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THE INDIAN ASSOCIATION FOR ENGLISH STUDIES

The Indian Journal of English Studies

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Shiv Kumar
G.D.C. Wilpe, Bagusara

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Editorial

R.K. DHAWAN

The 47th All India English Teachers' Conference being held at the University of Lucknow on 27-29 December 2002 is a momentous event as the first session of the Association was held in Lucknow only in December 1941. The first conference had only eighteen delegates, prominent among whom were: Professor Amarnath Jha (President), Dr. N.K. Siddhanta (Secretary), Mr. R.R. Shreshta (Local Secretary and Editor). Professor V.V. John, Professor A. Bose and Professor S.C. Deb made great efforts to launch a literary journal and the first issue was released in 1960, with Orient Longmans as its publishers. Since then, *IJES* has made big strides and currently it is perhaps the most prestigious literary journal in the country. Having said so, let us take stock of the position of English literary studies in India. How much India has contributed to the international English literary studies?

Indian literature is both single as well as pluralistic. One does wonder whether this literature, written in many languages, can be considered one literature. India is a country with many states and languages. But in spite of its bewildering variety and diversity, India has continued to be a nation down the centuries. A survey of the panoramic history of Indian literature, from the early times to the present, reveals a running thread of continuity against the background of regional diversity. The regional languages of India have had a free and independent growth through centuries, absorbing what they liked from Sanskrit and Prakrit and Persian and English. But they also reveal the underlying unity in theme and design. If analyzed deeply, they have responded in the same fashion to the many religious, cultural and political movements that swept the country from time to time.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan was not far from truth when he emphasized that Indian literature is one though written in many languages.

Creative writing in English, written in South-Asian (SAARC) countries, namely India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, has come of age. Since 1981, when Salman Rushdie received the prestigious Booker Prize, South-Asian writers have achieved spectacular success. A number of them have emerged as major literary figures on the international scene. These include Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Rohinton Mistry and Anita Desai from India, Tasleema Nasreen and Adib Khan from Bangladesh, Hanif Qureshi and Bapsi Sidhwa from Pakistan and Chandani Lokuge, Yasmine Gooneratne and Michael Ondaatje from Sri Lanka. A critical examination of the literatures produced in these countries reveals that there is a variety of themes in them and the most important of these is culture clash.

Another theme most popular with these writers is the projection of the image of woman in their writings. The position of woman in any given society can be taken as a mark of the progress of civilization, or to use the words of eminent sociologist Juliet Mitchell as the 'idea of human advance'. Indian fiction, since its origin more than a hundred years ago, has dealt with the position of woman in society. This is true of the very first novel in Urdu *The Bride's Mirror: A Tale of Life in Delhi a Hundred Years Ago*, written by Nazir Ahmed. The novel sold over 100,000 copies within a few years of its release in 1869. It was translated into English by G.E. Ward in 1903. Again, *Indulekha* by Chandu Menon focuses on the image of educated and cultured Keralite woman of the times. Published in 1890s, the novel advocates freedom to women to choose their partners if they want to have successful marriages.

Indian novel reached its zenith of glory when Arundhati Roy received the Booker Prize for her novel *The God of Small Things*. Roy has achieved the status of a celebrity with the publication of this maiden novel. There are several reasons for the popularity of recent books published by Indian writers in India and abroad. One of the several qualities a book needs to have is

its capacity to capture the imagination of the readers. In other words, the most pertinent question is whether the book is 'readable'. The fiction of R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Anita Desai has caught the attention of the audience for one or the other reason. Quality production, effective cost structure and easy mobility have given a boost to the sales. Books are now treated as products of a corpus culture, to be bought and sold with frenzied efforts. For example, the *Idea of India*, a diasporic book of Indian-born Oxford professor Sunil Khilnani, has been listed by *The Guardian* among the best ten world books published in the recent years.

It is mainly in the area of fiction that Indian writers have achieved a great success. An appraisal of Indian drama shows that drama in various languages has shown a marked development, it has not done so in Indian English. Very recently, Indian drama has shot into prominence. Younger writers like Mahesh Dattani and Manjula Padmanabhan have infused new life into this branch of writing. The forty-year-old Bangalore-based Dattani has published forceful plays like *Where There is a Will*, *Final Solutions* and *Tara*. Padmanabhan's Onassis award-winning *Harvest* has achieved worldwide acclaim. In poetry, writers like Nissim Ezekiel, A.K. Ramanujan, Shiv K. Kumar and Jayanta Mahapatra have made a remarkable contribution. Many of our writers have been prescribed in the syllabi in the west. In fine, India has contributed significantly to the world literature in English.

Language and Meaning: A Structuralist and Poststructuralist Study

KUMAR MOTI

Language speaks. Man Speaks only insofar as he artfully 'complies with' language.

Heidegger

Since the 1960s there has been a great revival of interest in linguistic studies. Many fundamental assumptions of linguistic theories have been questioned. However, one assumption, which continues to hold sway, concerns the function of language in the communication of meaning. What determines meaning? There is no one, simple answer. Traditionalists say that the meaning of an utterance/ text is what speaker/ writer means by it. According to this view the intention of the speaker/writer determines meaning. Structuralists say meaning is in the text as if meaning were the products of the language itself. Poststructuralists claim that it is context what determines meaning. A corollary to this assumption states that we have to look at the circumstances or the social and cultural situation in which the utterance/text is constructed/produced.

Let us try to examine what Structuralists and poststructuralists say about meaning? One may ask here a question: what is structure? It is said that no word can be judged in isolation. Its true meaning may be determined when it is used in a sentence where it acts upon by other words. Structures are the basic underlying patterns on which sentences and sequences of sentences are built. It is generally found that the Indian teachers and the students of English language do not take proper care of the basic structures, as if they were teaching and learning the native language. We cannot master the language unless we are not acquainted with central framework upon which hang the countless

variations of usage. These structures, in fact, are the moulds into which the sentences of the language are cast for the communication of meaning. The patterns of arrangement of words into sentences and the patterns of arrangement of parts of words into words are its grammatical structure. The smallest language unit that produces a complete communicative utterance is the sentence. We speak and write in sentences, not in words. Sentences are made up of patterns of arrangement of word groups, words, stress, intonation etc. These patterns of arrangement have meaning over and above that of the individual elements of the sentences.

Ferdinand de Saussure, however, describes structure in the same sense as we say a building is a structure. If we take away one brick from a building, the whole building will not collapse. We have undoubtedly made a structural alteration. Consequently cracks will begin to appear. For bricks need other bricks to support the structure. It may be noted that a structural alteration to one building affects just that building and no other. To him, this is the case with structure of a language, which he termed as *langue*. It seems to be misleading because we normally think of a building as a structure made of pre-existing bricks, planks and cement etc. But Saussurian structuralism has a different idea about structure. The crucial feature of his structure is that it itself creates the units and their relation to one another. In support of his notion, he used to give an analogy of chess game. If we enter into a room where a chess game is being played it is possible to understand the play simply observing the position of the pieces on the board. We need not require knowing the previous moves of the pawns, bishops and knights. Chess is a game, complete in itself. This completeness does confer on the individual pieces their separate but interdependent roles. No doubt, without pawns, or without bishops, or without any other pieces chess would be a different game. But more notably, without the game a pawn or a bishop cannot be identified as constituent elements (chessmen) of the chess game. Chessmen do not exist outside the context of the game. Similarly there is no linguistic sign outside the context

of its structure. This concept of structure is a holistic concept: the constituent parts do not exist independently on the whole.

Language is always organized in a specific way. It is a system, or a structure, where any individual elements are meaningless separately. The language that exists at a particular time is described as a system. Saussure calls it *langue*. *Langue* does not exist apart from any particular manifestation in speech. It is an underlying system on the basis of which speakers are able to produce and understand speech. Saussure's concept of *parole* is the actual and concrete act of speaking by an individual. It is a personal and social activity, which exists at a particular time and place. David Birch argues that "Langue is Saussure's virtual world and parole his real world. People do, however, live and talk in real worlds—real in the sense that they are socially, culturally and institutionally determined. . . . In order, therefore, to be able to talk about how meanings are produced in such a system, a theory of actualization has to be determined."[1]

Structuralism, thus, seems to be based on the assumption that if human actions have a meaning there must be an underlying system of distinctions and conventions which makes this meaning possible. The actions and events are meaningful only with respect to a set of institutional conventions. Various social conventions make it possible to marry, to write a poem, to produce a meaningful utterance. It is argued that such a network of social and cultural structure is composed of a set of symbolic systems. And this system consists of a signifier/word/sign and a signified/concept/ meaning. They are not two things but two aspects of the same thing. Of the relation between the two, however, Saussure argues that "The relation between the signifier and the signified is a matter of convention: in English language we conventionally associate the word tree with the concept 'tree'."[2]

Both the signifier/word and the signified/meaning are described themselves as conventional divisions of the plane of sound and the plane of thought respectively. Language seems to divide up the plane of sound and plane of meaning differently. Saussure says, "Each language cuts up the world differently, constructing different meaningful categories and concept."[3]

English language, for example, distinguishes *book, pen, pencil, pan, pain* and *pun* on the plane of sound, as separate signs with different meanings. But Saussure argues that if words stood for pre-existing meaning/concept, they might have same equivalents in meaning from one language to the other: which is not found at all. Rather he says that "the structures of language affect and influence our perceptions of reality."[4] Each language is, therefore, a system of concepts as well as forms that organizes the world.

It is noted that any structure/sentence is a sequence of signs. Each sign contributes something to the value/meaning of the whole sentence. At the same time, each sign contrasts with all other signs/words in the language. Linguistic unit generates concept/ meaning not because it refers to the object but because it differs from other objects of the system. For example, a word 'book' gets its concept not because it merely refers to an object but because it differs from other units such as pen, pencil, pan, pain etc. Saussure argues that "concepts are purely differential, not positively defined by their content but negatively defined by their relation with other terms of the system."[5] In fact, we are so accustomed to the world of words, our language system has been producing that it comes to seem natural.

Let us try to understand it by the analogy given by Saussure himself. He says that "a train say the 8.30 p.m. London to Oxford express—depends for its identity on the system of trains, as described in the railway timetable. So the 8.30 London to Oxford express is distinguished from the 9.30 London to Cambridge express and the 8.45 Oxford local. What counts are not only the physical features of a particular train: the engine, the carriages, the exact route, the personnel and so on may all vary, as may the times of departure and arrival; the train may leave and arrive late. What gives the train its identity is its place in the system of trains: it is this train, as opposed to the others."[6] Structuralism, thus, seems to have been concerned (as the analogy shows) with the analysis and understanding of an action under a particular system of systems within a culture. And language is seemingly taken as the ideal model for explanatory purposes. "This structuralism aims to do for literature—or myth, or food or fashion—

what grammar does for language: to understand and explain how these systems work, what are the rules and constraints within which, and by virtue of which, meaning is generated and communicated."[7]

It is seen that languages are instruments that enable us to achieve a rational comprehension of this world. However, the importance of words is not neglected. Rather a word is considered central to human life, not peripheral. Our existence is a linguistically articulated existence. Structuralists seem to emphasize the need to resurrect the concept of logos: there is a single fixed structure for both human speech and human reason. But things do not have fixed essences of meaning which pre-exist linguistic representation. Thought is like a moving cloud that has no intrinsically determinate shape. No ideas are established in advance before the linguistic structure.

Poststructuralists take the basic assumption of Structuralists that meaning is produced within language rather than reflected by it. Individual signs/words do not have intrinsic meaning but acquire meaning in the system of the language. For example, if we took the example of a sign 'sex' or the qualities identified as 'sexy,' it is not fixed by a natural world and reflected in the terms 'sex' and 'sexy' but socially produced within the language system. But it doesn't account for why the signifiers 'sex' and 'sexy' can have paradoxical meanings which change from time to time, from place to place and from culture to culture. This extreme view that there is a fixed meaning in the system of language does not accommodate heterogeneous voices of human beings.

Noam Chomsky, therefore, criticized structuralism and its psychological basis as not merely inadequate but as misconceived. Chomsky states: "Linguistics have had their share in perpetuating the myth that linguistic behaviour is 'habitual' and that a fixed stock of 'patterns' is acquired through practice and used as the basis for 'analogy.' These could be maintained only as long as grammatical description was vague and imprecise. As soon as an attempt is made to give a careful and precise account of the rules of the sentence formation, the rules of phonetic or-

ganization, or the rules of sound-meaning *correspondence* in a language, the inadequacy of such an approach becomes apparent. What is more, the fundamental concepts of linguistic description have been subjected o serious critique."[8]

To achieve this aim, Chomsky drew a fundamental distinction between a person's knowledge of the rules of a language and actual use of that language in real situation. The first he referred to as *competence;* and the second *as performance.* Linguistics, he argued, should be concerned with the study of competence, and not restrict itself to performance—something that was characteristic of previous linguistic studies in their reliance on samples (or 'corpora') of speech (e.g. in the form of a collection of tape recordings). Such samples were inadequate because they could provide a tiny fraction of the sentences of a language. They are records of human behaviour and called performance. But actual behaviour is not the direct reflection of competence for various reasons. The English language is not exhausted by its manifestations. It contains potential sentences, which have never been uttered, but it would assign meaning to those structures. A scholar of English language, for example, possesses capacity to decode the meaning of sentences that he will never encounter. It is his competence that is better than his performance. Sometimes performance seems to have been deviated from competence. One may utter sentences whose grammatical error he may recognize if the sentences were played back. Competence, therefore, is reflected in the judgement passed on the utterance.

