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**Editor: Prof. Shrawan K Sharma**

[www.thevedicpath.in](http://www.thevedicpath.in)

[thevedicpath@gkv.ac.in](mailto:thevedicpath@gkv.ac.in)

**+91-9412074666**

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## **Indian Medical Humanities: Challenges and Prospects**

**Kumari Priti,**

Assistant Professor, Dept. of English, Arya Mahila P.G.  
College (BHU), Varanasi, 221001  
email: kumari.priti5600@gmail.com

**Key Words:** Medical, Humanities, Medicine, Patient, Compassion, Empathy

Medical Humanities can be conceptualized as an in-depth association of medicine with various disciplines of Humanities like Literature, Philosophy, Ethics, History and Religion and different subjects of Social Sciences such as Anthropology, Cultural Studies, Psychology, Sociology, Geography and Fine Arts (Theatre, Film and Visual Arts) and their practical application to medical education and practice. The 2009 online manifesto describes Medical Humanities as: the name given to a so-far rather diverse field of enquiry. Its object is medicine as a human practice and by implication, human health and illness, and the enquirers are basically people working from the perspectives of Humanities disciplines. Thus Medical Humanities denote Humanities looking at medicine, looking at patients. At present, History, Literature, Theology, Anthropology and Philosophy are prominent among the disciplines that engage in Medical Humanities. In the West, Medical Humanities is well grounded as a part of academic curriculum which offers undergraduate and postgraduate courses in it and faculties from humanities are being systematically trained to be appointed in Medical colleges and institutions to render their services in the holistic development of field of medicine which is lacking in humanitarian aspects of humanity. It is in the

context of India, there is an urgent need to address the typical and traditional fabric of Indian mind which have drawn a knee-deep barrier between Medicine and Humanities. There few scholars like Dr. Satendra Singh and colleagues at the University College of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, have started certain healthy and innovative practices in the field of Medical Humanities. Seth G S Medical College in Mumbai, Maharashtra; PSG Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (PSGIMSR) in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu; and Jorhat Medical College, Assam etc. are keen to be pioneering proponents in Medical Humanities. With their scientific, rational and humanistic approach to the study of Medical Humanities the Centre for Community Dialogue and Change (CCDC) and Medical Humanities team of UCMs conduct workshops on Theatre of the Oppressed in different Institutions and fully committed to the democratization of the profession of medicine.

Medical Humanities is an extensive field of study and on account of this various Institutions across the globe have embraced different methodologies for its successful implementation. The socio, economic, political, ideological and cultural diversity of India have invigorated MCI to gear up MH as a discipline with the introduction of ATCOM( AT= Attitude & Com = Communication skills) Module into undergraduate medical curriculum to bridge the gap between the field of Medicine and non-medicine so that medical students may get familiar themselves with the positive and negative aspects of both Medicine and Humanities which may help them in their grooming as better future doctors. The core intention behind the implementation of ATCOM module is to create a medical professional who is first and foremost a human, clinician, leader, communicator, member of health-care team and system, life long learner and a professional and in this way it fulfills the very criteria of IMG (Indian

Medical Graduate).

With the unprecedented advancement of Science and Technology, it is not only imperative to reform the curriculum to accommodate new findings in order to enrich cognitive domain and skill acquisition, it is necessary to concentrate the heart of IMG. The affective domain addresses one's emotional behaviour such as feelings, values, appreciation, enthusiasms, motivation and attitudes. Medical Humanities de-emphasizes time-based training and promises greater accountability, flexibility and learner-centeredness. The ATCOM module addresses four domains i.e; knowledge, skill, attitude and communication. The early clinical exposure is planned to be started in the 1<sup>st</sup> year medical course, attitude and communicational skill development, adoption of contemporary education technologies such as skill laboratory, e-learning and simulation. It promotes competency pattern in the undergraduate curriculum and aims to draw a balance between explicit teaching and experimental learning incorporating values of professionalism. The module has been formulated in such a way that communication and ethics are being taught in each year of the medical course. The courses have been framed in the following manner: the foundation of communication in the 1<sup>st</sup> year, bioethics in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, medico legal issues, ethics and doctor-patient relationship in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year & medical negligence and dealing with death in the final year are some of the important topics. Thus, the emphasis has been given to address the heart of the medical graduates.

Medical Humanities makes provision for three distinct approaches. Firstly, the study of Medicine by Humanities scholars who are appointed in University Humanities department; secondly, Arts and Humanities interventions in medical education; and thirdly, Arts practitioners addressing the public with issue of the body and illness through

Literature, Dramatic Performance of various kinds, Theatre and Visual Arts in particular.

The basic concern of Medical Humanities is to shape better doctor or doctor who is more human in nature. The driving force behind introducing Humanities into the field of medical science is the noble thought of nurturing sensible human doctors and the development of a better medical education system. The purpose of the inclusion of it in medical education is to humanize and encourage democratic practices for the doctors who consider patients as cases and their diagnosis as the target of achievement at the expense of the negligence of their feelings and emotions.

The descriptor 'Medical Humanities' has been applied to the following five fields of activity:

- 1) The Humanities studying Medicine (such as history of medicine or the critical evaluation of medicine in Literature).
- 2) Arts and Humanities intersecting with Medicine in medical education—often called 'medicine as art'
- 3) The arts engaging with medical themes in public engagement.
- 4) Arts for health (for example, Art in hospitals and Arts activities with patients-often called 'arts as medicine'.
- 5) Arts therapies (sometimes linked with arts for health, but usually associated with mental health interventions using arts media within a psychotherapeutic framework).

Medical Humanities has flourished in three places-- University Humanities departments through the formal study of Medicine; university medical schools, hospital and community clinics through medical education; and public

galleries, museum spaces and theatres through arts engagement with medical themes.

Medical Humanities offers:

- a) a field of academic inquiry;
- b) the intersection of medicine and the creative arts;
- c) creating more compassionate , more capable communicative doctors that may lead to better health outcomes for patients.

Medical Humanities are no longer supplementary or complementary but actively reformulate what clinical thinking and clinical practice or the critical imagination might be. The Arts and Humanities are given a central role politically in democratizing medicine, where they also educate for tolerance of ambiguity

Medical Humanities is not limited itself only to the overall development of doctor rather it is deeply concerned with the institution of Medicine and the culture of medical education. it regards medical education should not act as handmaiden to normative medicine rather it should resist and critique the institutional norms of medicine where humanizing regarded as unproductive to patient care, collaborative inter professional teamwork and doctor's self-care.

Medical Humanities aims to render sensitivity to doctors so they can communicate sensitively with patients and colleagues, inculcate habit of close listening in receiving the patient's history, close noticing in the physical examination, have an emphatic understanding of patient's narratives of their illness, medical problems and act accordingly to achieve effective diagnosis. It also seeks to develop doctors' understanding so that they can critically and reflexively understand the very fabric of medical culture itself and have a better understanding of the body, health, disease

and illness.

Medical Humanities perceives that the political and aesthetic dimensions of medical education are missing from present medical courses offered to medical professional. And there is an urgent need to reframe these dimensions and this can be achieved through integrating the Medical Humanities into medical education as core and integrated provision. The political aspect of Medical Humanities looks forward to treat medical education for social justice that regards each and every patient as a valuable human being and citizen. It aims to redress health inequalities and provide equal access to health services.

There are diverse opinions from intellectuals of different streams. Hal Cook, a historian by profession, sees Medical Humanities as a way of exploring the complexities and ambiguities of the human condition which is inextricably related to medical practice. He promotes us to see 'the medical' as one historical and cultural determined dimension of human experience. Another intellectual like Deborah Kirclin, a doctor and medical ethicist, sees the application of the Arts and Humanities as a kind of fine tuning of sensibility which is helpful in developing a far more subtle and nuanced appreciation of the context within which illness is experienced and healthcare delivered.

Michel Foucault, French philosopher, social theorist, literary critic and historian of ideas raises questions which are historically and culturally grounded. Taken into account French historical archives, Foucault asks how the focus of medical practice shifted from the home visit to a patient attending a clinic? What conditions emerged that legitimated intimate examinations ordinarily taboo in everyday social exchanges? What is different about the way that a doctor and a lay person gaze on, or at, a body?



Different practitioners of Medical Humanities opine that it can be employed only non-critically, serving medical dominance rather than used in an interventionist manner. That's why Felix Guattari describes the incessant clash of the movement of art against established boundaries of Medical Science/ Practice. He asks the questions:

1. What does the future held for the Medical Humanities?
2. Where Medicine aims for homeostasis or relief from symptoms?

Medicine must collaborate with the Arts and Humanities if only to reap the rewards of learning about tolerance of uncertainty and ambiguity such as awareness of the cultural habit to repress or deny uncertainty that is also a symptom of the high rate of medical error.

In the beginning the first wave of Medical Humanities was introduced into medical education in the form of modules in ethics and the history of Medicine which gradually assimilated narrative-based medicine and topics which discuss at length how looking at art may help medical students to look more closely at patients. Initially with its introduction in curriculum, it was an optional learning, a supplement within the curriculum, a light relief from biomedical science and visualized as a means of entertainment. With the progress of time, Medical Humanities was redesigned as a critical educational intervention which aims at act as a counter point to reductive biomedical science from within the curriculum.

The structures of medicine do not encourage a relationship with emphatic care. The principles of medical practice as a scientific pursuit aiming to eradicate illness are also the values that undermine a moral medicine producing doctors who objectify the patients, where 'controllability and

safety' overshadow empathy. Attempts at empathy merely serve to feed the medical students' fears of losing their own equilibrium. In short, students may insulate themselves against contamination by patients through emotional distancing.

Scholars are of the opinion that empathy is being short-lived. Even if doctors empathize with patients, ten minutes later they can be joking with colleagues about a different matter entirely and the patient contact has already dissolved. It is believed that the true empathy is not possible in a doctor-patient relationship because the bonds are professional, generally short-term and not deeply intimate. The best that can be achieved is sympathy for the patients.

The process of medical education itself is not all to blame for empathy decline and moral (or ethical) erosion. The medical students are initially recruited to medical school because they show what in other people's eyes known as a 'premedical syndrome'. Medical education does not redress such symptoms but exacerbates them. If pre-medical education is overachieving, excessively competitive, cynical, dehumanized, over-specialized and narrow, how can a medical practitioner or doctor be humane? In other words, the majority of those students who plan to enter medicine are already educated for insensitivity and this process is reinforced by pre-clinical undergraduate medical education. Now the question is: how could any rational person, not to mention an entire profession, ever expect to be humane, compassionate, caring physician in an educational environment characterized by harshness, rigidity and cynicism?

Insensitivity in doctors may be studied and evaluated as an unpremeditated consequence of medical education on account of those in power failing to distribute capital of

sensibility aptly and fairly among the poor and disenfranchised-students, patients and healthcare colleagues such as doctors, nurses. The following lines from “Insensibility” one of the poems of Wilfred Owen, the First World War poet reflect the causes of insensibility:

By choice they made themselves immune  
To pity and whatever moans in man  
Before the last sea and the hapless stars

In this poem the poet describes how the soldiers have to cultivate insensibility to tolerate the horrors of battle, drawn from the poet’s own experience as a soldier in the First World War. The poet too recognizes that long term insensibility or shell shock is a product of war. He equates insensibility with insensitivity-soldiers are making themselves immune to pity. Doctors too, in a sense combat and also suffers a kind of shell shock in burn-out, how will they relate authentically to the suffering of patients if they harden to an insensibility and a lack of pity.

The use of the narrative and reflective writing is one of the best practices of Medical Humanities . India has a rich story telling tradition and narrative writing and reflective writing can be widely used in the medical curriculum. Students can get the opportunity to write about and reflect on their different experiences both inside and outside medical school which can help them in understanding of their own sensibility as well as those of patients.

Art Appreciation session is also used in Medical Humanities modules. It can be helpful in Indian medical scenario as well. These session have proved helpful in improving visual diagnostic skills among students. Religious themes have been portrayed in traditional paintings and art works while secular themes, occupied the modern paintings. Keeping in view the changing scenario and urgent need for

reforms in medical education, Medical Council of India (MCI) has proposed to introduce Medical Humanities in medical curriculum. It has also given directives to medical colleges to appoint faculties who have expertise in non-medical disciplines.

The present paper can be concluded with the remark that the incorporation of Medical Humanities is a boon for medical students, practitioners, technicians alike which can be helpful in the overall development. It tries to provide the medical professionals with that perspective of life which is missing till now. Literature with its insight into shared human experience exposes them to real-life situations. Medical Humanities with its interdisciplinary approaches may broaden view of all belonging to medicine and medical. It directly addresses the emotive aspects of life and helping the doctors in communicating with patients. The coming time with better prospects of Medical Humanities may prove nourishing doctors with humanity.

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## **Non-dualism (*Advaita*): Unity of Being (oneness) in Rumi's Poems**

**Sedigheh Zamanlou<sup>1</sup> & Sudhir Kumar<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Research Scholar, Dept. of English, Panjab University, Chandigarh

email: *szamanlou@yahoo.com*

<sup>2</sup> Professor, Dept. of English, Panjab University, Chandigarh

### **Abstract**

Despite the vast research on the non-dualism, little is known about the spiritual aspect of unity of being in Rumi's *Manavi-e-Masnavi*. The overall image that emerges from the literature is dualism as binary opposition: essence/existence, difference/non-difference dualism. This paper recovers some of non-dualistic perspective: the primary of Being as the principality of existence. The present paper attempts to trace in *Vedanta* a through exemplification of a system of critique of experience. The *Advaita* school of *Vedanta* by considering the monistic doctrine focuses on the concept of Absolute that is *Brahman*, the ultimate truth which is itself unconditioned but to which all multiplicity whatsoever is to be reduced.

**Key words:** Non-dualism, unity of being, essence/existence, difference/non-difference, Vedanta, principality of existence.

This paper attempts to present how one can integrate universal experience of *advaita* with *Vedanta* by focusing on universal aspects of *Vedanta* and explores the impact of *Vedanta* on the emergence of unity of being. So by focusing on Rumi's *Masnavi -e- Manavi* one shall investigate the integration of universal experience of Vedanta. This paper

through the metaphysics of experience attempts to interpret experience not in terms of a set of rationally conceived postulates but with reference to the immanent structure of consciousness. Such perspective is a way for meaningfully understanding of the philosophy of the non-dualistic system of Vedanta—a system of critique of experience to be clarified with its concept of ‘pure consciousness’. *Advaita* is to be constructed through the categories of human understanding based on man’s empirical experience, and are valid within the form of man’s understanding and empirical experience lose their validity in relation to *Brahman* which is non-dual. These categories involving duality is to be taken as the manifestation of *Brahman*. These categories through which *advaita* is to be taught present *advaita* directly and immediately which is itself the negation of all their dualistic teachings.

Yea, the Reason of man is a boundless ocean.  
a son, that ocean requires, as it were, a diver.  
On this fair ocean our human forms  
Float about, like bowls on the surface of water;  
Yea like cups on the surface, till they are. Filled;  
And when filled, these cups sink into the water.  
The ocean of Reason is not seen;  
reasoning men are seen;  
But our forms (minds) are only as  
waves or spray thereof.

