Collier's Friday Night* in all its stark simplicity acquires richness of meaning and texture in *Sons and Lovers*. What in the play had been a domestic situation, expands and embraces the whole of life in industrial England in the early years of the twentieth century. While the play presents the nature of relationships in a group of working-class men and women, the novel embodies a vision. The transition from the play to the novel means an advance from the naturalistic to the symbolic mode. *A Collier's Friday Night* was a trial with the theme. Its full flowering was to be accomplished in *Sons and Lovers*.

Lawrence realized perhaps that the dramatic mode of presenting the theme, the situation and the characters meant, of necessity, an acceptance of severe limitations. In a drama the situation and the characters are left to unfold themselves of their own accord without any kind of authorial interference. Lawrence, however, was an artist with a design. The principle of 'negative capability' of which Shakespeare offers the best example, had no place in his aesthetic canon. Because the novel proved to be the most suitable art medium for a detailed and lucid exposition of one's views, he regarded it as the most effective of the art forms in the twentieth century. It is significant that he should have tried his hand at all the major art forms-drama, poetry and the novel; but it is in the novel alone that we find him attaining lofty heights of glory and triumph. Impatient with the constraints of the dramatic form, Lawrence made occasional use of the subtle devices used commonly by the novelists for their interpretation of characters and their relationships.

We have evidence of this in his stage-directions which are as significant from the point of view of revealing characters and the

nature of their relationships as the dialogue. As a matter of fact, these stage directions reveal the stages of emotional tension in a better way than the dialogue. Mrs. Lambert and Ernest have had a sharp exchange of words over what the mother considers to be the silly infatuation of the son for Maggie. Then they make up, hug and kiss each other and assume an air of normality as if nothing really serious had happened. But the anguish each of them has suffered is too sharp to be dismissed casually. The kiss and embrace are not spontaneous. They are rather a pretentious demonstration of rapprochement of the mother and son have managed to achieve with considerable effort. When Ernest asks her if she understands things better now, she says she does. But Lawrence puts in a brief comment within brackets: "having decided not to torment him", "she bluffs him". Just a little later we have the following longer comment in the form of stage-direction :

There are in each of their voices traces of the recent anguish, which makes their speech utterly insignificant. Nevertheless, in thus speaking, each reassures the other that the moment of abnormal emotion and proximity is passed, and the usual position of careless intimacy is reassumed (*Three Plays* 79).

The play ends with the following significant observations by the author :

There is in their tones a dangerous gentleness – so much gentleness that the safe reserve of their souls is broken (*Three Plays* 79).

And then about the mother :

... she returns with her candle, looking little and bowed and pathetic...(*Three Plays* 79).

Lawrence clearly suggests that the mother is a miserable and defeated creature knowing that her hold on the children is loosening. This is

drama partly fictionalized. Whenever the dialogue and action prove inadequate means of communication, recourse is taken to the novelistic technique.

A similar situation is treated in *Sons and Lovers* in a more expansive and elaborate manner. If *A Collier's Friday Night* abounds in examples of drama being fictionalized, *Sons and Lovers* offers copious examples where this process is reversed. Retaining the novelistic framework, Lawrence exploits his dramatic apprenticeship in the form of crisp and pointed dialogue between Paul and his mother. The chapter under reference is significantly entitled 'Strife in Love'. Here the novelist presents one of the many encounters between two most powerful characters Paul and Mrs. Morel. Paul has come home late at night after seeing off Miriam. Mrs. Morel and Annie have been waiting for him and are in a very tense mood. When Paul finally returns there follows a heated exchange of words between him and his mother. Mrs. Morel leaves Paul in no doubt that she does not approve of his frequent meetings with Miriam. She expresses her resentment in no uncertain terms. So harsh has Mrs. Morel been that Paul bursts into tears and apologizes for his neglect of his mother. Mrs. Morel has on the other hand a strong premonition of her impending defeat at the hands of Miriam. She almost resigns herself to her predicament :

Mrs. Morel was so intense that Paul began to pant.

... ..

'You're old, Mother, and we're young'.

He only meant that the interests of her age were not the interests of his. But he realized the moment he had spoken that he had said the wrong thing.

'Yes, I know it well – I am old. And therefore I may stand aside; I have nothing more to do with you. You only want me to wait on you-the rest is for Miriam.'

He could not bear it. Instinctively he realized that he was life to her. And, after all, she was the chief thing to him,

the only supreme thing.

'You know it isn't, Mother, you know it isn't ! '

'It looks a great deal like it', she said, half putting aside her despair.

'No, Mother-I really don't love her. I talk to her, but I want to come home to you'.

He had taken off his collar and tie, and rose, bare-throated to go to bed. As he stooped to kiss his mother, she threw her arms around his neck, hid her face on his shoulder, and cried, in a whimpering voice, so unlike her own that he writhed in agony ;

'I can't bear it. I could let another women – but not her. She'd leave me no room, not a bit of room – '

... ..

'And I've never-you know, Paul-I've never had a husband – not really – '

... ..

'And she exults so in taking you from me – she's not like ordinary girls'.

'Well, I don't love her, Mother,' he murmured, bowing his head and hiding his eyes on her shoulder in misery. His mother kissed him a long, fervent kiss.

'My boy!' she said, in a voice trembling with passionate love. Without knowing, he gently stroked her face (*Sons and Lovers* 262).

Within the restricted framework of the play Lawrence could only hint at the defeat of the mother. In *Sons and Lovers*, which provided a broader canvas, he was able to show the defeat leading to the mother's death.

In *Sons and Lovers* we find Lawrence making profuse use of the flower symbol. A *Collier's Friday Night* too has a highly meaningful example. It is an evidence of Lawrence's sure handling of symbol

even at this early stage of his literary career. The symbol is that of a crushed rose on Nellie's bosom. The rose has suffered this fate because of the tight embrace in which the two lovers, Nellie and Eddie, held each other. This is how Ernest comments poetically on the sad history of a rose between two hearts :

Rose, red rose, that burns with a low flame,
 What has broken you ?
 Hearts, two hearts caught up in a game
 of shuttlecock-Amen ! (*Three plays* 77).

The rose here may be taken as a symbol of love. The nature of life in the modern world, however, does not admit of a smooth course for it. There are all kinds of frustrations and disappointments because of the general atmosphere of hostility and resistance. Both Ernest and Nellie have a sad experience of it. The history of the crushed rose is both comic and tragic-comic for the onlookers, but poignantly tragic for the victims of such a fate. The way Lawrence handled this symbol in *A Collier's Friday Night* gave clear indication of his later development as an artist. It was a fore-runner of his bold experiments in the novels where the narrative structure was to yield place to the symbolic structure.

Attempting a brief comparative study of *A Collier's Friday Night* and *Sons and Lovers*, Arthur E. Waterman says :

As an earlier version of the first parts of *Sons and Lovers*, then, *A Collier's Friday Night* oversimplifies conflict and character, presenting the mother's viewpoint one-sidedly without honestly treating the deeper issues. The novel qualifies the attitude toward the mother and examines the nature of love much more complexly than does the play (*Spilka* 144).

This is criticism having gone wrong because of its failure to have reckoned with the restrictions of the dramatic form adhering meticulously to the classical unities and the greater opportunities and freedom to develop characters that a novelist enjoys.

It is rather strange that Arthur E. Waterman should have seen the play ending on a note of triumph for the mother. As I have already made out with quotations from Lawrence's stage-directions at the end of *A Collier's Friday Night*, the mother is really a pathetic and defeated creature and this is the impression the author intended his readers to have about her. Lawrence's play looks a failure because we are unable to see it as an autonomous entity and always compare it with *Sons and Lovers* because of the identical nature of the situation in both the works. The situation in the play, it may be said, is no proper objective correlative for the theme as it develops later in *Sons and Lovers*. But why should one judge the play in terms of the expanded theme of *Sons and Lovers* ?

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UMA PARAMESWARAN'S *TRISHANKU* : THE TESTAMENT OF AN EXILE

C. N. Srinath

Man the wanderer is a pilgrim on earth. It is believed in the Indian tradition that human existence is a sojourn and hence all action is tempered by a tentative attitude to life. And yet to acquire the best of both the worlds becomes an innate desire. Hence the tension between body and soul, mind and matter, here and beyond, life and after life, the past and present, memory and desire. It is in this context exile on a foreign soil acquires new dimension when the individual wants to have both his roots and fruits together, when he wants to create his own country in the geography of his new existence. He becomes a *Trishanku*, like the legendary king who is hung between heaven and earth. It is a state of not-belonging, a human predicament which has negative connotations but need not be a closed door for a writer like Uma Parameswaran whose doors keep opening.

Here in *Trishanku* is the experience of a whole community of Indians in Canada, a new country, a new culture. Exile has always been an in our great epics the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharatha*, a great chastening experience. It is as though a part of one's spiritual and intellectual making and hence prince Rama and the Pandavas have to undergo this to sustain kingship later. It is undoubtedly the forest, away from civilisation, one's own hearth and home that becomes the training ground for exile. It's the communion with bird, beast and flower, the river, the hill the tree that chastens and strengthens man. Does it always happen to the Immigrant visa-glued who have not begun to live anywhere? That seems to be the question haunting the author of *Trishanku* herself having settled down in Canada for more than three decades.

The Invocation of the poem has an impressive imaginative beginning with childhood beads of rainbow colour becoming words of different lines generating images of feeling :

Then came a time
when feelings quietly rose
as the spring at Alakananda
rises up from earth's womb
above distant Badrinath
And words rose, flowed over
swept down carrying rocks and trees
In their tumultuous waves'

And after this lyrical evocation of Alakananda and Badrinath the poet rows to begin with the one that is here and now.

Then comes the soliloquies of characters Chander, Usha, Dilip, Savitri, Chandrika, Sharad. If Chander recalls his grandfather figure with 'goldbordered turban and gold headed cane 'it is ushas' turn to recall her 'grandpa's library / with stained - glass windows and marble figurines/ brought from Venice and distant Florence.

Inspite of their totally European evocation Usha 'born in that magic hour' is sensitively conscious of the down with melodious chants.

Arise Mother Kamakashi

Arise Kausalya's son

Arise O Lord of the seven Hills

reminding us of the Musical chant of a Suprabhatham by M. S. Subbalakshmi.

There is a Juxraposition of nostalgia, and deep memory of the native past and the implied emptiness of the present not necessarily a reflection on the adopted country. There is a wry humour and sarcasm in Chander's reflection on his father, mother and sister writing from home with stereotype expectations.

My sister writes every few months

November and April

thinking I might come for Xmas
or the summer, short lists, all underlined
or in block letters:
Bring a car, a blue cher, and if possible
Portcards of your Boeing 707.
My father in his large scrawl
Writes every week often ending :
Find yourself a job chandee, and stay there
This country is rule by blackgaurds.

