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Editorial

Human life is an ongoing debate where both the debaters, neither the one in favour of the motion nor the one opposing the motion, admit their defeat unless the jury gives its verdict. Actually, this may not sound good at times. But unfortunately, this has become a guiding principle of present day world where what really matters is the one who emerges as the victorious. Actually, a rational mind, most often, interrogates and deciphers that victory or success becomes immaterial in the long run. Recognition in the form of awards or citations depends upon who gets what and by whom. All of us have within us a supreme power that can help us distinguish between the good and the evil, the clean and the dirty, the fair or the foul. It is a matter of realization which may not be speculated as long as we are either confined to a particular locale, or to a particular language, or to a particular belief; a tradition, or a religion that blinds us to see the other side i.e. largely camouflaged.

We vouch for living a civilized life but cannot come clear off the contraries that we interface most often. How can we be true to ourselves when we cannot co-operate with our fellow countrymen for the greater good that is above petty considerations? What ails us to consider people from other religions or faiths as others who cannot speak? When rivers originating from mountains run into different directions, their waters neither dry nor stultify. Can that not be true of human beings? All civilizations are supposed to have originated on the banks of rivers and, thus, we should not pollute them

simply in the name of religious rites. Boasting of living in a scientific age does not permit us to defile our rivers even from environmental point of view. Nature has always been mankind's revered teacher and, hence, any attempt to disregard the latter is to terminate our own existence. Is it not pathetic that not only our physical garbage but also our electronic wastes find their outlets either in rivers or in the vast stretches of empty lands or spaces for which millions of us are fighting against one another? Mere talking of humanity, ethics, conscience, and righteousness cannot serve the purpose of living a meaningful life. A civilized society of ours, busy delivering speeches and declamations, examining discourse after discourse, is useless if the essences of such deliberations are not implemented in our lives. We have to cleanse not only bodies but also our minds that hanker after materialistic comforts bound to haunt our coming generations. Can this be realized simply by making forays into other continents and by saying that the grass in other countries is greener than ours? It is time we introspected to see the sort of care, respect and pruning we did to see the grass green. While other countries of the world flock to pay obeisance to Buddha, Rama, Krishna and Gandhi, they become hotbed of politics in our native land. It is time we peeped into our own souls, our own scriptures and our own gods? It is not without envy to find the great American modern poet, T.S. Eliot referring to three DAs of Prajapati in Upanishads: Datta, Damyata and Dayadhvam. While the interpretations of these three DAs may vary yet the key to an authentic being can also be discovered in these three terms. The echoes of the Upanishadic term may inspire the hungry generations to give fruitfully, to control our lustrous desires, and to be compassionate towards our fellow beings, prompting everyone to a world of peace and joy. Thus, let us all remember:

Datta, Dayadhvam, Damyata
Shantih shantih shantih.

(*The Waste Land*, 432-33)

The fifty-fifth volume of *The Indian Journal of English Studies* is a collection of scholarly papers presented at the 61st All India English Teachers' Conference at Nagpur, organized by Cenacle & FCW, 20-22 January 2017. It was very challenging to select articles and sending them to referees for their recommendation, but personal contact and speedy ways of communication eased my anxieties. It goes without saying that many established writers and critics, both from India and abroad, responded positively and contributed their scholastic articles to IJES. As Editor, one often is helpless enough to earn the wrath of even one's closest friends to ensure the quality and authenticity of an established journal that IJES has been since its inception. Many of our friends who had started doubting the credibility of the journal might feel relieved to know that IJES is included in the list of UGC approved journals and also has an excellent impact factor of 5.210. Though for a journal like IJES, which is being published since 1940, such approvals are mere formalities. Yet, AESI expresses its sincere thanks to our esteemed members of various universities, who recommended our journal to the UGC. However, it is difficult to name all of them personally.

The present volume of IJES comprises articles on Indian Writing in English, Literary Theory and Criticism, Feminism, American Literature, African Literature, Korean literature, Dalit Literature, Translation Studies, Autobiographies, English Language Teaching, Folk Literature and Indian Aesthetics etc. Besides 32 articles, the present volume includes 12 poems and 6 book reviews. Despite adequate care been exercised in selection, editing and formatting of the

content, the suggestions of esteemed readers are always welcome for further refinement of the journal. I thank all the contributors of this issue and look forward to fresh scholars' contribution to IJES in the times to come. I deem it my privilege to have received the love and encouragement of all esteemed members of the AESI for their continuous support to me for two terms; though through brickbats also at times, which too have worked as elixirs in my academic quests. I wish everyone a very happy new year full of euphoric endearments lying in store for all. I anticipate retaining the fathomless love and unflinching support of all readers in every walk of life.

BINOD MISHRA
Editor-in-Chief

Emerging Trends in English Language and Literature

**R.N. Rai*

When we make a subtle and systematic survey of the emerging trends in English language and literature, we find that contemporary literature in English is passing through turbulent and exciting times on account of unprecedented changes in the patterns of human relationships and alarming rupture between past and present. In the contemporary era no literature can survive without theoretical assumptions and ideological implications. Gradual erosion of boundaries between different disciplines such as literature and linguistics, psychoanalysis, philosophy, history, sociology, archaeology and anthropology has clearly shown a 'paradigmatic shift' in literary studies. All forms of evaluation now originate from a theory or a mixture of theories whether we consciously admit it or not. Multiple theoretical assumptions such as postcolonial, Marxist, feminist, dalit, subaltern, diasporic, tribal and ecological are bound to lead to different interpretive and epistemological perspectives.

Both Western literature and Western literary criticism/theory have been passing through different stages from 4th Century B.C. to 21st century A.D. Western literary criticism which was, till the first decade of the twentieth century, predominantly subjective, biographical, historical, empirical, psycho-

***Prof. R.N. Rai**, Former Professor & Head, Department of English, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India.

logical and impressionistic, became objective and textual by the end of the thirties. Literary text was now regarded as an autonomous, self-contained, self-referential aesthetic object. New Criticism or Russian Formalism or Saussurean structuralism which has had its impact in the field of Anglo-American criticism for roughly about four decades, started losing its appeal by 1970s and was finally declared as 'intellectually naive' and 'methodologically fruitless'. Both Derrida and Barthes moved away from the structuralist phase and started talking about the 'openness' of the text and text's connections with other texts. Highlighting the limitations of the text, Barthes in his essay "The Death of the Author" openly stated:

... a text is made of multiple writings drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, and not as was hitherto said, the author. The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination. (168)

Every text is plural in its meaning and hence it often reflects, echoes, borrows from and quarrels with other texts. The reader makes untiring efforts to discover the gaps, fissures and discontinuities of all kinds in order to decipher the text which is characterised by the notions of circularity, plurality, difference, indeterminacy and supplementarity. The reader thus becomes not only a close companion of the author but a co-creator also. The text is embedded more in the consciousness of the reader than in the printed words.

However, as Patricia Waugh has rightly pointed out that "no reading is ever innocent or objective or purely

descriptive”(2). It is always coloured by one’s own ideology, prejudice or preconceived notion. The reader explicates the text with a specific orientation and in a particular context. Text and context by 1980s thus entered into a dynamic, productive and inseparable relationship with each other. It is a fact that every context amends, deflects, alters and restructures the meaning of the text. In the contemporary era most of the literary theories like Feminist/ Lesbian/ Gay, New Historicist/ Cultural Materialist, Postcolonial/ Neo-Colonial, Dalit/ Tribal/ Subaltern, Mythical, Marxist, Diasporic, Ecological, Cultural and Intertextual are context oriented.

Feminist theory has become a major movement in the contemporary era. The radical American feminist Shulamith Firestone advanced the arguments of Simone de Beauvoir further through her text *The Dialectic of Sex* (1978) and suggested that modern technology should be used to free women from the restraints imposed on them by their biological construct. The famous American feminist theologian Mary Daly in her book *Gyn/Ecology* (1978) condemned the patriarchal norms of society and suggested that women should not accept the patriarchal tools including language and religion which play a very important role in shaping our view of life. Neither language nor religion takes a balanced view of female life and feminine sensibility. Daly further draws our attention to the fact that whereas men try to compete with nature, women develop intimacy with the objects of nature, as women have instinctive urges for pacifism and nurture. Women are opposed to all kinds of violence -from rape to war or deforestation-which are intimately related to men’s colonial bent of mind. Fiona Tolan in her article “Feminisms”, published in Patricia Waugh’s famous anthology *Literary Theory and Criticism* (2006) clearly stated:

Women, nature and the Third World are all victims at the hands of an exploitative male capitalist technology and ecofeminists frequently used the image of 'the web of life' to express the themes of cooperation, interdependence and harmony. (325)

If we believe in Foucault's statement that what is 'true' depends on who controls the discourse, male domination has entrapped women inside the male 'truth'. Hence women writers instead of contesting the male control of language, should try to create a separate 'feminine' discourse. Dale Spender explored the possibility of a gendered language and found that whereas male language was imperative, declarative and aggressive, female language was passive, apologetic, deferential, tentative and diffident. Focusing on the language of women's writing Cixous, Kristeva and Irigaray postulated a fluid, non-linear, elliptical, mystical, autobiographical and part mythic, realistic and fictional writing. It makes experiments with visual and graphic alterations to fonts, parentheses, blanks, breaks, silences, hyphenated words and altered punctuations. By disrupting the normal flow of language, the female author disrupts the social structure which is essential for women's emancipation.

In the contemporary era significant efforts are being made for the exposure of a typical 'cultural mindset' in the public which generated and perpetuated gender inequality. Well known gender theorist Judith Butler in her influential book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990) suggested the idea of the fluidity of gender. In her opinion masculine and feminine as two mutually opposing positions are artificial constructs imposed by heterosexuality. By subverting gender norms binary gender categories may be deconstructed and the division between male and female

may ultimately be transcended. The emergence of a 'new' woman is radically different from the traditional one. The 'new' woman is dynamic, resourceful, confident, even aggressive. She has succeeded to a very great extent in redefining herself and acquiring her new identity in every walk of life.

Since 1990s queer theory has emerged as a new theory and is primarily interested in reversing heterosexuality as the only accepted norm. It refers to the combined range of gay and lesbian studies related to all modes of variance such as bisexuality, transsexuality, sado-masochism and cross-dressing. It destabilises essentializing identities and resists heterosexual cultures through transgression, carnival and parody. It is anti-assimilationist, co-sexual and treats men and women on an equal footing. It seeks to subvert and confound the established verbal and cultural boundaries between male/female, homosexual/heterosexual and natural/unnatural. Its distinct contribution to literary and cultural studies lies in the fact that in addition to race, gender and class it recognises sexuality as the fourth category of human understanding and human relationship.

We are living in a world which is moving fast towards the worst phase of pollution, contamination and bio-disaster. Drawing our attention to the environmental crisis, environmentalist philosopher Val Plumwood in his book *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason* (2002) has highlighted the "massive processes of biospheric degradation, the failure and permanent endangerment of many of the world's oldest and greatest fisheries, the continuing destruction of its tropical forests and the loss of much of its agricultural land and up to half of its species within the next thirty years" (1). In the first two decades of twenty first century serious concern has been expressed by scientists and

conservationists over the environmental crisis caused by the depletion of natural resources , gradual extinction of plant and animal species, pollution of the biosphere and the explosion of population beyond its reasonable limit. Though the term `ecocriticism` was first used in 1991 by the British critic, Jonathan Bates in his book *Romantic Ecology*, it has now been recognised as the emerging field of literary pursuit with its own organisation ASLE (Association for the Study of Literature and Environment) and its own journal ISLE (Interdisciplinary Studies in literature and Environment). The central hypothesis of environmental activism is that whereas own world view is human-centric, it should be eco - or bio-centric for the survival of a safer planet. Ecocriticism admits the importance of all living things and their earthly environment and considers them as interconnected and mutually interdependent.

I would like to draw your attention to another important issue which is of serious concern to us. In the field of literary theory and criticism when Europe was passing through the dark ages (with the exception of Aristotle and Longinus), India had witnessed a remarkable outburst of creativity through well known critical theories of *Rasa*, *Alamkara*, *Riti*, *Dhvani*. *Vakrokti* and *Auchitya* —which are generally known as six schools of Sanskrit Poetics. The greatest need of the time is to recover the glorious past of India and establish its relevance to our contemporary literature. We should not abandon our donor Sanskrit tradition and become, rightly says Kapil Kapoor “passive uncritical recipients of Western theories and models” (1). Though some efforts have been made by Indian critics to develop, extend and reinterpret Indian poetics in order to apply its concepts to the contemporary texts and genres, it is badly needed to revalidate our classical

frameworks by contextualizing them and establishing their contemporary relevance.

It is an undeniable fact that our traditional Indian poetics is inadequate to cope with the changing requirements of Indian Literature. Several new movements like women's writing, gender writing, dalit writing, tribal writing, ecocentric writing, and modern folk writing can hardly be explained by the norms of traditional Indian poetics. Indian scholars and critics are required to make serious and systematic efforts to update, contextualize and revalidate our own theory in order to fulfil the changing requirements of our time and literature. We should develop our own critical canon which can, says K. Satchidanandan in his article published in *Frontline* (21 March, 2014), "help unlock and explain contemporary Indian texts"(1). What is lacking in our Indian theory today is the remarkable resurgence of contemporary Western theories which have attracted the attention of writers and critics of the world and which have radically altered our perceptions of the nature of literature and its function in society. Indian poetics should also develop a theoretical system which must be assimilative, comprehensive and self-consistent. We cannot or at least should not remain indifferent to the complex situations emerging out of the conflicting structures of the relationship between power and discourse. Contemporary Western theoretical trends have to be imbibed and integrated into our Indian theory for its contemporary relevance. When we look into our Indian treatises from Bharata to Jagannath, we find that Indian poetics has never been monolithic or resistant to change. It has continued to grow and tried to preserve an equilibrium between the centrifugal and centripetal forces of literature and society. The greatest need of the time is to recover, says C. D. Narasimhaiah, "the critical past of India, establishing its relevance for

us and applying a distinctly Indian sensibility to literary works, whether our own or others” (7-8).

In the contemporary era it is our basic responsibility to project the genuine and authentic image of India to the outside world and it is possible only through translation or transcreation. Had *Tagore's Gitanjali* not been translated into English and with an introduction by W. B. Yeats not submitted to the Nobel Prize Awarding Committee, it would not have been possible for Tagore to get the Nobel Prize in 1913. The world mostly knows India through Indian writings in English but who are the Indian writers in English – mostly the diasporic writers who occasionally come to India but use Indian society and culture as the raw material of their fictions and non-fictions. It is an open secret that as and when they write anything about India, they have the Western audience in mind. Now the question is: how can the world come to know about the genuine and authentic writings of the distinguished writers of our Indian languages such as Hindi, Sanskrit, Marathi, Urdu, Bengali, Tamil, Oriya, Kannada, Punjabi etc.? How can the world come to know about the rare contributions made by Premchand, Nirala, Mahadevi, Dinkar, Sarat Chand, Gopinath Mohanty, Indira Parthasarathy, Amrita Pritam and other distinguished writers of our regional languages who have presented genuine cultural ethos of the nation? Though some admirable efforts have been made by Katha, Srishti, Rupa and Oxford University Press, further efforts are required to translate the Indian classics into English and other languages of the world in order to present an authentic image of the nation to the outside world. Who can do it better than the teachers of English? They are at least bi-lingual and proficient in English as well as their mother tongue.

Highlighting the importance of translation David Lodge in his book *Language of Fiction* has rightly observed: "To test the closeness to its original, one would have to be not only bilingual but - to coin an ugly phrase, bicultural i.e. possessed of the whole complex of emotion, association and ideas which intricately relate in nation's language to its life and tradition" (20). Translation is not an isolated, innocent, transparent activity but an integral part of an ongoing process of the transfer of meaning across linguistic and socio-cultural boundaries. The most successful translation is the translation that is capable of making the most impressive rapport between widely separated people, places and times. Translation is now used in the context of 'transcreation', 'transluciferation', 'transtextualization', even 'poetic reorchestration'. The genuine need of the hour is to ensure that at least well known Indian texts are adequately translated into different languages of the world so that the world may be made aware of the glorious aspects of our Indian literature. It is an undeniable fact that if Plato, Aristotle, Homer, Virgil, Dante, Pirandello, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Brecht and other distinguished writers of the world had not been translated into English and other languages of the world, the world would have remained poorer than it is.

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Criticism in English in South Asian Countries: The Example of India

**Rajnath*

Presuming that the critical situation in English in other South Asian countries is more or less the same as that in India, I can hazard the generalization that it is mostly derivative, derived from Western theories or the indigenous critical tradition of the ancient past. This is unfortunate, as we have had very original and highly perceptive critics in Sanskrit as well as regional languages, whose critical formulations have benefited generations of students of literature.

When I make the above generalization, someone can instance Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak who has made her presence felt in the international critical area and who is admired, though not much read¹, in the country of her origin, which is India. Resting her critical speculations on Western thinkers, Derrida in particular, she has examined Western as well as Indian literary texts as a deconstructive as well as postcolonial critic little realizing that Derrida's deconstructive view of language premised on Ferdinand de Saussure's structuralist (read formalistic) concept of language does not accord with postcolonial thinking.

A brief comparison between Spivak and Edward Said, the father of postcolonial theory, will make my point clear. Said accepts whatever is worth accepting in Derrida's theory and rejects what in it goes against the

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spirit of his postcolonial certitudes. Pointing out the difference between Foucault and Derrida he writes that the text is important for Derrida because its real situation is literally a textual theme with no ground in actuality. . . then for Foucault the text is important because it inhabits an element of power . . . with a decisive claim an actuality even though this power is invisible or implied. Derrida's criticism moves us unto the text, Foucault's in and out (183).

Said admits that the two thinkers are united by their "attempt to *make visible what is customarily invisible in a text*" (184) but the difference between them is important for him as he believes, like Foucault, that hidden behind the textual game is the power game and that the text is grounded in reality.

Spivak, who is the most representative and the best-known critic from South Asian countries, moves from deconstruction to postcolonial theory without realizing the radical difference between the two and their inherent incompatibility. To be a postcolonial critic she needs to discard, as Said does, Derrida's view of language enshrined in Saussure's structuralism which dissociates language from the surrounding reality. Spivak is also a Marxist thinker but she does not seem to be aware that V.N. Voloshinov, a member of the Bakhtin Circle in the Soviet Union, in his *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1929) had stridently rejected Saussure's concept of language on which is based Derrida deconstructive view of language long before he became such an influential linguist.

What is true of Spivak also holds for those Indian critics who have drawn on Sanskrit poetics. Critics like C.D. Narasimhaiah and Krishna Rayan, despite their significant contributions to Indian critical scene, have surrendered themselves to Sanskrit theoreticians just as Spivak has to Derrida. Narasimhaiah has more or less

rejected Western critics in favour of Sanskrit theoreticians, whereas Rayan draws on both Western and Indian critical traditions with a marked privileging of the latter. Neither of them can tolerate a single word against Sanskrit poetics which they reckon sacrosanct. For me there is no difference between those who surrender themselves to Western theories and those who blindly admire and accept Sanskrit poetics. I must mention here a couple of exceptions who have mustered the courage to point their fingers at flaws in Sanskrit poetics or Western theories although they are historians, not critics. V.K. Chari in his *Sanskrit Criticism* finds fault in Anandavardhan's *dhvani* theory and S.K. Dey opines that, in the words of Rayan, "Sanskrit literary theories, or most of them, contented themselves with analysis of textual features and devices and failed to relate them to the poet's imagination and personality" (14) Nobody has, as far as my information goes, answered Chari's criticism of Anandavardhana but Dey has been answered by Rayan himself. "What De regards as the chief failing of Sanskrit poetics is in fact its chief strength", says Rayan. (14) Both Chari and De have argued in the Indian context and expressed their differences with Sanskrit theoreticians, but S.P. Mahanty, who is settled in the U.S. like Spivak, has taken issue in his *Literary Theory and the Claims of History* with Ferdinand de Saussure as well as Paul de Man and denied their denial of reference. This is the kind of spirit that is missing from the Indian intellectual scene in English.

I take an example to illustrate my point. Deconstruction was the most challenging critical movement that travelled from the West and arrived in our country sometimes in the mid 1980's, in 1984 to be precise when I brought out a special number of my *Journal of Literary Criticism* on this controversial

movement which levelled all distinctions between literature and non-literature. I was hoping that someone would systematically and emphatically question and seek to demolish this theory, which denied literature its unique identity and privileged place among the disciplines, but this was not done and even the best critical minds either rejected it without trying to understand it or wallowed in the knowledge of this latest trend from the West and acquiesced in Derrida's highly controversial view that there is no difference between literature and other disciplines. This was the latest intellectual gift from the West, they thought, and like a new fashion emanating from Paris or London, had to be gratefully accepted.

Let us compare the critical situation in India in the wake of Deconstruction with what transpired in the West. Derrida's critical assumptions were challenged by a number of thinkers such as Paul Ricoeur (France) Hans-Georg Gadamer (Germany) and, most significantly, Jürgen Habermas (Germany). Ricoeur in his *The Rule of Metaphor* (1975, English translation, 1977) has extensively discussed metaphor demonstrating how this very popular and widely used literary device is not without logic. This goes contrary to Derrida's belief expressed in "White Mythology" (1971, English translation, 1974) and elsewhere that metaphor undercuts logic and as such is diametrically opposed to metaphysics. Gadamer in his magisterial *Truth and Method* tells us, seven years before Derrida published his bunch of three books in 1967, the method whereby the truth is arrived at, the very existence of which Derrida has flatly denied. Gadamer maintains, as against Derrida, that understanding and agreement are basic to human life. He had a debate with Derrida in Paris in 1981. At the very beginning of his speech Gadamer asserts that "the ability to understand is the

fundamental endowment of man". (qtd. in Mikics, 185) Both Ricoeur and Gadamer were senior to Derrida in age as well as writing career but they lived through the period dominated by Derrida and on a number of issues differed with him and expressed their differences in so many words.

Jürgen Habermas, the German philosopher who was a contemporary of Derrida, had an extended debate with his French counterpart and received much more attention as Derrida's opponent than Ricoeur and Gadamer. In his celebrated essay, "Levelling the Genre Destination between Philosophy and Literature" in his *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* Habermas argues, as against Derrida that language operates not at one level, but three different levels, namely the ordinary level of day-to-day communication, the refined level of the sciences and philosophy and the literary level. He makes a fine distinction between problem-solving language outside literature and the world-disclosing language of literature. All these distinctions are ignored by Derrida with the result that language to him is always and invariably literary.

Unlike Western thinkers, Spivak does not question Derrida and surrenders herself to his deconstructive thinking from her first major work which is the English translation of Derrida's magnum opus, *of Grammatology* with a long Translator's Preface (1974) to her last major work, *A Critique of Post-Colonial Reason* with the appendix, "The setting to Work of Deconstruction." (1999) In the so-called third world we must learn to stand on our own feet and not surrender ourselves to Western or Indian thinkers.

The question that often crosses my mind is: How is it that Derrida has received so much attention in India and Habermas so little. Someone can turn the tables on me by saying that I am also partly responsible for this

by drawing so much attention to Derrida through my journal and writings. In my defence I'll say two things; first, my brief critique of Derrida in my first essay on Deconstruction in the JLC (1984) reprinted in my edited book, *Deconstruction: A Critique* (1989) was not heeded and, secondly, my highlighting of Habermas in my subsequent writings has also gone unnoticed. Derrida is fashionable in the West and whatever he says has to be taken as gospel truth. Habermas is rather conventional in his thinking and so he does not appeal to the Indian mind, howsoever, cogent, clear and convincing he may be. We forget that everything new is not necessarily good and everything traditional not necessarily bad.

I am far from denigrating the Indian mind if only because I am also an Indian. I have only expressed what I have felt over a long period. The astounding achievement of our ancestors in the classical era has taken the whole world by surprise. In Modern times too, we have had original thinkers like Gandhi and Sri Aurobindo. We must remember that we are their descendants and as such not inferior to those in other nations in other parts of the world. We need to assert ourselves.

NOTE

1. When I make this statement I have in mind Spivak as compared with Edward Said who is widely read and discussed in this country not only in English but also in Indian languages through translation. I have not met a single Indian who has seriously read or questioned Spivak.

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Indian Tradition and Mandala Literary Theory

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Mandala is a hermeneutical circle that involves a process of divination during the course of its formation and virtual emergence. Indian English literary tradition shows an astonishing lack of critical models. This compels the readers of such literature to apply Western models that are known as Formalism, Structuralism, Deconstruction, Post-Structuralism, Neo-Historicism, Post-Modernism, and Feminist Studies among others. Those Indian literary critics reluctant to apply a model upon English text produced by Indians have recourse to *Rasa*, *Dhvani*, *Alankar*, *Vakrokti* and *Auchitya* theories developed by our Sanskrit theorists and rhetoricians. These theories still hold good but when the colour, temperature and temperament of a particular time changes, older theories require a re-consideration given the difference in idiom and intension by the contemporary writers in any language leave alone English.

Indian civilization goes back to thousands of years of tradition-cultural, literary, philosophical, yogic, tantric, among others. My sectorial readings, howsoever peripheral, led to the conclusion that India could have not one but many more literary models given its long textual history. I, therefore, evolved a model and published it as *Concentric Imagination: Mandala*

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Literary Theory (1994). Adisankaracharya's *Brahma-sutras*, other commentaries upon the *Vedantic* tradition having *Dvaita*, *Advaita* and *Dvaitadwaita* dualistic, non-dualistic and both dualistic and non-dualistic-commentaries lead to a monistic, theistic and both monistic and theistic approaches that the same text generates. *Upanishads*, therefore, are an exercise in mono-theism, theism, polytheism, esotericism, even atheism. This abundantly extends the character of Indian textuality. The Western concept of enter-textuality is a much later invention.

I was also excited by Nagarjuna's exposition of the Buddha's word in his *Pratitya-Samutapada* and *Vigraha-vyavartani*. From the Western point of view, Alex Waymen has done a commendable job by writing *Buddhist Tantras*. Aghedanand Bharti published a book on *Sandhibhasha* known as the *Tantric Tradition*. The good translation work done by Sir Arthur Avalon in the early decades of the 20th century resurrected interest in the Indian esoteric tradition for the inquisitive and the curious. Earl Miner a Professor at the University of New York rightly lamented the lack of the development of critical models in a country which has so much of vibrant and living heritage. Prof. S.K. Dey, P.V. Kane and Krishnamachaiar have done yeoman services to the cause of Sanskrit studies as they are to be understood by an English clientele. Before them Winternitz and Weber have done enough by publishing books on Sanskrit literary tradition.

Literary studies, apart from evolving a reading fraternity, ask for a process of self-discovery. The Indian textual tradition evolves a narratology that structures and organizes a plethora of metaphors and symbols in such a way so as to lead to liberation. The text is not an entertainment but a sequence in our consciousness of

knowledge formation which has soteriological ends. The same may not hold good for the Western textual tradition. Prof. S. Radhakrishnan, as a fellow of All Souls College, Oxford in his classic book *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, remarkably establishes how Western religion and textuality have been influenced by a large number of sources originating from India. The Indian critical and commentatorial tradition begins when the first book of the world, *Rig Veda*, along with other *Vedas*, evolved into *Upanishadas*. Since, exegetical exercises need a continuum of expositional sanity, the process that we know as hermeneutical criticism continued for a very long time till the Muslim invasion on Indian put a bar on such endeavours.

Puranas established a big link between the audience and the *writer*. Vyasa formed as an inter-mediary who narrated such mythopoetic and historical narrative to the audience. This implied the audience's participation in the narrative content that led to liberation. In my reading of the *tantric* literature, I have come to the conclusion that *Tantra* provides a large number of taxonomies. These could be used as the epistemological paradigms which lead to the creation of different *Mudras*-postures. Consider the table below:

Čakra	Situation	Number of petals	Letters on same	Regnant tattva & its qualities	Colour of Tattva
Mūlādhāra	Spinal Centre of region below genitals	4	va,śa,sa,sa	Prthvī, cohesion stimulating sense of smell	Yellow
Svādhi- sthāna	Spinal Centre of regions above genitals	6	ba,bha,ma, ya,va,la	AP; contraction stimulating sense of taste	White
Manipura	Spinal Centre of region of the navel	10	da,dha,na, ta,tha,dā, dha,na,pa, pha	Tejas; expansion, Re producing heat and stimulating sight-sense of colour and form	Red
Anāhta	Spinal Centre of region of the navel	12	ka,kha,ga, gha,na,ca, ccha ja,jha,jna, ta,tha	Vāyu, general movement, stimulating sense of touch	Smoky
Viśuddha	Spinal Centre of region of the throat	16	the vowels a,ā,i,ī,u,ū,r, ṛ,ḷ,ḷ,e,ai,o, an, am,ah	Ākāśa; Space-giving, stimulating sense of hearing	White
Ājñā	Centre of region between the eyebrows	2	ha and ksa	Manas (Mental faculties)	

The figure details the body-plexuses symbolism which originates from the *Čakra* (plexuses) below the anus. Then, there is an upward movement because of the rising of the (textual) energy penetrating the six *čakras*, finally resulting in the blooming of the thousand petalled lotus. The human body contains this *virat*, there can be no text higher, greater, or differ than this. The table marks different stages of evolution of the creative writer as *yogi*, who concentrates and evolves, evolves

and concentrates till *sansara*, and *nirvana* appear to be the same as *Bhagavad Gita* puts it. The micro and macro cosmic symbols transact a metonymical and synecdoche relationship which results in the submergence of the part in the whole and the whole in the part. This also leads to the establishment of analogical and anagogical relationships.

Nagarjuna, a fourth century A.D. Buddhist monk, talks of the four *mahavakyas*, great sentences. They are: "This is", "This is not", Both this is and this is not", and "neither this is nor this is not". Nagarjuna said that a fifth condition of understanding is not possible. This is Buddhist doctrine of emptiness which F.J. Streng expounded in his book on emptiness. *Vigrah-Vyavartani* shows the contextual ex-termination of one word by another. Derrida has taken his method from here and studied the major text of the Western philosophical tradition. I have evolved a Buddhist model of reading and creating literature. The following figure shall explain much:

My circular exposition implies that a creative writer is gripped by an order of concentricity which may be in the ascending or the descending order. My figure has variations upon the *Tantrik Shri Yantra* or *Shri Cakras* which belong to the pure Hindu traditon. I have written a poem on *Kashi* which is known as a *Mandala Poem*. The *Mandala* here is *Shri Yantra* as *Kashi* is visualized at the centre of a fivefold journey (*Panch-kosh yatra*) with Shiva and Parvati illuminating the centre. I am trying to say that texts do have a centre as well as the creative writer. I make use of a *tantrik* terminology where the centre is known as the *bindu*. However, *Bindu* is imaginable but there is a textual dimension that is beyond configurations. I call this *Parabindu- The Rig Vedic Purusha* and the Krishna of the *Bhagavad Gita*

whose three-fourth is visible, the rest invisible. This comes as absence and presence in Murray Krieger, rupture and play in Derrida.

The figure shows two inter-secting triangles which are male and female. When they are in harmony, the centre is visible. When in disharmony, there are satires, lampoons, comedies and a literature of the low-mimetic. The circles have been surrounded by a square with four gates as Blake called them North, East, South and West. It depends upon a writer's consciousness as to which gate he is able to enter by. From that particular gate, a great writer always looks at the centre but the vision is often not clear. Therefore, many lower forms of writing appear, supplying us entertainment and pleasure and do not become part of the classical tradition in any language. The first circle establishes perceptive manifold; the second begins to interact with the objects of experience; the third acquires a nomenclature of its own-formal, informal, among others. The fourth circle is the Diamond Body of Buddha which emits resplendent rays of creative fulfilment leaving a caricatured existence.

East begets lyrics because of the youth and vibrancy of the sun. As the sun reaches the south it is mid-day and the poems written at this stage already show a consciousness of the rupture within. When a writer has a consciousness symbolised by the West, the rupture fully articulates itself. The North evaporates such distinction and writes complete poems like William Blake's *Prophecies*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Dante's *Divina Comedia* and even Virgil's *Aeneid*. In our own tradition there can be no better example from anywhere in the world than Valmiki's *Ramayana* and Vedvyasa's *The Mahabharata*. Added to this *Shrimadbhagavad* is the climax of the Indian textual components, expound

as it does the best from the *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, *Puranas* and the Schools of Philosophy. That is why this text is known a *Mahapurana*. *Mandala* model involves a continuity of cognitive process. It takes the best from the *Vedanta* and merges it in the Buddhist *Shunya* (cypher). Consider another table:

Form	Element	Direction	Geometrical figure	Body-Part	Phase
Lyric	Earth (generation)	East	Cube	<i>Indriya</i> (sense)	Literal-descriptive
Longer Lyric	Water (conception)	South	Cone	<i>Manās</i> (mind)	Descriptive-literal
Longer poem	Fire (creation)	West	Hemisphere	<i>Buddhi</i> (soul)	Formal mythical
Epic	Air (Movement) (recreation)	North	Sphere	<i>Ātman</i> (in time)	Mythical-formal
Dominant figure of speech	Mode-group	<i>Guna</i> Group	Vision	<i>Kāyā</i> -clusters (body-mandala)	
Metaphor	Romance-Irony	<i>Tamas-raj as-sattva</i>	Onefold	<i>Nirmāṅkāyā</i>	
Synecdoche	Irony-Romance	<i>Rajas-tamas sattva</i>	Two-fold	<i>Nirmān-Sambhog-kāyā</i>	
Metonymy	Tragedy Irony & satire	<i>Rajas-sattva tamas</i>	Three-fold	<i>Sambhog-Nirmān-dharmakāyā</i>	
Transumption	Tragedy comedy, Irony & satire & romance	<i>Sattva-raj-as-tamas</i>	Fourfold	<i>Vajra-dharma-sambhog-Nirmān-kāyā</i>	

Mudras	Time-mode	Fourfold propositions	Epistemological attitude
<i>Karma-mudrā</i>	Is-ness (present, perception)	This is	Empirical
<i>Dharma-mudrā</i>	That-ness-Is-ness (inference, present-future)	This is not	Inferential
<i>Sāmya-mudrā</i>	Future-Present-Past (Verbal-testimony)	This is & is not	Interrogative, dialectical
<i>Mahā-mudrā</i>	Future-Present-Past (Identification, conjoined & recreated, the eternal wheel)	Neither-this-nor- this-is-not	Moral

These tables elaborate how a resonantal body takes birth in creation as well as reading. This is what Kenneth Burke called the tonal body and Susan Langer called the musical body in her book *Form and Feeling*. Time is not so much existentially negative as Sartre and Camus put it; it creates while it negates. Heidegger truly picked-up the Buddhist paradigms in his philosophy and both Kant and Heidegger wrote “The End of Metaphysics”. Both held that the Western tradition has been going away from the self and this is disastrous. Kant was familiar with Paul Duessen’s translation of the *Upanishads* and *Bhagavad-Gita* was translated into French in 1787 by La Parrud. Charles Wilkins had already translated it into English in 1785 and published it as *The Dialogues of Kreeshna and Arjoon*. The text influenced the whole generation of English, European and American imagination. Blake and Whitman emerged as among those who began Romanticism and Transcendentalism in England and America. Franz Bopp reproduced the first Sanskrit German dictionary which heralded the beginning of the Indic studies in the West. Schlegel brothers and Schiller did not lag behind and made ample use of new literatures and philosophies.

I have given these details because the *Mandala* expands and keeps on expanding. It was for this reason that T.S. Eliot called The *Bhagavad-Gita* as the greatest poem of the world, supplemented it later by the statement: "second only to Dante's *Divina Comedia*". This was because of his Christian compulsions and we do not expect T.S. Eliot to perform better than this. He was taught Sanskrit by Charles Lenman and James Hottenwoods. Eliot read the *Gita* and the *Upanishads*, parts of the *Vedas*, in the original Sanskrit. He had his anxieties of faith. Therefore, he said that he must stop reading Hindu scriptures else he might become a Hindu. One does not become a Hindu or a Muslim or a Christian or a Hebrew by reading books of other religions. One becomes a better human being.

This is the problem when one belongs to an organized religion. *Mandala* theory is an emanation from the cosmic energy. It is different from imitative and expressive theories. A writer becomes the medium for something to enter into his body, mind and consciousness. Because of the advent of meditation the circles begin to gyrate and evolve into forms of magnitude whose destination is the complete poem- the world existing in a single body as that of Krishna in the *Gita* and as that of the Prophet Ezekiel in the last book of *the Bible*. The table shows how the human body passes through various phases of literal, metaphorical, symbolical, analogical and anagogical phases. Each phase enacts and gives birth to a geometrical form which has its own logic of proportion and means, allegory and the divisions implied therein- a utopian or dystopian existence or something in between.

Each relativity of time begets distinctive modes that in term beget *Mudras*-without and within. Time here is both fragmentary as well as unitary. The cognitive processes are unilateral, bilateral, trilateral and

endlessly so in an endless process where *bindu* is the *samadhi* and *parabindu* the onlooker. Literary forms can further be divided into Gods and Goddesses as in Sanskrit tradition – *Chchandas* are imagined as the bodily forms of a God or a Goddess. Similarly, the *Mandalas* are all constitutive of an epistemological order that change their colour and contour as the time is felt as an upgradation or as a lower body complex down under. This *Mandala* theory tries to consume all existing theories and makes literature an activity in which the creative writer and the reader participate in multiple models and colours of existence. Under the spell of concentration *Mandalas* acquire a level of energy that transforms the circle into a spiral. The spiral has its existence in the *bindu*. It is like realizing the *bindu*. It is like realizing the *Ashwattha Tree* of the *Bhagavad Gita* where the roots are above and the branches below. In the Western tradition, this tree is known as *Yggdrasil*.

**S.T. Coleridge's *The Rime of the
Ancient Mariner* as a Witness Poem**

* *Pramod K. Nayar*

The twentieth century is the age of the witness narrative, as numerous commentators have noted (Yudice 1991, Beverley 1992, Oliver 2001, Whitlock 2009). While these studies focus invariably on trauma narratives by eyewitnesses and survivors, little attention has been paid to witness poetry, although a full anthology of such work exists today (Forché 1993).

Teaching Samuel Taylor Coleridge's famous *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798) at the M.A level (where a fairly solid history of reading literature exists among the students) enables one to track a pre-history of witness poetry. The poem directs our attention to both eye-witnessing and a state of 'bearing witness' to larger social processes that cannot be readily *seen*. That is, a study of Coleridge's famous poem can enable us to see how witness narratives do more than just document the visible: they also gesture at the subtexts of events. Eyewitnessing is a simple referencing through one's serendipitous presence at the event, whereas to 'bear witness' is to be conscious of the historical and social processes not immediately to be seen. The latter, therefore, has to do with the awareness of a 'truth about humanity and suffering that transcends those facts [of the events eyewitnessed]' (Oliver 2004: 80). More importantly, when the poem shifts from eyewitnessing

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to bearing witness, it effects the construction of a narrative society within itself. A narrative society, James Dawes tells us, is one that understands itself through story-narratives and as narrative (1995). Within Coleridge's poem a narrative society is formed periodically in terms of *listeners* to a narrative segment, and climaxes in the personae of two specific listeners: the Mariner himself and the Wedding-Guest. That is, the *poem documents the transformation of the listener through the consumption of narrative*. The function of bearing witness enables the making of a sentimental and storied, public sphere.

This essay makes a case for reading a canonical text in new ways in the classroom to address questions of the public sphere and narrative.

The Eyewitness Narrative

The poem begins with the Mariner physically enforcing the condition of listening upon the Wedding-Guest, and who is forced to respond to the very act of being immobilized into an audience even before he responds to the story: 'unhand me,' he says (11). The Wedding-Guest experiences the Mariner's hand on his coat (10) and perceives the 'glittering eye' (13), all of which indicate the physical proximity of the listener to the speaker. This reluctant listening achieved by immobilizing the audience physically marks the first eyewitness moment and frames all that follows.

The listener is evidently an unwilling one and the Wedding-Guest's response to the Mariner's opening narrative moments is to attempt an escape from listening, not only because he wishes to join the wedding but because he does not *trust* the speaker. In order to persuade the Wedding-Guest to listen, the Mariner has to resort to providing numerous authenticating devices to demonstrate *his* reliability as an eyewitness.

Detailed accounts of the physical sufferings of the sailors, the colour of the sea and the weather patterns offer a realist eyewitness – ‘being there’ – narrative, with the poem adapting a ‘discovery narrative’ mode here (Rudolf 2013). Coleridge deploys both visual and aural images to convey the actual sensory experience of the Mariner on the seas. The ice is ‘green as emerald’ and it ‘cracked and growled, and roared and howled’ (lines 54–61). The sky is ‘hot and copper’ (111), and the sailors’ tongues are ‘withered at the root’ from thirst (135), to mention a few.

The narrative recall of traumatic corporeal experience, commentators note about the testimony genre, transmits the ‘bodily distress’ to the listener (Berlant 2001: 44). This ‘bodily real behind the clarity of traumatic representation’ (45) authenticates the eyewitness narrative by simply stating to the Wedding-Guest: I was there, I *felt* these conditions in, through and on my body. Thus, the Mariner constructs himself as the subject of the eyewitness narrative through these authenticating devices centered in the corporeal and experiential.

Later, the Wedding-Guest himself begins to note, as eyewitness, the bodily features of the Mariner.

I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown.’ – (225–228)

That is, after the Mariner’s account of the kind of conditions he witnessed and was subject to, the listener finds the story *embodied* in the Mariner. The victim-survivor does not narrate a story as evidence: he offers himself (Derrida 2000: 38). In the case of the Mariner, he offers his lanky body, his looks and his mannerisms

as evidence for his unbelievable story: his story is an embodied one, where text and corporeality complement each other. This is a classic witness narrative with its sense of 'thisness'.

The first moment of eyewitnessing and its narrative involving the Mariner and the Wedding-Guest occurs to the background of wedding music and festive noises ('noises off?'). But as the poem proceeds there is *no* longer any reference to the white noise from the wedding – almost as though the Mariner's narrative has silenced, for all practical purposes, the other noises. A narrative society begins here through this concentration of sound in the form of the Mariner's tale, excluding the rest of the stories, forcing attention to the speech at hand. Then the Wedding-Guest is described as 'he cannot choose but hear' (38). This implicitly signals a shift in the quality of narrating and listening, and at the captivating nature of the narrative being told.

That is, the narrative society begins not with the power of the narrative itself but by the stoppage of all possible (distracting) movements of the audience so that the narrative might be delivered in the first instance. Coleridge, I suggest, is speaking here of the structures of listening and the occasion for speaking. In order to bear witness to something, what is needed is the proper structure for the speech act.

The occasion for speaking here is akin to a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) setting: the storytelling is preliminary to a therapeutic process, and healing is inextricable from the telling of the tale. Rebecca Saunders described the South African TRC thus: 'to be at once a quasi-judicial body charged with measuring the accountability of perpetrators and a forum for witnessing the searingly emotional, embodied and profoundly interior testimony of victims' (2005: 99). The Wedding-Guest is indeed witness to all these qualities

of the Mariner's story. The Mariner declares his accountability for his actions in the process of telling his tale to the Wedding-Guest-as-witness with the operative 'I shot the Albatross' (82) serving as a confessional statement, an admission by the perpetrator. He states his truth, although 'reconciliation' will demand more than his function as an eyewitness: it demands that he bear witness.

After this eyewitnessing narrative, Coleridge's speaker offers us sub-narratives, reporting others' speeches that yield deeper truths and meanings to the events he was eyewitness to. The eyewitness narrative thus, is only a frame, the poem's heft is due to the bearing witness narratives.

The Bearing Witness Narratives

The second level of narrative in the poem has to do with the Mariner as the object of somebody else's narration. If in the eyewitnessing narrative he relays his experiences, the second level reveals deeper truths about his experiences and actions because these are interpreted by others. Coleridge is thus signalling the need for narrative elaboration and validation from the *outside* of one's perceived truths.

The bearing witness narrative is made up of several 'small' or sub-narratives. The narrative society on board the ship understands itself and the actions of others through these narratives that function, therefore, as interpretive frames.

The Moral Sub-narrative

Matthias Rudolf has argued that the *Rime* offers a moral geography (2013). I propose that the moral geography of the wanderings of the ship and the Mariner following the shooting of the Albatross is contiguous with a moral sub-narrative wherein his actions are discussed.

After the Mariner's shooting of the Albatross the Mariner reports his fellow-sailors' comments:

For all averred, I had killed the bird
that made the breeze to blow.
Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow! (93-6)
Then, once the fog lifts
All averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
'twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and the mist. (99-102)

The interpretation of the Mariner's action as justified or criminal by the sailor community suggests that he is the object of their narrative, and their addressee: he *hears* them approve of his actions *and* later accuse him. In this sub-narrative there is no disputation, no argument offered by the Mariner himself: he simply listens to them.

The accusations and justifications effectively place the Mariner in the position of a defendant, within the ship's narrative society whose norms of interpretive and juridical operations are not drawn from legal frameworks but from elsewhere, as we shall see. This narrative society, however, is an unreliable one and the Mariner understands that the interpretation of his action depends not on unchanging moral (or legal) code but the necessity of the moment, the extraverbal context of the sailors' narrative. The lines of description that intervene between these statements by the sailors are a contextualization of the interpretive act by the community:

His shipmates cry out against the ancient
Mariner, for killing the bird of good luck.

And:

But when the fog cleared off, they justify the

same, and thus make themselves accomplices to the crime.

The 'cry' in the first statement and the 'justify' in the second are narrative acts. The Mariner as the *object* of these narratives becomes the object of their opprobrium and their praise. The moral sub-narrative has three frames of interpretation into which the Mariner's actions are fitted and 'read' by the witnesses: the legal, the superstitions of the age and religion.

The Mariner bears witness to the operations of a society ridden with superstition, and where superstitions function as quasi-legal frames to indict the Mariner. The language used by the sailors, as the commentary puts it, to indict the Mariner merges the register of the law – 'accomplices', 'crime' – with the register of belief, superstition and folk wisdom ('bird of good luck'). Now, whether the superstition is foundational to the society the Mariner belongs to is unclear. A possible origin for this interpretive frame lies buried just four lines after 'twas right, said they, such birds to slay,/That bring the fog and the mist'. Coleridge writes:

We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

The 'first' suggests not only a pioneering presence in the seas but also an exploration of the unknown. Coleridge himself was to claim that 'superstition sprang from "the consciousness of the vast disproportion of our knowledge to the *terra incognita* yet to be known"' (cited in Fulford 2002: 48). The superstition, then, about birds of good or ill omen, is a response to a state of newness of the terrain *and* a state of ignorance and empirically verifiable knowledge. The Mariner does not record if he responded to the sailors' narrative and by reporting only this sub-narrative, leaves it to the listener (the Wedding-

Guest) to interpret both, the sailors' narrative and his own silence. But it appears possible that he declines a response because he is uncertain of his own guilt. Tim Fulford has demonstrated in his study of Coleridge's depiction of superstitions in English society in poems like 'The Three Graves', 'curses work when the cursed person is guilty enough to allow them to' (2002: 47). The Mariner therefore offers no response or retort to the charges levelled against him possibly due to a sense of guilt already extant within his conscience.

This sub-narrative, therefore, is the enunciation by a narrative society that employs superstitions as frames of interpretation-judgement, and to which the guilt-ridden Mariner subscribes. The law and superstition constitute the first two registers of the sub-narratives of bearing witness. The moral sub-narrative also takes recourse to a third register, that of religion.

A similar sub-narrative that focuses on larger moral issues, and is tinged with tones of accusation and indictment occurs in the form of voices of the 'Polar Spirit's fellow daemons'. This sub-narrative too judges and categorizes the Mariner. One voice queries:

'Is it he? quoth one, 'Is this the man?
By him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low
The harmless Albatross. (396-400)

The second daemon responds:

The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do. (406-09)

The Mariner's actions are now interpreted within a framework of religious rituals. 'Penance' has been performed, claims the spirit, and so the Mariner is essentially free. A hybrid of a judgement/ruling and a prophecy, the 'and penance more will do' is a defining narrative, for it defines the Mariner. The Mariner

overhears the narrative and understands his future: a lifetime of penance and penitence.

In Part VI the two voices offer another kind of moral classificatory narrative. One seeks to know the reasons behind the ship's pace of progress. The second voice offers the explanation: 'See, brother, see! How graciously/ she looketh down on him.' (419-420). The moon, says the second voice, is being gracious to the Mariner. This act of graciousness in the moral justificatory narrative of the two voices, cast in the register of belief and the imagination (the apostrophic-anthropomorphic construction of the moon) is the anterior moment to the fuller redemptive narrative because it indicates the Mariner is now no longer the accused or accursed but the recipient of benevolence and patronage.

The Hope-Curse Sub-narrative

The second sub-narrative has two elements, paired off in Coleridge's scheme. The first element of this pair is articulated by the Mariner when he detects the distant ship and cries out 'A sail! A sail!' (160), following it up with the ship's movement toward them: 'See! See! (I cried) she tacks no more!/Hither to work us weal;' (167-8). This hope narrative from the Mariner represents the ship headed toward them as a rescue mission: 'how fast she nears and nears!' (182). The other element of this pair is a silent but *visually expressive* 'curse narrative' by the dying sailors:

Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye. (214-15)

The Mariner interprets the looks of the dying sailors, and thus transforms the collective *look* into an expressive *act*.

The Mariner's hope-narrative is undermined by the curse narrative of the sailors, and hence works more on

the lines of a fantasy narrative. Adding to the sense of the fantasy is Coleridge's account of ghost ships and strange weather phenomena.

Between the hope and curse narratives is a mediating narrative, also approximating to the fantasy. This is the Mariner's 'sense' of the Life-in-Death spectre on the ship declaring 'The game is done! I've won! I've won!' (197). The game of dice exemplifies one more narrative, whose consequences for the sailors on the Mariner's ship are terrifying and as far from the sense of playful 'games' as imaginable. The sailors are witnesses to a narrative that will determine their future. The trope of the 'game' – to invoke a presentism – looks forward to the murderous games played by wardens and guardians of prison camps: the random acts of 'play' of knocking off a prisoner's cap so that he chases it, only to be shot down by the prison guards. The spectre and her 'playmates' are gaming for lives, even souls, in this, one of the most terrifying sections of the Mariner's narrative.

This game narrative mediates between the hope and curse narrative because the Mariner himself articulates the doubt that the rescue mission that he hoped the spectre ship represents might turn out to be something else altogether. When he seeks to set the terms of the discourse in the sub-narrative as a discourse of hope, the game-trope from the spectre and the players shifts the terms. Therefore, the spectre's exuberant shout of victory ('I've won!, I've won!') echoes and resonates with the Mariner's own hopeful 'A sail! A sail!' in the earlier part of this section, but resonates in a way that *inverts* his hope narrative.

The Redemptive Sub-narrative

The final sub-narrative is a redemptive one, and begins when the Hermit queries: 'what manner of man art thou?' (576). This question is the context for speaking.

The Mariner documents his response:

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woeful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale;
And then it left me free. (576-580)

The tale and his redemption are contingent upon having a listener who *initiates* the telling. It is in this narrative society that storytelling sets him free. This sub-narrative is, in effect, voiced and the terms of discourse set by the Hermit's question when he probes: What *manner* of man are you? He does not, it may be noted, ask for a documentary-descriptive or chronological recitation of events that befell the Mariner. Rather, he sets the terms of the response by directing the query at something larger, making an inquiry into a character-sketch rather than a plot-account. The Hermit therefore calls for self-reflection rather than a historical record. He probes the character of the witness to events rather than the events themselves.

Indeed, the Mariner notes that the urge to tell his tale despite the fact that it demonstrates his villainy, is a visceral one:

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns:
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns. (582-5)

To return to the traumatic event, to recollect it, is traumatic in itself, but the Mariner seems to anticipate in his actions much of the 'talking cure' theories of the twentieth century when he believes he experiences freedom when he recounts his trauma. The abruptness with which this sub-narrative ends suggests an element of surprise: the Mariner had not expected to be free with his telling of the story to the hermit. The Mariner here is constructed as a penitent story-teller located in a

narrative society, represented in this instance by the Hermit that wants to listen to the story. But it is also with this sub-narrative that the Mariner discovers his narrative curse and responsibility.

The sub-narratives construct the Mariner as bearing witness to abstract truths such as moral laws, hope and curse, crime and penance and the continuity of this penance. These truths inform the interpretation of the events that occurred on the seas. In each of the sub-narratives, the discourse is set and defined by somebody *other than* the Mariner: the sailors, the spectre, the spirits and the Hermit. Whether the discourse is about his guilt, his penitence, his luck (of being saved by the ghost ship) or his character, the sub-narratives position the Mariner as a recipient, a follower (perhaps 'observer' in the full sense of one who watches and one who follows) of others' narratives and discursive regimes.

It is to reclaim a measure of narrative authority as a means of defining himself that the Mariner then becomes a storyteller.

Narrative Responsibility:

I pass, like night, from land to land;

I have strange power of speech;

That moment that his face I see,

I know the man that must hear me:

To him my tale I teach. (586-590)

The Mariner here states his compulsion: to narrate.

Woven into these lines is a *pedagogic* project for which he identifies the appropriate listeners/students. He wanders *across* lands, bringing diverse people into the ambit of his storytelling project. In classrooms this immediately brought attention to bear on the thematic of teaching stories, and what we learn from them, what sort of narrative societies are constructed when we narrate/listen to stories.

Through this literary device of witnessing, Coleridge constructs here is not only a narrative society of appropriate listeners but an entire framework of a citizenship and identity founded on public storytelling.¹ Indeed, in the last section of the poem, the focus is almost entirely on the collective:

To walk together (603)

Goodly company (604)

Walk together (605)

All together (606)

The word 'all' occurs four times in the final twenty lines of the poem the end. The words 'all', 'together' and 'land' seem to imply a national narrative, a storied public sphere.

Before addressing the poem's making of a public sphere via the Mariner's transformative narrative to the Wedding-Guest, let us examine a different public instituted in the poem's sub-narratives: that of the ship. The ship functions as an isolated, limited and insular public sphere, carrying its own narrative society (examined above in the form of the sub-narratives). It also represents a public that is mobile, shifting its location to fluid terrains (the sea) and to the outworks of the known world. It is self-contained and the discourses – since discourses construct a public (Warner 2002) – circulating within the ship are insulated discourses for the period of the voyage since no narrative may enter or leave the ship. There is also no differend, no third party to whom a narrative conflict may be referred to for arbitration, for weighing the truth-values of whatever is said in the discourse. Devoid of conflicting and contestatory narratives the ship represents a regime of meaning-making where the moral, the redemptive and the hope-curse sub-narratives hold sway. Whether the Mariner steps off the ship indoctrinated with these sub-narratives that reigned uncontested for the period of

the voyage is a moot point. The ship as the space of insulated discourse enables the Mariner to develop a storyline whose veracity cannot be disputed because the events described happened elsewhere. This means, simply, the truth-value of the story may only be discerned from the Mariner's embodied telling, in his offering of himself as witness.

By invoking the ship as the site of his own transformation and the original displaced site of his story, the Mariner institutes a staging of testamentary or testimonial authority by virtue of offering a realist-documentary account of weather, the condition of the seas and the life forms seen. While the surreal and hallucinatory passages intervene on occasion, the Mariner's careful exposition of tides, weather, time of day and other details suggests narrative and testimonial authority.

The significance of the Mariner's attempt to circulate his story is that an individual life begins to acquire the status of a national story. Writing about the South African novel and the TRC, and the latter's attempt to create a national record, Aryn Bartley notes: 'the concerns of the novel—its attention to individual lives, psychological truths, and ambiguities in experience—haunt the historical record' (2009: 109). The bearing witness narrative in Coleridge's poem reveals each of these aspects: the Mariner's life on the seas, the psychological truths of his personality and the surreal, ambiguous experience, all of which he chooses to share with the world, and thereby construct a record to which the narrative society needs to respond.

The narrative society, or a public sphere, built around the Mariner's story would be of course a *sentimental* public sphere, but it would also bear witness to a historical wrong perpetrated by the sailors against Nature. The Mariner's endless recounting—spreading the

word, literally – fashions the public sphere against such a cultural wrong and moral misdemeanour. His response to the various sub-narratives through and in which he perceived larger truths about interpretation, the moral law, the uselessness of hope and the possibilities of redemption, is also a response-ability to *circulate* those narratives. That in the sub-narratives he is often a moral renegade is the burden of this response-ability, and one that he can only shed temporarily by articulating the story of his behaviour.

The imperative to listen to narratives such as the Mariner's is tellingly contextualized by Coleridge from the very beginning of the poem. When stopped the Wedding-Guest points out that one may 'hear the merry din' of the wedding feast inside (9). Later he 'beat his breast,/for he heard the loud bassoon' of the bride's arrival' (31-2). Coleridge also introduces the line 'he cannot choose but hear' twice (18, 38), and describes the Wedding-Guest thus: he 'stood still,/and listens like a three years' child' (13-14). The narrative society here is being carved out of a polyphony, or cacophony, of voices and sounds. As noted earlier, the Mariner's narrative is initially to the background of the noises from the wedding, but later there appears to be a reduction in this ambient noise for no reference to this occurs.

Coleridge suggests that there is a moral imperative to hear the stories like that of the Mariner even in the midst of, or to the background of the banal, celebratory or interfering noises of the world. The sounds of the wedding, the feast and the bridal march might be seen as the white noise of the world, and the Mariner's tale has to battle with these narratives in order to be heard by the listener.

Coleridge suggests that the kind of narrative society represented by the wedding has to be subverted for the moral narrative to be witnessed. The wedding *is* a public

sphere, but not the moral one the Mariner seeks to construct. If the rituals of the wedding and the attendant feast represent the narrative register of play and games, the high seriousness, indeed sententiousness, of the Mariner's storytelling intervenes within the former. Weddings and rituals might be the narrative that constitutes individuals into a collective as a public. A public, as Michael Warner has defined it, is 'the social space created by the reflexive circulation of discourse'. It is 'understood to be an ongoing space of encounter for discourse' and 'exists only by virtue of address' (2002: 61-2). What the Mariner achieves is an intervention in this ritual narrative. He extracts the Wedding-Guest from the rituals and prevents him from receiving the address from the wedding – and public – so as to construct the Wedding-Guest as an instantiation, however nominal, of a counterpublic. Michael Rothberg argues that a 'counterpublic' comes into being when "embodied truth' comes into conflict with a certain formation of the bourgeois public sphere", revealing subtexts to extant, official memories (2006: 179). It 'sets itself against the dominant by producing and circulating a stigmatized identity through forms that challenge the supposed neutrality and transparency of the general public sphere', writes Rothberg (179). The Mariner's narrative, indisputably about a 'stigmatized identity', constructs the Wedding-Guest in a whole new form, distinct from the consumer of feasts, joyous laughter and frivolity of the wedding. The Mariner is the embodied truth, as the guest himself notes when he pays attention to the Mariner's near-ruined body. The Mariner's narrative forces the Guest to listen to a different address and in the process reveals the sadness of the world underneath the generally accepted revelries.

After this attempt by the Wedding-Guest to stop the Mariner's narrative, he never interrupts him again,

except to say 'I fear thee, ancient Mariner!' (223). This shift in the Wedding-Guest's attitude from annoyed visitor who only seeks to move to and attentive, transfixed, unable-to-move listener might be read as the making of a wholly different narrative society that eschews narratives of, say, bourgeois celebrations of weddings with their stories of union and happiness and instead constitutes a counterpublic by taking to heart tales such as that of the Mariner. It should be noted that when the poem ends, in sharp contrast to its opening when the listener seeks to go away, it is the Mariner who is 'gone' (620). That the Mariner's counterpublic is at this moment made up of only one individual suggests that the change he seeks through storytelling cannot be disseminated to an entire group – such as the Wedding-Guests as a cohort – but has to work on one person at a time.

By demonstrating how he moves from a mere eyewitness to bearing witness the Mariner also maps a transformation within himself. Hearing and *repeating* the sub-narratives of his villainy and eventual redemption is a transformative experience for him. The Mariner's use of the word 'free' indicates this transformation, however ephemeral. Does the expansion of the scope of his narrative society imply such a storied transformation as well? The last lines of the poem suggest such a state of change:

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and wiser man,
He arose the morrow morn. (622-5)

Just as the Mariner moves beyond eyewitnessing the events to bearing witness to a greater truth ('love and reverence to all things that God made and loveth'), the Wedding-Guest as he '*turned* from the bridegroom's door' (621) has begun to bear witness. The burden of

being a 'wiser man' is of course a source of sadness, but one which he, as a responsible member of the narrative society, cannot escape. The use of 'turn' underscores a swerve away from the rituals of polite society, of social bonding and myths of happiness he has been eyewitness to, toward bearing witness to a larger truth made visible by the Mariner's story.

Katharine Mack comments on the utility of the exercise of storytelling by victims:

While victims' public storytelling ostensibly promoted their healing, the restoration of their dignity, and their ability to perform as citizens in the new South Africa, it also served the nation-building goals of the commission. (2011, 204)

Mack's points highlight the power of storytelling as a therapeutic not only for the teller but for the listeners as well and, growing outward centrifugally, the nation. Coleridge gives us one example of the making of this responsible narrative society and storied citizenship, but it is quite possible to see the Wedding-Guest as a *metonym* for larger demographics, given Coleridge's insistence on the 'all' and 'together' noted earlier.

The prose lines, summarizing the events so to speak, intervene like a metaleptic commentary. In traditional interpretations (Genette 1980), *metalepsis* indicates the shift between the world of the story and the world of the reader. Intervening within the poem's narrative movement they provide a protocol for reading the poem itself, and therefore as an address to the *reader* or listener who overhears the Mariner's narrative to the Wedding-guest. So when we meet the lines 'the ancient Mariner inhospitably killeth the pious bird of good omen' (near lines 78-9), they serve as *our* frames of reading his actions.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner thematises the making of a responsible narrative society through the circulation of individual stories, stories that cause the listeners, transfixed initially by the subjective account and affectively moved, to bear witness to larger truths. This narrative society is transformed when it bears witness to moral lessons, and this is precisely why the Wedding-Guest serves as a metonym for an entire social order. Coleridge's poem is, therefore, essentially about the power of storytelling.

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NOTE

- ¹ English Romantic poems that offer the theme of public storytelling include Coleridge's 'Kubla Khan', 'Foster Mother's Tale', Shelley's 'Ozymandias' and Wordsworth's

Peter Bell, the incorporated stories of discharged soldiers, vagrant women and others in *The Excursion* and *The Prelude*. Lucy Newlyn writing about reading and reception in the Romantic age tracks the anxiety over solitary reading as disconnected from the more communal 'reading' /by poets and authors (2003: 16-17). The Mariner's extended storytelling session might then be read as an attempt to personalize the story through his immediate corporeal presence – face-to-face – as teller rather than as an act of distanced and anonymized reading. He performs the poem, in a sense, through the evidence of his lank and brown body that 'speaks' of his voyage. Newlyn also notes that Coleridge was interested in the effect the storyteller had on the listening audience (88).

My Sufi Sonnets in Bhakti Tradition

**Stephen Gill*

The Bhakti movement started in the 7th century AD in the South of India. In the 14th and the 15th centuries the movement touched its peak when it stretched its wings to the North, replacing rituals, customs, castes and idolatry with unwavering devotion to the Almighty. The essence of the Bhakti Movement was tied-up with The Upanishads and The Puranas that link human with the Supreme, the embodiment of love. Literary critics have ascertained the virtues of love of the Bhakti tradition in my poetry and prose.

In addition to the followers of the Bhakti Movement, the Almighty is also the embodiment of love for Sufi poets, who believe in worshipping God in the houses with no walls, and speaking the language of kindness that even deaf people can hear. They perceive prized jewelry hidden in the good that is the passion of the person in the state of the artist in creation. It is not the outside, but the inside of the humility that matters to both Sufi poets and the followers of the Bhakti traditions. This passion is the invincible flame of the Buddha and the mystery of the Divinity. In other words, the Bhakti and Sufi traditions focus on selfless love in action.

This selfless love in action is also the path for the followers of Christ. 1 John 3: 18 says “Dear children,

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let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our action." This kind of love is not fascination and sentimentality. It is rather an action. In the gospel of John 4: 18-16 it is written that love is the attribute of God. Therefore, the quest for Him will be successful only through the unconditional love that is based on action, not on fear or expectations. Unconditional love is the truth that sets a person free from rituals and traditions. This love is beyond any definition, because it is an experience.

Tracing the Bhakti and Sufi traditions, particularly in my modern epic the Flame, Sudhir K. Arora says in his critical study, titled *The Flame Unmasked*:

"As a Sufi, he talks in a sufiana tone":

I wish to swing
under the wings of our affinity
on the steps of a Sufi (p. 201)

His tones vary according to situations in which the speaker is placed. He speaks in a romantic tone while talking about the Flame. He expresses his desire to become a lamb that needs a good shepherd. In sufiana or bhakti tone, he is submissive and loving. He has a longing for total surrender before the Flame as he knows that it is she who can guide him and instill in him a kind of driving force that will make him face the odd circumstances in life. (p. 201).

The driving force that Dr. Sudhir mentions is unconditional love. Something along the same lines Kalpna Rajput in "An Interpretation of the Mind and Art of Stephen Gill", edited by Dr. Anuradha Sharma, says: "The poetry of Stephen Gill is an appeal to man to make his existence authentic by adopting the indelible policies of being, conscience and spirituality. Dr. Shaleen Kumar Singh in the preface of his critical study *Essays on the Poetry of Stephen Gill*, includes Sufism:

Dr. Stephen Gill has always believed in the tradition of Sufism. Sufism is an ancient school of wisdom which puts emphasis on the basic unity of underlying ideals in all religions and mystic school's considering love as the first and foremost principle. (89)

To me, Sufi, Bhakti and mystics were mere words before scholars started pointing out my affinities to their traditions. This led me to independent studies, which strengthened my belief in these expressions making them meaningful for me. The more I meditated on these expressions, the more I became convinced of their strength. I am convinced that love is the single most emotion to bind every relationship that can be experienced rather than be defined. I believe in the illumination of self in the unity with the Almighty, who is the flawless ideal of love. I list below some examples of this devotion or love from my sonnets:

“Your love is my oceanic compass/ that keeps me aggressively saing.” (18); “My unceasing passion for prosody/ Springs from you, who spices creativity...”. (22) or I live to sing/ the enriching lyric of our love/ and hear your opiate symphony /that is a welcome boon for me (3).

Or

My love for you has no barriers,
no color, no age, no lies
and has nothing to hide. (12)

In addition to unconditional love, nature is the sacred manuscript of the Sufis. This is also a belief of the followers of the Bhakti Movement. Both believe in a close harmonious relationship with nature because Divinity exists in all the elements, including plants and animals. They discover permanent patterns in the laws of nature

that may be called Cosmic Power.

The devotees of Christ also hold respectable views about nature that is clear from the fact that Christ came to save not only humans, but also the entire planet and nature is a part of the planet. It also is clear from the Epistle to the Romans, Chapter 8, verses 19 to 22 which explain that physical creation and Mother Nature are parts of God's plan.

William Wordsworth, a Romantic poet of the 19th century, presents nature as the dwelling place of the Divine Being. In Tintern Abbey, Wordsworth finds God in "the light of the setting sun/ and the round ocean and the living air/ and the blue sky, and in the mind of man."

From the view of the rendition of nature, my poetry comes closer to the poetry of William Wordsworth. Here are some lines from my sonnet 49, which describe the same view:

You enliven the larks
on the sloppy lawn
where they run making lisping notes.
I see you jogging slow and fast
on the narrow windy path
along St. Lawrence where
your dignity moulds the Maple leaves.