Whinfield:18

In Upanisads, the nature of *Brahman* or atman, the reality of the word and its origin, and its relation to *Brahman* is mostly considered. *Brahman* or *atman* is mostly considered as essence and unity of all that is the truth of truth or explanation of all that is empirically experienced. Quoted

“*Brahman* in the Upanisads means the reality of all that is, including man, and it is one only without a second. It is all or the inner reality or difference is *avidya* or wrong knowledge, and the one who sees actuality or difference does not know the Truth” (Ramamurty : 167). There is non-difference of those cause and effect on account of the texts about origin etc. this aphorism by refuting the dualistic aphorism “the distinction can well exist as observed in common experience.” (Ramamurty :324) in fact affirms that this difference does not exist, since a non-difference between those cause and effect is recognized. The effect is the universe, diversified as space etc. and the cause is the supreme *Brahman*. In reality in the case of the thing illustrated also the supreme cause alone is ascertained to be real in, “All this has That as its essence; That is the Reality” as quoted in *Chandogya Upanisad* ( 328).

In this manner the reality of what is experienced responds the reality of duality. Therefore, one who perceives the multiplicity comes to know the unity of self and comprehends duality as the gradation of the non-duality—to go from a lower level existence to a higher level of existential stations.”Creatures are subject to ‘state’, but the gnosis has no ‘state’ because his vestiges are effaced and his essence is annihilated by the essence of another and his traces are lost in another’s traces.”

Seek annihilation and adore change of state.  
 You have already seen hundreds of resurrections  
 Occur every moment from your origin till now;  
 One from the inorganic state to the vegetive state,  
 From the vegetive state to the animal state of trial;  
 Thence again to rationality and good discernment;  
 Again you will rise from this world of sense and form.

Whinfield : 340

But the answer to the question posed here as why the duality is accepted while non-duality asserted by Upanisads is that the *advaita's* purpose is to reconcile between duality is more intelligible to man's rational understanding and is backed up by all the means of logical knowledge, whereas non-duality as it cannot be supported by various means of knowledge and human reason, it must be known in the light of *Veda*. Thus the scripture also shows that the individual soul is an agent and an experiencer when he is in a state of ignorance "Because when there is *duality*, as it were... then one sees another" as quoted in *Brhadarayaka Upanisad*. (Gambhirananda : 497) asserts:"You must abandon and ignore your own knowledge,/And dip your hand in the dish of abnegation of knowledge" (Whinfield : 135). The Supreme *Brahman* which is one with the inmost Self is pure being, awareness and bliss. For Sankara ultimate reality is pure intelligence, *cin-matra*, devoid of all forms. *Brahman* is devoid of qualities. Whatever qualities are conceivable can only be denied of it. "Every form you see has its archetype in the placeless world;/ If the form perished, no matter, since its original is everlasting" (Nicholson : 47).

The self of man is identified with consciousness because it is the only reality in man which does not change along with the changes in his body and mind. Things at times may change even in their essence, but consciousness the atman of man does not change. It knows all that a man experiences, and there is no doubt about its existence or nature. *Brahman* in *Vedanta* as the source of both the dualism (difference) and non-dualism (non-difference) is conceived as oneness in difference. So both unity and difference are equally true, and the same reality. Because *Brahman* is the essence of all that is according to the most of the upanisadic statements. In fact it is known that the effect has non-difference from, i.e.



non-existence in isolation from, that cause. This also follows from the teaching that the embodied soul is *Brahman* in essence in the passage, “That is the Self; That thou art, O *Svetaletu*” quoted in *Chandogya Upanisad*. (Gambhirananda: 328).

Unity in fact is the unity of difference, for without difference there will be no unity either. Unity is the unity of differences. But the fact is that unity is valid if the differences don not relate to substance. Like a pot and another pot made of clay have root in unity in clay. When the union has become many it is the essence of all, and it is common substance of all and therefore it is one from one point of view, and it is many in another point of view. Thus multiplicity and union have roots in the same reality and are both true.

*Atman* or *Brahman* is identified with consciousness as that is the innermost principle of man For Sankara as quoted “Consciousness is innermost in the sense that it is never an object to which alone the terms outer or inner, or external or internal can be applied.” (Ramamurty : 63) Consciousness has various manifestations in all that a man knows and experiences. *Atman* follows all ideas such as “I am this or that’. For it is present in all of them as rope is present in all its illusory appearances or in all the ideas superimposed on it” (Ramamurty : 63). “*Atman* is the inmost consciousness known directly, and is self-revealed” (Ramamurty : 63). Although all knowledge involves awareness and the objects knows, no knowledge is possible in the absence of an object whether it may be physical or mental. Thus subject and object are necessary for any kind of knowledge, and each is known in relation to the other. Things are known as objects only when they are revealed to some subject. And without the objects to be known there can be no idea of knower also. And in all knowledge subject-object or knower-known distinction is

present. In answering to this question that knowledge and if various kinds of objects through which the knower is known as thinker, hear, seer, etc. therefore, what is here important to refer to it would say that the principle of awareness or the capacity to know which is commonly present in all the functions of knower in the act of knowing. “Consciousness which is the precondition for thinking, so consciousness is based on the principle of knowledge. Therefore the actions consisted in the worlds both in waking and dream states are the objects for the known as the *atman*.” (Ramamurty : 64) quoted in *Madhavananda* “Therefore the seer, the *atman*, is different from its objects, the world perceived in these state.” (Ramamurty : 64) considering to this opposition in nature between the objects of consciousness. The consciousness it is known that the objects cannot affect consciousness because they cannot belong to consciousness.

You must abandon and ignore your own knowledge,  
And dip your hand in the dish of abnegation  
of knowledge.

Whatever seems profitable, flee from it,  
Drink poison and spill the water of life.  
Contemn whatever praises you,  
Lend to paupers your wealth and profits!  
Quit your sect and be a subject of aversion,  
Cast away name and fame and seek disgrace!

Whinfield : 135

On the other words, if the object as things experienced as known belong to consciousness they cannot be known, and there would be any experience of them. Thus consciousness is the knowing principle and is the precondition even for asserting or denying anything about consciousness. So all that are said about consciousness cannot belong to consciousness, and an object is always on object. In this

manner it is only the object of knowledge to which something can be attributed. Not to a reality which is not an object of knowledge. Even ignorance and knowledge of which one is conscious do not belong to *atman*, because *Atman* is never on object of knowledge. *Atman* knows them as desires or any other mental states. Thus it is impossible to talk of *atman*, except *atman*. *Atman* does not have any object of knowledge. And in this sense telling of *atman* as thinker, hearer and witness is self-contradictory with the real nature of *atman* which is consciousness. But viewed from the standpoint of subjectivity, the seeming difference between knowledge and knower would pertain only to the superficial level where the subjective essence is missed. On an approach subjective, the epistemic dualism of knowledge and knower—though such dualism may not be pronounced as that of knowledge and object—is sought to be pronounced to the essential background of subjectivity. So on the level of pure subjectivity, the supposed locus is presented as the bridge between self and consciousness, pure consciousness (*Cit*) now as the ultimate essence of subjectivity goes beyond all reference to individuality, so would self be as non-different from such transcendental essence. By ‘witness’ in literal meaning of *Saksi*, it means experiencing or seeing without being agent of the act concerned as quoted in Nrsimhastrama. (Sinha : 58)

How canst thou ever see red, green, and scarlet  
 Unless thou see the light first of all?  
 When thy sight is dazzled by colors,  
 These colors veil the light from thee.  
 But when night veils those colors from thee,  
 Thou seest that colors are seen only through light.  
 As there is no seeing outward colors without light,  
 So it is with the mental colors within.

Outward colors arise from the light of sun and stars,  
 And inward colors from the light on high.  
 The light that lights the eye is also the heart's light;  
 The eye's light proceeds from the light of the heart.  
 But the light that lights the heart is the light of God.  
 Which is distinct from the light of reason and sense.

Whinfield : 20

So in the Upanisads and in the philosophy of Sankara *atman* is considered as the ultimate or the absolute reality, and at the level of manifestation as unity and the essence of all that is, and thus as the self of man or the inner reality. As the self of man *atman* comes with all its knowledge and experience, apprehends all that is experience and knowledge. Its non-existence cannot be perceived as in the process of demonstrating its non-existence its existence is proved. *Atman* as the self of a person processes of consciousness as without consciousness the notion of self is meaningless. The notion of self as the spiritual reality of man consists of consciousness although mixed up with the things such as senses, body, and mind which are the object of consciousness.

Our senses and our endless discourses  
 Are annihilated in the light of  
 the knowledge of our King.  
 Our senses and our reason within us  
 Are as waves on waves "assembled before us."

Whinfield : 49

Consequently the concept of self is not the same as self, that is, there can be knowledge of self which can be communicated, whereas *atman* or consciousness by its nature is not an object of knowledge. Thus consciousness or *atman* which is all-comprehending and all-perceive by its very nature can not be identified with the self which is peculiar to a person

or man. *Atman* the essence of all is not only the reality of man, but the reality of all, and the idea of self is intelligible in terms of man only. Nevertheless *atman* manifests directly in *atman*, thus understanding the self is a direct means of knowing the nature of *atman* consciousness. It is here important to refer to the intention of Sruti the aims of comprehending *atman* by the concept of 'self'. Thus the Sruti statements like 'you are that', 'I am *Brahman*', 'all is *Brahman*' and *atman* is all would be meaningless. As quoted in *Advaita* "the truth of *atman* is really beyond the scope of the term and concept 'self' otherwise Sruti would only say one should mediate upon the self. But this would imply that the term and concept of *atman* were permissible with the self only. That knower is repugnant to Sruti." (Ramamurty : 69) thus when teaching the identity of *atman* with the self of man Sruti aims at instructing man about the nature of *atman*.

Their mercy is as the foam of the sea of my mercy;  
 It is mere foam of waves, but the sea abides ever!  
 What more shall I say? In that earthly shell  
 There is naught but foam of foam of foam of foam!"  
 God is that foam; God is also that pure sea,  
 For His words are neither a temptation nor a vain boast.  
 Plurality and Partial Evil, though seemingly  
 opposed to Unity, subserve Good.  
 The story is now concluded, with its ups and downs,  
 Like lovers' musings, without beginning or ending.  
 It has no beginning, even as eternity,  
 Nor ending, for 'tis akin to world without end.  
 Or like water, each drop whereof is at once  
 Beginning and end, and also has no beginning or end.

Whinfield :37

As *Atman* is directly revealed with oneself, one must know oneself to know *atman* as *atman* is known immediately,

and in knowing *atman* perfectly one sees *atman* as transcending self. Therefore one's aim at realizing *atman* is to know *Atman* as the reality of all or the ontological reality, otherwise instruction about *atman* is impossible. Quoted in *Brahdarnyaka Upanisad Bhasya* "After *Brahman* realization as the only reality there is neither instruction nor the instructor nor the self receiving instruction, one admits. But before that if one accepts it, it will contradict the assumption of all believers." (Ramamurty : 69) So by the main statements of the Upanisads like 'I am *Brahman*' and 'all is *Brahman*' one perceives the same truth by way of correcting the empirical knowledge of man whereby he sees differences. And it is the oneness that is ontologically real which is realized directly. And the nature of the state of non-duality is in fact something that is to be directly realized but cannot be explained in language.

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## **A Stylistic Analysis of Pablo Neruda's *Residence on Earth***

**Anuradha Bhattacharyya**

Postgraduate Government College, Sector-11, Chandigarh  
email : *anuradha@gmail.com*

The 1971 Nobel Prize for Literature was accorded to the then 67 year old Chilean poet Pablo Neruda. He was an ambassador of his country for most of his life, moving from one country to another in intervals of four or five years. He was first sent as a diplomat to Burma. He had been to India as well. He met the surrealist poets of the 1930s in Europe. He was strongly influenced by leftist ideas. He was an incessant writer. He is best known for his poems, though he also wrote a novel and a few plays. His prose passages too smell of poetry. His was a powerful voice that touched every heart and echoed the sentiments of the multitude. For the major part of his life, he had witnessed the condition of war. He has represented in his poetry almost all the political upheavals that took place in his lifetime. Even if not for his philosophical depth, he has been admired for his sentiments. The subject of his poetry cannot be summed up in a few words as he has been representing all the flux and the new ideas that emerged from time to time. However, he is best known for his love poems, both from his youth and from his later years. Often his politicized poems have also been critically read. Composed between 1925 and 1945 *Residence on Earth* was his highly acclaimed collection of poems. These were published in three series. The third series *Tercera residencia*



which was published by Losada: Buenos Aires in 1947 contained poems written during 1935-1945 and is popularly referred to in English as *Residence III*. It is specifically about Spain. (Tarn : p. 15-16)

His emotional involvement in the Spanish Civil War and watching its aftermath moved him away from privately focused writings to collective obligation. The execution of his friend, the well known dramatist García Lorca by forces loyal to the Spanish dictator disturbed him the most (Feinstein : p. 97-8). At the time he was living in Chile but he supported the Spanish Republicans by means of his writings and speeches. His poetry of that period is chiefly an expression of his sorrow and hope for poetry to restore the beauty of a country. He uses symbols of rebirth such as roots, seed and a drop of blood that might give rise to life again in his poetry to rekindle the passion to live. In most of his poetry of that time, he exudes hope against fear. He remains forever optimistic. He has expressed sorrow in a few words and there is a melancholy note to his promises of revival but the larger chunk of his poetry stretches its arms towards better days. How he achieves the juxtaposition of sorrow and hope is a matter of genius. For instance, in the same line he combines both the emotions:

Again  
I hear approach like fire in smoke,  
spring up from earthly ash,  
light filled with petals... (95)

In a poem titled *Meeting under New Flags*, he expresses his hopes for reintegration with the words, "I based my heart on this, I listened to all/ The sorrowful salt: by night/I went to plant my roots." (101)

*Spain in our Heart* is written as an address to the country, the motherland. As a poet, he represented all the countrymen. He became the voice of the ordinary man who loved his motherland and was shattered to see her beauty torn apart by crisis. And the repeated mention of cereals, the staple food that has been destroyed by war shows how heartbroken and devastated a man feels in such a crisis. It is not what a common man lives for; he never wanted fame or power or wealth. He always wanted peace and love. So the farmer sows the seed for all his brethren. And the country is his mother. Neruda, though Chilean, was of Spanish origin and lived away from Chile for long periods, in several other countries for short spells as ambassador. To him, Spain was mother of his mother tongue. He assures himself and also lending his voice for the countrymen, addresses her:

Furrowed motherland, I swear that in your ashes  
 You will be born like a flower of eternal water,  
 I swear that from your mouth of thirst  
 will come to the air  
 The petals of bread, the spilt  
 Inaugurated flower. (103)

Mothers are also addressed with positive thoughts. The poem *Song for the Mothers of Slain Militiamen* evokes a sense of pride as well as hope for the mothers, telling them that the ‘bodies’ of the dead are actually ‘roots’ that would grow up fruitfully. The poem exhorts mothers not to think of only the loss. They should remember “more than anger, more than scorn, more than weeping” that “your dead ones smile from the earth raising their fists above the wheat.” (106-7)

