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Pawan Kumar Sharma

Death of God : A Dialectical Study

The idea of God has held a tremendous fascination for human imagination since the very beginning of civilization on earth. Though it is the function of metaphysical or transcendental philosophies to find an appropriate answer to this perennial mystery of the existence, people of all faiths and beliefs, of theistic or atheistic schools, from the world of science to the world of literature, have used their faculty of imagination to interpret the mysterious phenomena of God according to their own proclivity and attitudinal tendencies. Till today there is no empirical evidence to suggest anything concrete or convincing, and this continues to provide fodder to the dialectics of God. There are philosophers and thinkers who have announced that God is dead. Whereas, there are others who find this kind of thought completely apprehensible and preposterous. Despite the tremendous advancements in science and our modes of comprehensions, it may never be possible to find authentic and convincing answer to the question. However it will make an interesting reading to make a comparative study about the origin, existence or the functions of God as viewed by different cultures and philosophies. This paper attempts to look at parallels between the Eastern and the Western concepts of God and then throw these

conceptual formulations at the modern readers to find out their own definition of God.

If we look at the entire anthropological discourse in its historicity, we shall find that the definition of man varies according to the way his relationship with God is visualized as much as the definition of God varies according to the way the human element is conceived. To describe how the different schools of thought define God entails how these schools conceive the essence and the characteristics of a human being. In the orthodox school of Indian philosophy we rarely find one word which points out man in both the aspects; as one who belongs to as well as who transcends the definition of nature. “Man” as a person is believed to be one of the many creatures of nature. What gives life or substance to the matter is called spirit or God. This perspective was also common in ancient Western traditions. It continued in the Western philosophy till at least the Renaissance and the advent of an anthropocentric attitude in Europe which revolutionized the previous theocentric and ecocentric viewpoint and which is now rightly characterized as ‘Copernican revolution’. Carolyn Merchant’s *The Death of Nature* ascribes to Bacon a pivotal role in the emergence of an environmentally destructive world view where “the image of an organic cosmos with a living female earth at its centre gave way to a mechanistic world view in which nature was constituted as dead and passive, to be dominated and controlled by humans” (16). This anthropocentrism, by centring the event of knowledge in the human person, was responsible for redefining God as the objective side of such an event. However there are some deep ecologists who also hold Judaeo-Christian traditions responsible for this dangerous shift in the form of the emergence of anthropocentrism.

And God said; Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:
and let them have domination over the fish of the sea, and
over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over the

earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. (Genesis 1: 26)

This biblical passage has often been cited to justify a dualistic interpretation of existence in terms of isolating God from man, and man from the rest of nature.

Let us try to find out how God entered into Western philosophy. This was due to the loss of sense certitude. Man has always been haunted by the mysterious nature of reality of himself and around him. He has held a belief that what the senses show is not the whole truth, and there is much more in the cosmic reality than what is viewed at the level of perception. Goethe mentions: "For what he thus perceives with his senses is out of keeping with the inner faculty of discernment; it would need a culture, as high as only exceptional people can possess, in order to harmonise, to a certain extent, the inner truth with the appropriate vision from without" (Goethe, Ch. 10). This lack of faith in the sense certitude has made him think of something higher that gives order and harmony to the different layers of existential reality. One of the great thinkers, Heidegger, also offers a similar hypothesis. He conceives of 'being' not only as a "self-substantiating ground of 'what is' but considers it as a unifying principle at the bottom and the highest order. These three ways of thinking can be described as logical, ontological and theological grounds. In whatever way it is thought 'Being is the Ground' of 'what is' and it is the account of the Ground that metaphysics and philosophy are concerned with. It is the highest being which grounds all beings, the foundation of all that is. It has been conceived by different thinkers as substance or subject.

With the total invasion of the philosophy of capitalism at the global level, its essential features such as the dominance of scientific rationality and expert knowledge, the strong belief in technological innovations as the agents of progress and the tendency to see nature as an exploitable resource or as an externality have destroyed the

idea of community or whole, and replaced it with an infinitely large collection of isolated rational individuals who are all equal and interchangeable. It has also destroyed the idea of an orderly universe by that of an infinite space without limits. When the community and the universe vanish, the media through which God is supposed to communicate no longer exist. In infinite space God falls silent; the concept of God is incompatible with the existence of God (Pascal, 206)". Rationalism gives reason the supreme ability to judge correctly and distinguish truth from error. As such God is left with no function except to give a little tap to start the world off. Thus in an individualistic mode of thinking there is no room or function for a god to guide man in transcendental norms.

Hegel was the first philosopher to announce the death of God. He gives many reasons in support of this contention. The belief in God, Hegel indicated, has withered away because the proof of his existence have been discredited; economic motives have gained predominance; and the priests and deists have isolated God from the world. Even for those who believed in God, he was an estranged God unconnected with reality. As everything must go through the antithetic movement of negation, separation and estrangement of itself, God too died in order that the world and man may come into being. According to Hegel, the God of religion, the lesser reality, has to be replaced with the absolute of philosophy, the higher truth. The distance between God and man must be annulled and the finite must be dialectically identified with the infinite. Hegel said:

The ethical world has vanished. Trust in the eternal laws of the gods is silenced, just as the oracles are dumb, whose work it was to know what was right in particular cases. The statues set up are now corpses in stone from whom the animating soul has flown, while the hymns of praise are words from which all belief has gone. The tables of the gods are bereft of spiritual food and drink. (506)

Philosophers like Nietzsche also questioned the autonomous and personalised concept of God. It was man who created him and it was also the same man who killed him. In *The Gay Science* Nietzsche introduces the character of a 'madman' who enters a busy market place and asks, 'Where is God?' Mocked by the people in the market, the mad man says, 'We have killed him, you and I.' Here Nietzsche does not mean the death of God in literal sense. He simply suggests that our belief or need for God is dead. Nietzsche believed that with the death of this belief in the idea of God, we must urgently face the consequences of this moral and spiritual gap in our lives, and look for something to replace Him. Nietzsche's writings are full of criticism for these new replacements, including scepticism, nihilism, feminism, democracy, utilitarianism and scientific positivism. Although Nietzsche is also critical of religion, it is more the modern condition, or 'modernity', that he finds unsatisfactory. In fact, Nietzsche – rather like the madman – was in many ways sincerely religious and spiritual, for religion can provide a vision and meaning to life. But the people of Nietzsche's time have replaced God with a faith in science or other modern '-isms' which fail to provide us with the same kind of meaning. Nietzsche's spirituality calls for a rebirth, for an appreciation of earthly life and nature, represented by the Greek god Dionysus. Contemporary thinkers like Sartre too express a similar anguish: "He is dead, he spoke to us and now is silent, all that we touch now is his corpse (Sartre, 153). As a consequence, according to Sartre, there is no universal morality and there are no absolute values. Man is at last free and can determine values.

Western literature also gives expression to the same predicament. Rilke has said that without god "life suspended in a bottomless pit, is impossible (Rilke, 480). Dostoevsky also laments that man can accept the world only if he is assured of justice and harmony prevailing in it. But when there is no God to give man guidance,

man has to rely on the sufficiency of his own reason. When God is dead, the unlimited freedom open to man leads him to unlimited despotism or every conceivable duplicity and every performable crime. Kafka's writings also show that for the modern mind there is no God, though at the same time it is suggested that there ought to be God. For Kafka the modern man feels that he is a slave, but does not know where freedom is; he experiences misery, but does not know where happiness can be found. Similarly the characters in Samuel Beckett's works are in a dilemma whether to believe in God or not. They on the one hand contempt for "a personal god, quaquaquaqu with white beard", on the other hand, they are spell bound by theological speculations. When asked if they believe in God, they hesitate to say "no", and at the same time curse him for not existing: "The bastard! He does not exist" (*Endgame*, 38).

So we can well make out from the above account that the contemporary Western mind holds that God's existence is not proved and it is hard to believe in Him keeping in view the injustice, evil and suffering in the world. But Western culture also feels that there could be no values and norms in the absence of God. Without values one cannot live by something or for something. The people of Dostoevsky, Kafka and Beckett illustrate the result of this. Most of them wish there was a God, but they know he is not; some of them try to live independently without him but end in madness or despair, despotism or cruelty. For contemporary Western culture the world without God is a waste land and a Godless man is lost and forlorn. The world without God is an absurd world. And if we do not wish to die we have to live in it, uncertain of everything but doing something.

However in the East the attitude to the question of God is different. In some of the eastern philosophies God does not even exist. There are religions like Buddhism, Jainism, Confucianism and Taoism, which are atheistic in nature. But one thing is common in all Eastern

philosophies. All consider that the universe is morally ordered and friendly, that ethical action is meaningful and urgently required to attain the highest good. The conviction that moral law is eternal and objective is also common to all of them. The values are not tied up with God. In some of these philosophies there may be a personal God, but he neither creates, nor governs the world. He may be the ideal or the supreme teacher in some philosophies, but in others he is not so. Even if there is no God, life can have meaning.

In search for the “origins” Eastern myths generally propounded a design of an evolutionary universe which proceeded from an ‘original source’. Instead of conceiving the causes of phenomena as temporary or arbitrary, as the modern physics does, the Vedic poets conceived them as eternal entities which rule all temporary phenomena. They searched for the “roots of nature, for the genesis of its forms, and for the makers of its rules” (Santis, 24). They conceived all beings or creation to be subject to an eternal cosmic law, “*ṛta*” and the gods as the mere custodians of this law, not its creators. *Rta* is then eternally constant, unmodified by any agency; ruling and harmonizing all levels of existence. The entire Vedic poetry is a song giving expression to this composed harmony which moves the nature.

Eternal Law (*ṛta*) hath varied food that
 Strengthens; thought of eternal law remove transgressions...
 To law belongs the vast earth and heavens:
 Milch-kine supreme, to law they milk they render.

(*Rig Veda*, 4, 23,9-10 [4], Trans. By R. T.H.Griffith)

The entire Vedic poetry is a vision of an animated reality. Gods, wherever they are invoked or mentioned, are simply the expressions, or “manifestations”, or “symbols” of a higher unmanifested, impersonal reality or transcendental Nature. A name used to refer to such a word, capable to awaken the secret forces of nature is “*brahman*”. We can

also call it “spirit” from which life proceeds, which permeate each and every living being, but also transcends them all.

The last portion of the *Veda, the Upanishads*, moved even further from the worship of the powers of nature to the realization of the essence of existence; from the cult of life to the cult of spirit. The seers of the Upanishads became less interested in singing about the splendid forms of life and moved inward into the self of man since the external world is the same one that gives order to the inner psychic world of man. The mystery of nature is in fact the mystery of his own self, of his “atman”. In this poetic vision “*Brahman*” is regarded as the soul of nature and “atman” is the inner nature of man. The great sayings of Upanishads are expressive of this unity: ‘*Atman and Brahman are one*’. ‘*Brahman is all and all is in Brahman*’. ‘I am that. You are that. All is that’. This is how, from the wonder of the poet looking at the mystery of nature at the beginning of the *Veda*, we arrive at the wonder of realizing the unity of existence in the *Upanishads*. *Upanishads* proceed from metaphors and poetic imagery, trying gradually to approach this core of existence, *Brahman*, but still the answer is a secret. The closest metaphor used is a negative symbolism and *Brahman* is described as *neti-neti-neti*. What is affirmed with conviction is the idea that realization of Brahman is the realization of one’s own inner nature. This is how the Vedic poets conceive of and achieve cosmic unity. They ultimately open up the frames of human identity for including one’s own self in a transcendental oneness with the soul of the universe. This is also the famous message Lord Krishna gives to humanity in the Bhagwad Gita: “I am the seed of all existence. There is no being, moving or still, that exists without Me” (10. 39).

In Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism, respect and even reverence for other species is based on religious concept of Reincarnation that the Supreme Being is incarnated in various species and that humans themselves can be reincarnated as animals and birds.

Rather than limiting oneself to abstract ideas of reality, they advocate the 'yogic meditations' to re-sensitize oneself to see, hear, and feel the oneness of life which is a "mutually causal web of relationship as in the jewel image of the Jewel Net of Indra" (Kaza, 57). Thus violence to other beings within the biotic community is immoral and given the percept of interdependence, self-destructive. All actions need to be informed by the principles of compassion, non-violence and the virtue of non-contention. *Hindu* doctrine of *Karma Yoga* also teaches the highest ideal of moral actions by emphasizing the importance of taking responsibility for every action in all of one's relationships. They underline the fact that there is an intricate web of cyclic relationship within and between the spiritual and material realms, the human and the non-human environment.

In Eastern religions the core values are not confined to being just the philosophical or scriptural precepts but are to be adopted as the way of life. The greater concern seems to be *Dharma* i. e. ethical way of life rather than a Being who creates or governs the universe, who may or may not exist, and if he existed it is not necessary to know and worship him. Some of these religions hold *moksha* and *nirvana* as the highest goal which can be attained through yoga, penance and moral action leading to the purity and perfection of mind, even without worshipping God. If *Dharma* is of paramount importance, knowledge of it naturally becomes very essential. Jainism and Buddhism assert that the eternal norm was rediscovered and revived by the Jinas and Buddhas, and it is possible for everyone to do so if he treads the same path. However Hindu schools find a difficulty in such a position. As an eternal universal moral law cannot be discovered by any finite being with finite knowledge, they searched for the crystallisation of the knowledge of *Dharma* in *Vedas*. Mimasa concludes that the *veda* contain an eternal knowledge of dharma and man should have this knowledge as the source of all moral obligation. All these moral

obligations are founded on the belief that “spirituality pervades and infuses all forms of existence – human, animate and inanimate” (Frost and Egri 1990, 7). It informs the view that all that exists in nature is living and sacred, therefore deserving of respect and care. It is these ethical and philosophical principles which form the basic structure on which the ideas of man, nature and their relationships are conceived in Hinduism and other Eastern philosophies.

Does not the moral law require an ordainer or governor? The theists of course feel that it is God who fulfils this need. But those thinkers, who consider it to be natural and eternal, or everlasting like the universe, do not think so. Fruits of secular and righteous actions are produced by the actions themselves and the superintendence of God is not required for this. This is the main hypothesis of Samkhya, early Nyaya, Mimasa and Vaisesika. The idea of God as the moral governor was not important for them. Even other schools, which held that both happiness and salvation are bestowed by God, believe in the agency of human action and accept that in the absence of human action, even God cannot intervene. God is not the independent agency to grant happiness or salvation to man. In some non-philosophical schools like Bhakti school, God is depicted as the arbiter of human destiny. In Buddhism and Jainism, as in Mimasa, the structure of the universe is ethical and as other actions produce their own results, ethical action too produces its own proper results sooner or later.

All Eastern religions think that nothing in the world is absurd or illogical. All of them present a “coordinative thinking” of the universe whereas the Western philosophies present a contrasting ethos of what H. Wilhelm calls the “subordinative thinking” (Needham, 280). The former is based on the idea of correspondence and the latter on that of causality (Needham, 288). Things according to the former kind of thinking are connected than caused. Things influence one another not in a mechanically causal way, but because they “synchronise” (Jung,

142) with each other by virtue of their positions in the total order that is the universe. Neetham thinks that the oriental way of thinking is closer to modern science, than the Western way of thinking which is closer to Cartesian- Newtonian science. It is interesting to mention that Leibniz thought he found his binary arithmetic in *I Ching*, and Wiener points out that modern computing machine are built on a binary basis. Paul Mus thinks that the *Brahmanas* and the *Upanishads* have hit upon “some of the fundamentals of our latest logistic conceptions – topology or *analysis situs* and the notion of functional connection (604)”. He asserts: “Vedic symbolism and modern attempts at non-syllogistic thinking operate along quite comparable lines” (605).

Whatever we may say about the physical or empirical existence of God or otherwise, one thing is absolutely clear that the ideas and the ideals God represents are urgently needed for the human civilization at all times. There is quite a commonality in all religious philosophies that the universe is a complete whole, both at the micro and macro level. It requires no controlling entity within or without. According to Chuang Tzu, the human beings are so organised that all its parts are equally complete in their places, such that mutually controlling each other they become masters and servants of each other by turns (Wing, 181). Thus the complex interrelationships of the various constituents of the human being bring about its harmonious functioning. Similarly all things in the universe are cyclically metamorphosed into each other. There is no need to postulate a governor of the universe. The constituents of the body as well as those of the universe work together for good without the former having an inner controller and the latter a word-soul or external deity. To sum up this kind of thinking, the universe is a vast pattern in which all things harmoniously cooperate with each other following their own inner natures forming different wholes, at different levels, all these fused into a unity. There is order in the world even without an ordering entity.

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Sunita Jakhar

Tracing Myths from Manil Suri's *The Age of Shiva*

The Age of Shiva is the second novel by Manil Suri, born in Bombay and now a professor of Mathematics in the U.S. He shifted to the U.S at the age of 20 on a fellowship to Carnegie Mellon in Pittsburgh. Adapting new culture was not a problem as Suri speaks on American culture, "Immediately, I was surprised how easy it was to set down roots here. Unlike immigrants from other parts of the world, I had the language, I'd seen American movies and had read *Mad* magazine. There was no culture shock" (nytimes.com). One cannot deny that Suri was equally interested in the culture left behind and his three works are well anchored in Indian-myths, traditions, ceremonies and narratives of gods and goddesses. *The Age of Shiva* is, "a mesmerizing story of modern India, richly layered with themes from Hindu mythology" (goodreads.com). In one of the interviews, Suri mentions that reading R.K.Narayan's *Gods, Demons and Others* in seventh grade was his first taste of Hindu mythology. In *The Age of Shiva*, "Suri uses mythology as a metaphor for contemporary Indians living here too" (window2India.com).

The first two descriptive pages about a doting mother breast feeding her baby connotes the many aspects of a mother-son relationship which is central to the novel. The first line of the book,

“Every time I touch you, every time I kiss you, every time I offer you my body...” (Suri 11) offers a sensuous touch developing into Oedipal tendencies in an adolescent Ashvin. Ashvin is also the 7th lunar month of the Hindu calendar. In an interview Suri says, “There are several meanings of Ashvin ... there are supposed to be Ashvin twins who race through the universe. There is a constellation, a pair of stars with that name. That’s the interpretation I used. Ashvin is also related to horses and physicians, different meanings. The one about the twins ... I picked... he is named to pair him with someone that Meera lost ... the name has this interesting anagram quality where it’s close to Vishnu and it’s close to Shiva too ... this constant pull in Ashvin where Because Shiva is the character who withdraws from the world, the ascetic. Vishnu is always trying to pull Shiva back into the cycle of life because his participation is needed to keep the world alive... these two attributes playing in Ashvin. The interesting thing is that one has to say which one is the stronger one, the dominant one. At the end, he’s shown, in the last glance you have of him, looking up at the sun, suggesting more of the Vishnu character whereas his father- it harks back to something where his father is looking at the moon, more of a Shiva” (Suri 12).

Meera not only holds Ashvin dear but also looks up to him as her only hope towards carrying her to salvation. Referring to the death rites performed by a son she says, “you are the hope and the fire, the absolution, the purifier. You will deliver me, will you not, from this life I find myself in?” (independent.co.uk). Akin to the Ganesha myth Suri creates the world of Meera, Dev and Ashvin i.e. Meera’s sentinel in times of loneliness who would be accountable only to Parvati and not Shiva. Farida Dastoor with her playful bunch of friends even teases Dev as Shiva during their picnic to caves, around Bombay and the jealous Meera as Parvati. Parvati creates Ganesha from the sandalwood paste on her body. “Similarly Meera, betrayed by her husband and her father, gives birth to a boy through whom she can find happiness...

a new kind of fulfillment” (wikipedia). Another myth parallel to Ashvin’s existence is the *Andhaka* myth. In Hindi the word *andhaka* has its origin in *andha* meaning the blind one i.e. the blind son of Shiva and Parvati. The word further connotes blindness to morals or inability to differentiate between good and bad. Andhaka was raised by Shiva and Parvati but, he gets smitten with his mother’s aura and attempts to violate her. In another variation of the myth, Shiva gave Andhaka to a demon Hiranyaksha as a boon. Andhaka inherits Hiranyaksha’s kingdom. “Shortly after becoming king Andhaka discovered that his cousins were plotting to overthrow him, so he retreated to the forest to meditate. He fasted and stood upon one leg for more than one million years, chopping off parts of his body as a sacrifice to Brahma, he waited, Brahma appeared and fulfilled Andhaka’s desire to become immortal but put a condition to be able to be killed only on one condition if he ever chose to marry a woman who is like a mother to him. Andhaka returned and calmed his problem. Millions of years later, three of Andhaka’s generals happened upon Shiva and Parvati in a cave, but did not recognize them. They thought Parvati was beautiful for their king. Andhaka asked them to return and ask for the woman in marriage. Shiva refused and Andhaka rushed to the cave to do battle which lasted for 1000 years and involved many gods and demons and finally Shiva killed Andhaka with his trident through his chest” (Suri 242). Suri agrees about the variants of Andhaka myth and mentions about the *Mahabhagavata Purana* as his source of Andhaka myth.

Dev, Meera and Ashvin enact roles from Andhaka myth. Meera pretended to be Parvati instructing, “little light of my life, Ganesh. Stand outside and keep guard –make sure nobody disturbs your mother while she washes herself” (Suri 288-89). Ashvin would triumphantly beat his chest and indulge in fight with Dev, the simulation enacted the beheading scene and finally putting an elephant head on

Ashvin. Meera mulls over the similarity between herself and Parvati. Comparing the satisfaction Parvati got watching her son, Meera too thinks about Ashvin on similar lines, “Could this be my invitation to mold you just as Parvati had done? Affirm my motherhood in the coming years as joyously as her? Hadn’t I always known that you would be the promised one? Entrusted to you the key to my future even before you were born?”(Suri 370). Meera wants unconditional love from Ashvin but is aware of the boundaries i.e. line not to be crossed over, “wasn’t there another son to give her pause, the one named Andhaka, the blind offspring of Shiva and Parvati? What lust erupted in his heart, how ravaged he was by passion, when his sight was restored and he was confronted by his mother’s beauty. It was only after Shiva burnt off his flesh and drained the blood from his body that he eventually became worthy to be a son again”(wikipedia).

The character of Meera has a remarkable feature of perpetual maternal love, she is an emblem of ‘*matra shakti*’, *matra* stands for mother and *shakti* means empowerment. *Shakti* is a metaphor for womanhood. “*Shakti* is the concept or personification, of divine feminine creative power, sometimes referred to as ‘the great Divine mother’ in Hinduism”(Suri 135).

Suri has created a ‘female narrator-protagonist’ through Meera. Her journey begins as a docile sister, daughter, wife and finally a single mother in between one sees the rare moments where she asserts herself or rebels, for example Paji, a rationalist dictates Meera not to touch Dev’s feet but Meera rebels against Paji and complies with the rituals of a newly-wed wife for *Karva chauth*.

Just after marriage Meera found the ambience at Dev’s house claustrophobic, she craves for ‘scent of freedom’. She is also aware that women continue to live in unhappy marriages and remembers the bitter days of Biji. Ironically Paji taught his children about equality of sexes. Ruminating over these thoughts Meera realizes that she has no

place to go. Paji dreamt of giving higher education to Meera and has a tacit agreement with Dev to arrange for Meera's abortion. Meera had, "collapsed, blood-drenched, in Sandhya's arms, after I had passed the remaining chunks of fetus which Dev wrapped in a rag to dispose somewhere"(Suri 139).

Paji apologises to Meera and to cover up arranges a flat for them in Bombay. Meera keeps calm in spite of knowing everything and begins life afresh in Bombay. She rises like a phoenix, "I was young and healthy...My body had pulled through the assault on it..." (Suri 156). Meera was all alone in Bombay and Dev often came home extremely late inebriated. She did not give up and, "one night, tired of waiting ...I decided to visit Auntie myself"(Suri 203). She even goes to the dancing girl Banu's place to retrieve Dev. Meera asserts the rights of a wife when she spots Roopa in a compromising situation with Dev, she not only threatens her of disclosing all to Ravinder but also succeeds in packing off Roopa, "the following night, and was gone by daybreak, returning to Madras a week earlier than planned"(Suri 313). After Dev's death Paji asks her to change back her sir name to Sawhney to which she refuses as she, "could never betray Dev in this way"(Suri 406). Arya wants to instill and groom Ashvin for his right wing militia of *Hindutva*. In a dialogue with Meera reveals that, "a new age, a new *yuga*, not of Ram and Shiva ... hold sway"(Suri 406).She could not control her modern views, "this age of Shiva you're talking about is the age of bullock cart, not the atomic age. Without Nehru's vision we'd have no science-without Indira, no nuclear bomb"(Suri 168).

There is an old notion still prevalent about '*patiparmeshwar*' i.e. a husband of a woman is her god. In Meera's case it is Dev. In an interview Suri reveals that Dev is the Shiva, the unattainable to those who loved him. While showing around the Shiva cave to the rest, Aarti points out, "the two most opposite aspects of Shiva, as my

father always declares. All his energy and action in the dancing Natraja on your

right , and the stillness of his *yogi* pose on your left”(Suri 169). Meera’s trance is broken when Freddy playfully asks her, “which one is your Dev more like?”(Suri 169). Meera is uncomfortable with the increasing proximity between Dev and Freddy. Freddy is symbolic of Ganga who descends from heaven and, “Shiva catches her in the locks of his hair. Notice the trace of unease Parvati displays at the arrival of her rival Ganga who she knows will become Shiva’s other wife”(Suri 170). Freddy too imagines Dev to be her Shiva the saviour. Watching the Shiva-Parvati relief she asks, “what I want to know whether there’s someone here for me as well, to catch me should I fall” (Suri 171). Keeping her feelings unexpressed Meera notices the flirtation between Meera and Dev. Watching Meera’s expressions, somebody comments, “what was the expression again on Parvati’s face?” (Suri 452). Suri writes, “Shiva’s amorous pursuits of consorts other than Parvati (interpreted in divine, not mortal, sense) is detailed in several of the Puranas (e.g., *Skanda* and *Matsya*), while Parvati’s uneasiness about his engagement with Ganga (so subtly conveyed in the actual Elephanta caves sculpture in Mumbai) is mentioned, for instance, in the *Skanda Purana*”(Suri 32).

As a child Meera was always intimidated by Roopa’s hot temper. Roopa was called little Durga as she , “could metamorphose from sweet to ferocious in an instant, like an irked goddess suddenly sprouting a phalanx of weapon-laden arms”(Suri 56). Wives are compared to Laxmi , the goddess of wealth and newly- wed girls are decorated and their dowries displayed. Tantalized by Meera’s gold ornaments, refrigerator, radiogram, pressure cooker and kitchen utensils the women comment, “Truly, Dev has brought Lakshmi to your house”(Suri 67).

Biji narrated tales from Indian epics i.e. the Mahabhart and

the Ramayana and instructed children to touch feet as a mark of veneration. She justified it as, "It's part of our culture, something that's come down to us from the ages. . . . It's a dignified custom- you should perform it proudly, not be ashamed"(Suri 89). Sandhya observed fasts on particular days for her inability to conceive a child. *Karva Chauth* fast is observed by women for longevity of their husband's life span. There are many versions/ways of keeping this fast all over India but the one observed by Meera, Sandhya and Mataji is the strictest i.e. staying without water. A myth attached to 'Karva' meaning an earthenware pot is sung in the form of a song by Sandhya, which goes , "Be sure to buy a *karva* if an old woman selling pottery comes to your door on that day . . . because if you don't , she'll capture his spirit in it and steal your husband away"(Suri 94). Mataji had preserved the '*karva*' that her mother used and, " she started arranging the ingredients for the ceremony that night- rice, vermilion, saffron, and black gram, along the rim of a *thali*"(Suri 97). These ingredients are considered auspicious for most of Indian ceremonies. In North India, particularly among Punjabis the first *Karva-chauth* of a newly wed is a momentous event and the lady dresses up as a bride. But Paji is an exception to witness this kind of change in Meera and says , "so this is the condition I find you in . Hands painted and fasting obediently like some fantasy Hindu wife . . . science has found no evidence that starving yourself , is going to prolong your husband's life?"(Suri 100).

It is ironic to watch women like Mrs. Sampath who dread a heart attack as she is unable to take her blood pressure pill during the fast. Women like Mrs. Gangwal who has an unfaithful husband , Mrs. Pota whose husband no one has ever seen can still be seen observing the fast. The women sang songs on myths related to *Karva-chauth* such as, "about a girl who fasted to bring back her beloved after he had been eaten by a crocodile, and about Savitri, who rescued her

husband by tricking *Yama*, the God of death”(Suri 100). After singing songs the women listened to the story of *Karva-chauth*, “the tale about seven brothers, who, moved by the suffering of their sister on *Karva-chauth*, shone the light of a lamp through a *pipal* tree so that she would break her fast early. She mistook the light for the moon as they had hoped, but the instant she took her first sip of water, her husband drowned. Fortunately, Parvati heard her cries of sorrow up in heave. She came down to investigate, even though Shiva, her husband, sulked about being ignored over some weeping girl. When Parvati discovered how the men had interfered with this most sacred rite of womanhood to trick the girl, she was engaged. She threatened to assume her *Kali* image and destroy everything in sight. Shiva had no choice but to intervene with *Yama*, who reluctantly brought back the husband to life”(Suri 122). After hearing the story the women worship Parvati, see the moon through a sifter shifting it towards their husband’s face after touching the feet of the husband the wife eats food. These days an interesting feature has come in vogue after watching Shah Rukh Khan in *Dil Wale Dulhaniya Lei Jayaege*. Some men too observe fast with their wives.

When Meera gets pregnant, “Mataji was more exuberated in her reaction- breaking coconuts in the temple in gratitude, performing ceremonies over me to ward off the evil eye, showering me with gifts of sweets and trinkets and toys. She started feeding me almonds crushed in milk every morning” (Suri 124). Through ‘nazar’ one believes to keep the ill effects of evil eye. Another myth is if a pregnant woman eats anything white as the first thing in the mornings she would give birth to a fair baby. Hema and Mataji kept their ‘their supply of suggestions’ such as- “Eat bananas and milk and other white foods to ensure the baby is fair-skinned. Sleep with a copper bracelet around your right wrist if you want it to be intelligent. Rub your private areas with fenugreek paste every day to ensure an easy delivery. Eat lots of

garlic, it will strengthen the baby's stomach... don't touch garlic or papaya- there's nothing more dangerous for a fetus" Suri 226).

Dev could not establish himself as a singer in Bombay. Earlier a rationalist, constant negative experiences made him superstitious to the extent, "The lunar calendar became indispensable... Thursday was the most auspicious day of the week and Tuesday the least" (Suri 226). He found a holy man in Dadar and made him guruji and began performing pooja as instructed by anointing, "each idol with a solution of saffron in milk and stopped for the correct flowers and fruits to hang as offerings. He gathered to ask from spent incense in a special pouch blessed by the guruji, transferring it into a brown paper sea at chowpatty" (Suri 241). When no change was observed in Dev's life Guruji diagnosed the problem through performing Ashvin's *mundan* ceremony. As there is a myth that the hair that a child is born with are unclean from the mother's womb. Dev got bolder using the castemark by smearing ash and marking tilak on the forehead. When even this did not work, "Instead of giving up, however, Dev became even more obsessed with his rituals. Once he moved back into the bedroom, he emptied the top shelf of the cupboard and converted it into a miniature pantheon... Around these he arranged ...K.L.Sehgal... From the roof of the shelf, he dangled an idol of Hanuman on a string, so that the monkey god seemed to swoop mid flight through the air" (Suri 257). At Marine Drive onlookers have different views about half immersed Ganesh statue. "A good omen, some claim, that Ganpati has returned to bless the land a second time" (204). Meera imagines a celestial birth for Ashvin, "I always imagine you born of the sun... Vishnu himself would slide down, like a gold-decked movie star, bearing you in his muscular arms" (Sen 17). There is a subtle undertone of Kunti and her son Karan whom she got as a result of a boon just by praying to the Sun god. Kunti cannot keep Karan with her as she was unmarried that time and Meera too remains disconnected with Ashvin

as she could not deftly handle the awkwardness of a teenager son single handedly.

Thus ‘Cultural synthesis’ – a hallmark of the Indian subcontinent has been instrumental in the creation of replete myths. Myths are attached to various religions of India but the scope of the paper discusses myths chiefly pertaining to Hinduism. Social researches have pointed out, “of the many races of India, some are worshippers of a river, or a mountain, or particular trees and animals. Each of these cults has influenced Hinduism, at least to the extent of finding room within its large and capacious body. Ganesha or Ganpati (the lord of the folk) is half human and half elephant”(Sen 58). Central to the concept of Hinduism is the myth of lord Ganesha , “the most worshipped god in India”(Kramrisch 74). As observed , since time immemorial Ganesha has been an icon of auspicious beginnings, this lord , “has everything that is fascinating to anyone who is interested in religion or India or both : charm, mystery , popularity, several problems, moral ambivalence, political importance, the works. One can start from Ganesha and work from there in an unbroken line to almost any aspect of Indian culture”(Courtright, vii).

Myths are not only attached to Ganesha but to others too for example, several mythical versions of Shiva have been traced such as Rudra, Natarj etc. As pointed above in the paper the Hindu scriptures are replete with various myths attached to a pantheon of gods and goddesses. O’Flaherty, in the ‘Introduction’ to *Hindu Myths* mentions, “ every Hindu myth is different : all Hindu myths are alike” (O’Flaherty11). The quote reveals the mysterious enigma surrounding a myth which gives an aura of similarity on the surface level but as one delves deeper into the various folds of a myth , the reader realizes how each myth is differently flavoured, making each one distinct from the other.

Over the past decade, there have been rampant debates about

the genesis of myths - whether these are constructed through imagination for a special purpose or are based on some kind of rationality. Scholars have conducted well grounded studies to prove that myths had been, “ created out of a long historical interaction between a set of basic ideas and the infinitely complex and variegated socio-religious beliefs and practices that comprise and structure the everyday life of individuals and small, local groups” (Lorenzen 38). The indigenous myths attached to a particular area gives a distinct flavor to a particular culture. Whether the myths are a construct or for that matter whose construct are besides the point and another topic for a seminal discourse. A careful study of myths does open up an important key to understanding and knowing a culture.

Addressing my personal e-mail query Suri revealed that the beauty of myths is that they keep getting relived by humans, no matter what century you're in. It is fascinating to see how one can find parallels with ancient myths. In *The Age of Shiva* , the Shiva mythology just formed one part of the story, in reality the book is about birth of India. Suri gets no nostalgia while talking of mythology as he never had any childhood influence on mythology beyond occasional visit to Ram-Leela festival. It is only while writing the fiction that he read a lot on mythology.

The meaning of the title of the book suggests the epoch of Shiva. Shiva analogy is epitomized in Dev. The central character is connected to Dev and after this connection one starts noticing a change in Meera from a quiet persona to an individual who decides to quit the world and ultimately learns to survive through *The Age of Shiva!*

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Bindu Bali

**Women in Arnold Wesker's *Roots*:
A Search for Identity and Voice**

The uniqueness of Arnold Wesker's *Roots*, hailed as “a landmark of provincial writing and theatre” (Ford 107) in the post-war British drama, lies in unmasking the predicament of not merely the class of farm labourers, but also their women who are, as Gayatri Spivak says, “twice removed in the shadow.” Wesker appears quite informed of how socio-economic circumstances are enmeshed intricately with the issues of gender and class, and how they determine social structures and power relations in the agrarian community. Though England was said to be moving towards a classless society owing to the socio-economic reforms initiated in the post war era, Wesker was intensely aware of the persisting salience of the same, especially in the rural social environment. Social activities as well as spatial occupations were marked clearly by hierarchical divisions. The wage farm workers who existed at the base of the hierarchical pyramid in the agrarian economy, quite ironically, by the sheer virtue of being males, dominated the women folk in the domestic space. Despite their meager incomes, men exercised hegemonic control over most decisions and domestic activities especially those pertaining to economics. Women were thus, pushed to the periphery and denied active participation even within the domain of domesticity – a fact captured realistically by Arnold

Wesker in his *Roots*. This paper is an attempt to explore the ontological angst of rural women in this play with reference to their search for identity and voice in an environment that deprives them both, subjectivity and expression.