Structures, according to Chomsky, are of two kinds, namely surface structure and deep structure. Surface structure usually has one meaning, whereas the number of meanings of a deep structure depends upon the number of surface structures it contains. Further, the structural meaning of a sentence is shaped by many factors, such as, structure words, inflectional forms, types of word-order etc. The structure words do, generally, complicate the meaning of a sentence, hence one must be very conscious about their use. He developed the concept of a *generative grammar,* which departed radically from structuralism and behaviorism of the previous decades. Earlier analysis of sentences were

shown too inadequate in various respects, mainly because they failed to take into account of difference between 'surface' and 'deep' levels of grammatical structure. At a surface level, such sentence as *John is eager to please and John is easy to please* can be analyzed in an identical way. But from the point of view of their underlying meaning, the two sentences diverge: in the first, John wants to please someone else; in the second, someone else is involved in pleasing John. A major aim of *generative grammar* was to provide a means of analyzing sentences that took account of this underlying level of structure.

Poststructuralists say that a language evolves in response to the specific demands of the society in which it is used. Its use is entirely context dependent. An utterance/text and situation are so mixed up with each other that the context of situation is indispensable to understand meanings. Actually speech act creates and maintains bonds of sentiment between the language users. Hence, social and cultural contexts determine meaning. Meaning is context bound and context is endless; always prone to change. When we read and comprehend a passage we get ambiguity. On the surface level of the structure, the meaning does not appear clearly. In such a condition, we should translate the surface structure into its underline deep structure. The deep structure enables us to clarify its meaning.

Discussion about meaning is always possible and in that sense meaning is an undecided subject: always in process to be decided; and such decisions are never final. But one thing is clear that the meaning of an utterance/text is not merely what the producer keeps in mind at the moment when he/she produces his/her utterance/text: it shifts in response to social, cultural, psychological and historical factors and considerations. For an individual chooses when to speak and what to speak according to the situations he encounters. And the process, it appears, is determined by other systems that the speaker does not control. Under such conditions, we should distinguish the immediate context of speaker from a general context of situation. The study of the meaning of words should be based on the analysis of the func-

tions of the language in the culture concerned because meaning is not 'in' anything; it is always in the process of construction.

NOTES

1. David Birch, *Language, Literature and Critical Practice* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 48.
2. Phillip Rice and Patricia Waugh, ed., *Ferdinand de Saussure, From Course in General Linguistics* (1915) *Modern Literary Theory* (Great Britain: Routledge, 1989), p. 6.
3. Ibid.
4. Richard Bradford, *Stylistics* (London, 1997), p. 74.
5. *Course in General Linguistics,* trans. Wade Baskin (New York: McGraw Hill, 1966), p. 67.
6. Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 57.
7. David Lodge, *Working with Structuralism* (London, Routledge, 1991), p. ix.
8. Noam Chomsky, "Linguistic Theory," in Robert G. Mead, Jr., ed., *Language Teaching: Broader Contexts* (Middlebury; Vt.: Northeast Conference Reports, 1966), pp. 43-44.

Rajendra College,Chapra

Affective Factors and Second Language Learning in Disadvantaged Group of Learners

PRATIBHA GUPTA

In the course of evolution in language learning processes, the focus had shifted from the teacher and teaching material to the learners. Learner-centered language teaching implies a process in which the needs, abilities, and interests of each learner determine the nature and shape of the foreign language (FL)/ Second Language (L2) methods and materials. 2nd Language learning is now viewed differently. The nature of the input is adjusted to suit the needs and attitude of the learners. The nature of the input and interaction influences the performance level of the learner to greater extent. In the formal setting or informal setting, how much of the input is intake by the learners varies person to person .It depends on how much of second language data the learner is able to assimilate.

When English is taught to tribal students (two culturally heterogeneous groups) cultural shock and language shock follow and they find themselves in a different, strange and uncomfortable situation, This happens due to the difference in the way people from one culture behave and think in a particular situation from people in another culture. This article tries to show what happens to the ST learners in this process and what is its effect on the L2 learning process.

Tribals are socially and economically deprived lot. They are concentrated in Chotanagpur Plateau of Jharkhand. Their distinct and different socio-cultural background provide them quite different type of learning situation to that of privileged ones. Their level of achievement suggests that they demand more attention than other counterparts. Role of affective factors on their lan-

guage learning process will provide an insight to adopt proper methodology for better results.

In learner centered language learning it is important to take into consideration learners' variable, but little attention is paid to this aspect. Schumann (1978) proposes taxonomy of factors influencing L2 acquisition. He observed nine factors, which have impact on the L2 learning process. Affective factor is one of them, which include: Language shock, Culture shock, and Motivation.

All languages (whether major or minor) are rule governed and have the potential to negotiate all the social contexts existed within that particular speech community. Its richness and state of development reflects the user's level of progress. Tribal languages reflect user's simple life style, thought pattern and socio-cultural context. English being culturally and structurally quite different, in course of learning English, culture shock as well as language shock occurs. Since one's attitude towards what one listens to is determined by his habits, he expects things to be said in the way in which he is accustomed to talk. Likewise the ST learner expects situations familiar to him but he is offered some thing completely different. In this unexpected situation one's behaviour can be negative or neutral or positive. It may extend over an extended period of time but its effect may be long-lasting. In ST learners' case it casts negative effect giving way to anxiety and adjustment problems.

Krashen's (1977) concept of affective filter in the theory of second language acquisition explains individual's variation in language achievement. He asserts that this filter controls how much input to let in and how much is to be excluded. ST Learners with high affective filter allow less input and are poor learners showing poor performance. Here are some of the words, which they take it for some other words showing poorly developed auditory discrimination power.

Words dictated	**Words Written**
While	Whine
Who	To
Master	Must

Wandering	Wanting
Along	Alone
As	Has
His	Has
Road	Rord
Work	Wark
Reached	Reashed

Between societies of greatly different socio-cultural structures, intercultural differences play a significant role when they try to learn language of other. Horwitz and Cope 1996 proposed that FL/L2 anxiety was responsible for students' uncomfortable experiences in language classes. Difference in cultural and language factors arouse anxiety in them. Arnold and Brown find that these affective factors are aspects of emotion, feeling, mood, or attitude, which condition behaviour. In presence of overtly negative emotions such as anxiety, fear, stress, anger, depression, individuals' learning potential may be compromised. Even the most innovative techniques and effective materials may not be fruitful in language learning process, where as stimulation of positive emotional factors such as self-esteem, empathy, or motivation can greatly facilitate the language learning process.

In 2nd language learning affectivity looks at the process from two perspectives: (1) Concerned learner as an individual (2) Focuses on learner as a participant in a socio-cultural situation. The internal factors, which are part of the learner's personality, affect language learning. These are: Anxiety; Inhibition and Motivation.

Anxiety pervasively obstructs the learning process. It ceases to be a stimulant in tribal learners and begins to impair their ability to concentrate and organize their thoughts. Their associations with negative feelings as uneasiness, frustrations, self-doubts, apprehension, tension etc. greatly affect the language learning process. High anxiety adds to the confusion and difficulty of the task.

Making mistakes is implicit in FL/L2 learning. Inhibition develops as the child gradually learns to identify a self that is distinct from others and their affective factors begin to form.

Strong criticism and words of ridicule greatly weaken the ego. And weaker the ego the higher the walls of inhibition. Dufeu, 1994 observes that for better language learning inhibition and ego harriers should be lowered.

Motivation is one of the crucial and important positive affective factors. It involves the learners' reason for the acquisition of 2nd language (Chomsky 1988, Atkinson 1979, and Lambert 1972). The learner may have either integrative or instrumental orientation towards learning the language. The former refers to learn the language to become the part of the target language whereas the latter has to do with practical reasons for learning language.

It affects language learning at two levels: Intrinsic and Extrinsic. Extrinsic motivation comes from desire to get a reward or avoid punishment and focus is on some external factors to the learning. Intrinsic motivation is the students' natural curiosity and interest to master the language. In case of tribal students, Extrinsic motivation works more than intrinsic motivation due to deprivation.

Gardner 1979 proposes, in 2nd language acquisition the learner is faced by not only the task of learning new information (pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar etc) but also with acquiring symbolic elements of a different ethno-linguistic community. This involves imposing elements of another culture into one's life space. Schneiders 1965 terms it as a process involving both mental and behavioral responses, which an individual strives to cope with tensions, frustrations and conflicts to bring harmony between these inner demands and those imposed upon him by the world in which he lives. He has to meet three types of challenges:

1. Direct challenges from physical environment
2. Challenges stemming from their physical limitations
3. Interpersonal challenges.

Shukla, 1997 viewed deprivation as multifaceted phenomena and sometimes its impact on learning resulted in disastrous behavioral pattern such as aggression, withdrawal, fixation, and com-

promise. This pedagogical environment is not conducive to the 2nd language learning process. They achieved only to the modification stage.

It is obvious from the above discussion that affective factors inversely affect 2nd language learning process in disadvantaged group of learners. If it is handled properly, keeping in view the above factors, their performance can be improved to a greater extent.

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Teaching of English Grammar

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1. Teaching Grammar: Problems and Perspectives

Teaching of English grammar plays a vital role in making the learner to learn the language successfully. Grammar provides the basics to use a language efficiently. Teaching grammar separately from the language does not always help the students to write and speak the language free from errors. They find it very difficult to apply the rules of the language while they use it. Let me bring my own experience in teaching grammar to our undergraduate students. Despite their learning of grammar till 12th standard, many of them could not write without mistakes and speak without fear. Students from the rural areas have an aversion for the English language. The teacher's job is to create an interest in the language by establishing the importance of English language in the present global context and to explain how it will help them to find a prosperous career. Above all we have to make the learning of English language a more pleasurable one by actively involving them in the process of learning. Another major disadvantage is that they are permitted to write their major subjects in the mother tongue. Hence they are not bothered about English language. Even many of the PG students whom I teach communication skills are very poor in their language. The whole paper is based on the writer's experience in the teaching of English grammar especially to rural students with the said problems and the methodology adapted by him to familiarize English grammar.

1.1 Grammar in Context

The features of grammar can be taught from the context of the reading and writing tasks that students need to complete in an

academic setting. This module therefore strives to present these features as grammar from context, that is, instruction based on the structures found in the texts that students will be required to read and write as university students. The grammar activities will be based on reading and writing tasks revolving around textual topics. Some descriptions of places can also be included which should involve vocabulary and content somewhat more familiar to the students.

We as English teachers can organize our curriculum in a way that is more consistent with the needs of our students. The progression of instruction is more natural when it deals with features that occur together, in contrast with instruction divided into present time, past time, modals, and so forth, without clear connections drawn between them and ways in which these structures are actually used. In this approach, instruction is based on authentic materials and this module seeks to demonstrate how these authentic materials can be employed in the classroom with students who have not yet mastered all of the grammatical structures contained within the texts. By clustering grammatical features according to what students find in texts and explaining to students why these grammar points tend to co-occur, confusion on the part of the students will hopefully decrease.

Apart from these, grammatical instruction should become more cohesive and less frustrating to teachers when organized according to these grammatical clusters that characterize specific discourse styles. By organizing instruction based on the clusters, we can avoid some of the problems that result when the grammar that students need to know is not a part of the current course curriculum. As many of us know from experience, basing curriculum decisions on the apparent easiness or difficulty of grammatical structures does not work when students need to be able to read or write texts that contain structures that they will not be taught until more advanced levels.

The grammatical features of informational writing may be grouped for more effective instruction, leading to greater understanding and an improved ability to communicate using academic prose. Through this method, apart from identifying com-

mon features of informational writing, the more specific points can also be covered in order to understand and write this prose. For example, the students must be familiar with articles, attributive adjectives, and relative clauses in order to deal with the lengthy noun phrases of academic writing. Through this method the students are provided ample opportunities to acquire the necessary grammatical knowledge and confidence to employ these structures in their writing

To illustrate the contextualised learning of grammar, a passage is taken from 'Foxpro 2.5 Made Simple' by R.K. Taxali which introduces various features of grammar starting from Parts of Speech to Sentence Structure: "If you are a beginner, the term *database* may sound too technical. But, once you understand the concept behind it, you will find that it is very simple. Let us begin with data. Anything can be data, e.g. a number, name of a person, or city, etc. When a data is meaningful, it is called information. The term database has been defined by different persons in different ways. A simple definition would be 'The database is an organized collection of related information.' We have stressed 'organized,' because only organized information is a database, Any unorganized information is just a pile or dump, and it cannot be called a database. Organized information or a database serves as an information base and you can use it for: retrieving desired information; taking meaningful decision; reorganizing information; processing information." This passage not only helps to explain the grammatical patterns but also shows how to give definition about a concept and present an idea in a logical coherence which helps to strengthen writing."

1.2 We can teach an explicit grammar lesson and design our grammar-based literacy teaching activities choosing appropriate passages like this to teach the following:

1. The principal elements of a sentence are: Subject, Verb, Object, Complements, Modifiers, Clauses and Phrases.
2. Parts of Speech and their functions within sentences
3. Types of Sentences and their syntax: Simple; Compound; Complex

4. Verb Usage: Agreement; Tense; ;Mood; Active and Passive; Sequence and consistency of tenses; Modals; Phrasal Verbs
5. Word usage or lexicon: Idiomatic expressions; Formulaic expressions; Use of Phrases within sentences.

We can also adopt the following steps in presenting points of Grammar using direct instruction.

1. Motivating the students by showing how learning structures will help them in real-life communication.
2. State the objective of lesson
3. Review the familiar items. E.g. Calendar, time, name of objects, auxiliary verbs in the target language that will be needed to introduce, explain, or practice the new item.
4. Use the new structure (adjective of colour, for example) in a brief utterance in which all other words are known to the students.
5. Reinforce it by repeating.
6. Engage in full class, half-class, group and individual to repeat the utterance.
7. Give several additional sentences in which the structure is used.
8. Write two of the sentences on the board. Ask the students to identify the new structure and illustrate the relationship of the structure to other words.
9. Point to the underlined structure as you ask questions that will guide students to discover sounds, the written form, the position in the sentence and the grammatical function of the new structure. ('What does it tell us?')
10. Help students to verbalize the important features of the structure. Use charts and other aids to relate other familiar structure such as verb tenses.
11. Require students to consciously select the new grammatical item from contrasting one learned in the past.
12. Engage the students in varied guided oral practice.
13. Have the students use the structure with communicative expressions.