My mother wrote to me
In Tamil 'GM' centered top of the page
My dear son, A mother's blessing

followed by 'sundry' details and giving
voice to the deep hidden sentiment when
she concludes the letter:
'My son this is the land where the Ganga flows'

Such is the dramatisation of the different voices within a family so effectively brought out even in routine stereotyped letters from home. The father's practicality is a reflection of an erosion of values and lack of self-confidence whereas the not English educated mother has immense faith in the land where the ganga flows.

The woman in *Trishanku* is presented as witness to deprivation of motherhood and also as a proud mother who can conquer Death itself. Here Usha loses her still born infant, 'heir to the heritage of the solar kings' whereas Savitri's children are all 'Little Markandayas' always nine year old' reminding us of the significance of Satyavan and Savithri legend. The creative use of Mytri and legend throughout the poem is Uma's forte. The rich evocation of the ancient Indian tradition with its Vedic and Upanishadic history is achieved imaginatively by the use of significant names loaded with historical and mythical import. Uma does it almost as effectively as Eliot did

in his *Waste Land* by evoking Ganga and Himayant though the contrast that Eliot could provide with the decline of human civilisation after the world war could not have been used by Uma with regard to her contemporary Canadian existence. But the poignancy is brought out here also because of the deprived predicament of an exile in a foreign country.

Just like the cockney episode of Lil and her husband in *The Wasteland* which offers a lighter vein only to enhance the gravity of the human predicament here also in Uma's *Trishanku* we have Tala towards the end of the poem bemoaning in her native slant of English

'Namaste' Savitri behn, come in

so good you are ...

Seat your good self.

Yes, we got vacuum cleanee

It is so convenient, no ?

You phoned Yesterday ? O I am so sorry

I was not being here"

It is in Tala's mother - in - law that we find the real hurt of an orthodox woman in an alien atmosphere :

'What kind of a place you' be brought me to, son ?

Where the windows are away closed

And the front door it is always locked ?

And no rangoli designs an porch steps

To say please come in ?

How can expect Lakshmi to come, and son ?

Open the Windows, son

I am too used to the sounds

of living things:

of birds in the morning

of rain and mind at night,

Not the drow of furnance fan

and his of hot blasts

and whoosh whoose of Washing Machine.

The other characters join the chorus of the entre poem as well. Jayant and Veejala struggle to merge with the main stream that is the whitestream. Even the orthodox Chamanlal Dwivedi finds everything accommodative if only you can adjust, that favourite Indian word both in the country and abroad.

"Everything is fine here
one must make adjustments
of course. At first
I thought this was Rakshasa land

where everything is opposite -
It was difficult at first
to eat meal and drink liquor
But the rishis did both
in older days;

I well versed in both, know this
for I am Chamanlal Dwivedi
learned in the Vedas.

The poet presents an Indian society in microcosm abroad, their attitudes and behaviour - sometimes despicable, pitiable, and adorable too as we find moments of introspection, self-criticism, and yearning for the deep and profound either within or in the form of the native country, history and tradition. So you find characters like Vitual who try to make a compromise

'We shall build our temple
Here where the A
Flows into the Red.
And I shall bring
As Bhagiratha did of old
To our land
our Assiniboine
And the fluteplayer

Dark as kaya blossom
shall dance on the waters of
La salle".

It is an extraordinary poem on the whole reflecting the agony of distance from home the joy of a missed comfort suddenly accessible and the, ensuing boredom as well, the anxiety of erosion of age old values, personal human relationships, coupled with a recognition of one's own capabilities and correctives to one's closed mind back home unmitigated loneliness in company and seaking the past by overtaking the present or indulging in the moment unmindful of its roots - it's tale of an Indian community in Canada coming to terms with life by weaving a new interior continent out of the geography and history of two nations.



TASTE AND PRINCIPLE IN LITERATURE

H. H. Anniah Gowda

I am very grateful to the Executive Committee of the All India English Teachers' Association for having elected me President of the Association for the year 1999. It meant some hard work for me when I was enjoying my well-earned rest after about four decades of teaching and have retreated into a shell. But it is good to come out now and again like an insect from the cocoon well protected in its silky case.

I used to be a very active member of the Association from its inception at the Aligarh Muslim University about the middle of the 50's. I attended most of the conferences, served on the executive, wrote and read papers, tried to justify the applause of my colleagues, who were very considerate to me. But something happened to my sweet relationship with the All India English Teachers' Conference, and it suddenly snapped. My name was nominated for President about two decades ago in Trivandrum but a young "poet" (note the quotes) whose name I did not mention in my lecture on Indian poetry in English, objected and other members yielded to the "poet's" self-esteem. Since then he has not heard of either as a poet or as a teacher of English.

Gatherings such as these are a source of scholarly happiness and sweetness: we see familiar faces and exchange words of friendship and courtesy and get to know one other and their work.

This paper was delivered as the Presidential address to the 44th Session of AIETC held at B.H.U. Varanasi, on 20 Dec. 1999 by the Author.

In the realm of scholars there are no strangers; a scholar is known by his work. I am happy that the conference is meeting in Varanasi, the holy city, venerated in our scriptures. My wife and I have visited the university before on the University Grants Commission scheme for lectures, hence it is like a homecoming for me. Dr. O. P. Mathur helped us in our visit to the holy places around the city. Dr. Singh was the Head of the Department of English and Dr. K. L. Shrimali was the Vice Chancellor. Our visit was memorable and pleasant.

At Varanasi we are attracted to Lord Siva, the presiding deity. I am delighted that I preside over the conference at an ancient city on the bank of the holy river which swallows the dead and purifies the living. Whatever may be the irreverent views of Aldous Huxley (who was only jesting and not serious), Varanasi is the city of God, pilgrims and the university. Huxley, who smiles ironically, is aware of acres sloping upon acres of humanity. How can an Englishman who lacks the eye of faith understand Hindu beliefs about eclipse and the Hindu veneration of the holy rivers and cities documented in the scriptures? Huxley cannot tell us that religion is a luxury that India cannot afford. Religion has put its stamp on Indians and has given us a way of life. We visit our holy cities and have darsan of gods or goddesses responsible for the holiness of the place. Varanasi is the Mecca of Hinduism. Hence from many different parts of India people come here to breathe their last in the sacred city. Such is the power of Lord Siva!

The Banaras Hindu University founded by Mahamana Malavyaji (who described himself as a prince among beggars) was a great visionary. He was of the class of patriots like Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru. Dr. Simhadri, who is in charge of the administration, is a scholar of repute. He has a name that speaks for itself. University administration is quite different from the administration of any other organisation: here we need a scholarly touch, an understanding mind and courage based on wisdom.

The English Teachers' Association is a club of scholars gathered to discuss and disseminate each other's knowledge. At Varanasi, we enjoy the hospitality of the members of the distinguished department of English, once headed by stalwarts: Amamath Jha is a name to cojure with: so are O'Brien, Dr. Singh and Mathur of Aurobindo fame and others, culminating in the present head, Professor Tripathy and his admirable and scholarly staff.

We teachers of literature and language have chosen a very difficult but pleasant vocation; we have a total commitment. We mingle with our students constantly and on a basis of mutual respect. We endeavour to build up a reputation which floats around other people and other groups and educational administration. We instruct in a language that is spreading around the world; we feel proud. Sir Walter Raleigh, the first Professor of English literature at Oxford said, "If I am accused on Judgment day of teaching literature, I shall plead that I never believed in it and that I maintained a wife and children". Let us ignore the views of Raleigh: we teachers of English are a dedicated lot and English is a language that will find itself in the service of the world community forever.

English Literature in India in the past 50-odd years has passed through a time of radical disturbance. When we say that we "teach literature," it involves a definition of literature which does many different things : interpretation, criticism and teaching are activities that are fruitful and rewarding; we are engaged in insights that are directly related to the works in hand.

Today a teacher of English is confronted with a number of problems with the invasion of new-fangled language theories: Deconstruction shows the emptiness of literary language and texts; Marxists show how the works of literature have been used as the instruments of power to establish the ideology of one over another dominant class: Shakespeare as a hegemonic instrument. While Feminists demonstrate literature's use in the past wrongfully to suppress the female.

Let us recall that Joseph Stalin who had imagined that literature could be pressed into service on behalf of social propaganda had declared writers the engineers of human souls. The general drive of one branch of literary theory (from Russian formalism, through practical and New Criticism) of imaging a totality to structuralism and post-structuralism is the basis of *avant-garde* writing. It has been to establish de-contextualisation, getting the author out of the text. Literary interpretation, in the twentieth century is haunted by the post-Darwinian, post-Freudian and post-Einsteinian cultures of uncertainty. The artistic *avant-garde* has to move on unaccounted by failed idealism and epistemological collapse. However, literature, which springs from the depth of fullness of intellectual or moral life is not to be emptied of all the joy and pleasure. The two-decade reign of New Criticism (largely of Eliot's inspiration) has ended on the eve of disruption of Western literary thought, culminating in a post-structuralistic phase of unparalleled innovation. Novel critical methods were fomented less by looking afresh at the distant properties of literature than by consulting extra-literary discipline.

English Departments have to instruct in writing and reading rather than pursue the Arnoldian mission of studying the great works of literature to make reason and the will of God prevail. Arnold's touchstone method has not been of much use where teaching is concerned. In the classrooms where deconstruction theory prevails, literature is being taught as a type of intellectual doctrine, revolutionary subject. Critical system has become complex; the critic cannot divorce literary scholarship from literary criticism but he has to see the relation between form and meaning. The crucial moments of distortion in eighteenth-century studies came when F. R. Leavis in his *Revaluation* and Cleanth Brooks in *The Well - Wrought Urn* began to see the same virtues of figural compression and even conceit in Pope and Gray that Eliot had discovered in Donne. However, I. A. Richards is clearly a major influence in the history of literary criticism and theory. F. R. Leavis called for a "common pursuit of true

judgement." Indian aesthetics call for a "sahrudaya": a compassionate heart which can discriminate between the good and the bad.

I. A. Richards is almost ubiquitous in Cleanth Brooks's, *The Well-Wrought Urn* and Wellek and Warren's *Theory of Literature*. He is clearly a big presence and influence in the history of literary criticism and theory: In recent years, the kinship of Coleridge and modern poetic is seen in the fundamental fact that they alone proposed a "poetic of tension" (to borrow the phrase applied by Wimsatt and Brooks to I. A. Richards's critical system). Ransom considers Richards bogus; but the theories of Richards early in the twentieth century were as great as those of Eliot.