In his finale, *Solar Ode to the Army of the People*, he remembers mothers again. He reminds soldiers that they are fighting for the ‘health’ of the country. Their mothers, their

schools and their mother earth fortify them with 'health'. The poet goes on to enumerate 'milk, potatoes, lemon, laurel' as the strength man has gained from mothers and the earth, including moral strength and the power of conviction. The war has dirtied the earth. War is destructive and wasteful. "Everything that belongs to the earth and to the mouth of man... everything prepares itself for you, converges on you!" says the poet to the army of the people. (121-2)

In another poem, *Song for Stalingrad*, Neruda expresses the same sentiment, that:

Men can no longer die  
And must go on struggling from the place  
where they fall...  
Because other red hands, when your hands fall,  
Will sow throughout the world the bones of your heroes  
So that your seed may fill all the earth. (128)

Irony, the eternal weapon of poetry, abounds in Neruda's works too. A poet does not always believe what is told him. He weighs and judges the given truths. Then he rejects some of them as void. In *Spain Poor through the Fault of the Rich* Neruda uses irony to disclose the hypocrisy of the men in power. It is the land which suffers. "Poverty was throughout Spain" because the cultivable land,

was guarded  
by triangular guards with guns,  
by sad-rat-coloured priests,  
by lackeys of the huge-rumped king. (128)

In place of cultivation of food and growing rich with resources of various kinds, and in place of schools, the educational institution that can remove ignorance, Spain's "idle lords ordered" people to pray "for a god with a rump as

huge as the king's rump". In place of working towards building a heaven on land, by growing food and alleviating poverty, people are advised to pray for heaven after death. Religion taught to the poor assuages their pain but it does not teach them to improve their condition on earth. Rather it is a false promise of "There you will have soup". (104). The violence in his expressions, as descriptive as they are, creates the picture of poverty of the so called rich. 'Frock coats' represent the rich. 'Guns' and 'knives' represent war and 'apple orchards and pines' represent health. (105)

In *Almeria*, Neruda has named all those rich people who would be guilty of the sacrifice of the poor people in the war. The bishop, the banker, the colonel and his wife, the garrison party, the ministers, ambassadors and table companions would be choked with the 'bowl of Almeria blood' at breakfast and they would try to ignore it. They would try to shove aside the guilt. They would want to forget how much harm they have caused. (115)

In another poem he sends General Franco to hell with such violence in his words that reflect the feelings of the ordinary men. Among the several visions of torture in hell for General Franco, the constant refrain is 'alone', for the poet considers being alone as the fiercest kind of infliction. (116-7).

In contrast the poet draws the picture of workers and tillers of the soil. He calls them 'Juan' and 'Pedro' (120), and enumerates their professions – fishing, growing fruits, working in the factories and mines, at the printing press and buildings (107), "carpenters, blacksmiths, farmers, photographers, railroad men and soldiers" (121-3).

These men left their productive work and joined the fight. They were driven to this disgrace by the rich. They were

peace loving honest people doing their work in a daily routine so that the country could thrive. But greedy people wrenched their peace away. In Neruda, the expression of honesty is not through 'blood' and 'sweat' but through 'grapes' and 'wheat'. The images of fruition have been blurred or turned upside down by the war and therefore, the poet expresses the need to restore first the 'roots'. The word 'blood' finds its place in the guilt of the perpetrators of war. It is they who have spilt blood and wasted away the sweat of the honest men. When working, there is only joy and satisfaction and ultimate gain.

In the end, a kind of solace is gained after strife. In October, 1936, the Francoist troops launched a major offensive toward Madrid, the capital of Spain. (Beevor : 150-51) In a poem called *Madrid*, the mood is that of satisfaction. Having failed to take the capital, Franco bombarded it from the air and, for two years, through several offensives tried to encircle Madrid. The Second Battle of the Corunna Road, another offensive to the northwest too, failed to isolate Madrid. The battle lasted into January, 1939. Madrid stood the tests of time like a solid rock. Madrid had resisted capture by the dictator for over three years. In the final scent of victory "men like a collar of cordons defend the city surrounded by flames." (120-1) The poet says:

City of mourning, undermined, wounded,  
Broken, beaten, bullet-riddled, covered  
With blood and broken glass, city without night, all  
Night and silence and explosions and heroes,  
Now a new winter, more naked and more alone,  
Now without flour, without steps, with your moon  
of soldiers. (119)

The new Madrid is a shattered soul which needs to be regenerated. It needs nurturing again “like a broken rose, surrounded by infinite laurel.” (121)

In the same mood, the poet conveys his support for Stalingrad. The present Volgograd in Russia is an important industrial city and the administrative center of Volgograd Oblast. It is situated on the western bank of the Volga River, after which the city was named in 1961. It was named Stalingrad after Joseph Stalin officially on April 10, 1925 to recognize the city and Stalin’s role in its defense against the tsarists between 1918 and 1920 (McCauley, 2013). For a while, Neruda was known for applauding Leninism. But he was a little unaware of Stalin’s dictatorship. Therefore, in hope of the victory of the Soviet Republic over the Nazi, he invoked Stalingrad. Under Stalin, the city became a center of heavy industry and trans-shipment by rail and river. During World War II, German and Axis forces attacked the city, and in 1942 it became the site of one of the pivotal battles of the war known in history as The Battle of Stalingrad. The battle began in August 1942 and on the same day, the city suffered heavy aerial bombardment that reduced most of it to rubble. By September, the fighting reached the city center. The fighting was of unprecedented intensity; the city was captured and recaptured eight times. By early November, the German forces controlled 90 percent of the city and had cornered the Soviets in two narrow pockets, but they were unable to eliminate the last pockets of Soviet resistance before Soviet forces launched a huge counter-attack on November 19. This led to the encirclement of the German Sixth Army and other Axis units. In January, 1943 the Sixth Army’s commander surrendered, and by February all the German troops were eliminated; the Battle of Stalingrad was over. In

1945 the Soviet Union awarded Stalingrad the title Hero City for its resistance" (McCauley 2013).

In *Song to Stalingrad* the sheer power of his verse is appreciable. There is no verbal irony in these lines. The poet conveys that the people of the whole world are supporters of the red army. Even from a place as far away as South America, there are prayers wishing that the city would hold out to the end and triumph (125-8).

In *Seventh of November: Ode to a Day of Victories*, the poet celebrates the end of the battle at Stalingrad as well as the victory of the red army in Madrid, the republicans who resisted General Franco's army.

I greet you, Soviet Union, on this day,  
 With humility: I am a writer and a poet.  
 My father was a railroad worker: we were always poor.  
 Yesterday I was with you, far off, in my little  
 Country of great rains. There your name grew  
 Hot, burning in the people's breasts  
 Until it touched my country's lofty sky!  
 Today I think of them, they are all with you!  
 From factory to factory, from house to house,  
 Your name flies like a red bird! (131-133)

Similarly, in *Song to the Red Army on its Arrival at the Gates of Prussia*, the poet expresses celebration through the lines:

This is the song of the spring hidden  
 Beneath the earth of Russia...  
 From the root covered...  
 By the bitterest winter on earth...

But things change, and from the depths  
 Of the earth the new spring steps out. (134-136)

In all his poems it is observable that he never thought of war as an end of everything. He always used expressions of rebuilding the nation with the residue of war.

Although generations of poets have quarreled with 'tradition', Neruda, in his poetry, has given it a fiery expression. The crown is no more bearable, so it has 'thistles'. Valour is not praiseworthy; it is a sign of dishonor for the country. 'Bloody hollow frock coats' are symbols of power and these do not produce any good. Rather, there are 'slugs', 'toothless mouths', 'pus' and 'pestilence' that throng the erstwhile garden of Spain. (105).

Another example of breaking away from tradition is the poet's use of the city as a symbol of life. The city is not treated as the symbol of power or a dynasty. So the fall of the rich and powerful is treated by the poet as rather a triumph of the city. The life of the city is not associated with the ruler but with the masses. Therefore, there is no sorrow in the loss of the system that ruled the masses in the city in the past. The new order, the vacant, lonely and ashen city is still our very own city and victorious indeed. This break away from the tradition is welcomed by the poet.

The Moroccan Army Corps was a field army of the Spanish Army that garrisoned the Spanish protectorate in Morocco from the late 19th century until Morocco's independence in 1956. At the start of the 20th century, the Spanish Empire's colonial possessions in Africa comprised Morocco, Spanish Sahara, Ifni, Cape Juby and Spanish Guinea. They had formed the Moroccan infantry and cavalry units with Spanish officers. Thanks mostly to the Moroccan Army Corps, almost all of western Spain was in Francoist Nationalist hands by the end of September 1936. By early 1937 their strength had been increased to 60,000 men. They



are known in history as the Army of Africa. They played a central role in the Nationalist victory (Thomas 2001).

In Neruda, the 'Moor' is an outsider. He has not expressed sympathy for the sacrifice of the lives of the Moroccan soldiers. In history it is clear that they were forced to battle against the republicans in Spain. But the poet has seen them as forces from the outside that broke into Spain to suppress the rebellion. The 'traitors' are Spaniards who fought for the government. These 'traitors' 'opened the door of the dwelling to the Moor and the bandit'. (103, 107, 109, 114). One of the skills of the Africans was the use of the knife to slit throats. The Africans slipped inside the enemy perimeter and silently cut the throats of the sentries (Thomas : 486). The 'knife' (105) as well as 'dry gunpowder' (108) finds mention in Neruda's poems in this context.

*Battle of the Jarama River* is another poem that refers to the historical progress of the Spanish Civil War. It was fought from 6 to 27 February 1937. Madrid lies on the banks of the Jarama River. On February 11, 1937 a small group of Moroccans crossed the river undetected and crept up to the positions of the Republican sentries. They silently slit the throats of the sentries using guerrilla warfare. The poet laments the fall of the defense the river stood for:

Jerama, to speak of your regions  
Of splendor and dominion, my mouth is not  
Adequate, and my hand is pale:  
There rest your dead. (114)

Neruda was not only writing but also actively involved in helping the cause of the Spanish Civil War. In 1938, Pedro Aguirre Cerda, President of Chile, appointed Neruda as special consul for Spanish emigrants in Paris. There he was responsible for transporting 2,000 Spanish refugees who had

been housed by the French in squalid camps to Chile on an old ship called the *Winnipeg*. He called it “the noblest mission I have ever undertaken”: (Feinstein : 141)

Neruda prefaces *Furies and Sorrows* with the line “if with only a drop of poetry or love we could placate the anger of the world, but that can be done only by striving and by a resolute heart.” It is dated March 1939. (95)

The poem is a long address to an unnamed woman, probably a prostitute from the enemy camp. She can only express her hatred in her attitude but she does not refuse sex. The poet launches on a melancholy tirade over the loss of amity. He does not acknowledge distrust. Instead, he coaxes and chides the woman to understand her situation. She, he suggests, cannot pretend to be ‘enemy’ where she simply belongs to the natural human race on the whole. He asks, “Then is it so that I am truly distant/ And a river of burning water flows by in the dark?” (97) He concludes with the refrain, “I want for myself... “; he says it filling the air with an appeal. His plea may be heard and she might respond with tender love and the combination of ‘ivy and perfume’ can be separated at last with the help of intense poetry.

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## **Tagore's Humanistic Vision**

### **Simmi Gurwara**

Associate Professor, AICC, Amity University, Noida, UP  
email: *simmi.gurwara2009@gmail.com*

### **Abstract**

Rabindranath Tagore is a name to reckon with when it comes to prose and poetry writing. He gave more than 65 years of his life to his passion which lay in sculpting memorable characters and binding together lyrical vines. Any person who creates fictional worlds is bound to be a compulsive traveler and minute observer and so was Tagore. His travels to different countries left a deep impact on him, and from an Oriental romantic mystic he came to be identified as a concerned citizen of the world. He voiced the concerns of colonized and subjugated people, expressing his fervent wish to be heard. No doubt, there have been campaigners of humanism in every age and time but none occupies as prominent a place as Tagore. His was a multidimensional persona, who unfailingly questioned unfairness, ugliness, atrocities, parsimoniousness and all kinds of indecencies. Tagore, given to his humanitarianism, cannot be confined to narrow geographical boundaries. By the virtue of this vision and mission, he came as a 'Living Essence' of human values. In the galaxy of myriad humanitarians and one world theory, Tagore holds a vital position. This paper attempts to revisit Tagore as a symbol of enduring humanism with a staunch humanistic vision to promulgate a humanist philosophy that appears more majestically in the face of all odds and vagaries of modern world.

Rabindranath Tagore based his idea of humanism on the teachings of the Upanishads. Because of this very reason, his humanism is imbued with universalism. The essence of Tagore's unwavering faith in humanity is centered on harmonious existence of all human beings. Humanism permeates the most productive years of Tagore when he used fairy tales and myths as the background of his stories. The literary significance of these stories is pronounced by the author's insight into the depth of human psyche as the characters are delicately portrayed in the realm of human drama. At the end of "A Fanciful Story," he writes: "The pictures suddenly became human beings. The unbroken peace and unchanging solemnity were no longer to be found there. The new kingdom of the young king was enriched by the flow of life with its joy and pain, anger and hatred, prosperity and loss. Now, some persons were good and some bad, some happy and some sad, everybody was a human being. Now, instead of being inoffensive by some irrevocable rule, they were honest or dishonest according to their own choice" ( Chaudhary 7).

Tagore was truly a humanist as he embraced humanity with all its trials and tribulations, follies and frailties, doubts and dilemmas, musings and mourning, limitations and lacunas- without any effort to romanticize or idealize. Nibir K. Ghosh opines,

Tagore inhaled the essence of life and his sole literary concern was man. He saw man placed in multitude of situations: interacting, transacting, negotiating and overcoming the complex terrain of day-to-day living. The misery of environmentally marginalized compatriots not only perturbed his sensitive soul to

critique its causes in fiction but it motivated him to make substantial as well as sustained attempts at amelioration of their condition within his limited means throughout his life. Ghosh ix

This mastery to see different point of views and reconcile them into one magnificent vision is his legacy.

Tagore's humanism becomes more focused and intensified in his later works. In an interview to an English journal called "Forward" in 1936 Tagore says, "my earlier stories have the freshness of the youth. There is a note of universal appeal in them. My later stories have not got that freshness, though they have greater psychological value and they deal with problems" (Chaudhary 8). Tagore never loses faith in the importance and value of humanity. He thinks it is crime to believe that the final outcome will be the endless irremediable defeat of humanity.

Tagore is optimistic because though it's undeniably true that the individual self is always in a state of flux but at the same time there dwells the Eternal Spirit of human unity which binds us all. This Eternal Spirit rekindles the disheartened soul. Thus both "Red Oleanders" and "Sacrifice" end with a ray of hope as characters like Nandini and Aparna are pictured as the insignia of the inborn human virtues of love, sincerity and simplicity which hold the power to revive life. Humanism reigns supreme to emphasize Satyameva Jayate-truth alone triumphs. In a poem "Mukti," the 22 year old dying woman seeks the rationale of life. Though she had never experienced liberty in life yet towards the end felt being a woman in itself was a great achievement as the moon and the flowers would have lost all their beauty and enigma if it was not for a woman. Tagore's poetry is "characterized by an impressive wholeness of attitude: a loving warmth, a

compassionate humanity, a delicate sensuousness, an intense sense of kinship with Nature, a burning awareness of the universe of which we are part" (Dyson 38).

