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SUMAN BALA

The year 2009 has witnessed a rich harvest of creative writing, both in India and abroad. Let us evaluate the literary scenario in India. In order to do so, one may go back to history, the rise of Indian English literature in the 1930s and 1940s. While the early Indian English fiction was confined to the three pioneers—Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao, the post-Independence era has witnessed the emergence of a large number of novelists—Khushwant Singh, Manohar Malgonkar, Arun Joshi, Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai and Nayantara Sahgal.

Indian novel in English took a new turn with the publication of the Booker Prize winner Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. Since then, there has been a spate of novels and many of these have won international recognition. It was K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar who critically analysed major works and published the literary history of Indian writing in English, which is perhaps the most authentic book in the area. Another book that gave impetus to Indian writing was *Twice-Born Fiction* by Meenakshi Mukherjee who passed away in September 2009 at Hyderabad. Similarly, C.D. Narasimhaiah, M.K. Naik and V.K. Gokak made a considerable contribution to the growth of this area of writing. Foreign scholars, especially William Walsh and Dieter Riemenschneider, wrote extensively about Indian literature. Recently Paul Sharrad, Professor of English at Wollongong University, Australia, has brought out a significant publication entitled *Postcolonial Literary History and Indian English Fiction*. He highlights in the book Indian fiction's close engagement with history during last few decades. The novel in India has been traditionally subjective or true chronicle of social life, but as already

stated, following *Midnight's Children*, it 'turned to history' and since then history has remained a vital theme with the writers.

A number of Indian writers have dabbled with Indian history and produced some valuable fiction. Most recent of these is Keki Daruwalla, the renowned poet, who published his debut novel *For Christ and Pepper*, based on the early adventures of the Portuguese, in exploring India in search of spices and in order to propagate Christianity. The novel takes us to the times of Vasco da Gama who discovered India for the western world.

Even at the international novel, historical novel got recognition, with Mantel's *Wolf Hall* getting the Booker prize. Hilary Mantel, 57, won the 41st annual Man Booker Prize in November 2009 for *Wolf Hall*, a historical novel about Henry VIII's court centred on the king's adviser Thomas Cromwell. Mantel beat out literary giants J.M. Coetzee and A.S. Byatt, both pervious winners of the Booker prize and deprived Coetzee of the chance to become a three-time winner of the award. She was the first favourite to win since Yann Martel won it for *Life of Pi* in 2002. Accepting the award, Mantel said: "I had to amuse the jaded palate of the critical establishment and most of all I had to capture the imagination of the general reader." James Naughtie, a BBC broadcaster who led the panel of judges, described *Wolf Hall* as "a thoroughly modern novel set in the 16th century," praising it for the way it "probes the mysteries of power by examining and describing the meticulous dealings in Henry VIII's court, revealing in thrilling prose how politics and history is made by men and women." Mantel, who has written ten novels, a collection of short stories and a memoir, spent five years writing *Wolf Hall* and is already working on a sequel.

Sarah Waters's novel *The Little Stranger*, a close runner-up to this year's Booker Prize, also draws its material from history, the post-Second World War era. Sarah Waters was once known as a writer of lesbian Victoriana, but she's been shaking off that reputation and become a serious writer. Her previous novel, *The Night Watch,* is set in postwar Britain. Her latest, *The Little Stranger*, is set in 1947 Warwickshire, England. Dr. Faraday, a country doctor, is called to Hundreds Hall to treat an ill maid. He

hasn't been to the hall since he was a boy, and his memory of its grandeur clash with the reality of its slow degeneration. Hundreds Hall has been home to the Ayres and the family's fortune has been undone by two world wars. He finds Mrs. Ayres, her son Roderick, who was damaged during the war, and her daughter Caroline residing in a home that is apparently turning malevolent. Dr. Faraday makes constant visits which are not always welcome to understand what's really going on at Hundreds Hall. The novel has supernatural element and the mystery adds to the curiosity of the reader.

Closely related to the historical fiction are the novels and other works highlighting a specific city. One of the most refreshing books published this year was the English author Sam Miller's *Delhi: Adventures in a Mega City*. It is in the tradition of Ahmed Ali, Khushwant Singh and Anita Desai who based their novels on the city of Delhi. As Mark Tully remarks: "I have lived in Delhi for 40 years and always wanted a book which I feel encompasses the whole of my city. Here it is . . . it is a wonderful read." Married to an Indian, Miller has been closely associated with New Delhi for past many years.

There has been a resurgence of literature on Dalit life. 2009 has recorded the publication of a number of books in this area. A significant book published this year is *Displaced by Development: Confronting Marginalization and Gender Injustice*, edited by Lyla Mehta. The volume has contributions by hardcore social activists as well as renowned scholars. It engages the issue of gender with other identities such as age, class, tribe and ethnicity. It reinforces the need for gender perspective in policy and academic debates.

Another book, the English version of *Amma and Other Stories* by Omprakash Valmiki has recently been published. Translated from Hindi into English, the fifteen short stories in this collection graphically present Dalit life and the painful experiences associated with it. Valmiki poignantly records the degradation, humiliation and brutalities the Dalits have to suffer in day-to-day life. The stories in the volume can be grouped thematically in the domain of literature of the margins written in English viz. Mulk Raj Anand's *Coolie* and Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*.

Vikas Swarup's *Q and A* regained its popularity with "Slumdog Millionaire," based on this novel, bagging several Oscar awards. The film, which is both shocking and endearing, shows an eighteen-year old orphan trying his luck at a game show "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" However, when he strikes a jackpot of twenty million rupees, he is arrested by police on the charge of cheating. In the treatment of the subject, "Slumdog Millionaire" resembles Mira Nair's "Salaam Bombay." In both these films, shot in Mumbai, the children are deprived and are up against the oppressive world.

The theme of the oppression of the poor is extended by Aravind Adiga in his Booker Award-winning novel *The White Tiger*, which remained perhaps the most talked-about novel in the year 2009. The novel, which sold a record 1,60,000 copies, invited adverse criticism for portraying the dark side of Indian life. Born to a rickshaw-puller in a small village called Laxmangarh, the protagonist Balram Halwai becomes a successful entrepreneur after murdering his master. The novel uses the epistolary form, the narrator writing a series of letters to Wen Jiabao, the Chinese premier, over a period of seven nights to acquaint him with the life in India. While narrating the story of the protagonist's rise from swamp to Silicon valley of India, Adiga paints a shockingly real picture of poor India—the ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor, the rural and the urban, the evils of child labour and rape that are eating into the vitals of Indian society.

Like last year, fiction in the lighter vein seems to sway the readers. Like Khushwant Singh, Namita Gokhale, Anurag Mathur, a number of writers have published works which can be classed as popular literature. Chetan Bhagat, the best-selling English language novelist in India, is out with a new novel. The theme is marriage. Bhagat admits: "*2 States—The Story of My Marriage* is on my life." This story of two cities, Delhi and Chennai, is about two lovers wanting to get married but this being India, their families, too, need to love each other. This process of osmosis takes more than 200 pages.

Bhagat's own story was no different. A Punjabi from Delhi, he was in love with a Tamilian from Thanjavur whom he met as a stu-

dent at IIM, Ahmedabad. And his was a happy ending, like the novel. The Mumbai-based author today flaunts a married man's well-fed paunch and jokingly calls himself a house-husband. "I quit my day-job early this year. These days, I make sure my banker wife gets her morning tea, drop our twins to school and then sit down to write," he says, before laughingly adding, "I also do some knitting and baking before it is time for the children to return."

While Bhagat's earlier three works have brought him moolah, can his latest novel, which he partly wrote on a Blackberry, bring him critical acclaim? "I'm here to win hearts, not awards," he says and then adds, "but if I'm given one, I'll probably take it." Of course, Bhagat is expecting a good profit. His last novel, *The 3 Mistakes of My Life*, which had an initial print run of two lakh copies, was a sell-out. *One Night @ the Call Centre* was adapted into a movie *Hello* by Salman Khan. *Five Point Someone—What Not to Do at IIT*, his first book, is currently being adapted into the Aamir Khan-Kareena Kapoor starrer *3 Idiots*.

Queer Studies, which was taboo in the past, has picked up with the changed policies of the government. There have been several books documenting the real issues and lives of gays in India. *Same Sex Love in India* by Ruth Vanita, *Loving Women* by Maya Shama, *Sexualities* by Nivedita Menon and *The Phobic and the Erotic: The Politics of Sexualities in Contemporary India* edited by Brinda Bose and S. Bhattacharya are some of the important publications in the area. The latest book on the subject is *Whistling in the Dark*, twenty-one queer interviews, dealing with issues of gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people. Edited by R. Raj Rao and Dibyajyoti Sarma, the volume makes a strong case for the queer humanity.

Apart from these four major thematic areas—historical fiction, literature of the margins, popular fiction, queer writing—there is a spate of writing dealing with other subjects, especially women's studies, and man-woman relations. Writers of Indian diaspora—Chitra Divakaruni, Jhumpa Lahiri, Shauna Singh Baldwin, Meera Syal—have published significant new works. While all branches of Indian English literature are growing substantially, Indian fiction has registered a remarkable growth. Such a successful attempt at

creative expression on a national scale in an alien medium is indeed rare in human history. Three cheers to Indian writing!

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In Defence of Indian English Poetry

C.L. KHATRI

> We can touch the life of the great works of literature of any age all the better if we know something of the less.
>
> T.S. Eliot

Indian English Poetry of late has come under severe attack by foreign critics like Bruce King and Indian critics like M.K. Naik and others for 'weed-like growth' (Naik, 183) and 'Chaos' in the field of poetry and a sharp decline in the quality of poetry. M.K. Naik in a sweeping generalization terms almost all poets of today "as incorrigible in full pseudo-poetic pursuit of the inconsequential" (183). Jayanta Mahapatra says, "It is an odd situation, because more bad poetry is being published now than ever before in Indian history." (3). Bhaskar Ghose calls poetry of the age in general garbage (*Frontline* Feb. 13, 2009). The objective of my paper is to defend contemporary India in English Poetry while analyzing its distinguishing features, strengths and weaknesses. At the same time it suggests some practical measures to nurture and cultivate poetry.

A discussion of Indian poetry takes us back to the twilight period of Indian cultural history and we trace its genesis in Vedas, Upanishads, the *Mahabharata* and the folk songs in regional languages and literatures of other ethnic groups. They form an inevitable part of our 'collective reservoir.' New leaves in the form of myths, tradition and custom, social and personal history are added to it. Somewhere something happens that shakes the sensitive mind of a poet and sets him reflecting on his 'collective unconscious' relating the present to the past and sublimating the present jolting, moving, soul stirring, searing experiences with an aid from that collective reservoir. All our yesterdays are involved in our deeper consciousness and we tend to relate the immediate present to the living past. Charu Sheel Singh rightly maintains that the origin of Indian poetry in English can be traced in the translation of the *Rig Veda* by Sir William Jones at the close of eighteenth century and the transla-

tion of *Bhagvadgita* by Sir Charles Wilkins in 1785. (viii) After the pioneering work done by Anglo-Indian writers it was the turn of the first generation of Indian English poets like Manmohan Ghosh, Toru Dutt, Aurobindo, Tagore and Sarojini Naidu. They explored Indian tradition, myth, culture and folklore in a medium that was colonial but the colonial tiger was tamed to serve as a powerful vehicle to spread Indian philosophy, literature and culture across the globe and make the West an obedient listener.

Decadence is the law of Nature. We can put it in this way: 'when spring comes can winter be far behind.' Winter of the Romantic poets came with the open revolt of P. Lal, Nissim Ezekiel, Raghavendra Rao, Shiv K. Kumar and others. With intense Gandhian Movement for freedom leading to political and economic uncertainties, the rise of the proletariats and disillusionment with the romantic exuberance of the predecessors, the new poets were prompted to reconsider the whole tradition of poetry writing in India and gave a new direction to it evolving themselves as a formidable group. Poetry moved from transcendental to realistic, prayer to protest, from metaphysical to physical, philosophical to social, conventional to experimental, mystical to ironical and in source of inspiration from Wordsworth-Shelley-Keats to Pound-Yeats-Eliot.

But there was no end of 'spiritual continuity,' and 'Romantic poetry' survived despite the onslaught of 'new poetry' or 'modern poetry' and the postmodern poetry as it is very much there in our blood. Reference may be made to Harindranath Chattopadhyaya's *A Bird Sang on the Bough* (1989), *Festival of Thirsts* (1930) and K.R.S. Iyengar's *Sitayana: Epic of the Earth Born* (1987), *Saga of Seven Mothers*: *Satisaptakam* (1991) and *Krishna Geetham* (1994). Poetry of Krishna Srinivasa and Charu Sheel Singh also fall in the same category. In course of time the steam of bitterness in them fizzles out and many of them prove a flash in the pan. It seems they realised that 'verbal belligerence' and 'incantatory fire' could not be sustained any more and proved very much shaky in their commitment to Muse. Soon P. Lal and Ezekiel the harbingers of modernity parted their ways with the latter forming his own 'Bombay School of Poetry.' Many of them left the show in the middle. They include Dom Moraes, P. Lal, Arun Kolatkar, Pritish Nandy, R. Parthasarathy, Gieve Patel and some others. One can put it in this way: They came, conquered, cashed and quitted. Two important points of this age are:

- They outrightly rejected and ridiculed the Romantic poets and even questioned the wisdom of Nobel Prize for Tagore.
- They stood against the establishment and ended up in an establishment with the declaration of 'Poetry Manifesto' and gave an impression that Indian English poetry does not exist beyond them.

Is the tradition of Indian English poetry going to die with Shiv K. Kumar, Jayanta Mahapatra, Daruwalla, Kamala Das and Arvind K. Mehrotra? Certainly not. Niranjan Mohanty rightly suggests that "a tradition once formed, only knows how to flow, like water, downward, carrying all, embracing all, encapsulating all into its living, warm, animating and ennobling fold.' (*JIWE*, Jan. 2003). The tradition is still continuing though the profile is low. P. Lal, Nissim Ezekiel and Jayant Mahapatra encouraged poets in their own ways. P. Lal's effort got diffused but Ezekiel could evolve and continue Bombay school of poetry and it is still thriving. It comprises a small group of about a dozen poets, including Saleem Peeradina, Santan Rodrigues, Manohar Shetty, Raj Rao, Ranjit Hoskote and women poets like Eunice de Souza, Tara Patel, Imtiaz Dharker, Melanie Silgardo, Menka Shivdasani, Mukta Sambarni and the daughter of Ezekiel, Kavita Ezekiel. They got better treatment at the hands of M.K. Naik. Similarly Jayanta Mahapatra inspired Oriya poets to grow and flourish. They include Niranjan Mohanty, Prabhanjan K. Mishra, Rabindra K. Swain and Bibhu Padhi. They write poetry with a strong Oriya ambience. If you closely look at Naik's treatment of these two groups you will find the difference of approach. He is liberal to the first group and with the latter he seems to be on a fault-finding mission. To quote:

> All the three Orissa poets surprise us occasionally with an unusual image or a lapidary phrase: "the heart . . ./ restless" (Mishra); and "Varicose city" and "gulmohars paint the sky" (Mishra); and "City of temples and turds" and temples "broken by stone-thirsty kings" (Swain). On the other hand, each is prone to lapsing into solecisms: "procession of cavalries" and "Lord of tendrils . . . tambourine . . . Telegrams" (Mohanty) (Lord Jagannath must be connected with the post office, because alliteration demands it). In fact, there are many more examples of sense being sacrificed at the altar of sound: "Wind is drunk" (Mohanty); "gutters" try to "serenade like brooks" (Mishra); and "ghee-wicks . . . burning by itself . . . will have been extinguishing" (Swain) (Naik & Narayan).

Can we reject powerful Muse of Mohanty on such ground? Let's have two examples to show his power-packed poetry:

> If you disbelieve me and my words, white or blue
> I shall wind up this game from the earth
> and roll this universe into a prayer ball
> a throw it out through the window
> of your eyes (Krishna, 49)

> I collect pebbles of my dreams
> to drop them one by one
> into the earthen pitcher of your being
> so that the margin of your love
> would rise to quench my thirst
> and thus, negotiating a satiation,
> I escape into you, flow into you
> until you and I become a song
> in some tired traveller's tongue (Tiger 10)

Among others who got greater and quicker acceptance in India are poets living or working abroad. They include Vikram Seth, Agha Shahid Ali, Hoshang Merchant, Meena Alexander, Sudeep sen, Tabish Khair and others. It is sad that for acceptance in India one needs certificates from the West. Narendra could not have become Vivekananda had he not got approval from Chicago. It is difficult to find a creative writer in English in India who moved to the central position by practising his craft from a small place with no foreign connection/link. Tabish Khair, for example, has greater acceptance as a poet than his teacher, Prabhat K. Singh. If he moves to U.K or U.S. and writes poetry from there, he would become a star poet overnight. It seems there are no roadways to success but only air-ways in this field. This is how things move. Contemporary poets in this sense are sailing against the current. However, this phenomenon is being challenged by contemporary poets. Never before in Indian history have so many people placed at small places written poetry of native sensibility with limited native resources for native consumption and published from native publication houses. They are, of course, growing like weeds for they are growing on their own, without proper cultivation, manuring and grooming. The lack of ideological alignment is a great depravity. You find it difficult to place these poets in a specific ideological tradition. There is no school to identify with. They are diffused, not confused but ritually abused. They are also called neo-Romantics but then there is no thesis to

ideologically support and promote it. However, one can certainly read the writing on the wall, the emerging trends of contemporary poetry. They are more native, urbane and down to earth and contemporary in their sensibility, more diversified in subject, treatment and language, more frank, honest and bold in expression. They depend largely on vanity publication and Indian journals where they are frequently published. They are receptive of diverse influences ranging from their respective native traditions, modern American, European and Black poetry.

Normally a new age rises in sharp reaction against the old age. Either you see the tradition of British poetry or Hindi poetry or even modern Indian English poetry. Interestingly contemporary poetry in English is not evolved in protest against the modern poetry. So the change is slow and silent without any acrimony. And so the icons could not emerge in absence of open revolt. Consequently what we have today is both negation and acceptance of the tradition of modern poetry at low ebb. Poetry becomes popular by aligning itself with a socio-political or cultural movement or by creating a new movement itself. The lack of either condition seems detrimental to its growth. For example, progressive poetry in Hindi gatecrashed to the mainstream through direct involvement with the people, working for the cause of the society.

However, contemporary poets are grateful to the New Poets for opening up the flood gate of poetry. Consequently thousands of poets have come up with their good, not-so-good or even bad poetry collections and are still pouring in, self-driven, self-published, self-managed without any institutional support. Some of them like Krishna Srinivas, O.P. Bhatnagar, Niranjan Mohanty (they are no more with us), I.K. Sharma, R.K. Singh, I.H. Rizvi,, Bibhu Padhi, R.C. Shukla, D.C. Chambial, D.H. Kabadi, Prabhat K. Singh, Pashupati Jha, Vihang Naik, P.C.K. Prem, Manas Bakshi, P.K. Majumdar, Makarand Paranjape, C.P. Surendran, S.L. Peeran, Ashok Mahajan, H.K. Kaul, S.N.Tripathy, Sudesh Mishra and Amarendra Kumar have been writing poetry for decades and still the door is slammed on them by the centre. But margin is marching to the centre of power right from America to Africa and India and no power can stop this movement. The tradition of poetry will continue.

Though it is beyond the scope of the paper to cover all the poets I wish to, a few excerpts of fine poetry of this group with a note will help validate my conviction.

Gaya

A holy city widespread
with filthy drains and murky lanes
coiled round the shrines
where angels fear to tread.

Lord Yama's choicest piece of land
for His gala show every year
where guards at the outposts
collect tolls,
sniffers move whoring about in the street
while their masters keep
entertaining the guests lured
by the ageless glimpses
of the facades
of temples and pagodas.

In and around
the dry river bed
of the Falgu,
dimpled and gurgled
at the feet of Lord Vishnu,
ceremonies continue
round the clock (P.K. Singh, *So Many Crosses*)

It is remarkable for descriptive and evocative quality of poetry. It traces a line of continuity from the myth of the place to the present day reality with neutrality. Prabhat K. Singh amply displays qualities of a good poet in his two poetry collections: *So Many Crosses* and *In the Olive Green.*

See how wonderfully D.C. Chambial, a prolific poet of cool breeze, sweet fragrance of hills and valleys of Himachal, achieves the synthesis of sensibility, ideas and images in this poem trailing in the desert:

Sand-Smell Spreads

Sand-smell spreads in sunburnt desert,
Squeezes every drop of water,
Fire, the volition of earth.
Shadowless opacities,
Pagodas on heads, miles of fire-tread
For ambrosia of life.
Sink into, emerge from vast wilderness
Ploughing the sands

Mirage metamorphoses into reality.
Pagodas of water
Poised on steady heads;
The fiery sun feels defeated. (D.C. Chambial, *Collected Poems*)

Here is another example in which the feeling of pathos and surprise is evoked in this simple but subtle poem of R.K. Singh:

Love or friendship in this land
is a hoax
each morning and evening
my tent is set afire
and they say
night is illuminated.

Singh is the king of Indian English Haiku. However, he does not strictly follow the Japanese structure of Haiku (5-7-5 syllables) and develops an Indian variant of it:

Her wet lingerie reveals
more than her body—
I drown in her sea. (Singh, *Peddling Dream*, 76)

Amarendra Kumar is a prolific poet from Bihar with a penchant for musical cadence, lyricism and verbal incantatory fire. His poetry collections are voluminous. They are: *Song Anti song, Sound and Shell* and *Stage Dilemma.* Here is an example of his sound poem:

Moment
momentum
fusible metal
melting point
of the metallurgy
of lip, arm, and solar plexus (*Strange Dilemma* 87)

I.K. Sharma, who has produced six volumes of poetry collections, is unjustly ignored by reputed critics of India. His poetry is rich in evocative meaning, powerful in the use of images and metaphors and profound in its connotative suggestions:

I go to my new house,
Switch the table-lamp on,
The table is all effulgence,
Streams of light flow on its sides.

I take the living lamp to other rooms
to see if the bright bulb kindles its kind,

bulb after bulb I try at every site,
no bulb wakes up from its sleep.

Tired, I turn to my old house
and light my earthen lamp,
with it I pass to neighbours
and light many a meanest lamp.

Each house glows with a happy fire.
Each head turns into a walking spire.
'I' goes out the door,
'we' comes in the front door. ('Light,' Singh, ed. *Continuity, 5*)

P.C.K. Prem is another versatile genius who has enriched both Hindi and English literature with eight novels, two novelettes, six collections of short stories in Hindi and six poetry collections in English besides two collections of short stories and three novels in English. His poetry books include *Enigma of an Identity, Among the Shadows, Those Distant Horizons* and *The Bermuda Triangles*. His poetry, besides other things keeps track of the barren consciousness of our time and its conflicting values:

For there is no scene
But disgust
A brush killed
And colours darkened
In a messed up canvas
Without an angle
That gives a movement ('Painter,' *Continuity*, 222)

Indian feminist poetic psyche is another area of contemporary poetry that needs to be explored as continuation with refinement and diversification of Kamala Das's feminist poetic voice. It is represented by Sujata Bhatta, Sunita Jain, Rukmini B. Nair, Siyatha Modayil, Achla Bhatia, Malavika Sanghvi, K.K. Dyson, Nilima Wig and Suniti Namjoshi. In their poetry we witness the emergence of a new woman, unphobic, bold and confident with no hang-over for a male force. Relationship with men is now a matter of choice and not compulsion or providence. Their poetry reverberates with 'female energy.' Lakshmi Kannan's *High and Dry, Ask for the Moon* (2005) and Rukmini's *Gomata* (1899), for example, are invocations of this female force. One invokes the river Gomti and another the cow as Swayambhu.

Gomti, it's only when you swell in pride.

Every few years
It's when you rise in fury
That's when we see you in your element
It's when you menace buildings
Gobble up boats . . .
that's when the entire city wakes up to you.
(Kannan, "Draupadi," *In Their Own Voice* xix)

Indian English poetry is highly enriched by the addition of translation from Hindi and other Indian languages to its corpus. They are also bringing in new forms and idioms of poetry. Ghazal is being experimented in English and sonnet is adopted into Hindi. Let's read a poem of Trilochan:

I said to Champa, It's good to write
Someday you'll get married.
For a while, your husband will stay with you
And then he'll set off for Calcutta.
Calcutta is very far away—
How will you read his letters?
Champa, it's good to read and write.
Champa said: Look, what a liar you are!
See for yourself, what study has done to you!
So much learning and such lies!
Me, I'll never get married
And even if I do, I wouldn't ever let my husband go to Calcutta.
So to hell with Calcutta. (*Indian Literature*, Sep./Oct. 2008, 18)

The whole business of rubric depends on the perspective and taste of a critic. So criticism begins with a bias. Several factors like time, place, moorings and training of a critic or a reader contribute to it. The charges often levelled against the contemporary poets are solecism, surrealist images, lack of poetic preoccupation, 'sense being sacrificed on the altar of sound,' poor taste, opacity and transparency. True, all is not well with Indian English poetry. But certainly there is no chaos either. We all know that 'taste' varies from age to age and from person to person and a critic, however great, is not the arbiter of readers' taste. Again poets have been enjoying poetic license and flaunting rules of grammar. To subject a poet for this on the ground of his nationality and stature puts the critic in a dock and is a reflection on his colonial and feudal mindset. We leave it to you to accept or reject the view.

Great poets have, of course murdered grammar with impunity but what is sauce for a Shakespeare, an Emily Dickinson and a Hopkins is not a sauce for lesser mortals. (M.K. Naik, 183)

Of late Indian English has come to a complex situation where we have practitioners of standard British English, American English, hybrid English and advocates of Indian English who analyse the common errors that Indian users of English commit and prescribe that instead of correcting the majority of the users we should accept those errors as common usages and develop our own variant of the English language distinct from the British English language. Another point is that the English language is now widespread and is accepted as a language of India. It is being taught across the country by the natives, bilinguals or even multilinguals. So varieties of English with distortion, corruption and aberration are natural to emerge. Poetry of the age is bound to reflect it. It will definitely disappoint the orthodox as almost the whole crops of Indian English novels barring the trio Anand-Narayan-Rao and Amitav Ghose and a few others disappointed C.D. Narasimhaiah. But it makes no difference to them because they have their readers intact. I am reminded of Kamala Das:

> I am Indian, very brown, born in
> Malabar, I speak three languages, write in
> Two, dream in one. Don't write in English, they said,
> English is not your mother-tongue. Why not leave
> Me alone, critics, friends, visiting cousins,
> Everyone of you? Why not let me speak in
> Any language I like? The language I speak
> Becomes mine, its distortions, its queernesses
> All mine, mine alone. ('Introduction')

What is important—reading and enjoying poetry or punctuation marks, capital/small letters, rules of articles, gender, so on and so forth exactly followed. Let us analyse a few cases. Moon is feminine in the English language but what crime is it if one uses it as a neutral gender or a masculine gender (Chanda Mama)? Ripples in the Lake or on the Lake when Lake stands for the heart. Cloud has negative connotation in England but positive in India. Language would bear this effect. I am not rationalizing errors. Errors are deviation from set standard rules of grammar; sometimes deviation is the demand of the context and native culture, sometimes because of the flux the English language in India is, at others simple lapse.

Again we cannot dismiss a poem just for a grammatical lapse. The point is poetry can be read from different perspectives. Paul Nash says in the context of *Gitanjali*:

> There is certainly a music in some of the poems but most of that I suppose is lost in translation. As to style, beauty of language, craft of any kind I am not bothered by it. I would read Gitanjali as I would read the Bible for comfort and for strength.

In fact poets have not ruptured language as much as novelists have done in India. Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy and others played amok with the language with impunity. Modern poets like, Parthasarathy, Kolatkar, Agha Shahid Ali and later on Meena Alexander reduced the language to its bare minimum with avowed interest. A.K. Mehrotra comments, "It also makes you ask if language is not in the end superfluous to poetry. Kolatkar himself appears to believe it is so, for in matters linguistic he is a monk, renouncing all but the most essential words. Keeping punctuation to a minimum." (Mehrotra, 4) Agha Shahid Ali talks of making 'biryanization of English.' His latest collections *A Nostalgist's Map of America* and *The Beloved Witness* continue to bear this imprint. G.J.V. Prasad is carrying it forward in *In Delhi without a Visa*. Naik writes:

> The dramatic monologues like "Cut Piece Corners" and "Crosstalk in Kaliyug" reveal an eye for character and a sense of situation. Their use of "Indian English" makes them even more effective. Ezekiel's experiment is actually carried a step further here, by the direct use of Hindi words and phrases, like "Yaar" and "*Shaadi ka chakkar*"; by hybridization of English by the admixture of Hindi, as in "sight maroing" and "*line-lagoing*"; and echoic formulations out of English words in a manner native to Hindi, as in "*joking-shoking*," "Poetry-*shoetry*." (177)

What is the litmus test of a good poem? To me a good poem must produce one or more *Rasa* to facilitate *Rasanubhuti* in the reader. If it moves a reader to tears, to laughter, to anger and so on, if it creates empathy, it is a good poem. And if it stands the test of time, it is a classic. So it is the reader who is very important. Poets by and large do not keep readers in mind while composing poetry, whereas a novelist does. Consequently readership of poetry is limited. Poetry begins with a view of '*swatah sukhaya*,' solace of the self. Tennyson wrote *In Memoriam* primarily for his own solace but it transcended the personal and became the solace of Queen Victoria, too. Similarly Tulasi Das's *Ramacharitamanasa* that was '*swatah suk-*

haya Raghunatha gatha' became the bliss of every household. But this is a rare event that seldom happens in history and when it happens, it creates a new history. However, like any artist poets too need readers. For that poets should go to the respective audience who happen to shape their poetic sensibility through poetry recitation on stage, in electronic media and educational institutions. Like Astha channel there can be a channel exclusively for poets of all Indian languages on which poetry reading, dramatization of poetry, ballad, adaptation into a film, interview, etc. can be telecast. Again we can have poets-in-residence in colleges and universities. Publication of anthologies of poets/ poetry of the decade/age must be continued. This will go a long way in cultivating and fostering the culture of poetry in India.

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Post-Independence Indian English Poetry

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Indian English Poetry came of age after the country got its freedom in 1947. Many poets in India wrote in their regional languages and also in English. M.K. Naik comments, "Post-Independence Indian English poets did not suddenly fall from heaven." (1) He argues that the "temptation to disown one's predecessors is a universal phenomenon but let not the 'new' poets forget that they stand on the shoulders of the older poets." "Indian verse in English did not seriously begin to exist until after the withdrawal of the British from India." (Parthasarathy, 3) Tagore fetched the much-coveted Nobel Prize for Literature for his *Gitanjali* (1913). The Sahitya Akademi awarded Nissim Ezekiel for his fine poetry.

West Bengal born Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) wrote in Bengali. His rendering them in English brought him world acclaim and popularity. During his visit to England he showed his poems to Rotnenstein, and he in turn to W.B. Yeats and A.C. Bradley. He was praised by all the three for there was freshness and charm in it. Som Deva writes, "The publication of *Gitanjali* in English took the English-reading public by storm and they got enamoured as much by the mobility of its thought as by the beauty of the language" (9). Tagore was not only a poet but a dreamer too and he felt the western civilization was heading towards destruction. His note of hope and the message of courage in his poems are well known. "As a great poet, he lived a great life. He placed before the proud westerners drunk with power, success and greed, the lessons of renunciation and sacrifice and like a prophet, he foresaw the bankruptcy of the modern European civilization"[8] (Som Deva, 16). Facing a stiff competition and opposition, his vision was not obscured and courage faltered. Born not only in a spiritual and cultural tradition society but in his family too, he devoted to the transcendental philosophy through his symbolism (symbols as vehicles of expression) and imagery. Devotion for the Divine is spread lucidly in his poetry.

> Pluck this little flower and take it, delay not!
> I fear lest it droop and drop into the dust. (*Gitanjali*, 4)

Life of my life, I shall ever try to keep my
body pure, knowing that the living touch is upon
all my limbs. (*Gitanjali*, 3)

Like a flock of homesick cranes flying
night and day back to their mountain
nests let all my life take its voyage to the
eternal home in one salutation to thee! (*Gitanjali*, 68)

According to M.K. Naik, *Gitanjali* is "firmly rooted in the ancient tradition of Indian saint poetry and yet reveals a highly personal quest for the Divine, characterized by a great variety of moods and approaches, ranging from the heights of ecstasy to the depths of despair." (7) In "Recovery" (Arogya) (1941) Tagore writes:

In this life I have received the blessing
of the Beautiful one,
And in the love of man tasted her nectars.

Dom Moraes (b. 1938) is an interesting literary figure but "very little of specific Indianness." At the age of 18, he won the Hawthornden Prize for his *A Beginning* (I Vol.). *Poems* (II Vol.) was Poetry Book society choice. Sivaramakrishna comments, "The most remarkable quality of his poetry is an unusual combination of romantic naiveté with a deep, underlying ironic thrust." (327)

I have grown up, I think, to live alone
To keep my old illusions, sometimes dream
Glumly that I am unloved and forlorn. ("Autobiography")

The loss of identity, eruption of violence and disorder, longing for love and mystical vision can be traced in his poetry. To him poetry seems to insulate one from the rough and tumble of life. Sivaramakrishna says that his weakness lies in "the lack of a controlling, focusing centre" and "an absence of firm roots." (328)

Nissim Ezekiel (1924-2004) in his poem, 'And I Reject the Indian Noise,' curses the noise.

I curse the noise
That's the worst way
but the sudden heat
cools my kingdom
keeps my reason dry. (Nandy 64)

Humorously he says.

One noise cancels out the other,

and I am free
underground or in the sky. (64)

During the month of 'Markazhi' (December) in the early morning, in every small and big temple, the loudspeakers used to blare. Even mosques and churches are not exceptions to this. They do 'religious service'; but how far they are liked by people is questionable. Politicians also contribute their own share of 'Noise' before any election. Each party competes with the other in creating the highest noise. Indian noise is allergic, uncouth to ears and it lessens the lifetime of individuals. But who cares for it?

Ezekiel can have the satisfaction that he is free underground or in the sky. Gone are those days. Now-a-days bombs are hidden underground by terrorists and one cannot even walk safely on the earth. What is the condition in the sky? There also the same plight prevails. Because of war, missile, rocket, and bomber-plane attacks, the sky too is not safe. Even one's bed room or prayer room is not safe. Who knows when the LTTE terrorists or Pakistani terrorists will attack us? As Ezekiel rejects noise, everyone rejects useless and harmful noise which is a day-to-day problem. Creative silence and inner silence, inner and outer harmony are today's needs and not noises. G.N. Devy opines "Ezekiel is analytical and witty"[14]

The atmosphere where we live or work should be conducive and eco-friendly. We cannot live and prosper in a hostile atmosphere. Gieve Patel in his poem, 'University' narrates the surroundings of Dacca University. Its corridors are dull and the library vacuous. Students from poor families skulk in ill-fitting clothes; students from rich families ring like jingles. About professors, he observes,

O professors,
Stale, malodorous, with yesterday's coats
And neckties! (Deshpande 124)

Not only it is about professors but also about many who don't seem to be 'smell conscious.' Many wear dresses, which have seen the washing powder or soap long back. Their armpits also smell bad. The bad smell of sweat emanating from their dress and bodies drives others miles away. Ill-smelling causes nausea.

About their financial condition, Patel says,

Pitiful bank balance, tame sheep at home (124)

About the function of a University, he writes:

May your odour rise and trip up
Our brains. Tell us
To change our thought. (125)

Our brains have to be activated by centres of higher learning and educational institutions. Our thoughts have to be changed for the better so that, the problems in the student and teaching communities be solved.

Gieve Patel in his poem, 'The Ambiguous Fate of Gieve Patel, he being neither Muslim nor Hindu in India' speaks about his bizarre condition. "To be no part of this hate is deprivation" (Peeradina 103). He is deprived of many things because he is neither a Muslim nor a Hindu as he himself admits it. What is the wrong if he identifies himself with either of these sects? Of course, he has his own freedom of 'not belonging' to any! The readers sympathize with him for his ambiguous condition.

Bodies
Turn ashen and shrivel. I
Only burn my tail. (103)

Identifying oneself with any religion is also a necessity. For argument sake, one can argue, 'I don't belong either to this religion or that religion.' Identifying oneself with one's religion is not a shameful affair. It is self-assertion. Religion is a discipline. It disciplines one's way of life. But due to disorderliness, people lose their faith in religion. It is not the mistake of religion but the mistake of the practitioners.

Saleem Peeradina in his poem, 'There is No God' extols motherhood. He has that much respect for women who have multiple roles like sister, daughter, wife and mother. He writes,

the multipurpose women
    to be taken
into the irreversible process
of motherhood
Become head of the house: wave
both arms like a paternal traffic-police man. (119)

A traffic policeman faces problems in regulating the traffic for the smooth going of vehicles and pedestrians. Similarly, a woman as a head in a family faces many problems. Many times she solves them amicably. He appeals to his mother:

O Mother

we are in fever
lie by our side, soothe us
mother
with a touch, release
the scripture of your hands
into us
press our eyes into
ourselves, rock us asleep
and mother look after us. (120)

Mother is our doctor, nurse, even God; her soothing touch will sometime free us from fever too, and rock us to calm sleep. She is everything to us.

T.L. Vaswani (1879-1966) in the poem, 'Forget Me Not!' speaks of a different problem. It is a request to God not to forget him though he may forget HIM: to keep him out of the feuds and fever of life around him; not to allow him to die in the loneliness of the world's loud noises.

> Forget me not, but listen to my anguished aspiration
> and bless me, Master! that I die not in the loneliness of the
> world's loud noises! (Gokak 157)

To Vaswani, loneliness is the world's loudest noise! Is this not something strange? To him, God is a daily necessity. He is not like Gieve Patel, for whom 'There is no God.' Even to keep him out of the feuds and fever of life around him, he needs the blessings of God. Even to lead him through danger's ways to find HIS home in His Lotus Feet, he wants God's grace. God is his Lord, Master, Leader and Liberator.

> I have wandered—but in Thy Quest!
> I have sinned—but in the yearning for Thy Face!
> I have fallen—but in climbing up to Thee,
> My Master and my Lord, my Leader and Liberator!
> Forget me not! (158)

His appeal is genuine and his surrender is total. Here is a poet with a difference—his problem is unique but his way is not unacceptable, for it is the right way for any individual who believes in God Almighty.

Kamala Das, born as a Hindu in the beautiful Southern part of India, is well known to all as a confessional poetess. Always outspoken in her writings about her personal life and sexual matters, she has been sensational. She has been even critical of her life part-

ner. When she does write like this, she gives vent not only to her feelings but also of thousands of women who have been suffering under the yoke of husbandry and family. As a writer, she yearns for freedom to express what all she thinks and feels. But as a woman, when she does it, many raise their eyebrows and ask, "Can a woman and that too an Indian woman write like this?" Whatever we say about this, whether we agree or disagree, she has been individualistic, outspoken and confessional which is always an extreme step for Hindu women or Indian women. Hence it is believed that she has been a freak.

Kamala Das who speaks three (Hindi, Malayalam and English) languages, writes in two (Malayalam and English), dreams in one (Malayalam), was criticized for writing in English. "Don't write in English, they cried./ English is not your mother tongue." But as one who loves individuality and freedom she quipped, "Why not leave me alone/ critics, friends, visiting cousins, everyone of you? Let me /speak in any language I like. The language I speak becomes/ mine, its distortions, its queernesses all mine, mine alone/ It is half English, half Indian, funny perhaps but it's/ honest, it is as human as I am human." ('An Introduction' 135).

She argues that her English voices her longings and her hopes; it is useful to her as cawing is to crows or roaring to the lions; it is human speech, the speech of the mind. When she grew she became tall, her limbs swelled, hair sprouted in one or two places. When she asked for love she was drawn to the bed room of a youth of sixteen. The door was shut.

> He did not beat me but my sad
> woman-body felt so beaten. The weight of my breasts and
> womb crushed me. I shrank pitifully.

She liked to maintain her unique personality by wearing a shirt and black sarong (instead of a saree and blouse); cut her hair short and ignored all manifestations of traditional womanliness. But the world wanted her to

> Be Amy or be Kamala. Or better still, be just
> Madhavi Kutty. It is time to choose . . .
> Don't play at schizophrenia
> or be a nympho. Don't cry embarrassingly loud when
> jilted in love. Later, I met a man. Loved him, call him
> not by any name, he is every man whom wants his
> woman, just as I am every woman who seeks love

In him the hungry haste of rivers, in me the ocean's
tireless waiting (136)

She is not ashamed to say "I am the sinner, I am the saint. I am both the lover and the beloved."

Youth has its own attractions and advantages. Kamala Das also is not an exception to it. She herself says, "we have spent our youth in gentle sinning/ exchanging some insubstantial love and often thought we were hurt" ('The Descendants' 136). When she writes like this, she does portray not only herself but also the womenfolk in general. "We were the yielders./ Yielding ourselves to everything. It is not for us to scrape the walls of wombs for memories" (136). She further moans, "we shall give ourselves to the fire or to/ the hungry earth to be slowly eaten, devoured." Who will come to redeem them like Abraham Lincoln from slavery and Raja Rammohun Roy from 'Sati'? She has lost hope in the uplift of women. "We are not going to be/ ever redeemed or made new" (137). Even 1000 Kamala Dases cannot bring changes in the society unless the people themselves make new their lives. It may take another century for South Indian woman to completely transform herself into a revolutionary. Exceptions are there like Ms. Jayalalitha, Mrs. Rama Rao (Mrs. Lakshmi Parvathy) and Janaki Ramachandran.

G.N. Devi writes that in the case of Jayanta Mahapatra (b. 1928), it is "delayed poetic career." (1) After the publication of *Relationship* (1980) there has been an industrious output in him: produced translation from Oriya poetry. A bilingual poet writing in Oriya and English, his Oriya poetry also ranks very high, R. Parthasarathy labels him as a genuine poet—he does not disown his Indian inheritance and he does not fall a prey to the feeling of alienation. In his poetry one can find primarily Oriya and Indian consciousness. In Mahapatra's best work, the language is English but the sensibility is Oriya. Panikar notes that Mahapatra is "Oriya to the core." It is said he is a child of the sun and the sea, delights in invoking the god of fire and the god of water. The details of the local become symbolic of India as a whole.

A.K. Ramanujan, a bilingual poet writing in Kannada and English (1929-2006), could do well in translation also. His Indian sensibility enabled him to go to India's past and his sense of Indian history and tradition is marvellous. His art is almost perfect except his thin poetic output. He reacts strongly to Indian life and situation; his comments are not direct or explicit. Mostly his poetry is rooted in

the family. Family is the central metaphor in his poetry; it is viewed in its historical context. Though he spent much time in the United States, he found his roots in Indian myth and tradition. His historical sensibility is sharp and acute. R. Parthasarathy praises him for his precision and accuracy. He is a master craftsman revising and re-revising till there is perfection. His poetry impresses everyone because he turns the ephemeral into the permanent the elements of the familial relationship in his poetic consciousness, which is the main source of his inspiration. His is the product of a specific culture. His 'Small Scale Reflections on a Great House' is about reminiscences of the house:

> lame wandering cows from nowhere
> have been known to be tethered
> given a name, encouraged
> to get pregnant in the broad daylight
> of the street under the elders'
> supervision, the girls hiding
> behind windows with holes in them (22)

His memory—stray cows, unread library books, neighbour's dishes, servants, phonographs, inherited epilepsies, short lived sons-in-law, poor daughters-in-law, undelivered letters, songs of the beggars, nephews killed in war—evokes pathos and complexity.

In the mid-seventies, poets like Jayanta Mahapatra, K.N. Daruwalla and Arun Kolatkar achieved eminence. Though they lacked the literary charisma of Nissim Ezekiel, Kamala Das and A.K. Ramanujan, they had their distinct identity. Kolhapur-born Kolatkar (b. 1932) a bilingual poet, writing in Marathi and English, from the advertising field (commercial artist) had the creative urge to pen poems like a graphic designer. He calls his poems "Cluster bombs," for they are full of sounds and metaphors. They are the product of the conscious mind. His *Jejuri* (1974) fetched him Commonwealth Poetry Prize in 1977. He is not a believer in God or Religion. His treatment is sceptical which can be called desecration. Usha Kalyani sums up his poetry in the following words:

> Kolatkar paints a fairly comprehensive picture of human life with sensitivity but the tone is casual, distanced and guarded. There is no condemnation and open censure. Kolatkar has made a wide choice—a flippant and comic tone—best suited to his poems, which lean heavily upon irony. Moreover he has chosen words carefully both with reference to sense and their sound. As communication efficacy is the test of

great poetry, he has pitched upon contemporary and immediate themes in reference, in the native rhythm. Leaving aside his early experimental poetry he has at last turned to urban, middle class reality, making lucidity his hallmark. This shift in focus has made him one of the most accomplished voices in the Indian poetic scenario, a poet with a difference. (60)

About English as a medium for creativity in India, C.D. Narasimhaiah writes: "Indians have for over a century and a half used English in speech and writing with conscious ability and that as scholars we should try and understand the nature of that achievement, such writing has now acquired respectability quantitatively." (84)

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Revival of Myth in the Poetry of Yeats, Eliot and Graves

SATYA BRAT SINGH

The revival or recovery of myth in the 20th century can not be seen as a whole, unless related to the fundamental question of unified culture or a unifying world-view developed from ancient times to the present. The basic centrality of myth is in clear focus in the two outstanding epochs in the Western world where this relationship of myth and a comprehensive unifying world-view is obvious. The pre-Socratic Greek world-view runs through its mythology as much as through Homer, Aeschylus and Sophocles. With the advance from myth to philosophy, the comprehensive unity of the human, the terrestrial and the celestial cycles then in acceptance broke apart, replacing the mythic unity with mythologies related to history. A corresponding movement is seen in the medieval synthesis of philosophy, religion and cosmology of the times into what is even today studied academically as the medieval world-view which persisted up to the Elizabethan age. Like the great literature of the Greeks, this world-view also may be possible for Dante and Shakespeare to develop systems of correspondence between various spheres of life into a harmony like 'the great chain of Being.'

It could be quite legitimately suggested and established that, like the medieval-Elizabethan world-view restored after the collapse of the Greek world-view, the holistic and sympathizing orientation of the 20th century is nothing short of a recovered world-view. Recovery of myth today, like its persistence through Dante and Shakespeare, through Homer, Aeschylus and Sophocles underline the crucial reality of living myth as a dimension of holistic unity, integration and relationships.

This transcultural and trans-historical assistance or order, wholeness and connectedness are far more basic to the necessity and recovery of myth than the secondary factors relating to its redefinition through anthropology, philology, psychology or historical relativism today. This observation would hold even in the context of the convergence of the scientific, mathematical and philosophical sys-

tems towards the general assertion that reality can only be a process, that, like the ancient myths of metamorphosis, paradoxes and cyclism being restated in $E=MC^2$ Quantum Physics, the physics of sub-atomic particles etc. which is a mirror image of cosmology—all these accentuated in what may be the most characteristic modern approach to philosophy "process as reality" (Whitehead). To cap it all, what else do the most outstanding poets of the century say other than accentuating this perpetual transformation, "Man can embody reality but cannot know it." And "How can we know the dancer from the dance?" (W.B. Yeats)

The collapse of a unifying myth and its effects on the nature and communication of poetic vision have been felt to be events of major significance since the waning of the Middle Ages. The vast synthesis of Ptolemy, Aristotle and Christian theology in the system of Scholastic philosophy was a pattern that held together separate fields of knowledge and experience, fact and value, the human in relation to the cosmic. The assimilation of Pagan rites into the rituals of Catholic Church celebrated round the year is one of the evidences of the resulting unity of myth which was available as common experience in folk-life as well as a ground for higher religious experience. With the loosening of this integrated pattern of experience due to knowledge becoming more and more important, the unifying myth split apart into specialized modes of rational and scientific enquiry. Promethean heroes were identified with the intellectual quest for knowledge and power and became allegories for these aspirations. Knowledge to Bacon was a means to master the world and the universe. Although such knowledge had been termed Satanic in the Middle Ages, the exercise of Reason for the sake of knowledge was man's Original Sin, specifically demonstrated by Marlowe in *Dr. Faustus*. The development of secular and religious thought in the 17th century separated Reason and Intellect from the instinctive, emotive or intuitive faculties. It is precisely on such a ground that the disintegration of myth began, where individual reasoning dissociates itself from a living experience of the world around it—trees, rocks, rivers, sun, moon, seasons and the like that provide value and unity to human experience of living. The loss of this pre-rational awareness has doomed modern man to live in a mythical world.

Blake realized the necessity of myth in order to keep the empirical and analytical knowledge of science within a larger and living framework.

The atoms of Democritus
And Newton's particles of light
Are sands upon the Red sea shore
Where Israel's tents do shine so bright.

Yeats was also aware of the collapse of myth when he wrote:

Locke sank into swoon,
The Garden died,
God took a spinning-jenny
Out of his side.

Locke and the spinning-jenny suggest the process unleashed by practical empiricism and Industrial Revolution as the new scientific myth in place of 'Genesis.' The Garden is Paradise as well as a myth of organic 'Nature' and human origins, that breaks down as the new Eve arises out of the new Adam's ribs—'a spinning-jenny' out of Locke's side.

The growth of natural sciences during the 19th century leading to Darwin's theory of mechanical evolution was gradually undermining the Romantics's experience of Organic Nature, due to growing belief in the progressive evolution of the species, allied to Comte's Logical Positivism, the development of industrial and commercial society, the prevailing interests of the formidable middle class believing in Utilitarianism. Utilitarianism was the social ethics of the masses, an aggregate of individuals, that were no more a community because no more united in themselves. 'It was a time in which bread and wine were mere commodities; a time in which reality meant nothing and meaning was unreal.' (Erich Heller, *The Hazard of Modern Poetry*, 23) Vico noticed this phenomenon as a civilization drifting towards disintegration by 'going mad and wasting its substance.' (G. Vico, *The New Science*, 62); Jung noticed modern mind's one-sided cultivation of Reason resulting in a 'general neuroticizing of modern man . . . a symbol of a mood of world destruction and world renewal that has set its mark on our age'; (C.G. Jung, *The Undiscovered Self*, 65), that our civilization, our world is at the verge of collapse, came to be a matter of general acceptance because Nietzsche had proclaimed: 'God is dead' . . . and we have killed him.' It is only the creator who can be the saviour of humanity. In such a situation, believing that God did not exist, God had to be invented, a centre had to be created, a system had to be brought in, for consolation, encouragement or as an energy giving principle. This has been done by Yeats when he envisages a rough

beast "Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born." ("The Second Coming") and Eliot envisages: "In the juvescence of the year came Christ the tiger" ("Gerontion"), and Graves supplanting the cult of Goddess, benign with the boon of earthly fullness, the shadow side of Christian asceticism. The purpose behind all these exercises is that the lost myths are to be re-created or myths have to be restored to its proper place or lost place.

If the myths of the Hero and the Great Mother provide a general view of reality as sacred, it is more specifically in the myth of Decline, in the sense of an ending, that the mythic concern with beginning and end, and with the 'axiological centre,' is clearly revealed. It has a general basis in the sense of culminating crisis in history universally apprehended in the modern world which has provided interpretations of history as an unfolding design around a central core of meaning—revealed as its beginning and its end. The collapse of the superstructures of civilization reveals the enduring skeletal forms, the roots under the proliferations. Thus, the experiences of decay, twilight, barrenness, crowding forms in a desert-like world and homelessness are parts of the greater image of a cycle-either at a point of completion or reversal. What is 'decline' to Spengler, 'Schism' or 'time of troubles' to Toynbee and 'the hour of metamorphosis' to Jung is a fruitful void in the poetry of Yeats, Eliot and Graves—the Apocalypse, the Second Coming, the next Annunciation, the Pentecost, the return of the primeval dark and the Goddess. Yeats and Graves regard the chaos of the closing cycle as a reversal and fulfillment through the release of compensatory energies that are the opposite and the 'unconscious' in relation to the values of modern civilization. Whereas for Yeats the reversal is just one in a series, for Graves, as well as for Eliot in a different sense, the Redemption is final—the end of the history of Fall, Exile and illusion in a final return to the dark origins, or the Garden. Nevertheless, what is the sense of the end as the origin, the centre as some kind of annunciation, birth from or return to Mother, Incarnation—the centre as myth underlying and shaping history. That this centre is fathomless, formless, dark of pre-historic mythical intuitions in Graves; an Annunciation in the dark flashing out into clearly outlined pagan or Christian icons of Leda or Mary in Yeats, and the luminous point of meaning in God becomes man in Eliot; in an index of the varying degrees to which they have revivified as images, the icons into which a single myth has been adapted at various lev-

els of history, culture, belief and tradition. Primitivism, syncretism and orthodox Christian belief are here applied to a universal myth embodied in widely common features of our time.

The common myths variously embodied in the works of three modern poets differing so widely in personality and background, spanning a period of nearly three quarters of a century, are visible features of a deep collective response to the crisis generally felt in contemporary culture and civilization. No less significant, however, is the distinctively individual choice of different myths by Yeats, Eliot and Graves, the peculiarities of an individual's access to collective experience through the channels of his own time, place, memories and traditions.

Yeats' search for myth is a fairly consistent and unified effort to render his experiences significant as referring to forgotten or less acknowledged patterns of meaning. But his concerns were many—Celtic and Classical heritage, Irish and European politics, theatre, occultism, spiritism, magic, mysticism, love, old age, death etc. His use of various myths from widely different sources is thus in keeping with his manifold enterprises, both private and public. Just as his poetry as a whole achieves a singleness beyond the separate intensities of his pursuits in history, philosophy, magic, astrology or reincarnation, so does his syncretism assert itself as a need (in *A Vision* and other prose works) to keep the many myths connected or corresponding to each other in a system of symbolism. But the peculiarity of his use of myth lies not in his forging or discovering a single myth in which all others are ultimately transformed. It lies rather in his keeping all the myths distinct as he kept his masks separate, and only then keeping them arranged in a system just as he liked to see the 'rig-rag wantonness' of the course of his own life assuming the semblance of an order. The great value of *A Vision* rests precisely in this need in a lyric poet with numerous masks to make his intensities part of a broad dramatic sequence and tension, his whole world thus completing a single design. All his myths certainly offer him diverse traditional roles through which to participate significantly in the life of his times.