2. Sentence Transformation:

From Basic to Complex Sentences

1. Take a basic sentence: I saw a man.
2. Expand on it: I saw a man wearing a black shirt.
3. Expand again with additional information: I saw a man wearing a black shirt at the bus stand.
4. Combine two sentences:
   I saw a man. I was standing at the bus stand.
   I saw a man when I was standing at the bus stand.
   I saw a man wearing a black shirt when I was standing at the bus stand.

2.1 Sentence Transformation:

Focusing on Specific Points of Grammar

Subject pronouns: I, you, he, she, we, they

Forms of verb be:

_____ am writing a letter. _____ was upset.

_____ is beautiful. _____ were busy.

Changes in Verb tense:

Tendulkar plays well.	Tendulkar played well.
Vajpayee goes to America.	Vajpayee will go to America

Negatives:

He likes coffee.	He does not like coffee.
We walk the distance.	We can't walk the distance.

Interrogative:

You are the leader of the class.	Are you the leader of the class?
Ganguly is a good bowler.	Is Ganguly a good bowler?

Relative Clause:

Alexander was a great warrior. He wanted to conquer the world.

Alexander, who was a great warrior, wanted to conquer the world

3. Sentence Recombination

Sentence recombination is an effective activity for teaching sentence structure, paragraph structure, punctuation, transition and coherence, and parts of speech. Students must also use critical thinking skills to cluster and organize ideas and concepts. Sentence recombination is thematic. Combine these sentences

into a passage by using compound subjects, predicates, and other compound sentence elements in re-writing, instruct the students to include introduction and transition sentences so the passage flows smoothly.

1. Cinema is powerful mass medium.
2. Cinema attracts everyone.
3. People watch television mainly for films.
4. People watch television mainly for songs.
5. All magazines publish film news.
6. The world has seen many good films.
7. 'Gandhi' is a great film.
8. Laughter is the best medicine.
9. Charlie Chaplin and Laurel and Hardy make us forget our worries and laugh.
10. Alfred Hitchcock's films chill our ideas.
11. Cinema is effective in conveying ideas.
12. Cinema exposes the sufferings of blacks, old people, orphan and children.
13. Cinema is not single art.
14. Cinema combines acting, dialogue, poetry, music, dance and singing.
15. Cinema also combines painting, fighting, make-up, photography and editing.
16. Cinema is a major industry.

Students can create many variations in the composition of paragraph. It can be evaluated based on linguistic and conceptual complexity and coherence.

4. Teaching Grammar through Situational Contexts

Teaching grammar through situational contexts is more effective in introducing various features of grammar which helps the learners to use appropriate language according to situation. Through this method we can also avoid monotonous ways of introducing grammar directly to the students. We can use newspapers, magazines and advertisements to-introduce and familiarize the learners as to how grammar helps them to use language more effectively and efficiently. Titles in newspaper captions and ad-

vertisements help the learners in using the language more precisely and to the point. They give them ample opportunity to learn more vocabulary and apt usage in various situations. The following chart gives an idea about, how a particular situation can be used to learn a particular point of grammar.

Situation or Context	**Points of Grammar**
Follow a recipe or instructions.	Imperative verb form Present continuous tense Present tense
Give directions to another person to get to a store, the post office, or a bank using a map.	Non-referential it
Discuss plans for an industrial visit	Future tense, if clauses
Describe a past vacation, weekend, etc.	Conditional tense Simple past tense Question form Forms of verb to do Word order in negation
Role play: a shopping trip to buy a gift for a function or family member or friend.	May, might Collective nouns and quanti fiers any, some, several, etc. Indirect object
Answer information questions: Name, address, phone number	Present tense of verb to be Possessive adjectives
Tell someone how to find an object in your kitchen.	Locative prepositions
Fill out a medical history form. Then role play a medical inter view on a visit with a new doctor	Modal verbs can, may, should Present perfect tense Present perfect progressive
Make a daily weather report	Non-referential it Forms of verb to be Idiomatic expressions
Report daily schedules of people (in the class, buses in the city, airline schedules, trains)	Habitual present Personal pronouns Demonstrative adjectives
Extend an invitation over the	Would like...

telephone to someone to come to a party	Object-Verb word order Interrogative pronouns
Explain rules and regulations to someone, i.e. rules for the college hostel; doctor's instructions to a sick patient	Modal verbs: Can, must, should, ought to Adverbs of time & frequency
Report a historical or actual past event and discuss conditions under which a different outcome might have resulted	Past conditional and past perfect tenses If clauses
React to the burglary of your house or apartment in the presence of another person upon discovery and in making a police report	Present perfect tense Contrast between active and passive voice Direct and indirect object

5.1 Remedial Grammar

The final stage in teaching of English Grammar is remedial which is focused on the elimination of errors in the use of language and the reinforcement and consolidation of effective use of language.

Errors in the use of Articles

1. My father is in bad mood. My father is in a bad mood.
2. I am a M.A. graduate. I am an M.A. graduate.
3. He is a best soldier in our military school.
   He is the best soldier in our military school.

Errors in the use of Nouns

1. One of the most widely spread habit is the use of tobacco.
   One of the most widely spread habits is the use of tobacco.
2. All the furnitures have been sent to new house.
   All the furniture have been sent to new house.
3. You can get all the informations you want in this book.
   You can get all the information you want in this book.
4. I trained a gang of sailors.
   I trained a crew of sailors.

Errors in the use of prepositions

1. This watch is superior than that.
   This watch is superior to that.

2. My brother has ordered for a new book.
   My brother has ordered a new book.
3. They walked besides each other in silence
   They walked beside each other in silence.
4. He has a car beside a scooter.
   He has a car besides a scooter.

Errors in the use of Conjunctions

1. Be smart not only in dress and also in action.
   Be smart not only in dress but also in action.
2. It is not such a good book that I expected.
   It is not such a good book as I expected.

After familiarizing the rules of the language we can give sentences like this and ask them to identify the right sentences and the reason for it. This will certainly strengthen their competence over the language. For every feature of grammar we can give exercises like this to reinforce their familiarity in grammar of the language.

Conclusion

It is very difficult to set a particular methodology to introduce grammar to the students, since the art of teaching is dynamic. We can, adopt our own methodology by evaluating the standard of the students and their ability to grasp.

As Venkitachlam Iyer puts it, "Whatever the model we choose it is futile to try to teach grammar in the abstract. What we should try to do is to present the analogous facts of language and allow the students to internalize the rules. A possible approach to the teaching of grammar is to make use of the contexts provided by the prose text." (1981, p. 40)

However I believe the learning of a foreign language has to be natural and spontaneous just like we learn our mother tongue. If we try to teach the language through grammar, it will be an arduous task and many of them find it very difficult to apply the rules in practical situations especially when they communicate. In spoken form we normally don't stress to follow the grammatical rules. Hence we have to simplify the process of learning a foreign language. First let us expose students to the language and

then slowly we will teach them to use the language and how they can avoid mistakes and be confident in using the language through learning grammar of the language.

Whatever the methodology we adopt to inculcate the 'basics of the English language,' students could not retain all the terminology for a long time. Persistent use of the language alone will help them to retain all the 'basics of the language' and use spontaneously like we use our mother tongue. Whatever the approach we take to grammar, we must show students how to apply rules not only to their writing but also to their reading and to their other language activities.

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Emerging Trends in Translation Studies

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Socio-cultural heritage of any nation is reflected through its literature. India is no exception. Through ages we have enriched our literary and cultural awareness by reading translated classics in Sanskrit. In fact, translation has integrated diverse sub-cultures in the country.

A number of translated texts of *Ramayana* in Sanskrit exist in almost all Indian languages. Translations were rendered freely, while the structuration competence and poetic competence of the translator invariably made the rendered texts eminently enjoyable. Most of the translated Sanskrit texts were localized to such extent that the readers of subsequent generations never viewed them as translated texts. "The polities of medieval Indian translators could perhaps be understood and interpreted in terms of visible absence of anxiety of authenticity on the part of these translators." (K. Ayyappa Panikar 1994)

Perhaps, the translation of the Bible into non-European languages might have triggered the paranoia for accuracy and fidelity. Subsequent euro-centric theories and strategies succeeded in transforming translation into a more linguistic exercise. In the last 200 years, a number of non-Indian texts have been translated into Indian languages, mostly through English. In the last century, the spurt of translation activity is a reflection of a vibrant creative mood that was a dominant factor in almost all parts of India.

Cultural turn in translation studies has assumed significance in recent times. Lefevere and Susan Bassnett (1990) declared that "neither the word nor the text, but the culture becomes the operational unit of translation." This has been hailed as a breakthrough in the field of translation studies. Growing awareness

and impact of globalization has in turn triggered frenzied efforts to preserve national identities. The relationship between cultural studies and translation studies has become inalienable. Homi Bhabha introduces notions of *in-between* and *hybridity*. He elaborates on his concept of hybridity in different ways.

Postcolonial translation has taken cognizance of foreignising as against domesticating in translation activity. Target orientation is the keyword here. This has created an excellent opportunity to the translators to create new idiom. They have been exploring and experimenting excitedly to carve a niche for themselves. "Translation is the essence of national as well as international integration. The discovery of the wealth of creative writing through translations is an inspiration. In the history of Indian writing in English, there has been a tremendous contribution by way of translations. Many regional writers who are doyen in their sphere of writing have become quite visible through translations." (Alok Saxena, *The Quest*, Dec. 2001, 33)

National and international seminars conducted in various universities and cultural fora on translation activities offered various avenues to translators as well as translation theoreticians to have interesting and inspiring interface. 'Sahitya Akademi,' 'Katha' and other organizations provide a platform for the enthusiastic in the field to come together. Growing patronage extended by the discerning public has served as a shot in the arm.

In India what obtains in a particular speech community can be extended to the others. In the wake of globalization and growing awareness of one's own social and constitutional rights many related movements were launched. The year 1980 is accepted generally as a reference point in contemporary Telugu literary history, since after the 80s it found a new direction. Left-oriented works became less attractive. Slowly but steadily a few more socially relevant trends became conspicuous.

The voices of the dalits, women and Muslim minorities were sought to be heard demanding attention. Feminist writers became the fulcrum of new poetry. Interesting themes and techniques were chosen. Topics, hitherto taboos, made feminist poetry compelling and controversial. Poetry and short stories written in this

manner denounced male chauvinism and called for remedies to the problems pertaining to women. It became fashionable for men also to expose the cause of women. However, it must be conceded that feminist poets succeeded in ventilating their legitimate grievances and gender related problems.

The dalits suppressed for centuries found it necessary to register their protest through powerful versification. Most of the poems are written from a dalit perspective. Enthusiastic young writers vie with one another in forcefully pleading for remedial action to the injustice done through the centuries. Earlier K. Madhava Rao translated Joshua's agony and anguish exquisitely expressed in traditional Telugu metrical verse in *Gabbilam* (Bat). *The Black Rainbow* Dalit poems in Telugu by Sikha Mani have been translated excellently into English by D. Kesava Rao, Kiranmayi, M. Sridhar and Alladi Uma. This is a classic example of modern dalit poetry in Telugu. While the dalit poets' revolt against the traditional stratification of the society is understandable, their outbursts and accusation of individuals belonging to other groups is not justifiable.

Muslim minority voice found its echo in the poetry written for the past decade. Some of the overzealous poets seem to have outstepped the acceptable boundaries inviting controversy and condemnation. Of late, poems reflecting regional aspirations have left their mark on the contemporary literary scene. Political zealots seem to be enjoying the scenario.

This being the image of the literary mosaic, the translation arena presents a distinctly different picture. The stratification of literary field has not profoundly affected the translators. They continue to be discerning in executing their task. While issue based texts are sought to be translated, it is still the individual poet's innate talent and the inherent worth of a text that have been the guiding principles of translation.

C. Narayan Reddy won the Jnanpeeth award for his *Viswambhara* elegantly translated into English by Amarendra. Shiv K. Kumar has written an excellent preface. V. Panduranga Rao has enchantingly translated Reddy's *Manishi-Matti-Aakaasham* as *Man beyond Earth and Sky*. Aluri Bairagi's po-

ems have been transcreated by P. Adeswara Rao into English with the title *The Broken Mirror*, mirroring the intellect, aspirations and cherished values of the poet.

J. Bapu Reddy translates his own poetry into English, just as Gunturu Seshendra Sarma does. V. Mohan Prasad edited a volume entitled *This Tense-Time*, wherein numerous translators and scholars collaborated. V.V.B. Rama Rao has brought out a volume entitled *Voices on the Wing* translating Telugu free verse written during the period 1985-95 followed by another volume *More Voices on the Wing*. He has translated poems of a large number of poets who have different ideological backgrounds, just like S.S. Prabhakara Rao who transcreated post-Independence Telugu poetry in 1993, whose work also echoes divergent voices. He has also rendered into English the poems of C. Narayana Reddy, Dasaradhi, Nagnamuni and others. Bhargavi P. Rao's translation of Seelaveerraju's poems with the title *Windowscape* is a significant contribution. *Down to the Earth*, an anthology of postmodern Telugu poetry compiled and edited by Seelavi and K. Satya Murthy is another remarkable endeavour.

The Sahitya Akademi periodically publishes English translations of regional language poetry. Alladi Uma and M. Sridhar are extending splendid support to the efforts of the Akademi ungrudgingly. Vol. XLIV, No. 6 of *Indian Literature* reflects the splendour of recent Telugu poetry rendered into English. Numerous scholarly works have been brought out in a bid to extend the regional flavours to the national and interventional audience.