In sonnet 39, I say along the same line: "You live/ in the hazy shade of the twilight that caresses St. Lawrence beach/ with muscles supple and sweet." In sonnet 42: "You're the sun that rotates/ on the axis of my obvious bliss. "And I find His manifestation in sonnet 51 as, "I salute when I sight you in the unclouded zone of Canada geese/ where reigns an elevated soul of peace." In sonnet 46, I say:

I see you elated in ravishing aroma
as the sovereign reign.
While you frisk in woods and plains

I soak alone here in rains. (46)

In sonnet 49:

“I see you jogging slow and fast
on the narrow windy path
along St. Lawrence where
your dignity molds the Maple leaves.
You appear behind the bridge
as adornment of majesty
In orange and yellow images.
Also in the air that casts off
the weariness of the aged sages.
You are the honk of the geese...

The message in my sonnets is certainly closer to the message in the poetry of Wordsworth because my poetry also finds infinite in the finite and everlasting in the lasting. My vision is mystic like that of Wordsworth that is a common vision of the Sufi and Bhakti poets. Wordsworth is a genuine mystic. The Bhagvad Gita, a sacred treasure chest of the adherents of the Bhakti tradition, is clear on this view about nature. Professor Dr. Rita Garg explains it in *The Singer of Life*, released by Vesta in 2016:

In the sonnets various Modes of Nature appear intermittently and all through. While Sattava is talked about in the Sonnets 13 and 14, Rajas is taken up in Sonnet 17.

According to the Gita, the three Modes of Nature are simultaneously latent in a human and at a time, one mode of nature has dominance. In Sonnet 48 when the poet is pretty close to his object, he knows only Sattava Guna. Secondly, Soma (Sonnet 17) is the nourishment meant for gods. Thus, the poet's desire to reach that world is prevalent here as well.

Sonnet 22 talks of the heavenly habitat for birds: ‘My passion for prosody springs from you, who spices

creativity that inspects also the fine prints for the cruise to spot my Chakora that sings in Shambhala where the birds of paradise for ever play.’(p.81)

Rabindranath Tagore, a Nobel Laureate, was the product of the Bhakti tradition. About the traces of the Bhakti tradition in my modern epic *The Flame*, Dr. Sudhir K. Arora, a literary critic who has authored two books on my works, says in his book *The Poetic Corpus of Stephen Gill*, released by Sarup Book Publisher in 2009:

“As he sings in praise of the flame, he sees her everywhere because of his belief the “The life disintegrates/ where the flame is “the spectacular sight/ of the first appearance of light/ that dissolves discomforts/ of the pilgrims of peace”. Both the poets—Tagore and Gill—sing the songs in praise of Light and seek her grace in their lives so that they may serve humanity through their contributions in spreading peace and prosperity in the world by helping the fellow beings.” (p. 167)

About Sufism in my sonnets, a US born Canadian literary critic professor Dr. Daniel in *The Singer of Life*, released by Vesta Publications in 2016, says:

Stephen Gill’s sonnets reach out and transport us to the absolute realms of Beauty and Truth—and Love. The Beloved embodies these absolutes. Her face “is the model of the highest perfection” (Sonnet 4); she “is the calm of my lake that derives its energy from the order of eternity and love is the spark of eternity” (Sonnet 5); she is “the lotus of my cosmos” (Sonnet 21). Each sonnet in effect records a different manifestation of the sublime. (p. 96)

The followers of the Bhakti Movement and the Sufi poets walk on the same path as far as their beliefs in God and Nature are concerned. For both, a gaze at a flower leads the gazer to think of its Creator as provider of life. This kind of thought exists in most scriptures of the world religions, including Christianity.

The Christian view is obvious in The Bible, Psalms 96: 11-12 says, "Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it. Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them; let all the trees of the forest sing for joy." Christ praised even ordinary flower such as the lily as per Matthew 6: 25-34 when he says: "Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ...". This again is a Sufi thought.

I would quote also from the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 13: 18-19, where Christ says that the kingdom of God is like a mustard seed, which a man took and threw into his own garden; and it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air nestled in its branches." This again a Sufi thought.

The word Sufi means wisdom in the Persian language. The Greek word Sophia can also be its possible derivation. For Christians and Sufis, God is the source of wisdom, and wisdom without humanity or love is lifeless. For a Sufi, love and devotion are the ways to harmonize with God. Love will find perfection in the Sermon on the Mount of Christ, described in Matthew 5: 3-12.

Love has and is still being used as a pivotal theme in poetry in the East as well as in the West. I believe that like the Creator, love is faithful that cannot be forced. It is the yearning of human beings. This is the cardinal message of my sonnets. About the message of Sufism on Supreme Power I feel happy to add that in my sonnets love is the single thread that unites humans and the unity of humans is the strength of humans in love and those who are in love are united with eternity and eternity is the all-pervading power and this all-pervading power is present in every tree, in every flower and in every moment. This truth, the other name of love, is the pivot of my sonnets. This truth is the heritage of civilizations from the beginning of life and is even now, in spite of the fact that these civilizations and cultures have developed in different ages and in different geographical regions. I find this truth in the kirtans in the Hindu temples; in the quawallies at Muslim Darghas; in the songs of Gurbani in Sikh gurdwaras and in the hymns and psalms sung in the churches of different denominations.

Among the Sufi poets of India, Bulleh Shah (1680-1757) from Punjab tops the list. He believes that love is the essence of God. Another, also from Punjab, is Baba Farid who believes that to receive the love of God one should love fellow beings. For him every human heart is pearl. He was against violence. In one of his poems, he says:

Tear down the mosques
And also temples
Break down all that divides
But do not break the human heart
Because it is there
Where God resides.

In my belief, love is God. My sonnets celebrate love that links creation with the Creator. Unlike rules and

regulations, love rules in these sonnets. In sonnet 3, I say:

I live to sing
the enriching lyric of your love
and hear your opiate symphony
that is a welcome boon for me.
I shall wear your ring
as the just tribute of my eulogy.

Love is the ruling passion also in my prose. My novel *The Coexistence*, based on the ideology of live and let live published in 2011 by Orientalia, India, has direct references to love. At one place, I adore it:

When the waves of the ocean fuse, they drive their energy from eternity. Love is the spark of eternity, and eternity is not born in time. Trusting love is trusting the arms of mother that are without strings. Abuse of love is the rape that is the reckless disregard of the trust, ending in the demise of relationships to become a sepulcher of emptiness. Love is the absence of the dust of self-desire, and self-desire uproots serenity to seduce infirmities. Love is the language of God and God is peace. (*The Coexistence*, P. 279)

In my novel *The Chhattisgarh*, published by Prakash Book Depot in 2017, I note:

Love is an endless process to dust off the diamond to live and let live under its radiance. Love is a fathomless ocean. It is a bird in flight—a lotus of the cosmos—the sun that brings every dawn and the stars that twinkle in the darkest hours. Love is a singer of life, not a singer of the lifelessness of detachees. God is unchanging; so is the love. (p. 544)

In my long poem *Amputee*, I bring out the devastation caused by the lack of love in a loveless family. I paint

love's beauty in canto 4, second paragraph:

You are
the center of aesthetic taste,
the grain of the promised land
for the orphans of emotional hunger.
The mystery behind knowledge
and the opening of a flower
in the spring of the countryside.
As in every blade of grass
you twinkle in the morning glow
and in the glances of amputees. (p.39).

Another element often traced in my poetry and particularly in my sonnets is mysticism, which is an experience and experience cannot be caged with words. Mysticism opens the portal of the divine understanding with the key of nature. This understanding strengthens my conviction that there is nothing outside the realm of Divinity.

The nets of my sonnets are largely different from the nets woven by Shakespeare, Spenser and other traditional sonneteers. Each of my love sonnets is of eighteen lines and is in a single paragraph without any division and each sonnet consists of one hundred words. The last line rhymes with the preceding line, sometimes even with the line before.

I do not stick to any traditional regular rhyming scheme. A rhyme is a repetition of the same sound at the end of the line to produce musical effect. These two lines at the end may or may not have the same meter. For example, I write in sonnet 51:

I salute when I sight you
in the unclouded zone of Canada geese
where reigns an elevated soul of peace.

In sonnet 54: I see you standing under the light/making me utterly alive. And in sonnet 56:

In my pagoda of truth and faith
they are the bounty of the bride
at best, blessed and benign.

In addition to the use of the last two rhyming lines, I make use of alliterative devices or poetic net wherever possible. This poetic net is richly used in ghazals. They rely largely on rhymes, because ghazals are meant also for singing or applause for their musical presentations. Ghazals will stagnate if they are rhymed poorly. Ghazal means conversation with women. Love is an important part of a ghazal, and is associated closely with Sufi poets. The net I talk about is the sound of the words, not letters, used in the quick succession. The last line in my sonnet 56 is a good example. In sonnet 54. 9, the opening lines provide another example where the letter “b” alliterates: “No bird or butterfly /Maple leaves in blustery breath bite.”

I have already mentioned Dr. Sudhir Arora, who traces Sufi and Bhakti traditions in my poetry. In an interview that he has included in his book *The Poetic Corpus of Stephen Gill*, published by Sarup Book Publisher, and later included in *A Selection of Stephen Gill's Interviews*, he rightly asks: “Your phraseology always offers newness and never lets the reader feel dull. You attempt to use every word carefully as a brick to build the edifice. You do not like to use clichés.” My answer is below to his question:

I have discussed this aspect in my prefaces and also in some interviews. To produce a palatable dish, the cook has to work diligently to know the kind and right amount of spices to use. The goal of an artist is a journey that never ends or a destination that can never be achieved. (p. 37)

I use these poetic techniques to weave a net to catch the attention of the reader. I believe that a poet can gather

any material from any source to present his or her art aesthetically. Any presentation without any newness becomes the breeding ground for monoToni. Change brings color to the rainbow of life. This change includes the use of phrases, symbols and other devices that refines the aesthetical taste. It also includes the cult of beauty that is the base of art. There can be a message, but the ruling atmosphere should be suffused with refined beauty.

Elizabethan sonnets in iambic pentameter of fixed rhyming schemes are divided into two sections. They have been around for centuries. Readers dared not say anything against them for fear of being bracketed as naïve, shallow or rude. I have, however, loosened some requirements of the traditional sonnets, believing that a poet can gather material from any source but the presentation should be fresh and alive, not repetitive, may cause monoToni.

I am convinced that because of these variations some literary critics term my sonnets as Stepheneans. At the same time, they find in Stepheneans strong elements of Sufism, and Bhakti traditions as well as mysticism.

Phoenix from the Ashes of Nagasaki: Nobel Laureate Kazuo Ishiguro

**Pashupati Jha*

The 2017 Nobel Prize in Literature to Japanese-born British citizen, Kazuo Ishiguro, came as a surprise to many; he was not so popular and well-known. But English as a means of creative expression has become a vast, global phenomenon; so it is well nigh impossible to keep track of the thousands of such writers spread across all the continents of the world. Yet, Ishiguro has his own strong claim to win the Nobel. Receiving four Booker nominations and finally winning that award for his novel, *The Remains of the Day* in 1989; listed among the best novelists of the English speaking world by the Time, award of the Order of the British Empire (OBE), and many other recognitions are testimony to the fact that he rose to fame steadily, and not by hogging the limelight mostly by generating sensation through controversies of various types. Ishiguro's fictional art is not like a swirling river, but a serene and stable lake that avoids unnecessary turmoil on the surface; though deep down there is a pervasive sense of unease restrained with superb artistic control.

Kazuo Ishiguro was born at Nagasaki in 1954, but his father migrated to England when Ishiguro was just five years old. He received his BA with English and Philosophy from the University of Kent in 1978, MA in Creative Writing from the University of East Anglia in

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1980; and there he came in contact with such stalwarts as Malcolm Bradbury and Angela Carter. His Master's thesis was published as his first well-known novel, *A Pale View of Hills* in 1982. Along with this first novel, this paper also refers to two subsequent novels of Ishiguro—*An Artist of the Floating World* (1986) and the Booker Prize winner, *The Remains of the Day* (1989)—to justify the main qualities of this novelist that eventually led him to win the Nobel Prize.

Much was devastated and lost in the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by America in August 1945 during the Second World War. Ishiguro's family too suffered a lot with thousands of other Japanese. Although not born yet, the family memories of this holocaust seem to play a subtle but sure role in the psyche of Ishiguro that he constantly refers to this episode and the Second World War in the three novels mentioned above. Memories—personal, familial, or racial—play a significant role, and help a sensitive mind to become creative. Haruki Murakami, a Japanese writer, has pointed out: "No matter how much suffering you went through, you never wanted to let go those memories." They remain to haunt you and your generation, till they get cathartic release through creative expression. I am of the firm belief that the trauma of the atom bomb and the world war was deeply embedded in the mind and heart of the novelist that shaped his mindscape and creativity, gradually enabling him to receive the literature Nobel, many years after his compatriots Yasunari Kawabata won it in 1968, and Kenzaburo Oe in 1994.

The main events of *A Pale View of Hills* are located in Nagasaki, though part of them are in England too. Creative writers have tried to highlight the horror of wars in the past to create a sense of universal humanism in the novels like *War and Peace* (Tolstoy), *A Farewell*

to Arms and For Whom the Bell Tolls (Hemingway). *A Fable* (Faulkner), *The Naked and the Dead* (Mailer), *The Red Badge of Courage* (Crane), *Catch 22* (Heller), *Slaughterhouse-Five* (Vonnegut), *Three Soldiers* (Dos Passos), and countless others. While in most of these novels, horrible consequences of war are openly described, in *A Pale View of Hills* it is muted, expressed through memories and an acute sense of deep but subdued loss. This is the nature of Ishiguro's narrative to be highly restrained, somewhat similar to those of Jane Austen and even Pearl S. Buck. Ishiguro mentions very little but tells a lot; his silent words become vocal when the sensitive readers brood over them.

Bombing of Nagasaki, Ishiguro's birthplace has special attachment to him, because his future mother, Shizuko, was young that time and had suffered the bad effect of nuclear radiation, but had survived somehow. She used to repeatedly mention 'heiwa,' meaning 'peace' to the child writer. She might have also told him the horrors of that dropping of the atom bomb and their shocking aftereffects. Strangely, Nobel Prize was part of such talks by his mother as striving for peace and harmony in the world. In *A Pale View of Hills*, Sachiko had lost her husband in that war and Mrs. Fujiwara had lost not only her husband but all her children except one son. Sachiko, as a consequence, was living the life of almost a destitute in a small cottage with her small daughter, Mariko, who used to be visited frequently by a nightmare of a sinister woman, drowning her daughter. She has developed a bitter hatred for America, which coupled with the fear of a step-father, comes into open when Sachiko wants to marry Frank, an American. Mariko has started attaching all her woes to things American, beginning in her subconscious mind with the atom bomb and all its disastrous consequences. That is why she puts all the venom in her words while referring

to Frank: "Frank-San pisses like a pig. He's is a pig in a sewer." And again, "He drinks his own piss" (85).

In the main plot of the novel, Etsuko's daughter Keiko by her Japanese husband, Jiro, is an alter ego and adult overgrowth of Mariko. There are many subtle references of disharmony between her English stepfather and Keiko—probably one of the main reasons for her subsequent suicide. It seems that Keiko had not adjusted with leaving Japan for an alien country and accepting an alien as a father. There are hints that had things been okay with Post-Nagasaki Japan, Etsuko might not have thought of an English husband and migrating to England where Keiko would never be happy. The only character who stoically accepts the deaths in the family and ruining of family wealth and status by the war is Mrs. Fujiwara. Although coming from an affluent, dignified family, she has compromised herself with running a noodle shop. Made of sterner stuff, she now believes in how important it is "to keep looking forward" (111). She reflects the real Japanese courage to face the past carnage with calm and composure.

This tendency to rise from the ashes of Nagasaki is aesthetically expressed in the Peace Park there in the memory of those killed by the atomic bomb. Presiding over this landscape is a massive statue, symbolizing the power of both destruction and creation:

The statue resembled some muscular Greek god, seated with both arms outstretched. With his right hand, he pointed to the sky from where the bomb had fallen; with his other arm—stretched out to his left—the figure was supposedly holding back the forces of evil. His eyes were closed in prayer. (137)

People visiting the park buy its picture postcard with austere, solemn greenery in the backdrop and big white statue looming over the entire landscape; they send this card to their friends as memento to what they have suffered and yet endured all, looking not to the past but to the future ahead. Ogata-San, the father-in-law of Etsuko, buys one too for his mysterious friend not known to her. Etsuko tries to forget the past horror, so lost she has been in thinking, most of the time, of her baby in the womb. The narrative of the novel shifts swiftly from Etsuko's present in England with her second daughter Niki, trying hard to forget the suicide of her first daughter, Keiko, and her memories of the past spent in Japan. The main artistic tension of the novel is balanced between these two time sequences, with obvious emphasis on the Japanese past. One here is apt to recollect the Irish novelist William John Banville: "Past beats inside me like a second heart."

Atom bombs dropped at Japan do not only leave a big physical and emotional scar; they also create an almost unbridgeable hiatus between the traditional old generation and the modern one impatient with, and irreverent of, the past. This is quite obvious in the ideological clash between Ogata-San, a retired teacher, and Shigeo, his former student. In one article, Shigeo has bitterly criticized the old aristocratic values of Japan, which couldn't save it from the American attack. He retorts back when he is confronted by his old teacher:

In your day, children in Japan were taught terrible things. They were taught lies of the most damaging kind. Worst of all, they were taught not to see, not to question. And that's why the country was plunged into the most evil disaster in her entire history. (147)

This generation gap is visible in Etsuko and his daughter Keiko and Niki too, and extends to subsequent novels as well.

The locale of the second novel, *An Artist of the Floating World*, unlike the first one, is entirely Japan. In the second novel, the painter-protagonist suffers throughout the fallout of the bombings and the Second World War. He has not only lost all his family except two daughters, but has also lost his power and prestige. As the first novel is narrated by the main character, Etsuko, so this novel too is narrated by Masuji Ono, remembering his past glory with present gloom—an outcome of the War as well as of his own misguided ideologies and actions. He was a popular artist and powerful figure in the time of Imperial Japan, but the defeat of his country led to his own downfall and discredit. Living in a ruined, old but magnificent house that he had bought from the family of famous Sugimura and repaired it afterward, there are still many signs of old scar in the building, symbolizing the fact that repairs are not enough to fully patch-up the past:

I had by then repaired the worst of the damage, but at one end it was still billowed and cracked where the impact of the blast had pushed up the boards from underneath. The veranda roof, too, had suffered, and on rainy days we were still having to line the floorboards with receptacles to catch the water that came dripping through. (6)

In a way, the entire novel is an attempt of the artist to come to terms with the life damaged by the war-ravaged past and his tenuous balancing role as an artist, widower, father, and grandfather. He has problems in negotiating the marriage of his younger daughter, Noriko, largely because of his changed status in the postwar Japan. He has already lost most of his family during the war; now

his small happiness of daughter's marriage too looks in danger. The novel has many ideas and possibilities embedded in its narrative structure, depicting the heroic struggle of a pathetic figure to rise to the tragic height. But Ono ends up becoming a propagandist from a pure and famous artist, and then turns to a miserable old man ignored by most of the people, including his own grandchild.

The narrations in the novel are based on Ono's recollection of the years gone by. In introduction to the e-copy edition of this novel, the novelist has acknowledged the impact on him and his other novels by the English translation of Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*. Kazuo Ishiguro uses this technique to unfold the memories of the past in almost all his novels with stunning effect. The 'floating world' of the caption relates to the pleasure district adjoining Ono's house and the ephemeral life there full of struggling artists, bohemians, underworld people, and geishas. On the whole, *An Artist of the Floating World* represents a subtle, sensitive depiction of the political, social, economic, and cultural turmoil of the postwar period in Japan through the eyes of Ono, who has to reject his past, but the present rejects him too, with the possibility of future doing the same.

The Remains of the Day is the most well known novel by Ishiguro. It depicts in masterly way how the private agonies are positioned against the tumult of the outside world and how the latter outmatches, in significance and outcome, the individual suffering and has to subdue itself. It was turned into a successful film produced by Ismail Merchant and directed by James Ivory, with Anthony Hopkins and Emma Thompson in the leading roles. The film was nominated for eight Academy Awards. The novel gradually explores the question of dignity and propriety in the life of an English butler,

Mr. Stevens, in the service of Lord Darlington. It is a classic story of how subtly class consciousness conditions and controls the actions, minds, and words of Mr. Stevens and Miss Kenton, the housekeeper in the same Darlington House. The house affairs are run under the looming, sinister shadow of the First and the Second World War and extends to the time even when the second one is over. Both for Mr. Stevens and Miss Kenton, their professional life is far more important than their inner desire of expressing love to each other, and they allow the possibility of a lifetime of fulfilled love to pass over; simply to regret twenty years later when they meet again after the hint of the tottering married life of the latter. Yet, the conditioning in them is so strong that allows only these passing words: "After all, there's no moving back the clock now. One can't be forever dwelling on what might have been" (251). This last realization remains an eye-wash; the possibility of love between them in the past haunts them both in the present.

The major, serious debate in this novel seems to be the condition of Europe caused by the War; in the social hierarchy, the plight of two insignificant employees of the big house is not much of a consequence. The post-Versailles situation was discussed and debated with both persuasive calm and furious confrontation. The distinguished participants were all people of consequence:

These were not only Britons and Germans, but also Belgians, French, Italians, Swiss; they were diplomats and political persons of high ranks; distinguished clergymen; retired military gentlemen; writers and thinkers. Some were gentlemen who felt strongly, like his lordship [Lord Darlington] himself that fair play had not been done at Versailles and that it was immoral to go on punishing a nation for a war that was now over. (78)

Liberals like Lord Darlington had promised their German friends a fair, human deal. As Lord Darlington desperately points out; “I fought that war to preserve justice in this world. As far as I understood, I wasn’t taking part in a vendetta against the German race.” (76) Had his sane advice been heard and the Germans treated with less stringent provisions in the Treaty of Versailles, there would hardly been the Second World War. Eventually, Lord Darlington died in disgrace as a Nazi sympathizer. His spacious mansion was bought by an American gentleman, Mr. John Farraday, who loaned his big car to Mr. Stevens and gave him a break from his duties to see Miss Kenton miles away in the countryside. There is, thus, a running intermixture of the personal actions with the national and the international events in *The Remains of the Day*.

This juxtaposition of the grand with the commonplace is quite common in Ishiguro. In the interview given to the Swedish Academy after the announcement of the Nobel Prize, Ishiguro has said: “We have a personal arena in which we have to try to find fulfilment and love. But that inevitably intersects with a larger world, where politics, or even dystopian universe, can prevail.” In this novel the personal desires of Mr. Stevens and Miss Kenton are completely swept over by their duties to the Darlington House and bigwigs visiting it to discuss international politics related to the two world wars. It is almost the same in *A Pale View of Hills* and *An Artist of the Floating World*—individuals, directly or indirectly, are pawns on the chessboard of power-politics heavily loaded with the ominous results of the war.

These works are “novels of great emotional force,” as the Nobel citation points out, but Ishiguro, as a mature writer, does not express the emotions of his major characters like stormy outbursts that would break

the discreet boundary; he prefers to underplay emotions with clever craftsmanship. The final outcome is much more effective in silently seeping into the consciousness of the reader than an open outcry against war would do. Although settled in England where he eventually became a British citizen in 1983, he had a strong emotional link with Japan and its plight. Referring to the radiation effect of bombing on his mother, that time still unmarried, Ishiguro pointed out: "So, in a way, I've grown up under the shadow of atomic bombings." He was happy to receive the Nobel in the same year when the Nobel for Peace was given to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). This type of mindscape, forged by the fire of atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, kept Ishiguro creative till, like the mythical Phoenix, he rose from the ashes of wrecks left behind to tell the horror and human failure linked to it.

Ishiguro went on honing his art further with other novels like *The Unconsoled* (1995), *When We were Orphans* (2000), *Never Let Me Go* (2005), and *The Buried Giant* (2015); like all his earlier novels, these too are published by the famous British publisher, Faber & Faber. One should expect some more classics from him, for Ishiguro is still in his early sixties.

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Religious Identity and Personal Space: Mahesh Dattani's *Final Solutions*

**Mukesh Ranjan Verma*

In his talk, "Contemporary Indian Theatre and its Relevance", on 11 February 2001 during the Krishti Festival of Plays, Mahesh Dattani raised the question - "So what is it that we see through our theatre in this country? Do we really see ourselves? Do we see what we have made of ourselves? Do we see our hopes, values, aspirations and struggles?" (470) About his own plays he had asserted in the 'Preface' to his *Collected Plays* (2000): "I am certain that my plays are a true reflection of my time, place and socio-economic background." (xv) His *Final Solutions*, first performed in 1993, certainly justifies this belief. It deals with issues that have been of vital concern to the socio-cultural-political life of post-Independence India. The play has variously been interpreted as dealing with communal conflict, gender issue, generation gap and "transferred resentments" (Alyque Padamsee). It does deal with all these issues. That is why this is perhaps the most complex of Dattani's plays that have come to us so far. However, if we take a comprehensive view of it, *Final Solutions* seems to be concerned primarily with the issues of religious identity and personal space. In the backdrop of communal violence when the worst as well as the best side of man comes to the fore, the play raises the questions how far do our religious identities determine what we are, how

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do they govern our relationship with people of other religious faiths and in times of such social upheavals do we cease to be individuals and become merely a part of the mob.

Final Solutions deals with a time frame of four decades from late 1940s when India became free and went through the traumatic experience of Partition and communal violence, to late 1980s when once again a deadly combination of politics and religion began to tear India's social and cultural fabric. To synchronize this time- stretch Dattani uses the character of the grandmother, Hardika who is also present simultaneously on the stage as Daksha, the young bride who came into the family of the Gandhis in 1948. In the stage direction at the beginning of the play, the dramatist notes:

There are several instances when Hardika, the grandmother, and Daksha, the young bride, are on this level at the same time, although they are the same person. Hardika should be positioned and lit in such a way that the entire action of the play is seen through her eyes. (165)

On 31 March, 1948 she is shown as writing her diary in which she records her emotions which she cannot share with any one, not even her husband. Thus her diary becomes a means of her search for a personal space. She was then fifteen years old and had a passion for romantic film songs of Noor Jehan and other popular singers of that time. She was too young to understand the significance of independence from the foreign rule and so her response to it was that of bewildered amusement:

Like last year, in August, a most terrible thing happened to our country. We... gained independence. You should have seen it.

Everyone was awake waiting for midnight - like children on the last day of school, waiting for the last bell of the last class before vacation. And their rushing out and screaming and shouting and fighting. (166)

The communal violence that took place during that time had caused two grievous losses to Daksha - the destruction of her collection of gramophone records of her favourite songs in stone throwing by a violent mob and the death of her father in an incident of communal violence. It was during that violent night that Daksha was confronted with the question of religion as a source of succour:

My mother and myself, we hid in the pooja room. The stone came smashing into our home. I clung to my mother. My mother clung to the family idol of Lord Krishna. . . I looked at my mother praying, with her eyes tightly shut, clutching the feet of the idol, praying not for us but for the safety of my father, wherever he may be. I looked at the idol and suddenly I had the most terrible thought. I feel afraid to repeat it here, but I must. I felt that the idol I had grown up seeing my mother worship was just a painted doll. A doll no different from the ones I used to play with and think it was a real person. (167)

Apart from this observation, the dramatist does not use the character of Daksha/Hardika to comment on the significance of religion in a man's personal and communal life. Another character who does not say anything directly about religion - except one or two cryptic observations - is the liberal rationalist Ramnik Gandhi, Hardika's son and now the head of the Gandhi family. It is through Aruna, Ramnik's wife, their daughter Smita and the two Muslim youths, Javed and

Bobby who take shelter in their house during a night of communal violence in late 1980s that the dramatist depicts the role of religious identity in a man's personal and social life. The inter-faith personal and social relationships have been presented in the play through two female characters of two generations - Daksha and Smita.

As Daksha records in her diary, her relationship with Muslim girls, which was a common social factor then as it is now, was rudely shaken when communal violence erupted as the nation became free:

DAKSHA. My father had fought for that hour. And he was happy when it came. He said he was happy we were rid of the Britishers. He also said something I did not understand then. He said that before leaving they had let loose the dogs. I hated to think that he was talking about my friends' fathers . . . But that night in Hussainabad in our ancestral house - when I heard them outside I knew they were thinking the same of us. And I knew that I was thinking the same, like my father. And as their voices grew louder, I blamed them more and more for my father's absence. (167)

When she came to live with her in-laws after her marriage with Hari, she was drawn towards Zarine, a Muslim girl living with her family in the locality, mainly because she had heard her favourite song of Noor Jehan being played on the gramophone in Zarine's room. Thus music became the common bond between the two.

It is the vicious atmosphere of communal conflict that disrupted the personal relationship between Daksha and Zarine. Daksha did not realize the reason of Zarine's changed behaviour. She had heard that the shop in the market that Zarine's father owned had caught

fire and they were in a financial trouble. She had also heard that he had gone to her father-in-law to ask for a job. It was Hari who told him that they had not offered Zarine's father any job. In fact, he had not even asked for one. When she tried to probe further into the issue, Hari became angry with her and began to abuse her. Daksha describes how Zarine had shouted at her when she had gone to meet her later on. She was bewildered as all she knew was that her family had offered to buy the burnt shop of Zarine's father to help him but he had asked for a much higher amount than they were offering. She had then blamed Zarine's family: "It was not possible to give him what he demanded and so the resentment. . . I hate people with false pride. As if it is their birthright to ask for more than they deserve." (221) It was forty years later that she came to know the truth of the matter when Ramnik told her on yet another night of communal violence in her life that it was their own family which was responsible for burning that shop and later on they had forced Zarine's father to sell the shop at a cheap price.

Hardika lives with bitter memories of communal violence that she had experienced as Daksha. She held Muslims responsible for the death of her father. She also did not know the truth of her husband and his father's role in the ruin of Zarine's family. So she was resentful towards them. That is why when the two Muslim youths hounded by a violent Hindu mob take shelter in their house, she has no sympathy for them. It is only towards the end of the play that we see a change in her attitude.

Smita, unlike Hardika, does not carry such a baggage from the past. Tasneem, her classmate, is her friend and so the news that Muslim girls' hostel where Tasneem is living has been bombed disturbs her. The two Muslim youths, Javed and Bobby, are Tasneem's brother and fiancé respectively. However, it is not Smita but Ramnik

who gives them shelter in their house despite pressure from the mob which is pursuing them to hand them over and Aruna's insistence that they should do so. It is only later that she even admits that she knows them. Nonetheless, in the play it is she and not Ramnik who makes the most significant observation about the conflict between ritualistic form of religion and an individual's need for a personal space. She loves her mother and has been following her instructions at home as to how she should conduct herself in her life out of love for her rather than out of any faith in her beliefs. It is the unusual circumstances of that night which make her speak what she has always felt:

SMITA. Don't! Please mummy, don't try so hard! You are breaking me. Ever since I was small, you have been at me to go to temple, make garlands, listen to your reading from the Gita. I love you, mummy, that's why I did that. I listened to you and I obeyed you. I tolerated your prejudices only because you are my mother. May be I should have told you earlier, but I'm telling you now, I can't bear it! Please don't burden me any more! I can't take it! (213)

It was her love for her mother which had made her not to take the side of her father in these matters, even though she knew that her father would have appreciated her feelings, "because it would have been a triumph for you - over mummy. And I couldn't do that to her." (213)

For Smita, religion had been in conflict with her personal space and so even if she did not say anything against it out of her consideration for her mother, she had never had any faith in the way it was practised by her mother. The dramatist adds another dimension to the issue when he brings a love angle to it. Javed asks Smita if she still has a feeling of love for Bobby. Smita

denies it and in the conversation that follows it surfaces that if there had been an emotional relationship between the two, it was more on the side of Bobby than on the part of Smita. Bobby asks her if she had restrained herself because he belonged to a different religious community. Smita says, "I am sure that if we wanted to, we could have made it happen, despite all odds. It is wonderful to know that the choice is yours to make." (218) However, the way the dramatist has presented Smita so far, this declaration by her does not seem to be very convincing. It seems that Dattani wants to bring this dimension also into reckoning, but his plot does not have enough scope for including this angle in a significant way. Nevertheless, through a brief conversation between Hardika and Smita he has tried to present the individualistic side of Smita:

HARDIKA. I hope you have the same freedom in your own house as you have here.

SMITA. I think one can create one's own freedom wherever one may be. (220)

For Aruna, religion in its ritualistic mode had always been a way of life as it had been for her own mother earlier. She never had an occasion or reason to question her beliefs. So she is shocked to hear what Smita says about "Praying and fasting and . . . purifying myself all day." (211) She herself had always taken pride in her religion and religious practices as taught by her mother. She had only scorn for the 'progressive ideas' as professed by her husband. She says to Smita:

ARUNA. Don't you have any respect for who you are? I shudder to think what will become of your children. What kind of sanskar will you give them when you don't have any yourself? It's all very well to have progressive ideas. But are you progressing or are you drifting? God knows, I don't want all this

violence. How can I, when I won't even harm a goat or a chicken? But to throw everything just like that? Doesn't it mean anything to you? For so many generations we have preserved our sanskar because we believe it is the truth! It is the way shown to us by our saints. We must know no other path. And I will not have it all perish to accommodate someone else's faith. I have enough faith and pride to see that it doesn't happen. I shall uphold what I believe is the truth. (210)

Aruna has been living in her secure world so far. It is only when she is confronted with the thoughts and words of not only the outsiders but her own daughter that her world is shaken. The act of Bobby at the end of the play when he takes up the idol of Lord Krishna into his hand and declares with conviction that human touch cannot defile God leaves Aruna shattered. She cannot go back to her smug world now but will be forced to think afresh about what she has been reading as the absolute truth: "Where do I go from here?" (213)

It is mainly through Javed that the dramatist has depicted how one's religious identity can shape one's life. Bobby recalls an incident which changed Javed who used to be the hero of the neighbourhood boys. Once while they were playing cricket, the postman gave him a letter to hand over to a neighbour. It would generally have been an ordinary incidence but for Javed it turned out to be a life-changing one. When he opened the gate of the house, the owner asked him to put the letter on the wall. Soon he came out with a cloth, wiped the letter before picking it up, wiped the wall and finally the gate and then went in. Even though the postman tried to laugh the matter away saying that the man was 'slightly cracked', it left a lasting impact on Javed. His pride in himself was badly shaken. A few days later he threw

pieces of meat and bones into the backyard of that man. This act of retaliation became his way of life. He dropped out of school and was later driven out of his home. He says to Ramnik:

JAVED. I believe in myself. Yes! What else have I got to believe in? It's people like you who drive me to a corner and I have to turn to myself and my faith. I have a lot to thank you for! At least now I am not ignorant of my history and faith. (198)

Bobby all the while had been trying to set Javed's perspective right and asking him not to become a tool of the men of vested interests who used people like him for their political and other ends. He had not succeeded in his task and Javed out of his misguided belief in saving his faith had become a part of the conspiracy of attacking the rath yatra in the town in which the pujari was killed and the whole town was engulfed in communal violence. He tries to explain his action to Ramnik:

JAVED. Don't we all have anger and frustration? Am I so unique? Now that I am alone . . . I hate myself. It was different when I used to attend the meetings. I was swayed by what now appears to me as cheap sentiment. They always talked about motherland and fighting to save our faith and how we should get four of theirs for every one of ours. (205)

Javed has now realised, with some help from Bobby, that delusions of valour and heroism, of finding a cause to give purpose to his existence and misguided notions of religiosity had given him an identity of which he can no longer be very proud, though he has no reason to be ashamed of his religious identity. Mahesh Dattani uses the simile of a giant wheel ride to represent the various stages of Javed's feelings:

JAVED. You have been protecting me from people like me. I'm no different from them! No different, do you hear? I do what they are doing - only on a different street! I was there on that street when the rath yatra came and I did precisely that! I shouted. I had permission to do exactly what I had been asked not to do all my life. Raise my voice in protest. To shout and scream like a child on the giant wheel in a carnival. The first screams are of pleasure. Of sensing an unusual freedom. And then . . . it becomes nightmarish as your world is way below you and you are moving away from it . . . and suddenly you come crashing down, down and you want to get off. But you can't. You don't want it any more. (204)

It was this very feeling that had prompted Javed to act the way he did during the rath yatra. When the religious procession entered the street, he, who had been brought there along with others to disrupt the yatra, had joined the shouting mob. Somebody placed a stone in his hand and he threw it with full force towards the chariot carrying the Lord's idol. After some time he felt a knife being thrust in his hand and he moved with it towards the priest who began to beg for his life. It was then that he came to his senses and the question what he was doing there began to hammer his mind. The knife fell from his hand and somebody else picked it up and stabbed the priest.

Javed is thus the central character of the play through which the dramatist discusses the issue of religious identity. In this play Dattani has created sets of characters in which the one acts as a foil to the other - Aruna and Smita, Javed and Bobby and Hardika and Ramnik. In contrast to an emotional Javed who is ever ready to pick up a fight for any real or imagined hurt,

Bobby presents the rational and balanced side of religious identity. Whereas Javed is belligerent in Ramnik Gandhi's house where both of them have taken shelter, Bobby realises the gravity of the situation they are in. So his response is cautious and conciliatory. Later he explains his behaviour by comparing himself with Javed: "I was ashamed of being myself. He wasn't." (201) When Ramnik is surprised at the expression 'ashamed', he further explains:

BOBBY. Yes. Like being apologetic. For being who I was. And pretending that I was not a part of my community. For thinking that I could become superior by not belonging. Nobody called me Baboon in college. I chose to be called Bobby. (201)

The change of name from Babban to Bobby shows his defensive attitude towards his religious identity. Like Smita, he also did not believe in the conservative, traditional and impetuous display of religious observance. So when Smita says to her mother how she felt suffocated, Bobby says to her: "I never could express my feelings as well as you do. Maybe my religion oppressed me far more." (213) Still it is he who shows to both Aruna and Javed the true meaning of religion. As he and Javed are leaving in the morning, he goes to the pooja room where Aruna is performing her pooja and picks up the idol of lord Krishna:

BOBBY. Look how he rests in my hands! He knows I cannot harm him. He knows his strength. I don't believe in Him but He believes in me. He smiles! He smiles at our trivial pride and at our trivial shame. (224)

To Javed he says that the Lord does not humiliate him. He welcomes his touch. To Aruna he says that no matter how much she bathes the idol and applies fragrant paste to

it, she cannot remove the smell of his hand from it “because it belongs to a human being who believes, and tolerates, and respects what other human beings believe.” (225)

It is thus Bobby who presents the final solutions to the communal divide in the society. Having one’s own religious belief is one thing and holding that only one’s own belief should prevail is another. We can co-exist with each other’s beliefs if we learn to respect the other’s belief. Our religious identities need not interfere with our or other people’s personal spaces in life.

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Teaching Literature Effectively

**Ramesh K. Srivastava*

Before teaching literature to any level of students, a teacher has to ask himself a simple question: Is literature being taught for information-oriented short questions or for appreciation and interpretation of it or for both? The nature of teaching of literature will depend largely on the answer to the above question, though a good teacher can cleverly highlight the beauty and depth of any work of literature and at the same time meet the requirement of the information-oriented examination.

The first requirement for teaching of literature, in my view, is that a literary work be read creatively. Literature, particularly poetry and drama, is often so rich, so deep and so universal in meanings and interpretations—in denotations and connotations—that each good work may yield a number of interpretations depending upon the fertility of the reader's imagination as well as his wide knowledge and experience. If for P. B. Shelley, the skylark could not only be a bird but also a highborn maiden, a poet hidden in the light of thought, an unembodied joy, a golden glowworm, a hidden star, a cloud of fire, an embowered rose, etc, it could as well mean many more new things to the teacher depending upon his own imagination, knowledge and experience. It is this kind of interpretation which makes the literary works of great writers so meaningful to us because they are so universal—beyond time and space, beyond man-made boundaries.

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When one reads creatively, one's mind is filled with thousands of ideas and each sentence, each word, even punctuation marks and blank spaces become imbued with one's knowledge and experience. The blank spaces in some of Kamala Das's poems could signify many things—sayable and unsayable. In reading a particular text creatively, the interpretation of one person may be quite different from those of others. The more imaginative the teacher is, the more meanings would the work yield for him from his readings. Creative reading, therefore, involves many things—understanding, thinking, imagining, associating, selecting and evaluating.

A typical literature teacher comes to the class, takes out a text book, reads out a piece of prose, poetry or drama line by line and word by word, explains the meanings of difficult words and goes to the next and next line *ad infinitum*. The students memorize the notes dictated by the teacher or purchased from the market and then reproduce them in undigested form in the examination without internalizing, even understanding a word of them. To write plainly, the following steps could be taken to teach literature effectively:

1. Let the teacher read the text at least twice with a relaxed yet open mind, preferably creatively. It is in the process of creative reading that our minds are spread around far and wide. The more creative a reader is, the more can he grasp not only the depth but also the strength and even the weakness of a literary work. It is done by associating the author's works with different experiences, different contexts and with the reader's own experiences. He must also read something about the author, his other works and the age in which he lived.

2. Make an attempt to find the meaning and implication on your own. Associate the subject matter, characters, and incidents with your own experiences— real or vicarious. Find out functions of words and phrases, of rhymes or rhythms as also of the figures of speech in it. Could rhymes and rhythms in Robert Frost's "Stopping by Woods" be associated with the gait of the horse? Or could the poem be associated with one's visit to a hill station, an equestrian adventure or simply going to an unknown forest on foot? The last stanza of the poem is particularly fertile for many interpretations.
3. Go through the meanings and interpretations given by the critics, and scrutinize carefully the places where you agree or disagree with the given interpretations. This is where your originality comes. While doing so, care must be taken that "peculiarity" should not be confused for "originality." A painter, in order to make his picture of a peacock aggressively different from those of others, may paint it completely in a black or red colour but that would be peculiar, not original. For the sake of information of the teacher, it can be pointed out that a teacher in the U.S.A. on an average spends four hours in preparation and self-study in order to teach students for one hour.
4. Read out the text slowly one or two times in the class, emphasizing words and phrases which deserve special attention. While reading a poem, rhymes and rhythms could be stressed. Some of Tennyson's and Robert Burns' poems have abundance of elements of music.
5. Explain the text, keeping in mind the level of students. Usually there might be no discussion on the text because what the teacher teaches is mostly

accepted and swallowed. The teacher can prod students, coax them for sharing their experiences, and make them answer questions about a character or incident. There could always be some intelligent student who might come forward to do so in a vernacular which, in my view, should be encouraged if he is deficient in spoken English.

6. One must find creative ways to teach reluctant learners. A dull lecture on someone's poetry, novel, drama or even prose has often been known to put students to sleep. Wit and humour create liveliness where there happens to be dullness and bring in gusts of fresh air to facilitate teaching and understanding of the text. My American professor Henry Webb used to create so much of humour in teaching Shakespeare's plays whether they were the darkest tragedies or tiring historical plays that each student enjoyed his class even when the period was unbelievably of three-hour long duration at a stretch. In my own B.A. and M.A. classes, I taught, among other things, the most tiring prose pieces of Bacon, Lamb, Addison, Steele and Hazlitt, which other teachers did not want to take up, but I always made them interesting with wit and humour. I had published two essays titled "Teaching of English Can be Fun Too" and "Wit and Humour in University Teaching" earlier respectively in *Indian Book Chronicle* and *University News*; they have now been included in my book *Read, Write and Teach: Essays on Learning to Live Together* (Authorspress, New Delhi) which suggest a number of ways to make teaching of language and literature interesting. There is certainly much more scope for making drama, poetry and novel quite interesting. In order to make the text interesting in the classroom, I occasionally misread or mispronounced a word or two, distorted

the meaning, cited an anecdote, associated a relevant joke with it, made funny gestures and transformed a mundane activity into profundity and vice versa. Once the students have a full-throated laughter, it refreshes them for confronting serious passages of literature.

7. In order to explain one thing, other cross references should be given because wider the knowledge is, the greater and richer becomes the meaning and interpretation of a literary work. Associate the theme, incidents, characters, dialogues with other works of authors or from your own life. For example, while explaining Nissim Ezekiel's poem "Night of the Scorpion," I invariably told my students how I too was stung by a scorpion and what effect it had on me and on the village people. The experiences of the poet and my own were compared and contrasted which often made the eyes of students sparkle with delightful understanding. Such interesting things, even if not directly related to the text, make the students understand and remember important points by association of ideas. In Raja Rao's novel *Kanthapura*, Moorthy's punishment of being an outcaste could be related to an act of isolating a person from his friends and his family.
8. Ask the students, if time permits, to write response papers for homework, associating the theme, character or incident with their own experiences and to write their own criticism or responses to the text. For example, what was the reaction of some of the students on seeing the rainbow for the first time in their lives? It is done by connecting the author's ideas with different experiences, different contexts and with reader's own experiences. In the tragedy of Shakespeare's *King Lear* or of Arthur Miller's *Willy Loman*, one can find a part of his own or his father's

self reflected. If only the students are given take-home writing exercises, or are asked to write response papers on an unknown poem or prose passage, such an exercise is bound to train them not only for understanding and interpreting literature but also for making them write poems or essays. Once they begin to indulge in such exercises, literature begins to have new meanings to them.

Reading of literature is also a kind of creative activity; while the author creates a character, a scene, an event, the reader re-creates in his mind a picture that is both similar to the author's in essence but different in details. It is almost like the second creation. One then says that Wordsworth's jubilation at the rainbow in the sky, Shelley's outburst in dejection near Naples and Santiago's disappointment in bringing the skeleton of a giant marlin in Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* belong to me or my friend.

9. For the students of M.A., M. Phil or Ph. D, there are many fertile grounds for interdisciplinary studies in fields, such as, poetry and music, poetry and painting, drama and theater, novel and cinema, literature and social studies, psychology and fiction, and so on. Many poems of Victorian and Romantic poets, particularly those of Tennyson and Burns, could be set to music. A number of John Keats' poems could be used for paintings. I personally saw in the U.S.A., most of Shakespeare's tragedies, Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*, Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and many more plays successfully staged in the University theatre. Some excellent movies have been produced on Shakespeare's plays, Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, Sharat Chand Chatterjee's *Devdas*, R. K. Narayan's *The Guide* and Chetan Bhagat's *Five-Point Someone*. Some of the novels give a graphic picture of the social life of the

country. Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*, Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*, Kamala Markandaya's *A Handful of Rice*, Bhabani Bhattacharya's *So Many Hungers!* and Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* deserve to be studied as social documents. In order to show relationship between fiction and psychology, Henry James' *The Portrait of a Lady*, James Joyce's *The Portrait of an Artist as a Youngman*, Anita Desai's *Cry, the Peacock* and Arun Joshi's *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* can be scrutinized. These randomly-picked up titles are merely suggestive, not exhaustive. Many more disciplines and literary works could be selected for such inter-disciplinary studies which may inject fresh blood than has been possible in water-tight compartmentalized studies of various genres of literature. By building such bridges between various disciplines, teaching and research in literature could be functional, creative and no less interesting.

Multicultural Education and Interethnic Harmony in *An African Night's Entertainment*

* *Zafar Khan*

Ekwensi's novelette for young readers, *An African Night's Entertainment* has been playing a significant role in promoting multicultural education and inter-ethnic harmony – the two most invaluable building blocks of a great and stable nation. Written in simple English prose, this book introduces the Nigerian child to some aspects of Hausa culture. It also creates bridges of inter-ethnic understanding and integration by informing the Nigerian child that Nigeria's 'federalism' assumes an underlying unity in diversity – an approach greatly needed by the growing child of a developing nation. Knowledge of cultural diversity and the inherent peculiarities of ethnicity among different tribes of Nigeria would lead to mutual understanding, trust and respect among the tribes living together in Nigeria.

Ekwensi employs his exceptional skills as a writer by adopting folktales and by making effective use of the traditional story-telling techniques to provide the Nigerian child with interesting and entertaining reading materials from indigenous experience and its environment. Since reading in school is gradually replacing the African tradition of story telling in most of the urban homes, Ekwensi's books for the Nigerian child tend to perform a highly entertaining as well as educational purpose. Ekwensi strongly believes that

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literature for children can play a vital role towards the achievement of unity (See Ekwensi's interview with *Sunday Punch*, July 9, 2000). It is in realization of the need to sow the seeds of national unity through intercultural education that Ekwensi, who saw through Nigerian history before independence, diagnosed the problem of social cohesion and wrote fiction with a purpose. Like the pharmacist that he is, he has prescribed a remedy: 'the infusion of intercultural elements in children's literature'. Ekwensi strongly believes:

By taking a regular dose at all levels of secondary education, children will grow up better prepared to appreciate, accommodate and cooperate with their colleagues from other cultures.¹

A major tenet of multicultural education is cultural pluralism, which has been defined by Timothy Bergen (1980) as, the right of individuals to maintain their ethnic identity while sharing a common culture with people from different ethnic groups.²

Ekwensi's books prepare the children and young readers generally to develop confidence in themselves and at the same time perceive, understand and accept others in different cultural settings without any malice or prejudice. This is the background and philosophy that informed Cyprian Ekwensi's writing of *An African Night's Entertainment* selected as a case study to demonstrate Ekwensi's unique contribution to the literature for the Nigerian Child. Emenyonu (1987) has identified the fact that 'this is one of the few books, which fulfils an important social function'.³

The issue of keeping Nigeria united must be taken seriously by governmental educational programmer and the society. Such an issue has handled by Ekwensi in

An African Night's Entertainment, using a multicultural approach.⁴

A closer study of Ekwensi's upbringing as a child and also as a young man throws adequate light on the shaping of the artist in him. His life-sketch reveals how he developed a multi-cultural approach to life and as Ekwensi himself points out how 'federalism' became a *key factor* in all his writings for children.⁵ A fluent speaker of Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, Ekwensi is a living example of 'unity in diversity' and inter-ethnic co-existence in a pluralistic society. *An African Night's Entertainment* is the product of Ekwensi's purposeful writing for children.

Textual Analysis

This paper undertakes a discussion of *An African Night's Entertainment* under three headings; Culture, Language and Values with a view to assessing Ekwensi's contribution to the promotion of inter-cultural education and inter-ethnic understanding of the Nigerian child.

Culture

In discussing multiculturalism, it is important to define what is meant by 'culture'. UNESCO defines (1980) it as ;

The whole concept of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterise a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters but also modes of life, fundamental human rights of the human being – value systems, traditions and beliefs.⁶

Culture is rather a very broad term, but in literature it is usually taken to mean a general way of life of a people,

their perceptions and values, as well as, their communal and individual codes of conduct. The culture of people is manifest in their utterances, action and in the ways they carry themselves.

Ekwensi has documented some elements of Hausa culture in *An African Night's Entertainment* for the purpose of educating the children of other cultural groups. For example, when Mallam Shehu sent his servant to fetch Zainobe, the beautiful maiden requested the servant to "tell him that I am not a man. I cannot come to see him, that is not proper." (12) When she finally appeared before Shehu, the shy, modest, well-bred maiden was quick in telling him:

I have no time for long words. I left home under pretext. My father has forbidden me to come out in the afternoon. he will be angry if he finds out that I have left home. Say what you have to say and let me go (p18).

Even though these sentences are short, they are clear, precise, pungent, and effective. The major point however, is the cultural issue of Hausa women in rural areas not being allowed to come out of the "Kulle" during the day. (However, this is really an urban phenomenon because Hausa women in rural areas not being allowed to come out of the "Kulle" during the day. (However, this is really an urban phenomenon because Hausa women in rural areas do come out to market and farms.) This is not just a 'cultural' shock but an education to the readers from other ethnic groups who are rather free in their cultures. An appreciation of this type of cultural difference can pave the way for better understanding, peace and harmony in a culturally pluralistic Society.

Another cultural trait worthy of attention is the mention of the Northern Muslims fashion of 'holding hands and touching the chest'. When expressing genuine

feelings of friendship, acceptance and appreciation, the Hausas touch the chest to show that the utterances and expressions are really warm from the heart. Again this is a trait that is completely different from those of the other major ethnic groups in Nigeria. The Yorubas would place a hand on the person's head as he kneels down in such a scenario, while the Igbo would simply shake hands vigorously and pray for him to go in peace. So the cultural differences are there, but it is only through an exposition of such differences or by interacting with the people directly, that they can be easily appreciated or accepted. Books like *An African Night's Entertainment* act as catalysts in the process of socialisation and national integration.

Ekwensi (1968) himself, projecting his idea of inter-cultural education as a powerful instrument of peace, had asserted in an interview that 'the Hausa and Igbo had lived together peacefully for a hundred years'. He claimed that this peaceful co-existence stemmed from the Hausa understanding that the Igbo man worked hard like a steam-engine, multiplied like a guinea-pig and effervesced with honesty; while the Igbo understand that the Hausa man is tolerant, affable, philosophical, accommodating and believes that whatever will be, will be. It is this understanding and acceptance that bonded them together so long until politics caused mistrust and created divisions between people.⁷

Nevertheless, Ekwensi's books for children in Nigeria have succeeded in providing a much-needed bridge for the inter-ethnic understanding for children of different ethnic groups of Nigeria in particular and Africa in general.

Use of Proverbs

Achebe's oft-quoted words, 'Proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten' prove true in the story

of *An African Night's Entertainment*. Such proverbs are: 'Women are like water and horses, dry today like ebb-tide; high tomorrow like a flood.' (14) The other is:

'Women behave like donkeys – they know they are doing the wrong thing today, but they repeat it tomorrow', and 'a girl who has been married is like a cloth in the market place. That is not everybody who offers a price for her that will get her.' (24).

The text of *An African Night's Entertainment* replete with rich Hausa-Fulani proverbs reveal the world view of the people of the Northern part of Nigeria, besides the elements of their multicultural and international educational relevance. They are interesting and revealing to people from other ethnic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds within and outside Nigeria.

The fear of dying without an heir becomes an obsession with Mallam Shehu, the richest man in his town. He wanted a child desperately. He has a strange dream in which he is given a clue to the solution of his problem. He consults the oracle that confirms the possibility of his getting a child, but warns that he will suffer greatly at the hands of the expected son, and that Shehu will regret going against the will of Allah. Shehu's pride and desires, blind him to reason as he prays, 'Will Allah indeed let me see a son of my own, if so I do not care how much I suffer after that.' (10)

With this, the action unfolds; Shehu derives Abu Bakir of his betrothed Zainobe who gives Shehu the son at whose hands he is to die. Abu Bakir against all advice insists on revenge. he uses almost the same words used by Shehu in his doggedness: 'I do not care what I suffer or how I look, provided I get what I want'. (10) The story builds to a climax.

In the end Shehu is slain in his own house by his own son Kyauta who then settles to live with his mother – perhaps a development of an Oedipus complex situation. So, the determination of Shehu and the doggedness of Abu Bakir polarise to the extent that Abu flouts the Biblical injunction; “Revenge not, for revenge is mine”. Of course, he pays clearly for it as did Ozidi, in J. P. Clark’s play Ozidi.

Language

The issue of Language in African literature has remained controversial from the days of Obi Wali to Ngugi Wa Thiongo, who opine that ‘African literature ought to be written in African languages’. The echoes of his ‘language debate’ can be heard in *Towards the Decolonisation of African Literature* (1980). It is not necessary to prescribe for an author the language he should speak provided he knows his immediate audience, and tailors his material to suit them. Children’s literature requires simple, short but vigorous sentences with sharp images. If the purpose is inter-cultural education as is the case in *An African Night’s Entertainment*, then the local language idioms and proverbs often punctuate the work. In the work under discussion, several Hausa expressions and words are used, not because their English equivalents could not have been effectively used, but they are used as a means of introducing these Hausa expressions and words to children from other ethnic groups, so that Nigerian children from other ethnic groups will begin to understand them and use them when they meet their Hausa friends and counterparts.

Such names and expressions as “Kyauta” which means – Allah be thanked; “Birnin Zauna da Shirinka” which means – a land where everyone holds himself in a

state of readiness, and “Kobonka Naka” which means, “Your penny is yours”. These words once explained are so simple that any secondary school child reading the book can easily pick them up. Even the names of the characters- Kyauta, Mallam Shehu, Zainobe, Abu bakir, Mallam Sambo and Dogo, can add to the vocabulary of the readers from the Hausa names, which the children can acquire.

Moral Values

What values should the school and society preach in these days of moral decadence, corruption, injustice, armed-robbery and oppression? Ekwensi as a true artist seems to have x-rayed the problems of the Nigerian youth before injecting the values of honesty, respect for elders, hard work and love for one another. These are the values capable of improving the moral, social, economic and even the political tone of the country if they are carefully and dexterously woven into the fabric of children’s literature in Nigeria.

In *An African Night’s Entertainment*, Ekwensi vividly describes the type of honesty displayed by Abu, so that other children may emulate him. The warder tested Abu’s honesty by giving him money to buy and sell things. Abu not only sold the goods but also brought back more profit than the warder had even dreamt of. He showed every penny he made to his master to avoid any kind of suspicion. The story has a moral in honesty for the growing child.

Respect for elders has been an accepted universal value in all cultures but Western civilization and technological advancement seem to be undermining this moral practice. It needs to be guarded and maintained religiously. Ekwensi who would like to see proper upbringing of the Nigerian children, said of Kyauta:

His manners were so good that people were attracted to him. Despite the fact that his father was a rich man, they expressed their appreciation of his good breeding by giving him presents of money. He was not aloof to the poorer boys. He knelt down in greeting to all who were older than he. (29)

Hard work and the determination to succeed are also values worthy of cultivation among Nigerian children. Ekwensi does not mince words about this when Abu says: "I do not fear that (problem). If that is all the only difficulty, go ahead. Let me know that I have come to the end of my journey." (46)

The type of hard-work being referred to is honest hard work, which leads to success and not doggedness, which leads to suicide. Ekwensi has used the theme of "Quest for Vengeance" of men to educate the Nigerian child. He suggests to the children that what one must fear is the vengeance of Allah Himself, the moral of which can help to foster better relationship among Nigerians. This is obvious in the following excerpts; when an evil thought comes to Abu's mind, he says; "Can't it be arranged that this same son should be the cause of his death? ... But what I fear is the vengeance of Allah Himself." (34)

An African Night's Entertainment has a purpose. Besides entertaining, it has also been educating millions of Nigerian children on the futility of vengeance, and highlighting the value and importance of peaceful co-existence of diverse ethnic groups that make up the geographical entity called Nigeria. The book presents some aspects of Hausa culture with a view to promoting inter-cultural understanding in a pluralistic society. Through an appreciation of the habits, customs and cultural differences of different peoples of Nigeria,

Ekwensi has given the Nigerian child a philosophy of unity in diversity, love and understanding which are the key elements for social development of the nation as a whole.

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Developing Linguistic and Communicative Competence through Literature

**Z. N. Patil*

Traditionally, literature was taught to enable students to understand, enjoy and appreciate its various forms such as poetry, drama and fiction. There is no doubt that the teaching of literature for this purpose was valuable. It had its advantages: it enhanced students' awareness of the use of language in literature, nurtured the affective side of their personality, gave them insights into the working of the human mind, made them aware of the intricacies of human relationships, and so on. Teachers left no stones unturned to explain stories and plots, settings and characters, etc. They spent chunks of precious time to elaborate on figures of speech, deviation, foregrounding, incremental repetition and all kinds of other features of literary language. As a result, several students who were taught this way used the language in a very bookish fashion. They would speak and write in real life situations as if they were writing answers to examination questions. Many of them would speak as if they were examples of living books. This was an outcome of overemphasis on literary language. However, the other side of literature was left under-emphasized and under-utilized. Literature as a rich resource to teach language for real life was not tapped. For example, poetic lines were explicated with great effort and in great detail, but few teachers demonstrated

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how poetic lines, among other literary resources, could be used to perform certain speech functions such as apologizing, complimenting, and criticizing and so on and so forth. Similarly, few teachers drew their students' attention to how characters in novels, stories and plays used language to agree and disagree politely, to offer suggestions, to make requests, to complain in direct as well as indirect ways. So, literature as a means to enrich students' communicative or functional competence was not exploited.

The present paper attempts to demonstrate how literature can be used to develop students' linguistic and communicative competence.

Preamble

We are going to use two stories and four poems to demonstrate how we can use literature to enrich vocabulary, practice grammar, teach devices of cohesion, and sensitize students to stylistic strategies. These stories are James Thurber's *Unicorn in the Garden* and *The Moth and the Star*. We will try to see how we can develop linguistic and communicative competence using the contents, the contexts and the code in the two stories.

But before I proceed to demonstrate how I did the titular job in some of my 'Teaching Language through Literature' classes, I would like to say a word about context. There are three types of context: physical context, psychological context, and linguistic context.

Physical context relates to the activities that we perform. It illustrates the events that happen, the location where they happen, and the time when they happen. For example, the sentence "The man saw a unicorn" tells us about the man's act of seeing the unicorn. But information about when he saw the unicorn and where he saw it is missing from this sentence. On

the other hand, the sentence “Once upon a sunny morning a man who sat at his breakfast looked up from his scrambled eggs to see a white unicorn with a golden horn quietly cropping the roses in the garden” has clearer contextual information. It tells us about the activities (having breakfast, watching a unicorn), the place where these activities take place (the implied dining hall, the garden), and the time when these activities happen (once upon a sunny morning).

Psychological context refers to the type of interpersonal relationships between characters and their moods. For example, in the unicorn story the man and his wife are not happy with each other. The man fabricates a story about a unicorn hoping that his wife will call the police and a psychiatrist to send him to a madhouse. She does that, but he turns the tables on her and succeeds in sending her to a lunatic asylum. The outbursts of anger and excitement the wife feels, the bewilderment the police and the psychiatrist experience when they listen to the woman telling them about the unicorn, and the cursing and screaming we hear (or imagine we hear) when the police take her away to the lunatic asylum reveal the moods of the characters and are aspects of the psychological context. While narrating the story, the story teller can create these moods through gestures, postures, facial expressions, pitch, pace and tone of voice.

The language that accompanies a specific piece of text constitutes the linguistic context or verbal context. It includes the words, sentences, and other language clues used. Verbal context facilitates the way we understand a specific text. There are three types of linguistic contextual references- (1) forward pointing reference, (2) backward pointing reference, and (3) outward pointing reference.

In backward pointing reference, the contextual information is already provided to the receiver (hearer or reader). The receiver merely has to recall the contextual information when the reference is stated. A simple example of this is when we wrap up the narration of our story with a statement 'This is our story'. The sentence 'This is our story' has a backward pointing reference to the story we have just narrated or heard.

In forward pointing reference the contextual information is yet to be shared with the receiver. The sender keeps the receiver on hold till the contextual information is provided. This hold can be intentional, for example to create a dramatic effect in a play. An example of this is when we begin with a statement 'This is our story' and then narrate the story. The sentence 'This is our story' has a forward pointing reference. Since the story is still not being told, listeners are being asked to be on hold till the story is completed.

In outward pointing reference, the contextual information is not within the text but outside of it. The sender assumes that the knowledge of the context is already with the receivers. So, there is no need to share it again. For example, a young man comes back home and says to his parents, 'It was a total disaster!' The parents know that the young man is alluding to his interview. They know the context. However, imagine a guest who has just arrived to visit the family. He does not have background context. So, he will surely have difficulty understanding what 'It was a total disaster!' means. Therefore, he must gather background context to understand the utterance. Only then can he understand it. He may even have to get help from others to fully understand it.

Discussion

Now let me explain how I tapped the language teaching potential available in the two stories I mentioned a few paragraphs ago. I have underlined some words and sentences which I used as language teaching points. This story is about a man and his wife who do not seem to be happy with each other. Here is an abridged version of the story.

One morning a man saw a unicorn cropping the roses in the garden. He went to the bedroom upstairs where his wife was still asleep and woke her and told her that there was a unicorn in their garden and that he was eating roses. The wife opened one unfriendly eye and looked at him coldly. She told him that the unicorn was a mythical beast, turned her back on him and went to sleep. The man went to the garden to see the unicorn that was now browsing among the tulips. He offered the unicorn a lily which the beast ate gravely. The man was so delighted that he went upstairs and roused his wife again and told her that the unicorn had eaten a lily. "You are a booby," she said, "and I'll have you put in a booby hatch." The man who had never liked the words booby and booby hatch and who liked them even less when there was a unicorn in his garden thought for a moment. "We'll see about that", he said. He walked over to the door and said, "He has a golden horn in the middle of his forehead". The man went downstairs into the garden to watch the unicorn, but the unicorn had gone away. The man sat down among the roses and fell asleep.

As soon as the man had gone out of the house, the woman got up and dressed as fast as she could. She telephoned the police and she telephoned a psychiatrist. She asked them to hurry to her house and bring a straitjacket. When the police and the psychiatrist arrived, they sat down in chairs and looked at the woman

with great interest. "My husband," she said, "saw a unicorn this morning". The police looked at the psychiatrist and the psychiatrist looked at the police. "He told me that it ate a lily", she said. The psychiatrist looked at the police and the police looked at the psychiatrist. "He told me that it had a golden horn in the middle of its forehead," she said. At a solemn signal from the psychiatrist the police leaped from the chairs and seized the woman. They had a hard time subduing her, for she put up a terrific struggle. However, they finally subdued her and just as they put her into a straitjacket, the husband came back into the house. "Did you tell your wife you saw a unicorn?" asked the police. "Of course not," said the man, "the unicorn is a mythical beast." The psychiatrist asked the police to take the woman away. They took her away, cursing and screaming and shut her up in an institution. The husband lived happily ever after.

Here I would like to note that I preferred narrating the story rather than reading it. I had memorized the story verbatim and I had rehearsed its narration a couple of times. I narrated the story and my higher secondary students listened to the narration attentively. I did not read the story from a book or from a laptop computer screen. The advantage of narrating the story was that I could establish eye contact with my students. Eye contact is like a lubricant. When we look the students in their eye, they understand things better and understand them faster. Moreover, they remember things for a longer period. Another advantage is that we can use body language and voice effectively and efficiently. When we read a story from a book, our eyes are glued to the printed text; our students' eyes are glued to the text as well. We cannot use gestures, postures, facial expressions and voice modulation freely. When we narrate a story with proper body language and tone

of voice, we do not need to explain unfamiliar words. Students can guess their meanings with the help of the teacher's performance. Incidentally, a good teacher needs to be a good actor, a good performer. Pedagogically, teacher's performing skills make a world of difference.

Having narrated the above story, I engaged my students in an informal dialogue. I asked them a few questions to enrich their **vocabulary**. My lexical focus was on the words 'cropping', 'browsing', 'roused' 'booby', 'booby hatch' and 'institution'. I could see that my students knew the words 'eating', 'woke', 'crazy' and 'mental hospital', but did not know the words 'cropping', 'browsing'; 'roused', 'booby' and 'booby hatch'. I told my students that there were two other words in the story that meant more or less the same thing as 'eating'. I asked them to identify those words. Some of them said that the words 'cropping' and 'browsing' were synonymous with the word 'eating'. I asked them why they thought so. They said that there were other words that helped them to interpret the words 'crop' and 'browse' appropriately. According to the story, the man tells his wife that the unicorn had 'eaten roses' and a 'lily'. In two other sentences, the author uses the words 'cropping' and 'browsing' in association with 'roses' and 'tulips' which are flowers. The collocation 'cropping the roses in the garden' and 'browsing among the tulips' establishes some sort of semantic resemblance and association with the expression 'eating roses'. It was this similarity which enabled the students to conclude that 'cropping' and 'browsing' meant more or less the same thing as 'eating'.