Cloke and Little in their study titled *Contested Countryside Cultures: Rurality and Socio-Cultural Marginalization* establish that “representations of rurality and rural life are replete with devices of exclusion and marginalization” (Cloke and Little 1), the causes of which are varied and several. Radical feminists hold patriarchy as the root cause of women’s subordinate status in society, more particularly in the rural milieu. Patriarchy maybe defined as “a system of power relations which are hierarchical and unequal, where men control women’s production, reproduction and sexuality. It imposes masculinity and femininity character-stereotypes in society which strengthen the iniquitous power relations between men and women” (Ray 1). Holding family as the chief institution of patriarchy, Kate Millet opines that “Traditionally patriarchy grants the father nearly total ownership over wife or wives and children including the power of physical abuse and often those of murder and sale. Classically, as head of the family, the father is both begetter and owner in a system in which kingship is property” (Millet 33). Ascribing the subsidiary status of women to the patriarchal order, Sylvia Walby conceptualizes it as “a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women” (Walby 5). Similarly, an American Feminist theologian, Mary Daly, who established herself as a feminist critic of Christianity, in her book *Gyn/Ecology* (1978) offers one of the boldest accounts of gender relations by tracing their roots to *The Bible*. She argues that even the image of ‘God the Father’ has also been constructed to validate the rule of the father in a patriarchy.

What strikes one very strongly in the provincial backdrop offered by the play is the actuality of patriarchal hegemony and the consequential subalternity of women in the rustic environment. The

sharply defined gender roles in the play show Mr. Bryant, a wage farm-worker, as the unchallenged master of the house while Mrs. Bryant's domain is confined strictly to domesticity. Theirs is a typical household where man, being the bread winner, enjoys the freedom of choice and authority, while the woman's space and rights are limited. Her role of managing the house, rearing children and catering to the needs of the family is conventional, irreducible and unchangeable. Disallowed from nurturing any political or economic ambitions, she is, and has always been defined in relation to man as either a wife or a daughter, but never as an individual possessing an identity of her own. Proud of his financial independence and socially sanctioned superiority, man demands service from his wife and daughters rightfully. Contrarily, the woman, perpetually berated for her physical, emotional and intellectual weaknesses, has no other choice, but to seek solace in service. Consequently, she spends her entire life anonymously and silently.

The dramatic world of Wesker's *Roots* brings on the centre-stage petty farm workers and their women in the post-war agrarian society in Britain. Afflicted with irredeemable poverty, these people live in the scarcity-stricken and soul killing environs of ill-equipped homes. The play opens with the description of Jenny's place as "a rather ramshackle house in Norfolk where there is no water laid on, nor electricity, nor gas. Everything rambles and the furniture is cheap and old" (Wesker 11). Condemned to live in want, deficiency and squalor, these women manage their domestic chores in ways that are primitive, time-consuming and tiring. It is but obvious that the farm women are still deprived of the fruits of industrial and technological development that characterized the post-War Britain.

Financial crisis is a ubiquitous phenomenon here, whether at Jenny's or Mrs. Bryant's. In fact, the Bryant household, just like any other in Norfolk, is stricken with penury but dominated absolutely by the father figure, thus, turning it into a site for power struggle between

the two genders. Simone de Beauvoir's observation that "society has always been male; political power has always been in the hands of men" (Beauvoir 102), finds a befitting evidence in Mr. Bryant. Since he is the man of the house who earns money, however limited, and pays the bills, he enjoys absolute power, and disallows any intrusion in his life. No one has the right to infringe upon his authority - neither Mrs. Bryant nor his children. Since he is not on speaking terms with his daughter Jenny, despite Beatie's repeated requests, he refuses to allow her to bake a cake with the electricity he pays for, and the women have no choice but to comply.

Thus, denial of financial independence and paucity of money render these rural women vulnerable, and perpetuate domestic rows on a regular basis. Delving into its origin, Marxists trace the roots of women's subordination to economic power. In the domestic hierarchy, they confer superior status to the man on account of his control over the means of economic production, and ownership of material assets. Friedrich Engels in his *The Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1845) asserts that the domination of women emerged with the advent of private ownership of land and material assets by individuals during the evolution of human civilization. Hence, it is not the biological but economic consideration which bears the causal burden of the subordination of women, and deprives them of authority or freedom. When Beatie seeks her mother's intervention on the issue of baking, Mrs. Bryant can only fret and fume, or call her husband names for his stinginess. But Mr. Bryant, the patriarch, is firm, rude and unyielding,

MR. BRYANT: You pay the bills and then you call names.

MRS. BRYANT: What I ever seen in you God only knows.
Yes! An' he never warn me,
Bloody ole hypocrite!

MR. BRYANT: You pay the bills and then you call names I say.

MRS. BRYANT: On four pounds ten a week? You want me to keep you and pay the bills? Four pound ten he give me. God knows what he do wi' the rest. I don't know how much he've go, I don't, no I don't. Bloody ole hypocrite.

MR. BRYANT: Let's have grub and not so much o' the lip woman. (Wesker 47)

Evidently, Wesker is conscious of the stronghold that patriarchy enjoys in the rural domestic space. Mr. Bryant's unchallenged control on the family despite his meager income seems to justify Adrienne Rich's definition of patriarchy which says,

Patriarchy is the power of the fathers; a familial – social, ideological, political system in which men – by force, direct pressure or through ritual, tradition, law and language, customs, etiquette, education and the division of labour, determine what part woman shall or shall not play, and in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male. . . . The power of the fathers has been difficult to grasp because it permeates everything, even the language in which we try to describe it. (Rich 57)

Thus, since matrimony is not a bond of equals, the concept of mutual respect or love does not arise. Quarrels over money are a common feature in the Bryant household often bringing mutual communication to a stop, as Mrs. Bryant complains to her daughter, "That's how he talks to me – when he do talk. 'Cos you know he don't even talk more'n he hev to, and when he do say something it's either "how much this cost" or "lend us a couple o' "bob." He've got the money but sooner than break into that he borrow off me. Bloody old miser" (Wesker 47). Thus, even with in the domestic space, women enjoy no freedom, control or power, but are forced into muteness and anonymity by the patriarchal domination. It is obvious that she is unable to deconstruct the power structure that threatens to subdue her and refuses to regard her as a recognizable identity.

With their creative and productive potential dismissed as non-existent, which also, concomitantly, limits their chances of any financial independence, these women find solace only in the performance of domestic chores. Unlike their urban neighbourhood, they nurture no tradition of separate cultural or aesthetic pursuits in their leisure time. The everyday rhythm of the country life as reflected in Jenny's and Mrs. Bryant's monotonous regimen is as demoralizing as that of workers in a factory or any other artificially pressurized environment such as the one witnessed in Wesker's *The Kitchen*. Through a similar image in *Roots*, Wesker unveils the stifling atmosphere these women are confined in. The tasks of cooking, washing, cleaning, ironing, sweeping go on endlessly like that of Sisyphus, bringing no satisfaction, reward or recognition. Sheer monotony of their domestic drudgery has numbed their faculties and made them disinterested in everything else but food. No wonder all of them are obese, and Jenny's remark, "Well, there ent nothin' wrong in bein' fat" (Wesker 24) is symptomatic of their aimless and listless existence. In the absence of any dreams of a better living, or any hope of change, these farm women exhibit no interest in their own emancipation. With their enthusiasm blunted by a deadening routine, they have ceased to care, whether it is Mrs. Bryant, Jenny, Susan or Pearl. Only Beatie is able to assess the reason behind the predicament of women.

BEATIE: ...I'll tell you why, because if she had to care she'd have to do something about it and she find that too much effort. Yes she do. She can't be bothered – she's too bored with it all. That's what we all are – we're all too bored. (Wesker 72)

In Mrs. Bryant, Wesker embodies all those women who are trapped in the inhospitable, alienated and suffocating environs of domesticity guarded closely by inexorable patriarchs. Free from the responsibility of rearing her children, she is now condemned to pathetic ennui and loneliness. Sitting alone in the house for hours together

with practically nothing to engage her usefully, she finds diversion even in the passing of the local bus. Fatigued more by the tedium of a changeless life of monotony, penury and silence rather than any hard physical labour, Mrs. Bryant has nothing worthwhile to look forward to. With no intellectually stimulating activity to perform she, like most other women, seeks distraction in mundane gossip, cheap songs and pop music. Their sole link with the outer world is through radio and T V which, dominated by the commercial world, pander their ordinary taste and dullness of mind. It is against this cultural hegemonization that Beatie raises her voice strongly in the play.

Wesker's polemical work on the status of women gains substance when viewed in its historical context. The fifties and sixties were the decades of great change in Britain. Expanding educational opportunities, better health facilities, more chances of paid employment, entertainment facilities, and better living standards altered the lives not only of men, but also women, especially in the urban centres. Many housewives joined voluntary women's organizations and institutes which encouraged them to play a more constructive role in the life outside home, and speak up for themselves. However, the rural spaces remained untouched by all these developments for a considerable time, thus, still keeping the rustic women confined to their hearths. Historical accounts, according to Kershaw and Kimyongur, have tended to categorize only housewifery, motherhood and family responsibilities as women's domain. For rural women, especially, "the physical boundaries that separated work and home were either blurred or non-existent, and a pre-destined career meant being confined to the home, and the land" (Kershaw and Kimyongur 201).

Evidently, lack of exposure to a life of better opportunities, forced silence and servile mentality inhibit these women from protesting against victimization. De Beauvoir's observation that "it is not nature that defines woman, it is she who defines herself" (Beauvoir 69) appears befitting in this context, for quiet acquiescence of their subordinate

status within the domestic hierarchy has made them immune to their own suffering. No wonder, they never voice their discontent, or demand any change. Since meaningful communication within the family is extremely limited, they never get a chance to express themselves. Thus, wanting to be heard but confined in their alienated worlds, they talk more to themselves than to others as Wesker observes about Mrs. Bryant,

Mrs. Bryant is a short, stout woman of fifty. She speaks most of the day on her own, and consequently, when she has a chance to speak to anybody she says as much as she can as fast as she can. The only people she sees are the tradesmen, her husband, the family when they pop in occasionally. She speaks very loudly all the time so that her friendliest tone sounds aggressive, and she manages to dramatize the smallest piece of gossip into something significant. Each piece of gossip is a little act done with little looking at the person to whom it is addressed. (Wesker 32)

Dwelling further upon the mechanics of gender roles in the play, Wesker argues that in this debilitating environment, only marriage and motherhood lend meaning and justification to a woman's existence. Love and compatibility are irrelevant as woman is perceived to have no individuality of her own. No wonder, therefore, when Beatie inquires if Jenny is in love with Jimmy, the young lady very candidly reveals the harsh actuality, "Love? I don't believe in any of that squat – we just got married, and that's that" (Wesker 23). It is evident that marriage is the destiny imposed by the male-dominated society on women. Beauvoir's comment on the issue is noteworthy:

Marriage has always been a different thing for man and woman. The two sexes are necessary to each other, but this necessity has never brought about a condition of reciprocity between them...A man is socially an independent and complete individual; he is regarded first of all as a producer whose

existence is justified by the work he does for the group ... [but] the reproductive and domestic role to which woman is confined has not guaranteed her an equal dignity. (Beauvoir 445-46) Thus, despite strained conjugal relations as in the case of Mrs. and Mr. Bryant or Jenny and Jimmy, motherhood is an inescapable reality for women. Babies are seen as a natural outcome of every marriage "because you just have 'em," Moreover, as Jenny observes, "[You] Don't need no education for babies." Even Beatie feels that everything will be all right "once we are married and I got babies I won't need to be interested in half the things I got to be interested in now" (Wesker 22). Here, she embodies a typical attitude of a rustic woman who exists solely to get married and have children. She possesses no worth beyond that. This idea is obviously ingrained in her psyche by the hegemonic patriarchal rule which has stipulated and enforced clearly specified roles for the two genders.

The predicament of Mrs. Bryant and other women in *Roots* is emblematic of a life-denying atmosphere in the rural patriarchal set up which is not peculiar to Wesker's times alone. Women across societies and centuries have been deprived of opportunities to seek intellectual and creative fulfilment. Hence, they are condemned to lead meaningless and vacant lives on the personal front. Solitary confinement in the home, quite inevitably, leaves indelible scars on their temperaments. No wonder therefore, that Mrs. Bryant appears stubborn, irritable and impervious to change. She outrightly rejects Beatie's efforts to initiate her into an aesthetic life of art and music, for she prefers her primitive cocoon. Mrs. Bryant's mute acceptance of the drudgery of her life, and refusal to allow any change is emblematic of her own complicity to the subordinate status imposed on her by the systemic patriarchal order – a fact rued by most Feminist scholars to be at the base of women's subalternity.

However, Beatie is the only character in the play who refuses to submit to these traditional mores and dares to cross the age-old barriers by moving out to London to seek employment. In the open and liberal environment of the city and under the tutelage of Ronnie, she outgrows her family's restrictive atmosphere, and explores new areas of self-expression. Her introduction to a new politically, socially and aesthetically awakened life challenges her rustic past. The glaring contrast between the two worlds brings an acute realization of their own backwardness. Consequently, she is able to locate the root cause of the deplorable plight of her people, especially the womenfolk, and strives hard to awaken them from their stupor:

BEATIE. . . . Look! Ever since it begun, the world's bin growin' hasn't it? Things hev happened, things have bin discovered, people have bin thinking and improving and inventing but what do we know about it all? . . . I'm tellin' you that the world's bin growing for two thousand years and we hevn't noticed it. I'm telling you that we don't know what we are or where we come from. I'm telling you something's cut us off from the beginning. (Wesker 72)

Her angry protest at their own sluggishness may well be taken as a critique of the condition of women since the beginning of the human history. However, what stands out here is that Beatie owns her own share of responsibility as a woman in her condition of servitude. A representative of the modern liberated women of the post-war era, she is the only one in the play to be saved from this demoralizing existence "because she happens to have attracted a proselytizing thinker into a love affair. All learning is easier when the learner feels respect and admiration, and especially love for a teacher who is also a model" (Leeming 58). Beatie is lucky to avail the liberty of making lifestyle choices of music, art, clothing, taste and leisure in London, and is consequently, able to respond to the contemporary popular trends and tastes in fashion. But others are not as fortunate. Having rarely

ventured out of their domestic environs, these women have limited mental vision and no articulacy. Contrastingly, Beatie realizes the worth of education through her exposure to its positive effects. Only she dares to challenge their conventional life-style, and ventures into the world believed to be beyond her access. She not only recognizes but also candidly accepts her own deficiencies, and of other women who share the same vacuous social milieu. She laments:

BEATIE: It makes no difference, country or town. All the town girls I ever worked with were just like me. It makes no difference country or town, that's squit. Do you know when I used to work at the holiday camp and I sat down with the other girls to write a letter we used to sit and discuss what we wrote about . . . We couldn't say no more. Thousands of things happening at this holiday camp and we couldn't find words for them. (Wesker 53)

Here, Beatie draws our attention to the essential sameness of the plight of all women, and the tragedy of a faulty social order that pushes them into the darkness of ignorance and subordination. She also castigates the education system for being deficient, regressive, and responsible for her limited vision. Since it has not prepared her to face the challenges of an active life of art, music and literature, she is unable to comprehend Ronny's ideas fully. No wonder, she merely goes on quoting him all the time, and blames her mother for her own failure to match Ronnie's expectations.

Wesker's uniqueness as a dramatist lies not merely in the dramatization of the prevalent issues bothering the social landscape of rural English society, but also in suggesting ways to ameliorate the situation. Like Mathew Arnold, he too, has an abiding faith in the power of education. His prime interest lies in emancipating the lower classes whose lack of learning constitutes the prime cause of their subjugation. Since the farm labourers themselves represent a subaltern class, their women exist in a state far worse. Lack of awareness of

aesthetics and culture has created a vacuum in the lives of these poor women, pushing them into a purposeless, anonymous and monotonous existence. In this context, *Roots* is Wesker's passionate plea for the marginalized women's right to education, equality and dignity, voiced through his heroine, Beatie Bryant, who under the stimulating and positive influence of Ronnie, acquires freedom from her intellectual and instinctual servitude. Sensitized by him to the joys of an energetic and free life, Beatie epitomizes the awakened contemporary woman who refuses to conform to the image prescribed by the socio-cultural institutions. She is the only woman to resist her secondary status and voice her discontent with the vacuity of her existence. Having wriggled out of her claustrophobic provincial environment, she explores a new world, discovers her latent talents and upgrades her mental faculties with the help of her boyfriend. Consequently, she begins to appreciate art, music, books – all those things which had no visible presence on her mental horizon till now. Beatie's release from her inherited coarse environment is visible not only through her newly acquired tastes and confidence, but also her sexual freedom. Her suggestion to her shell-shocked sister: "Love in the afternoon gal. Ever had it? It's the only time for it. Go out or entertain in the evenings; sleep at night, study, work and chores in the morning; but love – alert and fresh, when you got most energy – love in the afternoon" (Wesker 16) is suggestive of how Beatie has learnt to live the way she wants. In fact, she and her sister, Jenny, older by a few years, are the polarized models of young women's individual identities nurtured by two different environments. The two embody a glaring contrast between the active and challenging world of London, and the dull, static and drab life in Norfolk which promotes satisfaction of mere animal instincts.

Wesker's aim in juxtaposing the life of Mrs. Bryant and other women in Norfolk on one hand, and that of Beatie Bryant in London on the other, is to dramatize the issue of emancipation of women. He wishes to highlight how women existing on the margins of every social

setup can, and must strive for a qualitatively different life by rejecting servitude. It is through Beatie that the playwright voices the hitherto dormant concerns and aspirations of the marginalized women deprived of meaningful and fruitful lives. However, Beatie is interested not only in her own emancipation, but also of others. Profoundly influenced by Ronnie's personal approach to socialism, she tries to transmit her newly acquired knowledge to other members of her family to nourish their monotonous lives. She realizes that "everyone must argue and think or they will stagnate and rot and the rot will spread" (Wesker 67). Liberated from her regressive situation, she acquires a progressive outlook with which she tries desperately to influence her mother and sisters back home, but fails. Their intransigence is symptomatic of the enslavement of their psyche. In an environment where independence of thought, choice and action is disallowed, women are reduced merely to what Beatie calls "a mass o' nothing."

Wesker's deliberate choice of Beatie as his mouth piece serves a vital function. By placing on the centre stage a simple rustic girl from a primitive and provincial background, Wesker has achieved an important dramatic purpose. Not only does he draw our attention to her own growth as an individual but also uses her to voice the concerns, aspirations and dreams of marginalized women. Moreover, it is through her that he offers a workable solution of pulling this class out of its abysmal misery by means of education. For him learning is the only panacea - a belief to which Beatie lends expression:

BEATIE. Education ent only books and music – it's asking questions, we're all taking the easiest way out. Everyone I ever worked with took the easiest way out. We don't fight for anything, we're so mentally lazy we might as well be dead. Blust, we are dead! And you know what Ronnie say sometimes? He say it serves us right! That's what he say – it's our own bloody fault! (Wesker 73)

Thus, it is evident that Wesker does not adopt a sentimental approach towards the plight of women. Neither does he romanticize them nor berate them as pitiable beings. In fact, he censures them equally for their own dismal situation, holding their lethargy, lack of inquisitiveness and easy acquiescence as culpable for their marginal existence in the society. It is for their own lack of interest in themselves that they do not count on any front, as Beatie very clearly points out, “But us count? Count mother? I wonder. Do we? Do you think we really count?” (Wesker 73)

Thus, going against the established grain, Wesker creates a rebel in his heroine. Beatie not only raises her voice against the system that deprives her intellectually, culturally and aesthetically, but also shuns it. Though her realization comes with an exposure to a better life shown by Ronnie, she nevertheless rebels against restrictive social norms. Her articulacy in the last scene where she stands alone, abandoned and helpless, is symbolic of the discovery of her own voice. As she thinks and speaks for herself, she signifies her freedom from the clutches of Ronnie, or for that matter any man, to lend words to her ideas, opinions and choices. Here, she emerges as the representative of what Helen Cixious calls the “New Woman”-

The New Woman will dare to create outside the theoretical, and will bring about a mutation in human relations. The New Woman is struggling against the meanings and values of the male-oriented world. The struggle takes place within each woman when she refuses compliance with the male-attributed identity. The New Woman has raised the essential question, that is, why are women and their concerns problematic? The probable answer to that question is – male supremacy -- which constitutes the revolutionary potential and actuality of feminism. (Qtd. in Habib 703)

Unlike Strindberg, Osborne or Arden, whose portrayal of women in their plays smacks of misogyny, Wesker views them as

joint partners in the familial and social set up. His liberal humanism comes to the fore when we see him lending a status of equality and dignity to women smothered by patriarchal hegemony and choking social tenets. By liberating Beatie from her miserably stifling environment, Arnold Wesker appears to be emulating Henrik Ibsen who penned the tale of Nora's freedom in *A Doll's House* as early as 1897. The fact that despite numerous agitations, reforms and resolutions, nearly half a century later, Wesker felt compelled to raise the same issue in this play, testifies that neither have the concerns of women been addressed with sincerity, nor has their position in the social environment altered at all.

Thus, this topical play can be viewed as a cogent comment on issue of education as the key to women empowerment which harks back to Mary Wallstonecroft's ideas in *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1789) written during the French Revolution in which she condemned the patriarchal order for restricting women's rights to education, self expression and economic independence. Her invocation for a better education for women had found an active support and voice in various suffrage movements organized by women's organizations in the early 19th century. Since then, education has always been seen as the doorway to women's emancipation. In *Roots*, Wesker also advocates a similar revolution among women so that they may acquire their own identity and voice. He rues the fact that women across cultures have been trapped in their immanent experiences regulated by mere corporal identity. Therefore, he exhorts them to transcend physical identification by seeking the fulfilment of their intellectual and artistic potential. Thus, while dealing with the question of women's voice and identity, Wesker's primary aim is the amelioration of their current condition regulated by arbitrary and orthodox social norms.

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Sonia Singh & A S Kushwaha

Aesthetics of *Viraha*: Navigating Sur's *Sursagar*

Surdas is vividly mapped as a figure of *Bhakti* tradition in the South Asian Literature. He is also modelled as a symbol of faith to suture the then existing socio-political and religious turmoil of Indian mind. His poetry is resplendent in dignity, power, joy and expressive triumph giving expression to the complete submission of self over the power of perfect love- and paradoxically even more so in the articulation of the love of separation, ie *viraha*. With his *Sursagar*, he gives us the rarest gems from his poetic ocean and shines unsurpassable on the horizon of Hindi literature. In this paper I have taken the verses from *Bhramar Geet* to explore the aesthetics of *Virah*. The foundational document referred while taking into account the *Bhramar Geet* of the saint poet Sur Das is *Srimad Bhagwat Purana* albeit there is a wide difference between the presentation of *virah* in both. While *Bhagwat* becomes the reference text for delineating *Krishnalila*, Sur's verses are the gems of poetic sublimity, linguistic vivacity, metrical skills and thematic richness in the unfathomable depths of *Sur's* ocean.

The trajectories of *virah* tied to the *bhakti* configurations reflect the pangs of the pain of separation as experienced by the Brij ecosphere with special reference to *gopis* in *Bhramar Geet*. *Bhramar*

Geet by Sur Das is the compilation of the poignant verses abounding in philosophic overtones in a dialogic and debatable form between Uddho and the *gopis* on the matter of faith in the path of knowledge (*gyan marg*) and the path of love (*prem marg*). The genesis of *Bhramar Geet* is from the journey undertaken by Uddho to Braj to console the love lorn hearts of the Braj people whom Lord Krishna left wailing while he departed to Mathura. Uddho was a great preacher, intellectual and *gyani* who gave no significance to the path of love in *Bhakti* tradition. He suffered from a subtle sense of pride of his *gyana* advocating the meditative path for one formless *God*. (*nirguna braham*). He is given the task to console and divert the *gopis* burning in the eternal fire of separation. Confident of his powers to persuade and preach knowledge, he reaches Braj. Krishna asked him:

*kari pehile pranam nand saun samachar sab deejo,
 Aur wahan vrishbhanu gop saun jay sakal sudhi leejo*
 (Pay obessiance first to *nanda* delivering the news
 Take all heed of then *vrishbhanu gop*). (translation mine)

Uddho is mistaken as *Krishna* by the *gopis* as he too is black, wore yellow robe and came on the same chariot that took Krishna away from them: "*Hai koi waiso hi anuhari*" (Someone with the same appearance.) (translation mine)

This mistake of identity is significant of the state of *gopis* who have forgotten the existence of some other in the world beside *Krishna*. Ironically the *gopis* perceive Krishna in every object which is differently preached by the *nirguna* followers to see one God in all universe. *Gopis* say,

*Kou ayo hai tan shyam
 vaisai pat, vasai rath baithin, vaisai hai ur daam*

(someone like *Shyama* approaches same robe, sits the same chariot and has the same garland swinging on the chest.)(translation mine)

The *gopis* surround Uddho and asks about Krishna but Uddho is so endorsed in the spectacle of Braj which echoes with Krishna's love that he is unable to deliver the message he wants to give. Still gathering all his verbal excellence to put forth the path of *yoga*, he preaches them to tread the path of *gyan yog* for which the great seers and saints meditate in seclusion.

Jo brit munivar dhyavahi par pavahi nahi paar

So brit seekho gopika ,ho cchadi vishayvistaar

This outpouring of knowledge was contrary to the faith of *Gopis* who react strongly .

Suni uddho ke vachan rahin neechey kari tarey

Mano sudha saun seenchi aani vish jwala jarey....

Murakh jadav jaat hai hamahi sikhawat jog

Hamko bhulin kehat hein, ho, ham bhulin kidhaun log

Gopihu tein bhayo andh tahi duhun lochan aisey

Gyanayn jo andh, tahi sujhe ghon kaise....

Prem nem ras katha kahau kanchan ki kancho

Jo kou pawey sees de takau keeje nem....

Prem prem sau hay prem so parahi jaye

Prem bandhyo sansaar,prem parmarnth paiye

Ekeh nihchey prem ko, jivan mukti rasaal

sancho ni kai prem ko ho jo milihain Nand lal

Gopis reply to Uddho marks the firm establishment of the path of love in devotion which is as firm as a rock, unshakeable by the preacher of knowledge. They rhetorically answer Uddho that they have seen the son of Nanda and experienced his love, so they will not take the path of *yog*. They attack Uddho with their piercing words by calling him blind as his physical eyes have not perceived the beauty of Krishna and even the eye of knowledge has also gone blind. *Gopis* confirm their supremacy by arguing that their heart's eye is open to the beauty and love of Krishna. The teachings of Uddho for one omnipresent God goes vain as *gopis* refuse to detach themselves from the love of *Krishna*. *Gopis* are like that flower who is left behind dry as Krishna the bee had taken the life elixir from it. Krishna and Uddho, both are bees, one has taken away the soul and other has come like a wanderer to preach. This ardent faith of *gopis* in Krishna inspires from *prem yoga* which kindles even more in separation.

According to the scriptural elaboration, *gopis* are believed to be the incarnation of the roots of Vedas, the saints and sages who soaked themselves in meditation. They are beyond the genderisation of a being. Surdas has put forth an example of the selfless love out casting all socio-cultural barriers. The simple, illiterate maids set an example of the utmost devotion which is above all bounds of society. The female voice and the definition of desire is purely selfless because their desiring subject is God. They long for a divine gaze and seek to enclose it to attain salvation. However the dynamics of gaze within the space of *virah bhakti* is complex as Krishna equally divides his attention amongst all his devotees. The articulation of the desire is in terms of a devotee and God, although the imagery employed is covalent with broader conceptions of affiliation in society. In almost all verses Surdas depicts metaphorically *gopis* as helpless woman in love with Krishna. The citations given by Sur account for *gopi's* self which is free from social and cultural epithetical predicates and their associated

duties and expectations. Surdas has widened the scope of *bhakti* by making *gopis* the propounder of a tradition which attaches least importance to the gender on the one hand and lays foundation on the other for the belief in the fact that even the subalterns, marginalized cow maids can excel the intricate path of knowledge of the classical Sanskritized scholars.

Virah is the mode of *bhakti* by many in the Indian *bhakti* corpus for e.g., Meera, Bauls, Sufis and Tulsi. *Virah* is experienced by both *nirgun* and *sagun* devotee. Kabir a *nirgun* poet expresses freely the eternal suffering if the God is separated from the being in many of his verses. These are the two major streams ostensibly on the basis of a theological difference in the way of conceptualizing the nature of the divine being that is the object of worship. *Sagun* devotees worship the anthropomorphic manifestations of the divine being. The distinction between the two strands lies mainly between the hegemonic, subordinate and subaltern ideological discourses. *Virah* then is that intense feeling in love for the beloved that the seeker finds him present even in his absence. Usually the *virah* verses are in the form of a complaint sung by a young woman separated from the lover. In *virah bhakti*, this role play is evoked wherein the absent Lord is seen as the husband to whom all devotion is directed. This *bhakti* is popularly known as *madhurya bhakti*. It was seen as the highest form of devotion by the *vaishnavites*. This feminine nature of *bhakti* in contrast to the masculine *vedic* tradition views the female condition as the universal condition of mankind. This can be further illustrated by stating that

The stereotypical South Asian misogyny sees the woman as a split between virtue and sexuality, weakness and strength, essentially duplicitous or hypocritical because of its multiplicity. This multiplicity and the heterogeneity inherent in woman makes her an apt vehicle for the state of devotee. The multiplicity results in elasticity which is a necessary condition for a devotee. Womanhood is also a central

metaphor for the helplessness and dependence felt by the devotee. She is an epitome of devotion and surrender, the prerequisites of *bhakti*. *Virah*, thus accommodates all these strands creating a rainbow of myriad feelings where primarily love reigns. *Shringaar*, *vatsalya*, anger, jealousy are also woven along with this primary emotion to express the deep inner feelings. It is this reason which compels poets like Surdas to reverse the gender, for an apt, expressing vulnerable yet confident emotional ecstasy of the *gopis*. Gender becomes a medium to express both desire and defiance. At a time when love was under the problematic of caste, colour and creed, Sur composes verses making *gopis* the mouthpiece of his utmost devotional experiences. *Bhagwad Geeta* postulates that all the manifested world is a work of *Prakriti* while Krishna is the Supreme *Purush*. This suggests that the world is an expression of the feminine creative principle. Lao tzu is also of the opinion that the nature of existence is more like a woman because man comes out of a woman, and woman comes out of woman. Man could be discarded but woman can not be. Woman is the basic element, more natural and, more elemental. Man comes near femininity when he creates, loves, surrenders and dedicates. I believe that is why Sur, a male has transformed his masculine strength to achieve feminine dedication and surrender. This leads us to a step ahead where *virah* as a mode of devotion becomes highly mystic. Mysticism where conscious and rationality cease. *Virah* is composite of the kind of mysticism where logic is put to an end and what remains is the eternal longing which ignites and kindles a never ending thirst and fire. Here I am reminded of the famous 154th sonnet Shakespeare which describes, " Love's fire heats water, water cools not love."

Sur's mysticism then involves a detour through metaphorical language involving a bodily experience of a self, emotionally driven by a perpetually and immitigably absent beloved. He composes rather

weeps an ocean about this experience and each *gopi* is a drop in this ocean. In articulating devotion Sur rejects the social taboos by expounding the universality of love seriously assessed through the oral gestures and effective description through *vyanjana*. The powerful intellectual and political sophistication in a simple and native vocabulary stands in contrast to the classical, terse scriptural knowledge. Therefore Tansen could say,

kidhaun Sur kau saar lagyo

kidhaun Sur ki peer

kidhaun Sur kau pad lagaun

bidhaun sakal sarir

(Some are hurt by a warrior's arrow

Some are tortured by pain

Those hit by sur's lyrics

Are pierced through and through.)

The most prominent feature of *virah* is the weeping for the desired object. This weeping becomes devotion of the rarest kind. The devotional tears of the *gopis* are manifestations of their transcendence, They cry out of their social obligations escaping them, and cry into the realm of divine:

Day and night our eyes rain tears

The monsoon storms have settled inside

Since shyam has gone away

Everywhere mascara smears

Blackening our cheeks and hands

From within our breasts a torrent spills

And our blouses never dry

Our bodies are liquefied in tears

Incessant sadness, passion, rage

Sur's poetry is not just an occasion of the *gopis* expression of incessant sadness, passion, rage challenging Krishna's messenger, Uddho. The cowherd girls are convinced that their beloved has forgotten his homeland, forsaken his *gopis*. The cry is thus to create a yogic heat to generate Krishna's presence. The sense of presence comes paradoxically, only in the absence of Krishna.:

brijjan sakal shyam bratdhari

bin gopal aur nahi janat aan kahe vabhichari

(The whole Braj is Shyam

Knows none other than Gopal, other's thought is incest.(translation mine)

The entire Braj has only one God :

ham, ali gokulnath aradhyo

man vach kram hari saun dhari pativrat prem yog tap sadhyo

(We, friends, worship lord of Gokul

Observed the jog of love, with words action and thought
(translation mine)

In another verse the *gopis* say,

tumhre virah, brijnath, aho priy? nayanan nadi badi

leene jaat nimesh kool dou, aite maan chadi

(In your *virah*, O Lord of the Braj, o beloved, river flows from eyes

Tears flood across the banks of the two eye lashes.(Translation mine)

The *gopis* express their inability to follow the path of knowledge and the *gyan* that Uddho has bought with him :

Uddho hamein n jog pad sadhe

Sunder Shyam salono giridhar nand nandan aradhe

(We cannot observe jog

We worship the black, beautiful, mountain bearer son of
Nand.(translation mine)

The *gopis* cannot be consoled as they have the idol of their
love in the heart which no preaching can take away:

Uddho hot kaha samujhave

chhitt chubh rahi sawari murat jog kahan tum laaye?

So what if you counsel, Uddho

(Heart is pricked by the black beautiful idol, why have you
bought jog ?(translation mine)

Gopis cannot follow the path of knowledge but they ridicule
and mock it in the manner of innocent woman who will not be persuaded
by the crafty merchandise of the Uddho:

Jog thagorii brij na bikaihai

(Jog swindler, Brij won't sell (translation mine)

Gopis' mockery is at its height when they make fun of the
great learning of the priestly Uddho. There is an indirect satire on the
then existing social priorities to the Brahaminical hypocrisies:

aaye jog sikhavan pande

parmarthi puranani lade jyon banjare thade

(The preacher has come to preach jog

An altruist, like a nomad ,he stands, with the baggage of
puranas.(translation mine)

The image of trade is employed by Sur keeping in mind the
various trading movements that affected India in those times. It was a
period of turmoil which finds expression in the poets of *Bhakti* tradition
also:

aayo bahut baro vyopari

(A great trader has come.(translation mine)

Bhramar geet is replete with such examples of rhetoric verbosity ,language skills and apt images to lay a strong foundation of the *virah* mode of worship.At a time when faith is put to various tests and all classical literature seems to contradict it's very basis ,the supremacy of *virah* and *sagun bhakti* is laid by the *gopis* when they say

tau ham manein baat tumhari

apnau brahm dikhawahu uddho mukut pitambardhari

(Then we follow your teaching

If you show us Brahm with a crown and yellow robe, Uddho
(Translation mine)

Gopis further say that they are fortunate to be the beloved ones of Krishna as they have tasted the fruit two ways. We find such illustrations only in the cultural history of India where *virah* is enjoyed far more then the union. We can also add to this list the *virah* of Radha,Meera , the *Sufi* poets and *Baul* singers. The various other love legends like Heer Ranjha, Shiri Farad etc have the same depth and intensity in which they find a sublimity which transcends them in the state of *virah*:

ham to dui bhanti fal khayo

Jo brijnath milain to neeko natru jag jas gayo

(We have tasted the fruit two ways

The union with the Lord of Braj, fine, or will sing the praises to the world.(translation mine)

They goes to the extent to exclaim that they bear no ill will for Uddho as he is the follower of the dull and dreary path of knowledge so he is unable to understand the language of the love lorn hearts.

terau burau na kou maney

ras ki baat madhup neeras sunu rasik hot tau jaaney

(We are not offended,

O nectar less bee, if you were full of love-nectar then only will you understand our nectar talks.)(translation mine)

Gopis are unable to comprehend the reason of Uddho's dry preaching. They interrogate the reason for giving this loveless *gyan* to them painfully;

premrahit yeh jog kaun kaaj gayo

deenan saun nithur vachan kahey kaha payau?