Eliot's encyclopedic use of primitive myths, on the other hand, is a stage in his determined quest of a single tradition and myth. It is an orthodox religious concern compared to Yeats' heterodox eclecticism. It is a search for roots, 'the vanished mind' with its primeval fossils, the lower mythologies whose final and consummate trans-

formation is the higher Christian religion. Conversely, it is a quest of belief that goes deeper than intellectual assent or commitment and appeases the unconscious savagery of the vanished mind (objectified particularly in Sweeney) out of which the lower rites and mythologies sprung as the first intuitions of religion. The significance of these early myths in Eliot can be best realized in words Weston uses to describe the value of the Grail romances: 'The Grail romances repose eventually, not upon a poet's imagination, but upon the ruins of an august and ancient ritual, a ritual which once claimed to be accredited guardian of the deepest secrets of Life . . . where those who craved for a more sensible . . . contact with the unseen spiritual forces of Life than the orthodox development of Christianity afforded, might, and did, find satisfaction' (Jessie Weston, *From Ritual to Romance*, 187). With all his inherited Puritan tenacity of purpose, he quests after a belief that taps the deep springs of emotions beyond dry intellectual understanding. His Anglicanism begins in these first efforts to grow from the roots up to the stem. He is reported to have told Dr. Levy: 'Some of the best Anglicans today are those who had been Protestants. They know what they were missing' (W.T. Levy and V. Scherle, *Affectionately T.S. Eliot*, 29). It is also from these roots, perhaps, that he realized one of the profoundest emotional points of the Catholic decline: 'it is good to see how the Veneration of B.V.M. (Blessed Virgin Mary), for instance FITS IN inevitably to Catholic doctrine to see it as naturally growing out of Faith, instead of something added to it' (Daniel Hoffman, *Barbarous Knowledge*, 163, 176). If Yeats gave up orthodox religion (Protestantism) in search of deeper and fuller emotional release through myths affirming vital experiences of life, Eliot rediscovered in orthodox Anglican belief a myth of equally profound affirmations. The effect of this 'single' myth in his poetry can hardly be missed: he is a dramatic rather than lyrical poet, all his poems employing the predominant mask of the socker, all his poems falling into a clear sequence of search, exploration and discovery. It is within these few masks that the most diverse experiences of life are held up in a plan where the first poems foreshadow the last. Both Yeats and Eliot are in search for sanctions beyond reason, but Eliot' rediscovery of miracle outside 'time's covenant' is both so orthodox and deeply satisfying that the occult or lower mythologies (the field in which Yeats worked) are now rejected as encumbrances of knowledge and terrors of the irrational, unredeemed by faith:

To communicate with Mars, converse with spirits,
To report the behaviour of the sea-monster
Describe the horoscope, haruspicate or scry
Observe disease in signatures, evoke
Biography from the wrinkles of the palm
And tragedy from fingers; release omens
By sortilege, or tea-leaves, riddle the inevitable
With playing cards, fiddle with pentagrams
Or barbituric acids, or dissect
The recurrent image into pre-conscious terrors—
To explore the womb, or tomb, or dreams; all these are usual
Pastimes and drugs. (*ECP* 212)

In clear contrast to Yeats' determined bid to live life at all possible levels in various roles along the phases of the moon, Eliot's participation in the life of his times is through innumerable details of the single role of an individual seeking his roots in Christian society and European culture.

In Graves, there is both the intensity of primitive religious belief in one myth as well as an erudite, heterodox and eclectic concern with encyclopedia of mythologies as capable of being reduced to his monomyth. He brings to bear upon his study of myths a machinery of anthropological and psychological methods which is the same as in early Eliot and later Yeats. But whereas Eliot proceeds from the savage roots up to their transformation in the most sophisticated mysteries of Christianity, Graves delves through sophisticated cultural adaptations and comparative mythology to the roots in precultural instincts and intuitions. This reduction rather than integration of the many into one is a withdrawal from complications whose analogy in psychic life is in regressions to fantasies of child's assurances and its craving for the shelter of the womb. Unlike Yeats and Eliot who explore myths as symbolic language, Graves reads them as the most literal of all histories, the unchanging core of human life at all times and places. If it is a simplification, it is also deepened realization of the significance of those very few experiences in human life that have not changed with time: Childhood, love and death. These are involvements in the stream of racial and unconscious life often lost sight of in various engagements peculiar to certain people, times and places. Graves' poetry is deeply involved with living, in this sense; a reality revealed by unconscious mind is alienated from the mainstream of life and history in our times. Whereas the myths held by Yeats and Eliot provide those roles in

which to participate in contemporary life, Graves' myth offers him the role of a noble savage alienated from the modern world. It is sheer withdrawal as compared to the pattern of 'withdrawal and return' in both Yeats and Eliot. The deep racial and the unconscious origins embodied in myth are integrated, by Yeats and Eliot, to higher stages of civilization and culture, to conscious forms and patterns of thought. They remain in Graves, at the original level of elemental fears and joys which becomes the exclusive domain for the poet's imagination to work within. This accounts for the peculiar intensity of his lyric poetry. The body of his work presents no unfolding design; indeed, its very distinction lies in the separate lyrics all coming back, unchanged to affirm the changeless in moments of insight into the eternal ecstasies and agonies. It is a body of purest lyrical poetry in our times, inherent conservatism of both diction and structure, the least affected by changes in form and taste during the last eighty years, still dedicated to the archaic tradition of the Muse now realized as loved woman. But not all the arrogance of his poetic creed and critical judgments can mask the chief motif in his life and works—a deep unconscious compulsion or regression that makes him resist change, that makes his monomyth a refuge against all changes of history, and which has made him recoil from his role in history, as it were, since the first World War.

These being the general poles of awareness in the human mind and their separation, a phenomenon related to the modern mind in particular, Graves' synthesis is at once in integration of personality and a response to contemporary conditions. In Yeats and Eliot this inner ordering or unification of the self includes resolution of richer human conflicts and has more revealing points of contact with the objective world experienced and harmonized.

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Indian Sensibility in the Writings of Sri Aurobindo

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Sri Aurobindo was an outstanding poet of Indian English literature. He imbibed the spirit and the soul of Vedas, Upanishads, the *Gita*, the *Ramayana*, and the *Mahabharata*, and master woks of Kalidasa, Chandidas and Tagore and redefined poetry as "Mantra of the Real" or "Overhead Poetry." According to him poetry can be written without the involvement of mind or intellect or imagination, only from inspiration descending directly from the divine world. He says that the future belongs to the poetry of soul and the poet must rise to the height where he can experience the divine. He says: "new poet will ride on the wings of an eternal spirituality and articulate the indictable rhythms of the spirits and that the future poetry will more and more approximate to the Mantra style." It is this aspect of Sri Aurobindo which needs to be comprehended.

This Indian sensibility of overhead poetry is significant for the literary critics who are today struggling to find a social or universal purpose in all creative activity of man—Art not only for art's sake but also for soul's sake. It is for this contribution—the soul aspect of poetry—that Sri Aurobindo occupies a central position in the great tradition of Indian literary history. This theory of poetry given by Sri Aurobindo is influenced by the Rasa theory established by Bharata. Sri Aurobindo's poetic theory initially sprung out of the resonating influence of Indian classics and had finally evolved into spontaneous spiritual poetry imitating the original source of inspiration from Overhead Plane. The Indian theory of Rasa is well known *Rasatmak Vakyam Kavyam*. Sanskrit aesthetician Bharata stated that good poetry is the one in which various rasas have been depicted. Bhamaha says the words and sense full of rasas are poetry. Mammata says that poetry consists in words and sense full of rasas. For Vishvanath a sentence full of rasa is poetry. Thus poetry is considered to be an art whose function is to provide rasa.

Anandavardhana and Abhinav Gupta formulated the theory of *dhwani*. This eastern theory of poetry stressing rasa means the

deeper pleasure of the soul as against the western view where poetry is an activity of intellect. What the west lacked was the spirituality aspect which was present in Vedic literature. It is Sri Aurobindo who redefined poetry in terms of Mantra—poetry of Real—declaring that "the true creator of poetry as also its true hearer is the Soul." This is spiritual poetry of soul and enthused soul-spirit into poetry culminating into final form of divine expression.

The poetry to Sri Aurobindo was not only an art, craft of words, play of imagination or pleasure of intellect but it was the language of God, a voice which comes from above, singing the unheard melodies of the goddess of Muse. He believed that Reality can only be expressed through poetry in mantras, the flow of which comes directly from the divine source like a spring which the sheer poets of ancient Vedic ages had experienced. This Mantric poetry coming from the overhead inspiration creates vibration in the consciousness which prepares for the realization of the highest truth. Sri Aurobindo said that delight is the soul of existence, beauty and delight are inseparable, divine beauty envelopes all existence. Kathleen Raine finds the spiritual nature of poetry as "challenging an astonishing statement of Indian view of the nature of poetry." He had then the inspiration from the highest source and vision of universal soul and then he gave a significant definition of poetry by calling it "Mantra of the Real."

The poetry of mantra which is a new concept of poetry emerged out of Indian sensibility. Sri Aurobindo stands at the top among the masters of Indian English literature. His *Savitri*, an Indian epic containing 24000 verses, is acknowledged as the longest poem written in the English language. Its story is drawn from the *Mahabharata*. This is the example of poetry of vision of such width, breath and height as the world had rarely known. Sri Aurobindo has drawn his inspiration from Vedas—the great scriptures of mystics and living poetry of spiritual vision. *Savitri's* theme, style versification and rhythmic beauty are pervaded by Indian sensibility. It is perhaps the most powerful artistic work in the world for expanding man's mind towards the absolute.

The Songs to Myritilla is a collection of 24 poems of beauty, youthful outburst and despair. The undercurrent in these poems is the spiritual realization of these emotions. *More Poems* reveals his deep interest in the Indian classics. *Love and Death* is the story of Ruru and Priyamvada's love. This poem was inspired by the story

of Ruru in the *Mahabharata*. *Bajiprabhu*, a national epic of sacrifice written in vigorous blank verse, is ranked among the best heroic poems in English language. *Vidula and Chitrangada* contain stories of the *Mahabharata*. In *Last Poems*, we see the peak of excellence of Overhead poetry which is the revelation of mystic experiences. These poems aim to achieve in English verse something analogous to the Vedic mantras. *Ilion* is obviously Greek but it does not cease to have Indian sensibility *Mythvasavdata*, a verse play, is a tale of ancient India. These and some other plays are evidently an attempt to introduce deeper thought into English dramatic verse. Some of the dialogues of these plays have been written under yogic inspiration and knowledge. The entire corpus of Sri Aurobindo is full of the rapture of recitation which rises from the heart of the seer and is the source of spiritual joy. Its form, diction, style and rhythm take the right and appropriate shape when the creative force gushes into the mind of the pure poet who awakes the soul in poetry.

Finally we come to the conclusion that Sri Aurobindo stood for spiritual value—spiritual poetry, spiritual joy, spiritual beauty, spiritual style, spiritual imagination, spiritual vision, spiritual word and spiritual anand. It is Indian sensibility which he calls the poetry of mantra and the poet is a seer. It is only Indian sensibility in which poetry transcends the temporal and reaches to the Life Divine.

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The Poetics of Aesthetic Expression in the Poetry of Pashupati Jha

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Within a short gap of two years, Pashupati Jha has brought out two powerful and thought-provoking collections of poems: *Cross and Creation* (2003) and *Mother and Other Poems* (2005). The poems contained in both the collections strike the reader with their poignancy and suggestiveness. The poems, a hundred in all, draw upon a variety of themes—creativity, human suffering, self-pride, love, motherhood, social ills, and reflect the poet's sensitivity and imaginative vision. Jha, a Professor in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee, received an enthusiastic response from readers and critics all over the world for *Cross and Creation* in 2003. *Mother and Other Poems*, coming soon after the first one, further underlined Jha's poetic aptitude and his ability to present complex ideas through effective diction and appropriate form. Jha's two collections present his world-view through his concern with human relationships, the complex process of artistic creation and the social problems arising due to economic inequality and increasing immorality of man.

Jha's poems are generally in the form of short lyrics, using pithy expressions and vivid images, delineated through a few word-strokes, to convey his point.[1] His poems are written mainly in *verse libre*, containing irregular stanzas and unrhymed lines of varying lengths. And yet the forcefulness of ideas and emotions, and the memorable lines contained in his poetry, necessitate a closer look at his poetic technique and craftsmanship, which contributes to its aesthetic beauty and impact. As the reader goes through the two collections of poems, he/she realizes that it is not only through the sheer beauty of the ideas, imagery or language that his poems capture the reader's attention, but the weight of the argument in each poem, that assuredly evokes a favourable response from the reader.

In his poems Jha uses words with clinical precision to express his ideas in a straightforward manner, going in for laconic expres-

sions rather than indulging in prolix sentimental effusions. In the poem "Mother," Jha expresses realistically and yet emotionally his nostalgia for the bygone days when his mother was alive:

> Squeezed by many childbirths
> and suffering our enumerable
> pneumonia and typhoid
> I never saw you young my mother.
> But you were so beautiful all the time,
> and your smile on me
> the most charming thing in my life
> your hands on my head
> the softest touch I have known
> your cooked food on firewoods
> the tastiest I have ever eaten
> your words to my ears
> the most musical and the wisest.
> You my mother, teacher, angel
> no word can tell of that utter loss—
> not even a fraction of it.
> Would you mother me again
> in next birth and next and next? (*MP* 12)

In the invocation in the concluding section of the poem, the poet equates the Hindu goddess of compassion, wealth, knowledge and strength with the concept of Mother, thus unifying religion, myth, and memory in the poem. As Shiv Kumar Yadav observes, "In the domain of Jha's poetry . . . the glorification of mother and motherhood has got the most sacred space" (127). However, it is notable that of all the poems in the two collections, this is the longest one; it appears that when Jha is intensely moved, as when recalling his late mother, words pour out unchecked. All other poems by Jha indicate a subtle restraint, a refusal to let feelings overpower his controlled poetic measures.

The two collections of poetry by Jha indicate that there is a marked variation in the poetic technique in the two of them. While in *Cross and Creation*, Jha's poetics involve a comparatively simpler method of conveying his perspective, *Mother and Other Poems*, suggests a more complex strategy of interweaving his ideas into the matrix of succinct poetic lines. Within the two collections the reader can make out a development, a progress in Jha's poetic endeavour, as his poetic technique strongly affects his communication of ideas, as also the rhetorical aspect of his artistic enterprise.

A reading of Jha's poetry brings to mind the elaborate comparison Mikhail Bakhtin offers between the language of the novel, poetry and prose writing in "The Discourse of the Novel" (1981). Bakhtin defines the novel as "a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized" (Nicol 232). The variety of accents, intentions, speech variants, attitudes, worldviews integrated in a novel exert a counter pressure upon the narrative, and Bakhtin calls a novel a *heteroglossia* due to the plurality of discourses compressed with the narrative. The genre of poetry, however, according to Bakhtin, projects only a single voice, perspective and worldview, only that of the poet himself. He points out that even the images present in the poem are meaningful in the specific contexts within which the poet has employed them and are divorced from the reality with which they are normally associated. Bakhtin continues, "Everywhere there is only one face—the linguistic face of the author, answering for every word as if it were his own" (Nicol 235). The monologic framework of poetry does not permit the languages of *heteroglossia* to stratify its content into a plurality of discourses, which are observed in the novel.

In Jha's *Cross and Creation* Bakhtin's description of poetry as a "unitary, monologically sealed-off utterance" rings true (Nicol 234). The poet conveys a single point of view, chosen by him and explicated through imagery, poetic diction and rhetorical expressions. Jha employs several different poetic techniques in his poems, each of which presents his own perspective and worldview, in that particular poem.

A systematic reading of Jha's poems offers a clue to the poet's skilful arrangement of ideas and the careful attention he gives to the structural aspect of his poetry. As one goes through *Cross and Creation*, one observes that many of the poems present in the collection are built around a single idea, which, at times, is developed and expanded with the help of allusions, comparisons, and elaborate similes. "Home is where . . ." dwells upon the theme of the need for companionship in life, and the idea is underlined through the image of the loneliness and suffering of the sun. Poems like "A Busy Son," "The Grammar of My Life" and "A Godless Country" follow this pattern. In "Spring from Stone," while the concrete diction imitates the hardness of stone, in the concluding part of the poem, the lines break out from the rigidity of enforced control into sheer poetry

"and your cruel crust melts into pure spring/reflecting the sun in colourful rainbow." (*CC* 28)

There is a steady progression of ideas in some of the poems, a coherent narrative sequence, as in 'Civilization: A Progress Report' where the description of the preoccupations of the different family members move on to a reference to the father and the son's sexual exploitation of the maid who "mops everything/ away, except her misfortune" (*CC* 13). The poem ends with a reference to Christ's eternal suffering as a penance for human sins. A similar structure is discernible in "A Riot Victim," "Disintegrating Greed," "*Tapasya*," "Creation I" and "Creation II" where there is a temporal plane, and a progression of events, leading to a static situation in the concluding lines of the poem. In "Eternal Circle" the unfulfilled quest of the speaker is allegorically presented through the imagery of the water cycle, flowing in the form of a river, "for you failed to bank my furious flood/ in your beautiful, balmy arms," finally merging into the ocean and evaporating only to rain again. The poem ends with the speaker's hope for salvation, which will "make my soul forever free" (*CC* 39).

In some of the poems in this collection, the concluding lines offer a new interpretation to the entire poem, as fresh meanings are assigned to the old, or as something commonplace is shown in a new light, so that the entire idea suddenly becomes transfigured. This poetic technique is apparent in "For Dullu," "Jesus," "No Romantic Agony This," and "The Birth." "That Rare Moment" offers an exquisite description of the complex process of artistic inspiration through allusion to a picture of a girl on the wall, which is lifeless and dull until the sunrays falling on it animate it with life. Jha draws a parallel between the picture and poetic inspiration and avers that similarly "when the spark is ignited/ and thought and emotion/ transfused, ooze out of pen/ impatient to be printed" (*CC* 12).

Some of the poems offer word pictures, capturing particular scenes to convey the point. "My Muse," "An Indian Woman," and "The Hanging Cross," present flashes of scenes to build up a collage, which creates a composite picture to emphasize a point. The images of sordidness, hopelessness and immorality of the urban dwellers in "Night in a City" recall William Blake's "London" which, like Jha's poem, lashed acerbically on the emotional paucity of the city dwellers, and their materialistic and licentious pursuits in the rapidly developing city. In "An Indian Woman" the various fac-

ets of the life of an Indian woman adhering to social customs and male expectations are presented to reflect the *stereotyped* oppressive roles an Indian woman, or for that matter, women of most cultures are expected to perform by the patriarchal society in their lives (*CC* 30).

In Jha's *Mother and Other Poems* the poetic structure is very intricate and involves the building up of arguments for rhetorical purposes. In many of these poems, Jha effectively builds up a case to persuade the reader in favour of his argument. The intellectual aspect is very clearly evident in Jha's later poems. The merging of the aesthetic and the intellectual in Jha's poetry makes it exceptional and unique, and gives it a special place among the poetry of all other renowned Indian poets writing in English. Consider for example the concluding stanza of "A Visit to the School for the Deaf," where the poet compares the physical handicap of the children with the moral handicap of all physically healthy human beings. While the children's eyes are still lit with hope,

> But that hope is not amid us anymore—
> our eyes burning with anger all the time
> lips bursting with abuses of all sorts,
> and hearts so narrow with no space for any one else
> hands meant only for battering others
> thus defiling the gifts of god all the time.
> Who is disabled then—you or us? (*MP* 50)

Similarly, in "To My Surgeon Son" the poet metaphorically presents the hurt and pain he has received from his loved ones as "daggers piercing his tired lungs,/ knives delving deep in his bent back,/ and rusty nails lodged in his heart" which his son may discover during the postmortem in case the poet dies an accidental death (*MP* 18).

Jha's use of argument in his poetry to lend rhetorical force to his poems is a characteristic Indian feature. Amartya Sen in his essay "The Argumentative Indian" discusses the history of the Indian argumentative tradition beginning with the epics the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* and points out that within these great literary works the reader encounters "masses of arguments and counter-arguments spread over incessant debates and disputations" (3). Sen goes on to trace the role of argumentation in Indian history, religious myths, science and literature, referring to specific political figures, historical events, and literary works and characters. Sen also

quotes examples from ancient Indian literature referring to the stimulating arguments offered by the woman scholar Gargi, and Yajnavalkya's wife Maitreyi in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanisad* and by Yudhishthir's wife Draupadi in the *Mahabharata* to prove their points (7-10). Using specific historical instances and examples Sen explains how discussion and debate is a distinguishing characteristic of the Indians, and which has contributed momentously to the intellectual and social history of India.

Coming back to Jha's poetry, one notes that the striking feature of the poems in *Mother and Other Poems* is the poet's use of binaries to build an argument. In many of his poems there is a strong tension between two or more contrasting ideas/ objects/ images. These oppositions are used forcefully by Jha to convey his point. The titles of several of his poems are indicative of the polarity, which forms the basis of his argument. "Dot to Distance," "Balance Counterbalance," "Nature and Man," "Right and Wrong," "Within or Outside," "Instinct and Experience" are some of the titles of his poems, which suggest a polarity of opposing points of view. The binary oppositions employed by Jha generally emphasize a contrast between the good and the bad, the deprived and the abundant/ prosperous, the haves and the have nots, the harsh and the gentle, the ugly and the beautiful. This contrast between related ideas in the poem serves to create a tension at the structural plane while simultaneously binding it tightly as a compact whole. These oppositional viewpoints act as a pointer to the argumentative foundation of Jha's poetry.

Contemporary Indian poets writing in English have also successfully employed the argumentative mode in their verse. The poetry of Kamala Das, who has always refused to conform to prescribed codes of feminine conduct, is a well-known example. Her poem "An Introduction" justifies many of her personal choices, which went against the grain. Das argues for her use of English as the language in which she writes, and for her decision to behave differently from the traditional Indian women and the reaction she faced from the orthodox Indian community, "Dress in sarees, be girl,/ Be wife, they said. Be embroiderer, be cook . . . Fit in. Oh,/ Belong, cried the categorizers" (Narasimhaiah 48). Similarly in "Spoiling the Name," Das argues against the labeling of individuals by lifeless names, which exert undesired control upon their lives:

> Why should I remember or bear

That sweet-sounding name, pinned to
Me, a medal, undeservedly
Gained, at moments when, all of
Me is ablaze with life? (Narasimhaiah 47)

Das's poetry uses irony to draw attention to women's futile hope of receiving love and the male obsession with the female body.

The polarities compressed in Jha's poems too help to create an ironic undertone in his poems. In "Transformation" the contrast between the "sour" and the "bitter words" of the speaker's companion and the "pure and bright" sheet on which they will be transformed, implicitly draws attention to the mental and emotional agony which the speaker is forced to bear, and which ultimately results in the creation of a beautiful piece of poetry (*MP* 35). Similarly in "Right and Wrong," the wrongs committed by sectarian groups and the violence perpetrated by them on the weak is proclaimed to be done in support of religion and for a patriotic cause, hence the victim expresses his dilemma thus:

So my dying pulse
fails to find
who is right
who is wrong—
the victim or the victor—
in this derailed world. (*MP* 43)

In "My Choice" the speaker while expressing his philanthropic intentions of marrying a prostitute in order to improve her life, simultaneously attacks the hypocrisy of people who choose to do so for a "reward/ or a script on the screen" (*MP* 48). The undercurrent of irony present in these poems becomes a powerful strategy of voicing the poet's discontent with the existing situation as also drawing attention to the pressing need for its improvement.

The use of oppositional perspectives in Jha's poetry urges the reader to go back to Bakhtin's designation of poetry as a monologic genre in which heteroglot social contexts find no room. However, critics have moved on to analyze the *heteroglossic* form of particular works of poetry; Brian McHale in *Postmodernist Fiction* discusses T.S. Eliot's *The Wasteland* as a *heteroglossic* text which incorporates and weaves together "a variety of languages, styles, registers, genres, and intertextual citations" and yet, McHale points out that the pluralization of discourses in the poem is kept under control by its monological framework (166). The polyphony of perspectives

in modernist texts, suggests McHale, serves as a means for the dialogue and interaction between world-views and ideological positions presented within the text.

A similar confrontation between disparate points of view can be discerned in Jha's poetry, where the speaker's perspective is at variance with the view of society/ tradition/ religious beliefs/ the spouse/ the beloved, or in other words, the point of view of the 'other.' Bakhtin's comment on the semantic aspect of poetry that "the meaning must emerge from language as a single intentional whole: none of its stratification, its speech diversity, to say nothing of its language diversity, may be reflected in any fundamental way in his poetic work" does not seem to be true for Jha's later poetry, where the conceptual framework of the poems is in fact dissimilarity between individuals regarding social, religious, artistic, economic, or intellectual background (Nicol 234). Though a distinct parallel cannot be drawn between the typically *heteroglossic* form of *The Wasteland* and the bringing together of oppositional perspectives in Jha's poems, yet the latter does seem to approach *heteroglossia*, due to the embedding of plural perspectives and languages in a metaphorical sense, of violent nationalism, of egoistic pride, of material opulence, of spiritual complacence, which the speaker in each poem opposes.

I have tried to examine the diverse poetic strategies Pashupati Jha explores in his poetry to convey his worldview. The poet expresses himself imaginatively using sequencing of interconnected ideas, collages of images, allegory, allusions, and parallels to put across his point. The binaries employed by Jha in his verse draw attention to the difference in the economic, social, moral and intellectual levels between all individuals. The argumentative framework of many of Jha's poems, gives them a distinct style, by expressing the difficult dilemmas a perceptive human being experiences in his encounter with society as a whole, as Jha aptly questions in one of his poems, "For what is me without my sensitivity?" ("Hurts," *CC* 52). His poems resonate with clarity of ideas, freshness of expression, and his ability to observe the unobserved and recreate it in a new light. Jha's poetic skill makes his verse both stirring and appealing, and causes the reader to anticipate more of his poetic endeavours.

NOTE

1. As early as in 1976, R. Parthasarathy had commented upon the style of the contemporary poetry by Indian writers pointing out the preference of the poets for concision, a statement which is valid also for Jha's poetry: "most of the poets favour a short as opposed to a long line as the unit of composition. The line is easily spoken in one effort of the breath." (11)

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Terrible Fish in Sylvia Plath's Mirrors: Perception and Relevance of Mirror Imagery

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One mirrory eye—
A facet of knowledge. ("Berck-Plage" 48-49)

William Freedman demonstrates in his article entitled "The Monster in Plath's Mirror" that for Sylvia Plath, mirror holds great significance because "the search in the mirror is ultimately a search for the self, often for the self as artist," especially female artist who dissolves all self-linked taboos and given masks of regressive-cocoon shaped femininity in the cauldron of massive psychic energies emanating from her creativity in the light of which she sees herself as an autonomous female self. The mirror imagery thus signifies the consciousness of woman speaker who verbalizes the creative process of woman artist when she initiates into the inner world in search of her true self.

Since her childhood Sylvia Plath was greatly impressed with the character of Alice in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass* whom she refers to, as Pamela J. Annas has quoted as, "my muse Alice," "climbed through the mirror into another world" (3). Preoccupied with the curiosity to know what lies within the mirror like Alice, Sylvia Plath believes that mirror not only stands for the rational and logical view of this linear world to be registered through the senses, but also what lies beyond this tangible world. Annas remarks about Plath's attraction for the mirror: "Sylvia Plath too often found herself up on the mantelpiece touching her hands to the glass and wondering whether to pass through, catching glimpses of a world as strange as but far less full of delight than the world Alice saw. She balanced on the border between two worlds and wrote about what she saw from that privileged and precarious position, not as wondering and innocent Alice but as Gerd, the crystal gazer." (3)

The female protagonist in Plath's "Mirror" identifies herself with the inanimate mirror, which faithfully reflects whatever comes within the line of its vision. She has got no identity of her own ex-

cept those assigned to her by her male counterpart such as wife, mother, daughter and living doll to cater to the needs of her master who is "Lord of mirror." Freedman points out that this mirror is a symbol of female "passivity" and "subjugation" and that "figure gazing at and reflected in the mirror is neither the child nor the man the woman-as-mirror habitually reflects, but a woman." She feels that in this patriarchal world she is powerless and passive creature who is expected to have everlasting beauty and youth. However, with the passing of time, she grows old and with that, her beauty fades away. She does not accept casually that she is getting old like the Queen in children's story who possesses a magical mirror that answers any question, to whom she often asks: "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who in the land is fairest of all?" to which the mirror always replies "You, my queen, are fairest of all." But when Snow White reaches the age of seven, she becomes as beautiful as the day, and when the queen asks her mirror, it responds: "Queen, you are full fair, 'tis true, but Snow White is fairer than you" ("Snow White"). Thus the mirror tells the truth to the woman who relies on the false impression given by such liars as "moon" and "candles" since the candles and moon suggest the beautiful faces popular with romantic dreamers. Essentially, she is not such but is made to suffer this manic depression because of the objective attitude towards her resulting in her own peril as T.S. Eliot writes in his famous poem "Burnt Norton": "Go, go, go, said the bird; human kind/ Cannot very much bear reality" (43-44). The mirror projects what is thought of her in this male dominated society and since, she, herself a mirror, cannot escape from this world as Susan Van Dyne remarks on woman's loss of self confidence in her perception as the mirror: "Locating in her perception as the mirror marginalizes the woman: her presence in the mirror vision is intermittent, and then only as a reflected object. The source of mirror's image, the observing mirror, does not exist as a subject at all" (88).

But Plath's female protagonist senses the vicious conspiracy hatched against her very existence. She cannot loiter purposelessly in this tortuous world of passive adaptability and tries to understand what it means and has meant so far. She wants to recognize the mysterious depth of her role as an archetypal-mythical hero poet to throw away the stereotypical images of her own in the random and transformative poetic process. For this, she has to give up known means of control and accepted logic of causality in search of inner

reality of her experience. She puts everyday sanity at risk in search of healing truth that lies behind accepted structures of belief. On the chariot of her creativity with a sharp sword of poetic power like an epic hero, she runs amuck through the safely preserved conventional glories and inhibitions of patriarchal abyss, made with insinuating intent to bind her womanhood; however, this regressive enclosure holds no significance for her as she resolves to alienate herself from whatever reside in this outer world. For Plath, interior journey is a source of recuperative powers; and hence, a sojourn into inner realm fills her being with refreshingly creative energy. She writes in her *Journal* entry on October 17, 1951, "I don't know why I should be so hideously gloomy. . . . But at least the lower I go the sooner I'll reach bottom and start the upgrade again" (39-40). Neumann's views are worth-noting with regard to female creativity. He holds that "the female psyche is in far greater degree dependent on the productivity of the unconscious" (Stewart109).

The interior journey begins when the mirror transforms itself into a lake and with the emergence of lake, the woman/ artist departs from this world to recreate a new mythos, different from the prevailing ones. As Stewart suggests, her creativity enables her to make an alternative world, "If imprisoned in the labyrinth by outside forces, she must fly skyward. If her heritage is menial, she must create herself in new image. If she suffocates in traditional settings, she must find breathing space" (108). Rosenblatt counts three stages of initiatory process, "The first stage in the initiatory process involves transformation of external setting of the poem—landscape, seascape or hospital—into the symbolic landscape of death" (574). The second stage is the "stage of transformation, the self undergoes drastic forms of self-transformation in order to escape from the violence of death-world. Paradoxically, this escape takes the form of physical destruction, including self-mutilation, dismemberment, or symbolic annihilation" (575). The implication is that the female should deliberately alienate herself from the outer world as well as her own sexual identity and should enact the drama of psychic death by killing the phantoms of her false self, as they haunt her in the semiotic realm, with the energies discharged from the unconscious or artistic power. Paula Bennet has referred to Virginia Woolf's predicament as an artist: "as a novice reviewer she found that she could not speak her mind unless she first did 'battle with a certain phantom'" (1). The phantom is the phantom of the

angel of house. The Angel, as Paula Bennet suggests, represents the perfect and universally accepted traditional image of woman as "sympathetic, charming, utterly unselfish, domestic, self-sacrificing, and, above all pure." For a woman poet, Virginia Woolf declares, "Killing the Angel of the House" is a "'part of the occupation of the woman writer' and necessary to the pursuit of her craft" (2). Stewart Grace holds that the rejection of so-called conventional image of woman is essential to create artist/ woman; however, it requires relentless courage on her part to create 'a new mythology' of her own. That woman is essentially inferior to man because of missing of the marks (external genitals). This notion has to be falsified with an innovative glorification of womanhood, which is possible through creative power—annihilating and creative at the same time.

> When the artist must reject the mythic woman of literature written by men, must reject a stereotype of the "animus" conceptualized by Jung . . . must ignore the theory of penis envy postulated by Freud, must fight an identification with her mother in order to individuate, . . . to create the artist/ woman, the task seems Herculean rather than feminine. She must die as this mythic "feminine" woman in order to give birth to herself as an artist, a creator of myths. For her, the journey to the interior is often an acceptance of darkness there or in the place to which she returns. (109)

Sylvia Plath strongly believes in her creative powers as she herself remarks in her *Journal* entry, "All I need to do is work, break open the deep mines of experience and imagination, let the words come and speak it all, sounding themselves" (162). Similarly, she celebrates creativity in her "Lady Lazarus" too, when she declares: "Dying/ Is an art, like everything else" (43-44).

Each day the woman sees her face in the mirror and the mirror, not only takes note of every physical change in her, but also records every atom of experience falling upon her unconscious. Her conscious self tries to ignore her failures and inadequacy; however, they are faithfully inscribed to perfection in the record of mirror. She "comes and goes" staring into the mirror's reality and then reaches the point when "faces and darkness" intervene and the mirror becomes a lake, "Now I am a lake," an entrance to the terrain of unconscious when she leaves behind the world of waking consciousness (15, 9-10). It is through the mirror lake that she shifts into the creative world of *Death*. Rosenblatt states that this space of darkness can be arrived at through the deliberate departure from the

symbolic world of linear norms, where those aspects of existence that consciousness normally separates and opposes come together as one." Rosenblatt suggests that Plath compares this dark space with the womb in the hope of "a condition of unity" different from that of consciousness that starts with Lacanian 'mirror stage' reducing the self to fulfill social obligation as an active social agent. Nevertheless, this journey proves to be successful as the female self "simultaneously confronts death and the origin of life." He stresses on Plath's prognostic vision, "The darkness into which the poet enters may be the prelude to her own death or it may be the means for her to gain a more vivid and intense existence" (573).

The mirror is *the semiotic realm*[1] where the female poet suffers the pangs of psychic death followed by spiritual rebirth. The mirror renders and solves the central issue of identity by splitting her consciousness into subject and object. It is only in this dark realm of lake-mirror that the young girl confronts her double. The double selves imply an immediate self in this material worldview and a total self, which remains a mystery unless it emerges in its totality after the ritual initiation and when it smashes the angel of the house. The young girl meets her true self "terrible fish," she gets confused whether this is her self or not. The terrible fish with Leviathan-vigour eats and digests the stereotypical image of young girl and after a long sojourn in her Piscean eon comes onto the surface of the lake as an autonomous female self to terrify this world. All the thoughts, sense impressions, and experiences of young girl are offered up to the lake of spiritual world. "The terrible fish" is significant to represent her picture as a mature self. Virginia Woolf also, as Stewart has quoted, is of the opinion that self-confidence is essential for maturity. She observes, "Without self-confidence we are as babes in the cradle" (107). The mirror on the one hand is object, which reflects both the persona's subordinate self as well as stresses on her repressed primeval self. "The fish is the autonomous person and author. It is the role rejecting woman/ mother who, even as she proclaims her acceptance of the task, refuses passivity to mirror, man, infant or whatever else is set before it" (Freedman). The phrase "like a terrible fish" reinforces the idea of rebellion. Woman's psyche not only consists in beauty, fairness, and gentleness but also turns out to be "terrible" when she feels the violation of her rights at the hand of her male counterpart.

The ritual of initiation, leading to psychic death followed by spiritual rebirth, signifies the struggle between true and false self, has become the ubiquitous motif in most of Plath's poems. The mirror dispels the illusion of the female protagonist by projecting her true self and she gathers up her courage to execute the masochistic act of self-mutilation i.e., killing the projected dummy because what the female protagonist desires for is not the harmonious balance between two warring forces, but an inclusive flaking off the inferior false self. Judith Kroll demonstrates that "a life lived by the false self, is not life but an intolerable death-in-life which can be overcome only by dying to that life" (Kroll 12). The desire for the rebirth of the self, however, takes various shapes, as the persona's ambivalent attitude towards her double tends to interfere with her attempts at self-awareness. Elisabeth Bronfen believes that "dramatically protean resurrection of the self [is] so terrible that release from confinement is usually figured as a journey through death so that self-recreation and self-destruction are separated by a fine line" (64). The doubling of the self dissolves with the annihilation of false self, that is shed off like an "Old whore petticoat" in "Fever 103°" (50) and "old bandages, boredom, old faces" are peeled off like onion and the persona is reborn "Pure as baby" in "Getting There" (66, 67). Bronfen again points out "Plath's exploration of the oscillation between longing for extinction and transcendence of the self," claims that this struggle "translates into fantasies of transformation, of escape from constriction and engulfment, and of flight, where casting off outgrown selves and overused masks lead to a naked renewal" (64). The same struggle is evident in "In Plaster" where the poetic persona sees her self from the other side of the mirror and suffers desperation and anxiety:

> I shall never get out of this! There are two of me now:
> The new absolutely white person and the old yellow one,
> And the white person is certainly the superior one. (1-3)

But with the progression of the poem, this struggle culminates in her allegation of throwing out the white and beautiful mask with the acquisition of confidence in her real yellow self: "One day I shall manage without her,/ And she'll perish with emptiness, and begin to miss me" (55-56). A harmonious combination between these warring selves is prime requisite of the society, yet neither of them assimilates as the yellow self ignites within for assertion, prepared to spark off from its confinement, with a new belief in its ability to

stand on its own as an autonomous female self. The real self declares: "I'm collecting my strength, one day I shall manage without her/ And she'll perish with emptiness then, and begin to miss me" (55-56). Similarly, in "Morning Song," the woman tears off the imposed mask of motherhood by comparing herself with the floating clouds in the sky broken in rain to become a mirror lake, which reflects the gradual disappearing of the clouds at wind's hand. She does not want to be credited with the honour of being a mother and identifies herself with the floating clouds, free to move in the open sky and to break themselves in rain at their own whim. The wind is suggestive of the primeval energy pushing her to see her real self in the mirror lake by dissolving her stereotypical image of Virgin Mary feeding her baby Christ:

> I'm no more your mother
> Than the clouds that distills a mirror to reflect its own slow
> Effacement at the wind's hand. (7-9)

"Purdah" also demonstrates the recurrent pattern of rebirth motif of female protagonist with the extinction of her husband who suppresses her identity. Within the enclosure of Oriental harem of her husband, she becomes an object rather than a living being. She also visualizes herself as a comatose and inert jade statuette, nothing more than that a precious stone of her lord's chattels:

> Jade—
> The stone of the side,
> The agonized. (1-3)

In the presence of her husband, she feels that she is merely a reflecting object, while her husband is the "Lord of the mirror" (21). Pashupati Jha has remarked on the significance of mirror imagery to divulge the predicament of the woman in the enclosure of harem, "The expression 'mirror' is quite apt and significant, for all women in harem are supposed to be inert objects like mirrors meant only for reflecting the wishes and whims of the harem-keepers" (82). However, the latent self within her unconscious needs action on her part and comes on to the surface of the water when she becomes aware of her true self, to kill her male counterpart as a lioness after casting off the meek image of a living doll. The shattering of the chandelier signifies a shattering of a passive and reflective mirror image of the female protagonist when she gathers her courage and strength to murder her husband.

Shattering
The chandelier
Of air that all day flies

Its crystals
A million ignorants. (43-47)

She is resurrected like Clytemnestra who by killing her husband Agamemnon, while naked and vulnerable in his bath, flouts the so-called traditional image of hers and emerges out as a hybrid portrait of a viper abusing her intimate access to Agamemnon. Moreover, the myth of Clytemnestra has been amalgamated with that of Moon Goddess "embodying her true self and symbolizing the story of a Moon heroine who ritually murders in his bath her Sun-god or Sun King" (Kroll 157). Both Sun god and Agamemnon murdered at the hand of their female counterparts in their bath imply that the passive mirror is transformed into active slayer and the veil is replaced with the "cloak of holes." Judith Kroll comments on the last three lines of the poem:

> The Cassandra of Aeschylus, prophesying the event, calls Clytemnestra a "two footed lioness." . . . The "shriek in the bath" is Agamemnon's death-cry and "the cloak of holes" the raiment in which Clytemnestra enmeshes him and through which she stabs him. (157-58)

The inclusive rebirth of a passive and inert female protagonist is quite subtle and suave with the shifting from humbleness and hesitancy of veil to the finishing shriek of attack:

I shall unloose—
From the small jeweled
Doll he guards like a heart—

The lioness,
The shriek in the bath
The cloak of holes. (52-57)

In "Daddy," Sylvia Plath displays a picture of a role-rejecting daughter who, after bearing the pain of regression, turns out be a slayer replacing a devoted daughter. She mediates on her submissive position in her psyche and from her unconscious brings back her father as a primeval aggressor to be loathed as Nazi German, a devil so that she may slaughter him for her own survival like a hero in folktale:

There's stake in your fat black heart

And the villager never liked you.
They are dancing and stamping on you.
They always *knew* it was you.
Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I'm through. (76-80)

In "Face Lift," the female protagonist suffers from an anxiety and is apprehensive at the very notion of getting old because with the passing of age, she will lose her physical charm and will no longer be capable of alluring her male counterpart. With this end in view, she wants to keep her beauty intact through the mechanical process of cosmetic-plastic surgery so that she may avoid masculine aversion of herself. Under the sedative effects of anesthesia, she visualizes herself moving in the palace of Egypt and then returning in the hospital ward. The image of Cleopatra has a two-fold significance for the woman in this poem. Firstly, she thinks that after this surgery, she will acquire a beautiful face like Queen Cleopatra, but her attitude regarding herself changes as she thinks that she is a post-operative patient and does not possess a royal status enjoyed by Cleopatra in ancient Egypt. The nudity of Cleopatra geminates the seeds of consciousness in her psyche, triggering her off from the enclosure of perfect image of living doll. She departs from this filthy world in search of her true self. She initiates into the dark realm of semiotic where she cannot see her face clearly. The implication is that in the darkness of womb-like situation, her false self of living doll dissolves.

At the count of two
Darkness wipes me out like chalk on blackboard . . .
I don't know a thing. (15-17)

In the inner world begins the enactment of psychic drama as she ponders over her previous life. In the "tapped cask" of her psyche, she feels "years draining in to my pillow" and she "grow[s] backward" to become a girl of twenty (18, 21). She visualizes herself a girl of twenty sitting in her "long skirts on" her "first husband's sofa," but this time she is not brainless doll to satisfy male ego; this time she becomes "broody" (22-23). Her previous false self is not skin-deep; she casts off her false self since "Skin does not have roots, it peels away as paper" (21). She also feels her "fingers/ Buried in the lambswool of dead poodle" (23-24). The speaker's dissociation from the old body or false image is violent transformation as she suffers a lot of pain to suspend the false self of her own. Undoubtedly, her face has been lifted in this poem when she realizes:

Now she is done for, the dewlapped lady
I watched settle, line by line, in my mirror—
Old sock-face, sagged on a darning egg
They have tapped her in a laboratory jar. (26-29)

Here the old sock face, sagged on a darning egg is the previous face of a perfect doll she lets "wither incessantly for the next fifty years" (30). The psychic death of the false self culminates with resurrection of a new self "swaddled in gauze,/ Pink and smooth as a baby" (33-34). In "Brasilia," modern version of Virgin Mary challenges God and does not want her son to be the chosen one. The phrase "Mirror safe, unredeemed" suggests that she craves for seclusion in order to evade the reflection in God's eye mirror. She also feels that she is reborn with power and glory:

Mirror safe, unredeemed
By the dove's annihilation,
The glory
The power, the glory. (21-24)

The wife in "The Courier" also rejects the sluggish image as a devoted wife and wants dangerous exposure by assimilating within her the elemental forces of seething sea:

A disturbance in the mirror,
The sea shattering its gray one—
Love, love, my season. (11-13)

"Ariel" is saturated with a strong sense of freedom emanating from the beginning till the very end of the poem. "Stasis in the darkness" is the beginning point; no light or motion on the moor is visible until at the horizon "the substanceless blue" sky of freedom triggers the distinct motion (1-3). At a distance, a craggy hill appears as if crowned in this dream-like situation with a sacrificial altar, a semblance of purgatorial fire out of which she, urging herself to move ahead in her already transformed image of "God's lioness," emerges (4). She declares how she has acquired the elemental and animalistic power of a lioness to turn her passive state into activity, to leave behind all her past images. Annamma Joseph remarks, "The transforming ritual of purging and fusing leading to new birth, conceived . . . as a ritual leading to death, is presented here as journey from stasis in darkness through a nightmarish landscape" (67). The poetic persona starts her heroic journey on the horse back like a legendry hero in classical treatise at dawn assimilating within her the power

of Ariel, a blithe spirit of fire and air from whom she receives kinesis and moves from submission to assertion. She is reborn as rebellious "White Godiva," a masquerading form of the mythic White Goddess of Love and Death, who defies her husband. In her new identity, she says:

> White
> Godiva, I unpeel—
> Dead hands, dead stringencies. (19-21)

Like White Godiva, she has laid bare her true self by unpeeling her "dead hands" and "dead stringencies." The sea image with its glittering surface is the mirror of nature in which she sees her true face, not of a nurturing mother but of White Goddess:

> And now I
> Foam to wheat, a glitter of seas. . . .
> And I
> Am the arrow. (23-27)

The image of sea-glass is quite significant because it reflects both aspects of woman's existence as Plath draws a comparison between sea and woman: "Like a deep woman, it hid a good deal; it had many faces, many delicate, terrible veils. It spoke of miracles and distances; if it could court, it could also kill" (*Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams* 117). She is released from the mothering role, transformed an arrow, a power, launching forth into the sky and child's cry does not melt her heart as she says, "The child's cry/ Melts in the wall" (24-25). Annamma Joseph remarks regarding arrow image: "It marks the victory over suffering and death; yet the destination is death and rebirth" (68).

Thus, mirror plays a significant role to show the drama of psychic-striptease. Changing incessantly from one identity to another to wear all sorts of masks ranging from a faithful wife to a glamorous mannequin, a sort of antipathy is aroused in the psyche of the female protagonist, who with the tempo of self-realization, hopes for rebirth and resurrection. However, the metamorphoses of the self in the dark dungeon of mirror are painful, but the self willingly suffers this poignancy because she sees the looming gleam of refreshed self. Through the transparency of the mirror, the whole drama of self-realization is clear before our eyes culminating in the triumphant emergence of female self as a lioness, a terrible fish, Phoenix and airy spirit, golden baby, Lady Godiva and Moon Goddess, ca-

pable of shattering the mirror of this patriarchal world. Neslihan Ekmekçioğlu remarks on the significance and relevance of mirror imagery in Plath's poetry:

> in Sylvia Plath's poetry, surfaces which are capable of reflecting images from within such as the mirror, the sea, the lake, the window, the eye, the moon, the bell jar, the crystal ball and the polished stones, indeed, stand for her desperate search for her own identity and the reality of her inner psyche. . . . The reflecting surfaces which are used in her poetry become transparent and reveal a threatening world behind them, which can pull her in or drown her or annihilate the vision of the self. Reflecting surfaces demonstrate both the search for self in its multiple disguises and the disintegration of the self into pieces, and finally the rebirth of her true self.

Hence, the mirrors in Plath's poetry reflect the male point of view regarding woman, "a perfect reflection of feminine ideal in male eyes" (Freedman). However, Plath undermines the imposed version of feminine identity and exhibits the persona's genuine struggle during her interior journey to release herself from bondage of idealized femininity through the incarnation of a self, which is aggressively self-assertive. Linda K. Bundtzen suggests the significance and relevance of "mirror imagery" in Plath's poetry: "All of these mirror relationships between woman and her archetypes of feminine perfection—the youthful beauty, the virgin, the ideal, housekeeper, the sexually prized harem wife, and the all-good, all-giving mother—are brutally mocked and tested by Plath to discover what truths about female psychology they might convey" (227) since powers are within and not without. Annas Nin also writes, "I had to learn where the roots were:/ and they were in me" (qtd. Stewart 107). At last, the all powerful and transformed female self, with an awareness of another world, returns to declare her triumphant emergence with dangerous exposure:

> Out of the ash
> I rise with my red hair
> And eat men like air. (82-84)

NOTE

1. *'Semiotic realm'* represents the pre-linguistic stage of imaginary, which is free from the "ism" and the rules of Symbolic Order, i.e. the *Law of the Father*. This regime of '*semiotic*' and *'imaginary'* is called "Chora," a receptacle or womb where nothing is static and fixed in a

certain formula rather governed by drives: death and birth drives, the elixir of life. The implication is that a recourse towards semiotic is a return to the transformative creative power that solves the dilemma of identity. (For further details, see in *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* by Wilfred L. Guerin, et al.).

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Cross-Dressing in Shakespearean Comedies

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I dreamt last night that Shakespeare's ghost
Sat for a civil service post.
The English paper for that year
Had several questions on *King Lear*,
Which Shakespeare answered very badly,
Because he hadn't read his Bradley.[1]

This half-joking comment by *Punch* satirist in 1926 indicates the power of a critic. Shakespeare's plays and sonnets are being discussed and analyzed in so many different ways of which possibly Shakespeare himself could have had no conception.

Cross-dressing has in recent years been the focus of a considerable body of critical work, especially in studies of the theatre of the English Renaissance. From a variety of theoretical and critical perspectives like materialist, feminist, queer theory, post-Foucault analysis of the discursive construction of sexuality, the poetics and politics of representation, etc. several scholars have also sought to track the elusive figure of the transvestite. Post-structuralism rejects the notion of the essential quality of the dominant relation in the hierarchy, choosing rather to expose these relations and the dependency of the dominant term on its apparently subservient counterpart. The only way to properly understand these meanings is to deconstruct the assumptions and knowledge systems which produce the illusion of singular meaning. This act of deconstruction illuminates how male can become female, how speech can become writing, and how rational can become emotional. Not surprisingly queer theory has taken a special interest in cross-dressing. Queer theory's contribution to literary and cultural studies lies in its emphasis on sexuality as a fourth category of analysis next to race, class and gender.

Post-structuralism rejects the idea of a literary text having a single purpose, a single meaning, or one singular existence. Instead, every individual reader creates a new and individual purpose, meaning, and existence for a given text. To step outside of literary theory, this position can be generalized to any situation where a subject per-

ceives a sign. Meaning (or the signified, in Saussure's scheme, which is as heavily presumed upon in post-structuralism as in structuralism) is constructed by an individual from a signifier. This is why the signified is said to 'slide' under the signifier, and explains the talk about the "primacy of the signifier."

Cross-dressing is the act of wearing clothing commonly associated with the other gender within a particular society and can be seen as a type of transgender behaviour, not necessarily transgender identity. Even in Shakespearean times, nobody wanted to be known as homosexual, transgender, transsexual, or transvestite[2] because these classifications simply had no social recognition. Terms such as queer, invert, sodomite, sapphist, dyke etc. are cultural artifacts that are still tied to cross-dressing and related behaviour.

In Elizabethan times, cross-dressing was heavily criticized by the patriarchal society. The Renaissance culture assumed that men who cross-dressed were shameful and perhaps passive homosexual partners, and the women who cross-dressed were whores. It was inextricably associated with sexual misdemeanors. Cross-dressing was surrounded by an atmosphere of scandal, and so was theatre. The theatre was a place of unusual freedom for women in the period. Foreign visitors commented on the fact that 'English women go to theatre unescorted and unmasked,' and a large proportion of the audience consisted of women. The puzzle here is why a culture that so severely regulated the lives of women on every other sphere suspended its restriction in the case of theatre. Elizabethan theatre companies contained no women but Italian troupes, which always included women, visited England time to time and performed successfully. Many scholars have discussed cross-dressing as a real life social phenomenon in Renaissance England as well as a theatrical practice. Truly speaking, cross-dressing is a challenge to the readers/audience in exercising a habit of mind that Shakespeare himself possessed to an extraordinary degree; it is what Keats called 'negative capability.'

It has also been suggested by various critics, new and old that Shakespeare was bisexual, but cross-dressing as a gender issue in his work has come under attack recently. While the eighteenth century did its best to eliminate the tricky question of Shakespeare's own sexuality altogether, twentieth century scholar like Joseph Pequigney in *Such Is My Love: A Study of Shakespearean Sonnets* tries to put it back claiming a specifically homosexual identity for the au-

thor and deploring the way that most commentators neglect or dispose of the issue. The mid-1990s saw the appearance of some major studies in this field, notably Michael Saphiro's *Gender in Play on the Shakespearean Stage,* Laure Levine's *Men in Women's Clothing*, Stephen Orgel's *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare's England*, Marjorie Garb's *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* and Jean E. Howard's *Cross-Dressing the Theatre and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England.*

In Shakespearean world of comedy, cross-dressing is clearly related to specific events i.e. escape or disguise. Shakespeare made substantial use of cross-dressing for female characters, who take on masculine clothing. Of the thirty-eight surviving plays attributed to him, about one fifth involve cross-dressing. In seven of those plays female characters disguise themselves as young men. In three—*The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night*—cross-dressing is central to both the complication and the resolution of the plot. The heroines also disguise themselves as men in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona,* one of Shakespeare's earliest plays, and in *Cymbeline*, one of his latest. In *The Taming of the Shrew* and in *The Merry Wives of Windsor,* male characters are disguised as women. For example see Falstaff in Mistress Page's clothes .But it makes it clear that the magic works in one direction only—a woman disguised as a man is full of suggestive power, a man disguised as a woman is ridiculous.