Similarly, I asked them to find out from the story the synonym for the word 'woke'. They said that the synonymous word was 'roused'. The word 'again' helped them to confirm and legitimize their interpretation. Earlier in the story, the author says that when the man saw a unicorn in his garden, he went up to the bedroom

where his wife was asleep and 'woke' her. Later in the story, he says that the man was so delighted to see the unicorn in his garden on a shining morning that he went upstairs and 'roused' his wife 'again'. The word 'again' helped the students to associate the word 'roused' with the word 'woke'. Thus so far the learners had picked up three new words ('cropping', 'browsing' and 'roused'). I could see that they did not know the words 'booby' and 'booby hatch'. I was wondering whether I should ask them to rush to a dictionary and find the meanings. I did not think that was a good strategy. A language does not exist in a dictionary. Neither does it exist in a grammar book. It exists out there in the society that uses it. It exists in contexts.

When the man tells his wife that the unicorn had eaten a lily, his wife called him 'a booby' and says that she will have him put in 'a booby hatch'. Obviously, she is irritated and utters these words rather angrily. When I narrated that particular utterance, I delivered it in such a way that I succeeded in conveying the woman's annoyance. Why did I do that? Well, I did that to enhance the impact of the story and to sustain the listener's interest. I did that for a pedagogical reason as well. I wanted my learners to understand the meanings of the two words without the help of a dictionary. This is so because when our learners understand the denotations and connotations of words without referring to a dictionary, language learning approximates language acquisition. It gets more authentic. When we move about in the society listening to people in real life situations, we do not carry a dictionary with us to refer to it whenever someone uses a difficult or unfamiliar word. We guess and understand such words using our knowledge of the world, our knowledge of the language, and our ability to use the interpretative procedure or logic. So, when I delivered the utterance "You are a

booby and I'll have you put in a booby hatch" in a raised and irritated voice, my learners could guess the meanings of the words 'booby' and 'booby hatch' quite accurately. Interpreting these words was a process. The learners, as it were, said to themselves that since their teacher had delivered the utterance in an angry manner, the words could not be positive; they were negative. In other words, the utterance could not be a compliment; it had to be a derogatory remark and a threat. The psychological context told the listeners that the man and the woman did not go well with each other. There is evidence to this effect. For example, when the man tells his wife for the first time that there is a unicorn in the garden, eating roses, she opens one unfriendly eye and looks at him coldly; she turns her back on him and goes to sleep. In addition to this psychological context, listeners probably used other resources as well. I think they used words such as 'police', 'psychiatrist' and 'straitjacket' which are part of the linguistic context. The woman calls the police and a psychiatrist and asks them to bring a straitjacket which is meant to control a violent person. My students told me that the following things helped them to guess the meanings of these two words: (1) the woman's unfriendly eye, (2) her remark that the unicorn was an imaginary animal, (3) her irritated tone of voice (which we must imagine), and (4) the authorial remark that the man had never liked the words booby and booby hatch. These factors helped the listeners to arrive at a legitimate interpretation of the words 'booby' and 'booby hatch'. They proceeded to conclude that the negative words 'booby' and 'booby hatch' meant 'lunatic' and 'lunatic asylum' respectively. Thus the interpretive journey was generic (The words 'booby' and 'booby hatch' are negative.) in the beginning, and specific (The words 'booby' and 'booby hatch' mean 'mad' and 'mental hospital' respectively.) in the end.

Now, let me turn to the word ‘institution’ in the penultimate sentence of the story (They took her away, cursing and screaming and shut her up in an institution.). I knew that my learners were familiar with the word ‘institution’; they knew the general meaning of the word. I asked them what the contextual meaning of the word was. They told me that they established a connection between what the woman had said to her husband (“You are a booby and I’ll have you put in a booby hatch”) and the sentence ‘They took her away, cursing and screaming and shut her up in an institution.’ We have already noted that ‘a booby hatch’ means ‘a lunatic asylum’. If ‘a booby hatch’ means ‘a lunatic asylum’, then ‘institution’ would mean the same place. Moreover, the verb ‘put’ in the utterance “I’ll have you put in a booby hatch”, and the verb ‘shut’ in the sentence ‘They...shut her up in an institution’ strengthened the semantic resemblance and pragmatic implication.

Thus, through the narration of this little story I could add six words (cropping, browsing, roused, booby, booby hatch, and institution) to the existing lexical stock the learners had. It seemed that the first three words (cropping, browsing, and roused) were understood through forward and backward pointing lexical association, the next two words (booby and booby hatch) were understood through the tone of the delivery of the utterance in which these words were embedded, and the contextual meaning of the last word on the list (institution) was understood through linguistic and psychological contexts.

Having discussed how I had enhanced the lexical competence of learners, let me now consider how I developed their **grammatical competence** through story telling. I asked my learners to spot repetitions such as ‘She telephoned the police and she telephoned a psychiatrist’. I then asked them to rephrase the sentence

using other structures without changing its meaning. The students came up with sentences such as (1) She telephoned the police and a psychiatrist, (2) She telephoned not only the police but also a psychiatrist, (3) She telephoned the police as well as a psychiatrist, (4) She telephoned the police and a psychiatrist as well, (5) She telephoned the police and a psychiatrist too, and (6) She telephoned both the police and a psychiatrist. / She telephoned the police and a psychiatrist both. I collected from students these grammatically variant and semantically equivalent versions of the original sentence 'She telephoned the police and she telephoned a psychiatrist'. This grammar exercise gave the students practice and they learnt grammar from one another.

Later on, I drew their attention to the form and **pragmatic function** of the utterance "We'll see about that." They told me that formally it was a declarative sentence. I asked them what its contextual function was. In other words, when the man says this to his wife, is he informing her, threatening her, assuring her, or performing some other speech act? I asked them to embed the sentence in different contexts and explain the context-sensitive, context-dependent meanings of the utterance. They came up with various functions of the utterance such as threat, assurance, promise, consolation, conspiracy, etc. They said that in the context of the unicorn story it implied retaliation and 'apple cart'. When the man tells his wife that the unicorn ate a lily, she says that the man is a booby and that she will have him put in a booby hatch. It is against this background that the man says the above-cited utterance. So, its meaning can be summarized in the following words: "My dear, you want to send me to a lunatic asylum. Now, let us see whether you will send me there or I will send you there. Wait and see."

I then drew the students' attention to the **stylistic impact** of such repetitions as (1) 'She telephoned the police and she telephoned a psychiatrist' and (2) 'The police looked at the psychiatrist and the psychiatrist looked at the police', and 'The psychiatrist looked at the police and the police looked at the psychiatrist'. I asked them to explain why in their view the author had avoided repetition at the word level (wake, rouse; eating, cropping, browsing), but resorted to repetition at the sentence level as in (1) and (2) in this paragraph. Some students offered a legitimate explanation. They said that the repetition in 'She telephoned the police and she telephoned a psychiatrist' implies that the woman is very excited at the thought that she can now send her husband to a lunatic asylum. This is in consonance with the authorial comment 'She was very excited and there was a gloat in her eye'. A reduced sentence such as 'She telephoned the police and a psychiatrist' would not have conveyed that excitement.

Now let us look at the second instance of repetition. I asked my learners whether this repetition conveyed the same feeling as the first one did. A few students said that this repetition conveyed the feeling of confusion and bewilderment in the minds of the police and the psychiatrist. They offered the following explanation: When the woman telephones the police and the psychiatrist, she gives them the impression that there is a psychological or psychiatric problem with her husband, but on their arrival when she tells them that her husband saw a unicorn, the police and the psychiatrist gather that there is probably a problem with the woman herself. They get further confused when she tells them that her husband told her that the unicorn had eaten a lily. Finally, when she says that her husband told her that the unicorn had a golden horn in the middle of its forehead, the psychiatrist is sure that it is not the

husband but the wife who is a lunatic. The students felt that a sentence such as 'The police and the psychiatrist looked at each other twice' would not have conveyed the confusion in the minds of the police and the psychiatrist.

Finally, the students participated in a role play activity, which honed their **conversation skills**. They played the husband, the wife, the police, the psychiatrist and even the unicorn. They did some brainstorming and scripted a whole range of questions that the police and the psychiatrist would ask the man and his wife. This activity yielded several results. It boosted their confidence. It lent them an opportunity to frame various types of questions (initial questions, probing questions, closing questions; yes/no questions, wh-questions, etc.). It required them to use appropriate vocabulary. More importantly, the exercise gave them a pretext to use language to perform various speech functions such as asking for information, giving information, agreeing and politely or tactfully disagreeing, requesting, complaining, offering suggestions, etc.

This exercise proved that we could enrich students' vocabulary and grammar, sensitize our students to certain pragmatic functions and stylistic devices, and develop their conversation skills through a short story.

Now let us turn to the moth and the star short story. I have underlined some words and sentences to highlight language teaching points. The story goes like this:

A young and impressionable moth once set his heart on a certain star. He told his mother about this and she counseled him to set his heart on a bridge lamp instead. "Stars aren't the thing to hang around," she said, "lamps are the thing to hand around." "You get somewhere that way," said the moth's father, "You don't get anywhere

chasing stars.” But the moth would not heed the words of either parent. Every evening at dusk when the star came out, he would start flying toward it and every morning at dawn he would crawl back home worn out with his vain endeavor.

One day the moth’s father said to him, “You haven’t burned a wing in months, boy, and it looks to me as if you were never going to. All your brothers have been badly burned flying around street lamps and all your sisters have been terribly singed flying around house lamps. Come on, now, get out of here and get yourself scorched. A big strapping moth like you without a mark on him!

The moth left his father’s house. But he would not fly around street lamps and he would not fly around house lamps. He went right on trying to reach the star which was four and one third light years or twenty five trillion miles away. The moth thought it was caught in the top branches of an elm. He never did reach the star, but he went right on trying night after night and when he was a very, very old moth, he began to think that he really had reached the star, and he went around saying so. This gave him a deep and lasting pleasure and he lived to a great old age. His parents and his brothers and his sisters had all been burned to death when they were quite young.

I narrated this story, gave my students copies of it, and engaged them in the following dialogue to revise their vocabulary:

(A)Teacher: In the first paragraph there are three pairs of words that are pair-internally opposite in their meanings. Identify these words.

Students: Somewhere and anywhere, evening and morning, dusk and dawn.

- (B) Teacher: In the second paragraph there is an expression which is similar in its meaning to the expression 'badly burned'. Find it out.

Students: 'terribly singed'.

- (C) Teacher: In the same paragraph there is a word which means the same as the words 'burned' and 'singed'. Identify it.

Students: 'scorched'.

- (D) Teacher: What do the following underlined words/expressions substitute?

- (1) He told his mother about this. (paragraph one)
- (2) ...when he was a very, very old moth he began to think that he really had reached the star and went around saying so. (paragraph three)
- (3) This gave him a deep and lasting pleasure. (paragraph three)

Students: (1) He told his mother that he had set his heart on a certain star.

- (2) ...when he was a very, very old moth he began to think that he really had reached the star and went around saying that he really had reached the star.
- (3) The thought that he really had reached the star and the fact that he went around saying that he really had reached the star gave him a deep and lasting pleasure.

- (E) Teacher: Which expressions have the following words/expressions rendered redundant?

- (1) She counseled him to set his heart on a bridge lamp instead. (paragraph one)
- (2) ...and it looks to me as if you were never going to. (paragraph two)

Students: (1) She counseled him to set his heart on a bridge lamp instead of setting his heart on a star.

(2) ...and it looks to me as if you were never going to burn your wings like your brothers and sisters have.

(F) Teacher: Who does the pronoun 'it' in the following sentence refer to - the moth or the star? Explain.

The moth thought that it was caught in the top branches of an elm.

Students: The pronoun 'it' in this sentence refers to the star because throughout the story the author refers to the moth as 'he'.

(G) Teacher: Explain the difference between the pronoun 'him' in the following two sentences:

(1) ... she counseled him to set his heart on a bridge lamp instead.

(2) A big strapping moth like you without a mark on him!

Students: The pronoun 'him' in the first sentence refers to the moth in the story. It has a specific meaning. On the other hand, in the second sentence it refers to the moth in the story and to all young moths as a class. It has a specific as well as generic meaning.

After this dialogic exercise focused on **synonyms** and **antonyms**, **ellipsis** and **substitution**, and **pronoun reference**, I drew their attention to the following sexist sentences:

(1) All your brothers have been badly burned flying around street lamps and all your sisters have been terribly singed flying around house lamps.

(2) The moth left his father's house,...

There was an animated **debate** on the sexist bias. Most students spoke about the connotations of male dominance and gender discrimination. They said that the house was not just 'father's house'; it was equally 'mother's house'. They expressed unhappiness about the fact that sister moths were made to fly around 'house

lamps' whereas brother moths were free to fly around 'street lamps'.

Now, let me explain how I used poetry to develop the linguistic and **pragmatic competence** of my students. I taught them poems such as *The Solitary Reaper*, *Daffodils*, *The Second Coming*, and *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*. I brought to their notice how some lines from these beautiful poems could be used to perform certain speech functions such as complimenting, expressing remembrances, criticizing indirectly, taking leave, etc. I recited the following lines from these four poems:

(1) I listened motionless and still
And as I mounted up the hill
The music in my heart I bore
Long after it was heard no more.

(*The Solitary Reaper*)

(2) For oft when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude.

(*Daffodils*)

(3) Turning and turning in the widening gyre,
The falcon cannot hear the falconer.
Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold.
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.

(*The Second Coming*)

(4) The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

(*Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*)

I asked them to think of four situations that would require them to perform the speech acts of complimenting, expressing memories, criticizing obliquely, and taking leave. They came up with the

following situations.

- (a) Suman participated in a singing competition a month ago. She sang mellifluously. Kamal, her close friend, attended the competition, but she had to leave immediately after Suman's performance and so could not meet her and pay her a compliment on her singing acumen. Moreover, she got extremely busy doing her daily household chores and so couldn't call her for a month. Finally, she called Kamal and paid her a compliment (complimenting).
- (b) There is a very famous professor of English who retired some thirty years ago at the age of sixty five. One of his past students meets him after thirty years and asks him if he remembers his classmates. The professor tells him that he does recall all of them quite vividly (expressing remembrances).
- (c) Karim is attending Samuel's birthday party. The party is in full swing. Guests and friends are enjoying the party. There is plenty of food and drinks. We hear soft and soothing music in the background. Suddenly, Karim receives a phone call from home. His presence is urgently needed at home. He goes to Samuel and seeks his leave (complimenting and taking leave).
- (d) Anurag lives in a cooperative housing society. His neighboring apartment is very noisy. Four boys live in that adjacent apartment. Their parents work in a private company. They leave for office at nine o'clock in the morning and return home by six o'clock in the evening. The boys go to school at eight o'clock and come back home by one o'clock. They play loud music and talk very loudly the whole afternoon every day. They disturb the whole neighbourhood. One day, Anurag meets one of his neighbours and they share a complaint and indirectly criticize the noisy boys

(complaining and criticizing indirectly).

Then I asked the students to match the poetic lines with these situations. This is what they said. (i) Kamal would recite the lines from *The Solitary Reaper* to pay a compliment to Suman on her extraordinary singing skills, (ii) the professor would recite the lines from *Daffodils* to express remembrance, (iii) Karim would recite the lines from *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* to pay a compliment on a gorgeous party and to take leave of Samuel, and (iv) Anurag would recite the lines from *The Second Coming* to obliquely complain and criticize the noisy boys' behavior.

I asked my students why they would use these and similar poetic lines to perform various speech acts. They replied that they could perform speech acts directly and prosaically or indirectly in a poetic manner, but in their view the use of literary quotations improved the texture of their interactions, provided the conversation interlocutor was familiar with English literature, or at least had literary sensibility.

Conclusion

Creative writers use expressions from previously written literature as titles of their own literary works. *Things Fall Apart* from W. B Yeats' celebrated poem *The Second Coming* and *Sound and Fury* from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* are two examples. The movie title *Before I Go to Sleep* echoes Robert Frost's "Miles to go before I sleep/ And miles to go before I sleep". Journalistic writers sometimes characterize a political regime using Dickensian language ("It is the most honest of times and the most dishonest of times"). One editorial about the Telengana movement was captioned as "To T or not to T" reminding us of Hamlet's dilemma expressed in "To be or not to be". Political parties often accuse one another of anti-social activities such as corruption and bloodshed,

using expressions from *Macbeth* (e. g., “Fair is foul, and foul is fair”, “All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand”). We hear people philosophizing about life and describing it in *Macbeth*’s words (“Life is but a walking shadow, a poor player,...it is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing”). We describe extraordinary human achievements using a quotation from *Hamlet*: “What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculties! In form and moving, how express and admirable! In action, how like an angel! In apprehension, how like a god! The beauty of the world! The paragon of animals!”

This teaching article based on my personal experiences of teaching language through literature has demonstrated how we can tap literary resources to present and practice vocabulary, grammar, and language functions, to sensitize learners to stylistic nuances, and to enable them to take literature from the language and literature classroom and apply it in real interpersonal, social and political situations. It makes the point that literature is a more valuable source of language teaching than advertisements, spoonerisms, wedding invitations, and greeting cards, and so on and so forth.

What is in a Name? Problematic of Anglo-Indian Literature

**Susheel Kumar Sharma*

When one comes across a phrase like “... Anglo-Indian author [Amitav] Ghosh”¹ or “...Anglo-Indian writer Amitav Ghosh” (*Collins* 52) it is difficult to decide if a reference is being made to the parental lineage of Ghosh or to the language chosen by Ghosh or to his subject matter. Though *Collins Cobuild Advanced Illustrated Dictionary* and *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* define Anglo-Indian in very simple terms: “someone whose family is partly British and partly Indian” yet the geographical denomination in the term has not always been limited to Britain. *Oxford Dictionary* mentions three possible meanings of the term: “Of Indian descent but born or living in Britain, of mixed British and Indian parentage, or (chiefly historical) of British descent or birth but living or having lived long in India”. (oxforddictionaries.com) A few more dimensions have been added to these in *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*: “Anglo-Indian n. & a. A n. 1. A person of mixed British and Indian descent resident in the Indian sub-continent. 2. A person of British birth resident, or once long resident, in the Indian subcontinent. B. adj. Of pertaining to, or being an Anglo-Indian or Anglo-Indians; of pertaining to or characteristic of Indian under British rule, (of a word) adopted into English from an Indian

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language. (79) *The Oxford English Dictionary* (2nd ed., Vol. I) gives the following meanings of the term Anglo-Indian “A. adj. Of, pertaining to, or characteristic of India under British rule, or the English in India. B. sb. a. A person of British birth resident, or once resident, in India. b. A Eurasian of India” (466) *Cambridge Dictionary* describes “Anglo-Indian” either as “a person with British and Indian parents or grandparents” or as “an English person born or living in India (old-fashioned)” (dictionary.cambridge.org) It is interesting to note that none of the above definitions mentions the British paternal lineage and the Indian maternal side as a necessary condition for being pronounced an Anglo-Indian though for John Williams Ricketts it was a necessary condition of three when he characterised East Indians (in today’s context Anglo-Indians) as “The descendants of European British subjects and European foreigners, by native mothers, legitimate and illegitimate, as well as their offspring.... [they] have been educated, are entirely European in their habits and feelings, dress and language, and everything else ... and they habitually speak English among themselves.” (*Report of Proceedings* 52-54) Muthiah and MacLure hold that the term ‘Anglo-Indian’ was used by “the British to describe themselves, Anglo-Celtics for the most part, who spent most of their lives in India in the civil and military services, and who held senior positions in government departments, or spent years in the country as merchants and professionals, traders and planters” up till 1911.” (1) They further inform, “It was in 1911 census that the government of Lord Hardinge officially termed those of mixed blood, children born of European fathers and Indian mothers and children born of their offspring, as ‘Anglo-Indians’. Till then they had been called – ignoring such derogatory terms as ‘half caste’, ‘half-and-half’ and ‘eight annas’ – Eurasians (a term they

thought disparaging, though it was well accepted in Singapore, Malaya and Hong Kong), Indo-Britons, and what was curiously, for long commonly used, East Indians.” (1) The opposite i.e. an Indian father and an European/ English mother was a rare case in India in the days of European colonisation in India because of various reasons including several anti-miscegenation laws that had been passed after 1857 though by “the inter-war years, families with South Asian lascar fathers and English mothers had become part of the inter-racial communities in the dock areas of Britain.” (webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk, movinghere.org.uk) However, the presence of such groups is ruled out in India owing to the Indian historical context. The *Indian Act* of 1919 (Schedule II: 1.a.i), 1935 (Schedule I: 26.1) and *Indian Constitution* (366.2) have restricted the term only to the “European descent in the male line” as there is no mention of the female/ matrilineal lineage in them.

The term “Anglo-Indian” can be used both as a noun (compound noun e.g. *six-pack*, *self-esteem*, *off-campus*, *Anglo-Saxon*, *Anglo-French*) and an adjective (compound adjective e.g. a *well-known* writer, a *high-quality* patent system, a *well-developed* sense of humour, a *twenty-storey* building, *Anglo-Saxon* Literature). Therefore, the term “Anglo-Indian Literature” is a compound noun/ phrase with the structure of Mod (Adj) + N (e.g. Black Board, Common Room, Free Trade, Registered Post, Old Boy) or N + N (e.g. Autumn Leaves, Alphabet Worksheets, Christmas Activities, Farm Animals, Animal Pictures). While in the former case it means related to/by Anglo-Indians in the latter case it may mean literature produced by or about Anglo-Indians². In contrast, in compound words like “Hindi Literature” or “Kannada Literature” or “Sindhi Literature” (with word structure of N+N, for example, water tank, printer cartridge, birth place, college mate, needle work etc),

Hindi or Kannada or Sindhi simply indicates the language in which the literature has been produced. The question of being motivated by Indian culture is neither asked nor indicated in either case.

Most of the scholars, Anglo-Indians and the Websites maintained by them hold that the Anglo-Indians were brought into being by the direct policies of the Portuguese, Dutch, and British traders and colonists. Historically speaking, the Portuguese (ruled India for 450 years from 1505 to 1961), the Dutch (ruled India for 220 years from 1605 to 1825), the Danes (ruled India for 249 years from 1620 to 1869) and the French (ruled India for 286 years from 1668 to 1954) had arrived and established themselves in India prior to the British. It is but natural that the existence of Indo-Portuguese (Luso-Indian³), Indo-French, Indo-Danish and Indo-Dutch half-castes and their quarter-castes also goes back to the pre-British days. Besides, the armies of the colonisers had “up to the late 18th century, thousands of mercenaries from Sweden to Sicily, Spain to Russia and even men of European descent from North America and Australia.” (Muthiah 2). Therefore, it may safely be concluded that the Anglo-Indian community has descended from a mixed blood groups. However, there are hardly any authors left from this group in India writing in French, Portuguese and German. There are some in India who continue to write in English but with the exception of a few (like *Ruskin Bond*) they have largely gone unnoticed. One may like to consult the following books for details: I. H-Shihan’s *Anglo-Indian Fiction: A Brief Outline* (Kolkata: I. H-Shihan, 2016, Print), *Voices on the Verandah: An Anthology of Anglo-Indian Prose and Poetry* (Margaret Deefholts and Sylvia W. Staub (Eds.), New Jersey: C T R Inc Publishing, 2004, Print), *More Voices on the Verandah – An Anglo-Indian Anthology* (Lionel Lumb (Ed.), New Jersey: C T R Inc

Publishing, 2012, Print), *Women of Anglo-India: Tales and Memoirs* (Margaret Deefholts and Susan Deefholts (Eds.), New Jersey: C T R Inc Publishing, 2012, Print) *The Way We Were - Anglo-Indian Chronicles*, Margaret Deefholts and Glenn Deefholts (Eds.), New Jersey: CTR Inc Publishing, 2004, Print).

In his anthology *The Vintage Book of Indian Writing*, restricted to just fifty years (1947-1997), Rushdie has used the following terms to describe/ refer to this body of literature: Indo-Anglian, Indo-English, Indian writing in English, English-language Indian writing, English-language Literature, Indian novel in English and for the contributors, Indian writers working in English, English-language writer of Indian origin and non-english-language Indian writers. (x-xxii) M K Naik, whose canvas of study is much larger than that of Rushdie, is also conscious of the difficulty in choosing a name for this hybrid literature: "Another problem which the historian of this literature has to face is that of choosing from among the various appellations... 'Indo-Anglian literature', 'Indian Writing in English', 'Indo-English Literature' and 'Indian English Literature'." (4) In a different vein and tenor Arvind K Mehrotra writes: "Indians have been writing verse in English at least since the 1820s and it goes under many ludicrous names — Indo-English, India-English, Indian-English, Indo-Anglian, and even Anglo-Indian and Indo-Anglican. 'Kill that nonsense term', Adil Jussawalla said of Indo-Anglian, and 'kill it quickly.'" (*Oxford* 1) In another book of his, Mehrotra has used two terms 'Indo-Anglian' and 'Indian Literature in English'. Once upon a time it was presumed that by making this literature a part of Commonwealth Literature, it will be given a new colonial identity and consequently the problem of naming it will be over for ever. But almost the opposite has happened — the very idea of a Commonwealth is scoffed

at today. Today, six terms are in vogue for the body of literature in English in India (1784 to the present-day): Anglo-Indian Literature, Indo-Anglian Literature, Indo-English Literature, Indian writing in English (with small 'w'), Indian Writing in English (with capital 'W'), Indian-English Writing and Indian English Literature. Because of the constraints of time and space I wish to ruminate only on the term Anglo-Indian Literature in this article.

The term "Anglo-Indian" has been used as a prefix/qualifier/adjective by Edward Farley Oaten (1908), Alfred Comyn Lyall 1915) and Bhupal Singh (1934) in their histories/surveys. Though a new route from Europe to India had been discovered in 1498 by the Portuguese, the Words of Indian origin started entering into English "since the end of the reign of Elizabeth and the beginning of the King James". (*Hobson-Jobson* XV) The British contact with India formally began in a big way when the East India Company was chartered yet it can be safely assumed that the term "Anglo-Indian" was not known/popular in Britain till 1785 as it does not find mention in the sixth edition of Dr Johnson's *Dictionary* (1785). The great public interest created by various European travellers' accounts and the trial of Warren Hastings between 1788 and 1795 led to the publication of various independent glossaries of Indian terms. Many Glossaries⁴ of such terms were also appended to different official Reports prepared by the Portuguese and the British officers for their superiors in India and back home. *An Anglo-Indian Dictionary*, the first full-fledged dictionary, was prepared by George Clifford Whitworth in 1885 a bit apologetically. Whitworth writes: "In calling this work *An Anglo-Indian Dictionary*, some apology is needed, first for the name itself, and secondly, for giving it to this particular collection of words." (vii) Explaining the term Anglo-Indian Whitworth writes,

“The term ‘Anglo-Indian’ would properly designate something which, originally Indian, has been especially modified by something English; but popularly it is applied to English persons residing in India and to things pertaining to them. And while the stricter meaning does not wholly disqualify it, this inaccurate but common use of the term makes it specially appropriate as the name of a book which is not the work of an Oriental scholar, but only a compilation made for the popular use by an Anglo-Indian official.” (vii) Whitworth’s dictionary is perhaps the first dictionary where the word “Anglo-Indian” occurs. However, Arthur Coke Burnell, a young Indian Civil Servant at Madras, is said to have used the term in 1872 when he met Yule, his future collaborator in *Hobson-Jobson*. (Preface vii) The publication of Whitworth’s dictionary also indicates that the number of Indian words and phrases in nativised forms and manner in the active vocabulary of British/Europeans in India was so large that an explanatory dictionary had become imperative to understand their language/discourse. It also became an impending need of the newly arrived Britons in India and those who were listening/reading about it back home. This also justifies the publication of Yule and Burnell’s *Hobson-Jobson* (1886) on the close heels of Whitworth’s dictionary.

Edward Farley Oaten’s *magnum opus Sketch of Anglo-Indian Literature* (1908) was actually the Le Bas Essay prize winning essay of Cambridge University in 1907 (undertaken as a Golden Jubilee tribute to India’s annexation to the British crown in 1857) which aimed at not only appreciating “the chief Productions of Anglo-Indian Literature in the Domain of Fiction, Poetry, the [sic] Drama, Satire, and Belles-Letters, during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, with an Estimate of the Chief Writers in those Spheres” but also considered “Anglo-Indian Features of the Literatures.”

(*Preface*) Oaten correctly describes his work as pioneering as “Histories of modern English literature [were] singularly destitute of any allusion to Anglo-Indian productions.” (*idem*) While expressing his gratefulness to “*The Calcutta Review*, whose literary criticism has, ever since the magazine was founded in 1845, maintained a high degree of refinement and insight.” Oaten, also points out that “[*Review*] has done Anglo-Indian literature an immense service by continually pointing out to Anglo-Indian writers *the true aim which Anglo-Indian literature must always set before itself*.” (emphasis added) Oaten tells five characteristics of this literature: i) the ever-present sense of exile; ii) an unflagging interest in Asiatic religious speculation; iii) the humorous sides of Anglo-Indian official life; iv) description of Indian native life and scenery; v) ruminations about the ever-varying phases, comic, tragic, or colourless of Anglo-Indian social life. (194 -195)

The organisers of the essay competition at Cambridge had in their mind the location of the authors also as they used term “*Spheres*” in the title. Therefore, *an interaction between the (British/English) authors and their (Indian) location became an essential characteristic* feature of Anglo-Indian literature. Oaten writes: “In India for the first time since the era of Asiatic Hellenism, the spirit of Western Literature came into vital contact with the imaginativeness, dreaminess, and mysticism of the Oriental temperament. There was no real union between them; and yet it was impossible that each should remain unaffected by the other. Such a meeting, though it was long sterile of result, could not remain so permanently. New conditions produced new emotions, and new emotions always call for new literary interpretation. And so there grew up in British India a literature, English in form and language, which is

unique among the literatures of the world.” (4) He further clarifies, “Anglo-Indian literature, however, is not the literature of a young nation, but an offshoot from the literature of an older nation, transplanted to a foreign soil.” (18) As Oaten has these characteristics in his mind he is very cautious while classifying some authors: “Bishop Heber, whose reputation as a poet is mainly English, scarcely deserves a place among Anglo-Indian poets, though probably to the ordinary individual, in an enumeration of Anglo-Indian poets, few names occur to the mind before his.” (45) The only Anglo-Indian included in Oaten’s book on the basis of parentage is Henry Derozio, who had some Indian blood in him as his father was a Luso-Indian and the mother English. (Asiapac Editorial 104) What is interesting is that Oaten does not discuss Indians (like H Bijoy Chand Dutt, G C Dutt, H C Dutt, Shoshee Chunder Dutt, Toru Dutt, A M Risi Kunte, B M Malabari, P C Mittra, and Byaskh Lall Monukur, Michael M Datta and P V Ramaswami Raju) though he mentions and includes them in his list of “Anglo-Indians Works” (poets and dramatists) available in India House library. His exclusion of these authors on the basis of parentage (as none of them had English blood in them though some of them had converted to Christianity and had relocated themselves out of India, in the Christian lands) proves that for him Anglo-Indian Literature consisted of literature produced by either the English/Anglo-Celts or the Anglo-Indians.

In his *Studies in Literature and History* (1915) Sir Alfred Comyn Lyall devotes a chapter of about thirty four pages (121-154) to study mainly eight Anglo-Indian novels. None of the authors taken up for study by Lyall had Indian blood in him and these authors had described their impressions in the new found world i.e. India as civil/military servants mainly for the readers sitting far away in their homelands i.e. the British Isles. Lyall

writes: "No situation more unfavourable to the development of imaginative literature could be found than that of a few thousand Europeans isolated, far from home, among millions of Asiatics entirely different from them in race, manners, and language." (121) Geographical distance, unnecessary details about the new land's culture and traditions are some of the factors that Lyall discusses as the possible causes of the poor quality of the Anglo-Indian fiction before jumping to discuss the novels/romances. Interestingly enough, James H Cousins' *Modern English Poetry: Its Characteristics and Tendencies* (1921) does not mention any Anglo-Indian though it has full chapters on 'The New English Poetry' and 'Indo-Anglian Poets'. It is also clear that for Cousins also the parentage of the author was one of the main points of distinction between Anglo-Indian and Indo-Anglian writer. Maybe like Oaten he also considered the quality of Anglo-Indian's poetry too poor to be included but on this ground Indo-Anglian literature too could be rejected. However, Cousins' attempt is revolutionary for he is seeking to make Indo-Anglian literature a part of English/British Literature.

Oaten's contribution to *Cambridge History of English Literature* (vol. 14) under the heading of "Anglo-Indian Literature" begins with a foot note: "The sense in which this term (now largely used in different sense) is employed in the present section is defined in the text." (331) The very necessity of a foot-note to explain the meaning of the term "Anglo-Indian Literature" indicates that in between his last publication (1908) and this one (1916) a considerable change had come in its usage. Oaten writes, that logically speaking Anglo-Indian Literature should be called "English literature of British India" on the analogy of the literature of the great British self-governing dominions (331) but "the degree to which the ever changing English community that guards and

administers India differs from the settled inhabitants of Canada or Australia is, at the same time, an explanation of the main peculiarities of that literature and also, the measure of the difficulty which confronts any attempt to define it." (Oaten, *Cambridge* 331) According to Oaten, Anglo-Indian Literature is a creation of those Englishmen who wrote about their first-hand encounter with India while on furlough or after retirement and those who were "Englishmen in mind", "English in thought and aspiration" and who "never lost bias towards that of England" and who printed/published in England owing partly to lack of facilities in India (*Idem*). "[An] Anglo-Indian writer must, as a rule, make his appeal mainly to the public in England and only secondarily to the English community in India." (*Ibid* 332) "Anglo-Indian literature is based in origin, spirit and influences upon two separate countries at one and the same time." (*Idem*) Broadening the vistas of Anglo-Indian authors Oaten admits educated Indians and "domiciled community of European or mixed origin" to the circle for their "potential of development in the future" as they have "attracted little notice in comparison with the writings of the English migrant population."

Though Oaten rates those Indians "who attempted imaginative literature in English" very poorly and says "very few succeeded in writing anything of permanent interest" (*Cambridge* 341-342) yet in contrast to his past practice he devotes about two pages of the book to them. He refers to the contribution of Bankim Chandra Chatterji and Romesh Chunder Dutt who developed their talent in Bengali under the influence of English and the social activists like Ram Mohan Roy, Keshab Chandra Sen, Kashinath Trimback Telang, Bahramji Malabari and "hundreds of other Indians" who used English "for their own purposes almost as if it had been their mother tongue." He debunks creative authors like

Michael Madhu Sadan [sic] Dutt, Malabari, Govind Chandra Dutt and “hundred others.” (*Idem*) He has some praise only for Toru Dutt: “Her English poetry displayed real creative and imaginative power and almost technical skill. ... In her English translations and in her *Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan* she so nearly achieved a striking success as to make one regret that our language is essentially unsuited to the riot of imagery and ornament which form part of the natural texture of the oriental mind.” (*Ibid* 342) Oaten very frankly opines that “the bulk of Anglo-Indian literature ... written by Englishmen in mind and thought [is] odd, except in the rarest and most exceptional cases, anything of lasting value to the roll of English literature.” (*Ibid* 336) He concludes with finality, “... Anglo-Indian literature will continue to be mainly what it has been, with few exceptions, in the past – literature written by Englishmen and Englishwomen who have devoted their lives to the service of India.” (*Ibid* 342)

Robert Sencourt’s *India in English Literature* seeks “to discuss the value of India to [English] literary genius, and to review the form in which course of history India has been conceived by the English mind.” (257) It is a very comprehensive survey of literature available in Europe about India. Moving on from the European writers to the British authors writing on India Sencourt observes: “The record of Anglo-Indian Literature is but a chart of the materials of the history of British India.” (284) Sencourt has used the term, Anglo-Indian, several times in his voluminous book and at least two subsections in it have this term in their title. Under the heading “The Development of Anglo-Indian Literature” (198-218) Sencourt has limited himself to only English/British citizens’ contribution from the times of the East India Company, as English language had not yet gained the roots as it was quite early for Macaulay’s policy to bear

fruits. Under the heading “Anglo Indian Literature – Profane” (367- 411) British authors’ writings, who were posted in India have been discussed. There are some passing references made to some Indians as well. For example, he refers to “Sarojine Nayadu’s [sic] cunningness in her poetry” (11), Tagore and Gandhi. (455) Indians like Keshub [sic] Chandra Sen and Ram Mohun [sic] Roy who came under Christian influence have been discussed as social reformers in some detail. Though Derozio’s work was “little known” (385) and he was considered to be a minor poet by the librarian of Bodleian Library he has been discussed considerably (385-390) on the basis of Oaten’s introduction and he being “unlike most Portuguese Eurasians, a protestant.” (385) Sencourt claims, “Derozio is the sole example, of a poet of Anglo-India surrendering his genius to India with the passionate loyalty of her own children.” (390) When Sencourt writes, “Anglo-Indians in those days had even more their own ways than they have now, and they were far more ostentatious” (191) he has the likes of Clive in his mind. Thus, it is very clear that Sencourt uses the term Anglo-Indian for those Britons who were writing about India in English for the readers in England. He mentions only four Indians, of which three were either Christians or under Christian influence and the only Hindu Indian, Sarojini Naidu is mentioned contemptuously. So religion may be another dimension in the definition of Anglo-Indian.

George Sampson in his *The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature* (1941) observes: “Unlike the literature of the self-governing Dominions, Anglo-Indian literature is in the main produced by a small body of Englishmen who, during the working part of their lives, are residents in a remote and exotic country to which they can never, in any real sense, belong. Thus Anglo-Indian literature is usually English literature

with Indian local colour, and it is written for the whole English public, not merely for the English in India. A further distinction must be made. English not only became the language of law and government throughout India, it became the language of higher education for the Indians themselves. Thus, English is a medium of literary expression of the educated Indian, and Anglo-Indian literature must therefore include literary works written in English by native Indians.” (909) Sampson adds to Oaten’s list Sarojini Naidu, Manmohan Ghosh, Aravindo [sic] Ghosh and Rabindranath Tagore and like him debunks them. Amongst the short-story writers one finds a mention of Cornelia Sorabji and among the critics/surveyors Bhupal Singh, the first Indian in the genre.

Now let me turn to the Indian take on the issue. Two books published before the year of Indian independence viz. Bhupal Singh’s *A Survey of Anglo-Indian Fiction* (1934) and Iyengar’s *Indo-Anglian Literature* (1943) merit attention. Bhupal Singh in his *Survey* mentions three layers of meaning of the phrase *Anglo-Indian Fiction*: “Broadly speaking it includes any novel dealing with India which is written in English. Strictly speaking, it means fiction mainly describing the life of Englishmen in India. In still a narrower sense it may be taken to mean novels dealing with the life of Eurasians, who now prefer to be called Anglo-Indians.” (1) However, he broadens the canvas of Anglo-Indian fiction in his *Survey* as he “does not exclude Indian novels written by men of nationalities other than English. [The survey] also includes novels describing the life of Eurasians and of Indians.” (1) He considers this literature to be a sub-branch of English Literature as is clear from the following observation: “Artistically Anglo-Indian fiction is a record of the ephemeral. Excepting, Kipling, there are not more than a dozen novels which may find a place in the history of English literature....

[Most of the novels] suffer from a propagandist tendency" (4) While discussing the importance of Anglo-Indian fiction Bhupal Singh writes: "Anglo-Indian writers of fiction enable Indians to see themselves as 'others', or their rulers, see them. Incidentally, they also enable us to see our masters as they see themselves—not as demi-gods, as we had imagined them to be, but as human beings.... Anglo-Indian fiction is a criticism of the life of Englishmen and Englishwomen in India, and of Indians." (Preface) Singh expands the meaning of Anglo-Indian by including translations of vernacular literature into English. However, in the concluding paragraph of the Appendix Bhupal Singh dismisses the Indian authors on the grounds of poor language, poor craft, poor characterization and their leanings towards didacticism and allegory and declares "their contribution to Anglo-Indian fiction... of little importance". (310)

In his Introduction to K. R. S Iyengar's magnum opus *Indo-Anglian Literature* (1943) C R Reddy toeing the British line of thinking states: "We have two types of literature motivated by Indian culture: (i) the Indo-Anglian ... [and] (ii) the Anglo-Indian, by which is meant literature bearing on Indian topics or inspired by Indian motifs and spirit, and written by Englishmen or other Westerners." (iv) In his above mentioned book Iyengar, therefore, does not discuss any Anglo-Indian writer. He adheres to this very line in his next book as well which he wrote to justify his thesis that "Anglo-Indian literature was... a variation of English Literature." (*Writing* 6) Toeing the same line of thinking in his second book, *The Indian Contribution to English Literature* (1945), he wishes to underline Indians' contribution to English literature, a fact being missed by literary historians in Britain and elsewhere. Thus, Iyengar was trying to homogenise English Literature by including all those who were writing in English. In the Preface to

his *The Indian Contribution to English Literature* he writes: “*But I thought it desirable to distinguish between Englishmen who write on Indian themes and Indians who use English as the medium of artistic expression*; and I saw no harm in applying the already current terms “Anglo-Indian” and “Indo-Anglian” to these categories of writers.” (emphasis added, Iyengar, 1945 i-ii) Though Iyengar has enlisted and classified Indians’ works in English meticulously and has glorified them to the extent possible yet none of these authors including critics mentioned by him have been accepted in English Literature as none of them finds a mention in the English/British canonical literary histories. I wish he had titled his book as *‘Indian Contribution to Literature in English’*. Iyengar has not changed his stance even in his third book, *Indian Writing in English* (I ed 1962) though he has reached correct appellation in it. He has included Nirad C. Chaudhuri (who settled in the UK after independence as a British citizen) in this book. The fourth edition of the book (rpt. 2013) which has a long “Postscript” (by his equally competent daughter Prema Nandkumar) that includes books published up to late seventies though Rushdie finds a brief mention in it. As the issue has become even more complex after the emergence of Post-Rushdie Indian diasporic writings Nandkumar’s take on the issue is much awaited.

V K Gokak makes a distinction between ‘Anglo-Indian’ and ‘Indo-Anglian’ on the basis of the ‘point of view’ of the author though he believes that the term “‘Indo-Anglian’ has been coined as a kind of cousin to ‘Anglo-Indian’.”(160) He writes: “Indo-Anglian journalism is an ‘Anglo-Indian’ enterprise which was gradually ‘indo-anglianised’. Indeed, both the Anglo-Indian and ‘Indo-Anglian’ categories continued to exist side by side for a long time, the one representing the imperial and the other the national point of view. The

demarcation in substance has disappeared with Independence and such distinctions as prevail now represent the ideologies that are active in the country.” (167) What Gokak writes in the context of journalism (one genre of literature) may very well serve as a criterion in other branches/genres of literature (including fiction) as well. He coins a new term ‘Indo-English’ for the growing volume of “the translations into English of the books published in one of the classical or modern Indian languages.” (160) Such translations were earlier considered to be a part of Anglo-Indian or Indo-Anglian literatures.

Amongst the Indian scholars, M N Pandia perhaps is the first and the only one who has not made any distinction between Indo-Anglian and Anglo-Indian fiction as he has included writers from both these groups in his *The Indo-Anglian Novels as a Social Document* (1960). In her Ph D thesis entitled “Indian Writers of Fiction in English” Roshan Nadirsha Minocherhomji has discussed translations of R. C. Dutt’s and S. K. Ghoshal’s novels in Bengali as well. (Raizada ii) In his survey Harish Raizada has followed the line of argument advanced by Reddy and Iyengar. He writes “For a considerably long time even Indian writings of Indians were included within the purview of Anglo-Indian literature” (i) but he has taken “only the Indo-Anglian fiction” in his book. (iii)

M K Naik in his *A History of Indian English Literature* has also echoed the views of Reddy, Iyengar, Gokak and Raizada. He writes: “... ‘Indo-Anglian Literature’ [was] ... once even regarded unjustly as part of ‘Anglo-Indian Literature’... .” (Preface). He admits that “... the failure to make clear-cut distinctions has often led to a confusion between categories such as ‘Anglo-Indian literature’, literature in the Indian languages translated into English and original composition in

English by Indians.” (2) He has introduced the parameter of Indian sensibility to include an author into the category of ‘Indo-Anglian literature’. He justifies his introduction of a new parameter on the basis of the writings of two authors, viz. Annada K Coomaraswamy and Ruth Praver Jhabwala. If this highly contested parameter is accepted many contemporary Indian authors (in fact in abundance) who have been charged of writing about India and Indian themes for foreign audience from their perspective and many of whom have also been labelled as “India-baiters” will not find a place in Indian literary histories. At the same time they will not be accepted in British literary histories on account of their location. However, in the sequel volume, *Indian English Literature: 1980-2000: A Critical Survey*, Naik (as well as his co-author Narayan) has taken a more liberal view of Indian. Several of those who have surrendered Indian passports/ citizenship or those who never held them have been discussed under various headings. To accommodate such authors a complete section on diasporic fiction has been given. He has included not only Nirad Chaudhuri, V S Naipaul and Salman Rushdie but also Vikram Seth, Uma Parmeswaran, Sujata Bhatt, Suniti Namjoshi, Ahmad Ali, Shauna Baldwin, Kirin Narayan, Kiran Desai, Tabish Khair and others. Similarly, Anglo-Indians like I. Allan Sealy, Ruskin Bond, Randhir Khare and others also find a place. In this book the authors Naik and Narayan seem to have forgotten the parameter of Indian sensibility as well since they take books like *The Golden Gate*, *In An Antique Land*, *The Conversations of Cow* and many others which are set outside India and have no element of Indian sensibility in their purview in detail. In absence of clear parameters and an objective approach to include either an author or a book Naik’s book becomes subjective and lopsided as some authors have been included while

some others have not been.

In his *Rise of the Indian Novel in English* (1987) K. S. Ramamurti has discussed the novels published from the earliest times upto 1920. He has used five criteria for inclusion and evaluation of an author/work in his history of which three viz. parentage, location, sensibility are related to the author and two viz. subject matter and literariness are related to the book. While Ramamurti has used the term "Indian novel in English", K R S Iyengar in his Foreword to the book has stuck to "Indo-Anglian" fiction. By using the term "English writers of Indian Fiction" (50) for 'Anglo-Indian Fictionists' Ramamurti has tried to do away with the ethnic bias in the latter term besides restricting the meaning of the term 'Anglo-Indian'. He has expanded the meaning of the term 'Indo-Anglian': "The term 'Anglo-Indian' has been retained to describe writing by Englishmen in which the subject is India or material borrowed from Indian life. ... while English translations of works in various Indian languages are often described as 'Indo-English'. Some writers like Alphonso-Karkala prefer the term 'Indo-English' to 'Indo-Anglian' even while referring to the English writings of Indians. But there is another class of writing in which the writers are Indian and the subject is Indo-British relationship or what may be called the colonial encounter. No particular name has been given to this class of writing, but they should be considered as part of Indo-Anglian writing." (196) At another place he writes: "The term Anglo-Indian fiction has been used ... to refer to [the] novels on India written by native British writers. The term Anglo-Indian was rejected by Dr K R Srinivasa Iyengar as one having too ethnic a connotation in Indian life, ... Prof Bhupal Singh ... uses it to refer to the writings on India by native British writers. Prof V. K. Gokak prefers the term Indo-English to *Anglo-Indian*

while Prof Alphonso Karkala uses the term Indo-English in the place of Indo-Anglian.” (56) *Ramamurti* has somehow failed to notice that Gokak coined the term ‘Indo-English’ for the translations from Indian languages into English. Neither has *Ramamurti* been able to stick to the five criteria mentioned above in the book (which is the revised version of his thesis submitted to Madurai University in 1974 but published in 1987) under discussion as is clear from his inclusion of authors like G V Desani and Salman Rushdie in it; he has also discussed these authors as if they were Indian passport holders. *Ramamurti* rightly identifies two visible tendencies in this hybrid literature – the one to be a part of English literature and the other to be a part of Indian literature.

Since Arvind Krishan Mehrotra, the latest historian of Indian writings in English, treats 1794, the year Dean Mahomed’s *The Travels of Dean Mahomet* appeared, as the starting point of this literature, he begins his history with Raja Ram Mohan Roy and includes only those Indians who are connected with the geographical boundaries of the country in some way or the other viz. by way of holding an Indian passport or paying taxes to Indian government or social or historical family connection with India. Even those who deal with Indian subject matter but have some Indian connection (like Aubrey Menen, Ananda Coomarswami (not discussed in detail as the essay “failed to reach” the editor), Verrier Elwin, Rudyard Kipling, G. V. Desani, Nirad C Chaudhuri, Jim Corbett, Allen Sealy, Rushdie and other authors of the Indian Diaspora but not Forster) find a place in Mehrotra’s *History* for he considers this literature to be “a literature whose development has been piecemeal and ragged, or like fresh start each time” (xx) and its history as “scattered, discontinuous, and transitional.” (26) He, therefore, does not use the term

‘Anglo-Indian’ in his history in any of the above cited contexts and meanings but uses ‘Indian Literature in English’ broadly.

The above discussion makes it clear that the term ‘Anglo-Indian’ is heavily loaded as it points towards i) paternal lineage, ii) colour, iii) religion, iv) culture, v) mind and vi) the location of the author that distinguishes one from other British nationals. All these are being used as tropes to highlight one’s ancestry and provide one a distinct regional identity. It may also be noted that the novelists and poets that have been discussed in the books cited above were British citizens by virtue of their being part of the British Empire but every British citizen was not of British descent as the question of national identity and passport were immaterial before 1947, the year India got independence. There is a strong under-current of elitism operating in literary studies. All those associated with power of any sort very easily gain limelight in the form of finding a mention in surveys and histories (to be specific for the limited purpose of this article) nay those who are divested of power have to struggle to secure their position. The confusion of the editors, literary historians and academic scholarship was rooted in the historical reality. They were not able to make up their minds in the earlier days about various published works; their concern was divided between allegiance to the emerging nation i.e. India and loyalty to the crown/ the former masers. Moreover, the facts like the market needs and the stature of a particular author (on the basis of awards and backing of reputed western publication houses and the reviewers) perhaps forced the historians/ surveyors to change their stand in their later years. Thus, it may be safely concluded that the literature produced in England or British India has to be judged on its merit and intrinsic quality and not on the basis of

extraneous considerations like nationality or the location of the authors. But what is interesting is that most of the authors that have been discussed by the literary historians of the genre do not find a place in the histories of English literature (published after 1947) and the *Oxford Companion to English Literature*. The questions that one needs to ask are: 1) Are *Anglo-Indian* authors poor in art? 2) Are *Anglo-Indian* authors poor in content/themes? 3) Are *Anglo-Indian* authors being discriminated against and ignored because of their parentage? 4) Are *Anglo-Indian* authors being discriminated against and ignored because of their location in India? Answers to these questions are beyond the scope of this paper and hence are being left to the imagination of the readers of this paper and research in future.

NOTES

1. "In a complex narrative filled with echoes of Naipaul and especially Conrad (with an occasional nod to Peter Matthiessen's *At Play in the Fields of the Lord*), *Anglo-Indian author Ghosh* (The Glass Palace, 2001, etc.) interweaves the fates of several natives and visitors to the pristine (if not primitive) Sundarban Islands in the Bay of Bengal." (emphasis added, kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/amitav-ghosh/the-hungry-tide/)
2. Bridget White claims that Warren Hastings was the first to use the term 'Anglo-Indian' in the 18th century to describe both the British who lived in India and their Indian-born children. (58) It is claimed by Dias and others that the term 'Anglo-Indian' was for the first time introduced as the official description of the Eurasian communities at the formation of the European and Anglo-Indian Defence Association in 1882. (Dias 133, Jeswin in kerala-angloindians.blogspot.com.) "In 1911 Viceroy Hardinge had sanctioned the use of the term Anglo-Indians for their community for the census, a term from

then on signifying European in the male line but of European and Indian descent. The Montagu-Chemsford Report of 1918 classified the community as Anglo-Indians.” (Jupp 434) Muthiah and MacLure also maintain that “The Census of 1911 finally cleared the air, defining the ‘Anglo-Indian’ as a permanent resident of India of paternal European lineage. With that pronouncement, distinct community was officially born, its uncertain status of earlier years a thing of the past.” (30) India Act of 1919 defines the term as follows: “I. In this Schedule (a) “an anglo-Indian” means any person being British subject and resident in British India, (i) of European descent in the male line who is not a European, or (ii) of mixed Asiatic and non-Asiatic descent, whose father, grandfather or more remote ancestor in the male line was born in the Continent of Europe, Canada, Newfoundland, Australia, Now Zealand, the Union of South Africa or the united States of America, and who is not a European;” (The Government of India Act 1919, Schedule II) Its use was restricted in the India Act of 1935: “26.-(1) In the foregoing provisions of this Schedule the following expressions have the meanings hereby assigned to them, that is to say :- ... “an Anglo-Indian” means a person whose father or any of whose other male progenitors in the male line is or was of European descent but who is a native of India;” (The Government of India Act 1935, Schedule I) The term ‘Anglo-Indian’ was accepted by the Indian Constituent Assembly with a broad definition of Eurasian: “a person whose father or any of whose other male progenitors in the male line is or was of European descent but who is domiciled within the territory of India and is or was born within such territory of parents habitually resident therein and not established there for temporary purposes only” (*Constitution* 366(2))

3. The word ‘Luso’ in ‘Luso-Indian’ derives from Lusitânia, an ancient Iberian Roman province which included approximately all of modern Portugal south of the Douro river and part of modern Spain. The Luso-Indians were

later called Eurasians. They slowly started mixing with other Europeans or their progenies and later with the introduction of the Constitution of India in 1950 came to be called Anglo-Indians.

4. A list of twenty-three such Glossaries is available in *Hobson-Jobson*.

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A.K. Ramanujan's Concern for Ethics & Human Conscience

**K. Balachandran*

Ethics is one of the important aspects of an individual, nation and society. An individual without Ethics (Science of morals), will become a culprit, a nation will be undependable; a society will be a chaotic one. Similarly, human conscience (the moral sense of right and wrong) is one of the important characteristics expected in an individual whether the individual is a man or woman. Ethics and human conscience are like the two sides of a coin. Hence an individual / nation / society should have faith in Ethics and human conscience. If it is positive - if they exist, there'll be growth, prosperity and peace, if it is not what will be there except retardation, poverty and chaos. So it is very clear what an individual / a nation / a society should aspire for betterment.

Poets who are the keen observers of life and society never miss to click them in words in their poems. Is it not a poet's duty to plead for Ethics and Human Conscience in his poetry? A.K. Ramanujan does portray the need for Ethics and Human Conscience in his poems. The paper discusses how A.K. Ramanujan has handled this theme / aspect in his poems to evoke the need for Ethics and Human Conscience in the mind and heart of the readers.

"On Not Learning from Animals" (p.217) poem does reflect this aspect. He strongly believes from animals,

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we have to learn much, for they “bring us tranquility”. When there is a war all people are in tension. But “cats/sleep through a war”. This, people have to learn, not to be disturbed but be in a calm mood.

A man may have dogs and they don't bother if the master's sister has cancer. They forgive betrayals and rations. Even if there are betrayals in one's life, one has to learn to forgive. Even if one is not fed sufficiently by one's family, one should take it normally. Will this be possible? If a man sleeps with two women, he betrays himself. This shouldn't occur, for, it is not ethics. A dog will not mount one bitch after another! But when a man does it, the poet is very much pained to see it. He observes “quails are monogamous”. When American game birds are monogamous, man is not, for, it is not Ethics. One has to listen to one's conscience as which is right and which is wrong. He is autobiographical when he writes that he quarreled with his father when he was just 17, for his mother's rights. A son has to remind his father of Ethics and human conscience!

I forget how troubled I was when I saw,
at seventeen, after quarelling
with my father about my mother's rights,
(p.217)

Ponni Balachandran comments, “Ramanujan's poems have the basic theme of mortality of the human beings and the immortality of Nature and Divinity” (23). Ramanujan's poem “Obituary” also depicts ethics and human conscience.

Father, when he passed on,
left dust
on a table full of papers,
left debts and daughters, (p.111)

What did his father leave him? Much money and estate?
No! Only dust on a table full of papers! What is the use?

Of no avail! But huge debts – it means as a son, he has to repay the money borrowed by his father. It is ethics. And when his daughters don't get married, it is his (as a brother) duty, he has to give them in marriage to decent guys. It is his ethical duty to repay the debt and get his sisters married, for, he has human conscience. Not only during their marriage, even after marriage, for the first delivery, Deepavali, Pongal (Sankranthi), naming of the child etc he has to spend money for them - it is an ethical practice. The poem ends as follows:

And he left us
a changed mother
and more than
one annual ritual. (p.112)

Born in a Tamil Brahmin family, Ramanujan does portray Ethics and human conscience in these lines very touchingly. What is meant by a changed mother? After his father's death, his mother became a widow with the shaven head, clad in white saree, no vermilion (kumkum) on her forehead and no jewel on her. She lost the lustre and liveliness. Every year his death is remembered by conducting 'thithi' (thevasham). The poem is autobiographical with emphasis on Indian Ethics and human conscience. Dwivedi calls this "Obituary" poem as one of the best family poems of Ramanujan" (p.69). He further elucidates,

It is largely descriptive in character, not reflective or meditative. The situations and obligations are described dispassionately. It has a commendable ease and flow. It is free from hackneyed phrases and poetic tricks. The diction is lucid and unadorned. The details about the father's death are presented not only candidly but also realistically. (p.72)

We can see Ramanujan's tragic vision – every one is only upto one's living. After death, a vacuum is created by

one's death (ie.absence). Everything loses its glory, lustre and prominence after a certain period. It is better to do something solid, before one leaves this world.

Ramanujan's "Shadows" (p.199) poem, though it is tinged with his tragic vision, one can see his concern for Ethics and human conscience. While walking in the sun, shadows fall between people. "Doubts grow in the dark" how truthfully he writes this. In the light (came to light) doubts will vanish; only in the darkness doubts grow. Miners working in mines, come out, when their working time is over. Moss grows on the bark of oak trees. Barren women come around the peepul tree hoping to get a son. This is Indian Ethics. Scientifically also, it is true because they breathe the fresh air which will be helpful for their conceiving.

War heroes, after the war return covered with blood and flags in special trains; kill and flay twenty one nurses and hang one from a maple tree. Here it is a record of his sense of deep regret and sadness over the wars in which thousands of people get killed. Where is the need for killing nurses? Killing nurses is not a heroic deed but a sinful act, for, they are enemies of none. They are the helpers - help people to live and so they are life - savers. Killing is a deadly act and sin; and flaying - removing the skin from the dead is very cruel. All these atrocities should not recur. Seeing these tragic scenes, the poet expresses his concern for ethical living and human conscience. Will any man with real conscience indulge in killing nurses and flaying? Indirectly it may also refer to the Canadian soil where young Indian women were tortured and not allowed to marry and lead a happy married life.

Ramanujan created, literary history by writing a poem entitled "History" (pp.107-108). This poem actually doesn't deal with history of any particular nation; but because it does deal with the average human being who

without any conscience (or burying conscience) is greedy for jewels. History brings changes in a nation. It does the same in an individual's life. The poem is autobiographical about his great aunt who died and about her, his mother conveyed an important message to the poet.

her two
daughters, one dark one fair,
unknown each to the other
alternately picked their mother's body clean
before it was cold
or the eyes were shut, (p.108)

He gives a catalogue of jewels stolen from the dead body of his aunt by her two daughters.

of diamond ear – rings,
bangles, anklets, the pin
in her hair,
the toe-rings from her wedding
the previous century,
all except the gold
in her teeth and the silver g-string (p.108)

Is this ethical _ stealing the jewels from a dead woman's body by her own daughters? Don't they have conscience? Who will teach them about Ethics and human conscience? It is lagging especially in women who are greedy for jewels and that too from their mother! This incident he has universalized and it happens invariably in each family. When are they going to learn Ethical practice and listen to human conscience in them?

Ramanujan's portrayal of the family setup is unique which reflects the typical attitude of the people who are moneyminded and materialistic. About this Balachandran writes,

This money culture mars the real love of the
social set up, which results in a socio-cultural

degradation in a family which in turn reflects in the society. Though this happens within the four walls of a house, it becomes a social problem. It is not only the death of a motherly figure but also the death of social values, tradition, culture and decency and the birth of greed and callousness on the part of the daughters. This social evil may spread from one country to neighbouring countries if people of this sort migrate to other countries also and hence the poet wants us to discontinue this mentality. (*Recent Literatures in English* 4)

Elizabeth Reuben opines, "Ramanujan's "History" conveys an alien note of irony through which the non-resident observer's tone is clearly heard" (181).

Ramanujan's small section 'A Taste' (from "Imags" poem) is lovely. The striking lines reveal his Indianness. In order to make babes forget breast feeding, mothers have a knack of applying bitter neem paste over their nipples.

Mothers smear bitter neem
paste on their nipples
to wean greedy babies
and give them an inexplicable
taste for bitter gourd
late in life. (p.257)

Is conscience only for grown-up? Is it not for babes? Through this poem he says it is for babes also. Though some babes are greedy for their mother's milk (Some babes drink even upto 5 years!) it is brought to a stop by mother's activities – by applying neem paste on their nipples. This is a mother's practice to bring up the child in a good way. It is her ethical way of rearing up a son.

Though "Towards Simplicity" (37) poem of Ramanujan speaks about the season, it has embedded a

strong Indian Ethics. Spring is the season of life and Autumn, the season of fall. In a man's life, he grows (like plants) during the spring of his life and he has to fall during the autumn of his life. Falling in the soil is considered to be natural and which cannot be avoided or escaped. It is a simple happening. Hindus (saivites) believe in besmearing their foreheads with holy ash. Symbolically it means after our existence, our bodies will be burnt and we will become ash - one with the soil. "Into the soil as soil as we come" - these words in the poem are very powerful and meaningful. They reflect the ethics of human beings and thus awaken the conscience of the people to live a simple life - life without sins and stigmas.

Ramanujan's "Still Another View of Grace" is an ironical portrayal. What happens to the Ethics and moral conscience? Which is more attractive, powerful and graceful, whether the grace of God or the grace of a woman? The poet persona is a cat on the wall! What will be one's decision? More than God, it is like Satan's succeeding in the practical world. Here it is a street side woman's grace wins over him! This typical Indian scene can be seen in any metropolitan whether it is Bombay, Calcutta or Bangalore.

Sex is a part of one's life. It cannot be negative or hidden. As one burns for, the poet too burned for sexual pleasure. At first he denies his flesh's needs by telling or compromising himself, it is a sin; it is not moral; it is against God! It is against religion and it is against Ethics! It is against human conscience. Even if man remains firm, that lady has been longing for him - at least once to enjoy him! He advises her:

 'Beware

 Do not follow a gentleman's morals
 with that absurd determined air.

 Find a priest. Find any beast in the wind

for a husband. He will give you a houseful
of legitimate sons. It is too late for sin,
even for treason. (p.45)

The poet's religious lineage prevents him from touching a common woman. The fear for police is a hurdle to her. There is no need for him to learn about her lineage, for, his immediate need is sexual pleasure.

And I have no reason to know your kind.
Bred Brahmin among singers of shivering
hymns
I shudder to the bone at hungers that roam
the street
beyond the constable's beat.' (45)

Whose appearance is more alluring – that of God or a common woman? Even a glance of her makes him forget his father's lineage, which is like God's commandments. That much (satanic) power has the look of a woman for a mortal.

But there She stood
upon that dusty road on a night light april
mind
and gave me a look. Commandments crumbled
in my father's past. (45)

Satitrically he writes, even (Ten) commandments failed – crumbled! His father's heritage he forgot. The man who was indifferent to her all these days, now surrenders to her and takes her to his bed room.

Her tumbled hair suddenly known
as silk in my angry hand, I shook a little
and took her, behind the laws of my land. (45)

Indians have a taboo for a common woman, because they used to have a policy, "Don't touch anybody except wife". These are all Ethics and bowing to one's conscience. But here the poet and his father have transgressed the 'Lakshman's line', it seems, for heart is more powerful

than the brain! "Morality too begins to waver before the irresistible attraction of a woman." (Sumana Ghosh 160)

Subash Chandra Saha opines, "Ramanujan's point of view as a poet is often ironic. Though he cannot forget his cultural roots in India, he rises above the average perception of nostalgia and sees his Indian past from an ironic stand point." (*Recent Indian Literature in English* 24)

"Conventions of Despair" (pp.34-35) is also a poem about Ethics and conscience. How to live in this world as a traditionalist or a modernist? If a man becomes a widower the modern idea is, "Marry again. See strippers at the Tease." (34) The poet is not ready for this ultra modern way since he has been reared up in the traditional Hindu Brahminical tradition which extricates him from becoming a sinner, for, he can't tolerate the sufferings in hell. His observance of Ethics and his conscience prevent him from committing that act or sin. Still the modern way of life attracts him. He can't deny the allurements. He is like a cat on the wall, in a moral dilemma which one has to choose. He decides finally,

give me back my archaic despair:
It's not obsolete yet to live
in this many-lived lair
of fears, this flesh. (35)

The poet hasn't selected the modern way of living. But the desire which he had in the beginning is still with him. Is this not a world of dens - caves of fears and flesh? The moral dilemma intervenes.

About Ethos in Ramanujan's poetry, Natanam writes, "Ramanujan uses the opportunities to the full and articulates the Hindu ethos. Life's experience has severely restricted him to the social plane, seldom taking him to the higher levels." (12) Bruce King comments,

“Ramanujan is neither a nostalgic traditionalist nor an advocate of modernization and westernization. He is a product of both and his poems reflect a personality conscious of change, enjoying its vitality.” (212) K.R.Rao records, “For Ramanujan family connexions become a veritable repositories of tradition and culture, a microcosm of Hindu society, a historical replica” (104). Sujit Mukherjee observes, “As a poet, Ramanujan wrote of themes and pre-occupations traditionally and essentially Indian such as family, kinship and Hindu beliefs, with a fastidious and ironical elegance...” (4).

Nissim Ezekiel writes about family problems and personal relationships of Ramanujan: “They are expressed in his poems, always sadly but never self indulgently....I loved him, and he will always be part of my memories” (27).

In many of Ramanujan's poems, there is reflection of Indian Ethics and human conscience, which is very unique, individualistic and impressive. He successfully invokes the need for Ethics and human conscience in people. If there is no Ethics and human conscience, there is no A.K.Ramanujan. A.K. Ramanujan, his other name is Ethics and human conscience.

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Environmental Imagination: The Poetry of William Wordsworth and Kazuyosi Ikeda

**Mithiliesh K. Pandey*

The concept of the natural world as a place of vital sustenance and peaceful coexistence has become an illusion since the earth threatened by the imminent environmental catastrophe. The dawn of the industrial revolution indicated for the first time that such apocalyptic events were really the result of normal human activity rather than divine nemesis. In the early years of the 19th century, the manufacturing cities of England and Japan disappeared into a thick haze of photochemical smog, and it became possible to imagine that new technologies of mass production might alter the climate and eventually destroy the earth's ability to sustain life. The environmentalists for the first time perceived this danger and warned the world to take these dangers seriously and do what is necessary to avert them. An environmentalist philosopher Val Plumwood visualizes the natural crisis as the "massive process of biospheric degradation and the failure and permanent endangerment of many of the world's oldest and greatest fisheries, the continuing destruction of its tropical forests and the loss of much of its agricultural land and up to half its species within next thirty years" (Plumwood: 1).