V. Lalitha Kumari's translation of J. Paapaiah Sastry's *Karunasri* into English with the title *Karunasri: The Compassionate One* is a remarkable contribution, retaining the lyrical quality of the Telugu text. A remarkable endeavour has been made by translators of "Sathaka" (100 poems), a genre peculiar to Telugu literature. *Dasarathi Sathakam* has been translated by P. Venugopala Rao. *Sumathi Sathakam* translated by A.L.N. Murthy has the original verse in Telugu script followed by its transliteration in English. Translation of the verse, then, is accompanied by a brief paraphrase in English. Obviously, this is a target-oriented exercise. K. Srinivas Sastry and Usha K. Srinivas

translated *Vemana* into English with the verses in Telugu script on one page and the translations in verse on the facing page correspondingly. V. Narayana Rao teams up with David Shulman to bring out *A Poem at the Right Moment* containing translations of remembered verses from pre-modern South India. This text has an elaborate introduction, footnotes where required, and the translation followed by the text in English transliteration. The 'Afterword' at end is highly informative and 'Note on Sources' enables one to trace the sources of the texts.

The culture of the Telugu contained in the songs of Kshethrayya, Annamayya, Rudrakavi and others is presented with the title *When God is a Customer*, edited and translated by A.K. Ramanujan, V. Narayana Rao and David Shulman. Potti Sri Ramulu Telugu University has recently published the songs of Annamayya translated into English with transliteration of Telugu text in English, again a refreshing attempt at target orientation.

Though the above is not an exhaustive list, it can be perceived that translators are always interested in presenting the cultural and linguistic excellence of Telugu to the non-Telugu readers ignoring social stratifications and temporal ideological convictions. They are as interested as any other translators in the country in preserving and presenting the unique characteristics of their speech community. This, in turn, enables one to understand cultures and subcultures in India.

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From Translation of Bhasha Literature to Comparative Literature and Nation Building

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At the outset, I propose to explain the key terms in the paper in order to place the subject in its proper context. The concept of translation has undergone a sea change in the post-modern, postcolonial era—particularly in the mid-nineteen eighties, thanks to the proliferation of translation theories. G.N. Devy's term 'bhasha literature' needs an explication, before I say how the translation of it leads to the study of comparative literature and ultimately to nation building.

Translation as an activity was traditionally considered to be inferior—that is, because original writing was considered to be 'superior.' It was never studied seriously and taken as a discipline until mid-sixties. Edward Gentzler underlines five different approaches to translation beginning with mid-sixties till date: (l) American translation workshop, (2) 'science' of translation, (3) early translation studies, (4) polysystem theory and Translation studies, and (5) Deconstruction."[1]

Till 1963 there was no translation center, no association of literary translation, no journal exclusive studies in U.S.A. Paul Engle, Director of Writers' Workshop at the University of Iowa, hired a full time director for the first translation workshop in 1964 and gave, as it were, 'a local habitation and a name' to translation studies by recognizing the academic merit of literary translations. In 1965 "the Ford Foundation conferred a $ 150,000 grant on the University Texas at Austin toward the establishment of the National Translation Center. Also in 1965, the first issue of *Modern Poetry in Translation*, edited by Ted Hughes and Daniel Weissbort, was published, providing literary translators a place for their creative work. In 1968, the National Translation

Center published the first issue of *Delos*, a journal devoted to the history as well as the aesthetics translation. Literary translation had established a place, albeit a small one, in the production of American culture."[2]

In the 1970s, a group of scholars led by Itamar Evan-Zohar from Tel Aviv offered a new perspective on the study of translation. Evan-Zohar and his colleague, Gideon Toury gave us polysystems theory of translation which challenged the traditional view of 'superiority' of the 'original' and 'infidelity' and 'inferiority' of translation. For Evan-Zohar, translation, far from being a secondary, marginal activity, could be considered as a primary activity. It identifies three cases which accelerates translation activity. One, the early stages of development of a literature, two, when a literature becomes weak or peripheral, and three, when there are crises or literary 'void' in a literature.

Apart from Tel Aviv group, the feminist translation scholars also challenge the view of translation as betrayal of the original. Lori Chamberlain draws the attention of scholars to the sexualization of this terminology. "For 'les belles infideles,' fidelity is defined as an implicit contract between translation (as woman) and original (as husband, father, or author). However, the infamous 'double standard' operates here as it might have in traditional marriage; the 'unfaithful' wife/translation is publicly tried for crimes the husband/original is by law incapable of committing. This contract, in short, makes it impossible for the original to be guilty of infidelity. Such an attitude betrays real anxiety about the problem of paternity and translation; it mimics the patrilineal kinship system where paternity—not maternity—legitimizes an offspring."[3]

Chamberlain's emphasis on cultural complicity between fidelity in transaction and in marriage finds support from feminist translation scholars such as Susan Bassnett, Barbara Johnson, Barbara Godard, Sherry Simon and others.

The Manipulation of Literature (1985) edited by Theo Hermans marks a new stage in the development of translation studies. This shows that there are three distinct phases in the development of translation studies. The first phase, governed by poly-

system theory, challenged the notion of 'superiority' and 'inferiority' between 'original' and 'translation.' In the second phase there is a shift in emphasis from 'original'/'translation' dichotomy to a definite make away from the structuralist origins of polysystems theory to poststructuralist translation studies. The third phase, which could be termed the poststructuralist stage, "conceives of translation as one of a range of processes of textual manipulation, where the concept of plurality replaces dogmas of faithfulness to a source text, and where the idea of the original is being challenged from a variety of perspective."[4]

In the 1980s Translation Studies have acquired a new dimension. Translation is no longer viewed as a process of 'change into another language, retaining the sense' or 'substitution of SL textual material in TL,' 'a transference of meaning from SL to TL' but a 'regulated transformation' (Derrida's term). It is again defined as the 'migration through transformation of discursive elements (signs)' and as the 'process during which they are interpreted (re-contextualized) according to different codes' (Lambert and Robyns' definition). It is a form of 'cannibalism.' "Yet this term is not to be understood as another form of possessing the original, but as a liberating form, one which eats, digests, and frees oneself from the original. Cannibalism is to be understood not in the Western i.e. that of capturing, dismembering, mutilating, and devouring, but in a sense which shows respect, i.e. as a symbolic act of taking backout of love, of absorbing the virtues of a body through a transfusion of blood. Translation is seen as an empowering act, a nourishing act, an act of affirmative play that is very close to the Benjamin/Derrida position, which sees translation as a life-force that ensures a literary text's survival."[5]

Bassnett makes things clear when she says: "The images of translation as cannibalism, as vampirism, whereby the translator sucks out the blood of the source text to strengthen the target text, as transfusion of blood that endows the receiver with new life, can all be seen as radical metaphors that spring from postmodernist postcolonial translation theory. Significantly, they link up with other developments in translation theory discussed above, for what all have in common is a rejection of power hier-

archy which privileged the source text relegated the translator to a secondary role." (155)

Translation can never be marginalized. Without it, comparative literature is unthinkable. It deals with two languages which are the basic ingredients of comparative literature. Translation has been a 'major shaping force in the development of world culture.' Translation studies developed as a discipline in its own right in the nineteen eighties.

Having discussed the development of Translation Studies as a discipline, let me explain the term 'Bhasha' in Indian context. It refers to modern Indian languages other than English. For example, Oriya, Bengali, Hindi etc. are bhashas and literatures in these languages are called bhasha literatures. The translation of one bhasha literature into another bhasha literature provides us an opportunity to make a comparative study between them. In a multi-language country like India, this is inevitable. G.N. Devy makes a valid point in this context: "Literary criticism and literary history in India have been insensitive to the conclusions that can be drawn from a comparative perspective in itself can offer several useful starting points for postulating isolated strands of a theoretical nature about literature in the bhashas, which eventually be gathered into an Indian theory of literature. A blind acceptance of the cliche that Indian culture is eclectic, and the belief that the British came, were seen and immediately accepted, are detrimental to the theory as well as history of literature in India."[6]

It is necessary to remind us that much of literature of the pre-British bhasha period is still a living heritage in India. The poetry of Namadeva (1270-1350) and Tukaram (1598-1650) in Marathi, that of Narasimh Mehta (1408-80) and Akha (1615-1675) in Gujarati, of Kabir (1440-1518) and Surdas (1483-1567) in Hindi, of Guru Nanak (1469-1539) in Punjabi, and so on, have formed an inalienable part of the Indian consciousness. Tukaram, Mira, Kabir and Basaveswar, among others, have been some of the dream-images of India's cultural unconscious. They still guide the hands of modern poets like Arun Kolatkar, A.K. Ramanujan and Gajanan Mahadev Muktibodh. Yet, the cultural amnesia,

from which the modern Indian intellectual suffers, creates highly confused attitudes to the period—or periods—of these poets. The common term used to describe the above named pre-British poets is bhakti, devotionalism, or saint poetry. The term covers a vast period extending from the last part of the thirteenth century (Jnanadeva) to the early part of the nineteenth century (Tyagaraja: 1767-1847). It is like combining European poetry from Dante to Blake under one inexpressive label. It is certainly not very perceptive of literary historians to pack great works from five centuries into a straitjacket of a single insensitive critical category (1992: 42-43).

On the basis of the theoretical framework suggested by Devy, we can study comparative literature in India—that is, Bhakti Movement in Indian Literature and likewise, Dalit literature, after translating bhasha literatures.

Comparative literature is a stage of reading made possible and easier by the availability of translation. René Wellek and Austin Warren have used the term comparative literature in three different senses: "first, the study of oral literature, especially of folk-tale themes and their migration, of how and when they have entered 'higher,' 'artistic,' 'literature,' second, comparative literature as "the study of relationships between two or more literatures and the third conception of comparative literature identifies it with the study of literature in its totality, with 'world literature, with 'general' or 'universal' literature."[7]

The study of comparative literature in India can be facilitated on the lines suggested by René Wellek and Warren Austin through translation. In India we have a unique situation—that is, if bhasha literatures are translated into English a comparative study of such literatures will be easier and fruitful. Instead of translating a bhasha literature into another (say, Oriya into Bangla), we can translate it into English and make a profitable study of it. If 'translation' is literature three, we can have Indian comparative literature in English. That will be the great contribution of translation to literature.

Translation helps in the process of nation building in our country. The language of our administrative communication at

the national level (i.e. by the Central Government) is done either through the official language, or in English. It needs to be translated into more than 20 regional languages for the benefit of the people of several states. Similarly the language of the court is either English or Hindi and the judgement is delivered in these two languages. Thereafter the judgement is translated into regional language for the benefit of the common people. For administrative and judiciary purposes, translation is obligatory in India. For the promotion of commerce, trade and industry in our country, we make use of translation. In the modern world, the need for translation is greater than ever before. In the international field we need to translate for bilateral talks, and for discussion at the UN and all other international meetings and deliberations. Without translation, it is impossible for world leaders to communicate among themselves.

In this context Paul St Pierre makes a valid observation. "The importance of translation can be located in the fact that translation brings the readers, writers, and critics of one nation into contact with those of others, only in the field of literature, but in all areas of development: science and philosophy, medicine, political science, law and religion, to name but a few. Translation, in this way, plays an essential role in determining how a nation establishes its identity in terms of others, be this through opposition to foreign influences, through assimilation or naturalization of the foreign whereby differences are erased to as great a degree as possible, or through imitation of another, usually dominant culture. These are all different strategies of translation, becoming possibilities at different moments in history and underlying the various types of relation between nations which can exist. There is, thus, a particularly strong interconnection between translation and the constitution of national identity, and the study of translation can be useful—as I will attempt to show later in this paper—in determining the nature of this national identity, and the nature of the relations one nation institutes with others. Seen in this light, translation is a social practice with a definite role to play within a given society, serving in a sense as a form of selection process restricting, conditioning, and in any

case modulating cultural immigration. Through translation nations define themselves and in doing so they define others."[8]

The translation of literatures in India has assumed a special status in our country. The ancient Indian literary heritage which is to be found in languages like Sanskrit, Prakrit and Apbhransha etc. can be preserved and even rescued only through translation into English and several regional languages. Indian literature, which is a cover term for all regional literatures of India including Hindi literature, Sanskrit literature and Indian English literature, can reach all the people of India only through translation. In other words, it is through translation that one regional literature can reach the people of region of the country speaking a different language. (69)

Translation of world classics into several other languages of the world helps in enriching the target languages. Apart from well-known epics of the world, great authors like Tolstoy and Shakespeare, continue to be translated into several languages. New trends in literature come through translation. The two great epics of India, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* have been translated into almost all the regional languages of India. That helped the creation of pan-Indian ethos. National myths like 'Laxman rekha' (i.e., the lines drawn by Laxman, in the *Ramayana* to warn Sita), and 'Bhishma Pratigya' (the oath of Bhishma in the *Mahabharata*, an oath never to be broken) have stirred the minds of the Indians and these myths are available to our people through translations.

Not only in India but in other parts of the world where multilingualism is a reality like France, Canada and Switzerland, translation plays a vital role in nation building. Movements in literature, art and trends in political opinion sails from country to country through translation. The practitioners of translation face great difficulties in translating different culture contexts and linguistic codes and therefore, to translate a text of one county into another is to transform it. In the colonial era, translation was considered to be power. The colonizer used translation as a means to oppress the colonized and the colonized used translation to maintain the indigenous culture and tradition.

To conclude, I would say that translation is an essential factor in the study of comparative literature, which is concerned with patterns of connection of literatures across both time and space. In a multi-lingual and multi-cultural country like India, comparative literature helps in creating an all-India ethos and brings bhasha literatures closer for a meaningful study. And thereby, it furthers the cause of national integration. Thus, the study of translation of bhasha literatures leads to the study of Comparative Literature, reinforces the task of nation building in the Indian context.

NOTES

1. Edward Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 2.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
3. Lori Chamberlain, "Gender and Metaphoric of Translation," *Rethinking Translation,* ed. Lawrence Venuti (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 59.
4. Susan Bassnett, *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), p. 147.
5. Gentzler, p. 192.
6. G.N. Devy, *After Amnesia* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1992).
7. Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature* (Great Britain: Penguin, 1973), pp. 46-48.
8. Bijay Kumar Das, *The Horizon of Translation Studies* (New Delhi: Atlantic, 1998), pp. 68-69.