In addition to all these cross-dressed disguises, three of Shakespeare's earliest history plays feature female characters who probably appeared in masculine battle-dress (Joan in Part I of *Henry VI*, Margaret in Part III and Eleanor in *King John*).

Cross-dressing has a variety of functions in these plays, some deriving from the material conditions of performance, others from the conflicted status of gender roles in the culture at large. Like dialogism, there may be collision or clash, but unlike dialogism, there is shared space for re-positioning and transformations of more than voice alone. As part of its idealized vision of experience Shakespearean comedy includes the perfectibility of womankind by letting women, temporarily at least, become men. Cross-dressing in comedies makes the heroines' gender identity ambiguous. They are both men and women, owning both femininity and masculinity. Thus cross-dressing helps to deconstruct Renaissance gender stereo-

types, the binary opposition of gender and eventually, patriarchy. In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Julia, in order to act freely in a patriarchal society, transforms herself into a boy to pursue her lover. It becomes clear that in male attire the heroines construct their masculinity and reveal their masculine qualities like intelligence, courage and capability. Meanwhile they still keep feminine qualities like chastity, constancy, tenderness and fragility. In this way their ambiguous gender identity helps them to obtain equality with men. From feminist point of view to talk about gender ambiguity is to deconstruct gender stereotypes, and to prove that every individual, man or woman, owns both masculine and feminine characteristics, neither is superior to other.

Cross-dressing in the plays helps women characters to travel alone, to enter the men's world, and to act as men, instead of being confined at home. Second, in men's clothes, the heroine Portia, Rosalind, Viola and Julia all demonstrate masculine qualities such as intelligence, wit, capability and courage, which implies that women can also own masculinity. Third, heroines also demonstrate their admirable feminine qualities. Finally all the heroines take the initiative and control the action, especially when they pursue love. Their double gender identity shows that gender is free floating. It is not fixed, it can be constructed. As Simone de Beauvoir said: 'Woman is not born but made.'

But there is a different twist and turn. In Shakespeare's theatre, convention dictated that adolescent boys play the roles of female characters, creating humour in the multiplicity of disguise found in a female character that for a while pretended at masculinity. People saw these cross-dressed boys as arousing illicit sexual urges in the adult men who attended plays. Barbara Hodgdon comments in this regard, 'Desiring to equate "stage love" with "true love," Viola, the heroine of Shakespeare in love, alludes to the corporeal conundrum that weaves through Shakespeare's "transvestite" comedies—*Two Gentlemen of Verona, The Merchant of Venice, Twelfth Night*, and *As You Like It*—where boy actors playing women cross-dress as men in dazzling doubles acts that offer up a spectrum of flexible sex-gender identities, confounding the body's "truth."'[3]

One of the earliest results of development in feminist criticism was an intense focus on the fact that all the female parts in Shakespeare's plays were acted by boys. Therefore the original productions of the above-mentioned Shakespeare plays actually involved

double-cross-dressing: male actors playing female characters disguising themselves as males. No matter what is represented on stage, the fact that boys are actually playing cross-dressing men and women is insistently metaphorical; the literal fact of transvestism is divided between the homoerotic and the blurring of gender. A central issue of debate about the boy actor has been over whether the convention empowers women by allowing female characters to adopt freedom denied them in patriarchal culture, or whether in the end the disguises serve only to reaffirm the sexual hierarchy. Critics like Berggren, Dusinberre and Rackin see the possibility for an escape from the constraints of femininity. While critics such as Free and Howard reject the view of Shakespearean heroines as proto-feminist and argue that cross-dressing on the stage was not in fact a strong site of resistance to traditional assumptions about gender.

Julia's disguise highlights her fidelity, enabling her to observe Proteus wooing Sylvia as well as to forgive his sexual betrayal in a somewhat unsatisfactory resolution that traffics in women's bodies in order to celebrate male friendship. Portia does not assume disguise in order to pursue a wooer like Jessica, or like Rosalind, to play gender games. As a married woman she has no need to cross-dress in order to save her virginity. She is the likeliest feminist candidate who leaves a household where she is the master to take up a similarly powerful role in the public sphere, where she saves the life of Antonio, her husband Bassanio's friend.

It may be said that the represented female character who cross-dresses, functions literally to relieve the boy actor, at least for a time, from impersonating a woman. In this regard Kenneth Muir said: 'The difference between any one play and another are more significant than the resemblances. The only characteristic that all the comedies have in common is the use of disguise. For women to disguise themselves as boys may have been suggested by the fact that there were no actresses on the Elizabethan stage; but Shakespeare does not appear to have used this device so frequently merely to simplify the task of his female impersonators. The boy who played Rosalind, for example, had to pretend to be a girl, disguised as a boy (Ganymede), acting the part of Rosalind; and whoever played Perdita had to pretend to be a princess, supposed to be a shepherdess, and playing the part of the mistress of the sheep-shearing feast. Such complications, disguises within disguises, must have required a great deal of skill and sophistication from the actors. More signifi-

cantly, disguise enabled Shakespeare to symbolize one of his favourite themes, the contrast between appearance and reality."[4]

Twelfth Night or *What You Will* deals extensively with cross-dressing through the female protagonist Viola. She disguises herself as Cesario, and immediately finds herself caught up in a love triangle. She loves Duke Orsino who loves Countess Olivia, who loves Cesario. Luckily, all is resolved when Viola's presumed dead twin brother Sebastian comes along. We only see Viola as Viola in one scene; for the rest of the play she is dressed as Cesario. Her cross-dressing disguise further enhances gender ambiguity and explicitly illustrates the fashioning of one's identity through clothing. Moreover the performative aspect of gender intelligibility in Viola's disguise as Cesario highlights the volitional construction of one's gender identity on the stage.

Harold Jenkins also commented about the situation in play *Twelfth Night* when Sebastian appears. According to him it means that a plot which turns on external appearances—a close resemblance between men's faces—gives way to an action which also involves their feelings. For example when Viola all of a sudden takes up an unaccountable resolution to serve the young bachelor-duke Orsino and she can not claim of being in love with the duke, the plot becomes complicated and tangled. Jenkins commented: 'And since Viola has not even the excuse of being in love with the duke to start with, this goes 'greatly beyond the bounds of decency.' But if Shakespeare had wanted to make Viola assume her man's disguise because she was already in love with Orsino, he did not need Bandello to teach him: he had already tried that situation with Julia and Proteus.'[5]

Cross-dressing enables Viola to fulfill usually male roles, such as acting as a messenger between Orsino and Olivia, as well as being Orsino's confidant. She does not, however, use her disguise to enable her to intervene directly in the plot (unlike other Shakespearean heroines such as Rosalind in *As You Like It* and Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*). Critics argue that Rosalind is empowered by her disguise while Viola is trapped by it. Viola's persistence in transvestism through her betrothal in the final scene of the play often engenders a discussion of the possibly homoerotic relationship between Viola and Orsino. The elaborate gender reversals in the story are of particular interest to modern critics interested in gender studies When Rosalind and Celia flee court in *As You Like It*, Rosa-

lind dresses, for their protection, as a man. However, as a way to further complicate the situation for comedic affect, Shakespeare has Rosalind's male character "Ganymede" dress as a woman to help a male friend, Orlando de Boys, practise wooing Rosalind, with whom he is smitten, while at the same time fending off the affections Phoebe has for "Ganymede." The main reason for Rosalind to disguise herself as a man is to ensure that their escape from the court runs safely without anybody noticing them:

> Rosalind: Were it not better,
> Because that I am more than common tall,
> That I did suit me all points like a man?[6]

Puritan rejection of theatre held a particular revulsion for the cross-dressing of male actors to suit female roles, and the ensuing antics were thought to inspire equally impure behaviour in theatre-goers. The epilogue is given by Rosalind, the play's cross-dresser, and its subject turns out to involve more than the general goal of ending the play in good spirits through crowd-pleasing. It touches on the cross-dressing itself. Phyllis Rackin points out this confusion very beautifully: 'On a stage where female characters are always played by male actors, feminine gender was inevitably a matter of costume, and in plays where the heroines dressed as boys, gender became doubly problematic. The unstable product of role-playing and costume, not only in the theatrical representation but also within the fiction presented on stage.' (1987:29)[7]

We might say that the cross-dressing of these heroines is the main drive that propels the plays, and the main source of chaos and the humour. Bruce R. Smith in his book 'Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England: A Cultural Poetics' puts a question: 'Why should cross-dressing work the marvellous alchemy it does in Shakespeare's comedies and tragicomedies? To that complex question critics have given a variety of partial answers, each of them in its own way true. In political terms, it is tempting to hail Shakespeare as an incipient feminist.'[8]

Shakespeare's use of cross-dressing as a device for the purpose of gender individuation in the empowerment of romance is sufficiently discussed in Greenblatt and others. Greenblatt points out that the enactment of such difference is an instrument to increase audience anxiety, pattern played out in *The Merchant of Venice, As You Like It,* and *Twelfth Night*. Vern and Bonnie Bullough claim that cross-dress has signified both homosexual and heterosexual patterns

at various times in history, but homoerotic content is always present on the literal level. For Lisa Jardine, the ultimate effect of cross-dressing and its resulting androgyny is 'to kindle homosexual love in the male members of the audience.' (Jardine, 1989:19, 17) The homoerotic overtones in the relationship of Orsino and Cesario in *Twelfth Night*, are quite different from the most masculine or rather hermaphroditical authority. We know very little about the life of actual performers but we can argue, both from the texts themselves and from secondary material that this particular dramatic convention gave rise to a number of debates about sexual identity, sexual difference and sexual transgression.

Male homosexual desire in the Renaissance period is seen as the desire of adult men for *boys* and it resulted in the use of such terms for the younger partner as 'Ganymede' 'catamite' and 'ingle' etc. Rosalind's claim that 'boys and women are cattle of the same column' attests to critics' comments. To argue that boys and women are identical to each other, or that the less empowered or cross-dressed male has a female position in homoerotic exchanges is to understand homosexuality as a 'transvestite masquerade,' a replay of heterosexuality *without women*.

Element of homosexuality in Shakespearean literature can not be evaded. The association of the male actress with homosexuality is not something that modern critics originated; it was also discussed by contemporaries, although sometimes in veiled and ambiguous terms. Allowing men to cross-dress even on stage raised the issue of homosexuality, while at the same time episodes of homoerotic and homosexual relations between male actors and characters can not be overlooked. In his plays and poetry Shakespeare often depicted strong male bonds of varying homosociality, for example the question of homoeroticism in *The Merchant of Venice,* where the Antonio/Bassanio/Portia triangle has been read as a struggle between homosexual and heterosexual love. Antonio's unexplained depression—'in sooth I know not why I am so sad'—and utter devotion to Bassanio has led some critics to infer that he is suffering from unrequited love for Bassanio and is depressed because Bassanio is ready for marrying a woman. That's why Bassanio returns Antonio's affections despite his obligation to marry:

Antonio: Commend me to your honourable wife:
Tell her the process of Antonio's end,
Say how I lov'd you, speak me fair in death;

And, when the tale is told, bid her be judge
Whether Bassanio had not once a love.
Bassanio: But life itself, my wife, and all the world
Are not with me esteemed above thy life;
I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all
Here to this devil, to deliver you. (IV, i)[9]

In his essay "Brothers and Others," published in *The Dyer's Hand*, W.H. Auden describes Antonio as "a man whose emotional life, though his conduct may be chaste, is concentrated upon a member of his own sex." Antonio's feelings for Bassanio are likened to a couplet from Shakespeare's sonnets: "But since she pricked thee out for women's pleasure,/ Mine be thy love, and my love's use their treasure." Other interpreters of the play regard Auden's conception of Antonio's sexual desire for Bassanio as questionable. They have countered that these passages could be referring to intense platonic friendship, rather than sexual love. In the preface to his 1961 Pelican edition, Douglas Bush writes,' Since modern readers are unused to such ardour in masculine friendship and are likely to leap at the notion of homosexuality . . . we may remember that such an ideal, often exalted above the love of women, could exist in real life, from Montaigne to Sir Thomas Browne, and was conspicuous in Renaissance literature.'[10]

While concluding all these debatable issues I feel that instances involving the cross-dressing of characters raise questions not only of what Shakespeare implies with the ensuing encounters of other characters with the cross-dresser, but also what the actor's transformation—from male to female, then back to male—would have meant to an audience in a historical and social context. With heroine's cross-dressing, Shakespearean comedies complicate the development with the theatrical disguise and bring forward the comic plots and sexual reversal. At the same time it also brings to the foreground the cultural and social construction of gender identity, illustrating the fashioning of one's identity through clothing. While most critics are of the opinion that differences between the sexes were a matter of costume and behaviour rather than essence they also acknowledge the presence of homoeroticism within the comedies, especially in scenes of cross-dressing, and feel that these moments of subversion are contained by or within the concluding 'heterosexual marriages.' According to them these moments are temporary, dangerous, or comic and inevitably subsumed to heterosexual closure.

It is important to stress that what I say is not the only right answer, but merely one possible response. I hope to show that the nature of literary theory is such that it always allows for new influences and permutations and it permitted you and me to continue to say new things about an author as much discussed as Shakespeare.

NOTES

1. Lisa Hopkins, *Beginning Shakespeare* (Manchester University Press, Oxford, U.K.), p. 1.
2. Transvestites are a group of cross-dressing, male-bodied, male-identified and gynophilic persons. They will oscillate between two gender identities. While Hermaphrodites are intersexual or intersex persons, who are born with secondary sex characteristics. Transsexuals are those who have changed their biological sex. Transgenderists choose either to become a man or a woman, related to the question of identity. The term homosexuality was coined in 1869 by the Swiss doctor Karoly Maria Benkert, but it was not until about a century late that the term gained common popular usage
3. Barbara Hodgdon, *A Companion to Shakespeare and Performance* (Blackwell, U.S.A., 2005), p. 46.
4. Kenneth Muir, ed., *Shakespeare: The Comedies, A Collection of Critical Essays, Twentieth Century Views* (Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1965), pp. 2-3.
5. Harold Jenkins, *Shakespeare's Twelfth Night* (Twentieth Century Views, 1965), p. 73.
6. William Shakespeare, *As You Like It* (Green, 1959, reprint).
7. Phyllis Rackin, *Shakespeare and Women*, www.google.com.
8. Bruce R. Smith, *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England: A Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Comedy* (1956), p. 153.
9. William Shakespeare, *Shakespeare's Comedy of The Merchant of Venice*, ed. with notes by William J. Rolfe (English Classics) (New York, Harper, 1898, Rare Books).
10. J. Douglas Bruce, *Sexual Disguise and the Theatre of Gender* (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Pelican, 1961

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Domination of Patriarchal Authority in Mahesh Dattani's *Where There is a Will*

RAM SHARMA

Mahesh Dattani's first play *Where There Is a Will* is embedded within the mechanics of the middle class Gujarati family. Dattani has often referred to the subversion of patriarchy in the play as one of the major concerns. He has in a sense chronicled the follies and prejudices of Indian society as reflected within the microcosm of the family unit, the most tangible and dynamic reality in middle class Indian lives. Dattani calls the play an "exorcism of the patriarchal code" (449).

Sita Raina, a well known theatre director writes in the note of the play, "In *Where There's a Will*, he has control over his family through his money and forgoes an opportunity to improve his interpersonal relationships. As do most of us. Consequently, when he became the watcher of his actions, he perceives that his desire for control has led him to be the victim of his machinations."[1] Dattani explores the dichotomy between the male/ female roles within the archetype of the family headed by a man and what happens when a woman takes over.

Where There Is a Will works with clever dialogues, replete with direct-to-audience addressed by the dominating patriarchal presence (both dead and alive) of Hasmukh Mehta. The archetypal picture of an overbearing father and domineering husband, unpleasant and even nasty, Hasmukh is unequivocally unhappy with everyone around him—with no one having lived up to his expectations, the way he had fulfilled his father's. He makes a list of categories: "Why does a man marry? So that he can have a woman all to himself? No. There's more to it than that. No. What? May be he needs a faithful companion? No. If that was it, all men would keep dogs. No, No, I think the important reason anyone should marry at all is to get a son. Why is it so important to get a son? Because the son will carry on the family name?" (474-75)

The list holds good, and, yet, he says that his son has made his life worthless. Meanwhile, Ajit fiercely resists Hasmukh and will kowtow to his father's wishes, wanting to be his own man.

Hasmukh (to the audience) Well I tried, didn't I? (To Ajit) I do not think that educating you is a waste of breath. It is my duty to see that you are capable of fending for yourself when I'm not here.

Ajit: Why? Where are you going?

Hasmukh. Should God permit me, I intend to stay right here. But everyone has to go sooner or later. I will retire one day, either from the company or from this world. What will become of you then? I have to season you now. You need seasoning.

Ajit: Seasoning! What do you mean, seasoning? I'm not a block of wood! (460)

Dattani brings in reference to three successive generations of the male line, and indicates the compulsions under which Hasmukh behaves in the way that he does, on him lies the onus of perpetuating patriarchy and its stereotypes "You are raw! Under all the pressures in the office, you will bend. You will break. That's why I'm toughening you. Somebody tough has to run the show." (460)

Each character in the play provides an appropriate foil to his/her counterpart. If Hasmukh is a dictatorial-type husband, his wife Sonal is a submissive housewife dedicated to the choices of her husband. Business world is also dominated by Hasmukh. Sonal occupies the spaces in kitchen and pooja room. Hasmukh Mehta exercises hegemonic power over the rest of the family members to perpetuate his conception of self which he has in turn received from his father. He doesn't allow Ajit to speak to government officials. He challenges the identity of Ajit. "Hasmukh Mehta, has every right. It's my phone you are using in my house, and it's my business secrets you are leaking to government officers, and my typist your friend is flirting with." (458) Ajit remains a subaltern who can't speak before his father.

Ajit: I mean that you want to run the show, play Big Boss as long as you can. Or as long as God permits. And when all of a sudden, you are 'called to a better world,' you will still want to play Big Boss. And you can do it through me. In short, you want to be you.

Hasmukh: I should have prayed a daughter. Yes, I want you to be me! What's wrong with being me?

Ajit: And what becomes of me? The real me. I mean, if I am you, then where am I?

Hasmukh: Nowhere! That is just my point! If you are you, then you are nowhere. You are nothing, just a big zero. No matter what you do, you'll remain a zero. Over the years you'll just keep adding zeroes to your zero. Zero, zero, zero. On their own, the zeroes don't mean a thing. But if there's a number one standing before all those zeroes, then really add up to a lot. (461)

Hasmukh accuses his wife for wasting money in preparing rich dishes. He acknowledges Sonal's company as the greatest tragedy of his life but she is everytime careful for his tablets, high blood pressure and heart attacks. He condemns his wife for her inability to realize the intricacies of business and even her failure to provide him a good and healthy married life. Hasmukh takes it as his right to display his dreams in which there is no space for the desires for others. Hasmukh's statement about his wife strikes a note of sarcasm and sexual colonialism. For him a faithful wife is as good as a faithful dog. "Then I should be a very happy man. I've got a loving wife who has been faithful to me like any dog would be" (473) He continues

(to the audience): It's so easy for her to forget that we were a middle class family once. She keeps cooking food like it's a new invention. Rich food, wasting so much ghee and oil. Of course, she can afford it. She has been affording it for years. She has me, doesn't she? But don't think she slogs over the stove every day. We have a cook—a maharaj we call him. He has gone back to his town for a few days. The rich food he eats here gave him indigestion, I think. (465)

Hasmukh's consciousness of his authority, his contempt for the simplicity of his son, his mockery of the submissiveness of his wife prepares a very ridiculous image of patriarchal authority. For him Ajit is his investment and he seeks the return of his investment.

Why am I unhappy? Because I don't have a son. Who is Ajit? Isn't he my son? No. He's just a boy who spends my money and lives in my house. He doesn't behave like my son. A son should make me happy. Like I made my father—happy. I listened to him. I did what he told me to do. I worked for him. I worked hard for him. I made him—happy. That is what I wanted my son to make me (Gets a little worked up). But he failed! Miserably! He has not a single quality I took for in a son! He has made my entire life worthless! He is going to destroy me! It won't be long before everything I worked for and achieved will be

> destroyed! Finished because of him! Well, I won't let it happen! I won't let it happen! I won't let it—(475)

Hasmukh has no love for his wife and his daughter-in-law whom he describes as "Pretty, charming, graceful and sly as a snake" and sums her up as a girl who "has an eye on my money." And all this goes towards explaining why towards the end of the first scene, he dies in bed where his wife discovers his dead body a few minutes later.

However the ghost of Hasmukh lingers on in the house, wandering through its walls (and occasionally sitting cross-legged on the dining table) keeping on passing acerbic comments on the actions and attitudes of the other living characters, though unheard and invisible to them. It is Hasmukh Mehta who dominates both in the course of his life and after. As Ajit confesses after his father's death, "Ever since I was a little boy, you have been running my life .Do this, do that or don't do that, do this. Was I scared of you!" (465)

Hasmukh Mehta's parental authority was a tension not only for Sonal and Preeti, but also for Kiran. She confesses that she managed her relationship with an old and erratic man like Hasmukh, only for money. Sonal discards the authority of Hasmukh with this comment: "He was like a village buffalo. What did he understand about other people's feelings." (465) Dattani manipulates the events in the play to tear the veil of illusion of parental authority. 'Will' was designed to control the fate of all those who depend on him. He also had a mistress named Kiran Jhaveri about whom he has high opinion and had made her the trustee of his property

> Kiran, I think I must clear some misunderstandings you may have about my authority. I am only the trustee of all his wealth. Not the owner. I get a fixed salary for my job. Everything rightfully belongs to the three of you. Provided you follow his instructions. Ajit will have to attend the office as usual. He will get a detailed brief on his duties tomorrow. Mrs. Mehta, you shall get the regular allowance to run the house, and a little more for your personal expenses. And Preeti, you too will get an allowance—when you become a mother. When your child is twenty one, the trust automatically dissolves. Its holdings will be transferred to Ajit for him and his heirs to enjoy. (493)

Will assumes the dimension of a living character that controls and guides the action of each member of the family. Even Kiran is subordinate to the will of Mehta. She is only an agent having no choice of her own. She says, "My main duty is to run the Mehta Groups of

Industries on behalf of Ajit Mehta. I have the authority to make all the major decisions in the interest of companies." (493)

Kiran reveals that Hasmukh's own identity was subordinated to her care and protest: "He depended on me for everything. He thought he was the decision maker. But I was. He wanted me to run his life. Like his father had. (Pause) Hasmukh didn't really want a mistress. He wanted a father. He saw in me a woman who would father him. (Laughs. Hasmukh cringes at her daughter.) Men really grow up!" (510)

Kiran also satirises the patriarchal authority of his father and brothers: "Isn't it strange how repetitive life is? My brothers. They have turned out to be like their father, going home with bottles of rum wrapped up in newspapers. Beating up their wives. And I—I too am like my mother. I married a drunkard and I listened to his swearing. And I too have learnt to suffer silently. Oh! Where will all this end? Will the scars our parents lay on us remain forever?" (508)

Kiran appreciates Ajit who is at least free from the whims of his father to control the lives of others: "He may not be the greatest rebel on earth, but at least he is free of his father's beliefs. He resists. In a small way, but at least it's a start. That is enough to prove that Ajit has won and Hasmukh has lost." (510) In the end I can say that Mahesh Dattani has portrayed and ridiculed the domination of patriarchal authority in this play *Where There Is a Will.*

NOTE

1. Sita Raina, 'A Note on the Play,' Mahesh Dattani, *Collected Plays* (New Delhi, Penguin, 2000), p. 449.

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The Elements of Alienation and Death in *Tara*: A Psychoanalytic Study

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Mahesh Dattani shot into literary limelight by receiving the esteemed Sahitya Akademi award for his *Final Solutions and Other Plays* in 1998. All his plays including *Tara*, *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai*, *Where There's Will*, *Dance like a Man*, *Bravely Fought the Queen* and *Final Solutions*, seem to be a slice of life. Dattani himself said, "The love of my life is drama."[1] Like G.B. Shaw, Mahesh Dattani has turned theatre into a real reading room where he teaches and talks of the crisis in everyday life. In Ibsenian fashion Dattani deals with the problem of the individual in relation to his social environment and shows men and women struggling against the conventions of an unhealthy society. Shaw also finds that human personality and its native impulses are often repressed or distorted by the unhealthy laws and institutions of society. Similarly, Dattani realises that emotion rather than thought is said to be the staple of the theatre. Shaw is often accused of sacrificing emotion to intellect and the evolution or the movement of his plays is said to be purely intellectual. "Within the periphery of theatre, he dramatises human will, desires and determinations that mould and modify the dynamics of human relationship inside and outside the family."[2]

Tara is a wonderful realistic play which can be analysed from various angles and approaches. The dramatist raises a fundamental question regarding gender equity where we find ourselves unable to play any crucial and commendable role. It can be ably understood in the affair of 33 percent reservation for women for Assembly and Parliament Constituencies. The women have become elected heads and representatives of different bodies but behind the curtain their male kith and kin rule. Male chauvinism is prevalent in the present social set up and is a global phenomenon. All the hue and cry for gender parity is *ipso facto* baseless. Dattani like an existentialist thinker offers a relevant and remarkable task to the readers and re-

viewers to express their mind on *Tara* which deals with the helpless and hopeless condition of women.

The psychoanalytic approach of Lacan has provided readers a new theory on the subject. The Lacanian criticism has developed a 'materialist' analysis of the 'speaking subject which has acquired greater acceptability. Freud significantly locates the fact that during the earliest stages of childhood, the libidinal drives have no certain sexual object but moves around the erotogenic zones of the body. Prior to the identification of gender there is only the command of the 'Pleasure principle.' The 'reality principle' becomes gradually noticeable when the father warns the child's oedipal desire for the mother with the punishment of 'castration.' It is however believed by Freud that the repression of desire makes it possible for the male child to identify with the place of father and with a 'masculine' role. It is vehemently criticised by feminist critics. "In academic institutions 'theory' is often male even macho. The manly virtues of rigour, thrusting purpose, and rampant ambition find their home in theory."[3] The feministic criticism does not suggest certainty of theory and intends to cultivate a female discourse. Now feminists are fascinated towards the Lacanian and Derridean forms of structuralist theory as they actually refuse to assert a 'masculine' authority of truth. The psychoanalytic approaches have been helpful in examining the subversive and formless resistance of women writers and critics to male dominated literary values. Kate Millett in *Sexual Politics* (1970) explores the term 'Patriarchy' and finds it the cause of women's oppression. "Sex is determined biologically, but gender is a psychological concept which refers to culturally acquired sexual identity."[4]

In the Lacanian matrix of thought, the unconscious becomes apparent only with the individual's access to language. Tara, the central character, who from her origin suffers from the concept of 'lack.' The individual lacks something at birth itself; we come into the world in a fragmentary condition. The condition is determined by certain principle of norm which is biased. Like Millet, Cora Kaplan is of the view that 'ideology is the universal penile club which men of all classes use to beat women with.' It is almost certain that the shaping conventions of adventure and romantic phenomena have a 'male' instinct, impetus and destination. The male writer considers his readers as if they are always men. To Julia Kristeva "the possibility of a revolution or social change is tied up with the disruption

of the authoritarian symbolic discourses. This model is more of a representation of the Lacanian unconscious and the conscious."[5] In the preface of his collected plays, Dattani says; "I write for my plays to be performed, and appreciated by a wide section of the society that my plays speak to and are about: I also know that I have a lot to say and am probably not saying it well enough ."[6]

Critically speaking, Mahesh Dattani through *Tara* makes an honest effort to dive deep into the human psyche and sense of preference. The age-old socio-psycho acclimatisation of the mind and heart which has in fact become a colony of the social practices compel to go for male choice. It is irony of the situation that it is not accomplished only by male rather equally by female. In one of the interviews, Mahesh Dattani makes it clear and suggests: "I see *Tara* as a play about the male self and female self. The male self is being preferred in all cultures. The play is about the separation of self and the resultant angst."[7]

Mahesh Dattani's *Tara* is not simply an exposition of dramatic contour and finesse but a critique of the complexity of human relationship in a society where life becomes chaotic and neurotic. It is primarily a dramatisation of the plight of life of a girl and a boy who are joined together at hip and have to be separated medically, an operation which may cause the death of the one of the two. The playwright considers the psyche of other characters as well, constituting a brilliant thread of the complexity of the relationship. Here, we encounter the different shades and sets of the relationship of Mr. and Mrs. Patel, mother and daughter relationship through Tara and Bharati and brother and sister relationship represented by Tara and her brother Chandan. The bond of mother and daughter gets special focus. As a woman Bharati gets her inner self fractured, hence she finds inability to express herself free from all the taboos. She plans to donate her kidney to Tara who has lost her one leg which becomes a cause of Bharati's nervous breakdown. She bursts forth, "Yes I plan for her happiness. I mean to give her all love and affection which I can give. It's what she deserves, love can make up for lot." (349) The play provides a painful position of the woman and it too pinpoints the guilt complex of Chandan who turns into Dan. He cannot be accountable for Tara's demise but he bears the agony of his mother and grandfather. Out of self-imposed torture and trauma he escapes to London as Dan. Tara has an exhilarating urge to be a

complete and self-fulfilled person even more than Chandan who is relatively complacent.

Patel and Bharati are well qualified parents and their approach towards children is not admirable. No doubt, Bharati's father plays a mischievous role and it must be kept in mind that parents are somehow or the other responsible for their children's suffering. In course of time, Bharati realises her fault and expresses her concern for her daughter and she also asserts her moral superiority over her husband. On the other hand, Patel eludes the responsibility and devises a scheme for Chandan's future career. Patel is an emblem of male chauvinism who most of the time seems to be free from familial liability and finds others as culprits. In given circumstances women are more capable of tackling the problem. Because of hypersensitivity, Chandan is unable to forgive his parents. Each character of the play suffers from alienation and no one soothes the other at the time of dire need. In the concluding section of the play, we see a different mood of Patel who wants to console his depressed and guilt-stricken wife. "May be I'm expecting the worst. It may never happen so. Things are getting out of hand. I must worry about her. Yes, I am worried about my life." When Bharati asks why he forbids her to give one of the kidneys for transplantation to Tara, he says, "Because I don't want you to have the satisfaction of doing it." This is, indeed, a problem of ego. Even in everyday affair of life, each desires to dominate not only externally rather internally too. This is the case of Patel who desires to be called good without having goodness Michel Foucault, a French philosopher-critic, says that power is immanent in all social relations of power, whether in a family or in the layers of government and other social institutions . Nietzsche too believes that knowledge is an expression of the 'Will to power.' The behavioural pattern of Patel, Bharati and even of Bharati's father approves the approach of Foucault that power has the character of a network and that its threads extend everywhere. Hence it refutes the Marxist viewpoint which holds that there is conflict between the ruling class and the subordinate classes. In fact power is gained through struggle and in the context of this text power lies in social institution where man has edge over the woman. The language that Patel speaks for the sake of defence and domination reflects his masochistic mind-set. Simon de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* (1949) argues that legislators, priests, philosophers, writers and scientists have striven to show that the subordinate posi-

tion of women is willed in heaven and advantageous on earth. Dattani talks about the patriarchal mind-set where money spent on girls is considered to be a meaningless expenditure. The social practices and rituals which go against women are so strong and rigid that these cannot be challenged. According to Marx, 'It is not the consciousness of men that determines their living being but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.' (Selden 23)

In this utilitarian technology-based civilisation, man has been reduced to hands where every kind of human value is at peril and frustration and depression have encircled and compelled them to lead an alienated and fragmented life. The power of money has replaced the power of God. All the human bonds are breaking and collapsing for the sake of money. The purpose of every profession is being defeated. The best service is the self-service. Killing and deceiving others has become the short cut route to attain the destination. Truth, morality, commitment and conviction are good words but these are not meant to be translated into practice. Dr. Thakkar, a medical practitioner, at the persuasion of Bharati's father becomes merciless and money-oriented and makes Tara handicapped. She suffers from loneliness and develops a detesting attitude towards Patel and Chandan. She has strong grudge against her father who creates a hurdle in her access to mother. Chandan, on realising the malicious intentions of his parents and grandfather, becomes psychologically alone and depressed.

In the last section of the play both Chandan and Tara come close to each other. Tara bears excruciating pain as "she is condemned to live," like her brother. At last, Tara dies and her death has an unsettling effect on Chandan who finally decides not to come back to India. He does not come to India even when his mother Bharati dies. Prior to the death of Tara, a heart-rending incident takes place when Bharati's father shows his partial attitude of transferring the right of property to Chandan after his death and gives not even a petty amount to Tara. The tragedy of Indian social structure is that the senior male member cannot be advised by others. The entire episode occurs before the eyes of Patel who doesn't speak against the atrocities and cruelties; rather he becomes a party of it. "Modernist writings are particularly distanced from the reality to which they allude and this distance gives their work the power of criticising reality."[8] The critic rightly asserts that 'the modernist

texts' reflect the alienated inner lives of individuals. Marxists believe that individuals are 'bearers of positions in the social system and not free agents.'

In critical ambit *Tara* is neither a saga of Chandan's alienation nor Tara's death albeit it is a tragic tale of the patriarchal society which is bruised by gender preference. Like Shakespearean tragedies, we find a transformation of the soul when Dan seeks pardon from Tara, "Forgive me Tara. Forgive me for making it my tragedy." He further suggests: "I no longer desire that freedom. I move, just move without meaning. I forget Tara. I forget that I had a sister with whom I had shared a body." (379) This drama is a kind of discourse where the dramatist through Tara talks about social antipathy from which women badly suffer. *Tara* is a case study of our male-dominated society. Tara's case is uncommon in several respects which offers a tragic grandeur to her character like Thomas Hardy's Michael Henchard. The interpretation of the text may vary from reader to reader because *Tara* is a social event on which everyone has his/her own say and suggestion. Jonathan Culler says: "Variations in interpretation are not an obstacle, they are rather the fact with which one starts. What one is attempting to explain is the fact that for any work there is a range of interpretations which can be defended within the conventions of readings."[9]

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Doris Lessing's "To Room Nineteen": A Lawrentian Interpretation

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Doris Lessing, the winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, 2007, is generally recognised as the genuine heir to D.H. Lawrence as she perceives the operations of sex, power and society by way of a mystical vision. She is a writer who has surveyed and judged mankind in the latter half of the 20th century like no other writer. Using detailed, realistic descriptions, symbolism, and imagery to evoke a wide range of environments and moods, Lessing achieves what Edward J. Fitzgerald termed "tension and immediacy" in her work. As Lawrence's work traces the chronological development of his characters' growing awareness of themselves and their relation to their world, Lessing also explores the antithetical forces that can impede an individual's quest for self-knowledge.

D.H. Lawrence centred many of his novels and short stories on the difficulties inherent in what he called in his Foreword to *Women in Love* "the passionate struggle into conscious being." Lawrence believed that we gain knowledge of ourselves through two contradictory processes: our minds (what he called "mental consciousness") as well as our physical selves (our "blood consciousness"). He explains in his December 8, 1915, letter to Bertrand Russell that the blood-consciousness "exists in us independently of the ordinary mental consciousness." Lawrence writes: "And the tragedy of this our life, and of your life, is that the mental and nerve consciousness exerts a tyranny over the blood-consciousness, and is engaged in the destruction of your blood-being or blood-consciousness, the final liberating of the one, which is only death in result."

Doris Lessing joined the discussion generated by Lawrence's narratives of female and male self-discovery, which include his concentration on these antithetical impulses, but adapted them to her own historical moment. Lawrence's focus in the early decades of the twentieth century was a focus on the quest for an authentic self through the process of sexual awakening, reflecting the age's rejection of Victorian notions of propriety. Fiona R. Barnes, in her article

on Lessing for the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, notes that Lessing's works become "historical records that tackle the central political, spiritual and psychological questions of the last half of the twentieth century."

One such work is her celebrated short story "To Room Nineteen." As Lawrence had done several decades earlier, Lessing centres on her character's internal quest for an authentic self grounded in the historical moment of the story, here in the early 1960s, when women were struggling to find an identity outside of the domestic sphere. In this story, Susan Rawlings experiences a battle of wills between her mental consciousness, which insists that she accept her traditional role as wife and mother, and her blood consciousness, which sparks her quest for absolute freedom.

During the first-wave feminist movement in America and Great Britain, which occurred from the late nineteenth century to early twentieth century, women made great strides in their push for equality in the areas of voting rights and birth control. During World War II, the American and British government encouraged women to join the workforce, where they added to the accomplishments of the early women's rights activists by succeeding in positions outside the home. When the war ended, however, women were forced to give up their jobs, along with their newly developed sense of independence, and to retreat into the traditional roles of wife and mother. Post-war America and Britain returned to a renewed sense of domesticity and social conformity. The second wave feminist movement did not begin to make significant gains in the fight for equality until the mid-1960s, when in America, the Civil Rights Act was passed, prohibiting sexual and racial employment discrimination.

For the first ten years of her marriage, Susan has allowed, in Lawrence's terms, her mental consciousness to exert "a tyranny over the blood-consciousness" by dictating her life choices. Yet, as the last of her children start school, Susan's "blood consciousness" begins to emerge, threatening the fabric of her family, as well as her sanity.

Susan and Matthew have handled their relationship "sensibly," marrying late in their twenties, moving to the suburbs, and adopting conventional roles. Their "foresight and their sense" prompted them to decide that Susan would give up her job with an advertising firm and take care of the house and the children while Matthew would support them, both determining that "children needed their mother

to a certain age." In the early days of their marriage, they, along with their friends, were certain that they had chosen "everything right, appropriate, and what everyone would wish for, if they could choose." Their "intelligence" kept them from wanting more and ensured that they would appreciate what they had.

Yet at the beginning of the story, this "balanced and sensible" couple begins to experience a sense of flatness, which becomes most pronounced for Susan. Initially, she responds by throwing all of her energy into the care of her children and the upkeep of the house. She struggles, though, to find a point for her hard work, a raison d'être, for she could not say "for the sake of this is all the rest." The closest she comes to finding a reason for her sacrifice is in their love for each other. Yet, she feels a growing sense that this is not enough, not "important enough, to support it all," especially when she discovers that Matthew is having sexual relationships with other women.

Susan finds that she has little to say to Matthew when he comes home, other than the details of the day-to-day life of the household. She has become dependent on him to connect her to the outside world of which she had once been an active part. As she struggles to keep in check her hidden resentment, she does not, according to her "intelligent" sensibility, "make the mistake of taking a job for the sake of her independence." Her mental consciousness asserts its influence as "the inner storms and quick sands were understood and charted. So everything was all right. Everything was in order. Yes, things were under control." As the narrator notes, however, in the first line, "this is a story . . . about a failure in intelligence," the intelligence on which the Rawlings' marriage is based. Susan reaches a point where she can no longer suppress her passionate desire for freedom. When her youngest children begin school, she embarks on an intense process of self-examination. As a result, she acknowledges that in order to survive, she must break the hold that her intelligence has had over her and follow the instincts of her blood consciousness, which impel her to establish self-autonomy—physically and emotionally.

Yet Susan's struggle to break the tyranny of her mental consciousness, which compels her to resist the urge to abandon her family, pushes her to the verge of madness. As she recognizes that even the embrace of her beautiful twins becomes a "human cage of loving limbs," she begins to visualize a void, at first "something was

waiting for her" at home, then "an enemy," then a "demon," then a "devil," that appears to her in her garden. She gains solace only in an empty hotel room, the Room Nineteen of the title. When Matthew spies on her daily sojourns there, he shatters the sense of freedom she gains and unwittingly forces her to attempt what she determines to be her only outlet—suicide. After turning on the gas in the hotel room, Susan drifts "off into the dark river" that "seemed to caress her inwardly, like the movement of her blood" echoing Lawrence's assertion that blood-consciousness "is one half of life, belonging to the darkness." The story presents an ironic reversal, however, of Lawrence's insistence that death will result when mental consciousness takes over. Lessing suggests the reverse—that Susan's consuming desire to be free, to allow her blood consciousness to take control, leads her to suicide, the only option she sees. Susan's tragedy results from her inability to allow her "unreasonable" emotions and desires to surface earlier and more gradually. The battle that inevitably ensues between her intellect and her emotions drives her mad. Yet her madness becomes her path to freedom, as she slips "into the dark fructifying dream."

"Lessing's oeuvre takes over where Lawrence's left off, in a counterblast that tells another (but not an incompatible) side of Lawrence's story." Trying to see Lawrence through Lessing's eyes is clarifying. Like Lawrence, Lessing is concerned to see what people really need, beyond ideology. And she, just as much as Lawrence, believes that marital problems materialize in spite of the comity of the partners, in their souls or in their bodies. This belief is why both speak for sexual imperatives. In "Things," a send-up of Boston Brahmins who move to Italy and try to be Buddhists only to end up as antique collectors, he provides the template for the marriage in "To Room Nineteen." Here in Lawrence's story is the marriage that finds itself flat and empty: "To be 'free,'" Lawrence writes, "you must, alas, be attached to something . . . or else a certain boredom supervenes, there is a certain waving of loose ends upon the air."

Janina Nordius writes that in "To Room Nineteen," Lessing offers a "woman's perspective on the alienation fostered by modern society and its celebration of 'intelligence.'" As Lessing explores the mid-twentieth century restrictions placed on women's freedom and search for an authentic self, she also engages in a dialogue with D. H. Lawrence and his views on the interplay of contradictory hu-

man impulses. "To Room Nineteen" reflects this dialogue as it details the tragic result of the tyranny of the intellect.

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Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*: An Evaluation

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The pangs of agony rule the world. One is reminded of Coleridge's 'The Rime of Ancient Mariner':

> There passed a weary time. Each throat
> Was parched, and glazed each eye.
> A weary time! A weary time!
> How glazed each weary eye. (10)

On the surface level, the world appears to be having the glittering sparkle of light, colours, fun, mirth and wild ecstasy. To the inexperienced, it is full of 'Dance, Provencal Song and sunburnt mirth.' But, a closer scrutiny of the world affairs presents a diametrically opposite picture of the universe, which has 'nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure.' Lord Buddha also envisioned an image of the world full of grief and anxiety. Explaining Lord Buddha's first noble truth, C.D. Sharma writes: "There is suffering (dukha). Life is full of misery and pain. Even the so-called pleasures are really fraught with pain. There is always fear lest we may lose the so-called pleasures and their loss involves pain. Indulgence also results in pain. That there is suffering in this world is a fact of common experience. Poverty, disease, old age, death, selfishness, meanness, greed, anger, hatred, quarrels, bickerings, conflicts, exploitation are rampant in this world. That life is full of suffering none can deny" (71).

It is in this spirit that I propose to analyze Kiran Desai's Man Booker award winning novel, *The Inheritance of Loss*, about which Pankaj Mishra comments thus, "Although it focuses on the fate of a few powerless individuals, Kiran Desai's extraordinary new novel manages to explore, with intimacy and insight, just about every contemporary international issue: globalization, multiculturalism, economic inequality, fundamentalism and terrorist violence. Despite being set in the mid-1980s, it seems the best kind of post-9/11 novel." It is a novel, which discusses several tangling international

social and cultural issues, giving rise to a seething feeling of despair in the hearts of the readers. In this paper, I attempt to analyze some of these problems, which have a direct effect on the psyche of Desai's characters.

The first bewildering problem raised by Desai is that of the immigrant and diasporic sensibility. The disturbed mental condition of the displaced immigrants has caught the imagination of several Postcolonial novelists and Desai is no exception. Stephen Gill, India-born Canadian poet and novelist, has remarked thus about the diasporic sensibility: "Diaspora essentially is a bitter experience of dislocation that leads to alienation, a sense of loss and nostalgic desires. It refers to that particular class of immigrants who are unable to go back. . . . Usually, Diasporans are not happy anywhere, and suffer silently." (54)

This sense of alienation among the immigrants caught the attention of Desai and she created the diasporic characters like Biju and Saeed, who, to borrow an expression of Stephen Gill, have the psychologically disturbing elements of "alienation, loss . . . memories of the past and dream to return to the land of birth" (Agarwal 36). These characters experience displacement and nostalgia in the alien land. In a way, the memory of the imaginary homelands always haunts the diaspora. Pramod K. Nayar has explained this theme of diasporic sensibility in the following manner:

> Exile and displacement narratives frequently combine a sense of disquiet with their nostalgia and longing. Atwood recreates the world of Susanna Moodi, who migrated from Scotland to Canada in the 1830s, as a world in which the migrant is homeless and foreign. Such a migrant does not see the 'new world' as a land of opportunity. . . . Here Moodie finds herself 'foreign,' while others see the new world as a site of freedom. The sense of homelessness is accentuated by the recognition that one has not found a new home in the adopted country. Much of diasporic writing explores the theme of an original home. This original home as now lost—due to their exile—is constantly worked into the imagination and myth of the displaced individual/community. Nostalgia is therefore a key theme in diasporic writing (191).

Similarly Salman Rushdie, too, in his celebrated critical book *Imaginary Homelands*, emphasizes the importance of nostalgia for an author. In the introductory essay of the book, Rushdie has mentioned the dilemma of the authors in settling in alien countries. A feeling of guilt engulfs most of the immigrant authors, as they had

left their homelands and the orthodox ideologies. They "straddle two cultures." However, this distance from the homeland is the source of tremendous fertility in an author. This longing for the homelands in alien lands is the genesis of artistic creativity.

Just like Rushdie, Desai presents the several psychological shades of Biju, the son of the Judge's cook, who is "hopscothing from one gritty New York restaurant to another on an elusive search for a green card" (back cover of *The Inheritance of Loss*). The predicament of the boy experiencing nostalgia and cultural dislocation in the Western society is well described in these words: "The spirit of these men he worked with amazed Biju, terrified him, overjoyed him, then terrified him again" (15). After the day's work, his fellow workers visited the Dominican women in Washington Heights. But his distaste for these black women is evident, when he eloquently cries out, "How can you? Those, those women are dirty." He calls them "stinking bitches, sounding awkward" (16). His disgust for them is complete, when he utters: "Fucking bitches, fucking cheap women, you'll get some disease; . . . smell bad . . . hubshi. . . all black and ugly . . . they make me sick." (16)

While Biju finds it abnormal due to his orthodox Indian ethos (extra-marital sex being a taboo in India), his colleague Ronny is quite candid and frank in his confession, "I could do it with a dog." The episode clearly indicates the cultural contrast—a contrast between the hesitant East and the over-indulgent West. This mocking of one's ideals and beliefs makes one a prey to feverish anxiety and deadening discomforts. Biju's problems are multiplied by his illegal immigrant status in the States.

It is not only Biju, who experiences the racial prejudice; Jemubhai is also the victim of this hydra-headed animosity of the West towards the East. Mark the predicament of the Judge in the following expression:

> Thus Jemubhai's mind had begun to warp; he grew stranger to himself than he was to those around him, found his skin odd-coloured, his own accent peculiar. He forgot how to laugh, could barely manage to lift his lips in a smile, and if he ever did, he held his hand over his mouth, because he could barely let anyone see his gums, his teeth. They seemed too private. . . . He began to wash obsessively, concerned he would be accused of smelling, and each morning he scrubbed off the thick milky scent of sleep, the barnyard smell that wreathed him when he woke and impregnated the fabric of his pajamas. To the end of his life, he would never be seen without socks and shoes and would prefer

shadow to light, faded days to sunny, for he was suspicious that sunlight might reveal him, in his hideousness, all too clearly. (40)

At the very outset of this paper, I had mentioned that the novel traces the element of tragic agony in the universe. Another cause of despair in the novel is the non-fulfillment of the demands of the Gorkha Liberation movement. One of the agitators cries out the woes of the Gorkhas thus:

> At that time, in April of 1947, the Communist Party of India demanded a Gorkhastan, but the request was ignored. . . . We are labourers on the tea plantations, coolies dragging heavy loads, soldiers. And are we allowed to become doctors and government workers, owners of the tea plantations? No! We are kept at the level of servants. We fought on behalf of the British for two hundred years. We fought in World War One. We went to East Africa, to Egypt, to the Persian Gulf. We were moved from here to there as it suited them. . . . We are soldiers, loyal, brave. India or England, they never had cause to doubt our loyalty. In the wars with Pakistan we fought our former comrades on the other side of the border. How our spirit cried. But we are Gorkhas. We are soldiers. Our character has never been in doubt. And have we been rewarded?? Have we been given compensation?? Are we given respect? (158)

Similarly, the love between Gyan and Sai is also not without the ill-effects of the time. Chaotic surrounding situations have robbed the true lovers of the emotional bond and the love between the two is dwindling. Mark the conversation between the two lovers:

> "Well, if you're so clever," she said, "how come you can't even find a proper job? Fail, fail, fail. Every single interview."
> "Because of people like you!"
> "Oh, because of me . . . and you're telling me that I am stupid? Who is stupid? Go put it before a judge and we'll see who says is the stupid one." (164)

Thus the novel traces the history of despair and agony in human lives; in a way all the characters of the novel have inherited a sense of loss.

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Soaked In Indian Sensibility: A Reading of Anita Nair's *Mistress*

BINOD MISHRA

Anita Nair's third successful novel, *Mistress* (2005) revolves around three characters who look at life through their own angles. Love is the guiding spirit of the entire novel. The various forms of love emanate in the fashion of the nine rasas which are the nine forms of expression. All these forms have their significance in art as well as in human life. Kathakali, an ancient dance form of Indian culture, forms the background of the novel. Life and art play hide and seek running parallel in the lives of characters longing for the pulsations of art in their real lives and thus invite calamities of all sorts. The novelist, in an interview on the reason behind choosing Kathakali as the background of *Mistress*, says:

> Two things inspired it: My great love for Kathakali, a complex dance form and how, in many ways, it is a performing art that celebrates the grey area of life. Nothing is ever black and white in Kathakali. That even the most vile man could have a tender, sensitive streak and even the most heroic being could have a callous side is easily accepted in Kathakali. . . . Also within the peripheries of the dance structure, it allows great scope for interpretation. Secondly, I wanted to explore the premise of artistic success and juxtapose it against life's success. The most awesome point, I discovered was, be it life or art, the pitfalls are the same, the triumphs and sorrows alike . . . all of it appears in "Mistress" set against a backdrop of Kerala which is my familiar landscape, be it literary or figurative.[1]

A close reading of the novel reveals how all the major characters of the novel want to live life on their own terms which are against the dictates of their culture. They are born and bred in the utopian life styles and soon get a distaste of reality where society's querulous eyes and investigating mind start doubting their moves.

The novel begins with Sringaram, the first rasa that depicts love. The novelist has chosen Radha and Shyam as the hero and heroine of the novel much in the fashion of love episodes of Indian mythology. Radha and Shyam are made for each other. The readers witness

the arrival of a strange cloud in the shape of Chris. This cloud looms large over the clear sky of Indian couple and seems to darken their lives too. Shyam, the husband has an inkling of this alien cloud that showers too but is assured that such clouds are often elusive and not reliable. Such clouds do not rain. We cannot deny the fact that this alien showering might help in sowing the seeds but it cannot nurture and provide sunshine for the plant to grow. Shyam shows his hospitality to Chris despite his knowledge that the latter cuckolded his wife. His tolerance crosses all limits and instead of being harsh and vengeful, he maintains his integrity and sees Chris off to the railway station.

Radha, who had been infatuated with the bodily outlines of Chris since the day he arrived, leaves no occasion to be in his ambience sometimes on the pretext of being a good hostess and on other times in the hope of furthering Shyam's business. The hostess soon is converted into mistress who becomes blind to the moves of Chris who provides her the titillating moments which Shyam fails to do. The readers are familiar with Radha's disgust of her husband as she narrates: "He wasn't just a sham, he was an uncouth boor, this husband of mine."[2] The use of the word 'sham' is an approbation of Chris's pronouncing Shyam as Sham. Quite critical of Shyam, Radha considers him nothing but a 'habitual annoyance' though she believes he could rival any other Malayalam film star because of his beautiful features and his abundant neatly combed jet black hair.