"Tension" is a term alternating in modern theory with ambiguity, conflict and irony. Coleridge, who saw Hamlet in his own image, had true congeners in the twentieth century: Cleanth Brooks, defined the language of poetry as "the language of paradox"; Philip Wheelwright located the essence of metaphor in the "semantic tension" among its heterogeneous elements; Nelson Goodman ventured the generalization that wherever there is metaphor there is conflict. F.R. Leavis's radical and combative views of modern literature and Clifford Leech's views on drama in general, tragedy in particular, are useful in our study of the New Criticism.

In recent years because of the Anglo-American poetics inaugurated by the work of I.A. Richards and his colleagues and their acceptance of Coleridge's primacy in poetics, we are advised to scrutinise the text line by line and get at the essence of it. For Richards, Coleridge (having for years explored poetry with unrivalled "assiduity and enterprise") was a literary Galileo who "initiated a new era, for criticism." For Richards pity and fear balanced one another. Our own classicists argued for "sangharsha" (conflict) signifying that collision with the text and close reading of prose and poetry. Hence the importance of the printed page of the literary critic.

Also effective in the dethronement of New Criticism was Hartmann's penetrating essay "Beyond Formalism" (1966) which argued ably for a more inclusive kind of formalism, one that would take into account historical and social dimensions of literature too easily discounted in the medium-centered organicism of New Critical theory and practice. It aimed at the critic's concern only with "words on the page." With all these theories on our mind, we teachers of English have to cope with the demand of the importance of learning our mother tongue and a national language. The teaching of English literature and language has become a rare commodity, owing to the general absence of spoken English Education in English has its own discipline; it is apprenticeship of life. We have to gird up our loins to do the most difficult job. It is not a question of "He who can, does not, but he who cannot, does." In the altered words of Shakespeare: "He masters there a double spirit of teaching and learning instruments."

Teaching English language and literature is creative, but we feel that we are uncomfortable when we explain a line in prose or poetry and if the sweetness is not caught in the class room. Some of us who are not Puritans take the assistance of the second language or mother tongue to explain a word or two. How can we make a student who has not seen a piece of cake understand that cake is different from dosa? Therefore, we teachers of English in India are very heroic, we are brave enough to teach the global language, it is the only medium, by which we feel our life devoted to English study in some shape and form will find itself in the service of the world community.

Teaching literature is a complex human activity; it is not merely annotating the lines; it requires great human power. All of us in the Departments of English who have been privileged to profess English literature in pre-independent and free India have done great service to Education. When there was a clamour for national

Education soon after Independence, English was neglected; the political pressures for a shift away from English were great. But good sense prevailed and English continued and considered one of the Indian languages, adopted with greater vigour as one of the tools to hand. In the euphoria after Independence we teachers of English were looked down upon by our colleagues in Indian literatures but little did they realise that the English teachers promoted and propagated Indian literatures to audiences all over the world. We have to develop English writing and reading in India to overcome the dichotomy between the Arts and the Science and to provide a platform for young and aspiring writers and we have to put English across intelligently. English is the dress of thought of our science colleagues as well. We work in collaboration with other language departments; our colleagues in these departments need our support for their medium; knowledge of English helps discourse in individual life and dissemination.

In the world today, Indian critics of English literature are read and respected; their books are commented on; their critical works are compared to Saintsbury's and F. W. Ker's in learned periodicals. It is because of our elders' efforts and our own continuous effort that it was possible to produce a Vikram Seth who could compose blank verse ingeniously. Arundhati Roy of *The God of Small Things* fame gave the world the narrative architecture of a novel that turns out to be as subtle as it is powerful, a novel that is Faulknerian in its ambition tackling of family and race and class and Dickensian in its shape and observation of society and character. Between the two writers we note that poets and fictionists require intelligent and different techniques in their vocations.

There is a great change in the realm of English poetry; it has moved from blank verse to free verse and from the use of complicated and rich metaphors to simple similes and comparisons; the very modes of poetic investigation vary. Auden more than Eliot used the bare kind of rich and symbolic poetry even in intense situation as in:

Thomas Prologizes

Nay, an thou 'It mouth, I'll rant as well as thou.'

Hamlet

They are all gone upstairs into the world
 Of candlelight. The Prodigal is left.
 Beneath to work his own salvation out,
 Helped by the sordes of the past which taught him
 Well how best to set his codpiece in order.
 Have I forgot young Desmond whom I met
 Behind the fives-courts every Sunday night?
 Or Isobel who with her leaping breasts
 Pursued me through a summer? I remember
 Vases like music frozen into marble,
 Tall nymphs callipygous who taught my soul
 To lisp small lyrics which may gladden hearts
 Of mistresses in elementary schools,
 Limp lilies! I have bottle-fed on Art,
 Life peptonised to suit a tender stomach,
 Valleys of dead men's bones have been my refuge!.

Austere poetry is seen as well in some Indian poets such as Ezekiel, Kamala Das, R.Parthasarathy and others. During the last half of the nineteenth century, the long poem, epic, narrative, meditative, pastoral (entrenched for almost three hundred years) was slowly dispossessed by the Victorian novel. The long poem has made sporadic returns in the works of Eliot, Proust, Auden, Spender, Betjeman, Robert Penn Warren, Alfred Curis and Sri Aurobindo and in the cousinly verse novel and verse plays of Benet brothers, Maxwell Anderson, Christopher Fry and Eliot and in Vikram Seth, the verse novelist of *The Golden Gate*, written in Lambic tetrameter !

Seth says:

The dusty bread-moulds of Onegin
 In the brave bakery of Reagan?

The loaves will rarely fail to rise
Or else go stale before my eyes ...

Seth composes lines with grace, great energy and common metaphors.

As for the Pushkinian model, Seth's everyone of 600 loaves is fresh, light and flavoursome. One can exclaim: How marvellously quaint is *The Golden Gate* ! At heart the novel is concerned with love (with celibacy), with choices right and wrong, with loneliness and company, with loss and serendipity, with human comedy, and with tragedy - which is equally human, And above all, with humanity's insistence on surviving and even perpetuating itself when common sense would advise it to give up the ghost..

Creative writing in English in India is considerable and solid because we have been using English far more than two hundred years. In fact, English arrived in India before the Englishman came.

In the context of teaching English it is good to recall that poems which were considered difficult when they appeared, became classics. Frequent use of reading and interpretation have made them so. Fashions change; obscure poems become simple. T. S. Eliot was considered the darling of literary London and the poet of the moment in the 1920's and 1930's. Many, including Siegfried Sassoon, could make neither head nor tail of "The Waste Land" when it appeared in 1922 and was much comforted when he heard it described as "literary leg - pulling." Sassoon was already noting bitterly in his diary that he was thoroughly "fed up with being told that T.S. Eliot, is the most important modern poet." What Eliot, the user of modernism, thought of Sassoon, is a mystery: they never met.

Our National leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru, Rajagopalachari and others saw the necessity of continuing English as a medium of instruction. They corresponded or spoke to each other in English. (Rajagopalachari described English as the gift of

Goddess Saraswathi, The style of Harijan is Biblical. Our task of imparting instruction in English is arduous and pains taking, as English has to be taught well. Poetry, the art of words, has to be read aloud, it has to be explained delightfully; and the difference between verse and prose is to be driven home. A poet "sees the. eternal loveliness in things" as Auden said. Poetry is a combination of "rasa and dhvani". It is suggestion. Aristotle's *The Poetics* had practical effects on the course of written poetry.

Hence may I say a few words on *The Poetics* because as we all receive our wisdom from it? *The Poetics* in England, in particular, some (notably Sir Philip Sydney and John Donne and others, "the legislators of Parnassus") were eager to clothe themselves in Aristotle's armour. Others found it a poor, limiting fit. John Dryden observed, "it is not enough that Aristotle has said so, for Aristotle drew his models of tragedy from Sophocles and Euripides, and if he had seen ours, might have changed his mind." Dryden also resented Aristotle's promotion of tragedy over epic, "because it turns in a shorter compass, the whole action being circumscribed within the space of four-and-twenty hours. He might prove as well that a mushroom is to be preferred to a peach because it shoots up within the compass of a night". Aristotle's rules were made exaggeratedly constricting because of tendentious readings.

However, Aristotle possessed a commodious mind, and he is a valuable guide- though at times a gabbling guide. As Alexander Pope said, "poet/Received his laws, and stood convinced, it was fit/who conquered nature should preside O'er wit." *The Poetics* has been influential. We have been using the concepts of "hamartia" and "hubris" derived from Aristotle. "Hubris" is more an error than a "flaw" in any moral sense, "Hubris" did not exclusively mean arrogance. "Catharsis" cleared the mind for a calmly disillusioned perception of human possibilities and limitations. In "Samson Agonistes" (perhaps the most Greek play in English), Milton signalled the moment of queries in which all passion was spent and calm of mind was

established. Hence we have to explain obscure and difficult terms or lecture on the texts in English; while doing so we carry the weight of Indian experience derived from Sanskrit or any language we are familiar with.

We use a new English still in full communion with its Anglo Saxon home but altered and adapted to suit the Indian experience. Ultimately one wonders whether English will fragment. In 1877, the British Philologist Henry Sweet (the probable model for Shaw's) Henry Higgins "Pygmalion" (a brilliant study of contemporary social events of 1913) thought that a century later England, America and Australia would be speaking mutually unintelligent language owing to their independent changes of pronunciation, but while pronunciation varies, comprehension established community of thought. English prose is like currency minted with the public stamp; accents may differ, but the core of the language is universal ; it is flexible and is used in association with a number of languages. We adopt special methods which vary from region to region and we put across a language whose familiarity is scarce.

Teachers of English literature rise to the occasion, note the difference between one English and another, teach it well, demonstrate that the study of the English language and literature is valuable in a country of many languages. English is a unifying force, it is the immortality of speech through teaching. We teachers and students discover each other in a medium to which we are not born but which we have endeavoured to master.

The English departments in India have the responsibility for studying English literature along with native languages. Hence those who are well versed in the mother tongue and in English should undertake ,translation of classics of one language into another. This is a very rewarding service. Translation is not merely translating words, translator if he is rightly directed translates a civilization. English literature "extends our sympathies" as Shelley put it. In India

it helps the development of regional languages. We established post-graduate departments of English and research and demonstrated that worthwhile research in English could be done in India. Criticism and teaching are most fruitful and rewarding when they engage with a particular work or group of works. During this century, the departments in the faculty of arts have become evermore conscious of the need for research; we accumulate our learned periodicals and build our bibliographies like our science colleagues. It is worthwhile to engage in insights that are directly related to the works. At the basis of human existence is the instinct for social coherence. The teaching of literature in our country should always be need based and comparative; it cannot be fully achieved in isolation from the other arts. If we know something of the painting and music and architecture of a society, we shall understand better its literary impulses and modes of expression.