(To whom you sing this loveless jog

What you receive by these harsh words to the helpless.
(translation mine)

These are a few verses from the Sur's ocean, inspired by the perpetual absence of the beloved that inspires *virah* connoting both physical separation from the object of one's desire and the concomitant emotion one experiences due to separation. This poetry expresses the deep desire of the *gopis* to be always with Krishna in spite of the fact that they knew Krishna won't return as his going is also symbolic of the passing of time, i.e. from adolescence to manhood. *Gopis* have the fond memory of the ephemeral- yet profound presence of Krishna and the ritual; circle dance, whose memory inspires *virah*. Krishna's absence generate tears which washes away the knowledge of Uddho. What is meaningful here is the fact that this *virah* is not altogether mournful. Rather it is a comforting experience that re (creates) the union by experiencing the presence in absence. The various citations prove that Sur firmly puts forth the *gopis*' devotional mourning as a self dissolving phenomenon where selfless love softens the rigid structure of social obligation and domestic duties. This in turn dissolves

the social and political predicates imposed upon them, They are free to negotiate their identity. *Gopis*, thus are like yogis as their *virah* clears away oppressive social structures and free them to live the life of an ascetic on the margins of society leaving all social conventions behind. They are inspired by a divine madness that finds living under the restrictions of law that is socially unacceptable.

Hindu scriptures depict devotion as incongruous with or as an alternative to custom, family, obligation, caste and social duty. Sur Das challenges this perception of *bhakti*. He abandons the social demands that complicate or prevent a devotee from loving God. Thus *virah* becomes a natural form of religious discipline legitimized as yoga's rival sibling. *Yog* and *virah*, both respond to the inevitable separation between self and divine. Yet *virah* takes delight in the suffering of separation imputing to the positive religious valency. On the other hand *yog* attempts to surmount it through a contemplative form of meditation and strict body discipline. Both *vi* (*yoga*) are meditative, yet *viyog* is a verbalized form of meditation characterized by a straight forward lamentation addressed directly to the deity. *Yog* has an indirect nonverbal method of meditation. *Viyog* seeks to establish a direct, sensible connection to the divine—a religion of the heart as it were in which salvation is accessible through devotion. *Yoga* seeks salvation through a gradual process of self discipline and cerebral knowledge. In the differentiation between yoga and *viyog* we find the recrudescence of the age old dichotomies between feminine/masculine, body/ mind, emotional/ rational, and episteme/theoria. With the absolute knowledge of love, *gopis* are able to triumph in converting Uddho (Krishna's black bee envoy) from the misguided techniques of *yoga* to *viyoga* as the proper devotional practice. Uddho is so effected by the love sick *gopis* that he forgets all his treasure of knowledge and reports to Krishna, with tears in eyes which are wiped by *Krishna* and He asks whether he has taught jog to the *gopis*.

premvihal uddho girey, rahe nain jal chchay
ponchi peet pat so kahi, aaye jog sikhay

Love lorn Uddho fell, tears rolling through the eyes
 wipes with the yellow cloth, Krishna asked, taught jog and
 came ?.(Translation mine)

Sur, thus is successful in establishing *virah* though simple yet profound form of religious practice and the proper end of religion—the *bhaktidharma*. The entire corpus of Sur's poetry constitutes a kind of poetics expressive of interconnections between the individual self and the aesthetic, the philosophical and political dimension of a lived reality. It forms a highly charged subjectivity of the South Asian literature providing spiritual fields, sublime desires and equally sublime sense of loss and suffering. It offers an idiom in which the individual efforts to live beyond one self (and may be die for it) .

Uddho preet na maran vichare
preet patang jarey pavak pari, jarat ang nahi tarey
preet pareva urat gagan chadi girat n aap sambharey
preet madhup ketki kusum bans kantik aapu praharey
preet janu jaise pay paani, jaani apanpo jarey
preet kurang naadras ,lubhdak taani taani sar marey
preet jani jannani sut karan ko n apanpan harey
Sur Shyam saun preet gopin ki kahu kaise niruwarey?

This ideal of devotional love constitutes our cultural memory and makes us realize the ethos of the past and links it with the present . We find that this expressed intensity, the madness of language transcends time, transforms secular to sacred establishing the *virah* as ultimate union. It carries valence even today because of the emotional intensity that enables the articulation of individual self. It is a response to the

radical atmosphere of not only those days but present times too. The emphasis is on a lived experience over the doctrine, *bhakti* over knowledge, emotion over intellect, and in literature the nonclassical folk or *desi* over the classical or *margi* and *shastriya*. This emphasis makes it relevant for all times. Above all, the most outstanding feature of this poetry is the centrality of love. Although anti intellectual but it privileges the intensity of love:

aakl ke madarse se uth ,ishq ke maikade mein aa

(Arise from the school of intellect, enter the tavern of love.)

This was the challenge presented before the canonized Brahminical order of that time and even today. In fact this is the very basis of the cognition locating *gyan* in *bhakti*. It is to go beyond the challenges of domination of rationalism and the artistic reconciliation of sensuousness with reason. The *virah* poetic compositions deny the thought of any other within the cardiac space and negate entirely the cerebral space.

Uddho, man na bhaye das bees

ek hatho so gayo shyam sang ko aaradhe eesh

No ten twenty hearts, Uddho

(Had one that is with Shyam, who will worship God?)

(Translation mine)

Thus the images activate both eroticism and transcendentalism simultaneously. Sur's poetry paves way to create a space to accept the innate humanity of one's social "other". This is the aesthetics of *virah* which pertains not just to the senses but harmoniously blends all polarities including the sedimentation of the past with the imperatives of contemporaneity. It is distinct from the melancholia or resignation as it is constituted of the aesthetic pleasure which is a liberating phenomenon. Love, truth and freedom are reaffirmed as values in precisely the moment of their loss. This love impulse has a social meaning

as well because it is relevant to our progressive sensibilities. The aesthetics of *virah* is a lived reality moving beyond the poetic aesthetics to the realms of the social and from the self to the other. This kind of love gives society a firmer base as it is capable of liberating the senses from the forces of repression. *Virah bhakti*, thus is a way of life celebrating the liberating force of aesthetic pleasure as a resource for future over the institutionalized way of life.

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Rita Garg

**Protracted Negotiations with Self :
A Comparative Study in Diaspora**

With an inherent comparative note based on the land of origin and the host, diaspora has much more to it than the demographic mobility only. Analysing it, the creative genius ponders over the cumulative effect on the mundane life of the migrant. The writer's vision extended to the temporal and spatial extremes has inextricable links with identity ascertained during the oscillation between the two cultures—the original one and the adopted.

Along with the glittering hues on the widening horizon also befalls the angst as is the ironical duality of diaspora for the Indians — the present paper is about the cause of the non-girmitians, meaning hereby the diaspora by choice.

Although the present context of diaspora by choice too is not, necessarily a pleasant experience, yet this is adding a new dimension to the plethora of Indian Writing in English.

While much has been communicated by such theorists as Edward Said or Homi K. Bhabha, nevertheless, Prof Jasbir Jain, Abha Pandey Shaikh Samad, Thomas Faist etc. have many more dimensions to project. AbhaPandey opines that the term diaspora is “being used as a substitute of ‘deterritorialised’ or ‘transnational’ which refers to

population that has originated in a land other than in which it currently resides and whose economic and political networks cross the borders...”(20).

To further this it would be in the fitness of things to read it with the analysis made by Prof Jasbir Jain as she explains the present scenario with retrospective effect:

We have come a long way from the 1840s....Today’s diaspora –the post 1970s diaspora—is different from all these pasts....The parameters applicable to the earlier diaspora are no longer valid for a variety of reasons A willingness to go and stay, the growth of technology and media, and the prioritization of economic categories both internationally and individually. (22)

The above has supplementation in the views of Thomas Faist who lays emphasis on the bindings faced by the migrants on the host land:

... diaspora has been often used to denote religious or national groups living outside an (imagined) homeland, whereas transnationalism is often used both more narrowly—to refer to migrant’s durable ties across countries—and, more widely, to capture not only communities, but all sorts of social formations, such as transnationally active network, groups and organizations.(09)

Depending upon the circumstances borne by the diasporan, the referred facts may dominate either in singularity or in plurality. The pains and anxieties of the immigrants enhance as there is love for self, occasional lack of moral values or lust and the agony of missing the exact goal. Somehow, this mitigates with the recurrence of faith, belief, values and love. The resumption helps fight the assimilation dilemmas, cultural conflicts, family values and, above all, the freedom of self.

An indelible impression of cultural bondage forms the mental strength of the diasporan. For a while, with the cultural changes, the identity gets dwindling between the host country, along with its people and the homeland. Under the pressures of the lure of lucre, no visibility exists to build mounds of original culture on the host land—although the craving is existent. The impact of desire, undoubtedly hits human emotions. This has appropriation in the comment of Shailja Wadikar: “Commerce triumphs over culture”(205).

Nonetheless, as the experience covers the wider horizons, the culture gaps are filled—may be as a matter of need. The periphery is that diaspora is an inadvertent source to locate myth of the homeland and recollect the memories untarnished. Thus the consequences lead to hybridization and homogeneity. Shelley’s belief, if winter comes, can spring be far behind, has pertinence in, if globalization comes can glocalization be far behind—although much cornered by dislocation, displacement and disjunction. The maintenance of identity in a poly-ethnic society is a tough stand—particularly, in isolation, as forlorn and devoid of joy. In fact, this is experimental on individual identity of acculturation. Also this is triphasic. Abyss of the helplessness and the call of the intellect settle to the paradigm of the betterment credentials may be, cohesive and reparative.

Thus, binary categories are accentuated because of the monolithic notions of the past related to ethnic culture. Room also remains for coalesced cultural syncretism and multiple spatial references by way of mapping and remapping the occurrences.

The diasporic feature of globalisation minus glocalization is not admissible to the diasporans as per the Indian Writing in English novelists writing on diaspora. Similarly, Arundhati Roy in *The God of Small Things*, Manju Kapur in *the immigrant* and Rita Garg in *An Abbreviated Child*, paint diasporic reflection with cultural dislocation consisting of human breadth and wisdom casting a longing lingering

look behind on the land of origin.

The three novelists pointedly surmise the reader with a distinct articulation of the intersection of racism, ethnicity and fragmentation on both the lands. The cultural assimilation, related to transnationalism, marginalization, nostalgia, food, language, epistemology, emotional depravity, and above all, economic pressures, dispenses with the peace of unified sensibility of the immigrant which subsumes the efforts to weigh equally the native culture and the adopted culture. In spite of the chosen condition of the diaspora—as referred to the above novels—it is neither passionately homogenised nor always deserted for the trivialities of quotidian nature—how dismal and tear-jerking is even the voluntary diaspora.

The initial enthusiastic approach of the immigrants fades later on account of such lacks as deprivations, differentiations and distances. The stepping onto new traditions, home and cultures are weaker as the original ones are fastidious and the movement between the two worlds creates catastrophe to be fought with.

The aforesaid three voices concerning diaspora have those untouched dimensions of the individualized approaches to the unforeseen expatriate estrangement associating powerlessness, aimlessness, strangeness, and ignorance at the outset. The journey is rather tough to complete as the diasporan is always in transit. Beyond the physical settlement remain the chequered proprieties of the bygone days on the homeland and the host. The unsettled being lacks much in being the insider. All through operates the lack of integrity. Although, the advantageous issue is that the invocation of the previous life assists in the assemblage of the shattered identity of the immigrant.

Diasporic literature projects clearly that the new place either engulfs in the heat or chokes in the bindings of that shining edifice which is not of the immigrants. They may try hard to dissolve boundaries but only to be stiffened in that struggle. In *The God of Small Things*,

the novelist describes the anglophiles in India. They face turbulence for the reason of mimicry in life. Notwithstanding this, diaspora is taken up and the miseries befalling are as endless as the distances from home land. The central figure, Rahel finds her life a failure as she is not able to finish her studies. Her twin brother, Estha too has been sent away. Their emotional link has a remarkable permanence. This naturally, creates a vacuum and the American young man, Larry McCaslin who proposes her is soon accepted for marriage. They go to Boston. The pain of being away from brother, Estha always reflects on her face and she is not able to enjoy the marital bliss and discontinues marital relationship. Somehow, for no emotional mooring in the family, she is not tempted to leave America. Rather, her preference is to continue there, even if the job available is of lower type at the fuel station. Thus, follow the consequences of the inappropriate marriage and then be on the host land.

The country of birth has such bindings as roots, kinship, choices, preferences, dislikes as well as disgusts. It is nascent to look forward to all this on the host land. If, gradually, familiarity is developed, absorption comes. The propriety of conditions is understood when the surroundings along with ethics and ethos are followed. Nevertheless, Rahel learns on the foreign land of her brother's arrival back to the parental house and she returns to India—the realization of the warmth of home comes to the twins. How thoughtful that the dismembered prefers diaspora as a satisfactory step but returns with the idea of re-linking the kinship which could not be abroad otherwise. In spite of lacking in social and financial status, she has no grudges and continues there till the news of her brother's home coming in India. This is very much in association with her mental attitude.

ManjuKapur fully ascribes her novel, *the immigrant* to diaspora—covering all the aspects—social, cultural, economic, political and religious. The diasporan woman character, Nina endorses self to

emotion-lacking moorings and cravings in life. The shortcomings of the luxurious implantations make her life full of pitfalls and consequential manoeuvrings of dismay at self and the associates. Facing the diaspora results in loose threads, once from this corner now and then from another and not being in the know of the duration to prevail.

Hesitation in the delay to adapt to host culture increases the mounds of uncalled for burdens. Anyhow, for pressures—internal and external—formulation of self is taxing as the situations are unseen and unheard of. Befitting the conditions, requires counselling and companionship but only leading to gradual efforts made by the immigrant. Thus the initial stages of the adaptation have the constraints as food habits, distances, and above all, the inability to be rooted into subjugation by way of first entrance into a bottleneck situation. Even the fast ones to adapt, crib about the roots lost. With soul fluttering half-inclined, body and flesh crushed under monetary burdens, the boundaries are crossed either to reach into a bottleneck or let the journey boomerang. Nonetheless, the outcome is vacuous and vacillating the hues—although charming but also injurious. The dominance of soul expresses through the need to sustain life—half embarrassedly—tied to a faggot.

This appetite of heart and soul is questioned advertently by Nina: “What can one do with a hungry heart”(131)?

The hunger of heart, ironically enough, touches the stomach also: ‘I am a vegetarian,’ confessed Nina, looking at the rounded lump of glistening brown bread...’(135). Confession increases the emotional swinging as her dentist husband, Ananda a well oriented Indian immigrant in Canada philosophises casually: “When in Rome do as Romans do”(135).

The extremity does not end here. Rather too formal attitude of the relatives—seems warmth-lacking. Ironical the situation is, as in India, for Nina being taken care of by the relatives was always as to

why they would poke their nose into the personal matters of hers and her mother. Relatives in Canada seemingly lack propriety but that is the demand of ethics. Way back in India, she was doing her job, her mother was also with her, colleagues and friends were always there as per convenience and to fill the vacuum, books and lectures were faring well.

The third obstruction is of dress, the question also relates to the dilemma of Indian woman's figure with a—much or less—projection of tummy: “I don't know if they would suit my figure. Indian women are either pears or apples”(148).

Coping with this does not suffice as the constraint of language is also to be fought with. Her husband, Ananda has a reputation of a cultured man and the similar is expected of her. For this, he comments: “That you are a traditional, backward Indian girl, like some of these women you see at the India Club, can't even speak English properly”(150).

Too much of expectations are beyond management. As it comes to spouses living relentlessly, with no one to guide, that too in the rootless surroundings, the human psychology has the possibility of being famished of propriety. This applies to Ananda: “One day he might try again with a white woman. He loved his wife but he didn't want to feel that she was the only one in the world he could have sex with. What kind of man would that make him with his masculinity so limited”(151)?

Nina too, can't constrain self and develops carnal relations with a married batch mate who finally, because of Nina's refusal to continue with relations, rapes her in America where his wife works.

Accidentally, Nina's getting to know of her husband's extramarital relations and her own mishap, change her rationale. India has none for her as mother is dead and job is not necessarily possible now. Her inability to continue with her husband—a man constantly

sharing maximum possible domestic responsibilities and helping in completing the librarian's course—makes her leave him. Nina concludes to look forward to another journey:

The continent was full of people escaping unhappy pasts. She too was heading towards fresh territories, a different set of circumstances a floating resident of western world.

When one was reinventing oneself, anywhere could be home. Pull your shallow roots and move. Find a new place, new friends, a new family. It had been possible once, it would be possible again.(334)

Her confidence is the last resort as there is no future in India. She had accepted the marriage for such reasons as her coming to exceed the nubile age without marriage, longing for company and lots of money. She accepts this marriage and leaves her mother destitute only for the satisfaction of her mother and her own comforts. Way back in India, not owning a house was also a problem. She compares her plight with Zenobia, a friendly colleague, who is alone but has a house. Nina feels if she too owned a house that would have enabled her live like that.

The third novel, *An Abbreviated Child* by Rita Garg associates diaspora with education, more supportive to enable an individual, Chandrima be self-reliant as well as of help to others. A momentary phase develops in her life to creep into the niche of permanence by way of marital bond. All this remains that dream which would not come true. Somehow, there are no regrets because the needs of the nation, the requirements of the loving ones on the home land are more significant. The academic progress of Chandrima—as is apparent—on the host land is ascertained vehemently. Chandrima is working on Ph.D. in Economics. Her Professor has “a word of praise”(84) for the work. For the economic pressures, the people of Chandrima in India suffer all the time. Her studies in Alph University in

the USA are simply a step ahead to fight the economic needs. In fact, generally, the poor conditions in India also support the fact that Chandrima, an orphan, willing to fight for her orphanage—her home—goes abroad: “The purpose of joining Alph University in US is to complete Ph.D. in Economics and return with competence to earn better”(48). This is her choice otherwise there is no compulsion as Radha, the orphanage ‘Mother’ says: “Elderly beings have to be selfless. I would always suggest you all to take life as per your choice”(48).

During her pursuance of Ph.D. programme abroad, one day, the Professor over there enlightens on the relevance of medical tourism in India in comparison with tourism, agriculture, handicraft etc.:

The recent addition to this is medical tourism. A large amount is earned out of it. Medical facilities are on the increase day by day. All sorts of major operations, inclusive of various transplantations are taking place. As compared to developed countries, Medical facilities are cheaper in India. Besides, tourism gets a boost. Patients often get tempted to visit places.(83)

The Professor finished the lecture but leaves Chandrima brooding over: “Easy market, easy preys was the thought to dominate”(83).

Since she herself is from an orphanage, she is in the know of how in India organs are sold, women are sold or children are sold. Very well, she understands this as she has lived with the destitute—the fate of a kidnapped one or a sold orphan. This bare truth of medical tourism as the organs of the ill-fated ones are sold and purchased, detaches her. Further, her boyfriend, a Canadian, Bon, pursuing Ph.D. under the same Professor, has his father suffer from failing kidneys. The reason is his being a drunkard and transplantation is called for. This forces Chandrima to think:

The Doctor would ask for a kidney.

The kidney would be procured.

All the legalities would be performed. . . .

Somewhere or the other, abduction, kidnapping, purchasing, misery or fraud would be at the back of all this.(94)

The sharp contrast is created as to why some kidney be sold for supplanting monetary gains to a father or a criminal and why the rich spoil health for the access of money.

This line of thought reaffirms her belief of being a returnee. Chandrima's step befits the line of thought given by AbhaPandey:

The term 'Indian diaspora' has acquired a new meaning with the achievement of Sunita Williams, she has proved Indians wherever they are whether on the other side of the globe or in the space have never severed with their umbilical chord from the land of their origin and have maintained a link with their ancestral land in terms of culture and religion.(19)

How religiously Chandrima acts! In no way, her returning to India is an ordinary step, but she must. Even if that is taken to be *deewangi*—a whim of hers:

Deewangi has to reach the ultimate, otherwise that is madness. The lower level of *deewangi* is insignificant. Then the feelings are at the corner. That mars the attractive part of this pursuit. Urmila of the *Ramayana* stayed in the palace. She was sorrow-stricken but not *deewani* enough to accompany others in the jungle hardships along with her husband, Laxman.(99)

To be deeply rooted in the land of origin, to which Chandrima really belongs, is not giving her a luxuriant way of life. Her relations with Bon are also to be curbed. She does so because her object is clear to her. Chandrima remains a sojourner—as her circumstances demand. From the description, nowhere can it be said that she is

mentally unoccupied to ponder over mixing in or being alienated from the host society. Single minded she devotes self, in the interest of her people, and nation. How to bring joys to the deprived ones is the aim of her life. Since her anxiety is bound to her own beings, so nothing changes her attitude. At the time of departure from India also, her mind was filled with the thought of betterment of others. As a returnee also, her concern is the same. At mental level, she is a benefactor with benedictions for others. Thus the individual's mental strength and objects in life play a meaningful role.

Diaspora and its major advantage – to earn abroad and send money—finish with her arrival back home. She returns to work in India and work on the line of creating jobs for the labour and also for the skilled professionals. This is in sharp contrast with the immigration accepted on the host land as a matter of defeat.

Back in India, she discusses with Roderigo, an orphan companion:

Roderigo suppose we increase the resources of our NGO and take up places like an island where lack of civilization cannot accommodate people other than labourer. We teach there; establish institutions to learn harder and better. This also creates better employment for our higher stratum.(102)

She has courage of her own. Otherwise, the immigrant on the host land has certain requirements. Referring to Yogesh Atal's the sandwich culture in the Insulator and Aperture model(1989), Abha Pandey says that according to Atal, the immigrant looks forward to a definite level of "acceptance by the host society"(40). The immigrant also wishes for one's own community and the help as of insulators.

This acceptance comes easier to the man characters. In *the immigrant*, Ananda is fully established with the realization of needs and fulfilment. In comparison with the disturbance of Nina, he is easily

and finally settled. Since the beginning of arrival on the host land, he is over occupied as a dental student—earning, studying, along with loans. Nothing recapitulates his brain as he is too occupied with his profession and has little recreation or brooding over during limited free time. What troubles Nina, leaves this man unperturbed. Her mingling, assemblage, acculturation are forced while to him this is natural, normal and fit to live with. The courage of one's own plays the dominant role. The mental engagement is the second factor to occupy a diasporan. In all the three novels, the levels of suffering vary for this. No doubt, man characters miss the original land but without much perturbation. Their working remains as per calibre. In *The God of Small Things*, Rahel is not able to settle abroad, but her uncle, Chacko is a settler abroad. Rahel's uncle, Chacko, a Rhodes scholar, is a misfit in Britain for being more or less jobless but prefers to go to Canada as a businessman: "Chacko lived in Canada now, and ran an unsuccessful antiques business" (15). During his intermittent stay in India, he had plentiful time to judge over and plan future. His awareness of pains and troubles of the expatriate has clarity to him. Even then, his departure is suggestive of being uncared of any such dilemma as a diasporan and takes that track which does not help his niece. For them, the demarcation of choice is in money and emotions respectively. Similarly, Bon, a Canadian has no disturbances of being on a host land.

Thus it would not be out of context to mention that the indentured labour emigration was sufferance, compulsion, economic bondage, exile and above all a dead end road to the 1.5 million Indian girmities on the lands full of malaria, draught and exploitation, a condition totally under the serfdom—coolitude.

In the present context, it is the occupation giving invigorating courage to fight the intercultural miscommunications and conflicts as experienced by the immigrants in the referred novels. Otherwise, the sense of alienation recurrently moves the thought process and the

dichotomy of not being fully occupied and not being westernized to the core is the consequential ironical predicament ultimately. Negotiations with self on the host land call for a much more positive attitude as the land of origin too is full of thorns. Also, the obstacles and obstructions on account of the conditions faced on the land of origin are occasionally the issues unheeded on the host land.

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Priyanka Yadav

Voicing the Unvoiced in *What the Body Remembers*

For centuries, India has been a patriarchal and patrilineal society where the role of woman has been highly marginalized and her status constantly reduced. From this standpoint, when we look at the Indian diasporic women writers in Canada, we find an attempt on the part of these writers to transcend societal restrictions and renegotiating or relocating the ‘self’ in another culture, leading to the re-examination of gender roles. The ‘adopted land’ with a different culture and seemingly an entirely different set of norms gives these women writers an opportunity to look back and redefine women roles. The writer casts off marginalized status and questions the patriarchal hegemony. Women writers, those who are in India and of Indian Diaspora, have portrayed real life protagonists, relating to the plight of women and their wretched condition and their struggle to seek due recognition and equal rights in the society. Shauna Singh Baldwin, one of the prolific writers of Indian Diaspora in Canada, uses the platform of narrative fiction in *What the Body Remembers* to record the so vulnerable and physically, socially and psychologically distraught lives of women. Though Baldwin peculiarly narrates the story of Indian Sikh women in partition milieu, it’s a story of thousands of women all across the world. Two women in a polygamous marriage and the suppressed, repressed

and compressed world of the 'other' (the woman). This paper examines how Sikh women found themselves 'doubly marginalized' in the partition phase, torn apart between political and personal, how their all attempts towards self-integration and establishment of their identity, ended up making them realize that they were not the 'owners' of their lives and their lives could be blown all away at the slightest show of free will. This work evaluates the very ironic fact that how 'stereotyping agencies' had been working since ages within women 'themselves' but they always felt that it was only patriarchy who was responsible. Precarious relationships within their own clan were always so immanent but somehow women avoided accusing them openly in the larger scenario of whole discourse.

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Migration and immigration have directly or indirectly affected several generations of contemporary writers in English, engendering hybridism and culture complexity within them to grapple with multiple cultures and countries and tensions between them.

South Asian women writers are the most rapidly emerging group on the North American literary scene. Ramabai Espinet, Jhupma Lahiri, Amulya Malladi, Bharati Mukherjee, Uma Parmeswaran, Kirin Narayan, Anita Rau Badami, Shauna Singh Baldwin are some of them. These diasporic writers are not merely assimilating to their host cultures but they are also actively reshaping them through their own new voices bringing new definitions of identity. Their works signal an engagement with a matrix of diversity, of cultures, languages, histories, people, places and times. The diasporic community is varied and complex. As Bhikhu Parekh also puts:

The diasporic Indian is like the Banayan tree, the traditional symbol of the Indian way of life, he spreads out his roots in several soils, drawing nourishment from one when the rest dry up. Far from being homeless, he has increasingly come to

feel at home in the world. (106)

Yet this multiplicity of 'homes' does not bridge the gap between 'home'—the culture of origin and 'world'—the culture of adoption. The immigrant writer 'writes' his sense of belonging and this is worked out through retellings of the past in various different ways and thus the pre occupation with the past, the lost homeland and the lost identity is always there. It is through these retellings that inner conflicts are worked out and resolved, a renegotiation takes place with the self and a voice is found for self assertion. When writers frame their realities and look for parallels elsewhere, the connections are being made between the remembered, the experienced, the collected and the desired. The past remains a part of the 'self', conscious of inhabiting different worlds. Their imagined communities do not substitute old ones; rather create new marginalities, hybridities and dependencies, resulting in multiple marginalizations and hyphenizations.

The sense of an identity is very crucial for an individual both as an independent entity and social relationships. It is defined through environment, past experiences, collective memories and in this process the space occupied by the place it is located in, is crucial to the construction of the self. The past always lingers back in the mind and have a tendency to surface either through recognition or memory or collectivity. The role of imagination is also a crucial one in this whole process, culture; history and memory interact with multiple dimensions. Women writers, who migrated to different countries have always recalled their past, showing the inevitability of forgetting. They write their identities, negotiating the memories of inherited past and female projections of duties and rights.

For centuries, India has been a patrilineal and patriarchal society where the role of women has been highly marginalized and her status constantly reduced. From this standpoint, when we look at the

Indian diasporic women writers in Canada, we find an attempt on the part of these writers to transcend societal restrictions and renegotiating or relocating the 'self' in another culture. Relocation in another culture, leads to the re-examination of gender roles. The 'adopted land' with a different culture and seemingly an entirely different set of norms gives them an opportunity to redefine gender roles. They cast off the parameters lined for women in the patriarchal set up. But we need to study the experiences of the female protagonists to see how far they try to emerge out of the 'other'.

Novel has been one of the prime genres of literary expression, a torchbearer in the realm of women's emancipation. Women writers abound in themes that relate to the plight of women and their struggle to seek recognition and rightful place in family and society. Celebration of women has a long tradition in Indian ethos and literature which recognize the Shakti (power) of women. However, empowering them in real life always legged behind the declared myths.

Women writers those in India and those of the Indian diaspora have portrayed real protagonists who are peculiar in their relationships to their surroundings, society, and their families or so on. And the narrative fiction became a canvas to challenge the hegemonic practices of gender biased society.

Shauna Singh Baldwin, born in Montreal and brought up in India, is one of the prolific writers of Indo-Canadian women diaspora. She is the author of *English Lessons and Other Stories* and her short fiction, poetry and essays have been published in various literary magazines in U.S.A., Canada and India. Her first novel *What the Body Remembers* published in the year 1999 has remained the recipient of Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Canada/ Caribbean region (2000). The idea for this novel was born out of a short story titled 'satya' which won the 1997 Canadian Literary Award. With the partition milieu, *What the Body Remembers* is the story of a

polygamous marriage and three characters, Saradarji, his first wife Satya and her archenemy Roop, the young girl whom Sardarji, a wealthy person, Rawalpindi born, UK educated with a degree in engineering, is a man caught up in the midst of transition on more than one front. Baldwin has drawn Roop's character, her desires, her fears, her valour and most crucially her patience and altruism, with great detail and minuteness. Satya and Roop, the two women married to Sardarji who are so different in their personality and temperament, live under the same fear of the fragility of their security. From different levels of prosperity and status they see each other and with clarity the ease with their lives can be blown all away at the slightest show of free will or disobedience. It is a story lived by many women, all across the world.

The writer, Shauna Singh Baldwin, herself commented upon the agenda behind the novel:

My challenge to myself was not to tell the story of the Sikhs from the standpoint of the men——there a few non-fiction books that cover their story——but from the perspective of the Sikh Women. This quickly became very frustrating because books on Sikh history are usually written by men. As a member of one of the few religions in the world that actually says women and men are equal, and demands that a Sikh woman be called 'princess' to show how valuable she is, I found my research running up against the difference between theory and practice". (Shauna Singh Baldwin)

Most of the history is male written but here we have two women- Roop and Satya- symbolically-Beauty and Truth, expressing and recording their experiences as being the members or representing thousands of 'other' women, who suffered silently at every turn of history. Virginia Woolf argues in *A Room of One's Own*: "Women are

simultaneously victims of themselves as well as victims of men and upholders of society by acting as mirrors to men”. (35)

This novel begins mainly in Punjab———Pari Darvaza———the doorway of fairies———a small village where Roop takes birth. The historical frame work for the events in the protagonists’ lives is 1937 to 1947. Deputy Bachan Singh, Roop’s father, is a man of genuine standing in the village but of modest means. Roop, born into a Sikh family of dependents and servants, receives the benefit of a school education and some religious training but sees that it’s a men’s world and it’s on her brother that her father’s all ambitions are concentrated. Being brought up in a household which has more women than men, she is pampered as well, perhaps because she is more beautiful than her sister. In her household, a variance is found in women characters- her mother—Deputy Bachan Singh’s ‘Purdah’ woman, who could never see anything outside in the world other than the house she lived, Revati Bhua—who after being widowed in a young age, is condemned to live in Singh’s house, carrying all of his orders, Gujri, who was sent with Roop’s mother as an ally in a very young age and the two daughters Madni and Roop. Roop stands in sharp contrast with Madni, her elder sister, rather plain looking but Roop, so self aware of her beauty, always made herself believe, “I am Dipty Bachan Singh’s daughter and have good kismet”.(79)

Stunningly beautiful, Roop is a free spirit child who hates all sorts of restrictions. But it’s right from her childhood that she, alongwith her sister Madni is being brought up and conditioned keeping in light woman’s typical roles and responsibilities. Here famous lines of Simone de Beauvoir click into mind: “One is not born, rather becomes a woman”. (Introduction, the Second Sex)

Roop sees how her mother happened to be so ill all the time and delivering yet another child for Papaji and here we see how women themselves are the very perpetuators of so-called ‘femininty’ in their

own sex, marginalizing them doubly. We see how Roop's Nani highly objects to the very idea of Roop's mother being taken to hospital because for Roop's Nani, her daughter is not more than a 'body' which must not be shown to stranger men. Even if she is dying, a male doctor cannot see her body and cure the ailment. She is just a machine for 'producing sons'. Here we feel compelled to ask ourselves: What is a woman? Teta Mulier gives the answer that woman is a womb. Nani infuses the significance of only these roles for women in her coming generations also, teaching such lessons to her granddaughters at the time of Roop's mother's delivery as, "Ay, learn learn what we women are for" (32).

Roop sees her mother, suffering endlessly and ultimately dying after the pursuit of her goal to give birth to one more son to the house, the house which clinged to her like her 'Purdah', crossing its boundaries only to embrace death. But it turns up into a highly ironical situation where Roop's father comes out with an altogether different interpretation of the causes of his wife's death. He rather superstitiously blames Revati Bhua's practices of Hindu religion for all misfortunes and evils upon his house and one more time proving that, "Men see women from the corner of each eye, like a horse, never seeing what directly lies before them". One more poor victim of patriarchal hegemony, Revati Bhua suffers silently and little Roop learns one more lesson of 'Proposed, imposed and forced womanhood'. She learns how men control women lives and that too in such a closed way as to even decide the Guru and God for them to follow.

Deputy Bachan Singh who works on the fields of Sardar Kaushal Singh is the father of two girls. Elder one Madni is a 'sweet-sweet, good-good girl', destined to do all household chores, bear children and after living and dying unacknowledged. But 'women don't die of pain——it turns into children' (85) is what they have been taught right from childhood and this reminds Shirley Chilscholem's

words that the emotional, sexual and psychological stereotyping of female begins from the moment when the doctor says ‘It’s a girl’. Little girls are being nurtured and conditioned within their families by such ‘torch bearers’ of womanhood like Lajo Bhua who in themselves are the biggest stereotyping agencies. Madni and Roop travel to Bhua’s place to learn how to become ‘good-good, sweet-sweet girls’. Here they are given a distinctive code of conduct to follow. Rule No.1: “You want to make a good marriage, you must be more graceful, more pleasing to your elders. I want to hear only ‘Achchaji’, ‘Haanji’, and ‘yes ji’ from you. Never ‘Nahinji’ or No-ji” (76). Rule No.2 “Speak softly, always softly” (76). Rule No.3 “Never feel angry, never, never. No matter what happens, or what your husband says, feel angry. You might be hurt, but never feel angry” (77).

Here, we see how ‘woman’ is made, produced or manufactured in such stereotyping agencies. I again, feel like quoting Simone de Beauvoir’s too irresistible lines “One is not born rather becomes a woman”. And in our story, Roop is the perfect specimen of this sort of ‘becoming’. We witness the transformation of our little Princess Roop, from a self-centred, precocious, ambitious, rather proud child into a ‘sweet-sweet, good good girl’. She forgets the taste of eggs and chicken, no longer a quarrelsome girl; she learns when to be quiet. She expects things only she truly needs. She is no longer adventurous, having learnt the fear of unrelated men. She has, at last learnt how to please Bachan Singh as Madni did, as Kusum does in turn, covering her head, being silent and obedient all the time. We, the readers witness ourselves how this whole process of perpetuation of womanhood has been going on relentlessly from generation to generation since those times and how this has become a commonly inherited code of conduct now for women to follow all around. And the irony of the situation lies in the fact that women simply do not know what they have been doing by bringing up, modeling

their daughters like this. They are not the makers of these codes but over obedient executors. Such constraints and social constructs and relationships within their own gender complicate the whole discourse of gender rights and equality.