The novel displays a vortex of human relationships much to the accompaniment of Indian tradition and faiths. Human relations, particularly formed on the genealogical basis, may undergo contortions but ultimately return to the family fold. This proves a galvanizing factor and allows an edge to Indian sensibility over other faiths. Considered the world over as a patriarchal society, India not only assimilates subversions but also paves way for recovery, for triumph. The cacophony, which the world creates about Indians being conservative as regards their demeanour towards women have a sunny side so far as practicality is considered. Indian beliefs consider women to be titular yet tender, turbulent at times yet triumphant like goddesses, fecund yet forgiving. This belief is a pleasant reminder of the truth that the number of divorce cases, abandoned wives and broken relationships is still on the margins as compared to many developed and developing nations. What M. Mukund in his review of the novel said does not seem an exaggeration:

> She writes about man-woman relationships and complex Kathakali aesthetics with equal felicity. When you put down the novel, you feel as if you are walking back home in the pale early morning light at the end of a nightlong Kathakali performance. What fills your soul, then, is shaantam—the last of the nine bhavas.[3]

Koman, the most powerful of all characters in the novel can be studied as a relationship tree from which all relations branch out and spiral. His sphinx-like personality ensconces various threads which unfold layer after layer and lend meaning and relevance to Kathakali, which he loves and lives with. Koman has a bizarre past having various threads. A son of a prosperous father, he is a blotting paper which has squeezed the painful episode of his own being and becoming. His father, Seth alias Sethu fell a victim to the ravishing beauty of Saadiya, who comes to his home against the wishes of society at large and Saadiya's parents in particular. After the initial fetishes and fevers of love, they turn hostile to each other when their faiths criss-cross. Sethu is not at a loss of words when Saadiya wants to impose all her religious faiths on her son right from his naming to the sacraments associated with his childhood rituals. Much like an Indian and a responsible Hindu, he tells his wife:

> If you think you made a mistake, then I will not insist you continue doing so. You may leave. You can go back to your family and your religion, but you can't take this child. You will not want reminder of your mistake. (228)

Saadiya ends her life to keep her faith while Seth switches over many jobs to fend for his responsibilities. He decides to leave the place and goes to settle in his native place from where he had fled once. He bought some pieces of land for plantations, built talkies and earned a good name. Soon he becomes a prosperous businessman and everyone starts popping his questions. Seth won't commit the mistake of taking any lady of some other faith as his wife though Faith, the nurse nurtured an infatuation for him in the hope that his son was being looked after by her. Instead, he marries Devyani to triumph over his wavering faith. He started living a contented life as 'a plateau with no uneven slopes or pitted surfaces.' But a sense of guilt often pricks him and he longs for his own son being looked after by Faith. His son's strange hair-cut surprises him and when he comes to know the reason, he confesses before his son; 'I am the reason you have had to endure so much in twelve years of life. This

ring of hair must have come with enough torment and humiliation. How could I have been so irresponsible?' (238)

Sethu hides the existence of his son from Devyani. But he never evades his responsibilities under the hope of finding a suitable time for such a disclosure. Koman is accepted by his stepmother and two younger brothers. The novelist expresses her ire: "Discard your past and step into a new future—even if the past held wives and children. The owner of the clogs had, and so had my father. It had nothing to do with my mother. It was what men did." (264)

Koman lives a borrowed existence and nothing on earth tempts him but Kathakali. He proves to be a bad student who could never master the subjects taught at school. Art was the only medium through which he could both conceal and reveal his feelings. The wrath of his father and teachers too fall flat before the lure of Kathakali. He ably dissuades them not to impose upon him the worldly knowledge that helps humans earn their livelihood. Satisfied and delighted at his father's seal of approval, he records:

> I was grounded in nine faces of being. Love, contempt, sorrow, fury, courage, fear, disgust, wonder, peace.
>
> In that congress of body and mind, beat and world, I knew myself. Luring memories and possibilities, drawing on dreams and imagined happenings, I learnt to live the character I was to be. I learnt that beneath the guise, I was the character. For me that was the only way to be. (273)

Koman develops to be a signature in the world of Kathakali. Always on demand, he commands the love and admiration of many who would long for his company. His dancing abilities bring him many mistresses who cast a spell over him but no one proves as captivating a mistress as Kathakali. He plays Keechaka, Nala and Damyanti, Dhramaputran and many such characters from Indian epics but his own character remains intact. He comes across Angela, a student who later is converted into his mistress with whom he goes to London. Koman feels ill-at-ease in London where he is made to sit idle and to wait for his luck. Unable to bear idleness and alienation, he wants to return to his homeland. London had no place for the purity of Kathakali and those who were making money by dancing were by following a dunce instead of dance. Koman is disillusioned and detests everything about London right from people to places; nature to nurture etc. The novelist finds an echo of Koman's alienation in the following lines:

> In my home even the sound of the rain was different. Here, the rain was feeble and the smell of it was a musty, dank odour of unwashed bodies and rationed heat. Grey skies, the stale, sour smell of damp, and a perpetual hunger. What had I exiled myself to? (378)

Koman had also been smitten with Maya's love. They had been in love for ten years without naming this bond. In the innermost recesses of his mind, Koman felt all alone. Angela had wanted him to depend on her. Lalitha, a prostitute had eased Koman's dull hours by remaining a mistress only. It was Maya from whom Koman expected some solace if she agreed for a marriage. He wanted someone to share his loneliness, someone to have a stake in his life. They marry stealthily without any pomp and show. Maya, who is already married, obliges Koman simply to keep his heart, to free Koman, the man from Koman the artist. Koman tries to demarcate between man and artist but the artist always has an upper hand. He rightly says:

> It isn't as though I have not been acquainted with fear. I have been swamped by fear, different kinds of fear. The fear of not belonging. The fear that accompanies a decision: am I doing right? The fear that every artist feels—will I be able to fulfil the expectations of my art? Will I be able to do it again and again? (260)

Koman decides to tell the travel writer Chris about the difference between the man and the artist. Art is ideal and it cannot attain its subtlety unless it has its surly character. Man has limitations and he can never be above art. What he tells him is truth drenched in despair:

> I am an ordinary man made extraordinary by my art. In this story of my life, perhaps you will discover, as I will in the telling, how my art ruled my thought and life, how it helped me escape the confines of my secret fears. In the end, that is what counts. That art imbues meaning to one's existence. (262)

Koman's life, which has been a jigsaw puzzle, has numberless instances to make him warn other people against the coils of love. Radha's advances towards Chris put him in a dilemmatic situation. Radha, his beautiful niece is enthralled by the charms of Chris, the alien. She is much after happiness and always defends Koman's way of life. What she tells Shyam about her uncle's way of life also gives a hint of her own mindset: "People make choices, you know. This is Uncle's. He's happy with his art and that is enough for him.

A successful artist isn't always a good artist or even a happy one." (16)

Radha represents a typical Indian woman who is witness to the rounds of altar in the hope of making a successful couple. Most Indian women have no choice of theirs and they are considered subordinate to their husbands. The routines and bedtime rituals become a mandatory part of appeasing the man-god devoid of the willingness of their paramours. The novelist takes a sly dig by mentioning it in *Haasyam* section where Radha says: "I think that for Shyam, I am a possession. A much cherished possession. That is my role in his life. He doesn't want an equal; what he wants is a mistress. Someone to indulge him with feminine wiles," (53)

Radha undergoes a tension after Chris's arrival in her world. She gets more time to be with him and this develops into love. As time moves, Radha ignores the mute invitations and becomes a victim of Chris' erotic moves. Starting with polite gestures and hospitality to a foreigner, Radha pledges her body to the stranger. The blind moves of her body do not seal her conscience and at times she hears the shouts of her inner voice: "You, I wanted to say. You are sneaking your way into my system. You are doing it with the casual ease of someone who knows how to. Are you a practised flirt? A seducer of women? Or is this something that neither you nor I have any control over?" (55)

Shyam, a caring husband often wants to know the reason behind Radha's indifference to her. He is reminded of his past when he used to live on the mercy of Radha's parents after he lost his father in an accident. Radha's father considered Shyam an unworthy boy who could not be seen as a prospective groom for his daughter. But a twist of fate brings Radha's father to put her daughter's proposal before Shyam. Reminded of his hurts and conscious of his self-esteem, Shyam bursts: "So you are afraid to thrust soiled goods on to somebody else and decided to come to me. Shyam will do what we ask, because he is bound to us by a debt of gratitude—is that what you thought?" (121)

Shyam married Radha and succeeded in his mission of getting the moon. But he often wondered why he was not able to win her. Radha considered Shyam a husband who stood for security and status and beyond that there was no existence of the man. Radha's advances towards Chris, her meticulous make-ups, the spray of perfumes raised numerous questions in Shyam's mind: "Why is it that

my hold over Radha remains so ephemeral, even after eight years of marriage? Why can't I reach into the substance of her being? Is it because she doesn't let me?" (118)

Shyam has smelt of Radha's snuggles by Chris and he burns inside yet doesn't let it out for public disgrace. One day when Radha comes back after watching a Kathakali performance, Shyam tries to stake his claim on her. She protests yet listens to Shyam's blurts: "Just show some respect. You strut about the place with strange men; you come home at midnight and expect me to say nothing. No husband would tolerate this. What do you think I am? A fucking eunuch?" (163)

It is quite ironical that Radha considers Shyam's bodily advances as rape while Chris's as love. She may try to justify her analysis of rape as considering it as an act committed by force on a woman but should also realize that something done against the marital bonds set forth by tradition also does not go scot free. Koman, the uncle who has been the object as well as the outcome of the blind fury of passion often tries to warn Radha but to no avail. He believes that Radha is deceiving Shyam and he suddenly realizes why he should not tell her the consequences of deception. Pitying his own life, he forms the realization: "The curse of deception is that we can never erase it from our minds. I haven't led an exemplary life. It isn't as if I have a clear conscience. I have been deceitful. And I know the price I have had to pay for it." (175)

While discovering the reason of Radha's callous treatment towards him, Shyam is haunted by various questions such as their being issueless despite eight years of their nuptial. He also keeps a calendar marking the dates of Radha's ovulations. He is stunned to know from Radha about his own infertility. Not convinced, he consults specialists and tries to discover ways to overcome his debility if any. Radha, on the other hand, discloses her inclination towards Chris. Koman who suspected it before warns her about Shyam's men who are neither deaf nor blind. But Radha is not at all bothered and declares that her 'marriage was dead and Shyam meant nothing to her.' Instead, she rejoices at the soft caresses of Chris who swims in the ocean of Radha's love. She knows her actions are not justified and she starts shivering from within. Radha goes awry and clinging to Chris's hold, however, she cannot seal her conscience albeit purblind. The novelist records Radha's guilty consciousness in the following lines:

> I feel fear gather in me. His life is so beyond my comprehension. 'Chris,' I murmur. 'Please hold me.'
>
> In his arms, I feel panic stem. In the fold of his nearness, I feel nothing can come between us. Shyam, his parallel worlds we inhabit, guilt. Nothing matters. What feels so right cannot be wrong. This is what I have to draw courage from, to go on. (216)

Shyam decides to be more careful and conveys the message that he has detected the games Radha plays on him. He tries to feign cruelty which seems to work. Both Chris and Radha discover about Shyam's spying and they try to be more careful. Whether they approve of their breaking the barriers or not, they have come to realize the damage done to Shyam. The novelist makes use of the element of fear as one among the nine rasas and justifies its presence in the propriety of things: "Fear makes one do things one would never do otherwise. Fear lets you compromise. Fear will even let you seduce your husband so that he thinks he imagined your transgressions, your betrayal, and that you still are his." (253)

Radha is in a dilemmatic condition when she comes to know about Chris leaving for his homeland. She suddenly seems to be aware of her lapses. She allowed him invade her mind and body but how can she decide to go with him. The dawn of realization that it was a mistake to run to the rhythms of Chris's body makes her hate her own self. Full of reproach and remorse, she tells him:

> I am a country that has to rebuild itself from nothing. I am a country that has to face recrimination and challenges and I don't know where to begin. Worst of all, I don't even know if you will be there to hold my hand through the rebuilding process. So would not it have been best to leave me alone? (293)

Another bolt from the blue is the discovery of Radha's pregnancy which raises several questions. She knows for certain that the child in her womb could not belong to Shyam but to Chris. She inquires Koman of her past and is torn to know about her own identity oscillating between her father and her uncle, Mani. Dogged by the phantom of her fractured identity, she grows anxious about her own child who will share the same fate. Shyam's own ploy also helps him understand about Radha's conception and this pierces his heart. He feels his manhood challenged by a foreigner and becomes indecisive about his next action. The man who considered Radha his sole possession has been dispossessed on genuine grounds. Radha, too, feels

embittered at the shock which Shyam has undergone. Full of grief and shame, Radha curses her pleasant past and cries in disgust:

> When we made love, wanton abandoned love, there was no shadow of betrayal but I cannot erase from my mind the sight of Shyam as I saw him that night. Everything that I think he has put me through is outweighed by what I have turned him into. A broken man, hurt and humiliated, and I know that is I who have caused him such anguish. The extent of my callousness frightens me. (397)

Radha is disillusioned to know that Chris's mother, Anjela and Koman were lovers. She grows hot and cold to know how Chris hid this secret from her. Moreover, her Indian upbringing will allow her to trace Chris as her cousin. Her doubts rise to an extent and she suspects Chris of having a wife as well as a child. His practised moves during love-making solidify her doubts about him. Moreover, Chris's bewilderment makes her more suspicious and Radha detests him with the determination never to see him again.

Radha feels racked and ruined because Shyam won't accept her once he knows about her bearing Chris's baby. She tells Shyam about her decision of leaving him. Shyam is shattered yet he does not want to claim the fatherhood of Radha's baby. His self-esteem comes in his way and he shows no interest in the house, business and property which Radha wanted to offer him as a recompense for all the hurts and bruises. Shyam considers his fractured identity, his sole possession and shrieks: "I don't need anything. I cannot be bought. Your father was the same. He thought he could buy me and now you are doing the same. I am not to be bought. Do you hear me? All I ever wanted was to love me." (401)

Thus, we find that despite the rough and tumble the characters in *Mistress* ride over, they finally do not desert their Indian inheritance. Their Indian roots matter more to them than anything else. Uncle Koman keeps his devotion to Kathakali unshaken. The glitter of London or any other nation does not fascinate him. Moreover, he does not become a parasite on anyone; rather he keeps touring not for money but for disseminating the essence of traditional Indian dance form. Though having smelt Radha-Chris episode, he allows it for sometime but warns his niece of the consequences. Radha, too, confides in him her heartburns and seeks his help in crisis. Knowing about Shyam's infertility though, she doesn't disclose it before Chris who impregnated her. She keeps it confined to herself in the hope that the arrival of the child will bring a vicissitude. She is not

the type of lady who would flee away with the man she loved so much. Her hatred for Chris towards the end becomes obvious as she does not go to see him off. Notwithstanding Shyam's indifferent attitude, she remains in the same house under the impression that things will be set right after all. Shyam, too, shows his colours but acts on his uncle's advice and allows Radha the time. Koman's parents, too, do not compromise with their religious faiths and also do not bring impediments to each other though they pay for it heavily.

Most of the characters in the book are accommodating and have strong sense of family values. Sethu's return to his native village, Koman's return to India, Radha's decision to remain on the mercy of Shyam and Shyam's maturity to allow everything to settle emanate from the Indian ideology of trial, transformation and triumph. All of them stand a testimony to the fact that the ultimate truth is what remains. The novelist, too, in the beginning, symbolically taking the background of harvested fields hints: "Love lives in memory and hope." (7) Love, the guiding spirit allows Kathakali to begin with *Sringaram* and end in Shantam and thus the novel can be said to represent Indian sensibility.

NOTES

1. http://sreenireports.rediffiland.com/blogs/2008/06/06/Interview-with-Anita-Nair-Writer.html
2. Anita Nair, *Mistress.* New Delhi: Penguin India, 2005, p. 9.
3. M. Mukund, 'A blend of Kathakali and the Novel,' *The Hindu Literary Review*, 6 Nov. 2005.

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Jhumpa Lahiri's *Unaccustomed Earth*: Celebration of Indian Sensibility

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Ever since the emergence of the crop of Indian English literature, there have been the arguments and controversies in the post colonial India regarding the nexus of the identity of Indian cultural heritage and the identity of its literature. The national sensibility is an integral aspect of human consciousness and it is mandatory to construct the paradigm of creative texture with the visible or invisible shadows of the light of national sensibility. It has been accepted, "Nationalism is not a vehicle of individual liberty but it is an adoration of collective power."[1] In the discourse of national consciousness in context of Indian sensibility, India has been depicted as deep and as comprehensive as religion or the immensity of God. Sri Aurobindo acknowledges 'nation' as 'religion': "Nationalism is not mere political program. Nationalism is a religion that has come from God; Nationalism is a creed in which you shall have to live."[2] He further observes that the preservation of national heritage is only a pathway to a greater solidarity; "you must remember that you are the instrument of God for the salvation of your own country, you must live as the instrument of God."

In the wake of globalization, the migration of Indians to the west has been a major phenomenon of the postmodern Indian society. Indians scattered across the globe are making desperate efforts towards assimilation but their innate bonds of affinity with their motherland obstruct their vision of wholeness because Indians share a distinctive awareness of 'self' and 'identity.' India besides being a seat of culture and sublime philosophical and ethical creed has been a manifesto of an exclusive vision of life expressed in terms of personal relationship. The women writers of Indian diaspora, like Bharati Mukherjee, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and Jhumpa Lahiri, have tried to reconstruct the images of India within their fiction sharing the nostalgic sensibility for their homeland. In this trio of expatriate women writers, the one common observation emerges

that Indian sensibility is not a matter of geography or cultural distinctiveness only but its seeds also remain hidden within the consciousness of the characters. It reflects the images of divine sublimity that is imperishable and the shadows of it go beyond the periphery of time and space. Jhumpa Lahiri in an interview to *Hindustan Online* admits:

> It was important and inevitable for him to accept his name, to realize that there is never a way to shed what is given to you by your parents. The book is not so much about names per se. It is more about what we inherit from our parents—the whole complex set of things, certain ideas, certain values, certain games . . . and the way that no matter how much we create our own lives and choose what we want out of life, it is very difficult to escape our origins.

It signifies that through the sensibility and experiences of the community of migrants, a vast spectrum of Indianness has been projected at the global level.

Jhumpa Lahiri's latest collection of short stories entitled *Unaccustomed Earth*[5] (2008) is a saga of the celebration of Indian sensibility set amid the background of cultural encounter. The plot of the title story "Unaccustomed Earth" revolves around the personal conflict of Ruma, a middle-class Bengali woman migrated and settled in America. After a pause of seven years, with the second homecoming of her father, she reconstructs her personal relationship in which past and present seek a common ground of synthesis. In spite of her radical decision of marriage with an American, her mind is preoccupied with the idea of the security of widowed father and her unconscious realization of the guilt born out of the digression from the periphery of the parents. Ruma staying in Seattle with her husband used to keep a rigid vigilance to ensure, "If there hadn't been a plane crash anywhere in the world." (3) She has an irresistible craving for the company of her parents and the father used to keep in touch with the consistent exchange of photo-postcards. Ruma like a typical Indian woman shares the dilemma of personal relationship in which she has to play the role of a balancing factor. If postcards come as the consolation regarding the safety of her father, it also brings greater loss in her life because her father never included Adam's name in them. Ruma shifts the geographical spaces but her consciousness remains rooted in Indian soil. In the life of Indians the bonds of personal relationship are bound to the spiritual aspect of human existence in which the effect of western technical world

that is basically fragmentary and utilitarian seems weak and insignificant. It is attributed: "Science of the west has discovered evolution as the secret of life and its process in this material worlds but it has laid more stress on the growth of form and species than on the growth of consciousness."

With the news of the arrival of her father, Ruma recalls the memories of her past in the context of the parental home. Ruma unknowingly assumes the role of a caretaker and is amazed to find that her father was surviving all alone. Ruma in spite of sojourn in America fails to get rid of the consciousness that persistently reflects her Indian sensibility. A sense of guilt grips her consciousness because "Wholeness" is the cardinal core of Indian womanhood. She confesses: "She knows that her father did not need taking care of, and yet this very fact caused her to feel guilty. In India, there would not have been a question of his moving in with her." (6) She makes plans to cook food for her father and particularly serving the food of his own choices. She fears of the encounters of personal reactions. Her hyper-sensitivity is positively an index of her mind. Ruma suffers with insecurity and she is apprehensive of two distinctive stages of time and two different commitments.

In the Indian context, the warmth of relationship continues beyond time and space but parents seek the continuity of the relationship in the form of the reconstruction of the life of grandchildren. With Ruma, the prominent concern was the reactions of Akash towards his grandfather 'Dadu' because he was a child born and brought up in solitary conditions. The complex pattern of conflict existing within the psyche of Ruma is a manifestation of the diverse commitments associated with the life of an Indian woman. She shares the responsibility of an Indian daughter, wife and mother in which her own personal self remains an unacknowledged entity. In the Indian context, a woman can't conceive of her own independent self beyond the choices of parents. The remarkable changes in the pattern of her father make her to contemplate the factors that were responsible for the modification in behaviour. She is an Indianized American whileas her father is Americanized Indian. She has her affinities not only with Indian soil but also with her native Bengali tongue. Her own Bengali was slipping from her. Her mother had been strict so much so that Ruma had never spoken to her in English. Ruma tries to enter in the reserve spaces of her father through her son. Ruma while showing the room to her father is more nerv-

ous and uncertain of herself because she is not able to get rid of her fear of a forced marriage against the wishes of her parents. Jhumpa Lahiri records, "Showing it off to her father, she felt self conscious of her successful life with Adam and at the same time she felt a guilt slap of rejection, gathering from his continued silence, that none of it impressed him." (16)

Jhumpa Lahiri in *Unaccustomed Earth* makes efforts to establish that the warmth of personal relationships is comprehensive realization that goes even beyond the limitations of human experiences. Dadu is tender and sympathetic not only to Akash but exhibits consciousness for the growth of plants. He waters the plants to keep them in perfect order. Akash watches each activity of his grandfather with great curiosity.

In *Unaccustomed Earth* Lahiri has laid great emphasis on the haunting memories of food. Ruma tries her best to please her father by preparing the dishes of his choice as the father desperately admits that during his stay in Italy, he ate only Pizza. Among Indians, food is not a matter of nutrients only but it is also a significant metaphor of life. Ruma spends her two days in cooking, the items accumulating one by one on the shelves of the refrigerator. She takes exceptional pleasure in cooking food for the sake of her father. In the company of her father, with unprecedented ease, she ate with her fingers as her father did, the ease and comfort of Ruma reflect her native sensibility. She is apprehensive of Akash's Americanized ways in the company of her father.

In *Unaccustomed Earth* like her other collections, Jhumpa Lahiri exhibits her sensibility with the vision that the personal relations are not subservient to geographical conditions. She recalls how her mother prevented her from getting married to a foreigner because the idea of her daughter's security was her prime concern. It was only after the birth of Akash that her mother became confident of her relationship with Adam. Similarly her father unconsciously perceives the reflections of his wife image in the personality of Ruma. In the company of Ruma, his emotional affinity with his wife revives. He realizes, "Something about his daughter's appearance had changed, she now resembled his wife so strongly that he could not bear to look at her directly." (31) It is through her relationship with Akash that she gets a second entry in his daughter's life. The ease and enthusiasm in the life of Akash is remarkable. The involvement in personal relationship gives a rare strength to the idea of cultural

variations. He does not want to waste even a single moment without Akash. Baba prefers to sit at home and enjoy the company of his grandson than loitering in the outside world. Each activity of Ruma and Akash is under strict observance of Baba. He was monitoring her driving, glancing now and then at the speedometer. Besides, every time he was conscious for the personal care and it was a typical manifestation of exceptional parental care exhibited in the life of parents. The Indian sensibility in the life of Ruma reflects in her love and sensibility as a mother. She rears Akash as a typical Indian mother. When Baba enquires about her job in the new place, she confesses, "Part time litigation work is hard to find. Pre-school is only until noon, and I don't want Akash in day care." (36) Her arguments suggest that her sensibility was still rooted in Indian cultural ethos. Father views the whole situation in a distinctive way because he views a mechanism of merger in the alien cultural surroundings. With the enthusiasm of Akash, Baba defines his relationship with his daughter. Jhumpa Lahiri accepts that all migrants suffer with the ever piercing home sickness. When Baba makes a mention of his old house, with a view to build a porch there, it affects her native sensibility and tears start floating from his eyes. It was not only the retrieval of the memories of old house but also the expression of his own suppressed energy. With the image of old houses she thought of a wall in the dining room, imagined speaking to her mother on the telephone, her mother complaining as the workmen hammered and drilled. She accepts that a person never dies, and his existence continues at the mental level. Her sensibility is stirred at the extent that she becomes impatient to go back to her parental home and see her father's new apartment.

The distinction in the sensibility of Ruma and Adam clearly reflects that the Indian mode of living is deep and profound. Adam feels that Ruma might have been exhausted in the care of her father but for Ruma it was the turning back to her own infancy. What was a burden for Adam becomes a consolation in the life of Ruma. The whole idea of cultivating the plants, nurturing them and making them grow assume symbolic dimensions. It was not the question of the nurturing of plants only but it was also a matter of Ruma's replantation of her own identity in her native soil. Baba's affinity was with Akash, with the grandson, but that too was a half-revealed reality. He is apprehensive that the rearing in the other cultural surroundings would modify the personality of the child. He finds that

the dress, tongue, behaviour and even the colour of hair would convert. He realizes a sense of loss with the confession, "oddly, it was his grandson who was only half Bengali to begin with, who did not even have a Bengali surname, with whom he felt a direct biological connection, a sense of himself, reconstituted in another." (54)

Jhumpa Lahiri is a consummate and sensitive artist who makes a conscious effort to bare the true feelings in personal relations by peeling off egocentric and eurocentric layers imposed on the immigrants by western culture. In the process, human self and national self become one integrated identical sublime. For Ruma it was not a turning back to her childhood but a recovery of her own lost self in which she regains her imperishable affinity with her native cultural roots. The entire spectrum of the personal crisis of Ruma and her father in which Akash remains an inevitable link is the celebration of the socio-psychic state of human consciousness in which Indian consciousness works as an inseparable entity.

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Culture of Convenience in Jhumpa Lahiri's *Unaccustomed Earth*

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Like *Interpreter* of *Maladies*, *Unaccustomed Earth* is a collection of short stories by Jhumpa Lahiri. The stories are perhaps written for the Indians living in America. The setting is entirely American. Names of the places and universities are truly American. At very few places she has mentioned 'Calcutta,' that too by reference only. All this is because here she is writing about the second generation of Indians living in America. These young people have adopted American culture and are alien to the culture of their parents, i.e. Indian. Due to this, they have no memories of India, its culture and the people living there. Lahiri has mentioned India for older generation only, who came to America for education or employment and then settled there. These old people kept going to 'Calcutta' to meet their parents and relatives. Their children felt that they were 'dragged' to India against their wish. "And so they'd gone in spite of the expense, in spite of the sadness and shame he felt each time he returned to Calcutta, in spite of the fact that the older his children grow, the lesser they wanted to go." (8)

The title story 'Unaccustomed Earth' is the story of Romi and Ruma who were born and brought up in America by their Indian Bengali parents. The author has not even mentioned the names of the old ones. They are throughout referred to as father and mother. Romi, the son has completed his education and is living somewhere in New Zealand. The activities of his parents hadn't made a difference to Romi (6). He is very sparingly mentioned in the story. Therefore, now it remains the story of Ruma, her husband Adam and her son Akash.

After the death of Ruma's mother, her father retired from the pharmaceutical company where he worked for many decades. He began travelling in Europe, a continent he had never seen. In the past year he had visited France, Holland and most recently, Italy. These were all package tours, travelling in the company of strangers, riding by bus through countryside, each meal and museum and

hotel pre-arranged. He is gone for two, three, sometimes four weeks at a time. When he is away, Ruma is not in contact with him. Occasionally she gets a postcard in Seattle where she is living with Adam and Akash. "Her father wrote succinct, impersonal accounts of the things he had done. . . . Ruma was reminded of the telegrams her parents used to send to their relatives long ago, after visiting Calcutta and safely arriving back in Pennsylvania" (4). His next visit is scheduled to Prague in August. But before that he intends to come to Seattle to spend a week with Ruma and see the house she and Adam had bought. Ruma's mother had died on the operation table, of heart failure. Anaesthesia for routine gall-stone surgery had triggered anaphylactic shock. A short period after her death, Ruma's father went on tours to Europe. During this period, he became fond of Mrs. Meenakshi Bagchi who is a co-traveller. She had married a boy she loved since girlhood, but after two years of marriage, he was killed in a scooter accident. At twenty six she moved to America, knowing that otherwise her parents would try to marry her off again. She completed her doctorate in statistics and taught for over thirty years at Stonybrook University. Being the only two single Bengalis in the tour group they naturally came closer. He enjoyed Mrs. Bagchi's company. They had agreed, for the time being, to see each other only when they were abroad. He would soon see Mrs. Bagchi again in Prague. This time they had agreed to share a room. She was adamant about not marrying, about not sharing her home with another man, conditions which made the prospect of her companionship all the more appealing.

Ten years ago her mother had done everything in her power to talk Ruma out of marrying Adam, saying that he would divorce her, that in the end he would want an American girl. Ruma had been bold enough to withstand the outrage of her mother and her father refused to express even that which had felt even crueller. Her mother had told her again and again that "you are ashamed of yourself, of being an Indian that is the bottom line" (26). Ruma knew what a shock it was. She had kept her other involvements with American men a secret from her parents until the day she announced that 'she was engaged' (26). Over the years her mother grew to love Adam as a son, a replacement for Romi, who had crushed them by moving abroad and maintaining only distant ties. It was only after the birth of Akash that Ruma's relationship with her mother became

harmonious. Being a grandmother transformed her, bringing happiness and an energy Ruma had never witnessed.

Her father lived alone now, made his own meals. She knew her father did not need taking care of and yet this very fact caused her to feel guilty. In India, there would have been no question of his moving in with her. Her father had never mentioned the possibility. Ruma feared that her father would become a responsibility, an added demand, continuously present in the way she was no longer used to. It would mean an end to the family she had created on her own, Ruma, Adam, Akash and the second child which was due in January. She could not imagine tending her father as her mother had, serving the meals her mother used to prepare. Adam never objected to the idea of her father living with them. He thought that he would be of help when he is away. But Ruma disagreed. "It was her mother who would have been a helpful one, taking over the kitchen, singing songs to Akash and teaching him Bengali nursery rhymes, throwing loads of laundry into the machine" (6) whereas "her father claimed an armchair in the living room, quietly combing through the "*Times* . . . but behaving as if he were waiting for the time to pass." (6)

Since he was on his own now, acquaintances sometimes asked if he was planning to move in with Ruma. Even Mrs. Bagchi supported the idea. But he pointed out, "Ruma hadn't been raised up with that sense of duty." (29) She led her own life, had made her own decisions, married an American boy. He did not expect her to take him in. He could not really blame her. He himself did nothing when his father was dying and his mother was left behind. There was no question of moving his family back to India. His eighty-year-old widowed mother could also not be moved to Pennsylvania. He had his siblings look after her until she also eventually died.

Ruma's father arrived at her home in a rented car. He did not ask her to come to airport to receive him. Ruma showed him his room where he unpacked his suitcase and put everything very nicely. After dinner, her father washed the dishes expertly. He did not run the water when he was soaping the dishes. He waited until the plates and the pans were ready to be rinsed. After finishing with the dishes he dried them and then scrubbed and dried the inside of the sink, removing the food particles from the drainer. He put the left overs away in the refrigerator, tied up the trash bag and put it into the dust bin. He sat at the kitchen table to repair the handle of

the sauce pan which was loose; he had noticed that while washing it. Since he could not find a screwdriver so he accomplished the task with the tip of a knife. He woke up early in the morning, made breakfast for himself, cleaned up everything and then took Akash to the lake. After their return, he made breakfast for Akash also and then again made tea for himself while Ruma made her own breakfast.

Soon he befriended Akash and both started going places together. One morning he went to some place alone and brought pastry for Ruma and Akash. He offered to beautify her backyard by planting shrubs and flowers. Flowers in the backyard had not occurred to her until then, yet his offer appealed to her. She felt flattered by his interest in the place she lived, by his desire to make it more beautiful. He brought "bags of topsoil, flats full of flowers, a shovel, a rake and a hose" (43). For the rest of the day, with Akash playing at his side on a growing mountain of soil, her father pushed the shovel into the ground, hacking away at grass with soft, forceful sound. He worked steadily, pausing briefly at midday to take refreshments with Akash coming at dusk only because the mosquitoes were out. Next morning he again drove back to the nursery to get more things. He brought a bale of peat moss, bags of mulch and composted manure. This time, in addition to the gardening material he brought an inflatable kiddies pool, in the form of a crocodile, which he set up in the yard and filled with water. Akash splashed in the pool all day squirting water into the garden. The garden was coming up nicely. But he knew that it was a futile exercise. He could not picture his daughter or his son-in-law caring for it properly. In weeks, he guessed, it would be overgrown with weeds, the leaves eaten by slugs.

Ruma had not known certain things about her father. She had not known how self-sufficient he could be, how helpful he could be. She had not had to wash even a single dish since he had arrived. At dinner he was flexible, appreciating the grilled fish and chicken breasts she prepared. Most surprising side of her father was his love for Akash. He helped Akash putting on his pyjamas, brushing his teeth and combing his soft damp hair. He read the bed time stories to Akash.

On the last day of his stay, Ruma asked him to move in permanently with her. She even offered to give him full accommodation downstairs but he refused telling her that he did not want to be a

burden. She said, "You wouldn't. You'd be a help" (53). He knew that it was not for his sake that his daughter was asking him to live with her but it was for her own sake. She needed him. He did not want to be a part of another family, part of the mess, the feuds, the demands and the energy of it.

Until *Unaccustomed Earth*, Lahiri's concerns were confined for the most part of the Indian emigrant parents to America and their struggle to raise a family in the country very different from theirs. She wrote about how the parents struggled to keep their children close to them even after they have grown up in Indian tradition of joint family. In this story she steps forward to scrutinize the fate of the second generation and their children. As succeeding generations become increasingly assimilated into American culture and are comfortable in constructing global perspectives, Lahiri's fiction shifts to the needs of the individual. The reader sees more clearly the departure of second and following generation from the constraints of their parents. The latter were especially devoted to community and their responsibility to other immigrants. In this story there is a departure from the original ethics and Lahiri's characters embark on the path marked by alienation and self-obsession.

Indian culture is perhaps the culture of restridian, bonding and togetherness. It does not give much freedom to deviate from the traditional moral and social values. But American culture here seems to be the synonym of freedom. Freedom in any aspect of life, freedom to disobey your elders, freedom to go where you like, freedom to throw away your parents, freedom to discard joint families and arranged marriage, freedom to sleep with a number of people and concealing it from their parents. The second generation of Indian immigrants is doing all this as per their convenience only. For example Ruma repeats her mother's life pattern when she gives up her job and follows her husband to a distant place. "Growing up, her mother's example—moving to a place for the sake of marriage, caring exclusively for children and a household—had served as a warning, a path to avoid. Yet this was Ruma's life now." (11) He realizes that if his daughter chooses a life in Seattle that she could have led in Calcutta, this is perhaps another kind of freedom.

Ruma's father "resembled an American in his old age. With grey hair and fair skin he could have been practically from anywhere." (11) He has really become an American in the true sense of the word. He has shed all his training in Indian culture. After a lapse

of barely a year or so of the death of his wife, at the age of seventy, he is in love with Mrs. Bagchi and has decided to share the room with her at Prague. He is anxiously looking forward to his trip. He is also dreaming to "sleep next to her." (53) The author suggests that this is not for passion but for the long habit of companionship. I very humbly differ to say that Mrs. Bagchi is quite rigid and does not want to share her home with another man and companionship does not mean meeting occasionally and sleeping together. This is perhaps the freedom to have sex freely.

Another significant point is that Ruma feels that in India her father would have never thought of living in with his daughter but is afraid that in America, he could live with her permanently. She thinks that he will become a burden, an added responsibility and is therefore unable to decide whether to ask her father or not to move in with her. But during his stay he proves that he would not be a burden but proves to be a self-sufficient and helpful person. She experiences that he looked after her garden, kitchen and Akash very efficiently. This brings change in her attitude and she insists on her father's living with her permanently—for her sake—for her convenience.

NOTE

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Toni Morrison's *Sula*: An Interpretation of the Tortured and Fractured Psyche

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The narrative matrix of Toni Morrison offers a criss-cross of opinions and observations. Kay Deaux, a principal contributor to research and theory in the analysis of gender-differences incisively commented on the relative utility of three common approaches to their study. Deaux categorizes research into studies that offered gender as a subject variable, as a psychological construct, or as a social category. In all these approaches, gender is considered to be as an individual difference variable. The researchers and scholars made an effort to discern how individual with particular standing on the variable, that is, a man or a woman differ in the ways that they think or act. N. Kulkarni writes: "Gender as subject variable takes a more demographic approach and regards biological gender as the individual difference of importance. The second approach takes a more psychological than demographic track. Gender-related characteristics, such as masculinity, femininity and androgyny are addressed in a manner similar to personality traits. The gender-role identification of men and women is assumed to vary along the dimensions of masculinity and femininity and it is the character of those identifications rather than biological gender that determines thought and behaviour."[1]

Actually the third kind of approach does not deal with the actual differences between men and women albeit it is based on perceptions of and response to the social categories exemplified by men and women. Deaux concludes that gender as a biological marker with complex and unspecified connection to psychological characteristics, is too broad and undifferentiated a variable to have much utility as a predictor of human behaviour. Truly, biology is not a psychology and neither all men or all women are similar, thus, the scholars locate the effects of the individual's level of self-identification and introspection in conventionally masculine or feminine perspective. In order to give a specified meaning to mascu-

linity and femininity Spence and Helmreich suggested a myopic vision of the masculinity as a measure of instrumentality and the femininity as a parameter of expressiveness. Both the scholars advocated that these personality features should predict specific behaviours that are highly indicative of instrumentality or expressiveness. But at the same time, it should have report with other more general domains of gender-related behaviour. The social categorization to gender differences proposes the effects of gender not in terms of what men and women think and do but the most impressive factors, more beliefs, perceptions and expectations what the common people keep about members of the social categories of men and women. Moreover, in class-structured society, mode of economy plays a decisive role which also decides the nature of social categories to effect beliefs and other characteristics and behavioural patterns. Sociologically, these categorical assumptions and presumptions affect the reactions and the relationships of male and female characters. Critically, it can be suggested that the choices that individuals offer, from their career to other activities might be affected and influenced by how they relate to gender-relevant paradigms.

The narrative domain of Toni Morrison, however, talks of cultural and structural explanation of gender variation. A culture is a set of cognitive and evaluative beliefs about what is and what ought to be that is shared by members of a social system. The cultural analysis interprets differences between the behaviour of men and women caused by these learned internalised values and beliefs. In fact a structural analysis posits that an individual's behaviour is determined by the position that he or she holds in the social structure. The cultural approach to gender differences would hold that women are socialized differently than men because of traditional expectations for the roles that they are expected to fill. The socialization of women would include traits concerned with constructs like expressiveness or communal qualities which are associated with the idea for the welfare of others. In the cultural exploration of gender differences, gender-rate socialization is thought to be so pervasive and powerful that behaviour in perspectives beyond the traditional roles remains consistent with gender-role socialization. The structural approach emphasizes situational constraints associated with the individual's role in social structure. Morrison's *Sula* is a subject of psychological case and theoretical analysis. The empirical studies and reviews have continued to mount up and are assisted by the meta-

analysis strategy. According to a research made by a group of researchers, behaviour is likely to be influenced by global, gender-role stereotypes. Sula as a character suggests that gender-role expectations affect leadership actions in situation. Normally women were found to be more democratic in their style than men. A significant gender-of-author effect was found on this measure with authors more likely to report higher use of democratic decision style for their own gender. Terms like 'autocratic' and 'democratic' are vividly value-laden in American society. The literature on gender differences dealing with behaviour, emergence and evaluation reveals that actual differences between men and women are slight or non-existent. The implication of power and its relationship to gender and leadership forms the basis of so many research programmes. Ragins and Sundstrom are of the opinion: "for women, the path to power contains many impediments and barriers and can be characterized as an obstacle course. In contrast, the path to power for men contains few obstacles that derive from their gender and may actually contain sources of support unavailable to their female counterparts."[2]

Johnson has made a sociological study of the leadership quality of women. He is of the opinion that power was most congruent with a feminine leadership role, whereas coercive, legitimate and expert power was suited with the male role. Mythologically, men and women are considered to be the two sides of the same construct. It may be a matter of theology and religiosity but it has certain socio-psychological base. Even the persons possessing scientific temperament believe that these are biologically and generically true. A critic rightly says that, "each individual will therefore necessarily be the repository of the generic attributes of both gender, even the biologically and one may predominate. It is not one's maleness or femaleness alone that defines one's identity, it is the harmony between the two that determines how comfortable and integrate one's identity is going to be."[3]

The textual framework of *Sula* embodies the racist and class-consideration of paramount importance. Actually, the problem of racism and sexuality is interwoven. This is the reason that a novelist like Toni Morrison offers a characterization of radical temperament and rebellion. *Sula* is the second novel in which the story moves around the protagonist Sula through whom Morrison focuses the question of racism upon the identity-search of the black woman. Sula may be a case of fractured and tortured personality owing to

the racist and sexist socio-cultural structure. A critic says: "Masculinism has defined as governance. As result, women and feminism have been and remain particularly disadvantaged in these crucial domains of public life. One of the obvious disadvantages is that women have been forced to understand—even master—masculinism and its values if they are to move successfully into positions of public leadership. The converse for men is not true."[4]

In *Sula,* the novelist also takes the moral consideration into account to determine the excellence and evil so far as woman can be defined. Moreover, in the white-dominated society blacks are considered to be sub-human and subdued not only on account of their social and academic background rather also because of their geographical locality. Morrison in *Sula* makes it a point of discussion when we find that a black community is located in the hills above the fictional town of Medallion, Ohio. The definition which has been presented by the novelist shows the ironical situation of the dare-devil what Sula characterizes. The most significant factor of the black community is that Bottom represents women as a class in which they are assigned to play certain needful roles for the running of the society. They are committed to bear and rear the children and support the men sexually, emotionally or even financially. The novel proposes an igniting agenda for black women's status in the realm of social and creative feasibility. Historically, the Black Movement provided honourable status to the women and created healthy and hygienic situation in the dynamics of man-woman relationship. Hence we come to know the requirement of a different narrative script for the weaker sex that may reflect the boundaries and barriers of social and linguistic tradition. In the post-Black Movement phase, we try to search or research a useful model of self, of identity and identification in the procedure of reading. A critic of repute suggests:

> Day and night are mingled in our gazes. . . . If we divide light from night, we give up the lightness of mixture. . . . We put ourselves into water-tight compartments; break ourselves up into parts, cut ourselves in two. . . . We are always one and the other, at the same time.[5]

This statement is highly provocative and prominent in case of western metaphysics and critical devices. The study of *Sula* is of unique nature in the sense that it presents the black woman by differentiating from others hence the study of the narrative becomes psychological and biological at the same time. No doubt, in *Sula* gender

becomes a subject of utmost importance and the problem of gender has been discussed with race and class which constitutes the domain and terrain of the novel. Critically speaking, the concept of class is not instrumental so far as the narrative pattern of Toni Morrison is concerned. In Morrison's narrative art, race becomes a primal concern while economic disparity of the society also comes to the fore. *Sula* does not discuss the problem of the community; it deals with the issues and eventualities related to the individual. Sula as a character becomes a specimen of the study who simultaneously becomes the sufferer at the hands of whites as well as blacks. She is typically eclectic and radical in her temperament who is fully non-conformist to the rules and customs of the society. As a fictionalist, Morrison through the character of Sula champions the cause of individual's rights and independence of mind. Morrison however believes that the individual should be the master of her fate and the captain of her soul. The society as well as the family should have no right to intervene in the life of the individual. This is unfortunate on the part of Sula as well as all the women that they become the private property of their kith and kin simply in the name of relationship while they are ruthlessly and inhumanly exploited. In connection with Sula, we come to the point that she becomes a subject of study primarily because of the machoistic nature of the society. The search for self and psyche is not a crime; rather it is an effort for getting the state of self-actualisation. In that effort sometimes the concerned characters behave abnormally and uncommonly which jeopardises the traffic of everyday life as well as behavioural pattern. Actually, this happens with Sula who at last becomes a subject of split-personality.

Toni Morrison has a certain mind-set to explain and explore through her narrative works, moreover, in the manner of William Shakespeare. Like him, Morrison justifies the remark that her novels are dominated by heroines rather than heroes. This statement is truthful to Shakespeare's comedies but Shakespeare does not discuss the malignity and malicious relationship between man and woman. According to Elizabethan sensibility, Shakespeare focuses on the shining, cheerful, breezy and loving atmosphere between love couples which ultimately turn into marital bliss. But in Morrison, problem starts when one is born as female sex. The mental and psychological problems ultimately lead one towards frustration, embarrassment and finally to destruction and death. The novel discusses the problematic phenomena of womanhood. So far as male

characters are concerned, they seem to be superficial, superfluous, immature and insignificant which is also reflected by their names—Jude (Judas), Green (Naive), Boy-Boy (infantile), Chicken little (fearful and diminutive). On the contrary, the names of the women are powerful, suggestive and significant. No man offers novel behaviour and performs manly. All the men are compelled to live with the community of the abandoned women. The abandonment is the chief feature of the narrative pattern of Morrison and here Eva takes it as a challenge and poses her assertiveness and self-reliant attitude. She cares least when she and her children are abandoned by her husband. The novelist wants to focus the fact that males are selfish by their temperament and this selfishness makes them inhuman. When the males get their desire fulfilled, they do not pay any attention towards the well-being and welfare of their dependents. This is a common feature everywhere but Morrison presents it in a more specific manner.

Morrison incisively observes the intimate relationship of Nel and Sula who stand for each other: "their friendship was so close, they themselves had difficulty distinguishing one's thoughts from the others."[6] (83) Nel and Sula are two facets of the same entity, something like Catherine and Heathcliff. Their characters are poles apart yet the relationship persists. Nel is a traditional woman who is very much conformist and lodges no complaint against any imposition made by the society. She does not have any identity and existence but Sula's case is diametrically opposite to Nel who is decidedly firm to define her position and place in the affluent black society. She suffers from psychological trauma and torture. Both the women feel and find the patriarchal form of the society, is playing a key role which does not offer any room to the womankind. It is a kind of spider-network created by man where everything is man-oriented; either it is a case of God or Law and the man uses it as a hammer against women. Simon de Beauvoir rightly analyses the male-made complex situation and says: "The humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being. . . . The body of man makes sense in itself quite apart from that of woman, whereas the latter seems wanting in significance by itself. . . . Man can think of himself without woman. She cannot think of herself without man."[7]

Truly, Beauvoir means to argue that woman is being treated as 'other.' Even in the traditional society, we trace the expression of a

duality—that of the self and the other. Originally, it was not related to the division of the sexes; rather it is a development of the later stage. Temperamentally, Nel and Sula differ from each other yet they agree that the entire woman community is a victim at the hands of the male-oriented society. Levi-Strauss, a great anthropologist who goes into the detailed account of human life, suggests, "Passage from the state of Nature to the state of culture is marked by man's ability to view biological relation as a series of contrast, duality, alteration, opposition and symmetry whether under definite and vague form constitute not so much phenomena to be explained as fundamental and immediately given data of social reality."[8] Morrison's *Sula* is an appropriate case of this kind of phenomenon. As Morrison says: "Because each has discovered years before they were neither white nor male and that all freedom and triumph was forbidden to them, they had set about creating something else to be." (52) Sula's approach towards life becomes very sensitizing as well as exciting for all the Afro-American women because she declines to play the role of a woman assigned to and offered by the society.

The thematic construct of *Sula* provides unique intensity of woman to woman relationship. They have fractured relationship and all the time they face the crisis of identity at so many levels like cultural, sexual and racial. It is rightly pointed out that "their broken friendship is a measure of their broken lives, lives that are cramped from the very start. As counter-points, all the other women in *Sula* must either fit themselves into the place life has set for them or defy it with tragic circumstances proportionate to their degree of non-accommodation."[9]

Both Sula and Nel can search peace and bliss in the association of others because they share the common bond of youth, blackness and female virtue and vices in a universe which is designed to combat the framework of the developed white males. They come from altogether different backgrounds but the unifying force is greater than the separating one. The relationship between the black girls begins when Sula was twelve. Barbara Smith writes: "the necessary bond that has always taken place between black women for barest survival. Together the two girls can find the courage to create themselves."[10] Simultaneously, Sula and Nel attain the stage of puberty and at the same-time they come to know about their gender and sexuality.

Sigmund Freud, the father-figure in the world of psychology, characterizes the attitudinal behaviour of human sex into two parts: normal and abnormal. The relationship between man and woman is normal, psychological and biological phenomena but if the relationship develops between man and man, and woman and woman, it is something abnormal and uncommon. Mythologically, man and woman are considered to be the two parts of the single whole. It is natural that two parts desire to be one. Relationship between man and man and woman and woman has become a fertile subject for academic discourse. Theologically, it is immoral, biologically it is unnatural and psychologically it is abnormal. Apart from it, from time immemorial, these things are in social currency that captivates the intellectual attention of the literary personality, anthropologist and thinkers for deeper and meaningful interpretation. Shakespeare has discussed the close relationship between two women in *As You Like It* and he also talks of close relationship between two men in his sonnets. T.S. Eliot talks of homosexuality in *The Waste Land* and D.H. Lawrence in *Women in Love.* In *Wuthering Heights,* Heathcliff possesses the same intensity of love and attachment even after the death of Catherine. Dante was mad in love for Beatrice throughout his life though she died at a young age. About the relationship between Nel and Sula, the novelist says: "their friendship was as intense as it was sudden, they found relief in each other's personality. Although both were unshaped, formless things, Nel seemed stronger and more consistent than Sula, who could hardly be counted on to sustain any emotion for more than three minutes." (53)

Both the women have equal intensity of urge for their identity and status. Actually, the sociological factors compel them to be united as both are black and restricted by their society as well as external world. There are certain points of disparity and differences between their personalities. Sula does not want to be limited within her community and gender. She does not want to look beautiful. She is above the limitations of sex, race and class-determination made by the society. She is almost outcast even in her own community. The family set ups of Nel and Sula also differ from each other. Nel's mother, Helene is not always aware of the emotional need of her daughter. Nel's mother applies force and her own choice to make the daughter docile and submissive. Nel's marriage with Jude is also a case of pity and sympathy but it is a matter of utter surprise

for her when she loses her husband because of his sexual relation with Sula. Afterwards, she never sought any man in her life, on the other hand Sula becomes an exploited creature who detestingly uses black and white men for her sex-desire and at last she herself is abandoned by the man whom she genuinely loves. Above all, Nel and Sula have invented their own world where woman can live without man. In respect of conduct and character, there is a major difference between Nel and Sula. Nel approves the social norm and feature while Sula rejects it. She behaves like an outsider who is not committed to play the role which may be called meaningful and fruitful. Sula always advocates establishing the sovereignty of women. Sometimes she seems to be unsexed like Lady Macbeth who desires to get rid of womanhood. In the manner of Lady Macbeth, she cries against the possibility of getting babies, "I don't want to make somebody else. I want to make myself." (92)

In Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*, the narrator beautifully describes the psychic condition of a woman which is almost true to every woman. The narrator says, "a woman with a round moon, stomach: the body . . . sitting of inside her gazing out. . . . The baby was myself before I was born."[11] Like *Sula, Surfacing* is the search of the narrator's lost self, a journey from the fragmented self to a unified one. In the manner of Morrison, Atwood presents it as the surfacing of the alienated, repressed, lobbed away almost irretrievable missing part of the narrator. As a novelist, Toni Morrison fuses the essential ingredients like racism and sexism to construct the character of Sula. Actually, whiteness stands for freedom and maleness symbolises triumph. Barbara Smith locates latent lesbianism in the construct of Sula and this is the reason that she is unable to yield before a black man. The novelist explores the element of attraction between man and woman and says that the very thing that would attract a man to a woman in the first place might be the one thing she would give over once she falls in love. Sula's bent of mind is different as she deserts everyone and finally becomes the sole reason of her ruin and destruction.

Sula beguiles and negates the age-old ideas of feminine accountability. She refuses to visualize women simply as wives and mothers. Morrison attaches importance only to those factors which jeopardize the interests of the blacks in American set-up. The fundamental reason of all the exploitations and malicious treatment is related to the issue of racism. The blacks are always hunted and

looked down upon simply because of their colour and it happened to women because of their sexuality. There is a kind of parallelism in the class-divided society of Russia as Maxim Gorky shows and the contemporary race-oriented American society. The blacks are surrounded by the suffocating situation at every level and Sula is an outcome of those inhuman circumstances. The pathetic condition of the Afro-Americans in general and Sula in particular can be diagnosed on the basis of Marxian theory like Basic Structure and Super Structure. Karl Marx rightly says that basic structure is always instrumental to shape the artistry and creative vision of the individual and likewise one enacts and behaves. The basic structure means the very economic system in which one is born and brought up that prepares one for creative outlet and expression. Sula as a woman is a result of the socio-economic complexity of the society. Simon de Beauvoir discusses the psychic structure of women: "They live dispersed among the males, attached through residence, housework, economic condition and social standing to certain men—fathers or husbands—more firmly than they are to other woman. . . . The division of the sexes is a biological fact, not an event in human history. Male and female stand opposed within a primordial Mitsein and woman has not broken it. . . . Here is to be found the basic trait of woman: She is the other is a totality of which the two components are necessary to one another.[12]

Though Sula always poses a very different and independent self to the society yet she is no more than a subdued and semi-human being in the opinion of the colour-dominated society. . Morrison does not make an issue so far as the economic division of the society is concerned that appears to be an incidental factor and race and sex become the instrumental factors. Sula's attitude towards the society is radical as well as reactionary hence she loses her balance and becomes the victim of undesirable and unwanted calamity and suffering. Morrison through Sula poses a new set of answer to the contemporary male-oriented and white dominated society. Sula has been compared to Meridian of Alice Walker: "In their own ways, Meridian and Sula are made to receive the accepted social roles, expected to then as women. From her grandmother and mother, Sula learns of the two culturally devised versions of womanhood—the caterer to men and the whore. Meridian is expected by her community to be a good wife and mother—images later parodied in the variously captioned grotesque images of a mummy woman at a

travelling circus—'obedient daughter,' 'devoted wife' and 'adoring mother'—who had been killed by her husband because she had gone out of home to find her pleasure."[13]

Meridian, however, gradually becomes conscious and assertive regarding her status. Meridian also like Sula tries to carve out an independent niche by rejecting all the tempting images that wrongfully promise safety and security but truthfully represent death-in-life. P.B. Shelley once remarked about marriage: 'Oh my God, it is so lasting and boring relationship.' She ever seeks an opposing set of values. In the third stage of the novel, we find that both Sula and Meridian come back to their roots. She is twenty-nine, possessing strong and dominating sense of selfhood. She sleeps with so many men and makes them a creature of disdain and helplessness. Sula miserably fails in her search. Psychoanalytically, it can be said that by sleeping with several persons cannot be an act of independent and sovereign mind. She thinks that she has sexually used and exploited the male sexuality while in the real sense of the term this is a perversion. No healthy mind can think the way Sula thinks. On the other hand, Alice Walker's Meridian experiences a sense of unity and community as she contemplates the meaning of the picture. Even in a case of Meridian, we come to a point of completion in song and Meridian thinks that her role "will not have been a useless one after all." The deeper analysis of *Sula* manifests the fact that the novel is more related to sexual consciousness than to racial struggle. The plot-structure of *Sula* is quite different from *Meridian* but both the novels deal with the black women who are not confined to the age-old patriarchal definition of themselves as women. From beginning to end, Sula poses a fierce challenge and rejects the age-old notion that a woman should be the tuck and hem of men's garment. Morrison, through the character of Sula, equates marriage with the death of female self and imagination. A critic says, "Sula's female heritage is an unbroken line of 'man loving' women who exists as sexually desiring subjects rather than an object of male desire. . . . Nel's sexuality is not expressed in itself and for her own pleasure, but rather for the pleasure of her husband and in obedience to a system of ethical judgement and moral virtue, her 'only mooring.' It is impossible for her to imagine sex without Jude. When she finds him and Sula in a sex-act she describes her thigh—the metaphor for her sexuality—as empty and dead. . . . And it was Sula who had taken the life from them."[14]

Sula is an intensely and elaborately elegiac novel about loss, grieving and the release of pain. At the end of the novel, Shadrack expresses his grief for Sula, and when he does, he ceases to fill his life with compulsive activity. Morrison's approach engages on the structural and thematic levels, memory, dialectic and discontinuity. Robert Grants says, *Sula* in form and content is about gaps, lacks, missing subject, and ambiguous psychic space, all of which must be filled and interpreted by the reader. Further, the narrative contents and techniques are complementary in their appreciation how the devices of memory create presence out of absence."[15] It has rightly been stated that in literature as in life, memory works as a cognitive and imaginative synthesizing connector of the lapses, gaps, absences, discontinuities and raptures of time. The novelist presents and confronts the reader with a text in which the perspective of memory and phenomenological perceptions play a key role.