The Romantics and modern critics like F.R. Leavis in England and (across the Atlantic) Cleanth Brooks in the USA considered English as a "discipline of thought". They insisted on the cultivation of thought and feeling in a combination that envisions poetry as a provocation to critical thought that would enable readers to judge its emotional appearance.

For literature's appreciation we have to possess a "sahrudaya" (discriminating heart) as responsive mind, the approach of a "sahrudaya" is rewarding and satisfying both to the author and the critic. Criticism helps active production of knowledge in response to the enduring power of literature; it requires that we read great books or study minds carefully and self-consciously. The discrepancies of the latter become occasions for critical reflections. The critical reflection marshalls words as Eliot put it in "The Rock", the critical idiom should spring from the perfect order of speech and the beauty of incantation. Eliot proposed an ideal of criticism as "the common pursuit of true judgement" that documents "poetry as the renewal of

words for ever and ever." All criticism is prose according to Harold Bloom and the New Criticism edifies poetry:

Matthew Arnold suggested that poetry would increasingly take on a religious importance in modern culture. It is not that poetry will become a substitute or replacement for religion, a situation that could only produce phony literature as well as phony religion. It is rather that religion will come to be understood increasingly as having a poetic rather than a national language and that it can be more effectively taught and learned through the imagination than through doctrine or history. The language of imagination is all important.

Criticism, like creation, grows and develops; it is a story of reading and thinking. It does help if it has some of the charm and imaginative vigour, the verbal pursuit and push, of the better kind of stories. If criticism is to be of any use, it must know what it is talking about and talk only of what it knows and it must distinguish between different kinds of knowledge and notice the different relations. In spite of cartloads of critical books on Shakespeare, there is criticism still appearing. Recently Ted Hughes in *Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being* (1922) takes a new line; he identifies Shakespeare's use of the most significant religious myth of the ancient world in the poems "Venus and Adonis" and "The Rape of Lucrece" and argues that these myths later provided Shakespeare with templates for the construct of every play from *All's Well That Ends Well* to *The Tempest* and this also represents playwright's poetic explorations of conflict with the living myth of the English Reformation. The claim is extraordinary but the critic supports his theory with evidence; hence we are attracted to it. So are many new critical theories and new forms of poetry: Recent critical theorizing has destabilised the text; it has sought to abolish the frontiers of literature and hence has undermined the notion of "greatness" or any consideration of the plays as works of art. We have to guard against such a fallacy. Deconstruction of Western metaphysics and

textual revisionism both (French in origin) reject external authority and both achieved prominence for sometime in the United States and in the United Kingdom. The effect of the new historicism in the United States and of cultural materialism in Britain has been similar. However, these waves have had their rise and fall.

The job of a critic is to detect "magic in the web" (*Othello*) and be an informing spirit of the humanizing influence of literature. New criticism and form make the difference; the study of poetry must centre on the study of form. The form has undergone tremendous change. New critical theory emphasises myth as the ultimate source of joy:

Today the task of the English teacher in India is bewilderingly enjoyable; he has to be familiar with and be knowledgeable about many literatures - Indian, American, Commonwealth and European classics in English translation as well as other branches which have enriched the main tradition although derived from it. The drapery of these literatures is English, an adaptable language; it constantly changes and evolves. It has assimilated many Indian words such as "dhoti" "dhobi" "dharma" even "satyagraha." David Crystal in *English: A Global Language* (1977) speaks of a new form of English: "World Standard Spoken English." He hopes that it will soon arise. After all, "It is not languages that innovate, it is speakers who innovate" (James and Wesley Milroy).

In a country like India most people are "multi-dialectal" to a greater or lesser degree. They use one spoken dialect at home, when they are with their local community; this tends to be an informal variety, full of casual pronunciation, colloquial grammar and local turns of phrase and mixture of English and their own language. They use another spoken dialect when they are away from home interacting with others at their place of work. This tends to be formal variety full of careful pronunciation, conventional grammar and standard vocabulary. Those who are illiterate have learnt a third variety - that

of written standard English which (apart from a few minor differences such as British Vs. American word, idioms, spellings) currently unites the English - speaking world. Of all the Englishes, Indian English is considered grammatically correct. Hence, Salmon Rushdie's comment that the English Language has ceased to be the sole possession of the English. English is a genuinely global or universal language; those who are devoted to the study of such a language have to bear the cross; if we fail as teachers of English, it-is-our own trial and affliction.

May I digress for a moment to note the little difference between teaching and lecturing? Lecturing is to discourse before an audience or class on a given subject. Teaching enables one to give lessons. We lecture in a university class and we teach at the lower level. Both aim at imparting knowledge and stimulating the pupil in his or her love and pursuit of knowledge. Teaching and lecturing are nearly synonymic in their functions. However, teaching is more intimate.

We teachers have chosen a difficult vocation even Benito Mussolini, the Italian dictator, found teaching hard and preferred dictatorship to teaching. Often we have to take stock of our performance in a classroom and our reading should extend beyond our chosen subject. It should not be the case of one preparing a day early and another a day later as Tagore said. Our lectures should be scholarly and delivered sweetly in a trained voice, marked by a sense of humour and spoken with clear accent. One should read poetry with gusto, booming like a belfry when demanded and prose as distinctly as possible. I think it was Sir Osbert Sitwell who first pointed out that all forms of charming voices are deliberately made impossible to hear so that the little group at the back has to crane its ears. Our purpose is speaking to be hard and nothing else about it is nearly so important as being clear and correct. Hence we should speak English with a correct accent. It should not be an opera without subtitles. "The linguistic sense," which indicates a certain form or construction, is in accordance with the genius of the language and it is to be fostered. Spoken English has become a discipline by itself; one must

have a thorough knowledge of nuances, of aural - oral skills like stress, inflection, accent and images. Long after the English language has ceased to be spoken, if there is any kind of civilization worth living in, there will be professors who teach English so that pupils can learn to read Shakespeare. No doubt they will be right. Following the dualism which animates Shakespeare's art, he is both plain and unplain. A well known example from *Macbeth* will illustrate the symphonic structure.:

No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green, one red. (2.2.61-64)

One line is for the intellectuals on stage stools, the other for the groundings.

The study of literature in English opens up towards the wide range of other intellectual interests - psychology, philosophy, social anthropology, and so on. One has to acquaint oneself with some of these disciplines if one is to be a good teacher. Also, one cannot divorce literary scholarship from literary criticism. If one does, literary judgement will be superficial and diffuse. Matthew Arnold, whose criticism is the prevalence of the cognitive and moral themes, was deeply aware of the importance of studying literature within a European context. Only in that way, will we avoid provincial judgement. Literature establishes truths in question and it penetrates our settled differences. For many of us, a reading of *King Lear* is important in the same way as the getting to know another human being may be important. Hence our acquaintance with great literature helps our criticism of life. Great critics have hinted at it. As Camus said of Dostoevsky, "He teaches us only what we know, but not what we refuse to recognise", and as Melville said of Shakespeare, "All that we seek and shun is there." Those who "seek and shun" should not be the skimmers of literature's cream, they should have deep knowledge of literature and an ideal of experience. Hopkins, with his inscape and instress, Proust with his instants of remembrance

and recognition, Eliot with his timeless moments of enlightenment are all talking about an ideal of experience as the real goal of life. Hence, "The Wasteland", for Eliot has a positive conclusion that points to a "resurrection."

Some writers employ religious terminology or symbolism as Joyce and Proust do; it indicates that their direct analogy of ideal experience is typically the way of the mystic or saint rather than the artist; "an occupation for the saint," as Eliot calls it, though he immediately adds that it cannot in any sense be an occupation. This has a special appeal for Indian critics of English literature, who eloquently and unflinchingly face problems of Western literature in an Indian context.

Religious experience is not everybody's cup of tea. But a critic should be equipped justly to discriminate, firmly to establish, easily to prescribe and honestly to award. Well-equipped conversation lacking in scholarly roots does not make us good critics. We must possess comparative knowledge and cultivate comparative judgement to seek "the best that has been known and thought" in a work of art, identify a kind of touchstone used by commentators, to try what parts of Great Man's work are truly his own. In these days of expansion of knowledge, creative work will always assume new and varying forms and it seeks of the human, it responds to public demand for ideas in poetry: "large ones or small ones, grand ones or pretty ones, certainly ideas to live by and die by," as George Moore puts it in *World's Body*. Byron in the Third Canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* speaks beautifully of this phase of creation; he can apprehend the imaginary creation, as he cannot apprehend himself;

Tis to create, and in creating live
A being more intense that we endow
With form our fancy gaining as we give
The life we image, even as I do now.
What am I? Nothing: but not so art thou,

Soul of my thought! with whom I traverse earth,
 Invisible but gazing, as I glow
 Mix'd with thy sprit, blended with thy birth,
 And feeling still with thee in my crush'd feelings' dearth.

The sense of release from the flux of time, of keen apprehension, will be more fully available to the writer through the making of whole work and instilling a love of literature. A "modern" view of culture of criticism is in the English literary tradition. We will need to reach it by going beyond the arguments about it in T.S Eliot's "Notes Towards the Definition of Culture," F. R. Leavis's *The Common Pursuit: Or Education and the University* or Raymond Williams's *Culture and Society* and into the imaginative works that lie behind them. Northrop Fry's *Anatomy of Criticism* took away the dominance of New Critical theory which implied close reading or explication with the literary text and emphasised myth as the ultimate source of joy; Also, innovation in New Criticism supercedes Anadnavaradhana and other Sanskrit poetics.

"Literature extends our sympathies" wrote Shelley not long ago. Literature was considered to be the most authentic language of humanity, its highest abilities and aspirations. When literature is the sole visionary of life, it becomes a drudgery. But we who are devoted to it have learnt to make it a pleasurable relaxation, we enjoy the humanizing influence of poetry. Hence, let us not "rhyme out in love's despair / to flatter beauty's ignorant ear." (W.B. Yeats) The newest work, in literature is always modern, great literature is "the life blood of a master spirit." It enshrines the "magical idea of speech literacy as thaumaturgic, the word able to transform and classify our lives." (Hartman). Hence one has to study the texts carefully, make close examination, catch the shaping joy which has kept the language alive (Cleanth Brooks) before putting it across or interpreting it. Let us not make literary study more scientism than science. It is unscientifically loose and pluralistic. Literature is catch - all category made up of different kinds of critical views. Hence it admits all points of view.