Simone de Beauvoir asks this question in *The Second Sex*, 'What is a woman'? Woman, she realizes is always perceived as 'other'. She is defined and differentiated with references to man and not her with references to her. In this book and her essay 'Woman: Myth and Reality', De Beauvoir anticipates Betty Friedan in seeking to demythologize the male concept of women: "A myth invented by men to confine women to their oppressed state. For women it is not a question of asserting themselves as women but of becoming full scale human beings" (20). Men only created this myth called women and they were women themselves who lived, highlighted and immortalized this myth. After her elder sister Madni's marriage, Roop almost desperately waits for her own marriage, feeling claustrophobic in her father's house and suffocating under his endless restrictions. But Roop's marriage is not going to be an easy affair for Bachan Singh. Despite the beauty part on her favour, a dowry less girl is not at all a desired match. Here, Sardar Kaushal Singh enters on the scene with the match of his brother-in law for Roop, a man in his forties, already having a wife though barren. Sixteen years old beautiful Roop gets ready to marry a man almost thrice of her age and already married because she thinks that it will enable her to leave the poverty and restrictions of her father's house. She sees the future prospects of being a rich landlord's wife, with all amenities at her disposal and sees 'Sardarji' (as he is mentioned in the whole novel) as her 'liberator'. Though initially Bachan Singh could not reconcile himself with this decision of Roop but 'a manglik girl, with one deaf ear, also ambitious, slightly vain, lazily intelligent and above all dowry less and Bachan Singh excuses himself saying "the girl's kismet will take care of her" (100).

Carrying a sort of self assurance and her Papaji's words "Above all give no trouble", in her heart, Roop reaches to Rawalpindi after marriage with the hope that Satya(first wife) will be an old friend like a sister or even a substitute for the mother she lost as a young girl. But Roop only finds more trouble in the form of 'Satya'. Satya, married to Sardarji, is in her forties in the year 1937. She hails from a reputed family, excels in all duties at home and takes care of all Sardarji's business. But her dotting position is threatened because of her barrenness, of her inability to produce a son for Sardarji's house. Sardarji, always a man with a strong sense of 'Dharma' feels persuaded to marry for a second time because of his duty towards the preservation and promulgation of his family. He uses Satya's barrenness as well as her impatience with her sharp tongue as excuses for marrying a second wife. Satya who would have welcomed Roop as her daughter will not welcome her as a competing wife and on the contrary of Roop's all hopes begins a subtle campaign to destroy Roop. She could never bare the thought of Sardarji's continuing favour and love for Roop. She could not reconcile herself to the thought of Roop's body thickening to ripeness—two children proof of her fertility and Satya's failure.

Satya puts the umbilical cord of Roop's son on fire-full of hatred-not letting earth produce more sons to Roop. Even after taking Roop's children, Satya is not generous to Roop. Her haughty face knows no peace. In her grey eyes there is only fear, fear turning to hate, hate that radiates to Roop. But Lajo Bhua's rule no. three is so stuck with Roop that how can she get angry with Satya? She remains hungry but fear from Satya eats on Roop and she finds herself in danger. She writes to her father and ultimately returns to Pari Darvaza. But on return she finds that her father's home no longer belongs to her and for her Papaji, it's a matter of disgrace and ingratitude that she has returned from her husband's place, without his permission, whatever is the reason. Roop is being told that death is preferable to

dishonour for good-good Sikh girls and Roop realizes the limits of her sky where she could only flutter her wings but cannot fly as her sky is in the Patriarchal territory. At one place, Joseph Conrad appropriately remarks that being a woman is a terribly difficult task since they have to principally deal with men.

On the part of Sardarji also, Roop's step is betrayal, bestowed on him as a return of his generosity. He thinks that she should have communicated her fears to him but without informing, leaving his children behind and going all alone to her father's house could not be justified in any way, in Sardarji's point of view. And men as always only have their versions of 'Rights':

If Roop is going to get his protection, his name and live like a little rani in his home, she is going to have to give something. Whatever possible, sons, for one thing, not just one son, and that too a sickly little chap. Yes, sons and loyalty. These are his rights. He is within his rights, by Jove, within his rights (272).

Here Jane Fonda comes in mind, "*A man has every season while a woman only has the right to spring*" (25). But here, when Roop with her small daughter and son takes refuge with her father and her brother, the traditional protectors of women, Sardarji is forced to agree that Roop, the mother of his son, will be the wife who will live with him wherever he is posted as an engineer. Roop becomes the 'official' wife while Satya, the woman who has no males to protect her against her husband, is left without her husband or Roop's children she had laid claim to earlier.

But Shauna Singh Baldwin's constant references to Draupadi and Sita transform the personal struggle between Satya and Roop (of course, Truth and Beauty) into a struggle between two different strategies used by two different woman to secure their positions in a world hostile, or at least indifferent to women. Satya, who refuses to

lower her voice or to stop speaking the truth about her personal life, about the effects of colonialization on her husband and her country and about the events taking place in India, is Draupadi. Roop on the other hand, chooses to learn from her brother's wife, Kusum, the art of seemingly acquiescing to everything she is supposed to do as a traditional, dutiful wife, Sita of the popular imagination. But at the end of the novel, Baldwin complicates the simple equation. Satya refuses to live her life as the solitary first wife and decides to choose her own death, her self-selected disappearance from the life of her husband. When she deliberately kisses and breathes in her own death from her cousin who is dying of tuberculosis, the author does not let the reader forget that Sita in the end also selected her own path, her exit from Rama's life, one needs to keep in mind that Satya's suicide is text of a one life/ one death belief system. She knows that she will be reborn to continue her struggle and her story.

Satya refuses to live a life where her positions as the first wife and the desires and needs of her woman's body have been usurped by her husband's second wife.

Margaret Sanger says: "No woman can call herself free who does not control her own body" (45). And seeing Satya, we get the feeling of watching a warrior choosing her own death, rather than staying alive as a conquered pitied, subservient woman. Satya's suicide raises many complex issues and questions that are not easy to explain. It is a difficult act to accept. But it is certainly not an unfamiliar act in the women history. In *The Second Neurotic's Notebook*, Mignon McLaughlin puts: "Many beautiful women might have been made happy by their own beauty, but no intelligent woman has ever been made happy by her own intelligence" (37).

Satya dies, being an intelligent woman. But we wonder, seeing this equation of Sita and Draupadi, where would Baldwin place Kusum? Kusum dies, facing a ritual slaughter at the hands of her father-

in-law, who kills her in order to save the 'izzat', the honour of the family and the community as the violence between Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs escalates. Is this a continuation of the stories repeated throughout the India about women who voluntarily and involuntarily jump into pyres and into wells to escape rape and mutilation in order to save their men's sense of honour? It is a sense of honour constructed as dependent on women's bodies, on women's behavior and on women's fate. And this has increased the agony of the whole plot. Elaine Booster's words define woman's plight aptly that she is just a person, trapped inside a woman's body. The protection of women's bodies or the killing or the subjugation, lies within men's hands. Women do not possess their own bodies.

Their bodies are like instruments rather than ornaments. And men are the players of these 'instruments', but not always without the complicity on the part of women. But as it is evident from the novel that this complicity on the part of women is born out of the need to survive in a patriarchal society. But this novel does not lack strong women also. When Roop briefly faces the possibility of a life without a protecting male, she calls upon the dead Satya and conjures up Satya's strength to help her. This blending of Draupadi and Sita in Satya's death is reversed at the end of the novel when Roop feels that she and Satya have become 'one woman'.

The core of the narrative is death and division, during partition. The demand for the birth of a son visited upon Satya and Roop subjects both women to emotional violence and one of them to suicide. Baldwin, very well makes the two women and their story, her main focus, rather than the history of events leading to partition and independence. This narrative about fathers estranged from daughters, mothers from sons, husbands from wives, becomes a metaphor for the historical turmoil and flux. Though it's these three characters Roop, Satya and Sardarji and their movement towards reconciliation that rivets the story. The

canvas of *What the Body Remembers* also takes the sweep of history from 1895 to 1948, but what makes the novel striking is the fact that *What the Body Remembers* is one of those very few books where the history of partition is solely told from the point of view of Sikh women. And so, this novel is not just about a disposed and displaced community within community (women) and their struggle. The violent birth and division of India are here played out onto the bodies and lives of women.

Writers like Bapsi Sidhwa and Amrita Pritam have portrayed the destruction of women's bodies and lives as tangible. Baldwin's challenge in writing this book lies in the fact that there were only a few books which narrated the story of partition from the perspective of Sikh women. *What the Body Remembers* is a very feminist text so to say if one defines feminism as the radical notion that a woman is a person and it depends on how accustomed you are to women having rights as people, including the right to own their own bodies. It comments on woman power relations, surrogate motherhood, and the two strains of feminism-strident and persuasive, that we have in operation today.

At the end, last but not the least, it is about the division of India, the sorrows of patriarchal, the trauma and alienation and marginalization women face due to it and women's role in the emerging nation state and their ongoing struggle. In the epilogue 'Satya' is born again. Once again a girl with her eyes wide open and once again kicking and screaming. Her last words to the reader are:

I know because my body remembers without the benefit of words, that men who do not welcome girl-babies will not treasure me as I grow to woman—though he calls me princess just because the Gurus told him to, I have come so far, I have borne so much pain and emptiness! But men have not yet changed (471).

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Monika Bhatnagar

**Manju Kapur's *Home* :
A Microcosm of Indian Family Institution**

Manju Kapur is one of the most talked about and appreciated contemporary English novelist. The New Delhi based novelist received huge international acclaim and was awarded the Commonwealth Writers Prize for the best first book (in Eurasia region) in the year 2000. She is a writer who translates dark emotional quandaries into accessible and cherry prose. In two previous novels, *Difficult Daughters* and *A Married Woman*, she has shown an impressive talent for transforming domestic soap into page turning fiction. It's easy to underestimate the shock value of her quiet debunking of middle class Indian life. With the brilliance of a crystal clear narrative and insightful perception she claims to be a rational as well as entertaining chronicler of the Indian middle class families. She has been referred to as 'the archivist of modern times' and '*Modern Jane Austen of India*'. She is well placed in the kind of genre which portrays the ordinary lives of the middling kind of persons, whose banal and thrashy existence bears no identity in the world. Her stories are set around in middle class, urban India (largely Delhi and Amritsar) because this is the social frame she penetrates into best. An observant eye and a fine sense of aesthetics assist her in understanding the everyday issues faced by everyday people. The sensibilities, attitudes, traits,

needs, hopes, fears and experiences of such people are narrated by her after understanding the politics, the economics, the psyche and cultural milieu of the middle class domesticity. Being a writer of new generation her delineation is frank and sensitive. As a faithful chronicler of the lives, she has captured the changing nuances of the Indian middle class life.

Published in 2006 and shortlisted for the Hutch Crossword book award, Manju Kapur's third novel *Home* is an engrossing story of joint family life. It is an stimulating account of three generations of Banwari Lal's pedigree; Banwari Lal comes to India after partition and with the help of his wife's jewellery, settles with a saree shop in the busy bazaar of Karol Bagh, Delhi's chief shopping destination for middle class people. Initially, *Home* draws us into the lives of two sisters – Sona and Rupa. Sona is married to Yashpal, the elder son in Banwari Lal's lineage while Rupa to an ordinary junior government officer. After tracing the lives of these two sisters, the focus shifts entirely to the Banwari Lal's family and then begins the talk of second generation people. We are introduced with the female protagonist Nisha, Sona and Yashpal's daughter, who becomes the victim of sexual abuse by her cousin Vicky, the spoiled burden on family, staying with Lals after his mother's suspicious death in a kitchen "accident". But it is her later pursuits in life – studying English literature in an university, falling in love with a low-caste boy, forcefully standing up to her conservative family, despairing at being jilted by the lover, her courage in struggling with the meanness of life, her attempts in finding her place in an uninformed society that refuses to recognize the promise of her merits, her petty jealousies, unarticulated complaints and simmering frustrations that inevitably accompanies a life riddled with disappointments – that becomes the centre to explore the family scenario.

Home is undoubtedly a chronicle of the Indian joint family, something that fascinates the western world. What raises *Home* far

above its seemingly common place concerns is writer's understanding of the inconstancy of human beings and their relationships; of their self-delusions, their manipulating of situations to suit their own viewpoints, the instinct for gossip-mongering and grouping and how the joint family system provides the perfect setting for the playing out of all these qualities. While most of the contemporary Indian writers concentrate with women's issues, Manju Kapur in *Home* dared entering an area equally travelled by the male and female, the child and the grown-up, the elder generation and the younger generation, the blood relation and the outside entries. The novel's biggest strength is Manju Kapur's impartial treatment of the universal human nature. In this paper, my aim has been to treat the impact of the suffocating proximity and subversive limitations of Indian family values on the family members, especially on the woman living there. Manju Kapur brings some disturbing home truths to lime-light. Yet the beauty lies in the fact that the atmosphere never becomes absolutely gloomy as the joint family frequently comes up to support as a strong wall against the storm of misfortune. Manju Kapur does it from an exceptionally mature, detached perspective suggesting that many of the things that go wrong stem naturally from the human condition rather than from the flaws in any one way of life. She makes her characters believable and sympathetic; positive and negative flows simultaneous in their veins and even when we shudder at the repressive ancientness of their beliefs, we can recognize them as being not all that different in their essence from us.

Joint family, marriages, celebrations, scandals ... well Manju Kapur's *Home* is infused with bits and bobs that you find at once so recognizable and that are at times rather singular and at others so universal. For the first 10 years of her marriage, Sona the elder Bahu of Banwari Lal's family, is childless which makes her a subject of resentment and pity among the other women in the house-it being understood that a woman's prime function is to serve as the vessel

that will bring forth the next generation. And that becomes almost inevitable when one is living in a joint family. As we know Rupa, Sona's sister, also could not bear child but that is quietly accepted by the husband, Premnath. Sona's fear knows no bound when Sushila, her sister-in-law, gave birth to a male child within a year of marriage. Now Sona becomes very strict in the rituals she observes for getting her womb open, every Tuesday she fasted, that one also even without water. She started going to temple very punctually and giving charity to the Brahmins. Through a parallel picture of Rupa's life Manju Kapur enables herself to display a discernible contrast between a joint family and a nuclear family. While Sona has to go through a shower of pricking comments from her mother-in-law, Rupa is free from all such burden. Many times in the novel Sona expressed the weight of joint family and does comparative: "Rupa was childless but free from torment. She accepted her fate, she didn't spend every Tuesday fasting, she had no one to envy, no one to rub salt in her wounds, no one to keep those wounds bleeding by persistent hurting comments"(17). When finally Sona conceives, her mother-in-law (known only as "Maji", never by name – indication of her status as nothing more significant than the patriarch's wife) promptly starts doting on her – which in turn creates a bridge between Sona and Rupa who all these years had been her sister's confidant in gossip about the mother-in-law. Manju Kapur observes these little details masterfully, rarely playing them up but making sure they stick in the reader's mind. The shifts in relationships, the power struggles within a family, the suppressing of individuality, the selective thinking that can allow a woman to feel threatened and aggrieved by her son's bride while completely forgetting her own experiences as a daughter-in-law 25 years earlier – all these things are set down with great economy.

Meanwhile the joint family grows. Sona gives birth to a female child who is received with lot of fuss and care. Celebrations took place crowded with relatives with their hands full of gold and silver

gifts. In a parallel thread, the sad fate of Yashpal's sister Sunita creates complications. When she reached marriageable age, Sunita was disposed off as all daughters must be. The stars were unfavourable and her husband was an abusive boor and now after her death in a Kitchen "*accident*" her young son Vicky is brought to Delhi to stay with the Banwari Lals. Confused and uncared for, he is destined to become the family's source of tension and he takes his first step in the direction by sexually abusing his little cousin Nisha. Manju Kapur's handling of this passage is stunningly matter-of-fact. One minute Vicky and Nisha, brother and sister, are playing together and bantering on the terrace; the next minute he is touching her private parts and then using her little fist to aid in jerking him off. But what's even scarier than the actual incident is its aftermath. Manju Kapur goes deep into the psyche of a victim of child-abuse: "In the days that followed, Nisha grew silent for the first time, she felt divided from the family she had been so unthinkingly part of: her mother was always so particular about her being clean, now she had gone something dirty. Her hand had touched that filthy black thing. She tried to block it from her mind, but it proliferated, grew large and terrifying" (60). Some of the elders figure out what might have happened but bringing it into the open is so unthinkable that the possibility isn't even discussed, instead they decide to let the traumatized Nisha live with her aunt a few houses away. It's just something that has to be done; family honour must be preserved at all costs.

Situations like this will no doubt sound improbable to those who have no insider's knowledge of what can happen behind the veil of the joint family system. A close friend recently told me how shaken she was when, as an adolescent, she was sexually harassed by her cousin. She told her mother about it immediately but the matter never went beyond the two of them. A subtle distancing did take place between the two families, but for a couple of years after the incident my friend had to continue, for appearance's sake, to tie "rakhi" on the

brother's wrist. Naturally even today, at infrequent get-togethers they go through the hi-hello formalities, the incident hasn't left her mind and she still feels exploited].

Through this incident with Nisha, Manju Kapur has unveiled those shocking truths which generally happen in the so-called safe surrounding of big families and those which otherwise never come to light because of the family reputation. I would suggest to the housewives (those who have engrossed themselves in watching only soaps on television which are far away from the gross realities of life) to go through the pages of *Home* to acquaint themselves with what can happen under the cover of relations. Many children are suffering from this one of the biggest crimes of present-day society. Moreover most of them are not fortunate enough to get shifted to some safe surrounding like Nisha to escape from being exploited further. Manju Kapur's effort in bringing forth those relationships that do not conform to the societal median is really noteworthy. In *Difficult Daughters*, it was a woman's attraction towards a married man with kids, in *A Married Woman* it was lesbianism and *Home* talks about incest.

Well life goes on. The sons and daughter grow up. The sons marry, the joint family expands with the inclusion of the new daughters-in-law and the children that follow inevitably. Nisha, the seemingly docile central character of *Home*, claims her space halfway through the novel when she demands an education. But life at university offers little more than cribs to help her exams. More significantly, she has a clandestine love-affair with a boy. But the boy is considered too far beneath them in the social scheme of things for it to result in a wedding. He is paid off and scared off, and Nisha swirls into depression, putting to use her family genes. She starts her own business and does remarkably well. But that was not a child's play. Before this her struggle was hard. Manju Kapur reaches the heights of understanding the psyche of an elder sister whose younger brother, Raju is married before her:

The forlorn misery that was Nisha's burden increased with

every step made in the direction of her brother's marriage. Had her parents not been so determined to reject Suresh, she could have been reveling in attention as the groom's only real sister, instead of feeling a source of apology and justification. She wished she could disappear into some hole till the wedding was over (250).

For Nisha, the mental stress was further intensified by the physical trauma in the form of a skin disease. But marriage has to take place whether the person concerned is interested or not, whether a suitable match is available or not. Ultimately, by the blessing of the family priest and persistent advises and solutions offered by the family members for physical ailment and bad stars, the marriage became materialized. The man in consideration was a widower. Nisha marries Arvind, has twins, has to give up her business. Throughout the story it had seemed that Nisha was different. She aspired to something more substantial than the nondescript lives woman such as her had-with little function apart from making "good" marriages, bearing children and looking after their menfolk. Yet, even for Nisha, home and family become "the prime importance" which is still almost inevitable in an Indian societal concept. We notice her as secured and contented in the company of two newly born babies at the naming ceremony and this forms the end of the novel: "Forty days later, during the naming ceremony, Nisha sat in front of the havan and through the smoke gazed at her tiny babies. Nisha clutched her daughter tightly to her breast. Her milk began to spurt and stain her blouse. She quickly adjusted her palla and looked up. Surrounding her were friends, relatives, husband, babies. All mine, she thought, all mine"(336-337).

Home belongs to what must now be counted as a subgenre of Indian writing in English: Domestic Fiction – stories of weddings and cooking and bickering in a joint or extended family in south Asia. Manju Kapur weaves universal truth about the complexities of joint families and one of those is the pull of tradition against modernity. Banwarilal, the family patriarch is a firm believer in the continuity of

time honoured customs. With next generation, however, the tradition he embodies is questioned. When their traditional Delhi business – selling saris – is threatened by the new fashion for jeans and stitched salwar kameez. The young family members know it must adapt to the world outside. Then began the very human and hugely engaging act of kindness, compromise and secrecy that lie at the heart of every family. Not only the shop of Banwari Lal's renovated but the old house was completely demolished to meet out the needs of new generation. Yashpal, who became the patriarch of the family after the death of Banwari Lal, was reluctant at the shuddering idea of a totally new set up: "Pull Down their whole house, just because of a few adjustment problems – what kind of drastic solution was this? Yashpal, now head of the family, was not sure. Would they be able to function with everybody's interests in mind if they couldn't even live together? He wished his father was alive" (169). The men in the third generation are more ambitious now branch out into bridal dresses and all the accoutrements needed for those lavishly described Indian weddings. A new daughter-in-law does not show the traditional submission to the mother-in-law, and keeps herself and her husband separate from the communal living that had been the norm before.

In fact, Manju Kapur's *Home* is a lively as well as sad family saga about love, money and position. We learn a lot about the pressures and rewards of living in a traditional extended but close-knit Indian family of shopkeepers: brothers and their families living in the same house; the submissiveness of women to their mother-in-law, the pressures on wives to produce children-boys for preference – and for the eldest daughter to be married before a younger brother; the importance of caste, social ranking, education, skin colour and horoscope within the marriage market; even young girls having to fast one day a year for their future husbands; the pressure to adopt the children of deceased relatives; the demands of the family shop on all the members of the family; the women spending their energies left

over from cooking and housework in being jealous of each other and being particularly status-conscious, in nagging their husbands who generally are more sensible and considerate.

The skin deep delving into the nature of the family members of Banwari Lal brings forth the sensibility of Indian middle class joint family very accurately. Though darkness underlies the chatty brightness of this very enjoyable novel's surface and the apparent tranquility of home seems to cheat, with most of the characters being unhappy and caught up in family tensions, still we feel as though we are growing, learning and at the end sharing in the joy of the leading characters. We feel absolutely at home with the story of *Home* as both – the bright and dark, positive and negative, for and against, helping and discouraging – attitudes go side by side in the characters of the story making it marvelously believable. It is a world trying to grapple with complexities of adjusting your aspirations and individualities with those of the other inside closed walls of the houses, facing challenges of generational changes, trying to accommodate growing children in narrow personal spaces and even narrower working spaces. Manju Kapur observes the role of the family in making important decisions to benefit the entire family. The career of an individual is planned and executed by the family, matrimonial alliances are made through family connections and family also provides continuity between generations through inheritance and succession. Manju Kapur comes out as a winner when we make a search for our own Dada-Dadi, Chacha-Chachi, Ma-Papa, Bhaiya-Bhabhi, Didi-Jijaji in the characters of Banwari Lal, Maji, Yashpal, Sona, Pyarelal, Sushila, Rupa, Premnath, Raju, Vicky and Nisha.

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Madhu D Singh

Here is God's Plenty: Bio-diversity in the Works of Kalidas

Unlike the West where the term 'ecology' was coined in the latter half of 19th century, in India the concept of ecological harmony and preservation of bio-diversity dates back to the Vedic period. The Prithvi Sukta of *Atharva Veda*- "माता भूमिः पुत्रोहं पृथिव्याः" (Earth is my mother and I am her son) is perhaps the most evocative environmental invocation. It is important to note that the Vedic, Jain and Buddhist traditions have established the principles of ecological harmony, not because of any imminent environmental disaster but because their world-view is holistic in which there is a fine symbiosis between the physical and the spiritual. Many ancient Sanskrit texts such as *Vishnu Samhita*, *Manu Samhita*, *Yajnavalkya Samhita* etc. contain explicit instructions regarding the preservation of bio-diversity. Similarly Sanskrit literature is extremely rich in references to all aspects of bio-diversity, wherein Mother Earth is celebrated for all her natural bounties, specially for her gifts of herbs, flowers and plants.

The world of nature as portrayed by Kalidas in his works, specially in *Ritusamharam*, *Meghadutam* and *Abhijnan Shakuntalam* is so rich and varied that one is tempted to exclaim: "Here is God's plenty!" Kalidas' knowledge of various flowers, herbs, birds and animals as evidenced in these works is really amazing. While

he lovingly describes hundreds of flowers and plants which are a testimony to his deep knowledge of plant kingdom, his authentic depiction of the habits and attributes of various birds and animals establishes him as a keen observer of the avian and animal kingdom. However, what is remarkable in Kalidas' works is that the fertile world of nature is not simply a backdrop; it is integrally related with the world of human beings.

This paper aims at critically analysing the rich bio-diversity as depicted in the works of Kalidas, specially in *Ritusamharam*, *Meghadutam* and *Abhijnan Shakuntalam*. In *Abhijnan Shakuntalam* scores of trees, flowers, plants, herbs, creepers and bushes have been mentioned. Different types of trees such as mango, *saptparna*, acacia, jujube, palm, fig, sandalwood, *ashok*, *peepul* and *mandar* tree etc; a large number of flowers such as jasmine, *vanjyotsni*; several types of lotus such as blue lotus, pink lotus and golden lotus; medicinal plants such as *ushira* (known as *khas-khas* in Hindi which is used in curing fever), ingudi oil extracted from the nuts of ingudi tree (also known as hermit tree) which is used as an ointment for wounds; many bushes such as *madhavi* bush, *amarnath* bush; many types of grass such as *kusha* grass, *durva* grass which was strewn on Vedic altars — all these have been mentioned in *Abhijnan Shakuntalam* in different contexts and for different purposes.

It is remarkable that in *Abhijnan Shakuntalam*, flowers have been used as means of comparison to highlight the beauty and delicacy of Shakuntala. For example, Shakuntala is called as delicate as a jasmine flower by her friends Priyamvada and Anasuya; King Dushyant considers her beauty as delicate as the petal of a blue lotus. Finding her dressed in bark-garments, he compares her with a lotus surrounded by duckweed: “सरसिजमनुविद्धं वैवलेनापि रम्यं” (Act I, p.26). Observing the hard ascetic life of Shakuntla, Dushyant comments that it is as hard as trying to cut acacia wood with the petal of a blue lotus: “ध्रुवं स

नीलोत्पलधारया मीलतां छेत्तुंमृि र्व्यवस्यति"; (Act I, p 24). Telling his friend Madhavya about the divine origin of Shakuntala (she is the daughter of Menaka, an apsara) King Dushyant compares her with a white fragrant jasmine flower which was dropped from its parent stalk onto an *arka* leaf. When Shakuntala is shown suffering from high fever, the King compares her with a madhavi bush, its leaves touched by scorching winds. "पत्राणामिव गो णेन मरुता स्पृ टा लता माधवी" (Act III, 96). In Act IV when Shankuntala is being bid farewell by all the inmates of sage Kanva's ashram, she is overwhelmed at the thought of parting from her foster father's home. She cries out that she is being rent from her father's lap as a sapling of sandalwood tree is uprooted from the side of Malaya mountain: "तातस्यांकात् पस्मि टा मलयतटोन्मूलिता चन्दनलतेव" (Act IV, 154). When Shakuntala goes to King Dushyant's palace along with two ascetics Sharngrav and Sharadvat, he compares her with a tender sprout surrounded by yellowing leaves. In Act VI when Madhavya is caught by an invisible power, the King sends his Chamberlain Parvatayan to see who is tormenting Madhavya. When the Chamberlain returns, his entire body is shaking with fear. Finding him terror stricken, the King compares him with a *peepul* tree which is shaken by the wind blowing through it:

I see you—

Already trembling with age, your limbs now tremble even more, like a peepal tree, shaken by the wind blowing through it

(Act VI 262)

Kalidas also refers to the medicinal and curative value of some of these plants and creepers, which is a glowing testimony to his deep knowledge of the plant kingdom. For example, in Act III, Shakuntala suffering from heat stroke is treated with the cooling balsam of the fragrant Ushira root; similarly when the mouth of a young fawn is lacerated by the sharp blades of *kusha* grass, Shakuntala dabs it with

healing *ingudi* oil.

Another important aspect of Kalidas' portrayal of bio-diversity is that the entire kingdom of flora and fauna has been invested with human attributes of which numerous examples can be cited from the play *Abhijnan Shakuntalam*. In Act I, Shakuntala is shown talking to the mango tree who is fluttering his fingers of tender leaf-sprays. When Shakuntala departs from the sacred grove, all the creatures start grieving:

The doe tosses out mouthful of grass
The peacocks dance no more
Pale leaves flutter down
As if vines are shedding their limbs (Act IV.224) .

Even the *chakravak* does not answer the call of his beloved. Hidden behind the lotus-leaves, with lotus-fibre dangling from his beak, he gazes only at Shakuntala.

The world of fauna serves as a means of comparison also. In the very beginning of the play when King Dushyant is chasing a black buck, the ascetic requests the King not to hurt it with his arrow, as it would be like throwing a tongue of flames on a heap of flowers. “क्व बत हरणकानां जीवितं चातिलोलं, क्व च निशित निपाता वज्रसाराः । रास्ते” (Act I, 18). Later on commenting on the beauty of Shakuntala's eyes, the King says that they reflect the beauty of a gazelle's eyes. In Act V, doubting the integrity of Shakuntala's character, the King compares her with a cuckoo who has her eggs reared by other birds:

स्त्रीणामशिक्षितपटुत्वममानु णी ऽ
संद श्यते किमुत याः प्रतिबोधवत्यः ।
प्रागन्तरिक्षगमनात्स्वमपत्यजात—
मन्यैद्विजैः परभ ताः खलु पो ायन्ति (Act.V, p. 186)

In Kalidas' works, the beautiful Nature serves as background also. A remarkable example of this is the mesmerizing

description of sage Kanva's ashram in Act I, where *darbha*-roots are closely cropped, the fawns are lazily browsing in the meadows, grains of wild rice have fallen from tree hollows, parrots are nesting inside and water is flowing in deep channels to lave the roots of the trees all this is richly picturesque.

Kalidas also deftly uses the world of nature as a means of blessing. At the time of Shakuntala's departure from sage Kanva's ashram, voices in the sky also bless her in the following words:

May her path be safe and gracious,
as gentle breezes blow,
pleasant be her way dotted by lakes
where green creepers grow
May the burning rays of the Sun
filter mellowed through the thick shade-trees
let the pollen of water lilies drift
to lie as softest dust beneath her feet. (Act IV p.223)

Use of flowers and plants for ornamental and cosmetic purposes has also been shown by Kalidas in *Abhijnan Shakuntalam*. e.g. Shakuntala adorns her ears with shireesh flowers. Helping Shakuntala in her make-up, Anasuya says that she has specially kept a garland of Kesar flowers (whose fragrance is lasting) for her dear friend. She also prepares auspicious materials for Shakuntla's adornment such as yellow orpiment, holy earth and Durva sprouts.

A very important aspect of Kalidas's biodiversity is that there is a reciprocal relationship between the world of flora and fauna and that of human beings. Kalidas shows how the inmates of the Holy Grove care for plants and animals as their own near and dear ones. Feeding the birds with grains of rice is their regular practice. Shakuntala and her friends water not only the flowering plants but also those past flowering because that is an act of devotion. How much Shakuntala nurtured the world of flora and fauna is poignantly brought out by

sage Kanva's following words with which he addresses the indwelling divinities of the sacred grove at the time of Shakuntala's departure:

She who never had a drink of water
Before you had all drunk your fill
she who never plucked your tender buds
for love of you, though fond of adorning herself
she to whom it was a joyous festival
when you first burst into bloom...(Act IV, p.223)

Shakuntala has become such an integral part of the world of nature that at the time of her departure from Sage Kanva's ashram, a young fawn tugs at her garments again and again to show its attachment for her.

The concept of protection of environment as the moral duty of the Kings also finds an echo in *Abhijnan Shakuntalam* when the ascetic refers to the performing of holy rites by the sages in the sacred groves, free from any disturbance. It re-inforces the concept of अमयारण्य where all types of animals roamed fearlessly. Shakuntala's friends also indicate that the penance groves are under royal protection: "राजरक्षितव्यानि तपोवनानि" (Act 1, p.32)

Nature as depicted by the Kalidas is not only rich in biodiversity, it also acts as a moral preceptor. In Act V, the bard compares the King with a tree who lays bare his top to the blazing Sun to give shade to those who seek shelter in its shade:

Unmindful of your own ease, you toil
each day for the world's sake - such is your way of life
the tree bares its crown to the blazing heat
while it refreshes those who shelter in its shade (Act V, p.231).

Kalidas gives a moral dimension to the King's relationship with his subjects and with the world of flora and fauna. Unable to correctly apprehend the reason behind sage Kanva's disciples' arrival

at his capital, King Dushyant fears that perhaps there has been some lapse on his part which has stopped the flowering of plants or perhaps the sacred groves have been defiled by some impediments.

Nature also provides moral metaphors in *Abhijnan Shakuntalam*. Kalidas comments that the trees bend down when laden with fruits; the rain clouds filled with water hang low almost to the ground, similarly wealth does not make the good haughty because this is the true nature of those who do good to others. Not only trees and creepers but birds and animals also act as moral preceptors. For example, in Act VI, the King angrily tells the invisible power which is torturing hapless Madhavaya that his arrow would kill it, but it would not cause any harm to his friend Madhavaya, just as a swan takes in only milk and leaves out water. Similarly Matali explains to Dushyant that since he (Dushyant) was so distraught in the memory of Shakuntala, it was necessary to rouse him to Veer Rasa (heroic sentiment) because the cobra spreads its hood only when it is stirred.

Another feature of Kalidas' biodiversity is his authentic portrayal of the habits and habitats of various animals. The picture of the slender black buck arching its neck with infinite grace, glancing at the speeding chariot of King Dushyant, its form curving and its haunches almost touching its chest, panting from fatigue, its jaws gaping wide and spilling the half-chewed tender grass on the path — all this reveals the poet's minute observation.

Interestingly, Kalidas uses the flora and fauna in a humorous context also. For example, taking a dig at General Bhadrasen's propensity for hunting, Madhavaya compares him with 'a witless jackal that is prone to walk into the jaws of an old bear someday'. (Act II. p. 190) Apart from these references to flora and fauna, there are references to various rivers, stream, pools and water bodies also in *Abhijnan Shakuntalam*, whether they act as background or carry some mythological or religious significance.

In *Ritusamharam* Kalidas through his lyrical portrayal of the six Indian seasons (ग्रीष्म, वार्षा, शरद, हेमन्त, शिशिर, वसन्त) succeeds in inducing the atmosphere representative of these seasons. The predominating theme of Canto I is searing heat, which is reflected in the reaction of various animals which Kalidas describes very graphically and authentically. He describes how the snakes with drooping hoods, repeatedly hiss; tuskers foaming at the mouth do not fear even the lions; overcome by thirst, a cobra darts his forked tongue : खर्मयूखरभितापितो भृशं विदह्यमानः पथि तप्तापांसुभिः / अवांगमुखो जिह्मगतिः वसन्मुहुः फणी मयूरस्य तले नि पीदतिः (1.13)

Besides these, there are other images also such as a herd of wild boars rooting with the round tip of their snout, a herd of female buffaloes coming out of hill's caves, spittle coming out of their cavernous jaws and lean monkeys trooping into caves: all these show Kalidas' vast knowledge of the world of fauna.

In the Rainy season, the thunder reverberates and dark clouds loom heavily on the land. When the much awaited rain arrives, the marshy and wild rivers tear down the trees growing on their banks. The world of flora is resplendent with the groves of *kadamba*, *sarja*, *ketaki* and *arjuna*:

Blowing through groves of *kadamba* and *sarja*
and *ketaki* and *arjuna*, shaking the trees
scented by the fragrance of their flowers,
consorting with clouds and cooled by rain drops-
whom do these breezes not fill with longing? (2.17)

कदम्बसर्जार्जुनकेतकीवनं विकम्पयंस्तत्कुसुमाधि वासितः
ससी कराम्भोधरसंगशीतलः समीरणः कं न करोति सोत्सुकं। (2.17)

Women wear *kesar* buds and *ketaki* fronds in this season. Many flowers such as *bakula*, *malati* and *yuthika* enhance the beauty of this season. Similarly the description of the world of fauna is spell-binding, whether is chataka imploring the clouds to rain, or a bevy of

peacocks caught in a flurry of billing and fondling or the timorous gazelles easily alarmed and, their eyes shining like water lilies.

Investing Nature with human attributes, Kalidas compares the Earth draped in pale silk of kasa flowers in Autumn season with a beautiful bride. It is a season of full blown lotuses and ripening grain when the Earth is dusted by *bandhuka* pollen .and with *kovidara* tree. The world of fauna is marked by the presence of minnows darting about the river banks, teals plunging in lakes, regal swans sailing in ponds, black ducks and sarus cranes making noise.