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Postmodernity altered the writers to be conscious of their natural surrounding in an age of global warming and industrialization. Man's ambition for limitless enjoyment and material comforts has led him towards the exploitation of nature's treasure so indiscriminately as to reduce its capacity for self-stabilization irreparably. To make things worse, man's innate urge to conquer nature has brought him in confrontation with environment. As a consequence, the crowded islands of Britain and Japan demonstrate the fact that nature is rapidly being gobbled up by culture and as such poets have emphasized the urgency of ecological balance threatened by "an unending conflict and war between the natural eco-sphere and man-made techno-sphere" (Commoner: 7). The poems of the British Romantic poet William Wordsworth and those of contemporary Japanese poet Kazuyosi Ikeda invariably focus on nature and environment. In *Ecological Literary Criticism: Romantic Imagining and the Biology of Mind*, Karl Kroeber vehemently argues that British Romantic poetry was "the first literature to anticipate contemporary biological conceptions and that poets such as Wordsworth, Coleridge and P.B. Shelley were proto-ecological in their intellectual orientation" (Kroeber: 2). They often seek to address perennial questions concerning the relationship between mankind and the natural world which has become one of the most important terrains for the development of ecological literary criticism. Everybody seems to be concerned at the impending doom of our planetary ecosystem due to an array of man caused environmental hazards on an unprecedented scale as never before. The well-known critic Jonathan Bate voices his anxiety in the following words:

Carbon dioxide produced by the burning of fossil fuels is trapping the heat of the sun,

causing the planet to become warmer. Glaciers and permafrost are melting, sea levels rising, rainfall patterns changing, winds growing stronger. Meanwhile, the oceans are overfished; deserts are spreading, forests shrinking, fresh water becoming scarcer. The diversity of species upon the planet is diminishing (Bate, 2000: 24).

What is alarming is that despite widespread awareness of these shocking environmental problems no effective remedial action is in sight. Something is lacking in the deep matrix of the Western culture or at the global level and this warrants change in human consciousness. The study of the poetry of these poets can be a positive step towards the solution of this global problem because, "the business of literature is to work upon consciousness" (Bate, 2000: 23). The present paper attempts to unravel the nuances of environmental phenomenon as portrayed in the poetry of Wordsworth and Ikeda and how these poets seek to warn us of environmental threats emanating from governmental, industrial, commercial and neo-colonial forces.

Towards the close of the eighteenth century, man was disappearing into money and nature into machinery. That is why Rousseau's call back to nature sounded so pertinent and was widely acclaimed by the Romantic poets. Man was indeed everywhere in chains of machinery and chains of reason. Poetry of this period reveals the fact that man is no longer at home in society rather alienated from the society. The most common figures and powerful literary creations are solitaires, a haunted Ancient Mariner, a self-exiled Childe Herald and a Solitary Reaper. The typical figures of Wordsworth are largely ordinary people, remote shepherds, forsaken women all lost creatures exhibiting a peculiar strength of heart. But inspite of this, Wordsworth is particularly

concerned with man and nature whereas Ikeda's preoccupation is man, nature and the glory of God's creations on this earth. Both the poets seek this in the primitive and unspoiled nature and myths. Fed up with dins and bustles of society, Wordsworth is instinctively driven away to nature. It is here that he seeks his freedom and liberty in the lonely places of nature. For example in "The Daffodils", the poet cherishes the eco-friendly moments:

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once. I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils.
(Hutchinson, *The Poetical Works of Wordsworth*: 187)

If Wordsworth hailed from Lake district, Kazuyosi Ikeda is a child of Japanese hills and shares with him a profound faith in imagination as a means of knowing the truth. Ikeda's attitude to nature is obviously Wordsworthian because he treats her as a perennial spirit ready to sympathise with and soothe a suffering heart. In one of his significant poems, Ikeda puts before us the healing virtue of Nature:

The seven coloured Rainbow is so beauteous
Sunlight gives mercy and grace very
bounteous.
Sunlight flows to the bottoms of humankind's
hearts.
And dissolves the sufferings and worries in
hearts.
(*Songs of the Soul*: 12)

He observes beauty and peace in nature which straightway corresponds with heart and enkindles it by removing all traces of anxiety collected here.

While comparing Wordsworth and Ikeda, it can be illustrated that the former was a pioneer in the strict

sense of the word. His chief merit lies in an acute perception of the contemporary scene and the expression of a poignant reaction to it. The following observation of Wordsworth in the *Lyrical Ballads* exhibits his prophetic vision:

For a multitude of causes, unknown to former times, are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and, unfitting it for all voluntary exertion, to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor. The most effective of these causes are the great national events which are daily taking place, and the increasing accumulation of men in cities, where the uniformity of their occupations produces a craving for an extraordinary incident which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies. To this tendency of life and manners, the literature and theatrical exhibitions of the country have conformed themselves (Brett, R.L. and A.R. Jones: 210).

Wordsworth obviously felt the dehumanizing impact of the growing mechanization of society. He could foresee the gradual manifestation of the horrible consequences of the industrial revolution. His anguish bursts in the following lines of the sonnet "The World Is Too Much With Us":

Great God! I'd rather be
A pagan suckled in a creed outworn,
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less
forlorn:
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.
(Hutchinson, *The Poetical Works of Wordsworth*: 259)

In the above lines, the word 'Forlorn' is a key word which stands at the threshold of the contemporary world and compels the poet to go back to the primitive realm of nature. People are always busy, running after a materialistic life, which consumes their time and energy blinding them to the beautiful objects of nature. The poet discloses the horror of social, moral and ecological degradation embedded in the industrial pursuit:

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our
powers
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid
boon!

(*Ibid*: 259)

In this context, Bate's following remark is quite apt:

Wordsworth's politics were truly green and that he is the first authentic ecological poet in English. His message has strong relevance to our own contemporary census with the depiction of the layer, the damages of acid rain, the disappearance of the tropical rainforests, the development of energy saving technology and clean engines, and the problems of industrial pollution generally (Bate, 1991: 181).

II

Like Wordsworth's, Kazuyosi Ikeda's poetry also appeals for going back to nature for the survival of humanity. He has a deep insight into human psychology where the sad plight of man is the real cause of his tragedy. His poetry basically deals with nature and human situation. As a scientist and environmentalist, he ponders over human suffering with a sense of unusual concerns. In his book *Poems on the Heart of Creation*,

he expresses his faith in humanity which will ultimately survive because of its inexhaustible voice. As a poet Ikeda differs from Wordsworth because he did not believe in the presence of any divine spirit in the objects of nature like trees, plants and flowers etc. The following speech of Ikeda unravels his firm belief in the God's creation particularly man, nature and environment:

I consider that man-made things, such as a pen, a basket and a hammer, also have their own hearts, because they are creations of men who are creations of God and so they are God's indirect creations: I also sing of the hearts of many man-made things.

(Dwivedi: 120)

Coming from a developed country, Ikeda is more deeply concerned with human surrounding. He knew that technological advancement ushered in the industrial revolution and brought in its wake unprecedented material prosperity besides the evils of unfettered capitalism. The over-crowding in big cities and the consequent moral and social problems resulted in class tensions spoiling the face of nature. What Bill Mckibben observes in this context is true that "by changing the weather, we make every spot on earth man-made and artificial. We have deprived nature of its independence, and that is fatal to its meaning. Nature's independence is its meaning, without it there is nothing but us" (Mckibben" 54). In the poem "An Aeroplane", the poetic persona longs to soar high into the sky beyond the human existence since an inanimate object has also physical feelings. In the following lines Ikeda criticizes scientists for inventing aeroplane whose heart is heavy being abused by men. The poet, conscious of his environment, longs for peace and harmony without 'vain sound' and 'roaring cry':

I am an aeroplane soar high into the sky;
I fly in the bright sunlight at will and freely.
But as my wings are heavy, my heart is heavy.
Listen, there is a vain sound in my roaring
cry.

(Ikeda, *Poetry on the Animate and the Inanimate*: 25)

The word ecology is derived from the Greek word ‘*aikos*’ meaning house or dwelling place, and the poetry of Wordsworth and Ikeda clearly foreshadows the modern science of ecology in its holistic conception of the Earth as a house-hold, a dwelling place for an interdependent biological community. In his great autobiographical poem “Prelude”, Wordsworth states that his earliest memory of childhood was the sound of the river Derwent, whose murmurs “from his alder shades and rocky falls, ... sent a voice/That flowed along my dreams”? (Wordsworth, I: 272). He claims that his first memories were those of sounds, a speaking forth of the river directly into the dreams of the infant, making him an engaged participant in the world that surrounds him, not merely a detached observer. On the other hand, in the poem “Tintern Abbey”, he describes again his return to a place on the banks of the river Wye that he first visited five years ago. His initial response is one of sheer delight in the evidently unchanged appearance of the landscape; he celebrates the endurance of wild natural beauty, even in the midst of intensive human pre-occupation. The opening lines of the poem depict a human community dwelling in harmonious co-existence with nature; the local farmsteads are green to the very door, and the local farmers have acted to preserve a remnant of the primordial ecosystem of the region by allowing their hedgerows to run wild. It is the central meditative development of the poem in which Wordsworth depicts his younger self as if, ‘he were a

wild beast, bounding over the mountains'. Ikeda has also formulated his ecological philosophy in the context of man and animal relationship. He imagines a small creature—a bee which makes our life more beautiful despite being aware of his own ephemeral life. In the poem "A Bee" the poet suggests that man should also emulate the philosophy of the bee and beautify his surroundings without disturbing the external world:

A bee is frail insect with no human mind.
But the shortness of his life may be in his mind.
So he at a calyx, sucks nectar from flowers.
And he dances together with falling flowers.
(Ikeda, *Heart of Creation*: 19)

The beautifying nature of an insect bee is contrasted with man's "meddling intellect/Misshapes the beauteous forms of Nature". Unlike Wordsworth, Ikeda has used here the Japanese "Sitigotyo" (seven and five syllable metre) quatrains where each and every word portrays unique beauty, precision and clarity. The last two lines of the stanza contain alliterations which underline the poetic art of Ikeda while contributing to his sense of rootedness in a particular landscape.

Both Wordsworth and Ikeda wrote poetry to propagate natural peace and prosperity on this planet. Unlike Wordsworth, Ikeda deliberately believes that all things in nature, animate or inanimate are created by God with a heart which has feelings like human beings. In his poetic piece titled "Three subjects poem", he states the fact that inanimate objects have also a living sign and soul. The following lines of the poem from "A Stone on the Road" show the helplessness of a stone which is lying on the road unnoticed by man. But the pretty flowers provide shadow and shelter in a peaceful atmosphere:

I am a stone on the road, but I do have life.

A traveler, ignorant of a stone's dear life,
 Kicks me, then I roll lightly with unwounded
 pride
 And rest by pretty flowers on the calm roadside.

(Ikeda, *Heart of Creation*: 45)

While narrating the relation between man and nature, Wordsworth also feels pity and sympathy for man who has made his life worst living in a scientific surrounding beyond nature. The poet wonders how the madness of man to acquire all round development has brought evils of unfettered capitalism and overcrowded industrial cities. As a consequence, social problems arise like co-existence of poverty and wealth, class tensions and damage to the beauty of nature. He warns us against the continuous degradation of the environment in particular by the interference of human activities. Wordsworth's poetry particularly "Lines Written in Early Spring", "manifests", as K.R. Johnston observes, "the same split or contrast between praise of natural beauty and expressions of sympathy for the poor," (Johnston: 179). The following is an apt instance of poet's anxiety about the lot of man alienated from natural eco-sphere:

To her fair works did Nature link
 The human soul that through me ran;
 And much it grieved my heart to think
 What man has made of man.

(Hutchinson, *The Poetical Works of Wordsworth*: 482)

III

However, it is worthwhile to infer that being aware of the environmental hazards both the poets aspire for natural wilderness for the growth and survival of humanity. Their poems succinctly reveal their ecological speculations which they might forethink to change the

vulgar space of modernity into a holy space of wilderness. Their fascination for nature is to be understood in a broad perspective which brings with it a sense of loss and desire to recover that time of unalienated life when man was in symphony with nature. In his poem, "Japan" Ikeda as an optimistic poet imagines that our world should be evergreen and in this way can make our earthly life full of bliss and ecstasy transcending the prejudices of human life. From an ecological point of view, the following poetic extract reminds the reader of the dependence of all living things on the light of the sun and reveals the glory of natural beauty, sustenance and bliss which is essential for the entire universe:

O Japan! People's hearts are pure, warm,
tender.

The fields and mountains are full of rays
beautiful

Spring and autumn are pregnant with subtle
flavour.

May the dear, lovely Isles be forever blissful?

(Ikeda, *Poems on Love and Peace*: 34)

Wordsworth like Ikeda also delineates the picture of the early morning in the poem "Upon Westminster Bridge" where the great beauty of the London city is marvellous. He imagines an environment where the towers, domes and temples stand glittering under the smokeless sky. Such a sort of ecological speculation is experienced in the following lines:

This City now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning: silent bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples
lie

Upon unto the fields, and to the sky,
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.

(*The Poetical Works of Wordsworth*: 269)

Thus, Wordsworth and Ikeda share a perception of the natural world as a dynamic ecosystem and a passionate commitment to the preservation of wild creatures and serenity of nature. Fed up with 'anthropocentric' problems both turned back to the realm of primitive nature in their own ways. The serenity that they derived from natural objects was not merely a response to the striking patterns in the natural order—the beauteous forms of nature. For them, the objects of nature were a constant source of enrichment of their imagination and moral being. The crucial thing, however, was their characteristic belief that man and nature were interdependent. So the interdependence is sought to be explained through a mediacy of an all pervasive, animating, informing principle—the spirit. This is the supreme achievement of their myth making imagination which makes their view of man and nature organic and hence any disregard to the sanctity of nature and its functioning may lead to colossal loss in their relationship which would jeopardize the forward movement of humanity.

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**Race and Beyond:
Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man***

**Nibir K. Ghosh*

When people like me, they tell me it is in spite of my color. When they dislike me they point out that it is not because of my color. Either way, I am locked into the infernal cycle.

(Frantz Fanon, 116)

If Richard Wright's *Native Son* (1940) marked an important watershed in the history of black aesthetics, the literature of black protest entered a brilliant new phase with the arrival of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* in the Spring of 1952. According to Nathan A. Scott, Jr., "the astonishing authority of its art and of the systematic vision of the world which this art expressed immediately won for the book a pre-eminence which in the intervening years, far from being in any way diminished, has so consolidated itself that it is today universally regarded as an established classic of modern American Literature" (Scott, Jr. 295).

Invisible Man brought for Ellison many awards and accolades: the National Book Award, the Russwurm Award, and the National Newspaper Publishers' Award. The novel was acclaimed as "the most comprehensive one-volume fictional-symbolic-treatment of the history of the American Negro in the twentieth century" (Kostelenatz 5). *Invisible Man* amply justified this tribute

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by offering a kaleidoscopic vision of all the historical landmarks that characterised the racial experience in America: the dilapidated promise of the Golden Day, the system of education at a Southern College for Negroes, the illusions created by the likes of Booker T. Washington, the migration from South to North, adjustment to Harlem - the city within a city, the problem of finding employment in a discriminative and exploitative capitalist economy, the evictions of the Depression era, the allurements of Garveyism and Communism as panaceas and subsequent disillusionment, and, finally, the outbreak of the explosive black anger in the form of Harlem race-riots. And all these presented not as documentation but as symbolic points on the journey of a nameless narrator towards self-discovery.

In the "Preface" to his *Shadow and Act*, Ellison pointed out the difficulty which a Negro writer encountered in depicting "with honesty and without bowing to ideological expediences the attitudes and values which give Negro American life its sense of wholeness and which renders it bearable and human and...desirable" (Ellison xxi). By embodying in art the ideological and emotional penalties suffered by the Negro in America, Ellison, in *Invisible Man*, succeeds in overcoming the said difficulty.

The hero of Ellison's *Invisible Man* is the unnamed black Narrator who introduces himself as "a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids" but who is, nevertheless, "invisible" simply because people "refuse to see" him (IM 3). He begins his life with the naive illusion that education is what separates him from the whites. With the help of a scholarship he manages to enter a Southern College for Negroes. During his junior year at college he is asked to drive Mr. Norton, a visiting white benefactor, about the countryside. The

narrator unwisely allows Mr. Norton to meet Jim Trueblood from whom Mr. Norton learns the horrifying tale of how, while abed with his wife and daughter, Trueblood had made love to his daughter. When Norton demands a drink, the narrator takes him, unwillingly, to the Golden Day, an inn and brothel frequented by the Negro inmates of a mental institution. Thereafter the narrator is expelled from the college by Dr. Bledsoe for having failed in his duty to please the white benefactor and philanthropist.

With Dr. Bledsoe's sealed letters of reference, the narrator leaves for New York with the idea of seeking employment which, he thinks, will enable him to return to his studies later. He discovers through Mr. Emerson that Dr. Bledsoe's letters contain a warning to the prospective employers against hiring him. Emerson recommends him for employment in the Liberty Paint Company that produces the "optic white" paint for use in national monuments. He soon loses his job at the Liberty Paints and then travels to Harlem where he is suddenly confronted with the violence of the outside world. Aroused to anger by the eviction of an elderly Negro couple, the narrator incites the mob to action with his skilful speech which attracts the attention of Brother Jack who enlists him to the Communist Brotherhood as a speaker for the underprivileged. The narrator is soon disillusioned by the Brotherhood's attempt to curb his individual identity. Finally, after discerning how the Communist Party is exploiting the color situation in a Harlem race riot the narrator flees from the scene and accidentally plunges into an open manhole, the underground world from where he begins to observe as well as evaluate the metaphor of his own invisibility.

The odyssey of the anonymous narrator forms the focal point of the narrative of *Invisible Man*. The narrator's close encounters with people (both white and

black) and situations unfold for him the true nature of what it means to be black in America. The narrator's plethora of experiences ultimately gives him the opportunity to say like Ulysses, in Tennyson's poem, "I have become a part of all that I have met." His journey has made him aware of the painful realities of his blackness and invisibility and has given him the courage to emerge as an individual who finally wishes to be visible, at least to himself: "It took me a long time and much painful boomeranging of my expectations to achieve a realization everyone else appears to have been born with: that I am nobody but myself. But first I had to discover that I am an invisible man" (IM 13).

Each new experience that the narrator undergoes makes him aware of a reality which constantly reveals itself as the reverse of what it had appeared to him initially. In this awareness of reality, he sees for the first time the possibility of being more than a member of a race who could be instrumental in ushering in "The Rainbow of America's Future!" His euphoria, however, does not last long as he is quickly made to realize that "individuals don't count for much; it's what the group wants, what the group does. Everyone here submerges his personal ambitions for the common achievement" (IM 299).

The narrator is disillusioned because he has lived by the commandments of his social group and cannot, therefore, see through the hypocrisy that is an inherent part of the social structure under the framework of which he is made to operate. All along in his journey the narrator assumes the identities that have been thrust upon him by others. He has accepted the "accepted attitudes" and that has made life simple. He has used all the "shock-absorbing phrases" that he learned all his life in order to reconcile himself to the circumstances that confronted him in his voyage of self-discovery. He

yearns for freedom that comes to him only after he finally becomes aware of his own identity. Only after plunging into the underground does he come to realize “what and how much I had lost by trying to do only what was expected of me instead of what I myself had wished to do” (IM 202). He is no longer blind for he has learnt to see and understand things for himself instead of blindly following the path cut out for him by others, a fact that he states in his “Epilogue”:

Everywhere I’ve turned somebody has wanted to sacrifice me for my good - only they were the ones who benefited....I had thought they accepted me because they felt that color made no difference because they didn’t see either color or man....For all they were concerned, we were so many names scribbled on fake ballots, to be used at their convenience and when not needed to be filed away...I was simply a material, a natural resource to be used (IM 382-384).

The narrator’s assertion shows that his journey has not been a senseless waste. He has learnt the hard way how “All boundaries down, freedom was not only the recognition of necessity, it was the recognition of possibility” (IM 377). Each time he has met with the despair of betrayal and duplicity, he has come a step closer to recognizing his potentialities for coping with the pressures of life. He has put to good use the advice given to him by Bledsoe: “learn to look beneath the surface ... Play the game but don’t believe in it ... You’re hidden right out in the open....They wouldn’t see you because they don’t expect you to know anything” (IM 118). His disappointments have made him wiser for he has learnt to see beneath the surface. He has very well understood what it meant to play the game without believing in it.

Confronted by the confoundingly complex arrangement of hope and desire, fear and hate, the narrator realizes the futility of any withdrawal or retreat into a Separate Peace. He was assigned various identities but no one really bothered to find out what he called himself. After years of trying to adopt the opinions of others, the narrator "finally rebelled" (IM 433). The first step of his rebellion is his conscious recognition and acceptance of his own invisibility. He confesses in the "Epilogue":

Like everyone else in our country, I started out with my share of optimism. I believed in hard work and progress and action....My world has become one of infinite possibilities....No indeed, the world is just as concrete, ornery, vile and sublimely wonderful as before, only now I better understand my relation to it and it to me....I have stayed in my hole, because up above there's an increasing passion to make men conform to a pattern....Why, if they follow this conformity business they'll end up forcing me, an invisible man, to become white, which is not a color but the lack of one. Must I strive toward colorlessness? (IM 435)

The narrator points out the inherent danger of assuming this colorlessness by totally negating the human content in the individual's personality. The narrator's reflection in peace and quiet in the underground cellar into which he has accidentally fallen reveals that he does not wish to use his invisibility as a disguise to withdraw from the scene of actual action. On the contrary, he decides to shake off the old skin and emerge from the underground to proclaim to his fellow-men that "on the lower frequencies" he would speak for them irrespective of his invisibility for, he affirms, "even an invisible man has a socially responsible role to play" (IM 438).

It is true that the narrator cannot do much to alleviate social oppression but it is wrong to presume that the narrator falls an easy prey to the subtle varieties of oppression practiced upon him by both the blacks and the whites. His frank admission in the "Epilogue" should not be misunderstood to be an expression of his helplessness: "Being invisible and without substance, a disembodied voice; as it were what else could I do? What else but try to tell you what was really happening when your eyes were looking through?" (IM 439).

As both participant and spectator in the tragicomic drama of his own life, the narrator succeeds in persuading one and all to make a distinction between his self-identity and his social identity. It is in this awareness of his identity that one can see the visible impressions of the power of his protest.

Another important lesson that the narrator learns from his eventful journey is the art of controlling his anger which the frequent instances of betrayal and duplicity elicit in him. Unlike Bigger Thomas in *Native Son*, the narrator in *Invisible Man* refuses to be provoked into violent hatred since it would prove to be self-destructive. In one of his pre-invisible phase statements the narrator makes it plain that he longs for "freedom, not destruction":

"I wanted peace and quiet, tranquility, but was too much aboil inside. Somewhat beneath the load of the emotion-freezing ice which my life had conditioned my brain to produce, a spot of black anger glowed and threw off a hot red light of such intensity that had Lord Kelvin known of its existence, he would have had to revise his measurements" (IM 197).

Placed between the two extreme attitudes of abject conformity and violent retaliation, the narrator finally decides to shed all his illusions of finding easy solutions

and prepares himself to recognize and affirm his invisible presence. By stepping outside the narrow borders of a distorted reality the narrator has been able to re-activate his own sense of perception which had hitherto been deadened by his vain effort to live a life controlled by others. The shedding off of his illusions has helped him to reflect on his world in a philosophical manner: "Whence all this passion towards conformity anyway? Diversity is the word. Let each man keep his many parts and you'll have no tyrant states....America is woven of many strands; I would recognize them and let it so remain....Life is to be lived, not controlled; and humanity is won by continuing to play in face of certain defeat. Our fate is to become one, and yet many. This is not prophecy but description (IM 435-436).

Ellison's message is clear: The black man must, first of all, learn to convince himself that his existence is real instead of living with the sensation that he does not exist in the real world at all. In a review of Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma* Ellison states how it is very natural for the Negro "to exist in the nightmarish fantasy of the white American mind as a phantom that the white mind seeks unceasingly, by means both crude and subtle, to lay" (Ellison, 1964: 304). In order to come to terms with the reality of his own existence, the Negro must awaken into the dawn of consciousness and apprehend things from his own standpoint. Neither meek submission nor violent retaliation can help the Negro assert his identity. Not through the willing suspension of disbelief but through the conscious recognition of his own identity can he begin to live meaningfully as a citizen in a nation that is made of many strands. Only after the black man becomes conscious of his own individuality can he begin to persuade the white man to acknowledge his existence. The blacks and the whites need not merge into a single entity. What was required of the whites was to see the

Negro people not in terms of stereotypes and cliches but really as Americans who share American characteristics and American history.

In an interview for the *New Leader's* special issue entitled "Harlem's America," Ellison says how the white men who were antagonistic to his race would provoke him to violence so that they could destroy him and how he would struggle "to keep from being provoked, to keep my eye on my goals. I was not there to hold a contest of violence with people" (Ellison 1966: 31). Like Ellison, the narrator in *Invisible Man* is aware of the futility of holding a contest of violence with the white people. He has been taught by men like Bledsoe that anger had to be skillfully controlled so that the energy of the hatred against the prejudice of white racism could be organized and directed in the right manner:

"Blinded with broad bands of White cloth, the black man finds himself compelled to acknowledge that he is not a human being but "a mark on the score-card of (the white man's) achievement, a thing and not a man; a child, or even less - a black amorphous thing "whereas the white man is, again, not a man to him "but a God, a force" in a world where both slaves and pragmatists are taught "that white is right" (IM 73).

The narrator, therefore, points out very emphatically towards the end of the novel that it is one of the greatest jokes in the world to see "the spectacle of the whites busy escaping blackness and becoming blacker every day and the blacks striving toward whiteness, becoming quite dull and gray" (IM 436). Ellison says: "We are Americans, all of us, whether black or white Americans" (IM 263). It is imperative that the Negro and the White should not look for their identities in terms of color but both must

become aware of their responsibilities as American citizens.

All the same, Ellison's ideal brotherhood where the "invisible man" can discover his identity and live with freedom and dignity is suggested as an ideal possibility rather than a description of fact. It is not without a great deal of irony that the narrator finds the torch of the Statue of Liberty "lost in the fog" (IM 126), implying, thereby, that the American ideal of liberty is still a myth. Again, towards the end of the novel, the narrator looks at the wall map and laughs at Columbus, wondering "what an India he'd found" (IM 377).

In the final analysis, it can be accepted without doubt that Ellison's purpose in making the narrator journey from innocence to experience across the frontiers of racial pathways and realms is to show how individuality has to be operative beyond the racial structuring of society to correct the perspectives mystified by centuries of prejudice. *Invisible Man* may have come as a disappointment to all those who were looking for a protagonist who would further intensify the fury and hatred of Richard Wright's Bigger Thomas. Ellison was complimented by Saul Bellow for not having "adopted a minority tone" (Bellow 29). This remark of Bellow does not imply that Ellison was writing to merely seek white approval. Ellison may have created an aesthetic distance with regard to his Negro experience but there is a great degree of truth in Irving Howe's remark that "No white man could have written it, since no white man could know with such intimacy the life of the Negroes from the inside" (Howe 100-101).

By exploring all the significant aspects of the racial confrontation and by looking for a tangible solution to bring about a black-white integration, Ellison has produced through *Invisible Man* a state of mind from

where one can begin to understand the “American Dilemma” better than ever before. Ellison’s narrator may not demand justice and equity as does Wright’s protagonist, but he shows a greater and deeper inclination to confront the inferences he draws objectively from his own experiences and to throw those inferences into the “guilty conscience of America.” At the end of the narrator’s journey which takes him underground and prepares him to emerge with the consciousness of his social responsibility, the narrator has shed his illusions but not his prejudices about both the blacks and the whites in order to grow in awareness of the role which even an invisible man is expected to play in formulating a correct perspective of the American society.

Charles Johnson, the first African American writer to receive the National Book Award after Ralph Ellison, rightly remarked in an interview with me that “Ellison’s achievement in *Invisible Man* was the creation of a protagonist rich in his humanity, in the folklore, music, and literary culture of African Americans, as well as the cultures of the West, which is something no white writer can do from ‘the outside’ when creating a black protagonist” (Ghosh :2005,7).

With Barack Obama’s phenomenal entry into the White House for two terms, the color line indicating the presence of a prominent racial divide may seem to have become relatively less significant in today’s America but the ambivalence of the American dilemma continues to exist in the conscience of the nation that was built on the fundamental alienable rights of human beings to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. Consequently, Ellison’s classic novel is bound to remain a comprehensive guide to the understanding of race relations in the world’s most powerful democracy.

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Remembering Shiv K. Kumar as a Poet

*Sudhir K. Arora

I have followed every funeral procession in
town
of friend, relative or stranger –
for this is the moment of introspection.
Where does one go from here? (*Where Have
the Dead Gone* 20)

...
So I have chosen to write hereafter
only on sand,
while I hear the waves
intoning mantras in my ears.
Let my epitaph be written on sand. (*Where
Have the Dead Gone* 27)

...
Give me a line or two
in some local paper
even in fine print. (*Trapfalls in the Sky* 31)

While musing over the phenomenon of death and wondering where man goes after death, Shiv K. Kumar, whose first love is poetry, moved to the other world to experience 'Death' on March 1 2017. His death is an irreparable loss to every poetry lover though he is still alive through his creative writings, particularly poetry collections, namely, *Articulate Silences* (1970), *Cobwebs in the Sun* (1974), *Subterfuges* (1975), *Woodpackers*

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(1979) *Trapfalls in the Sky* (1986), *Woolgathering* (1995), *Thus Spake the Buddha* (2002), *Losing My Way* (2008), *Which of My Selves Do You Wish to Speak to?* (2011) and *Where Have the Dead Gone? & Other Poems* (2014). Today he is remembered as a poet though he endeavoured his hand in other genres like fiction, short-story, play and translation.

(II)

Shiv K. Kumar (1921-2017), a recipient of the Padma Bhusan, winner of Sahitya Akademi Award for his poetry collection—*Trapfalls in the Sky* in 1987, distinguished Professor of English, critic of great repute, Bergsonian scholar is an academic poet who has woven the texture of his poetry with intuitions, feelings, symbols, imagery and myths. D.H. Lawrence, T.S. Eliot and Bergson have influenced him so profoundly that he has developed a poetic attitude which recommends the primal innocence, purity and intuitions. The poet in Shiv K. Kumar rejects wickedness, reason, analysis and logic in favour of intuitions and innocence. He is sure that only intuitions help a man to face the challenges out of the predicaments in life. Reason and intellect fail to penetrate the mystery of life while intuitions offer the right vision to understand what life is. He feels that it is better to depend on intuition than merely on intellect or reason. Reflect over the excerpt from the poem 'He Walked All Night', which offers the poet's musings on life:

The best way to choose is not to choose
but just press on.
If you plan to return home,
it may take you a lifetime,
as reason stumbles at every step.
So why don't you rest through the day
and voyage through the night?' (*Where Have
the Dead Gone* 95)

(III)

Shiv K. Kumar's poetic idiom is touched with the West but the Western touch does not wipe out his Indian sensibility. The water of life flows in the Indian river with its western banks. Keki N. Daruwalla writes about Shiv K. Kumar's poetry saying: "It floats between ironic counterparts, and its tension comes from the Indian environment he writes in with an outlook moulded by years of living in the West" (110).

It is the force of Kumar's poetic idiom that makes even silent words speak. The words that lie in dormant stage come to action. The interweaving of words makes a poem alive. A solitary word does nothing but when it comes in touch with other words, it contributes in the poetic journey. All the words are charged with the pen of the poet who makes them sing and dance on the white sheet. He releases words softly. "Don't cough out words. / Just let them out softly" (*Losing My Way* 55). Images and figures come, react, interact and then, fuse. This happens by virtue of his poetic idiom which illumines words with insight. And this is how a poem takes birth.

A poem is born when words wing down
from the sky, chorusing like nightingales
with holes in their throats. (*Losing My
Way* 55)

Sometimes his poetry becomes confessional in tone. But, it is also true that a poet takes the raw material from his life. He cooks this raw material in the fire of imagination. He adds the spice of literary devices. It is the reader's participation which a poet longs for. He shares with Atma Ram thus:

I have been often labelled as a 'confessional' poet and indeed in tone and structure my poetry may be called 'autobiographical'. But what most readers fails to comprehend is the fact that a poet often invents facts

and experiences camouflaging them as real and authentic – to achieve the reader's total participation. It is more a strategy of the imagination than a transcript of empirical reality. (73)

(IV)

The poet peeps within to know who he is and why he has come here. He finds himself a bundle of various personalities. He delves deep to realise himself and explores his identity through love, sex, religion and landscapes. Many selves begin to pop out of him.

I am a beehive of selves
each conditioned by its own horoscope.
Touch me at any point
and I will metamorphose into a new
configuration
of colour and sound. (*Thus Spake the Buddha* 17)

He debunks what is orthodox and outdated in religion. His progressive nature makes him satirize even social institutions like marriage. Intuitions, not religion is the right touchstone with which he judges a thing.

(V)

Buddha enters the poet Shiv K. Kumar and makes him somewhat philosophical in his approach towards life. He emphasizes on the sublimation of desires, not their suppression. The hunger is to be purified. When purified, it results in the creation like lava that licks earth and makes it fertile.

The way to satiate a yearning
is to sublimate it. Like lava licking
barren earth into tulips and marigolds. (*Thus Spake the Buddha* 5)

With birth, death is certain. The body is a fort that has many exits. The body dies, not the soul. The soul remains

eternal. In the *Bhagvad Gita*, Lord Krishna says:

Nainam chhindanti shastraani nainam dahati
paavakah;
Na chainam kiedayantyaapo no shoshayati
maurutah. (*Bhagavad Gita* 2.23)

Shiv K. Kumar who is influenced by the *Bhagavad-Gita* makes the people understand the truth of life and death. How philosophically yet plainly he states thus!

The body is like a fort, with many exits.
When it crumbles under its own weight,
the commander within flies away
from the rear gate to set up another fort
elsewhere. He is never killed.
Flame cannot turn him to ashes,
nor water dampen his resilience.
He was there to see the first sunrise
and he will survive to see this planet lapse
into nothingness. (*Thus Spake the Buddha* 50)

When death is inevitable, why should it be feared? A man throughout his life remains greedy and collects one thing or the other in spite of knowing the fact that nothing will go with him in his journey beyond this world. Does it not seem to be strange that flesh is given to flame and ashes to the holy river? How philosophically the poet states the ultimate truth!

Perched on the wall a vulture cogitates
upon human avidity—flesh offered
to the flames, bones and ashes
to the Ganges. No leaving
for the living. (*Woodpeckers* 19)

Man should never forget the end. The moment of his painful journey begins the moment he comes in this world.

Pain, he has now learnt, is born
in the mother's womb, and ends only

when the ashes are silenced—
by a sprinkling of milk. (*Thus Spake the
Buddha* 56)

It is strange that man suffers as a result of his sins committed in his previous life. Man continues to suffer without finding any solace. How painfully the poet has expressed the anguish of man!

Now the voyage of agony,
from somewhere to nowhere,
in search of redemption. (*Losing My Way* 26)

The poet desires to know the end of this painful voyage but finds himself perplexed as there is no way out of it. He is much influenced by the theory of Buddha who believes that pain is flowing in the world and its cause is desire.

(VI)

Shiv K. Kumar paints his poetic landscape with the colours of reality. Poverty and disease have become synonym with the lower poor class of the Indian society. These poor people are devoid of bread, clothes and shelter. The poet talks of street children, who have not any identity because "Identity is for those who lullabied / in cradles, and fed on / honey and dreams" (*Losing My Way* 41). But, these street children are denied name, honey and dreams. They are simply "leftovers in the dustbin, discarded even by a ragpicker" (*Losing My Way* 41). They are found before the churches and temples stretching their hands for bread or alms but fail to have from the devotees who come for worship. The poet believes that when the deities do not care for them, how will other people care?

I see them in front of churches
and temples, their hands stretched
our for boons. But who cares? Not even

the deities, each resting
smugly in his sanctorum. (*Losing My Way* 41)

If he writes on love and sex, he also writes on the underdog. In his poetry he talks of the street children, pavement sleepers, rickshaw pullers and the like. When it is night, these poor people sleep on the pavement without caring for tomorrow. The poet calls them fallen angels who come here only when the sun sets.

The poet believes that justice is always delayed. Man continues to move in and out of the court but never gets relief. The final relief that he gets is not from the court but from the court of God who calls him from the earth forever. This judicial system is polluted and poisonous to the extent that it snatches away man's precious time and, to the extreme, even life. One may come here but cannot go as there is no escape from its labyrinth. The only fate left to him is waiting. Waiting becomes life. Waiting becomes end.

It's the long wait that kills
the lover, the cancer-patient
and the petitioner. (*Trapfalls in the Sky* 23)

The petitioner continues to go in the hope of settlement or justice but gets date after date. Each date becomes another doomsday for him. He has to tolerate insult and alienation as soon as he enters it. The court spreads its labyrinth which never lets the petitioner go out of it.

During those aeons of anguish,
I seldom saw the Trinity, all together—
the judge, my counsel and the respondent.
So each time another doomsday was fixed
for my martyrdom. (*Woolgathering* 16)

The court becomes the grave for the alive. The petitioners become the living dead bodies. The judicial system is the river of pain which drowns petitioner and his family.

(VII)

Shiv K. Kumar is not against religion but he is against the irrational, outdated and orthodox rituals that have embraced religion in the name of faith and belief. He is against shedding blood of animal in the name of sacrifice for the goddess. What is the use of such sacrifices as take the lives of innocent animals like sheep? Does creation mean killing? The poet determines:

If the way to create
is the way to kill
I have hoarded enough blood
in my throat
for all the hyenas to suck from.

(*Subterfuges* 34)

The holy river Ganga is worshipped as a goddess among the Hindus who wish to die on her bank with the belief that they will go directly to heaven. The Ganga is religious to the extent that it lures even the poet to declare:

If I were to die
this is the moment
and this the place. (*Woolgathering* 23)

But, the poet cannot close his eyes to the pollution done in the name of religious rituals. Even the dead bodies, ashes and animals are thrown away into the river. It is strange that people take a bath for their outward purification without caring for the inner purification. With birth they enter the world as “chaste, like breast-milk” (*Trapfalls in the Sky* 35) but as the time passes they pollute themselves by becoming a part of pollution.

(VIII)

Shiv K. Kumar is a poet of love with a difference. He is natural in the matter of love and sex and, hence, expects

naturalness and openness. What he recommends is *samarpan*—total devotion. What's the use of sex if it is not done with love? Under the influence of D.H. Lawrence, he raises sex to the level of religion. He associates sex with religion through the instances of the Sun Temple, Konark and Khajuraho which highlight the religiosity of sex. He gives wings to the holy sex and takes the reader to Khajuraho where various gods and goddesses are seen in different sexual postures which give a feel of creation and divine energy. Man is alive because of love and sex. Man exists because sex exists. Sex is the holy flame which continues to illumine the way that finally elevates him to the divine within. What Khajuraho has become today is the result of sculptor's intuitive hands. Reason makes distance while intuition lessens it. Stones at Khajuraho cannot tolerate any control; they remain free and so seem to be engaged in love-making.

Since any distance
between leaf and bud, bone and flesh
hand and breast, only whets appetite
these stones brook no restraint .
They flow into a confluence of navels,
Legs and thighs, leaving blemishes
Even on a lotus palm. (*Woolgathering* 24)

(IX)

The poet is not a slave of an institution like marriage for love. A true relationship depends on mutual understanding and caring. The marriage ceremony can bind two individuals officially but not necessarily internally. He wonders that before marriage how love can be lust and after marriage how lust turns itself into love. He sees the birds while mating in the tree's foliage which provide a cover for "the ritual of love." The other thing that he traces in birds mating is that they are

detached and not bound with any bond for the whole life. One bird hops onto the other and after performing sex act it flies away without the possibility of reunion with the same one. The poet knows that attachment brings pain. When it brings pain, why does a man not seek freedom—freedom from the bond of living for life? He is against hypocrisy and double standard of the people who believe in the continuation of the bond despite the lack of faith and mutual understanding in love. Birds are better than human beings as they are not attached to their companions because they know that the attachment will result in pain, suffering and separation. Mark the excerpt from the poem “Birds Mating”, which exposes hypocrisy of the human beings in the name of love on one side and philosophy of detachment on other side though the way does not suit to Indian values and traditions:

As each bird flies away to its own hemisphere,
there will be no reunion hereafter —
never the same tree, nor the same pair.
If attachment breeds pain,
why not seek peace in freedom?
If the same river flows into the same sea,
the waters would turn turbid. (*Where Have
the Dead Gone* 86)

(X)

Shiv K. Kumar is wrongly alleged for being anti-women while the truth is that he criticises only the inconstant and infidel women. He respects woman as woman—be she a prostitute, mango-vender or female jogger or maid-servant or any other female form. He respects women with faith and constancy. He appreciates Indian women for their faith and patience that they have for their husbands. India is considered to be “triple-baked Continent” because, as Prabhat K. Singh writes, “Life in

India is baked in the fires of sun, sex and penury" (106). The poet has compared them to empty pitchers waiting for their husband who will come and fill their heart with love.

In this triple-baked Continent
 women don't etch angry eyebrows
 on mud walls.
 Patiently they sit
 like empty pitchers
 on the mouth of the village well
 pleating hope in each braid
 of their Mississippi-long hair
 looking deep into the water's mirror
 for the moister in their eyes. (*Cobwebs in the Sun* 4)

The poet in Shiv K. Kumar pleads the case of woman before God though he remains quite opposed to her for her faithlessness and infidelity. Generally, he respects woman in woman and asks God to see this creation made out of him. Is it really sin on his part if he has pressed her to his bosom with the intention of reclaiming the bone out of which she was created? Praising her he pleads her case before God thus:

Look at this woman you created
 out of me. A marvel, isn't she? A symphony
 of design and aroma. A rose-bush grown out
 of
 my rib's seedling. Temptation even for your
 angels to deny you, at least for a night.
 Was it a sin if I pressed her to my bosom?
 May be I was just reclaiming my lost rib.
 (*Losing My Way* 6)

(XI)

Shiv K. Kumar is a fine craftsman who chisels his verse with his poetic tools like figures, paradoxes, contrasts,

irony and satire. His academic brain makes the abstract concrete. He is not for an ordinary reader. His poetry needs a reader with discipline, wit and understanding. He interrogates and leaves the reader to opt the best alternatives as suggested through the paradoxes and contrasts. The use of paradox makes him impartial and objective. He himself states: “peach paradox carries two faces: / fruit and worm, beginning and end” (*Thus Spake the Buddha* 44). His figures are telling and pictorial.

Simile:

The air is calm
like a bird frozen on its wings.
So is the lake napping
like a crocodile on the sand. (*Thus Spake the Buddha* 37)

Metaphor:

The moon, veiled partially
by a cloud’s hem, is a slice
of some water-melon. (*Thus Spake the Buddha* 55)

Beautiful blending of Personification with Simile:

A shadow
crouches on the earth like a predator
in search of its prey—consciousness
retreating within itself. (*Losing My Way* 8)

The poet uses the art of rhetoric when he articulates through questioning. For instance:

But how can you confront the sun
if you don’t seek rebirth after each death?
(*Woolgathering* 67)

Doesn’t sinning carry within its womb
the seeds of redemption? (*Losing My Way* 7)

His phrases like “involution of pain” (*Articulate Silences* 11), “silken thighs” (*Articulate Silences* 21), “seductive

movements" (*Articulate Silences* 26), "pregnant folly" (*Cobwebs in the Sun* 32) and "the vaginal creeks" (*Cobwebs in the Sun* 48) are well-crafted and picturesque. Being an academic poet he knows the art of generalization out of particular situations. Here are two beautiful excerpts that illustrate his art of generalisation:

The moment of despair
has no age
no discretion. (*Woodpeckers* 39)

Often the moment of pain seeks solace
in a headstone, not tears. (*Trapfalls in the Sky* 27)

The use of proverbial lines strikes the reader who cannot remain without praising him for the striking lines. Here are two instances of such proverbial lines:

Attachment generates only anguish. (*Thus Spake the Buddha* 57)

A destination is often a mirage. (*Losing My Way* 40)

The poet has employed images after images which become imprinted on the mind of the reader as soon as he deciphers them. These images make the invisible visible. The abstracts become concrete.

(XII)

Shiv K. Kumar is a poet of love and intuitions. It is only he who can see the holy Ganga in the West and Mississippi in the East. Sex, to him, is not a means to release lust but a religious mantra that can make one feel divine. No doubt, his poems make a show of breasts, lips and thighs but this show makes the reader serious to life which is meant to live lively and intuitively under any circumstances. He respects women but does not fail to criticize the faithless ones. He gives due place to the

cries of the poor and the exploited. He satirizes the corrupt judicial system that offers nothing except pain and suffering. The pen is dipped in the satirical ink which writes nothing but the truth though somewhere the intention of amelioration for the greater cause is reflected. Life is boring but he motivates to make it colourful with the aesthetic specs. Lust makes one fall while love makes one rise. He has written the script of intuitions but this layered script requires equally the reader's cerebrum for deciphering. The script of intuitions inspires to love—love mixed with harmony of body, mind and soul. He dips in the river of love and inspires others to be in this river. This river is polluted when one takes a dip with lust. Divine love is experienced when one takes a dip with the total surrender. This divine love survives even after death. This is the only valuable possession that counts. Though the poet is no more, he survives by virtue of this divine love which he recommended along with his emphasis on intuitions. The poet in Shiv K. Kumar articulates the inarticulate truth thus:

What will survive
beyond the tombstone is only divine love.
(*Losing My Way* 42)

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Dalit Identity in Dalit Autobiography: A Standpoint

**A.C.Thorat*

Dalit literature in general and Dalit autobiography in particular have been a landmark and unique phenomenon in the history of modern Indian literature. Deprived of education for centuries together, Dalits exploit the genre of autobiography as a tool to expose their untold agonies of centuries. This genre has, therefore, become more endeared to and efficacious for Dalits. These narratives are tales of personal as well as collective sufferings of Dalits. They are multivalent in scope and make a poignant critique of the injustice inflicted on Dalits. Dalit autobiography challenges the dominant presumption of a society based on inequality and discrimination and seeks to establish equality. In other words, Dalit autobiography has given a new dimension to the genre of autobiography. The present research paper, therefore, endeavours to explore the genesis and evolution of Dalit autobiography and the emergence of Dalit identity in it.

Dalit autobiography emerged as a genre in the wake of the phenomenon called Ambedkar. It is an explicitly new entity which emanates from a counter-hegemonic cultural, social and political discourse. It is taken to be a genre because it adds to the growth and development of dalit literature as a whole. It proffers a critique of the oppressive caste system and the notion of untouchability

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through an assessment of everyday, commonplace dalit experience. It shows paradigmatic and discursive changes in dalit life before, during and after Ambedkar's struggle for emancipation. It is a historical document which puts on record the process of transformation and analyses the cultural and political tools which enable dalit liberation. It is a manifestation of the anti-caste revolutionary philosophical traditions in India. The emergence of dalit autobiography has given a new dimension to the study of autobiography in the sense that it has opened the floodgates of a hitherto unknown living experience of a whole lot of humanity. The genre of dalit autobiography reveals the difficulties involved in dalit claiming or exercising their human and civil rights. It plays a key role not only in fighting for freedom and equality for dalits but also asserts the political aspects of dalit culture. Dalit autobiographies record the perpetual oppressive social and material conditions of dalits in an aggressively caste-ridden society. They bring out critical accounts of untouchable culture and the areas of transformation of dalit selfhood, culture and identity. Writing an autobiography is a special act and experience for dalits who use this genre to attain a sense of identity and mobilise resistance against different kinds of oppression and coercion. Therefore, they say that *autobiography is the weapon of the weak*. Dalit autobiography is much more than an individual story as it is employed and harnessed by dalits to reconstruct and regenerate dalit history and mark the changes in dalit culture and politics. Additionally, they employ this genre to show their struggles for equality and freedom in a positive vein as opposed to dominant and mainstream narratives which term such struggles as divisive and subversive. Dalit autobiography also highlights the differences between the hegemonic Brahminical epistemology and the counter-hegemonic

dalit epistemology which have, in turn, produced conflicting knowledge domains. As Rajkumar says "Instead of celebrating self, the Dalit narrator has to record a life which is full of pain and suffering because of the caste system" (Rajkumar: 2012, 05).

Dalits, working in consonance with the anti-caste paradigm and discourse of Ambedkar, have begun developing distinct literary and analytical methods to produce without compromising with mainstream literature, its standards of judgement and canon. It is not imitative of Black literature as Eleanor Zelliot points out "There seems to be no imitation of Black literature and its two strongest fields, autobiography and drama ... in Dalit literature" (Zelliot:2005, 281). Dalit writing finds refuge in the Ambedkarite philosophy of liberty, parity, fraternity and justice to produce a poignant critique of the Brahminical Hindu social order and its cultural practices in India. Dalits, who have been raising voices through personal narratives, were rarely taken cognizance of and were systematically neglected in literary and academic circles. One of the reasons of this connivance is the fact that their voices challenge the hegemony and suzerainty of the uppercastes and make way for the assertion of the marginal self. An important aspect of dalit autobiography is that it cannot be substantiated according to the existing mainstream canons of literary evaluation, legitimised by educated uppercaste writers. Exactly because of this anti-caste discourse and the modern Dalit literary and political objective of establishing an egalitarian society that dalit autobiography creates its own parameters of literary evaluation. Evaluating dalit autobiographies by the mainstream literary and critical yardsticks and canons would therefore lead to chaos. Some scholars, therefore, find it difficult to define dalit autobiography. Mark S.J., for instance, defines *Karukku* (2000), Bama's

autobiography, as “At the first sight it reads like a history of a village. From another angle it reads like an autobiography. From yet another angle, it reads like a brilliant novel” (Rao: 2003, 130). Similarly, commenting on Baby Kamble’s autobiography, *The Prisons We Broke* (2008), Maya Pandit, the translator, defines it as a socio-biography rather than an autobiography. The wilderness in defining dalit autobiography must be dispelled when we perceive ‘*Dalit*’ as a synonym to ‘anti-caste’ or ‘anti-oppression’. We need to understand Dalit autobiography as a genre portraying how dalits are subjected to coercion in the caste system and how recent Dalit movements and Ambedkarite ideology propel dalits to fight repression and atrocities. Dalit autobiography thus is a kind of self-writing of the oppressed. These self-writing manifestations of the marginalised cannot be judged by the methodological parameters of mainstream literature. Dalit autobiographies need to be understood in their own political and changing socio-cultural context. Arun Prabha Mukherji, in this regard, aptly remarks “... dalit writers have used the autobiographical mode as a multivalent signifier...The autobiography in dalit writers’ hands has become testimony...” (Mukherjee: 1998, 53). In this respect, the life-narratives of dalits have a larger political agenda of documenting the offences and perpetrations against them and their community and fighting for the emancipation of dalits than only to recording an individual struggle for progress, success and liberation in his or her life.

The objective of Dalit autobiography is far wider than mere depiction of the sufferings of Dalits or sensitising non-dalit readers to their sufferings. Dalit autobiography is multivalent in its scope and makes an incisive critique of the caste system and the Brahminical ideology that subject dalits to enormous untold sufferings, hardships and exploitation. Dalit autobio-

ographies are not 'simple tales of private lives' providing 'voyeuristic pleasure', but they are historical documents recording the struggles of dalits for salvation from the coercive caste system. They expose multifarious dimensions of caste oppression and the hegemonic Brahminical ideology inflicting caste-slavery upon dalits and project persuasive accounts of dalit resistance and defiance. As S.P. Punekar argues "Dalit autobiography may be credited with the distinction of introducing us to a hitherto invisible and unknown social and cultural landscape, with their use of indigenous symbols and idioms" (Shah: 1997, 371-96). Dalit autobiographies point out the unsettled contradictions in modern Indian democracy and throw search light on the persistent and recalcitrant structures, institutions and ideology that indoctrinate and perpetuate inequalities. Besides, dalit autobio- graphies bring to the fore the malignant convergence of caste Hindu social dominance with political power enabling traditional caste elites to control even state and power. Sub-ordinated and marginalised, dalits, in their autobiographies, take a critical look at the traditional and modern structures of power. The lived experience of dalits exposes the limitations of democracy in India and projects an essentially dalit critique of the highly discriminatory caste system as well as modern political democracy, which is assumed to be invested with emancipatory potential. Dalit autobiography enunciates the anti-caste philosophical traditions in India and dalit epistemology produces a critique of Indian social order, i.e., the caste system and also its social and cultural practices. Dalit autobiography also attempts to transform, reconstruct and regenerate social space, politics and culture, based on the principle of egalitarian society. Dalit autobiography draws its canonical and conceptual tools from the anti-caste or dalit epistemology which

emanates from Ambedkarism. The unique feature and strength of dalit autobiography, therefore, is a critical self-evaluation of dalit communities themselves with regard to social, economic and cultural inequalities and injustice and their outcry how democracy is rendered ineffective, shaky and ramshackle in India.

Dalit identity is marked by two fundamental dimensions, i.e., dalit consciousness and dalit assertion. Identity formation is a historical process and is based on experience in relation to community, similar beliefs and cultural expressions. Dalit identity does not only mean identifying oneself with the dalit self but also to bring about awareness among fellow dalits. Dalit identity demands destruction of caste discrimination, economic and cultural exploitation, and denial of knowledge. Badri Narayan is of the opinion that dalit narratives are narratives of identity and self-respect. He observes, "The new narratives of the Dalit politics, which appear as cultural narratives of identity and self-respect are filled with memories of dissent against dominance and oppression" (Narayan: 2006, 40). Evaluation of untouchability as an ideology and the desire to overcome untouchability and caste coercion make dalit consciousness. Dalit assertion involves a sense of self-respect and equality in the public domain. Subverting the Brahminical Hindu hierarchy, fighting against caste-composed perpetration and construction of a culturally, discursively and politically autonomous dalit community constitute Dalit identity. Dalit identity demands a conscious denial of untouchable social and cultural practices. It inspires and enables dalits to reconstitute a culture which buttresses their social mobility and collective action in cultural and political spheres. Historical and sociological studies show that dalits have been stigmatised, dissipated, condemned and dehumanised by the Brahminical Hindu society, its

scriptures and its dogmatic practices. However, anti-caste intellectuals like Phuley and Ambedkar have categorically and logically challenged the basis of the Brahminical scriptures. They subvert mainstream interpretations of ancient Indian history and Brahminical scriptures. It is in this process of challenging Brahminism and critiquing Indian history and culture that dalit identity has emerged.

Gangadhar Pantawane, the founder-editor of *Asmitadarsh* (Mirror of Identity), observes that “A dalit does not believe in God, Rebirth, Soul, Holy Books teaching separatism, Fate and Heaven because they have made him a slave...Dalit is a symbol of change and revolution” (Zelliot:1996, 268). On the other hand, Ravikumar argues that only those, who suffer the untouchable status can reject the caste system, can take up dalit identity. He says “Only victims of ‘untouchability’ can deny the caste system and take on the subjectivity of a dalit... only an untouchable can take the position of a dalit” (Sheshadri: 2008, xxv-xxvi). It should not, however, be presumed that all the victims of untouchability would take up dalit identity. Only awakened and enlightened untouchables would do so, only those who resist and defy their relegation to be damned by the hegemonic Brahminical ideology. It is in this process of retaliation that the victims of untouchability will be able to muster self-respect, dignity and equality. Consequent only to this enlightenment, the untouchables would be able to take up a moral standpoint against untouchable culture, customs, beliefs and caste-designated callings. If they bungle to claim dalit identity without discarding the symbols of abasement, i.e., their prescribed caste identity, it might lead to destroying of dalit identity as a caste identity only. Dalits must improve themselves in terms of Ambedkar’s egalitarian philosophy to

overcome this probable error. Only such dalits will understand the significance of dalit identity. Ambedkar concluded that the untouchable castes should abjure Hinduism for emancipation. From this conviction come the mores of Dalit identity. Ambedkar awakened Dalits from being victims of untouchability to claim their rightful status as human beings. As Meenakshi Moon and Urmila Pawar say “Babasaheb first awakened a consciousness of their rights and a sense of identity among the untouchables” (Moon and Pawar: 2008, 349). This re-invention of the self is the pre-requisite to the claim to dalit identity and then to project it as a political identity. Dalit identity signifies a radical ontological transmutation from within. In this sense, an awakened dalit is an oppressed-turned-leveller, bent on restitution of equality.

Claiming Dalit identity, thus, asks for a moral capacity to challenge Brahminical oppression. Dalit identity motivates dalit consciousness among dalits to enable them to challenge the institutions and the dogma of Brahminism. Dalit identity calls for belief of dalits in themselves, their character and culture. In other words, it demands a complete metamorphosis of dalit self and a scrutiny of the Brahminical Hindu society. This whole proposition emanates from Ambedkar’s exhortation: Educate Organise and Agitate. This dictum of Ambedkar has turned out to be the cornerstone of dalit identity and culture. Freedom, self-respect and equality are the fundamental facets of dalit identity. Claiming dalit identity requires a denial of untouchable identity and abdicating caste-designated demeaning vocations, leading eventually to the subversion of the caste system. Untouchables who have not relinquished caste occupations and untouchable customs fail to realise the violence inherent in the caste system and the Varnashram dharma and those of them who claim dalit

identity by defying Hinduism and caste occupations cannot escape organised Hindu violence. Caste occupations, thus, are oppressive and coercive for dalits. Caste slavery has thus been inflicted on dalits through caste-specific duties. Abandoning caste occupations and duties is a symbol of renouncing Hinduism, leading to emancipation. This consciousness allows dalits to seek freedom from untouchability. But, it creates among caste Hindus a sense of loss of their slaves, which leads to violence against dalits. Vasant Moon, in his autobiography, *Growing up Untouchable in India: A Dalit Autobiography* (2002), records a few incidents describing the conflicts between Mahars and caste Hindus during the 1930's, when the former were awakening from age old slumber.

Baby Kamble is right when she thinks that education is the elixir, for only education will diminish and remove dalits' dependence on caste Hindus. As Ambedkar also advocates that dalits must explore new avenues of economic independence, as does Baby Kamble. Baby Kamble's father, besides looking after his family, also financially supports people belonging to his community. Urmila Pawar's parents also, as mentioned in her autobiography, *The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs* (2009) run a business in Ratnagiri. Thus, even after her husband's death, Urmila Pawar's mother feeds, brings her children up and educates them. Exploration of modern means of survival and livelihood, self-employment and independence helps dalits assert their dalit identity and lead a respectable and dignified social life. Like Baby Kamble, dalit women send their children to school despite trying social and economic conditions. The dalit community thus shifts its attention from superstitions, destitution and degrading caste-designated occupations to education as they believe that education is their only means to emancipation. Vasant

Moon also in his autobiography narrates this new awakening among dalits. Education has brought about drastic and decisive changes in dalits' lives and culture. Dalit literature, which articulates and vehemently projects dalits' distinct identity, is the outcome of this desire for education. This literature provides them with new strength and vigour to manifest their newly found dalit aspirations and to revolt against the coercive Brahminism and its graded inequality. As Ghanshyam Shah says "it is an important medium in their search for identity" (Shah: 2007, 210). It is worthwhile to note that dalit consciousness and dalit identity have emanated from Ambedkarism. Dalit identity, therefore, is inseparable from Ambedkarism. It makes dalits discard their traditionally-designated caste duties and promotes dalit consciousness.

Urmila Pawar observes in her autobiography that the root cause of such abhorrence towards dalit woman does not lie in her seemingly 'unclean' body. Hindu caste women's detestation is rooted in the purity- pollution ideology, which condemns dalit body as the epitome of untouchability. In spite of such contempt, dalit women are not deterred by the Brahminical supremacy. They do not hesitate to assert their identity and demand parity. Baby Kamble, in her autobiography, recounts an incident which reinforces how dalit women have grown conscious of self-respect and equality. One Rani Lakshmibai in Phaltan has founded a Mahila Mandal. She organises the Mahila Mandal meetings in her bungalow. At one of these meetings, describes Kamble, all the touchable Hindu women occupy chairs, not allowing the Mahar women to sit. As the meeting is about to commence, Thakubai, one of the Mahar women, goes forward, holds Ranibai by shoulder and remonstrates her saying that the so-called touchable women are not allowing them to sit and that 'our

Ambedkar' has told us to ask for rights and also that she would remove perforce their women and make the Mahar women occupy the chairs. Rani Lakshmibai is flabbergasted and at once arranges for chairs in the front for the Mahar women. Dalit assertion thus involves a sense of self-respect and moral stature to claim human treatment and equality in the public domain. Ambedkarism transforms dalit women from being superstitious and ignorant to becoming somebody. So, this journey from nowhere to somewhere, from nobody to somebody, from chaos to cosmos and from ignorance to knowledge could be possible due only to the Ambedkarite doctrine of egalitarianism. Sharan-kumar Limbale, in his autobiography, *The Outcaste: Akkarmashi* (2003), stresses the moral strength that Ambedkar infuses in dalit youth. Dalit consciousness and Ambedkar's ideology help him think about his own mother and the atrocities against the dalit community. Limbale is aware of the oppressive social reality and feels agitated about the perpetration against dalits. He understands his mother's pathetic condition as a concubine of a Hindu landlord after learning about dalit women's vulnerability. Limbale holds the landlord responsible for his mother's plight and assumes his name in the public sphere. Conversely, traditional Mahars find fault with his mother and subject her and her children to public disgrace. Ambedkarism thus influences Limbale to re-examine the social relations within the gamut of the caste system.

The dogma of the Chaturvarna dharma has fraught dalits with ignoble and humiliating names. Changing the stigmatic names inflicted traditionally upon dalits is a conscious and deliberate ploy for dalits. It is a way of asserting equality, humanity and the emergent identity. Dalits' claim to a distinct culture, assuming non-Hindu names and rejecting everything that implies caste

identity is symbolic of their metamorphosis. Abandoning demeaning caste names is a sign of protest against caste debasement. Rejecting names implying stones, dumbness, rubbish, abasement, humiliation and assuming respectable ones announce that dalits urge for equality, self-respect and individual dignity. This is symbolic of the new dalit identity. Ambedkarite dalits deny from being assimilated into Hinduism through Gandhian Harijan politics. They affirm self-respect and dalit identity. Vasant Moon narrates an incident about this assertion in his autobiography. When the class teacher asks the Harijan students to stand up and give their names for Harijan scholarship, none of the dalit students give their names. In this context, the dalit children strongly oppose and reject being called Harijan. Thus, dalit identity and dalit consciousness lead dalits not only to changing names but even to asserting their self-respect and individuality. For dalits, naming signifies equality and emancipation, for which they have been waging a battle.

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On the Trajectories of Feminist Theology

**R. P. Singh*

Feminist theology is an offshoot from the Feminist movement in general. Feminism refers to the organized efforts of women against the evils of patriarchy. It is a conscious struggle for resisting the false standards of male dominated society. The movement questions various institutions of society, the artifacts of cultures, and presents an authentic standpoint towards casting a re-look on the socio- cultural trajectories of life. There has been an interesting struggle towards women empowerment, and it sets the tone of the feminist movement. Feminist ideology, in the present times, has given various connotations in different contexts, that appearing rather in a prismatic mode. Both as a movement and as a theory, it has shown its presence in almost every discipline of human knowledge, and academic investigations viz. literature, film studies, economics, polity, gender studies, women's rights, history, political science, sociology and different visual and performing arts. In the contemporary intellectual scenario, where many a subtype of feminism are equally posing themselves, it will be judicious to use the term 'Feminisms' in place of 'Feminism'.

As mentioned above, the feminist theology is a derivative from the Feminist movement; it refers to the feminist interpretation of the canons of religion, and

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poses a question mark over certain issues in religious scriptures that are deemed to have gender bias in illustrating the relationship of religion, God and Soul. Feminist theology, although started with analyzing the version of the *Bible*, and attempting its re-reading from the feminist point of view, its focus spread on looking at other religions of the world also. Certain practices, ordains and commands of Buddhism, Judaism, New thought etc. are in question by the feminist thinkers and practitioners. Although, almost every religion believes that in the early days of human civilization, woman as mother, has enjoyed greater power, respect, authority and command over social system, but later on, under the ordains of religious scriptures and certain socio-cultural interference, her position was relegated to secondary place. It is assumed from the perspective of the feminist theology that the politics of writing and the interpretation of scriptures were fore grounded as the politics to attaining and exercising hegemony. On the issue of re-reading the scriptures, the views of feminist theologians differ. There are certain groups who find fault with the complete text, and there is a camp which finds certain specific parts as objectionable. The advocates of the feminist reconstruction of theology and religion present huge data showing the marginalization of women. They also ground their arguments on historical and mythological imaginations.

The advocates of feminist theology argue that even the language of the scriptures, and different symbols and metaphors devised for explaining the systems in theology have built the configuration of male oriented language. The scriptures mostly address men, not women, and the masculine pronouns are used in the sentences of religious texts. The objective and agenda of feminist theology, broadly, includes combating the politics of exclusion in theology. They believe that

religious texts, in content, structure and language, have been patriarchal. They have reservations on the marked religious principles of gender roles, women's place in society, and the representation and acceptance of matriarchy and patriarchy, and even sometimes on the issue of the gender of God etc.

While tracing the development and history of this thought, we find a genuine comment by Phyllis Tribble, who observes that "with the publication of *The Church and the Second Sex*, in 1968, Christian feminists began to develop a sustained critique of their religion. Though the book's author, Mary Daly, later abandoned the church as hopelessly sexist, others remain to continue the struggle. Rosemary Radford Ruether, a professor of applied theology at the Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, and Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, a professor of *New Testament* studies and theology at the University of Notre Dame, have written scholarly works that call for the transformation of Christian consciousness and practice." (Tribble, Para 1)

The movement geared force with the publication of Elizabeth Cady Stanton's *The Woman's Bible* in 1895, and its subsequent edition in 1898, feminist theology came to light as a feminist movement in religion. At par with the demand of equal rights in different other domains of human life, and taking cognizance of the above said issues, the advocates of feminist theology demanded equal say of women in church and other institutions of society that are governed by religious principles, or associate with any such principle culturally, socially and intellectually. So, in a way, the feminist theology is an offshoot of feminist movement in society and culture and it rejects the patriarchal ways of looking at religious and spiritual practices. Kwok Pui-Lan points out, 'the emergence of white feminist theology in the contemporary period... was embedded in the

larger political, cultural, and social configurations of its time' (*Cambridge Companion to Feminist Theology*, 26). The focus of feminist movement turned critical during the 1960's which observed the cultural revolution in Europe.

For realizing its aims, and to achieve the avowed say of women in religious institutions, the mobilization towards feminist theology adopts many ways of looking at religion and religious texts. For convenience, in main, their practices towards looking at religion may be put under two categories; the analysis and interpretation of the established religious/theological norms, and presenting a re –reading/re-casting/re-interpreting the canons of religion. The advocates of the feminist theology present a contextual study of religion, and they create a sub – text(s) of the religious scriptures in their own contexts. Rosemary Radford Ruether writes in this framework, "the feminist critique of sexism finds patriarchy not only in contemporary and historical Christian culture but in the *Bible*. The *Bible* was shaped by males in a patriarchal culture, so many of its revelatory experiences were interpreted by men from a patriarchal perspective. The ongoing interpretation of these revelatory experiences and their canonization further this patriarchal bias by eliminating traces of female experience or interpreting them in an andocentric way. The *Bible*, in turn, becomes the authoritative source for the justification of patriarchy in Jewish and Christian society" (Ruether, 14). The critics like Rosemary not only put a question mark over the structure of the religious texts, they study even the impacts of these on the social life of women at large. Rosemary even relates the effects of these texts *a propos* to their relationship with the cause of women in general. This trend of looking at religious texts as andocentric construct has affected the religions of both east and west.