There is a big difference between the literary critic and the critic in the arts. If the latter comes to believe that his subject is the one that matters, he may be a bore but he may still resemble a good critic. The nub of the problem of the literary critic is otherwise. He will avoid the graver temptations of his trade only if he constantly reminds himself that his subject is concerned with just a part of human activity. The good literary critic will say of literature what E.M. Forster has said of democracy: "Two cheers for democracy... two cheers are quite enough; there is no occasion to give three. Only Love, the Beloved Republic deserves that." Great literature does in most part reflect and mould our lives, it nourishes the imaginative and keeps the language alive, but we will be better judges of that literature if we remember:

How small, of all that human hearts endure

That part which literary laws or principles can cause or cure:

These lines also reinforce our ability to awaken our hidden thoughts and engage in scholarly discussions which fill us with "joyous intellectual energy" in the words of Blake. Discussion has the mysterious power of awakening thought. It is the writer's best *Gradus and Parnasse*; steps to Parnasse, Hellicon source of poetic inspiration and sacred to Apollo and the Muses, the Pierian springs, reputed home of the Muses where discussion is characterised by wisdom, and tolerance. When we are content to recognise this spirit within the unity of a work of art and find an expression of ourselves within the nature of things, we shall begin to be qualified as critics with that humility and purity in our hearts that T.S. Eliot demanded.

The three days' deliberation will make us give and take. In the area of scholarship the more we give, the richer we become; we learn from each other and incur the debt that enriches us and leave the holy city happy and contended.

Thank you.



EDITORS' RESPONSE TO JAYANTA MAHAPATRA'S POETRY

(For the benefit of the researchers and critics a new feature is included in this number of IJES. While reading and evaluating a poet, the researchers and critics seek to probe into the making of the poet. Jayanta Mahapatra is now one of the best known Indian English poets both at home and more abroad. His poetry is a much sought after topic for doctoral dissertations in our country. Here, five letters from four foreign editors and three letters from two Indian editors are included to show how his poetry was received by them and how he grew over the years. The letters were made available to me by the poet at my request. I am grateful to him for his kind permission to include them in IJES - *Chief Editor*)

The Rereat,
Bellasis Road, Bombay 8BC

5th Oct' 71

Dear Jayanta,

I'm sorry your letter of Sept 11 and the book of poems remained unacknowledged. Best wishes for the book. You may send a copy to Adil Jussawalla direct, but I don't know if he'll review it. Worth trying.

Congratulations on the Chicago Review acceptances. In view of Mr. Enright's favourable view of your poems, he really should have accepted at least one. Prof. Norman Jeffaraes recently accepted a poem of mine and says it will appear in 1973. Still, I have no option but to wait.

The much delayed review of your poems and now of your book - I'll do my best.

Regards.

Sd/- Nissim Ezekiel

Department of English,
University of Manchester,
Manchester M13 9PL

13th October, 1972.

Dear Mr. Mahapatra,

Tony Dyson and I were very impressed by your poems, and we are happy to accept a group of them to print in the *Critical Quarterly*. We should like to accept 'Taste for Tomorrow', 'A Missing Person', 'Myth', 'Listening to a Prayer' and 'Silence'. I return the other poems.

We receive quite a number of manuscripts of poetry from India, and you might like to know that this is the first time in the fourteen years of our existence that we have ever accepted any of them. They are usually conventional and banal. Your own poems show a sense for language, plus an ability to talk simply about precise landscapes.

Have you tried to publish in other British journals? If we can help you, please write. I do think you have a most original talent.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/- Professor C. B. Cox.

Jayanta Mahapatra,
Tinkonia Bagicha,
Cuttack 1, Orissa,
India.

The Rereat,
Bellasis Road, Bombay 400 008

10th Oct' 73

Dear Jayanta,

I'm giving you a full page in the weekly this month. Please rush me a glossy passport-size photograph for use on the page. The poems kept with me are: "Taste for Tomorrow", "A Missing Person", "Myth", "Listening To A Prayer", "Three Indian Poems", "Silence", "An Old Country", "Hunger", "Idyll and Thought of the Future". The others I'm enclosing.

Not all the selected poem may fit in on the page. I've retained one or two extra just in case they are needed.

With regards.

Sd/-Nissim Ezekiel

The Sewanee Review

America's Oldest Literary Quarterly

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Telephone 615-598-5142

25 June 1974

Dear Mr Mahapatra: I'm sorry to have kept you in the dark since February about my response to your poetry. The fact is that I think well of it and have been bemused by its very excellence. This is to say that I don't have room to accept all the poetry that appeals to me-and that I've been puzzling over the titles I like and thinking of it in terms of the economy of the magazine and what else will be appearing.

For now let me return the new poems that you have just sent (of which I think "The Faces" is best) and several of the poems that you previously submitted. I'm going to hold "Ceremony," "The Sentence," "The Cows," and "Four Rain Poems" a little longer, and I hope you won't mind the imposition. Of these I'll accept as many as I can and try to publish them by the spring issue of 1975. (I am also retaining "Dawn at Puri.")

I apologize for the lengthy delay. I've been terribly pressed since taking over this post in the late summer of 1973 and inheriting several thousand unread titles.

Unfortunately some of the work that I have liked most has been neglected most in terms of time, for I have held it for rereading and often, as in the present instance, I have let a great deal of time go by.

Sincerely yours
Sd/- George Core, Editor,

I'm moving to Sewanee next week and hereafter you should address me there.

Editors : PAULA DEITZ
FREDERICK MORGAN

Managing Editor: RICHARD SMITH
Editorial Assistant: RONALD KOURY

The Hudson Review
65 East 55th Street, New York 10022

March 10, 1982

Jayanta Mahapatra
The Chandrabhaga Society
Tinkonia Bagicha
Cuttack 753001, Orissa
India

Dear Jayanta,

I have three nice letters from you to answer, and in addition many thanks to convey to you for sending me the first two issues of *Chandrabhaga*, which I greatly enjoyed, and the even more special gift of your "Orissa Journal". This is a lovely piece of writing, full of sights and sounds and smells that convey the full texture of a place and a way of life deeply experienced and understood. Thank you, my dear friend, for this generosity.

And most hearty congratulations on winning the 1981 award from India's National Academy of Letters ! *Relationship* is a most thoughtful and impressive work: I am glad that it has been fittingly honored. You will be pleased to know, too, that it is receiving a favorable and interesting review in our next issue, the same issue which will contain your poems. We shall be publishing three of your poems in that issue, because, in addition to the two already accepted, we are taking "The Hour Before Dawn" from the group you recently submitted. We liked this poem best of the group, though there was much merit in all the poems you sent us.

I did receive safely the second copy of *The False Start* and hope to have it reviewed in a later issue.

This has been a very busy winter for me, and in some respects a painful one. My oldest daughter, who lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, is seriously ill with cancer and may not have much longer to live. My second daughter, who also lives in Cambridge, is pregnant and is expecting a child in late April or early May. So life ends, but is renewed, according to the age-old pattern. And I hope for nothing better for the human race than that this pattern will be allowed to continue: rather than our destroying ourselves and the rest of the natural world in some atrocious nuclear disaster. I see my own country as chiefly to blame for this hideous threat, and am very unhappy about it. A possible silver lining is that there are beginning to be signs of an anti-nuclear reaction here, though it is not as strong yet as in Europe.

As far as my personal life goes in other respects, all is well. I am now working on a series of prose parables based on fairy tale and folklore material, which may appear in book form later this year. My next collection of poems, *Northbook*, is due to be published in a few weeks: I only yesterday received my advance copy, and am very pleased by the attractive way in which it has been produced. I'll send you a copy as soon as I have a few more on hand.

Thanks again for your fine letters--it is always a joy to hear from you. Paula joins me in sending warmest wishes to you and Runu. We hope 1982 will be a wonderful year for you.

With warmest good wishes always,

Ever,

Sd/- Frederick Morgan

FM : Clg

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|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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*The**Kenyon Review*

KENYON COLLEGE. GAMBLER. OHIO 43022 TEL:614-427-3339

RONALD SHARP

FREDERICK TURNER

Editors

April 21, 1982

JAYANTA MAHAPATRA

TINKONIA BAGICHA

CUTTACK 753 001

ORISSA INDIA

Dear Mr. Mahapatra:

It is we who are indebted to you for sending us your fine work. If you would like to put together your two or three strongest new poems every six months or so, we'd like very much to see them.

We don't read manuscripts during the months of June, July, and August; so please don't send then.

We'll certainly send you a subscription to the *Review* in lieu of part of your payment, and remit the balance to you by check.

Cordially,

Sd/- Frederick Turner

FT:gs

15th November, 1985.

My dear Jayant,

This brings you warm greetings for the New Year which will soon be in.

I hope that there will be new poems from you in the sustained manner of your previous deep rhythm.

Myself, I continue to write my aap-hiti to confer the failures. I wonder if *The Bubble* came your way. If not will have it sent to you for review in your magazine.

About a month ago Shri C. R. Rath of OE.S. wrote to me suggesting a translation through the Govt. Bureau of my early novel *Coolie*. I told him that I would agree if they ask you to do the rendering into Oriya. I don't know if you ever read this novel, it was written in the first flash of euphoria. Of the acceptance of *Untouchable* in the pigeon Indian language in which I echoed the rough rhythms of Punjab.

May be you will understand these folk rhythms when it may be difficult for the average Oriya to sense it through my awkward English-Punjabi the flow of consciousness of my characters.

I hope you will agree to do the rendering if you had this is a boring job can you suggest someone among your protege who might attempt it under your advise.

Regards.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/- Mulk Raj Anand

MULK RAJ ANAND
25 CUFFE PARADE, BOMBAY - 400 005

*The Sewanee Review*17 Sept. 2008
931-598-1246

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Dear Jayanta :

Thank you for your letters, the second of which arrived yesterday. I am sorry for my slowness to respond to the first with its ballast of superb poetry. My hanging fire was caused by my inability to decide on the best poems. I finally concluded, earlier this morning, that I would accept all the poems. I want to run these in two issues, so please tell me how I can best do that.

I'll try to publish the first batch by spring or summer (2009). I am acting more promptly than usual owing to the confusion and delay on my end about an earlier submission. a casualty of the chaos at the magazine during the depredations of Honest Iago Jones, which were followed by the move to new offices, as you know.

You should be hearing from Bob Buffington about Runu. I am almost certain that Bob introduced me to your poetry, but perhaps it was the other way around. Of course I remember your book in the University of Georgia Press's series, with the wonderful cover illustration by Albert Christ-Janer, now dead these many years. . . He was a good man as well as a good artist.

Thank you for the splendid photograph of you and Brian. Susan and I are having it framed. In fact it is with the framer in Chattanooga, and perhaps we can pick it up on Saturday. --We got a handsome letter from Jean Cox earlier this week. She seems to be doing pretty well, given the "circumstances.

Susan is now fine after fracturing her sacrum in late January. This kind of break heals very slowly, as is the case with the pelvis and the ribs, because there is no way of putting a cast around the fracture, as you know. We haven't heard from Paula Deitz lately. I owe her a letter and must write to her. I'll mention that you have lost Runu. I know that you miss her keenly. Only time will help, and before you get any ease time will seem to stop, the way it does in your poetry, old friend.