Kalidas observes how the season of frost is marked by sudden spurt of barley's young shoots, with paddy ripening. Now *lodhra* flowers are in full bloom while lotuses wither. It is a season of thick falling dews, when women perfume their hair with black aloe smoke, rubbing their bodies with white aloe salve. Blue lotuses open in the chill, shimmering waters of the lakes, while mallards court in wild excitement. The *priyangu* flower grows pale in this season, as it languishes blanched in chilling frost. When the village bourns are brimful of bountiful harvests of golden grain, the air is sweet with curlew's notes. The winter season is marked by stacks of ripe rice and sugarcane. With the coming of spring, the Earth regenerates herself. Fresh karnikras adorn the ears of young women; *ashokas* and jasmynes bloom. New tender leaf-shoots of young *atimukta* creepers bend and wave in gentle breeze and all around *kimshuka* groves blaze fiery red, bright as parrots' beaks.

In *Meghdutam* the relationship between the human and natural worlds has been explored in a unique way by making a rain-cloud the messenger of Yaksha, who is separated from his wife due to the punishment given to him by his master Lord Kuber. Addressing the cloud, the Yaksha says that impelled by the gentle breeze, as the cloud loiters along, it can see on its left the *chataka* singing sweetly, while the Earth unfurls her mushroom parasols. In this month of Ashadh

(आ णढ) when the clouds stir the *ketaka* to bloom and thickets of nicula are filled with sap, the hill cranes also know this is a time for mating.

Tracing the journey of the cloud, Kalidas observes that when it approaches the noble mountain Chitrakuta, the latter would greet him and bear him on its head. During its journey onwards the travel-weary cloud would rest on the crest of Amrakuta Mountain. With its burden lightened by the outpouring of its waters, the cloud would then see the river Reva's streams spreading disheveled at Vindhya's uneven rocky foot hills.

Describing the captivating beauty of the world of nature, Kalidas vividly brings out before his readers eyes the green gold nipa flowers with their stamens half-emerging and the *kandal* flowers showing early buds. The dasharnas put on a new beauty at the cloud's approach, the birds start thronging the sacred peepuls in the village squares, rose-apple groves darken with the sheen of ripening blue-black fruits. Kalidas further writes how the cloud would taste Vetravati's sweet waters when it reaches Vidisha. There it would seek rest on nicai hill, thrilling with delight at its touch.

Kalidas makes the cloud take a detour to Ujjayani (as he had a special fondness for this ancient city) where it would be greeted by the cool breeze of Shipra river, scented with the fragrance of loos. Ujjayani is the city of the holy shrine of Lord Chandishwar where palace-peacocks dance and greet the cloud.

Kalidas then refers to the cloud sailing over Gambhir river's clear waters and compares its glittering white fishes to water lilies. On its journey forward, the cloud would reach Jahnvi's true birth place, Mount Kailas which is white with snows and whose rocks are scented by musk deer. The Yaksha requests the cloud to quench the forest fire which breaks out in cedar trees and scorches the bushy tails of the yaks. Kalidas now refers to the next destination on the cloud's journey: the narrow Krauncha pass (gateway for wild geese). Finally

the cloud would reach Alakapuri where it would see a miniature hill surrounded by plantain leaves on which Yakasha's palace is situated. Thus through the cloud's journey from Ramagiri in the Vindhyas to Alkapuri on Mount Kailash, Kalidas not only traverses from South to North India but in the process, also unfolds the entire Indian landscape also which is so rich in biodiversity.

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Vandana Rajoriya

Conception of *Vīratā* and *Vīra Rasa* in Indian Aesthetics

Comprehension of an artistic situation in any given work of art has been at the center of enquiry since the times immemorial and as the artistic situation primarily focuses an attention on internal and external forms hence it is the categories; Thought, Experience, Imagination, Language, *bhāva* (emotion), *sthāyī bhāva* (Abiding Emotion), *vibhāva* (Stimulus provided by characters and excitants), *anubhāva* (Emotional reactions or consequents), *sañcārī bhāvas* (Transitory Emotions), *ābda* (word), *pada* (Quarter Verse or foot) and *vakya* (Sentence) which become the determinants of the whole artistic situation. In Indian Aesthetics there are seven different schools; like *Rasa*, *Dhvani*, *Riti*, *Guna*, *Alamkara*, *Vakrokti* and *Anumana* which have independent and significant theories to deal with creation of an artistic situation (Poetry). Each of these schools has a distinct and unique mode of assessment of a work of art. In *rasa* for example the primary models in the form of *ābda* (word), *pada* (Quarter Verse or foot) and *vakya* (Sentence) and the primary categories in the form of *bhāva* (emotion), *sthāyī bhāva* (Abiding Emotion), *vibhāva* (Stimulus provided by characters and excitants), *anubhāva* (Ensuaunts or emotional reactions) and *sañcārībhāvas* (Transitory Emotions) came to be universalized by an enrichment of each of these

models and categories. The creation of universality corresponds to the creation of *rasa*. It is for this reason that *rasa* happens to be the basic tool of inquiry into the nature of an artistic formation. Since the scope of this work would not allow a detailed discussion and application of each of these *rasas*, in this paper we would take up a discussion of *vīra rasa* which is one *rasa* which in itself abides the possibilities of creation of all other *rasas*. To begin with let us consider the following lines from Alfred Tennyson's famous poem "Ulysses":

Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unbrnish'd, not to shine in use!
... And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought (20-33)

On reading the above given lines the sympathetic reader or the *sah[daya]* experiences a kind of dynamic energy which completely engrosses him. To put it in other words every part of his body becomes active to put whatever he thinks, in practice. This in Indian tradition is called *maitrībhāvanā* and this comes into existence when there is *utsāha* (dynamic energy) and *âcārya* (wonder). Here in the above-given verses this *utsāha* (dynamic energy), *âcārya* (wonder) is instigated by what we know in Indian Poetics as *vīra rasa*. *Vīra rasa* is that state in which *citta* gets *vistāra*; spreading in the whole body of *sah[daya]* it facilitates a unique kind of pleasure or *ânanda* which is different from that experienced in all other *rasas*.

Bharatmuni in *Nāmyaœâstra* says that *vīra-rasa* is of the form of *utsāha* (*utsāhâtmaka*). According to him, men of noble character (*uttam prak[ti]*) would naturally have *utsāha*. *Utsāha* is the *sthâyībhāva* of the *vīra rasa* : *AsaAmoha* (not to get perturbed), *adhyavasāya* (determination), *naya* (foresight), *vinaya* (modesty),

bala (strength), *parâkrâma* (Prowess), *œakti* (strength of mind), *pratâpa* (valour) and *prâbhava* (grandeur) are its *vibhâvas*. (6.39) One's inclination towards bad (or worldly) things is known as '*SaAmoha*' and '*AsoAmoha*' is its absence. '*Naya*' can be explained as the good knowledge of the state-craft and *vinaya* is the control over senses. To further illustrate on these, it is worth our while to take again into consideration a few lines of Tennyson's Ulysses, which give expression to the indomitable will of a true *vîra*, summoning up every reserve of resolute courage and seeking new worlds to conquer.

Ulysses, the hero of the Trojan War, returned to his island state of Ithaca after twenty years. He has been ruling his state for some time, but the life of peace, devoid of adventure, does not suit him (*asaAmoha*). In the poem, he is supposed to be standing at the coast of the sea, surrounded by his sailors whom he exhorts to follow him in quest of more knowledge and experience:

...My Mariners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me,
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads, - you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honor and his toil.
Death closes all, ...
Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
... that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are.
One equal temper of heroic hearts...
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield. (58-71)

Here *asaAmoha* (not to get perturbed) in "with a frolic welcome took/The thunder and the sunshine", *vinaya* (control over the sense) in "opposed free hearts, free foreheads", *naya* (foresight) in "old age hath yet his honor and his toil", *prâbhâva* (grandeur) in

“tis not too late to seek a newer world” and *parākrama* (prowess) and *pratāpa* (valour) in “To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield”, (*œakti*) strength in “that strength which in old days, moved earth and heaven” and “heroic hearts” lead to overflow of dynamic energy in the reader which is naturally a manifestation, in the reader, an experience of *vīra rasa*. According to Bharatmuni the *anubhāvas* of the *vīra rasa* are: *sthiratā* (firmness), *dhairya* (boldness), *œaurya* (snow of might), *tyāga* (charity) and *viūâradatā* (skill). (Nâmyaûâstra 6.39)

To again consider the examples from Ulysses discussed in the foregoing we can say that Ulysses’s speech and actions manifest everything his firmness, boldness, might, skill and charity, all the *anubhāvas* of the *vīra rasa*. About the *vyabhicârî bhāvas* of the *vīra rasa*, Bharatmuni in *Nâmyaûâstra* says that: “*Dh[ti* (courage), *mati* (thinking), *garva* (Pride), *âvega* (mental agitation), *ugratâ* (fierceness), *amarca* (anger), *sm[ti* (recollection) and *românca* (horripulation) are its *vyabhicârîbhāvas*”. (6.39)

Ulysses’s Courage- in firm determination to take up new challenges despite old age, his thinking- in “old age hath yet his honor and his toil/Death closes all, his mental agitation -at ‘rust unburnish’d, not to shine in use”, his recollection of the successful ventures of the past- “in old days moved earth and heaven” and the resultant (horripulation) manifest the *vīra* in the situation to the full.

In *vīra rasa* the person who is to be vanquished is the *âlambana vibhāva* and his actions are the *uddîpana vibhāva* which rouse the *utsâha* and raise it to the state of *rasa*. DhanaCjaya in *Daûârûpa* says that the person who is the *âlambana vibhāva* of *vīra rasa* should be of the *dhîrodâtta* type. According to him a man of *dhîrodâtta* type is *mahâsattva* (high minded) which means, he is not easily overcome by anger and distress etc. He is *gambhîra* (deep) and is of forgiving nature. He is not boastful but at the same time in his assertions and actions (*d[ha – vrata*). Though conscious of his

greatness he does not show his *ahaEkâra* (egoism):

महासत्त्वोऽ तिगम्भीरो क्षमावानविकन्धनः ।
स्थिरो निगूढाहङ्कारो धीरोदात्तो दृढत्रतः ॥(2.4)

(An important point, to be kept in mind, while discussing *vîra rasa* is that *vîratâ* (being *vîra*) is not confined to the battle and adventure only. It has a wider scope. The word ‘*udâtta*’ in *dhîrodâtta*’ indicates this only. *Vîratâ* infact is associated, related or connected with all the great qualities like *dayâ* (kindness), *danâ* (Charity), *dâkciGya* (politeness) and *œaurya* (show of valour) etc.) (trns. Haas 2.4)

A man cannot be called *vîra* merely by defeating the enemy in the battle, for being called *vîra* he should have such great qualities as discussed in the forthwith. It is only when these *guGas* appear; that there would be *vistâra* of *citta* and *utsâha* would prevail everywhere. It is because of this reason that the words of *Jîmûtavâhana* in *Nâgânanda* make the *utsâha* pervade in the spectator but not *karuGa*:

शिरामुखेः स्यदत्त एवं रक्तमद्यापि देहे मम मांसभस्ति ।
तृप्तिं न पश्यामि तवापि तावत् किं भक्षणात्वं विरतो गरुत्मम् ॥

(“Oh! *Garutman!* There is still blood flowing through the ends of my veins; still there is flesh in my body. I do not think you are satisfied; why did you stop eating.) (qtd. Chaturvedi 83)

What is witnessed here is the real sign of *vîratâ* and as is evident from it the real sign of *vîratâ* when expressed leads to the overflow (uncontrolled) of *sâttvic utsâha* (positive energy) in the reader or the spectator.

Based on the qualities associated with *vîratâ*, in Indian tradition we have many varieties of *vîra* – *dânavîra*, *dharmavîra*, *dayâvîra* and *yuddhavîra* etc. (And numerous example of each can be cited from both Indian and western tradition) it is because of this reason that in Sanskrit literature not only the victorious persons like *Râma*,

KṛcGa, *Arjuna* and *Chandragupta* etc but also persons like *Buddha*, *Mahāvīra*, *Jīmūtavâhana*, *Dadhîci*, *KarGa*, *Yudhicmhira* and *Paraiurâma* are considered as *vīras*.

The scope of the *vīra rasa* is not confined only to *dâya*, *dharma*, *dâna* and *yuddha*. On close examination we can see how it overshadows and envelops all the *rasa* like *æ[Egâra* etc, also. In the *Abhinavabhâratî* it has been indicated that the *vīra rasa* only has got the capacity to produce all the *rasas*. A *mahâpuruca* shows *utsâha* i.e. a high-minded and noble person shows the dynamic energy, strength, might, courage and valor to achieve something great in this world and this can lead to the possible generation of all the *rasas*. As stated by Abhinavgupta *vīra rasa* is the one which has the other *rasas* as the objects aspired for:

यस्तु रसो रसान्तरं फलत्वेनाभिसन्धाम
प्रवर्तते तस्योदाहरणं वीरः । (qtd. Chaturvedi 84)

What can be understood from this is that the *utsâha* (dynamic energy), the *sthayi bhâva* of *vīra* is found only in a person of nobility. It reaches its climax in the personality of a *mahâpuruca*. Only a *mahâpuruca* (person of nobility) shows *utsâha* (dynamic energy) to achieve a very important object (result) connected with this world, the result of his act can lead to all the *rasas* depending on the difference of the *âlambana* (the opponent). To illustrate the point it is worth our while to take into consideration the following verses from *BâlakâG*

a of *Tulasîdâsa's Râmacaritamânasa*, where he has very skillfully shown how *vīra* can lead to or produce all other *rasas*. *Râma* climbed the stage and is about to break the *shivadhanusha*:

उदित उदयगिरिमंच पर रघुवर बाल पतंग ।
विकसे संत सरोज बन हर े लोचन भुंग ॥
चाप समीप राम जब आये । नरनारिन्ह सब सुकृत मनाये ॥
सबकर संसय अरु अजानू । मंदमहीपन्ह कर अभिमानू ॥
भृगुपति केरि गरब गरुआई । सु(रिन्ह केरि कदराई ॥

सियकर सोचु जनक पछतावा । रानिन्ह कर दारुन दु(पावा ॥
 संभुचाप बड़ बेहितु पाई । चढ़े जाइ सब संग बनाई ॥
 रामबाहुबल सिंधु अपारु । चहत पार नहिं कोउ कड़हारु ॥ (Doha 259)

Here we can see that how although, *Rama*, the *mahâpuruca*, the *âçeraya* of *utsâha* is one but reactions of different persons to the situation when the *œivadhanuca* is broken are different. Different *sthâyî bhâvas* appear among different people as a reaction to the *utsâha* of *Rama*, *Vismaya* in the ordinary people, *rati* in *Sîtâ*, fear and aversion (about themselves) in other princes, *krodha* in *Paraiûurâma*, *karuGa* in Janaka and his wives, and *hâsa* in Viûvâmitra. This magnificent illustration beyond doubts proves the point that *vîra rasa* is at the centre of all the *rasas* and that all the *rasas* are or can be produced by it, directly or indirectly. This may be said to be a reason why all the heroes in literature (fiction of all kind, epics and all) are *dhîrodattas* i.e. *vîras* only, no matter whether the predominant *rasa* in them (or in the work) is *œ[Egâra* or any other.

A significant question put forth many times is that if the *vîra rasa* is the source of all the *rasas* then why *adbhuta* only is said to born out of it; Abhinavagupta has answered it in *Abhinavabhârtî*: *vîrasya samyak nikamâni yatphalâmi so 'dbhutam – œ[Egâro api vîrasya anantaram phalam*. The first general reaction to *vra* is wonder; and therefore *adbhuta* is said to be the direct product of *vîra*. *Rati*, *hâsa* and other *bhâvas* appear as reactions of *vîra*, only after wonder and so they are connected with *vîra* indirectly.

An important point to be kept in mind while discussing *vîra rasa* is that in *vîra rasa* the dynamic energy must be channelized in the right direction through 'correct perception' as we discussed in details in our discussion on *raudra rasa*.

The scope of the *vîra Rasa* is very wide. Numberless examples of *vîra rasa* can be cited from all old medieval and modern writings (Achilles of *The Iliad*, Beowulf of *The Beowulf*, Odysseus of Homer's

Odyssey, Bilbo Baggins of Tolkien's *The Hobbit*), but here it must be kept in mind that *utsāha*, the *sthāyībhāva* of *vīra* is an emotion which is not unique to the nobles, it can be found even among the Common people. As we see in Ernest Hemmingway's 'The Old Man and the sea':

Santiago, the hero of Hemmingway's 'The Old Man and the Sea' is an Old fisherman, a common man. But he is a veteran fighter prepared for anything and everything. And what is remarkably important about him is that he never gives up hope:

He was an old man who fished alone in a skiff in the Gulf Stream and he had gone eighty four days now without taking a fish. In the first forty days a boy had been with him. But after forty days without a fish the boy's parents had told him that the old man was definitely and finally *salao*, which is the worst form of unlucky... It made the boy sad to see the old man come in each day with his skiff empty... (5)

The situation is inevitably that of *karuṅga* but what holds our attention is the 'Never say die' or 'Never say no' spirit of the Old man, his stubborn perseverance. When the narrative begins he is going out for the eighty – fifth time without a fish. His single-minded and dogged determination becomes even clearer as the narrative proceeds. The old man is battle-scarred and there are marks of sea-battles (with fishes) upon him:

...his hands had deep-creased scars from handling heavy fish on the cords. But none of these scars were fresh. They were as old as erosions in a fishless desert.

Everything about him was old except his eyes and they were the same colour as the sea and were cheerful and undefeated. (5-6)

Thus we can see that the Old Man is a warrior with nerves of steel. Even after eighty – four days out of luck, his eyes are still

undefeated. The old man has full control over him and never gets angry; not even when he is ridiculed: “many of the fishermen made fun of the Old Man and he was not angry” (7). He had learnt his lesson from life that the ultimate essence of heroism is ‘humility’ and ‘forgiveness’: “He was too simple to wonder when he had attained humility. But he knew he had attained it and he knew it was not disgraceful and it carried no loss of true pride.”(9-10)

We see importantly here pride and humility resolved into one man. Thus he is a man DhanaCjaya calls of dhîrodâtta type and response to him therefore is of adbhuta as manifested in the reaction of the boy (Mandolin) who considers Santiago the best fisherman in the world:

“There are many good fishermen and some great ones. But there is only you.”

“Thank you. You make me happy. I hope no fish will come along so great that he will prove us wrong.” (19-20)

But on the eighty-fifth day, when the old man goes deep into the sea; actually a big marlin, very big in fact comes along his way and challenges him. What follows is a battle of courage, patience and intelligence. The old man is ‘shrewd’ and skillful. But he soon realizes that the fish is also a ‘shrewd’ old fish, the way it dives in and threatens to capsize Santiago’s skiff makes us realize that it is experienced in this game. The battle turns slowly into a test of patience and endurance, a war of attrition. Even after an entire day and a night neither is ready to give up:”Fish”, he said softly, aloud, “I’ll stay with you until I am dead”.(19-20)And the process makes us wonder at the courage and endurance of the two warriors (Old fish and Old Man) when Santiago appreciates the fighting caliber of the fish:”Fish”, he said, “I love you and respect you very much. But I will kill you dead before this day ends.” (19-20)

As the day progresses, finally the fish comes out and he kills him but on his way back the dead fish is attacked by sharks. He fights

with them with his harpoon, and when it is gone, with a knife and then with the tiller. But in the night they eat most of his great fish and he almost seems to be giving up in despair but immediately he recovers and says: "But man is not made for defeat, ... "A man can be destroyed but not defeated." I am sorry that I killed the fish though. (19-20). As readers we feel sorry for both the fish and the Old Man but more than that we feel wonder and admiration at the indomitable spirit, courage strength and endurance of the Old Man. Thus we can say that *vīra*, in itself can lead to a state of 'happiness' when it achieves something great, as happens when the Old Man finally kills the fish in *The Old Man and the sea* and in that moment of achievement there are moments of both wonder and complete satisfaction of *adbhuta* and *œânta*.

To conclude we can say that *vīra rasa*, associated with all the great qualities like *dayā* (kindness), *dāna* (Charity), *dākiGya* (politeness) and *œaurya* (show of valour) etc, is a very powerful experience which when expressed leads to the overflow (uncontrolled) of *sāttvik utsāha* (positive energy) in the reader or the spectator. And as is established through the discussions in the foregoing the scope of *vīra rasa* is not confined only to *dāya*, *dharma*, *dāna* and *yuddha*, rather it overshadows and envelops the possibilities of generation of all other *rasas* from *œEgāra* to *œânta* in it as we saw in case of Sri Rama. While we look at the situations at work in *vīra rasa*, we can safely assert that *rasa* happens to be one of the best theoretical principles for the creation, comprehension and realization of an ideal artistic situation and *vīra rasa* provides a wonderful and apt occasion for it.

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Nishtha Saxena

**Some Reflections on Manju Jaidka's
For Reasons Unknown with Special Reference to *Rasa* Theory**

“Can *sahitya*/literature (or poetry in the present case) be written and read for reasons unknown?”- seems to be an aesthetically and theoretically incorrect proposition. It may sound untenable to all those who are culturally and theoretically trained or indoctrinated to locate and fix the meanings of a literary text in the context of a particular ideology or world-view which a writer represents through her/his text. For example, the *sahitya* or literature of this kind is generally hailed as progressive and politically correct as it is considered the literature of commitment which always speaks for the oppressed and stands for a social cause. Critics often indulge in this kind of “critical labeling”- that helps them construct a canon- through the politics of inclusion and exclusion of writers in their discourses. For example, such important writers as Dickens, D.H.Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, T.S.Eliot and James Joyce in the European context and Agyeya, Premchand, Renu, Muktibodh, Faiz and Nirala in the Indian context – whose texts have been considered both- readerly and writerly have suffered at the hands of the critics who tend to believe that literature is written as well as read for “reasons” quite “known”- the reasons are further spelled out in terms of some ideology or “ism” – ,that is, to cite a few, Marxism,

feminism, post-feminism, post-structuralism, new-historicism, postcolonialism, postmodernism, environmentalism etc.,

On the other hand, it is also true that literature or sahitya has also been written and read for reasons unknown. There is no critical machinery/supercomputer in existence at present that may exhaust the possibility of infinite meanings (ananta artha- according to the Indian theory of shabda shakti- the power of the word) a text may engender or evoke in the heart of an alert reader or sahridaya. For example, the relevance and beauty of the works of Kalidas, Bhasa, Bhavabhuti, Kabir, Tulsi, Premchand, Prasad, Nirala, Tagore, Mahashweta Devi, Bankim, Basheer, Manto, Gurdayal Singh, O.V Vijayan, Fakir Mohan Senapati, M.T. Vasudevan Nayar, U.R. Ananthmurthy, R.K. Narayana, Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, Hardy, Eliot, Yeats, Joyce, Pinter, Beckett, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Wole Soyinka, Achebe, Coetzee, Atwood, Nadine Gordimer and others will remain eternal as they wrote for reasons unknown. In other words, their works do not betray “one” or any number of fixed “reasons” which were already “known” to them, and through a critical sleight of hand, may also be “known” to a reader or critic. Here it is important to understand that writers may write for reasons- but these remain largely “unknown” to them. Hence, the source of aesthetic beauty or pleasure (called rasa) evoked by a text as the reader as well the writer is taken by surprise when a host of new meanings are generated in the text every time a reader reads a text. Tagore, in his essay –”The Five Elements: The Significance of a Poem” (Das & Chaudhary 72).

Some people extract history out of poetry, others unearth philosophy in it; others discover morality or worldly wisdom; while yet others can extract nothing but poetry from it. Each person can return content with what each has found. I see no need for any conflict, nor will it yield any good.

It is in this sense of the celebration of the plurality of meanings or arthas which arise from a text “for reasons unknown”- that Manju Jaidka’s anthology of poems titled *For Reasons Unknown* be read and relished as it enables a reader to discover the charm of *sahitya* – ,that is ,newer and newer combinations of shabda and arthas (words and meanings)- resulting into an ineffable “*rasanubhuti* or aesthetic pleasure/experience). The universal experience *rasa* or aesthetic emotion arises because of the universality of “emotions” in all the hitherto known forms of cultures and societies and their representation/ anukirtan in the world of art or literature- and not because of the critical superimposition of ideologies or “isms” on art or literary texts.

Unsurprisingly enough, Manju Jaidka’s poems enrich a reader with many kinds of rasas (aesthetic emotions) and dhvani (suggestions) as she leaves her poems “open-ended”- inviting the readers to relish the delectable combinations of shabda and arthas (word and meanings) resulting into a veritable feast of rasas and to explore the known or the unknown reasons that might have constituted the logic of poetic composition, only if the reader so desires. In the poem “For Reasons Unknown”, the poet displays a distinct longing to be loved and cared for by her mate in her old age:- “For reasons unknown/When passion has flown/.../Will you still care? Will you still be there?(FRU,7). The poem evokes the aesthetic emotions of karuna (compassion) and spiritually –grounded shringar (prema or love) in the heart of a reader. Similarly, the poem “Yin and Yang”, with a series of scintillating images, represents the identification of the male and female principles of life, erroneously imprisoned in our culture and society in the gendered categories of “men/masculine” and “women/feminine”, Celebrating her union with her companion in a “warped world / Of warped relationships”, she imagines her relationship with him to be:-

A slow turning wheel
Moving toward a whole

An orchestrated dance,
A complete circle (*FRU*,8)

Through yet another poem “Not This, Not This”, the poet evokes the aesthetic emotion(*rasa*) of sublimated *shringar* which is the *sthayi bhava* (the permanent emotion) of most of the poems in the collection: “ There is a love that does not grab or lust,/That does not boast or shout./It waits and watches and bides its time,/Seeps in and oozes out. (*FRU*, 11).”

There are also a few poems such as “ King of Pop”, “ Keki, poet”, “Versification”, “ Cyber Romance” and “ Poet of Bad Times” that may well be considered good examples of aesthetic emotion of the comic (*hasya rasa*). The poet comically remembers how “Michael Jackson/ . . . an ‘eighties icon’ was undone/ By his love for a young’un.” (*FRU*, 18). Keki Daruwalla, the famous Indian English poet, is fondly appreciated, in a comical vein, for his verses which are:- “ So human, so lovable” though couched in “ our own incorrigible/Quite unfathomable/ Indian English!”(*FRU*,19). Similarly, the poet revels in comically treating the efforts of a versifier or a novice poet who goes on “juggling with words/Jingling with rhyme” in order to write a poem. The “wannabe poet” soon realizes that –” It isn’t easy all that easy/To write your mind in verse”(*FRU*, 21). Interestingly enough, the poet makes fun of a “committed” poet who tries to make a poetic capital out of the ghastly incident of the Nanjing rape in his poem is written for reasons well known:- “He continues relentlessly/Rambling on and on/ Blames the yellow tribe for the rape/All recorded, on film and on tape” (*FRU*, 52-3).

One will not fail to notice the poems such as “ Angel out of Heaven”, “Abandoned Boat”, “Grief Like a Tidal Wave” and “Misfortunes” that engender deep compassion in the heart of the reader through the evocation of *karuna rasa* (the pathetic sentiment). To me, the best poem of the collection is “Angel out of Heaven” (dedicated

to the poet's special child-Raju) for its evocation of *karuna rasa*; it is a moving poem that identifies the poet's special child with all the special children of the world- through *sadharanikarana* or poetic identification- (the private becomes the public in the poetic sphere) brought about in the poem by a concatenation of green and poignant images:- "If you were green/You would sprout from the seed/And morph / Into a seedling/A sapling/A plant/A bush/A tree... (*FRU*, 47-8).

Another feature of Manju Jaidka's poems is the predominance of green consciousness" – which may also be considered a form of *karuna rasa* in the present context. The poet's compassion for the deliberate ongoing destruction of "green" (or nature/*prakriti*) in our world in the name of development and economic progress manifest in such poems as "Waiting for the Rains", "Autumnal Hues", "The Chinar Gold", "Lament of the Dying Lake", "Rape of a Queen" (for Shimla, once the queen of hills), "Lakeside Sonata", "Chasing the Sunset", "These Rocks, These Rocks", "Desert Terrain", "Dry Leaves", "Where Do Peacocks Sleep at Night?", "Waiting for the Monsoons", "Shimla Poems", and "Summer in the Plains". In "Summer in the Plains" the poet states that :- "The Amaltas is here/For such a short while/Won't you come back, my dear,/And bring back my smile? (*FRU*, 84). Shimla seems resplendent with its "Steaming clouds/Rolling mist/A hint of rain/Snow-peaks sunkist" (*FRU*, 77). The earth, parched and grief-ridden, because of its having been mercilessly ravaged by rabid consumerism and materialism cries out:- "Defeated, defeated, the earth seems to cry/Give me my cover, give me some rain/Make me green, make me young, a virgin once again!" (*FRU*, 66). The blending of *vibhavas*(causes), *anubhavas* (consequents) and *vyabichribhavas*(transient emotions) in her poems continues in a spontaneous flow giving rise to what we call "*rasanubhuti* (the aesthetic relish). In this manner, the poet connects her "kriti", that is, her poems, with "*prakriti*" (green- consciousness) with effortless poetic ease and excellence.

In sum, Manju Jaidka's *For Reason's Unknown* is a refreshing addition to the shrinking appeal of Indian English poetry in terms of its engagement with beauty and truth. Her poems engage and enthrall a reader through their simplicity of diction, multiplicity of themes and unusually evocative imagery (mostly green images) employed to create a sense of *chamatkar* (wonder) and ananda (joy) letting the reader express ecstatically:- "My spirit, my rooh / Let me renew, let me renew" (*FRU*, 14).

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Syed A. Raza Abidi

Transmigration in the Poetry of Agha Shahid Ali

Agha Shahid Ali, a name that reminds us of happiness, of life, of food, of liveliness, of poetry, of exile, of migration, and of a man who was so full of life. Shahid moved to various places. He also moved to New York, where he taught creative writing and English Literature at Hamilton College. His works bear the imprint of diverse places, influences, and readers. Published in North America, Europe, Australia, and the Subcontinent, Shahid's poetry has appeared in numerous prestigious journals, for example, *Grand Street Poetry*, *Paris Review*, and *Antioch Review* to name only a few, as well as in significant new anthologies. In addition, he has written on T.S. Eliot, Salman Rushdie, and Faiz Ahmed Faiz, and through the translations of Faiz, has brought the ghazal and the Urdu poetic tradition to Western audiences.

Agha Shahid Ali is perhaps Kashmir's most famous poet in the Western world, having lived in Amherst, Massachusetts, where he sadly died at the young age of 52. In addition to translating the works of poets like Faiz Ahmed Faiz from Urdu, he also popularized the ghazal form of poetry in English. An Indo-American, a Kashmiri-Indian, a Shiite-Muslim, the hyphenated existence to Agha Shahid Ali

did not entail an existence on the fringes or a depriving force. Instead of succumbing to the status of refugee, he became the cultural ambassador of his country. Agha Shahid Ali's poetry is a sincere attempt to make this culture available to world. Agha Shahid Ali used the ghazal form in English. Ali's experiments with form included his own mastery of canzone, a form which requires extreme repetitions, his use of the ghazal form in English (at times even using lines by American poets and developing them into ghazals) and his ability to persuade many American poets to write ghazals. Through these endeavours, Agha Shahid Ali not only introduced an entirely new idiom in English poetry but also exploited poetic form as a site where the "in-between" space, the hyphenated identity, could be posited.

Agha Shahid Ali was born in New Delhi on February 4, 1949 and grew up in Kashmir. He was later educated at the University of Kashmir, Srinagar, and later on in Delhi University. He was awarded a PhD degree in English from Pennsylvania State University in 1984, and an M.F.A. from the University of Arizona in 1985. The poems in English and the translations into English as the split halves of a single though complex poetic world, in which contemporaneous reality is like the translucence through which a past predating the poet's diasporic present is refracted as memory. This evocation of memory, which refers to a personal and a communal time before various forms of separation took place, overshadows the present as a coloration that is somber and nostalgic. Under this dark light, the diasporic poet becomes several kinds of translator. The activity, the materials chosen, and the function of translation, all act as a form of what Seamus Heaney has called a form of redressal, which translates displacement into poetry.

Initially under the spell of English verse and the influence of Shelley and Eliot, Agha Shahid Ali fell increasingly under the spell of native Urdu poetry, first Ghalib and then Faiz Ahmed Faiz. The turn

from Ghalib in earlier poems to Faiz in later poems, whom he willingly embraces and whom he has translated extensively, is a telling shift, signalling his growing historical and political consciousness. Ghalib offered him a refuge from the ravages of time and historical change. Faiz, on the other hand, the poet who redefined the cruel beloved as revolution stands inside history as always . . . witness to 'rain of stones'. . . . (*Greater Kashmir*, Sensor 6).

The literal meaning of the term 'Transmigration', as per the Oxford Dictionary is, 'The passing of a person's soul after death into another body'. However, if the term is broken and to read it as, 'trans' and 'migration', it would have a different meaning, since 'trans' means 'across' or 'beyond', or 'into another place or state' (according to the Oxford Dictionary), and 'migration' means 'movement from one place to go to live or work in another, or, movement from one place to another according to season'. Thus, 'Transmigration' would mean, 'movement across one country/ place to another to go to live or work'. Agha Shahid Ali's life and work has been affected by the term, Transmigration, and the term ('Transmigration') was similarly affected by Agha Shahid Ali's state of being an 'exile'. Shahid migrated to three different places, and considered himself a 'triple exile'. He moved from Kashmir to Delhi, and from Delhi to Pennsylvania. This way he transmigrated from and to three different places, and absorbed three different cultures in himself, hence, the transmigration of cultures. He spent his childhood in Kashmir, and after completing his studies from Presentation Convent School, Burn Hall School and University of Kashmir he moved to Delhi, to do his post-graduation from Hindu College, where he taught also.

Myriad representations of nation are made into crystal images that reflect the emotions of a migrant sensibility through the haze of foggy yearnings to belong, to go back to the culture of the homeland, in order to form an identity of not the migrants but the

Kashmiri's, as Shahid presents in his "The Blessed Word: A Prologue" in his book *The Country Without A Post Office*:

I write on that void:

Kashmir, Kaschmir, Cashmere, Qashmir, Cashmir, Cashmire
 Kashmere, Cachemire, Cushmeer, Cachmiere, Casmir. Or
 Cauchemar in a sea of stories? Or: Kacmir, Kaschemir,
 Kasmere
 Kachmire, Kasmir, Kerseymere? (15)

Shahid was already familiar with the culture in Kashmir, and was exposed to the culture prevalent in the Delhi society when he migrated to Delhi. Since he was a Muslim, its culture was inborn in him also, being in India, he was comfortable with the Hindu culture too. Thus, we can say that Shahid had Muslim, Hindu and Kashmiri culture, and was also exposed to the Indian culture and tradition. He was well acquainted with the Western culture too, as the family spent a few years there, during Shahid's childhood.

The influence of Ghalib and Faiz is obvious on Shahid. Transmigration from English verse form towards Urdu verse form (Ghazal) is the clear evidence of this. Shahid wrote an entire volume of Ghazals, *Call Me Ishmael Tonight*, and translated a few of Ghalib's Ghazals. The interest in Ghazals brought him closer to Begum Akhtar. Though it was his mother who introduced him to Begum Akhtar's ghazals, however he became so influenced by the legend of Begum Akhtar, that he could not bear to be away from her. Once he told Amitav Ghosh, "I loved to listen to her, I loved to be with her. I could not bear to be away from her" (*The Imam and The Indian: Prose Pieces* 347). Shahid was haunted by the image of Begum Akhtar where she mourns the death of her mother, so unconsolable and so sorrow-ridden. He was so heart-broken by Begum Akhtar's death that he dedicated an entire volume to her. The first poem in his book *In Memory of Begum Akhtar* reads as:

Your death in every paper,
 boxed in the black and white
 of photographs, obituaries,
 the sky warm, blue, ordinary,
 no hint of calamity,
 no room for sobs,
 even between the lines;
 I wish to talk of the end of the world.