She further expresses this attitude in the following way, “the critical principle of feminist theology is the promotion of the full humanity of women.... Theologically speaking, whatever diminishes or denies the full humanity of women must be presumed not to reflect the divine or an authentic relation to the divine, or to reflect the authentic nature of things, or to be the message or work of an authentic redeemer or a community of redemption.” (Ruether, 18-19)

In this way, the advocates of Feminist Theology conduct both the diachronic and synchronic study of religion; trace its impact on social set up, and the construct of gender roles. On the one hand they focus on investigating the condition of women in church, society and other socio-religious institutions over the period of human history, and on the other, they make a close reading and investigation of different religious texts from the angle of women’s rights in prospective and retrospective orders. Drawing their inferences, they try to establish new norms and standards for the religious institutions. On this ground they present a re-reading. To be in accord with Natalie K. Watson we find feminist theology as “the critical, contextual, constructive, and creative re-reading and re-writing of Christian theology. It regards women - and their bodies, perspectives, and experiences - as relevant to the agenda of Christian theologians and advocates them as subjects of theological discourses and as full citizens of the church.”(Watson, 18). Thus the Feminist theologians in Christianity criticize the traditional readings of the scriptures like *Bible*, labeling them as a patriarchal text. This agenda somewhere coheres with Linda Hogan’s assumption of Feminist theology as “a theology based on women’s experience and praxis must of necessity acknowledge and learn to value difference.... A theology based on an understanding of women’s experience and

praxis, which is sensitive to racial, class and sexual differences among women, must recognize women's 'different primary emergencies' (Hogan,167).

Feminist theology in Judaism associates with the canons of the Jewish Feminism which raises its voice for propagating the feminine characterization of God. With the publication of Rita Gross's article "Female God Language in a Jewish Context"(1976), the agenda of Jewish feminist theology came to light. Rita Gross proposed a lay out of an egalitarian status of men and women under religious institutions, and different socio cultural practices related to it. In Jewish theological contexts, the "feminists have sought to think about Jewish identity, belief, and practice in ways that are not invidious or hierarchical. They have reflected on what it means to fully include women and women's differences in the Jewish community. Genuine equality is not to be understood in terms of women's achieving some taken-for-granted male standard but in terms of full recognition of the diversity of the Jewish community, and of women's differences both from men and from each other. Feminists have reworked rituals that seem to sanctify hierarchy in order to affirm both separation and connection."(Para, 10).

In Islam, the Feminists look at the scriptures to seek equal rights at par with men, whenever they feel like their rights are infringed. They explore the patterns of women's rights and sphere in Islamic world. Islamic feminists like Amina Wadud have tried to interpret the *Quran* in more women friendly perspective. Many scholars in this field agree that there is a need of feminist reading of many oriental scriptures. Amina Wadud finds that "the importance of the Qur'anic text is its transcendence of time and its expression of eternal values.... Stating the significance of her work, Amina Wadud states that the Qur'anic concept of woman is

measured within the perspective of the text itself, both as a force in history, politics, language, culture, intellect, and spirit, and as a divine text claiming to present guidance for all humankind. Through reviewing the Qur'an itself—with its principles of social justice and human equality, and its objective of guidance—I hope to shed some new light on the role of woman. That this issue has been discussed from other perspectives only reminds us of its significance in the modern context. (Preface, xxi).

Hindu religious texts present a mixed pattern of women's place in society. The *Devi Sukta* in *Rigveda*, states that the feminine energy is the quintessence of the universe. It gives birth to physical matter and consciousness. It is eternal, infinite, metaphysical and empirical reality. In the Vedic period of Hinduism women enjoyed greater power and say in society. With the passage of time the scriptures were interpreted from the perspectives which women, sometimes, feel questionable. In the *Manusmriti*, which is a seminal text of Hinduism, women have got mixed response as far as their position in society is concerned. The trend of asserting feminist theology is rather mild in Hinduism yet advocates of feminist theology have started relooking at the texts and giving the realistic interpretation of these from the point of view of gender equality. Caroline A.F. Rhys Davids and I. B. Horner have explored the perspectives of feminism in Buddhism, which is also quite mild.

The push for feminist theology became more ardent during the post 1960's cultural revolutions, especially in Europe. Its effects are seen across the globe. The major publications that have given vent to flourishing the idea of feminist theology are as follows:

1968: Publication of Mary Daly's *The Church and the Second Sex*.

1973: Publication of Mary Daly's *Beyond God the Father*.

1974: Publication of Letty Russell's *Human Liberation in a Feminist Perspective – A Theology*.

1976: Publication of Rita Gross's "Female God Language in a Jewish Context".

1980: Publication of Judith Plaskow's *Sex, Sin and Grace*.

1982: Publication of Sallie Mc Fague's *Metaphorical Theology*.

1983: Publication of Rosemary Ruether's *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*.

1984: Publication of Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza's *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*.

1986: Publication of Rosemary Ruether's *Women-Church: Theology & Practice of Feminist Liturgical Communities*.

1987: Publication of Letty Russell's *Household of Freedom: Authority in Feminist Theology* (1987)

1988: Publication of Anne E. Carr's *Transforming Grace: Christian Tradition and Women's Experience*.

1990: Publication of Elizabeth Johnson's *Consider Jesus: Waves of Renewal in Christology*.

1990: Publication of Rabbi Margaret Wenig's sermon, "God is a Woman and She is Growing Older" (It proved a seminal address in airing Jewish thought towards feminist theology)

1990: Publication of Pamela Dickey Young's *Feminist Theology / Christian Theology: In Search of Method*.

1991: Publication of Judith Plaskow's *Standing Again at Sinai: Judaism from a Feminist Perspective*

1993: Publication of Rabbi Paula Reimers' "Feminism, Judaism, and God the Mother".

2003: Publication of Melissa Raphael's *The Female Face of God in Auschwitz: A Jewish Feminist Theology of the Holocaust*.

Besides these major publications, many articles, speeches and pamphlets have come to light sporadically across the world.

The feminist theologians even pose their objection to the word "theology." They argue that, etymologically, the term "theo" is masculine in form. Countering it, they prefer the use of "thea", in place of "theo". "Thea" is a feminine form, so they prefer calling this branch of knowledge as "thealogy." Now, the feminist theologians are branched in a number of sects and groups like the Black, Hispanic, and Asian etc. Besides the traditional agenda of feminist theology, now a days, it has started looking at different patterns of women's 'embodiedness' and sexuality. The recent development in feminist theology has aired many a new pattern of spirituality.

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Local Hermeneutics in Translating Folk Drama *Maach*

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Preservation of the folk literature is extremely imperative in order to safeguard the material for the future generations and to make them realize the richness of folk tradition. This can be done either through transcriptions or through translations. There are always certain issues and problems encountered by a translator in the process of translation. These concerns become more serious when the source texts or material available for translation is clouded with the questions regarding their authenticity. The problems are further aggravated for a translator if the translations are concerned with the transcripts of oral folk tradition where the documentation of the oral tradition varies from one transcript/text to other both in content and in interpretation. This variation may be caused due to various reasons like the transcribers'/writers' theoretical 'home', the purpose of transcription (for research or writing thesis or dissertation), their ideological position, sources used for transcription, faulty interpretations etc. At the same time it is found that 'transcription procedure is responsive to cultural biases and itself biases readings and inferences' (Ochs

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44). These 'interruptions' and 'digressions' caused to the transcription/text of the 'basic text' lead to the fact that the same piece of data can be transcribed/written and so interpreted in different ways depending on such questions as what is being transcribed/written? For whom, why, what is theory of language or communication that lies behind it and also the particular theoretical stance of the transcriber/writer. The transcriber/writer aims also to shape all the details conveyed and the format and status of the resulting document. Because of this multiplicity of choices no two transcribers/writers will transcribe/write in the same way. In this way a lot of versions (transcriptions/texts) of the same folk form are available before the translator who wishes to translate these texts into the opted target language (in present case English). Variations both in words and concepts found in the transcripts/texts raise grave questions about their authenticity and originality. When a translator attempts to make a translation from these texts the variety of these texts cause tremendous confusion and the problem of choosing the right text. In order to pick the correct transcript or the text the right choice for the translator is to turn to the local hermeneutics i.e. to investigate the local experiences related to the available transcripts/texts in order to make his translation valid and close to the original without further misleading the readers. It is also relevant to consider local conventions, traditions, expectations about the nature, format, and distribution of the translated text. In this way the translator can also verify the truthfulness of the data available and present a correct translated document.

The present study is based on the issues and problems related to the translation of the oral folk drama form *Maach*. *Maach*, a folk drama form of Malwa region of Madhya Pradesh, is a lyrical folk drama and a form of

operatic ballet. The term *Maach* comes from Sanskrit folk form *Manch* (stage) or place of performance. This distinctive and traditional folk drama style of open stage has been the source of folk entertainment in *Malwa* region for more than 200 years. This indigenous folk-form is believed to have its birth in the holy city of Ujjain.

The origin of folk-drama is quite ancient in India. *Natyashastra* by Bharata Muni dates back to almost 500 years B.C. *Natyashastra* laid the classical rules for performing dramas. The development of dramas is like the growth of any language. In India the various forms of folk dramas are prevalent in different states and are known by different names i.e. *Jatra* in Bengal, *Rasleela* and *Nautanki* in Uttar Pradesh, *Khayal* in Rajasthan, *Ramleela* in Delhi, *Lalit & Lavani* in Maharashtra, *Ottam Thullal* in Malabar, *Therikoothu* in Tamilnadua, *Veethi* in Andhra Pradesh similarly *Maach* which is a form of operatic ballet is very popular in *Malwa* region of Madhya Pradesh.

Folk theatre is the theatre which originated and evolved among, and has been transmitted through, the common people. Its relationship with the common people is deep, multiple and multi-layered. It is a kind of entertainment which is not entertainment alone. It carries within it the entire folk culture with all its social and religious institutions. We find reflected in folk theatre the cults, customs, rituals and beliefs of common people. It assumes different forms and fulfils multiple functions. Sometimes it takes the form of a ritual performed to propitiate divine forces for the welfare of the society and sometimes it is entertainment, pure and simple,. Emphasis on different aspects and constituent ingredients makes it change its colour. It aims at the common man, may he be from rural or urban society. The common man is emotionally and intellectually involved with his theatre; for him the theatre is not

something external or superficial. It is a part of his tradition with which he has lived for generations. Actions flow from people and their environment to the performing arena and from there back to the source in a single sweep. *Maach* plays are mostly based on religious or mythological stories from epics or *Puranas* (*Raja Harishchandra*, *Bhakta Prahlad*, *Shivaleela*), lives of saints and great devotees (*Narasingh Mehta*, *Bhakta Puranmal*, *Raja Gopichand*), historical or semi historical tales (*Amarsingh Rathod*, *Raja Shivaji*), folk romances and tales (*Heer-Ranjha*, *Veer Tejaji*) and contemporary episodes and issues (*Mehanat Ka Moti*, *Dharati ka Daan*). *Maach* writers, of late, have addressed more diversified issues related to social and environmental concerns. Such *Maach* themes have been able to motivate the people in the society to take initiative for increasing the green cover by mass tree planting. They also inculcated the spirit of creating awareness on the ill effects of using plastic bags, they added, explaining the non-biodegradability of plastic.

Maach can become a very effective tool as it is a popular, traditional art form of folk theatre depicting various life processes of a local socio-cultural setting in the *Malwa* region. It holds phenomenal appeal. Its understanding is direct and at the personal level. *Maach* performances are uniformly popular, irrespective of the educational, social and financial standing of any community. Various researchers have established the role of *Maach* in spreading the message about various social, religious, educational and environmental issues. Traditionally, folk dramas were primarily used for entertainment, social communication and persuasive communication. Now, there are efforts to involve folk theatre for conveying development messages, and *Maach* can play extremely significant role in this regard. In the past few decades traditional folk theatres have been

increasingly recognized as viable tools to impart development messages, both as live performances and also in a form integrated with electronic mass media. If *Maach* is preserved, nurtured and supported then it can become an effective medium of mass communication not only in the region but also in the nation for spreading social and environmental concerns.

The purpose of translating the text material of this rich and popular folk drama into English language is to safeguard and conserve this part of the rich heritage of humanity and to promote a better, correct and wider understanding of the social and cultural diversity of Malwa region to the world. Translation would help the documentation of this form for the interest and record of the future generations. But the real problem arises when the translation is posed with variety of disagreements in interpretations about the nature and validity of the source texts to be used for translation. There is no harmonious model of texts written and published on *Maach* which can be used as an ideal model for translation. So, the big question is that which views or which forms or which texts should be given dominance over the other views, forms or texts while doing the translation. This dilemma is painful and the translation has to overcome this dilemma in order to reveal the correct picture before the readers and should cater to the 'collective agreement' of the people, scholars, artistes associated with it.

For a translator to translate a local text into a western language is a monumental task. There are certain questions that need to be addressed like aims and style of translation, which version to translate or in what context it shall be presented. If the source texts are choppy and clumsy then the translation would have no literary worth. So, whatever texts are available as source material in Hindi language need to be verified

for their correctness with the local *Maach* writers, artistes. So this paper focuses on meeting the local legend of *Maach* Guru Pandit Om Prakash Sharma, who is awarded with Sangeet Natak Akademy Award of 2006 by the then President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam for his contribution to the folk music and promoting regional *Malwi* music. Based on the conversation with him there have been lot of issues that were addressed and resolved regarding *Maach* related history, terms, concepts, writings, performances etc. Pandit Sharma is one of the few *Maach* artistes and writers who actually carry with them the legacy of *Maach Mandali* or *Akhada* (group). Pandit Sharma belongs to the *Maach Akhada* of Kaluramji Ustaad (1857-1927), who was his grandfather and was a prolific writer of *Maach khel* (plays) and his influence on *Maach* performances was so great that this group was known after his name. Pandit Om Prakash Sharma gave a complete description of his family tree who contributed to the richness of folk drama *Maach*. The *Maach Akhada* of Kaluramji Ustaad was as following: (the order is from earliest to present)



In the process of interacting with him, Pandit Om Prakash Sharma started clarifying various conjectures and doubts associated with the origin, history, stage, music, characters, terms, concepts etc. related with *Maach*.

The popular belief is that *Maach* originated from the *Khayal- Nakal*, the folk-drama of Rajasthan. *Khayal- Nakal* was performed in various parts of Malwa in 18th & 19th century. But according to local interpretation it is believed that *Maach* was performed to please and appease god *Bhairava* (incarnation of Lord Shiva) and was celebrated during the month of *Phalgun*. There is a social purpose behind *Maach* being played during the month of Phalgun, as most of the youths during this time are believed to be in the colours and temperament of Holi occupied with mischievous acts. So in order to keep them occupied, they were involved in *Maach* acts, either performing or watching. During *phalgun* month the breeze blows from west to east therefore the stage of *Maach* was set facing the temple of god *Bhairava*. This has more of a religious fervor than anything else. Thus, the artistes and writers of *Maach* were devotees in the true sense of term who performed this magical folk drama as part of their hobby not as a vocation. Its birthplace is the holy city of Ujjain and it is the gift of nature to the *Malwi* people. As to the question of influence of other regional folk forms on *Maach* the local interpretation is that they are all related to each other like '*bhai-bandh*' (there is element of inter- textuality that connects them).

The word *Maach* is derived from Sanskrit folk form *Manch* (stage) or place of performance. This distinct and traditional folk drama style of open stage has been the source of folk entertainment in *Malwa* region for more than two centuries. There has been lot of writings available on the dimensions of the stage of *Maach*. Some

writers write that the stage was set up at such a height that bullock cart could easily pass beneath it. Other writers have given the dimension of the stage saying that wooden planks were set up at the height of 10 to 12 feet with the support of wooden poles from the ground level and the entire stage was covered with white clothe. These variations in writings about the stage of *Maach* lead to confusion as to what is the actual form of the stage. According to Om Prakash Sharma the stage of *Maach* is never ostentatious but very simple. His submission is that when the audience sits very close to the stage then how is it possible to see the performance at the height of 10-12 feet from the ground level? So such kind of interpretations about the stage of *Maach* are misleading. The stage was set up without any paraphernalia. According to him the performances have been done even on the *otala* (extended portion of the threshold of the house). Today's modern stage and pretensions are harmful to the soul of *Maach* which needs to be protected as much as possible in its original form.

Characters play very significant role in the success of *Maach*. The characters were from mythology, folklore, epics, society, religion, politics etc. The themes of the plays were dominant with moral, ethical, religious, social issues. The purpose was to demean the evil and promote the goodness; promote social cause and curb the ill customs. Some of the important characters in *Maach* performances were *Bhishti* (the one who sprinkles water before the commencement of the play), *Pharraashan* (the one who used to place the matting), *Vidushak* (clown who used to assist the hero in the play, was intelligent, clever and used to play the role of the hero if the need be. He is also called *Bedhab* (in Kaluramji's *Maach Mandali*) or *Shermar Khan* (in Guru Balmukunda's *Maach Mandalis*), *Halkara* (the announcer who used to announce the arrival of the king

on the stage and conveyed all the relevant information) *Chobdaar* (wished the audience and made them take their seats comfortably), *Sipahi* (constable who stood at one place and kept an eye on the happenings around), *Pustake* (prompter- who helps the actors to remember and deliver their script). Some of the writers are of the opinion that *Bhishti* belonged to Muslim community and forgetting all his religious beliefs performed to elevate the audience). This opinion has also been contradicted by the local hermeneutics saying that this is a false notion that *Bhishti* belonged to Muslim religion. Some writers might have got confused with the Urdu names of the characters and there are no evidences to prove that *Bhishti* belonged to Muslim religion. There was dominance of Urdu words in the writings of the *Maach* writers as they were extremely learned scholars and musicians.

There has been strong objection raised from the locals against those writers who wrote that women did not perform in *Maach* plays because of the obscenity in the themes and indecency of dialogues. Pandit Om Prakash Sharma gave evidences to the fact that his grandfather Ustad Kaluramji was the first to allow women actors to perform in the *Maach* plays. He introduced a woman whose name was Babajaan, who earned great deal of fame for her clear and melodious voice. Two more women namely Lahargaurji Maharaj Gunsai and Gomatibai Beragan also performed on the stage.

Since *Maach* is a musical folk drama or folk belle with the dominance of songs and music, the role of musical instruments is key to the success of this unique drama performance. The artistes present the theme of the play through songs and not through dialogues (*bol*) (but in modern times dialogues are used). *Dholak*, *Shahanai* (clarinet) and Harmonium are the majors

musical instruments played during the performance. *Dholak* is said to be the soul of *Maach*. Regarding the structure or form of the *dholak* some writers say that it had the roundness or curvature of 29 *angul* (measurement of fingers, *angul* means four fingers of hand put together to form a lump to measure something). Presently the *dholak* has a curvature of 19 *angul*. The logic given by the writers is that the vastness of the curvature of *dholak* made the sound of *dholak* heard 10 kms away from the place of the performance of *Maach*. The local hermeneutics discards this notion of size of *dholak* saying that it has nothing to do with reality, it is only an exaggeration or the imagination of a writer who has never witnessed a *Maach* performance.

There has been an issue related to the duration of a *Maach* plays. Earlier it was performed for a period of 8 to 10 hours beginning in the late night till early morning. Audiences used to bring their seating equipage with them and enjoyed the performance entire night. People used to come from far off places or villages on their bullock carts where they kept all their needful and enjoyed the performances. But, in modern times the duration has been reduced to 2-3 hours which has been extremely challenging for both the artistes and writers of *Maach* to confine a 'khel' (play) of long duration to a short duration. This editing needs to be done by someone who is dexterous in the art of *Maach* writing and should not be done by any one arbitrarily otherwise the desired effect would be lost and the play would turn clumsy and uninteresting. It has been found that because of the commercial and personal interests the structure of the *Maach* plays have been distorted. This sort of experiments driven by profit motives (in the hands of non-*Maach* *Mandali* people) have hurt the performers of *Maach*. Pandit Om Prakash is of the opinion that modifications are required to fit the *Maach* plays to the

contemporary requirements but such editing should only be done in the directions and supervision of the *Maach* writers or artistes otherwise such attempts would mar the soul of plays.

There have been many reasons for wrong interpretations, faulty texts and misleading descriptions associated with *Maach*. The local *Maach* writers and artistes are of the opinion that all digressions found in most of the texts written are due to participants' attitude, propose and funding agency. Texts related to *Maach* are sometimes driven by the sponsors' aims and hidden agenda to make personal gains. There might be certain obligations to colleagues and subjects as well as to those who sponsor it. At times people are driven by the personal aim of the timely completion of a research work and their research findings which are different from what was expected out of them eventually presenting a misleading document which is a complete deviation from the original form. There might be the involvement of 'power as well as language' and can have negative implications. A few of these and many more reasons are the major cause of misinterpretation of the *Maach* related transcripts and texts.

Modern means of entertainment have marginalized the rich Indian folk art. It is imperative on the part of art lovers, scholars, academicians, researchers and government agencies to keep this rich folk legacy alive. The survival of such art form is possible with honest approach of everyone involved in such attempts. It is not only essential to preserve the manuscripts, transcripts or texts related with such art form but also to patronize the artistes and writers associated with it. *Maach* today needs such support and care by such honest efforts otherwise it would gradually vanish and the future generation would be deprived with the performances of this great folk theatre form of *Malwa*

region. Attempts have been made to keep this folk form alive from various cultural, academic and government agencies and the *Maach* artistes, musicians and writers have been rewarded from time to time. But despite all these supports, there needs to be an extremely crucial role to be played by those who are trying to transcribe and translate the texts of *Maach*. Any translation or transcription done should be verified and authenticated by the local resources and preferably by meeting, interviewing or conversing with the people who have been an integral part of *Maach mandalis* because, if it is done otherwise by those who refer incorrect sources and write with personal biases, then whatever text is produced would be misleading. Thus, a translator's duty is surely to include the quest for translating *Maach* texts with all due competence and sense of responsibility. Handling correctly the search for understanding this folk theatre form and the questions about the performances should be the prime focus of the translator as it would be an honest endeavour to make this form available to the global audience in English language. Thus, the present paper reflects that in the case of any attempt to translate *Maach* transcripts and texts, it is found that local hermeneutics is of immense help to seek after the truth in order to impart the correct information to the future generation.

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Machinations of Power in Edward Bond's *Lear*

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Edward Bond is considered one of Britain's most significant, innovative and controversial playwrights writing today. Bond's diverse and wide-ranging body of drama raises many intercultural, political and aesthetic issues. His engagement with the social role of art through a critique of violence and authoritarianism is an established fact. Bond believes that violence occurs in situations of injustice and flourishes most under Capitalism. In his plays, violence is seen as the tool and symptom of an unjust society and is portrayed as part of what Bond calls "aggro-effect" to break the limits of rationality and naturalistic characterization. The use of sex and violence creates the shock effect that can be seen as a kind of crude Brechtian 'estrangement'. According to Bond, theatre must explore the causes of human misery and sources of human strength. His demand is for a "rational theatre" which in effect has to be epic because it sees beyond individual psychological issues to social and political truths. On the social and political levels, Bond envisions the creation of a democratic socialist society. He considers violence inefficient, and hopes to reach a more humane society "by rational means; that means writing plays, that means teaching, that means discussion, that means persuading, that means caring". (Stoll 417)

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An epic rewrite of William Shakespeare's *King Lear*, Bond's *Lear* (1971) was first produced by the Royal Court Theatre in 1971. By creating a politically effective piece from a similar story, Bond was more likely to cause people to question their society and themselves, rather than simply to have an uplifting aesthetic experience. For Bond, time is history; and the characters' subjective experience of time depends on their particular relation to history-as motive forces (progressive or destructive) as victims, or as dangerous combination of both. *Lear* presents a powerful, complex and violent study of how men and women are crushed by the society they have created. In this play of shattering power, an authoritarian monarch is overthrown by his daughters who, in turn, find the possession of power to be fatally evil. In a popular resurrection, a peasant woman takes power and becomes even crueler. As the play ends, another insurrection is in preparation and it's clear that the brutal cycle will endlessly repeat itself.

The play opens with the accidental death of a worker on the wall which the king, Lear is constructing very arduously around the country to keep out imagined "enemies". The paranoid autocrat has arrived at the spot to inspect the work in progress. He outrightly decides to execute the man who is suspected to be responsible for this act of "political sabotage". Both his daughters Bodice and Fontanelle, oppose this very strange death sentence made by Lear. Neither do they find any sense in the construction of the wall. Moreover, they openly announce their decision to get married respectively to the Duke of North and the Duke of Cornwall, Lear's sworn enemies. Lear is shocked and shattered at this revelation which is an open challenge to his autocratic authority.

Lear's daughters believe their marriages will lead to peace, but Lear believes that only the wall can protect

his people. Lear lives in the myth that enclosing his country with a wall can protect it from enemies. But he fails to see that such an endeavour deprives his subjects of their welfare. After Lear and others leave, Bodice and Fontanelle reveal the plans they share with their husbands to attack Lear's armies.

As a parade of soldiers passes and as Lear salutes them, Warrington attempts to get him to abandon his war with Bodice and Fontanelle, saying he's an old man and could always ask to live in peace in the country. Lear refuses, saying his daughters can't be trusted. Warrington then reveals that Bodice and Fontanelle have each independently asked him (Warrington) to betray Lear, each offering him financial, military and sexual rewards if he does. Lear comments that they live in a fantasy world, and then tells Warrington that if he (Lear) is killed, he (Warrington) must finish the wall.

Knowing better their father's moves, the daughters are successful in defeating him. When the daughters come into power, hope is generated about a radical takeover of the patriarchal set up. But the daughters cunningly plan the expulsion of their father without any compunction. There is no display of any filial attachment. On gaining power they behave as wickedly and vulgarly as possible. Bond presents both Bodice and Fontanelle as having perverted lust, never satisfied with their husbands. They are presented like she-wolves, blood-thirsty and power-hungry.

In the beginning of the play Bond presents the daughters as reasonable characters who are able to see through the injustice of their father's deeds. Their opinions gain credence as even the subordinate officers convey the idea that Lear is unjust. The daughters come into power after ousting the father from his position. They imprison him and prove him to be insane. Madness is proved by a pseudo-trial. The daughters who turned

against their father very soon turn against their husbands as well as against each other. Each invents plans to do away with their husbands and marry Warrington who was Lear's adjutant. Finding that their plans do not work out as expected, they cruelly get Warrington maimed under their supervision. Both Bodice and Fontanelle turn out to be disgusting monsters. The word "bodice" stands for something which covers the heart and "fontanelle" is something that provides an outlet for secretions. Their very names that Bond gives them are suggestive of their hypocrisy and vulgarity. They seem to have inherited their vileness from Lear himself.

Fontanelle is lustfully vibrant and it is she who orders very weird tortures on Warrington. Meanwhile, Bodice just sits knitting in a very poised manner. Getting a chance Lear escapes from prison. Though his daughters' men are hunting for him, he is given shelter by the Gravedigger's Boy, a naive good fellow. Lear's presence brings tragedy to him also. The daughters' army murders him and rapes his pregnant wife, Cordelia. Lear alone is left unharmed. John, a village Carpenter who is in love with Cordelia, attacks the soldiers, and the third phase of the play is centred on them. They overturn the daughters' government and form a new government and once again Lear is imprisoned. Both Bodice and Fontanelle are executed onstage. Lear, however, is not killed. He is blinded and thus made politically ineffective. He is let free. Now that he has lost his eyesight he begins to "see" clearly. He understands his folly in constructing the wall. Also he realizes that it is he who is the root cause of his daughters' ruin.

Soon after Cordelia assumes power, she resumes the work on the wall. Ruby Cohn feels that Bond found Cordelia dangerous because she translated her wrongs into an avenging army. Though Bond has expressed such

sentiments in favour of Cordelia, by making her a guerilla leader, he moulds her also into a violent character as cruel as Lear was in the beginning. Lear, who has now got a profound insight, tries to warn her against it. He preaches against the new government. He turns into a Christ-like figure who talks to the people through parable about freedom. Cordelia orders him to stop provoking people against her and to keep silent. Towards the end of the play Lear is shown trying to pull down the wall using a shovel. However, he is not allowed to fulfil his mission. He is shot to death by a farmer's son who is now a soldier appointed by Cordelia to ensure the smooth construction of the wall. The same Lear who in the beginning took off one man's life for the construction of the wall sacrifices his own life in an attempt to pull it down.

New governments come into power declaring novel goals. But the frames of oppression remain the same. On the whole, what is portrayed in *Lear* is a society trapped in a pattern of excessive aggression. In Bond's opinion, they change the left foot for the right foot and call it revolution. Bond claims that his concern is for the society and not for the individual. He wants to depict the fate of the common people who are nullified by the governing machinery. The post-War period was in need of a play which could portray the disillusionment of the age. Lear's foolish wall-building project acts as a grim physical reminder of the connections between irrational public policy and social injustice.

Lear provides a rare example of a Bondian character that moves the full circle from oppressor to victim to militant hero, a movement that is accommodated in the linguistic range of his dialogue. Throughout the first two scenes of Act I, Lear wields a language of power that his daughters learn well. In these scenes Lear is dogmatic, assertive, inflexible and uncompromising. He lives in a

myth of his own righteousness and is a prisoner of his own wilfulness. He speaks most often in the imperative voice and his questions (to officers and family alike) are rhetorical ones.

Expelled from power, he moves into the countryside. The lucid tone of command quickly gives way to the elliptical speech of madness. In the last few scenes of Act I, Lear's self-consciously metaphoric language indicates the mental confusion caused by his military defeat and reflects a weary state of unenlightened self pity. He fails to sit back and analyse the reason for his setback in life. As we might expect, Lear's obsession with his daughters' cruelty predominates, erupting at different points:

Lear. My daughters have been murdered and these monsters have taken their place! I hear all their victims cry, where is justice? (35)

My daughters have taken the bread from my stomach. They grind it with my tears and the cries of famished children-and eat. (17)

It takes a long time before Lear can relate cause to effect. Towards the end he is presented as a Christ-like figure that gives up his life for the well-being of his people and becomes noble through his suffering. Though there is an antipathy towards him in the beginning, soon it turns to sympathy and even empathy towards the end. Lear dies but death is a sacrifice. Before his death he makes an attempt to rectify his folly: he tries to pull down the wall by digging up a shovel of earth. Shakespeare's Lear undergoes a spiritual regeneration but Bond pins down his Lear to be a social man. The content of Lear's sermon is in support of the common man. On finding that he is not able to bring about any change, he bursts out:

What can I do? I left my prison, pulled it down, broke the key, and still I'm a prisoner. I hit

my head against a wall all the time. There's a wall everywhere. I'm buried alive in a wall. Does this suffering and misery last for ever? Do we work to build ruins, waste all these lives to make a desert no one could live in? There's no one to explain it to me, no one I can go to for justice. I'm old, I should know how to live by now, but I know nothing, I can do nothing, I'm nothing. (80)

Michel Foucault's discussion of "the Other that is not only a brother but a twin, born, not of man, nor in man, but beside him and at the same time, in an identical newness, in an unavoidable duality" (326) is singularly appropriate in the context of the play. As with Foucault, for Bond unseen power relationships determine the specific configuration of this Other (friend, enemy, alternative self) at any given moment in a complex interplay of fluid, ambiguous social forces. Bond's preface to *Lear* highlights the contrast of the innocent aggressiveness of the free animal to the unnatural violence of the caged one and the comparison of both free and caged animals to the panicked aggression of the human race. The assassination of the Gravedigger's Boy and his transformation into the Ghost that accompanies Lear in his later journey presents such a contrast. Partly an imaginative construct on Lear's nostalgic desire for a Golden Age and partly an independent being, the Ghost reflects Lear's own lack of a critical evaluation of reality. In Bond's world, even the Ghost is torn apart by new categories of opposition. Sometimes almost sinister, sometimes pathetic, the Ghost decays in death as Lear gains in wisdom and maturity in his dealings with the world.

Scharine observes that "The Boy's moral maturity travels a path parallel to Lear's but in the opposite direction. By the time Lear reaches a state of only

desiring to live humanely, the position of the Boy when we first met him, the Ghost of the Boy wishes only to be hidden and protected" (211). As Lear achieves insight and understanding, he returns to the world to die a politically significant death. His double, the Ghost, evolves in the opposite direction until, gored by his own pigs, he dies, ignominiously, a second time. Ultimately the Ghost represents a regressive force that is both unfeasible and immoral in a political age, and he is quite rightly rejected even by pigs. Lear learns that human beings, who may be pig-like in many respects, are not malicious by nature, and that only through political action can his sufferings and those of his people be alleviated.

The social roles themselves tend to dominate the characters' actions. This is most apparent in the case of minor characters, trapped in roles which deprive them of humanity and over which they have little control. The soldier who tortures Warrington despises his superiors, and tells his victim, "Don't blame me, I've got a job t'do". (16) The Councillor who betrays Lear claims: "I did my duty as a man of conscience"- (34) The soldier in Act II protests: "Give it another minutes. Best t'stick t'orders as long as yer can". (51) The prison mortician is similarly concerned about his job:

A little autopsy. Not a big one. We know what she died of. But I handle this routine work methodically. Otherwise they think you can't be trusted with bigger things. My new papers will open up many new opportunities for me. (58-59)

Beyond the distancing humour they provide, such asides highlight the inescapably destructive effects of a competitive, unjustly ordered society. Even Bodice admits: "I don't decide anything. My decisions are forced on me ... I'm trapped ... Now I have all the power ... and I'm a slave". (48-49). The theme is epitomized by the old

orderly, who has served a life time in prison for an unrecorded crime that he cannot recall.

Unlike these minor figures, the Carpenter, Cordelia, and the Gravedigger's son are characters whose behaviour and "psychology" seem to change as much as Lear's; but unlike Lear, their development is not a positive one. The fearful, sobbing wife of Act I becomes an effective rebel organizer in Act II and an autocratic tyrant in Act III. The boy who offers bread to Lear in Act I suggests that he poisoned the well in Act III. The lover of Act I bears little resemblance to the leader of guerilla warfare and high official of Cordelia's regime later in the play. Such changes imply neither schizophrenic personalities nor lack of realistic development; rather each presents the real alternatives that, Lear eventually rejects. Understandable in context without being unified in retrospect, they too become victims of the social roles they actively take up. Through them Bond represents "the human" in contemporary terms as both socially constructed and capable of change, as possible shapes of an inevitable socialism.

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Linguistic Dialogism in *The God of Small Things*

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Arundhati Roy's debut novel *The God of Small Things* (1997) created turmoil in the world of fiction. The present paper modestly examines the linguistic diversity of the novel. Further, the paper also elucidates the Indianized version of English and the power politics of language played by the novelist. It is interesting to see that how she debunks the colonial structure of language. The novel smells of Indian sensibility which has questioned the authority of power politics that dominates the global world today. The novel also presents such a situation more vividly and effectively in which the dialectics in between the rigidity and flexibility of the language finds superb expression.

Indian writing in English is much indebted to Arundhati for this another milestone set in the journey undertaken earlier by Indian fiction right since the time when Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Rajmohan's Wife* saw its print and fell in the hands of Indian readers. Indian fiction in English has confronted so many challenges from the high-brow critics peering through the glass of colonial colours and the minds hinged on the pivot of power. *The God of Small Things*, (TGST) the Booker prize winning novel of Arundhati Roy has

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not only caught up the rhythm of the tradition in this lineage but also taken a stride further in challenging the Dracula of die-hard colonial system from the point of periphery and margin. The language has its free play when it touches the sensibility of the culture it wants to express. The creativity of any good literary writer depends by and large upon the construction and invention of a language that may suit the context. Any inclination towards standardization to fix a pattern may prove fatal and hazardous not only for the users but also for that particular language. The very universal nature of any language is that it is always in a state of flux and this is so because it has to fulfil the changing demands of the community which uses it. At the same time it has to reconstruct and shape itself as per the needs and requirement of various communities. It is not merely the matter of innovative language but also Roy's intention to hint at politics behind her experimentation. She herself says in *The Shape of the Beast* "My style is my politics" (26). In fact, politics has its existence not merely confined to state and political institutions as it was considered earlier. Its scope gets widened up to the extent to touch every part of human behavior. The politics plays a dirty role when the voice of the marginalized is not allowed to get an outlet through a language. How true does Braithwaite appear with these words in his article 'Nation Language' when he posits "It is an English which is not the standard, imported, educated English, but that of the submerged, surrealist experience, and sensibility [...]" (311). She does not hesitate to show her arrogance for the cultural hegemony of power that erodes the very existence of pluralistic and diverse culture of India. The text of the novel has intentionally violated the rigid literary canons set by authoritative European scholars. Cynthia vanden Driesen while pointing to the post-colonial feature of

the text observes, “its language constantly interrogating and displacing the hegemony of the colonialist master text” (374). In fact, Roy has to speak the voice of the community she belongs to. She has the guts in her to challenge the authority of the grammatical rules of English that has filtered the minds of the colonized people. She has to create and invent her own system of English language that can better express her creative drive. She herself has got an explanation for it when she says, “Language is a very reflective thing for me. I don’t know the rules, so I don’t know if I have broken them.” (Quoted by Dhawan 2012:21). She creates an imaginary, separate, unique, genuine and real world of her own that confronts the currents and cross-currents of the domineering colonialist world. Roy so often is absorbed in her past memories when she gives expression like a child in such noteworthy phrases and lines like:

“Little man. He lived in cara-van. Dum-dum.”
(TGST 99, 294, 319, 325)

“Things can change in a day.” (TGST 164, 192, 202)

“Orangedrink Lemondrink Man.” (TGST 101, 102, 103, 104, 108, 109, 111).

The rationality of the readers sometimes wanders in the world of senselessness which again holds philosophically the bitter truth of life in the following language of expression:

“And again Estha walking
Past floating yellow lines...
Past green mangoes...
Past glass casks of vinegar with corks...
Past shelves of pectin and preservatives...
Past gunny bags bulging with garlic and small onions...
Past the lemon squash.” (TGST193-194)

The repetition made of the word 'Past' brings poetic relief in the midst of the novel. The impression that Estha has on his mind while walking through the pickle factory is expressed without any alteration and manipulation. Such live expression of the reality is much demanded today to keep literature close to the reality. The postcolonial move can have a genuine lesson from such an expression of language. Let the truth come as it comes. Manipulation of the facts has already degraded the world and the language. The so-called sophisticated language has played an instrumental role in misrepresenting the facts. The hidden game of power politics needs to be exposed through such a language that may capture the essence of life that lives at grass root level. It is that language which is the brain child in the form of novel and revolutionary thought of Arundhati, which speaks of the things known small, negligible, weak and marginalized. The readers, even those who have the least of sensibility in them cannot miss the silent and hidden sobs and cries of those beings of our society who have been suppressed, humiliated and forsaken on the periphery to seek their existence. The language of the novel has received so many poignant attacks from the high-brow critics the world over but call it the divine fate or good luck that it stands on every front with its own justification. The rigid and customized English cannot suit the innocent, natural and genuine feel of the marginalized. The centre of the authority and power has exploited the small particles left on the margin. The time is ripe now for those on the periphery to make their own voice of protest. The language of the novel is not merely an invention by the novelist to draw the attention of the world to get applause or appreciation. The language is charged with movement against the merciless power that has customized it to serve those who are sitting on the throne like a dictator.

It is at the end point of justice that the marginalized voice must get expressed through a language which is set free from the imposed standard. Chinua Achebe in his famous article captioned 'The Role of the Writer in a New Nation' comes up with the similar bent of mind when he says "It is important first to learn the rules of English and afterwards break them if we wish.... The good writer will know how to do this." (12). In fact, Arundhati Roy should be explored in this novel with her instinct, her normal act of expression and also with an intention to be irregular that may break the constraints of so called standard of English, i.e. Queen's English. She has to show her insight from her own cultural milieu and she has enjoyed her artistic independence in expressing the voice of her heart. It is just to emboss local color in the novel that she has used terminology that shows kinship in relation and so she picks up such names for the characters like Pappachi, Mammachi, Kochamma, Ammu, Chacko, Estha and Rahel etc. Her experimentation with English language has found relocation in the theme of the novels, the landscape and images she has depicted in the novel finds expression in the cultural space of Ayemenem, one of the villages in Kerala. The geography, climatic condition, flora and fauna, demographic structure, costumes and conventions etc. of the village are vividly pictured in the month of May. Here it is how she begins:

May in Ayemenem is a hot, brooding month. The days are long and humid. The river shrinks and black crows gorge on bright mangoes in still, dustgreen trees. Red bananas ripen. Jackfruits burst. Dissolute bluebottles hum vacuously in the fruity air. Then they stun themselves against clear windowpanes and die, fatly baffled in the sun. (TGST 1)

The feminine sensibility is infused into a patriarchal language in the text of the novel to reflect Roy's intention of pushing the constraints of meanings and discourses. Language has always sought its way posing a central question in post-colonial studies. The deconstruction of ideas can get much effective possibility only when English language is assessed from new perspective. Roy comes up with linguistic struggle and relates it with the struggles taking place in the real political world. She remakes the colonial language she is using to reflect her post-colonial experience. As Salman Rushdie in *Imaginary Homelands* says, "[R]eflection of other struggles taking place in the real world struggles between the cultures within ourselves and influences at work upon our societies. To conquer English may be to complete the process of making ourselves free" (17). Roy has availed the freedom to generate her strategies to present number of themes based on struggles of the weaker ones against the powerful. The character of Ammu has set her struggle against patriarchy, the unjust world of the adults is being rebuked by the twins, the subalterns have to speak the voice of discontent against the ruling upper caste, the growing ups in the family are led by the air of struggle against the dysfunctional family norms, Nature yells and shouts at artificially constituted culture. The language invented by the novelist goes hand in hand with the themes as such so as to represent them artistically, naturally and realistically. The indigenous expression that the novelist has incorporated shows this fact that native spirit can adeptly be conveyed in the invented English of hers. The novelist inter-mixes languages. This may be called hybridization of the language that takes shape in particular cultural and political spheres. This linguistic experiment is through the process of decolonization leading to *Indianization* or *Nativization* of English. The

English she uses in the novel is nothing but incorporation of native tongue. The language she has used is set in reaction against the language of the colonizer. Her expression may be considered what Bakhtin has referred to as heteroglossia in *Dialogic Imagination*. We can find Arundhati Roy and her novel close to the philosophy of Bakhtin as quoted here under:

The novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized. The internal stratification of any single national language into social dialects, characteristic group behavior, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of authorities, of various circles and of passing fashions, languages that serve the specific sociopolitical purposes of the day, even of the hour (each day has its own slogan, its own vocabulary, its own emphases)- this internal stratification present in every language at any given moment of its historical existence is the indispensable prerequisite of the novel as genre. (262-63)

Arundhati Roy seems to be on the zenith as she has not left a single stone unturned in breaking standard conventions imposed by colonial English on Indian minds. The deviations communicate to the world the culture that she actually represents and in this sense she is an unrivalled champion. *The God of Small Things* through and through gives ample space to the expressions which disseminate the fragrance and essence of Indianness. The deviance from the monopolistic standard of colonial English is a very severe blow set against power of the centre. As Alex Tickell in *Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things* observes "This

kind of change in language makes it the language of negotiation that authentically represents people looking for a way, a psychological, zone or some form of not feeling the weight of history and of colonization” (67). Almost all the essentials of the unique culture of the community she lives in, find fresh stroke of her powerful pen. Family relations in the novel calls for the uses of the words like *appopan* (grandpa), *ammooma* (grandma), *kochamma* (respectable lady), *ammavan* (uncle), *ammai* (father’s sister), *mol* (daughter) etc. The uniqueness of the wearing and dress does not make any compromise and so the expressions get free play with *kunukku* (old fashioned earring) (113), *mundu* (loin), *white churidar and shervani* (228), *chatta* (blouse) (161). The novel abounds in hundreds of such Malayalam terms experimented as devices to interrogate colonizers. The end of the novel puts lasting impression on the mind of a serious reader and for that the novelist has used a single word ‘*naaley*’ (TGST 340) encapsulating the meaning of a whole sentence making an intentional substitution for a commonly understood world ‘tomorrow’.

The God of Small Things is a daring effort of the novelist to convey an unacquainted message to the world that gets support from local color, local words and local phrases without damaging artistic beauty. The suppressed voice of the marginalized tends to cleave out the stony chambers of the hearts of the powerful be that local or global. A multipronged questioning voice of individual characters in the novel pushes it closer to the Bakhtin’s concept of polyphonical novel. David Lodge states it as “novel in which a variety of conflicting ideological positions are given a voice and set in play both between and within individual speaking subjects without being placed and judged by an authoritative voice” (86). The multiple consciousnesses of the

characters and the novelist tend to destroy the established forms of the homophonic novels of the Europeans. The dialogic nature of human thought and human life echo and re-echo throughout the text and context of the novel. The use of so many compound words like thunderdarkness (10), soapslippery (23), paint-flaking (29), Pleasant-looking (39), coat-hangers (55), ground-level (76), double-coloured (91), serpent-headed (92), fan-whirring (100), Black-haired (100), dirt-coloured (108), ring-shaped (111), card-holding (119), ship-shaped (306) etc. strengthen her narrative technique that also elicit multiple and diverse local images. All such utterances become integral part of the context making string of sounds which enter into dialogic relationship. These compound words are referred to not in isolation rather they become the part of linguistic reality and individual sensibility. The various collocations like 'Beautiful Ugly Toads' (TGST 187), 'an unmixable mix' (TGST 44), 'noisy television silence' (TGST 28) etc. appear as double voiced oxymoron which get themselves attached to the feelings and plight of the characters. The vast linguistic diversity of the native color finds soft and smooth strokes in foreign tongue. The novelist does this all with her aesthetic carefulness only to express her rage. The juggling with letters all with poetic tenderness reveals a grounded resentment driving her to challenge the authoritative rules of the language. The orthodoxy of English must melt down to construct a new linguistic and social system. The words which occur in tabular form speak the originality of the voice as repeated the whole day by the three children namely Rahel, Estha and Sophie Mol just to amuse themselves are being referred to here under:

*Nictitating ictitating titating itating tating
ating ting ing* (TGST 188-9).

The mode of presentation in the novel crosses the

established conventionality as to suit the demand of childlike sensibility. The words are toyed, the big structure of the sentences develop tendency in them to reach on to the point of diminutive. From the very beginning the narrative tends to move on different levels of experience be it the experience of past, present or future. The characters delve deep into the mysteries, they introspect and reveal through the language which is aptly suited to their variegated experiences. The children's vision also finds the appropriate level of their apprehension. The two children characters, namely Rahel and Estha are the representation of the melting point which gives signals of the coming future of the die-hard orthodoxy. These children are only two years of their age when they get separated from their father and brought to Ayemenem house by their mother Ammu. These creatures have not been accepted whole heartedly by Ayemenem house rather they are treated as social stigma. Particularly Baby Kochamma gives so many reasons for not loving them. To substantiate, the narrator says: "Baby Kochamma disliked the twins, for she considered them doomed, fatherless waifs. Worse still, they were Half-Hindu Hybrids whom no self-respecting Syrian Christian would ever marry" (TGST 45). She takes Ammu for the ill fate "of the wretched Man-less woman" (TGST 45). Baby Kochamma earmarks the harsh words for them and is ever ready to vent her ire with her suppressing power to mould their minds as to suit her crazy expectation. She herself was a victim of patriarchal supremacy and her own will has remained suppressed throughout the youth she has lived now. She may pose to be submissive at times outwardly but is obsessed with unfulfilled desire throughout. She wants pseudo modernity and colonial mindset to be established in Estha and Rahel. She is observed imposing the colonizing language behavior in them so that they may

lose their instinctive and native tone of the language through the prescribed norms of socialization. As Vogt-Williams in his famous article "Language is the skin of my thought" *Language Relations in Ancient Promises and The God of Small Things* says "Language is often used as an instrument of power- it can hurt, exclude and even deprive a person of their rights- the right to speak, the right to be heard and the right to be one's self and to have that self-acknowledged by one's surroundings" (394). Baby Kochamma has the rigid flavor of colonial juice of the English she wants to ooze out for the twins so that when they grow up they may not feel what they really are. She would take it for a golden opportunity to discard and nip the native habits of children in the bud to groom and flourish in them any further and so:

That whole week Baby Kochamma eavesdropped relentlessly on the twins' private conversations, and whenever she caught them speaking in Malayalam, she levied a small fine which was deducted at source. From their pocket money. She made them write lines- 'impositions' she called them- *I will always speak in English, I will always speak in English*. A hundred times each. (TGST 36)

The compatibility and suitability of language has always been adjudicated through the peering lens of the standard befitting the needs and requirement of powerful. The colonial establishments have always exercised their mammoth power in propagating such a standard of English language that remains far beyond the adaptability of the marginalized mass of the world. Imitation and copying a language cannot serve the purpose of the cultural setup of a particular community. English language must be decolonized and further be

nativized so that the reality of life of the diverse cultures across the world may get expressed through.

Estha and Rahel from the very beginning show their wild objections to that. They are not ready to get themselves strangled by so many do's and don'ts. Sometimes they also misbehave with Baby Kochamma because of her excessive abhorrence and reservations for accuracy of English. When there comes the matter of pronunciation practice in English Baby Kochamma tells them to form words in proper order to "be particularly careful about their Prer *NUN* sea ayshun.

Rej-Oice in the Lo-ORD Or-Orlways

And again I say rej-Oice,

RejOice

RejOice

And again I say rej-Oice".

(TGST 36)

The world of experience has always compelled the innocent world of children to earn all sorts of hypocrisy and duplicity. The world of children has taken it as for their turn calling in wilderness. The tutor in Miss Mitten fails her to teach English to these children when they take her lesson so innocently and carelessly. She becomes disappointed and so "Miss Mitten complained to Baby Kochamma about Estha's rudeness, and about their reading backwards. She told Baby Kochamma that she had seen Satan in their eyes. nataS in their seye" (TGST 60). The baby book given to them as present when she visited Ayemenem had the title *The Adventures of Susie Squirrel*. This was so offending for these children that they put forth the backward loud reading: 'ehT serutnevda fo eisuS lerriuqS. enO gnirps gnirom eisuS lerriuqS ekow pu' (TGST 60). In fact, the creativity of the children opens a new world for them, the world which has small things, the world that goes carefree and unstructured emotional outlet, that world which is not eager to kill the individuality of its inhabitants and

surely that world almost decolonized. A new language is being framed to catch-up the sensibility of children.

The language that Roy has used becomes so effective to articulate the voice of small things. The essence of the native touch of Malayalam in the novel is not merely to speak about the importance she has given to the native colour but also tells a lot about the flavor of the small community she belongs to. The English language has intentionally been broken and toyed to serve the purpose of counter politics of power against powerful. The narrative of *The God of Small Things* has not merely an intention to narrate the sad story of many imaginative creatures boarding in Ayemenem house but also the purpose of the novelist throughout to bring to fore the consciousness of power politics through the expression of language.

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Multiculturalism in the Poetry of Agha Shahid Ali

**Gauri Shankar Jha*

Multiculturalism has been a long fashion in the realm of Indian English poetry and the present poet is deeply involved in this exercise. The present paper seeks to establish the same in the poetry of Agha Shahid Ali. Agha Shahid Ali is a trilingual and tri-cultural poet who has witnessed India in its various phases, namely, before Independence, after Independence, Partition and the aftermath. His migration to the United States is a move circumstantial than anything else. For an Indian, post-colonialism implies literary modernism (which is, now-a-days post-post-modernism), diverse influences and their acceptability, a culture beyond the purview of culture (often called indigenous), identity which is all-inclusive, and tradition which is more than the past-and Ali stands for that. His preferred sojourn at U.S.A could not detach him from his roots and he always poised his Indianness intact, "emotional identification with...North Indian Muslim Culture." Some of his works are: *'Bone-Sculpture'* (1972), *'In Memory of Begum Akhtar'* (1979), *'Half-Inch Himalayas'* (1987), *'A Nostalgist's of America'* (1992), *'The Beloved Witness: Selected Poems'* (1992). M. K. Naik observes;

"A poet conscious of his Muslim faith his family heritage and his attachment to his native Kashmir, Ali celebrates all three in his verse. He tells us about God's 'Ninety-nine names in Arabic', and the 'black stone

descended from Heaven', in the Holy of Holies of Islam. The Kashmir ambience is all pervading in Ali's verse....redolent of Kashmirial." (175-76)

M. K. Naik does not find in him a prominent poetic instinct and found him a failure in coining his own poetic idiom. On the other hand, Pritish Nandy finds him a promising poet and quotes him as 'early insight' of Indian English poetry who swings from traditional Urdu to modern English. His diasporic identity is explained by Bruce King in his book 'Modern Indian Poetry in English',

"Agha Shahid Ali might be considered part of a diaspora, Indians who spent part of their youth abroad, returned to India, but settled elsewhere, and frequently visit India. Such lives have produced a different kind of poetry which, rather than being marginal to the contemporary literary scene abroad, is often central to it." (258)

Ali's first poetic work *Bone-Sculpture* was written and published in India in 1972 which echoes the abiding influence of Eliot, Auden and other modern poets and carries the theme of loneliness, uprooting, cultural dislocation, personal obsession comprising the usual ingredient of history, death, memory, family, ancestors, dream, friendship, etc. He does not harp on the mound of the past or the rituals of the ebbs and so the word 'bone' used in the title symbolise the 'death world', simply a 'mosaic world of silent graveyards.' In one of his poems entitled 'Dear editor', he introduces himself,

"I am a dealer in words
That mix cultures
And leave me rootless.

.....

.....

And
I wake up in dark room
Alone with sweat."

The nostalgic fever of Kashmir also haunts him like any diasporic entity which can be traced in his book *In Memory of Begum Akhtar*, published in 1979. Here, Ali moves from Kashmir to Delhi in search of the rich heritage of Indian Islamic tradition. Obviously, it has an autobiographical touch with the place acting as symbol or image to communicate the imperative theme. In his process, he chooses the great singers of Kashmir and expresses their function of drudging the chasm of any sort with the help of delicacy of feeling, lyric phrases and instinctive music. 'K. L. Saigal' is such an expression:

"Nostalgic for my father's youth,
I make you return
His wasted generation
.....
You felt it all
.....
The ruins of decades."

Such an attempt provides an elegiac colour and fragrance. But the cultural tradition is also celebrated:

"You've finally polished catastrophe
The note you seasoned
With decades of Ghalib,
Mir, Faiz:
I innovate on a note-less raga."

It is something more than the simple roll-call of the classic poets and singers who were the integral part of Indian culture before Independence, after Independence and after partition, reflecting both Hindu and Muslim culture.

The lamentations or carvings of the immigrant souls make the poems a bit subjective. His family background furnished him amalgamated stuff of Islamic and European culture, which can be calculated as the deriding Westernization. So, Ali was a product of a unified culture, though his orthodox grandfather could not sustain him further, as he admits: "My voice cracked on Ghalib/and my tongue forgot the texture of prayer." After partition, the scenario was completely changed and he says, 'History broke the back of poetry'. Urdu language and literature has fed his English poetic raw material and we can very easily find the influence of seasoned poet like Ghalib, though most of the time it is T. S. Eliot who dictates him. He also admits, "Shakespeare feeds my alienation." Bruce King observes that his life has become his mythology, his subject. The United States has become his new home but his constitution generally dwells on the combination of three cultures: Western, Hindu and Muslim, that is why he keeps on oscillating between the native and the alien, India and the United States, and we have his substantial work 'The Half-Inch Himalayas' which registers his imaginative upheaval of this native and magnitude. The question of 'home' crops up,

"Kashmir shrinks into my mailbox,
My home is a neat four by six inches.

.....

Now I hold
The half-inch Himalayas in my hand
This is home. And this the closest
I'll ever be to home."
He can construe his past in a delicious way'
"I am not born
It is 1948 and the bus turns
Onto a road without name

.....

I wants to tell them I am their son
Older much older than they are
I knock, keep knocking.”

History, memory, religion and music recur in his poetry again and again. The past appears through the family and the landscape, which is why, his mother appears in ‘A Dream of Glass Bangles’, and ‘The Season of the Plains’, his grandfather appears in ‘Prayer Rug’, the crafts of the Indian past appears in ‘The Dacca Gauzers’, the monsoon and the rain appears in ‘A Monsoon Note on Old Age’, the future appears in ‘A Lost Memory of Delhi’, and language and poet appears in ‘A Butcher’. He is also aware of the poverty of the present India and its affluent past under the Moghuls and the British: “Beggars now live here in tombs, /Of unknown nobles and forgotten tombs.”

His sense of alienation is more vivid and clandestine in Section-III of ‘The Half-Inch Himalayas:

“I’m alone, walking among atrocities,
Guillotine blood-scorched,
Goods stabbed at their alters,
Dry wells piled up with bones,
A curfew of ghosts.”

He is aware of the violence of the land and he finds his dreamland bulldozed with massacres: “In my dream I’m always/in a massacred town.” There is no hope for social justice or revolution of any sort which can revive the traditional values and bring a respite from the nightmarish aura. In the United States, he is not at ease; he can feel his self without root, without home and without identity. The Partition has brought another catastrophe and the exile is an escape rather than compulsion.

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**Evaluating Human Follies in *The Vegetarian*
by Han Kang**

**Urmila Dabir & **Shubha R Mishra*

I

The greatest challenge facing anyone trying to introduce Korean writing to the outside world is the world's greatest lack of knowledge regarding Korea's recent history, which has a deep influence on its literature. Korean poetry and fiction were mostly written in imitation of the classical Chinese model until the end of the 19th century. Drama as a genre was not there. In the 15th century a very simple 'Hangeul' alphabet was invented to transcribe the polysyllabic grammatical structures of Korean and sounds of Chinese words. With the advent of Meiji Reform in 1960, the vistas to the modern Western world were opened. It was also marked by a vast programme of translation of European classical and modern writings. The Christian missionaries favoured the use of Hangeul as even the uneducated could also read. In 1910 Korea became a province or colony of Japan and the official language was Japanese. During this period the use of Korean in publishing was prohibited.

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The Japanese annexation was a boon for educated Koreans as it brought them in contact with the wide range of World literature and philosophy. The Koreans were being challenged to abandon its patriarchal, hierarchical, authoritarian Neo-Confucianism. Therefore, the Koreans started using Hangeul for modern fiction, the major themes being individual freedom and the generation gap. With the advent of education, women radically transformed their own self-perception. Fiction mostly dealt with the rise of 'New Woman' whose desire was to marry the man of her choice and live life on their own terms.

Korean Literature published during that time was censored and no criticism was permitted. After a long war in 1953 South Korea was born and the surviving writers came to terms with the tragedy of division. There had been no victory to celebrate. The best that the writers of fiction of South Korea could do was to celebrate human dignity and little acts of human kindness that served as moments of a kind of redemption, during the war and amidst ongoing hardship and poverty. South Korea was transformed into an urban, industrial capitalist state. The rural youth migrated to the cities in search of work. Hence, the fiction of 60s and 70s portray on uprooting the loss of rural innocence amidst urban violence and corruption and harsh social reality, leaving little space for fantasy and romance.

When the Korean cities flourished and became modernized with high rise apartments, a transformation set in. The works of contemporary Korean writers were seen writing comedies, fantasies and frustrations of the modern world. In contrast, the Korean cinema, television and drama were better equipped than the printed page. It portrayed the modern Korea for the world view.

The literary scenario was quite different. Amidst a great deal of suffering, trial and tribulations, Korean writers managed to produce works which reflect the challenges, faced by them. These works now see the light of translation and an army of translators began doing this job with great zeal and enthusiasm. Korean writing reflects Korea's unique experience of turmoil and change. It needs to be read and understood in this context. It can be aptly said that Korean history is very unlike that of other countries in many ways. It is amazing to see how a small country changed and projected itself to the world through its literature.

II

Korean literature in translation can be traced back to the later nineteenth century when through Japan western literary influences began to filter in on Korean writers. Two social movements: the New Education and Korean Language and Literature Movement had an important role to play. In 1894 the Gabo Reforms introduced western style of education and on the other printing technology got a tremendous boost. Serialized novels in newspapers became fashionable. They were known as *Sijo* and *Kasa*. The new novel *sinsosol* gained immense popularity. But it was only in twentieth century that bi-lingual publications began to appear. Earlier, the translations were limited to Japanese and Chinese now it became possible in English. Like many Asian languages, the exact translations in words is not available, therefore the equivalence in language and culture does not remain the same. The order of the words change and therefore it no more remains faithful to the original. The translators faced many problems when Korean government introduced new Romanization system. This was done to avoid confusion and quite recently McCune Reischauer system became recognized

standard. Some critics like Sogang call the Korean literature between 1990-2000 as “literature in a consumer society” (Sogang: web).

By 1988 events like Seoul Olympics became a landmark when Korean society entered the era of intense consumerism. This changed the value system, ways of thinking, and the aesthetic sense of a whole generation. The 90s saw the technological boom and the internet which opened a new world for the young generation. In this period some prominent poets like Kim Kitaek, Chang Songnam, Ho Su-gyong, Choe Chongnye eulogized about the loss of values and alienation, insecurities of existence. On the other hand, the fiction writers began to reflect upon the consumer culture as a double edged sword which will eventually lead to meaningless lives. The writings of Yen Taenyong, Yi Sunwon and Kim Yong-ha show many characters caught between traditional and modern values. Kim Yongha needs a special mention as he is regarded as the writer of the digital age. His popular fiction *Wind Blows* (1998), dwell upon age of simulation. “Insistently aware of its own fictional status, Kim Yông-ha’s writing adopts a rhetorical strategy that is more parasitic than mimetic, based on the recognition that “reality” can no longer monopolize the realm of experience or serve as the sole guarantor of truth. Instead, reality is understood as something to be engineered, even digitally re-mastered.” (Sogang)

Another characteristic of Korean fiction emerged was the women writers like Hong Chiyong, Un Hugyoung, Kim Insuk, So Hajin, Cho Kyongnan and Pae Su-a, “set out to articulate feminine desire and challenge like phallogentric order of Korean society and customs” (Sogang). Fictional characters depicted women’s liberation from values, family ties and sex. The dramatic change from women writers per se referred to as *yeoryu*

jakka while their counterparts were called *jakkanim* (can be translated as “authors” honorably) Till the second half of the twentieth century women writers remained on the periphery. With the emergence of new women fiction, things began to change. Books like *The Future of Silence: Fiction By Korean Women* translated and edited by Bruce and Ju Chan Fulton, Park Wansuh’s *Who Ate Up All the Shinga*, Ch’oe Yun *There a Petal Silently Falls*, Shin Kyung-Sook, Bae Suah (*Nowhere to Be Found*), changed the literary tone of Korea. Han Kang is part of the new Korean wave driven by women. Her writing represents change and touches upon the modern day Korea and a victory for Korean translated literature.

III

“It takes a gifted storyteller to get you feeling ill at ease in your own body. Yet Han Kang often set me squirming with her first novel in English, at once claustrophobic and transcendent Yeong-hye’s compulsions feel more like a force of nature.... A sea like that rippling with unknowable shadow, looks all but impossible to navigate – but I’d let Han Kang take the helm any time.” (Chicago Tribune)

This is the review published by Chicago Tribune on the novel, *The Vegetarian* written by South Korean writer Han Kang and translated into English by Deborah Smith, who won the Man Booker International Prize for 2016. Han Kang made her literary debut as a poet in 1993. She currently works as a Professor in the Department of Creative Writing at Seoul Institute of the Arts.

The Vegetarian is Han Kang’s first novel to appear in English and it’s a bracing, visceral system showing addition to the Anglophone reader’s diet. It is sensual, provocative and violent, ripe with potent images, startling colours and disturbing questions. As Yeong-

hye changes the book's language, it shifts too with Deborah Smith's translation moving between the baffled irritation of Mr. Chong's first person narration in part one, the measured prose of In-hye's world, the dense and bloody narrative of Yeong-hye's dream and seductive descriptions of living bodies painted with flowers, in states of transformation or wasting away. A reading of *The Vegetarian* is an extra-ordinary experience.

Yeong-hye and her husband lived an ordinary and controlled life before nightmares began. Her dreams, images of blood and brutality torture her. It drives Yeong-hye to purge her mind and renounce eating meat altogether. It's a small act of independence but interrupts her marriage and sets into motion an increasing grotesque chain of events at home. As her husband, her brother-in-law and sister each fight to reassert their control, Yeong-hye obsessively defends the choice that's become scared to her. Soon their attempts become desperate, subjecting first her mind and then her body to ever more intrusive and perverse violations, sending Yeong-hye spiraling into a dangerous, bizarre estrangement, not only from those closet to her, but also from herself.(Dabir 365-367)

IV

The Vegetarian is written in three parts. The novel can be viewed as a piece of social protest, but this seems beside the point, unless the protest is against existence itself. The heroine of the novel progresses through three stages of detachment, shedding herself first of the imperative to live up to empty convention, then of desire, and finally the most primal attachments of blood and compassion. This paper is an attempt to describe these three stages of Yeong-hye.

It is said that there is a primal side in each one of us. One that disrespects social norms, has needs, makes

demand. The novelist in the novel, *The Vegetarian* has explored the irreconcilable conflict between our two selves: one greedy, primitive the other accountable to family and society. .

“Existence precedes essence” is said by Jean Paul Sontag, meaning that first a human being comes into existence, and then it creates its essence, the values and meanings that it has as a human being.

In *The Vegetarian*, Yeong-hye gradually sheds her essence, emotionally isolates herself and devotes into something that exists with meaning, like a plant or an animal. In this process she ignores the social norms that require a suppression of the primal. Yeong-hye and her husband are ordinary people. He works in an office with moderate ambitions and mild manners and on the other hand Yeong-hye is an uninspired but dutiful wife. The novel consists of three long chapters that were originally published in Korea as separate novellas. Yeong-hye is the focal point of each chapter, and when read together the narrative fashion a novel that is greater than the sum of its parts. He chooses a wife who was unassertive and bland. As he says, “And so it was only natural that I marry the most run-of-the mill woman in the world. As for women who were pretty, intelligent, strikingly sensual, the daughters of rich families – they are only ever have served to disrupt my carefully ordered existence.” (TV 4)

Yeong-hye was a woman of few words who never made any demands or fuss. She spends her time doing household chores reading in her leisure time. According to her husband the only respect in which she was unusual was that she didn't like wearing a bra. He tried to persuade her lecture her on wearing a bra but she complained of the discomfort that she faced. Her husband began to have doubts about this hypersensitivity of hers.

One night Mr. Cheong, Yeong-hye's husband finds her standing rapt before the fridge pulling out all of the fleshy contents out of its depths and dumping them into the trash. Mr. Cheong was shocked, "It was cold enough as it was, but the sight of my wife was even more chilling. Any lingering alcohol-induced drowsiness swiftly passed. She was standing, motionless in front of the fridge." (TV – 7)

Everything in their steady life changed when Yeong-hye had a dream. She stopped eating meat and persisted in her abstention despite pressure from Mr. Cheong and her family, not relenting even in the face of the awkward social situations that result. She also started avoiding sex. She said to Mr. Cheons, "The meat smell. Your body smells of meat." (TV 17)

One day Mr. Cheong forced himself upon her, she strongly resisted and came out with verbal vulgar curses all the time, and once the act was over,

'She lay there in dark staring up at the ceiling , her face blank, as though she were a 'comfort woman' dragged in against her will, and I was the Japanese soldier demanding her services. As soon as I finished she rolled over and buried her face in the quilt. I went to have a shower and by the time I returned to bed she was lying there with her eyes closed as if nothing had happened, or as though everything had somehow shorted itself out during the time I'd spent washing myself.' (TV 30-31)

Her act of vegetarianism was getting on the nerves of the family. Her parents tried to persuade her that the body needs nutrients and if she wishes to follow a vegetarian diet, she has to have a proper well balanced meal. Her mother prepares all types of non-vegetarian dishes and whole family makes use of force to make her eat non-vegetarian food. They even put the food in her

and mouth forcefully;

‘My father-in-law mashed the pork to a pulp on my wife’s lips as she struggled in agony. Though he parted her lips with his strong fingers, he could do nothing about her clenched teeth.’ (40)

She tried to free herself and caught hold of knife, and ripped off her wrist.