NOTES

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The Concept of Alienation: The Women Characters of Anita Desai

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Madhushudan Prasad in his book *Anita Desai: The Novelist* briefly assesses Desai's female characters: "Desai explores the turbulent emotional world of the neurotic protagonists who smart under an acute alienation, stemming from marital discords, and verges on insanity."

Bereft of the revolting excesses of the feminists' ideologies, Anita Desai has silently but steadily and certainly made the marginal move to the centre stage. Gently shaking off the paternalistic and at times condescending liberalism of a Bhattacharya, the abstract mongerings of a Raja Rao, the propagandist tokenism of an M.R. Anand, Anita Desai in both the form and content of her writings leaves unmistakably the feminine imprint without pausing to 'a female sentence,' 'Female time' or some other such inartistic formulation. Her women are seekers, hankering after what has since long been routine pursuits for their male counterparts but what appears preposterous and appalling in their case. One must hasten to add that the questing protagonists of Desai include a couple of males too. What these protagonists strive for is self-realization, self-fulfillment, carving out an identity, a true image of their individual beings, lateral and figurative space to themselves, to define themselves to make a foray into the outward, to make their own mistakes and retrace their steps if the need be, rather than being chaperoned everywhere. To ask whether they all succeed or not in doing what they endeavour to do is to belittle the enormity of their situation. The singular distinction of the novelist is that she suggests quite a few of her novels, at times overtly, at times covertly, the small but significant change wrought in the perceptions of the other characters in the strivings of the central characters. Even where the note on which the novels end is stark and devoid of any tangible sign of complacence, they do seem to succeed in jolting one into new perception of reality. While Sita in *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* does have a sort of family reunion and 'where we go this summer' is

no more a disquieting question left hanging in the air, her other artistic siblings—Maya (*Cry, the Peacock)*, Monisha and Amla (*Voices in the City*), Sarah Sen (*Bye-Bye Blackbird*) Nanda and Raka (*Fire on the Mountain*) and Bim and Tara (*Clear Light of Day*) are poised tantalizingly at different junctures of the philosophic spectrum. Even the travails of male protagonists in Desai in characters like Deven Sharma (*In Custody*) and Baumgartner (*Baumgartner's Bombay*) have been sympathetically attended to.

A common contemporary issue facing every country is the question of woman. The 'new women' today challenges the traditional notion 'of angel in the house' and 'sexually voracious' image. The 'new woman' is essentially a woman of awareness and consciousness of her low position in the family and society. The feminist criticism has developed as a component of woman's movement and its impact has brought about a revolution in literary studies.

Anita Desai's emerging new woman is contemplative about her predicament and chooses to protest and fight against the general, accepted norms. What is different about these women is that they are prepared to face the consequences of their choices. Anita Desai asserts that her protagonists are new and different: "I'm interested in characters who are not average but have retreated or been driven into some extremity of despair and so turned against . . . the general current"; it is for them a challenge to better their own personal existence.

Anita Desai's protagonists, brought up to be different, meek and quiet in the face of exploitation, are highly sensitive and intelligent and are desperate to find an outlet to their pangs. Their extreme sensitivity, however, channelises their mode of liberation in various directions. *Clear Light of Day* is chosen to evince and examine the wide space that divides the two types of women hailing from the same family—the women who do not act but surrender and so keep the tradition alive, and also the women who choose not to surrender and be meek but break the convention to face their situation and take up a new road where no one can dictate to them.

Bim is the chief protagonist in this novel. Her ambition is twofold: to be emotionally and economically independent. She never wanted to marry: "I can think of hundred things to do instead. I won't marry. I shall earn my own living and look after Mira Masi and Baba and be independent" (140). She would not depend on any one, not even on her father. Had she depended on her father for edu-

cation she would have been an illiterate: "for all my father cared, I would have grown up illiterate and—cooked for my living. So I had to teach myself history and to teach myself to teach." (155) She gets education in history, a subject with immense significance for her. The past is important as the progenitor of the present. Bimla has confidence much like her creator that "both the past and the future exist always in time present." In an interview, Anita Desai points out clearly "time is presented as the fourth dimension of human existence." The novel revolves around 'Time' drawing different impressions from the characters. Desai says: "My novel is about time as a destroyer, as a preserver and about what the bondage of time does to people. I have tried to tunnel under the mundane surface of domesticity." It is her opinion of present as the important section of past and future that makes her pursue her ambitions, despite the gloomy atmosphere at home and the burden of responsibility.

Bim's desire to be independent and courageous, and to dress and smoke like a man enables her to grow up strong and confident. It is only because she has trained herself to be different that the much eulogized characteristics of women i.e. weak will, dependence and shyness are alien to her perception. Bim refuses to confine herself to her role as a traditional woman. "Women in our society are still trained from infancy to entertain, to please and to serve men." But Bim was fortunate. Her father was known by his arrivals and exits and the mother through her diabetes and the cards, there was virtually no one to instruct the young girls. The free will and the lack of training in meekness enable Bimla to pursue her ambitions.

Bim has confidence in herself to withstand the shock of the sudden death of her parents, the alcoholic Mira Masi, the tubercular Raja and the mentally-retarded Baba. Bimla alone is left to carry the family away from its perturbed atmosphere. Tara being meek and weak willed, has no help. She has no courage to face the innumerable problems that the family all of a sudden starts to face. This sort of problem and her own business with insecurity and fear drive her towards Bakul. Tara with matrimony succeeds in getting away from the family which had suddenly gone out of control. With the death of Mira Masi and unexpected sudden departure of Raja, Bim feels only disappointed but she never becomes bitter.

The confused condition of Bim's mind disappears, and she is able to consider her inner psyche "by the clear light of day" (65). Her calmness of mind is the emblem of the quiet before the storm,

which is to overtake her soon. The growth of Bim's self is not yet complete and her mind starts thinking about the past and the present. In spite of this, she begins to study a book which turns out to be the life of Aurangzeb. After perusal of the emperor's death, she is highly impressed by two sentences: "Many were around me when I was born. But now I am going alone" and "strange that I come with nothing into the world, and now go away with this stupendous caravan of sin." Bim thinks of her life in the light of these two sentences and explores its meaning. The image of birds, animals and insects are indications of the landscape of the house. They depict the atmosphere, participate in the emotional tumults of the chief characters, and throw their mental states into sharp relief. The novelist starts with the call of the Koel presenting the soul of the daybreak: "The koel began to call before daylight. Their voices rang out from the dark trees like an arrangement of bells, calling and echoing each other's call, mocking and enticing each other into ever higher shriller calls." (165) Bim, an educated unmarried working woman, enjoys financial freedom. Desai appears to demonstrate that violence and operation against women can be diminished if women are financially self-sufficient and self-assured. R.K. Srivastava has rightly said: "the man woman relationship becomes more important due to rapid industrialization, growing awareness among women of their rights and individualities and westernization of attitudes and lives of the people."

Bimla, the eldest of all, incurs upon her all the burden of the family. During the day her father passed his time in the office, and in the evening at the club. But after his death Bim accepts the role of a father to take care of her sisters and brothers and later marrying them. Due to the responsibilities, she has no time for her own love and life even though she has an affair with a doctor. In the novel, she appears as a middle-aged woman teaching history in a college, living an ascetic life, the only luxury she affords is to buy books. Bim is fairly representative of the new woman of contemporary Indian urban woman—single, independent, self assured. At a superficial level, such a woman may be seen as "westernized." Madhusudan Prasad, commenting on this image points out: "This image, combined with the image of Sisyphus, is replete with deeper symbolic significance. A momentous image, it is connected with the theme of the novel illuminating the real character of Bim."

It is her extreme sense of responsibility for the family and for Baba which makes her feel strong and in control of herself. She does not lose her courage with the burden of responsibility. She appears to show that a woman can look after the family much better than any man. Bim is careful and conscious enough not to think of the need of protection or love of any one. She hates Mira Masi who craves for love and protection and is elated to receive it from the children if not from anyone else: "They crowded about her so that they formed a ring. A protective railing about her. Now no one could approach. No threat, no menace. . . . They owned her and yes, she wanted to be owned." (109) The novelty of Bim is that she had no desire to be owned. She does not want anyone to feel either kindness or responsibility for her.

In spite of all the odds Bim gets success in building up her ambitions, is triumphant in being independent, and it is Tara and Bakul who realize this: "Bim had found everything she wanted in life. It seemed so incredible that she hadn't had to go anywhere to find it; that she had stayed on in the old house, taught in the old college, and yet it had given her everything she wanted. Isn't that strange Bakul. . . . She did not find it—she made it, she made what she wanted." (158)

Bim appears a new woman of the coming years. She is independent and liberated and yet there is no mark of arrogance or superiority in her. Bim is very clear about her aspirations, urges and expectations, yet she is not the one to roll in pity about her alienation. If she felt cheated and stranded and thought Raja and Tara to be selfish, she was ready to forgive them. She was ready to see every flaw of others in the light of understanding. She would have to forgive her parents too, towards whom she was resentful because she could not grasp the disturbed atmosphere of their lives. Bim is able to obtain everything in life without the help of masculine forces due to her confidence in herself. It is in Bim that we recognize the emerging new and independent woman that Simon de Beauvoir delineates: "Once she ceases to be a parasite, the system based on her dependence crumbles: between her and the universe there is no longer any need for a masculine mediator."

Bimla and Tara in their quest for identity, liberty and individuality act and react in radical ways to the set conventional construct. Tara is certainly not unhappy in obeying her husband, but the question which finally perturbs her is "how long"? She realizes that she

does something that she never likes: "She felt she had followed him enough, it has been such enormous strain, always pushing against her grain, it had drained her of much strength, now she could collapse, inevitably collapse." (18)

Tara analyses her position as a young and hopeful girl: "I must have used an instrument of escape. The complete escape I could have made—right out of the country." (157) They used him as the direct track of escape because: "Bakul was so much older; and so impressive. Wasn't he? And then he picked me, paid me attention—it seemed too wonderful, and I was overwhelmed." (156)

The attention he used to pay her was something she always craved for but never received from anyone at home. So she became meek and her submissiveness and deference were used to keep her at the level of docile and unquestioning wife. Tara feels that it is time for her to stop being submissive. She does not want to make Bakul stoop to come to her level, rather she would stretch out and reach over to his position.

In comparison, Bim has everything that Tara does not have. And in that she has all this, and not what the society and tradition expects her to be, she is misunderstood: "Now I understand why you do not wish to marry. You have dedicated your life to others—to your sick brother and aunt and your little brother who will be dependent on you all his life. You have sacrificed your own life for them." (97)

Bim concedes to carry the burden of responsibility in spite of the dismal atmosphere of the house. She does manly duties and breaks the traditional norms and currents. Here Desai seems to suggest the significant sign of new woman. Anita Desai's women are all reflective about their condition. Their protest is not for quality but for the right to be acknowledged as individuals capable of intelligence and feeling. They do not look for freedom outside the house but within, without painting their lives in various artificial shades of sentiments.

Thus this leads up to the very concept of 'new woman.' The new woman that has been explored in the book reveals that Bim is not the 'ideal' or the 'best' woman. She is new in the dimension of time by being a rebel against the general current of the patriarchal society, and in exploring her true potential, along with the struggle to fulfill her urges and needs. Anita Desai speaks to us not only of the tumult of the human soul but also of its depth, its poetry and pa-

thos. It is through "the quality of the mind and soul alone" (Iyengar 343) that Anita Desai's novels would be a major contribution to literature. That is why the existential predicament in her novels .has the unique touch of the universal

Her tender, flexible, malleable and moribund sensibility whipping inanities into awe become at times, as in *Fire on the Mountain*, melodramatic to make the story artistically coherent and aesthetically satisfying. The "fire" in *Fire on the Mountain* and the "light" in *Clear Light of Day* have an insignificant and trivial link with the central plot and have a dim symbolic and metaphorical relevance, which, instead of ennobling and satisfying the artistic sensibility of the readers often bewilders them. Her hold on the reader's mind loosens. The readers instead of identifying themselves with her artistic sensibility, get alienated from it. Desai endeavours to offer the reader a slice of life but fails to impart the required voltage. The action at times denotes poetic and philosophical speculation on existence and essence which the readers are so much repelled by the peculiar psychic set up of her novel that they fail to take stock of the alienated self's existential plight.

Alienation is basically a western concept and in imitating this idea in her novels, Anita Desai remained at heart no less traditional than western. To her alienation is more related to the emotional and mental moods and attitudes. The alienated self in Desai experiences the pangs of emotional isolation, not the spiritual and intellectual angst of Raskolnikov or a Roquentin. The struggle of the alienated self in Desai is more similar to the Kafka protagonist than to the Camus hero. The Camus hero is nauseated and stifled. He seldom delights in his alienated existence as a Kafka hero does. Anita Desai's protagonists encounter it single-handedly. They delight in despair. Nirode in *Voices in the City* longs to move from failure to failure. The Desai protagonist is not an instance of bureaucratic alienation of Kafka's "K."

The alienated self as portrayed in the novels of Anita Desai is not an instance of total alienation. The lone self in Desai novels does not undergo the pang of alienation as does Hemingway's Santiago, who stands isolated from every entity and group, even from God. In Bharati Mukherjee and V.S. Naipaul, it is the sense of "exile" that leads to the alienation of the characters. Anita Desai's novels do not deal with the theme of exile: "exile has never been my theme" (interview, *Rajasthan University Studies in English* 69) says

and individuality. In Mukherjee, it is people in collision, it is cultural confrontation but in Desai, it is psychic confrontation. Desai's protagonists are emotional orphans. Emotionally maimed, they hail from fractured families. Their parents are either dead physically or psycho-emotionally. Maya's only memory of her mother in *Cry, the Peacock* is the photograph on her father's desk (134); the Ray children in *Voices in the City*, all four of them, are alienated in different degrees from their mother, their only surviving parent, as well as from their father, who is now dead. Sita's mother in *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* ran away from home leaving her children to the care of a father whose concerns lay outside the family and the cultural situation. The children in *Clear Light of Day* represent the long absences of their parents and are aware only of exits and entrance." (*Stairs to the Attic* 113-14).

Like the novelist herself making a bold deviation from tradition in her approach to the fictionalization of artistic ideas and ideals, Desai's characters "carry very little of their parents in them; it is as if they were consciously rejecting whatever little they may have inherited. They prefer to go in the opposite direction" (116). But heredity figures only marginally in her novels. In tracing the positive and negative effects of heredity on her characters, Anita Desai fails to supply the required voltage. Hence it is not as strong as in the novels of George Eliot or Thomas Hardy. Thus Anita Desai eschews traditional practices and gives free Reins to her individual vision.

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Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance*: A Re-visit to the Emergency

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Rohinton Mistry was born in Bombay in 1952 and his predecessor Salman Rushdie was born in the same city in 1947. Mistry was a Parsi and Rushdie, Muslim. Both of them are great storytellers. *Midnight's Children* and *A Fine Balance* make a distinguished addition to the mythologizing of Bombay, a big city celebrating plurality and multiplicity, now turned into Mumbai, the city of Raj Thakre. It is really such a long journey.

The background of Mistry's novel A *Fine Balance* is 1970s. The early 70s was a period marked by economic decline, rising prices, shortages and strikes. Nehru died in 1964 and subsequently a drift in the political climate of independent India followed. The country was burdened by the influx of refugees from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and the country's economy was under severe strain. India's intervention in the liberation war of Bangladesh restored India's prestige in the eyes of the people. But once the war was over, the country faced problems. In 1975 internal Emergency was declared which spelt the gravest threat to Indian democracy since independence. 1975-77 will always remain as the darkest period in the history of free India. It was characterized by repression, censorship of the press, the imprisonment of the leaders of the opposition, sterilization of people and all sorts of torture of activists, artists and people in general. Naturally, the artists and writers like Rushdie, Shashi Tharoor, Rohinton Mistry, Nayantara Sahgal and many others felt a shock as they thought that the declaration of Emergency dealt a heavy blow to the secular democratic institution of free India. It was a dream of the nation insufficiently dreamed as Rushdie felt. In other words, the history of the postcolonial India, rather than of the sub-continent, was a story of the broken promises if one calls to mind Indian Prime Minister Nehru's midnight speech.

Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance* is amenable to postcolonial readings as it deals explicitly with historical and political realities. Lacking R.K. Narayan's sense of local detail, operating at the level of upper-class, modernized urban India, Mistry shows a powerful awareness of the ties of family, caste and religion stretching back to

the earlier colonial, even medieval times when inhuman hierarchy of caste-system subjected the subaltern classes of India like Chamars and Bhangis to a state of extreme poverty and brutality. His work displays the complex determining force of history rather than a monolithic version of reality.

One of the most striking trends in the Indian novel in English has been its tendency to reclaim or re-live the nation's histories. Naturally Mistry's novel has attached a definable historical weight to its narrative. There are digressions and indigenous orality which mark the discourse.

> In their village, the tailors used to be cobblers, that is, their family belonged to the Chamar caste of tanners and leather-workers. But long ago, long before Omprakash was born, when his father Narayan and his uncle Ishvar, were still young boys of ten and twelve, the two were sent by their father to be apprenticed as tailors. (95)

The father is Dukhi Mochi. The name 'Dukhi' suggests penury and pain. Dukhi's friends feared for the family.

> And consternation was general throughout the village. Someone had dared to break the timeless chain of caste, retribution was bound to be swift. Dukhi Mochi has gone mad, they lamented.

This is our own homegrown racism. Dukhi Mochi's two sons entered the premises of the village school meant for upper-caste children out of curiosity. For such a blasphemy, masterji slapped them again and again till his hand was sore. "'Get the cane from the cupboard,' he ordered a girl. The cane was presented and the teacher asked four older students to hold the trespassers (Dukhi's sons) to the ground, face down, by their hands and ankles. He commenced the punishment, alternating strokes between the two. . . . When the two had received a dozen strokes each, the teacher stopped. He panted. 'Now get out, don't let your unclean faces be seen here ever again'" (111).

Ishvar and Narayan ran off limping, their faces swollen. The father Dukhi Mochi demanding justice turned to the upper-caste headman. Pandit Lalluram who was not just any ordinary Brahmin but Chit-Pavan Brahmin—descended from the purest among the pure, from the keepers of sacred knowledge. Lalluram's judgement is no different. There are four varnas in society. Each of us belongs to one of these four varnas and they cannot mix. Otherwise there would be chaos in the universe. Dukhi Mochi's children deserve ter-

rible beating as they entered the class room, polluted the place, touched the instruments of learning (slates and chalks) which upper caste children would touch. Dukhi was calm as he touched Lalluram's sandals to take his leave.

On the other side of the social ladder, is Ashraf Chacha who is a Muslim tailor in town and runs a tailoring shop. Ashrof extends fraternal love to Dukhi, his comrade, and at his instance, Dukhi's sons learn the trade and become tailors. This is a march on the footprints of time and history and then India passes through colonial time. Leaders of Indian National Congress address the crowd and Dukhi and Ashraf join one such meeting. Speakers preached Mahatma's message of truth and non-violence and requested the crowd to pledge that they would expunge all caste-prejudices from their thoughts, words and deeds. It was not only a struggle for freedom from the British. It was more importantly a struggle against the evil of untouchability. After one such meeting Dukhi observes, "I wonder," said Dukhi to Ashraf, "if the Zamindars in our villages would ever clap for a speech about getting rid of the caste-system."

"They would clap, and go on in the same old way," said Ashraf. "The devil has stolen their sense of justice, nah—they cannot see or feel" (108). This is a critical view of the freedom struggle from below and as a result of which there is a compromise vis-à-vis the truncated independence achieved in August 1947. Our freedom struggle suffered from in-built flow.

Let us look at Fanon. Various anti-colonial critical theories have been influential among the oppressed peoples of the world but "*The Wretched of the Earth* has spoken more directly, profoundly and lastingly than any other single anti-colonial work on behalf of and to the colonized" (Walder 73). As Mistry's text exemplifies, only the veritable wretched of the earth, Dukhi Mochi and Ashraf Chacha, Dina Shroff (Dalal) and Ishvar and his nephew Omprakash retained sufficient sense of community and self-value to reclaim their country and their dignity by, as per Fanon's suggestion, violence. This was not done and colonial bourgeois remained tied to the privileges they had enjoyed under foreign rule and hence their support to the corrupt postcolonial Governing class. With Algerian revolution as the model for successful independence struggle, Fanon advocates the violent overthrow of colonial regimes as the only solution to the problem of the "continued existence of exploitative structures in the postcolonial situation" (Walder: 75). The postcolonial downward

drift of democratic institutions resulting in the declaration of Emergency in 1975 may partially be explained with reference to the post-national events. During the late 1950s and 1960s Fanon shaped an account of the consequences of colonization which developed both Marxist and psychoanalytic strands of western thought, primarily in two books—*Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*. This is really the major problem we live with today in the de-colonized world, of the expansion of neo-colonial, global structures and the difficulties of overcoming the tensions inherited from the colonial situation.

A Fine Balance is another portrayal of change and decadence in the country and the focus of action is the city by the sea, that is Bombay. Thousands of people are coming to the city because of bad times in their native places. Rajaram, the barber, comes for the same reason. Ishvar and his nephew Omprakash, the tailors, come for a job under Mrs. Dina Dalal, popularly called Dina Aunty. Mistry is able to create fictional figures who inhabit a real world. This is India under the draconian rules of the Emergency. Small people have small dreams in life, but their hopes are crushed under the heavy weight of the hours. An application for ration-card cannot be considered by the Rations Officer as Om and Ishvar could not mention a locatable address in the application form. Let us look at the conversation that follows:

'If you let me arrange for your vasectomy, your application can be approved instantly.'

'Vasectomy?'

'You know, for Family Planning. The nussbandhi procedure.'

'Oh, but I already did that,' lied Ishvar.

'Show me your F.P.C.'

'F.P.C.'

'Family planning certificate.'

'But I don't have that,' thinking quickly, he said, 'in our native place there was a fire in the hut. Everything was destroyed.'

'That's not a problem. The doctor I send to you will do it again as a special favour and give you a new certificate.'

'Same operation, two times? Is not that bad.'

'Lots of people do it twice. Brings more benefits. Two transistor radios.'

'Why would I need two radios?' smiled Ishvar. 'Do I listen to two different stations, one with each ear? '

'Look, if the harmless little operation frightens you, send this young fellow. All I need is a sterilization certificate.'

> 'But he is only seventeen! He has to marry, have some children before his nuss is disconnected' (177).

The officer requires promotion in service and Om, Ishvar's nephew, is castrated after repeated brutal operations and so is the dream of a happy home shattered. With amputated limbs, both the uncle and nephew turn beggars and one carries another upon shoulder—a fine balance indeed.

In this vein of political critique, Mistry composes his novel *A Fine Balance* dwelling upon numerous disturbing facets of the 1975 emergency in India cutting through the tight net that holds the businessman, the politician and the bureaucrat in a shared corruption of values. Mistry still found the emotional energy to create an idealist Parsi woman Dina Aunty. This young woman retains the integrity she admired in her doctor father, now dead. She refuses to bend her values to the demands of an authoritarian landlord. She as a girl did not surrender her freedom to her bullying brother after the death of her father. Dina, capable, introspective and forthright suffers numerous setbacks in her career and personal life. Defying her brother, she married Rustam Dalal who died by a road accident on the third anniversary of her marriage when in the evening he was out to buy chocolates for the sons of his wife's brother. She does not compromise and does not leave her husband's small flat but retains her composure all through life. Her brother sees her as stubborn and self-destructive individual. Dina, in her turn, experiences in anguish the widespread anarchy unleashed by the Emergency, forced sterilization, gang warfare, political suppression, violence and bribery—Mistry touches upon details which are still fresh in the memory of his readers.

Through all his movement and change, Dina believes in stable values of personal loyalty, friendship and love. She acts as the angel of hope to Ishvar and Om. She arranges the bridal bed in the veranda of her small flat and waits eagerly for Om and his wife. Om has gone to his native place to marry a sweet girl from his community. Inhuman face of Emergency undid everything. Om returns to Dina aunty, a eunuch who has nothing else to do but begging till he breathes his last.

Emergency was lifted by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and election was declared. She lost to the opposition; the Janata Party was voted to power as an emblem of freedom. It was an epiphany. This victory brought home to each Indian the need to guard democ-

racy. The emergency served as a warning to each Indian to act as an effective watchdog lest the past repeats itself. At the top of it all Indira Gandhi's presence looms large in the novel. The reader is reminded of the indulgence she displayed to her playboy entrepreneur son Sanjay, who emerged during the emergency as the leader of India's new western oriented business elite and whose words and actions were reported "almost as extensively as those of his mother in the carefully controlled and censored press" (Wolpert 401). Although emergency frames the action, the narrative imagines it as a moment within an immense and varied history. The circling, digressive structure, within which stories are folded within stories, suggests indigenous narrative tradition although Mistry's skilful deployment of free indirect speech and stream of consciousness technique may derive from modernist western tradition. In the last chapter of the novel "Epilogue 1984," the narrative comes full circle. The assassination of Mrs. Gandhi, the massacre of Sikhs in Delhi in 1984, the call of Khalistan and outcries of fundamentalism are disturbing events. These have worked to reaffirm the need for national integration and recognition of plurality. Novels of 1980s reflect the theme of the mixed Indian tradition. The controlling temper of the new Indian novel is synthesis.

In fine, we may say that Mistry in his *A Fine Balance* addresses the real postcolonial constituency, presents his own perspective of India to the Indians which is more important than addressing the west or trying to modify the view of the west about India.

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Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*: A Study in Multiculturalism

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Basically, a postmodern phenomenon, Multiculturalism is a product of globalisation. It also involves a certain transnationalism, a state of existence from where national boundaries have disappeared. It is the recognition of the people's ethnicity, religion, linguistic backgrounds and sexual orientations. Multiculturalism is a multifaceted reality and it has different dimensions of experience. Identity, and with it self-respect, is clearly one of then; a sense of belonging is another; a sense of locality, or a commitment to a place is a third; and a fourth is a sense of history arising out of a link to the post traced through kinship and family tradition. Globalisation has unleashed migration and the dislocation of population is a necessary fallout. The dislocation can be of diverse kinds: physical, psychological and emotional. Jasbir Jain in her Introduction to the book *Dislocations and Multiculturalisms* says, "But no dislocation is ever complete, terminal or permanent in itself. There is always a looking back in some may or the other. This may be through memory, recollection, history, parallels or differences. Cultural memories have a tendency to surface again and again and establish a connection with the future, they do not allow the individual to snap ties with the past. Histories govern power relations and intervene with the construction of the 'present.'

The Shadow Lines by Amitav Ghosh is a kaleidoscopic world of different cultures, tours and travels. It also portrays a world torn asunder by history. Through an intricate web of memories, relationships and images, Amitav Ghosh builds a vivid and moving story. It's unlike the novel of previous era, firstly because it's not linear in narration. The interaction of Indians with English people, their journey to and fro, the issues of political freedom and the forces of nationalism that this throws up has been very vividly described.

The first impression one gets in reading this novel is that the people described belong to so many different nationalities, cultures and backgrounds. The very opening of the novel describes the writer's aunt Mayadebi going to England with her husband and son. This was in 1939 and since then the interaction with them and separation from them has been projected through memories. Through the

cinematic technique of flashback, the action moves to and fro from London to Calcutta and to Khulna and Dhaka. With the world moving at break-neck speed, it is no longer possible for any writer to write the novel in a Jane Austen fashion, with its setting in the circumference of 50 kilometres from the centre of her place.

It is clearly a transnational world of complex relationships and images. The writer imagines Tridib, the son of Mayadebi to be like himself but the grandmother immediately perceives difference between him and Tridib. The grandmother thinks he looks different, all her native intelligence cannot come to terms with the distance, his foreignness and his English education. This inability to identify with Tridib and his family though related by blood is clearly her failure to identify with the members of her own family and therefore she calls Tridib a loafer and a wastrel. Time and space for her is a single dimensional entity. It is never the complex reality of an international existence that the people of the twentieth century are made to live.

The writer an enlightened fellow and a product of the modern generation clearly doesn't suffer from the grandmother's limitations, intellectual or otherwise. The compass of his experiential world is wide enough where differences merge into similarities. His perception is clearly global. His intelligence is catholic enough to admit differences without creating any hostilities. The writer particularly likes Tridib's capacity of visualization. Tridib in his imagination can touch the Great pyramid whereas Ila has been all around the world without seeing anything. Tridib can easily sound the note of casual self-mockery and the listeners are left to wonder whether they should take him at face value or believe its opposite. Tridib clearly allows his world to drift by; he doesn't display a hegemonistic view of looking at the world. A student of archaeology with a lot of respect for his studies, Tridib understands history and its power to shape the present and future. History doesn't intimidate him, on the contrary he absorbs it and this is what draws the writer to Tridib.

Calcutta, in this novel, is the nucleus of the entities of time and space. Calcutta combines in itself the east and the west, the past and the future and the temporal and the timeless. It is from here that people immigrate to other countries, to London, Dhaka and Khulna and it is here again they mingle together, sometimes in person and sometimes in memory. In a way, it is a locality, but in another term it is the power centre. It expresses therefore, the dialectics of domi-

nance. It is through this place that the writer's family casts its network of influence far and wide. Tridib's father occupies an important position of a diplomat, an officer in a foreign service, his brother is an economist in U.N. Tridib is already a Ph.D. student in archaeology.

Calcutta is the hub from where the exploration of rich interrelationships commenced. It is also the meeting point of different people of different cultures and nationalities. Mrs. Price and her family gravitate towards Calcutta as the writer's family gravitates towards London. Tridib's atlas showed the writer 'that within the tiny ordering of Euclidean space, Chiang Mai in Thailand was much nearer Calcutta than Delhi is; 'Tridib went on redrawing the map of most of the Asian countries and came to wonderful conclusions. But it is an irony that killed Tridib that compelled the writer to say: 'When the places we know as Dhaka and Calcutta were more closely bound to each other than after they had drawn their lines—so closely that I, in Calcutta, had only to look into the mirror to be in Dhaka, a moment when each city was the inverted image of the other, locked into an irreversible symmetry by the line that was to set us free—our looking-glass border.' (232)

The Shadow Lines is a complex rendering of the heterogeneous world the writer found around himself. Memories, flashbacks, images, some of them sensual like playing the house under the table, of the 'Ladies' at Cairo airport or the great pyramid seen by Tridib and moving to and fro in time and space are some of the devices employed by the writer to capture the multicultural reality of the modern world.

The shadow Lines can therefore be called a pathbreaking attempt to deal with a multi-cultural world.

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W.S. Maugham as a Versatile Genius

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Maugham's versatility is amply reflected in his stories, novels, dramas and other miscellaneous writings. Being a gifted and talented writer, he has shown not only originality but also variety in all these fields. He has enjoyed a tremendous popularity during his life time. Even today, Maugham's versatile genius is being recognized, appreciated and established. He is not deep and subtle; he does not claim to be either. He is a traveller and an adventurer of life with great zest and enthusiasm. He has seen and enjoyed life—the sophisticated Western Parisian life primarily with all its colour, charms, pattern and elegance. Being fed up with its hollowness and transitoriness, he has had a pining for peace and inner tranquillity in the lap of the East. Sex in modern life has become a very important factor. He talks of different situations, people and episodes in order to paint them with variety and versatility. With his clear and lucid expression, his portrayal of this vast life—human follies, behaviour, sex and a normal struggle for existence becomes enjoyable.

In the realm of stories, Maugham has displayed a versatility thematically as well as technically. Suspense is maintained throughout. Consequently, the stories are entertaining and delightful. "Maugham's books have long had an excellent sale. By the middle of 1950, according to his American publishers, a total of 4,339,520 copies of the various editions of his novels, stories and plays had been sold."[1] As Swinnerton says: "Maugham caught a sudden glimpse of the field in which his greatest triumphs have been gained. It so happened that as Kipling had ceased effectively to write short stories, about the East; there was a wonderful opening for the teller of tales round the fire in the cavern."[2]

Social satires are full of wit, fun, pun and sarcasm. The element of the ridiculous is also present in them. Maugham has his peculiar gains for the presentation of these elements. Actually, these factors are found almost in all his stories. For our convenience, we have made this classification. 'The Luncheon' is one of the most entertaining stories of Maugham. It is a rare blend of wit, satire, and humour. Maugham's treatment of male vanity and female gluttony is

not only satirical but also psychological and humorous. The young author was lost in dreams after getting a woman's letter of praise. He readily consented to give a luncheon party to his female guest in the costliest restaurant, Foyot's, where French senators ate. He could not say 'no' to a woman at his young age. He fell from the sky to the ground after meeting her: "She was not so young as I expected and in appearance imposing rather than attractive."[3] She was not sweet sixteen, but a woman of fifty "(a charming age, but not one that excites a sudden and devastating passion at first sight)."[4] This comment of Maugham is psychological as well as satirical, having a tremendous appeal of its own.

'The Facts of Life' satirises a father's over-confidence in himself. The younger generation is out-smarting the older one. It is a bitter and universal truth. Henry Garnet advises his young son Micholas when he goes out for the first time to take part in sports' tournament not to gamble, lend money to any one and not to have any intercourse with any woman. He does all the three tactfully and comes back victoriously. The boy is lucky. Hence, the father is beaten. The story has peculiar situations which have been handled artistically. The boy sleeps with the lady in the hotel, enjoys her, keeps a watch on her and pays her in the same coin. That is the smartness and cleverness of the younger generation. Maugham takes up the peculiar situation and gives it a unique turn with mystery and suspense.

In 'The Ant and the Grasshopper,' the moral that hard work is rewarded and giddiness punished has been humorously and satirically shown. George Ramsay, the symbolic Ant of the story, is put to a great disappointment by his younger brother Tom Ramsay's (the typical Grasshopper) free-lancing, cleverness, charming manners and the ultimate luck; Maugham mystifies his readers by giving queer turns to the set notion of convention and morality. We are not only stunned but also amused heartily.

In 'Winter Cruise,' the innate biological need of a woman has been depicted with satire and humour. The story is full of farcical situations but they are relevant to life and human weakness. Miss Reid, like the lady in 'The Luncheon,' has her own vanity and egoism. The crew of the ship was over-bored by her talks and commentary. Ultimately, the Radio operator was selected by them to satisfy her requirements. Since she took him to her bed-room, she was a different woman—calm, quiet and balanced.

'The Bum' casts satire on a writer who is penalised by society for his vanity and arrogance. He gives up his job in order to become a writer. He was a man of high spirits, over-confidence and tremendous vitality. He ultimately becomes a beggar; "Life had taken him, rent him on its racks, torn him limb from limb, and then flung him, a bleeding wreck, on the stone steps of that church."[5] Finally, the beggar was not seen because he had a sense of self-respect.

'Rain' is a story of morality very psychologically written by Maugham. The conflict between sin and virtue, morality and immorality is universal. Even a dedicated and devout religious person falls a prey to the irresistible charm of a dancing girl Miss Thomson and ultimately commits suicide out of self-condemnation and remorse. In 'The 'Lion's Skin' Captain Forestier poses to be a gentleman. By showing his gallantry he wants to be established as a gentleman. He gives his life for saving the dog of his wife. By giving him life, he has proved his bona fides.

Thus, Maugham's stories have variety in themes, characterization, dialogues, atmosphere painting. As he is well-versed with men and manners, his portrayal of men, women, situation, love, romance, sex, frailty, hypocrisy, sensuality, Eastern, and Western landscape is pleasantly exciting. He wields facile pen with an eye for the minutest details. He changes and moulds his pattern according to his situation, theme, character and motive. The impact of war is also the back-drop of some of his stories. Consequently, his stories reveal his varied and versatile genius.

As a novelist also, Maugham displays his versatile genius. His novels are remarkable for their variety of themes, situations, characterization, flexibility of style and versatility in landscape-painting. Europe is the setting of most of his novels, The East is symbolized as a dreamland of peace, tranquility and an escape from the Western civilization. In spite of Wordsworthian touches, Maugham is original in the treatment of this subject. He very artistically handles this basic theme of his novels with variety, colour imagination and acumen. Consequently, his landscape-painting is marked for its poetry, liveliness, accuracy and appropriateness. It is one of the greatest qualities of Maugham, as novelist. For example, *Liza of Lambeth* incarnates the slum-life of London, *Up at the Villa*—the fashionable and romantic life of Florence, *The Moon and Six Pence*—the life of Paris and Tahiti, *Of Human Bondage* of London, Heidelberg and

Paris etc. There is beauty in diversity. Maugham paints the landscape according to his requirement.

The themes of Maugham are also varied—love and sex, a revolt against tradition and a conventional struggle for existence, human ambition and finally the enjoyment of life. Maugham is incapable of dealing with the varieties and intricacies of love, his treatment is elegant and superficial. He does not go deep into love-psychology like Hardy, Joyce, Virginia Woolf and Lawrence. Love with the rich aristocratic Western class is a hobby for sex-enjoyment. Marriage is just a matter of convenience; it is broken any time. Wealth, status, standard and novelty are the requirements of this society. Maugham excels in the depiction of this society, this theme is told in his novels with variety and diversity. He is superior to Congreve and Sheridan in this field. The themes of love and sex become fascinating in his hands. Another beauty is that he is nowhere obscene and vulgar. He is suggestive and decent. He is unbeatable and unrivalled in this field. A rich and colourful widow's passion for sex, love and enjoyment is realistically, elegantly and authentically painted. *Liza of Lambeth* and *Up at the Villa* are fine examples of love and sex. The presentation is full of suspense, humour and liveliness.

An artist's ambition is presented in *The Moon and Six Pence*. Strickland fed-up with six pence or business revolts against it and goes to the Moon or the East for his fulfilment as a painter. This exquisite theme has been exquisitely painted. Maugham once again has shown his originality. His sex-indulgence crosses all norms of morality and decency. Generally, this is a universal phenomenon with an artist, Strickland being no exception.

Of Human Bondage—the most inspiring novel symbolizes a crippled orphan's struggle for existence. Maugham has dealt the theme with gusto and autobiographical touches. Consequently, it becomes lyrical, appealing and poignant. Philip comes across bad women, enjoys them; Mildred tortures him but ultimately, he marries Sally after becoming a doctor. The novel embodies Maugham's scientific and balanced approach to life. Depth is missing, but Maugham's handling of human struggle, crossing the sea of life through sex and humour, is logical and inspiring as well as entertaining.

Maugham's themes and settings are artistically harmonized. In *Up at the Villa*, Mary Panton is obsessed with an infatuation for the hilly beauty of Florence with all its sophistication, hotels, parties,

ladies and gentleman, romancing and the final mirage of life—fears, murders, suicides and inner remorse etc. In *The Liza of Lambeth* the setting and the theme co-relate with each other, Liza's sex indulgence is a part of that sort of life. Free enjoyment is a common feature, scandalisation, exposure and ultimate quarrels—all common and relevant.

In *The Moon and Six Pence*—the Parisian life symbolizes business, routine life, family wealth and so on. In *Of Human Bondage*, London is the main setting. It is a place of constant stirring and activity in spite of many hurdles; Philip is perfectly in tune with this place ever striving and ever going ahead of course, with ups and downs and dreams for the East in his heart and soul. Maugham has his expertise in presenting themes symbolically with his settings. The harmony among settings and themes is uniformly maintained.

In the realm of characterization also, Maugham exhibits his variety with originality and momentum. He has always liked the rebel who stands against conventions and struggles for existence. He has his individuality unlike the pocket-sized hero. "It is also noteworthy that those who challenge convention are always men, for only men, in his eyes, are capable, of sacrificing themselves for a dream."[6] Charles Strickland is among his most fascinating and impressive heroes. He gives up the routine life of business property and family happiness for the achievement of his inner aim. He wants his fulfillment by becoming a painter; therefore, he eschews Western civilization in order to embrace Eastern culture. Ultimately, he succeeds in his aim. After his death, he becomes famous and his genius is recognized by the lovers of art. Philip is another favourite hero of Maugham having autobiographical resemblances. Although a crippled orphan, he never surrenders to his circumstances but goes on struggling against them and finally comes out of them with flying colours.

In the portrayal of female characters, Maugham has variety and diversity. Different types of women have been portrayed. Herein lies his special expertise. There are some traditional, vindictive and hypocritical type of women. Among them are Mrs. Strickland, Mrs. Driffield in *Cakes and Ale* and Mrs. Garstin in *The Painted Veil*: they are cold, grasping, petty, vindictive and hypocritical.'[7] Mildred in *Of Human Bondage* and Blanche in *The Moon and Six Pence* are bad and sexy women who are the blots on the fair name of women. Sally in *Of Human Bondage* and Ata in *The Moon and Six Pence* are

good and submissive women symbolizing the personalities of their lover-husbands. Thus, they help their ambitious husbands in accomplishing their respective tasks. Mary Panton in *Up at the Villa* is also a fascinating romantic lady who suffers for her dreamy desire and sexual enjoyment in the night. But she fascinates us for her colour, beauty and enthusiasm. Maugham's study of female characters is unparallelled.

In dialogue-delivery also, Maugham is versatile. It is natural, spontaneous and befitting. The dialogues have a sweetness, wit, sparkle and colour of their own. They help not only the characterization but also the total impact and universal appeal. The titles of his novels also are apt, suggestive and meaningful. Maugham's specialty lies in the comic portrayal of life with all gaiety, joy and sexual enjoyment.

Maugham's novels have vitality, exuberance and passion for life. His naturalism is also effective and fascinating. His compassion for his characters provides them life, vitality and warmth. Maugham is interested in human nature; therefore, he seldom gives autobiographical touches. He universalizes the picture of life with a blend of fact and fiction. 'Somerset Maugham is the cultured English traveller who wherever he goes, is interested in the study of human nature without any restriction as to nationality.'[8] However, he is concerned with the English character the most. "He is convinced that as an Englishman he will never quite succeed in understanding and portraying other peoples realistically."[9] Maugham's portrayal of life and delineation of characters has universal appeal with a great factor of entertainment.

As a dramatist also, Maugham has shown his variety and versatility. His brilliant comedies have enjoyed an immense popularity for their variety of themes, versatility of characterization, mastery of the technique like dialogue, landscape-painting and the total impact. Maugham has enjoyed the greatest popularity as a dramatist. He has a great solicitude for technical perfection: 'A lofty purpose will not serve you so well as competent technique."[10] Maugham's dramas can be classified, although it is a difficult job because 'drama is essentially a literary form, but a literary form which requires, for its communication, all the theatrical elements of performance.' [11] Drama can be classified according to their forms—viz. comedy, farce, tragedy and melodrama. But people may interpret things in their own way, a comedy may be called a farce or vice-versa.

Nicoll, therefore, observes that we are able 'to frame a very tough classification of the majority of plays always remembering the fact—that the one class can almost imperceptibly fade into the other.'[12] According to Peacock, drama 'is a mixture.'[13] Plays can be classified on the medium of presentation. They can be presented through the theatre, or on the wireless and television or the video. They can be broadcast on the radio also. They may be theatrical or non-theatrical. Nicoll Further observes: "A play exists in and for itself."[14]

In the realm of comedies, Maugham is brilliant and he has made a tremendous contribution. According to Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson, he gave "thirty two plays"[15] out of them thirty are comedies, a few are farces and some are tragedies. Maugham gradually developed his art and achieved worldwide eminence.

NOTES

1. W. Klaus Jones, "The Gentleman from Cap Ferrat," *The World of Somerset Maugham* (London, Peter Owen, 1959).
2. Frank Swinnerton, "Somerset Maugham as Writer," p. 17.
3. W.S. Maugham, *The Complete Short Stories*, 3 Vols. (London, William Heinemann 1952), pp. 53, 55.
4. W.C. Kuner, "Maugham and the West," *The World of Somerset Maugham*, p. 39.
5. W.S. Maugham, *A Writer's Notebook* (London: Peter Owen, 1949).
6. Raymond Williams, *Drama from Ibsen to Eliot* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1961).
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"I must never behave as though I am staying": Shifting Identities in V.S. Naipaul's *Half a Life*

SUREKHA DANGWAL and KUSUM LATA

Shifts in locations and epistemic status are theoretically crucial in determining the status of an 'identity' and its articulations. 'Identity' as a concept is much larger, for it is sited beyond minority and majority discourses. In V.S. Naipaul's writings, the construction of 'identity' is one of the most hotly disputed issues among literary critics. He has been described as a writer who is fascinated with borders, including those between literature and reality. The paper is an attempt to study Naipaul's works with a renewed interest of origins and political complexities not of a race or a nation but of an individual.

The paper goes on to examine Naipaul's *Half a Life* (2001)—the story of Willie Somerset Chandran. His name itself raises various queries in his mind and he works hard to re-invent himself. In his mental and physical journey, Willie does not remain fixed and comes across various frustrations and sensations. Wherever he goes he finds himself an outsider. The other characters in the novel too have mixed origins and split existence. The novel opens with Willie's contemplation: "I don't know where I am. I don't think I can pick my way back. I don't ever want this view to become familiar. I must never behave as though I am staying." With the stress on shifting identities, the protagonist realizes that "Life doesn't have a neat beginning and a tidy end. Life is always going on" (83). The paper focuses on the issues of identity and complexities that shape the world of V.S. Naipaul.

The present paper is an attempt to prove that one's origin, his/her experiences, his/her education and the environment of his/her early life affect one's personality and identity with the help of Naipaul's novel *Half a Life*. The study of the forty-one years of the life of Willie Somerset Chandran, the protagonist of the novel, shows how his origin and his early life are responsible for the crisis of his identity and how he suffers throughout his life because of it. In the words of Erikson, a famous psychologist, identity crisis can

be defined as a loss of the sense of personal sameness and historical continuity. It is this very feeling that makes people alienated and displaced. They cannot make balance between jumping at opportunities as soon as they are presented to them. They cannot work steadily and patiently towards their long-term goals and they do not feel consistency in their self-image and the image they present to others. They are always doubtful about the success of what they choose to do and feel that they have no set of basic social, philosophical, or religious values they can follow and make their outlook.

Willie's unusual origin and his experiences in early life make him feel alienated and uprooted. All these facts have affected Willie's mind to such an extant that he is not able to settle down anywhere. He lacks confidence and can not take decision at the right time. He always regrets for his decisions. His unusual origin and past compel him to recreate his identity and personality hiding his family background. He has no aim in his life and is always doubtful about his future. He is confused and dissatisfied.

The experiences of Willie in his childhood have not been good. The mind of Willie is highly affected by the knowledge of his own origin, his parents' status in the society, his relationship to his parents, his education at missionary school and the society he is living in. All these factors affect his perspective to look at the world and himself. His unusual past remained with him throughout his life and makes him unfit for everything he decides to do and throughout his life he moves to one place after another in the search of his identity and place where he could feel completeness. But Willie could not make his own identity.

Willie's origin is the biggest factor which affects him to such an extent that throughout his life he tries to hide his background because he feels ashamed of his half status, a son of a Brahmin father and low caste mother which his father has given to him. He feels that he neither belongs to his father nor to his mother. This very feeling makes him feel alienated and displaced throughout his life. His origin leads him to leave India because he wants to get away from all that he belongs to.

His relationship with his parents also affects his mind. Willie as a child was very close to his mother and was highly influenced by her. He has a soft corner for his mother. His mother's humiliation in the society because of her caste leads him to hate his father and other brahmins.

The name of a person is an important part of his personality. It is one's name that shows his background, his distinguished place in the world and his relationship to a particular group or community etc. It is a well known fact that one's cultural identity is formed with the combination of his individual identity and his belonging to a group or culture, known as collective identity. Half of Willie's name is borrowed from the name of famous writer W. Somerset Maugham. His first name proclaims him as a Christian, whereas, his surname signifies his Hindu ancestry. He feels ashamed when his classmates at mission school mock at him because of his name:

> Willie Chandran asked his father one day, 'Why is my middle name Somerset? The boys at school have just found out, and they are mocking me.'
>
> His father said without joy: "You were named after a great English writer. I am sure you have seen his books about the house." (1)

It is this very question of Willie that leads his father to relate the story of Willie's origin and his own pathetic mislead. From his father, Willie comes to know that he is the product of the marriage of Brahmin father and low caste mother. Willie's father who "comes from the line of priests" (5) and "had some little imp of rebellion" (7) in him was worried about his insecurity because he was doubtful for the future of Maharaja's state in the light of freedom movement. So in order to assert his own identity and individuality he decides to follow the 'ideal of sacrificing life' presented by Mahatma Gandhi before the youths of India. Willie's father decided "nothing less than to make a sacrifice of [myself]. Not an empty sacrifice, the act of moment—any fool can jump a bridge or to throw himself in front of a train—but a more lasting kind of sacrifice, something Mahatma would have approved of" (10). This is why he decides to turn his back on his ancestry and on the hopes and on the hopes of the college principal who wanted him to marry his daughter. For this purpose Willie's father chose "a girl at the university" (11) who "was small and coarse-featured, almost tribal in appearance, noticeably black" (11) and "belonged to a backward caste" (11) with whom he decided to "make a declaration to and in her company live out a life of sacrifice" (12). But as a consequences of this act, in spite of belonging to a good family, with a promising future, he turned to be a "mendicant on the alms of the poorest of the poor" (5) which he thinks was the only escape he could see for the foolish predicament

he got himself into and found himself "caught between the devil and deep blue sea in every direction" (26).

Having no option, Willie's father left his home, dressed himself as priests and went to the temple barefooted and barebacked. There he declared himself mendicant. Having nothing to say or being unable to explain himself, he also took a vow of silence and became a holy man. At this time he got a chance to impress the foreign writer Somerset Maugham, who came to India for getting the material for his novel about spirituality. The writer recounts their meeting in his book, *The Razor's Edge* and foreign critics began to see in him "the spiritual source of the book" (3).

Willie's father regretted all his life for his decision because the relationship spoiled all the prospects of his bright and secure career. He also regretted for his loss of identity in his attempt to create an identity for himself and bring shame for his family:

> I was ashamed of her as much as my father and mother and the principal, and people of our sort generally were ashamed of me. This shame was always with me, the little unhappiness always at the back of my mind, like an incurable illness, corrupting all my moments, all my triumphs. . . . I began—though it might seem strange to say so—to take refuge in my melancholy became so much part of my character that for long periods I could forget the cause. (33)

He also regretted fathering the children of mixed origin because he thought the children belong partly to him and partly to their mother. He inwardly thinks himself guilty of them and his heart sunk for this act. The following lines of Willie's father reveal his poignant feelings: "A little later, as he started to grow up, I would look at him without saying anything and feel myself close to tears. I would think, 'Little Willie, little Willie, what I have done to you? Why I forced this taint on you?' And then I would think, 'But this is nonsense. He is not you or yours. His face makes that plain. You have forced no taint on him. Whatever you gave him has disappeared in his wider inheritance.'" (33-34) The acknowledgement of his origin leads Willie to despise his father for giving him and his sister a half status which leads to his half life in the half world.

Some other factors also exercise significant role in Willie's identity crisis. For example, in his childhood Willie was very much attached to his mother and had soft corner for her. His mother's account of her experiences also affects Willie's mind and plays a significant role in forming his views about the society and culture of

India. The caste system prevailing in India is the main factor of his hatred for his country of birth. Willie comes to know about his mother's humiliation at school, she had to face caste and class prejudices of the teachers and servant of the school there. She was ill treated there. Once when she wanted water she was provided water in "a rusty old tin" (38) because she belonged to backward class while the children of the caste were provided water in "brass vessel" (33) while the Muslims and Christians were offered "aluminum one" (38). His mother's account of her experiences affects him very much; this makes him negative about his father's people and the Indian society. In other words, we can say that Willie inherited his mother's hatred towards the people of upper caste. It forms one of the bases for Willie's wish to get away from India, his birthplace.