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The Idea of Reason and Galileo in Milton's Epistemology in *Paradise Lost*

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The present paper deals with the theme of reason as the divine law of nature. Here an attempt is being made to study the role of reason in human nature, and to show how it is central to the process of the acquisition of knowledge. In this context, it is necessary to examine Milton's epistemology with a view to focus on the purpose and need of knowledge in human life and Milton's concern for knowledge that is far more complex issue than is implied by the prohibition placed on Adam and Eve regarding the eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. It is also necessary to study the meaning of wisdom, and the relationship between reason and faith, and free will and conscience.

Further, in this connection, the attempt is also being made to examine the impact of Galileo, a contemporary scientist, on Milton. To Milton, Galileo was a man like Socrates who suffered and died for the cause of truth and reason. We learn from *Areopagitica* that Milton "found and visited famous Galileo grown old" and blind as a prisoner in his villa at Arcetri near Florence "for thinking in astronomy otherwise than Franciscan and Dominican licensers thought"[1] This made a very deep impression upon Milton, and remained in his mind as a figure of martyrdom for the cause of truth and reason. In Milton's thought, Galileo stands for how the free use of reason could be stifled by bigotry. He must have been horrified by the strangeness of Galileo's distorted position in prison just for pursuing a scientific truth that even after six years (in 1644) his obsession with Galileo, along with his own position after Divorce Tracts, compelled him to write *Areopagitica,* a rebellious plea for "the ancient liberty."

It is not the heliocentric but the geocentric universe which bulks the larger in *Paradise Lost.*[2] But there are numerous examples in the epic poem to show Milton's interest in the new cosmology, however dispassionate it might be, like other philosophers and poets in the seventeenth century. His imagination was stirred by the 'New Philosophy' that had put 'all in doubt' as John Donne called one year after Galileo's publication of his first celestial observation in *Sidereus Nuncius* (in 1610). Hence Galileo's heliocentric cosmology and other theories of new science had been a new source of poetic material to Milton. In *Paradise Lost* he does indeed make use of science in a highly imaginative way and suspends judgement on doubtful matters. Milton uses Galileo both as a figure of martyrdom for truth and reason and all that is wrong with papacy, and as the only contemporary astronomer that characterizes the contemporary interest in the new cosmology and excitement for the scientific knowledge which was gaining importance in the seventeenth century; for instance when Milton speaks:

> the moon, whose Orb
> Through Optic Glass the Tuscan Artist views
> At Evening, from the top of Fesole,
> Or in Valdarno, to descry new Lands,
> Rivers or Mountains in her spotty Globe. (I: 287-91)

In *Paradise Lost* Milton's extraordinary powerful and imaginative response to the conception of infinite space extending beyond the utmost power of human ken can be perceived only with the inward eye. The vision of the limitless expansion of the space is never to be measured by the physical eye penetrating through the most powerful telescope. Milton's own delineations—of observation through telescope in the lines just quoted above[4]—clearly show that he was fascinated by telescope which aided and inspired his imagination to see, with angels from the shore of "heavenly ground," and tell of the "vast immeasurable abyss/ Outrageous as a Sea" (VII: 210-12) 'invisible to mortal sight.'[5]

Milton's vision of infinite space, his addition of the notable sections of Galileo's discoveries to the Biblical account of crea-

tion—especially pertaining to the creation of the sun and the moon, and the moon's shining, not by its own light, but by the light borrowed from the sun, the Milky Way the poetic allusions to the optic glass of the Tuscan artist, 'optic tube' and the glass of Galileo, the association of comet with evil and disaster[6] in the concluding part of *Paradise Lost*—all these should be examined in the relevant conceptual perspective of Milton's idea of reason which signifies the divine and natural law of order, degree, and harmony in the entire universe, as well as in the mind of man.

Milton's attitude on every issue—religious, ethical, natural, and scientific—of human significance should be proved on the basis of his impersonal faith in reason along with his belief in 'election.' In his view the idea of reason in alienation from God has no meaningful significance. In *Paradise Lost* Adam demonstrates Eve:

> But God left free the Will, what obeys
> Reason is free, and Reason he made right. (IX: 351-52)

And Eve before her fall says to Satan "our Reason is our Law" (IX: 654). Reason is the God like principle in man is evident from Eve's earlier affirmation in Bk. IV, "God is thy Law and thou mine." (637)[7] Man's happiness consists in his reason swaying passions where desires do not clash with love and obedience to God (VIII: 588-94, 633-37). To love and obey God is to act most closely in accord with reason or conscience, God's deputy in man (III: 194-97).[8] God, who is infinite, omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal, cannot be a character speaking a particular language, English, ruling in a particular kingdom, Heaven, and waging war against his enemies with weapons. Rather God must be comprehended as the omnipresent principle of reason creating and maintaining order and harmony between man and the universe that surrounds him. In *De Doctrina Christiana* and *Paradise Lost* Milton views the Genesis story of man's fall as an allegory illustrating the obscuration of reason by passions which, in effect, cause 'spiritual death' and the loss of will's freedom to choose the right.[10] Adam is created with the freedom of choice whether or not to eat the fruit of the forbidden

free. By eating the fruit he chooses the slavery of passions rather than freedom of serving God—that is reason. Under the superior sway of reason all is well till each faculty—of growth sensation and intelligence (V: 410-12)—rules in its own hierarchy (V: 100-3). Reason thus figured as God is the centre and circumference (V: 509-10) or the source from which all things come into existence and end to which all things return (V: 469-70); in that it signifies the eternal 'cycle of nature' operating through the process of change and progress in God's good scheme of creation. Hence reason is the creative and operative principle of the universe which maintains and restores the harmony of and amongst man, beasts, and entire created universe on the scale of nature (it demonstrates the nature of reason, V: 469-512). What is God in the universe, the macrocosm, reason is in man, the microcosm. The damage of reason in man's individual soul, as a unit of the integrated whole of the universe, causes disorder in the world of nature, as we read in Milton's utterances, when Adam and Eve eat the forbidden fruit (IX: 780-84, 997-1004).

De Doctrina Christiana gives evidence of Milton's attitude towards reason in religious matters; while his *Art of Logic* deals with his concern and unflinching faith in the application of reason—not only in ethical and religious matters—but also "in "the matters relative to natural and sensory apprehension."[11] The basis of unfallen man's blissful state lied in his obedience (V: 501, 520-22) which could have enabled him to "ascend to God" "by contemplation of created things" (V: 511-12). In the fallen world man's reason—which is "not altogether extinguished" after the fall "even in the worst of characters"[12] has to exercise for re-establishing the proper hierarchy of the human soul with the study of nature providing the material for making, out of it, the life of virtue that consists in regaining the right knowledge of God which Adam had lost when he left the garden of Eden; as we learn from *Of Education:*

> The end then of learning is to repair the ruins of first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue, which being united to the heavenly

> grace of faith makes up the highest perfection. But our understanding cannot in this body found itself but on sensible things, nor arrive so clearly to the knowledge of God and things invisible, as by orderly conning over the visible and inferior creature, the same method is necessary to be followed in all discrete teaching.[13]

In Milton's thought, as was in his time, nature was the book of God, and "Philosophy," "the contemplation of created things," "was an approved method of knowing him."[14] Milton was not against the scientific study of nature, nor does he celebrate it as superior to all other kinds of knowledge. The study of nature cannot be of sole importance since it cannot be an end in itself.[15] Robert Hoopes argues this case persuasively that the apparent criticism of knowledge is really an attack on "idle speculation and scientific disputation perused as ends in themselves."[16]

Galileo is celebrated, in *Areopagitica,* as a martyr for reason; but when Milton remembers him as astronomer in *Paradise Lost,* he does not admire Galileo's reason—for having no place or accommodation in his theories for the concept of God as the rational creative and operative principle of the universe, and man's regenerate reason to redeem him. Galileo's empirical observations in astronomy are not the virtuous efforts, as means, to some higher end of regaining the right knowledge of God; but they, being ends in themselves, constitute a Godless philosophy which he, himself, is reported to have denounced—as A.N. Wilson illustrates—by turning to spiritual studies towards the end of his life. Galileo "was deeply revered by Milton's friends in the Svogliati and the Apatisti, Coltellini had written a poem in praise of the astronomer which, years later, he published. He praised the way, after Galileo's imprisonment and torture, he turned to spiritual studies."[17]

Milton is of the view that through Scripture reason is the most authentic source of knowledge.[18] His notion relating to the meaning and purpose of knowledge should be understood in the light of his concern for knowledge which is more complex than is implied in the prohibition against touching of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. In this conceptual context, the totality of knowledge comprises his four-fold division of knowl-

edge corresponding to the four aspects of human existence—sensitive, rational, intellectual, and angelic. In Milton's epistemology, the art of reason is a common property of man, angels and God varying only in degree not in kind. This constitutes a hierarchy of reason which manifests the perfect unity of creation with reason (V: 508-12). The quality of one's reason is determined by the degree of his distance from God on the scale of nature. Reason's virtue lies, not only in acquiring true knowledge, but also in keeping the knowledge within limits by temperance.[19] In his *Art of Logic* Milton defines physics as "the knowledge of natural things"[20] which traditionally is thought to have begun with the knowledge of stars. Milton's sense of the structure of the universe certainly is not concerned with the astronomical controversy relating to the centre of the universe, even though there are obvious evidences in his Raphael's famous dialogue on astronomy that he was inclined towards a great deal of Galileo's discoveries in new astronomy for their scientific appeal. Gilbert puts the point: "Milton understood Galileo and applauded his studies, while at the same time using without hesitation the ideas of the older astronomy. And it would have been folly in Milton to have decided with certainty either for or against the Copernican view. Indeed, Huxley is credited with the remark that in his opinion the Polemics of Galileo's time had rather the better of the argument. Until the publication of Newton's *Principia* in 1687, the Copernican system did not have an assured basis. To expect Milton to pass beyond interest and consideration of his views as possible and probable, and definitely declare for Copernicus, is to ask him to do what only a professional astronomer had a right to do."[21]

Finally Milton's notion of reason is marked off from others for its greater reliance on Scripture[22] and revelations,[23] and its adequateness lies in the act of acquiring the knowledge, within bounds, which creates and confirms faith in God and his providence. To Milton sense experience is neither detestable nor an unreliable guide to knowledge; yet by all means it is insufficient by itself as reason is insufficient without faith. Perceptions are as inevitable as reason, irrespective of time and place; in the uni-

verse, if knowledge is to be gained. In the last resort, following conclusions can be drawn from the argument in the above pages:

1. In his allusions to Galileo Milton honoured him as the hero who fought against the obscurantism in the contemporary church for the intellectual and scientific freedom.[24] Milton's additions from Galileo's scientific observations to the notable sections of the Biblical account of creation (in *Paradise Lost*, VII) especially relating to the creation of the sun and the moon, and moon's shining not by its own light but shining by the light borrowed from the sun, and the Milky Way are the indications of Milton's irresistible desire to bring the two 'Books of God'—the Book of God's Word (Scripture), and the Book of God's Work (the created physical nature), the facts of which are to be revealed by the empirical science—into a meaningful coherence that each of the two books should confirm and enrich the knowledge of other.
2. Milton introduces Galilean impressions both in the beginning and at the completion of the creation scenes (i) the vision of infinite space which Galileo's telescope aided and inspired his imagination to see with angels from the shore of "Heavenly ground" and tell of the "vast immeasurable abyss/. Outrageous as a Sea" (VII: 210-12) invisible to mortal sight, (ii) Galileo's astronomy reoccurs towards the completion of the creation of scene when Christ returns, along with angels, to Heaven over Galileo's Milky Way (VII: 574-81). This seems to imply that God, who is the invisible fount of reason and the final cause of all things, operates through the effective causes in the physical universe. Thus physical science alone can reveal the factual knowledge about the universe, in that it characterizes a 'step' in the scale of nature for ascending to God.
3. The Tuscan Artist viewing through the telescope represents the farthest extension of the human perception that is always finite to comprehend the infinite space and the plurality or infinity of the world (VII: 209-12). This indicates the dependence of his imperfect reason, lacking faith in God and Scripture, on perception. His reason symbolizes only the

outward gaze on nature which can be employed to study effective causes—visible matter in motion and generation. While to Milton reason, in its rightness, should be employed, "through contemplation of created things" to ascend to God who is the invisible fount of reason and the final cause of all things. His sole concern is to see the presence of God in the shape of things God's omnipresence can be testified by reason, in the universe, as the creative and operative principle of order and harmony. Milton is of the view that greater trust of outward can lead to deception.[25]

4. In Milton's view the 'faith' of contemporary church was obscured for want of reason, and Galileo's 'reason' was imperfect for want of faith. In his concept of creation—which he views in the light of a perpetual process of change and progress in the constant flow of time and ever-expanding space—Galileo's astronomy still continues to be a hypothesis and not a proved conclusion even to Raphael, and Archangel (VIII: l32-35, 140-44). Milton makes Raphael say his final lesson on the issue is plain:

> Solicit not thy thoughts with matters hid:
> Leave them to God, Him serve and fear. . . .
> Be lowly wise;
> Think only of what concern thee and thy being
> Dream not of otherworlds. (VIII: 167-75)

NOTES

1. Frank Allen Patterson, ed., *Student's Milton* (New York: Appleton Century Crofts, 1961). See for the controversy as to whether or not Milton actually visited Galileo, Yale ed. of Milton's *Complete Prose,* Vol. II, p. 538n. See for the controversy over Milton's famous visit to Galileo, the arguments for both sides, and the conclusion that the objections made against Milton's claim result from an inadequate understanding of the historical context, Neil Harris, "Galileo as Symbol: The Tuscan Artist in *Paradise Lost*," *Annali Dell Istituto E Mused* (1985), X, 2 pp. 4: 10.
2. See for an illustration of Milton's lacking confidence in Galileo's astronomy, John Arthos, "Milton, Andreini, and Galileo: Some

Considerations on the Manner and Form of *Paradise Lost,"* in *Approaches to Paradise Lost,* ed. C.A. Patrides (University of Toronto Press, 1968), pp. 164-79.