‘Blood ribboned out of her wrist. The shock of red splashed over white china. As her knees buckled and she crumpled to the floor, the knife was wrestled from her by In-hye’s husband, who until then had sat through the whole thing as an idle spectator.’ (41)

Her conviction for vegetarian was so strong that she tried to commit suicide but did not give up her vegetarian way of life. The second part of *The Vegetarian* is narrated from the perspective of Yeong-hye’s brother-in-law, a painter and video artist by profession. He was obsessed with a vision, ‘the image of a man and woman, their bodies made brilliant with painted flowers, having sex against a background of unutterable silence — one shipped down, drawn out moment of quiet purification, extremity sublimated into some kind of peace.’ When he came to know about the birth mark of the size of a petal on the buttock of Yeong-hye he decides that she must be the woman of her dreams;

‘Though her face was missing, the woman in his sketch was undoubtedly his sister-in-law. No, it had to be her. He’d imagined what her naked body must look like and began to draw finishing it off with a dot like a small blue petal in the middle of her buttock.’ (59-60)

Now the most important aspect of the mission was to persuade and convince his sister-in-law to allow her

body to be painted. She consented to his offer willingly. She reported to his studio and posed as per the instructions of her brother-in-law. Without a qualm she stripped. He noticed her birthmark which was thumb-sized on the upper-left buttock.

‘How could such a thing still be there after all these years? It didn’t make any sense. Its pale blue-green resembled that of a faint bruise, but it was clearly a Mongolian mark. It called to mind something ancient, something pre-evolutionary, or else perhaps a mark of photosynthesis, and he realized to his surprise that there was nothing at all sexual about it; it was more vegetal than sexual.’ (83)

He painted her body with half opened buds red and orange. He painted an orange flower with full bloom on her right buttock. He left the Mongolian mark undecorated. As days pass he painted her body but he realizes, ‘All the same it was surprising that the process hadn’t provoked in her even the slightest feelings of desire.’ (90)

All these activities shattered the married life of her sister but she was unperturbed. The last section of the book is viewed from the eyes of Yeong-hye’s elder sister. Yeong-hye follows the Vegetarianism strictly and it descends into full-blown madness and the ecstatic belief that she is in the process of becoming a tree. When she is being taken in an ambulance to the hospital in critical condition, her sister whispers into her ears,

‘Perhaps this is all a kind of dream.’ She bows her head. But then, as though suddenly struck by something, she brings her mouth right up to Yeong-hye’s ear and carries on speaking, forming the words carefully one by one. ‘I have dreams too, you know. Dreams... and I

could let myself dissolve into them, let them take me over...but surely dream isn't all there is? We have to wake up at the same point don't we?" (182)

Yeong-hye raises her head and notices a bird flying up towards the dark clouds. She tries to follow the flight but she can no longer follow it;

"Quietly she breathes in. The trees by the side of the road are blazing, green fire undulating like the rippling planks of a massive animal, wild and savage. In-hye stares fiercely at the trees. As if waiting for an answer. As if protesting against something. The look in her eyes is dark and insistence.' (182-183)

The novel concludes with these lines. The disturbed state of mind of the protagonist seems to filter on to the reader.

V

Some reviews of *The Vegetarian* have said that the novel should be viewed as a piece of social protest but this seems beside the point, as the protest of Yeong-hye is against existence itself. The novel portrays the progress of Yeong-hye through three stages of detachment. First shedding herself of the imperative to live up to empty convention, then the desire and finally detachment from the most primal attachment of blood and compassion. Her sister sits beside her haggard frame, Yeong-hye triumphantly announces, "I am not an animal anymore." (TV 153)

She has gone far past fretting about the pressures on women in Korean society, or any society for that matter. In the novel the inner conflict of Yeong-hye is so poetically described that at one point the reader feels not just pity but begins to empathize with her. (Dabir

371) The whole life of Yeong hye reflects how her own decisions, affect not only her family but symbolically the whole world around her. Her own decisions became her fatal flaw which gradually turns her into a different person. Human follies turn her into a fatalistic person who seems to waiting for death with no purpose for life.

“The failure to comprehend the very people with whom we should be closest is the underlying theme of the novel. Kang punctuates our erroneous faith in the ability to understand one another by silencing Yeong-hye and instead allowing her story to be told by her husband, sister and her brother-in-law. Their inability to “know” Yeong hye creates frustration, disillusionment and isolation. Only In-hye, who, in the midst of her own personal crisis rejects the temptation of the primal, ultimately finds some meaning in Yeong hye’s choices. Kang’s provocative novel calls into question our reliance on others for emotional substance when the primal side of our natures remains always unpredictable, always incomprehensible. (web)

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Toni Morrison's *Beloved*: An Attack on Racial Exploitation

** P.K. Singh*

Toni Morrison demonstrates a keen awareness of concern for and dedication to African people in America. As Mbalia puts it, almost “like a scientist, she uses each work as a laboratory in which to research a hypothesis as to the nature of oppression experienced by African people and to posit a solution to it.”¹ In terms of fictional art, starting with the issue of race as the primary form of oppression in *The Bluest Eye*, demonstrating the sexism as oppressive as racism in *Sula*, adding the problem of self-identity and class-exploitation to that of race in *Song of Solomon* and then showing class struggle and capitalism as the primary target against which the blacks must struggle in *Tar Baby*, Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) examines America's past of slavery and is dedicated to the ‘Sixty Million and More’ Americans who died in the middle passage, on the slave ships to America. In an interview in *Today Review*, 1985, Toni Morrison tells that her main theme in writing this novel was to “bear witness to a history that is unrecorded, untaught in mainstream education. She has to a great extent relied on oral history, and attempted to replicate the black female slave voice, her “unspeakable thoughts, unspoken.”² In *Beloved*, we feel that almost every character is yearning for his or her identity. Thematically, *Beloved* may be interpreted as a novel to

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seek the solution of the African people who suffer from the class exploitation and racial oppression. But at the same time, the characters are making an honest effort to seek their identity.

Toni Morrison marshals out the unique feminine cultural ethos and qualities of resistance, excellence and integrity that were part and parcel of the Black women's past and prominence. It is, moreover, vivid and vibrating that Morrison's fifth novel *Beloved* exemplifies and objectifies the diversity and delight of the black feminine experience. She herself is committed to the historical and womanist cause and then she remembers *Beloved* as a genuine Black book. The analysis of Morrison's characters shows that they are in a constant state of flux, fluctuating and flexibility and all these do happen on account of their restlessness for getting themselves identified. The role-shift deconstructs the man-woman static role and constructs and destabilizes the man-woman dichotomy.

Beloved is the story of a visitation from the past and the consequent upheaval in the emotional lives of its characters. It is set during an appalling period in America's history: the years of the civil war and of slavery. After the civil war ended in the later half of the nineteenth century, life was still dreadful for black people, whether slaves or freed. The novel examines the impact of slavery on a group of black people.

Morrison gets the kernel of this novel from the news article entitled 'A Visit to the Slave Mother who killed her child'. Quoting from an interview with Morrison, Melvyn Rothstein in her newspaper article "Toni Morrison" in her new novel, defends women, mentions the incident, which moved Toni to write the novel. In Morrison's own words, as quoted by Laura:

I was amazed by this story I came across about a woman called Margaret Garner who had escaped from Kentucky, I think into Cincinnati with four children. And she was a kind of cause caliber among abolitionists in 1855 or 56 because she tried to kill the children when she was caught. She killed one of them, just as in the novel. I found an article in a magazine of the period, and there was this young woman in her 20s, being interviewed... and she was very calm, she was very serene. They kept remarking on the fact that she was not frothing at the mouth, she was not a mad woman; and she kept saying, 'No, they're not going to live like that. They will not live the way I have lived.'³

The picture of life, which comes through this statement, is ugly, empty and dreadful. It is reported in Fairmount Theological Seminar published in *Today Review* of 1985.

With the essence of this news clipping, Morrison concocts the story of *Beloved*. She, however, expands, refines and shapes it so that *Beloved* picks up where *Tar Baby* leaves off. While considering carefully over this new article what evidently clicked in Morrison's mind was the fact that conditions of oppression then and now as well as our reactions to them have not qualitatively changed.

Sethe, the protagonist of the novel, is a slave on a farm in Kentucky called Sweet Home. The other slaves who belong to the farm are three half-brothers—Paul A, Paul D and Paul F—and two other men, Sixo and Halle. The latter becomes Sethe's husband. While their owner Mr. Garner is alive, the slaves enjoy a relatively stable way of life. Garner prides himself on treating his slave as men. He allows them to use guns and to hunt to supplement their rations and he lets them choose their

own partners, rather than breeding from them for offspring. Unfortunately, he dies unexpectedly and Sweet Home is taken over by his brother-in-law, schoolteacher.

Schoolteacher regards slaves as animals and, aided by his nephews, submits them to various investigations and experiments. As the quality of their lives deteriorates, the slaves decide to escape. Paul D and Sethe are the only two who succeed. The other Pauls are killed, and Sixo is shot when the white men are unable to burn him alive. Halle witnesses Sethe's rape and beating by schoolteacher's nephews, and is reduced to a wreck. It is assumed that he also dies. Paul D is sold and spends several months in a prison camp in Georgia because he attempted to kill his new master. He manages to escape with the other member of the chain gang.

Sethe, heavily pregnant with her fourth child, sends her other three children ahead to her mother-in-law's house and runs away. She survives the journey and is helped by a white girl. She gives birth to her second daughter, Denver, on the banks of the Ohio. Helped by Ella and Stemp Paid, two black people who assist runaways, she arrives at Halle's mother's house in Cincinnati and is reunited with her other children. Halle's mother is known as Baby Suggs. She used to live at Sweet Home until Halle bought her freedom. In Cincinnati she has become an unofficial preacher and a significant figure in the local black community.

Beloved deals not only with 'reconstructed memory' but also with deconstructed history. Set in post-civil war Ohio, this haunting narrative of slavery and its aftermath traces the life of a young woman, Seth B, who has kept a terrible memory at bay only by shutting down part of her mind? The novel deals with Sethe's former life as a slave on Sweet Home Farm, her escape that follows.

Although Sethe physically survives, she remains emotionally subjugated, and her desire to give and receive love becomes a destructive force. Morrison also addresses the difficulties faced by former slaves in keeping the horrors of their pasts submerged within the subconscious. In the words of Ann Snitow:

Morrison twists and tortures and fractures events until they are little slivers. She moves the lurid material of melodrama into the minds of her people, where it gets sifted and sorted, lived and relived, until it acquires the enlarging outlines of myth and trauma, dream and obsession.⁴

Thus, Morrison recreates a past, however painful, to undercut the ideological basis upon which it has largely been constructed by whites, employing not only available accounts in slave narratives, but also disengaging the materials from historical documents in order to revitalize them as lived experience. The novel hinges on the death of Sethe's infant daughter, *Beloved*, who mysteriously reappears as a sensuous young woman. *Beloved*'s spirit comes back to claim Sethe's love. Sethe struggles to make *Beloved* gainful possession of her present and throws off the long, dark legacy of her past. Sethe's experience is treated with many ironic overtones that point to certain strange and many fundamental complexities of her quest for freedom.

The novel *Beloved* begins almost twenty years after these events are supposed to have happened. Sethe is still living in the house on 124 Bluestone Road with Denver. The two women are outcaste by the black community. Baby Suggs has died. The murdered baby girl's ghost who is engaged in poltergeist activities rocks the house. It is saturated with an atmosphere of misery, manifested in pools of red light. In the first section Sethe wishes that her daughter would come back and allow

her to explain her dramatic action. The novel charts this very event. A girl arrives whom Sethe and Denver gradually come to accept as the ghost made flesh. She calls herself 'Beloved', the name engraved on the toddler's gravestone. The other inhabitant of 124 Bluestone Road is Paul D, who arrives to visit Sethe. He and Sethe have a relationship and he is as opposed towards the living Beloved, as he was to the ghost, whom he banished from the house on the day of his arrival. Denver, who has been lonely for many years, is dependent on Beloved, and resentful of Paul D. Stemp Paid decides to tell Paul D of Sethe's crimes and the period that she spent in prison. Paul D is awed and repelled by Sethe's reaction to the realities of black existence, and leaves the house. After his departure, Sethe is positive that Beloved is her daughter and slowly relinquishes everyday life. She loses her job in a restaurant and spends each day trying to compensate and justify herself to Beloved. The three women lock themselves into the house in a deadlock of love, blame and guilt. Beloved grows fatter and fatter while Sethe shrinks away to nothing. Denver realizes that she must do something, and braves the outside world to look for a job. She is waiting to be collected by her new employer, when the women of the area come to Sethe's rescue. They have heard of the presence of the ghost and are determined to rid the house of Beloved. As they are gathered outside, Mr. Bodwfn appears. He is a white man who has helped three consecutive generations of Baby Sugg's family, and arrives to pick up Denver. Sethe attacks at him with an ice pick convinced that he is another danger to her children, but is struck by one of the other women. Beloved disappears.

Later Paul D comes to visit Sethe and finds her lying in Baby Sugg's bed. He washes her and tells her that their shared past must be overcome. She must stop

grieving for the death of her child and begin to value herself. The novel ends with the possibility of a future life for Sethe, Denver and Paul D. There is an epilogue, which commemorates the way in which the novel's protagonists forget their supernatural visitation.

Sethe is a pivotal character in *Beloved*. The narrative voice of the novel is most often hers as she relives and 'rememorizes' the awfulness of her life as a slave. She rarely saw her mother, and was brought up by a one-armed woman named Nan, while her mother worked in the fields as a slave. Her mother took her aside one day to show her a mark, which was branded on her ribcage. Later Sethe finds her mother hanged, along with many other women, but she never discovers the reason why. Sethe is presumably a second-generation slave, since she can remember her mother speaking another language and being told of her repeated rapes during the voyage to America. Sethe's memories of her youth are vague, but at the age of thirteen she is sold to Sweet Home, a farm in Kentucky. She is bought to replace Baby Suggs, whose son she later marries and to whose home she escapes.

While Mr. Garner and his wife run Sweet Home, Sethe lives in relative tranquility. She works in the kitchen and makes ink for Mr. Garner. All five of the male slaves would like her as a partner, but after a year she chooses Halle to be her husband. They make love in a cornfield to spare the feelings of the other slaves, but the waving of the corn on a windless day signals their activity to the watching men. She gets pregnant every year and has three children—two boys named Howard and Buglar, and a baby girl. She is nineteen and pregnant for the fourth time when Mr. Garner dies.

His brother-in-law (schoolteacher) comes to take control of the farm. From this point onwards life becomes

unbearable for the slaves. They decide to escape, but in the ensuing confusion Sethe is forced to send her three children on ahead to Baby Sugg's house. After being beaten mercilessly by the nephews, and having to endure the indignity of their sucking milk from her swollen breasts, she runs away on foot. She gives birth to her fourth child (Denver) with the help of a white girl named Amy. She is helped to cross the Ohio River and reaches 124 Bluestone Road where her mother-in-law, Baby Suggs, is living. For twenty-eight days she enjoys freed life before schoolteacher arrives to take her and her children back to Sweet Home. Rather than allow this to happen, she takes her children into the woodshed and tries to kill them all, to preserve them from a life of hopeless slavery. She succeeds in dispatching her best thing—her small daughter to safety by cutting her throat with a handsaw. She sees this act as one of protection and provision for her young but, paradoxically, it proves to be an act of destruction, lending gruesome irony to the phrase 'mother love was killer.'⁵ Sethe is impressively strong. Her determination manifests itself in her successful escape from Sweet Home. Pregnant and wounded she manages to make her way through the woods and across the Ohio River. Although haunted by her memories of the past, she withstands the humiliation of being sexually abused by two men. Halle witnesses this and loses his reason. He is last seen beside the butter churn, spreading butter on his face. She thinks for a moment that it would have been a release if she too could have joined him, but her three children on the way to Ohio needed her and 'no butter play would change that.' (45)

Beloved, set in rural Ohio, is a chronicle of slavery and after. Even several years after the emancipation, the experience of slavery keeps haunting the lives of the Blacks. They realize that "[f]reeing yourself was

one thing, claiming ownership of that freed self was another." *Beloved* chronicles a period of radical change and redefinition of emancipated black people. As slaves they had been dependent on whites for their entire existence. They now found themselves without the material or emotional means to cope with freedom.

Toni Morrison emphasizes the utter depravity of slavery by underlining the concepts of humanity and bestiality. *Beloved* is a saga of grit and courage, a chronicle of fundamental contradictions which always define a civilization. But what becomes most significantly transparent is the moving combination of the strength and constraints of a woman who is basically a mother, and happens to be a black slave in a society. The society is bifurcated by dominant racial hatred into two sections—the ruler and the ruled, the master and the slave, at a turbulent time of the American history. *Beloved* cannot be interpreted in a simplistic manner.

It has different layers of probable meanings involving a multi-leveled communication, which has always existed between the reader and the text. The most significant impression the reader retains is of a mother who is struggling to save her children from a predictable brutal future. There is a black woman who has been cow-hided and emotionally de-shaped before spending only 28 days of tentative freedom in the company of her children, mother-in-law and neighbours. She is trying desperately to protect her children from the repetitive fate of her race.

A woman hounded by generations of future—acting decisively to put her babies “where they’d be safe”. This impression is further intensified by the fact that Morrison herself has refused to take sides. Using the flashback technique, she has tried to put across certain sympathy for Sethe, but has restrained herself from

direct and conclusively justifying Sethe's choice of slashing her infant daughter's throat rather than see it in chains. This authorial act has added a sense of ethical responsibility the reader has to internalize the facts of the narrative and take a decision in terms of defending or rejecting Sethe's choice.

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Emerging Trends in English Language Teaching

**K. Jayaraju*

English language, willingly or unwillingly, has come to stay and has been taught in Indian schools and colleges for the last 150 years or so and for the last fifteen to twenty the necessity to acquire the language has reached colossal proportions keeping in view of the global employment scenario. In most of the cases desired results have failed to show up and the most prominent reason for the failure is that our students rarely get any opportunity or are never given an opportunity to use the language. Our language teaching methodology has been besotted with the provision of content in the form of short stories, essays, poems and rules of grammar. Students generally get used to rote learning as in the case of any other content subject. They are attuned to this form of language learning as they are assessed and evaluated in this aspect only. A fleeting glance at the English language question papers at school and college level ascertains the truth that the students are mostly tested for their memory and not for their creative and critical thinking as well as other language acquisition skills. As end products, our students miserably fail in using the language even after nearly fifteen long years of English language learning at both school and college level and so struggle in the work environment.

Against this background there is a dire necessity to take a thorough introspection and reflection on our

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English language syllabus, teaching and learning methodologies. Within the constraints that one works in our educational administrative set up, as teachers, one has no say regarding what should go and should not go into syllabus. However, as teachers we have clear bearing on the teaching methodology that we adopt and adapt. Our Indian educational system as well as the classroom is undeniably teacher centered where the teacher is looked upon as the saviour of students' academic lives. Teacher is the doer, speaker, performer and what not. Teachers wallow in their demi-god like status and also at the same time total responsibility of learning lies on the shoulders of this solo performer. Students are perceived as empty bowls, tabula rasa, which are titled up with teachers' scholarship. Cooperative participation is strikingly absent in the classroom. Hence, a change towards better teaching learning scenario is the need of the hour. All over the world a paradigm shift is taking place towards student autonomy and lending importance to the authentic needs of student. This teaching learning process is widely acknowledged as Student Centered Methodology (SCM). The present paper attempts to look at the efficacy of these methods In an English language classroom.

The implementation of student centered methodology in a language classroom is carried out well with the execution of recent trends like Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Learning (TBL), Project Based Learning (PBL), Problem Based Learning, Inquiry Based Learning, Discovery Learning and so on. After providing a brief idea of the methods listed here an extensive discussion on the practice of CLT in our English language classroom, the approach that provides far reaching solutions to many of the problems faced in a language classroom, is carried out in a detailed manner.

A task in **Task Based learning** is defined as an activity “where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome.” Jane Willis. In a task-based lesson the teacher doesn't pre-de-termines what language will be studied as the lesson is based around the completion of a central task and the language studied is determined by what happens as the students complete it. The teacher introduces the topic and gives the students clear instructions on what they will have to do at the task stage and might help the students to recall some language that may be useful for the task. The students complete a task in pairs or groups using the language resources that they have as the teacher monitors and offers encouragement. Students prepare a short oral or written report; practice what they are going to say in their groups and then report back to the class orally. After an analysis of the student presentations the teacher selects language areas to practice, based upon the needs of the students. The students then do practice activities to increase their confidence and make a note of useful language.

The essence of **Inquiry-based learning** is to make inquiry which implies involvement leading to understanding. Furthermore, involvement in learning implies possessing skills and attitudes that permit you to seek resolutions to questions and issues while you construct new knowledge. **Discovery Learning** is an inquiry-based learning method. Discovery learning takes place most notably in problem solving situations where the learner draws on his own experience and prior knowledge to discover the truths that are to be learned. **Case-based learning** teaches important concepts and fact within the context of authentic or real-world situations. Further, this learning reduces the need for “inert” knowledge which is acquired information that is

difficult or impossible to apply to realistic situations, because - was learned in a “chunked” fashion, type any out of all context or relation to reality. **Project-based instruction** is a holistic instructional strategy that builds on children’s individual strengths, and allows them to explore their interests in the framework of a defined curriculum.

Communicative Language Teaching is in a way similar to these methods mentioned here as it also focuses on the learner. However, all these methods mentioned could be used in other content based subjects while CLT has special focus on language and language acquisition skills. The basic tenets of CLT are that language is primarily for communication and so as per **Hymes (1972)**, the goal of language teaching is to develop “Communicative competence” that is, “the knowledge and ability” a learner needs to be communicatively competent in a speech community. It enables students to communicate in the target language by providing them with the knowledge of the linguistic forms, meanings, and functions. Students use the language a great deal through communicative activities such as games, role-plays and problem-solving tasks. The main objective of CLT is to decrease Teacher Talk Time. (TTT) and increase Student Talk Time (STT). Another characteristic of CLT is the use of authentic materials as it gives students an opportunity to develop strategies for understanding language as it is actually used. Activities in CLT are often carried out by students in small groups in order to maximize the time allotted for each student for communicating.

Teacher in CLT is looked upon as an adviser, a facilitator, a ‘co-communicator’(Littlewood 1981). Student is entrusted with responsibility of his learning in this situation. He /she co-operates with fellow learners thus leading to ‘cooperative learning’. They work on all

four skills i.e. reading, writing, speaking and listening. The target language should be used not only during communicative activities, but also for explaining the activities to the students or in assigning homework. The students team from these classroom management exchanges, too, and realize that the target language is a vehicle for communication, not just an object to be studied. Both accuracy and fluency are evaluated. A teacher can informally evaluate his students' performance in his role as an adviser or co-communicator. For more formal evaluation, a teacher is likely to use an integrative test which has a real communicative function. In order to assess students' writing skill, for instance, a teacher might ask them to write letter to a friend. Errors of form are tolerated during fluency-based activities. Students can have limited linguistic knowledge and still be successful communicators. The teacher may note the errors during fluency activities and return to them later with an accuracy-based activity.

Communicative language teaching attains its authenticity and veracity through the class room communicative activities that are extensively used in teaching learning process. The activities are not just learner and learning centered but teacher oriented too. Teacher is equipped with many class room management techniques while the learner is provided with cooperative learning techniques. To name a few, some teacher aiding techniques are eliciting, giving instructions, pair work, group work etc. The learning process also is strengthened with many communicative activities which are basically looked at as fluency activities and accuracy activities. "Fluency is natural language use occurring when the speaker engages in a meaningful interaction and maintains comprehensible and ongoing communication despite limitations in his or her communicative competence." defines Jack C

Richards in his article “Communicative Language Teaching Today”. He maintains that students negotiate “meaning using communication strategies and he contrasts fluency practice with accuracy practice which focuses on creating correct examples of use”. In fluency based activities focus is on natural and meaningful use of language, achieving communication, use of communication strategies, and linking language use to context. The end product language of these fluency based activities is not always predictable. Accuracy based activities focus on classroom use of language, formation of correct examples of language, language out of context, small samples of language that may not require meaningful communication. The outcome is generally predictable as the output language is controlled.

Encompassing all the four language skills CLT activities that can universally be used with improvisations on the part of teachers are surveyed. Classroom management activities like pair work and group work certainly benefit the learner as well as the teacher. Two students doing activities in pairs or few students working in small groups inherently have the advantage of confidently trying out language they know in the privacy of peers. Further, there is less or no fear of being wrong and the students benefit from listening to peers, negotiate turn taking, use language purposefully and cooperatively, try out communication strategies like checking understanding, paraphrase to get round an unknown word, reformulate other people’s ideas, and supply words and phrases for other speakers. In group work, learners perform a learning task through small-group interaction. Learners in a class that is divided into five groups get five times as many opportunities to talk as in full-class organization. Other advantages are; it fosters learner responsibility and independence, improves motivation and contributes to

a feeling of cooperation and warmth in the class. There is research that indicates that the use of group work improves learning outcomes. The success of group work depends on careful and effective organization. One important aspect to be taken care of is to give clear instructions of what is to be done and they have to be given before the commencement of group work. Both for pair and group work a demonstration or an example of the activity helps the students better. Repetition of instructions by students would be a useful strategy to check the comprehension of the given instructions. Time limit must be set and preview of language in terms of vocabulary and grammar would be highly substantiating the preparation of group work. Teacher has to monitor closely the work carried on by the groups and help the students when necessary. Allotting roles like time keeper, note-maker, and presenter would check passive and hyperactive participation of students.

Eliciting means drawing out information, language, ideas, etc., from the students. It is a technique based on the principles that students probably know a lot more than we may give them credit for. Effective eliciting includes conveying a clear idea to the students, perhaps by using pictures or gestures or questions, etc. They then supply the appropriate language, information, ideas, etc. finally teacher gives them feedback. Generally language ideas, feelings, meanings, contexts, memories, etc are elicited. Language is learned through a process of guided discovery, and it seems likely that it will be more memorable because of the degree of student involvement in the learning.

The teaching of basic three language skills i.e. reading, writing and listening in CLT follow PWP method. PWP method elucidates the process of pre activity - while activity - and post activity. In case of reading pre- reading activities like prediction, using

background knowledge, skimming are used. While-reading activities include chunking. Scanning and organizing. Some CLT reading activities are

1. Jigsaw Reading.
2. Dramatic Reading.
3. "Cast" the Story - Ss choose well-known film stars to act in the movie version of the story. Ss must justify their choices.
4. Movie Poster - Ss design and draw a poster for the movie version of the story. Ss present their poster and justify their design.
5. Dialogues: Between 2 characters who do not share a scene in original story; S meets and interviews a character from the story; One S becomes a character, the other S (s) interview; One S becomes the author of the story, the other S(s) interview (Post reading).
6. Letters : As a character in a story; To a character in a story
7. Diary - Ss write a diary as one of the characters
8. Rewrite the Story - from a different character's point of view, or with a different ending, or with a surprise plot element.
9. Student - Made Reading Tests.
10. Student-Made Ooze: Ss in pairs, same paragraph; Pair writes 2 different closes, same text; Exchange 2 clozes with another pair; Second pair tries to complete orally, back to back;
11. Dictations: Classic, Missing words. Back to back, Shouting etc.

(Courtesy.: ELF Workshop, George.Bishop Junior, Senior English Language Fellow. U.S. State Department)

'Listening' too follows PWP method. Pre-listening activities help students use their background knowledge about the setting, topic and language associated with

them so that they can anticipate and predict what they will hear. Purpose for listening is set in advance through visuals, topic related discussion, prediction and pre-teaching of needed' vocabulary and structures. While listening, students are expected to take notes, note down information, accomplish a task.- Repetitive listening takes place during this phase moving from general to specific. While-listening is followed by post listening activities like reading, writing or speaking.

Writing has five step writing process which once again falls into PWP model. Pre-writing activities like brainstorming, clustering, webbing, mind mapping, diagramming can be used to gather the needed information on any topic. While actually writing organization in the form of grouping and outlining takes place. It also includes rough draft, revision and the final draft Some CLT writing activities could be:

1. Paragraph and essay, ideas: Introductions, Interviews (Student descriptions), An important person / favorite person / friend; Favorite place or thing; Morning person or night person?; Weekends / Weekdays; Recipes / How To ; Funny or Scary Story.
2. Relaying instructions: Building models/ drawing pictures; Giving directions; writing commands: "Mary, take off your left shoe."
3. Exchanging letters; a) Writing messages that ask for a reply : To John: What kind house do you live in? From Maria." b) Advice column : "Dear Professor X", c) Letters of complaint: "Dear Complaint Department"
4. Group writing: News broadcast, Class bulletin, Tourist brochure, Advertisements, Group fairytale.
5. Other writing activities: Stories from pictures, I am the Curtain, Poems, Pen Pals, journals (courtesy: ELF Workshop, George Bishop Junior, Senior English Language Fellow. U.S. State department)

Speaking skill which has always been considered the most difficult one to be accomplished has been presented quite innovatively in CLT where meaningful use of language in real life is the focus. This skill as the other skills is integrated into other language acquisition skills. Essentially 'speaking' is not approached through PWP model as speaking, in CLT, takes place continuously. However many effective speaking games and activities such as information gap activities (Student A has some information which Student B doesn't have), opinion gap activities (Ex. Starting a new civilization), preference line etc. can be employed to generate good amount of natural talking. CLT researchers and experts have worked extensively on communicative activities that could be used to teach vocabulary as well as grammar. Vocabulary may be presented through translation, pictures, realay, pictograms, mimes, synonyms, antonyms, hyponyms, giving examples, providing definitions, providing a context and so on. While teaching grammar teachers should first show learners an example of how grammar is used to communicate information. The example of the grammar structure that learners see before learning about the structure should have a context - a situation or theme that connects all the words or sentences. The example should also be interesting for the learners and give as much information as possible about the different forms of the structure. Some suggested activities for grammar practice are Picture Cue, Situation, Free Practice, One Word Clue, Substitution, Scrambled Sentences, Repetition, Cloze / Fill in the Blank, Multiple Choice.

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Translating PLSI Surveys in English and Hindi: Its Implications

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Linguistic surveys are a means to assess the demographic profile of languages. They provide us a picture of the language ecology of a country. They made available to us the data regarding the existing condition of languages. Through the linguistic surveys we come to know about the total number of speakers of a language. This helps us to know whether a language is facing threat of extinction or may face it in near future. These surveys are also done to provide a linguistic and cultural description of languages in order to document them. The linguistic, social and cultural documentation of languages provided in the language surveys help us in language planning and deciding the language policy of a country. Moreover, the surveys are significant as they contribute to the preservation of many marginal languages which have reached the threshold of extinction.

Language Surveys in India:

In India census remains the only means to know about the demographic status of Indian languages. However, it is not a detailed survey of languages. In India the first attempt to survey Indian languages was initiated in the British period and conducted between

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1894 and 1928. The survey provided linguistic description of 250 languages and 750 dialects and its material was published in 11 volumes from 1903 to 1928. After independence in 1984 Government of India commenced a survey to find out the linguistic deviation taken place in Indian languages after the submission of Grierson's survey. However, this survey is still incomplete. Another attempt to survey Indian languages as a part of XIth plan was undertaken under the aegis of CIIL Mysore but the survey could not fructified and remained only in the conceptual state. However, census of Indian languages and total number of their speakers has been conducted regularly after every ten years and this remains the only source of knowing the demographic status of Indian languages. In 2010 Professor G.N. Devy, Chairman Bhasha Research and Publication Centre, Baroda initiated PLSI a survey of Indian languages with a focus to identify, document and describe them with an aim to conserve them. The PLSI survey identified 860 languages. It was completed in 2013. The survey will be published in 50 volumes. The publication of the volumes will be state-wise. The part one of the volumes will be in the respective schedule or official language of the state and part two of the volumes will be English translation meant for the non-Hindi and international readers. Further, all the respective volumes of the state will be translated into Hindi to be made available to the Hindi readers. The PLSI survey of India is the only survey whose translation will be available in English and Hindi. Grierson's survey was published only in English and hence remained away from the reach of the non-English readers.

Conservation of Languages as Important as Bio-Diversity:

The Government spent money on the conservation

of Tigers, Lions and other animal and bird species to protect the bio-diversity. People celebrate Van Mahotsava and plant trees in large numbers to maintain the eco-system. However, no conscious raising and efforts have been done by the governments to protect and preserve the linguistic diversity of the country. Linguistic diversity refers to the different languages spoken in different regions of the country by different language communities. The languages spoken by different communities contain their traditional knowledge system which has been developed over centuries by the members of the speech communities through observation and experience. It is this knowledge system that helped them to survive in spite of many odds faced by them over centuries. This knowledge system enshrined in their languages also helped them in the conservation of the bio-diversity of their regions. The PLSI survey of the tribal and other marginal languages reflects this bio-diversity. These languages provide ample vocabulary to express the forest life and its richness which cannot be thought of through alien languages divorced from the native forest regions. Hence, the conservation of these languages becomes of paramount importance for conserving their traditional knowledge system that has preserved the rich bio-diversity of the country.

Translating PLSI: Creating Multi-lingual Space to Save Marginal Languages:

The PLSI is not only a survey of Indian languages but also a socio-cultural account of them. The PLSI shall soon be made available in the form of the translations of the different volumes of the state in English and Hindi. The first part of the PLSI volume is in the respective state languages and the second part of the volume shall be in English. Further, PLSI also decided to bring out

33 volumes in Hindi version. The translation of the English volumes of the state has already been completed and some of the volumes have already been published. The translation of the state volumes in Hindi is in progress and the state volumes translated in Hindi will be published soon. When all the state volumes which contain the description of so many marginal languages will be published in their translation renderings, these volumes will be made available to the readers of English and Hindi which are the official and the most widely used languages in India. Hindi is the official language of India and is spoken and understood by more than 40 crores of people. English is a global language. The translation of PLSI survey of marginal local languages in Hindi and English shall create multi-lingual space for these languages. These renderings in English and Hindi shall extend the reach of the marginal languages from the local to the global. Most of the marginal languages exist only in spoken form and are spoken by people of these speech communities. Some of these languages have few speakers. The documentation of these languages in written form and translation of these languages in standard languages like Hindi and English will save them from extinction. The documentation of these languages will preserve them for posterity and their translations will expose these languages to global readership. By creating multi-lingual space for these languages through translation, these languages can be preserved and some of them which are on the brink of extinction can be revitalized.

Pedagogical Potential of PLSI Translations in English and Hindi:

Tribal and other marginal groups are taught in schools through the medium of Hindi, English and other regional languages. In spite of the recommendation of

the National Tribal Policy 2006 to teach tribal students in their mother-tongue up to at least class IIIrd, no attempt has been done by the government in this direction. The result is increase in the drop out of the tribal children in large numbers. The hostile medium of instruction imposed on the marginal pushes the marginal children out of the class rooms. The PLSI volumes contain the essential frequently used vocabulary. The vocabulary items which are related to the kinship terms, names of vegetables, crops, agricultural equipments, seasons, animals, fruits, food items, house-hold articles, time, diseases etc. are frequently used in the daily lives of the people. The meaning of each word is provided in the Hindi volume in Hindi and in English volume in English. The vocabulary of the frequently occurring words related to daily routine of the tribal paved the way for bilingual manuals which can be prepared for the tribal children of primary schools. Since the vocabulary items are related to the daily lives of the people, they will be easily learnt by the children of the marginal groups.

Translating PLSI: Bringing the Marginal Languages near the Main Languages:

The tribal and the marginal groups have remained isolated from the mainstream of the society. The beauties and strengths of their languages have remained away from the main stream population that does not understand their languages. The PLSI translation of the vocabulary and the oral literature of the marginal languages into English and Hindi shall bring these languages near the speakers of English and Hindi. Speakers of the main languages shall come into contact with the linguistic and literary material of the marginal languages and come to know about their rich oral traditions which remained away from them for not being

available in written form. Through the PLSI translations, authors of the main languages shall experience the fragrance of the rich oral traditions of the marginal languages. The PLSI volumes of different states contain the folk songs, folk stories, riddles, proverbs etc. collected from the community members of the marginal ethnic groups. These state volumes present the cultural and linguistic diversity inherent in the languages of these communities. PLSI translations of these volumes into English and Hindi shall bring the marginal languages near the main languages.

PLSI Translations in English and Hindi: Deconstructing Myths about Marginal Languages:

The PLSI survey covered scheduled as well as non-scheduled languages including a large number of tribal languages which have always remained at the margin. The survey concentrated on the socio-cultural aspects of the lives of the people reflected through their languages and folk literature. The survey deconstructs many myths about the verbal deprivation of marginal languages, their underdevelopment, these languages lacking in communication potential, their backwardness and these languages as chaotic and unstable. The PLSI survey of tribal languages that has taken into account the vocabulary related to kinship terms, seasons, time, name of colours, fruits, animals, vegetables, musical instruments, kitchen equipments and the words used in daily conversation and the rich folk literature available in these languages dismantle the various colonial myths about the lack of vocabulary, backwardness and communication potential fabricated by the privileged class. Since most of the tribal languages do not have a writing system and mostly used in the spoken form, they seem to the people as disorderly and

unsystematic. But analysis of the phonological, morphological and syntactical features of these marginal languages in PLSI survey of these languages discover a uniform pattern at the deep level which, however, is not visible at the surface level in the spoken form. The below listed vocabulary items related to time, parts of the body, illness and court in Bhili, Mavasi, Bhilali and other marginal languages deconstructs the false and fabricated myth about the lack of vocabulary in the tribal languages.

Words Related to Time in Bhili

Bhili	Hindi	English
Havere	Prabhat/Subah	Dawn
Hanje/Hanj	Sandhya	Dusk
Dahadu	Chan/Din	Day
Rat/ Shrat	Rat	Night
Bapor/Bopahar	Daphor/Dopahar	Noon
Ghanumondnu/ Dhanivar	Bahut Samay	Too Much Time
Ujalani Tem	Subah 6 Baje Ka Samay	Time of 6 O'Clock in the morning
Vakhat/Hanje	Andhera Samay	Hour of Darkness
Tara Dubata	Subah Char Baje Ka Samay	Time of 6 O'Clock in the morning
Ghanto	Ek Ghanta	One Hour
Mlu Jhakale	Gou Ke Ghar Aane Ka Samay	Dusk
Chan Ugata	Suryoday	Sunrise

Dubata Dan	Suryast	Sunset
Rotani Tem/Vakhat	Khana Khane Ka Samay	Time for Meal

Words Related to Parts of the Body in Mavasi

Mavasi	Hindi	English
Dui	sir	head
Cuti	bal	hair
Tala re sir	antranali	intestine
Kapad	kapal	forehead
Gardan	garden	neck
Papdi	palkem	brow
Kandha	kandha	shoulder
Med	amkh	eye
Boto	amgutha	thumb
Meda ga gara	amkh ki putli	eye lid
Angutha	anguli	finger
Lutur	kan	ear
Moniyam angutha	panch anguliya	five fingers
Jhoka	gal	cheeks
Hathedi	hatheli	palm
Thidin	damt	teeth
Madire lan	jaban, jibh	tongue
Muchi	mumch	moustache
Torra	gala	neck
Dadi	dari	beard
Mohar	cehra	face
Lae	antari	intestine
Dimag	dimag	mind

Daka	eri	heel
Munga popa	nak ke ched	nostril
Maiyan	kamar	waist
Lihur	hoth	lip
Kabja	sina	chest
Bobli	nabhi	naval
Sati	chati	chest
Bulu	jhang	thigh
Bhavdi	pith	back
Tona	ghutna	knee
Kamsil	phephre	lungs
Khopra	khopri	skull
kaleja	hriday	heart
Puti	nala	a long bone, windpipe
Jhilu	mans	flesh
Guda	guda	anus
Gothaiya	purush jannendriya	penis
Kacraiya	istri jannendriya	vagina
Komar	badan	body
Pacna	khun	blood
Thi	kalai	wrist
Katde	camri	skin
Coti	coti	tuft (of Hair)
nokko	nakhun	nails
Pasli	pasli	rib
Pindri	pindli	calf (of the leg)
Kura	pair	feet

Bhadi ga hadge	rir ki haddi	back bone
Hadge	haddi	bone
Bagal	bagal	side, flank
Koyosa	sams lena	to breathe, inhale
Kokho ara	sams chorna	to exhale (breathe)
Ighda	ghabrahat	palpitation, discomfort, tizzy
Juda kemn	jura	round- shaped/ bun- shaped hair- do

Words Related to Illness in Bhilali

Bhilali	Hindi	English
Mandalu	Bimari	Sickness/ Illness
Dukh	Dard	Pain
Munddukhanu	Sirdard	Headache
Bhomaru	Samanya Sardi	Simple Cold
Pet Dukhyo	Petdard	Stomach Ache
Khorjyo	Khujali	Itching
Aandul	Andha	Blind
Heri/Seri	Bukhar	Fever
Barthi	Dast	Loose Motion, desentry
Bhmaro	Sardi Jukam	Cold Cough
Sujanao	Sujan	Swelling

Beharu	Bahara	Deaf
Ukhot/ Dova	Davai	Medicine
Radd	Marana	Die
Molom	Malham	Ointment
Jhanva	Mirgi	Epilepsy
Ukhalavani	Ulati	Vomiting
Datkor	Doctor	Doctor

Words Related to Courts in Mavasi

Mavasi	Hindi	English
Mandi dokhe	apil	appeal
Iljam	iljam	charge
Hathkari	hathkari	handcuff
Davai	dava	claim
Bedi	beri	chain
Kakani	arji	application
Gavaku	gavah	evidence
Hakho	pukar	summon, call
Cor	cor	thief
Fansi	fansi	death sentence
Jamanat	jamanat	bail
Barabar	phaisla	judgement

PLSI Translation as preservation of Cultures of the Marginal:

Many marginal languages are on the verge of extinction. It has been anticipated that in the next few years 250 to 300 marginal languages in India will face extinction. The tribal and other languages are the carriers of their culture. The tribal and so many marginal groups do not have written traditions of literacy. Their

culture which is manifested in their rich oral literatures always remains vulnerable. With the extinction of a language, its rich cultural heritage too comes to an end. PLSI documentation of the tribal and other marginal languages will preserve the rich culture of the tribes and other marginals for posterity. The documentation of the folk songs, folk stories etc. and their translations in English and Hindi shall contribute to the conservation of these languages by making them available in the print form. The below example of a song from the Sahariyai language and its translation in English is a documentation of the traditions of the Sahariyai people who sung different songs at the time of performing different wedding ceremonies and rituals.

Bhat

Rat bari kin choto bhatiyo
Bulat dabaem cal aiyo bhatiyo.
Aae meri dera pe shor kar jaiyo
Aae meri sas ko hariyal sari,
Ek jor bhat ko le aiyo. Rat...
Ae mere susura ko
Sut le aiyo. Rat...

English Translation

[A sister tells her brother...]

The nights are getting longer and the days
are becoming shorter.

My brother bringing bhat, come early
bringing a motorbike,

Bring so much bhat that people will talk about
you in my village.

Come and bring a green sari for my mother-
in-law.

Bring me a pair of saris.

And also bring a suit for my father-in-law.

Exposing Rich Oral Traditions of Marginal Languages to the World:

Generally, marginal languages spoken by the tribal and the other marginal sections of the society remain confined to them only. The rich oral literature composed in these languages remained confined to these sections of the society. It does not reach the global audience due to its non-availability in the written medium. Further, these languages are not understood by the educated sections of the society. The PLSI volumes of different states of India which contain the documentation of so many marginal languages contain a rich collection of oral literature which has been documented in the form of stories, folk songs, proverbs, riddles etc. The translations of the rich oral literature of these languages into Hindi and English shall extend their boundaries from the local and regional to the global. The translation shall expose these works to the national and international readers otherwise the beauties of these works will remain unappreciated and these languages are rather thought of as poor, novice and sometimes even corrupt. The below transcribed Banjara folk song and its translation in English and so many folk songs and folk stories transcribed and translated in Hindi and English in different volumes of PLSI show the rich oral traditions of the tribal and the marginal communities.

Folk Song(Banjari)

Dadi Sone Ri Hoti

Jhallar resham ri hoti

Ghunghru chandi re hote

Lari tare mande re, andbic urelo alvar ro
pankho

Bannai tare mande re, andbic urelo alvar ro
pankho

dadi sone ri hoti

jhallar chandi re hote

lari tare mandua re, andbic urelo alvar ro
pankho

ke tare palga re, andbic urelo alvar ro pankho

English Translation of the Folk Song

A bride who goes to father-in-law's house
dislikes the famous fan of Alwar and demands

—

The handstick of the fan should be made of
gold.

The borders should be made of silk.

The (small) bells should be made of silver.

(On not finding it according to her taste) The bride
demands these adornments (from the assembled women
of the groom's side) and in the midst of the women with
pride throws that famous fan of Alwar in the air.

The adorned bride repeats:

The stick should be made of gold.

The borders should be made of silk.

The (small) bells should be made of silver.

The newly married bride (is so much in rage)
throws the fan of Alwar in the air in the
Mandap where the wedding rituals are
performed.

Conclusion:

The translation of the PLSI state volumes in English
and Hindi shall not only contribute in conserving the
marginal languages but the translations of the volumes
shall also contribute in changing the perception of the
people about the marginal languages and their cultures.
Translation of the PLSI volumes in Hindi and English
shall bridge the vast chasm that has been created out of
ignorance between the marginal languages and the main
languages. Translation of the marginal languages into
English and Hindi shall bring the marginal languages
near the main languages and shall dismantle many

misconceptions regarding the marginal languages which are born out of ignorance as well as fabricated for the vested interest by the dominant speech communities. Lastly, the translation of the PLSI volumes into the main languages like Hindi and English shall unveil the rich oral literature of the marginal that remained hidden from the sight of the speakers of the main languages over centuries due to not being exposed to them.

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Decoding Waves of Existence in Binod Mishra's *Multiple Waves*

**Bhaskaranand Jha Bhaskar*

Contemporary Indian English Poetry has witnessed several tremendous developments. Several new voices have emerged on the poetic horizon with their sensibilities, arresting the attention of the world. They share their vision and mission, their emotions and their aspirations through their writings. It has come of age in terms of global recognition, quality, variety and quantity. Contemporary poets also explore various aspects namely, subject matter, language use, and craftsmanship. Especially their poetry is an expression of full-flowering and maturity of a large number of Indo-Anglian poets whose poetic fires and creativity deserve our attention for their proper evaluation. Their writings are fresh and inventive. There is a long list of contemporary poets writing in English. Among them Binod Mishra deserves our special attention. He has emerged as one of the celebrated poetic voices of twenty first century Indo - English Poetry.

Binod Mishra is a serious, sensible, sincere and highly prolific poet of humane thoughts and sensibility, with a keen insight into the contemporary realities of the world. He has to his credit 22 books (16 edited and 06 authored) on various aspects of English language and literature. *Silent Steps and Other Poems (2011)*, his first poetry collection in English, was critically acclaimed

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across the world. He has now come up with his second anthology entitled *Multiple Waves* which is creating waves in the literary circles. His poetry flows like a wave in a myriad form, creating ripples in the heart and mind of his readers.

It is not out of place to highlight his poetic personality and output with an exploration of the social, familial, existential, environmental, religious concerns, and women and identity issues, as reflected in his poetry, with a special reference to the poems contained in *Multiple Waves*. The purpose of this paper is to study the poet's heart and mind, realize his sensibility and analyse his poetic efforts made at par with his other counterparts.

Life is a series of waves— ups and downs. Each rise and fall in life gives us some experiences. Poets have been using the symbol of 'sea' and its 'waves' to represent life and its troubled times. The sea of life is said to have its daunting width and depth, quite calm sometimes and more raging and even deadly at other times. The waves and varying moods, symbolise diverse human conditions in emotional, social, cultural, familial, individual and universal contexts. It is through one's extraordinary creative ability that a poet turns all these phenomena of existence and existential experiences thereof into artistic form for their sublimated expression. As a sensitive poet of minute observation, Binod Mishra subtly captures these vicissitudes of life in his second poetry collection *Multiple Waves*. Prof Charu Sheel Singh, in the Foreword to *Multiple Waves*, writes:

"While he feels with his heart, he writes with his mind. Thus, his feelings don't run amuck; they are beautifully bound in apt words and images. His expressions are loose; he rightly prefers restrain to profligacy."(xi)

Multiple Waves contains 46 poems dealing with multiple thematic concerns veering around different vital issues of contemporary relevance. His poems are emotive and evocative, expressionistic and impressionistic, magical and intriguing, realistic and pessimistic, and philosophic and reflective. His poetry is a wonderful realistic depiction of contemporary social reality of each and every sphere of life. Prof Charu Sheel Singh is right when he, in the Foreword, reveals that Dr Mishra's poetry is '*largely a response to occasions, situations, and moods*'(xi). As a matter of fact, multiple waves are symbolic of varying moods and feelings surging in the ocean of life. The poet has very successfully captured those moments in beautiful words and images. Poet and poetry, issues concerning women, observation of life, love and nature, environmental issues and concerns, life and death, human predicament, religiosity and God, familial affairs, philosophy, parents and children etc are the central preoccupations of his poetry. Ebbs and flows of life find an excellent articulation with great ease in his poetry. His poetic swash soothes us when we descend into the depth of his poetry.

The volume opens with "Night before the New Year" which throws light on the plight of woman as a victim of circumstances. The poet is saddened to see constant exploitation and humiliation of woman. He shows his disquietude over her predicament. He presents a contrast between the flickering lights of her days and darkness of her nights and the space in between is pregnant with her tears. The simile "pungent pills" is quite remarkable here as it reveals everything about her, her 'sobs and shrieks'. Years come and go but the deplorable condition of woman remains all the same. However, she, thanks her inbuilt mettle, and is all the more,

Resolved to stand and wait,
 she decides to cast her glance
 protesting her master's advances;
 the habitual grazes on her
 decrepit body, her desiccated self
 against her impenetrable mentor
 who stops not and
 proceeds nimbly even after a surfeit. (MW,01)

The poet then provides strong succour to her to steer clear of '*the cobwebs of worldly pangs*' and supports her, saying;

Light may not be her delight
 yet she revels in her ugly sight,
 that lends a pillow to all pale desires
 a bed to unquenched thirsts, the deadly
 hunger of the poor
 a shoulder to mothers, who
 have lost their children in calamities,
 a balm to unrequited lovers, a coffin to black
 desires
 a *palki* to new born babes bewildering at times
 as in Kubla Khan's dreams.(02)

In "A Child's Family", he talks about a child's innocence and the latent potentiality and highlights his/ her talent to fructify in the days to come. This is a remarkable poem as it contains the essence of the saying – "A child is the father of man". The poet rightly writes-...she sparkles with a vision/even adults fail to foresee"(03).

In most of his poems, the poet raises woman-centric issues and tries to resolve them. "Woman" is an inspiring poem dealing with her wretched plight and her revolutionary zeal to rise from the ashes. As a protesting voice of woman, she boldly avers-

I am but born a woman since ages
 'Becoming' is not in my fate
 a tireless traveller against troubled times.

Giver at all times
sometimes receiver though
of heat, hate and harshness.(04)

Further, he speaks of the important roles a woman plays at the same time. In spite of performing various roles, she remains 'a caged bird', her only 'being'. The poet is disheartened to see her pitiable condition and her unheard 'groan and grumble', 'just to raise civilization after civilization'. Nevertheless, as a mother has her eyes sparkling in glee for her children. In "Mother", she mirrors her pathos and affection, love and care and enjoys experiential bliss as her past- *the cuddles, clasps and cries/vying to turn innocence into experience* (16).

Another distinct feature of Mishra's poetry is his plausible perspective on poetic process and creativity. His poems reflect his views on the aesthetics and art of poetry. He has composed many more poems on the process of poetic creation. With the help of stirring metaphors, he redefines a poem and the role of a poet whose objectivity lies in his reader's becoming from what he is to what he should be- a worthy human being. In his poem entitled "A Poem", he writes-

A poem is not a medley of words
but a music of thoughts
not a circumference but a circuit,
a poem is a half-clad moon
an alley leading to highway,
a song of the silence, a discovery of truth
a series of wounds waiting to be healed.(06)

A poet has to face a lot of hardships- physical, mental, psychological, and emotional. He undergoes a series of anguish and agony and has experiential understanding of the intricate way of the world. The volcanic eruption of his eclectic emotions and tender feelings in him releases and relieves him of all his pain and pangs in the form of his poetic expression. The role of a poet is

very significant as he weighs 'despair and delight with equanimity', and sheds 'tears in isolation and finally,

Forges a balance between known and
unknown,
thinks of mountains and seas;
A poet in the making,
they envy his suppressed smirk
and call him a quirk.(08)

"The Laugh of a Poem" reflects his poetic creativity and shows his craftsmanship in presenting poem as an appealing and appeasing maiden. He singles out befitting poetic colours from plethora of colours enlisted in the catalogue of God or nature and further weaves a beautiful tapestry for the creation of his poem.

———— a well-clad maiden
spreading her youthful fragrance,
her bewitching smile
lending poets to wage a war with words
eulogizing her in different forms.(42)

Dr Mishra is a sensitive poet of keen observation. Endowed with an extra sense of perception and extraordinary ability of minute observation of life, he observes life and everything around and garners day-to-day experiences to express them with a vivid account. "Her Bag" is full of such a fantastic observation of a school going child who manages everything and grows up by being expert and adept in life, achieving success after success. However, the poet is concerned because love is getting depleted from his/ her life for running after the mad pursuits. Moreover, when a girl is grown up, her marriage is a big issue of concern. In a society torn by various social evils, dowry is an alarming one for a father. He poses a vital question-

How can business transaction allow
Love to get some room between
things sold and things bought?(10)

Nostalgia, generation gap, the clash between the old and the new, are also apparent in the poetry of Dr Mishra. His poetry is a kind of social commentary. He resorts to sarcasm to make fun of the stagnant social mores. "Grown up" is a brilliant poem in this regard. The poet recalls 'the past crippling like small children/ ready to perform nothing'. He is unable to understand the mentality of youngsters. That's why he avers: "I shrink in shame and shriek in pain/They are grown up now" (11).

In addition to his personal feelings, the poet's vivid objective observation is at its best in some of his poems, particularly when he depicts a poignant picture of a postman in the poem "The Postman". Here, we get a feel of realistic parallelism between a postman and a poet. Both meet the same fate. He describes the postman as '*a man of all seasons*' who '*always wears the/on his khaki dress,/distributes rays of all hues.*' The poet presents him worth quoting:

"I am both colonizer and the colonized,
a poet in suspended animation
tropes and figures stare at me.
I watch the centre inching towards the margin
and the margin centring to write
new history for mankind.
The game, at times, makes my bag thin yet
being gamesome is my fate."(15)

The poet is a man of seasoned experiences. He creates a contrast between the older and new generation and shows his sympathy with the former and rebukes the latter. New generations have different choices, preferences and points of views. Ideals, values, beliefs have different meaning for them. "The Rising Sun" is quite a remarkable poem that expresses the angst of the elderly people and their rebuke at the people of new generation '*fed on pasteurized milk and modified food*',

who have no respect and regards for them. The poet becomes philosophic and talks about the eternal reality- "*Both the sun and showers / are but Nature's moods.*" The deplorable condition of the old people is well depicted through the use of 'winter', symbolic of their anguish, in the following lines from the above poem-

The sunrays alone my cozy bed
to keep me warm and to forestall
all winters given by our children,
who cannot stop us
from reading the messages
of generations and yet keeping warm.(30)

The above description really evokes a sense of pity for the helpless and hapless elderly people.

Love and nature are other important preoccupations of the poet who dwells upon these themes in his poetry. He explores man and nature relationship. The poet appears to be a self-made man who realises the true worth of love. Unlike the modern trend gripping today's youth in the selfish grip of 'passionate intensity', he is 'a silent lover' who believes in positive, constructive and creative aspect of love that elevates, enables and ennoble him to stand on his feet in life. He never believes in the loving rendezvous of so-called 'passionate lovers seeking chances in parks or movie world in unveiling longings'. He expresses the actuality of his love in his autobiographical poem "A Silent Lover":

.....I never bought pleasant moments
at the cost of my parents' hard earned coins
given in the name of tuition fees
or career counselling .(12)

"Whatshapp" is a beautiful poem containing the conception of love in today's world of electronic and social media. The poet seems to be unearthing the hidden aspect of love that has gripped the romantic sensibility

of youths today who are '*flamboyant, spendthrift and a chatter box*', '*always a busy bee, pressing numbers frequently/on a slate-like cell phone*'. He adds unique dimension to love and tries to reveal love in newer light:

Love-a word with different connotations
and dimensions, a cross-platform
of texting and imaging
with electronic vibrations titillating
bruised selves meditating
between the medium and messenger
where trust feels forsaken
like a tattered dress.(28)

His love for nature is apparent in most of his poems. He adroitly interweaves various elements of nature with human experiences. Influence of romantic poets on his creative sensibility is palpable throughout his poetry. In his poem "Nature", he holds that nature is: "*always keen, kind and compassionate/gratifying everyone's needs/in all seasons*"(13).

Nature is a great healer and comforting, a constant companion of ours. It alone helps us unburden 'all our shrieks, sorrows and severity'. The poet reveals: "*You receive them gladly without groans/ and never deceive like humans/in love, friendship and brotherhood.*" He also talks about the fierce aspect of nature. His "Flood" is a poignant poem that reveals the havoc of flood and wrath of nature. Dual aspect of nature is well captured here. The poet recalls the flood days when he had to face agonising pain due to its devastating nature. The poet is right when he says- "*when the margin spews and speaks/it unleashes havoc and nothing remains.*" In the concluding stanza of the same poem, the poet, despite the perennial rapport between man and nature, writes about the conflicts of nature due to bludgeoning industrialization:

Man is always at war with Nature
Land rovers and high towers alone future;
where noises of machines abuzz around
and merciless music rant the sky,
I greet everyone with my grating sound.(41)

On the other hand, “Time’s Fool” talks about the drought affecting the common people. The imagery in the poem is brilliant and striking. Let’s see:

The cracks in the field
like the lines of anxiety on the farmer’s face
deepening every passing summer day
looking towards the azure sky
wishing it to turn black and beautiful
like lovers’ dismal face—tired of waiting.(42)

In another poem “Desert”, he delineates ‘desert’s cry’ and becomes suggestive:

Hope against hope- the only resort,
the desert waits for nothing but sunrays
that make its tiny particles shine though,
the emperor of an undivided kingdom
a godsend nightmare for its past deeds.(48)

Nevertheless, his poem “The Inner Eye” encourages and inspires us to ‘remain firm against all odds’. Thus, his poetry presents contrasts and conflicts- both mental and natural alike.

Environmental issues are also manifested in the poetry of Dr Mishra. The poet tends to lose his nerves to see all around various wastes scattered and floating, thus defiling the beauty of nature. In the world of rank materialism, people have turned indifferent to the beauty of nature. He skilfully employs objects of nature to bring forth his ideas through his suggestive symbols and images.

Water is one of the significant elements of nature. The poet calls it ‘Nature’s first girl child’, who is ‘formless’

yet has 'numerous forms', conveying various 'feelings of love, lust and sorrow'. The poet is concerned with depleting power and abundance of water. The world is faced with water crisis. The poet expresses his concern over the pollution of water due to growing industrialization. In "What the Water Says", he highlights the deteriorating plight of water and shares its grievances:

I too can have my private tears
that ooze out of my soggy shape
shouldering my own chimera to a forlorn land
where none can hear my woeful ballad
where the heights alone can hide my depth
where gods along can save my chastity.(34)

"Funeral Song" is yet another poem expressing his ecological concern. Water pollution poses an alarming situation in the world. Rivers are littered with human filths- from industrial wastes to electronic wastes which are threat to nature. His "Funeral Song" echoes the voice of rivers:

Once a mother to several civilizations
my sterile womb-a mere skeleton
my bed a litter of electronic wastes where
neither wind finds space not night sneaks in
where frustrated desires of a civilized world
write my funeral song.(39)

"The River and the Bridge" is another heart-touching poem dealing with the impact of man-made pollution, and "human greed" that renders the river with 'dirt, depravity and debris only' to be officially declared- 'Abandoned' after their selfish purpose is served.

Life and Death are other significant themes that carry Mishra's perspective on them with a beautiful articulation. "Penalty" is a reflective poem which highlights the idea of life and death through a woman. Life –both outside and inside journey-is lived all alone with an unflinching faith in the Almighty. Through her,

the poet expresses:

.....mortals have but little choice;
they simply wait to bow before
The Almighty, even cruel at times,
still called the kindest.(14)

“The Sandalwood Tree is” a metaphoric poem expressing his view on vicissitudes of life. Our life always oscillates between hard reality and unpredictability. Nothing is certain in life wherein we often fall a victim to circumstances. More often we are faced with struggles. However, it is our constant endeavour for pursuing our desired pursuits that make us sustain our existence. In fact, life is ‘a short time’, the ‘space’ of someone else but ‘we unknowingly call our own’. It is a game of ‘climb and fall’. The poet opens our eyes:

Life is but a game of snakes and ladders
we play at leisure jut for pleasure
mostly practising the freaks of fate.(24)

There is also a Shelleyan touch in the following lines of the poem “Life”: *“Let us look back and grieve for what is lost/ for that alone can stir innovation and life.”* Death is a hard reality of life. In the same poem, the poet brings this fact to our notice, through the metaphor of football game:

Death is but a reality
we all know yet evade.
Our advances, passes and pulls
fail often to enter the goalpost
yet the penalty shot gets rewarded
as it gets your nod, O lord.(14)

Dr Mishra’s poetry gives an insight into introspection, self-discovery, self-realization, and vital search for identity of self and soul. His poem “Identity” presents the authentic identity crisis of modern man as ‘Identity changes every minute now’. He describes “identity” as ‘a

misnomer' / one fumes, flames and fumes / yet assumes a new identity.' He writes:

Identity now is in a flux
fixed one rusts and fair one fouls.
Innocence fled to spiritual world
Shyness found in smithereens
Beauty bidding adieu to branded smiles
shopped, sold and sheltered by
unsheltered avatars.(19)

"Height and Weight" is a symbolic poem dealing with a brilliant juxtaposition of 'deadly opposites'. A perfect control between the two opposites is indicative of fostering harmony in the world. The poet here talks about the equality- social, existential, political- between individual and collective consciousness. If not, these opposites might 'invoke catastrophes' and 'unleash havoc'. Let's see what he says: "*Height blurs vision on earth / And weight eats away all the mirth*"(23).

Human predicament is one of the major themes of Mishra's poems. The poet is of the opinion that fate or destiny plays pivotal roles in our life. With joy comes sorrow which is an inevitable part of life. There are certain things we don't have control over. '*Despite Time's chariot crossing many milestones*', one has to make compromises and move ahead while making terms with the stern realities of the world. We must '*smile amidst all cruelties*.' His "Regulations" is a poem of philosophical musings over the hard reality of life. He avers:

No one knows our sorrows
bound to cause the raging fire and stir
visible only when crazy leopards enter our
habitats
to terminate the growing greed of hungry
generations
felling and fuelling their incessant fires. (37)

A careful study of his poems reveals that Dr Mishra is a man of unflinching faith in God and religiosity. His “Jai Mata Di” is a poem of religious faith that gives a description of a spiritual sojourn of people to a holy pilgrimage. God is kind to one and all and He makes no distinction between the rich and the poor, big and small. He points out-

the doors of deity never discriminate
between the mighty and the weak
rather embrace the weak before the
mighty.(40)

“Humble Prayer” is another poem showing his strong faith in prayer and God. He prays to God:

to grant us peace and rest assure
that those who follow the right karma
alone receive your grace and never
question your eternal ways.(46)

The last two poems of the anthology are quite notable. While “To Buddha” is steeped in philosophical contemplations, “A Happy Man” is sarcastic and ironic, and reflects hard reality and human predicament. The poet satirises so-called rich people who struggle a lot, make money and spend them to exhibit their affluence. The poet observes the religious sentiment of these people and verbally depicts them with a caustic sarcasm:

His big bank balance made him visit
temples and mosques to give in alms
both cash and kind to needy ones
in every *jagran* and puja
went throwing grand parties
just to swell his pride amid elites. (51)

Mishra’s poetry is rooted in the family. He remembers his family members when they are not with him. Sense of loneliness engulfs him in absence of children. The poet touches upon these delicate themes in some of his

poems. Marital relationship aside, missing of children- sons or daughters- is also the motif of the poet. His poem "Absence" throws light on the plight of parents caused by the absence of their children who are out to realise 'their coveted dreams at the cost of parents' loneliness'. The poet compares the lonely parents with a gardener rearing a plant or tree. The poet evokes mixed feelings in us when he questions:

Who could rather realize
the gardener's mixed feelings
to see the tree blessing its fruits
not to the planter but to the passers by
who enjoy its shade and reap
the harvest of other's toil?(35)

The concluding stanza of the poem is heart-wrenching as it lays bare everything with a realistic poignancy:

Today I am all alone
you left me half way as others,
our children have lost our addresses.
I look for your belongings in every corner
and soothe myself in silence
with your absence marking your presence.(35)

The poet is a man of conventional conviction in well-organised system of society. Be it arranged or love marriage, he believes that marriage is a union of two hearts on the social bedrock of acceptance. He holds that man -woman relationship is based on mutual understanding of each other's needs and concerns. His idea is well-contained in his lovely poem "Arranged Marriage":

Two souls eagerly await
to know each other's minds
unravelling and unveiling their desires
exploring through their bodies
discovering the ecstasy of love.(47)

In this way, on close examination of Dr Binod Mishra's poems, he appears to be a poet of moods and memories, and of observation and personal vision. His social consciousness, commitment to family, society and environment is what makes him a great poet of contemporary times. It is apparent that his poetry is creative reactions and responses to immediate social and existential reality, personal and family relationships, philosophical and contemplative broodings over duality of life. He takes up the issues of woman and tries to resolve them with a sympathetic deftness. In his poetry he also raises some environmental issues and takes to task human greed and growing industrialization for defiling the beauty of nature and causing environmental pollution. His poetry unplugs a gamut of emotions in the likes of love, life, hope, solitude, despair, quest in life and quest behind life.

Stylistically speaking, he draws his symbols and metaphors from the world of nature and technology and expresses human conditions in changing scenario of the world. He wants to establish in the world the traditional values and ideals for prosperity, harmony and peace everywhere. His imagery is striking and stirring and evokes required feelings in us. Simplicity of language as employed for his poetic articulation facilitates easy flow of thoughts and ideas making the readers grasp the essence. Impact of modern technology and gadgets on him can be seen in some of his poems. Typos in the titles of some poems, namely in "Whatshapp" intentional though lend aesthetic beauty to the anthology, which is well sustained both in terms of quality and quantity.