Yours,

Sd/-George CoreAMERICA'S OLDEST LITERARY QUARTERLY • PUBLISHED BY THE
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SHASHI DESHPANDE IN CONVERSATION WITH BIJAY KUMAR DAS

[Shashi Deshpande won Sahitya Akademi Award for her novel *That Long Silence* for the year 1990. A prolific writer she has ten novels, a number of collection of short stories and a brilliant book of non-fictional prose, *Writing from the Margin and Other Essays* to her credit. She dives deep into the human heart and re-creates characters in their situations. To read her fiction is to see an actor enacting his/her life on stage, it is to see the inside out. No wonder, her characters evoke the readers' empathy. Apart from being creative writer, she is also a brilliant translator.]

BKD: I would like to begin with a statement made in your essay "In First Person" that 'writing however was never part of my dreams, and surprisingly, in spite of my feeling for words and desire for articulation, I wrote nothing...' . At what point of time did you make up your mind to be a writer?

SD : There was never any particular point when I 'determined' I would be a writer. I began writing because I felt the need to say something. Very soon I realised that this was something I wanted to do, something I felt at home in, something that completed my life. Since then I have gone on writing.

BKD: You are now one of the best-known Indian English writers of our country with ten novels, three collections of stories, four books for children, two translations, and above all, a book of

non-fictional prose to your credit. Are you conscious of any literary tradition that influenced your writings ?

SD: I guess all writers are influenced by the literary traditions of the language they write in. However, for me, like for so many Indian writers who write in English, there was this gap between the traditions of the language I wrote in and the literary traditions of the society I was living in. However, though I began by being much more under the influence of English (specifically British) literature, I soon became aware I was writing about the same society Indian language writers were writing in. This was more possible for me because of my father being a Kannada writer and my having some access to the writers and the writing of that language. How far these have influenced me I can't say and I am not aware of consciously adopting any literary conventions of any language. But certainly I am aware of what is being done - even if very superficially - in these literatures, of the trends etc. and I know that my writing belongs to one of the Indian literatures.

BKD: Of the different genres of creative writing that you have done, do you feel equally comfortable with them? Or do you have a preference for any specific genre?

SD : I began by writing short stories and for many years wrote only short stories. But I had this urge to move to a larger canvas and once I began writing novels, I knew it was the form that suited me best. I like the space it gives me, the possibility of exploring characters and ideas at greater leisure and depths.

BKD: Do you take characters from Indian myths and recreate them in your stories?

SD: No it is not a recreation. I look at them differently, using my own eyes.

BKD: Your stories "The Last Enemy", and "The Inner Rooms" built on myths have a special appeal to the readers. Do you sympathize or empathize with the characters ?

SD: Obviously I have some feeling - whether you call it sympathy or empathy - with the characters, or else I would not write about them. Like in *The Last Enemy* I found myself looking at Duryodhana - usually the villain - in a different way. Probing his mind, becoming him, following his thoughts as he was dying, seeing him look at his life and his past, I saw an entirely different Duryodhana. So too with Amba. Having read her story in the *Mahabharata* I was not satisfied with her only place in the epic being the one who was reborn as Shikandi to kill Bhishma. She was Amba, herself, a woman whose life was destroyed by the almost casual actions of a man ...

BKD: You are taken to be a feminist writer - rightly or wrongly, that is another matter. Do you feel that women characters should be portrayed from women's point of view?

SD: Absolutely not. A writer is a writer, that is all. Whether you are a man or a woman, you are getting into the mind of another person. Imagination, knowledge and sympathy are needed, as well as writing skill. Obviously writers will be able to portray some characters with greater success than others, but that's all. You can't separate writers into men and women and limit them to writing about their own sex. In fact, writers can never be told what or whom they should write about. They, or their writing, can only be judged after it is done.

BKD: How do you organize your characters? Do you enter the novels through your characters ?

SD: Yes, it is the character who lead me into the novels. It is who they are, the kind of people they are, that shapes the story.

BKD: You have stated "In First Person" that "Each novel is a voyage of discovery for me, a discovery of myself, of other humans". Would you please elaborate it ?

SD: One learns much, about the world, about people, about oneself as one writes. One does not start with knowledge and go on from there.

BKD: You have considered your story "Intrusion" as special for you because it expressed freely women's concern for love. Do you believe in articulating love freely through the mouth of women characters ?

SD: There's some misunderstanding here. I have never said that "The Intrusion" is special because it expresses 'freely women's concern for love'. No it is special to me because in this story I found my own voice. In this story I was saying something that mattered to me, I was saying it in the way I wanted to, I had put aside all the conscious or unconscious influences which had been part of my writing till then. This was my voice, my style, my work. And this story is not about 'love' but about a woman's right to her body.

BKD: Love makes most of your women vulnerable such as the case of Savita, Indu, Jaya, Urmi, Madhu and Manjari . Do you agree ?

SD: Love makes all humans vulnerable. Which has not and will never stop us from loving.

BKD: In your latest novel *In The Country of Deceit* the jacket states that "there are no hostages taken in the country of Deceit, no victors only scarred lives". Would you like comment on it?

SD: The blurb is always written by the publishers, writers rarely do it themselves.

BKD: Do you believe in women empowerment?

SD: I believe that all humans should be empowered. That there should never be any exploitation of one human being by another.

BKD: Do you face any kind of competition with Bhasha writers? Is it correct to say that Indian English writers failed to authenticate Indian characters and situation in their works?

SD: Writers are never competing with one another. That is a very unhealthy view. Different writers have different things to say, they say these things in various ways and readers too respond to different writers depending on what they want from literature. I don't understand this view that 'English' writers have failed to authenticate Indian characters and situations in their writing! There are good and bad writers in all languages. And I thought we had left the bogey of 'authenticity' far behind. Do my novels have to prove their 'Indianness' even today?

BKD: Do you revise and edit your novels and stories?

SD : A great deal.

BKD: In "Writing from the Margin and Other Essays" there is a chapter "Telling our Own Stories" which makes an interesting reading. This brings the critic in you to light. Do you think that the mythical characters from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* should be re-written or re interpreted?

SD: Anyone who wants to rewrite the *Ramayana* or the *Mahabharata* is welcome to do so. Can one stop anyone from writing? But considering how these two epics have lasted through the years, considering their power and their hold on us, considering the fact that they leave us free to constantly re-look at them, to reinterpret them, why would anyone want to 'rewrite' them?

BKD: In the end I would like to refer to two of your statements which show the clarity of your mind and courage of conviction. That is, in course of an article, "How to Read Or Rather How not to Read the Writing of Women" (*Journal of Literature and Aesthetics*, Jan-Dec, 2004) you emphatically said "For God's shake I am a novelist. I writ novels, not feminist tracts". And in course of an article (*The Hindu*, Jan 2, 2000) you have stated that " I have yet to hear that any writer in the west who is waiting with trepidation to hear what a critic in India has to say about her/him. I have yet to learn that an Indian critic can make or break a book that comes from the west". This message should be clear to the readers who seek to pursue independent judgment. I feel the critic in you complements the creative writer. My last question is : Would you kindly tell us what you are involved in writing now ?

SD: I am taking a breather at present. And writing out answers for interviewers !

BOOK REVIEW

Shashi Deshpande. *In the Country of Deceit*. Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2008. (Hard Cover), pp. 261, Rs 399/- .

Shashi Deshpande's latest novel, *In the Country of Deceit*, was released by the famous theatre personality and playwright Girish Karnad in Bangalore on Friday September 26th, 2008. This novel, once again, establishes the author's position as one of the best writers of fiction in India. With her magic wand of artistic creation, she presents the multilayered and multifaceted human relationships in a new light - "what oft was said but never so well expressed." Beginning with a short story in the 1970s, Shashi Deshpande now has ten novels, four books for children, a collection of essays and several volumes of short stories to her credit. In her new novel, while exploring the theme of a woman's journey of self-discovery she depicts a theme that speaks about the myriad feelings of love. In her interview with Reema Moudgil, this celebrated writer and winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award said that *In the Country of Deceit* has been a surprise for two reasons. First, because Devayani, a character in one of her early novels *Come Up and Be Dead* appears once again "after five novels and twenty years" and becomes the central protagonist in this work of fiction which, however, is not a sequel to the former. She added that the second surprise to her was that this is a love story which "explores the slippery, treacherous terrain that love takes people into."

Rendered with a voice of authenticity, Shashi Deshpande's new novel is divided into four chapters. The first Chapter, "Ground Zero", begins by revealing to the readers the invisible bond that

Devayani has with her ancestral home and the memory of her father telling them "with an expansive gesture that took in everything in sight, including the hill some distance away, 'all this is mine'" (3). It depicts the demolition of the family house which evokes sentiments. Metaphorically, this autumnal decay is followed by the sense of a rebirth, a fresh beginning, and a season of renewal which adds new colours to the central character Devayani Mudhol's otherwise dull life. After the death of her mother, life had almost stopped for this young unmarried woman who had nursed her ailing mother and had been a source of comfort to many of her relatives in their times of distress. She however, tries to emerge from the trauma of her mother's death and start life anew- symbolized by the demolition of her ancestral home and the building of a modern house. The new house, "a complete reversal of the old house" (4), is spacious, airy, sunny and has a sense of openness. Ignoring the disapproval of her family and friends who are keener on getting her married, she chooses to live alone on her own in this small town in Karnataka called Rajnur (a fictional version of Dharwad?). Despite the desolate look that the place had taken on during the process of demolition, Devayani had awaited the day when she would inhabit the house again. After her sister and other relatives leave, she settles amidst the tranquil setting in her new home. She spends her time teaching English to a few eager learners of the language and creating a garden with a frog-pond. Despande depicts Devayani's cozy relationships with the different members of her extended family by introducing the correspondences through letters. Her aunt Sindhu's voice, in the form of letters to her niece from the US, expresses their strong attachment to each other. She begins her letter with the endearing words-"How are you, Putta?" (17). The poignant portrayal of the bond between Savi and Devayani, the latter's friendship with her brother-in-law, Shree, the loving tenderness between cousins lend new perspectives to the different relations.