The impression of all these incidents has always been on Willie's mind. He always feels alienated, uprooted and displaced even in his own place because of his origin, experiences, education and society. His origin functioned as a matter of shame for him, "the past . . . instead of functioning as a source of certainty and true understanding . . . often generates fear and shame" (Gikandi 72). His past prepares the background for his "half-life in half-made societies with the people who are themselves leading a life which is half-discovered, half-realized and half-lived" (Chaubey 1). Even Willie's father is not able to understand Willie's state of mind:

> I used to think that you were me and I was worried at what I had done to you. But now I know that you were not me. What is in my head is not in yours. You are somebody else, somebody I don't know, and I worry for you because you are launched on a journey I know nothing of. (49)

Disappointed from all sides and uprooted from his own culture, Willie decides to go to London "to get away from what he knew" (51) with no idea for his future. Tripathi rightly remarks, "[h]e aimlessly floats like a survivor of the shipwreck, trying to find security but finds none anywhere" (221). In spite of efforts to get used to the new environments of London, Willie is overtaken by the feeling of alienation.

The fact that one's background always remains with him is also true in the case of Willie. Willie tries to pick up the ways and habits of London and Africa but his background affects his growth and achievements of his life. The view is supported by Naipaul in his interview with Farrukh Dhondy: "My concern in the book is also the

historical side of things. Willie runs away from his background and even when he gets to Africa, this Portuguese province—he is reminded of the background from which he came."

All the time Willie feels that his shameful background is with him. In London he finds that the college was "full of various pieces of tradition, that the teachers and students were proud of but couldn't explain . . . the old rules were of make-believe" (59). So in order to make a place in this world of make believe, to find out his face to manage his development, he decides to reconstruct a background on which he can set his new life. He feels that "[h] e could, within reason remake himself and his ancestry" (60). This wish makes Willie recognize that his knowledge about world he is living in is not sufficient. His ignorance seems to widen with everything he reads. He feels that the reason for his ignorance is his background. He feels he is swimming in ignorance and living without any knowledge of time. He contemplates:

> This habit of non-seeing I have got from my father. . . . He remembered one of things his mother's uncle used to say: that the backwards had been shut out for so long from society that they knew nothing of India, nothing of the other religions, nothing even of the people of caste, whose serfs they were. And he thought, 'this blankness is one of the things I have got from my mother's side.' (55)

Willie goes on inventing his newer self because of his hatred for his background, his half existence. In his attempt to free himself from his unusual background and past, he recreates/re-invents his past and ancestry. From his memory he draws information of former times but modifies that information according to what he believes is appropriate to his new life. "Memory does no more than to set a stage" (Manfred) and recalling his past, Willie alters the facts of his past and adopts the facts to the role that he is playing now, that of a college student in London. He first of all changes his mother's background. Seeing the newspapers full of news about the trade unions and remembering that his mother's uncle had been "the firebrand of the backwards" (60), he transforms him to "a kind of trade union leader, a pioneer of worker's right" (60). Because of his mother's education at the mission school, he sees her as "half a Christian" so he alters that speaking of his mother as a full Christian belonging to "an ancient Christian community of the subcontinent, a community almost as old as Christianity itself" (61). He keeps his father as 'courtier.' Further to disengage himself from the mission-

ary school, he adjusts his behaviour to certain things suited to the manners of the Christians from his memory and gets more stuck up in these creations of his own.

With his recreated background, Willie starts his new life in London. He was very happy with his new created self and gradually, "Willie was becoming part of the special, passing bohemian-immigrant life of London of the late 1950s" (72). There Willie comes into contact with a lot of people belonging to different races, who come to London to try their luck. He befriends Percy Cato and Roger who help him to get into the life of London.

In spite of all his efforts, Willie could not adopt the culture of London because of his uprootedness from his own culture. Naipaul is occupied with the crisis which arises out of a change of environment which is known as cultural shock. Naipaul is of the view that if a tree is torn off its roots and transplanted somewhere else the tree cannot form healthy roots and cannot be able to have normal growth. It needs soil and air of its birthplace. Similarly if a person is uprooted from his culture he cannot get into another culture and suffers a lot. One can find fulfillment only in his own culture.

Without having any idea of his future, aim, set principles, Willie Somerset Chandran decides to go to Africa, the country of Ana, an admirer of his book who was a half-Portuguese and half-American girl. The reason behind this decision was that the period of his scholarship was on its closing stage and then the college authority is going to throw him out: "My life is going to change completely. I will have to look for a place to stay. I will have to look for a job. It will be a different London then" (130). Ana comes into his life as a ray of hope, as a guide and protector: "I've been a fool; I've been waiting to be guided to where I should go. Waiting for a sign. And all this time the sign's been there. I must go with Ana to her country" (130). The very basis of Willie's attraction for Ana is that Willie finds similarity between her background and his own. In Ana, Willie discovers a kind of reciprocity. It is her 'half-ness' that strikes a bond with Willie. Willie thinks: "It was possible that she belonged to a mixed community or stood in some other kind of half and half position" (124).

In the company of Ana, Willie feels fulfilled. The 'half-ness' of Ana makes him forget his own 'half-ness.' It is her company that allows Willie peace, relief and strength to push back the shadow of his inadequacy. Before meeting Ana, Willie was leading a half-life.

He was in search of completeness: "And what was most intoxicating for Willie was that for the first time in his life he felt himself in the presence of someone who accepted him completely. At home his life had been ruled by his mixed inheritance. It spoilt everything." (125)

But he feels alienated in Africa too. He is not able to live a peaceful life. He feels himself "a parasite, a nowhere man and becomes woebegone" (134). Even on his way to Africa, Willie had doubts about his decision to accompany Ana to her country. He is in fear of losing his identity. The very idea of learning a new language to accommodate a new world arouses in him the fear of forgetting his own language and the English language, the language of his stories. He feels that in his attempt to search for completeness, he will lose even the half life which is within his reach.

Throughout his stay in Africa, he is reminded of his past. After sometime Willie begins to feel alienated in the "half and half world" (160) with "half and half friends who come to reconcile with their position as a people of the second rank." (161) He suffers the pangs of alienation and always feels that a stranger is always with him because of the uprootedness in his own culture. It is this unbelongingness from his own culture that makes Willie feel that he will not be able to settle down anywhere. Willie has kept ten pounds that he saved in London with him as "get away money" (157). The loss of passport shows the insecurity he always suffers from:

> The loss of passport worried me more than everything else. Without my passport I didn't see how I could prove to any official in Africa or England or India who I was. . . . Without my passport I had no credentials, no claim on anyone. I would be lost I wouldn't be able to move. The more I thought about it, the more unprotected I felt. For some days I could think of nothing else. It began to be like my torment, on the way out, all down the coast of Africa, about losing the gift of language. (157-58)

Even after spending eighteen years in Portuguese Africa, Willie could not get into this place and realizes that he must leave and join his sister who is living in Germany now. Although he realizes Ana's importance for him that "in spite of appearance, men really looking for women to lean on" (141) and admits "Ana was important for me because I depended on her for my ideas of being a man" (142) and also "we each found comfort in other; and became very close, not looking beyond the other for satisfaction, not knowing, in fact, that

another kind of satisfaction was possible" (189) but with the break-out of civil war in Portuguese Africa, Willie was taken over by the insecurity because the colony was about to explode into a bloody revolution. He at once feels that he is not living his own life. It is Ana's life he is living all the way: "I am tired of living your life" (227).

At the age of forty one, lamenting on his behaviour up to now, Willie in Berlin with his sister admits: "I have been hiding from myself. I have risked nothing. And now the best part of my life is over" (138). Willie's unusual past did not allow him to make relation with his own culture. He feels uprooted, alienated and displaced from his own roots. It does not allow him to settle him in other culture also. It reveals the fact that one's experiences and past can be responsible for the crisis of his/her identity if his/her experiences in his childhood are tormenting. Throughout his life Willie feels alienated and displaced. The following lines disclose his philosophy of life: "Willie thought, 'I don't know where I am. I don't think I can pick my back. I don't ever want this view to become familiar. *I must not unpack. I must never behave as though I am staying.*'" (my italics 135)

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A Search for Meaning in Namita Gokhale's *Paro: Dreams of Passion*

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Namita Gokhale came into limelight in the literary world after the publication of her book *Paro: Dreams of Passion* (1984). It is a frank exposition of decadent life style of the urban and suburban Indians. It depicts business class, politicians and ladies of metropolitan cities, who in the name of modernity and emancipation takes undue advantage of the freedom and spoil themselves.

Gokhale believes that a piece of work and literature should discuss the social issues and social evils. Literature mirrors society, its aim is not only to discuss but to reform the society. With the publication of her book *Paro: Dreams of Passion* Namita Gokhale received scathing criticism as the initial response of her book, perhaps because of her frank depiction and erotic elements. But she didn't put her pen aside rather she went on continued to prove herself a serious writer. No writer can live in isolation. His works mirror the period, the society in which he lives. Namita Gokhale is a writer who is concerned with society, she writes what she witnesses in society. But truth is always bitter. Paro a so-called modern woman spoils herself in search of meaning.

Many contemporary writers have raised such issues. The new depiction of virtuous women and sympathetic portrayal of premarital and extra-marital sex shows that women are becoming more conscious about their sexual needs and their fulfillment. The advance lies not only in the characters enjoying greater freedom but in fairly close depiction of sex in the novel, which takes us inside the bedroom and inside the consciousness of the characters giving us details that were considered taboo earlier. The early image of women in Indian English fictional world is gradually disappearing, her place is taken up by an independent, free-thinking individual, claiming her life to be her own. Her need for self-discovery, self-expression and self-fulfillment has made her question and defy tradition which undermines her individuality and importance. If family

atmosphere is not favourable, she becomes rebellious and this may result in breaking up relationships and family.

The self-awareness and self-analysis make her seek freedom through rebellion to assert herself as a woman and individual in her own right. "Women learn in many ways to suppress their selfishness, and by doing so suppress also their self-esteem. If most men hold women in contempt it is no greater than the contempt in which women hold themselves."[1]

Paro, the central character of *Paro: Dreams of Passion*[2] is portrayed as rebel who revolts against the social and moral codes assigned to women. Paro does not feel any shame in matters of sex. In an attempt to find the meaning of self, she exploits herself and uses sex as a weapon to gain her hold in the world; but even after exploiting herself Paro finds it impossible to overcome the mental, economic and emotional slavery. Paro marries Priya's Boss B.R., the manufacturer and owner of Sita sewing machine; but this does not last long. She leaves B.R. after six months of their marriage. Then she moves towards Bucky 'Bhandpur' who is a little younger than her. "She had left B.R. only six months before—she was living in open adulterous sin with 'Bucky' Bhandpur, test cricketer." (27) But very soon she leaves 'Bucky' and faces many legal problems regarding her father's will and death duties, about her divorce, her alimony: "Every relationship and encounter seemed to have ended in bitterness, misunderstanding and wrangling." (29)

Paro takes help of Priya's husband Suresh. They spend a lot of time together and develop an illicit relationship. Paro reveals so many secrets of her school life to Priya. In her school days she was expelled from the school after she was raped by her art-master. An innocent girl was cheated. She is seduced, used and thrown out because this art-teacher had already made an ayah pregnant. It was rumoured that 'head-girl was raped.' But Paro says clearly: "Funny thing is that I wasn't raped, I loved every moment of it" (32) and again she says "we were at it, wherever and whenever we could." (31) Paro talks frankly about sex and complexities of life. In search of perfection and newness, she runs from one man to another after leaving 'BuckyBhandpur.' She is involved with Avinendra, a Marxist son of a cabinet minister. Avinendra says about Paro: "She has the courage of her conviction. She is not a kept woman; she is free that is why I love her." (47)

Paro also considers herself a free woman, a symbol and a proto-

type of emancipation and individuality: "I am myself—and no one else. Depend on no body. I am my own person." (48) In Vedic and pre-Vedic times a woman enjoyed equality with men for she could perform yagnas and religious rites. There were Gargi and Maitreyi, who had equal rights, but slowly a change came and women were supposed to confine within the four-walls of the house. A woman had to take pride in patience, needed to accept lower status through mythological models of Sita, Savitri, Gandhari etc. A woman should be shy, gentle and pure, faithful wife, selfless, loving and thoughtful mother. But with the change of time women started questioning and were aware of their role and rights. They raised their voice against dual standards, and the hostile environment of the society. The demand for equality, rightful place, recognition and respect spurred a search for self-fulfillment. In search for meaning women forgot that a woman was, is and will always be weaker because of her physical structure. In her demand for equality and rights she should not forget her role for the family and society. In the name of so-called modernity she spoils herself; and Paro is the best example of it.

Paro's relationship with Avinendra was happy earlier; but very soon he wanted to throw her out of his life. She is beaten, her clothes are torn and she is treated like a whore. Paro says to Priya that she left B.R. and his money due to his same behaviour: "He had his whores and wanted me to take it" (54). She becomes very disturbed by this behaviour of Avinendra and when he bends down to kiss her she becomes rebellious and gives him a hard kick on his face, then on his groin. Then she ran out into Priya's bedroom and bolted the door behind her. Lenin (Avinendra named Lenin after a Marxist hero) goes to the door and starts knocking gently on the door but there is no reply. Anyhow door is opened and: "Paro lay on the bed, quite inert. Blood dripped from her wrists to little puddles on the floor."(56) She attempts to commit suicide, this is the suffering of Paro, no relationship can survive without commitment. A woman needs inner fulfillment, a companionship, love and protection in her relationship, but here she is treated like a whore. In search of pure love she makes new relations, but nowhere finds perfection and meaning. She commits so many mistakes and becomes manipulative. When Priya asks Paro how she manages things, she replies: "It's part of being a Beautiful Woman. It's a full-time occupation and much harder work than it seems." (62)

By depicting the character of Paro Namita Gokhale draws our

attention towards the changing social values and changing image of women; on the name of pseudo-modernity. In a chic cocktail party which is organized by an industrialist friend of Lenin, Paro dresses herself in modern ways and starts 'yoga' without caring for the people around her. Namita Gokhale writes: "Suddenly I found Paro throwing down her pallav and wrapping it around her waist, lungi style, and before I could even figure out what was happening, she was on the grass, sandals kicked off, and two long beautiful white legs—and I could glimpse her shadowed thighs and black lace panties." (64)

Just as a politician leaves one party and joins the other, Paro leaves one man and joins the other. She comes in contact with a fat sinister Shambhu Nath Mishra, a member of Congress Party. Priya says: "Staring at her across the room was the ugliest, grossest and vilest man I had ever seen. He was black as the night, black as the carpet, and his belly protruded obscenely from the chest, like a fat rotting pear." (79)

Shambhu Nath Mishra was one of the most controversial politicians of the day, a sinister minister. So for rest of the evening he and Paro were inseparable. Their affair becomes a scandal. Paro says: "He is so ugly, so repulsive, that he makes me beautiful." (84) Paro is depicted here as a love sick animal. Once she was beaten and abused by Mrs. Shambhu Nath Mishra, still she remained in strange and terrible thrall. She seemed quite content, indeed happy, to be treated like a common whore. They were referred as Paro and Devdas. She accompanies Mishraji to America and returns totally changed: "She returns looking thinner, and younger, and very sexy; she had styled her hair differently, and was wearing jeans, and white khadi kurta, which she had borrowed from Mishraji." (87)

But after this Mishraji never turns back. Here also she is seduced, used and thrown. Lenin also gets married with another girl and "Paro was again without a man in her life; there was stillness, a lull, stagnation." (100) She develops her relationship with Suresh, a lawyer husband of Priya. Priya knows this but is helpless. Paro realizes what she is doing is not proper. She says: "I'm doing it in an attempt to, you know, find myself. I mean, I've spent the last umpteen years fucking the men in my life, and getting fucked myself in the process." (109)

Paro's search for meaning leads towards destruction. She looks herself in the mirror and says: "Who are you Paro? I asked myself.

And I knew I didn't know. So I started looking for myself again, deciding to follow wherever my search took me." (109)

Paro represents sexual indulgence amongst the westernized urban Indians. She enjoys freedom like a male without caring for moral values. In search for a meaning she makes mistakes, but nowhere finds it because of social framework. She says: "all the fucking freedom for men and none for women." (111) At last Paro moves to a homosexual film-maker Loukas Learos and on his visit to India she throws a party for friends and embraces her ex-husband B.R "wrapped him as completely as a banana skin." (155) He also planted a decorous kiss on her excited cheeks. Both of them ignored his wife completely. "I'm in heat; I need a man!" (156) Male sexuality and sexual behaviour is acceptable, even celebrated because it is symbol of masculinity; but as far as female sexuality is concerned, it is restricted, so modern women writers raised their voice against such discrimination.

Priya the narrator protagonist of *Paro: Dreams of Passion* comes from typical middle-class background. Her mother neglects her in favour of her brother. She couldn't complete her college education and had to take up a job in B.R.'s office. In Priya we find a working class girl's ambition to liberate herself from her tedious middle-class suburban existence. She loves her Boss B.R. and surrenders herself to him, but when B.R. marries Paro, she feels ashamed of her poverty: "Suffused with shame and contempt for the poverty and meanness around me I would vow to rise from that mire." (14)

She imagines and dreams about B.R. and Paro: 'I could picture him slowly undressing her.' (14) Priya marries Suresh. He provides her every possible material pleasure, but there is no emotional fulfillment. He is a typical Indian husband and tries to restrain her from wearing anything but sari like an Indian wife. Suresh has his relationship with Paro but can't tolerate even a small comment of Priya. He beats her: "For the first time in our marriage, he hit me. Again and again, angrily, relentlessly, he punched out at my face, my breast, my thighs, and anything and everything he could lay his hands upon. 'You stupid woman'—what were you when I married you? You were nobody—a secretary in an office—I gave you status! What are you without me? How dare you behave like that with my friends? (48-49) B.R. marries Bubbles just six months after Paro leaves him. Once Bubbles had gone to Poona, B.R invited

Priya for dinner as Suresh was not there, she goes there and thinking about B.R "her petticoat was already wet with anticipation." (36) They used to meet frequently. These were the happiest days for Priya because B.R. never mentioned the name of Paro nor about his wife Bubbles. B.R. says: "Men are very insecure creatures. They need a lot of love. And they need beautiful women." (38)

The writer describes men who regard women as a sex toy, seduce and use her whenever and wherever they can. As Priya says: "Sex had become, to him, more than a sport, it was a duty, a vocation, a calling. I sensed that it was with sex alone that he reached out to the world. I do not think he ever refused a woman; it was as though he was bound by his code of honour, to ravish every female that he encountered." (40)

It was like a second youth, a middle-aged revival of dream, so Priya didn't want to return to Delhi or Suresh's "clumsy hateful arms." Namita Gokhale depicts frankly the psyche of her protagonist. Priya after keeping a vigil over Paro's first suicidal attempt dreams: "Sometimes I became Paro, and sometimes I was myself. Sometimes I was B.R. devouring Paro, and then B.R. tenderly loving Priya, and then I became Suresh who was ravishing Paro, and then Paro with Suresh in slavish possession, and intermittently Suresh copulating with Priya who was actually Paro." (60)

Thus, Namita Gokhale portrays the characters that represent modern men and women. Paro represents love-sick modern woman who longs for pure love and fulfillment. They lack companionship and partnership. Priya, though married to Suresh, loves B.R. because from Suresh she doesn't get emotional fulfillment. Suresh is a pompous lawyer who maintains contacts with influential people. He provides Priya material prosperity but no emotional satisfaction. In this way the writer exposes the promiscuity in society. Paro's suicide and Priya's realization of her marriage shows the message of the writer to the society.

NOTES

1. Carol Mc Phee-Ann FitzGerald. *Feminist Quotations. Voices of Rebels, Reformers and Visionaries* (Thomas Y Crowell, New York, 1984), p. 11.
2. Namita Gokhale, *Paro: Dreams of Passion* (New Delhi; Penguin India, 1999).

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Colonial Discourse in E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India*

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The present paper intends to discuss the working of colonial discourse in E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India*. Before going to analyze the novel in the above context, one must identify the colonial elements around which the entire story of the novel revolves.

"Discourse" is basically dissemination of ideas in which the ideology and the political interest are interwoven. According to Obeysekere: "Discourse is not just speech; it is imbedded in historical and cultural context and expressed often in the frame of a scenario or cultural performance. It is about practice of science, the practice of cannibalism.

Knowledge is not innocent but profoundly connected with the operations of power. This Foucaultian insight informs Edward Said's foundational work *Orientalism* which is circulated in Europe as an ideological accompaniment of colonial power. Orientalism uses the concept of discourse to reorder the study of colonialism, Orientalism can be set to inaugurate a new kind of study of colonialism. Said argues that the representation of Orient in European literary texts, travelogues and other writings contributed to the creation of dichotomy between the visible and the hidden, the dominant and marginalized, and ideas and institutions. It allows us to see how power worked through language, literature, culture and the institution that regulate our daily lives.

Colonial discourse studies are indebted to the Foucaultian concept of discourse. Colonial discourse, then, is not just a fancy term for colonialism. It indicates a new way of thinking in which cultural, intellectual, economic and political processes are seen to work together in the formation, perpetuation and dismantling of colonialism. It seeks to widen the scope of terminology of colonialism by examining their intersection of ideas, institution, knowledge and power. Colonial Discourse studies seek in-depth analysis of colonial epistemologies and also connect them to history of colonial institutions. For example Gauri Viswanathan (*Mask of Conquest* 1990) situates the institutionalization of English education and the study of English literature within the politics of colonial rule in India and

English literature within the politics of colonial rule in India and South Africa. In other words, colonial discourse studies erase any situation between the materials and ideological because they simply concentrate on the later.

In E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India,* colonial discourse operates different levels. Forster depicts that the encounter between two different cultures which is a consequence of British Colonialism in India cannot escape the effects of colonial discourse in the novel. There are various strategies used in order to create the Other to marginalize the native, to legitimize the domains of colonizer and so on.

The setting of the novel is around a picturesque city called Chandrapore. It is situated on the bank river of river Ganges. Thus Chandrapore is really an imaginary place that relates to Bankipur in Patna. Forster visited with two Professors, Charles Russel and V.H. Jackson in Patna College who suggested him the significance of the place near Barbara Hills. Later this location was depicted as Chandrapore district and Marabar Caves in *A Passage to India.* In the city there is a civil hospital and a school. Dr. Aziz is the surgeon in the hospital. Dr. Aziz has two sons and daughter who live with his mother. He has two friends known to be Hamidullah and Mahmood Ali. Now the problem arises whether it is possible for the Indian to be friends with the English people. Hamidullah, who has recently visited Cambridge, is of the opinion that it is possible to be friendly with them in England but not in India. Mahmood Ali, who has been recently, affronted, holds that it is not possible at all. He has had experience of rough treatment from Mr. Roney Heaslop the city magistrate of Chandrapore. The general impression runs among Indians that the moment Britishers reach India, they are ruined. Dr. Aziz complains against the rough treatment of his boss. In this case colonizers seem to be superior to colonized.

In the novel there are two kinds of discourse. One in which Britishers consider themselves superior to the Indian natives. In the second, Dr. Aziz in whose mind the memory of the Mughal Empire, is fresh considers himself superior to Indian, Hindu natives. He believes himself to be the descendent of Muslim rulers.

The construction of the otherness also led to the notion of an exotic orient, as a result of the travel writings and fiction about the East. These essentially were mixture of many things like demand of the reading public in Europe about information about strange lands and people. The image of orient also depends on the imaginative in-

genuity of the writers themselves. Mrs. Moore's visit to India, a consequence of her curiosity to see real India, has been whetted by the books about the 'Orient' written by the Europeans. In fact, Mrs. Moore's desire to see real India can be looked upon as a westerners' desire to discover the exotic lands of the East. She has come to India because she wants to escape the rationalistic, masculine, commonplace of the west. She wants to discover the Orient that is exotic, mysterious and irrational. She is looking for India that has been constructed and shaped by centuries of writings about India.

Colonial discourse is a consequence of the encounter between two cultures. The colonizers failed to acknowledge the independence and dignity of the non-European cultures. As a consequence of their self deceptive belief that their culture was provided by their religion and church, yhey failed to acknowledge their incomprehension and bafflement in the face of other cultures. As a result, the colonial discourse resorted to the strategy of branding all other cultures as primitive, irrational, chaotic, uncivilized and barbaric.

Dr. Aziz goes to mosque for taking rest and he is bewildered to see an English lady in the holy place. She is Mrs. Moore, the mother of Romy Heaslop, the city magistrate. Her politeness wins the heart of Dr. Aziz. She tells that she has already arrived in India with Mrs. Adela Quested who is to marry Ronny. Mrs. Moore feels peace and tranquillity in the mosque. Mrs. Moore's experience in the mosque brings her in touch with the Eastern metaphysics. The tranquil and quite atmosphere of mosque instills in her a sense of mysticism, something that she was looking for when she came to India.

The cave image shows a great gap between the colonizers and colonized. Dr. Aziz is accused for no fault of his own. This is the colonizers' feeling of superiority to Indians. It exposes the feeling of the English colonizer to the colonized. In the cave section when Adela Quested feels that she has been molested and Dr. Aziz is subsequently accused of the crime, it is basically the colonial discourse about the natives which is responsible for it. According to them, natives are brutal, savage and violent. This has somehow stirred up the feelings of bitterness and suspicion towards the natives. Adela Quested demonizes Dr. Aziz as the Caliban whose desire is to molest Miranda. She is believed by the English and polarization between English and native become crucial in the novel.

The mosque image thus defines the outer limits of colonial civility. Within the mosque, by all accounts, Aziz behaves rudely,

venting his anger on some unknown women. But if the mosque would seem to be a place beyond English's reach, colonial power asserts itself, in the form of mimicry. For Aziz's rudeness to Mrs. Moore imitates, even as it inverts, the ambiguous enunciation of colonial authority, with its exclusionary codes of gender, custom, race, region, nationality.

A reading of this scene in light of current theories of colonial discourse might offer a more sobering view of its performance, a performance whose happy ending identifies Aziz as both object and agent of what Edward Said has called Orientalism, the production, by and for the west, of the Orient is a knowable entity.

There is a kind of cultural divide between the Britishers and Indians. E.M. Forster depicts the various strategies that have been used consciously or unconsciously by the colonizers to justify their rule in India. In *A Passage to India*, E.M. Forster underlines how this colonial discourse might have been a convenient way of understanding the incomprehensible east. But the novel also shows how racial tensions are a consequence of the colonial discourse which brands, stereotypes, interiorizes and constructs 'the other' in contrast to the Eurocentric Western man.

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A Quest for Identity in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*

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Alice Walker is a leading African American woman novelist who came to prominence in the 1980s. Her novel *The Color Purple*, published in 1982, won both the American Book Award for Fiction and the Pulitzer Prize in the year 1983. It emerges out of Walker's central concern with defining the existence, experience and culture of Afro-American women, the brutally complex systems of oppression that shape these. It chronicles the life of a black girl Celie who despite poverty, illiteracy, physical and mental exploitation transcends her plight through self-awareness and attempts to scale the subtle and warm dimensions of womanist consciousness. Walker in *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens: Womanist Prose* uses the term "womanism" to refer to the feminism of woman of colour or the African American feminism. As she explains: "I just want the word that describes things correctly. Now to me 'black feminist' doesn't do that. I need a word that is organic, that really comes out of the culture that really expresses the spirit that we see in black women. And it is just . . . 'womanish.'" This is a folk term peculiar to characteristics of boldness, premature adulthood, and a spirit of inquiry inappropriate to children, particularly female children, but which suggests capability, responsibility and leadership. Thus the two terms, black and feminism, are interchangeable because both are concerned with the struggle against racism and sexism by black women who are themselves part of the black community's efforts to achieve equality and liberty. For Walker, both terms involve "a bonding of women as a continuation of the struggle for self-definition and affirmation that is the essence of what African American means." (*ISMG*, 289)

Walker tells Celie's story in the form of letters—first written to God and later to her sister, Nettie. Celie writes to God to help her to survive the spiritual, emotional and physical abuse she suffers at the hands of her father, Alphonso. Moreover, Celie's attitude about her own self-worth and her perception of God emerges in these letters, and the readers quickly recognize that Celie believes she is totally powerless and worthless. The novel presents her journey from pow-

erlessness to the state of full empowerment and from self-abnegation to self-recognition.

The very first letter Celie writes to God indicates the miserable way she falls a victim to sexual advances and atrocities of her father, Alphonso. Being born in a poor family, she is forced to overhear her mother and father. The father described in Celie's letters appears to be virile, ill-mannered, and tough and strong man who represents Satyr-like potency and who is like a walking phallus. When he finds out that Celie's mother doesn't allow him to have sex, he tries to find out a substitute in the form of his daughter. Consequently, he makes brutal attacks on her and threatens her, "You better shut up and git used to it." (2)

No doubt, mother is relieved from her father's continuous sexual attacks; however, Celie is subjected to enforced rape. As a result, she becomes pregnant when she is 14. To add injury to insult, her father asks her not to tell this to anybody and orders, "You better not never tell nobody but God. It should kill your mammy." Hence she writes about her plights and fate to the almighty God. The moment she becomes pregnant, she writes to God:

> I'm big. I can't move fast enough. By time I git back from the well, the water be warm. By time I git the tray ready the food be cold. By time I git all the children ready for school it be dinner time. (3)

Motherhood may be pleasure to women, but for Celie, like Margaret, Mem, and Josie and Meridian, it is a burden. She is not allowed to love her own kids as her father takes them away from her. Immediately after the death of Celie's mother, Alphonso marries another black woman, Daisy and passes her on to Albert, a widower as his wife. Thus Celie is passed on like a piece of property from one cruel and dominating black male into the hands of another.

Though Celie doesn't know how to fight, she knows well how to work. When Albert's two sisters, Carrie and Kate come home; they appreciate Celie's ability to work. In their eyes, she is a "good housekeeper, good with children and good cook." However, after finding Celie in trouble, Kate gives a new vision to her. It is at the request of Kate that Celie gets her own dress for the first time from Albert. When Harpo, the eldest boy, doesn't help her at home in her work believing that it is the duty of women to work and not of men, Kate orders him to help her and like Nettie, she advises her, "I can't do it for you. You got to fight them for yourself." (22) Surviving is of supreme importance to her and she does survive through all odds.

Celie suffers not only at the hands of her stepchildren but also at the hands of Albert, her husband. He treats her like a beast and beats her as and when he wants. She writes about his mercilessness in one of her letters, "Mr.___ marry me to take care his children. I marry him cause daddy made me. I don't love Mr.____and he don't love me." (66) For him, to be wife means to be submissive, to be subordinate, to be obedient and to be a punch bag for the man. Celie describes the treatment meted out to her as follows:

> He beat me like he beat the children. Cept he don't never hardly beat them. He says, Celie git the belt. The children are outside the room picking through the cracks. It all I can do not to cry. I make myself wood. I say to myself, Celie, you a tree. That's how come I know trees fear man. (23)

The fact that Celie, in moments of extreme physical pain transforms herself into a tree is a telling example of a black woman's proximity to the passive and suffering agony of nature.

Celie gains a new perspective on life when she meets Shug Avery, Albert's mistress and Sofia, Harpo's wife. Sophia Butler, the beloved-turned-wife of Harpo demonstrates Celie how to fight one's husband as a self-respecting person. Sofia is not one of those black women who would like to become a white man's housemaid. When the Mayor's wife asks her, she says, "Sophia, all your children so clean, would you like to work for me, be my maid?" She declines the offer saying, "Hell no." (90) For every white man, every black woman is a girl and his woman is a lady. When the Mayor listens the way Sofia replies, he slaps her. She promptly retaliates by slapping him. The Mayor, however, takes revenge by ordering the Police to use third degree methods to torture and mutilate Sofia.

No doubt, Sofia is defeated by the Mayor and his men, but she represents the black woman who wants to fight for her own identity and dignity. Though her struggle is not always successful, it provides an opportunity to her to display her fortitude and agility to transcend her racist and sexist circumstances. Her varying responses to her environment illustrate the need for the development of the black society which allows an individual to define one's meaningful existence in the larger American society. The very presence and activities of Sophia make tremendous impact on Celie's thinking. Sophia convinces Celie that the black women suffer not because of any inborn disabilities and faults in them, but because of their sex,

race and the lack of will to fight. This really inspires Celie to initiate struggle for her own identity and dignity.

Another woman who impresses Celie is Shug Avery whose love for Celie is deep-rooted. As a result Shug inspires Celie to celebrate her own existence. She also loves Shug in a way that radiates all elements of God's world that he has given to Celie. Once Shug implants the idea in Celie that she is somebody; she undergoes a transformation which encompasses her social awakening. Daniel W. Ross describes this point very effectively by stating that one of the primary objects of feminism is to restore women's bodies appropriated long ago by a patriarchal culture to them. Adrienne Rich expresses that women must overcome these negative attitudes if they are to achieve intellectual progress. As she writes, "But fear and hatred of our bodies had often crippled our brains. Some of the most brilliant women of our time are still trying to think from somewhere outside their female bodies--they are still merely reproducing old forms of intellection."

Of course, coming to terms with the body can be a painful experience for women. Naturally, women often think of their bodies as torn or fragmented. Celie has no desire to get to know her body as it is the source of her exploitation. However, Shug's presence generates an erotic stirring and creates a spiritual bond between them. It is Shug who prepares Celie to have sexual pleasure guiltlessly and reveals her the mysteries of her body and sexual experience. She becomes not only a role model for her, but also a mother that Celie never had. She protects her from Albert and gives her knowledge about her body, the essential spirituality of the world. She retrieves back her lost sister, Nettie, and her letters from the custody of Albert and helps her to become financially independent.

The very first letter of Nettie opens with a message, "You've got to fight and get away from Albert. He ain't no good." (131) Nettie provides information about different things to her. She has gone to Africa with Corrine, Samuel and their children Adam and Olivia. They work for the American and African missionary society. As Africa is a far-off place, Nettie feels good when she writes to Celie. Through her letters, she reveals the past glory of Africa to her.

Thus by providing the glorious history of the black race, Nettie reveals the history of the power of the black race. She informs her that New York is a beautiful city where a section of it called Harlem is owned by the blacks. There are coloured people who own fancy

motorcars and live in houses, which are finer than the white people. These people live in much beauty and dignity and love Africa. In one of her letters, she reveals that even Jesus Christ was not White but Black.

Nettie also informs her that Olivia and Adam are her own children who were taken away by Alphonso and handed over to Samuel and Corraine who adopted them. In addition to this, she writes that their father is not their true father. Thus Nettie virtually gives back Celie her children Olivia and Adam and tells her the true family history which liberates her from the guilt of incest. Nettie's letters also free her of the old white haired gentleman called God who has kept her in bondage to an oppressive system. For Celie knowledge is power. She learns that she doesn't have to obey Albert, if obeying him means a loss of self.

However, it is Shug who works as a transforming force in Celie's life. She names one of her songs after Celie and calls it Miss Celie's song; teaches her to love herself and her body. She also invites Celie to come to Memphis to live with her and gives her lessons in economic autonomy. She teaches her how to stitch pants. When Celie tries to work for Shug, she dislikes it and warns her, "You not my maid. I didn't bring you to Memphis to be that. I brought her to love you and help you to get on your feet," (187) and leaves her alone so that she can become psychologically independent.

Shug breaks her dependence upon her by declaring her own sexual freedom, which ultimately helps her to understand her own fuller and larger self. Consequently, Celie liberates herself gradually from the fear, pressure and heavy-handedness of her husband, Albert. When Albert tries to prevent her from moving to Memphis with Shug, Celie warns him saying that she is no more like a cow now and roars, "You a lowdown dog is what's wrong. I say. It's time to leave you and enter into the Creation. And your dead body just the welcome mat I need." (207) Thus she moves from her helplessness and dependence to the state of complete independence.

Thus, Celie, a black girl, who suffers from self-scorn learns to love herself and also other black men and women and becomes aware of self-reliance. Her journey from a dumb, illiterate, ugly black girl to the awakened and self-conscious woman is not a phenomenon that occurs at random. In fact, it is the *result* of the company of women like Nettie, Sophia and Shug Avery. All these

women stand united against the racist and sexist tyranny in the American society. Barbara Christian writes in *Black Women Writers*: "The focus on the struggle of black people, especially black women, to claim their lives, and the contention that this struggle emanates from a deepening of self-knowledge and love—are characteristics of Walker's work." Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* depicts the struggle of black women like Celie, Sofia, Nettie and Shug to gain respectable place in the highly charged, racist and sexist society of America.

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Emerson and Thoreau as Visionaries

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R.W. Emerson and H.D. Thoreau had their own vision of free America where people get the joy of living. Fundamental rights are granted to all of them by American constitution and the Blacks and the Whites love each other. Let the gloominess caused by slavery wither away and the light of freedom pervade in every corner of the country. In a few essays such as "American Civilization," "Love, Power," "Discipline," "Prospects," "Life without Principles" etc. they assert the dignity of man as man and condemn every brutal action of the American Congress and admire the step taken by Abraham Lincoln. Like the Greek philosophers, they express their love for virtue, truth, nonviolence, harmony, regeneration and social construction. As visionaries, they knew that the shape of society cannot be changed by the state government alone and all sections of people must get rid of prejudices for brave new world and new social system.

Like Matthew Arnold, R.W. Emerson knew the difference between culture and anarchy. In the essay "American Civilization," he illustrates the difference between civilization and chaos. People are rude and uncultured brutes if they possess racial prejudices and ignore human beings and remain static in their approach to life. Let the people have positive vision of life and break all racial barriers. Unless their companions get liberty, they will not be civilized in true sense. The evolution of society is possible when the Blacks also lead a dignified life and there is no difference between man and man. For this, political as well as economic rights have got to be granted to all sections of society. Sense of honour is as important for the American President as for the Black labourer. Like C.E.M. Joad, he does not feel any hesitation in defining the term civilization. People are civilized when they value new ideas and exchange their thoughts with others freely. If a few rich people possess material pleasures and property, it does not mean that they are civilized. Many slave traders boasted of American democracy and yet R.W. Emerson and Thoreau were not satisfied with the situation. Every

nation is free to have its own civilization and no particular ideas can be imposed upon them by the outsiders. All the citizens are free to get education which they like and no particular syllabus can be imposed upon them. Many races are still savages as they are not dynamic, active and progressive. Negroes and Indians can grow and advance in every field if they come forward and get rid of illusions. A lot of discoveries have got to be made by the people so as to possess energy for making life comfortable. If people continue to adjust with their distressed situation, there will be anarchy even in future. Let them get rid of fixed ideas and establish new centres for higher studies and research. They must attach importance to action, novelty and progress. Advanced people must have sympathy for the ignorant masses and inspire them to become progressive in life. For this, other languages have got to be learnt by people so as to exchange their thought with the citizens of other countries of the world. Then, changes can be brought in the present state of affairs with the help of new outlook about nature, education, adventure, agriculture and transport system. New skills and arts have got to be learnt for social reconstruction and people must share their technical knowledge with other learned people of the world. Old barriers have got to be broken so as to share power with others. However, importance has got to be attached to power as well as tranquillity. All the people must get equal chances for progress and all must share the produced goods. The slogan of the greatest good of the greatest number of people has got to be adopted in the interest of humanity. The slogan that 'one who cannot/ does not work shall not eat' has got to be forgotten. The feeling, that 'struggle for existence' will continue, has got to be dropped. Every kind of violence has got to be stopped and the people must live as brothers all over the world. Society has got to be refined in every respect and profits from new inventions have got to be shared by all. Everybody must get chances for the development of his skills in case his ills are going to benefit society at large. In the essay "Manners," he asserts the importance of decent manners like Bacon and Montaigne. Both of them attach due importance to invention, art, manners, beauty and delight and identify these qualities with civilization. The time has come for the Parliaments and colleges to pay attention to new social order based on equality, liberty and fraternity. Hunting must be stopped and new destructive weapons need not be produced in ordnance factories. New agricultural skills must be developed to produce more

foodgrains so that people get enough food to eat. By now the Americans had started using post offices. They felt the need of new energy for various industries. As a civilized author, Emerson asserts in "American Civilization":

> The division of labour, the multiplication of the arts of peace, which is nothing but a large allowance to each man to choose his work according to his faculty to live by his better hand, fills the State with useful and happy labourers,—and they, creating demand by the very temptation of their productions, are rapidly and surely rewarded by good sale: and what a police and ten commandments their work thus becomes! So true is Dr. Johnson's remark, that men are seldom more innocently employed than when they are making money.[1]

Bertrand Russell later said that prudence and wisdom are necessary for the growth of civilization. Most of the ignorant masses think of their territory, religion and race and condemn other citizens of the world as brutes. Such passions have got to be dropped without delay. Respect must be paid to the idea of universal brotherhood and universal language. Emerson asserts that equal rights must be given to women so that they may contribute freely for social welfare. He asserts:

> Right position of woman in the State is another index. . . . Place the sexes in right relations of mutual respect, and a severe mortality gives that essential charm to woman which educates all that is delicate, poetic and self-sacrificing, breeds courtesy and learning, conversation and wit, in her rough mate; so that I have thought it a sufficient definition of civilization to say, it is the influence of good women. (228)

By his times, good poetry had not been written in America. The people of south were quarrelling with those of North and the tension grew bitter among the people. New thoughts could abolish these prejudices as God didn't prescribe any particular religion for Adam and Eve. Moreover, Adam didn't quarrel with Eve on the issue of religion and nationality. New skills have been invented to use the water of the ocean for human welfare. Salt has been manufactured from the water of the ocean and new research work has been done on the fishes that one watches in the ocean. Every research and invention needs liberty and Emerson says:

> Civilization is the result of highly complex organization. In the snake, all the organs are sheathed: no hands, no feet, no fines, no wings. In bird and beast, the organs are released, and begin to play. In man, they are all unbound and full of joyful action. With this unswaddling, he re-

> ceives the absolute illumination we call Reason, and thereby true liberty. (229)

Attention has got to be paid to the climate of every society as it is related with civil freedom. He asserts the need of ethics for free atmosphere which is needed for research:

> But one condition is essential to the social education, of man,—namely, morality. There can be no high civility without a deep mortality, though it may not always call itself by that name, but sometimes the point of honour, as in the institution of chivalry; or patriotism, as in the Spartan and Roman republics; or the enthusiasm of some religious sect which imputes its virtue to its dogma. (230)

> Civilization depends on morality. Everything good in man leans on what is higher. This rule holds in small as in great. Thus, all our strength and success in the work of our hands depend on our borrowing the aid of the elements. You have seen a carpenter on a ladder with a broad-axe chopping upward chips and silvers from a beam. How awkward! At what disadvantage he works! But see him on the ground, dressing his timber under him. Now, not his feeble muscles but the force of gravity brings down the axe; that is to say, the planet itself splits his stick. (230-31)

He admires the inventors of the wheel which could grind the corn and tides for driving the wheel. Electricity was being used for production and yet research work was encouraged to invent energy from steam and water. In other words, the scientists want to possess the power of the gods so as to control time, space and other elements. But R.W. Emerson asserts that life can be eternally happy when universal ends are achieved. It is not enough to use the cars and railways for transport. New ideas are important along with honour, justice, love, freedom and utility. It is shocking to Emerson that certain economists want to earn money with taxes on tobacco, wine and opium. Money can be earned for government schemes but he does not accept such taxes as they degrade society. Gandhiji accepted this theory of Emerson and followed the theory of good means for good ends. Many cities of U.S.A. had advanced industries and yet remained the source of pollution and other social evils. Like Whitman, he was shocked to see that prostitution had become a social institution at several places. Thanks to God as He sent many prophets like Christ, Zeno, Luther etc. who gave new convictions to the masses. Gunpowder, rubber-shoes, printing machines etc. are useless without ethics. Unfortunately, unethical means were adopted

for material growth in New York, Boston and other cities. Like Montesquieu he asked—Are people really free? Is liberty not checked? Are Black women not tortured? Since complex structures are established, the higher ethical values have withered away. Exploitation of labourers continued. Emerson laments:

> We have attempted to hold together two states of civilization: a higher state, where labour and the tenure of land and the right of suffrage are democratic: and a lower state, in which the old military tenure of prisoners or slaves, and of power and land in a few hands, make an oligarchy: we have attempted to hold these two states of society under one law. But the rude and early state of society does not work well with the later, nay, works badly, and has poisoned politics, public morals, and social intercourse in the Republic, now for many years. (237-38)

Now he asserts the need of secularism, sensibility, zeal and discipline to fulfil his mission and see real prosperous and civilized society. He remarks:

> The telegraph has been swift enough to announce our disasters. The journals have not suppressed the extent of the calamity. Neither was there any want of argument or of experience. If the war brought any surprise to the North, it was not the fault of sentinels on the watch towers, who had furnished full details of the designs, the muster and the means of the enemy. Neither was anything concealed of the theory or practice of slavery. (238)

Americans will be really civilized when they have men of perception and original action and he puts George Washington and Abraham Lincoln in this category. The country does not need any dictator who controls legislative, executive and judicial powers in his hands. New demands were being made in 1860 to retain the slavery system and Emerson and Thoreau raised their voice for liberation and emancipation. Then they asked the people of Southern states to cooperate with the citizens of Northern states. As minute observers of humanity, they wanted harmony among all labourers of various units. The mischief of slavery had done a lot of harm to the nation. To retain path of love they asked people to follow the path of love and peace. Further delay for this will cause immense losses to community. Only right action and right conduct will solve the problem. All the Senators and other Parliamentarians must have patience, tolerance, faithfulness, hope and rational thinking for the protection of democracy.

In the essay *Power,* Emerson refers to the human tendency to capture power. A few people want to lead the human race through political power. Most of them want to gain material gains with the help of their power. However, only a selected few have the ability and capability to come forward and lead the nation. Many honest leaders get the reward of their deeds and the examples of Jefferson, Martin Luther King, Pt. Nehru, Gandhi, Dr. Radhakrishnan etc. could control the situation due to their vision and prudence. A mature person knows how to taste the elixir and get success in his mission. Here Emerson refers to the opinion of King Lear that 'nothing is got for nothing.' Napoleon Bonaparte fought a lot of battles and got success in his mission on most of the occasions. Once he had sixty thousand soldiers and thirty thousand of them were rogues and wicked people. Yet he had the power to control them for his mission. These bold people are unique in themselves and bold blood circulates in their arteries. They know how to overcome the situation with their physical and intellectual strength. Constantly they work for the goal and ultimately succeed. For example, Shakespeare came to London in search of a job and lived here soon as a theatre-manager. Many sculptors continue to work hard with their hammer and chisel and ultimately succeed like Michael Angelo. Once Michael Angelo took a lot of time to select his stones and mud and people laughed. But all of them were surprised with the statue that he prepared. Here Emerson refers to vivacity of such powerful artists and writers. There is a certain instinct, perhaps a divine gift, that guides them through purification.

He refers to children who don't win the competition in the first attempt. Some of them don't lose heart as they want to win the prize. Ultimately, they win with their regular work and gusto. Such people harden themselves when they face the problems and oddities and don't bow down before unimportant, political situations. For example, Pt. Nehru and Gandhi didn't surrender before British imperialism and ultimately won national freedom. He gives the example of trees that remain firmly rooted in the earth even at the time of storm. Many sailors don't care for the rocks of the ocean and the tempest. Many farmers sow the seeds and don't bother for bad weather. Many scientists don't depend upon the government help and yet discover new things for human welfare. People like Marconi can be referred here as example to confirm the statement of Emerson. Then he refers to the terms like 'Commerce,' 'reason,' 'balanc-

ing of judgement,' 'power of the mind' etc. Like other thinkers, he also accepts 'an idea without action is mental debauchery.' Hence, promptness is one of the qualities required for success. Otherwise people suffer like Hamlet if they delay in taking action. Such people have strong will-power as Emerson says in "Power":

> And, in morals, wild liberty breeds iron conscience; natures with great impulses have great resources, and return from far. In politics, the sons of democrats will be Whigs; whilst red republicanism, in the father, is a spasm of nature to engender an intolerable tyrant in the next age. On the other hand, conservatism, ever more timorous and narrow, disgusts the children, and drives them for a mouthful of fresh air into radicalism. (42)

There are cunning and wicked politicians in the country and they know how much tyranny is tolerated by the common people. Certain people are not purely ethical and yet pretend to be the benefactors of mankind. He refers to a knave who could win the hearts of people easily and yet remained cruel in his deeds. So, power has got to be used properly in general interest if one wants to make one's name immortal in the world. Since a few merchants possess the power of taking great risk, they succeed in their business. The profits they earn from their industries confirm this argument of Emerson. A few persons depend upon others for help. But the successful people often go alone and continue the march. For example, the friends of Lincoln didn't accept his proposal of granting equality to the Blacks. Quite often the members of the party drag one's legs. Here Emerson uses the term energy, spiritual courage and ethics. Only dreaming about bright future is not enough. One has to work regularly for success. He has to adopt the policy of the gardener who cuts off the useless grass that grows near the plant. That means concentration for the aim. Quite often one has to sacrifice the joy of gossiping with friends and other lower duties. Then, he must practise the same thing regularly unless he gets success. Regarding faithful work, Emerson remarks in "American Civilization":

> Friends, books, pictures, lower duties, talents, flatteries, hopes,—all are distractions which cause oscillations in our giddy balloon, and make a good poise and a straight course impossible. You must elect your work; you shall bake what your brain can, and drop all the rest. Only so, can that amount of vital force accumulate, which can make the step from knowing to doing. (48)

A few leaders and teachers fail to express their thoughts in public due to sense of fear. He gives the example of a person who wanted to learn German language and failed several times. Yet he did not lose heart and continued learning the German language regularly and ultimately succeeded. However, he does not unite success with eccentricity. One must get rid of one's follies for success in this complex world. He writes in "Power":

> Success has no more eccentricity, than the gingham and muslin we weave in our mills. I know no more affecting lesson to our busy, plotting New England brains, then to go into one of the factories with which we have lined all the watercourse in the States. A man hardly knows how much he is a machine, until he begins to make telegraph, loom, press, and locomotive, in his own image. But in these, he is forced to leave out his follies and hindrances, so that when we go to the mill, the machine is more moral than we. (53)

Towards the end of the essay, he warns that good means should be adopted to achieve good ends. Yet he aptly relates virtue with truth and talent. Similarly, he highlights the importance of discipline in the essay "Discipline." He tries to illustrate the meaning of space, time, society, labour, climate, food, the animals, the machines etc. Since prudent people possess wisdom, they know what is good and what is hateful. Their scale is different from that of the ignorant people. The wise man knows that the world is wide and complex and hence it is not easy to explore it.

In "The American Scholar," Emerson hopes that the tree of knowledge and the tree of life will prosper in U.S.A. definitely. The American scholars, artists, sculptors, musicians, literary artists, scientists, botanists etc. will contribute to the general welfare. The people will define rest, motion, gravitation, change and other aspects of nature after making experiments. All those experiments will be made with positive approach. The scholars will touch the depth of the subject and analyze all the aspects of life. After reading books, they will enlighten society for intellectual and spiritual growth.

In "Life without Principle," H.D. Thoreau criticizes the people who work hard only for material gains and ignore real knowledge, real wisdom, truth, prudence, virtue etc. Their ways of life are ridiculous for him, as they miss the basic aims of life. Once one gentleman asked him—What he thought? As a matter of fact, Thoreau was not interested in trivial news that were printed in the newspa-

pers. The worldly news regarding the rise and fall of market rates were useless for him. At some other time, another gentleman asked him to share his thoughts on slavery. Actually, Thoreau never wanted to utter unpleasant words on this question too and hence turned down the proposal.

Like William Wordsworth and Shelley, he found that most of the people were conscious of their material gains. Business was most important for them but not for Emerson and Thoreau. Thoreau found no wisdom in the game of dollars and cents. He asked himself—Should he engage himself in meaningless labours? Unfortunately, people thought of cutting the trees and not planting them. He was never prepared for any irksome drudgery. One rich man was proud of himself as he had a lot of servants and spent a lot on luxuries. But this fellow ignored the beauty of the objects of nature. It confirms that Emerson and Thoreau gave due importance to the objects of nature. Like the followers of the *Gita,* both of them wanted that people should live as liberated human beings and not as slaves of money. The materialistic people are less than human beings. Both of them surveyed the objects of nature and wanted that others should follow them for a life of bliss. To them, most of Americans were working for lower ends. Why to work only for money and not dignity and truth? This question was asserted by Thoreau again and again.

He noticed advertisements in the newspapers for active men and not wise fellows. In the worldly sense, he had failed miserably. Yet he ever felt as an Indian yogi. Let others mind their own business and never feel bothered for him. He failed to understand why the people were jealous of his freedom. Since he is not worried about money, he is happy. Others are worried as they want to get more and more wealth and assets. As a follower of the *Gita,* he wanted to perform his duty regularly and that too with love and told people: 'You must get your living by living.' Quite a large number of people realized during the church service that their expenses are higher in comparison to their income. Thoreau gives a new definition of success and greatness. As a student of literature, he was happy in his own world and thought of virtue, mortality and truth. He knew well in advance that money teaches certain wicked ways and the same are not permitted by God. Cold weather and hunger failed to make him nervous. Trade and commerce developed in many American cities but Thoreau never felt tempted to join these merchants. As

products of Harvard university, both of them could make money even in the teaching profession. Since they loved personal liberty like Rousseau, Byron and Shelley, they made no compromise with the situation. They refused to be 'gold diggers' in society. They thought of God's coffers and not earthly coffers. Thoreau asked in a light mood: Is God a rich person?

Let others think that Thoreau's life was a failure or unsatisfactory. Yet he led a life of love and reverence and not cunningness. When he analyzed the life of many preachers, he noticed that only a few were moral teachers. Thoreau had a moral vision in life and, like prophets, thought of the results of a truthful life. He can be called an intellectual like Emerson. Inner values were highly important for him. As civilized people, Emerson and Thoreau tried to create a new civilized society in U.S.A. They wanted America to have her own culture, civilization, literature, history, music and fine arts. They asked people to get rid of hollow values and not to imitate the Britishers any more: "Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close. The millions that around us are rushing into life, cannot always be fed on the remains of foreign harvests. Events, actions arise, that must be sung, that will sing themselves. Who can doubt that poetry will revive and lead in new age, as the star in the constellation Harp, which now flames in our zenith, astronomers announce, shall one day be the polestar for thousand years." (45)

NOTE

1. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Complete Works of R.W. Emerson* (New York: Tudor), Vol. Ill, 227-28.