As an awakened soul, Tagore wanted the villagers to cultivate a spirit of freedom and independence by getting educated in every sense of the term. He wanted to ignite awareness about human dignity and grace with the cooperation of one and all. He wanted the villagers to fend for themselves without being at the mercy of any feudal machinery. He intended to initiate educational services, healthy atmosphere, amiable relations between neighbors by mitigating bickering and brawls.

Tagore's ready responsiveness to every sort of natural beauty evokes in him, as in Wordsworth, a sense of deep affiliation with nature and its myriad forms of life. He was a worshipper of nature as he felt a reverberation within himself whenever he found something stunningly beautiful in nature. His heart danced like a peacock with the changing of seasons. For instance, when spring came "gladdening the earth after sluggish winter," the poet beamed with gaiety. He felt so happy and content in the midst of nature's abundance that he penned:

Thy sunbeam comes upon this earth of mine with arms  
outstretched  
And stands at my door the livelong day to carry back to  
thy feet clouds made of my tears and sighs and songs.  
With fond delight thou wrappest about thy starry breast  
that mantle of misty cloud,  
Turning it into numberless shapes and folds and  
coloring it with hues ever-changing.  
It is so light and so fleeting, tender and tearful and dark,  
that is why thou lovest it, O thou spotless and serene.

And that is why it may cover thy awful white light with its pathetic shadows. *Gitanjali: Poem 68*

Tagore's philosophy of humanism and one world are exemplified in his own lectures:

One day while I stood watching at early dawn the sun sending out its rays from behind the trees, I suddenly felt as if some ancient mist had in a moment lifted from my sight. The invisible screen of the commonplace was removed from the things and all men, and their ultimate significance was intensified in my mind; and this is the definition of beauty. That which was memorable in this experience was its human message, the sudden expansion of my consciousness in the super-personal world of man. The Hibbert Lectures

As a Humanist, Tagore glorified man and uplifted him to a lofty position. To him "man is not only the measure of the universe." But "the creator of the Creator." Tagore's profound message is one of universal humanism. Satish Kumar posits, "As a master of his craft, Tagore combined the purity of poetry with a purpose for living" ( 1). He empathized with the underdogs and the downtrodden. His identification with the commoners, the toiling, sweating and marginalized masses and his compassion for the browbeaten and broken was driven home when he profusely said:

Let me lie down upon the ground  
Beneath your footstool in perfect gladness  
Let my garment be red with the common  
Dust you touched with your feet.

(Tagore web, verse 47)

Tagore believed that science bereft of humanity is a curse which brings about spiritual hollowness. He thought



that the social turbulence prevalent in the world is because of the chaos of spirit in modern civilization. A spirit of togetherness, parity, righteousness and self-esteem is the need of the hour. He knew that essence of life is the highest Indian chant, "Shantam, Shivam, Advaitma," meaning peace, beneficence and unity among all mankind, and this chant holds true for old as well as modern times. His poem "Unity in Diversity" pronounces his humanism loud and clear:

We are all the more one because we are many,  
For we have made ample room for love  
in the gap where we are sundered.  
Our unlikeness reveals its breadth of  
beauty radiant with one common life,  
Like mountain peaks in the morning sun.

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A spirit of peace and earnestness gleams through the works of Tagore. The impact of his unparalleled writings is such that it transports the reader towards an inward journey of peaceful rumination and blissful solitude. His critical concern for the humanity was colossal because of which he came to be regarded as one of the greatest humanists of the world. Tagore's writings lift the human spirit and restore human dignity. Such a message comes across in his concept of jiban-debata (Life god) or the creative principle, which "connects Tagore's own poetic creativity with the creative process of the universe as a whole," (Radice lxxvi).

To conclude, Tagore's Humanistic vision is a source of synergy and sustenance in the midst of manifold differences that we have witnessed throughout centuries. We need to strive hard to awaken ourselves into his most cherished "heaven of freedom" where the mind is led forward into an

ever widening thought and action with serenity and synchronization to bring oneness in a fast changing world.

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## **The Theme of Pursuit of Happiness and Indian Fiction in English**

**Shubha Tiwari**

Professor of English, A.P.S. University, Rewa, M.P.

email : *shubhatiwari0001@gmail.com*

### **Abstract**

What is happiness? It is an eternal question. Everybody seems to believe that the purpose of life is to find happiness. Everybody also seems to believe that success leads to happiness. A high salary job, a picture-perfect spouse, a lovely house or apartment and cute kids are supposed to give happiness. The interesting thing is that those who have all the things mentioned above often find themselves anxious and adrift. The measures, the parameters for job, spouse, house and ideal children keep changing. People in the most advanced countries like America and some European nations are the biggest sufferers of mental ailments. As societies advance, the strange pattern emerges that richness does not always result in happiness. Huge funds and resources are going into research to find out the true nature of happiness. The more we run after happiness, the more it runs away from us. Thinkers for ages have pondered how happiness works and how it changes lives. This issue also figures in the contemporary writings also. The present paper is an attempt to look at the issue of happiness and how it has been conceived in Indian English fiction.

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Happiness alone is not life. There is more to life than finding happiness. If we try to summarize years of empirical

research, we find that happiness and meaning are two different things. Happiness is a state of comfort, ease and feeling good in the moment. Meaning in life is much deeper. Meaning in life comes through belonging. When we cross our own “self” and do something genuine for others, life becomes meaningful. When a person becomes the best version of herself/himself, life becomes meaningful. Meaning to life comes when we break the barrier of self. Those who are leading meaningful lives are more strong than others. They are better in studies and work. They even live longer.

Advancement in human thought and research shows that there are four pillars of meaningful life. Each one of us can try and build these pillars. The first pillar is belonging. Belonging simply means being in a relationship where you are valued for what you are and not for your money or position or power or beliefs. A person has to be valued for her/his intrinsic qualities. You are loved because you are. This is what belonging means.

In our day to day life, we often reject fellow human beings in small, unconscious ways sometimes even without realizing. Not paying attention, not answering a wish, checking phone while talking, and not being present mentally are some of the ways in which we devalue people. We hurt others by making them invisible and unworthy. We need relationships based on genuine love. Parents, siblings, spouse, friends, colleagues and neighbors are the first pillar.

The second pillar is finding a purpose in life. Purpose is not equivalent to job. Purpose is less about taking and more about giving. We can find a purpose in job but it is not the only means. For a house wife, the purpose of her life might be raising her children. We can find more than one purpose in life. When we use our energy and strength to serve others,

we find a purpose in life. When we contribute, we feel needed. Without a purpose in life, people go off track. The purpose is our anchor in life. Besides a larger purpose in life, we can have small, short term purposes to keep us going on the path of life.

The third pillar is about transcendence. We in India often identify it with spirituality. When the immediate urgency of senses becomes secondary and when we connect to the higher reality, we find meaning in life. Experiencing art, listening to music or reading literature can be our bridge to transcendence. Nature photography and travel, experiencing the natural joys of mother earth can also give us the much needed connectivity. It is the vital “wify” of our lives. Most of the people are dry and dull because they have lost that connectivity.

The fourth pillar might be unexpected for you. It is relevant especially to people of literature. It is about story telling. It is about the story a person tells to herself/himself. All of us want to create a narrative out of the events of our life. It brings clarity to life. It helps us in understanding how we have become what we have become. We edit, interpret and retell our story even at the cost of facts. We are the authors of our life story. Life is not just a list of events. We can edit, interpret, reinterpret and tell our story as we like. How we change the narration changes our life. A cancer survivor instead of regretting that he had cancer, starts rejoicing in leaving bad habits, being under constant medical checkup and thereby safe. Tragedies often turn into blessings if we interpret them positively. As Steve Jobs famously said that the story teller is the most powerful person on earth.

When we talk about happiness and pursuit of happiness, we have to remember that these concepts are applicable only

to well-to-do people. We cannot talk about bliss and pursuit of happiness among those who are struggling with basic needs of life. In every discussion, there is always a point where one has to agree with Karl Marx. Pursuit of happiness cannot be a theme with hungry, naked people. When we accept that this is an idea for those who are well-fed and well – covered, our thought process becomes clear. “Pursuit of happiness” is a luxury.

It we decide as to what is not happiness, we can easily see as to what is happiness. Pretension, hypocrisy, negative emotions, emptiness and dehumanization are clearly not happiness. Doing one’s duty, being true, kind, tolerant and physically fit is happiness. A long life and a good memory are happiness. Being active is happiness. To love and to be loved is happiness. Being productively busy is happiness. To sing and dance is happiness. Happiness is finding one’s passion and following it. Connecting to one’s own self is happiness. Being bold and daring is happiness. Contradicting oneself, to be wrong at times and not fearing to be wrong are also happiness. And then there is joy is not doing anything. To be idle is happiness sometimes. Happiness is an attitude. To take life as a journey, take lessons from experiences and move on – this is the attitude. There is nothing like a physical, material destination. The journey is the end. Balancing body and soul is happiness.

With all these ideas, definitions and approaches in mind, when we come to Indian English fiction we find that like life, ‘pursuit of happiness’ is a strong theme here. We may call it happiness, fulfillment or meaning in life – the essence is the same. With Raja Rao and especially his *Kanthapura* (1938), freedom was the key element of happiness. To endure the British was suffocating. Thinking of freedom and working for it was happiness. *The Serpent and Rope* is a bit complicated.

Ramaswamy, the Vedic scholar cannot continue his mismatched marriage with Madeleine, a French. Madeleine represents Western materialism. Ramaswamy represents India's Vedic Brahman tradition in its purest form. Something awakens within Ramaswamy. For him being Brahman becomes a search. 'A Brahman is one who knows Brahma (God).' The two sides, husband and wife cannot go along. Liberation from each other is a kind of fulfillment here.

For Mulkraj Anand, protest, rebellion, freedom and social equality mark happiness. R.K. Narayan writes on an ordinary, earthly plane. Romantic love as described in *The Guide* (Raju and Rosic) and *Waiting for the Mahatma* (Sri Ram and Bharathi) is what can be called his idea of happiness.

Amitav Ghosh and Vikram Seth are among the most evolved Indian English novelists. They sail into realms of emotion at different levels. The theme of pursuit of happiness becomes relevant in the context of their writing. Amitav Ghosh has a wide range – travel, colonialism and post colonialism, diaspora, history, memory, political movements, communal violence, love and loss and now climate change. In my view, Ghosh's fiction which borders on Anthropology, History and Geography, is basically post colonial. His writing is seething and bleeding in the pain of the lost wisdom and lost eastern way of life. How the colonial masters have permanently damaged the ecosystem of the east. The dysfunctional system is bad for the soul, body and also climate. Ghosh is undoubtedly one of the most accomplished novelists in English in current times. Besides postcolonialism, there are matters of heart spread all over his pages. With reference to Amitav Ghosh when we think of the theme of pursuit of happiness, finding meaning in life seems to be a more appropriate term. "Revisiting roots" is a motif for finding meaning in life. "Revisiting", the word is important here

because it does not suggest that we should go back to old times. It means that we should understand and imbibe all that is good, reasonable and relevant in our traditional way of life. We cannot undo what our colonial masters have taught us. What we can do is to add their good tools in our arsenal and then go back to understand and imbibe our way of life. We can enrich our lives if we accept west and yet never leave our roots. That is the model I draw from Amitav Ghosh.

Self fulfillment becomes a major theme in the novels of Vikram Seth. His characters as they go through life learn how to deal with relationships, love, loss, heart break, death, loneliness and void. His novels give a healthy understanding of life. Personal space is essential for happiness in Seth's world.

A mention may be made about the popular novelist Chetan Bhagat. His message that our institutions focus too much on grades and percentages is important. The general Indian obsession with class and grades is a major deterrent on the path of happiness. Likewise his attack on regionalism and casteism in matters of marriage is also commendable.

A mention may be made about the female perspective on happiness and its reflection in their works. Each woman novelist has a different view of happiness but the connecting point among them is definitely their womanhood. The society makes a woman conscious of her gender. It is difficult to find a woman writer who is not conscious of her gender. Probably this is the reason why economic freedom, emotional liberty, need for space, equality and freedom from the perpetual male gaze mark the definition of happiness for all women novelists. The cravings are similar. Nayantara raised the issue of economic dependence and plight of divorced women in *The Day in Shadow* (1991). Shashi Deshpande effectively raised the issue of sexual abuse in *The Dark Holds No Terror* (1980).



*The God of Small Things* (1997), the phenomenal novel by Arundhati Roy demands social equality, personal space, money, freedom and right to self not only for women but for all. Happiness is a remote idea here. Burning in turmoil and suffering are the order of the day. Anita Desai and her noted novels *Cry the Peacock* (1963) and *Voices in the City* (1965) cry for understanding and acceptance. As said earlier, with women “womanhood” becomes the unique point of experiencing the world. Whether they like it or not, they are always conscious of the different treatment society gives them at every juncture and moment of life. This becomes the moot point. The blisters of ages of suffering are hard to hide. “Home” remains central to a woman’s happiness. Togetherness, relations, warmth and love remain crucial to a woman’s happiness.

We can conclude that there can be no definite definition of happiness. We cannot derive any set theory or formulae for happiness from these novels. Nevertheless, we can understand human existence in a better way by reading these novels. Reading fiction helps us in developing our own concept of happiness and achieving it. Reading a novel is certainly equivalent to happiness. Material sumptuousness is essential to happiness but it is certainly not the only thing. A holistic approach can lead us to happiness. “Happiness” is a way of life; it is not a destination.

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## **Contesting the Myth of Purity : An Analysis of Nadeem Aslam's *The Golden Legend* in the Light of Jean-Luc Nancy's Insights**

**Sumandeep Kaur**

Research Fellow, Dept of English, Punjabi University, Patiala  
email: *suamtwins@gmail.com*

The persecution of the minority communities in Pakistan is associated with the nation-building process which has been, from the very beginning, defined in terms of the romantic visualization of the community, Islamic ideology and the 'purity' of the land. This has led to the wide-scale wiping of the heterogeneous heritage of Pakistan and its diverse subcultural streams from the dominant discourse. A community is a *process* of confrontation, transformation, development, re-composition and combination. However, there is usually a tendency to erroneously perceive it in terms of pure unity. Aslam challenges the parochial idea of community and identity and opens up a space for acknowledging diversity, complexity and difference as constitutive elements of the community as a lived way of being.