3. Cf. his indifference about Ptolemic-Copernican controversy of the system of the universe, *Paradise Lost*, VIII: 132-35, 140-44.
4. Also see *ibid.*, III: 590, V, pp. 261-62.
5. Marjorie Hope Nicolson argues, "do we find more majestic conception of vastness of space than in the work of this blind poet, in those scenes of cosmic perspective in which we, like Satan on the one band, God on the other, look up and down to discover a universe in its vastness." "The Discovery of Space," O.B. Hardison, Jr., ed., *Medieval and Renaissance Studies: Proceedings of the South-Eastern Institute of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* (N.C.: Chapel Hill, 1966), p. 57 passim. Also see her "The Telescope and Imagination," *Modern Philology,* 32 (1935), pp. 233-60.
6. *Paradise Lost*, XII, 633-36; cf. in *Of Reformation in England,* Bk. II: "Let the Astrologer be dismayed at the porteous blaze of comets and impressions in the air as foretelling troubles and changes in states: I shall believe there cannot be ill-boding sign to a nation (God tura the omen from us) then when the inhabitants to avoid insufferable grievances at home are informed by heaps to foresake their native country." (*Student's Milton,* p. 459) Allen H. Gilbert suggests that the idea of symbolic association of comet with evil and disaster must have been suggested by Galileo, "Milton and Galileo," *Studies in Philology*, 19 (1922), pp. 152-85; and "Milton and Comets," *English Literary History,* 4 (1937), pp. 41-42; also see for a critical review of this issue Kester Svendsen's *Milton and Science* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), p. 90.
7. In his *De Doctrina Christiana* Milton demonstrates that the law of reason implanted in the heart of man is the unwritten law of God which is "no other than the law of nature given originally to Adam, and of which a certain remnant, or imperfect illumination, still dwells in the hearts of all mankind; which, in the regenerate under the influence of Holy Spirit, is daily tending towards a renewal of *its* primitive brightness." Bk. 1, Ch. XXVI, "Of the Covenant of Grace," *Student's Milton,* p. 1024.
8. "The existence of God is further proved by that feeling, whether we term it conscience or right reason, which even in the worst of characters is not altogether extinguished" *Ibid.,* Bk. 1, Ch. II "Of God," *Student's Milton,* p. 923.

9. See for different degrees of death, namely: (i) guiltiness, (ii) Spiritual death, (iii) bodily death, and (iv) eternal death. *Ibid.* Bk. I, Ch. XII, "On the Punishment of Sin," *Student's Milton*, pp. 999-1000.
10. "Reason is also choice," *Paradise Lost,* III: 108; cf. "reason is but choosing" and "the gift of reason to be his own chooser." *Areopagitica, Student's Milton,* pp. 738, 741.
11. Lee A. Jacobus, *Sudden Apprehension: Aspects of Knowledge in Paradise Lost* (Paris: Mouton the Hague, 1976), p. 45.
12. See note 8 above.
13. *Student's Milton,* p.726.
14. Kester Svendsen, *Milton and Science* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), p. 5.
15. For Milton true wisdom consists in the will doing right in the full issue of the moral knowledge of which Milton speaks in *The Reason of Church Government,* "to know anything distinctly of God, and of his true worship, and what is infallibly good and happy in the state in the state of man's life, what in itself evil and miserable, though vulgarly not so esteemed," *Student's Milton,* p. 522.
16. Robert Hoopes, *Right Reason in the English Renaissance* (Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 194.
17. A.N. Wilson, *The Life of John Milton* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 90; further Wilson proceeds to quote, "The great Tuscan Lincean no longer surveyed the spots upon the sun, nor cared any more to study Jove and Saturn and the Bear. He put down his crystal lens and closed his eyes, and from the lowly earth, filled with the desire to behold lovelier things than these, with the wings of love he raised himself above the stars, the eyes of his mind fixed upon God." John Artbos, *Milton and the Italian Cities* (John Murray, 1962),p. 19.
18. *De Doctrina Christiana,* Bk. 1, Ch. XXX, "Of the Holy Scriptures," *Student's Milton,* pp. 1038-42.
19. Cf. Knowledge with food and indigestion, *Paradise Lost,* VII: 126-30, and also *Ibid.,* IV: 635-38, VII: 639-40, VIII: 167-68, 173-78, 412-14.
20. *The Art of Logic,* I, XXXI, *The Works of John Milton,* gen. ed. Frank Allen Patterson, 18 vols. (New York, 1931-42), XI, p. 269, quoted from Lee A. Jacobus, p.45.
21. Allen H. Gilbert, "Milton and Galileo," *Studies in Philology,* 19 (1922), pp. 183-84.

22. H.N. Gohain, *Tradition and Paradise Lost: A Heretical View* (Gauhati-Assam: Lawyer's Book Stall, 1977), pp. 168-234. *De Doctrina Christiana*, Ch. XXX, "Of the Holy Scriptures," *Student's Milton*, pp. 1038-42.
23. Milton's chief concern is with two kinds of revelation: (i) to inform Adam with all his faculties of reason intact (through Raphael), and (ii) after the fall to inform him (through Michael) with his reason seriously injured by sin, and the will strongly caught by vicious desires.
24. Galbraith Miller Crump, *The Mystical Design of Paradise Lost* (London: Associated University Press, 1975), p. 60.
25. *Paradise Lost*, IV: 449-73; contrast *Ibid.*, VIII: 250-82.

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Kamala Das: A Revolt against Male Tradition

GEORGE ALEXANDER

"Woman had no history—so they were told and so they believed. And because they had no history they had no future alternatives."

Gerda Lerner

Kamala Das is one of the strongest voices of women writing in India today. Her poetic sensibility has often been termed as either confessional or erotic. But I think her poetry voices to the full the existential pressures generated on the Indian women—right from the ancient times to the modern. By employing a highly self-conscious idiom, she perhaps aims at 'a release' from the male-dominated literary tradition that had always succeeded in backgrounding women to the margins. Perhaps like Margaret Atwood, she wants to assert: "We must resist. We must refuse to disappear."

In this context, it is indeed proper to study Feminism that has now emerged as a strong postmodern trend. This Feminist movement can be phased into three distinguished periods:

1) 1840-1880 marked the first phase, though insignificant, during which the women writers concentrated chiefly in imitating the style of great male-writers in order to attract a wide readership. They even adopted "a male pseudonym" to get their works see the light of the day.
2) During the second period—1880-1920—a stronger voice emerged to protest against the male-hegemony. It was aided and abetted by such modern thinkers as G.B. Shaw etc. As the Women Suffragette Movement got intense, Virginia Woolf a strong feminist herself voiced the anguish of women in her *A Room of One's Own*. "It's unpleasant to be locked out . . . it's worse perhaps to be locked in."

3) 1920 to 1980 and further is the most significant and meaningful period during which writers of the calibre of Simon de Beauvoir, Helen Cixous, Julia Kristeva, Gilbert and Gohar etc. delivered through their writings a real punch on the Male Ego, and compelled him to accede if not a superiority status, but at least an equal one. They talked in terms of the Obliteration of Male Sex. Elaine Showalter demolished the traditional image of women—Monster and Angel—and called upon the woman to use strong language to silence the Man. It is in this context that we have to study Kamala Das's poetic sensibility.

A historical study of the role of women in the male-dominated society of both the developed and under-developed worlds—and in particular India, the land of pati-parameshwars and karva-chauths—would categorically prove that man has successfully connived to keep woman confined within the socio-religious walls; by allowing her no freedom and by instilling a constant fear in her mind with convenient and conservative images like God, King, Man and roles like father, husband, son etc.

Kamala Das is not the first woman-poet to revolt against the male-dominated literary traditions of this land. Right from the Therigatha poems (Songs of the Nuns) of the pre-Aryan times to the present the germ of revolt has always been there in women. The rule of male dominion that deprived women of imagination, communication and hope can be summed up in three parts—women must not speak; if she speaks she must not speak the whole truth; and if she dares to speak the whole truth she must be silenced. Numerous women poets of the past—including courtesans and folk-singers—have used sexual passion and erotic sensibilities in their songs to strike against the male literary tradition. They realized that they could attract attention only by speaking in a language—unconventional, crude and licentious. In their book *Women Writing in India*, Susie Tharu and K. Lalitha cite the example of Muddupalani, an eighteenth century Telugu woman-poet. Her *Radhika Santwanam* an adorable work—was rejected by the traditional male critics because Muddupalani is an adulteress, many parts of the book are such that they should never be heard by a woman, let alone

they should never be heard by a woman, let alone emerge from a woman's mouth. Using sringara rasa as an excuse, she shamelessly fills her poems with crude descriptions of sex. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Victorian morality redefined sexual mores for women—giving birth to the concept of 'the proper lady'—Kamala Das believed this to be a new design by the male to further silencing of women. Hence physical love in and outside marriage becomes a recurrent theme to puncture the male ego. Her attacks on her husband—the symbol of Protector and Preserver—is in fact a thrust against male-chauvinism. Kamala Das believes that the silencing of women, the thematics of victimization functions not only through patriarchal attitudes, but also through woman's conscious or unconscious complexity in the matter. In order to combat it, she recognizes the source of oppression, and desires to express her anger by writing as a fully liberated individual—as a woman—in the society.

Kamala Das's love-poetry is more physical than spiritual. Her search for love outside marriage is firstly, due to her frustration of an ideal man-woman relationship with her husband:

> It will be all right if I put my hair
> Stand near my husband to make a proud pair. ("Substitute")

Secondly, her seeking a release from a life of 'lovelessness':

> I shall some day, leave the cocoon
> You built around me with morning tea,
> Love words flung from doorways and of course your tired lust—
> —then shut my
> Eyes and take refuge, if nowhere else'
> Here in your nest of familiar scorn—I shall some day.

Kamala Das's love experience is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Its complex nature can be apprehended only by focussing on some of the important dimensions defined in terms of her husband and other lovers. Her concentration on sexual love can be likened to the confessional poetry of Sylvia Plath. She desires to use sexual love to assert, to conquer and to dominate. Her visions of ideal love are destroyed by her husband's inability to of-

fer spiritual fulfillment through physical love. She feels that her dignity is lost because she is not respected as a woman.

You were pleased
with my body's response, its weather, its
usual shallow convulsions you embalmed
My poor lust with your bitter-sweet juices
You called me wife
I was taught to break saccharine into your tea, and
To offer at the right moments the vitamins
Cowering
beneath your monstrous ego,
I ate the magic
loaf and
became a dwarf.

Kamala Das' search for the ideal spiritual lover can be compared to the metaphysical poets. She blames her ineffective husband for her straying into the path of sin.

Love became a swivel door
when one went out, another came in

Another dimension that complicates the man-woman relationship refers to her traditional role of woman. She desires freedom from it:

I wore a shirt and my
Brother's trousers, cut my hair short and ignored
My womanliness. Dress in sarees, be girl
Be wife, they said. Be embroiderer, be cook,
Be a quarreler with servants. Fit in, Oh
Belong , cried the categorizers.

She rebels against conventional marriage: "The ideal marriage continued according to the desire of our society, is a bond in which both become mental cripples and cling on to each other until death." ("The Sham of a Marriage") She comments against the pretentious role of a happy wife

I must pretend
I must act the role
of happy woman

Happy wife. (The Suicide)

Thus, Kamala Das's outbursts against all the stereotypical roles of a woman—lover, wife, married woman—characterize the subtlest and most radical woman writing. Poetry becomes in her hand a powerful medium for self-expression; thereby conforming to a new female literary tradition to liberate the suppressed voice that has been trying through ages to find its own identity. Incidentally, I found this voice—this urge—in an excerpt from one of the Gnostic texts, called 'The Thunder: Perfect Mind'—probably written by a woman in the second century:

I am the one who has been hated everywhere
and who has been loved everywhere.
I am the one whom they call Life
and you have called Death
I am one whom you have scattered
and you have gathered me together.
I am the one before whom you have been ashamed
and you have been shameless to me—
I am she who does not keep festival
and she whose festivals are many,
I am godless
and I am the one whose God is great—
I am unlearned
and they learn from me. . . .?

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Silence as a Mode of Expression in Paul Scott's *The Raj Quartet*

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Paul Scott's *The Raj Quartet* is about India, from the historical sources of its experience to the aesthetics of its structure and embodies Indian experience in space-time as well as in the continuum of its metaphysics. It is woven around form and substance; manifold illusions of mirrored images, articulated sounds, and the utter silence of the absolute and the whole, the desolation of reality etc. It is the paradox of maya (finite, measurable particularities of form) obstructing a view of the infinite reality while yet a part of this reality. It echoes the paradigm of the articulate resounding from the sinking back into the inarticulate, in the voicing of AUM. To express the voiceless in a voice, infinite continuum in space-time is to make 'raids upon the inarticulate.' The 'silence' of India, which has got to be broken through, is an experience of political-historical-metaphysical kind where the structure splits this silence, condensing the expanse and the void into spiralling galaxies of situations converging upon the tangible and opening out towards the intangible. In terms of musical analogy, structures like Quartets or symphonies are basically harmonies of many into one, discordant notes orchestrated into a concord. In terms of the analogy of Indian music, however, the ultimate concord of music is in silence, of the articulate in the inarticulate which precedes and succeeds the efforts at vocalized structure. Scott's reference to the 'raga' being sung by Parvati at the end of *The Jewel in the Crown* spells the whole truth about the relativity of structure and experience of the whole truth.