(*In Memory of Begum Akhtar* 9)

Shahid had always liked Ghazals, mainly because of Begum Akhtar and because of the ghazals, especially Ghalib's, that she sang, later on he became more inclined towards writing ghazals. And translated Ghalib's Ghazals, as well as the entire volume of the translated Faiz's ghazals. Translation of one of Ghalib's Ghazal was published in *Rooms Are Never Finished*. In the initial stage of his ghazal writing, Shahid identified himself more with Ghalib because the feeling of being alienated and isolated was similar to that of Ghalib's. Ghalib's poetry too, characterized by feelings of longing, loss and sorrow as those of Shahid. However, with the passage of time Shahid's poetry was more influenced by that of Faiz. Therefore, he wrote "Homage to Faiz Ahmed Faiz" in *The Half-Inch Himalayas*, followed by the *Rebel's Silhouette: Translation of verses*, a book of translation of Faiz's selected ghazals. In "Homage to Faiz Ahmed Faiz", Shahid invokes Faiz:

When you permitted my hands to turn to stone,
 as must happen to a translator's hands.
 I thought of you writing Zindan-Nama
 on prison walls, on cigarette packages,
 on torn envelopes. (*The Half-Inch Himalayas* 32)

The last line of Faiz Ahmed Faiz's poem "Tanhai", which Shahid translated and named it as "Solitude", is, "ab yahan koi

nahin, koi nahin aayega”, which is to be read after translation, as, “no one, now no one will ever return.”, finds expression in Shahid’s “Homage to Faiz Ahmed Faiz”.

Bolt your doors, sad heart! Put out
the candles, break all cups of wine.
No one,
now no one will ever return.

(*Rebel’s Silhouette : Translation of Verses by Faiz Ahmed Faiz* 9)

Shahid’s Transmigration from English verse form towards Urdu verse form in a sense introduces the latter to the Western readers. The knowledge and exposure of Western Culture makes it possible for him. An example for this is the poem from book *Call Me Ishmael Tonight*. The name of the poem is “land”:

If home is found on both sides of the globe,
home is of course, here-and always a missed land.
Clearly, these men were here only to destroy,
a mosque now the dust of a prejudiced land.
You made me wait for one who wasn’t even there
Though summer had finished in that tourist land.(50-51)

Agha Shahid Ali is also a prime example of a diasporic writer who has “an ethnoglobal vision”, namely, a vision that is rooted in the nurturing rhythms of his own indigenous, ethnic traditions and one that also has wider, even global resonance, for humanity as a whole. Shahid brings the local, indigenous tradition of Urdu poetry, via the ghazal, in conversation with a global audience through the very power of his linguistic talents, and through his creative and cultural translations that make one culture alive to a different one. The poems of Agha Shahid Ali included in *The Country Without a Post Office* (1991-1995) are the record of the fact that diaspora’s point of departure can never be fixed positively in time and place, as he is on continuous flight to

and from the home/ host countries to make the connection or the communication via his poetry if not via the post office. Hence the presence or absence of the post office, stamp, or mailman as significant tropes is rhetorically ricocheting in these poems. The fundamental importance of location thus becomes a 'passage' where temporality becomes dynamic, forging out a new affiliation. Thus the Indian immigrant poet making his so-called home in America, and writing from that space elaborates Fanon's spectacular insight on cultural citizenry, that is, that a "national consciousness", which is not nationalism, is the only thing that will give an international dimension. Majumdar points out,

Inventing, investigating and refashioning the self with all its fractured bits is the problem of all diasporic writings, especially poetry. Agha Shahid Ali's poems narrate the saga of the bereavement, longing and pain of a helpless spectator who sees from thousands of miles away his beloved Kashmir, the paradise of earth on fire, eternally besieged, being the innocent scapegoat of a political game played on its surroundings, citizens, hopes, dreams. (*Kavya Bharti: Special Issue, Poetry of The Indian Diaspora-I.175-176*)

An example of this can be seen in the poem, "After the August Wedding in Lahore, Pakistan", from his book *The Country Without a Post Office*, which is as follows:

. . . expelled from the glass
of someone's eyes as if no full-length glass
had held us, safe, from political storms? Pain,
then, becomes love's thirst. . . .(90)

All these prove Shahid's Knowledge of Western atmosphere. Shahid also edited *Ravishing Disunities: Real Ghazals in English*, which has been contributed by various ghazal writers from all over the world. Transmigration of cultures alludes towards transmigration of forms. Ali's innovative use of the ghazal form reaffirms the dialogic

possibilities in dialectically juxtaposed cultural spaces. Agha Shahid Ali asks his readers to see culture not as a static, fixed or given entity, but as something dynamic in its interaction with other cultures.

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Shweta Bali

W. B. Yeats as a Literary Critic: An Exploration

Writing in 1949, N. Jeffares had declared, “Yeats’ greatness is secure” (Jeffares, vii). This statement holds true even today for perhaps there is hardly any other writer who can match Yeats in his dedicated craftsmanship, spectacular thematic range, technical virtuosity and voluminous output in the field of English Literature. Yeats’ heterogeneity and complexity of critical thought sets apart his literary ingenuity and productiveness from other literary figures. Apart from his accomplishments as a poet and a dramatist, his contribution as a freelance critic, and editor, although underplayed by most critics, cannot be ignored. The present study is an attempt to gauge his literary and critical acuity as depicted in his prose especially his reviews, letters and essays.

Apart from collected memoirs, a chronological anecdotal account of his life, published in 1935 entitled *Autobiographies*, Yeats has several other prose publications to his credit. These include *The Celtic Twilight* (1902), *Ideas Of Good and Evil* (1903), *Discoveries: A Volume of Essays* (1907), *A Vision* (1925), *Letters to the New Islands*, (1934), *Pages From a Diary Written in 1930*, (1940), *Reflections*, 1970, *Uncollected Prose*, (1970-74) and *Interviews and Recollections*, to name only a few.

Impelled by the financial anxieties of his impoverished family soon after their arrival in London, Yeats ventured into criticism and took up compiling of anthologies and reviewing for magazines and journals like 'The Yellow Book', 'The Bookman', and 'The Savoy' and popular newspapers such as 'Titbits' and 'The Daily Mail' to earn quick money. His reviews cover half a century beginning with a review 'The Poetry of Sir Samuel Ferguson' (1886) and conclude with a review of 'Poems: by Margot Ruddock with Prefatory notes on the Author' (1936). One of the earliest articles, regarded as a statement on his literary philosophy, appeared in *The Dublin University Review* in 1886. After Ferguson's death two articles had appeared in journals which allied Ferguson's loyalty with the British crown. Yeats had challenged these articles and claimed that Ferguson was a nationalist who "sang to sweeten Ireland's wrong..." In his review, Yeats had hailed Ferguson for his simplicity, lack of florid expression and the "supreme gift of story-telling" and "imagination enough- to make history read like romance, and simplicity enough to make romance read like history". He had concluded the article with a clarion call for rebirth of Gael by one "who sang of the indomitable Irishry". Thereafter, Yeats has reviewed numerous books and articles on Irish fairies, ghosts and witches, a topic very close to his heart. Some of his articles include: 'Irish Wonders'; 'Irish Fairies'; 'Irish Folk Tales' and a review of collection of Folk-tales in 1890. Between 1892 and 1899, he contributed nearly 40 reviews to 'The Bookman' wherein he has assessed and critiqued the poetry of Michael Field, Savage Armstrong, Edward Ellis, Alfred Tennyson, William Blake and Robert Buchanan, and also Irish literature including Douglas Hyde's Old Gaelic Love songs. Yeats strongly felt that 'directness and simplicity' typified Celtic literature. He also assumed it to be mythologized and symbolist. The revival of Celtic mythology was envisioned by Yeats as a consequence of the growing popularity of Symbolism and aversion for didacticism in literature. In this regard, he compares the symbolic works of

Maeterlinck, Wagner and Adam with the didactic works of Browning and Tennyson.

In 1894, he wrote two significant reviews on Villiers de L'Isle Adam's *Axel*, a dramatic prose poem and Ibsen's verse tragedy *Brand*. His review of *Axel* is hailed as the expression of the emergent, non-naturalistic standpoint, an example of the imaginative drama of future. Yeats has sketched a general account of the current developments in drama in this review and observed how the scientific movement has swept away many religious and philosophical misunderstandings of ancient truth that have entered the English theatres in the shape of realism and Ibsenism. He also establishes the growing dissatisfaction among the theatre-goers with the realistic drama: "The younger generation has grown tired of the photographing of life and has returned by the path of symbolism to imagination and poetry, the only things that are ever permanent" (qtd by Peter Faulkner in W.B. Yeats: Critical Assessments vol.III, 69).

In his early reviews and essays, Yeats emerged as a forceful proponent and theorist of the Irish Literary revival, though there were no set principles which governed his ideology. Devoted to the Irish cause, he endeavoured hard to propagate the fledging literary movement. For Yeats, the ancient Ireland and its sagas were one of the seven great fountains in the garden of world's imagination besides those of the Indians, the Homeric, the Spanish, the Arthurian, the tales connected with Charlemagne, and the Scandinavian cycle of legends. In *A Book of Irish Verse* (March 1895) edited by Yeats, he ignored the popular patriotic verse of Thomas Moore and Thomas Davis, and concentrated more on the writings of Douglas Hyde, William Allingham and Samuel Ferguson. He lavished praise on Irish nationalist writers like Carleton, Hyde, Katharine Tynan, A.E and Lionel Johnson and also approved of Richard Ashe Kings' *Swift in Ireland* as a "beginning of that scholarly criticism of men and things which is needed in Ireland even more perhaps than creative literature". In his over enthusiasm for

Irish literature, he compiled a list of the best Irish Books and drew the wrath of his critics for in the absence of any established literature or recognized criticism on Irish Literature, such an attempt seemed rather preposterous. Yeats also courted controversy due to his whimsical observations such as his assessment of Ferguson as the great Irish poet whose popularity has made possible “the new school of Irish literature and criticism, aiming to create in Ireland a true, cultivated, patriotic class”. He has been criticized for basing his judgment on three or four poems which were rather ordinary and no way great.

Yeats used his reviews and articles to voice his opinion regarding various pragmatic movements and changes that have transformed literature. For instance, in the course of evaluating Maeterlinck’s plays, he reiterated the significance of the Symbolist movement. “We are in the middle of a great revolution of thought, which is touching literature and speculation alike, an insurrection against everything which assumes that external and material are the only fixed things, the only standards of Society” (qtd in W.B Yeats: Critical Assessments, Vol.III, 71). He repeated the same sentiments while reviewing *Aglavine and Selysette*.

The literary movement of our times has been a movement against the external and heterogeneous; and like all literary movements, its French expression is more intelligible and obvious than its English expression. . . . A movement which never mentions an external thing except to express a state of the soul has taken the place of a movement which delighted in picturesque and bizarre things for their own sake. (UP II, 52)

The final review which he wrote for *The Bookman* had symbolism as its subject. According to Peter Faulkner:

The Bookman reviews show Yeats committing himself more and more firmly to a Symbolist view of literature as held by Arthur Symons. . . . Yeats’ aspiration for Poetry to contribute to the forging of

the Irish Consciousness provided a complicating element in his development, and held him back from aestheticism. It was to drive him in the next decade... to create an Irish theatre, in a new direction. But the reviews bear witness to the importance for him of Symbolist ideas in the 1890s. Edmund Wilson rightly wrote of Yeats' visit to Axel's Castle: his emergence from it was to be the next stage of his unceasing mental journey (quoted in W.B Yeats: Critical Assessments, Vol.III, 72).

Yeats' stance in these reviews was typically romantic, emphasizing imagination against the intellect and the mind. Complementing his father's anti-Victorian ideology, Yeats showed no patience for the Victorian love for the explicit and unrelenting moral patterns. In fact, true to his romantic proclivity, he admitted in the first draft of his Autobiography "I was romantic in all" (Memoirs, 19).

However, Yeats' capaciousness as writer is not confined only to reviews, letters, plays and poems. He has authored a significant body of scholarly essays written in cultured yet simplistic, conversational mode. These essays are the most direct record of Yeats' theories. In *Ireland's Literary Renaissance*, Ernest A. Boyd comments that "if style is the man", then the essays, 'Ideas of Good and Evil' is a perfect portrait of the author" (177). He also regards the essays in 'Ideas of Good and Evil' as a "defense of Yeats' own ideas and an exposition of the theories underlying literature which he has helped by precept and example to create" (Ibid, 180). In 'Magic' (1901) and 'Invoking the Fairies' (1892), Yeats explores the world of the supernatural and the Gaelic folklore. His essays 'Symbolism in Poetry' (1900) and 'Symbolism in Painting' (1898) survey the Jungian concept of the archetypes of common symbols used by writers across the ages and genres to display symbolically the universal emotions and situations. Similarly, 'The Philosophy of Shelley's Poetry' justifies the relevance of anima-mundi and the inherent connection between the artist and the audience, forged primarily by symbolism, archetypal

images and supernaturalism rather than any other scientifically explainable means. These essays also demonstrate Yeats' in-depth evaluation of various writers especially some of the Romantics whom he admired and emulated.

Mostly informal, subjective, anecdotal, and exemplary in style, Yeats has elucidated his own craft as a literary writer and critic in these essays, especially when he identified and empathized with the subject. He has also expounded his judgment of the style and content of other writers across varied genres and modes. His essays were an extension of his reviews and offer an expanded discussion on the analogies and connections he discovered between different components such as occult and symbolism; imagination and will; self and the anti-self; realism and romantic fantasy. Most of his essays are closely akin to the prose of conversation and are remarkable for simplicity of expression and assertion than any strenuousness of Rhetoric. Using clear and concise technique, Yeats tried to exclude over emphasis, obscurity or vagueness, though not always successfully.

Also Yeats' critical theory and perceptions seem more subjective than objective. His prose-pieces present the continuous growth of his mind and his sustained subjectivity in criticism. The subjective impulse in Yeats' criticism does not progress logically from his doctrine of self-conquest, rather his assessment of works as a literary critic seems more impressionistic than impartial, objective or scientific. The fact that he never abandoned his role as a writer and the consequent intermingling of critical and artistic sensibilities make his criticism rather subjective. His impressions in criticism are illuminating precisely because they are observations made not by a professional critic but by a practicing artist and hence they are impressionistic in tone.

Yeats' prose is indeed the direct documentation of his inclinations, preferences, and insights into the nuances of literature. It is through them-especially the essays and letters that we learn more

precisely and succinctly about his preference for poetic drama over other forms, his passion for symbolism, his Romantic leanings, his belief in the supernatural, his theory of imagination, his take on the dichotomy between the self and the anti-self, and the role of anima – mundi in his artistic design, to name only a few. These essays also show that Yeats learnt the nuances of perceiving art, writing poetry and critically analyzing texts primarily from his father. An accomplished artist, John was forever dissatisfied with his own accomplishments. He was a well read man who had both the knowledge and the eloquence to debate and write on varied issues. For him, ‘art had a definite purpose’ and he was certain that ‘a work of art is the social act of a solitary man’. Being shy, introvert and self conscious, at the outset, Yeats had found himself suppressed by an onslaught of his father’s opinionated views on an array of issues, art and literature in particular, leaving him little room for self expression. It is only after he rebelled against his father’s ideology that he began to find his moorings in the literary world. He overcame the filial pressure to perform, and his own gawky physicality to give wings to his imagination. His disinterest in studies, distrust in Christianity and the consciousness about his physical weakness drove him to find peace with his own self by plunging deep into the world of art and literature. Thus driven, he meditated on the fundamentals of literature, apart from seriously taking up writing of poetry and drama.

Zealous as he was about drama, and its essential mechanism, Yeats is credited with initiating experimentation and suggesting ways to improve drama and to allure public into theaters besides writing 31 plays. He has also analyzed the realistic drama written by Shaw, Ibsen and Beckett and censured them for their overemphasis on reality. Yeats explored the genre of drama as a tool to study the prevalent trends in stagecraft, themes and plots, and to suggest revolutionary changes based on the idealistic models available across the world. His iconic observations and suggestions to revamp theatre were greatly

inspired by The Noh Drama which altered Yeats' style of writing especially with regard to stage craft and setting. He found the Noh plays to be the befitting antidote to the contemporary commercial and realistic drama which caters to the tastes of all and sundry which according to him did not auger well for aestheticism in literature.

To stage a successful drama, Yeats thought it imperative to amalgamate body and the soul of the play. He realized that poetry, acting, dialogues and the plots needed to be in unison, one complementing the other to make it worthwhile. According to Yeats, if "Art is to reign supreme" it can do so only "in the reconciliation of poetry, gesture and scene. This reconciliation [is] to be historic". He further feels that "the two great energies of the world that in Shakespeare's day penetrated each other" [have] fallen apart. . . . The modern theatre [has] to prepare for the eventual fusion of those energies that would free the arts from imitation" and "ally acting to decoration and to the dance" (The collected works of W. B. Yeats. Vol. vii, 42). However, his mythological and esoteric references, impossible demands on actors and audience alike and remoteness from ordinary day life and everyday concerns made him rather unpopular as a dramatist and as a drama critic.

Yeats' development as a literary figure and a literary-critic occurred concurrently. As a critic, he not only explored the ever-changing preferences in the intricacies and nuances of rhythm, and forms and styles of literature but also adopted them in his poems and plays. His own evolution as a creative figure transformed his perceptions about art and literature. His imaginative self was often overwhelmed by fleeting and contradictory ideas, transitory phases and bouts of passion which he transmuted into his unique philosophy, most profoundly enshrined in his prose and his later poetry. Influenced by distinctive schools of thought and art especially Symbolism, German Expressionism, and French Surrealism, initially Yeats associated himself with a group of writers "The Decadents" who professed the doctrine

of 'art for art sake'. The group comprising Ernest Dowson, Lionel Johnson and Arthur Symons regarded 'making beautiful things the sole motive of writing poetry', unmindful of their own prejudiced and biased contention against the contemporary morality. However, later on realizing the futility of such an ideology, Yeats gave it up for a more realistic and modernistic stance in literature.

Echoes of the concerns and subjects of the Romantics are apparent in Yeats' own literary works: vision and prophesy; primitive myths and legends; heightened imagination; passionate expression; use of masks to present the real self and its anti-thesis, the anti-self and the Anima Mundi- the universal mind in his persistent urge to seek patterns of experience and images. In *The Romantic Survival (1957)*, John Bayley surveys Yeats' career to establish Yeats' dealings with his Romantic inheritance. "Like the Romantics, Yeats places the self at the centre of his work..." Bayley further asserts "Yeats is certainly the last Romantic to believe implicitly in the power of Poetry" (54) and applauds Yeats for balancing restraint and passionate assertion in the development of his style. Yeats, nevertheless, also tries hard to incorporate Modernism into Romanticism, driven as he was by an urge to 'make it new'.

Desirous of reviving and re-vitalizing the oral Gaelic traditions and the Irish folklores, Yeats lamented the loss of past glory and beauty with the advent of modernism. In "The Gyres" referring to the 18th century Ireland as a time before secular religion and political feuding divided the people in Ireland, he plainly states "A greater, a more gracious time has gone" (Ex. 337). Similarly in 1930, he records in his diary that his expression is most profound and ideal "when I carry with me the greatest possible amount of hereditary thought and feeling (Ex. 293). This desire for tradition, according to George M Harper is fuelled not so much by a lack of confidence in his own ideas as by his belief that "if his ideas were true they would not be original to him, but would be received from the world-soul, ancient truths enshrined in the

oldest religious and philosophic traditions and in the work of the most venerable poets (6).

Yeats celebrated the pan psychic power of imagination as opposed to the abstract reasoning which he detested mainly because he found it divorced from imagination and the natural world. He deemed imagination capable of revealing the inner truths and intuitive meanings underlying the everyday experiences. The pursuit of unorthodox forms of knowledge not only satiated Yeats' curiosity but also fed his imagination with copious ideas and images. Yeats subtly fused together his imaginary, visionary perception with realistic details. Like William Blake, Yeats also regarded imagination to be the source of all human thought, endeavour and action. Thus, like the Romantics, he idealized Romantic imagination which he believed had the ability to transcend present reality. In 'The Philosophy of Shelley's Poetry', he writes: "... I have observed dreams and visions very carefully, and am now certain that the imagination has some way of lighting on the truth that the reason has not, and that its commandments, delivered when the body is still and the reason silent, are the most binding we can ever know" (E&I,65). In fact, in his search for a coherent, personal metaphysics, Yeats has reiterated the need for formulation of a philosophy which could give free play to imagination. "I wished for a system of thoughts that could leave my imagination free to create as it chose and yet make all that it created, or could create, part of the one history, and that of the souls" (Av A,xi.).

Presuming conflict to be integral to creation, in the 'Trembling of the Veil', Yeats affirms that all creation is from conflict, whether with our mind or with that of others. Reiterating conflict as fundamental to literature in 'Synge and The Ireland of His Time', he observes: "I think that all noble things are the result of warfare; great nations and classes, of warfare in the visible world, great poetry and philosophy, of invisible warfare, the division of a mind within itself, a victory, the sacrifice of a man to himself" (EI, 321).

Although he promotes personal sentiments in poetry, he also advocates the Arnoldian concept of objectivity in the aesthetical appreciation of a work of art. In “The Death of Synge”, Yeats tells us that “the act of appreciation of any great thing is an act of self-conquest”. Though he seems to be vehemently suggesting surrender of the self to appreciate art, he practices subjective evaluation in his critical observations about his contemporaries and literature in general.

Yeats’ concept of literature also entails yoking together of rather disparate entities enumerated as his chief interests in *Explorations*. He says: “I had three interests: interest in a form of literature, in a form of philosophy and a belief in nationality. None of these seemed to have anything to do with the other but gradually my love of literature and my belief in nationality came together” (263). Detesting the use of literature for political polemics, Yeats, nevertheless, stressed on the need for it to be rooted in the native soil. His ideology in this regard was opposed to that of Dowden who believed that locating or confining literature to a particular nationality or period would adversely affect the scope of literature. In fact, Yeats yoked together his love for literature with his belief in nationality to write some of the best poetry.

To him, Literature is an outpour of an individual’s thoughts, aspirations and emotions. “Literature”, according to Yeats “is always personal; always one man’s vision of the world, one man’s experience and it can only be popular when men are ready to welcome the visions of others (Ex, 115). He desires it to be free from all irrelevant details and moral and scientific discursiveness. Literature, for him, could either move upwards into ever growing subtlety until it served the cause for only a small and learned audience or downward until all was “simplified and solidified again” (ibid, 266). In ‘Discoveries’, he enumerates the changes that have marked the development of literature: “In literature, . . . we have lost in personality, in our delight in the whole man-blood, imagination, intellect, running together- but have found a new delight in essences, in state of mind, in pure imagination, in all that comes to

us most easily in elaborate music” (8).

Yeats recognized art as indispensable to life. From Wilde, he absorbed the idea that artistic form simulates and improves nature. Yeats established definite analogy between art and poetry which also fed his theory and practice as a poet, dramatist, prose writer and a literary critic. He linked these two persistently into a web of associations. His preoccupation with the visual art underscores his aesthetics. He anticipated the modernist approach which W.J.T. Mitchell termed as “the Pictorial Turn” which embodied a growing inclination towards ‘culture of images’ and the prominence of the correlation between literature and visual arts. In fact, in the 1937 introduction to ‘Essays and Introductions’, Yeats perceives the poet’s task as procedurally analogous to the painters. “I would have all the arts drawn together, recover their ancient association, the painter painting what the poet has written, the musician setting the poet’s words to simple airs, that the houseman and the engine –driver may sing them to their work” (E&I, ix).

In keeping with his ever vacillating ideology as a critic, Yeats’ views on art were also inconsistent and ever-evolving. While acknowledging that art should reflect the personality of its creator, he found it difficult to differentiate between the artist and his art. Yeats also did not reach any finality regarding the predominance of subject over pattern or vice versa and left the issue open-ended. In fact, he clearly voiced his concern at the existing dissonance and lack of integration and the necessity of forging unity between form and content in art. Moreover, his theory of art was closely related to his idea of symbolism as he believed in the extensive use of symbols. In his essay ‘The Symbolism of Poetry’, Yeats conclusively declared “the continuous indefinable symbolism” to be “the substance of all style (E&I, 155). For him it was a façade which allowed the artist to say several things open to multiple interpretations by the readers.

More than most other issues, the concept of Unity has been central to Yeats' poetic dogma and critical thought. It remains an indispensable part of his life and art. His concept of unity as a desirable component of literature and his belief that symbols can evoke this unity evolved from his own personal experiences and his efforts to synthesize various divergent philosophies and subjects. In a lecture delivered in 1910, Yeats had identified and suggested two-pronged approach to achieve unity in literature. He had advocated the assimilation of the "personality of the writer in lyric poetry and the imaginative personality in drama". He used this device in the meditative poetry where he created imaginative personalities and objective characters in dramatic settings and his own personality as the Poetic "I" and then tried to unite them in the verse. Yeats' stint as a dramatist and producer of plays was marked by a paradigm shift from the unity of literature and the visual arts offered by poetry of vision to that provided by drama. He perceived in theatre the perfect opportunities of rendering unity as exemplified by John Todhunter's *Helena of Troas* where in "mood, acting, scenery and verse were all a perfect unity" (qtd. by Ian Fletcher, 184).

It is indeed widely accepted that Yeats did not have a systematic or constant philosophy or a definite system. His literary oeuvre is marked with complexity of attitude, treatment and technique and his inconsistent theoretical views on poetics are strewn throughout his correspondence, *Autobiographies*, introductions to edited works, and in the introduction to his own works and many of the collections of essays especially *Ideas of Good and Evil* and *The Cutting of an Agate*. He also transcends, transforms and complicates his earlier views. Thus, provinciality, prolixity and rhetoric marked Yeats attempts at elucidating and recording his observations on the nuances and notions and components of literature. Nevertheless, there are certain issues which remained paramount in Yeats' repertoire of literary criticism. Paramount among these was Unity which remained a matter of concern

and much endeavour for Yeats, although often the attempts remained ineffectual. Thus, though he tried to forge mythical unity in literature, he seemed 'to embrace only aesthetics of conflict-caught perpetually between the dualities: real and the mythical or the symbolic; between the "cry of the heart" and the "necessity", wishing he was part of Maud Gonne's political world while longing to escape its reality' (Ben-Merre, 72). Another significant aspect of Yeats' prosodic theory is the extensive use of mask, persona and voice to define and accentuate personality. Just as imagination was to the Romantics, for Yeats, the mask and the persona were tools of both-self expression and self-concealment to reflect upon the conflicts in personality. Thus, in his insightful observations and analysis, Yeats tried to blend together his romantic sensibility with his modernism. Yet despite his attempts to modernize, his critical acuity and imaginative proclivity remained pro-Romantic rather than modern.

Undeniably, despite varying critical estimations about Yeats' insight or lack of it as a literary critic, there is no denying the fact that his literary criticism of the works of his contemporaries and his observations on literature in general display the lively reaction of an erudite critic to various ideological and artistic concerns of his age. His pragmatic approach towards literature in general and poetry in particular is inseparably intertwined with his own poetic achievements. The world may have grown hostile to some of his ideas, yet his instinctive sharpness as an artist, his psychological candour, and his versatility cannot be ignored. That is why, despite the publication of voluminous works on his craftsmanship, his imaginative thought and creative vision, no conclusive definitive study has been able to fathom the depth of his literary worth. He continues to remain an enigma- open to new interpretations and new perspective studies mainly because of the dimensions and the complexities as a literary figure. For Yeats, as for many writers, poetic theory and practice form a continuum; theory leading to experiment in language and experiment leading to theory

and its subsequent realization in literary form. Hence, his theory of mask, anima- mundi, unity, poetry, drama etc find befitting expression in his prose where he elaborates on their relevance, necessity and validity. These are ultimately translated into his craft as exemplum of his perceptive thought.

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Shilpi Saxena

Representing the Nation: Reading Achebe and Ananthamurthy

“The nation”, as represented in the novels of both Chinua Achebe(a Nigerian writer, 1930-2013) and U R Ananthamurthy (an Indian Kannada writer, 1932-) (with special reference to *Things Fall Apart*, and *Samskara*) implies the collective cultural/ social consciousness of the people that integrates them despite their linguistic, social /ethnic, religious differences, and it is this national consciousness that arises from their collective cultural consciousness that enables them to fight against the colonial as well as post-colonial forces of oppression and exploitation. It is in this context that the present study deals with the critical analysis of the cultural and social values, that form the bedrock of the nation, as represented in the novels of Achebe and Ananthamurthy, viz, *Things Fall Apart* and *Samskara*.

Things Fall Apart beautifully depicts the socio-cultural ethos of pre-colonial Africa endowed with a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty. As title suggests, it is concerned with the dislocation of the African society caused by impact of another culture. The conflicts both inside and outside the traditional Igbo village society prepared the way of its eventual disintegration.

The life at Umuofia follows a natural rhythm marked by periodic festivals. Harvests and feasts measure time. Music and

dances are as common as the new moons. *Things Fall Apart* seems a simple novel, but it is deceptively so. On closer inspection, we see that it is provocatively complex interweaving significant themes, love, compassion, colonialism, achievement, honour and individualism etc. Besides the depiction of duties and sense of justice, values and complex behaviour patterns of the Igbo people; connecting the various episodes and descriptions of rituals in the novel and daily routine life, there is the tragic story of Okonkwo, the Chief protagonist. Brave and burly, he is an outstanding warrior and wrestler who have performed several remarkable deeds of physical dexterity. He is both an individual and some of the value of his community. The village is held together by a network of relationship, with a common recognition, much stronger than in modern European civilization. The relationship that exists between Okonkwo, the principal character, and his society is what society has made him by proposing certain values and lines of conduct. As the authorial voice comments: "Okonkwo is what his society has made him, for his most conspicuous qualities are a response to the demands of his society. If he is plagued by fear of failure and of weakness it is because his society puts such a premium on success" (Palmer 73)

Okonkwo is a personification of his society's value. He is a man who is grown up in a community, which, because of its passionate desire for survival, places its faith above all in the individual qualities of manliness. The qualities commanding most respect are toughness, courage, self-reliance; without them, whatever else you may have you will not win a place of honour, for the accepted values are hard on weakness.

Okonkwo's father Unoka had many endearing gifts. He was a flute player of genius and a gay companion filled with joy of life. His talents might make him a welcome guest at parties, but he was lazy and improvident and no fighter. Okonkwo, ashamed of his father, reacts over-violently against his father's incompetence, cultivating in himself all the qualities of success and suppressing

everything that was like his father. He is hard to himself and merciless to his family, “Okonkwo ruled his household with heavy hand. His wives, especially the youngest, lived in perpetual fear of his fiery temper, and so did his little children.... his whole life was dominated by fear, the fear of failure and of weakness” (TFA 12). Unoka himself seems to have acquiesced in his status. He once says wistfully that the hardest of misfortunes is to fail alone when other men succeed- a remark in which there is pathos, but not rebellion.

The novel demonstrates the eminence of religious beliefs in nineteenth century Ibo land. The society which the missionaries later branded as heathen were actually more religious than anything that had been seen in the western world for a very long time. No major venture was undertaken without first seeking the divine will of the gods. The religious system is involved in a complex hierarchy of gods and deities ranging from the personal god ‘chi’, through ancestral spirits such as ‘egwugwu’, and clan deities such as Idemili, Udo, Ogwugwu and Ulu etc. to the major national gods like- Amadioha, the god of thunder and of the sky; Ani, the earth goddess; Ojukwu, the god who controlled dreaded diseases; Ifejioku, the god of yams, etc., and above them all was the greatest- Chukwu. It manifests the belief, similar to the Christian (or even Hindu) theory of Omnipresence of God, that they are present in all aspects of creation through which they could speak to their people. The concept of decentralization of power of God is depicted through the conversation between Akunna, an intellectual of Umuofia and Mr. Brown - the first missionary in Umuofia:

You say that there is one supreme God who made Heaven and earth’, said Akunna on one of Mr. Brown’s Visits. ‘We also believe in Him and call Him Chukwu. He made all the world and the other gods.... It is indeed a piece of wood. The tree from which it came was made by Chukwu, as indeed all minor gods were. But He made them for His messengers to that we could approach Him through them.... We make sacrifices to the little

gods, but when they fail and there is no one else to turn to we go to Chukwu. It is right to do so. We approach a great man through his servants. But when His servants fail to help us, then we go to the last source of hope (TFA 162-163)

Thus the Igbo ethnographic narratives should be read in the context of Igbo aesthetics that does not find value in any absolute resolution of the forces that inform human life and social practice; rather, it is the need and the striving to come to terms with a multitude of forces and demands which give Igbo life its tense and restless dynamism and its art an outward, social and kinetic quality.

It is not our custom to fight for our gods' said one of them. 'Let us not presume to do so now. If a man kills the sacred python in the secrecy of his hut, the matter lies between him and the god. We did not see it. If we put ourselves between the god and his victim we may receive blows intended for the offender. When a man blasphemes, what do we do? Do we go and stop his mouth? No. We put our fingers into our ears to stop as hearing (TFA 145)

We come across several culture markers in the novel elaborately reconstructing the Umuofian customs and traditions, rites and rituals, beliefs and superstitions, duties and sense of justice, value and complex behaviour patterns, prior to the coming of the white men in the Ibo heartland. The African tradition or the Nigerian tradition is amply foregrounded in the narrative of *Things Fall Apart* for example; the condition of poor marginalized peasants (TFA 21-22), the farming method (TFA 30-31), the presence at wrestling match (TFA 42-43) and the wrestling match itself (TFA 45-46). Then, the inhuman tradition of twin throwing (TFA 56), the mutilation of body of dead child (TFA 71). The ritual of Iyi-Uwa (TFA 73-77) and the ceremony of 'egwugwu' (TFA 80-85) and the judgment. The marriage of Obierika's daughter (TFA 103, 106-108). The funeral ceremony (TFA 110-112). The Osu (TFA 143), etc are all markers of the rich tradition, good or bad, of the Nigerian tribes.

Throughout the novel, this complex dualistic nature of the

customs and traditions of Ibo society of Umuofia is made clear. Achebe essentially writes about the common people of his region, minutest details of their daily life- their houses, their food, their clothes, their creativeness, children's plays, folk stories, all find space in this narrative of common people.

The traditional Ibo society that emerges is a complex one: ritualistic and rigid yet in many ways flexible. In this society, a child is valued more than any material acquisition, yet the innocent, loving child, Ikemefuna, is a denied life, by the rigid tribal laws and customs. Outwardly, Umuofia is a world of serenity, harmony and communal activities but inwardly it is torn by the individuals' personal doubts and fears. It is also a society in which "age was respected, but achievement was reserved". It is this sustained view of duality of the traditional Ibo society that the novel consistently presents in order to create the sense of tragedy that makes the reader understand the dilemma that shapes and destroys the life of Okonkwo.

His participation in the killing of Ikemefuna is one of the most significant events in the novel, "He heard Ikemefuna cry 'My father, they have killed me' as he ran towards him Dazed with fear, Okonkwo drew his matches and cut him down. He was afraid of being thought weak" (TFA 55). Okonkwo had to steel himself against ordinary human feelings but Nwoye breaks down on death of Ikemefuna. Nwoye's final alienation from his father, the final breaking of the filial bond is directly related to the killing of ikemefuna, "Nwoye knew that Ikemefuna had been killed and something seemed to give way inside him, like the snapping of a tightened bow. He did not cry. He just hung limp (TFA 55).

Things Fall Apart also narrates how Christian modernity intruded the placid of the Igbo people- shattering their worldviews and finally, subjugating them. That is why, the story of the colonization of the Igbo community is also the untold, immediate history of the colonization of Nigeria. In order to exteriorize the national history, Achebe loads his (national) narratives with the telling details of the colonial encounter. His politics of representation

resists the colonial intrusion. Thus, the narrative of liberation derives its power from the tradition it seeks to reject, revise, or appropriate and set in a different direction.

As far as U.R. Ananthamurthy is concerned, he represents the national cultural consciousness of the people of India through his portrayal of the rural societies of Durvasapura and Parijatpura through the conflict between tradition and modernity and the complexity of the moral values in Indian society in his novel *Samskara*. The novel is based in a time not long before independence. The Brahmin in that period were highly respected. People did not eat if some Brahmin was hungry near them, and they never fought in presence of Brahmin. “seeing a brahmin in front of him, the man gulped down his anger. The other started lowering on them” (*Samskara* 117). And still the brahmins felt the threat of rebellion: “With this kind of rebellious example, how will fair play and righteousness prevail? Won’t the lower castes get out of hand?” (*Samskara* 22). U.R. Ananthamurthy foregrounds here the highly iniquitous and anti-human caste-hierarchy.