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**Epistemological Realities of Diasporic
Consciousness in Select Novels of
Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni**

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What a human is and what constitutes its epistemological textures have been a matter of great philosophical enquiry and literary understanding in both Western and Eastern traditions of Philosophy. The philosophical, intellectual, and literary configurations of the present paper encompass the cardinal *topos* of 'Self' as it is inextricably embedded into the complex rubric of the phenomena of subjectivity and identity formation which is inescapably associated with the process of subjectivization, interpellation, alienation, expatriation, assimilation, hybridity, syncretism, dissimilation et cetera. Further, synchronic and diachronic study of Structuralism, Empiricism, Poststructuralism, Psychoanalysis, Cognitivism, Constructivism and Pragmatism reflect the fact that subjectivity is all about the process which defies all teleological and ontological possibilities of totality and absoluteness. The paper intends to explore the phenomenological and existential reality of the subject which gets embroiled in the uncanny and compelling

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world of cultural differences where the character either moves into the host country and gets itself assimilated into the cultural vortex of the country or finds itself in the condition of ambivalence, flux, multiplicity and hybridity et cetera. Further, the paper also explains that the said realities may not record the process of becoming and hence, the reality of immanent becoming with its fracturedness, multiplicity, ambivalence, bricolage, pastiche, parody and its rhizomatic reality becomes imperative for recording the infinite process of becoming and unbecoming. The circumscribed fulcrum of the study includes six major novels of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni which explain the epistemological reality of Diasporic consciousness informed and guided by the complex plenitudes of expatriation, immigration, exile, longingness, crisis, assimilation, hybridity et cetera and the novels are *The Mistress of Spices* (1997), *Sister of my Hearts* (1999), *The Vine of Desire* (2002), *The Queen of Dreams* (2004), *The Palace of Illusions* (2008), and *One Amazing Thing* (2010).

Introduction: Epistemological Realities and Diasporic Consciousness

The process of subject formation and the reality of subjectivity are profoundly embedded into the social, political, economic, cultural, psychological, linguistic, and physical realities of the contemporary world. A diachronic history of human beings and their civilization and culture may reflect the fact that they have never been static, monological, uniformed and teleological rather they have always been in the state of process, continuity and change. A close observation of the complete texture of history, sociology, psychology and economics of the human beings may divulge the fact that they are always in the perpetual process of change, transformation, development and metamorphosis. There

have been several events in the history of human development which have shaped the present predicament of human beings. The advent of structuralism, emergence of Freudian psychoanalysis, the birth of Darwin's theory of evolution, the arrival of Marxist theory of economic determinism, the presence of Einsteinian theory of relativity, the unprecedented growth of technology after apocalyptic wars, the experience of economic crisis, the growth of postmodernism, the imposition of globalization, liberalization and privatization along with transnationalism and finally the generalization of poststructuralism with its basic tenets of decentred reality of the world, hybridity, multiplicity, dialogism etcetera have constituted and constructed the reality of the world. The condition of human beings has always been dynamic as they have experienced several incommensurable changes which have also guided their movements in the spatio-temporal, psychological, social, cultural and economic conditions. The phenomenon of movement is inextricably intertwined into the complex cusp of the existence of human beings. They have always been moving in aforesaid domains either syntagmatic or paradigmatic way which is often termed as Diaspora. It is generally perceived as a global phenomenon which connotes the group of displaced or relocating people who have moved from their homelands to new hostland for their social, political, economic and psychological reasons.

The sign "Diaspora" is generally associated with the realities of expatriation, immigration, dislocation, exile, longing-ness, crisis, assimilation, hybridity, syncretism etcetera and it has gone under some remarkable changes as far as its form, nature and function is concerned. The realities of Diaspora have undergone some major metamorphosis and what it used to connote during

colonial period and even after that, it does not imply the same in the synchronic realities of Postmodernism, Poststructuralism and Transnationalism. Though the word "Diaspora" has been derived from the Greek verb *Diasperio* which was used somewhere in fifth century B.C by Sophocles, Herodotus and Thucydides yet it has some direct relationship with some Hebrew terms like *Galut*, *Galah* and *Golah*. Stephane Dufoix in his *Diasporas* (2003) writes that the word Diaspora has been used in Septuagint Bible where several Greek words: "*apoikia* (emigration), *paroikia* (settlement abroad), *metoikia* (emigration) or *metoikesia* (transportation), *aikhmalosia* (wartime captivity), *apokalupsis* (revelation)" (Dufoix, 2003:4). Further he notes that "Diaspora" is just a word. Like all words, it serves only to denote part of reality, one that is not always the same each time it is used. It is never that which it denotes. To the point where the word is alone enough to describe what it expresses. There is no phenomenon called "Diaspora" that is independent of each individual case an independent of the use of the word "Diaspora" and its corresponding terms in different languages" (Dufoix, 2003:2). A general observation on Diaspora establishes the fact that it refers to a phenomenon of dispersion from a place; the organisation of an ethnic, national, or religious community in one or more countries; a population spread over more than one territory; the place of dispersion; any non-territorial space where exchanges take place. Thus, dispersion implies distance, so maintaining or creating connections has become a major goal in reducing or at least dealing with that distance. Now it is amply clear that Diaspora which knows its origin in religious, ethno-religious or eschatological idea gradually has acquired colonial, imperial and oppressive colours and then finally attains transnational identities. While referring to Diaspora as ethno-religious or

eschatological ideas it is often associated with Zionism. Keeping these shifts and dialectics within Diaspora in mind; it may be discussed and defined through three major ways; open, categorical and oxymoronic.

The Open definition of Diaspora explains that any ethnic collectively which lacks a territorial base within a given quality which may include groups of nomadic hunters or herdsmen, "Gypsies". Further, it also explains that modern Diasporas are ethnic minority rules of migrant origins residing and acting in post country but maintaining strong sentiment and material links with their countries of origin- their home lands. Thus, a Diaspora involves a number of factors like migration, settlement of one or several countries; maintenance of identity and community solidarity and finally the relationship between the living state and the host state is revisited. The Categorical definition of Diaspora initially differentiate between true and false Diaspora and then it offers two major definitions, depending upon whether Diaspora must satisfy one or more than one criteria.

The Oxymoronic definition of Diaspora has been found to be rooted in postmodern thoughts of 1980s and is the heirs of various forms of critical modernity which is dominated by Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Jean-Francois Lyotard, Gilles Deluze, and Felix Guattari. Modern societies, which are characterized by a belief in reason, progress, universality, and stability, are confronted by emerging postmodern societies dominated by doubt, fragmentation, the end of great narratives of truth and science, racial mixing, and fluid identities. Postmodernism spread through most of the social sciences, in particular sociology and anthropology. In the 1980s it encountered the English "cultural studies" movement, which studied subaltern or postcolonial subcultures (workers, minorities, immigrants, and so

on). In that setting, a vision of "Diaspora" developed that was radically different from both the open and the categorical definitions. Where those definitions stress reference to a point of departure and maintenance of an identity in spite of dispersion, postmodern thought instead gives pride of place to paradoxical identity, the non-center, and hybridity.

Three authors writing in English played an important role in establishing this vision: Stuart Hall, James Clifford, and Paul Gilroy. Hall in "Diaspora" (1990) "I use this term metaphorically not literally: Diaspora does not refer us to those scattered tribes whose identity can only be secured in relation to some sacred homeland to which they must at all costs return, even if it means pushing other people into the sea. This is the old, imperializing, hegemonizing form of 'ethnicity'. ... The Diaspora experience as intended here is defined not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity" (Hall, 1990:12). The postmodern vision introduced a break between modern forms of Diaspora, whose archetype is the Jewish model, and its new forms, whose archetype is the "black Diaspora." Paul Gilroy in *The Black Atlantic* (1993) introduces the concept of "black Diaspora". He insists on the "plural status" that can be seen in the word's history, where "Diaspora-dispersion" and "Diaspora-identification" have coexisted in opposition, with the first tending to the end of dispersion, unlike the second, which is written in living memory. Taken in this second sense, the "Diasporic idea" allows one to go beyond the simplistic view of certain oppositions (continuity/rupture, center/periphery) to grasp the complex, that is the joint presence of the Same and the Other, the local and global –everything that Gilroy calls "the changing

same.” Similarly, James Clifford foregrounds the concept of “traveling cultures”, also opposes two visions of “Diaspora” while rejecting the “postmodern” label: an “ideal-type” vision founded on the accumulation of criteria and the built-in relationship to a center, and a decentralized vision more focused on the frontiers of the Diaspora than its core, in order to understand what Diaspora is opposed to. In 1999 the sociologist Dominique Schnapper weighed the value of the world with respect to the socio-political environment and made the connection between the shift in the meaning of “Diaspora” from pejorative to positive, and the development of transnational phenomena that relativize the significance of a national model. The confluence of cultural and economic realities within the framework of the national-state has become less pertinent, favouring a disassociation between the territories of residence, belonging, and subsistence. This context favours Diasporic thought, but it is necessary to specify the limits of a term whose contemporary use is so sloppy that it is becoming simply a synonym for “ethnic group,” “Diaspora” will remain scientifically useful only on two conditions, writes Schnapper : first, its use must be neutral, neither pejorative nor eulogistic; second, it must concern, independently of the circumstances of the dispersion, “all dispersed populations, whatever their prestige, that maintain ties among themselves, and not only to the Jews, Armenians, Greeks, or Chinese.” These ties must be “institutionalized... whether objective or symbolic.” Schnapper is here touching on the differences between a word in its ordinary meaning and a category of scientific thinking. The distinctive criteria of Diasporas are a community of history, belief, reference territory, and the language between the dispersed cores. Further, “Diaspora” is synonymous with the persistence of awareness and the community link in spite of

dispersion- a concept that contradicts the notion of the fragmentation, not to say absence, of a West Indian identity shaped by the slave trade, slavery, and assimilation. By contrast, British postmodern theorizing about Diaspora (Hall and Gilroy) puts the nomad and the hybrid first, as we have seen. The West Indian World (Hall) or *The Black Atlantic* (Gilroy) became the prototypes of the Diaspora seen as “fluid and mobile”. Diasporas primarily born of the loss of a national territory create a sense of identity in their exile situation, a national imagination that supports the maintenance of solidarity in dispersion. So, the maintenance of myths- of origin or return-is therefore the foundation of a *modus vivendi* among states. We use Diaspora provisionally to indicate our belief that the term that once described Jewish, Greek, and Armenian dispersion now shares meanings with a larger semantic domain that includes words like immigrants, expatriate, refugee, guest-worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community. Thus, Diaspora was characterized by dispersion and fed by successive exoduses, forced or voluntary, and by ethno-cultural segregation and conservation of cultural practices despite contacts with the surrounding population.

Countless dialogues and researches have been undertaken to unknot and unwind the intricate nexus between Diaspora and the identity. The immense proliferation of Diasporic writers and literature has also led to the discrete study of the Diaspora theory itself. The apocalyptic wars, phenomenon of globalization, linguistic turns in theory of epistemological construction, and the unprecedented growth in technology have unsettled the structuralist’s model of telos, eidos, and truth. Now everything is seen through the phenomena of dialecticism, dialogism, aporia, and multiplicity. All these things have led to globalization

and have destabilized entire philosophy of self, subject, and subjectivity. The phenomena of self and subjectivity are seen through the lenses of ideology and the consciousness which are deeply influenced by the temporality of history, economic diversifications and the dissolution of boundaries.

‘Self’ occupies a central position in the entire discourse of Diaspora, it is commonly observed that the self has moved from its transcendental reality to the mundane fractured face. It is because of this plurality and multiplicity which defines self through rupture, bricolage, fracturedness, multiplicity et cetera. And the Diaspora tries to examine this change and how the reality of identity of a person is changed when one migrates from one geographical and cultural landscape to another. The reality of migration into another cultural context entails profoundly upon the epistemological and ontological realities of the self who moves into another culture. Vijay Mishra’s *The Literature of the Indian Diaspora*, (2006) undertakes an attempt at forging the historical and psychological impetuses of being a second generation Diaspora and exalting the study with literature of the same. Though the Diaspora studies can be understood as postcolonial saga, however, its roots can stretch back to the Jewish dispersion and introduces four key terms of Diaspora theory; Mourning/Impossible Mourning, Travel and Translation, Trauma, and the Diasporic Imaginary. The *girmit* ideology, recites the history of *girmityas* and *jahajibhai*. The book thoroughly refers to the epic Ramayana for allusions. The story of *Ahalya* is retold by keeping it as the theoretical model of *girmit* ideology. The story of “curse and redemption” is applied to the *girmit* experience. *Girmit* is a term that came out in the process of Creolization by the plantation Diasporas as a “vernacularized neologism”. The word comes after repeated degeneration of the word

‘agreement’. It elaborates upon the suffering of girimityas; the haunting memory, the broken promises, and the trauma. Fiji Indians were the assorted and varied group of illiterate peasants who were transported from India to Fiji for bonded labour. The Diaspora of these girimityas were known as the Plantation Diaspora. They were suddenly left to confront modernity and need to reconstitute themselves as community within the autochthonous pressures. There was a constant process of assimilation and reconstitution with political engagement for a fair and just society. This struggle in a far away foreign land also works as a template for the modern Diaspora. These stages of adaption and adoption can be witnessed in almost all journeys of settlers. Bill Ashcroft’s *Utopianism in Postcolonial Literature* (2016) suggests the similar idea through the “utopian” imagination of the home and indicates that achieved utopia is close to a dystopia reality and Vijay Mishra (2007) termed it as “communal schizophrenia”. Works of Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy, R. Radhakrishnan, Sura P. Rath, Vijay Mishra, Robin Cohen, and N. Jayaram among others reveals how the conflicted territories of home-location, nation-postnation, inside-outside, citizen-stranger, pure-hybrid, roots-routes, centre-periphery, sameness-difference, subject-object etcetera intersect and collide at the aporetic intersection where Diaspora finds its multi-vocal and multi-referential signification. These binaries bring with them traces of their past configurations also. Their affiliations with Poststructuralism, Postmodernism and Postcolonialism add still greater complexity to the already multi-accented term *Diaspora*. This deliriously overflowing complexity of the term *Diaspora* is responsible for its appropriation and recuperation in a variety of disciplines and discourses.

Thinkers like Homi Bhabha, Stuart Hall, Avtar Brah

and R. Radhakrishnan in their formulations, categories; such as hybridity, palimpsest identities, displacement, decentrement, difference, alterity etc. have strong affiliations with poststructuralism, postmodernism and Postcolonialism become celebrated reference points. For Homi Bhabha Diasporas are, "Gatherings of exiles and *emigres* and refugees; gathering on the edge of 'foreign' cultures; gathering at the frontiers; gathering the signs of approval and acceptance, degrees, discourses, disciplines; gathering the memories of under-development, of other worlds lived retroactively; gathering the past in a ritual of revival; gathering the present" (Bhabha 1994:139). Diasporas inhabit liminal, interstitial spaces and their inter-subjective and intercultural experiences constitute them as hyphenated, hybrid subjects. This hybridity is not natural and organic hybridity which fuses, blends and reconciles the codes of culture, race, colour, ethnicity, and gender which inform it; it is self-reflexive hybridity and is an outcome of a conscious negotiation with and contestation between its *informing* elements. The hyphenated existence of the Diasporas draws attention to the fluid identities which are continuously reconfigured in ongoing negotiation with the changing political environment. According to Stuart Hall, the Diaspora experience "is defined, not by essence or purity, but by recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity, by a conception of 'identity' which lives with the through, not despite, difference; by hybridity" and Diaspora identities "are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference" (Hall 1993:402). The hyphen also draws attention toward the suppressed histories of cross-cultural and cross-racial relations. This self-reflexive hybridity, in Bhabha's words, an "insurgent act of cultural translation" (Bhabha 1994:7), is rife with the

subversive potential to unsettle hegemonic relations as it focuses on processes of negotiation and contestation between cultures. Hybridity and hyphenation “offer an alternative organising category for a new politics of representation which is informed by an awareness of Diaspora and its contradictory, ambivalent and generative potential” (Jacqueline Lo). For this reason Bhabha thinks that the in-between (third) space occupied by the Diasporic subject is pregnant with creative possibilities: “...[I]t is the space of intervention emerging in the cultural interstices that introduces creative invention into existence” (Bhabha 1994:7). Like Bhabha, Salman Rushdie and Edward Said also visualize creative potentialities in the exilic condition. For Avtar Brah the “Diaspora space is the intersectionality of Diaspora, border, and dislocation as a point of confluence of economic, political, cultural and psychic processes. It is where multiple subject positions are juxtaposed, contested, proclaimed or disavowed...” (Brah 2002:208). According to Brah, the ‘Diaspora space’ is a highly contested site. The lure of eclectic hybridity, however, in its equation with fusion music, fusion of cuisines, fusion of cultures, as it obtains in postmodern pastiche culture does tend to empty term ‘hybridity’ of its political content and historical specificity and exposes it to the charge of occluding the pain and grief of living in Diaspora.

The aforesaid discourse, discussion and deliberations have expounded the realities which have created the panorama of crisis as far as the ontological and epistemological condition of the human’s ‘being’ are concerned. The inception of the discourse on Diaspora can be located into the cusp of such crisis; political, economic, cultural and linguistic. Thus, with the passage of time, what one is and how one is constituted, have become important and of primary concerns not only for

creative writers but also for all theorists and critics. Diaspora deals with migration, immigration, circulation, nation-state, nation-boundary, expatriation, alienation, longingness, isolation, dislocation, movement, ideology, consciousness, self, and other which are deeply associated with the phenomenon of identity formation. The reality of identity formation can be responded well with two major philosophical plenitudes; Structuralism and Poststructuralism. The former explains Diaspora though the reality of self and the other, home and host, and melting pot theory where one is dominated by the hegemonic order of another which acts as host whereas the latter holds that everything exists in continuum and in process therefore, all is a medley, pastiche, and parody and thus, the reality of hybridity may expound the complex reality of identity.

Diasporic Consciousness and the Novels of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni (1956—) through her novels and poetic creations respond to the contemporary debate and discourse on identity which is generally seen as a construct of ideology and consciousness. A complex trajectory of contemporary literary theories particularly Postcolonialism, Postmodernism, and Cultural Studies explicates the phenomenon of identity formation through the process of interpellation. Divakaruni deals with the complex plenitudes of the contemporary age i.e. self, subject and subjectivity. *The Mistress of Spices*, indeed, a dialogic novel as it encapsulates multiple themes through the theoretical structure of magic realism. It is often articulated that *The Mistress of Spices* is a dazzling tale of misbegotten dreams and desire and it represents a beautiful integration of myth and romance. In the backdrop of the motifs of myth and romance, Divakaruni registers the ripples of human

experiences particularly the condition of existence of the life of immigrants. The plot of the novel develops along with the narrative structure in which the consciousness of Tilo, a young woman born in another time in a faraway place, unfolds with the development of time and space as the text moves between them. Tilo who is known for her acumen acquires dexterity in ancient art of spices with an extra ordinary command on their properties and the possibility of administration. It is because of her perfection in the art of the spices, she has been addressed as The Mistress of Spices. She, in the very beginning of the novel avers "I am a Mistress of a Spices... I know their original and their colour signifies and their smells. I can call each by true- names; it was given first, when earth split like skin and offered like it to the sky. Their heat runs in my blood. From *Amchur* to *Zafan*, they go to my command. As a whisper they yield up to me their hidden properties, their magic powers" (09). She expresses her native identity and regards India as a place of exceptional power of spices. In order to reaffirm her pride she describes, "The spices of true power are from birth land, land of ardent poetry, aquamarine feathers. Sunset skies brilliant as blood" (10). Tilo who has been endowed with the exceptional control over spices travels to Oakland and California, where she opens a shop of spices so that she may suggest some spices to her customers which may cure them. Divakaruni employs spice as metaphor to connote the realities of home and homelessness. She very intelligently deals with the phenomenon of immigration and she explores the reality of nostalgia and the psyche of homelessness. Divakaruni not only captures her poetic sensibility, aesthetic imagination and the feelings of Diasporic realities but she also oscillates in the complex web of narrative structure between past and present, memory and the moment, movement and stasis, theoria and

praxis. She believes that America is not only a place of opulence and dreams but it is also a location of riches and happiness but not without some amount of humiliation and uncertainty. Beena Agrawal's *Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni- A New Voice in Indian English Fiction* (2016) adumbrates; "In *The Mistress of Spices*, Devakaruni takes three dimensional approach- Tilo's cocoon of mistress like life, Tilo's isolation as an immigrants and Tilo's suppressed sensibility as a woman" (Agarwal, 2016: 25).

The novel *Sister of My Hearts* explores the texture of marriage, friendship between two women of Indian culture and mythical realities, Tradition and Modernity and some features of Fairy Tales. Two Indian girls; Sudha and Anju narrate the texture of their narrative in which she covers the journey of their life through childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood. The novel recounts the process of epistemological construction of Sudha and Anju. It also expounds how they experience social, cultural and linguistic realities which shape the process of their becoming or the reality of their *Bildung* formation. The novel has been divided into two books; "The Princess in the Palace of Snakes" and "The Queen of Sword" in which the process of becoming and unbecoming of both Sudha and Anju have been explored. The novel reinstates some underlying features of female *Bildungsroman* as has been expounded by Jerome Hamilton Buckley's *Season of Youth: The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding* (1974) defines it the "[N]ovel of all-around development or self-culture with a more or less conscious attempt on the part of the hero to integrate his powers, to cultivate himself by his experience" (Buckley, 1974:13). The *Bildung* vacillates in the space between the child to the youth and the youth to the age of adulthood or maturity and in between this space, the protagonist experiences several stumbling

stones which propels her journey further and allows her to experience a series of epiphanies which bring him closer to her inner culture, however the narrative pattern of the novel charts the growth and development of the character but it does not allow the protagonists to attain their inner culture. In fact, they attain a failed *Bildung* which is amply clear through the failed narrative of Sudha and Anju.

The Vine of Desire (2002) traverses through the conduit of the psychological realities of human relationships in a dislocated geographical, social, linguistic, economic and cultural terrain where the characters experience the reality of cultural conflict with dissimilation and the condition of assimilation. Along with these plenitudes, the characters also experience the condition of existential struggle as they strive and strife to realize their self and subjectivity. The rich texture of the novel with two parts; "Subterranean Truths" and "Remembrance and Forgetting", unfolds itself through the narrative of marriage of two childhood friends; Sudha and Anju. The former even after the marriage remains in India whereas he latter goes to the United States of America where she lives with her husband, Sunil. As the plot of the novel develops, it brings out the reality of human relationship, the emotional and psychological turmoil and the dilemma of existence that the immigrant women face. It also foregrounds the existential challenges and the challenges of hybridity that they face. The novel in its outset refers to the condition of mystification and inquisition. The novel is the emplotment of desire in an infinite chain of signification and hence it is represented as vine of desire. Before, the text moves any further, it is really important and viable to interrogate what desire is and why, the novelist employs it in metaphoric and metonymic form. Desire is always for something or

someone which is not present but is absent and hence ontology of desire the constituted by the metaphysics of absence means something which is not there. Jacques Lacan *Ecrits: A Selection* (1977) recounts the fact that desire is the condition of lack and lack is infinite like the infinite chain of signification. The epistemological reality of one desire or lack automatically refers to another and hence the long chain of desiring continues till infinitum. Deleuze and Guattari in their *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987) explain it through the contextualization of deterritorialization and reterritorialization which finally create a rhizomatic experience. Sudesh Mishra's *Diaspora Criticism* (2006) enunciates that "...whereby the Diasporic subject is simultaneously sundered from and sutured to its various psych-territories. Here, the subject rhizomatically experiences, at the one and the same time, the double movement of deterritorialization and reterritorialization" (Mishra, 2006:17). Further, Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic* (1993) emphasises the "rhizomorphic, fractal structure of transcultural and international formation" (Gilroy, 1993:4) and he negates the possibilities of homogenised, circumscribed, and nationalized territories no longer may function as privileged referents for identity constitution.

The Palace of Illusions (2008) reinvents Indian myth in the light of Western ideologies. It is an attempt of Divakaruni to give a voice to Panchaali, the fire born heroine of *The Mahabharata*. The novelist here has tried to weave a vibrant interpretation of the ancient tale of Panchaali's being married to five royal husbands. Panchaali did her best to support her husbands to regain their status and kingdom. However, she could not deny her complicated friendship with the enigmatic Krishna or her secret attraction to the mysterious man who is her husband's more dangerous enemy. In *Palace of*

Illusion, myth dominates, and the idea of immigration subsides in the background. However the aim of the novelist remains hazy and uncertain because myth dominates and the focal interest seems to have been subsided in the background.

In her latest novel *One Amazing Thing* (2010), Divakaruni makes experiment in the mode of travel narrative with the ample scope for the self-revelation of the characters. The structure of the novel is the collection of the experience of nine travellers trapped in the visa office at an Indian consulate after a massive earthquake in an American city. The group consists of two visa officers, an Indian woman in her last years. Her granddaughter, Lily, is an ex-soldier haunted by her own guilt. Uma is an Indian American girl bewildered by her parent's decision to shift to Kolkata. Tariq is a young Muslim from Kolkata. As rescue operation was going on, to come out of the trauma of earthquake, they begin to tell each other stories related with their own lives, narrating one amazing thing from each one's life. These tales are the tales related to the harsh realization of life with the immense possibilities of affirmation of human conditions.

Conclusion

Thus, the literary oeuvre of Chitra Banerjee Devakaruni explores some complex Diasporic phenomena; expatriation, migration, immigration, identity crisis, existential concerns of identity formation, location, dislocation, human relationships, assimilation, dissimilation, food, cultural conflict, multiplicity, nation and nationality et cetera. It may clearly be expounded that the literary and creative corpus of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni traverses through the conduit of the psychological realities of human relationships in a dislocated geographical, social, linguistic, economic and

cultural terrain where the characters experience the reality of cultural conflict with dissimulation and the condition of assimilation. Along with these plenitudes, the characters also experience the condition of existential struggle as they strive and strife to realize their self and subjectivity. Hence, the aforementioned novels deal with Diasporic consciousness; assimilation, dissimulation, disjunction, multiculturalism, cultural fracturedness, expatriation, isolation, female sensibility, identity, consciousness, myth, history, and politics which constitute the complex texture of the epistemological realities of the subject.

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A Dalit Autobiography: A Sociography or Social History

**Shivkumar Yadav*

The origin of this reflection of mine on Dalit autobiography appeared on the 29th of September 2005, during a Refresher Course in English at the Academic Staff College, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, when during a panel discussion on “Translating the Peripheries”, Keki N. Daruwalla, a retired I.P.S officer and established poet, started the debate and questioned the appropriateness and literary values of Dalit Literature especially the autobiographical narratives. He asserted with a lot of emphasis that all these narratives are nothing but the victimology, not literature. During his speech, he shared an anecdote of a Zamindar of post -independent India, who visited a theatre to watch a film but he left the theatre in the middle of itself with a promise not to visit ever in his life as a spectator. It was because in the film the zamindar was shown as a cruel, dishonest and inhuman being while a hero of humble origin as honest dignified and resilient one, and the audience in the theatre was jubilant in watching these interactions and dialogues. Not only that they were abusing the zamindar without any limits of indecency. Daruwalla, it seems, felt indignant at the behaviour of the audience as was sympathetic towards the injury made to the psyche of the Zamindar, who was no longer the same in technical

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term in the post- independent India. Just imagine the depth and difference of pains of three hours of watching a reel and of the 3000 years of living and real one!

Obviously, Daruwalla was making a point that anything sordid of the past should not be the part of our present memory as it vitiates the present and that brings restlessness at the various levels. No doubt, there is some merit in his assertion, but at the same time it gives a smell of those attitudes of mainstream writers who have been since beginning protesting against the legitimacy of Dalit literature. This attitude has been summarised by Alok Mukherjee in 2004 itself in his note to the translation of Sharan Kumar Limbale's *Dalit Sahityache Saundaryashastra* (Towards an Aesthetic of Dalit Literature):

“Dalit writing has been accused of lacking in literary merit when measured against universal criteria. Dalit writers have been charged with being divisive and sectarian, using disrespectful and offensive language towards divinities and revered figures, and engaging in distortions of pre - and post - independence history. It has been suggested that some dalits were treating literature as simply another arena of affirmative action, and were claiming to be writers even though they did not have the ability to write.”¹

Like many others, Daruwalla's arguments have questioned the basics of Dalit literature, which goes against the trend of growing popularity, respectability, acceptability and accessibility of it. While referring to Daruwalla, I too feel that he is quite conservative, as Dalit literature does not belong to the epic tradition in which there is fight between the light and saint on one side and the dark and devil on the other of nearly equal strengths and that ends with victory of the former over

the latter as per Manichaeism (216-276 A.D) which 'taught an elaborate dualistic cosmology describe the struggle between a good , spiritual world of light and an evil , material world of darkness.'² Rather , Dalit literature is a story of those hapless and helpless, the deprived and depressed, the offended and oppressed segments of Indian socitey who became the victim of the historical accident or social conspiracy of the caste system, a rigidly closed and negative outcome of the once high profile and open Varnashram, in which the powerful had all rights and might too, to oppress and exploit the weak without facing any protest in any form. Now simply the awareness on the part of sufferer is somewhat unpalatable to some of us. Awareness as regards self, society and the hissings of world histories have helped Dalits to narrate their own truths, which were on peripheries. What can they remember and contribute to literature saving social sufferings, injuries, discriminations and diseases? The Black, the Metis and the Dalit literatures from America, Canada and India can help the critics like K.N. Daruwalla to appreciate the vomitings of the victims. Just witness the feelings of a black Poet, Countee Cullen, in the poem "Incident":

"Once riding in old Baltimore,
Heart filled with glee,
I saw a Baltimorean
Keep looking straight at me
Now I was eight and very small
And he was no whit bigger,
And so I smiled but he poked out
His tongue, and call me "Nigger".
I saw the whole Baltimore
From May until December;
Of all things that happened there
That's all that I remember."³

Similar answer to Daruwalla has been given by Manish Parmar from Gujarat:

“I write accounts of each and every tear
How many books of pains should I write?
I hear screams breaking all around,
I write the unfinished answers
I have never seen the white light,
I am the night, how can I gift you suns? ⁴

Like any discriminated lots of the globe, Dalits in India too have been expressing anguish, anger and anxieties in poetry, novels, short stories, memoirs and autobiographies. The last ones have been quite effective and powerful tools for dalits to present the personal pains in plain words which ultimately achieve the status of a sociography and social history of India from North to South and from East to West. What the historians have neglected to record, the Dalit autobiographies have described in detail and that too not by design but by default, as they have faced only discriminations, depressions and diseases. The prime object of this write-up is to present the Dalit autobiographies as the real sociographical details of India and its social history unlike mainstream autobiography of the world and India.

When one takes a glimpse of autobiographies of Saint Augustine (254-430 A.D), Edward Gibbon (1737-1794), Leigh Hunt (1784-1859), Robert Southey (1774-1843), Anthony Trollope (1815-1882), W.H. Davies (1871-1940) and others, very interesting biographical details and literary gossips are found there. These represent more about private, social, public, political and moral life of writers unlike the Dalit's, which is not limited to the narrator's life and sufferings faced by him and some shiny spots enjoyed by the author, though always written in the first person, it represents the trauma, tortures and wounded psyche of Dalit community. They always prefer autobiography as their mode of expression to

novel(though now some of the dalits have started writing novels too) because if the latter is a history of human experiences, then the former is much more authentic details of that where one does not take the help of imagination as we know, facts are always stranger than fiction for dalits, and at the same time, its truthfulness can be verified in numerous ways unlike the novel which does not submit itself for any kind of verification. Who can be a better narrator than a sufferer himself? And the dalit's sufferings have no comparison in the world. Ken Cooper observes:

“As an African-American, I used to think American racism was the most stifling obsessive system of oppression in the world, with the exception of what was South -African apartheid.

After my stay in India, I am sure that the Caste System was and continues to be worse — it has religious sanction and has been ingrained for 3000 years.”⁵

Perhaps Mr Daruwalla, as I mentioned earlier, could not differentiate between the abusive language of the theatre for 3 hours and abused lives for 3000 years in ghettos. In this regard, Arundhati Roy, an author and activist, who writes and acts authentically against the violations of human rights, finds casteism in India, a form of apartheid,

“I do believe that in India we practice a form of apartheid that goes unnoticed by the rest of the world. And it is as important for Dalits to tell their stories as it has been for colonised peoples to write their own histories. When Dalit literature has blossomed and is in full stride, then contemporary (upper caste?) Indian literature's amazing ability to ignore the brutality and ugliness of the society in

which we live, will be seen for what it is : bad literature.”⁶

Dalit literature especially autobiography may look like a victimology but actually it is a diagnostic kit for social maladies of India which has the instruments of pathology, radiology, ultrasonics and MRI to get at the truth as to the social disabilities and deficiencies. When inside questionings become the debate and discourse of the outside and all, it may ensure creative and curative effects on all the concerned, victims as well as victimizers. As Neerav Patel, a dalit writer from Gujarat, submits: “I wish you to be not only my reader but also an empathizer, then and only then, perhaps, my pain would.”⁷

A Dalit autobiography does not fit into the framework of commonly accepted definition of it, which actually a literature of personal revelation like memoir, diary, letter and journal. In it, we find similarities with the Black autobiography in which “ self belongs to the people, and the people find a voice in the self “ (8), as examined by Stephen Butterfield that shows deep connectivity between individual self and community self. Naturally, an autobiography of Dalits changes into the sociography and social history as the pains and sufferings are not rare and limited to one and few rather to a large segment of Indian society.

While skimming the growth of Dalit autobiography in India, it has been found out that except one, Narendra Jadhav ‘s *Outcaste : A Memoir* (may be some other not known to me), all the autobiographies have been written in regional languages — Marathi , Hindi , Bangla, Oriya, Tamil ,Kannada, Gujarati, Malayalam and some others. Even Jadhav’s autobiography, which is written in English, is an expanded and rewritten version of Marathi’s *Amcha Baap Aan Amhi* (Our Father and Us). This shows that even in the early of 21st century, there

are few Dalit autobiographers who are able to reach a wider English readership, though they are aware of its importance in socioeconomic life. Their autobiographies have been translated into English by others.

In course of studies, I found scores of Dalit autobiographies in different languages of our country in which following ones have attracted my attention especially those which have been translated in English and Hindi. In Hindi, Omprakash Valmiki's *Joothan* (also translated in English with the same title), Surajpal Chauhan's *Tiraskrit*, Mohan Das Naimisharay's *Apne Apne Pinjare*. S . K. Limbale 's *Akkarmashi* (in English as *Outcaste*), Daya Pawar 's *Baluta*, Arjun Dangle's *Poisoned Bread* , Shantabai Kamble's *Majya Jalmachi Chitrakatha* ,Kishore Shantabai Kale 's *Kolhatyache Por* (Against All Odds, in English), Baby Kamble's *The Prisons we Broke*, Dada Saheb Malhari More's *Gabala* (The Household) are important in Marathi. In Tamil, Vitivelli's *Kalakkal*, in Kannada, Siddalingaiah's *Ooru Keri*, in Gujarati, B.Kesharshivam's *Purna Satya* (The Total Truth,Nothing but the Truth,in English) , in Bangla , Manoranjan Vyapari's *Ittivrutti Chandaal* and Manohar Mouli Biswas 's *Amar Bhubne Ami Beche Thaki* (Surviving in My World) are the autobiographies of the substance. It is also significant here to point out that in Odisha, Rajasthan and Gujarat despite having some Dalit writings in the form of novel, short story and poetry, there is absence of autobiography which has been the favourite mode of Dalit's expression. Many of the authors claim that their novels are as authentic as an autobiography, just because they have witnessed all the discriminations and injustices, like Akhila Naik's *Bheda* in Oriya (translated in English as *Discriminations*, by Raj Kumar). Naik belongs to Dom community living in the hinterland of Kalahandi known as Dompapa (colony of Dom). In Gujarati too, Memoirs are there in numbers

like *Bhandariyan* edited by Dharmabhai Shrimali, *Madi Sambhare Re*, edited by Chandu Material and Pitrugatha, edited by Balkrishna Anand. Strictly defining, there is a difference between an autobiography and a Memoir as Joseph T. Shipley explains:

“Autobiography and Memoirs, though the terms are often used as if interchangeable, are properly distinguished by the relative emphasis placed on character and on external events. Memoirs customarily give some prominence to personalities and actions other than the writer’s own; some are hardly more than accounts of historical occurrences that have come directly within the view of their recorders. The autobiography proper is a connected narrative of the author’s life against wider background.”⁹

But as regards Gujarati Memoirs in which the different authors have described their mothers’ and father’s accounts as well as their struggles they did in order to survive in the anti - dalit’s social ambience, are very close to the features of autobiography. There are many salient features of Dalit autobiography which make it quite different from mainstream autobiography, but here, the object of my write-up is to bring out the social history and sociography of the Indian society with the help of these autobiographies mentioned in the preceding paragraphs. In other words, it’s my view that unrevealed part of social history can be reconstructed and rewritten without much difficulty if we analyse the dalit autobiographies appearing from different corners of India.

Sharan Kumar Limbale is an illicit son of a lower caste mother and a higher caste father, who were not married. His so-called father Hanmanta Limbale was instrumental in destroying the conjugal life of his mother

and then possessed her as his concubine. She became a mother many times but Hanmanta Limbale never became a father. All these things happened in the post-independent India where society was a mute spectator. Laxman Gaikwad's story is more puzzling as his caste (Jadhav & Gaikwad - Santamuchcher in Telegu) does not come within the boundary of India's Varna system, as it is the part of the tribal community, but the social process of 'tribe- caste continuum' has also created the space for its exploitation at the hands of the Caste Hindus. The British government had declared this caste as 'criminal caste', which gave license to the public and the police to beat the people of this caste mercilessly whenever any theft was reported from its neighbouring communities. Omprakash Valmiki belongs to 'Chuhar' caste whose main job is to clear the dead bodies of animals. Valmiki presents the social picture of western Uttar Pradesh, where Tyagi and Jat communities dominate, but the picture looks like a universal phenomenon of Northern India. Similarly, the realities from every nook and corner of India have become the parts of Dalit autobiographies.

The dimensions this subject actually demand a space of doctoral dissertation, which is not possible here, hence some of the important aspects of Hindu history, society, economy, polity, customs and rituals have been identified which have the recurring themes (though only the tip of iceberg) of the Dalit autobiographies. These are:

- Existing gap between the theoretical Hinduism and practising Hinduism.
- Questioning the moral horizon of the Caste Hindus.
- Attack on social hypocrisy-untouchability and post-death rituals.
- Journey towards atheism via Buddhism
- Process of 'tribe- caste continuum'.

- Interchangeability of little and great traditions.
- Intra-dalits discriminations and hypocrisy.
- Caste Hindus' protest to Sanskritisation and Westernisation.
- The role of dominant castes and caste panchayat.
- Ease social ambience of urban locale.
- Myths related to local deities and saints
- Medieval customs, outlook and superstitions.
- Marriage and morals
- Occupational divisions
- Diets, drinks and dress descriptions.
- Status of women and mother
- Reverence for Ambedkar and love-hate relationship with Gandhi.

Hinduism has many things to claim its greatness that too from time immemorial and one of them is its philosophy of inclusiveness and unity which has been reiterated in different words on different occasions:

--एकोऽहं द्वितीयो नास्ति। (There is only one not the second or other)

--एका सूत्रे सकलम्। (Everything is connected to one)

--एकं सदविप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति। (There is only one , but gets expressed in many ways)

-- अयं निजः परोवेति गणना लघु चेतसाम्।

-- उदारचरितानाम् तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्।

(This is mine and that is not, betrays a narrow mind,
Those of a large heart see as family, all mankind.)

-- अव्वल अल्ला नूर उपाया, कुदरत के सब बन्दे,
एक नूर से सब जग उपजे को भले को मन्दे।

(We all are from the same Light, son of God/Nature, how anyone can be superior or inferior.) When Dalits read and study these lofty thoughts and find the crafty acts, they start disbelieving the scriptures, finding them unsound as practising Hinduism is starkly obscene though the theoretical one is full of beauties that the humanity aspires for. In all sort of personalised narratives, Dalits question the moral horizons of the Caste Hindus. Sharan Kumar Limbale in *Akkarmashi* (The Outcaste) outlines the relationship between Santamai and Dada (a muslim) who live together without being in wedlock, a relationship, now known as 'live-in', where respect and care are the real glues that ensure the strength in it. But he is quite puzzled while closing his autobiography, and place a number of questions that question the whole edifice of practising Hinduism:

“Who will undertake Dada’s funeral after his death? Will Muslims attend his cremation? How can they perform rituals after death? Where would they bury his body? What will happen to his corpse? What will its fate be? In which graveyard will they cremate him? Would people come for the rituals on Santamai’s and Masamai’s deaths? Why this labyrinth of customs? Who has created such value of right and wrong, and what for? If they consider my birth illegitimate what values am I to follow?”¹⁰

All these autobiographies actually make a mockery of the concept of untouchability, when they describe how

dalit women are touchable at night and untouchable in the daylights. Another important development, quite noticeable in the autobiographies, is the direct or indirect delineation of atheism which appears vide Buddhism. Atheism and theism have been in coexistence since the beginning of civilization but social alienation and atrocities have sharpened the Dalit's feeling of atheism. B. Kesharshivam writes in his '*Purna Satya*' (translated by Gita Chaudhary- The whole Truth and Nothing But the Truth):

"I have been greatly influenced by the story of Sharvan, his sense of filial duty towards his parents. I had no faith in God, then, but I remember I used to light an incense stick in front of a mounted paper on which I had inscribed 'Mother and Father'. For me , my dalit parents were my Gods because they had not only battled with life but struggled hard and at times at the cost of their own lives , to bring us up"¹¹.

Though we find in many autobiographies the existence of folk deities, both male and female, like Vithal (of Pandharpur; called Pandurang) and Yallama, Satwai, Mariai (folk mother goddess, supposed to ward off calamities especially epidemics) masoba, khadoba, khokayai (a female deity worshipped to cure cough) and Saints like Chokha Mahar (a saint poet of the Mahar, community, a contemporary of saint Namdeo 14th Century (A.D). He was killed when the ramparts of Mengalwedha, where he was compelled to work as an unpaid labour, collapsed), Laginshaa (a Muslim saint), Sidhayappa (a Shaiva saint). On this count, the autobiographical narratives serve as the detailed accounts of gods, goddesses, saints, deities who belong to the local traditions. At the same time, there are many stories — oral as well as written in rudimentary forms

– who establish the connectivity between the local tradition and great tradition, thereby presenting the true picture of cultural exchanges that took place among the different collectivities during the long course of history.

The working processes of Sanskritization, Westernization and Urbanization have also been found out in detail and how these processes have affected the lives of dalits positively and negatively. The roles of dominant castes, caste Panchayat and Panchayat penal system can be enumerated if we study them systematically. Many of the writers have been charging the caste Hindus, who subscribe the Great tradition, of cultural rigging and cultural silence. One of the claims is that Jagannath was a tribal god initially, who was later Hinduised and Brahminised and how he is considered to be the Lord of the universe, and Dalit and Adivasis are not allowed into the Jagannath temple. Through the concepts of totemism and occupational exchanges, in course of history, Dalit writers give a number of suggestions that clearly support the theory of tribe-caste continuum. Laxman Gaikward's autobiography 'Uchalya' provides enough descriptions of this kind.

Many of us criticise A.L Basham, an Australian historian, who did sincere work on the ancient period of India and wrote *The Wonder that was India* for his elaborated details of our dark side, though he also highlighted our strengths of that time. But after going through the Dalit autobiographies, which appeared on the national scene much after the Independence of our country, it seems to me that these narratives are the valuable sources of myths, social prejudices and superstitions related to health problems, agriculture, women, deities, gods and saints. It is also revealed after surveying the autobiographies of different regions, that as to marriage neither exogamy nor endogamy are the rules rather it varies in time, space and castes and so is

the case with 'Jajmani system', which was the base of economic activities and occupational structures in rural and agricultural economy. The debt- trap prepared by *sahukar* in rural area has been vividly depicted in these autobiographies. It was a virtuous circle for the money lender and caste Hindus while a vicious circle for Dalits. The economic history can be rewritten on the descriptions given by the different authors.

Some of the autobiographies specifically deal with the life story of particular community. In *Kolhatyeche Por* (Against All Odds) Kishore Shantabai Kale narrates about the *kolhati* tribal community, in which women earn their livelihood by dancing and males enjoy the earnings leisurely and lavishly. Kishore's mother was a *tamasa* dancer and he was an illegitimate child who suffered a lot. Women are the real exploited lot who are abused by outsiders as well as insiders. Similarly, Siddalingaiah's *Ooru Keri* (in Kannad) gives a picturesque description of the house-structure, food pattern, occupational systems, customs, rituals, superstitions as to ghost and black magic as well as living and thinking of dalits. He clearly rejects the traditional Hindu culture and accepts the Buddhist one. In the similar vein, Uttam Tupe in *Katyaverchi Pote* describes the agonies and anguishes of *Matang* community that earns their livelihood by skinning dead animals and begging in village, when they do not have their traditional jobs. Atmaram Rathod in his *Tanda* describes the life and living of Banjara community. Shakarao Kharat in his *Tatal Antarat*, describes the customs and traditions of Yesker community -a sub caste of Mahar and also his struggles for education which ultimately helped him to be the vice chancellor of Dr. Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar Marathawada University, Aurangabad. Mukta Sarvagond's *Mitelei Kavade* (closed doors) discloses the plight of the Dalit women to the world. She raised her

voice against the people of her own community and also of those who are availing the facilities of being Dalits for filling their houses. She very much openly attacked the pretence of Dalit leaders. Sharan Kumar Limbale also wrote a novel *Narvanar* on the intra-dichotomy of Dalits and dalit politicians' attitude towards their fellowmen.

What can be underlined as the distinguishing mark of dalit social history is the appearance of resilient Dalit women in the autobiographies written by men and women. Women writers like Kumud Pawde, Shantabai Kamble, Urmila Pawar, Shantabai Dani, Baby Kamble, Mukta Sarvagond, and men writers like Sharan Kumar Limbale, B. Kesharshivam, Omprakash Valmiki, Daya Pawar have vividly presented the sacrificing mother and pain enduring wife in their autobiographies very much like the women characters of mainstream literature

Dalit autobiographies can also serve purpose of Linguist and Linguistic Anthropology, as the dictions (like *banosa*, *bhausahab*, *garbane*, *modi*, *komti*), idioms and proverbs that have been used by the authors are also on the verge of extinction, as the dialects are about to die owing to multidirectional developments that are going on in all civilizational aspects of modern society that change the cultural ones too. These words of Dalit writers may serve as the historical documents for the future researchers in the realm of sociology, anthropology, polity and socio- linguistics.

Two autobiographies that demand special mention, are Vasant Moon's *Growing Up Untouchable in India* and Narendra Jadhav's *Outcaste : A Memoir*. They are more equally reflective and descriptive. Moon's autobiography is certainly different from others because it is about 'vasti', an urban neighbourhood unlike village experiences in others. That is why Moon vividly describes the positive changes that have occurred in the

lives of Dalits due to a number of affirmative actions taken to ameliorate their overall conditions. He talks of ancient principles of hereditary caste system, notions of pollution and purity ; also reflects on the importance of effective and influential leadership of Dr.B.R Ambedkar. And at the same time he rejoices the aesthetic aspect of Vasti. Narendra Jadhav's *Outcaste : A Memoir* reflects, apart from personal and social life, on the important issues related to Gandhi and Ambedkar and their relationships. All the autobiographical narratives are the outcome of Ambedkar's thought, life and actions. To them, Ambedkar is God and anything against him would be considered as a blasphemy. This tendency can be traced in this autobiography. Gandhi's approach to Dalits has never been appreciated by them. After the advent of Dalit intellectuals, the interpretation of Ambedkar and Gandhi's differences came into the limelight. Dalit autobiography has certainly contributed to this discourse that would help the historians in judging their roles and efforts in the making of a nation.

All these narratives have amply demonstrated that despite having a togetherness of thousand of years, at least in spatial sense, today's dalits or yesterday's *avarna* have not been properly assimilated or integrated into the ideas of India or Indian which is evident from the name 'Anarya' that has been given by Sharan Kumar Limbale to his son. They claim themselves the aboriginals of Jambudweep unlike the Caste Hindus. So through these autobiographies, they not only claim their human rights but also reclaim and retrieve their history. It is also a fact that history of any nation and country has been written from the perspectives of the conquerors, Victors and dominants. The vanquished are represented in the history and literature like a salt in the recipe as per the taste and preference of the chef and the consumer .The modern Constitutional India certainly provides

space to each and everyone to tell one's story from their perspective and at one level that is being done by Dalits of India.

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Nativity and Tradition: A Study of N. Scott Momaday's *The Way to Rainy Mountain*

**K. Sareen Raj & **A. Karunaker*

“Once in his life a man ought to concentrate his mind upon the remembered earth . . . He ought to give himself up to a particular landscape in his experience, to look at it from as many angles as he can, to wonder about it, to dwell upon it” (Momaday, 83).

The subject of nativity and cultural history is undoubtedly the most significant aspect of any region. All the world cultures have their own uniqueness and splendor. It would be inappropriate to say that a particular culture or history is inferior to others. Native American traditions are rich and varied. Their history cannot be ignored from the vast canvas of American history. In fact, a proper understanding of a nation could be ascertained only through a proper study of its indigenous cultures. In a similar vein, Native American cultural history and tradition needs to be studied with seriousness. Commenting on the importance of nativity i.e. the relationship between the land and tradition, Greg Sarris, a critic says that the oral tradition is tied to the land: “The landscape becomes the Bible and each stone, each mountain, each set of trees or a river, or a section of the river becomes a text, because they become a way

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of remembering stories, and stories associated with that place" (Amerpass). Hence, land is intrinsically connected with its tradition, history and culture. Native Americans have an emotional attachment to their homelands and for them the homeland preserves the past. Yu-Fi Tuan in his book, "Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience" writes:

Landscape is personal and tribal history made visible; the native's identity-his place in the total scheme of things-is not in doubt, because the myths that support it are as real as the rocks and waterholes that he can see and touch. He finds recorded in his land the ancient story of the lives and deeds of the immortal beings from whom he himself is descended, and whom he reveres. The whole country is his family tree. (157-58)

Navarro Scott Mammedaty (Scott Momaday) is a notable Kiowa Native American writer, a poet, a playwright and a storyteller. He was born in Lawton, Oklahoma in 1934, and grew up in the company of the Navajo and San Carlos Apache communities. He received his B.A. in political science in 1958 from the University of New Mexico and later received M.A. and Ph.D from Stanford University. His first novel, *House Made of Dawn* (1969) won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. He wrote several novels and poems. He is also the editor of various anthologies and collections. His major interest is the preservation and restoration of Native American culture, heritage and history. Speaking about the significance of myth and history, N. Scott Momaday writes, "The voices are all around us, the three voices. You have the mythic and the historical and the personal and then they become a wheel, they revolve, they alternate . . . Myth becomes history becomes memoir becomes myth" (Amerpass). Recollecting his childhood experiences with his father,

and his interest in the Kiowa oral tradition, he says, "My father was a great storyteller and he knew many stories from the Kiowa oral tradition." He further says:

He told me many of these stories over and over because I loved them. But it was only after I became an adult that I understood how fragile they are, because they exist only by word of mouth, always just one generation away from extinction. That's when I began to write down the tales my father and others had told me.
(*THE WEST*)

Momaday's major focus was safeguarding oral tradition and identity of native Americans. His commentary in *THE WEST* provided vital information about the nativity, the vast terrain of the West for more than thousand years and the native people before the explorers ventured from other parts of the world. Speaking about the West, he said, "The West is a dream landscape that for the Native American is full of sacred realities" (*THE WEST*). Taking pride in his heritage, he said, "I am an Indian and I believe I'm fortunate to have the heritage I have". As a Kiowa Indian, he always defined himself as a Western Man. He developed a passion for Kiowa, Navajo, Jemez Pueblo, Spanish, and English through his childhood experiences.

The Way to Rainy Mountain (1969) is an autobiographical book of Momaday. The writer emphasizes the importance of the Kiowa landscape and his father's tribal heritage in the book. The book presents an accurate picture of Kiowa culture in its heyday and the writer's longing for the past. It is a multicultural reading experience with Kiowa history through a collection of stories and memories. The book is a nostalgic travelogue, a heroic quest of an inquisitive mind in search of meanings and answers of life. It also speaks about the importance of a writer's relationship

with his land and culture. The myths, legends, folklores and oral traditions became a source of information. The book became Momaday's favorite as it was a product of stories that he heard since his childhood. *The Way to Rainy Mountain* brings forth 300 years of Kiowa history, re-imagining the sacred myths, tribal customs and the events related to encroachment of white settlers on the tribal lands in the 1800s. Momaday combines his personal reminiscences with ethnography to depict his family's participation in tribal customs. Sometimes sorrow, pain and melancholy dominate the writing. The book sketches the magnificent land stretching for miles together. It's a revelation of the mystic land. The writer begins with the description of his journey in the prologue, "The journey began one day long ago on the edge of the northern Plains. It was carried on over a course of many generations and many hundreds of miles. In the end there were many things to remember, to dwell upon and talk about" (RM, 3).

Momaday talks about the migration of Kiowas in the early 18th century and the location of their settlement by saying:

... the headwaters of the Yellowstone River eastward to the Black Hills and south to the Wichita Mountains [in what is currently southwestern Oklahoma. It is there, says Momaday, that] ... a single knoll rises out of the plain ... [which serves as a landmark for the homeland of the Kiowas], to which...they gave the name ... (RM 1)

The destruction of land by prairie winds is observed as a destiny. The 'bleak northern mountains', the place where Kiowas struggled to exist, and the destruction of the land by 'prairie winds' is observed as a destiny, "There came a day like destiny; in every direction, as far as the eye could see" (3). Momaday calls these

ruinations as ‘agonies of human history’ and recounts it as a time of ‘great adventure,’ ‘nobility,’ and ‘fulfillment’. The sacrificing of a buffalo during ‘Sun Dance’ is observed as the customary practice. Momaday hints that the will and spirit of the Kiowa people was destroyed as soon as the wild herds were destroyed. He ends the paragraph by saying that it was a “time of great adventure and nobility and fulfillment” (3).

Language plays a significant role in human life. It helps in preserving the past. Momaday says the ‘verbal tradition’ is essential to retain the identity and history: “a remarkably rich and living verbal tradition which demands to be preserved for its own sake. The living memory and the verbal tradition which transcends it were brought together for me once and for all in the person of Ko-sahn” (86). Though he finds his traditional language to be fragmented over time, it’s a miracle for him as the traditional ideas are preserved in the form of “mythology, legend, lore, and hearsay” (4). He reiterates the power of the word which is of great significance in the human life: “A word has power in and of itself. It gives origin to all things . . . And the word is sacred” (33). Some of the legends and myths convey moral lessons. These in turn provide foundations for a cultural value system.

The landscape of Rainy Mountain takes a central stage in the book. The land is connected with the human spirit. The ‘Rainy Mountain’ itself implies a place full of life and unceasing activity. The journey is an evocation of three things in particular: a landscape that is incomparable, a time that is gone forever, and the human spirit, which endures (RM 4). The migration of Kiowas is observed as an expression of human spirit with wonder and delight. The rough weather symbolizes the unfavorable conditions in which the natives lived, “frequent blizzards and heavy winds” (5). The description

of yellow grasshoppers popping up like corn to sting the flesh reflect the vulnerability of the natives to the outside aggression. The life of the natives is symbolized by the crawling of the tortoises on the red earth symbolizing their undaunted spirit, that the life was rather serene though they were going through turbulent times. The landscape with the reference 'creation begun' (5), alludes to the Garden of Eden from the book of Genesis, the first chapter of the Bible: "To look upon that landscape in the early morning, with the sun at your back, is to lose the sense of proportion. Your imagination comes to life, and this, you think, is where Creation was begun" (5). The Yellowstone reaching to the skies accentuate the spiritual realms. The dark canyons, waterfalls and deep rivers reflect the perpetual blooming life with a hint of freedom. The exotic creation, 'blind in darkness' suggests the native's life concealed in the wilderness (7).

The art of war is a matter of pride, a tradition for the Kiowas. As a nomadic tribe, the people depended on horses, weapons and adventure. Kiowas were brave warriors and finest horsemen in the world, "War was a sacred business to them" (6). Another heroic act was buffalo hunting. It marks a symbol of courage and reflects the valorous life of the tribe. The news of Aho's death, grandmother of Momaday sets him for a long journey. Aho belongs to the last culture evolved in North America. The expression that his grandmother's face was that of a child in her death proves the innocence and purity of the lost tribes of America. Tai-Me, the sacred 'Sun Dance Doll' became a symbol of worship to the tribe. Their migration is believed to be the 'fruit of an old prophecy' (6). 'Taime' is the central figure of the Kado or Sun Dance ceremony. It is a small image, less than 2 feet in length, resembling a human figure dressed in a robe of white feathers (37).

Momaday takes us back to 1890s in memory. Aho is seen standing at the wood stove in a winter morning and turning meat in a great iron skillet. She stands beside her bed praying and the light of the lamp moves on her dark skin. The setting implies the kind of faith the natives had even in the darkest hours of history. The light of the lamp is symbolic of hope for the lost tribe (10). The summers were marked with festivity. The summer time is full of excitement and lot of movement takes place in the form of reunions. They had lot of aged visitors who wore traditional attires:

“They wore great black hats and bright ample shirts that shook in the wind. They rubbed fat upon their hair and wound their braids with strips of colored cloth. Some of them painted their faces and carried the scars of old and cherished enmities” (11).

In the last part of the book, ‘The Closing In,’ the disappearance of buffaloes from the Kiowa country is mentioned. Horses become food for the people due to the scarcity of buffaloes. They eat the ponies to save themselves from starving:

“Tsen-pia Kado, Horse-eating sun dance . . . This dance was held on Elm Fork of Red River, and was so called because the buffalo had now become so scarce that the Kiowa, who had gone on their regular hunt the preceding winter, had found so few that they were obliged to kill and eat their ponies during the summer to save themselves from starving” (67).

The life of the natives evolved over a period of time. Their history can be studied as a beginning, eventual growth and a tragic end. The journey to the Rainy Mountain is regarded as a journey of self discovery by the critics. The life in its fullest harmony is sketched in

the book. The book allows us to develop new insights, perspectives in the context of Native American studies. Literature is nevertheless but the study of human experience; and Momaday gives an exemplary model for this great experience, setting a tone for the future explorations in the human history, life and culture. The journey is a spiritual experience; a journey intricate with motion, meaning and memory. He considers it as an experience of the mind which is legendary as well as historical, personal and cultural (RM 4). The "historical" experience means a factual representation of the Kiowa experience. Momaday with his impeccable writing style and a keen eye for minute details brings back the lost history to life. The writer unearths a glorious tale of Kiowas with great imagination, creativity and vision, and helps us to revisit the forgotten treasures of the American History.

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Ashamed of Speaking in the Mother tongue: Negligence and Death of Agartala- Bangla

**Ashes Gupta*

Gharer dorjay bura Shib gusthigottor loiya
Deikkha suinya diben dan haroshito hoiya
Tribhuboner swami aisen bhikhukher raza
Geroster kailyane bajook damboroor baja.

(Quoted in Sengupta, Mihir. 34)

(A prosaic translation: Old Shib/Hara/ Mahadev/ has come to your threshold with his entire family, so be considerate and joyous while giving alms. The king of the three worlds as well as of the beggars has arrived, so play the damaroo¹ for the welfare of the landlord, trans.mine)

The language in which this extract is written approximates to Agartala- Bangla, a distinct variety of Bangla spoken in Agartala, the capital of Tripura, far removed from the elitist and sophisticated Kolkata-Bangla which is the medium through which literature in Bengali for the most part finds its outlet. This 'folksy' variety of Bangla generates plenty of vibes and hits on Coke Studio² and has crowds jiving to the tunes of the Bangla folk band Dohar³, but when it comes to speaking and expressing oneself in a public forum, it has no takers. This duality and dichotomy is analogous to rural eco-tourism where for a specified period, an urban tourist pays (at exorbitant 5 star rates) to live in simulated rurality, but inevitably prefers to go back to his urbane convenience in the end. And it is exactly here that this

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paper attempts an academic and critical interjection to analyze and comprehend why we hate to speak in Agartala-Bangla, our mother tongue, thus leading it to extinction. It is essential to clarify the necessity of my usage of 'Bangla' instead of the more anglicized 'Bengali' in this paper with reference to language, the former being more anti-colonially positioned than the latter. Moreover, the term 'Bangla' has gained legitimacy and currency in usage in today's Bangladesh that contends for and attempts at theoretically relocating the Bengali diasporic center from Kolkata to its capital Dhaka, and by its continuous promotion of everything culturally Bengali, right from Bengali New Year (Bangla Nabobarsho) to celebration of Nabanno (the new rice festival), from Bangla billboards to globalising authentic Bengali cuisine. My usage of the term 'Bangla' in this paper is therefore aimed at a certain political correctness.

The very idea of negligence and death of a language (here Agartala-Bangla in all its distinctive nuances) lends itself to academic scrutiny on account of the hegemony that privileges Kolkata-Bangla in both literary and public domain. And the proliferation of this tendency in Agartala itself raises serious doubts about the survival of this language variety (I propose not to subscribe to the term 'dialect' with reference to Agartala-Bangla) in the days to come. Hence, the basic premise on which this paper attempts to situate itself nucleates around three key words in the title viz. 'negligence', 'death' and 'language'. While attempting to initiate a discourse on these three words and their interrelations in the proposed topic, it was really interesting to find that the hegemonic construct of language vis-à-vis dialect that operates between the so called 'standard' Bangla spoken in Kolkata (henceforth referred to as Kolkata-Bangla) and Agartala-Bangla respectively is more socio-

political and cultural in nature rather than linguistic. In fact, the usual discriminatory and arbitrary standardization that has promoted Kolkata-Bangla as standard is the effect of several extra-lingual and extra-literary factors that include delineation of the diasporic centre at Kolkata, privileging Kolkata in the hierarchy as well as favoring Kolkata-Bangla and consequently the Bengali literature written in and from Kolkata over that written in Bangla away from it (away from the diasporic centre). This pertains to generating a set of questions and structuring the inferences thus obtained towards the proposed hypothesis. It is however necessary to mention here that I am not a linguist by profession or specialization and therefore this paper is not purely linguistic in perspective, rather it is more of Culture Studies orientation and tends to restrict linguistic technicalities to a bare minimum, itself the inevitable result of my very limited knowledge in the field of Linguistics. Agartala-Bangla certainly does not fall into the UNESCO list of endangered languages and diehard linguists would even disagree to the term 'language' that this paper ascribes to it and relegate it to the status of a dialect. To some even the existence of Agartala-Bangla as a language reality would be doubtful. Thus, the task/tasks that this paper attempts to undertake is manifold and ranges from validating the existence of Agartala-Bangla as a language reality, reading into the socio-cultural politics and ideology of standardization that it has been subjected to for ages both at individual and institutional levels, consequently problematising its dialectical status and finally, pointing out how gradually it is facing extinction and death due to social and cultural neglect.

The usual paradigm of considering Kolkata-Bangla as 'the language' and Agartala-Bangla as the 'dialect' necessitates questioning and revaluation. It would not

be irrelevant here to cite the usual definition and difference between language and dialect and the consequent hegemonic and hierarchic construct that tends to place the former i.e. Kolkata-Bangla as superior to the latter i.e. Agartala- Bangla. The term 'dialect' (from the Greek Language word *dialektos*,) is used in two distinct ways by linguists. One usage refers to a variety of a language that is characteristic of a particular group of the language's speakers. The term is applied most often to regional speech patterns, but a dialect may also be defined by other factors, such as social class. A dialect that is associated with a particular social class can be termed a sociolect; a regional dialect may be termed a regiolect or topolect. The other usage refers to a language socially subordinate to a regional or national standard language, often historically cognate to the standard, but not a variety of it or in any other sense derived from it. And this paper relates to all these details of specification as an appendage to comprehend the status of Agartala-Bangla. As far as regional criterion is concerned, Kolkata-Bangla, which is supposed to be the standard, is as much regional as it can be with each region (district or province) of West Bengal having its own variety of Bangla proving that such standardization is arbitrary. In fact, popular lore has it that as one travels from North to South Kolkata the /f / gradually gets replaced by /s/ in colloquiality ('Shyambajar' becoming 'Syambajar' and so on).

It's pertinent here to understand the dynamics of power as well as the socio-cultural politics that has gone to the making of Kolkata-Bangla a language and Agartala-Bangla a dialect. A very important factor that influenced the genesis of Agartala-Bangla was the partition of India in 1947. After the partition of India the influx of Bengali Hindu refugees to the state of Tripura led to the development of this language. The

migration of refugees across the Indo-Bangladesh border (erstwhile Indo-East Pakistan border prior to Mukti Juddha or Bangladesh's struggle for independence in 1971) to Tripura at that time shows a peculiar pattern of straight line movement that led to intersecting the international border at 90 degrees and settling down in Tripura at the nearest possible district. Thus, we had refugees from Comilla and Brahmanbaria⁴ in Bangladesh settling down in Agartala just across the Akhaura border, those from Noakhali settling down in Belonia while others from Silhete in Dharmanagar and Kailasahar. This linear migration pattern across the shortest route to Tripura had a tremendous impact in shaping the language context of the areas of settlement. As a result the language of the people of Agartala referred to here as Agartala-Bangla had features similar to and influenced by the Bangla spoken in Comilla-Brahmanbaria areas, though across the years due to internal movement within Tripura itself, this language has undergone considerable metamorphosis. People from other districts with distinct phonetic and intonation patterns (attributable to the language of the areas inhabited in erstwhile East Pakistan and now Bangladesh) have been moving into Agartala settling down here or otherwise, since it is the economic centre of Tripura. And this has led to the emergence of Agartala-Bangla as a distinct language different from Kolkata-Bangla with features that are the cumulative result of all such influences. Thus, Agartala-Bangla language has come to be accepted and understood, legitimized and naturalized across Tripura and even beyond.

Why I have been referring to Agartala-Bangla as a language is an obvious issue that needs to be addressed. The idea is quite clear. I have been trying to read into the politics of considering Agartala-Bangla a dialect as has been traditionally done. The root is deeply

embedded into the politics of centralization and marginalization to which it has been subjected to. In the pre-independence as well as pre-partition times the erstwhile East-Pakistan served as the granary of undivided Bengal. Kolkata being the economic, political and cultural centre of undivided Bengal, its variety of Bangla shared its centralized status, bolstered all the more by its burgeoning literary corpus. The economic superiority that Kolkata enjoyed in yester years resulted in movement of human resource from all other regions of India including Bangladesh, Tripura, Orissa, Assam in the East and even Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan in the North and the dominance and superiority of Kolkata-Bangla at both cultural and literary fronts. Moreover, Kolkata's notable contribution in Indian freedom struggle in terms of Anushilan Samiti⁵ and aided by the Bengali Renaissance spear headed by Raja Rammohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and followed up by Rabindranath Tagore cemented a pride of place for Kolkata-Bangla as the standard.