**Keywords:** Community, Identity, Purity, History, Pakistan

*That awful idea of one God, one religion, one nation, one language—well, it goes against everything I hold dear.*

Nadeem Aslam

On 4<sup>th</sup> January 2011, the Governor of the Punjab province of Pakistan, Salman Taseer, was assassinated by his

bodyguard Mumtaz Qadri as he had spoken out in defence of Asia Bibi, a Pakistani Christian woman accused of blasphemy, and demanded a change in Pakistan's draconian blasphemy laws. The shocking and tragic incident sowed the seeds of *The Golden Legend* (2017), an account of the persecution of the minority communities in Pakistan. The present research paper, in the light of theoretical insights provided by Jean-Luc Nancy, focusses on Nadeem Aslam's debunking of the myth of the 'land of the pure', an idea zealously advocated by religious and political leaders of Pakistan. The paper examines how the myth of "purity" and the efforts to homogenize a community in the name of religion proves oppressive and often incites violence. Aslam invokes the multi-cultural and multi-religious heritage of Pakistan and challenges the parochial idea of community and identity. The paper also focusses on how *The Golden Legend* opens up a space for acknowledging diversity, complexity and difference as constitutive elements of the community as a lived way of being. After giving a brief overview of Nancy's idea of the community, the paper attempts a critical appraisal of how Aslam's engagement with the question of community throws light on the social, political, cultural and historical state of Pakistan.

Nancy, the French philosopher, revisits the question of the all-pervasive yet critically unexamined notion of the community. His works *The Inoperative Community* (1991) and *Being Singular Plural* (2000) are particularly significant for reopening the debates about the nature of the community. These offer novel ways of considering the political and philosophical aspects of the community. He rejects the idea of a unified and immanent community and points out that so far the community has been envisioned in metaphysical terms,

a practice which must stop now. He critically engages with the nostalgia for a lost, transparent and small-scale community that is supposed to hold the power to free us from alienation in the modern society. He points out that in the modern era there is a deep longing for an “organic communion with essence” (*The Inoperative* 9). This longing comes from the vague belief that we once lived in a harmonious and intimate community, which has somehow vanished with the passage of time. In fact, a consequence of this is that even history is sometimes viewed “on the basis of a lost community - one to be regained and reconstituted” (9).

He is critical of conferring a grand essence on the community. This putative essence is presented through “economic ties, technological operations and political fusion” (*The Inoperative* 3). However, Nancy calls this essence “totalitarianism”, which may be seen as “immanentism” since the members of such a community are wedded to the goal of a totalizing community. They are incapable of leaning toward the other (3). As Ana Luszczynska says:

The ties or relations between individuals within this context are characterized by a lack of being-with and rather institute and expose the will to essence. Everything is under-stood in terms of the accomplishment of this essence, which becomes the work of all relations. (“The Opposite” 171)

Nancy points out that this essence can be noticed not only in totalitarian regimes but also in democratic societies. The desire to find the essence becomes the core of nostalgia. That is why the response to insecurity resulting from disintegration and dislocation of the community is usually sought in a nostalgic return to the times when communal ties were supposedly very strong. This nostalgia has become a

common and easily discernible paradigm. Ignaas Devisch observes that the longing for a lost community is actually a sign of the fact that the question of the community has not been sufficiently thought out (“A Trembling” 2).

Nancy warns that we should cast doubt at the “retrospective consciousness” (*The Inoperative* 10) about the lost organic community and identity. This “retrospective consciousness” constructs an ideal image of the past. It is as if there has always been nostalgia for a more archaic community, a community which has disappeared. This is evident in the mourning the loss of companionship, amicability, and congeniality (10).

He further argues that when we regret the loss of the community, we are actually expressing a displaced desire for immanence. The term ‘immanence’ derives from the Latin word *immanere* (to dwell in, remain). It signifies “the condition of being entirely within something<sup>1</sup>.” It is used in contradistinction to ‘transcendence’. Nancy’s use of the term ‘immanentism’ alludes to how communities, nations, cultures, religions and ethnicities close themselves up in the image of some pure and unadulterated identity so that they can protect themselves from infiltration by the other. Nancy is suspicious of the belief in community with an immanent identity, a specific essence and character, because this often leads to suppression of the actual community which is based on communication. The concept of immanentism used by Nancy may be productively juxtaposed with the concept of immunization developed by Roberto Esposito. As a community “immunizes” itself against its other, an “immanent” community is also founded on the idea that whatever does not belong to it has to be eliminated. Just as an immunized community sealed off against the other cannot be realized in practice, an immanent community can also never be achieved. Attempts

to establish such a community lead to death and destruction. Nancy and Esposito both define the community as essentially directed towards the other.

Moving on to a broader canvas, Nancy regards the collective political enterprises controlled by a will to absolute immanence as possessing only the “truth of death” (12). Immanence and communal fusion, in which both the individual and the community dissolve, embody no other logic than that of the suicide of the community because to realize the so-called pure immanence, every factor seen as threatening the imaginary, originary purity has to be eliminated. Nancy here invokes the example of the Nazi Germany:

The logic of the Nazi Germany was not only that of the extermination of the other, of the subhuman deemed exterior to the communion of blood and soil, but also, effectively, the logic of sacrifice aimed at all those in the “Aryan” community who did not satisfy the criteria of *pure immanence*. (*The Inoperative* 12)

It was not only the Jews who lost their lives; many members of the so-called Aryan race also had to be killed to realize the ideal community. Hitler himself declared, “The greatness of the Aryan lies in his readiness to put all his capabilities in the service of the community... [O]ut of free will he puts the life of the community above his individual existence and will sacrifice himself when necessary” (qtd. in “The Unsacrificeable” 33).

In *Being Singular Plural*, Nancy explores the idea of community, culture and identity in terms of *mêlée*<sup>2</sup>, turmoil and chaos. Instead of writing a eulogy of *mélange*, Nancy chooses to write a eulogy of *mêlée*. He has his reservations for not choosing the word *mélange*. The word *mélange*

suggests that already there is purity that can be or must be mixed with something else. He argues that *mélange* acknowledges and celebrates the idea of “hybridization, exchange, sharing and a sort of transcendental variegation” (*Being* 148). However, this is not enough as there is oversimplification in this, according to Nancy. He even rejects the idea of cosmopolitanism and unity in diversity as these are oversimplified notions that conceal the complexity of reality. Many times these words are just reduced to the level of mere intentions. Nancy remarks that if he chose to write about community, culture and identity in terms of *mélange*, it would be just another way of dealing with these in the manner which has been questioned by him. That is the reason, he states, for moving from *mélange* to *mêlée*.

There is no doubt that Nancy’s focus remains on identity; however, he does not surrender to the frenzy of substantial identity. He does not see identity in terms of substance, purity or homogeneity. Rather identity means to him

mixing together again the various lines, trails and skins, while at the same time describing their heterogeneous trajectories and their webs, both those that are tangled and those that are distinct... . Identity is by definition not an absolute distinction, removed from everything, and therefore, distinct from nothing: it is always the other of another identity. Difference as such is indiscernible. Neither identity nor *mélange* can be pinned down. They have always already taken place, are always already gone, or always already still to come. And they are in common, shared by all, between all, through one another. (149)



However, the problem is that *mélange* has been essentialized and so has lost its significance. *Mélange* ultimately takes the form of fusion or osmosis, which homogenizes the difference.

Nancy rejects purity as it has led to much destruction. As already mentioned, history can give us innumerable examples where the idea of racial or religious or cultural purity has unleashed violence and chaos. Nancy rejects the metaphor of the melting pot also because pot implies a container which “contains all the differences” (149) as a mixture. Instead, he thinks of the community in terms of *mêlée*: “an action rather than a substance” (150). It cannot be conceived of as purity. It does not imply mixture or consumption of differences and heterogeneity. The specificity of *mélange* is that it mixes together so that the diversity is lost or compromised. Cultures and communities, Nancy states, do not mix together. They encounter others, mingle, alter and reconfigure each other.

Hence, Nancy debunks the idea of the purity of a community. He argues that every community from the very outset is a *mêlée* because there is never any ‘pure culture’ as such. The golden period of Greek culture is glorified and the West takes great pride in it. Even the Greek culture was a *mêlée* of ethnic and cultural diversity. It was an encounter of different cultures through art and trade, the exchange of language and cultural practices. All this together formed the Hellenic culture. Nancy suggests rethinking the *mêlée* of history which has been widely ignored in the process of glorifying the pure Hellenic culture. He writes:

Thus, at the beginning of the second millennium, a phenomenon of extraordinary novelty was created; a cosmopolitan culture was put into place in which one

could recognize the contribution of those diverse civilizations that were built on the edge of the sea, or in the middle of it. Some of these civilizations were those that became empires: Egypt, Mesopotamia, Asia Minor of the Hittites; still others of these set to sea and were supported by certain cities: the Syro-Lebanese coast, Crete, and much later, Myceanea. But they all communicated with one another. All of them, even Egypt, ordinarily so closed in on itself, turned toward the outside with passionate curiosity. This is the epoch of voyages, of exchanges, of presents, diplomatic correspondence, and princesses who were given as spouses to foreign kings as proof of new “international relations.” (*Being Singular* 152)

Thus he reaches the conclusion that every culture is *mêlée* from the outset. To think that there is some point of pure origin is an error because a culture is a *process* of confrontation, transformation, development, re-composition and combination. However, we tend to erroneously perceive the past culture or community, even the past itself, as a pure unity. There is usually an effort to form the present community or identity on the basis of that pure community or identity, neglecting the present political, cultural, social and economic reality.

Even when one talks about a specific culture, for instance, French culture, it is not represented by one person or one voice but by multiple voices. Nancy, of course, concedes the presence of French identity, but it is not stagnant or static. He uses the word ‘ipseity – a being-its-self’ (153) to denote the broader dimension of identity. Ipseity is not like stone which would remain unchanging. It is constituted of exchange, recognition, encounter and difference. Ipseity is constantly in touch and combat with the other and, in turn, it

is identified and valued by the other. It cannot be understood in terms of purity. According to Nancy:

A pure identity would not only be inert, empty, colourless and flavourless, it would be an absurdity. A pure identity cancels itself out; it can no longer identify itself... . Purity is a crystalline chasm where the identical, the proper, the authentic is engulfed by itself; it is nothing at all, and it drags the other along in order to carry it into abyss. The absolute and vertiginous law of the proper is that in appropriating its own purity, it alienates itself purely and simply. (*Being Singular* 154)

Thus Nancy formulates the question of how we can speak of “us” as a plurality without surrendering to the notions of an exclusive identity. He emphasizes the uniqueness of each singularity while at the same time bringing out the importance of plurality. Community, according to him, is a space in which singularities transcend themselves but only to touch and share; and this does not add up to immanence.

### ***The Golden Legend***

Aslam’s *The Golden Legend* is set in the “Orwellian world” of Zamana – somewhere in Pakistan (Wallace). However, Zamana is a microcosm of the entire planet. The story unfolds in Badami Bagh – the poorest neighborhood on the northern outskirts of the city of Zamana. After partition, this neighborhood became the largest ghetto inhabited by the Christian families who now live on the outskirts of the city and who, in the face of ‘purification’ of the country and persistent marginalization, are “docile and obedient” and work “as servants” in Muslim households. They “clean the city’s roads and sewers” (*The Golden* 13).

Lily and Grace live in this neighborhood in a house bought with financial assistance from Massud and Nargis,

both acclaimed architects who live in a former defunct factory now converted into their beautiful home as well as work space. They paid for the education of Helen, the daughter of Lily and Grace, and encouraged her to study abroad. They, in fact, adopted her as their daughter and provided her with “an alternative set of opportunities” (10). Just across the lane, there is an eighteenth-century mosque where a moderate cleric lives with his daughter Aysha and his grandson. All of them have already lost a part of their lives, “a small nation of love” (32) to the state and to sectarian and military violence. Massud lost his brother to a covert state operation after he had started investigating a story about the military intelligence; Lily’s wife Grace was brutally murdered three years ago by a Muslim; Aysha lost her husband, while her son lost his legs in an American drone attack; Nargis’s sister Seraphina was raped, and committed suicide; finally, the cleric lost control of his beloved mosque, which was taken away by hardcore militants.

As the novel opens, Massud is killed in the crossfire between an American diplomat and two young men on the Grand Trunk Road where he is part of the “human chain” (*The Golden* 9) to transfer Islamic books from one of the oldest libraries of Zamana to a new building designed and built by Massud and Nargis. Things get even more complicated when Nargis is approached with a political demand by a military agency to forgive the American killer of Massud. Under the Sharia law<sup>3</sup>, a murderer can be forgiven by a relative of the victim after accepting blood money. Later, she is approached by a Jihadi group to do the opposite. Initially, Nargis rejects their proposals; however, eventually, she has to comply with the demand of the military agency since she has a ‘secret past.’ While Nargis faces these tough choices, Lily and Helen are accused of blasphemy. This results in large-

scale violence and the burning down of the houses of the Christians. During this period, Imran, a young Kashmiri, comes into the life of Nargis and Helen. Nargis, Helen and Imran flee zamana and take refuge on an island, while Lily is also on the run. The narrative unfolds after this point against this backdrop of escalating violence.

Aslam's first novel *Season of the Rainbirds* (1993) was published in a period rife with Islamic extremism and fundamentalism. When he turns back to his country after twenty five years, it is not very different from the one portrayed in his first novel. The country is more and more embroiled in the mire of Islamization and terrorism and continues to bear the brunt of policies adopted by its leaders during 1970s and 1980s.

The birth of Pakistan took place when India was partitioned with the aim to provide an exclusive homeland for the Muslims. When the final plan for the new country was being worked out, the founding fathers of Pakistan emphasized the diversity of the country and proclaimed that non-Muslims would be equal citizens in the new country. In his famous speech of 11 August 1947, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Quaid-e-Azam, stated that "equal rights, privileges and obligations" would be provided to every citizen of the country irrespective of caste, creed and religion. He started with a hopeful note:

We are starting in the days where there is no discrimination between one community and another, no discrimination between one caste or creed and another. We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one state. Now I think we should keep that in front of us as our ideal and you will find that in course of time Hindus would

cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims. Not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the state. (Pakistani.org)

As the Governor General of Pakistan, Jinnah attended the mass on Christmas at the main Catholic Church in Karachi. He appointed a Hindu Dalit leader, Joginder Nath Mandal, as the Minister of Law and Sir Muhammad Zafarullah Khan, a leading Ahmadi as the Minister of Foreign Affairs. He strongly criticized the attacks on the Hindus in Karachi in 1948. Ishtiaq Ahmed argues that this bears testimony to the fact that Jinnah wanted the civilized form of government (“Iqbal”). His dream of the Republic of Pakistan being a secular and democratic country was quite clear. The white colour in Pakistani flag meant that the non-Muslims would be given equal status in the new state. However, Jinnah had not thought that his dream would turn into a nightmare. Farahnaz Ispahani is of the view that soon after Independence, some leaders declared that the sole objective of the creation of Pakistan was the establishment of an Islamic state. They argued that Pakistan meant “land of the pure.” The drive to establish a ‘pure’ Islamic state led to the exclusionary tendencies which marginalized the non-Muslims as well as liberal Muslim sects since they did not belong to the ‘purifiers’. The policies embraced by the successors of Jinnah put Pakistan on the road to being an ideological and theocratic state.