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Portrayal of an Ignited Indian: A Study of Abul Kalam's *Wings of Fire*

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Portraiture of men and milieu all over the world has been all-too-myriad in their complexion, as they have been all-too-rich in their composition and all-too variegated in their point of view. Picked up from the different times and diverse climes, even a random perception of these metaphors soon reveals the wide spectrum of richness of their convention, demeanor and treatment. There has been witnessed in recent years a boost in the number of autobiography writers in Indian English making their mark not only in this country but all over the world with their technical virtuosity, aptitude and mature portrayal of multifaceted issues of verve and civilization from a point of view that is far more enlightened and extroverted than anything attempted before.

Missile Man, Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam—a man of versatile genius and one of the most celebrated writers—enjoys a conspicuous and unassailable place in the history of Indian rocketry programmes. Kalam possesses a commanding narrative influence. He portrays with compassion, insight, vehemently evincing his youthful naiveté and his development into a man who comprehends that he must always endeavour to accomplish his desires.

Kalam's autobiography *Wings of Fire* occupies an important place in Indian English autobiographies and ranks very high with the greatest autobiographies of the world. Autobiography is properly distinguished by the relative emphasis placed on character and on external events. As Joseph T. Shipley further writes:

> Autobiography customarily gives some prominence to personality and actions other than the writer's own; some are more than the narration of historical occurrences that have come directly within the view of their recorders. Thus autobiography properly is a connected narrative of the author's life with main stress laid on introspection or on the significances of his life against a wider background. (123)

Wings of Fire is one of the autobiographies which have gone into more than twenty impressions. It has so far been translated and published in more than 13 languages including Gujarati, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Oriya, and Marathi apart from Braille. Written in his seventies, it is an account of an intensely humble, spiritual and brilliantly insightful man. Kalam has written *Wings of Fire* in order to reveal and to recapitulate the past events. He looked behind in order to join the threads of the past to the future. The innermost desire of Kalam was to peep into the secrets of India's heart and mind:

> Of the straitened circumstances of my schooldays, the odd job I did to pay my school fees. . . . They tell something of the story of modern India, an individual destiny and the social matrix in which it is embedded . . . seem germane to include the accounts of my frustrated attempt to become an Air Force Pilot and of how I became, instead of the Collector my father dreamed I would be, a rocket engineer. (xiv)

Wings of Fire is a wonderful piece of self-introspection. Kalam has revealed in it a vivid, sincere and truthful account of his life. Many and various are the motives which can inspire autobiographical writing: sheer vanity, as in the case of Colly Cibber, Benvenuto Cellini and Lord Herbert of Cherbourg, the urge for unbuttoned self-revelation as in that of Rousseau and Gandhi. Among others, as Cardinal Newman's beautifully written *Apologia Pro Sua Vita*, a nostalgic desire to linger over enchanting memories, as Selma Logerfof's *Marbacka,* beliefs that one's experiences may be helpful to others, as Helen Keller's *The Story of My Life*, an earnest attempt to orient self amid a world of confusion, as *The Education of Henry Adams*, the urge for artistic expression, or the pure commercial desire to capitalize on fame or position. But so far as the motive behind writing the autobiography by Kalam is concerned, he writes:

> This story is an account, I hope, not just of my personal triumphs and tribulations but of the successes and setbacks of the science establishment in modern India, struggling to establish itself in the technological forefront. It is the story of national aspiration and of co-operative endeavour. And, as I see it, the saga of India's search for scientific self-sufficiency and technological competence is a parable for our times. (xv)

> I do not wish to set myself as an example to others, but I believe that a few souls may draw inspiration and come to balance that ultimate satisfaction which can only be found in the life of the spirit. (177-78)

The central hypothesis of this autobiography is the edifice of a scholar's acumen, and it is the recitation of a susceptible author's edification. Kalam has revealed his verve and divided his autobiography according to various phases of his life. One of the distinctive characteristics of this autobiography is that it covers the story of Kalam's life up to the successful launch of Agni—his long cherished vision, and has not only given Kalam enough span to present a full picture of both the growth of his mind and his early milieu but it has also endowed a large part of *Wings of Fire* with an exceptional vividness and immediacy, because of all human limitations.

Wings of Fire is an elaborate portrayal of the places where he lived in his early days. The revelation is carried on chronologically. Being vastly exploratory and having numerous deviations, the sequence of events does give the impression to progress on and incredibly frequently the series of events is in order, hence the revelation is made extremely intriguing by Kalam's extraordinary domination of estimation and psychoanalysis. However, as with most of the other autobiographers so with Prof. Kalam, the psychological compulsion to express oneself and to highlight one's achievements cannot be a less motivating force. In fact, Kalam himself has been too much conscious about the psychological urge when he was writing his autobiography. It reveals vividly several dimensions, such as vision, leadership skills, planning, management, failure, hope, integrity, perseverance, modesty. He writes:

> I am a well in this great land
> Looking at its millions of boys and girls
> To draw from me
> The inexhaustible divinity
> And spread His grace everywhere
> As does the water drawn from a well. (177)

Kalam has given short pen-picture of the role of visionary Indian scientists, such as Dr. Vikram Sarabhai and beautiful descriptions of the creation of a coordinated network of research institutions in his autobiography, which is written in a language that is simple and a style that is direct. He further says:

> It is also a tribute to the unflagging enthusiasm and efforts of my young colleagues who helped to realise our collective dreams. The famous words of Isaac Newton about standing on the shoulders of giants are valid for every scientist and I certainly owe a great debt of knowledge and inspiration to the distinguished lineage of Indian scien-

> tists that include Vikram Sarabhai, Satish Dhawan and Brahm Prakash. They played major roles in my life and in the story of Indian science. (xiv)

Wings of Fire commences with the very lucid revelation of Kalam's early years which played a vital role in shaping his mind and character. He writes:

> My story—the story of the son of Jainulabdeen, who lived for over a hundred years on Mosque Street in Rameswaram island and died there, the story of a lad who sold newspapers to help his brother, the story of a pupil reared by Sivasubramania Iyer and Iyadurai Solomon, the story of a student taught by teachers like Pandalai, the story of an engineer spotted by MGK Menon and groomed by the legendary Prof. Sarabhai, the story of a scientist tested by failures and setbacks, the story of a leader supported by a large team of brilliant and dedicated professionals. (177)

Wings of Fire is a record of the mental growth of Kalam and is written with many scientific perspectives. Modern scientific developments and events have been revealed at length and the personal factor recedes into background. Kalam has totally identified himself with the cause of India's rocket technology and aerospace research programmes. He has jumped into the struggle for countdowns headlong and every narration bears the stamp of his great involvement. *Wings of Fire* is a wonderful piece of the literary craft which reveals Prof. Kalam completely.

Wings of Fire is an attempt at the discovery of inner self. From its pages Kalam emerges as a man of high culture and sophistication with keen intellect and poet's sensibility, very human and great patriot. A man of wide interest, he had great passion for life and greater for motherland. He could lead a life of luxury and ease but he preferred the open sea, with all its storms and tempests. Kalam never married. He writes that he found that maintaining relationships was more difficult than rocket science. 'So all you married folk can pat yourself on the back! It does though beg the question, to have that kind of passion and dedication does one have to give up worldly life as we know it and take up "sanyas" from everything but work?' *Wings of Fire* reveals clearly how Kalam had no other mission in his life than that offered by his profession and how efficient has he been by utilizing the minimal of resources (for survival) and giving back in exponential proportions.

Kalam was born in 1931 into a middle-class Tamil Muslim family dipped and steeped into the depths of Muslim culture and religion at Rameswaram—a small pilgrim town in Tamilnadu. The famous Shiva temple, which made Rameswaram so sacred to pilgrims, was about a ten-minute walk from his house. His locality was predominantly Muslim, but there were quite a few Hindu families too, living amicably with their Muslim neighbours. There was a very old Mosque in his locality where his father used to take him for evening prayers. His keen and sensitive mind observed the religious acts of ritual performances, prayers, worship of images in temples in day-to-day social life in Rameswaram that had left an indelible impact upon his growing and developing personality. His personality is woven into the well knitted fabrics by the Muslim and Hindu civilizations and by the thread spun out of the wheel of the external environment and the inherited inner urges. About his cultural enrichments, he writes:

> We used to go for long walks . . . every evening. . . . I talked mainly of spiritual matters. The atmosphere of Rameswaram, with its flocking pilgrims, was conductive to such discussions. Our first halt would be at the imposing temple of Lord Shiva. Circling around the temple with the same reverence as any pilgrim from a distant part of the country, we felt a flow of energy pass through us. . . . I would . . . look towards the large groups of pilgrims around the temple, taking holy dips in the sea, performing rituals and reciting prayers with a sense of respect towards the same Unknown, whom we treat as the formless Almighty. I never doubted that the prayers in the temple reached the same destination as the ones offered in our mosque. (6-7)

Wings of Fire reveals his life starting with an account of his genealogy in 19th century in a middle-class Tamil family in the island town of Rameswaram, his early schooling at Schwartz High School, Ramanathapuram, his undergraduate education at St. Joseph College, Trichy, and completion of a degree course in aeronautic engineering from Madras Institute of Technology in 1958. He worked at the Langley Research Centre (LRC), NASA, in Houston, Virginia, USA, and at other facilities in the USA, including the Wallops Flight Facility at Wallops Island in East Coast, Virginia. He writes about a sculpture he saw at NASA where he was initiated into Rocket Engineering, "a charioteer driving two horses, one representing scientific research and the other technological development, metaphorically encapsulating the interconnection between research

and development." (37) Prominently displayed in the lobby, this painting depicted a battle scene with rockets flying in the background. He writes:

> A painting with this theme should be the most commonplace thing at a Flight Facility, but the painting caught my eye because the soldiers on the side launching the rockets were not white, but dark-skinned, with the racial features of people found in South Asia. One day, my curiosity got the better of me, drawing me towards the painting. It turned out to be Tipu Sultan's army fighting the British. The painting depicted a fact forgotten in Tipu's own country but commemorated here on the other side of the planet. I was happy to see an Indian glorified in NASA as a hero of warfare rocketry. (37-38)

Kalam joined India's Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) upon graduation to work on a hovercraft project. In 1962, he moved to the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), where his team successfully launched several satellites. He made a significant contribution as Project Director to develop India's first indigenous Satellite Launch Vehicle (SLV-III) which successfully placed the Rohini satellite into near earth orbit in July 1980. He has worked under Dr. Sarabhai (yet another top-class scientist of India), with scientists from countries like USA, USSR, Japan, Germany, France etc. He has worked in TERLS (Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launch Station) and worked with INCOSPAR (Indian Committee for Space Research) too, and has worked on SLVs (Satellite Launch Vehicles), hovercrafts and many more such projects.

In 1982, Kalam returned to the DRDO as Director, focusing on Indigenous guided missiles. He was responsible for the development and operational success of the Agni and Prithvi missiles. This earned him the sobriquet "India's missile-man." As chief of the country's defence research and development programme, Kalam demonstrated the great potential for dynamism and innovation that existed in seemingly moribund research establishments. He also helped in the formulation of healthcare products using technology developed for missiles. Through sheer grit, determination, hard work and a brilliant mind, he transformed the Indian defence research establishment, and went to hold some of the most sensitive jobs in government. In the process he made his mark as a visionary and project manager par excellence, while leading the development of the Integrated Guided Missile Program that resulted in the development of all modern Indian missiles. Developing and mastering

indigenous technologies that were denied the West, Kalam showed that even in the depth of despair, there is hope, and tremendous technological achievements are indeed possible with the right mix of talent, hard work, fair play and motivation.

In July 1992, Kalam became a Scientific Advisor to India's Defense Minister. As the Principal Scientific Advisor to the Indian government, he held the rank of a Cabinet Minister. His work led to the successful Pokhran-II nuclear tests in 1998, which reiterated India's position as a nuclear weapon state. Kalam was also the Chairman, Ex-officio, of the Scientific Advisory Committee to the Cabinet (SAC-C) and piloted the "India Millennium Mission 2020." He has the unique distinction of having received honorary doctorates from at least thirty universities, as also India's three highest civilian honours: the Padma Bhushan in 1981; the Padma Vibhushan in 1990; and the Bharat Ratna in 1997.

Thus, *Wings of Fire* reveals very lucidly Kalam's own rise from obscurity and his personal and professional struggles, as well as the revelation of Agni, Prithvi, Akash, Trishul and Nag—missiles that have become household names in India and that have raised the nation to the level of a missile power of international reckoning. (ii) This is also the saga of independent India's struggle for technological self-sufficiency and defensive autonomy. Kalam ends his autobiography on a note of sombre contemplation. "This story will end with me. I have no inheritance in the worldly sense. I have acquired nothing, possess nothing—no family, sons, daughters." (177) But he should have by now realized that in his "end" is a new beginning, for the river of life never stops flowing.

Wings of Fire thus unveils a comprehensive portrayal of the scientific verve of India but Prof. Kalam's personal life is so intimately blended with the verve of the nation that it is impossible to distinguish them as disparate. However, it is remarkable more for the relative privacy and reserve that he maintained in it than what he could have confessed and revealed. It would be hard to say that which part of it reveals the more fascinating story—the early chapters which describe his school days, his adolescence, and his life as a student in the various distinguished institutions, or the absorbing narrative of his moral development and his struggle in pursuit of vocation. Accordingly he is a humanitarian, secular, democratic, simple and inspirational. He has given the country an inspiration on how to dream and realize the dreams.

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Cohesion in Text

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Before Roman Jakobson the idea of cohesion was brought into use in literary discourse as we find in Alexander Pope's poetry, but not discussed as a means of linguistic strategy, or as an essential instrument of making non-literary discourse into a literary one. He, a dominant linguist of the 20th century and founder of formalism, diminished the unwanted line drawn between linguistics and literature as if they were the watertight compartments. He showed the application of linguistics to literary discourse analysis by the broader concept of cohesion to be observed at all structural levels of language, say sound, lexicon, sentence and meaning. In 1960 he applied mechanism of cohesion, that is, internal patterning or symmetrical arrangement and repetition of linguistic materials to nonliterary texts. Cohesion in poetry is appreciated in terms of alliteration, assonance, refrain, regular stanza, rise and fall of stress, rhyme, metre and other devices. He noticed that linguistic cohesiveness ties sentence structure and meaning and sentence structure and sound together for the sake of creating poetic and literary effect on the reader. Shapiro has recently argued against the Jakobsonian interpretation of cohesion as symmetry pointing out the fact that poetry is based on contrast rather than exact similarity and parallelism.[1] To Jakobson, even the contrast, which lives with shared similarity or depends on two aspects of the same thing, is to be included in cohesiveness along with parallelism.

Jakobson lights on the idea of cohesion in the words, "The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination"[2] that is enough to discern linguistic approach to literature. He means that language becomes functional due to interplay of two processes, metaphor and metonymy, which are absent in people suffering from aphasia or language loss. In his essay entitled "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances," he opines that understanding a kind of breakdown or disturbance in communication requires understanding the nature and structure of the particular mode of commu-

nication that has caused non-function of language. It can provide new insights into the general laws of language, concerning the phonemic pattern and the grammatical system in general and cohesion in texts in particular. Speech implies a selection of certain linguistic entities from lexical storehouse common for addresser and addressee and their dissolved paradigm, say of grammatical cases such as he-his-him, of tenses such as write-wrote-written-writing-writes, of word derivatives such as grant, grantor, grantee. He has keen sense of oversimplification, automatism and innovation. "Mokr-ic" is interpreted as "something humid" or "humid weather" at the place of "woodhouse" in Russia, because the root "mokr" stands for "humid," All varieties of aphasia fall between the metaphoric and metonymic poles consisting of some impairment of the capability either for selection and substitution or for combination and contexture. Semantically common discourse takes place along the metaphoric and metonymic poles in the most condensed way. Jakobson says, "In normal verbal behaviour both processes are continually operative but careful observation will reveal that under the influence of a cultural pattern, personality and verbal style preference is given to one of the two processes over the other."[3]

Jakobson is of the view that interaction between these two poles is observed in verbal art also. Verse patterns require a compulsory parallelism between adjacent lines as we find in Biblical poetry or in the west Finnic and Russian oral traditions. In more general terms, we can find it appearing on all verbal levels such as morphemic, lexical, syntactic and phraseological. In Russian lyrical songs, metaphoric constructions predominate, but in the heroic epics, metonymic influence is recurrently used, in romantic and symbolic compositions metaphoric tendency is repeatedly acknowledged but realistic trends abound with synecdochic illustrations.

These two processes hold good in sign systems other than language[4] such as the history of painting consists of metonymical orientation of cubism or transformation of objects into a set of synecdoche. Metaphorical and metonymical poles are found in surrealism where painters adopt metaphorical attitude.[5] In this way metonymic and metaphoric devices are always in interaction in almost all symbolic expressions. Freud in his interpretation of dreams, which is latently related with a set of symbolic systems, takes recourse to displacement equivalent to metonymy, condensation equivalent to synecdoche and identification and symbolism equivalent to similar-

ity.[6] Frazer working on magic finds two types of laws—law of similarity and law of association or contiguity helpful for explaining magical charms. Magic is based on combination into units of higher degree of complexity as do addresser and addressee in the language in the light of the syntactic system. For the optimal exchange of information, the speaker and the listener have more or less the same "filing cabinet of prefabricated representation." To Jakobson, selection between alternatives implies the possibility of substituting one for the other. Equivalent in alternatives implies the possibility of substituting one for the other, equivalent in one respect and different in another. Actually, selection and substitution are two faces of the same operation. Combination is made up of constituent signs and occurs only in combination with other signs. Ferdinand de Saussure has already explained the fundamental rules played by these two operations. that is "selection is presentia: it is based on two or several terms jointly present in actual series," whereas "combination connects terms; in absentia as members of a virtual mnemonic series." That is to say selection refers to the fact conjoined in the code without any message whatsoever in it, on the other hand combination deals with the fact conjoined in the actual message, so the message conveyed to the addressee is a combination of constituent parts such as phrases, clauses and sentences. For a meaningful communication, the constituents of a context are as per the condition of contiguity or metonymically related. In the ambit of substitution signs are metaphorically related or guided by some degrees of similarity oscillating between the equivalence of synonyms and the common core of antonyms.

Jakobson explains speech disturbance in aphasiac one in the light of the similarity disorder and contiguity disorder by which the individual's capacity for combination and selection of linguistic units is lost. Classically, aphasia is described in terms of emissive and receptive dichotomy, but it is not as much suggestive as similarity and contiguity dichotomy. Aphasia due to selection deficiency tends to loss of capacity for selection of alternative, but the context or scraps of words or sentences help patient readily complete conversation with some difficulty. He says, "the more his utterances are dependent on the context, the better he copes with his verbal task. He feels unable to utter a sentence which responds neither to the cue of his interlocutor nor to the actual situation." The patient suffering from similarity disorder is not able to produce the sentence "it

rains," unless and until he actually sees it raining. He uses words dependent on other words of the same sentence in the syntactical context. Words syntactically subordinated by the grammatical agreement are more likely to occur, but the cornerstone of the sentence, that is, the subject is omitted; sentences are elliptical resulting from the antecedent sentences uttered. In his speech words inherently related to the context are prominently used. Goldstein found that his patient did not ever utter the word "knife" alone instead he called "Pencil-sharpener," "apple-parer," "bread-knife," "knife-and-stork," on the ground of its use, thus the free morpheme "knife" was changed into a bound morpheme. In another example, the patient could not answer what a bachelor was, but replied: "a bachelor is an unmarried man" or "an unmarried man is a bachelor," which is an equational predication and a projection of a substitution set from the lexical code into the context. Equivalent terms are two correlated parts of the sentence tied by contiguity and in complementary distribution. Finally, in similarity disorder the selective capacity is strongly impaired, ability for combination is preserved, contiguity determines the patient's whole verbal behaviour being supported by the context.

Hughlings Jackson in his major contribution points out: "It is not enough to say that speech consists of words. It consists of words referring to one another in a particular manner and without a proper interrelation of its parts, a verbal utterance would be a mere succession of names embodying no proposition. Loss of speech is the loss of power, to propositionize speechlessness does not mean entire wordlessness." The contiguity disorder refers to impairment of the ability to propositionize, in other words inability to combine simpler linguistic units into more complex one. Contiguity disorder is termed contexture deficient aphasia, because it leads to loss of extent and variety of sentences and syntactical rules. This is the stage of agrammatism, the degeneration of the sentence into a mere "word heap," Rule of concord or government and cohesion of grammatical coordination and subordination fail resulting in chaotic word-order. We do not find any grammatical functions such as of conjunctions, prepositions, pronouns and articles apparent, but "telegraphic style" or infantile one sentence utterances and one-word sentences in the patient's speech. Contexture disintegration process in the selective operation process is acutely followed. He does not deliberately transfer meaning, he uses "spyglass" for "microscope" and "fire" for

"gaslight," Moreover he loses sense of inflection, uses infinitive for finite verbs and nominative case for objective case. In the world of magic, the law of similarity has been called homeopathic or sympathetic or imitative, while magic based on law of contiguity has been termed contagious magic.[7]

On the ground of dichotomy discussed above in case of aphasia, Jakobson tries to apply it to the text, that is, a passage, spoken or written, or a literary composition or prose or verse, dialogue or monologue, or a single proverb or a whole play, or from a momentary cry for help to an all-day discussion on a committee. A text is regarded as a semantic unit related to a "clause of sentence not by size but by realization, so a text has texture functioning as a unity with respect to its environment. It means a text has cohesion either based on similarity or contiguity to form or constitute a linguistic whole. For example: Wash and core six cooking apples. Put them into a fireproof dish. When we analyse 'them' of the second line, it refers back to the six cooking apples in the first sentence, that is anaphorically related for establishing cohesion between two sentences.

To make cohesion realize in a text we should take into account presupposition as is evident in the sentence "so we pushed him under the other one." Here presuppositions are to be found in words so, him, other and one. But the presuppositions loaded in the words are not to be resolved, because it is the opening sentence, so the presuppositions must be satisfied as is in the case of previous example where the two terms "them" and "six cooking apples" are identical in reference or coreferential. Coreferentiality is a cohesive agency being implemented in the two sentences.

In the second sentence 'the' is an anaphoric agent being followed by apples, functioning as mark of identity. A text is a text owing to existence of cohesion referring to semantic properties of the constituents of the text for their interdependence. We take resort to cohesion for interpretation of elements in a text and their interdependence. The combination of one lexical item with others is due to many constraints such as selectional restrictions, contradiction, anomaly, tautology, also. In our language, there are several nouns such as tower, person, chimney, tree being specified as being vertical denotation and nouns such as ribbon, pencil, snake, rug as being specified with horizontal denotation. Being vertical and horizontal are not binary features but predications. Lexical entry for tower in-

cludes predication that is vertical, while that of ribbon does predication that is horizontal, so the nouns like tower are combined with 'tall' and ribbon with 'long' under vertical and horizontal constraints. This phenomenon is termed selectional restrictions equivalent to metaphor of Jakobson, because they govern the selection of lexical items in accordance with predication.[8] Most often we come across deviant combination of lexical items which are incompatible due to avoidance of predication. Predication deviance is called anomaly such as in long tower and tall ribbon in which selections have not been perfectly made. Contradiction related to anomaly refers to both affirmation and negation at the same time or x is not x or not x is x. For example: "This corpse is alive." Here contradiction lies in corpse and its being alive, being explicitly opposite to each other against the implied oppositeness of anomaly. Selection restriction includes tautology, in which predication does not give any new information because of the equation "X is indeed always x" such as "This teacher is a teacher," "My wife is married to me," "This corpse is not alive," This distinction between contradiction or anomaly and tautology is to be found in the fact that tautology is not false or absurd, does not violate pragmatic rules, while contradiction is absurd, false, humorous and violates the organization of sense in a message.

So far as cohesion in literary text is concerned, it goes beyond the basic logic of the sentence. In comparison with grammatical morphemes, content morpheme, which carries phonological patterning, is a carrier of alliteration, assonance, rhyme, stress, etc. It is more important for it sets up sound-meaning correlations. Lexical cohesion is realized by the repetition of content words as we can find in "the text quoted below:

> True ease in writing comes from Art, not chance,
> As those move easiest who have learn'd to dance.
> 'Tis not enough no harshness gives offence,
> The sound must seem an Eccho to the sense.
> Soft is the strain when Zephyr gently blows,
> And the smooth stream in smoother Numbers flows;
> But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,
> The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent roar.
> When Ajax strives, some rock's vast weight to throw,
> The line too labours, and the words move slow;
> Not so, when swift Camilla scours the plain,
> Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and skims along the main.[9]

When we do the semantic description of the above-mentioned text, we find that a set of terms like harshness, sound, echo, soft, strain involves sound, the set of words like stream, flows, surge, shore, torrent, main involves water or liquid, and the set of content words like loud, hoarse, roar, Zephyr, blow, fly, skim involves air, a set of words like move, dance, blow, flow, surge, scour, fly, skim being tied with other action verbs like lash, roar, strive, throw and labour involves various kinds of motion. Proper names like Eccho, Zephyr, Ajax and Camilla refer to personalities of classical mythology set in lexical cohesion, thus there is a cohesion in them.

It is worth mentioning that idea of cohesion is most fervently found in poetry of all literary genres owing to creation of parallels among meaning, sentence structure and sound structure. It is in poetry that structures equivalent in sound, sentence structure and grammatical category are combined in a linear progression where repetition of metrical patterns, rhymes, melody, stressing pattern and metre take places at a certain interval. Jakobson himself is fond of quoting Caesar's famous veni, vidi, vici, in which there are many parallels such as of grammatical category that they all are verbs, bound morphemes that they are all inflections of first person singular past tense, syllable that they are disyallabic, stress, sound structure of rhyme and alliteration. The benefit of cohesiveness in lines of poetry is that they remain memorable as is the Caesar's sentence against the English "I came, I saw, I conquered" in which /s/versus/k/, two syllabi of conquered versus one syllable of came and saw make it of less effect. To make slogans and advertisement which may last long and be easier to remember, cohesion plays a dominant role in maintaining phonological, lexical and semantic similarity. In the Robert Browning's song cited below from "Pippa Passes" we find that the patterns are varied for avoidance of monotony. However syntactic cohesive patterns are maintained:

The year's at the spring
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hillside's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in his heaven—
All's right with the world![10]

Each line of the song is of one Principal clause written in simple sentence and consists of structure "noun + 's + Prepositional Phrase," The fourth and eighth lines are variant but appear at the fixed place made of adjective phrase. The syntactic cohesion is parallel with semantic cohesion because of a series of time nouns joined by 'at' preposition such as at the spring, at the morn, at seven. In the 5th and 6th lines two animals like "lark" and 'snail' are mentioned, but they are in contrast for their being higher and lower animals being followed by the same preposition 'on' for lexical likeness. In the 7th line God is equated with lark and snail but its grammatical function is being followed by the preposition of place 'in' for the parallelism sake. From the metrical composition point of view, all lines except the 3rd and 7th begin with unstressed syllable being followed by the stressed one. The meaning of the poem does not coincide with the normal spoken English expression, because we can not say that "The years are at the spring" and so on, but the fictional young Italian woman and singer, Pippa, describe the most suitable time deductively of the day that is morning at seven in spring "when all's right with the world," thus sameness and difference interplay to keep up with symmetry of the song.

Phonological cohesion in the text is to be found in alliteration, assonance and rhyme involving textual patterning made of repetition of similar sounds. On the sound patterns of language the type of verse, too, is determined as in old English poetry. Alliteration and stressed first syllable word were favoured in contrast with middle English and modern English poetry. Moreover in English literature rhyme ending with stressed syllable, termed as strong rhyme such as life—knife is favoured, but in Swedish literature rhyme ending with unstressed termed as weak rhyme, such as divisions—incantations is favoured. Strong rhyme is made of several monosyllabic words while weak rhyme of several multi-syllabic words. In this way we can say that cohesion is owing to interaction of phonological symmetry and meaning lying therein. Phonemes in themselves are meaningless, however they complement meaning which is to be exemplified in the famous passage already quoted from Pope's "Essay on Criticism," Pope's striking revelation is that "the sound must seem an echo to the sense," In line 2, words "soft" and "gently" and mid vowels/ e, E,o, /, fricatives/ f,s,z, j,f/, repeated nasal /n/ are indicators of the softness of a breeze and line 3 contains the very word "smooth," fricatives, vowel /u/ and nasal /m/ indicating the idea of

smoothness. The word /loud/ in 4th and 5th lines consists of diphthong /aw/ to impress on rearing of waves and ideas of harshness and hoarseness become evident of the palatal fricatives /s/ and /j/. Besides sounds, syntax, too, has related sense such as adjectives placed before noun have lighter stress, but heavier stress if placed before structural words like prepositions or articles. We can find a little bit opposite intonational construction from line 3 onwards where adjective-noun constructions have been promptly used such as "loud surges," "no arse rough verse," Here there is no unstressed syllable's intervention between the stressed syllables. In the phrase "some rock's vast weight" in line 6, the word-order is made of determiner, noun, adjective, noun and every syllable has some stress in which no smoothness of flow is maintained. It is clear now that sound being combined with syntax creates meaning. To find out meaning of a sentence in verse, we are to keep sound-symbolism associations into account, in which syntax adds meaning to the total effect. Sound is to support and create meaning and sound symbolism association has the subjective casting of meaning. There is nothing like systematic feature of the language in it. In the poem "The Harbour" by Carl Sandburg quoted below, we can find phonological and semantic cohesiveness more vividly:

Passing through huddled and ugly walls
By doorways where women
Looked from their hunger deeps eyes,
Hunted with shadows of hunger hands,
Out from the huddled and ugly walls,
I came sudden, other city's edge,
On a blue burst of lake,
Long lake waves breaking under the sun
On a spray-flung curve of shore;
And a fluttering storm of gulls
Masses of great gray wings
And flying white bellies
Veering and wheeling free in the open,"[11]

The poem is about deformation of the man-made city in its first part and alluring beauty of nature in the second part. The poem deals with contrasts between the world of city and the world of nature, poverty and confinement of town being expressed by the repeated use of phrase huddled and ugly walls, hunger deep eyes. They are subordinate to the main clause "I came sudden," Phonologically speaking the word "huddled" is very significant, in which /e/ pre-

dominates for it lays stress in the word and so is the case with words "ugly," "hunger," "sudden" "sun," "flung" and "fluttering" forming assonance. Alliteration is to be observed owing to /s/ in lines 6, 7, 10, /b/ in lines 7, 8 and /1/ in line 6. In lines 11, 12, 13 front vowels /x/ and /e/ are repeated for serving double purpose, that is, to inform that description of lake is quite different from the world of gulls and to maintain rhythmic effect.

Lastly, we should take metre, patterning of stressed and unstressed syllables in a poetic line into account for understanding cohesion and sense underlying in the structure. It is to be pointed out that metre and stress are two separate supra segmental features of language. However there is a basic parallelism between them for metre simulates stress and intotational patterning of language. The generative theory of metrics has been expounded by Morris Halle and Samuel Jay Keyser in "On Metre and Prosody": "A given metre can be described as a system of potentials for stress, somewhat like a musical beat that may undergo various modifications in particular contexts." In iambic pentametre composition in English poetry, the metrical line consists of ten syllables, in which the odd positions say 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 are weak or unstressed, while even positions say 2, 4, 6, 8 are strong or stressed. In both prose and poetry, rhythm is for cohesion as well as sound-sense linkage that we can find in Virginia Woolf's novel *Mrs. Dalloway*:

> What a lark! What a plunge! For so it had always seemed to her, when, with a little squeak of the hinges, which she could hear now, she had burst open the French windows and plunged at Bourton into the open air. How fresh, how calm, stiller than this of course, the air was in the early morning; like the flap of a wave; the kiss of a wave; chill and sharp and yet (for a girl of eighteen as she then was) solemn, feeling as she did, standing there at the open window, that something awful was about to happen. (3)

The lines quoted above are most rhythmic, organized on syntactic phrase groupings, pause, punctuation marks, repetition of similar stress patterns either within or between two phrases. The novel deals with life as an alternation between a joyous "lark" and a "plunge" into despair, presented in equilibrium by tripartite rhythmic pattern. Conclusively speaking, a good poem is cohesive and so is prose but blind adherence to an equivalence may lead to doggerel. Jakobson's idea of cohesion has been an instrument for literary critic to evaluate a text showing differences and similarities or a variation in a pattern

for thematic, strategic and ideational understanding of both creator and the text.

NOTES

1. Shapiro, "Asymmetry: An Inquiry into the linguistic structure of poetry" (New York: North Holland, 1976).
2. Jakobson, "Closing statement," p. 358.
3. Jakobson and Morris Halle, "Two Metaphoric and Metonymic poles," Chapter 5 of *Fundamentals of Language*, published in 1956.
4. Jakobson, "I ventured a few sketchy remarks on the metonymical turn in verbal are verbal art ("Prorealizm u mustectri," vaplite Kharkov, 1927, No 2; "Randbemarkungen zur Prosa des Dichters Pasternak," slavische Rundschau, vii (1935); in painting ("Futurizm," liskusstvo, Moscow, August 2, 1919) and in motion pictures ("Upadek filmu," Listy Pro umeni a Kritiku, I, Prague, 1933), but the crucial problem of the two polar processes awaits a detailed investigation."
5. B. Balazs, "Theory of the Film" (London, 1952).
6. Freud, "Die Traumdeutung," 9th ed. (Vienna, 1950).
7. J.G. Frazer, "The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion," part I, 3rd ed. (Vienna, 1950). Chapter 3.
8. Noam Chomsky, "Aspects of the Theory of Syntax" (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1965).
9. Alexander Pope, "Essay on Criticism," in *Alexander Pope: Pastoral Poetry and An Essay on Criticism*, ed. E. Andra and Aubrey Williams (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1961), pp. 281-83, lines 362-73.
10. Robert Browning, *The Poetical Works of Robert Browning*, Cambridge Edition, with a new introduction by G. Robert Stange (Boston: Houghton Miffin, 1974), p. 133.
11. Carl Sandburg, *The Complete Poems of Carl Sandburg* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970), p. 5.

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The Role of Pragmatics in Pedagogic Grammars of English

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Grammar can be narrowly defined to include only morphology and syntax. Structural linguists held this view of grammar. Grammar can be widely defined so as to include phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. Grammar under such a view will be concerned with the principles and processes of sentence construction. Transformational grammarians held such a view of grammar. Grammar can be still more widely defined so as to include phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. Pragmatics is defined as the study of context in the interpretation of utterances. Dell Hymes, Widdowson, Keith, Wilkins etc. hold such a view of grammar.

Then, our concept of what is grammatical is dependent upon our view of grammar. Linguists who include only morphology and syntax under grammar regard syntactically well-formed sentences as grammatical. So a sentence like 'The tree married the girl' will be grammatically well formed for them.

However, in Chomdkyian type of grammar, the above sentence would be considered semantically deviant and hence will be out.

In a yet wider view of grammar, not only syntactic and semantic deviance but also pragmatic deviance will matter. By pragmatic deviance is meant the utterances that are not appropriate. The following utterance will be out because it is formally inappropriate:

a. What happened to the books?

b. The moths destroyed them (formally inappropriate).

The functionally inappropriate utterance will also be out:

a. What's this? (In a context where the listener and speaker both know the object.)

b. It's book.

Depending upon the purposes for which a grammar is written, a grammar can be classified into a linguist's grammar, a teacher's grammar and a pedagogic grammar. The purpose of a linguist's grammar is to construct a scientific theory of a language. It not only

describes the linguistic facts but also tries to account for them. A teacher's grammar, on the other hand, helps the teacher to teach his students. The purpose of pedagogic grammar is to teach the learner how to use the language correctly.

Most of the pedagogic grammars that are being used in classrooms in India today concentrate on teaching form in isolated sentences followed by exercises in isolated sentences, too. These grammars include those by Pit Corder, Stannard Allen, F.T. Wood and Wren and Martin. An example from Stannard Allen's here will not be out of place. One of the experiences on articles in the book is to read the following into plurals.

a. A garden has a tree.

b. A potato is a vegetable.

Notice sentence (a) is funny and (b) will be funny when made plural. Further, these grammars do not teach 'value' (Widdowson: 1972) but only 'Signification.' As a matter of fact, a pedagogic grammar must teach a learner not only the syntactic and semantic rules but also pragmatic rules so that he can communicate more effectively. For this purpose, new types of pedagogic grammars will have to be written which will be based on a combination of syntactic, semantic and pragmatic rules.

Linguistic facts can be adequately accounted for if we include a combination of syntactic, semantic and pragmatic rules in pedagogic grammars. Purely syntactic rules may work for certain areas of grammar only.

Let us take an example. The difference between pre-positional and phrasal verbs can be discussed in terms of purely syntactic rules. Look at the following sentences.

a. He looked up the word in the dictionary. (Particle)

b. He looked up the wall. (Prep.)

c. He looked up. (Adverb)

In this case, we can invoke syntactic evidence to differentiate among particles, prepositions and adverbs. If a word is a particle, it allows particle movement whereas prepositions and adverbs do not. So, it is possible to say (a) but not (b) and (c):

a. He looked the word up in the dictionary. (particle movement applied)

b. He looked the wall up.

c. He went last night out.

Further, it is possible to frontshift the prepositional phrase but not the phrase with the particle:

a. Up the wall he looked.

b. Up the word he looked in the dictionary.

The above examples show that the difference among particles, adverbs and prepositions can be explained in terms of pure syntactic rules. But there are linguistic facts that cannot be accounted for in terms of syntactic rules. To account for them, one has to invoke semantic rules. Consider for example, the use of the progressive aspect in English. The present progressive tense is used for those actions that are taking place at the moment of speaking. Now signals the use of the present progressive. But then, there are the verbs of cognition, perception and relation that cannot be used in the progressive aspect. The non-occurrence of these verbs in the progressive aspect is a linguistic fact that requires explanation in terms of semantic rules. That is, certain stative verbs cannot be used in the progressive aspect. Consider the following sentences:

a. He has a big car.

b. He is having a big car.

c. I understand what you say.

d. I am understanding what you say.

Then, there are certain linguistic facts that defy syntactic or semantic explanation. They can be explained in terms of pragmatic rules. Pragmatics will include linguistic context, relationship between the speaker and hearer, politeness, tact, hesitation, background knowledge, shared knowledge register. To illustrate the importance of pragmatic rules, we shall take an example from the System of Articles in English. The generic reference in English can be expressed in one of the following ways:

a. The cow is an animal.

b. A cow is an animal.

c. Man is mortal.

d. The Germans are nice people.

The noun phrases in the above sentences refer to a class yet they are different in some way and their difference can be explained in terms of pragmatic rules. (a) is more likely to occur in a scientific register. (b) and (c) have the same meaning. In (d) man refers to mankind and (e) is used only for nationality. The generic use of articles is thus illustrative of pragmatic-semantic rules.

Further, consider the use of the definite article in English. Anaphoric, cataphoric and exophoric references are realized as the definite article followed by a noun in English. Anaphoric reference is a result of textual and situational components whereas exophoric reference depends upon the shared knowledge between the speaker and listener and world knowledge. A noun can receive anaphoric interpretation because of the previous mention of a related object. The second type of case is very interesting. Quick et al (1984) give the following example:

John bought a bicycle, but when the he rode it one of the wheels come off.

Here the use of 'the' before wheels is a result of situational and textual factors. We all know that cycles have wheels and further there has been a previous mention of a cycle.

Pragmatic rules are necessary to account for, at least, one of the uses of the simple past tense. This tense is used to express those actions and events that took place at a definite time in the past. This definite time may be overtly expressed or is covertly assumed. The speaker assumes the definite time when this is recoverable form of knowledge of (a) the immediate or local situation (b) the larger situation of 'general knowledge' (c) what has been said earlier in the same sentence or text. (Quirk et al: 1984)

We shall exemplify the situational use of the simple past tense by taking two sentences. Consider the following sentences:

a. Did the postman come?

b. Lal Bahadur Shastri died in Tashkent.

In (a), the definite time, say, at lunch time is understood because it depends upon the shared knowledge of the speaker and the listener. The alternative to (a) could be: Did the postman come at lunch time?

The definite time in (b) is recoverable from the interlocutors' general knowledge. This use of the past tense is restricted to historical or biographical statements 'which have specific people, places or objects as their topics' (Quirk et al 1984). The past tense in (b) presupposes a common knowledge between the speaker and the listener to the effect that 'we all know that Lal Bahadur Shastri died at some time or other, well when he died, he died in Tashkent.'

Politeness sometimes affects the kind of tense form that we use. In some situations we could use either the simple past or the past continuous: Consider the following sentences:

a. What were you doing before you came here?

b. What did you do before you came here?

The choice of (a) over (b) depends upon politeness: when the speaker chooses to be more polite, he uses (b). Sometimes, the use of the past continuous expresses disapproval. (a) below indicates that the listener had no right to be in the room whereas (b) gives no such impression.

a. What were you doing in my room?

b. What did you do in my room?

Modal auxiliaries, apart from having semantic uses, also have pragmatic uses. The pragmatic uses of modals include request, offer, politeness, tentativeness, formality, informality etc. Both may and can are used for possibility. However, the use of 'may' instead of 'can' lends a touch of formality to the usage, and the use of might/could in place of may/can makes a statement tentative. Consider the following:

a. You may be right.

b. You might be right. (tentative)

c. During the winter, many rare birds may be noticed in Gana. (Here may is a formal substitute of can)

Further, 'ought to' and 'should' must express logical necessary and obligation. However, they are different from 'must' in that whereas 'must' and 'have to' express the speaker's confidence in the occurrence of the events, 'ought to' and 'should' express only the speaker's tentative inference. Consider the following sentences in which (b) and (c) show the speaker's tentative inference:

a. He must be home by now.

b. He should be home by now.

c. He ought to be home by now.

The preceding discussion shows that an adequate description of a language requires three types of rules—syntactic, semantic and pragmatic rules. It seems to me that pragmatic rules are more important than semantic and syntactic rules and if we are to set up a hierarchy, it would be the following: Pragmatic rules—Semantic rules—Syntactic rules.

It seems that a language would never tolerate the violation of pragmatic rules though it might allow the violation of semantic or syntactic rules. Consider the following sentences in which the syntactic rules have been violated to safeguard the pragmatic rules:

a. I was wondering if you would do me a favour (more tactful and tentative).

b. It's time I went. (hesitant)

c. Which (of these two) is the strongest (Informal)

Notice the use of the past progressive in (a). Here this tense does not refer to an ongoing activity in the past but has been used because the speaker wants to be tactful and tentative. The syntactic rule requires the use of the present tense in (a) but the pragmatic rule warrants the use of the past progressive. The speaker gives more importance to the pragmatic rule. The use of the past tense in (b) is warranted by the pragmatic rule. The use of the comparative in (c) would be rather literary whereas the use of the superlative degree is required in informal English.

The use of always requires the use of simple present or simple past. But this syntactic rule is sacrificed if the speaker wants to express his irritation or disapproval. Consider the following sentences in which the present progressive is used with always in a violation of the syntactic rule:

a. He is always losing his keys. (annoyance)

b. He's always working. (tone of disapproval)

Further, there are cases where semantic rules are violated to protect the pragmatic rules. Want is one of the stative verbs. The semantics of this verb prevents it from occurring in the progressive aspect. However, if the speaker wants to be tentative or tactful, he could use this verb into the progressive aspect. Look at the following sentence: "Were you wanting to see me?" (tact, tentativeness)

The preceding discussion makes it clear that there are areas of grammar that can be best explained in terms of pragmatic rules; then there are areas of grammar that can be best accounted for in terms of syntactic and semantic rules. Therefore, what is required in pedagogic grammar is a combination of syntactic, semantic and pragmatic rules. The present pedagogic grammars pay little attention to pragmatic rules. So new types of pedagogic grammars can be written in which pragmatic rules must play an equal and profitable role. The presentation of material and the exercises should be in the form of contextualized stuff, mini dialogues and communicative tasks. Isolated sentences should be avoided as far as possible. Emphasis should be placed on teaching language use rather than isolated sentences devoid of any communicative value. Grammar materials should be based on the combination of syntactic.

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Learning English Genres: A New ELT Paradigm

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We dream in narrative, daydream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, love, despair, plan, revise, criticise, gossip, learn, hate and love by narrative.

English language teaching and learning is an important and crucial part of contemporary education. Accorded a global stature and currency, the language has made inroads within every nation and culture. A language that engenders avenues of progress and prosperity, teaching and learning of the language (ELT) is not without its share of obstacles and difficulties.

Several approaches abound in the application of techniques and methods in ELT. A method that is steadily gaining ground is the genre-based method. Communication (transference of knowledge: emotive or informative) being the prime function of language forms the basis of the concept of genre-based language teaching. Inspired by Bakhtin's dialogic principle that defines language as a way of conceptualizing the world; genre focuses on studying the use of language in context. Bakhtin further explains genre as a derivative of the 'inner genre' that resides in an individual just like inner speech gives shape to outer speech. Several factors that contribute to the creation of the inner genre are based upon the culture, tradition and social milieu.

Language is a process of signification that derives its meaning from the social, political and economic culture of which it is a part. To learn a language it is essential to be aware of the culture of which it is a part and a product. Genre helps in this area because it not only gives an example of the technicalities of language usage (grammar, syntax, etc.) but also the innate nuances of its use, the expressions and emotions.

In the arena of second language teaching that distinguishes ELT in India, it is very important that the students are made aware of the

nuances of its use. Lack of a proper and conducive environment impedes the smooth progress of ELT. It is an uphill task that has to grapple with multiple problems of lack of relevant context, motivation, proper student-teacher interaction, passivity, practical and learner-centred approach and most importantly the culture that language carries within itself. Genre is seen as the way culture carries out its transactions and communication. Knowledge is conveyed through different genres determined by culture. The use of genre in an English classroom provides the teacher and student with more room to actively interact, learn and use the language.

The various genres of literature that prove to be an important aid to ELT convey this very knowledge integral to the learning of a language, and its eventual practical use. Poetry, drama and fiction complement ELT as useful resources in the form of context that contribute to the four integral steps of language learning i.e. LSRW.

ELT cannot be confined merely to the technical knowledge of its structure and grammar; comprehension forms an integral part of the process. Unless the student comprehends fully what he/she listens and reads, he/she will not be able to effectively use it in speaking and writing. One has to develop the ability to comprehend, think and decide the particular way he/she needs to employ to articulate the knowledge he/she wants to convey. Genre helps the students of language to learn and understand the ways in which language is used in particular situations and context.

Story, theme, character, emotion of a poem, play or fiction help to generate an interest among the students. They can listen to the teacher reading out the text, discussing it in the class or try reading it themselves, discuss it with peers, comprehend the meaning and form their own perception.

Discussion, speaking out in the class and reading helps the students to overcome the initial inhibition and shyness, thereby raising their self-confidence and interest in the class and classroom activity. It will also help them to learn and actively practice pronunciation, punctuation, stress and intonation to be used in a particular situation and expression as dictated by the context in use.

Eventually leading to the stage of composition, the above activities will help in the effective usage of the language with the aid of a new ELT paradigm; genre.

Knowledge, language and culture are interrelated. A major obstacle that most second language learners face is the inability to re-

late to an emotion or thought in English, the target language. They think in their mother tongue and then try translating it into English. This often gives rise to difficulties related to difference in cultural context, errors in construction and the use of the target language. Use of genre in the teaching of English as a second language helps the learners to think in the target language by enhancing their language skill as well as their knowledge of the cultural context of the language text, and developing their level of comprehension and critical faculty in that language.

Poetry in the words of Wordsworth is the 'spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings' which is a quite difficult genre to teach and utilize to teach language. As a genre it is often highly symbolic but at the same time very interesting and enchanting that can help in catching the attention, interest and curiosity of the student.

In language teaching, the students can benefit from listening and imbibing the aesthetic employment of language, comprehension of the underlying ideas and emotions, intonation, stress, etc. Being rhythmic in nature, the students enjoy poems and lilting music of the verse which in turn helps them to sustain their interest in the language. The use of metaphoric language and expressions help the students to understand and learn the poetic use of language; it will help to develop a sense of aestheticism related to the language.

Recitation is an important part of poetry reading and appreciation. Great significance is laid on proper stress, intonation and pitch that vary with the emotions expressed in a particular poem. Reading a poem aloud in class helps the student to understand these peculiarities and nuances of the language and learn their proper usage. "Poems which express strong emotions, attitudes, feelings, opinions, or ideas are usually more 'productive' than those which are gentle, descriptive, or neutral." (Tomlinson 36)

Language is not merely a system of set rules and grammar, for effective communication it requires to be substantiated with appropriate non-verbal communication as well; expression, voice modulation, stress, etc. Use of literary text like a poem helps invigorate the language classroom with new ideas, information, sounds, and knowledge. Learners are able to discuss the related cultural attitude and ethos of the text.

Use of poetry provides a waft of fresh air into the ELT environment. Along with the grammatical rules, learners enjoy and learn the rhyme and rhythm; the music inherent in poetical use of lan-

guage, their vocabulary is enhanced and they can try out the interesting exercise of finding new words that rhyme and they learn the use of metaphorical language by listening to the recitation of the poem and reciting it themselves they become familiar with the sight and sound of the language. Learning should be an enjoyable experience and poetry aids in the process of enlivening the process of language acquirement.

Communication being the sole aim of language learning, an associated and important aim that often gets ignored in the language classroom is creation. Introduction of the poetic genre in ELT will attune the students to the lyrical quality of the language which can further culminate into a creative activity of poetry writing that they can present themselves later in the class.

Use of poetry apart from making the language classroom more learner-centred does not however negate the role of the teacher as a facilitator who will guide and supervise the learning and appreciation of poetry, its various nuances and technicalities, and its eventual contribution to the overall process of ELT.

Drama facilitates communication in L2 learners by encouraging the following psychological factors to operate: heightened self-esteem, motivation, and spontaneity; increased capacity for empathy, lowered sensitivity to rejection. (Stern)

Drama is an important and effective genre in the field of ELT. The use of short plays and skits enable the teacher not only to enliven the classroom atmosphere and break the monotony by actively involving the students in role play but it also helps in teaching the students the expressions and other inherent characteristics of language usage.

An important contribution made by the dramatic genre has been in the generation of interest and interaction in the language classroom. The students can read out the play and enact the roles with dialogue delivery in the class guided by the language teacher. The exercise helps them to learn the way a character speaks, the emotions expressed through words with proper stress and intonation, the pitch, etc. The exercise enables the students to come out of their cocoons and open up as they will be enacting the character of someone else. Coming out of the traditional confines of the text also helps enliven the teaching process and motivate the students to learn and use the language effectively.

The employment of the dramatic genre in an ELT classroom enables even the passive students to take part, as drama is a group activity that demands team work and equal participation. It not only helps in learning and practising the four basic steps of language learning but also in acquiring the non-verbal part of communication, building of self-confidence and self-worth and also helps to overcome shyness and inhibitions, and most importantly makes the learner aware of social and emotional situations and the language used therein. "Drama demands enthusiasm—not only for the lesson, but also for the students. And this in turn depends on the formation of a relationship of mutual trust in which neither teacher nor student feels 'at risk,' but they willingly change roles and status to achieve the aims of the lesson." (Wessels 15)

Second language learners of English do not have minimal ability in the use of the language nor do they have a proper atmosphere wherein they can become familiar with it. A major hurdle for the language teacher is to overcome the inhibition and fear the learners have for the language by creating an enjoyable, interesting and relaxed environment for the students to get familiar with the language. Genre plays an important role in helping the students to become friendly with the language. Poems, drama and stories create simulation of real life situation and help people to understand and learn the practical usage of the language. This helps in developing the imaginative, creative and critical faculties of the students along with their language skills. It develops their understanding of literature within social, cultural and political constructs thereby extending their knowledge of the language; its features and conventions.

Fiction involves the use of short stories and novels, preferably novellas to generate an atmosphere of active student-teacher interaction, and enhance the level of comprehension and perception of the language through the narrative.

The stories help the student to understand not only the particularities of language use but also the culture in which it took birth. Local and global texts help them to understand the differences and similarities of language use and the way it transforms and alters to suit to a particular culture and ethos.

Comprehension and perception help the students to progress from the path of imitation to imagination and creation. Stories can be given the form of a play by the students themselves by writing dialogues and enacting the story in the form of a performance.

Visual media has always proved to be a more effective medium of instruction compared to traditional ones. Use of genre in ELT can also benefit from the use of media like feature films that are based on literary texts. Use of popular culture in the form of films will help the English teacher to break the monotony of the classroom as well as provide the students with a visual representation of the use of language and the culture of which it is a part. Ayesha Viswamohan says in this regard, "To begin with, a film can add to the understanding of the period: the socio-political milieu, the ambience, the lifestyle, and also the language." (4)

The exercise helps motivate and create an interest among the students regarding the language. They are able to listen and learn accents, expressions, pronunciation, and other features of the use of language. Level of comprehension is enhanced when the narrative is depicted through actual performance. Plays and fiction can be taught with the help of the cinematic media along with the text. Comparisons can be made by the students regarding the difference in both, the text and the film, and their own interpretation of the theme and characters. Viswamohan in her article also emphasises the use of songs to teach the language, thereby imparting to the English classroom a degree of energy and enthusiasm that would benefit all the students to actively take part in the class, enjoy the experience and learn from it. Viswamohan further remarks:

> Their use instills the class with a sense of belonging, promotes better interaction, and facilitates positive attitudes among the learners. The not-so-proficient learners are also motivated to learn the language better as they feel that their insufficient skills act as deterrent in their whole-hearted participation. (Viswamohan 5)

Primary function of language is communication. Unless effective communication takes place between addressor and addressee, learning a language is of no use. Genre helps the language students with examples of how to use the language in particular context. Each genre has its equal place of importance in ELT. A primary concern for an ELT teacher is the content that he/she needs to incorporate in the classroom to teach. Content development is a crucial part of language teaching that can be benefitted tremendously by the employment of literary genres.