On the other hand, irrespective of the often numerical majority of speakers, East Bengal-Bangla (whose offshoot is Agartala-Bangla) was marginalized simply because it did not enjoy economic, political and cultural limelight and prioritisation. And hence when refugees migrated to this side of the border, they carried a language legacy that was already subordinated to Kolkata-Bangla. Economics thus had a major role to play in determining the status of the Bangla spoken in East Bengal (with its clear affinity to Agartala-Bangla) vis-à-vis Kolkata-Bangla. Moreover for generations of landless, homeless refugees who had migrated to Tripura after partition a sense of endemic cultural inferiority was symptomatic. For education and for making it BIG, a movement to Kolkata was a must and so developed the culture of the 'mess' for the employed

Bourgeoisie Bengali who was stationed at Kolkata, but whose home was either in far away mufassil West Bengal or East Bengal. The famous Bengali writer Shibram Chakraborty's adage "Mukatarām babaur shukto" (He lived in a mess in Kolkata's Muktārambabu Street and survived on the vegetable stew 'Shukto' which has a distinct Bengali gastronomical identity) is a case in point. The refugee's sense of being uprooted and made homeless by a decision of political convenience adversely affected their life and psyche and made them devalue their language and culture in contrast to the speakers of Kolkata-Bangla who had never been forced to such a traumatic exodus. The former's history was one of loss and forced migration whereas the latter's was that of a peaceful settled life without even the slightest displacement. Having settled in Agartala, the refugee psyche had difficulty believing that it could be a contender to language and not dialect status. However, the effort to draw the Bangla diaspora with Kolkata as its diasporic centre has been long problematised with the emergence of Dhaka as the more politically appropriate contender for the position post-Bangladesh Muktiyuddha, all the more since the national language of Bangladesh is Bangla. And the discerning critic has to decide which should be the diasporic centre, Kolkata or Dhaka. Such being the problem, it would be very naïve to consider Kolkata-Bangla as 'the language' and Agartala-Bangla as the 'dialect'.

It is also necessary to carefully scrutinize the resultant ideology of standardization to which Agartala-Bangla has been subjected to, the prescribed standard being Kolkata-Bangla. A random survey of various cultural artifacts and social entities would be useful to comprehend how this arbitrary standardization has been working overnight. Culturally, Kolkata-Bangla has always been projected as the standard with literary texts

in Bangla (be it poetry, prose fiction or drama) written in it. Moreover as a general rule, the language of the subaltern characters is Agartala-Bangla (close to East Bengal Bangla). The landlord and the aristocratic gentry speak in the former whereas the servant and members of lower social strata speak in the latter thus making Agartala-Bangla a sociolect by compulsion, since such broad generalizations tend to deny or overlook the social reality that actually even the higher-ups in Agartala including the kings of this erstwhile princely state used to speak in this language. Classical and semi-classical compositions have their lyrics written in Kolkata-Bangla while folk songs and songs of rural life are almost invariably in Agartala-Bangla. The same scenario is true for Bengali films and theatre where a comedian like Bhanu Bandopadhyay has his screen and stage antics in Agartala-Bangla or East Bengal Bangla, while the hero or the heroine speaks in Kolkata-Bangla. Even the villain does not speak in the latter; such is the quantum of neglect for the language. At the social and familial spheres too, Agartala-Bangla has been subjected to neglect and step-motherly attitude. In the average urban middle class Bengali family in Agartala, the parents encourage and even pressurize their children to speak in Kolkata-Bangla while within themselves and with servants, drivers and other members of the labour class they speak in Agartala-Bangla. The same is promoted in schools and other educational institutions across the state capital. The result is that the children are subjected to an artificial and simulated linguistic environment which leads to a neglect of the mother tongue, a language which by virtue of their birth in that language community is their own. At the same time the difficulty of negotiating two different languages in very close familial, social and cultural planes leads to lack of proficiency in both. This is certainly alarming as today Agartala-Bangla has a

diminishing number of speakers and very few takers. In normal day- to- day conversation even if Agartala-Bangla is used, a resident of Agartala invariably switches over to Kolkata-Bangla when addressing a meeting or a gathering or speaking in a mike. Unable to find a place of its own in literature, culture and social spheres and even in speech, Agartala-Bangla seems to be dying gradually. Already many words which were once in currency in Agartala-Bangla are now lost. For instance my grandmother and other speakers of this language would frequently use the following words:

1. 'bakka' (/bĕkkĕ/) meaning 'fairly good';
2. 'huber' (/huber/) meaning 'of good repute';
3. 'sheber' (/sheber/) meaning 'convenient';
4. 'pisa' (/pisa/) meaning 'broom';
5. 'senga' (/senga/) meaning 'caterpillar';
6. 'teillasura' (/teiljasura/) meaning 'cockroach'

and so on, but they are no longer used today and are not in currency anymore. Rather such words are variously supposed to be uncultured, uncouth, uncivilised and even subaltern. In fact, the present generation of Agartala-Bangla speakers have no idea what these words connote to. Even where this language has been partially documented for a comical purpose say for e.g. in Bengali prose fiction as a language spoken by a subaltern or comic characters, the encoding has been erroneous. For instance: one frequent fallacy has been to write 'gesi' (/ gesi/) meaning 'to go' in Agartala-Bangla as 'gechi'(/getʃi/). The former is the Agartala-Bangla form whereas the latter is Kolkata-Bangla variation, the /s/ being replaced by /tʃ/. The subtle nuances by virtue of which Agartala-Bangla can be distinctly distinguished are generally overlooked including replacing /s/ by /h/; / t/ by /d/ et al. These and many such instances only

validate the fact that Agartala-Bangla is endangered because of the socio-cultural neglect that it is subjected to.

The aim of this paper was to investigate the status of Agartala-Bangla and validate the fact that it is endangered due to socio-cultural neglect by its own community of speakers. As a language Agartala-Bangla lacks social recognition and status and is subjected to the wrong ideology of standardization, the arbitrary standard being Kolkata-Bangla which is itself very much confined to the limits of Kolkata region primarily and varies according to zonal divides. One way in which Agartala-Bangla could be rescued and revitalized would be to go for a complete process of cultural revivalism which would automatically include the language component. Since, it is social and cultural neglect that has led to its endangerment.

NOTES

1. A leather covered musical instrument narrow in the middle and wider at both ends, associated with Lord Shiva.
2. Officially titled Coke Studio @ MTV, is an Indian television series, which features live studio-recorded music performances by various artists. Coke Studio combines myriad musical influences, from Hindustani, Carnatic and Indian folk, to contemporary hip hop, rock and pop music. Inspired by the Pakistani show of the same name. It is one of the most popular music programmes in India.
3. (দোহার) is an Indian folk music musical ensemble that specializes in the styles of greater Bengal as well as the North East India. It is very popular in the Indian states of West Bengal, Assam and in Bangladesh. Dohar has popularised Bengali and Assamese folk music. They have played for various Bengali communities in India and abroad. Kalikaprasad Bhattacharjee was the lead singer

and leader of Dohar. Bhattacharya died in a road accident near Gurap village in Hooghly district on 7th March 2017, aged 47. Five other members were also injured. The remaining members of the band have continued singing.

4. Districts of Bangladesh.
5. A Bengali Indian organisation that existed in the first quarter of the twentieth century, and propounded revolutionary violence as the means for ending British rule in India. The organisation arose from a conglomeration of local youth groups and gyms (*Akhra*) in Bengal in 1902. It had two prominent if somewhat independent arms in East and West Bengal identified as Dhaka Anushilan Samiti centred in Dhaka (modern day Bangladesh), and the Jugantar group (centred at Calcutta) respectively. From its foundation to its gradual dissolution during the 1930s, the *Samiti* challenged British rule in India by engaging in militant nationalism including bombings, assassinations, and politically-motivated violence. During its existence, the *Samiti* collaborated with other revolutionary organisations in India and abroad. It was led by nationalists such as Aurobindo Ghosh and his brother Barindra Ghosh, and influenced by philosophies as diverse as Hindu *Shakta* philosophy propounded by Bengali literateur Bankim and Vivekananda, Italian Nationalism, and Pan-Asianism of Kakuzo Okakura. The *Samiti* was involved in a number of noted incidences of revolutionary terrorism against British interests and administration in India within the decade of its founding, including early attempts to assassinate Raj officials whilst led by the Ghosh brothers. These were followed by the 1912 attempt on the life of the Viceroy of India, and the Sedetious conspiracy during World War I led by Rash Behari Bose and Jatindranath Mukherjee respectively.

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Religion and Philosophy in Nissim Ezekiel's Poetry

** Deepika Shrivastava*

Nissim Ezekiel is one of the most popular and eminent Indian poets of the post-Independence era. He exhibits a deeper religio-philosophical awareness of the world and the tortured self. Ezekiel was brought up “in a mildly Orthodox Jewish home which gradually became liberal Jewish.” He attended the liberal Jewish synagogue in Bombay until he abandoned religion altogether after leaving school. This decision to abandon religion reveals a keen, rational and analytic mind wedded to an individual system of beliefs. Michael Garman observes: “He brings to the established tradition of love, religion and the passing hour the modern attitude of the need for a commitment, an existential plunge into life, and of cold analytic disgust becoming more detached and ironical as he develops.” Ezekiel’s attitude to religion is rational, logical, secular and humanistic. His religion is a religion of love and charity, ideals which every religion cherishes and preaches. He believes that all barriers dividing mankind should give way to the religion of love for all:

And yet to speak is good, a man
Is purified through speech alone
Asserting his identity

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In all that people say and do.¹

(“Speech and Silence”-Collected Poems, 53)

And,

Do not, in your vanity, the tenuous thread
Of difference flaunt, but he
Asserted in the common dance. Participate
Entirely, make an end of separation.

(“Transmutation”-Collected Poems, 56)

Ezekiel does not believe in the negation of the worldly and sensual pleasures. He has a strong feeling of belonging to the world. He enjoys the world of ‘eye and ear’. Neither the world nor the flesh repels Ezekiel. He is rather committed to both of them, and affirms his faith in them again and again. His poems reveal not only an awareness of his sinful self but also his constant preoccupation with the Supreme Deity:

The vices I’ve always had
I still have
The virtues I’ve never had
I still do not have
From this Human way of Life
Who can rescue Man
If not His marker ?
Do thy duty, Lord.

(“The Egoist’s Prayers”-Collected Poems, 212)

Ezekiel claims that he does not “get a sense of religion, sustained from day to day, in my life. If I write a religious poem, the next poem is likely to be very secular, sceptical. I attach a great deal of importance to the worldliness of the world, its independence.” He again says, “I am not a religious or even a moral person in any conventional sense. Yet I have always felt myself to be religious and moral in some sense. The gap between these two statements is the existential sphere of my poetry.”

Although the words “God” and “Prayer” often occur in his poetry, his approach to life is not religious. His attitude is that of philosophical humanism. His natural recourse is to prayer:

If I could pray, the gist of my
Demanding would be simply this.
Quietude. The ordered mind.
Erasure of the inner lie,
And only love in every kiss.

(“Prayer”-Collected Poems, 54)

Important poems which reveal religious-philosophical strain in Ezekiel’s poetry are: ‘Process’, “Choices”, “Transparently”, “In the Theatre”, The Egoist’s Prayers”, “Hymns in Darkness”, “Latter-Day Psalms”, and “Blessings”. The opening lines of the poem “Process” provides a clue to Ezekiel’s mind which has acquired a new religious stance 1967, paving the way for a positive faith:

Just when you give up
the whole process
begins again
and you are as pure
as if you had confessed
and received absolution.

(“Process”-Collected Poems, 164)

V.A. Shahane gives an interesting account of Ezekiel’s ‘newly acquired religious stance’ in the following lines:

“The poet has achieved a new faith ‘in a process that can perform such miracles’. In April 1967 Nissim Ezekiel had his first LSD trip, which he would like to describe as the voyage of discovery-this happened during his second visit to the United States. He explained to me an aspect of this experience in a letter: ‘I came out of that with my ‘philosophy’ turned inside

out in eight hours, and became a Believer: in God, religion, the metaphysical nature of the Universe and life, ESP, etc' This entirely new change in Ezekiel's mode of thought and values is a basic shift from his earlier rationalist atheist phase reflected in his early poetry."²

The quest for knowledge and religious belief continues in several poems of Ezekiel. In his quest for knowledge, Ezekiel shuns 'hackneyed truths' which remind him of his mask that he wears on different occasions. It is not always possible to convey through poetry his spiritual dilemma, and Ezekiel is conscious of this fact. And yet his search continues for a sacrament. In a poem called "Choices", Ezekiel reveals the stages in his spiritual quest and moral belief. 'I cannot choose but live unless I choose to die' is reminiscent of philosophical liberalism. The philosophical dilemma of man in relation to place and time is resolved by the poet's strong decision 'Not to live imprisoned /In the time or the place/In the mind or the self". The next stage in realization is self-surrender which brings us closer to God.

The religious-cum philosophical quest, creates, as it were, a room for Ezekiel, a spiritual parallel to his own physical room of study-where he writes poetry. His philosophical dilemma is stated in the following lines:

The door
is always open
but I can not leave
I mock myself here
as if my very existence
is presumption.³

("The Room"—Collected Poems, 206)

In the concluding section of "To a Certain Lady" comes the philosophical realization,

Always we must be lovers,
 Man and wife at work upon the hard
 Mass of material which is the world.
 Related all the time to one another and to
 life,
 Not merely keeping house and paying bills
 And being worried when the kids are ill.

(“To a Certain Lady”-Collected Poems, 30)

Ezekiel writes more and more philosophical poems in a paradoxical language. Thus he says,

A man withdrawn into himself
 may be a man moving forward.

(“Happening” -Collected Poems, 163)

One cannot be a Stranger to God if one is a reader of Ezekiel, but not even Ezekiel’s most thorough reader can confidently say what his God is exactly like. At moments, as in “A Time to Change,” he appears to be a Judeo-Christian “Lord;” more often, He is just “God.” He does not seem to be omnipotent, but His existence never seems to be in serious doubt. Swami Vivekananda’s observation, “To the other nations of the world, religion is one among the many occupations of life... But here, in India, religion is the one and the only occupation of life,”⁴ (India’s Message to the World, 16 Jan. 1897) is only the exaggeration of a vital truth. The Jewish community in India is one of the most microscopic religious minorities in the country. The outsider consciousness which Ezekiel’s birth into it provided him with seems to have aided the sharpening of his powers of observation and the strengthening of his sense of awareness.

Even in “An Atheist Speaks,” His existence is not denied: it is only said that

He
 Made Hilter and Stalin.

He
Made the Inquisition.
He
Made the Holocaust.
It's all quite plain.
If you look into a mirror,
it's the Devil reflected
and God remote.⁵

(“An Atheist Speaks”-Collected Poems, 287-288)

The title poem “Latter-Day Psalms” consists of a sequence of nine poems. The poet’s footnote explains the correspondence of the first nine Latter-Day Psalms to 1, 3, 8, 23, 60, 78, 95, 102 and 127 representing the 150 Biblical Psalms. The name also makes it clear that these nine poems offer a modern interpretation of the original psalms. Here, Ezekiel does not reject or discredit the original psalms. In fact, they seem to prove for him a source of inspiration, and they also help him to redouble his sense of integrity in religious faith. Ezekiel’s attitude to the Biblical Psalms is creative. Old moulds are deftly used to convey new experiences. The old psalms, however, belong to his consciousness.

Ezekiel’s universe is not without God; it is controlled by some supernatural power. In the world of Ezekiel God reigns supreme. He prays:

I laid me down and slept;
I awaked, for the Lord sustained me. Let every man,
woman and child sleep and
awaken, sustained by thee.⁶

(Ezekiel- Latter Day Psalms, 40)

“Blessings”, a sequence of fourteen short lyrics is written in the same mode as that of “Hymns in Darkness” and “Latter-Day Psalms”. Ezekiel, here tries to make use of Judaic and Christian tradition of Blessings in, the light

of the wisdom he has acquired over the years. Ezekiel while writing this poem has in his mind wisdom literature of proverbs and Ecclesiastes with their advice on how to live. Ezekiel is sceptical of Wisdom literature.

This poem can be interpreted from existentialist point of view. In a way, each individual's life is self-creation, and one is what one makes of himself. The tension in Ezekiel's poem is between the existential self and the 'blessed' being. To know yourself is not egoism but the gateway to all virtue. One has to 're-make' oneself with or without 'blessings' Ezekiel's rational and sceptical mind dives deep into human psyche and emphasizes the 'life' to be created' out of one's belief or otherwise. Ezekiel himself points out: "I am not a religious or even a moral person in any conventional sense. Yet, I've always felt myself to be religious and moral in some sense. The gap between these two statements is the existential sphere of my poetry."

Ezekiel's attitude to religion is rational, logical, secular and humanistic. This religion is a religion of love, and charity. He believes that all barriers dividing mankind should give way to the religion of love for all. He does not believe in the negation of the worldly and sensual pleasures. He has a strong feeling of belonging to the world. His poems reveal not only an awareness of his sinful self but also his constant preoccupation with the Supreme Power.

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Bharata's Theory of Rasa and Indian Dramaturgy

**Aparna*

The object of drama, like any other art form, is to give us an aesthetic pleasure. The aesthetic pleasure in sensitive reader or spectator, who is termed as sahradaya in Sanskrit literary theories, is evoked through various modes of representation dealing with the creative use of language and technique adopted in the work of art. In any literary work language plays an important role. Creative use of language has the power to affect us by delighting us as in case of comedies and romances or disturbing us as in tragedies or horror plays. Aristotle too focuses on the use of language in his definition of tragedy in *Poetics*, "in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play;" (*Poetics* 31) It is this use of language which is capable of arousing interest in sahradya (or sensitive audience or reader) giving him saundaryanubhuti (aesthetic experience) which is examined from the point of view of rasa (aesthetic sentiment), alamkara (figures of speech), riti (style), dhvani (suggestion), vakrokti (oblique expression) and aucitya (propriety). These can be categorized on the basis of riti, alamkara, vakrokti and aucitya focusing on technique dealing with phonetics, lexical aspects, grammar, episodic and compositional aspect, whereas rasa and dhvani focusing on the power and impact of

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language. Therefore riti, alamkara, vakrokti and aucitya deal with the science of fine art and rasa and dhvani focus on philosophy of fine art.

Rasa theory is an elaborate attempt to analyse the nature of the emotional effect of literature. Rasa theory was propounded by Bharata, a 2nd century Indian aesthetician, in his famous and one of the earliest treatises on dramaturgy, the *Natyasastra*. In his *Natyasastra* he tells us what should be shown in drama, how it should be shown and where it should be shown. It covers all the aspects starting from the mythical origin of drama, moving further to the construction of the playhouse, preliminaries to a dramatic performance, dance, music, costume and make-up, poetic aspects, roles of characters, classification of the plays and its style and ending with the criticism of dramatic performance. In chapter VI and VII of the *Natyasastra* he also tells us about the impact of drama on us through his theory of rasa and its related bhavas (emotions).

The term 'Rasa' has been taken from the flavor of the food. It is defined by Bharata as 'asvadyte' i.e. capable of being tasted. Just as in food, rasa in literature is the essential delight that literature gives us. In drama, through a combination of dialogues, performances, styles, gestures, body movements and acting the dramatist evokes various emotions in the spectators, which culminate in an aesthetic pleasure as foods of various tastes give us physical pleasure. Bharata has explained rasa in context of the taste of food:

As taste results from a combination of various spices, vegetables and other articles and as six tastes are produced by articles such as sugar or spices or vegetables, so the durable psychological states or sthayi bhavas, when they come together with various other psychological states, attain the quality of

sentiment (i.e. become rasa or sentiment).
(Tr. Manomohan Ghosh 105)

For experiencing rasa in a dramatic performance there should be the combination of vibhavas (causes/ reason), anubhavas (consequents) and vyabhicari bhavas (transient emotions). Bharata writes in his rasa-sutra "*vibhavanubhava vyabhicari sanyogada rasa nispattih.*" (Ch. VI Sutra 31)

For the realization of rasa, along with vibhava (causes), anubhava (consequents) and vyabhicari bhavas (transient emotions) it is necessary that the sthayi bhavas (permanent emotions) should be aroused in the sahradaya (sensitive audience). Sthayi bhavas or permanent emotions are those basic emotions which are inherent in sahradaya. It is these sthayi bhavas which correspond to the experience of the particular rasa. Thus, while listing rasas and bhavas Bharata mentions eight rasas, namely sringara, hasya, karuna, raudra, bibhatsa, adbhuta, veera and bhayanaka rasa and eight corresponding sthayi bhavas, namely rati (love), hasya (laughter), shoka (grief), krodha (anger), jugupsa (disgust), visamaya (surprise), utsaha (energetic) and bhaya (fear).

A play is a four fold creation: first created by the dramatist, secondly produced by the director, thirdly enacted by the actor and fourthly experienced by the sensitive spectators. So is the rasa, felt by the dramatist and helping him to create characters and plots, later felt by the director whose experience is directed in the actor, his role and plot direction in drama, then felt by actor who in order to act on the stage experiences those emotions, dialogues and situations so that he could efficiently and loyally give the performance and convey the meaning to the audience and last experienced by the sensitive spectator who watches the drama with concentration giving them rasa or aesthetic pleasure.

On the level of the dramatist as well as director, while creating and producing characters and situations, his sthayi bhavas evoke the resultant rasa. On the level of actors and actresses the sthayi bhava (permanent emotions) combines with sattvika bhava and vyabhicari bhava to evoke the resultant rasa in him. These actors or actresses through their acting or abhinaya arouse rasa. Bharata has mentioned four kinds of abhinaya (acting)- angika (gestures), vacika (words), aharya (make-up) and sattvika (mental state). Angika is related to the performance based on facial gestures and movements of limbs, vacika is the performance based on the dialogue delivery, aharya abhinaya is related to costume and make-up and sattvika abhinaya is related to the psychological association of the actors with the characters. At the level of the spectator rasa is evoked by their sthayi bhava combining with the vibhavas (causes), anubhavas (consequents) and vyabhicari bhavas (transient emotions) dramatized on the stage. The abhinaya or acting, which involves vibhavas, anubhavas and vyabhicari bhavas, has significant role in the evocation of rasa.

Abhinaya (acting) is physical representation of various emotions and consequent mental reactions. Sanskrit drama emphasizes the use of all the faculties or the total personality of an actor. When we define drama as natya we tend to include both acting as well as dance, where dance is angika and aharya abhinaya and acting is vacika and sattvika abhinaya. In angika abhinaya the whole range of emotions whether it be of krodha, rati, shoka, bhaya, hasa, jugupsa, vismaya or utsaha, are depicted through various poses and postures of the body on the movement and gestures of hands, legs, shoulders, eye, eyebrows, lips and cheeks. This depiction of emotions through body language is enhanced by the make-up and costumes of the actor. Alongwith the body

language the vacika abhinaya or acting through words too affects the mood of the sahradaya. Proper articulation of the words, deeper understanding of the metres, rhythm and poetry as well as proficiency in music or singing create an aura where the sahradya is transported and relishes the performance therefore experiencing rasa. These abhinaya are guided by four notions of zonal divisions or kaksavibhaga (Avanti, Daksinatya, Odramagadhi and Pancala-madhyama), four styles or vrtti (Bharati, Sattvati, Kaisiki and Arabhati), regional characteristics or pravrtti and two modes or practises- sophisticated or stylized (natyadharmi) and a more natural mode (lokadharmi).

When we consider the evocation of rasa at the level of the spectator we look forward to two aspects: one is the aspect of spectator being a sahradaya and other is the aspect of empathy. Bharata in Sutra 7 of chapter VII has written-

*“yartho hrdayasvadi tasya bhavora-
sodbhavah,*

*Shariram vyapyate tena shuskam
kashthamivaginna.” (Natysastra 80)*

This means “a meaning which touches heart creates rasa; the entire body feels the rasa like fire consuming a dry stick’. (Adya Rangacarya 65) Rasa is apprehension of meaning by heart and mind. This goes with the explanation of sahradya or sensitive audience. What makes a drama successful is the emotional appeal of drama by sensitive spectator. Drama (literature in general) has two functions—— one to draw us closer to truth and reality and second to take us away from the sufferings and perplexities of actual life. Both the functions are so blended by the poet in his work that in each case the reader/spectator feels transported from his present state to experience aesthetic pleasure. In

Indian critical tradition reader/ spectator should bear the same mental and emotional level as that of the poet to experience the aesthetic pleasure. This attuning of the basic receptivity of spectator/reader with the poet makes him Sahradya- 'sah' meaning equal and 'hradya' meaning heart. He should have samanadharmā (the nature of poet himself) which may differ in degree but not in kind, in sensitivity and capacity for imaginative contemplation. Explaining sahradya, Abhinavagupta remarks that those, who by constant practise of reading poetry have acquired in their cleansed mirror like minds, the capacity to identify themselves with the poet and are thus attuned to the poet's heart, are sahradya.

In *Natyasastra* Bharata mentioned that Natya is "the nature and behaviour of the world, intimately connected with happiness and misery, as rendered by physical and other forms of acting". (Devy 5) Thus, in drama not only happiness but misery is also taken into account i.e. not only pleasant emotions but unpleasant emotions will also be evoked by dramatic performance. When a drama represents emotions of shoka (grief), bhaya (fear), krodha (anger) and jugupsa (disgust) it also gives us pleasure as when a drama dramatizes emotions of rati (love), vismaya (surprise), hasa (laughter) and utsaha (energetic). This is because of transition of mental state from material world to aesthetic world, which Vishwanath Kaviraja termed lokasamsrayat (association with material world) and kavyasamsrayat (association with aesthetic world). This is explained differently by Aristotle in his *Poetics* when he writes in his definition of tragedy- 'through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of emotions'. This is also explained by Bhattanayaka, one of the commentators of Bharata's theory of rasa, through his theory of sadharnikarana. Sadharnikarana is the state of universalisation or in terms of Abhinavagupta state of impersonalisation. In

this state the sahradaya is neither objective nor subjective rather attains the state where he loses his own individuality and identifies himself with the character drawn on the basis of common men and their experience in life.

Indian drama (which before the emergence of vernacular plays was termed as Sanskrit drama) adopts the concept of sadharnikarana to 'depict different mental states, emotions and ideas, desires and aspirations, strengths and weaknesses, basic moral and social questions as well as individual predicaments.' (Nemichandra Jain 6) This helped the Indian playwrights to present the fascinating picture of social, political, economic and cultural life of the time. Though the stories were taken from myths or folktales or historical events of kings or episodes from epics The *Ramayana* and The *Mahabharata*, they were molded to suit the contemporary situations. Such wide presentations of themes in Sanskrit plays give us a profound philosophical insight, a comprehensive world-view and a highly developed aesthetics that has come down to us as the theory of rasa. The Indian drama aims at representing the deeper realization of truth through an experience of a state of bliss or rasa. It represents an artistic, imaginative imitation (anukarana) or picture of actions, feelings and various situations of human life, portraying the simultaneous experience of joy and suffering, success and failure, ecstasy and pathos, union and separation, laughter and tears. It defies the categorization of tragedy and comedy based on the fate and chances in human life and focuses on the nature and character of the hero, the form and type of the action. This resulted in the categorization of drama in many kinds. Bharata, in chapter XX of his *Natyasastra*, has mentioned ten types of plays, termed as das-roopaka. These plays are categorized according to the role and

action of the characters. There are three forms known as Dima, Samavakara and Ihamriga, where the characters are gods and demons and the story involves battles, witchcraft, etc. while in Bhana, Prahasana and Vithi, the story is taken from mythology and folklore; in Anka and Prakarana, the hero is from ordinary life, in Vyayoga, the hero is from royal sage, while in Nataka he is a traditional hero of noble birth.

Thus, Bharata's theory of rasa as well as *Natyasastra* has given Indian drama a form, an objective and a definite place in the social and cultural life of the people. Bharata's rasa theory provides a new dimension to the study of Indian drama. It has given us a new vision to analyse drama from the perspective of its emotional appeal and aesthetic pleasure that it gives to the sahradaya.

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CREATIVE WRITING

POETRY SECTION

God too Awaits Light

**R.K. Singh*

The wings of my thought
are too short to climb God's height
or blue deeps of peace:
I stand on the edge of
earth's physicality

elements clack
in the small house shudder
the harp and strings

I don't know how
the bones grow in the womb
still in darkness
the heartbeats pronounce
the balance of nature

look for body's love—
the mystery song echoes
some truths not spoken

the mind creates
withdrawn to its own pleasures
a green thought
behind the banyan tree
behind the flickering lust

painting the glow
in the green forest
unseen fingers

how to weigh the breath
the flame the soul or the ash
the body conceals:
I can't turn my inside out
nor know life's weight when lifeless

each death a passage
to surprise the dead—
awareness matters

between earth and sky
it disappears, one with
elements, quiet
there's no way to know the thread
or its mechanism that binds

the heart's rhythm:
dust smells beneath the feet
above the head

secures life now or
beyond what if I can't feel
the weight of the color
on the leaves on the tree maybe
shrinking into itself

measure wisdom
to unknow, now lower gaze
and look within

sexless meditate
in the darkest of hours
negotiate peace
with self and rest even if
I exist in my suffering.

***Dr. R.K.Singh**, Retired Professor of English, IIT
Dhanbad, Jharkhand, India.

Tranquility

**G.Maria Joseph Xavier*

“Care is an enemy to life” for it disturbs the
tranquility of mind.
Human life is an ocean of worries with a few
promontories of peace
Most of us go the way of Martha and are worried
about many things.
There is no day without night, a year without biting
winter.
Even an expanse in India without the cursed thorny
desert trees
That absorb ground water and leaves the land dry or
a man without care.

Lack of money may be a reason for the lack of mental
peace;
But the lack of peace is not owing to the lack of money
only.
There are evils that grieve our hearts and disturb our
minds.
Those who swerve from the path of righteousness
procure woes.

Love of money abets greedy men to murder innocence
for gold.

Cruel times at times unsexes termagants who kill
women for wealth.

Wealth is mistaken for money which is nothing when
compared with peace.

A good man lives a quite life with his blameless wife
and kids.

A wicked man with all his riches leads a cat and dog
life.

Life bereft of peace is worse than death through self
immolation.

A lass who was married off against her wish set
herself ablaze.

A lad who falls head over heels in love with a lass dies
in love lorn state.

An opulent lady unable to bear the torture of her
spouse and in-laws

End her days and a lord commits suicide as his
reputation is ruined.

Sinners misuse power to mint money and corrupt
officials accept bribe.

They gain pelf but lose the precious peace of mind and
live under threat.

Wherefore the people sell their eyes to buy the
ravishing paintings of even Raphael?

A morsel in a house of peace is better than the feast in
a palace of strife.

Labour not to become rich; keep His precepts;
Heavenly peace will become yours.

* **Prof.G.Maria Joseph Xavier**, Madurai, Tamil
Nadu, India.

Kamdhenu

**Charu Sheel Singh*

In the silver sanctity of
Goloka space lives a cow
endeared to gods. She eats
vegetational ideas in the suburban
vicinity of our minds that
have become frescoes of frozen
fates evolved as silken nets.

Kamdhenus are not Kamsutras of
enervated ideas not an effigy of
blooming seasons. They are forms
of bliss that is honey, milk and
sugar too. The salty sands of the
endless seas can appropriate the
milky swans; they do not become
what they imbibe.

Vishwamitra's gestural impasses
had crocodilish intent as he wrote
scriptures without a script. His
ritualistic attire bore attritional
bodies that never fructified into
love. Mental caves could be
cages to and kamdhenus need open
spaces to graze and think. Milk
is not an onion nor a strawberry syrup
that one can have in the shallow
sauce-pans in one's infantile
imagination. Milk is the art of

honey ideas that became ideational
trees showering nectar on the
lotus gold of an otherwise filthy creation.

***Prof. Charu Sheel Singh**, Retd. Professor of
English, Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapeeth,
Varanasi, India.

Attempting to Sleep Beside Oneself

** Bibhu Padhi*

I have taken every mode of
getting my sleep at ten. Tegretol.
Lonazep. Thioril. Inderal.
A wishful dose of Nitrosun.

In the afternoon, the dreams
quietly passed one after the other
when I kept the perfectly round tablets
far from me, forgot their usefulness.

How nice it felt to be
a part of a fluid spontaneity
that was only too good
to be believed, remembered!

Now sleep is awaiting my time,
disappearing into its own kingdom
of waiting in the adjacent room—
its dark palace of the night.

The dream-full modes sleep
defying their own prescriptions

of rest, their inherent behaviour
of putting one into time-tested sleep.

What does one do except
keep awake, chew tobacco to kill
a sufficiently darkened time, listen
to others sleeping so miraculously?

The only other thing is to recall
every little pill, repeat each
to kill more night, more time—
a quiet, night-resolving time.

***Dr. Bibhu Padhi** retired as Professor of English
from Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, Odisha, India.

The Spirit of the Age

**D.C. Chambial*

We are living in times
That knows only rapes and murders;
Where life for the handful rich few
A pass time from the boredom of life.

While earth is flooded (has been doing
So, since time immemorial). But for the
Claiming rulers an opportunity to fly high
And have a spectacle of the doomed sight.

They have tanks full of crocodile tears
To show to the marooned humanity
Who have lost their shelters, means to bread
And, of course, their loved ones too.

Murders as common as pruning plants;
Can be done even for a single rupee.
Friendship lost in no time; Yama looks fierce.
Siblings turn their own dead enemies.

A wildest *kaliyuga* where all human
relations stand severed. Father becomes
The animal Male and his lovely daughter
In his eyes only the Female for his lewd eyes.

Patriarchy so strong in society:
Women treated slaves by men tyrants.
Woman the root of life tree bears life's brunt;
Looks skyward with hazy eyes for some chants.

Men consider women their possessions;
Not their equals in His purpose of Earth.
They can throw them at their whim like a stone:
Use them like any bottle of sweet wine.

Now saints busy in amassing wealth
Exploiting the faith of naive masses.
With money and men in their subordination
Feel free to violate the modesty of women.

***Dr. D.C Chambial**, Editor, *Poetcrit*, Maranda,
Himachal Pradesh, India.

Adult Love

**Pashupati Jha*

Adult love has no wings
to soar high up in the sky
imagining all impossible things

and acting insanely all the time.
Mine moves on a more solid earth
with all caution and concern.

Adult love has no wings;
but it has weight
to tie you down
to essential reality
that makes love to sustain
this life and the life thereafter.

Young love is stormy and impulsive,
hardly reliable for long,
leaving behind a disturbing wreckage.

And I assure you, my young friends,
my grapes are not sour at all.

***Prof. Pashupati Jha**, Professor, Department of
HSS, IIT Roorkee, Uttarakhand, India.

In the Absence of Illusion

**S. Murali*

Like a blotch of curdled milk
A pale moon slips across a yellow sky.

Purple clouds spill on to a seascape of silence.
The rocks are disarmed

Under the spell of the awesome spectacle
Of the night's arrival—

The shifting sands
Give way willingly over and over again

To the seeking swells of the sea.
All things return to silence and sleep

Caught in the deep mists of unknowing
In a rhythm of soundless being.

In the absence of illusion
We must begin to unlearn

From the heart outwards
From the skin inwards

See the rock and sea and star
As if with renewed eyesight

Feel the spray and sun
As if with tightened new skin

Break into new rhythm with the wave
Sing with the cicada at dawn

And slip beyond the rain and rainbow.
Decades are better left uncounted

Because in the flow of the stream
No stone can keep its sharp edge

All things reach back into their true selves
Even a whole country and its people

Who can withhold the voice of the aeons?
Who can sleep without the visions of the past?

Like a pageant or a play
The curtain falls at the end of each scene.

And like the pause at the tip of the wave
Life tilts and turns, whichever way, who knows?

Listen to the breeze. Learn with the leaves
That fall and are returned. All flowers fade

And the dawn stealthily beckons.
Why be afraid of another sun rise?

Every day is an atonement; every eve an apocalypse.
We who are left to count the stars

Have no more illusions; no more dreams.
A country without dreams is a pebble

Trapped like nothing in empty space
A country without a present is a bird

Under a starless sky across a wild sea.
A country without its people

Is a barren field, birdless and bare
A people without their country

Are voyagers in space of no return.
A people without dreams

Are lost in the barrenness of being
Trapped like nothing in empty space

Dreams are not all illusion
Bound each to each we learn and forget.

One enigmatic generation founded this land
The next was uncaring enough not to inherit

Their traumas and hopes, knowing only to resist
The blankness on each other's face

Fingering the clay, the roundness of all stones
Forgetting to rebuild only to break;

The youngest have forfeited their past
That which is history now had a reality

Far in excess of a desireless present.
That reality is alive in forgotten dreams.

Dig deep and search amidst the rubble.
Dreams are never illusion.

Better to have dreams.
Much conviction leads nowhere

Who dares to dream dares illusion.
The strength to imagine lies at the foot of the green
mountain of hope

And the path that winds up reaches no where
The desert of conviction begins here.

The soul does not exist—
Like the dark bird song everything vanishes without
trace

Silence within the heart
Like the stone within the deep waters rolling

Tear the sand-dreams and free all desires
See the sky again light up with thousand suns.

***Dr. S. Murali**, Formerly Professor of English,
Department of English, Pondicherry University,
Pondicherry, India.

Draupadi

**Laksmisree Banerjee*

She was punished
for loving only one man
she was punished
for loving only Arjun,
her bold, recalcitrant, wayward
husband in love with
so many women
except herself.

With five husbands to protect
her supreme grace
she killed almost every man
with her perilous beauty
though she remained
the most unloved, unprotected
and beggarly,
raped ceaselessly by
centuries of shame,
by vile destiny,
stripped bare by demoniac men
who lusted for her
with silent eunuchs of husbands
and impotent onlookers of authorities
their famous manhood

vanquished by their own sins
in the conspiracy of silence.

But history relents now as always
caught in the snare
of her dark mane,
Draupadi's fire still rages
to purify and equalize.

She still remains unbeaten
in the flow of her black tresses
In the chronicles of her womb,
In the milk of her womanhood
defying the spineless, dying patriarchs.

She still stands erect loving only one man
who never ever loved her.

***Dr. Laksmisree Banerjee**, (Sr. Fulbright & Commonwealth Scholar), Poet & Prof. of English & Cultural Studies & Ex-Vice Chancellor, Kolhan University, Jharkhand, India.

Lord Buddha

**S.L.Peeran*

Emancipated bony Siddhartha in austerity,
Giving up sustenance, on mere grain of rice.
In deep meditation to seek release from suffering.
A damsel of rare beauty and youth
Offers him as biksha a morsel of food.
Out of compassion and grace he accepts it.
Then the flood light of wisdom dawned.
The cosmos opened with expanding horizons.

A white winged Angel on Pegasus
Did not arrive to enlighten Siddhartha.
His deep meditation, struggle from within,
Self enquiry immense austerity opened the gates
To enable him to pronounce the whole Truth,
Of Ahimsa, Karuna, abstinence,
Of eight fold paths of righteousness
To break the chain of rebirth to reach Moksha;
Nirvana and absolute peace.
Release from suffering to enjoy ever bliss.

Buddha's message is to break rituals, Superstitions
and create bonds between man and man.

***S.L.Peeran**, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India.

Nithilai

** C L Khatri*

Your parched coal lips
cracks in heels and hands
whip marks on the back
have many stories to tell.

They carry the black ashes of the kiln
you were bought to work in.
The narratives must be lying
in the bricks of this mighty mansion
or words are burnt into ashes in the chimney.

But words do not die; they wait
for years, decades and at times centuries
before they burst out like a volcano
or secretly surface like a diamond from the coal.

They find a savior who deconstructs the mansion
and resurrects a phoenix from the ashes.

In your shameless brute eyes
Gray's elegy on the death of an angle lies.
Tears soaked in the eye socket
only dry salt clings to the skin.
Sweet smile turns into derisive laughter
even voiceless violence.

They laugh at you; let them laugh.
They don't know the narratives of knife
written on your virgin body.
They laugh when they need to weep
and weep when they need to laugh.

Nithilai! Nithilai! Look up.
Dark clouds are breaking into fresh rain.

***Dr. C L Khatri**, Professor, Department of English,
T.P.S. College, Patna, India.

Free Bards

**Jaydeep Sarangi*

If you need a brand of active
Peace Army, I bet for poets. Poets.

Poets give law
Of the land and the seas.

Poets are humanists,
Who break walls, build up roots
In silence. Sign peace accord
With owners of law

Rulers of the code. Frontiers of
Several environmental zones.

I bet for them.
Give them a job.
They will pay you back
In words, words and volumes of words
For peace of the land and mind.

I bet for them
They can give us a green earth
Of values and morals
Poets shake hands with green grammars of the land.

Poets are like Shiva's poison-green neck
Gather green, emit music.

They will not come.
They will not go, free bards.

***Dr. Jaydeep Sarangi**, Faculty, Department of
English, J. C. C. College, Kolkata, West Bengal, India.

Farewell

**Binod Mishra*

With eyes down sits the poet
to hear every word they say
of him in dis/honour
fading glories of his mansion
built over the years
brick by brick
in utmost solitude
falling heavily for this moment.

He gulps their words solemnly
amid murmuring disorders
not in the belly but straight in the heart
blocked because of worldly woes
never to be cured by worldly gods
extending his time under false pretence
promising nostrums pilfering his pension
day-by day.

Life is but a give and take affair
Poor players run amuck
Bothering less about their destined share
And when time comes, one has to bear
The fair share for everyone's health/happiness
And say heartily/ heavily: "Farewell, friends!
My time has come and let me pack."
Everyone sheds some feigned tears.

***Dr. Binod Mishra**, Associate Professor, Department
of HSS, IIT Roorkee, Uttarakhand, India.

BOOK REVIEWS

Rajnath, *The Identity of Literature: A Reply to Jacques Derrida*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications. ISBN: 978-81-316-0899-9. Price: INR 625/-.

India has been a land of boundless creativity where criticism also attains the form of beauty and benignity not only to attract readers but also to provide them with palatable food for thought. Prof. Rajnath is one such tireless traveller who even after his superannuation makes his presence felt in literary circles by his innovative views ennobling the reader's mind either through his articles or through his books. His latest contribution in this regard is *The Identity of Literature: A Reply to Jacques Derrida*.

The blurb of the book says that it 'questions Derrida's view of literature levelling all distinctions between literature and other disciplines.' The eight chapters of the book have been delineated in such a way that the aficionados of literary criticism are bound to stop and mull over Rajnath's insight and his wide reading. The last chapter provides an in-depth analysis of Shakespeare's romantic masterpiece, *Romeo and Juliet*, which was taken up by Derrida for his deconstructionist study.

The Identity of Literature: A Reply to Jacques Derrida is the first book of its kind to attempt a discussion of Derrida's view of literature which levels all distinctions between literature and the other disciplines. While an inexhaustible amount of researches have been undertaken by philosophers like Jürgen Habermas and others to distinguish philosophy from literature and to establish its distinct identity from other disciplines which altogether become one in the eyes of Derrida, there is no record of any work with the

same intention done by literary fraternity. In a world dominated by fiction, this book on literary criticism fulfils that gap between literature and criticism and is a similar effort like Jürgen Habermas from the side of literature.

Prof. Rajnath has adequate reasons to respond to Derrida's generalisation of all disciplines. According to Derrida, all texts are literary in nature, all disciplines are without any specificity and hence literature, philosophy, and history all are same. Prof. Rajnath is of the view that Derrida 'was taken more seriously by literary critics than by philosophers who felt that by denying logic and truth, which used to be the prime concerns of philosophy, he had dealt a death blow to their discipline'(12). The author's endeavor in this book is to establish the independent identity of literature and to establish logic in literature as well as other forms of writings by opposing Derrida and other deconstructionist critics.

Prof. Rajnath has laid his theoretical foundation in the initial chapter citing the ideas of philosophers, namely Paul Ricoeur and Murray Krieger. The second chapter examines the views of major Humanist critics like Cleanth Brooks, Murray Krieger, M.H. Abrams and Helen Gardner 'in order to salvage literature with its distinct identity'. Finding the critique of these four critics as 'a tangential argument, which neither demolishes deconstruction nor tells comprehensively and precisely those qualities which are predominately, if not exclusively, present in literature' (37). Yet he considers their views as 'support to literature in its fight against deconstruction for survival' (38).

In further two chapters Rajnath has focused on Saussure's linguistics which makes the foundation of Derrida's deconstruction theory. Rajnath offers numerous examples to interrogate Derrida's use of

aporia and says that 'it is by discerning *aporia* in all writings that Derrida dissolves the distinction between literature and non-literature' (52). He is of the view that the writer builds up his own universe with the use of images which are not abstract ideas but are in flesh and blood. He praises Jurij Lotman of Soviet Union and supports his views about the writer creating his own model of the universe. Readers can get enough reason in what Rajnath has to say in this regard; "It is in Shakespeare's tragedies that we see what ghosts and witches look like and how they behave. Do we find such creations in other disciplines with which Derrida identifies literature?"(62)

The identity of literature as the author advocates is established because of its exclusive features i.e. fictionality and therefore the fifth chapter is devoted to the discussion on fictionality, seeking theoretical support from J.C. Ransom. Derrida does not accept the two language theory propounded by philosophers and literary theorists and instead forcefully pleads for one language which is literary. In the chapter titled "Literature and Experience", Rajnath refers to Sanskrit Poetics in between to counter attack Derrida's proposition that there is one language and that is literary. He appreciates literary critics' understanding of literature and literariness better than Derrida's which 'fails to appreciate the nature of experience that goes into a literary construct' (102). The reasons offered by Prof. Rajnath in this regard appear logical: "A literary text is both similar to and different from other texts. It is similar in the sense that the experience that goes into the making of a literary text is the experience of our life but its rendering in artistic form makes it different". (101)

Rajnath's reply to Derrida's sweeping generalization is not devoid of the argument that language does not

operate only at literary level but at several levels. Literature is different from non-literature also because of the indicated and suggestive meaning which may include the *rasas* and *dhvani*. Prof Rajnath argues that Derrida has subjected *Romeo and Juliet* to a deconstructive analysis using terms like *aporia*, *dissymmetry*, *disjunction* etc. He refers to Harold Bloom and Aristotle and rejects Derrida's 'philosophical discourse on time and naming' which blinds the great critic to see in *Romeo and Juliet* the theme of love and death which is at the centre of the play.'(149).

The Identity of Literature: A Reply to Jacques Derrida is written in a succinct language analyzing comprehensively all major theories which attribute to the distinct identity of literature and forms a ground by which one can defend literature by correcting Derrida's propositions. While one cannot deny the truth that literary theories are proposed to augment discussion after discussion, Rajnath's book will not only help understand and unravel the gaps but also lead to a curative reading for serious readers of literature as well as of philosophy. The book, surely, is going to be readers' favourite at a very reasonable price.

Reviewer: Dr. Binod Mishra, Associate Professor of English, Department of HSS, IIT Roorkee, Uttarakhand, India.

Ajay K. Chaubey, Janmejaya K. Tiwari & Bishun Kumar, eds. *Salman Rushdie: An Anthology of 21st Century Criticism*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors. ISBN: 978-81-269-2097-6. Price: INR 995/-.

The twenty-first century is still taking shape, though we have perceived first fifteen years. So, it is difficult to pause with any certainty about its future course of development. One can only point out certain

dominant trends and remain aware of changes and developments. With the advent of various discourses on the fore, new genres of literature emerged i.e. fictional autobiography or autobiographical fiction. Rushdie, like V.S. Naipaul, has been contentious for uneulogizing remarks on contemporary socio-political, cultural and literary affairs for which he is “always controversial,” but unlike Naipaul, he has not yet bagged the most prestigious Nobel Prize, which he truly deserves for his literary contribution. However, he had attracted the global media and academia when he was awarded the Booker Prize in 1981 and the Booker of the Booker in 2008. Additionally, he was knighted in 2007. This generated a spree of debates all over the world to unravel the beauty and mystery embedded in Rushdie’s literary oeuvres. The book entitled *Salman Rushdie: An Anthology of 21st Century Criticism* is also the output of valuable discussions on Sir Ahmed Salman Rushdie, one of the key literary figures of the twentieth and twenty first century.

This edited volume carries a Foreword by Neil ten Kortenaar, Professor of English and Comparative Literature, University of Toronto Scarborough, Canada. Professor Kortenaar remarks in his ‘Foreword’, “The mark of the living author is that he is being read afresh and in that sense, this collection entitled *Salman Rushdie: An Anthology of 21st Century Criticism* proves resoundingly that the author who once had a death sentence passed on him is alive, well and living in Mumbai (and Delhi and Kolkata...)! ”

This anthology comprises seventeen essays by young and budding critics. The essays vouch for promising contribution to the already existing corpus of Rushdie’s criticism. The book has been divided into four broad heads—the first section intrinsically deals with the popular books of Rushdie, and concurrent global issues

— his Knighthood, his contentions on global affairs of literature, politics and society and worldwide controversies which he is champion of; while the second section, the lengthiest in the volume, contains exclusive essays on his most popular book till date, *Midnight's Children*. The third section, inherently deals with Rushdie's latter fictions which have been researched and presented in the light of intertextuality, hybridity, diaspora and, of late, the ambivalent relationships between the political economy of international rock music, the culture of celebrity, and postcolonialism.

The papers in the Section-A entitled "Critiquing Rushdie's Knighthood, Authorship and Controversies: Contentions in the New Millennium" critically examine Rushdie being Knighted; autobiographical elements in his fiction; *The Satanic Verses*, the most controversial till date and terrorism in the *Shalimar the Clown* and offer fresh outlooks on his self-proclaimed controversies, in the second decade of this millennium. This section contains the essays by Ana Cristina Mendes, Valiur Rahaman, Ramesh Tibile, and Hetal M Doshi.

The Section-B entitled "*Midnight's Children*: Fictionalization, Historicity and the Nation" deals with various aspects and approaches applied in trendsetter novel, *Midnight's Children* (1981). The segment-C entitled "Treatment of Imagined Temporalities, Cosmopolitanism and Narrative Strategies: Recent Perspectives" primarily deals with the major novels of Rushdie—*The Moor's Last Sigh*, *The Satanic Verses*, *Shame*, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, and others. The last section entitled "Rushdie's Diasporic Passage to the New World: Some Observations" astutely deals with Rushdie's treatment of heterogeneous themes and issues that cover a wide gamut of his intellect and ingenuity. This unit unfolds critical study on Rushdie's major novels, which have been critiqued through the rubrics

of diaspora criticism, identity discourse, treatment of satire and history as well as his Indianness, which is palpable in his textual orientations.

Thus, the *omnibus* offers myriad minds on Rushdie's writings. All the essays of the anthology will certainly provide promising contribution to the already existing vast corpus of Rushdie criticism as his works are "concerned with the many connections, disruptions, and migrations between Eastern and Western civilizations." The volume includes researchers not only from India but also from abroad who though not well known critics yet have more potential for becoming sincere researchers. They have fervently participated in the present volume to make this book worth reading for upcoming and existing scholars of the field. Since no academic work is perfect, hence, an epistemological fecundity in the very realm is vouched for.

Reviewer: Dr. A.K. Bachchan, Professor of English, P.G. Department English, L.N.M.U Darbhanga, Bihar, India.

Srivastava, Ramesh K. *Road Not Taken and Other Stories*. New Delhi: Authors Press. ISBN 978-93-86722-63-8. Price: INR 495/-

In a digital age of today, when reading voluminous books has taken a backseat, because of the complexity of modern life which often witnesses paucity of time, short stories are the only alternative for people to unearth joys and relieve themselves of their burdens and anxieties. Since literature mirrors life, people can find their parallels as characters in fictional works and realize their shortcomings besides re-inventing themselves from their lapses. While writing online poetry has become a common fashion in today's world, writing short stories requires much patience, guts and craftsmanship, apart from imagination. Ramesh K.

Srivastava is one such writer in today's time, who displays innumerable qualities in his writings, compared to the modern day commercial writings merely to gather instant name and fame. His latest contribution to academia is *Road Not Taken and Other Stories*, a collection of 20 stories churned and chiseled in the experiences of life.

The book entitled *Road Not Taken* is a potpourri of various types of emotions and feelings garbed in the form of short stories. The book is a subtle example of artistic excellence blended with a critical insight. The Preface of the book, in the great tradition of books like *Lyrical Ballad* and *Tom Jones*, presents in a very lucid and detailed manner the rationale behind every aspect of short stories included in the collection. Prof Srivastava aptly records in the Preface of his book *Road Not Taken and Other Stories*: "A short story is an artistic portrayal of ever unfolding mysteries of human existence. It is a tiny mirror that intentionally reflects a focused fragment of vast moving kaleidoscope of life that each day, each moment passes by us in its new yet recognizable ever changing patterns and combinations". (09) It also sheds light on the different tools of the genre, such as dialogue, character, points of view etc. and tries to makes the reader well informed in advance before he proceeds for the actual reading of the short stories. Many of the stories of *Road Not Taken* remind the readers of the famous Indian/Pakistani writer Saadat Hasan Manto. The writer seems to be fascinated with the theme of revenge in many of his stories, but the revenge is not without a purpose and brings about a sense of relief for the readers as in most cases it is David who wins over Goliath in the end and here the similarities with Manto ends. A point worth mentioning is the adherence of the writer to poetic justice, which does not undermine the realism of the stories as the stark realities of the society, such as dowry

cases, domestic issues; embezzlements, terrorism etc. have been very honestly portrayed in the collection. The terrorism depicted and talked about in many of the stories is largely related to Punjab during the Khalistani movement of 80's. Another important aspect of the stories of this book is the theme of women empowerment. In many of the stories, women characters play a very important role, nay the role of protagonist. But as a realist, the writer knows that not all women are heroines as not all men are heroes. In one of the stories entitled "Behind the Façade", a major female character turns out to be a criminal. As the stories progress, many characters undergo a change as well. A dash of humour here and there serves the much needed comic relief for example in the story "Road Not Taken", the protagonist Kushagra drops all the 'c' from Connecticut when told to drop the 'c' in the middle position and pronounces it as 'O-ne-ti-ut' in place of 'Conne-ti-cut'. The writer also uses concepts and myths from the ancient times for example in the story "Niyog-The Authorisation", the impotent, loving husband knowingly ignores the extramarital one night stand of his wife for the sake of a child. In the story "Lucky Rope" the character named Hulli, a diminutive localized form of the name Holika, literally burns and kills the local tyrant land owner in his own mansion.

Coming to some of the shortcomings, one common flaw with many of the stories, which a reader faces, is that of anachronism. The use of modern day gadgets and devices like mobile phones, personal computers etc in stories, by characters in the eighth and ninth decade of the last century may confuse the readers regarding the background of the stories like in the story "Of Terrorism and Friendship" Shubhpreet Kaur and Harpal Singh use mobile phones and computer during the time of insurgency in Punjab. Another limitation is the

miscalculation of characters' age in different parts of the same story as the time progresses, for example Brij Lal's wife Mintoo's age in the story "Matri Natyam" or Harsha's age in "A Dumb Show of Lovers" may create some perplexity in the minds of the readers. The issue of probability and improbability, although dealt with, in the Preface, still confounds the readers sometimes in some of the stories like "Reciprocating Gestures" and "Folk Musical Drama". However, the writer has every right to use his artistic licence to make his story line attractive and startling to serve his creative purpose. But in spite of some technical glitches, overall the stories have been written using quite simple language and a very elegant style which reminds us of R K Narayan. In spite of few lapses as mentioned above this short story collection is a unique work of fiction. Thus once started, readers are bound to be absorbed in a manner that they do not feel to put the book aside before finishing it up to the end. The collection will, of course, serve as a guide to people from all walks of life, who often fail and falter in its web but want to come out of it refreshed.

Ramesh K Srivastava's collection, on final analysis, serves the readers with varieties of characters and situations woven dexterously in a familiar language for people of all ages. Since the price of the book is quite reasonable, it is bound to secure its place not only among common readers but also in the libraries for everyone's education and enrichment even in remote areas.

Reviewer: Dr. Binod Mishra, Associate Professor of English, Department of HSS, IIT Roorkee, Uttarakhand, India.

Khatrī, C. L. ed. *R.K. Narayan: A Critical Study of his Novels and Short Stories*, New Delhi: Sarup Book Publishers (P) Ltd., Pp-252, Price Rs. 950/, ISBN978-93-5208-088-5

A critical anthology captioned *R.K. Narayan: A Critical Study of his Novels and Short Stories* edited by C. L. Khatri is one of the finest critical works on R. K. Narayan, a pioneer of Indian English Novel. Despite numerous works on Narayan, the present one is significant owing to a good number of articles on different aspects of exploration and research. The editor himself accepts this critical anthology as the sequel to his earlier anthology entitled "R.K. Narayan: Reflections and Reevaluation".

This anthology comprises 20 insightful articles which try to evaluate and analyze R. K. Narayan's works from feminist to psychoanalytical and postcolonial angles. They add new dimensions to the study of R K Narayan's works besides the study of irony, humour, comedy, mysticism, politics and other thematic points of view. It seems that the editor has attempted to depict critical evaluation of all his novels, short stories, travelogue and non-fiction prose. It appears like a ready reckoner and guidebook of R.K. Narayan where mere a common man can easily unearth all complexities of his literary creations.

Dr. R A Singh in his essay captioned 'The Financial Expert: A Study of Comic Overtones' deals with the postcolonial aspects in the character of Margayya who is always in search of 'get rich' technique, showing fascination towards money and leading a life of common man. He is of the opinion that greed for money and pride in public dealing in general and fatherly mistakes like Dhritrashtra in particular in the case of Margayya are the root causes behind his miseries.

Kapileshwar Parija minutely explores Narayan's short stories linking Indian Short Story tradition and the art of Chekhov. He highlights objectively the technique of tragi-comedy and Chaucer's comic vision

employed through the technique of reportage and epistolary form in the short stories of Narayan. As a short story writer R.K. Narayan has emphasized more to character rather than to plot and presented multiple facets of life through simple and pure diction.

Dr. R K Gupta in his research has very aptly evaluated R K Narayan from feminist point of view. To tell the truth, R K Narayan is not a true feminist but he has sympathy for segregated, oppressed and exploited class of women in Indian society. The protagonist Savitri in "Dark Room" has shown confidence and the seed of rebellion her personality makes her emerge as a true voice of endurance in 'Dark Room'.

Dr Alka Saxena unveils sense of alienation and diaspora elements in the travelogue of R K Narayan. She advocates that Narayan has very realistically depicted his experiences concerning racial discrimination, cultural differences and love for motherland in *Dateless Diary*. Americans' inclination towards Indian philosophy, custom and tradition in search of absolute peace and pleasure also find mention in her article.

Dr Neeraj Kumar in his article captioned 'Wife in R K Narayan's *The Dark Room: A portrait*' has analyzed the novel innovatively, depicting the miserable condition of wife in general and Savitri, the protagonist in particular in a patriarchal Indian society. Indian wives make home a cozy place rendering her sincere, faithful and loving services. In yet another insightful research article entitled 'Search for Self: A Study in R K Narayan's *A Painter of Signs*' Dr. Kumar elevates Narayan as a classical exponent of Indian culture and civilization, calling him an unbiased writer who saves his art from pitfalls of propaganda. Women's quest for liberation is not a new thing but Narayan depicts the power of female intellect and vitality by portraying the character of Daisy

who displays courage to overcome humiliation in this male dominated society.

Dr. C L Khatri has tried to evaluate analytically R K Narayan's *The Bachelor of Arts* by observing regional ambience in a wider sense. He further adds that the region becomes global to express the grammar of love and juvenile sensibility. For instance coffee suggests south Indian ambience. This wider and broader analysis explores multi layers of R K Narayan's vision.

Other articles included in this anthology are equally commendable. Dr. Sonal K Mehta has evaluated man-woman relationship on different angles. Dr. S K Arora highlights stream of consciousness and psychological tools of Narayan's presentation in his article and observes that silence is the best way of defence. Dr. Bhavesh Chandra Pandey has tried to observe the postcolonial aspects depicted in Narayan's 'Man-eater of Malgudi' and shows victory of good over evil and order over disorder. Dr Kumari Rashmi Priyadarshini has very critically analyzed the radical feminism and amalgam of comedy and tragedy in her insightful articles captioned 'A Glimpse of Radical Feminism in R K Narayan's The Painter of Signs' and 'R K Narayan's *The Vendor of Sweets* : A wonderful amalgam of comedy and tragedy' respectively. She is of the view that a woman has full right to lead her life as per her own will and to materialize her long cherished dream.

The present anthology catalyzes the wit of readers, researchers, critics and academicians to unwrap the hidden layers of mystery latent in Narayan's depiction. It is just like an intellectual dose for academic fraternity.

Reviewer: Dr. Atal Kumar, Associate Professor, Department of English, Gaya College, Gaya, M.U. Bodhgaya, India.

Meghnad Desai and Aitzaz Ahsan. *Divided by Democracy*. Series editor David Page, New Delhi: Roli Books. Page 144, Rs. 295, ISBN 81-7436-425-0.

This is the second publication (the first one, Dr. Humayun Khan and G.Parthasarathy's *Diplomatic Divide*, 2004) by Roli Books under cross border talks series, David Page as editor. The series is an earnest endeavour to have an exchange of understanding outside the diplomatic channel between India & Pakistan with a view to make reading public of these countries aware of each other's problems and perceptions. Desai and Ahsan have tried to be very frank and fair in their analyses of the democracies of India and Pakistan. Desai has opined on 'Why is India a democracy' while Ahsan on 'Why Pakistan is not a democracy?'.

Apart from introduction, Desai has planned his essay under seven segments, giving subtitles as; The long apprenticeship: 1858-1947, Crucial choices/ Wise leadership, Coping with pressures, Why did democracy survive in India?, Fragmentation and inclusion, warts and beauty spots, and the future of Indian democracy. In the first section he surveys the historical forces like introduction of Modern/ Western education, socio-religious reform movements, growth of railways, growth of local self governments and politicization of masses by Gandhi etc, which ultimately shaped the future of democracy in India. In the second one, he analyses the reasons behind the choices, the wise leadership took after the Independence and adopted the Westminster Model for Indian democracy. In the third one, he underlines the pressures India faced and that too successfully. In fourth one, he argues why democracy survived in India despite having troubled sixties and uneasy seventies. In the fifth one, Desai makes very interesting observations as regards India's resilient

efforts in making democracy quite inclusive in nature despite having a fragmented and layered society. In the sixth section, he identifies the ugly as well as beauty spots of Indian democracy. And lastly, he makes conjectures, foresees possibilities and prescribes something regarding the future of Indian democracy.

Ahsan has also divided his essay into two major segments: the first dealing with the events before partition and the second about developments after the formation of Pakistan. In the first part, he underlines the historical, political and social causes of partition and in the second one, the reasons behind the absence of democracy in Pakistan. He finds the civil and military bureaucracy, the superior judiciary; the political parties, the feudals, the industrial and business classes, the fundamentalists and the electoral management of the military regime are responsible for the undemocratic state of Pakistan.

Meghnad Desai, a trained economist and Aitzaz Ahsan, a lawyer and politician, have written this book in such a manner that it is really difficult to categorise it as a book of history or polity or sociology or economics. This is the real strength of this book which makes reading highly absorbing and refreshing. Desai observes as regards Indian democracy, "Democracy in India had now settled down to a cosy accommodation with local society, with its caste hierarchies, religious groupings and regional diversities". Further, he argues that India ensured this democracy at heavy economic loss. But at the same time he finds that, "This deepening of Indian democracy happened because of a parallel failure on the economic front." Despite living in London, Desai proves himself keen observer of Indian political and social scene. But there is a factual error in the book regarding Rajiv Gandhi's support to the V.P. Singh's government from outside. Actually, Rajiv Gandhi supported

Chandrashekhar's government from outside, when the latter's government lost no-confidence motion as the BJP withdrew its support after Advani's arrest in Bihar during his Rath Yatra.

Desai's observation would give much solace to those who feel depressed and hopeless due to the nature of politics existing in Indian society at present. To include all the segments of the Indian society, India has to pay something in one way or another.

Ahsan presents a very clear picture of Pakistan's feudal society and the nexus between military and civil bureaucracy as well as the fundamentalists. After having analysed all the reasons behind the undemocratic state of Pakistan, Ahsan affirms, "The fact that even military dictators are convinced that full suffrage elections are unavoidable and inevitable is testimony that the spirit of democracy in Pakistan is indeed irrepressible. I believe that one day it must prevail to the fullest extent by wresting complete supremacy and sovereignty."

In the very beginning, David Page's editorial comments underline the purposes behind this book and provide enough light on the effort made by these authors. This book has very attractive cover representing symbolic colours of India and Pakistan i.e saffron and green. As pointed above, this book has interdisciplinary values and is thus more fruitful for the students, researchers and academicians at large.

Reviewer: Dr. Shiv Kumar Yadav, Associate Professor of English, College of Commerce, Arts & Science, Patna, Bihar, India.

O. N. Gupta's Poetry Collection, *Foaming Fountain: A collection of thoughts and realisations*. Raipur, 2017, Pp.78, Rs.250

The sun was folding its wing,
birds beating retreat,
and I stood at the threshold
to sing my swan song. (11).

O.N. Gupta is a 76- year old poet and academic; he has already published poetry collections like *Lilacs in Lab* (2001), *Mosaics of Love and Legends* (2005), *Prisms of Poetry* (2011), and *Spilled Feelings* (2014). *Foaming Fountain* (2017) is his fifth collection. His age, education, and experience, therefore, have given him an edge over youngsters, who go on churning poems day and night because, for them, writing poetry is more of a fashion than a sincere passion. Gupta has led not only a fully lived but felt life with all its triumphs and traumas. But like a veteran, he is not daunted by the upheavals, because finally dark “clouds would pass over/ and sun filter through cracks and inlets” (1). One has to simply digest and assimilate all the experiences and turn them into poetry, as “cow converts grass into milk”(ibid.). Like most of the old generation, he is keenly aware of the generation gap, which is expressed in many of his poems. In the “Swan Song,” he feels lost in an age where youths have lost all sense of respect for the things old. So, he tries to retrieve some antiques before they are sold as scrapes:

I gathered some old relics and mementoes
from a show case preventing the wiser
generations from selling them to street
vendors. (11)

Similarly, he is shocked to see the suggestive photograph of a boy and his girlfriend biking on a bicycle with driver’s seat so positioned that the girl’s body will touch the boy at every twist and turn of the road, so that “if goodness lead her not/ giddiness may toss her up/ to

tying knot”(10).

This gap between the old and the new is present everywhere, even in the house of the poet. In a light humour, he talks of the modern attitude of his daughters-in-law, who would prefer clubs and gossips to domestic drudgery:

I knew how they
spent evenings in parks, exhibitions
and art galleries,
their penchant was club,
a school for scandals
where dancing damsels and Malaprops
gathered to talk mischiefs and mimicry... (61)

This difference in attitudes of the two generations is glaringly obvious in their marriages. In “I Still Remember,” the poet talks of his own marriage decades ago. Obviously an arranged marriage, both wife and husband worked hard to generate true love and sustain the same, leading to a grand golden jubilee:

We tied knot noiselessly, unceremoniously,
wove the yarn every moment
turning the coarse fabric into silk with skill
till it burst into flowers. (2).

Then he talks immediately of the tantrums caused in the family by the young generation because of love marriage. Parents may fume and fret but are helpless and can't do much. So, the poet suggests:

No use airing the gun
or going to police.
Let us welcome Romeo and Juliet
liberally, lovingly and exuberantly. (3)

The hallmark of Gupta's poetry is maturity in the use of words and images and the variety of social themes presented with ironic twist and comic overtones. He is

master of using words with assonance and alliteration. But, at times, he overdoes it, as in “a history, harvest of heroics and hysterics” (62). On the whole, the collection is highly readable and enjoyable one.

Reviewer: Lal Veer Aditya, Senior Research Fellow,
HSS Dept., IIT Roorkee, Uttarakhand, India.