In his novel *Samskara*, Ananthamurthy tries to highlight the fact that the institution of caste-system is arbitrary, anti reason and anti-human. We see in the corpse of dead brahmin: “...its rotting there, that thing, its stinking there, its belly swollen.... its neither brahmin nor shudra. A carcass. A stinking rotting carcass” (*Samskara* 70). The author seems to suggest that as a dead body rots when not paid heed for a long time, similarly age old customs, ancient ways start rotting and stinking in need of proper ‘samskara’. The problem faced by the protagonist in the novel is not the problem of him only but of the whole community.

...my dilemma, my decision, my problem wasn’t just mine, it included the entire agrahara. This is the root of the difficulty, the anxiety, the double-bind of dharma, when the question of Naranappa’s death rites came up, I didn’t try to solve it for myself. I depended on God, on the old law Books. Isn’t this precisely why we have created the

Books? Because there's this deep relation between our decisions and the whole community. In every act we involve our forefathers, our gurus, our gods, our fellow humans. Hence this conflict... The consequence, I'm shaking in the wind like a piece of string" (*Samskara* 109).

The author is also raising the question of communal consciousness and the responsibility of the intellectual towards his society. Praneshacharya questions the fossilized, decaying tradition sanctioned by the law books and makes a case of re-investing the tradition in accordance with reason and morality.

Praneshacharya, the spiritual leader of the Brahmins of the Durvasapur agrahara epitomizes the ancient Indian tradition. His 'unfailing daily routine' is strictly based on Vedic activities and he is a firm believer of *The Gita*. As the novel opens we see him beginning one of the days of his holy life with sacred performances of offering prayers, nursing the holy animal cow, reciting mantras and sacred Vedic legends to the audience gathered in his house. His ailing invalid wife epitomizes the diseased sterility of the entire agrahara, whom he nurses as a daily routine.

A simple issue of cremating a dead man is turned complex by these arguing stalwarts of religion. They condemn the epicurean life style of the dead brahmin and due to his relations with low caste people and people of other religion, they are reluctant to carry the rites but are ironically interested in the gold given away by Chandri. Through the discussion we come to know that Naranappa lived an epicurean life and encouraged others who came into his contact, to leave the rotten practices of their ancestors and lead a practical life. Naranappa was a rebel against the rotten tradition. This was not liked by the people of his village. In a way he was trying to break the mental shackles of the people, but in a rather ruthless way. Naranappa seems to be a reformer who thinks that God is not an estate of brahmins but it is for all men. "Your texts and rites don't work any more. The congress Party is coming to power, you'll have to open up the temples to all

outcastes, “(*Samskara* 21). Naranappa’s political consciousness manifests itself in his tirade against the inhumanely divisive caste-system and his plea for change. Gandhiji also desecrated caste-system and rightly said: “Caste has nothing to do with religion.It is harmful both to spiritual and national growth. Varna and Ashrama are institutions which have nothing to do with castes”(Gandhi 1979:83)

Through the examples of Naranappa and Praneshacharya, Ananthmurthy tries to prove that true spirituality does not admit of the ogre of caste-system. It is the perversion of our spiritual samskaras (or actions) that results in the tragedy that haunted the village of Durvasapur.

Praneshacharya who was busy seeking a solution to the present dilemma, finds nothing acceptable to his conscience, and decides to go to the Maruti temple to ask the god to help him out of this dilemma. He sees Chandri sleeping on bare floor in verandah. He is moved and offers her mat and pillow and a moment later returns the gold to her saying that it complicates the matter. Chandri is dumb struck by the halo of this saintly figure who has no body pleasure, nurses his ailing wife, and still does not have a glimpse of lust in his eyes while talking to a voluptuous woman alone at night. Symbolically read or understood, Chandri is the social context that a religious person like Praneshacharya was looking for.

In the due course of time, Praneshacharya was engaged in self examination which leads him to the conflict caused by duties of a learned scholar and desires of a common man inside him. He dragged his weary feet without any sense of direction and duration. He thought about his dead wife and the scriptures and consoled himself that he has left everything behind and must not worry about anything. He is free now. Praneshacharya, who was aware of the pollution and corruption in brahminical way, thinks about agrahara:

Why did I walk away after cremating my wife? the agrahara was stinking.... the intolerable stench in my nostril, the sense of pollution, certainly. Then what? Why didn’t I want

to meet again the brahmins who were waiting for my guidance? Why? (*Samskara* 92).

He found the difference between himself and a common brahmin when he met a stranger farmer at an unknown place: “Praneshacharya felt like bowing his head. Look, this villager took him for a mendicant brahmin going on his rounds. All his luster and influence lost, he really must look like a brahmin going around for his collection. The lesson of humility and begun” (*Samskara* 94). Praneshacharya comes to know about the responsibility of the intellectual towards his community: “Even if I leave everything behind, the community clings to me, asking me to fulfil duties the brahmin is born to. It isn’t easy to free oneself of this” (*Samskara* 96). As he walks further he discovers a new thing in him :

I’d never experienced such dread before. A fear of being discovered, of being caught. A fear that I may not be able to keep a secret from others’ eyes. I lost my original fearlessness. How, why? I couldn’t return to the agrahara because of fear, the fear of not being able to live in full view, in front of those brahmins. O the anxiety, I couldn’t live with a lie knotted in my lap (*Samskara* 96).

To read *Samskara* as a critique of orthodox Hinduism is to limit it severely. It is a novel worth taking notice of not simple because it repudiates a decadent value system but because it is a novel where the physical and the metaphysical fuse; where the interiority of an individual’s social predicament is dealt within its psychological complexity; and where the problem although uniquely personal reflects also the crisis of a civilization in which, through a painful process, a collective code is giving way to individual choice. It may profitably be read as a narrative of the nation as India, to a great extent, lives in villages. Thus, both Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* and U.R. Ananthamurthy’s *Samskara* may justifiably be read as narratives of the nation as they foreground the social, cultural, political and economic aspects of the nation.

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Pooja Mittal

J. Krishnamurti's Matrix of Eastern Philosophy and Theology

In general, philosophy means exploring basic concepts of life as the relation of existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind and language. It is a search of truth by intellectual pursuit and moral self-discipline. While theology means the logical study of concepts of God and its influences. It explores the nature of religious truths. The entire knowledge of Indian philosophy is stored in Sanskrit scriptures. The mysteries of life are codified by sages in verses. These verses are originated by them after undergoing an odyssey of penance and intellectual pursuit. Only the intellectual mind can comprehend such verses. Gradually people lost their interest in this complicated subject and the heritage of Indian Philosophy was lost in oblivion for some time. Later on, the philosophers like Aurobindo Ghosh, Vivekanand and J. Krishnamurti who were not only scholars in Sanskrit but also had a command on their English translation. They revealed the secret of codified complex verses of Indian Sanskrit scriptures and established India as *Dharam Guru* on the world map. The present paper aims at hatching a graph of the matrices of philosophy and theology how they are dealt with in the writings of J. Krishnamurti.

J. Krishnamurti (1895 – 1986) was an Indian who wrote and spoke on Indian philosophy and spirituality. He was a well

known teacher all over the world. He put efforts to change the psyche of every human being and claimed that this process of change can only be directed by individual strength rather than any outer institution whether it is religious, political or social. He brought out the essence of theology and gifted it to the world its nectar in the form of his teachings. Krishnamurti's teachings can be understood in the concepts of conditioning, freedom, conflict, education, observation, relationship, and truth.

Human mind is bound with conditions. It is accustomed to behave in a certain way or to accept certain circumstances. It is not easy to free it from the bondages. According to Krishnamurti there is no method to uncondition human mind. The seeking of gurus or religious leader make humans slave to them and therefore they are conditioned according to their will. It will bring out the confusion and thus it will still be conditioned. The main cause of conditioning is thought which arises out of knowledge and experience, which becomes memory. So thought is a material process. This society conditions the mind to a particular pattern of thought, the pattern of self-improvement, self-adjustment, self-sacrifice, and only those who are capable of breaking away from all conditioning can discover that which is not measurable by the mind. So, everywhere society is conditioning the human being, and this conditioning takes the form of self-improvement, which is actually the continuation of the 'me', the ego, in different forms. Self-improvement may be very pure if it becomes the practice of virtue but essentially it is the perpetuation of the 'me', which is a product of the conditioning impact of society. All our efforts are directed into becoming something, either in this world, if we can make it, or if not, in another world; but it is the same instinct to maintain the self. As a result there is improvement in the self, but that improvement, that progress, does not free the mind from sorrow. Self-improvement is progress in sorrow, not the cessation of sorrow. Krishnamurti in his *Collected Works* Vol. VI says:

You can see that those who pursue a system, who drive the

mind into certain practices, obviously condition the mind according to that formula; therefore, the mind is not free. It is only the free mind that can discover, not a mind conditioned according to any system, whether Oriental or Occidental. Conditioning is the same, by whatever name you may call it. To see the truth, there must be freedom, and a mind that is conditioned according to a system can never see the truth. (211)

Immanuel Kant's views about conditioning are depicted on the internet as:

Kant's approach is also of comparative interest because of the similar ancient Buddhist philosophical distinction between conditioned realities, which mostly means the world of experience, and unconditioned realities ("unconditioned *dharmas*"), which interestingly include, not only the sphere of salvation, *Nirvana*, but also space, which of course for Kant was a form imposed *a priori* on experience by the mind.

Similarly the views of J. Krishnamurti about conditioning are far more convincing since they come from contemplations on Sanskrit scriptures written by sages like Maharishi Gautum, Patanjali and Kapil.

Krishnamurti teaches us that being humans we have to understand the complexity of mind and to enter into this complexity the mind must be free from all attachments, from any tie to anything, to guru, to our conclusion, to our concepts, ideas and so on, because if we are tied to something, or committed to a particular religion, or a particular system of thought that very commitment brings corruption because in that attachment there is fear, hate, anxiety. One of the factors of this corruption is authority. If we are committed to the idea that I am a Hindu, a Catholic, Protestant, Buddhist, or belonging to some sect, some theological or democratic concept, then we are tied to it and therefore not free to examine. And there must be freedom.

Our brain has been trained to accept the authority. We accept

not only the legal authority but also the psychological authority especially the religious authority. We have become slaves to that authority. So we are controlled, convinced and shaped by that. The problem with human being is that he always wants to lean on somebody. By leaning, seeking comfort from another, our brains have depended on the authority of the spirit. And so our brains have been conditioned to accept spiritual authority - the priest, the guru, the man who says, 'I am enlightened, so I will lead you to that'. A man who is enlightened, when he says he is enlightened he is not, because enlightenment is not a thing to be experienced; it is a state of mind, and has gone beyond all thought.

The free mind is one with cosmos. It means presence of stability and absence of disorder and confusion. The free mind is meditative mind which is devoid of any thought. It is religious as well as secular at the same time. The free mind accepts truth and makes the entire world at its home as depicted in our scriptures the concept of *Vasudhev Kutumbkam*. The free mind is full of love. To love means to be alone. To be alone means one with all. Lord Krishna in the *Bhagavadgita* says to Arjun in the 20th verse of chapter 5 (*karma yoga*) as: "*na prahrsyet priyam prapya nodvijet prapaya capriyam sthira-buddhir asammudho brahma vid brahmani sthitah.*" Its English translation by Swami Prabhupada in the *Bhagavadgita As It is* is depicted as: "A person who neither rejoices upon achieving something pleasant nor laments upon obtaining something unpleasant, who is self-intelligent, unbewildered, and who knows the science of God, is to be understood as already situated in Transcendence" (294).

Another important aspect of philosophy is conflict which arises by the difference between what we are and what we should be. When we try to par this difference by depending on some outer authority it brings disorder, fear and divisions. We have to finish with them and go beyond. Nobody on earth can free us from sorrow or anxiety. It is only we that can do it. So it is futile to travel different countries to seek

various spiritual authorities and live in their concentration camp that are known as *ashramas*. So this is the cause of our conflict, because we are looking to another for solution. We do not observe actually what is going on within ourself. Order in life is absolutely essential. There is such a thing as absolute order because the cosmos means order. The universe is in order. But we human beings live in disorder. The reason for it is that we live a life of contradictions. These contradictions exist not only in our thoughts but in our actions and behaviour. This disorder will remain as long as thought dominates our actions because thought is the outcome of memory. That memory is the result of experience, knowledge, stored up in the brain, in the cells. Thought has created the opposite, not the fact. For example if I say that I am unhappy but I have known happiness in my past and the remembrance of that is a contradiction to 'what is' - so there arises a conflict. But if there is no opposite there is only present, and then we can deal with this. Thus the views of J. Krishnamurti about conflict are far more convincing since they come from contemplations on Sanskrit scriptures written by sages like Maharishi Gautum, Patanjali and Kapil.

The aim of education is to let the student and the educator flower naturally. It means healthy development of our minds, heart and our physical well being. It is not limited to a mechanical process that is merely career-oriented. The present culture of society demands that money comes first and the complicated ways of life are second. But Krishnamurti through his teachings try to reverse this position. If we exercise all our energy and ability to gain money i.e. when money becomes the dominant factor it causes an imbalance in a way of life that cultivates the total human being. The flowering of the mind is possible only when we have a clear vision and our aim is free of any kind of imposition. It is concerned not with what to think but with how to think clearly. Freedom is necessary for flowering of mind. There must be a complete harmony between mind, heart and body. It comes out from proper food, exercise, affection and love, goodness.

Krishnamurti regards teaching as the greatest profession in life.

The core of Krishnamurti's philosophy is choiceless observation. It means that observation must be free from pre-conceived notions and opinions. The observation should be free from any personal likes and dislikes or any sort of prejudices. The thought process should be silent in the observation. Krishnamurti regards the negative and the passive approach as most active and positive. Such approach leads to the ultimate reality. In order to hold the totality of 'what is' the complete attention is necessary. The complete attention produces the energy that reproduces 'what is.' Krishnamurti says we should observe the achievements of our reputation, power, status, success and everything else. We may find that there is a contradiction in every form of relationship, clashes, dissatisfaction, and lack of mental peace. We are very conscious of this life but not try to understand the actual reality. Every form of theological concept drives us away from the real existence. There is a need of radical change in the mind which is the centre of the society. This change requires freedom of the mind because free mind is truth. Truth is love and love alone possesses the power of transformation. According to Krishnamurti, there is only one fundamental revolution. This fundamental revolution may be called love. It is the only creative factor in bringing about transformation in ourselves and so in society.

Sri Krishna in Sri MadBhagvad Gita says in the 13th and 14th verse of chapter six (Sankhya-Yoga) about meditation: "*samam kayo siro grivam dharayann acalam sthirah sampreksya nasikagram svam disas canavalokyan. Prasantatma vigata bhir brahmacari vrata sthitah manah sam yam ya mac- citto yukta asita mat-parah.*" (One should hold one's body, neck and head erect in a straight line and stare steadily at the tip of the nose. Thus, with an unagitated, subdued mind, devoid of fear, completely free from sex life, one should meditate upon Me within the heart and make me the ultimate goal of life) (Prabhupada 321).

Jiddu Krishnamurti focuses on the flowering of goodness in all the relationships. But most of the people do not take it seriously. The reason for this is selfishness. Krishnamurti regards relationship as an important part of one's life. One cannot live without some kind of relationship. The sages, the monks however they abandon the materialistic relations of the world but they carry the world within them. Krishnamurti writes in his book *Letters to the School* about relationship as: "We hardly ever show ourselves to another, for we are not aware of ourselves fully and what we show to another in relationship is possessive, dominating or subservient. There is the other and me, two separate entities sustaining a lasting division until death comes" (11). The flowering of goodness in relationship demands intelligence. It cannot be taught by some book. It needs an analysis of the entire structure and nature of relationship. It needs some leisure to ponder and discuss over the actual reactions, suspicions, hesitation, silence, on the part of the man or the woman, the teacher or the student whosoever are related in some way.

The crux of Krishnamurti's philosophy lies in his statement when he says that truth is a pathless land. He is concerned about unconditional and absolute freedom of human being from the leaders and the teachers of the spiritual organizations. He thinks that perception of truth is free from system of theology. Dependence on any spiritual institution is a hazard in understanding the truth according to Krishnamurti. It cannot be perceived by following a particular faith. Krishnamurti says that all humans depend for their spirituality on someone else but no man from outside can make them free. He says that communication of the truth gets successful only when the speaker and the listener possess same level of intensity for truth. An enlightened person can show the way to obtain the truth but it has any significance only when the seeker is completely and intensely ready to understand the truth. Krishnamurti says that a spiritual leader might point out the door and would say, 'look, go through the door' but each man has to

do the work entirely himself.

Sri Krishna in the *Bhagavadgita* in the 53rd verse of chapter 2nd says: “*sruti- vipratipanna te yada sthasyati niscala samadhav acala buddhis tada yogam avapsyasi.*” (When your mind is no longer disturbed by the flowery language of the Vedas, and when it remains fixed in the trance of self-realisation, then you will have attained the Divine consciousness) (Prabhupada 139). Similarly the views of J. Krishnamurti about truth are far more convincing since they come from contemplations on Sanskrit scriptures written by sages like Maharishi Gautum, Patanjali and Kapil.

Krishnamurti's teachings do not discard any school of philosophy. They are the outcome of the truth which he directly perceived. Krishnamurti has tried to put into words the manner of his realization. Time and again Indian thinkers have established that Indian scriptures have dealt with all the aspects of life. They have pondered and drawn conclusions about rule of education in society, importance of morality, love, truth and the path of conscience that leads to ultimate truth. Thus we can say that the views of Indian thinkers like Jiddu Krishnamurti come from ancient scriptures, written in Sanskrit.

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Nidhi Sharma & Kavita Tyagi

**Synthesis of Diversity in Bhabani Bhattacharya's
*Music for Mohini***

Bhattacharya as a great scholar of Indian history firmly believed in the great Indian tradition of integration of diverse and conflicting elements, viewpoints and cultures. His fiction embodies “the essential Indian ideal of unity in diversity resulting from the compromise between the various aspects of life.” (Sharma, 93) He feels that at such a crucial time when country greatly needs political, economic and social stability for its progress, we should not stick to any one ideology but rather draw the best from all others and thus bring about a healthy synthesis in cultural life Highlighting this significant characteristic in his works, Dr. K.R.Chandrasekharan aptly remarks:

With his progressive ideas and his vision of a glorious future he has also great admiration for the spiritual and cultural heritage of the country. Like the great men whom he admired, particularly Tagore and Gandhi, he is also a builder of bridge between the present and the past. (Chandrasekharan, 8)

After winning the political independence the Indian society was in the melting pot because of various conflicting ideologies. *Music for Mohini* is a detailed study in the old and the new values of life. Here Bhattacharya puts forward the view that reconciliation between the contrary ideals and values- modern and traditional is very much required for a happy and harmonious life. Marjorie B. Synder, writing

in *The Chicago Tribune* (Aug. 10, 1952) finds modern India revealed in *Music for Mohini* as:

a sociological battleground in which the older generation clings to tradition. ...[while] the intellectuals... are struggling to throw away, charms and bangles, to open themselves and their country to Western ideas. (Synder, *The Chicago Tribune*)

In this novel, there are two types of characters first: those who advocate the old and the established values of the past and secondly, those who plead for a change and deviation from the dead past in favour of new and modern value pattern. These two entirely different types of characters have ideological differences and conflicts but finally they reach on a compromise or reconciliation to create a harmony in life.

In the first part of the novel, we see a conflict between Mohini's father, the Professor and the old Mother. Mohini's father is highly educated and modern-minded man. He is very much under the influence of the fashion and the norms of modern times. He sends his daughter Mohini to a Christian Convent School and allows her to be a radio-singer. He has no objection to Mohini's song being recorded and sold in the open market. But his mother is very much opposed to this wide publicity of her granddaughter. She firmly believes in orthodoxy and superstitions and is a staunch supporter of old and established moral values. There is a wide ideological gap between the son and the mother and whenever this gap widens she threatens: "Send me away to the Holy City. I won't have no mouthful of your food or let water pass my lips." (*Music for Mohini*, 16) Although most of the times Professor is able to handle the situation tactfully, the real crisis occurs on the occasion of Mohini's marriage. As Professor is a modern man he wants to marry his daughter to an educated city-bred cultural boy. But the Old Mother strongly believes in horoscope and would allow marriage only after the horoscopes match perfectly. Once she rejected a marriage proposal simply because as she says: "He is not the right sort for our Mohini. He and his friends have no respect for elders. They smoked cigarettes in your presence, didn't they?" (*Music for*

Mohini, 44) When the Professor objected to it she again firmly said: “The groom belonged to his circle. He has his root in that soil. They are all alike. No tradition, no true culture. Apes of Westernism.” (*Music for Mohini*, 44) Due to this difference in outlook the issue of marriage is left unsettled and the Professor says in anger: “Let our girl remain unwed rather than be sacrificed to your antiquated outlook.” (*Music for Mohini*, 44) But the difference between the mother and the son gets resolved when Jayadev appears on the scene. He is accepted not only by the Professor and the Old Mother but by Mohini also because he is a combination of traditional as well as modern values in being both “a great scholar and master of Behula village.” (*Music for Mohini*, 50) The Professor appreciates him thus: “He has a true legacy of the past, an inner health, a source of graceful living, and to that he has added our modern culture.” (*Music for Mohini*, 130)

We find a synthesis of the old and the new values in the personality of the Professor also. That’s why he often compromises with Old Mother’s outdated notions and somewhat silly actions. In order to live happily with the old lady he even lets her tie an amulet to his neck chain. He knows fully well that the path of compromise is better and that “the old customs and conventions are not too unsound.” (*Music for Mohini*, 55) and that “They seem to suit our mental climate.” (*Music for Mohini*, 56)

Similarly whenever the Old Mother sees the tension mounting in the family she at once leaves her rigidity and accommodates to the new beliefs and practices. Many times we find that the “Old Mother had compromised with modernity” (*Music for Mohini*, 130) and was “of the old and the new.” (*Music for Mohini*, 130) This old lady upholds the old values and orthodoxy only as a habit otherwise she is often ready to compromise with the spirit of the new times. As Bhattacharya remarks:

Every Sunday the family went to the cinema, often an Indian film, though Old Mother, with all her orthodox heart enjoyed English picture as well- the “Shadow Show” was to her mind a wonder of wonders, the supreme achievement of the western people. (*Music for Mohini*, 30)

Jayadev, the chief protagonist in the novel also integrates the traditional and the modern values. As a 'scholar' he is all for modern, liberal and progressive ideas while as the 'master' of the Big House he symbolizes the old tradition in his character. Roop Lekha describes her brother Jaydev to Mohini and says: "A strange mixture of the old and new is he, my brother." (*Music for Mohini*, 94) She further tells Mohini: "You see the New Learning holds him as much as the old, so that his is set on a synthesis as he calls it. He would have a harmony of cultures for India." (*Music for Mohini*, 94) Jayadev wants a fusion of the best of the ancient and the modern culture so that a healthy and progressive social system can be established which may take India forward on the path of progress. He emphasizes: "Look back that you may look forward. Look to the roots of India in this fateful hour of flowering. Use the buried material of the past to write the new social charter." (*Music for Mohini*, 68)

When Mohini is happily married to Jayadev and comes to Behula as the new mistress of Big House, she encounters the old values personified in her mother-in-law. Mohini is a modern girl whom the rich environment of Calcutta has given shape. The noise, clamour and colour of the street are the accepted parts of her life. She is a city-bred, sophisticated and convent educated girl who has had no experience beyond the life of city like Calcutta. Such a girl enters her new life with a load of expectations that may prove too heavy for a girl's shoulder to bear. On the first day Mohini is given the keys to the household safe and is shown the family tree. "the last seventeen generations, the record of a thousand years." (*Music for Mohini*, 101) Her mother-in-law is described by Roop Lekha as: "My mother is usual orthodox Hindu woman, only she is more intense than others, and all her faith is pinned to family traditions. No deviation for her, not an inch." (*Music for Mohini*, 94)

Mohini has to adjust with the Mother who represents the Big House which is "much more than a residence. . . . a way of living,

a stern discipline and iron tradition.” (*Music for Mohini*, 78) The mother is very stern and strict and puts a number of restraints upon the young girl. She dislikes Mohini’s wearing bright coloured saree and bangles of glass and lac. She even restrains her from using powder and rouge as “they were for actresses who had to make their faces shop windows.” (*Music for Mohini*, 130), no sleeveless blouse, tight blouse, no hair style and the Mother is also against her singing modern songs, climbing tree perch. In other words “there was no end to prohibitions” (*Music for Mohini*, 130) and restraints on Mohini. These are too heavy demands for Mohini and her husband Jayadev has already warned her: “The Big House will make heavy demands on its young mistress. Demands that you will find unreasonable. Some of them will have to be met with patience and a spirit of give and take. (*Music for Mohini*, 78) But Mohini accepted this life by choice not by force so she assures her husband: “A city girl you call me, but you will see how soon and easily I become Behula’s own.” (*Music for Mohini*, 77)

Thus Mohini tries her best to adapt the new ways of village life and of the Big House. She finds it quite difficult in the beginning but gradually, the struggle between the contrasting values that is so intense and fierce in the beginning becomes less and less severe and finally reaches a happy compromise. As Bhattacharya remarks: “Yes, the young mistress of the Big House took deeper colour from her new life every day. Slowly she fitted herself to the rural designs.” (*Music for Mohini*, 130)

Not only Mohini but Jayadev is also in conflict with his mother because of their contrasting ideas and outlook. Whereas Mother is an ardent supporter and defender of the family traditions, Jayadev is very liberal and modern in outlook. Jayadev knows that this conflict between him and his mother is inevitable because it is not a clash of personalities, but that of values, of tradition and modernity. Like the Professor Jayadev also tries to compromise with his mother and many times

remains silent out of his love and reverence for his mother but this conflict takes a serious turn when the Mother takes Mohini to the temple to offer her heart's blood to please the Virgin Goddess. Here on the altar of the Goddess the basic difference between the Mother and the son is exposed vividly. Mother says: "Heresy holds you. Old beliefs, old morals, old values mean nothing to you." (*Music for Mohini*, 180) Jayadev makes it clear to his mother that there are values beyond her grasp. He makes it clear to his mother that there is no place for such blind beliefs in the Big House because it will set a wrong example for the whole village which looks towards them for a proper way of living. He clearly declares that there is "no room in the Big House for crazy beliefs." (*Music for Mohini*, 179) Despite this fierce ideological tussle with her son the mother soon realizes that her son is right:

For the first time she could see her son clearly. His ideas, his point of view, moulded by the new spirit in the land, were different from hers and opposed to them, but they were, nonetheless, true ideals. (*Music for Mohini*, 187)

At the peak of this tension Mohini is found to be pregnant and though the son is not yet born he will definitely prove to be Jayadev's savior a new force for India from the new woman that Mohini is. K.R.S. Iyengar's remarks about this synthesis of old and new:

Out of the clash between the old and the new, the seeming antagonism between the country and the city, a creative new synthesis has to emerge. The old is not necessarily all gold, the exiting and the new needn't be always good; and music is a matter of harmonizing different notes, and there will be no 'music for Mohini' till her heart-beats chime with Jayadev's." (Iyengar, 415)

The synthesis of the old and the new values is also evident in the story of Harindra's family. Harindra trained in the modern medical system has to face opposition and resistance not only from the villagers but from his own father "*Kabiraj*. The old *Kaviraj* has been practicing the ancient Indian Ayurvedic system for over forty years. He is

suspicious of his son's medical system and openly ridicules his son and his ideas. The old *Kabiraj* who practices the Indian system of medicine in its antique purity is "an iron pillar of orthodoxy!" (*Music for Mohini*, 128) He considers his Ayurvedic system more efficacious than Modern medicines. Harindra educated and trained in a Western style medical college believe in the medicines prepared in the modern laboratories. Harindra pleads with his father that modern medicines are more effective in curing the disease but his father is furious with rage because "here was a challenge to the indigenous system of Ayurveda, the system that had prevailed for the millennium." (*Music for Mohini*, 140) He does not allow Harindra to treat his ill mother. But when he fails to cure her he seeks his son's help who is able to cure his mother with Sulfa drugs. Now the old man realizes the true meaning of his son's remark: "What's wrong in using the fight against disease the best that East and West have to offer? Medicine knows no race or nationality. Father!" (*Music for Mohini*, 140) With this note of harmony he lives happily with his wife and son quite reconciled to the modern values and system.

Bhattacharya who is immensely under the influence of Tagora and Gandhiji has tried to maintain a balance between asceticism and fullness of life in his novels. "Bhattacharya feels that man should live intensely and fully, seeking joy and beauty and not make life a burden by imposing unnatural restraints and sacrifices on himself." (Rai, 72) In *Music for Mohini*, the heroine Mohini is an embodiment of joy, beauty and aesthetic and emotional sides of life. But she gets married to "a shy simple ascetic" "a book-worm" who "seems to have no use for our kind." (*Music for Mohini*, 88) Mohini has very simple expectations from her marriage "love and be loved." (*Music for Mohini*, 80) She judges the world around her in aesthetic terms. She does not have even the slightest idea of Jayadev's dream of making her into the intellectual Vedic woman. Jayadev as a visionary and idealist expects his wife to be his counterpart like Gargi and Maitrey. She should be above her physical basic needs, "no household drudge, no decorative being but an intellectual, striding besides man in a tireless quest for knowledge." (*Music for Mohini*, 72)

Thus Mohini's dream about the glamour and romance of marriage are shattered the moment she enters the Big House. Standing before the flower-bed in her room, Mohini is so upset to notice the other worldliness of her husband that she tears the jasmine garland round the neck with her teeth: "She needs life, feeling. . . . No one, by temperament could be less like Maitreyi." (*Music for Mohini*, 80) But Jayadev who has no knowledge of the soul of a woman sought in his wife a source of inspiration to complete his mission of social reconstruction. Jayadev also finds pleasure in spending time with his beautiful wife but "Jayadev girded himself for a struggle. He can not distract from his goal. Bhattacharya also says: "How could he pause and give himself to his private life." (*Music for Mohini*, 124)

This ideological gap between husband and wife creates problem for both of them. But later on Jayadev realizes that a balance and harmony is required for a happy life and life should be lived without any repression of natural urges. Thus finally a deep communion is established between Mohini and her husband. This communion is indicated by making Jaydev sit on the very tree perch on which Mohini used to sit.

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Babita

R. K. Narayan's *The Guide* as a Confessional Narrative

R. K. Narayan (1907-2001) is a master narratologist, particularly the way he makes the central character, i.e. the first person as a narrator. In *The Guide* (1958) especially, he exploits the confessional mode to the maximum. The novel is divided into eleven chapters, excepting the chapter –I, VI, and XI, the rest of the story is told by Raju, the central character, himself. Critics in general, including Narayan's readers, has paid scanned attention to this division of the novel, strategically planned, making the third person narrator, i.e. the author tell Raju's predicament in Chapters - I, VI and XI. It is an interesting phenomenon so far as, the writer's positioning is concerned. The novel opens *in medias-res*, as if it were an epic. However, it is an epic of a confessional in the chapter-I, Narayan find him sitting all alone against the backdrop of a ruined country temple. Narayan's first feeling about Raju is gathered from the way he welcomes a villager coming towards the temple after crossing the dry bed of a river, "Raju welcome the intrusion – something to relieve the loneliness of the place" (TG 5).

Raju has come to this place after his release from the prison where he has spend two years on the charge of forging the signature of Rosie. He has been sitting all alone perhaps all through the day. On

seeing the villager coming towards the temple he felt relieved, as Narayan writes because man is a communal animal, not that he seeks communality, but that he is thrown into the world of fellowman, i.e. he is a being-in-the-world of ongoing concerns. In fact, he is always involved in some situation, some relationship and this constitutes his being. Phenomenological existentialist like Martin Heidegger, in particular, views human world as a world which we share with others. The communality of human being is a pervasive phenomenon which shows itself in man's experience, as for example, Raju's experience of aloneness as assuredly as his experience of being-with-others.

That is why Raju's aloneness is a deficient mode of being-with. Sitting all alone for whole day is a torture for him. Therefore, when he finds the villager coming towards him he feels relieved because he experienced aloneness as a privation of his original relatedness. The moment the villager, Velan, looks at Raju reverentially, thinking that he must be a saint, considering the backdrop against which Raju sat, Raju at once gets involved with Velan also indulges in communality. It was Raju who first broke the silence asking him about his village. Curiously, Velan took no time to oblige Raju and in fact starts offering unmasked information. Narayan looks at this comedy of human involvement amusedly, without either of the two especially Raju realizing that it will cost him more grievously than his earlier involvement with Rosie; in fact Narayan during his narrative rues his involvement, "It was in his nature to get involved on other people's interests and activities. 'Otherwise' Raju often reflected, 'I should have grown like a thousand other normal persons with worries in life'" (TG 9).

Narayan takes over this expression of Raju to add what Raju said in the course of narrating his life-story to Velan at a later stage, that his troubles would not have started but for Rosie. If one asks Narayan the meaning of Raju's confession, he would say that man's involvement in the world is primordial. This is what shows itself, or to

put it in phenomenological terms, lets itself be shown. Narayan's whole corpus has its basis in phenomenology, or else Raju could not have confessed his involvement in others affairs, and inauthentic involvement for which he has to pay a heavy price. As Narayan allows the phenomenon of Raju to show itself, he finds that the first thing that comes to our sight from his childhood, so far his memories go, he becomes Railway-Raju because the railway station of Malgudi comes up and Raju's home closer to the station involves Raju in its activities, first as a seller of newspaper and magazines and then became a guiding tourists around Malgudi, an imaginary up-and-coming town. It is part of human phenomenon that we are always, world not simply as in a crowd but in some profession which again is not chosen but what happens to be at hand. The coming up of the railway station of the Malgudi closer to his home makes Raju to follow those activities associated with the railway. Indeed, Raju says in the opening chapter:

You may want to ask why I became a guide or when. I was a guide for the same reason as someone else is a signaler, porter, or guard. It is fated thus. Don't laugh at my railway associations. The railway got into my blood very early in life. . . I felt at home on the railway platform, and considered the stationmaster and porter the best company for man, and their railway talk the most enlightened. I grew up in their midst. (*TG* 10)

The whole passage has phenomenological coloration, first Raju's involvement in the railway activities and then speaking about the world of the railway in a language betraying his care and concern for the railway. If we follow Heidegger in this regard, he would say that we are not only part of the world closer at hand but also the world we care about, talk about as Raju does. In fact, 'care' is the very being of a person. In his conversation with the railway people which Heidegger would call 'idle talk,' Raju loses himself, his authentic self by "falling into the 'way' and the 'world' of its [his] concern," (*BT*

230) what Heidegger calls 'fleeing' in the face of itself. This result is the consequence of his faithful meeting with Rosie, who comes along with her husband, Marco who explore wall paintings in and around Malgudi. Raju has no training as a railway guide but he did so well anything that comes handy. Eventually he is able to alienate Rosie from Marco by showing his concern for the former. Thus, we can say that Raju's concern for the world around him are grounded in Heideggerian 'care' which "as a primordial structural totality lies before every factual 'attitude' and situation of Dasein, and it does so existentially *a priori*; this means that it always lies in them..." (BT 238).

Raju falls in love with Rosie; it is because of his primordial *a priori* concern further practical over the theoretical. The average everydayness of concern, to quote with Heidegger, "becomes blind to its possibilities and tranquillizes itself with that which is merely 'actual'. This tranquillizing does not rule out a high degree of diligent one's concern, what arouses it..." (BT 139). Narayan watches this phenomenon of Raju conducting Rosie's dancing programs so indulgently as if this is all there is. He is the happiest man around 'amidst other man, drinking, gambling with them, without any view of new possibilities. His concern for Rosie is more for himself than for her, but he would not like to lose her as a money-churning machine. One day he receives a box of jewelry from Marco by post, he forges her signature so that she does not get drawn towards Marco by the latter's generosity and this becomes his nemesis; is lands him in the jail from where he is released and is seen sitting in the ruined temple near Mangla village in the opening of the novel. As Narayan sees, man is a temporal being: he lives in space, no doubt but he also lives in time, i.e., he come from the past, lives in the present and moves to the future, having learnt a lesson from his past. That is what presumably Narayan expects from Raju, that he would not involve himself, unless he does it with the whole of his being, i.e., authentically. Unfortunately

Raju once again falls to her inauthentic, as a being in the world. This is what shows itself the way he and Velan for may bonhomie with their 'idle talk' of Heideggerian domination. It is not merely Raju who readily involves himself with the villager, but he is equally ready to get involved in the 'they' relationship. One has to read their talk which is commonplace, this honest more in the case of Raju than in the case of Velan, Raju wants to be honest, but could not because of his dread of his past life and his future prospect particularly when he is offered easy and respectable life as a Swami. Once again, Raju falls as a being in the world rather than seeing the world as it is objectively, that if it helps, it also harms. It is a world of mutual exploitation because if one uses other, others have also the right to use you. In fact one comes to know the world only when as one comes to lift a hammer, whether it is heavy or light.