Ispahani further argues that the parochially guided amendments in the Constitution of Pakistan and the introduction of blasphemy laws by President Zia-ul-Haq with a drive to promulgate Islamization served as the final nail in the coffin of secularism and democracy. President Zia’s military regime promoted the Sunni Islam at the expense of other

faiths. His regime showed great insensitivity to the religious pluralism and diversity and there was greater emphasis on a monolithic Pakistan. At independence, the number of non-Muslims in Pakistan was 23 percent, which has declined to mere three percent (*Purifying* 6). Ayesha Jalal points out that instead of propagating a monolithic idea of Pakistan, multiple dimensions of its history should be brought forth and nurtured. Unfortunately, this has not happened in Pakistan where the political leaders often asserted that history can be written at their whim. (“Pakistan”). Many people fled the country during Zia’s regime and thousands of people were brutally killed to ‘purify’ the country. Aslam’s parents also moved to England during this time. In an interview with Ben East, Aslam remarks that this derogatory treatment of the minority communities forces them to migrate to some other countries (“Nadeem”).

Striving for the land of the ‘pure’, the political and religious leaders of Pakistan have used blasphemy laws aimed at the Christian and other communities. Though Aslam’s novel *The Golden Legend* is set against the backdrop of the blasphemy laws in Pakistan, he does not anywhere define blasphemy. This is a conscious attempt to satirize and replicate the absurd situation when anyone can go to the police station and complain that his friend or neighbour said something blasphemous about the prophet, but he is not allowed to repeat the words. If he does so, he is also charged with blasphemy. In *Zamana*, people are on death row, but they do not know what they have done. Anyone can be picked up for charges of blasphemy. This is really a Kafkaesque situation like the experience of Joseph K. who is arrested one fine morning without having done anything wrong.

It is quite ironic and ridiculous that those who want to establish the pure Islamic state do not even know the meaning

of the Islamic state. After the riots against the Ahmadis in Pakistan in 1953, the Munir commission was set up. The findings of the commission were quite surprising because no two religious scholars agreed on the basic definition of Islamic state and the definition of a Muslim. All the Islamists wanted the formation of the Islamic state, but they had divergent views on it. The only common thing among them was the persecution of the minorities. Many of them related it to the form of government that existed during the caliphate after the death of Prophet Mohammad. They wanted to re-establish that perfect and 'pure' rule in Pakistan. Maulana Shabbir Ahmed Osmani, an Islamist considered the Islamic state as a welfare state and compared it to the pious state set up by the Prophet (I. Ahmed, "Sovereignty"). The Munir Commission concluded:

It is (the) brilliant achievement of the Arabic nomads, the like of which the world had never seen before, that makes the Musalman of today live in the past and yearn for the return of the glory that was Islam. He finds himself standing on the crossroads, wrapped in the mantle of the past and the dead weight of centuries on his back, frustrated and bewildered and hesitant to turn one corner or the other. Little does he understand that the forces which are pitted against him are entirely different from those against which early Islam had to fight. Nothing but a bold re-orientation of Islam to separate the vital from the lifeless can preserve it as a world idea and convert the Musalman into a citizen of the present and the future world from the archaic incongruity that he is today. (Fatah 36)

Thus religious and political leaders of Pakistan postulated that the sole objective of Pakistan was to create an Islamic state. The desire to form essential Islamic



community became the reason of turning back to the times when the Islamic glory was supposedly at its peak. They considered a government based on equal rights irrespective of religion, creed or community as the work of the devil (Ispahani, *Purifying* 57). Seyyed Hossein Nasar also points out that Muslims have looked at the society of Medina during the time of Prophet Mohammad as the golden age of Islam (*The Heart* 168).

To realize the dream of the ideal community, all other communities are considered as threatening to its existence. Consequently, it is maintained by the radical Islamists that Christians do not belong to the “land of the pure.” They are treated as ‘other’ and are identified with the threatening elements that generate fear among the people. They have always faced the discrimination and cannot separate this degrading treatment from the very fabric of their existence. In the novel *The Golden Legend*, a Muslim boy accosts Helen and wants to attack her with a knife to know whether “Christians have black blood” (*The Golden* 26). He is only eleven years old and proudly proclaims himself as a Muslim. The Christians are confined to the ghettos and they live in the largest ghetto, Badami Bagh. They can go to their locality by using only one lane. All the other lanes leading to the houses of the Muslims have been closed so that they are not ‘polluted’ by the Christians. This process of othering can be understood in the context of imaginary threat to the majority Muslims. In this way, Badami Bagh represents the segregation of Christians from the majority Muslims where even access to space is withheld from them. They cannot naturally interact with one another. Aslam symbolically refers to it, “No hint of the world out there where it seemed Cain was eternally pitched against Abel. Though at times it would have been more accurate to say Cain against Cain” (*The Golden* 146).

When Helen was fourteen years old, she was asked by her teacher to justify why she had taken the place of the Muslims. If the crucifix worn by the Christians around their necks is visible, it is considered a provocation by the Muslims. Christians are not allowed to drink water from the public places. Majority of the houses in Badami Bagh are owned by Muslims who want to reap all the benefits available. Babur, who owns all the rented houses, finds cleaning jobs for the Christians in the richer areas of the city. He sabotages all the efforts to establish a school in the Christian vicinity since it would provide education to the Christians and they would learn the ability to think and act. Lily gets angry because of the daily discriminations and for being treated as a “non-citizen” and “a half-citizen” at the hands of the Muslims and thinks “if Pakistan were a person he would kill it” (70). He has been so affected by this discrimination that he becomes afflicted with stammering. The so-called advocates of the blasphemy laws warn Helen, “You should go and live in a Christian country. This is a country for the Muslims” (122).

The Christians living in Badami Bagh are systematically targeted. The houses of Muslims are marked with white colour so that their houses can be easily identified while attacking the Christians. Lily’s alleged affair with Aysha becomes an excuse to burn the entire Christian neighbourhood. Nothing is left except the black soot in the alleys and streets. Thousands of rose petals are showered on the burnt houses by the local politician to celebrate this blessed deed. In a way, their community is made inoperative by conflagrating and dislocating them. Those who survive this mayhem have to leave the neighbourhood and find work somewhere else. All the Christians keep the members of the ghetto together, but they are dislocated now. After this tragic episode, the Christian men, women and children not only collect the

remains of the “singled objects” (154), they also try to collect their broken community. This reminds one of the systematic killings of Hindus in East Bengal. Sydney Schanberg presented his report on the massacre of Hindus in East Pakistan. He writes that Yellow “H” had been painted on the houses of Hindus to make them particular targets of the Pakistani army (Vyas 7). The politics of othering does not target only the members of other communities, but it targets its own members also. Only few years after partition, the Muslim minority sects were also “accused of extra-territorial loyalties” (Ispahani, *Purifying* 23). Consequently, the Ahmadis were described as agents of the British and the Shias as acting at Iran’s behest. President Zia-ul-Haq said about the Ahmadis, “We will, Insha Allah, persevere in our efforts to ensure that the cancer of Qadianism is exterminated” (151).

It is because of this politics of othering, exclusion and dispossession that Nargis creates a Muslim ‘other’, more suitable to the community in which she is living. It is through the stifled memories of Nargis/Margaret that the novel *The Golden Legend* touches upon the degradation borne by the Christians in Pakistan. Nargis is born into a Christian family as Margaret and spends her early years with her uncle Solomon, the first Bishop in Pakistan and with her elder sister Seraphina. She is mistakenly introduced as Nargis (a Muslim) at the school. She realizes the stark difference between being a Christian and being a Muslim. She feels for the first time in her life that she also has a place in the world. She comes out of the ghettos of persecution through a constructed identity. Assuming the identity of Nargis provides Margaret an additional sense of security and strength to survive in the hostile world. However, when she remains alone after the death of her husband, there is a clash between her “early self” (*The Golden* 62) and later self. Though she never longs

to become Margaret again, her “early self” disturbs her so much that she has to confront it and she stares at Margaret in her face. When Margaret becomes Nargis, she no longer remains part of the community into which she was born. However, if her constructed identity is revealed, she will not even belong to her ‘chosen’ community. She finds it insulting and feels enraged with herself, her uncle, Massud, Pakistan, Islam and Christianity. Thus, she is the other in both the communities – Muslim and Christian.

Aslam debunks the myth of purity from the very first line of the novel *The Golden Legend*. Nargis sees the Arabic writing in the books related with Christ and later, she comes to know that the Arabic script had been used by Giotto, Fra Angelico and Fra Lippo Lippi for ornamental purposes and she, like Helen, realizes, “That was how one continent poured into another. How one person carried the answer through his life until he met the person who was carrying the answers” (*The Golden* 188). In the novel, 987 pages long book, *They Might Know Each Other* written by Massud’s father, symbolizes the *mêlée*. It suggests that every community is *mêlée* from the outset. The title of the book is inspired by a verse from the Quran. It is divided into twenty one sections. The book is a cultural history and chronicles how various currents of love, understanding and knowledge have always flowed on the planet. It is a celebration of the coming together and confrontation of numerous ideas and thoughts through pilgrimage, wars, trade, curiosity, etc. Aslam writes:

It outlined and examined how disparate events in the history of the world had influenced each other, the hidden or forgotten contributions that one set of humans had made towards the happiness and knowledge of another. Tradition and histories had

always mingled, and nothing in the East or the West was ever pure. (18)

“Tracing the umbilical connection between places” (34), the novel describes how Dante Alighieri, for example, was inspired by Muhammad’s journey to Paradise and Hell when he wrote *The Divine Comedy*; how Boccaccio used elements of Ramayana in his *The Decameron* and how Andalusian mystic Ibn Tufail’s romance fed into Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (244). The torn pages of the book contained references to Abraham – the common father of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

The book suggests that no two places, cultures and civilizations have expanded, grown and flourished without the intervention of another. No culture can ever grow in a cocooned shell. This coming together has always opened the ways for more progress, knowledge and exploration. In this way, Aslam debunks the myth of absolute purity. Aslam himself says, “Everywhere is part of everywhere now. That interconnectivity was one of the things I was trying to explore and convey in *The Golden Legend*” (Aslam, “Editor”). Rachel Watts points out about the novel:

It is book of commonalities of humanity, the lore, the fables and yes, the religious beliefs that are interchanged between nationalities, cultures and faiths. And this book, destroyed and painstakingly stitched together with gold thread, offers Aslam the focal point that makes his story both very specific and universal.

The last section of the book is named “The Book of Warning” and it tells the story of disastrous consequences whenever people fail to value others.

The cruellest and shocking incident in the novel, *The Golden Legend*, is when the military intelligence officer, Major

Burhan slashes the book. Imran, Nargis and Helen spend time on the Island by putting together the pages of the book. Nargis does not use ant tape or glue; rather, she uses a golden thread to sew the pieces of the book together. At the end of the novel, the entire book is sewn with the scars of the book shining. Aslam borrowed this idea from Japanese art form *Kinsugi* – “the art of mending pottery with lacquer mixed with powdered gold” (79). The flaw is seen as a unique piece of the object’s history which adds to its beauty. It implies that the world is broken, yet there are people who can put things together. Thus, *The Golden Legend* is not only the story of Zamana, but it also tells the story of the constant regeneration of the civilizations which are marked by many scars. It is also an effort to acknowledge the rich cultural tradition of Pakistan which has been either destroyed or totally neglected after the wave of Islamization. Nargis’s act of sewing together the book is an act of resistance against all the regressive forces. It is contrast to the present intolerant society where the sectarian violence is rampant. Nargis, Helen and Imran not only sew the book together, but they also sew together the additional stories of past and present. It shows that the present is guided by the past and the past is reconstructed through the present, thus, forming a connection between the two.

Aslam shows that community and identity cannot be comprehended as some essential, pure substance. He calls into question the idea of purity and in the line of Qurratulain Hyder’s *Aag Ka Dariya* (River of Fire) traces the multi-linear heritage of Pakistan which is not confined to the Islamic tradition only. *The Golden Legend* shows when community and identity are equated with purity, essence and absolute-ness, it always proves destructive. It does not prove destructive only for those against whom some ‘pure’ and ‘substantial’ community is formed, it also proves self-destructive.

The stay of Helen, Nargis and Imran on the island binds them together into a “small nation of love” and presents the formation of a community that is heterogeneous and contingent. The unique moment of being-together prepares them to face the darkness outside. When Imran expresses his desire to have known them in different circumstances, Nargis says that she does not have any idea of that. Being-together, they share their fears and feel compassion for each other. Their coming together does not mean doing away with the differences and the formation of absolute unity; rather, their relationship oscillates between both self and other. It is only in this community that Nargis can reveal her true identity without the fear of being declared a blasphemer. Even after getting to know that Nargis is basically a Christian, Imran and Helen’s opinion about her does not change. Helen tells Imran, “I don’t think I’ll ever be able to find fault in her behavior towards me. The lessons she learnt silently from her mistake, she taught them to me. So I myself do not have to make those mistakes” (*The Golden* 332). They both want to accompany her to her house in Lyallpur to attend the last rites of her uncle Solomon. It is only in this community that the love of Helen and Imran can flourish which would not have been acceptable in the world around. Together, they also represent the voices from the past in order to articulate the pluralistic tradition of the country. This is an act of resistance against the atmosphere of hatred and fanaticism which does not provide anything except chaos, violence and the violation of basic human rights. The fundamental question here is can we form a community that is not antagonistic towards the other? Helen, Nargis and Imran’s brief sojourn on the island represents this being-together and co-existence.

Thus Aslam’s novel symbolizes an attempt to re-think community in terms of what Nancy conceptualizes as *mêlée*,

being-in-common, being-with and being-together, which does not imply mixing together, but means, on the contrary, exchange, encounter, contestation and the affirmation of difference. This is of great relevance in a world marked by sectarian, military and communal violence where the illtreatment and marginalization of ethnic and religious minorities has become a rampant phenomenon. The vision of the novel invokes the rich culture and heritage of Pakistan. It presents a creative exploration of the history which is inevitably associated with the present and also shows that present cannot be dissociated from the past. Rather than pursuing the illusory path to some past glory, there is a need to look forward to where we can understand the fundamental question – what does it mean to be together? What is the meaning of ‘we’ in a world where the parochial politics of nationalism, fundamentalism and communalism wedges a stark division between ‘us’ and ‘them’? In order to address the present crisis, the pluralism existing in the country should be invoked; however, the Pakistani establishment has often actively undermined this pluralism. There is a need to build more spaces for interaction and inclusion of the other rather than resorting to the totalitarian and authoritarian tendencies.

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**Footnotes**

<sup>1</sup>[www.britannica.com/topic/immanence-divine-attribute](http://www.britannica.com/topic/immanence-divine-attribute)

<sup>2</sup>A note has been added by the translator at the end of the book to clarify the meaning of *mêlée*. He writes, “The French word *mêlée* has entered the English language in an impoverished form. It should not be read as meaning only a confused fight, a fray, scrap, skirmish, or scuffle, that is, as a word in English. Rather, it remains an untranslated French word meaning a fight, but also a mingling of a more sexual nature. In addition, as its connection to the verbs *mêler* and *se mêler* (“to mix”) make clear, the ideas of mixture, mixing, motley, and variegation are also implied” (*Being* 205).

<sup>3</sup>Sharia law is the religious law which constitutes an important part of the Islamic tradition. It is derived from the religious doctrines, particularly the Quran and the hadith. Sharia law is considered the divine law which cannot be changed by human agency.