> Behind all the chatter and violence of India—what a deep, lingering silence. Siva dances in it. Vishnu sleeps in it. Even this music

> is silence. It's the only music I know that sounds conscious of breaking silence, of going back into it when it's finished, as if to prove that every man-made sound is an illusion.[1]

The innate structure of things, their paradigmatic significance, has to be probed through particulars of experience. Structure of art is related to experience in this probing, whereas, in the lines cited above, morphology of articulated aesthetic structure leads to the amorphous and *ponderous silence* of truth as Myth or metaphysics. The *inarticulate void of silence* enveloping the sleeping Vishnu and the dancing Shiva (void beyond creation and beyond dissolution) is the same as the silence stretching all around the ripples of sound that arise from it and flow on to it—experience of truth circumscribing the structure of experience, aesthetics of articulation sinking into the inarticulate myth. This poses as Scott's acceptance of the tact of Indian experience as history, as myth, as a paradigm or any experience of the 'real'—being intractable and silent; acceptance also of the fact that the *Quartet*, in using language and a structure of language, is reaching beyond the articulations of language to a reality that can be described as 'silence' because it baffles and transcends speech. Myth and Music are more or less capable of making the presence of this silence palpable even by breaking it. As George Steiner writes in *Language and Silence*: "As storehouses and conveyors . . . of felt life and human conjecture, myths embrace words but go beyond them towards a more supple, inventive, universal syntax. That music and myth are akin, that they build shapes of being more universal, more numinous than speech, haunts the Western imagination."[2] ". . .it is decisively the fact that language does have its frontiers, that it borders on three other modes of statement—light, music and silence—which gives proof of a transcendent presence in the fabric of the world . . . what lies beyond man's word is eloquence of God."[3]

The Raj Quartet is engrossed with this 'silence' of utter and absolute reality which is a continuum of time-place, history-myth. The musical analogy of the Quartet as a building-block for restructuring language towards the inarticulate is explicitly re-enforced by Scott in this recession of the Indian situation and

history towards the epiphany of Indian music which, in its proximity to silence, carries the recession further from Indian aesthetics and metaphysics to myth and iconography of Vishnu and Shiva, creation and dissolution as the two finite points at which time touches eternity, the articulate meets the inarticulate. To quote George Steiner once again, who while discussing Wittgenstein—one most profoundly intent on escaping from the spiral of language—holds: "That which we call fact may well be a veil spun by language to shroud the mind from reality, Wittgenstein compels us to wonder whether reality can be 'spoken of,' when speech is merely a kind of infinite regression, words being spoken of other words. . . . Language can only deal meaningfully with a special restricted segment of reality. The rest, and it, is presumably the much large part, is silence." (2)

Elaborating on this notion in The Retreat from the Word. Steiner observes: "There are modes of intellectual and sensuous reality founded not on language but on other communicative energies such as the icon or the musical note. And there are actions of the spirit rooted in silence. It is difficult to speak of these, for how should speech justly convey the shape and vitality of silence?" (12-13)

That language can only deal restrictingly with a segment of reality, that language can restrict sense of reality by veiling it with a veneer of facts, that 'awareness dependant on language is a determinacy that imprisons the mind. These are the challenges to which literary form or structure responds by using language to achieve a communication beyond linguistic categories. The confrontation of the English and the Indian in the Quartet is a clash of modes of awareness, communication and history, almost determined by the tyranny of language in this sense.

> It's an Anglo-Saxon failing I suppose. Constantly we want proof here and now, proof of our existence, of the mark we've made, the sort of mark we can wear round our necks, to label us, to make sure we're never lost in that awful dark jungle of anonymity. (428)

This tight feeling for finite forms and this anonymity are opposed to each other as British and Indian—linguistically, histori-

cally and culturally. It is the challenge of articulation by silence, history by myth, particularity by universality, and so,

> 'Perhaps we haven't got a word for what they feel. Perhaps it's hidden in that stone carving of Vishnu sleeping, looking as if he might wake at any minute and take them to oblivion in a crack of happy thunder. (428)

In contradistinction to precision and proof, here is the sleep of Vishnu equivalent to the waking world and his waking the end of the world; here is his almost eternal slumber potentially poised for a break 'any minute'; here is his happy thunder and our oblivion. The contraries provide the kind of 'muddle' that Forster saw in India—a muddle inseparable from 'mystery.'

It is interesting to see this distinction worked out by Scott in terms of race and history—having much to do with language—in the light of what Yeats made of East-West, Europe-Asia, polarity, precision, form, number, calculation; 'measurement began one might': is what characterizes the West. The East, or Asia, is referred to in terms such as 'vague Asiatic immensities,' fabulous, formless, darkness.

Interestingly, the approximation of language and structure to musical form that we have found in such different uses of the 'Quartet' as *Four Quartets, The Alexandria Quartet* and *The Raj Quartet* can be reduced to a common functional denomination in terms of experience. They involve an encounter with a reality of many dimensions with a capacity to falsify, deceive, bewilder and beguile. To hold it in a structure is to comprehend it as a whole. This is the apprehension of the timeless in time, the formless in form that Eliot implies in terms like 'Incarnation' and 'articulation.' This is what Durrell's *Alexandria Quartet* attempts to realize by structuring the mirage like deceptions mirrored by planes of reality into the contours of a truth whose wholeness both contains and falsifies the parts. *The Raj Quartet* takes on another such bulk of silence—something numinous, inexplicable and inarticulate about Indian experience that articulates itself in terms of what it does to outsiders who encounter it—an example of the disintegration of character brought about

by the manner in which a personality in many ways distinguished, and certainly distinctive, is affected by the Indian experience. And yet, this is how any mystery, any confrontation with the whole is likely to affect minds that are fragmented. Forster showed such effects in *A Passage to India* on Mrs. Moore and on Adela Quested. The nature of Indian experience behind the events narrated by Scott is in essence what Forster saw in the undifferentiated darkness of the Caves and in the muddle that came closest to mystery—what Yeats saw as "vague Asiatic immensities."

A remark, made by the lawyer Srinivasan, the context of which is a very particular detail of Kumar's whereabouts, long after the Bibighar incident, has a characteristic generality of reference to this immensity of Indian experience:

> Well, it is a vast country. Easy to get lost in. And again the sense of immensity (of weight and flatness, and absence of orienting features) blankets the mind with an idea of scope so limitless that it is deadening. Here, on the ground, nothing is likely, everything is possible. Only from the air can one trace what looks like a pattern, a design, an abortive, human intention. (208)

This is the 'silence' of Indian experience as also the inarticulate immensity and variety that Eliot, Durrell and Scott seem to tackle in different particularities. It is a common quest for shape and significance in variety multiplied 'in a wilderness of mirrors' (Eliot). The particularly of a detail, an event in time (in the dimension of time) and the timelessness; of the pattern glimpsed in the detail are points of vision in which reality is apprehended in a timeless present. Sister Ludmila has one such insight that falsifies all clear outlines of a beginning and an end that specify history. She says:

> It is as if time were telescoped? Is that the right word? As if time were telescoped and space dovetailed? As if Bibighar almost had not happened yet, and yet has happened, so that at once past, present and future are contained in your cupped palm. (133)

This dovetailing of space, telescoping of time, into the here and the now of Indian history from 1942 to 1947 is precisely what Scott has achieved.

There is a negative kind of 'silence' which threatens human civilization—the opacity and the draining out of the capacity to participate, share and communicate. It is symptomatic of the ruthless force of civilization that one speaks one's own language or the language of one's narrow belonging to a nation or community. This is a general symptom of the modern condition and it is a barrier of barbarism imposing such colossal silence on humanity that no cry or language has crossed it. It happened during the genocide of the Jews in Hitler's Germany; it happened in Taslima Nasrin's Bangladesh in December 1992, it is still happening everywhere. British India exhibited this mute barbarism—as much in Ronald Merrick as in the slaying of Ahmed Kasim by the railway-track. This barbarism, incapacity for comprehension and understanding, is expressed in the blunting of language. Conversely, to extend the expressive potentials of language is to extend one's capacity to take in and comprehend more and more. The overwhelming pressure of the uncomprehended, inarticulate, that this structure takes upon itself to accommodate and articulate is the aesthetic counterpart of the humanizing culture that is Scott's mode of experience—giving him an insight into the silences of barbarism and abstractions that made Britain and India wrestle with each other and into resonance's of articulation that made them embrace each other—both in one gesture.

'Silence' is a powerful symbol of the essence and meaning of the Indian experience. Edwina Crane's withdrawal into the solitude and silence of realizing the failure of Anglo-Indian relationship finds articulation in a symbol running through the *Quartet:* burning in flames. Both she and Daphne are silent, unable to find words, about the men who perpetuated the acts of violence. This is hardly understood by the Europeans who 'hated her for it.' One person can enjoin another to her own silence as Daphne and Kumar happen to do, facing interrogations with silence. To Sister Ludmila, it is a silence wrapping Daphne round

like she has the child in her womb 'carrying it like a woman in a state of grace' believing 'that she carried India in her belly.' (165) This has echoes of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin and Eliot's 'Word within word unable to speak a word.' Silence, thus, leads through deepening and widening of sensibility to instructions of mystical and spiritual kind the inarticulate heart of silence. It finds a specific relation to Indian aesthetics and mysticism of silence and articulation, formless and form, with reference to Daphne's child Parvati, articulating the 'morning raga' in a mystical song about parting.

Silence is the human awareness of the whole truth for which any medium, any articulation is bound to be an aberration, a distortion and a limitation. In metaphysical and aesthetic terms, this is the challenge of the ineffable and 'formless' whole that cognition or art has to contend with—to know the unknowable, to find form for the formless, to articulate silence. In terms of human relationship, silence is a mode of deep and inarticulate communication, almost a measure of the depth and wholesomeness of the involvement. Such is the silence of Daphne and Hari, and of Mabel Layton and Sarah: "Silence between them were not unusual. They were strange silences which Sarah found difficult to break once they had set in. She sometimes thought of them as silences her mother used to establish between them as a closeness that had never existed before and which she thought it too late to establish now except in this exchange of sentences unspoken and of gestures unoffered."[3]

The formless has a form too subtle for our notions of form; silence is a language finer than ours: our medium has to approximate to these. These 'pregnant' silences are the opposite of imposed reserve and reticence of the Englishman—thin, pale, polite and inhibited. Deep 'communion 'is what silence becomes as Sarah and Ahmed face each other while riding—he smiling and silent, she smiling and speechless. Underneath the courtesy and reserve of 'smile' is the confrontation with unsuspected depths of silence. To an observer like Merrick, Kumar's silence is 'dumb insolence.' Even to Nigel Rowan, Kumar's is an 'unreasonable silence' which only shows that silence is a mode be-

yond reason and that it is hardly what can be experienced or known in rational or 'reasonable' terms. It is more dangerous and authentic.

Silence is the mode in terms of which Lady Manners accepts Daphne and Parvati something incomprehensible to Mildred and others who find her house boat in Srinagar 'quiet': "muted to the point of creating its own illusion of itself as though at any moment it might break up into component parts of air and light and water."[4] This muteness is a mutation, the silence and sinking, into the deep communion and identity with the elemental patterns of life. The 'cry of the child' from within that breaks the silence does not so much break it as articulates it. Between Barbie and Sarah, a communion in depth casts an illusion of word unspoken but heard. Barbie slowly moves away from 'ceaseless chatter' of involvement to 'the mystery of imaginary silence' which, unlike cool reserve, 'should not be used to destroy contact but to create it.' She craves such contact, talking and silent:

> to enter the private realm of inner silence and begin to learn how to inhabit it even while her body went its customary bustling way and her tongue clacked endlessly on. (191)

It is more like being on two planes at the same time, the balance between involvement and detachment as taught by the Upanishads and the *Gita*, and only superficially a potential symptom of schizophrenia. She comes close to a mystical state where silence is the condition of the soul: "I want to create around myself a condition of silence so that it may be broken, but not by me. But I am surrounded by a condition of Babel." (196) It is a preparation for and invitation to God, for the final communion that shatters the shell of silence. In the silent ritual of Susan putting her child within fire and in Barbie's loss of voice, an 'insight' finds expression in symbolic action, thus pointing to the futility and inadequacy of language for such modes of being. India's 'silence in stillness' is the inscrutable and menacing power, destructive when not understood, dividing races and bearing down an Englishman. Like the vultures over the Parsee's towers of silence stripping the bones of the dead clean of flesh and skin,

Barbie is purified by total silence: knowing and remembering so much but unable to speak out: "The birds had picked the words clean." Perron is articulating what is basically beyond speech i.e. making 'raids upon the inarticulate.' The deeply subjective feelings, like joy, fear, love, are the most difficult to convey . . . with the crutch of the words themselves.[5]

History is neither enough nor all when one is concerned with expressing the formless in form, silence in articulation. India is experienced by Daphne, Sarah and Barbie as an enlargement of perspectives that upsets and bewilders confined notions of form. Sarah actually responds to the Indian landscape as Scott responds to the Indian experience as a whole- receding, disappearing horizon; expansion that destroys the illusion of mind, hand or eye being able to cope with parts related to whole; a receding mirage. This frightening formlessness of landscape has the multiplicity and elusiveness of Maya- the Many (parts) that have to be seen in relation to the one (whole). Formless and form are analogous to silence and its articulation. As Perron realizes, knowledge of Indian history is never enough for understanding India; actually, the telescoping of time is going beyond history, seeing 1857, Jallianwala Bagh and 1942 as simultaneous. The perception of form in formlessness, the timeless in time, is like listening to silence and stillness behind sound and motion. The novelist is more than a historian, not having to waft for a final version and for the archives, listening into the silent core of all the babble.

NOTES

1. Paul Scott, *The Jewel in the Crown*, 468.
2. George Steiner, *Language and Silence*: "Orpheus with his Myths Claude Levi-Straus," 249.
3. Ibid., 39.
4. Paul Scott, *The Day of the Scorpion,* 148
5. Paul Scott, The Towers of Silence, 170
6. Paul Scott, *A Division of the Spoils*, 301.