The plot gets a twist with the arrival of Rani, a famous actress, in Devayani's life. In spite of their differences they share a deep friendship. It is in connection with her relation with the filmstar that the protagonist meets the charismatic Ashok Chinappa, the new district superintendent of police who is much older than her and married. Though they know full well that such a relationship has no future, yet they get involved in a passionate love affair. In response to the cautions from her family she says that there are no boundaries for love. Deshpande's work convinces the readers that truly, there can be no moral judgments on love. Though Devayani longs for a happy married life and sex without guilt and fear - "This is what I want. I don't want clandestine meetings, drama, constant fears... This is what I want, this is what I'll never have" (191-92), she can't resist Ashok who promises her love and honesty but no future. The story line thus, as the author expressed in an interview, deals with "new landscapes of love and goodness" and is not burdened with many twists and turns. She overcomes her emotional turmoil when she realizes the final truth that "only this man could give me such ecstasy, only he could give me such joy with his love making... It was this man, not the sex. This man's love, not the sex. And yet, the sex too" (193). In being together, the lovers find compassion and understanding. Their ecstasy of togetherness, though only for a few moments, outweighs the pain of separation. Deshpande's admirable craftsmanship in portraying the inner psychology of the heroine creates a narrative of tender beauty rather than depicting a theme of adultery. As Devayani voyages the deceitful road to an illicit love, she ponders "Why did I do it? Why did I enter the country of deceit? What took me into it? I hesitate to use the word love but what other word is there?" (257), but ultimately understands that there can be no easy answer to it. Though her separation from Ashok is tragic, yet she has her own joy - "I too had a moment, a very brief moment, when I raised my arms and my fingertips brushed the sky?" (259). This kind of love, is both pleasing pain and also painful pleasure.

The novel thus really becomes "a fantasy feast" portraying "a state of intense vulnerability and beauty". Devayani, as a "new woman" shows patience, courage and an enviable spirit to face life as it comes on her way. As in *Moving On*, Deshpande, in this novel also shows how to move on, how to make the most of one's life. Through her protagonist, the novelist depicts the fact that one must understand the meaning of life and learn how to face it. She gives Devayani a new perception of life by making her more compassionate and tolerant of human frailty.

Rajnur, like Malgudi, comes alive in Deshpande's evocative description. The first-person narrative helps the author to relate with the readers. Though written in simple English, the sentences have a lyrical charm of their own and this makes the book a pleasant and enlightening read. The spontaneity and brilliant imagery leave the readers spell bound. In this decade of literary jargons, Deshpande's novel, like a gush of fresh air, freshens up the readers. *In the Country of Deceit* is truly a collector's piece, a "little bit of ivory, two inches wide". The novel is also elegantly bound with an attractive jacket. No wonder the readers will read and re-read it. We are grateful to the writer for unveiling to us such exquisite portraits of human relationships.

Anupama Chowdhury



Wit and Humour in Indian English Literature. Ed. Ramesh K. Srivastava. Jalandhar: ABS Publications, 2008. Pages 295+xvi. Price- Rs 800/- (Hard Cover).

The volume under review is a collection of twenty-three well written scholarly articles on the use of comic imagination in the writings of the renowned Indian English authors like G. V. Desani, Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Kamala Markandaya, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Khuswant Singh, Manohar Malgonkar, Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri, Nissim Ezekiel, U. R. Anantha Murthy, Ramesh K. Srivastava and S. Santhi. In addition to the majority of the essays in this selection by Ramesh K. Srivastava, a well known name in the field of Indian English literature, there are also a few articles written by other scholars and teachers. Taken as a whole, these essays provide a comprehensive assessment of the sunny side of Indian English Literature from almost every angle.

In the first essay on wit and humour in Indian life and Indian English Fiction, R. K. Srivastava shows the positive effect of comic relief in the life of modern men and women who have no time to "stand and stare" and most of the times suffer from tensions, insomnia and neurological disorders. Tracing the use of wit and humour from the time of Tenali Raman and Birbal to the more recent "Mahamoorakh Sammelans" and laughing clubs, the author suggests that "wit and humour are very essential for human beings in order to keep them in good health and cheer" (2). Citations from psychiatry and research articles are given to demonstrate the positive effect of laughter. But the author also warns us to be aware of the borderline between good humour and ill humour because the caustic jokes and witty pin - pricks may worsen the situation. In his analysis of wit and

humour vis-A-vis Indian English fiction, Srivastava finds a subdued humour in Raja Rao which is created by the rural dialogues that abound in "the pauses, the repetitions, the fragmentary sentences, the circumlocutory ways peppered with his comic touches which brings the village pleasantly alive and kicking in the novel's pages" (9). Mulk Raj Anand's subdued humour introduced by oddities associated with swearwords and ungrammatical use of English in dialogues, Markandaya's countryside humour, the fusion of mythic and comic modes in R. K. Narayan, Khuswant Singh's vibrant and boisterous humour, and the use of comic relief by other novelists have been critically analyzed in this article.

Reanda Ruso Bachel's scholarly essay on the translatability of humour examines "various problems encountered by translators of the genre of humour... with an aim to reaffirm the importance of knowing the cultural background of a source language in order to be able to decode the comic element of a given situation and transfer it in the recorded text" (20). The author concludes this evocative article with the suggestion that a translator must have strong reasoning power, a good deal of knowledge and a critical bend of mind.

Basavaraj Naikar in his article on the comedy in G. V. Desani's *All About H Hatterr*, argues that it "can be regarded as a philosophical comedy because the protagonist of the novel wants to 'seek Truth like a philosopher'" (28). Hatterr's escape from the evangelical institute reminds him of Fra Lippo Lippi's escape from the Carmelite church in Browning's poem. Referring to the various humorous episodes in Hatterr's life, for example, Hatterr's genealogy, his meeting with the seven saints of India, his experience with the washerwoman and his infatuation for Rosie, and finally his transformation into a Hindu Monk, the writer makes this article colourful and vibrant.

Ramesh K. Srivastava's articles on rural dialogues and comic touches in Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*, "shades of light-hearted swearwords" (54) and Mulk Raj Anand's sense of humour in

Untouchable, fusion of mythic and comic modes in R. K. Narayan's *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*, Bhabani Bhattacharya's "shrewd humour" in *He Who Rides a Tiger*, and mild, countryside humour in Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* are analytical and thought-provoking.

Written in simple and direct language, A. Hariprasanna's essay on R. K. Narayan's humour, shows how Narayan's comic vision deals with both the comical and serious aspects of life. The writer's observation on the comic realism of the master novelist merits the appreciation of the readers: "... it is this comic realism that makes him capable of weaving an intricate web of patterns of life" (70). To him, the novels are a perfect blend of humour and pathos.

In a brief and analytical essay, K. Radha discusses the various episodes that raise peals of laughter in Markandaya's *A Handful of Rice*. While Ruby Gupta, in her article on humour in Khuswant's Singh's *Delhi*, finds deterioration in Singh's sense of humour, which, according to her, has regressed to "bawdy and even offensive at times due to its explicit nature" (153), R. K. Srivastava finds it "full-blooded, vigorous, masculine and suited to the people of all ages" (163).

Jacob George C. finds humour in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* as a means of feminist protest. According to him, the novel strikes a "balance between feminist and female humour" (201). Both R. K. Srivastava and Jacob George C. have given an in-depth analysis of the comic episodes in this Booker prize winning novel and the various techniques applied by Roy to achieve a perfect blend of humour and pathos. But one feels the essays could have been more enjoyable if the authors have added a few words on the "carnavalesque" in this fiction. In the true Bakhtinian vein, Roy has used satire, irony and laughter to subvert patriarchal discourses and confront male domination. In *The God of Small Things* humour emerges in the sense of "Carnival" as well.

Shakti K. Pandey's analysis of S. Santhi as a monarch of wit and humour, Zerín Anklesaria's article on the use of wit and humour in Nissim Ezekiel's poetry, S. Krishna Bhatta's essay on humour in Indo-English plays and the discussion of the role of humour in Classical Sanskrit plays by G. H. Godbole, are all well researched and provide an enjoyable reading. Last but not the least, mention should be made of Swati Srivastava's article on the wit and humour in the works of Ramesh K. Srivastava. Her observation on Srivastava's "trait of indulging liberally in pleasant and witty conversation" (232) reminds the readers of the editor's preface where Srivastava confesses-

Many times, a word, a remark, a situation, a person or any of his activities could trigger and launch my comic imagination. . . The trait at times happens to be so forceful, so compulsive, so irrepressible in me that to maintain a serious posture at grave occasions becomes as difficult as muffling the cackles of a poultry. (xiii)

Thus, the volume under review is a significant contribution to the critical study of Indian English fiction in its comical aspect. The essays form a mingled yarn of various interesting articles on wit and humour, their role in life in general and in Indian life and literature in particular, the translatability of humourous writings, function of humour in classical Sanskrit dramas as well as in Indo-English plays, and offer altogether a different rendering to the subject. Neatly bound with a colourful cover page, the volume is well produced with almost minimal typographical errors. A very important book for the researchers, scholars and teachers, it deserves a place in every library.

Anupama Chowdhury

Manju Kapur, *the immigrant*. New Delhi: Random House India, 2008, pp vi+338.

Expatriation as a literary phenomenon provides the exilic mode of writing to fictionists like V. S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Bharati Mukherjee, Jhumpa Lahiri and now Manju Kapur. The difference between other master fictionists and Manju Kapur is of special significance that she herself is not an expatriate and thus looks at cultural transplantation from the Indian side. Manju Kapur's new novel *the immigrant* (2008) deals with the theme of geographical dislocation entailing several ruptures - emotional, cultural and fragmentation of identity. The novelist's immigrant treads the anguished path of expatriation. Her deliberate use of small letters "t" and "i" in the title is a definitive statement, perhaps denying the hierarchal power structure, like cultural critic bell hooks adopting the small letters in her name. The self of the immigrant is diminished every moment in the adopted land. The novelist dwells on the situation of Indian immigrants - "certain Indians become immigrants slowly." These immigrants are tormented souls because they are not who have fled persecution, destitution, famine, slavery or death threat. Their country has not closed its doors on them the moment they leave. They are divided beings - always in two minds; the novelist uncannily observes they are educated and they are English speaking.

Kapur's woman protagonist is Nina, a thirty-year-old English lecturer, unmarried, struggling to make both ends meet for herself and her widowed mother. On the eve of her thirtieth birthday she finds her life ebbing away - no hope of any brightness in her existence.

Teaching at a women's college, Nina finds her world totally female: colleagues, friends, students, parent (her father, an IFS officer dying of sudden cardiac arrest at forty-five). She would end up, she dreads, a bitter old spinster like Miss Kapoor of the Economics Department, like the Misses Hingorani and Rao of her own, like Miss Lal of History or Miss Krishnamurthy of Sanskrit. Fate of educated women in India is evident, "Academics.. full of spinsters, minatory signposts to depressing, lonely futures." Marriage - and arranged marriage surfaces as yet another preoccupation of the novelist in this book.