## **Loss of Meaning at Lexical Level: *Ādhe Adhūre*(SLT) and *Halfway House*(TLT)**

**Pallavi<sup>1</sup> & P Bhattacharya<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Research Scholar , Dept. of English, GKV, Haridwar  
email:pallavirana0044@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor, Dept. of English, GKV, Haridwar

Translation theorists, scholars and reviewers pay serious attention to whether a faithful translation of a text is possible and conclude their studies own ways. But one thing on which there is almost unanimity is that translation is not an intellectual act. It is a creative act which requires good linguistic competence in both source language (SL) and target language (TL). Hence most of them perceive translation as a target language text (TLT) in which a lot of the meaning of the source language text (SLT) gets lost. The present paper focusses on how far the translation of *dhe Adhūre* done by Bindu Batra *is* a faithful attempt. They accept that translation is full of lose and gains at phonetic, lexical, grammatical, sentential, episodic and compositional levels. As has already been referred to that an act of translation operates at six levels but the present attempt is limited to lexical level.

The scholars hold that the intricate language of SLT is responsible for the loss of meaning in translation. They seem to refer to the specific style, which a language adopts when it is born, and which gradually changes and refines itself as it comes into contact with new thoughts and cultural changes both in and outside the society where the language is spoken. In this way, each language inherits some essence, which cannot be expressed in any other language. It is in accomplishing this task of recreating the style of SL, the loss of

meaning in translation may occur, even though translation succeeds in transferring the sense exactly.

The language of play under-review is plain and simple, quite appropriate for the members of a middle class family, but at the same point, it is powerful enough to convey the tension, the mental disturbance and agitation of the family members. As far as its lexical items are concerned, they have been employed appropriately. All these facts about the style of a language in general and of Mohan Rakesh in particular pose serious challenges before the translator of *dhe Adhūre*.

Words are an important unit of composition as the basic role of expression depends upon them. This is why, the choice of words has been included in the art of translator which operates at the levels of usage, synonyms, transference of epithets, adjectives, pronouns, indeclinable, gender and verb. *dhe Adhūre* is impregnated with such lexical items which the translator has used to convey the meaning and delineate the character. The play, as the title *dhe-Adhūre* or *Halfway House* unfolds life becomes incomplete when one thinks from one's own point of view. The play is about a family consisting of husband (Mahendra Nath), wife (Savitri) and their three children. Savitri is working woman while Mahendra Nath is an unemployed person. Mahendranath lives as a person, good for nothing. Contrarily Savitri is very assertive and thinks always from her own personal point of view. In order to delineate the mental states of these character, Mohan Rakesh uses lexical items effectively. Let us see how TLT (*Halfway House*) is a faithful translation of SLT (*dhe Adhūre*).

Mohan Rakesh is also fond of usages. Once the daughter of Savitri says:

मेरे चेहरे से क्या झलकता है? कि मुझे तपेदिक हो गया है? मैं घुल-घुल कर मरी जा रही हूँ? (*Ādhe Adhūre* 30 .Hereafter it is referred to as A A).

Here, the beauty of the expression, caused by using of the word “तपेदिक” followed by the word “घुल-घुल”. The purpose behind the selection of these word only to make the feelings more real and picturesque. Instead of writing a simple sentence i.e. “मुझे तपेदिक हो गया है? मैं मरी जा रही हूँ?” the writer adds “घुल-घुल कर” which clearly intensifies the seriousness and her agitation. Bindu Batra translates it as “how do I look? As though I’ve got consumption? As though I am about to die?” (*Halfway House* 16. Hereafter it is referred to as H H) reads smoothly but it also fails to recreate the same effects.

*Ādhe Adhūre* is impregnated with synonyms. At varying interval, Mohan Rakesh employs synonyms creatively. The following use of synonyms show the subdued mental state of the Mahendranath and assertive and selfish nature of Savitri:

“इस घर में कि जो जब जिस वजह से जो भी कह दे मैं चुपचाप सुन लिया करूँ? हर वक्त की दुत्कार, हर वक्त की कोंच, बस यही कमाई है यहाँ मेरी इतने सालों की ...” AA 43.

In the above lines, the playwright employs two synonyms “कोंच” and “दुत्कार” so that the emotions described here can become vividly clear to the reader. These words clearly describe how the speaker is broken, defeated and suffocated. The constant insults by Savitri and Nath’s withdrawal, as he is an unemployed person makes him feel suffocating in the house which is intelligibly convening through these synonyms. The translator, Bindu Batra translates it as “Silent acceptance perpetual snubs, constant insults, is that all I deserve after so many years?”(H H 26). Although it shows a genuine effort of Bindu Batra to preserve

the sense, emotion and meaning of the SLT but overall it fails to transfer the emotional fabric which the reader experience in the SLT. The intencity of insult which the words “दुत्कार” and “कोंच” carry is missing in the translation. Thus at the level of synonyms, there is loss of meaning in the translation. Such a loss is further seen when the following reaction of husband is noted:

“किसे सुना सकता हूँ? कोई है जो सुन सकता है? जिन्हें सुनना चाहिए, वे सब तो एक रबड़-स्टैप के सिवा कुछ समझते ही नहीं मुझे। सिर्फ जरूरत पड़ने पर इस स्टैप का ठप्पा लगा कर ...।” A A 43.

Here the word “रबड़-स्टैप” is used in secondary sense to refer to an object with which it is not directly associated. Here Mahendranath compares himself with a “रबड़-स्टैप” a hand held for inking and imprinting a message and design on a surface. By comparing himself with it, Mahendra Nath wants to convey that he has no identity in his house. He greatly resents his loss of control and influence in the family and is immensely unhappy to be regarded only as a “stamp” to be used only when the need arises i.e. Savitri needs him only for the sake of husband’s name, daughter and son needs him for the sake of father’s name. Bindu Batra uses a descriptive expression “regard me only as a stamp of respectability, to be used when the need arises” (H H 26), which fails to make us sympathize with the protagonist. However, there is no gain, no loss as the word “रबड़-स्टैप” figures in both the texts.

The suffocation of Mahendranath is a permanent mark in the text. At one place, he compares himself with a “कीड़ा” after comparing his self as a “रबड़-स्टैप”. He begins to define himself in terms of his non-utility and unsuccessfulness, and thereby seeks solace in temporary act of rebellion involving and seeking meaning and mental peace outside home.

“सचमुच महसूस करता हूँ। मुझे पता है, मैं एक कीड़ा हूँ जिसने अंदर-ही-अंदर इस घर को खा लिया है (बाहर के दरवाजे की तरफ चलता) पर अब पेट भर गया है मेरा। हमेषा के लिए भर गया है (दरवाजे के पास रुक कर) और बचा भी क्या है जिसे खाने के लिए और रहता रहूँ यहाँ? “ A A 44.

The translator uses the word “Dry rot” for “कीड़ा” which is a good translation as far as the sense is concern but it fails in preserving additional effect. This is all due to cultural association and disassociation. This happen even at the level of adjective.

There is an instance- Savitri wants her son Ashok to settle down so, invites Singhania home to introduce him to her son. Singhania is the member of the urban rich class who flaunts his riches and high social status, takes undue advantage of weaker sections and exploits woman employs for gratifying his sexual lust and for pleasure. He is disliked not only by Mahendranath but also by Ashok, who feels bitter about his frequent visits and his continuous gawk at his mother and elder sister. Ashoka goes to the extent of making a figure of Singhania with ass-like ears and describes his nature with two adjectives “लपलपाती” and “रिसती”. When the mother does not accept what her son says, then he becomes vocal and says: “देख नहीं रही यह लपलपाती जीभ, यह रिसती गुफाओं जैसी आँखें”(A A 57). The word “लपलपाती जीभ” clearly describes the lust of Singhania and his bad intention which is very much clear through his continuous gawk at mother and daughter followed by adjective “रिसती” in रिसती गुफाओं जैसी आँखें which evokes feelings of lust. But in TLT the words “hanging tongue” and “fearful cavernous eyes...”(H H 39) fail to cope up with the pace, meaning, expression of SLT. ‘Hanging tongue’ doesn’t show any kind of feeling of lust and similarly the ‘fearful, cavernous eyes’(H H 39) gives us the expression of frightful and cowardly men not of unwieldy men.



Sometimes Mohan Rakesh, employs adjective with subtle purpose. Let us see this purpose in the use of “पथराई” and “स्थिर”.

पथराई आँखों से चुपचाप दोनों को देखती है। (A A 91-92).

स्त्री स्थिर आँखों से बाहर की तरफ देखती आहिस्ता से कुरसी पर बैठ जाती है। (A A 99).

These both adjective have same implication and meaning but just to avoid monotony, the writer uses these two different adjectives. The first one is used for the elder daughter, Binni and the other for Savitri. But circumstances are the same for both of them. They are trying to search the answer to different questions for inner relief but they are unable to get the answers. These two adjectives make us have emotional bonding with them and provide a picturesque look. Bindu Batra uses word “stonily” for both the translation which creates monotony.

There is another important device of using pronouns in the text. Mohan Rakesh’s technique of using pronouns make the expression more delightful and charming. This is necessitated by his keenness to convey infinite speciality of the object being described. He writes a long speech for Savitri to be spoken towards the end of the play, in her encounter with Juneja, friend of Mahendranath, which is fully impregnated with various pronouns.

कितना कुछ एक साथ हो कर, कितना कुछ एक साथ पाकर और कितना कुछ एक साथ ओढ़ कर जीना। वह उतना कुछ कभी तुम्हें किसी एक जगह न मिल पाता। इसलिए जिस किसी के साथ भी जिंदगी पुरु करती, तुम हमेषा इतनी ही खाली, इतनी ही बैचेन बनी रहती। A A 94.

The use of pronouns “कितना कुछ”, “उतना कुछ”, “जिस किसी” etc intelligibly convey how modern Savitri is. By asserting

her individuality, Savitri holds that a woman is not merely a wife, mother, and daughter, but also a free human being who has her own dreams, ambition, aspiration, goals in life. Savitri is always in a search for a complete man which she never gets. She is woman more sinned against than sinning. Bindu Batra translates it as “because the meaning of life to you is how many different things you can have and enjoy at the same time. One man alone could never have given them to you, so no matter whom you married, you would always have felt as empty and as restless as you do today” (HH 74.). It is obvious that the translation fails to evoke the feeling as in the *Ādhe Adhūre*.

Mohan Rakesh uses lot of compound words in his play *Ādhe Adhūre* as a tool to make his play more meaningful and real. There is a list of compound words below taken from the text. It is important to note that the compound words have not been translated by Bindu Batra. In the list they have been shown as not translated (NT).

कारण—अकारण	- NT
इधर—उधर	- Here and there
जमा—खर्च	- Invested

As it is seen from the above list, most of the compound words are left untranslated in TLT and their equivalents do not create any rhythmic effect. Bindu Batra only tries to preserve the sense but loses a real touch.

Mohan Rakesh’s vocabulary in *Ādhe Adhūre* is vast. It includes words and phrases from Urdu words, rural words and English words. In fact it is this complex arena of words and phrases which given life to the literary quality to the text, Bindu Batra translate all of these word into standard English. At this juncture the effect is lost. Some such examples are given below:

## Urdu Words and their translations

खैर	- But	कारगुजारी	- NT
आमादा	- Pounce	ख्वार	- Ruined

## Rural words and their translations

चेट्टा	- NT	सहेजकर	- NT
मोढ़ा	- Cane Pouf		

## English Words and their translation

फेचकट	- Goetee	ऐश ट्रे	- NT
एट योर डिस्पोजल	- NT		

To conclude, Halfway House (TLT), the translation of *Ādhe Adhūre* (SLT) to a great extent, maintains sense and literariness, yet there is loss of meaning at the following levels : usage, transference of epithets, adjectives, pronouns and indeclinables.

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## **Book Review**

***Amitav Ghosh: Contemporary World Writers*** by Anshuman A. Mondal. Copyright@ 2010 Viva Books: New Delhi.

The book is divided into five chapters. This volume includes a chronology of Amitav Ghosh's life, a detailed introduction on formative contexts and intertexts, and discussion of all his major works. This book offers a thematic organization to approach Amitav Ghosh's works. The first chapter, 'Contexts and intertexts', talks about the concerns of Amitav Ghosh in his fiction which are with margins, that is, marginal peoples, histories, episodes, knowledge systems and beliefs. The dominant issues in his novels are the troubled legacy of colonial knowledge and discourse on formerly colonized societies, peoples and ideas, the ambivalent relationship to modernity of Third world; politics of identity in colonial and post-colonial societies; the question of agency; the recovery of suppressed histories; commitment towards multiplicity and admittance of cultural differences and 'critique of Eurocentrism in general.'

Mondal, then, mentions Amitav Ghosh's disavowal of the fact when his work is termed as a representative example of postcolonialism. He moves further in his discussion towards the biography of Amitav Ghosh and points out the figure of the refugee prominent through out his fiction like *The Circle of Reason*(1986), *The Shadow Lines* (1988), *The Glass Palace* (2000). To Amitav Ghosh, Mondal believes that journey (either physical or inner) is fundamental to human experience and travelling finds an important place in all his works. Calcutta exerts a strong influence on Amitav Ghosh's imagination and the upper and middle sections of Bengali

society, the *bhadralok*, mark their presence in his Calcutta and space- physical or mental, represents itself to the mind of its inhabitants. Mondal proves that as an intellectual and cultural centre, Calcutta has always inspired Amitav Ghosh's imagination. The arguments and discussions that take place in *adda* coffee-houses, lecture-halls, student hostels, universities, parks and around its bookstalls and bookshops bring the element of vibrant modern vernacular culture and literary cosmopolitanism of Bengali intellectual culture in the city. Calcutta, serves as a signifier of colonial relations as mediated through the global hierarchies of culture. In *The Calcutta Chromosome*(1996) and *The Circle of Reason*, the city is both a metaphor for the knowledge/power relations initiated by colonialism, and the stage on which Ghosh re-enacts what has been called 'the battle for cultural parity' waged by the Bengali cultural elite. This phrase is from Ranajit Guha's *An Indian Historiography of India: A Nineteenth Century Agenda and its Implications*.