In the use of genres, particular attention should be given to the fact that English is no longer the language of the Britishers but has today many roots and many voices. The students should be made

aware of the changing facets of the target language, particularly the local use of the language. Knowledge of the way Indian English is fashioned to suit the Indian ethos and culture will help the learners to relate to it more easily, and think and employ the language in their speech and writing effectively without stumbling over cultural constructs that hinder their understanding and use of the language. "If English is imposing the world on our students, we can enable them, through English, to impose their voices on the world." (Warschauer) The learners should be provided with the knowledge that will enable them to master the language, and also the freedom to use the language in their own authentic voice.

Apart from the complementary role that the genres provide to the process of LSRW, it will also help in making ELT learner based by incorporating projects and study groups on the genre and the related text. The teaching process will become more interactive and interesting catching the attention of the students and sustaining it throughout the class for a better reception of knowledge and its practical use in society and practical situations. Genre and its contribution to the basic steps of ELT are—L S R &W

L (Listening)

- The teacher can brief the class with an introduction of the theme and background of the text. The students will become familiar with the social and cultural background of the work that will help them in better comprehension.
- Initial reading out of the text by the teacher will enable the students to listen and learn: pronunciation, punctuation, voice modulation, stress, intonation and expression.
- Being the first step towards language learning the students will benefit from listening to the language as it is spoken; verbally as well as non-verbally with proper and appropriate expression.

S (Speaking)

- Students should be actively involved by the teacher in the discussion of the text. Expression of their views regarding the theme, background and culture are to be encouraged.
- Groups can be formed and after the teacher has discussed the introductory part of the text, one speaker from each group can present their view after discussion.

- Queries related to the text and introduction should be encouraged thereby initiating the second step of language learning--the ability to overcome inhibitions and speak out.

R (Reading)

- After the initial introduction and discussion, students are to be encouraged to read the text aloud in the class with proper pronunciation, punctuation, stress, intonation and expression.
- The teacher is to act as a guide in correcting the errors if any.
- Groups can be formed and listener groups should act as an invigilator to record the mistakes made by the student of the speaker group. In case groups are not formed, some individual students can act as reporters to record the mistakes of the speaker.
- Discussion of the errors spotted while reading should be discussed with active student participation under the guidance of the teacher.
- The teacher is to guide the students regarding the norms and conventions of recitation while reciting poetry; the rhyme and the rhythm, the stress, etc. Emotion and expression should be properly coordinated through pitch, intonation and stress.
- The teacher is to guide the students through the salient features of non-verbal communication as well as per the requirement of the genre, the inherent mood and expression of the text.
- Through reading, along with the earlier step of speaking the most important aspect of language learning is undertaken and that is oral communication: verbal and non-verbal.
- Proper care, constant guidance and supervision are to be provided by the language teacher with adequate freedom to the student to make their own effort and learn so as to master the language and not just be a passive imitator.

W (Writing)

- The final step of language learning is to put into practice the creative and critical faculties developed through the employment of the genre in ELT.
- Writing project should include a discussion and analysis of the poem, drama or fiction; theme and convention of a par-

ticular genre; character analysis, vocabulary, and their own interpretation and analysis of the genre, the text and the cultural construct.

- Writing work should also encourage creativity of the students thereby enabling them not only to learn the structure and conventions of the language but also to think in it which is a crucial link in its effective use. Students should be encouraged to write their own verse, dialogues and stories and present them in class.

Here the teacher needs to understand the responsibility that rests with him/her as not only the guide but to be truly a friend, philosopher and guide. Content should be chosen with proper care and activities related to content should be developed to encourage the students to practice their skill.

- Text should match the level of the learners' language skill.
- It should be relevant to their lives, age and interest.
- It should be fun, interesting and lively.
- It should have emotion, expression, racial and cultural variants that stimulate the students' curiosity and interest.
- Content having violent, aggressive and negative emotions, expressions and prejudice may be avoided.
- Activities like quiz related to the textual content, author, and social milieu can be held.
- Vocabulary test as to the formation of words in rhyme, pronunciation, etc. can be incorporated into games and quizzes.
- Character development and dramatic presentation of the poem, play or story can be undertaken as a group activity.
- Public speaking and conversation can be developed through recitation and role play.
- Poetry, drama and stories can be developed, created and presented by the students themselves.

The four crucial steps of language learning and the importance of the course content is an integral part of ELT irrespective of the method or approach adopted in teaching. Use of literary genre however transforms this somewhat placid and dull task into an activity full of creative potential and energy. Imagination gets a free and controlled reign with the role of the teacher as a facilitator not the dictator. With creative energies flowing out through the content onto the minds and hearts of the students, the language teaching and learning experience becomes an enjoyable and fruitful one. Moti-

vated and curious students themselves make the effort to learn and utilize the language in their expression and boundaries of inhibition, fear and unfamiliarity are broken down to usher in knowledge that liberates not confines.

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English: The Tongue of the Tribes

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When we look at the whole edifice of English literature, we find in it a mosaic of many colours. That's because it bears the different shades of racial characteristics. The prismatic fancy of the Celts, the sombre passion of the Teutons, Scandinavian greys, Italian purples, all these with the passage of time have gone into its making. But of all these characteristics, the most predominant is the characteristic of the Teutonic tribes, the Anglo-Saxons, who gave England its name, its language, and its culture.

The history of the British Isles goes far back to the Paleolithic and Neolithic Ages when the dark curly-haired primitive race lived on the banks of the Thames and used tools and weapons made of stone. Later, these islands were subject to a series of invasions by the Celts, Romans, and Anglo-Saxons. The Celts were the ancient people of West Europe who came to these islands in the Bronze Age and settled in the north of England. Their language was Celtic which is regarded as the first Indo-European tongue to be spoken in England. In the first century BC, England was invaded by the Romans and remained under the Roman rule for about four hundred years. During the Roman rule, Latin became the official language of England and was used mainly by the people of the upper-class society. That is why, it could not replace the Celtic language in England which was spoken extensively by its native population. Time rolled on, and the Romans withdrew in 410, exposing the island to barbarous attacks by the Germanic tribes. These tribes—the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes—came from the north-west of Europe, the region of Denmark, Holland, and Germany and started the invasion of England in 449 A.D. which continued for more than a hundred years. During this period, they established themselves in the south and east of the island, gradually driving out the Celts and occupying its larger area.

These Germanic tribes originally lived on the shores of the Baltic and the North Sea in the eastern lowlands which the Roman his-

torian Tacitus (55-120 A.D.) called by the general name of Germania. They were heathens and lived a pastoral life on the shores of the sea and in the clearings of the forest. They worshipped not Christ but Odin, and their earlier literature had been oral. It consisted of songs and stories, heroic and stirring in character.

After they left their continental homes and got settled in England, the Germanic tribes combined under the influence of their powerful leaders to create seven small kingdoms known as the Anglo-Saxon Heptarchy: Northumbria, Mercia, East Anglia, Kent, Essex, Sussex, and Wessex. The language they spoke throughout the country was known as *Englisc* (English). But Old English was not the single uniform language of England. It was rather dialectal as it was spoken in its different regional varieties. There were four regional dialects of Old English spoken in seven Anglo-Saxon kingdoms: Northumbrian, Mercian, West Saxon, and Kentish. Northumbrian and Mercian were spoken by the Angles in the region north of the Thames. West Saxon was the dialect of the Saxons in the southwest while Kentish was of the Jutes in the southeast. Of these, West Saxon was the most developed as it received patronage from the West Saxon King known as Alfred the Great. In Alfred's time, most of the Old English literature was written in the West Saxon dialect which achieved in some measure the position of a literary standard. But it suffered a setback when the Norman conquest of England took place in 1066. Ultimately, it is the Anglian dialect which emerged as the most dominant of all the dialects. Similarly, the Angles dominated the other Germanic tribes in the course of time. It is probably because of this reason that both *Englisc* (English) and *Englaland* (England) derive from the name of the Angles.

In order to know the real strength of Old English, we must have a look at its literature. The present context reminds me of the importance of literature in the history of a language suggested by A.C. Baugh: "The language of a past time is known by the quality of its literature. Charters and records yield their secrets to the philologist and contribute their quota of words and inflections to our dictionaries and grammars. But it is in literature that a language displays its full power, its ability to convey in vivid and memorable form the thoughts and emotions of a people."[1]

Beowulf is the first epic in English composed by an anonymous Christian scribe in Britain. It is a long narrative poem "remarkable for its sustained grandeur of tone and for the brilliance of its style,

both in its rather baroque diction and in the association of the elements of its plot."[2] But the material of which it is composed belongs to the distant pagan land of earlier times. The poem, therefore, is a mosaic of pagan tales placed in a Christian setting. *Beowulf*, the oldest surviving epic of the Teutonic people, contains more than three thousand lines. Though its scenes and people are Scandinavian, the language is purely Anglo-Saxon. The original manuscript was written in the West-Saxon dialect of Old English and has been preserved in the British Museum. *Beowulf* is held in high esteem and regarded as "the early English ideal of virile courage and nobility."[3] He is to the English what Achilles is to the Greeks, Romulus to the Romans, and Charlemagne to the French.

Caedmon is the first Anglo-Saxon poet known to us. Bede in his *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation* says that Caedmon was a lay brother in the monastery at Whitby in Yorkshire. He had no gift of song and, therefore, always withdrew from the singing ceremony. One night, he had a vision in which he was commanded to sing a song. At his bidding, Caedmon sang verses, and in the morning, he was able to recall them. As he was unable to read the Bible, it was read to him by monks, and he went on to turn its pages into verse. These stories in verse known as *Caedmon's Paraphrase* were written in the seventh century and marked an early stage in the development of Anglo-Saxon religious poetry.

Cynewulf is the second Anglo-Saxon poet with remarkable contribution. He is a Northumbrian who wrote poems in the Northumbrian dialect and signed them in runic letters. His four Christian poems, *Christ*, *Juliana*, *Elene,* and *The Fates of the Apostles* written in the eighth century, are distinguished by their genuine religious passion and remarkable craftsmanship. It is not that the Anglo-Saxons wrote only poetry. Some of them came out as good prose-writers of their time. King Alfred of Wessex (871-899) was a remarkable genius indeed. There was in him a rare combination of a writer, a warrior, and a patron. He fought against the Danes, united all the kingdoms of southern England, and translated a series of Latin prose-works into Old English.

The English language that we use today owes considerably to Anglo-Saxon prose and verse. Our use of similes, metaphors, and alliterations is not new. It is derived from the poetical method employed in the earliest English verse where the sun is described as "the candle of heaven" or "the jewel of the sky."[4] In Anglo-Saxon

verse, a line is normally divided into two parts by a strong caesura: and each part carries two stresses where one or two of the stressed syllables have alliteration.

The poetry of the Anglo-Saxons is archaic. Generally, it reverts to the traditional turns of expression, to the words almost consecrated. But the case with the Anglo-Saxon prose is quite different. It tries to observe the rules of ordinary speech unless it has to copy the Latin prose of the clerks. Its object is not to move but to instruct and inform us. Since it develops our understanding, it obviously turns to the future. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that the prose-writings of the Anglo-Saxons are much nearer our speech. No revolution seems to separate Alfred's pages from those of Caxton, Aelfric's from Wyclif's. There is a change but no break. National and linguistic continuity seems to exist right from the days of the Anglo-Saxons to the present.

Nevertheless, Old English differs from Modern English at some levels. There are some phonological and orthographical, lexical and grammatical features which distinguish one from the other. For example, *th* in Old English is pronounced as /θ/ and /ð/ represented by two different characters: *þ* and *õ*, as in words *wiþ* (with) and *õā* (then). But these characters are no longer in use in Modern English. Similarly, *sh* in Old English has a typical sound represented by *sc*, as in *scip* (ship) and *biscop* (bishop). The sound of *k* in Old English is represented by *c*, as in *bæc* (back) and *cynn* (kin). Much of the Old English spelling is not found in English that we speak today. Besides, Old English differs from Modern English in both vocabulary and grammar. Most of the Anglo-Saxon words have disappeared by now. Those that survive today express fundamental concepts like *mann* (man), *wif* (wife), *cild* (child), etc. Old English is a highly inflected language, whereas inflections in Modern English are few and far between. It is a synthetic language in which the relationship between the words in a sentence is indicated by means of inflections. On the other hand, Modern English is an analytic language which largely depends on word order to show the relationship between the words in a sentence.

In its synthetic character, Old English has close resemblance to Latin where the meaning of a sentence largely depends on inflectional endings. Let us have an example of a Latin sentence: "*Puer virum videt.*" This sentence means "The boy sees the man"; and it would mean the same thing if the word order were reversed: "*Virum*

puer videt." That's because *puer* which means 'boy' is a subject while *virum* which means 'man' is an object. There is no ending on *puer* but on *vir* in the form of *-um*. To alter the meaning of this sentence, we must change the forms of words, not their order. For example, *Vir puerum videt.* This sentence means "The man sees the boy" because the word ending *-um* has been shifted from *vir* to *puer*. However, in Modern English nouns as the subject and the object of a sentence do not have any distinctive forms. The meaning of a sentence depends here largely on word order, not on word forms.

As Old English is a synthetic language, it has plenty of inflections which show the relationship between words and establish the meaning of a sentence. These inflections take the form of endings on nouns, adjectives, verbs, and the definite article.

Whatever similarities and differences between Old and Modern English be, it is quite evident that the English language had already taken root in the Old English Period and acquired with the passage of time enough vitality and strength to become the powerful and flexible medium of today. The large body of Anglo-Saxon literature which speaks of the beauty, variety, and competence of the Old English language has always served as a great tradition for the writers of later generations. There is indeed a long and remarkable continuity in the language of King Alfred, Geoffrey Chaucer, and William Shakespeare. English as the world language today has its deep origins in the tongues of the Teutonic tribes.

NOTES

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Manaissance

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The call for woman empowerment i.e. empowering women in every field of life has disempowered men, leaving them to be a petty creature of the women's world—all broken and distressed. I feel men are getting sick of the women's world, and the sufferers are getting seditious, giving a clarion call for 'manaissance'—a return to less complex correct days when men behaved like blokes.

Men today are living in constant fear and agony of their gender change, hanging around the whims and fancies of a woman. Dismembered, distorted, dilapidated and exiled masculinity cries for its revival, for rejuvenation. Tired of living by women's rules, men are fearful of being turned into a race of 'waxed and coiffed metrosexuals.' New research shows men want change. They are depressed and feel undervalued, agonised by the fact that they have lost their role in the society. According to the US study, which was commissioned by the Discovery Network, Man strongly wants a return to manliness, or what has been dubbed as manaissance, tough, blokey and opinionated man, such as the Rama of the *Ramayana* and Krishna of the *Mahabharata*, Vishwamitra, Harischandra and many more of the days gone by like that of my pa and grandpa and well remembered Bollywood actors like Gurudutt, Kapoors, Rajkumar, men of promises and ideologies and Hollywood actor Russel Crow and potty mouthed Chef Gordon were held in high regard.

Of those surveyed 52 percent confessed that they had to live according to women's rule and 33 percent agreed they were handcuffed by 'political correctness' thus too scared to speak out their minds and a third of them are frightened of their bossy women and four out of ten are frightened of heights and spiders. A prof. of psychology of Queensland univ. Dr. Mathew Brambing said expectations of men have changed. Men were expected to be a responsible father, a loving husband and a good son: a bread earner, protector. A provider and a reproducer, catering to the needs and necessities of his family, friends and fiancé, shouldering the multi-role with all

potential. Now the women have shared this responsibility. Nonetheless they are also, timid, sensitive, blockey and tough. They are the first child of a woman, very weak, indeed women is their necessity. They can not be alone though women can. Women are more sturdy having an iron-like temperament, though physically fragile, that we are seeing a kind of dual masculinity. It can throw guys into quandary about where do they fit in their world, as a slave or a master: and are they meeting the expectations of a mistress—hanging around, pampering and pestering with tall claims and promises. Women are domineering, accept the 'man' the' yes boss' type. A Man has lost his personality and self-esteem. It seems there is an infusion of women's blood in man and vice-versa. In reality the sex has become the beast of burden, both have gone against the law of nature, and have been punished. God made man a ship, the woman a harbour, the power, the force, an engine to propel the actions of men. Nonetheless a woman is behind a man's success, insensibility and failure. History is crowded with innumerable stories and anecdotes supporting the words cited.

Everyday we can see the manliness demeaning, their masculinity melting down to feminity. Masculine traits are being fumed away in their day-to-day huffs and puffs of this age when man has become a machine in order to meet the day-to-day world of consumer fetishism. Both need to work hard, come home tired and worn out and result in becoming an integral part of the corporate rat-race: stressed by the fact who would serve whom, disregarding the human values and priorities; the bliss and laughter of the family life, left bereft and broken. Working for enjoyment and self-development is appreciable but to drain out is sickening and frightening. Family break-down, mental illness, physical ailments have been the result of women being a careerist. The relationships are under stress, genders carrying their own characteristic features explain their role vividly. Men are from Mars and women are from Venus exhibiting their own individuality, their distinguished physical and mental make-up with their own definite role plays, entirely the two poles, the law of magnetism proves that the unlike poles attract. But what makes them at times collide and smash to fragments, lost, stripped and stolen, encircled in darkness and strings of loneliness.

Men are no more gutsy and strong, they have become the puppet of the woman's modern world living upto their rules and aspirations. Men were used to feelings like 'heroes in a tool belt,' pre-

dominated by male chauvinism. A new study has found the modern man of the East and West feel they are undervalued and are living in a women's world, be it in relationship, family planning, career choice always women have their say. There once was a saying when I was a girl that's men's work, this is girl's work for which we were trained and streamlined with a borderline. Few of the works which were solely for them with no encroachment like driving, riding horse, tongas, carts, farming and ploughing, horse and elephant training, fighting with the beasts and anti-social element, killing snakes and hairy spiders, cockroach and lizard, women run into men for rescue. Jimmying the lid off the jar. Maintenance of machine and power, tinkering with battery terminals on their girlfriend's Ford, focussing and pretending like they knew what they were doing, impressing and offering his broad, strong shoulder for their support virtually ruling the free world. Apparently all these things gave men their value, made them feel useful and important. But we girls are now a careerist working abreast the successful man, have learnt to parallel park, have amenities and latest resources to procure the helpline e-information and solution of one's need with government's full support has added problems of life. Their fearlessness and efficacy keeps the male away. The crumbling values of men abstain them from adapting to the new-found equality between the two. Even with the advent of the feminine world with utter freedom and facilities at par with the boys, they still fail to do anything that boys can do—may it be the paucity of time and lack of chivalry. Despite all the weaknesses and strengths at varying wavelengths, the gender crisis is heart-rending and ghastly. What would be the panacea, revolution, to evolve new ideas, find new ways to be indispensable.

The frilled apron over the pants, nappy changing, serving the guests, do this, do that drives them into hue and cry. They can not fit in this woman's world. The emasculated ego prohibits them from using the pink towel, leaving the walk-in-closet in pink robe, cooking, attending like a stewardess, babysitting, cleaning and looking after the children. We can't live in the feminine world, they cry. They want their own world of man and conquerors, back into their primitiveness, to the role of a sole bread earner and their outdoor life. But on the contrary the average metro men are good at toiletry art, which was once reserved for women. Going for hair style just a tad too far, visiting salon and parlours, massage, facial hair removal,

pricking their organs, with the rings on, tattoos all over the body, designer shirts, ultra low pants, exposing the cleavages, gaits and gestures, submissive and sophisticated all for one thing, to look feminine. Cooking skills, babysitting and love for romantic comedies is another. Some guys are not comfortable with their girls wearing pants, they say it is not enticing and alluring. The image of the dainty, delicate, well-mannered, soft in skirts and pleated frocks with pleated locks. The blokes out there can try who think they are getting a raw deal should try being a woman for a week or two and see just how cushy life is on the other side of the fence. See how one is slogging whole day in and out, a penchant for pain when your privates are invaded by the man, that killing hot wax therapy, be presentable and fresh in the bed when the man surmounts the woman, the penetration and the pain. All traumas of the pre- and post-gestation period, holding the baby in the tummy touching your chin for nine months and oh, consequently the pain of the childbirth. This is what a man of any species can never do, unless you are lucky to be born a sea horse.

There is a good blending and mixing of the males and females, marching towards modernity in a high tech world of ambiguities and complexities, better world where there would be no ruler and ruled and would be no one's world but be only our world—made for each other and made by each other, an offshoot of an amicable intercourse.

Melbourne

How to Tame the Devil: Disciplining the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

PASHUPATI JHA

Because of somewhat indiscreet policy of the University Grants Commission introduced more than three decades back, making Ph.D. degree almost compulsory for teaching positions and for further promotions in colleges and universities, there ensued a frantic race for grabbing this degree—it became like any other general degree such as M.A., M.Com. and M.Sc. The authorities did not think even for a moment that Ph.D. is not a general but a specialized degree and needs creative intelligence, sincere interest, and serious commitment on the part of the scholar. Presently, in some of the universities of the country it is easier to get a Ph.D. degree and a little more difficult to get a master's degree. At the master's stage, there are a certain number of books in each paper that a student has to read, has to attend the classes for two years, and appear in written examinations; in Ph.D. degree in third rate universities, he has nothing to read but mostly copy down from different books and, possibly, from different dissertations already submitted! This is quite shameful that the highest degree should be doled out to any one who needs it and can pay for it. What is even more shameful is the way 'Dr.' is prefixed with so much of pomp and show by these people who have very little or nothing to show by way of scholarship. We, the teachers, as the stakeholders in higher education, have to seriously think over the prevailing mess and to do something to curb this malady, because any degradation in any degree is unfortunately linked only to us in the public mind.

The first cardinal question is the use of this degree of Doctor of Philosophy by all disciplines, be it Science, Engineering, or allied subjects—have they anything to do with Philosophy as such! Apparently, the answer seems to be in the negative. But, in a way, it is justified, because the term 'Doctor,' has been associated with the meaning of a great scholar since long—students of literature are well aware of the legend of Doctor Faust/ Doctor Faustus. So, by

implication, this degree should be awarded to only real scholars, and not to all and sundry. Furthermore, philosophical level of knowledge also means the highest level of learning in any area. Thus, one has to bring the selected topic of research to such a profound height of knowledge. Finally, the fundamental method of philosophy is to reach that level of knowledge through logical argument and intellectual discourse. Even the simplest definition of research, as given by *Chambers 21st Century Dictionary*, calls it a "*detailed and careful investigation* into some subject or area of study *with the aim of discovering and applying new facts or information*" (1186, emphasis mine). Thus, it is clear that research involves extensive and meticulous study aimed at discovering fresh facts. So, only one who has real aspiration to become a scholar, and has an aptitude for serious study and analytical thought, should get admission to this degree, and not any riff-raff who happens to gets a master's degree by fair or foul means and, after getting no job anywhere, enrolls himself for this prestigious degree. Some of the brilliant scholars, too, join this programme, but mostly as a stop-gap arrangement, applying all the time for a regular job, or preparing for Civil Services and similar competitive exams. The moment they achieve their aim, they leave research midway. So, here also, there is no visible light at the end of the tunnel. I am sorry to say that even teachers, who do not have real desire and aptitude for higher knowledge but want only promotion to a higher post, should not ideally enter this very selective area.

Any worthwhile research requires three to four years of long hours in dusty and stuffy libraries looking for relevant books and journals, not only reading dog-eared pages in thousands and noting down copious and relevant details, but brooding for days and months for new ideas. Research is not the mugging up of materials already available, or reworking on what others have already written; it is going beyond them to find out fresh ideas and innovating interpretations. As Joseph Gibaldi points out, research is "identifying, locating, assessing, and assimilating others' research *and then developing and expressing your own ideas clearly and persuasively.*" (3; emphasis mine)

The mess in the prevailing chaos is further confounded because of misconception about what is a research thesis; is it the same or something different from a general book on some author/topic! A book may take all the elements and features of an author, but research is always a specific study on some particular aspect of that

writer—thus, it is a more regulated, specific, and disciplined form of writing. In research, there should be a clear hypothesis, or thesis statement, "a single sentence that formulates both your topic and your point of view" (Gibaldi 49). All subsequent pages of the thesis should be in the form of a series of sound and convincing arguments in support of that statement. Description is not primary to a thesis; it should work only as a support to the main argument of the scholar. But unfortunately, in majority of the theses submitted in Indian universities, description becomes the main focus; argument or serious discourse rarely finds an important place in them. In many cases, a scholar concentrates on collecting materials, even if some of them are not directly relevant, and then 'vomiting' the ill-digested matter on over two hundred or so of printed-pages.

At times, the big size of the thesis and the growing satisfaction of the scholar go side by side while, in reality, bulge has nothing to do with the importance of a thesis; rather a bulky thesis simply indicates the presence of irrelevant and ill-assimilated materials. A good thesis normally, and not necessarily, should be of about two to two hundred fifty pages of highly disciplined writing. The problem lies less with the scholar and more with his supervisor, whose only qualification to guide a research thesis, quite often, is his own Ph.D. degree, received largely in the same haphazard way, not because of the keen desire for scholarship, but hurriedly written for a timely promotion.

Ignoring where the wrong lies, it is better to think of the main point—how to write a meaningful thesis. First comes the question of a good topic; there are a lot of misconceptions here. First, the topic is to be finalized before the scholar applies for admission—what is even worse, in most of the universities, he should also attach a synopsis with his application. Nothing can be more absurd and intellectually dishonest than this. How a student, whose postgraduate classes had nothing to do with research orientation, is expected not only to select the topic of his research but also to write a synopsis, which in most of the universities is supposed to be final? It simply means only one thing—supervisor, and not the scholar, writes the synopsis, keeping in mind his own interest and expertise and not that of the scholar—the first heinous sin, an intellectual fraud, which ought to be discouraged and denounced by one and all.

In a very few progressive universities and institutes, a logical and convincing approach is applied. In IITs, where sufficient re-

search is carried out in Humanities, a scholar is expected to write only the broad area of his research at the time of admission/ registration, such as Black American Fiction, Modern British Poetry, Diasporic Fiction, Indian English Prose Writers, Restoration Plays, and so on. It is only after he finishes his Pre-Ph.D. course and has read, thought, and debated a lot on his broad subject that he narrows down finally to a specific topic. Even later on, during the course of his study and exploration, if he and his supervisor feel the need for some modification in the name and content of the topic and similar modification in chapter division, that is possible up to a few months before the scholar actually plans to submit his thesis. This flexibility and freedom is one of the vital reasons that allow a scholar to be fresh, original, and innovative.

The second misconception is the idea that any topic is good enough for Ph.D. thesis. One of my young scholars bubbling with youthful energy came to me with this topic: "A Comparative Study of the Poetry of W.B. Yeats and T.S Eliot." He thought that both the poets are Nobel Laureates, and hence his thesis would be really remarkable. Scholars with misdirected enthusiasm have this wrong feeling that their research will be great if the topic itself is 'great.' It took me hours of agitated discussion with my student to convince him that Ph.D. on such a vast topic may take one's life-time; moreover it would hardly be an intensive but only a sprawling study. Thesis is bound by a degree, which in turn is always bound by the consideration of time. Finally, the greatness of the selected author/topic does not make any thesis great; it is the content that one has contributed, that lends real worth to a thesis. Thus, there may be a wonderful thesis on a minor writer and a very dull thesis on a famous one.

I am giving below some of the problematic topics that I have come across while evaluating theses on such topics:

Socio-Moral Awareness in the Victorian Novels
Political Consciousness in Indian English Novels (1930-1980)
The Treatment of Love and Beauty in Elizabethan Poetry
Political Satire during the Restoration Age
Treatment of Nature in Romantic Poetry
A Thematic Analysis of the Poetry of W.B. Yeats
The Mind and Art of Charles Dickens
The Poetry of Alexander Pope: A Reassessment

And the game of topics goes on. The problem with the first five topics is their vast area; a good book can be written on those topics but hardly a good thesis, which is always a focused study on some specific, and not broad-based, topic. So, if someone is really interested in those areas, he will have to select one, or maximum two writers from that field for an intensive analysis. The topic with thematic analysis becomes problematic because a prolific writer like Yeats has, in fact, so many themes in his poetry that a pointed thesis on such a subject is just not possible. Moreover, so much of general kind of study is already there on Yeats that there is no scope for more general studies of this type! So, it is better to choose one or two themes of the poetry of Yeats. Not only that, the scholar is also finally expected to analyze the impact of such a theme on the poetics of Yeats. A suggested topic on Yeats, therefore, may run like: "Analysis of Irish Myth and Legend and Their Impact on the Poetry of W.B. Yeats."

The thesis of the type of 'the mind and art' is again a general, and not specific study, and hence not suitable for a focused discourse which is the basis of any research. So, a better suggested topic may read like, "The Innocent (or Cruel) Mind in Charles Dickens and Its Impact on His Art." Or, this type of general study on mind and art may be feasible on upcoming, recent authors or on little known or minor authors of the past. The reassessment type thesis is rarely a re-evaluation—mostly it is a summary of others' assessments and nothing else, an easy way to get the much-needed degree. The next misconception is related to the wordings of the topic—most of the universities naively believe that if words in the caption are the same as one submitted earlier in any university, the research would be a simple duplication, and hence the same is to be rejected. But if critical approach adopted is different and the conclusions drawn are different, then the same wording does not count, and hence it should be allowed.

It is better for a scholar to go through at least some of the following important books before making up his mind on the topic of his choice, such as *Literary Research Guide* (Modern Language Association of America, 2002), *John Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism* (John Hopkins Univ. Press, 1994), *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (Princeton University Press, 1993), various Oxford Companions to English, American, and Canadian Literature published by Oxford University Press, New

York, *The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1994), *Thinking Straight: Principles of Reasoning for Readers and Writers* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice, 1975), *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, Sixth Edition (New Delhi: Affiliated East-West Press, 2004), and *Dissertation Abstracts International*, Section A (ProQuest, USA). Reading these sources would enable the scholar to finalize his own topic and plan his research in a better way.

After selection of the topic, the next important work is to get and read the entire primary materials—the original texts of the selected author. It is always advisable to possess them personally. The primary texts need a minimum of four readings, and each reading should be done carefully. The first two readings are for understanding the texts thoroughly, and the third reading should be meant for taking relevant notes and quotations. The use of research cards is very helpful in keeping the record of quotations systematically. The scholar, thereafter, should move to reading secondary materials—critical books and research papers already written on, or related to, the topic of research, and note down effective lines/passages for quotations. Lastly, he should read the primary materials once again to understand them in the light of secondary sources that he has read recently. But the focus, as far as possible, should be on his own understanding of the primary texts—this is the way critical sense and originality develops. As correctly pointed out by Joseph Gibaldi, the secondary sources "should only support your statements. . . it should not overshadow your own ideas or distract the reader from them." (6)

Now comes the actual writing of the thesis. Clarity of aim is quite essential from the initial stage itself. In the words of David Daiches: "Clear conceptions . . . seem to me the primary requisite for a serious interest in literary criticism. It is little use stuffing one's head with ideas of what this critic said or that critic believed if one cannot see clearly in what area of critical activity each critic is operating" (vii). The scholar has to keep in mind the critical approach that he is going to follow—biographical, historical, textual, psychoanalytical, philosophical, feminist or so on. The first two approaches are almost outdated now; unless there is a pressing need when the life and/or time of the author has largely influenced his work, it is better to ignore such obsolete approaches and go for the safer option of textual interpretations. Philosophy has always influ-

enced writers; so if a scholar feels that a particular philosophy or philosopher is predominant in the works of the selected author, he can adopt this approach. But then the focus should be finally on the literary merit of the works, or on how that particular philosophy has finally been transformed into literature of some worth. In modern literature where the focus is less on external events and more on internal mind of the characters; psychological handling of the theme becomes quite handy. Recently, gender and culture critics have become quite important; a scholar may choose a relevant feminist or cultural critic and relate him/her to the interpretation of the selected texts. But in all these cases, the scholar should have a clear concept of that specific psychological/feminist/cultural theorist that he is going to refer to and their natural, and not forced, connection with the texts. There may, then, be postcolonial reading, archetypal approach and so on. Adopting one specific approach lends direction to the study and the chance of its scattering away is safely avoided.

Writing first chapter is the most difficult one, because a good thesis invariably begins with literature survey—a critical and brief survey of book-length studies and research papers on the selected author/ topic. What fresh work you are going to do in your research may become clear only after you have mentioned what others have already written in that area—repetition in research has no scope. But in majority of the dissertations, this difficult but essential literature survey is replaced by writing copious details of the author's life and time, and also something about other contemporary writers. It should be noted here that while these details may be helpful in writing a book, they largely distract the scholar and his reader from the main topic of his research.

After the introductory chapter, the rest of the thesis should have interlinked and cohesive chapters, each dealing with one aspect of the topic. The scholar should always bear in mind that descriptive details should go side by side with arguments. The 'what-ness' of the content is meaningless without 'why-ness' of the content—it is the second one that gives argumentative touch to the thesis. Foreign and reputed examiners always look for the 'feel' of arguments in the thesis. One of my scholars wanted to work on the issue of leadership in the novels of Chinua Achebe. I asked him why he wanted to select the question of leadership in Achebe overriding other themes in him; and why and how Achebe himself had come to this issue, forcing the scholar to read deeply and think seriously before selecting

the topic. If scholars go on asking 'why this and why not that,' their writing would automatically become argumentative. It is less important to write that Wordsworth is the greatest Nature poet in English literature (because it is well known anyway) and more important to point out 'why' he is the greatest in that area; and 'how' Nature has shaped his whole poetic consciousness. Similarly, while talking of death obsession in John Keats, it is never sufficient to only point out poems and lines where death is described; it is much more important for researcher to argue in some detail the reasons behind this obsession and the impact of this theme on his poetics.

The last chapter on conclusion should be clear on what conclusions the scholar has finally drawn from his study; they should be supportive of his thesis statement of the introductory chapter. Nothing can be more ludicrous if the thesis statement and the conclusion run counter to each other. This last chapter on conclusion by its very nature should be the smallest one, say up to the maximum of 10-12 pages. But in most of the dissertations evaluated by me, the average length of even this concluding chapter has been about 20-25 pages. Finally, I would quote the advice of Joseph Gibaldi once more:

> As you continue to read, reread, and think about the ideas and information you have decided to use, you will begin to see new connections between items, and patterns of organization will suggest themselves. Bring related material together under general headings, and arrange these sections so that one logically connects with another. Then order the subjects under each heading so that they, too, proceed logically. Finally, plan an effective introduction and a conclusion appropriate to the sequence you have worked out. (51)

Thus, the emphasis should be on clarity, coherence, and logical sequence of points and arguments.

Pessimists and cynics may say that there is no chance of improvement in this present situation; rather things will go further down the drain. So, why waste time and energy on how to plan and write a good thesis! But I have a strong feeling that most of the scholars do not have the basic idea of how to go for research, and hence they do what is suggested to them by their supervisors. Young learners are very enthusiastic; if they know the basic mechanics of research writing, they will invariably go in the right direction. After all, one works for Ph.D. only once in a life time.

I have a few suggestions for the authorities too—the University Grants Commission, the Association of Indian Universities, and

Central Universities; they will have to take the lead. The UGC or the AIU may start listing of the theses submitted to the universities in the last twenty years or so. Scholars who want this optional listing should pay one thousand rupees as fees to the UGC/AIU, and there the thesis should be judged for listing by experts reputed in their subjects. I hope, substandard dissertations would be automatically eliminated at this stage. Scholars, later on, would be informed whether their dissertations were listed or not. This process would not violate the much-touted autonomy of the universities because the degree is not invalidated; the thesis is simply categorized. But this listing becomes a positive point at the time of scholar's selection/promotion. Moreover, copies of the listed dissertations stored in the UGC/AIU would help all the future scholars. This simple step of the UGC/AIU will bring a sense of sanity in the field of chaotic research of today.

Secondly, the UGC should also fund 7-10 day intensive and interactive workshops on research methodology organized by reputed institutes during summer and winter vacations—they should be open to both scholars and supervisors. Resource persons for such workshops should be acknowledged teachers with long experience of research guidance.

Thirdly, a Ph.D. degree should not be made mandatory either for the selection of or promotion to the rank of Lecturer/ Senior Lecturer; it should only be a desirable qualification with due extra points given to it. Ph.D. degree should be made compulsory for higher posts alone. There are many examples of brilliant teachers who did not have a Ph.D. degree. My own teacher, S.N. Palit, was without this degree, and I must confess that I have yet to find a more brilliant teacher than him!

Fourthly, UGC should circulate list of reputed Professors, who should be the examiners of Ph.D. dissertations—it should be a sort of help and optional to the universities to select examiners from the list. Viva has become optional in some of the universities; it should be made compulsory. UGC may suggest to the universities to arrange for seminars by each scholar every semester till the submission of the thesis. Thus a scholar, before his final viva, would have already presented papers in seminar five to six times—this will enhance his confidence to face the final challenge. It would also help him to be a better communicator, a must for good teacher.

Fifthly, central universities and reputed Professors from anywhere should take it as their professional responsibility to safeguard the standard of teaching and research. They should protest against both external political interference and internal politics of the departments. The maximum damage to the cause of higher learning has come from this single source—political interference in education—and this should be opposed at all cost.

Finally, I conclude that writing of this paper has roots in my sincere and humble desire to share my experience, and a few renowned Professors have already voiced their dismay on this sad situation. M.S. Kushwaha has equated the present predicament with the lines of Matthew Arnold: "And we are here on a darkling plain. . . . Where ignorant armies clash by night". Contribution to already existing knowledge is the rationale of writing a thesis, but quoting another great teacher, V.K. Gokak, he laments at the dismal scene where it is a contribution, "not to knowledge, but to a whole heap of type-scripts piled up in a University library" (229).

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I.I.T., Roorkee

Book Reviews

Sanjukta Dasgupta. *More Light*. Kolkata: Das Gupta and Co., 2008. Rs. 110.

More Light is a volume by the veteran poet Sanjukta Dasgupta in which poems range in a wide "trajectory of macro and micro issues, engagements with the home and the world, expressing uninhibitedly an irrepressible desire to be able to find a home in the world and world within the precincts of home." The author of *Snapshots* (1996), *Dilemma* (2002) and *First Language* (2005), the earlier three volumes of poetry published by the poet, reveal the growth of the poet from her effort to find some ground in the world of poetry to an established, confident master who can play with words and find poetry "truly the magical products of an inexplicable labour of love and care, sometimes fraught with anxiety, anger, disappointment and helplessness though inspired with the impulses of joy, mirth, humour, happiness and laughter." In a true postmodernist situation, one notices a complete breakdown of the formal structure of the modernist school of poetry, as Dasgupta creates her own forms, structures and images.

Dasgupta's *More Light* reminds one of William Carlos Williams' "The Uses of Poetry" in which Williams tries to "satiate wend,/ On poesy's transforming giant wing,/ To worlds afar whose fruits all anguish mend." If one happens to know the poet personally, one can't help but think of the beginnings of Carlos' above-quoted poem:

> I've fond anticipation of a day
> O'erfilled with pure diversion presently,
> For I must read a lady poesy
> The while we glide by many a leafy bay.

In the very first poem "More Light . . .," Dasgupta introspects her concern as a poet:

> Should I let these words
> Scar the pristine page
> Should I hang your severed skull

Like a pendant round my neck
A stark Kali, fearless and free

Albatross or tyrant
I had to annihilate you
Piercing your lying heart
With the unerring trident
Of furious Durga

In a poem on the rising of 1857, the speaker experiences vicariously

Such joy to breathe the air
Of a free homeland
Come, celebrate that defiant meteoric zoom

"Maidan Memories" is reminiscent of the speaker's growing up years and looks back nostalgically at the vanishing maidan as "a bruise" which has become "an indelible scar":

The violated beautiful Maidan
Cringed in shame at the cruel callousness
Of practical needs and immediate gratification
Raped by its very own people
The Maidan shrunk voicelessly
Living more in the memory of a woman

Yet another poem called "The Art of Lying" does not only question what "a lie" is but also interrogates one's very existence in a world of lies:

"Why did you bring me to such a world
Now I'll have to suffer like you and others

I'll have to suffer if I love and trust
How can I live if I can't trust"

A chemical and biological fluid called saliva has been poetically treated as fortune "hunters panted in lascivious heat" and when it dries up,

The tongues hung out
Like flattened, drunken leeches
Dripping blood

One thinks of a perpetual plight of a dog who is all the time jutting its tongue out for whatever reason. In another poem, Dasgupta notices that "peace" is nothing but,

Humble penance for all the blood bath

Till peace emerges as the only reality
The fire-spitting murderous dragons
Are eliminated forever.

To her, "illusions" are "fiendish feast/ Of tandoorised drinks. Limitations of a poet, howsoever insightful or fiery they might think themselves to be, Dasgupta finds that in reality poets "weep and wound" and their "helpless spectators" script caveats. Ironically, peace "Is a beautiful dream/ Till war guns it down." But the best of the lot remains a poem called "Consumed" and plays on a variety of literary and philosophical aphorisms:

All the world's a shopping mall
All men and women big shoppers
The transnational anthem
"Shop till you Drop" . . .
Provocatively packaged
See-through, bare-some
Or just wrapped. . . .
"I shop therefore I am"
A postmodern mantra

And eventually "greed is good" and the consumer is "consumed." In the same ironical mode, with a unique sense of humour and bubbling with fresh and topical imagery, Dasgupta wonders about Meera's bhajan:

Shall I dump you
In the Trash Bin
Or place you in the Recycle Bin
Or shall I delete you forever

In a tribute to the American Senator William Fulbright, who has been instrumental in making the poet "the Fulbright enables traveller" and

I now see the world again and again
With my designer brand new glasses
Exclusively made for me by Senator Fulbright.

The three poems on rain delineate the speaker's relationship with the rain of different kinds at different times and the woman in Dasgupta continues and writes about the male Gods and female Goddesses, she wonders whether Goddess Lakshmi is

Bored to death by the same song

Sung by the discordant human voices
Does Lakshmi regret that she is immortal?

On a more human level the woman poet observes that an apparently romantic act by a man is, in fact, an act of power.

It was power
When he straightened
The pendant on her bosom

While reading Dasgupta's latest volume of poetry *More Light*, one notices that the fascination of reading poetry is figuring out what scenario or feeling the poet might be describing because all that emanates from the poet's own socio-cultural background. In Dasgupta's case, words appear like a gift and they come to the reader in waves, many a time they give new meanings to the reader's own insights. Who said that no one reads poetry nowadays and the poet is dead? Is s/he?

R.L.A. College, University of Delhi **Vijay K. Sharma**

Nilanshu Kumar Agarwal, *Discovering Stephen Gill: A Collection of Papers and Articles*.

Literary oeuvre is the outcome of thought process. The product which emerges out of the exercise becomes the intellectual asset of the nation. Stephen Gill is providential in finding a coterie of kindred spirits who could read and interpret his works for knowledge dissemination. It is the duty of the society towards the artists. This review sails through *Discovering Stephen Gill: A Collection of Papers and Articles* by Nilanshu Kumar Agarwal to fulfill the same in a humble way.

Stephen Gill is an Indo-Canadian poet and novelist who lives near Ottawa. A.N. Dwivedi's article "Fissures and Fractures: Identity Crisis in Gill's Poetry" gives a clarion call to the need for an unbiased, genuine common criteria to identify people based on innate qualities. Thus, the article opens the reader's mind to evolve a common parlance to combat identity crisis.

Ideals are often shattered when they are applied in an imperfect social order. Gill's protagonist in *Immigrant* Reghu Nath is an ideal-

ist. He is highly conscious of ethics in life. Obviously, he expects just perfect conditions to accomplish his goals. After agonizing experiences, he realizes that the world, at large, is imperfect. Finally, he reconciles to the ways of the world in order to survive and succeed in the new land. A critical insight into D. Parameswari's article "The Dialectics of Diasporic Experience: A Reading of Stephen Gill" illustrates readers with migrant's sensibilities with regard to language, gestures, attire, job market, hypocrisy and lifeless souls in an alien culture. The article throws light on the necessity to compromise, negotiate, accept and assimilate new culture to resolve psychic conflicts in a migrants' life.

Mother Nature is a great leveller. Her ways are always justified. But, today she is reduced to a child by her own son, namely mankind. Yet, she survives to sustain life on earth. T. Ravichandran's article, "Green Dove in the Shrine: Eco Concerns in Stephen Gill's Shrine" implant hope on nature's vitality quoting Gaia hypothesis. The author believes that chaos is the result of communication delinks between mankind and nature. He categorically asserts that revival of rapport with nature would empower human beings to live in peace and harmony.

Interpersonal relationship is a skill which makes or breaks one's fortune. The true colour of one's character is always under cover. The apparent behaviour is just the tip of the iceberg. Any number of studies on behaviour analysis and character study prove foolproof to unearth its mystery. The article "Sociation and Reghu Nath in Gill's *Immigrant*: A Study" by G. Dominic Savio and S.J. Kala is based on formal sociology. George Simmel's classification is used as the guideline for the study. The paper identifies the social type of Reghu as 'a stranger.' The article helps readers to understand that engagements, controversial issues and even fleeting encounters shape one's behaviour. The article also throws light on the impact of one's status and role, in the process of sociation. The various modes of interaction namely dyad, trial, super ordination—subordination and their potential impact in shaping human behaviour is clearly brought out. Readers are exposed to a galaxy of encounters such as humiliation, illumination, shock, frustration, affirmation, enlightenment, inadequacy etc. that moulds one's behaviour.

Short story as a literary form is an effective tool to reach common people. It is not a poor substitute for novel which demands greater time. By virtue of length and force, it remains popular

among readers. Ashok Kumar and Roopali in "Stephen Gill's *Life's Vagaries*: A Critique" estimate Gill as a master of reversal technique in short story writing.

Life is a game of glorious uncertainties. A wide range of emotion governs mankind to mark him as the most complex creature in the world. Gill is not an exception. Sailendra Narayan Tripathy's article "Seeking the Dove of Peace" mark Gill as a poet of copious moods.

Conscience is the invisible and invincible force. A few people dare to enter its realm. Very few venture to give voice to it. Kanwar Dinesh Singh identifies Gill as a poet of conscience in his article "In the Fire of Self." He finds Gill's conscience craving for nature in its full form and democracy in its real sense.

Migration is a common phenomenon in the natural world. All living organisms move from one place to another for food, shelter and reproduction. They cross bad routes, face worse conditions and meet worst predators. Only the bold and prudent undertake and complete the journey successfully. Gill shares these qualities. Nilofar Akhtar's paper titled "Stephen Gill's *Immigrant*: A Study in Diasporic Consciousness" exemplifies the truth that the process of migration is an admixture of enticement and entrapment. The new environment can be an abode of predators making survival laborious. But, the land might be fertile enough to nurture new attitudes to scale new heights. Gill is a standing example. After all, migration is a choice not an accident.

Satan's ignorance cast him into bottomless perdition. Adam's disobedience cost him Eden Garden. Down the ages, humans are discontented which leads to dislocation and disappointment followed by Diaspora. Mankind's failure to comprehend this truth is a pathetic paradox. Nikola Dimitrov's article "Paradoxes in the Works of Stephen Gill" shatters the myth of sixth-sense in man. This article summarily rejects man as a civilized creature as he is unwilling to accept God's ways.

No culture is tolerant in the world; it is ever complex and anomalous. People inherit culture and practise it in their lives without even reasoning. Consciously, they appear as world trotter. At the subconscious level, culture lurks like a goliath and unleashes its ugly face when confronted. O.P. Dwivedi's article "Cross-cultural Conflicts in Stephen Gill's *Immigrant* (1982)" raises a volley of doubts in the minds of people who aspire to settle abroad. The arti-

cle depicts culture as a double-edged sword to be handled with caution and contempt.

In Indian families, it is customary to collect a handful of soil from the place where a new child was born. This concept holds true universally across borders, cultures, race, sex and ethnicity. Thus, separation of any kind can inflict humans with an unbridgeable void. This void creates sense of guilt, remorse and undesirable developments in the psyche of human beings. Shweta Saxena's paper "Angst of Alienation in Stephen Gill's Poetry" explores the vacuum in the mind of the poet created by displacement and disillusionment.

Nilanshu Kumar Agarwal's article, "A Critique of Stephen Gill's Literary Sensibility" helps readers to unravel the sources of Gill's literary works. The author rightly places him among the few who, by their traumatic experience, enriched world literature. His interview with Stephen Gill opens the window for a panoramic view of Gill's world. As a seasoned educationalist, Gill moots radical reforms for teaching English language in India.

P. Raja evokes an interesting episode from Tamil literature to illustrate the prestigious position, poets held over politics in the article "The Power of the Written Word: A Note on the Poetry of Stephen Gill." There is an instance in the same source where verbal power wins over political prejudice to effect opinion change. Celebrated poetess, Oovaiyar went as ambassador of peace to persuade Thondaimon not to avenge Adiyamon. She spoke eloquently on the whereabouts of Adhiyamon's armoury. She conveyed a connotative meaning and succeeded in averting an imminent battle. This incident speaks of poet's power in shaping a nation's destiny and moulding the ruler's mind. Likewise, the author believes, Gill will succeed in his attempt in revitalizing the nations to rise above the codes which govern today's world. Finally, the author attributes the poets' success to the positive role played by the environment. Readers are reminded of the opening line of Tagore's *Gitanjali* song XXXV: 'Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high.'

In "Rainbow Strings: Hope in the Poetry of Dr. Stephen Gill," Ann Iverson says that Gill's lyrics aid readers to rejuvenate trust and reclaim peace. He further says that Gill's poetry stuffed with gratitude to Nature serves as an oasis to gain moral support and confidence in the journey towards absolute peace. John Paul Loucky is sceptical of the poet's extraordinary faith over world federalism and

oneness owing to mankind's recurrent failure in redeeming actions in his article "Stephen Gill: Poet and Protester for Peace."

Aju Mukhopadhyay in the article "Poet Stephen Gill: A Dream of Peace" makes it clear that religion is not the dividing force in the world. He establishes that, at the higher levels of religion, there is no division and no idol.

"Stephen Gill: A Time-Tested Person with a Time-Trusted Vision," by Tholana Ashok Chakravarty holds that Gill's government will never invade but integrate cultures and languages retaining their identities (salad bowl). Precedence are countries like India and Canada. This is a proven philosophy on the pages of history and will find its feet everywhere. This acid test will transform the face of nations on the sands of time.

The volume showcases Gill's accomplishment as prolific writer who has drawn considerable attention from the academia. The book discusses Gill's philosophy in myriad standpoint. Featured articles replete with arguments powerful enough to create a strong impact on the reader's mind.

VHNSN College, Virudhunagar **R. Anandam**
VHNSN College, Virudhunagar **G. Baskaran**

Creative Writing

Ultimate—Rescue

Passing through bridge no.12
struck by a dekko
of culpable gushing of water below
broken first pillars then groyne
swept away plastic houses over
earthen hearth, cots and refugees there-in
to the unknown fate never to return
except a child of two
helpless, hapless and hiltless
whom I collected in my arm
took resort to a pipal beside
as a hop-pole

for all the victims of flood
serpent, vulture, kite, falcon,
the defunct stopped by the stem
and my bike standing on
half drowned in waltzing water with mire
all in commune
for four days
without a piece of grain and a drought
as if the mariner of Coleridge
facing chilly blowing and pouring over
suffering from cold and fever
crying baby of hunger
thud of falling muddy houses nearby
three men in a boat
deemed to be chums
showing macay's sympathy
with bread and butter
razor inside
to cut my pocket of a few hundreds
of students' welfare of my college
where from received a call
on my mobile
like a compass for the directionless sailor
found by a rescue team
shed their idle tears
over the ultimate rescue
of the child.

Naveen Kumar Jha, Darbhanga

Pangs of a Wife

Skies are lit up,
Blanketing me in darkness, all around,
Wrapping me in a distant silence,
Diwali comes and Diwali goes,
But this one's sure different,
Sweets of words, no longer I hear,
The grab of loneliness I sport this year,
I celebrate for the messenger of the other world is here,

Taking me to I know not where,
I try, the mind refuses to yield,
And reminds, why should I try?
And all because they say I have not tolerated to the last breath,
"You sure must have done something wrong," I hear
All I did, was fought in outburst so hat he may love me,
That's wrong right? I learnt not to do again but in vain,
I am left with Anguish, Rejection and Pain

Aditi Dubey, Jabalpur

Betrayed

Anguished convulsions of darkness,
Thoughts fuelled with alcohol,
Suddenly seizes my body and soul.
My words fly up, while thoughts remain below,
For my joys are slaughtered, before it had begun.
As my fear interprets, I am but hurt and betrayed,
Your vision creeps upright,
In a dark gloomy tangled night
The desolate and lonely moon sinks
Behind the silver lined clouds,
My shadow of pleasure floats midway on the waves,
Is it possible to revive within me,
That same old music loud and long?
Heard for off in mingled measures,
Within the mountains and caves.

Punita Jha, Darbhanga

O! Rose

O! rose,
you,
left thorns,
in my orchard,
i am bleeding,
my orchard has no fragrance,
still now,

many plants grew,
but weather is not favourable,
greenery has lost,
trees are cut,
belief no more,
system crushed,
orchard has become desert

Ram Sharma, Meerut

So, This Is Life!

This stretch of land;
Only one tree
Has kept it green for long
And full of seasons.

I have never found
A girl waiting for her love
In its shade.

Even though nights have always given it
The charm of deadening solitude
No lone old man has ever cried below it
The wounds of his son's ingratitude.

Birds, of course they have nested in it,
But not like when they are spied by kids
With twig-bows in hands and pointed arrows,
They've never thanked gods for its safe resort.

The tree has forever been eclipsed
By dust of burnt-up stars I know
It's rooted in a hill's forgotten snow.

Ashwini Kumar Vishnu, Akola

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