Thus Raju starts his new life, putting his past at his back, as if it were 'that.' He starts living an average life, average in the sense being blind to the future. It is an average life which is the most risky in the sense that not because Raju has chosen to conform to the task, the rules, the standards, the urgency of others, but simply because '*acting as They do*' is the typical mode of behavior of human existence. This existence, as we have noted, is inauthentic. Like other existentialist, Heidegger and following him Narayan suggests that we are aroused of this in authenticity by encountering ultimate situations and, particular, by our realization that we must die. The everyday existence, the existence of herd is dangerous because it is the most ambiguities. We have already underlined how Velan and Raju fall to 'idle talk' which leads them to an involvement, costing Raju's life. We've also seen, as Narayan shows the tendency of mankind to be curious about things which do not concern us. This also manifest human fear as to what is happening elsewhere.

When one season the rain gods turn their face people become

panicky. Animals start dying. People approach Raju who lassies their fears, but when the situation goes out of hand, he himself becomes fearful regarding his own food which the villagers use to offer him. There is talk of clashes among the villagers and to hoarders should bring the police on the scene and he may be found out as having served two years jail. In fact, he has many fears. He explores ways of running from the scene but then we find that he has never trained himself in any profession. Here the food was available in plenty and without his asking. Maybe, he hopes, things get normal in due time. So out of sheer curiosity and also to avert clashes among the villagers, he betokens a half-wit brother of Velan, grazing animals to tell his brother that he would not eat till they are 'good.' The simpleton asks, "Good? Where?" (TG 100). Velan's brother confuses the adjective good with place. As Narayan writes: "This was frankly beyond the comprehension of the boy. He wanted to ask again, 'Eat what?' but refrained out of fear." (TG 100)

Not comprehending the scarcity of food in the village and Swami is resolved not to eat, when people were fighting for food, the boy gets ensues to run from the place to tell his brother what the Swami said. And when panting he reached the villagers discussing rains, they assume that Swami would undertake the fast to propitiate rain-gods. So the whole village comes to the ruined temple to pray the Swami to observe the fast for eleven days. Raju is caught in his own ambiguity, born of his average existence which is always hazy because it fears the ultimate, i.e. death. Raju is forced to observe the fast, villainy. There is no escape. Life is contingent. Suddenly all security falls apart and one feels surprised how it happens. Raju tries to wriggle out of the situation one of the nights of his observance of the fast. By telling him the whole story from his early days, that he is no Swami, that he has been into jail for two years that occasions is confession, not in the ordinary sense as one confesses one's guilt but that one is

always guilty, not for being born and living in fallen state. While Raju tells his long story, Velan deliberately or otherwise goes to sleep. It may be a strategy on the part of Velan not to hear Raju when the fast is already under way. It is in Velan's interest to see through the fast. By this time Raju's fast picks up the newspaper full of it when no hope is left to retreat, Raju decides to observe the fast, not thinking of food anymore. It not that he believed in any miracle, but that he hears the call of his conscious. Phenomenologically, conscious calls him as if it were both from him and beyond him – a call of an alien, comes as it does not from everyday self, but from as Heidegger would say, Raju's 'uncanny' self, i.e. the home of the self. Henceforth Raju gives himself to the call of his conscious that one is always towards death, sooner or later, and he thinks his fast food bring some solace, he would do everything in his capacity. He grows weak after the eleventh day. When in the morning of the twelfth day he is carried to the dry bed of the river, he sages down saying, "Velan, it's raining in the hills, I can feel it coming my feet, up my legs- " (TG 247). Whether it really rains in the hills or whether he feels as he has grown weak in body, is left ambiguous.

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Mudita Agnihotri

The Nature Force in Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine*

Let me begin my paper with the message of Sri Aurobindo given in *The Life Divine* itself. The great poet says:

Nature takes good care that the race shall not neglect these aims which are a necessary part of her evolution; for they fall within the method and stages of the divine plan in us, and a vigilance for her first step and for the maintenance of their mental and material ground is a preoccupation which she cannot allow to go into the background, since these things belong to the foundation and body of her structure.

(Aurobindo 674)

It has purposely implanted in us a sense to know beyond terrestrial nature of humanity, this is the very reason that we do not accept or follow view which ignore the higher sense in spirituality. By nature man has intuition of beyond the idea and feeling of a soul which is surly not mind life or body .A Common man satisfies his sense easily through the zest of his earthly nature .But on the other hand the exceptional man turns to the one aim and diminishes his earthly zest in the hope of developing his celestial nature. The great seer writes: "There are powers beyond of which nature in our race is capable, the not only does our hope upon earth ,let alone what is depend upon their

development, but this becomes the one proper road of our revolution” (Aurobindo 678).

Mind and life are not able to grow in to fullness without a spiritual touch to them. Spiritual consciousness is larger and higher and up to a great extent embracing or welcoming to all that is noble and worthy. It, in spite of earthly - life, manifests the diversity of self achieving spirit. Because there is a purpose in all creation that culminates as soul's growth with the Endeavour of Nature. The soul gathers the essence of all our mental and bodily experience and assimilates in Nature. Nature begins slowly and attentively to show our parts and tries her best to assemble it. It leads us to look more and more within our 'self'. On the ignorant surface of world a man is faintly aware of something that is called a soul totally different form mind, life or body. The soul becomes the major means of joy which is attained through sensitive feelings .Since man is satiated with the external function of Nature but internally not satisfied. He has a longing to achieve something beyond externalities of nature. The treatises produced by spiritual saints bear the fact that the wisdom always leans towards - the God, Light ,Freedom ,Immortality and the World beyond the concrete image of world. According to great poet, the quest of an enlightened soul longs for an establishment of an infinite freedom in this world which contains in itself mechanical necessities, and simultaneously it has to discover and realize the immortal lie in a body subjected to death and constant mutation. The main assisting factor in achieving the above goal is harmony in life and matter just like an awakened mind seeks harmony in the arrangement of its perception. The great seer says that Nature is the biggest force as it solves greater complexities beyond human capability. The quest could be produced by only Nature as it has constant tendency to evolve beyond mind. The human being could be taken as animal which is a living laboratory where only Nature

as a scientist works out man. Man again is processed in the experiment of working out superman near to God, divine. The manifestation of Nature always comes secretly. The great Seer concludes the aspiration is natural and significant as it is the first step of illumined intuition or self-revealing truth.

In fact, Sri Aurobindo does not have negation of physical or bodily existence, he proceeds the discussion that the Brahman (knowledge) has entered into form and represented its being in material substance. He frankly declares:

It can only be to enjoy self-manifestation in the figures of relative and phenomenal consciousness. Brahman is in this world to represent Itself in the values of life. Life exists in Brahman in order to discover Brahman in itself. Therefore man's importance in the world is that he gives to It that development of consciousness in which its transfiguration by a perfect self-discovery becomes possible. To fulfill God in life is man's manhood. He starts from the animal vitality and its activities, but a divine existence is his objective"

(Aurobindo36).

Simultaneously, he makes quite clear the things by the analogy of natural phenomena that 'high we may climb, we climb ill if we forget our base'. It means we have not to abandon the value of lower or physical existence but we should transfigure it in the light of the higher to which we have attained that is called a true divinity of Nature. Brahman is always integral and unifies many states of consciousness. The unity of Brahman provides full knowledge of Life. We do not need give up the bodily life to attain a mental and spiritual growth. Therefore, body and soul are complementary to each other for the proper culminations of our Karmas into Destiny. The activities of life are governed by our conscience and conscience is determined by destiny. The individual

is a great and only centre of universal consciousness. In his views the universe is a form and definition which is occupied by the entire immanence of the NIRAKAR (formless) and AVYAKTA (indefinable). Individual embraces universe and universe embraces individual. This relation is very much true and if not felt that is by our ignorance. When we proceed further in the right path to know ourselves, our destiny the 'individual' in us is modified and ultimately spirit and its activities are changed. The great poet admits that all the things and happening cannot be explained but they have their everlasting significance in our life. The bliss existence consciousness in mind and body may be taken as the transfiguration and value of individual existence. The universe and individual are two basic poles in which the tidings of the world as unknowable descend.

The universe and the individual are necessary to other in their ascent. Always indeed they exist for each other and profit by each other. Universe is a diffusion of the divine All in infinite Space and Time, the individual its concentration within limits of Space and Time. Universe seeks in infinite extension the divine totality it feels itself to be but cannot entirely realize; for in extension existence drives at a pluralistic sum of itself which can neither be the primal nor the final unit, but only a recurring decimal without end or beginning. Therefore it creates in itself a self-conscious concentration of the all through which it can aspire. In the conscious individual Prakriti turns back to perceive Purusha, World seeks after Self; God having entirely become Nature, Nature seeks to become progressively God.

(Aurobindo 45)

The meeting, departure, fall a company(willingly or coincidentally) all show a cause behind it. The universe, the happenings all have a great purpose as unknown to man. The universe, the happenings all have a great purpose as unknown to man. The

universe comes to the individual as life – a dynamism the entire secret having with. Here the great poet classifies man and animal.

The animal is satisfied with a modicum of necessity; the gods are content with their splendours. But man cannot rest permanently until he reaches some highest good. He is the greatest of living being because he is the most discontented, because he feels most the pressure of limitations. He alone, perhaps, is capable of being seized by the divine frenzy for a remote ideal.

(Aurobindo 46)

The conscious force behind our all works is the part of that universe. Matter can not be ignored or denied as it has a very significant role in moulding the action which we call to be 'ours'. In fact, our meeting, engaging, administering and departing is under some preplan by some superconsciousness. The physical presence is a working station for a great cause, and for this a solid state that is earth, is necessary.

All forms of Matter of which we are aware, all physical things even to the most subtle, are built up by the combination of these five elements. Upon them also depends all our sensible experience; for by reception of vibration comes the sense of sound; by contact of things in a world of vibrations of force the sense of touch; by the action of light in the forms hatched, outlined, sustained by the force of light and fire and heat the sense of sight; by the fourth element the sense of taste; by the fifth the sense of smell. All is essentially response to vibratory contacts between force and force."Force is inherent in Existence. Shiva and Kali, Brahma and Shakti are one and two who are separable. Force inherent in existence may be at rest or it may be in motion, but when it is at rest, it exists none the less and is not abolished, diminished or in any way essentially altered" (Aurobindo 82-83).

The poet again goes for deeper analysis of union and its substances the element or substance have mingled and its function is well discussed and interpreted. *The Life Divine* widely focuses on the Existence of world animal.

Even the Illusionist theory must admit that Maya, the power of self illusion in Brahman, is potentially eternal in eternal Being and then the sole question is its manifestation or non-manifestation. The Sankhya also asserts the eternal coexistence of Prakriti and Purusha, Nature and Conscious-Soul, and the alternative states of rest or equilibrium of Prakriti and movement or disturbance or equilibrium.

(Aurobindo 83)

The great poet affirms that the spiritual tendency of human being always has been to look more beyond life than towards life. He further admits that the spiritual change has been individual and not collective. And its aftermaths were always positive in the man and successful in the human mass.

The spiritual evolution of Nature is still in process and incomplete ... its main preoccupation has been to affirm and develop a basis of spiritual consciousness and knowledge and to create more and more a foundation of formation for the vision of that which is eternal in the truth of the spirit. It is only when Nature has fully confirmed this intensive evolution and formation through the individual that anything radical of an expanding or dynamically diffusive character can be expected or any attempt at collective spiritual life....

(Aurobindo 83)

The work of nature goes on constantly as it goes from general to concrete; it always wants to create a force to go to up or higher. The poet gives the example that is like a crust of the outer nature, which cracks inner light gets through, the inner fire burns in the heart,

then substance of the nature and consciousness are refined to a greater purity. In this whole process the nature works as a prompt mentor. With the help of initiative contemplated by the desired soul of individual nature carries the consciousness to the full stature. Then nature interchanges its role as: “The soul, the psychic entity, then manifests itself as the central being which upholds mind and life and body and supports all the greater function as the guide and rule of nature”

(Aurobindo 907).

Nature is a cosmic force and it is autonomous. The development of human life step by step is procured by nature. Because mind, life and body of man depend upon this physical principle. The role of body cannot be neglected as it is the medium of all ultimate divine out-flowering.

The importance of the body is obvious; it is because he has developed or been given a body and a brain capable of receiving and serving a progressive mental illumination that man has risen above the animal. Equally, it can only be developing a body or at least a functioning of the physical instrument capable of receiving and serving a still higher illumination that he will rise above himself and realize, not merely in thought and in his internal being but in life, a perfectly divine manhood. Otherwise either the promise of life is cancelled...

(Aurobindo 231)

The bond and function between the body and nature can be best conceived through the round off theory. The growth of the being as interpreted by the great poet and philosopher is the progress of nature self step by step. He emphasizes that matter, life, mind and spirit are interconnected and none of them can be neglected for the divine cause. “Mind in which it conquers, represses or even slays the vital cravings, impairs the physical force and disturbs the balance of

the body in the interest of a greater mental activity and a higher moral being.” (Aurobindo 233).

Life and matter can be overcome by mind. Matter in a certain sense, as he feels, is unreal and non-existent. He declares that what we see and experience is not its truth but only a phenomena of the connection between our senses and all existence we have. The philosophers find that matter only exists as a substantial appearance to our consciousness. The great poet clears that the mind cannot be the creator of the matter. He gives the example that earth cannot be the outcome of human mind because itself is the outcome of earth existence. The material world existed before man came on earth. He supports his views by saying that the earth will keep on existing even if man disappears from the earth. Mind always tends to know and sense substance of conscious being in order to arrive at a conclusion or totality. Mind is the source of all atomic existence and matter is a creation, and both are interrelated. Mind and life in their creative action represent the atomic division in the form of Matter. The great poet has the opinion that spirit comes through mind to matter and again it ascends from matter through mind to spirit.

It is necessary for man's first work, the finding of his own Individuality and its perfect disengagement from the lower Subconscious in which the individual is overpowered by the Mass consciousness of the world and entirely subject to the Mechanical workings of Nature. Man the individual has to affirm, to distinguish his personality against nature, to be powerfully himself, to evolve all his human capacities of force and knowledge and enjoyment so that he may turn them upon her and upon the world with more and more mastery and force.... (Aurobindo 692)

According to the great poet, nature has crafted ego in man for a great cause. So ego in all forms: the mind - ego, the life- ego, the body ego have to play a vital role in the uplift of human life and brings

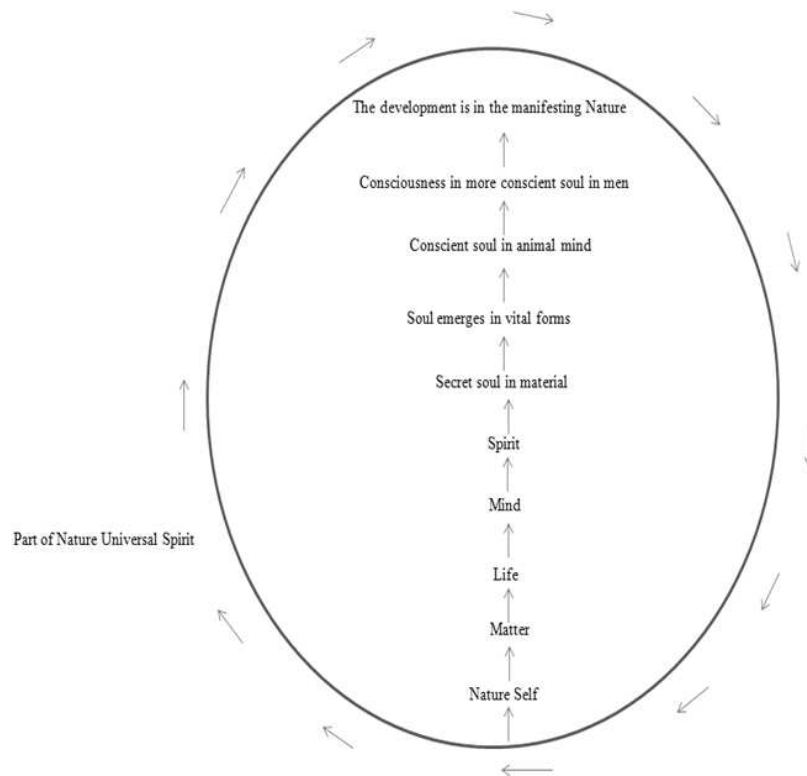
closure to the true essence of self-effectuation. It is ego which moves man to raise from his position for better. He further makes it clear that ego is main factor responsible for the individual progress of man in either field. Because man has to stand apart in order to affirm his separate reality in the world. The force of ego helps his mind to emerge from the common mentality. "For this reason Nature invented the ego that the individual might disengage himself from the inconscience or subconsciousness of the mass and become an independent living mind, life-power, soul spirit, co-ordinating himself with the world around him but not drowned in it and separately in-existent and ineffective" (Aurobindo 694).

It should be a part of our attempt to look below the obscure surface our egoistic being and try to know ourselves if we want to find a real man out of common totality, we must follow the nature's primary teachings, otherwise the purpose of knowing ourselves will not be served. And we will be only a little higher than the animals without an egoistic self-affirmation and satisfaction. He suggests: "He may seek it in Nature and mankind and thus start on his way to the discovery of his unity with the rest of this world: he may seek it in super nature, in and thus start on his way to the discovery of his unity with the Divine" (Aurobindo 695).

There is a consciousness force at every point which works even if it is not existentially felt. And in fact it is the real creator of the world, for this act it could be called the occult secret of nature. This force has two contradictory forms- the force of knowledge and the force of ignorance which help the material world to exist. It enters into form and represents itself in the material substance and self manifestation. All of the discussion points highlight that life exists in Brahman and Brahman is in this world to represent itself in the values of life, which could be nourished by man."Therefore man's importance in this world is that he gives to it that development of consciousness in which its transfiguration by a perfect self discovery becomes possible.

To fulfil God in life is man's manhood. He starts from the animal vitality and its objective, but a divine existence is his objective" (Aurobindo 36).

The nature force as described here could be illustrated with the help of round off theory.



The total vision shows that nature works for nature because universal spirit is the part of nature and it evolves. The spirit develops in nature self and self into matter, matter into life and so on. It is a graded series of development in spiritual fabrics. Matter is the extreme fragmentation of the infinite and continues to grow till it has to manifest nature.

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Book Review

***Indian Army: After Independence* Yking Books, Jaipur:
2013, pp.290, Rs. 995. ISBN : 978-93:82532-19-4**

The book entitled *Indian Army: After Independence* by Lt.(Dr.) Satendra Kumar is welcome and useful edition for general readers and researchers, both who are genuinely interested in knowing the glorious past, structure, activities and significant contributions of Indian Army, the second largest army of the world after Peoples Liberation Army of China, in post-independent epoch of contemporary of India. Even in the age of global capitalism dominated by consumerism and driven by fast growing technology, the real 'power' of a country is defined by its military presence and strength.

Divided and systematically arranged into eight chapters the book is intended to give objective information regarding Indian Army in synoptic but meticulous way. First chapter of the book revisits the historical background of Indian Army in various phases of Indian civilization starting from the vedic period up to recent times with exclusive depiction of rise of militarism under the Sikhs, Marathas and Gorakhas. It is pertinent to mention that during British colonialism Indian Army was instrumental in expansion of British imperialism and its convincing victory on enemies during first two world wars. The second chapter, the smallest one provides capsulated information regarding the Indian Defence Forces which technically comprise the Indian Army, Indian Air force, Coast Guards, Territorial Army and

National Cadets Corps. Indian Defence Forces shoulder the vital responsibility of the national security, territorial integrity, unity and sovereignty of the country.

The author in order to give a coherent picture of military operations of Indian Army focuses on several military activities starting from the Sepoy Revolt or First War of Independence(1857) and logically concludes on the Kargil Operation in 1999 with a cursory glance on other landmark military operations namely, the Indo-China Conflict(1962), Indo–Pakistan War of 1965, Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971 and etc. India was historically bound and destined to face a series of wars and confrontations just after its emergence as an independent nation in 1947. This was the crucial and tough phase of Indian Army who despite all of its limitations of resources, strategy and military planning fought bravely with enemies and showing exemplary war ability proved its might in geo-politics of south Asia. Fourth chapter of the book looks for equipment of the Indian Army in evolutionary way. Since 1947 the world has radically changed and so is the case with Indian Army too. ‘Equipment’ in broader sense comprises comprehensive list of weapons, vehicles, artillery, missiles etc. Technological advancement and sophistication has completely changed the nature of weapons and its operation. In the age of three-dimensional wars conventional war equipment has lost its utility and relevance and most of the weapons have been almost defunct and have become sufficiently out-dated. So the author rightly describes the addition of missile technology under Indian Ballistic Missile Defence Programme. Fifth chapter of the book throws light on different regiments, rifles, battalions and units of Indian Army reflecting India’s racial, cultural and ethnic diversity.

From time to time, Indian Army with specific objectives and goals has formed Special Forces to address urgent issues related to terrorism, infiltration and counter insurgency within and sometimes outside India. These important issues have rightly been taken into proper consideration by the author. Under the chapter titled ‘Wars and Conflicts’ many crucial wars, operations and military interventions

of Indian Army outside India has duly been mentioned. The last chapter of the book categorically mentions the awards-gallantry and non-gallantry, conferred on Indian Army. The first category of the defence award that is the awards for gallantry in the face of the enemy comprises the prestigious awards like Param Vir Chakra, Maha Vir Chakra, Vir Chakra etc.

A critic knows the price of everything but value of nothing. Reviewer is fully conscious of his duty and is of the opinion that the book by Satendra Kumar is replete with significant information in lucid way for readers who want to know about Indian Army in its totality. One more chapter on problems and challenges of Indian Army in present context would have made it more relevant. There are certain issues who deserve careful analysis regarding Indian Army- growing corruption charges, scandals, suicides, reducing interest of the youth opting military careers etc. The book is strongly recommended for the readers for its conceptual clarity, theoretical soundness, analytical rigour and methodological sophistication.

- Sanjay Kumar

Review

**Rita Garg. *An Abbreviated Child*. New Delhi :
Vishvabharti Publications, 2011, pp.104, Rs.195.00.**

The agony of the kidnapped, the pain of the sold, the misery of being an organ-seller, the sickness of a blood-donor, the unpleasant taste of hunger in the mouth, the suffocation of the memories painful, the unwanted situations of Electra or Oedipus complex, the anxiety of the wife deserting the anti-nation Ministerji and also sheltering his child labour, sprout as consequential to every HIV or leprosy sufferer, mentally disturbed or poverty-stricken drunkard enjoying the freedom to breed children like mosquitoes.

Therefore mounts the typhoon of a breast-beating and shrieking mother: My Babe! My Lal! She understands the ills on the part of her son's kidnapping rascal that someone else's child is like a 'loath of meat' to others. Gone are the days of PannaDhaya!

The novelist seeks answer to the practice of surrogacy; the birth of unwanted infants to be littered by the roadside; immoral politicians; freedom to sell children in the open— in or away from animal market.

Surrogacy— seen from Abhimanyu's source of enlightenment in the womb of a qualified mother— fails when the surrogate mother is a poor, needy-greedy woman and the embryo is naturally in the 'never-

never- nest'. The very concept of it proves a burden in the over populated world.

Charles Dickens and William Blake pictured chimney boys, hungry boys being tortured but the present global scenario, as described by Rita Garg, suffers from over towering medical tourism, easy to grow in legally weak, poor people's habitat that India is.

No doubt, incidents like, NithariKand superimpose the presumption of the novelist. Besides boys, girls are also bearing with a worse nature of threats falling their way every second.

Referring to above, the novelist appropriately, binds the scene with the characterization of Radha, a 'thrice sold' girl, later struggling to fight for others and also running the orphanage where she herself had grown. It is her struggle that she envelops under her protective care all those who were victims of the acerbity of circumstances in life. She has other grown up inhabitants there, like Chandrima or Roderigo who would find better means of life in helping the miserable. The novel moves further with Chandrima, no doubt an abbreviated child, who was sheltered by Radha, after being recovered from the roadside. On growing up, she goes to an American University for Ph.D. in Economics to carry on with the mission of Radha. Somehow, abroad, she develops attraction for Bon, a Canadian fellow research scholar.

A discussion on medical tourism by the Professor over there brings forth the ironical situation that the kidney transplant would cause a poor one to be deprived of his for the privileged one. Then she completes her degree and comes back to India for the cause of the wretched ones. Roderigo proposes to marry her but helping one and all is the primary concern of hers. He tries his level best to find a solution to the problem. To Roderigo and Chandrima, a marriage is a must because live in relationship is not approved of by them. This is in sharp contrast with the opium eating, Kalia who sells his sister to a

being with whom she has the loss of womanhood but without the loss of virginity. In fact, he marries Gauri to serve the dual purpose of a wife as well as the substitute of an ox. In fact, this simultaneously covers the loss of recently lost wife and the ox.

The permanent scars of passing through all this at an age when memories accompany, is worse than an infant taken behind the legs of a lame-footed man in a self-propelled tricycle. A boy, bringing a ram and ewe extremely close, cannot learn ethics of a girl-boy relationship. The hut is too small to keep young ones innocent.

‘A good writer is the mirror of contemporary society’ proves to be quite true in case of this novelist as the novel provides a crystal clear and poignant picture of the misery-stricken poor face of Indian people. The novelist tries to explore the complex terrain from the social ugliness which flows like an undercurrent towards the smooth flowing stream from the upper crust to the down-trodden in our society. The novelist not only boosts some serious issues ailing the contemporary society and spoiling it entirely, but also tries to find a remedy for them by suggesting some solutions practised by the characters in the novel.

The novelist is true to her observation as she ironically hammers the unjustified life style of those oblivious of the good: “While a rich drunkard buys a kidney, a poor drunkard sells his own or that of his child—an abbreviated child—as if he is sure to face the surgery and do well with one kidney only—that too all through his life.” Her point of view is appropriate that ‘the under-nourished cannot be the better ones’ and this is revolutionary to the existing theory and is definitely a subject of debate.

The success of the novelist lies in dexterous description of people and events in true aspects of nature and still without distorting the object taken up by her. Her clear cut opinion is: ‘Baby is not a toy to be fondled, embraced and this and that by one and all’. Rather in today’s already existing ‘underfed and poverty-stricken society’, we

badly lack better humans and well-nourished race to progress further and 'not an over-burdened and under-fed race'. An Abbreviated Child gives a clear and poignant description of the misery-stricken poor face of India, telling the story of Radha, a girl victim of poverty.

For the agonized woman, the novelist has no way out but to coin the term, 'genderex'. The novelist is right in saying that in India more than forty percent parents are not fit for childbearing and rearing due to some physical, mental, social or financial reasons. In such a case only those who are financially strong can be benefitted by this system and not all the deprived lots. This can further increase the difference and sense of hatred among people of different groups. The most thought-provoking question is when poor women are either forced or persuaded to rent their womb for the sake of money, where does 'feminism' stand?

The brutal placement of the children in the name of work, money or job, fake adoptions, child-abductions, their involvement in glued work, beggary, slavery, sexual abuse, malefic results of drugs, shipping of youngsters to foreign countries for financial or personal security, shattering their dreams and finally to be lost forever describing a heart-touching story which abounds its readers to finish it in one sitting. Once again to talk of the novels of Charles Dickens, An Abbreviated Child portrays the plight of children, the so-called have-nots of the Indian down-trodden masses, but unlike her, David Copperfield and Oliver Twist develop the plot of their novels on the same grounds and be the pioneers in serving the downtrodden masses of society rather than making a move to improve their miserable lot or providing or presenting any suitable remedy to this devastating plight of poor classes on their own.

Rita Garg presents through the same characters the solution of their own ungifted lot. Those who feel that there's no remedy to the miseries of poor people, Rita Garg presents a good and worthy reply

to them. The concluding lines of the novel leave a satisfactory message: “When History is the biggest lie; Myth is not proven scientifically; and, Culture is a changing phase then lots of succour ought to be extended to the abbreviated young ones.”

To talk of culture is typical of the novelist as in her maiden novel also, viz. Precursor of Love, she questions the ugliness of unnatural relations of human beings.

The most soothing part of the novel is in the ray of hope spread by Chandrima as a foreign educated one tracing the characteristics of Bhishma Pitamah in self and being ‘much avowed’ to help the unfortunate lot. She says that to be wise may not be so good as to be ‘Deewani’ like Sita who left all the comforts of palace and followed the path full of thorns but was always bound to duties. Thus nothing is impossible to handle and deal if only we have the will power like Radha and Chandrima. It also suggests the possible answers and solutions to the problems spreading like parasites in a troubled society.

The novel traces many instances from mythology and history. This highlights the reflections and realities to create a social awareness. The subtle tone of the novel along with the appropriate descriptions and a study of human nature going into extremities of nature and temperament is remarkable on the part of the novelist. It is this style that binds the reader to it.

-Alka Rani Agrawal

Book-Review

Susheel Kumar Sharma, *The Door is Half Open*. New Delhi : Adhyayan Publishers & Distributors. 2012. ISBN: 978-81-8435-341-9. pages 141, ₹ 150.00/ US \$ 10.00 /UK £ 15.00

Susheel Kumar Sharma's collection of 52 poems in *The Door is Half Opened* may be studied in the light of the latencies of semiotic signs of India's culture not only of its riches in the hoary past but also in the light of deteriorating spineless signs of shattered dreams of vicious circle in the present turbulent times. The number 52 is highly suggestive – in the distant past it referred to of fifty two forms of Lord Bhairava while in the modern world it has 52 pieces of playing cards; it results into degenerative multiple games of material principles causing grief, agony and ceaseless struggle against poverty. Susheel's 52 poems represent not only the joyful game when one meets the goddess Ganges as mother merged in the processes of natural phenomenon but also of gloom, sadness and poverty, the signs representing degeneracy and decay.

The poet comes to Allahabad to witness the assembled worshippers and their exuberant movements which are extremely complex to define as the sages of Indian culture say doors of Varanasi are fully opened for an entry only after visiting Lord Bhairava. Susheel appears to have opened the doors half by visiting the Prayag at Allahabad where cultural signs three deities namely Ganga, Yamuna

and Saraswati unite for the salvation of masses in the form of water and move forward to reach Varanasi and then to Ganga Sagar signifying sea. Opening and closing poems “Ganga Mata – A Prayer” and “Liberation at Varanasi” must be studied together as these have deeply latent import of the poet’s wish for salvation and a movement to find a ‘small moorage’. Since the river Ganges has become a great epic of national importance, the poet opens the first of fifty poems by invoking the holiest of the holy rivers of Indian or world culture with some forty four signs of significant attributes out of one thousand attributes dedicated to the holy river as a goddess. His prayer to holiest of the holy is due to some revelation which remains inexpressible in *Purgation*, “How long will God keep my life/Enriched and embellished in a harrowing world/I sometimes wonder” (p. 82). He therefore keeps the door half open as he is certain that the revelation imports a message that prayerlessness is a characteristic of a savage or degenerate civilization. Therefore, he keeps the door ajar in the very first poem with all humility where resignation is quite explicit before impartial Holy River of Salvation sans priests: “I want a small moorage/ In an island created by you. . . / Allow me to have a haven/By your feet” (pp. 1-2). As his prayer moves, the holy river is dedicated as Gayatri, who is suggested to have the excellent glory of the divine vivifying sun as a close bosom friend of her sacred water.

Susheel Sharma uses the sign of ‘Annapurna’ for the holy water of the holy river against the metaphor of poverty in most of the poems to reflect his brain’s willingness to accept its horrors and its crucial role in shaping a degenerative identity to mark a difference; the way we really were in distant past due to free flowing river and the way we have really become in the present by restricting its flow: “The wonder that was India” “to grow in plenty” (p. 5) “to share one’s prosperity with *purna* [perfection]” (p. 5); but now

Just one scene —

Poverty, squalor, dirt, sloth and melancholy.

Everyone is weeping bitterly.

Everyone is crying hoarsely.

Everyone is worried knowingly.

No one has a solution! (p. 9)

His quest is towards unity for one voice of seeing perfect Ganga Mata to cause “Mukti” or salvation from poverty. It is a beginning to return to Ganga Mata not only for plenty but also for “a small moorage” (p. 1) to play in her lap and grow as a new singer to sing Psalms of poverty, grief, irresolution and misery and reach to the core of her heart to gain freedom through a passage (p. 2). He invokes the Trinity in terms of colours “white and green” (p. 2) and colourless Saraswati (3), and with a question on the loss of will to knowledge “where does Saraswati inhabit?” (p. 3).

The very first poem has the cultural signs of Indian origin and these have appropriately been suited to the modern signs of degeneration and human plight for salvation from poverty and resulting grief. If the path of poverty and grief lead but to hope for salvation the second last poem sets the mood of salvation, “Many souls have burnt themselves/In the eternal Pentecost fire/To purge themselves/Of worldly material”(p. 84). Free flowing waters of Ganges that “crush stones and push sand under [her] gorgeous feet” is a natural phenomenon but its cession has forced the poet to enrich its nomenclature with the cultural heritage and spiritual value of salvation. The poet opens with a new style in English, “O Ganges!” and then twenty times with a big “O” and only once as “Om Jai Gange mahajii...!”(p.7) and finally without “O” or “Om” but as “Mokshdayini” signifying her nature of giving salvation impartially.

Considering this as the latent voice of the poet I wish each poem must be read and enjoyed perfectly by prefixing each poem with: O Goddess! In doing this we may assume that each poem is dedicated to the goddess of salvation. The resulting lines may go as follows:

O Goddess!/ My conscience/Is like a pen/That exhausts its ink/In the examination hall” (p.10). O Goddess!/The other day I received a card/Inviting me to a function... (p.12). O Goddess!/I have embraced my dreams (13). O Goddess!/People hated my grandpa/ For he held his head high (p.17). To me it appears that the latencies refer to the cognitive voices of the poet as poverty becomes dear to the poet’s cognitive mind. Ways to poverty have compelled the poet to sing the glory of the Ganges in varying situations and fluctuating plight as it simultaneously remains deeply latent in the utterances of self esteem: may be due to past heritage or due to acquired knowledge or status that he has gained due to his prayers. Why is he running away from man-made home in search of salvation to river Ganges and finally to Varanasi? The question remains unanswered in terms of the latencies of the cultural signs. Some are suggested not only in the heritage of belief but also in terms of the value system to begin “Liberation at Varanasi” and then at Bodh Gaya in an inverse order with gratitude, “I thank you Buddha/ For teaching me/ To sit silently” (p. 88) in the “Hope of Last Thing to Be Lost”.

I wish the reader to juxtapose the first two and the last two poems as prologue and epilogue and then divide the rest of the poems into six groups having eight poems in each group. Thus we may have eight groups of cognitive utterances: A) Prayer salvation (1-2); (B) Painful remembrances (3-10); (C) Forced Forgetfulness (11-18); (D) Cognitive Displeasures (19-26); (E) Privacy Shared (27-34); (F) Inactive Resolution (35-42); (G) Quest for Effort (43-50); (H) Cession for Salvation (51-52).

Susheel usually uses present and past tense but with a difference as these are contextualized to a new dimension of spirituality in poverty, grief and painful in-expressions. In terms of genre, 52 poems may be regarded as the testimony to Susheel's budding manipulation of semiotic signs of cultural heritage in contemporary contexts of degenerating everyday life of human existence. I do not know how to justify Susheel's Sharma's unconscious mind in by quoting his words, "In India, for example, there exists a tradition of *Sahasranama* (one thousand names of the object of one's reverence) where every word connotes a meaning embellished with physical or other characteristics such as history, geography, culture, myth, literary reference etc." ("Glossary", p. 93). His words remind me of the lost tradition of the Egyptian *Sahasranama* (one thousand names) dedicated to goddess Isis. Is there any co-relation between these two cultures of distant past and present? A search in this direction related to semiotics of cultural signs of African-Indian tradition may stamp him as a budding poet of new of genre.

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