Mondal, then, progresses towards the discussion of Amitav Ghosh's novels. *The Circle of Reason* is analyzed for its episodic and picaresque nature, elements of magic realism and fantasy, rational and irrational characters who are obsessive and erratic like Balaram, illegal migration for a promised future and hope, loose plot with tight knitting of motifs and recurring images, such as, metaphors of weaving for story-telling, and also the history of weaving is used as a synecdoche for the nature of Reason. On the contrary, Mondal distinguishes *The Shadow Lines* for its tightly plotted structure, developed individual characters, the silence about certain historical records and suppressed memory, and technical narrative skills with prompt shifts of time and spaces. The borders are invisible which are transgressed by the novel with its themes and concerns for national boundaries which mock the physical, political, existential safety of its people. Mondal

views *In an Antique Land* as a critique of colonialism and its consequences. Amitav Ghosh traces the various intractable political problems of today between Hindus and Muslims in India/Pakistan and Jews and Arabs in Israel/Palestine. He attempts to recover lost or silenced histories that disturb Eurocentric representations and undermine myths of Progress. *The Calcutta Chromosome* has continued the engagement of the novelist towards colonialism. The novel blends the elements of the thriller, the detective novel, science fiction, ghost stories, gothic melodrama and historiography. The central figure in *In An Antique Land* and *The Calcutta Chromosome* is a research scholar who enables the novelist to question knowledge, its production and its consequences in a different disciplinary and environmental milieu. *The Glass Palace* has straight forward linear narrative and epic dimensions of a grand historical romance whose diasporic reach stretches out into eastern arc of Indian Ocean. Burma becomes the novel's centre and the novel recounts the fortunes of three families. The bonds made by circumstances and by blood and kinship, generate communities of their own and move beyond the social boundaries of race, ethnicity, class, religion and nationality. *The Hungry Tide* deals with the issues of scientific knowledge and its relationship to subaltern ways of thinking and being, the logic of modernity and development, the politics of ecology, the ways of life of indigenous peoples and their relationship to the environment. Mondal highlights the novel with foregrounding of language and textuality and its relationship to lived experience which is minutely observed by Amitav Ghosh. The novel, Mondal views, is a song of the earth which is sung by its people 'who are not swamped by the hungry tides of either development or environmentalism.' (19)

Non-fictional writings, Mondal observes, also hold important place in the novelist's career like academic articles, travelogues, reportage, journalism and criticism. He further points out that many of Amitav Ghosh's works seek to deconstruct the value of distinguishing between 'fact' and 'fiction'. Fact, for Amitav Ghosh, does not necessarily deliver 'truth'. Facts must be interpreted and must be embedded in discourse. They speak when placed in narratives.

The postmodern features of Amitav Ghosh's fiction are exhibited in the nature of language, textuality and discourse and the ways in which they shape and determine human perception, comprehension and experience. He advocates unstable and fluid identity 'because what is made can be unmade.'(21) Amitav Ghosh also disavows 'universal' historical narratives and instead focuses on fragments of human experience that 'have been occluded from the historical record.' Mondal compares the generic multiplicity (science fiction, detective fiction, thriller, and modes of writing such as historiography, ethnography, *bildungsroman* and scientific discourse) found in Amitav Ghosh's texts with what Steven Connor has identified as an inherent interdisciplinary within postmodernism in his *Postmodernist Culture: An Introduction to Theories of the Contemporary (1989)*. Metafiction, self-reflexive narrator and usage of irony are other important postmodern features of Amitav Ghosh's novels.

Mondal states other equally significant issues that were part of Indian history is the centre-region dialectic enmeshed with the dynamics of religious communalism. These issues affect the grand narratives of Indian nationalism. National unity fragmented into a multiplicity of regional, religious, caste, class, and linguistic identities. State which was once regarded as a harbinger of liberty, progress and modernity, later on, was associated with coercion and repression. In the



works of Amitav Ghosh, the state is represented as a menace, and a threat.

Mondal evaluates Amitav Ghosh's close ties with the Subaltern Studies group who disavows grand narratives of Indian nationalism, suspect the state, and affirm the subaltern. These dimensions are discernible in the novelist's works. Mondal also signals towards Amitav Ghosh's secular and humanist orientation that are in perpetual tension with the postmodernism present in his works. His fiction is full of three-dimensional characters and his interest in individuality, experience, self-fashioning and biography, Mondal feels, owe something to V.S. Naipaul. For Amitav Ghosh, language is a division that separates human beings. Mondal further says that the novelist's humanism is influenced by modern literary and artistic tradition of Bengal. Two important figures from this tradition who influenced Amitav Ghosh are Rabindranath Tagore and Satyajit Ray. Amitav Ghosh's troubled relationship to modernity and humanism reflects Tagore's impression and his inclination towards humanism (which is present in the innocence of childhood and distinctive individuality) has representative impulse of Satyajit. *The Calcutta Chromosome* is influenced by the popular fiction of the 1930s and 1940s, that is, ghost stories, science fiction, fantastical novels, and detective fiction as well as social realism of Saratchandra Chatopadhyay and Bhubutibhushan Bandhyopadhyay. Thus, Mondal visualizes a strong presence of the legacy of Bengal Renaissance in Amitav Ghosh's works.

The second chapter 'The metaphysic' of modernity' focuses on Amitav Ghosh's exploration of knowledge, science and rationality in *The Circle Of Reason*, *The Calcutta Chromosome* and *In An Antique Land*. Language for Amitav Ghosh is a rationale, a general system of ideas and an ensemble of knowledge to ensure a particular way of thinking and being which encompasses all aspects of experience. The

metaphysic of modernity was encoded in knowledge disciplines which were disseminated by the colonial education system. Science was seen as a symbol of the superiority of Western knowledge and it constructs the visible motifs of colonial authority such as the railway network, organized scientific exhibitions and museums. In these three works, Mondal believes that Amitav Ghosh seeks to reveal the gaps and fissures of modernity's metaphysic in western scientific rationale and opens a space for other knowledge systems and other way of thinking and beliefs.

In *The Circle Of Reason*, Mondal argues that reason, for Amitav Ghosh, is always bound to its other natural side: desire, hope, despair, madness, and obsession. In *The Calcutta Chromosome*, Amitav Ghosh is engaged with the grand narrative of Western scientific discovery and subjects it to post-colonial scrutiny. The novelist actually shows how subalterns and their knowledge trouble the very concept of discovery itself. Mondal shows three thematic displacements in the novel, the geographical (that positions Calcutta as the centre of discovery and not New York, London, Oxford, Paris and so on), social and cultural (displacement from elite British scientific authority to the subaltern Indian) and epistemological that challenges the initial displacement of other epistemologies by modern scientific rationality.

Mondal equates Amitav Ghosh's strategy with Derrida's philosophy because both of them do not believe in 'metaphysics of presence', that is, meaning can be grasped which is present in language. Their point is that the meaning and truth of experience can never be fully represented because the language, by which it is mediated, is unstable and has multiplicity of meanings. Murugan voices it when he says, 'to know something is to change it'(CC,104).

In the novel, Amitav Ghosh also displays the haunting

of scientific knowledge through intertextual references to various ghost stories for the key episode of Phulboni's visit-Charles Dickens' 'The Signalman'(1866), Paneshwarnath's story 'Smells of a Primeval Night' and Tagore's story 'The Hungry Stones.' The novel, Mondal proves, dissolves the boundary between science and its others. He illustrates this fact from Ross' research that relies more on his belief and faith than about knowledge and reason.

*In An Antique Land*, technology like trade acts as a vehicle of state which comes 'wrapped in flags.' State is seen as a threatening presence. In other novels, like *The Circle Of Reason*, Jyoti Das explores the post-colonial state's will to knowledge, *The Hungry Tide*, government machinery is shown to be corrupt system of power which seeks knowledge for political control.

Mondal also points out the moments when identity of a person becomes a problem for the state. *In An Antique Land*, the identity of the narrator is suspect in the eyes of the Egyptian authorities because it does not conform to their set rules. In *The Circle Of Reason*, Alu is classified as an extremist and fugitive because he has no identity that the state can recognize. *The Circle Of Reason* and *The Calcutta Chromosome* suggest that the same technology that can serve and enable government can also offer opportunities for its subversion. The railways, for example, were a medium of resistance as well as repression. The novelist is concerned not just with the epistemic violence that erases other epistemologies but actual physical violence of the state.

In the third chapter "Looking-glass borders', Mondal displays the engagement of Amitav Ghosh with nationalism and national identity. A nation is a mental construct, a space that is termed as 'imagined community' by Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and*

*Spread of Nationalism*(1983,6). People may live far away but they can imagine they share an identity because of a ‘silent communion’ in their minds. That’s why, Ghosh suggests that the borders that separate them are shadow lines. The borders in *The Shadow Lines* are linked by the metaphor of the mirror as ‘looking-glass borders’, the trope of the mirror through the figure of the twin, even siblings are referred in terms of the mirror. The metaphor of the mirror reminds Mondal the theories of French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan concerning the development of a person’s identity initiated from ‘the mirror stage’. The novel is fascinated with the power of the imagination, of memory, and of stories.

Most critics, Mondal admits, have seen Tridib as either a figure of universal and liberal humanism, or an equally cosmopolitan postmodernist. He, thus, represents a position that is critical of nationalism. He quotes Jon Mee that Tridib ‘thinks across cultures rather than beyond them.’ His global imagination respects differences even as he traverses them. Amitav Ghosh’s attempt is to show something special about social relations in the subcontinent that transgress the looking glass borders of its nations, which instead of separating them actually, binds them closer together. The repressed unconscious is present in the language. Silence, according to Mondal, is operated in the novel as a Lacanian figure of the unconscious as the novel shows repressed political unconscious of the language of nationhood in the subcontinent. This silent unconsciousness is the intimate relationship of religion and nationalism.

In *In An Antique Land*, Mondal not only sees an allegory of the politics of identity in the subcontinent but also an exploration of the problematics of identity in modernity. It displays the tension between a postmodern refusal of modernity and its support as a safety against the fragmentations of contemporary life. In *The Glass Palace* explores the

complex dynamics of collaboration, complicity and resistance to colonialism and its aftermath. The ability to absorb the colonial worldview, characters like Saya John and Rajkumar ascend to the pinnacle of colonial society. They undertake a transformation of identity through clothing which is a marker of identity and attitude. This relates to a term 'colonial mimicry' (given by Homi Bhabha) which results in hybrid identity. But the novel does not just endorse Bhabha's argument because the novelist firmly believes that beneath the layer of Rajkumar's costume is a more stable identity that is represented in his preference for a cotton vest and *longyi* over European clothes. Towards the end of this chapter, Mondal concludes that the novelist deconstructs notions of fixed and discrete cultures, identities, and landscapes.

Chapter 4, Mondal brings out the elements of past in the fiction of Amitav Ghosh. The novelist seeks to locate marginal, lost, or suppressed stories from the other pasts to recover the 'tiny threads' that are 'woven into the border of [its] gigantic tapestry' (*In An Antique Land*, 95) Mondal then notices that the novelist's major novels direct their narrative energy toward marginal or unofficial episodes in the historical record. *The Circle of Reason* explores the histories of science and pseudoscience in colonial milieu; *The Shadow Lines* examines the way in which people are compelled to forget the communal riots that disrupt their official state-centred histories; *In An Antique Land* attempts to recover the forgotten history of the medieval Indian Ocean trade; *The Calcutta Chromosome* deconstructs the history of modern science by rewriting an alternative history to bring forth the contribution of non-western knowledge systems and colonized peoples; *The Glass Palace* represents two overlooked episodes during the Second World War: the history of the Indian National Army in Malaya and the forgotten long march of Indian refugees from Burma in 1941.

Mondal then brings into the point of ‘subaltern pasts’, that is, experiences of subordinated social groups that have not been documented; that remain untranslatable into forms of historical consciousness. Elite and dominant groups can also have subaltern pasts which are subordinated by the major narratives of the dominant institutions. Mondal gives the example of adda in Gole Park where Tridib is involved in the long, informal and unrigorous conversations and he is looked down upon by Tha’mma who is subsumed within a historicist vision of the world as seen through the eyes of capitalist modernity.

Mondal draws the attention of the readers to the question of historical representation of subalternity which exists beyond representation. Mondal believes that Amitav Ghosh’s ‘texts can be seen as perhaps the most radical attempt to ‘do’ subaltern history.’(140)

Amitav Ghosh attempts to access the past in his major novels. He sets out on a quest to find the subaltern figure of Bomma in *In An Antique Land*, tries to piece together two seemingly different events into coherence - the death of the narratos’s uncle in a riot in Dhaka and his own terrible encounter with a riot in Calcutta. He does it with the help of memory and recollection of others, and of Robi in particular. *The Calcutta Chromosome* demands to open up a space for subaltern pasts in historical archives which record observations, opinions and conclusions of colonial doctors, linguists, anthropologists, historians, surveyors, civil servants and others and ‘compose a particular picture of the colony.’(146) The need is to identify those moments of disruption when colonial knowledge encounters an intractable disruption in its logic. Silence is used as an important metaphor for subalternity. The figure of the phantom or ghost is a recurring motif in Amitav Ghosh’s fiction. Mondal believes that the ghost is a signifier of the

presence of the past. The phantom or haunting is a metaphor that points to those subaltern pasts that cannot otherwise be brought into discourse without co-opting them into metaphysics of modern meaning. Mondal shows that in *In An Antique Land*, Amitav Ghosh illuminates the limits of historical knowledge and emphasizes the attempt of history at persuasion, he prefers speculation that supplements the discourse of the historian. Mondal compares *The Glass Palace* as a historical novel with that of Scott because the protagonists are not great historical figures. They are representative and exist at the margins of the narrative. He classified the text with the theoretical analysis of Hungarian critic Georg Lukacs. In his conclusion Mondal states that Amitav Ghosh's texts bestride the boundary between history and fiction and in this indeterminate state they attempt 'the impossible double-task of writing historically about pasts that could not have been articulated through historical discourse in the first place.' (162)

In the last chapter, 'Critical overview and conclusion', Mondal, very significantly brings out the issue of gender representation in Amitav Ghosh's texts. He points out that *The Glass Palace* and *The Hungry Tide* have detailed and individualized women characters as compared to that of *The Shadow Lines*. It is in *The Calcutta Chromosome*, however, that a feminine figure emerges for the first time in his works as a pivot around which the text is structured. Another concerning issue is the political implications of Amitav Ghosh's writing. Mondal proves the views of certain critics who believe that Amitav Ghosh does not face up to 'political realities.' He illustrates it with A.N. Kaul's 'A Reading of *The Shadow Lines*', in which he argues that by depicting borders as illusion and shadow lines, the novelist evades rather than explores political realities. Kaul quotes Ernest Gellner that nationalism 'invents nations where they do not exist.' But Mondal points

out the significant omission, that is, Kaul's silence about the divisiveness of nationalism that suggests that he is voicing from the Indian nationalist left. Mondal then brings out the critique of Amitav Ghosh's syncretism in *In An Antique Land* by Gauri Viswanathan in 'Beyond Orientalism: Syncretism and the Politics of Knowledge' which is a critique of the political inefficacy of the secular humanism that he shares with Nehru. Mondal, further shows the argument of Robert Dixon who argues that Gosh's texts float free of any affiliation either to liberal humanism or postmodernism. Mondal, on the contrary strongly feels the possibility of the novelist's 'commitment to both.' (171) Mondal gives central argument of his book with characteristic 'ambivalent tension between the modes of liberal humanism and those of postmodernism.' (171)

Mondal mentions the politics of ambivalence in Amitav Ghosh's work which is made stronger with the help of irony. His texts like *The Shadow Lines* and *The Hungry Tide* involve the foregrounding of ethical situation which remains unresolved. May Price's prerogative of moral and ethical judgement for the deaths as she is responsible for three deaths in the novel. Piyali in *The Hungry Tide* humanizes tiger which is killing people and urges Kanai to take radical steps for its safety. The novels do not offer a resolution rather their position remains ambivalent. Mondal concludes that the novelist tries to 'open the channels of communication' so that we can hear that which we do not understand. Thus, Mondal presents a convincing study of Amitav Ghosh's works underscoring their myriad issues and concerns.

**Jimmy Sharma**, Assistant Professor  
 Dept. of English, Univ. College,  
 Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra, Haryana  
 email : jimmysharma@kuk.ac.in