Nina represents the urban Indian woman. She had taken seven plus years to finish school, migrate to Delhi to study English Honours at Miranda House, take a postgraduate degree from the University and get a lectureship at her alma mater. She dreamed for a fuller life for her mother and her mother hoped that a husband could be found for her daughter who would give her a home she deserved. For Nina, education which gave her a life of the mind was a gift she would not exchange for a humdrum marriage. But Nina was destined to be an immigrant. An arranged marriage takes place: marriage with Anand, a dentist from Halifax, Canada. As Anand was building up his career, he had no time to think of marriage. To escape the death of his parents in an accident, he had migrated to Canada leaving a flourishing practice behind in Dehradun. Like many immigrants, he used his work to become integrated with the adopted land. But Nina who comes as a wife has more difficult time - discovering truth about her husband. Their marriage ends for Nina in going away from her husband. She needed to be herself. With her mother dead (she could only reach India at her mother's funeral) she had nothing tying her down anywhere. Nina lives her life in parts wanting to belong, but everything she experiences is temporary. The immigrant has also the stoicism, develops the courage to move on

when something fails. Return is not possible for Nina. In the modern world once moved there is no homecoming. Nina becomes a "floating resident of the western world." One is reminded of the closing of D. H. Lawrence's novel *Sons and Lovers* as one reads the last words of the immigrant: "When one was reinventing oneself, anywhere could be home. Pull up your shallow roots and move. Find a new place, new friends, a new family. It had been possible once, it would be possible again."

With this fourth novel of hers, Manju Kapur once again proves that she is a master delineator of the complex Indian family life. The narrator exploits the familiar spaces of present day human experience with exceptional understanding. There is always a sense of *deja vu* that makes her story at once of the individual with unparalleled universal appeal. Kapur's preoccupation with geographical dislocation in the *immigrant* opens up the expanse of inscape for her and for her readers.

Sushila Singh



Dalit Literature : A Critical Exploration. Eds. Amar Nath Prasad and M.B. Gaijan. New Delhi : Sarup and Sons, 2007, PP. 324, Rs. 850/-.

Dalit Literature is an emerging literature in India. It refers to the literature of and about the people who are silenced for centuries by caste prejudices and social oppressions. It is a shame on us that in India a Mahar or a Paravan is treated as untouchable, not allowed to worship with caste Hindus. It is an irony that a high caste touches a common animal or worships it but he believes that touching a low caste is a sin. Thus, dalit literature aims at celebrating new subjectivity, identity and psychic struggle to remove the socially imposed disabilities on the untouchables. By editing the book Amar Nath Prasad and M. B. Gaijan have selected twenty one research papers on this theme to highlight the growth of Dalit Literature.

At the very first glance the book focuses on contributors' ideas of resisting, alleviating and changing the identity and experience of the untouchables. As a whole all the papers on dalit literature focus on new thinking, new point of view and perceptions in the celebration of a new genre. Some of the papers like that of Darshna Trivedi, S.K. Paul, Anita Ghosh, D. Padamarani, and Shibu Simon and Sijo Varghese C. are the critical explorations of dalit literary theory and concerns. Trivedi's paper examines the origin of dalit identity from the Vedic roots and shows how the dalits have suffered from prejudices and social oppressions for centuries. He states how this marginalised group is "exploited by the social and economic traditions of this country." While Trivedi rejects dalit literature as canonical literature, B.S. Nimabat goes back to 13th and 14th century Marathi

Bhakti tradition and analyses Marathi saint poet Chokhamela's protest against untouchability and exploitation of the oppressed.

S. K. Paul has contributed three papers to the volume on different forms of dalit literature. His paper on Dalitism presents its growth and evaluation, social position of the dalits, their social, political and economic exploitation in the name of religion. His paper on dalit literature and poetry is a brief historical survey of Indian society, oppression of dalits and inhuman social system. His paper on Gujarati dalit literature is a 'content analysis' of dalit sociology, dalit consciousness and dalitness of the backward castes like chamar and Bhangi.

There are six papers on Gujarati dalit literature. Pathik Paramar's paper is a critical analysis of Gujarati dalit poetry. The paper reveals the beginning of the Ambedkarite movement in Gujarati dalit poetry which reveals contemporary reality, intense anger and revolutionary protest of the dalit poets in their poetic excellence. Rupalee Burke's analysis of reversing centrality and marginality in Gujarati dalit literature and Gujarati adalit literature focuses her ideological discourse on Gujarati society, history, culture and religion with social, political and economic implications. Harish Mangalam's paper is a fine analysis of the origin and development of Gujarati dalit poetry with ideological revolution, tremendous freshness, enlightenment and originality of depiction. Dushyant Nimavat's paper on Gujarati dalit literature presents the sorrowful elements of dalit suffering and their protest against untouchability as a blot on Hinduism. In his critical hypothesis Nimavat anticipates the emancipation of dalits from age-old discrimination by education, ignition of mind and awakening of consciousness for their rights to equality and freedom. Ami U. Upadhyay's analysis of dalit sociology in his short stories deals with dalit identity, representation and sociology in Gujarati dalit literature.

Anita Ghosh's paper on dalit feminism focuses on some of the aspects of dalit feminist discourses. It analyses some of the dalit women writers' contribution to dalit literature, their desire for healthy "democratic patriarchy" and socio-economic situation in which they are trapped in. D. Padmarani presents the distinctive voices of dalits in their dehumanised, degraded and deprived status. In the Bakhtinian carnivalisation of dalit status Padmarani presents that the dalits are socially marginalized, psychologically comatized and drugged in the rigid caste system of the society. Sunita Sinha gives a detailed growth of dalit writing in Maharashtra and Gujarat and its variety in other regional languages where dalits battle for freedom and reclamation of human personality. Analysing Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* and *Coolie*, T.S. Ramesh presents how caste defines duties in Indian society; and ideas of Karma, Dharma and Moksha are closely associated with Hindu caste system. He views how this philosophy instead of becoming philanthropic invites miseries for the untouchable masses. S. S. Bhandari's paper on Jim Corbett presents Corbett's Samaritan spirit with the "sturdy, happy and unspoiled people of the hill" and India's starving millions. Satish Barbuddhe's paper on Narendra Jadhav's *Outcaste : A Memoir* presents how the Mahar parents had struggled hard against the society and the hostile high caste surroundings, while bringing up Narendra and his siblings.

The editors have some papers to their credit in the volume. Amar Nath Prasad's paper concentrates on the plight of defenceless dalits in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*. In his paper Prasad creates an impression that a dalit is a dalit by low birth like Velutha, or by gender identity like Ammu. In his paper he opines that birth makes one a low caste dalit and sometimes gender identity of a woman makes her a subaltern. Apart from his paper on Gujarati dalit novel *Shosh* M. B. Gaijan has two more papers in the volume. His paper on dalits in *The God of Small Things* analyses the condition

of Paravans in Kerala's religious communities, their atrocity and brutality. His paper on Tagore's poetry reveals the social realism in the presentation of the condition of dalits and it questions the academic monopoly of the Brahmins to aspire for the highest wisdom. Gaijan has analysed Tagore's praising of outcasts for their wretched living and opposing the hypocrisy of proud castemen of our country. All the papers included in the volume are well researched and carefully selected. The merit of the book surpasses the weakness of some errors that need to be corrected in its next edition.

Bhagabat Nayak

CREATIVE WRITING

Jayanta Mahapatra

THE WINDOW

An endless sky. God let loose,
the earth drunk with the brilliance
of the first rain's colors. And here
my words shut their mouths
when I am lost myself.
The past floats in with the wind,
sorrows the curtains at the window.
Something like a longing
scurries up the walls.
In a toothless house
a door is open.
The shadow that moves across it
belongs to you, and its ten arms
wound me with their barren despair.
It's not because you said goodbye
or my subtle agitations failed on you.
This stillness rises precipitously
before me, but it isn't
the concentration of God.
Today the heart is strange and distant,
untouched when you see
young girls raped and killed
and hear their mothers weep, and when
the old sing of the wonder of another birth.

Motes of dust hover in the air,
an occasion for the still and unstill
to celebrate, and they were guiding me
without making their presence known;
through the colors a face formed,
and a flawless shoulder
that had no body about it.
A wind waved its arms desperately,
and the web swung,
closing the window of silence.



PAIN IS JUST SOMETHING THAT HAPPENS TO BE IN THE ROOM

Jayanta Mahapatra

Awakening, there is
once again the postured chair.
Righteous in dogmatic time.

I have to cross the last ghetto
and still I want to be here.

Struck by the new morning sun,
the long room of memory
comes out of a little door on the left
and begins to fill with light
that has yet to find its home.



I'M STILL WAITING FOR YOU

Shiv K. Kumar

It was a child's love for you.
I stared at you with a teddy bear's
eyes, like the coral buttons
on mother's blouse.

Then you left for another country
where rivers divided towns
and nobody ever returned home.

Mother, for nine springtides you
held me in your womb. But did you notice
that when I emerged, my eyes were
hitched to a star that glimmered
like kum kum on the sky's forehead.

During the past myriad autumns, trees
have lost their limbs. Ominous forebodings,
meteors and cloud - bursts.

But I'm still waiting for you.



WORDS

Shiv K. Kumar

They lie dormant in a shark's pouch
till it is harpooned by a poet's quill.
Released, cleansed and baptized, they're
now ready to be strung into verse.

A solitary word is a foetus that floats
rudderless on the womb's sea. It's an arc
sliced off a tangerine that looks
like the lip of a Nigerian woman.

A poem is born when words wing down
from the sky, chorusing like nightingales
with holes in their throats.

Don't cough out words.
Just let them out softly, like seals
rubbing their backs on a beach
off the Mediterranean coast.



MUSE'S MYSTIQUE

Pashupati Jha

Emotions stir and implode
Striving for an outlet
A blank sheet, virgin white
Sneaks near to be seeded
I want back my youth again.

Forget my thick embossed papers
I have a wild side too;
When I am alone, utterly denied
Bent down and writhing in pain
The sea rages within, with leaping tides
When every thing is eaten, embers remain
To tell of another loss, another gain.



CONFESSION

Punita Jha

Do I have guts enough,
To relate a confession
I wish I had faced,
The critics gaze.
I conspired with
By aching thoughts,
But all in vain,
I could not gather guts enough
To relate a confession.
Day and night,
Have I thought,
Hearts throbbing,
Heaving and sighing
Memories trapped,
Between thick rocks.
How can I snuggle to sleep?
When my thoughts play hide and seek
How can I unburden myself
confess, concede,
Be truthful to myself.
Is it a secret or a guilt.
Which I should confide

It's my love which can never
Be circumscribed,
Then why should I
Confess and confide
Why then should,
I have guts enough
To relate a confession
When my love is confident
Confidential and not confinable,
Secure in his confidence
Then why, O, Why? a confession
My love is dedicated
And consecrated
Then why should I
Sabotage it by a confession.



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