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Women in Hemingway

NIBIR K. GHOSH

"My mother never sent me flowers," complained Ernest Hemingway rather ruefully to his friend and confidant, A.E. Hotchner. Hemingway registered his grouse with Hotchner when well past fifty, and with his mother still alive. Ernest Hemingway had his first brush with womanhood in the form of a peculiar relationship that he came to develop with his mother—a relationship flourishing on the fertile though sinister ground of mutual dislike and distrust. And this went on throughout Ernest's stay with his parents until he was ready to wing off to some more congenial surroundings which would give him the necessary independence to carve out his future path and programme. Hemingway was ready to launch on a career of his own choice, not bothered by the demands and bonds of parental authority. Obviously the genteel sophistication, sought to be administered to the other Hemingway children, was not Ernest's cup of tea, and the method and manner in which the parents, especially the mother, had tried to force the pace of inducting culture into their children left young Hemingway with a permanent scar which gave him occasional shivers even in his later life. "My mother was a bitch" and "My father was a coward" were the bitter exclamations that Hemingway unashamedly made in the presence of many friends and admirers much later in life. He could never outlive this scar of childhood, and made repeated references to his unhappy experiences under the parental roof. His vision of an ideal, integrated womanhood seems to have suffered an early and lasting jolt in his mother's spasmodic and fitful enthusiasm for refinement and taste. "Our parents ran their lives and those of their children on the basis of the Victorian morality in which they had been brought up. There were rules which could not be broken, and expectations which abso-

lutely had to be met. The individual and his special needs and circumstances were secondary. If the order of things somehow got fractured, then the wisest course might be a fine and noble pretence which was known as 'living it down.' You did this with the law, the Church, and public opinion."

Ernest himself, recalling his early days with his parents, presents his mother more than once in some very uncomplimentary terms: "Though Mother was temperamental she was basically an honest person who was simply a poor observer. She would get so involved looking at her side of the problem she could forget there was another side." Talking of his father's suicide and of why he couldn't write the promised stories with an American locale, he once remarked that "I always wanted to, but had to wait till after my mother's death. You understand? Now, I don't know. My father died in 1928—shot himself—and left me fifty thousand dollars. . . . When I asked my mother for my inheritance, she said she had already spent it on me. I asked her how. She said on my travel and education. What education? I asked her. Oak Park High School? My only travel, I pointed out, had been taken care of by the Italian army. She didn't answer. . . . My mother was a music nut. . . . When I was in school she forced me to play the cello even though I had absolutely no talent and could not even carry a tune. She took me out of school one year so I could concentrate exclusively on the cello. I wanted to be playing out in the fresh air and she had me chained to that knee-box."

Ernest Hemingway went out into the world a spiritual orphan, an exile in search of a home away from the hypocritic correctness and prudery of his parental home. He actually, in the words of his younger brother, "got formally drummed out of the home just after his twenty-first birthday. Mother and Father managed to carry it off with a magnificent show of solidarity. They not only did it—when it was all over they congratulated each other on the stand they had taken. Disenchanted and disinherited, the young rebel was left with no option but "to move into new fields to conquer" as his father remarked in a letter to his wife.

This break with his family, he had ever loved so deeply and sincerely, and his emotional estrangement with his mother played a decisive and vital role in the formation of his attitudes, specially his attitude towards women. Hemingway, so it appears, reserves all the bitterness and cynicism of which he is capable, for the portrayal of the American female. I think it is here that his traumatic experience of childhood and early youth find a full scope for their free expression. Hemingway betrays almost a pathological aversion for the American woman. Time and again he dwells on the theme as if only to get pleasure and satisfaction out of belabouring the American female of the species for all her real and imagined sins of commission and omission. She has been repeatedly portrayed as the sinner and the sucker, the persecutor and the exploiter of all that is good and great in man.

But this is not to be implied even remotely that Hemingway grew into a confirmed misogynist owing to his estrangement with his family. Certainly he could never again muster the same warmth for his mother, but his over-all view of womanhood is far more pervasive and far more balanced than he is generally credited with. He had in the course of his career as a writer, soldier, sportsman, big-game hunter, deep-sea fisherman and bull-fight expert, come in contact with multifarious aspects of life, of which women formed a very vital part. It has often been argued that it is not necessary to identify the characters of his novels and short stories with those in real life, those he had met and moved with. But one will have to go to the original if one had to judge things in their correct perspective.

Hemingway, of all others, had no scruples about letting anyone into the secret source of his characters. This, of course, may be another matter that the author compounded so many real-life persons into a single fictional character to suit his particular purpose of the moment. And it is true, of his own admission, in the case of many characters, especially women. Hemingway faced life with the ardour and zest of a lover, a lover who is violent and vigorous, and virile, a lover who would very much like to have things at his own terms, and a lover who wouldn't even mind killing the object of his love if he could thereby confer immortality on it. This may be as true of the lion in the jungles of Africa, the bull in the bull-ring, the fish in the sea, as the woman in

bed. It is here that for Hemingway lies the central point of the meaning of life. Elaborating on what he considered to be the border-line between life and death, Hemingway once remarked: "The worst death for anyone is to lose the centre of his being, the thing he really is. Retirement is the filthiest word in the language. Whether by choice or by fate, to retire from what you do—and what you do makes what you are—is to back up into the grave." Again even in the worst moments of his life his mind was centred on how best he could refashion his life so that it could fit into the pattern he had set for himself long ago. His regret was that all that he loved and valued in life was behind him: "What does a man care about? Staying healthy. Working good, Eating and drinking with friends. Enjoying himself in bed. I have not any of them. Do you understand, goddamn it? None of them."

Hemingway meets his women through his protagonists in his novels and short stories in a variety of ways, in a variety of situations. These situations may be as diverse and as removed from each other as a Parisian café from the American Red Cross Hospital ward in Milan, as a Left Bank Spanish mountain region is—threatened by the impending fascist attack—from the calm, rippling waterways of the post-war Venice. Hemingway's women have a quality of admirably fitting into the physical as well as psychological situation of the hero. It is, I think, in accord with the hero's mental make-up of the moment, that he seeks and gets the lady-love after his heart. It may be Lady Brett Ashley, or Catherine Barkley or Maria or Marie Morgan—but all of them with their different social and political background, have a quality of eliciting an emotional response from Hemingway's protagonist, whose own identity and general social background basically remains the same. Lady Brett, with all her drunken orgies and so-called immoral goings-on notwithstanding, does act as a balm, as a shot in the arm for the incapacitated American journalist. Catharine Barkley not only tends and attends to the sick body and soul of Frederic Henry, but also acts both as a brake and a lever whereby Frederic is impelled to making a separate peace with the enemy. Robert Jordan, carrying the cross of his father's suicide—curiously resembling the manner of the death of Dr. Hemingway—and his own impending doom, re-

ceives a whiff of fresh air amid the heat and blaze of intermittent gun-fire, a balm on his raw, burning emotions in the love and attention and complete surrender of Maria. It is girls like Maria and Catharine Barkley, who by themselves stand up to nothing much, but who by virtue of the contrast invested to their personality by the turbulent and uncertain existence of their loves, assume a certain force, a major significance. There is the significance of the fresh water stream, which when found accidentally in the scorching desert, provides a welcome haven from the cruel winds of adversity, violence and bloodshed, even though for a brief, much too brief a period. These heroines, by themselves basically frail and dependent, provide what one may call the eternity of bliss captured in a fleeting moment fast leading to doom and destruction. Such women characters of Hemingway seem to possess an inherent quality of loyalty, submissiveness, self-sacrifice, surrender and moral virtue—the conventional qualities of an ideal woman. Maria has nothing of the dynamism of Pilar and nothing of the dash of Lady Brett Ashley; on the other hand she seems to be a mere shadow, a lovely and lovable shadow, a dreamy substance as soft and delicate as dew on the flower-petal, whose only job—so it appears—is to give Robert Jordan a vision of what a good life he could look forward to—if he were to survive the inevitable tragedy that was awaiting him round the corner.

In the same way Marie Morgan in *To Have and Have Not* has nothing to do with the shady business her husband Harry Morgan is engaged in. She is to be there on the scene, if only to provide her husband with a purpose, a central point of existence. Catherine Barkley manages to steer Frederic Henry clear of the rugged waters of war and violence, and eventually dies in giving birth to his child, as if only to prove to him the ultimate futility and tragedy of cherishing an ideal, that the ideal life of man and woman together is a mere distant vision, a mirage, "that calls from far yet as I follow flies."

Hemingway has yet another type of women characters who seem to provide something of a complement to the gaps that may have been left in the personality and make-up of the male by the turbulent living pattern that he has followed. Pilar, for instance, leaps forth on the mental horizon as the feminine counterpart of

the hero, though by no means is she the heroine in the ordinary sense of the term. She has had, and still has, no scruple whatever about what is called the moral virtue in the conventional sense. But she, to my mind represents the dynamic spirit of the Spanish revolution, who is not averse to war and violence, who does not mind killing as many fascists as possible in the cause of Republicanism. She loves Pablo deeply and is referred to again and again in the novel as the wife or woman of Pablo—a fact of which she is still proud. But she is absolutely in no sympathy with the wayward behaviour and weakening determination brought on by his addiction to the bottle and his advancing age. He has almost become a coward and Pilar calls him so a number of times. But she is the very symbol of womanhood at war with the wrongs perpetrated by naked fascism. The feminine quality about her character is undeniable and it would be wrong to designate her as a masculine woman or even an Amazon. She possesses all the essential qualities which Robert Jordan—and through him Ernest Hemingway—looked for in a woman.

Hemingway appears to recognize in the various women he portrays the quality and character of the Creator, the Preserver and the Destroyer. His women characters like Maria, Catherine and Marie Morgan, by the very fact of their basically feminine role of the passive, submissive and loyal partner of the male point to the essential quality of woman—the beloved, the wife, the mother—in a way the Creator. On the other hand Pilar and Lady Brett seem to fit very well into the mould of the Preserver, the role a woman has to play under certain circumstances. They may themselves perish in the consuming fire of their real or imagined weakness but they remain basically a pillar of support and strength to the male on the physical and psychological planes. Characters like Pilar to Robert Jordan, or Lady Brett to Jake Barnes, appear almost their equals and as such evoke their admiration, a craving for their favours, and not of love—self-surrendering, self-sacrificing love that they expect, Robert Jordan from Maria, or Frederic Henry from Catherine Barkley, or Harry Morgan from Marie.

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Religious Conflict in Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God*

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Religious conflict happens to be the central thematic concern of Chinua Achebe in *Arrow of God*. There arises a conflict between African tribal religion and Christianity as a result of colonial encounter between the native Africans and the British. While dealing with the religious conflict, Chinua Achebe throws light upon several aspects of religion like the sociology, psychology, philosophy, semiotics and ritualism of religion. Anthropology tells us that whenever two cultures come in contact with each other, the dominant culture influences the other culture in a variety of ways. The minor culture is likely to undergo a process of acculturation by being attracted to the dominant (or foreign) culture. At such a juncture some people of the native culture may become acutely conscious of their cultural identity and try to resist the foreign culture. Thus attraction and resistance may be seen in the bi-cultural relationship. Religion being part of culture will have the same pattern of attraction and repulsion towards another religion. In *Arrow of God* religious conflict is foregrounded against the backdrop of political and cultural conflict.

The novel throws light upon several aspects of African religion. The distinctive features of the African religion become conspicuous when they are compared and contrasted with other religions, like, say Hinduism. Formerly the tribal people of Africa used to quarrel among themselves about petty problems. Hence there was no unity among them. The people of some villages used to be attacked by those of other distant villages. Compelled by the contingent crisis the people of six villages decided to unite themselves by accepting a common (supreme) god

called Ulu and by appointing Ezeulu as the Chief Priest of Ulu. Ezeulu, thus assumes a position of religious power as well as responsibility. One of the aims of religion is to unify the believers into a cohesive social bonding and to give them a sense of social security and peace. Ezeulu tries his best to bring about peace between the people of Umuaro and those of Okperi who have been quarrelling over a piece of land.

Although Ezeulu has been elected as the Chief Priest of Ulu and a custodian of religious values, he is not a bachelor but a married man with three wives, four sons and four daughters. He, thus, plays a double role of a householder and a religious head. As a religious authority, he has to regulate and monitor the ritual events in his village and facilitate the harvesting process thereby paving the way for the community happiness. In other words, he is not expected to be content with his private encounter with God, but to discharge his duty as a guardian of the community of believers. Ezeulu is keenly aware of his religious power and wants to exercise it as and when necessary.

> Whenever Ezeulu considered the immensity of his power over the year and the crops and therefore, over the people he wondered if it was real. It was true he named the day for the feast of the Pumpkin Leaves and for the New Yam feast; but he did not choose it. He was merely a watchman. His power was no more than the power of a child over a goat that was said to be his. As long as the goat was alive it could be his; he would find it food and take care of it. But the day it was slaughtered he would know soon enough who the real owner was. "No! The Chief Priest of Ulu was more than that, must be more than that. If he should refuse to name the day there would be no festival—no planting and no reaping. But could he refuse? No Chief Priest had ever refused. So it could not be done. He would not dare."[1]

The authority that Ezeulu enjoys is to be exercised for the welfare of the community in general and not for any selfish or egoistic purpose.

With an awareness of his religious authority as well as responsibility, Ezeulu cuts the roasted yam and puts it in the wooden bowl. After it is cooled he eats it in silence. He has to

perform this sacred duty every New Moon. Likewise he takes the *ofo* staff, sits in front of the shrine and prays to Ulu for rich harvest, prosperity, male progeny and happiness.

> Ulu, I thank you for making me see another new moon. May I see it again and again? This household may be healthy and prosperous. As this is the moon of planting may the six villages plant with profit? May we escape danger in the farm—the bite of a snake or the sting of the scorpion, the mighty one of the scrubland. May we not cut our shinbone with the machete or the hoe? And let our wives bear male children. May we increase in numbers at the next counting of the villages so that we shall sacrifice to you a cow, not a chicken as we did after the last New Yam Feast? May children put their fathers into the earth and not fathers their children. May good meet the face of every man and every woman. (6)

Ezeulu's prayer indicates the comprehensive vision of African religion which includes a desire for the general human health, prosperity, abundance of harvest, escape from various dangers, male progeny, increase of population, natural and chronological sequence of deaths, and good for all. One may easily see here how the African religious ideals embrace individual, social, economic, natural, supernatural, providential and moral aspects of human life.

Ezeulu who articulates his high and sublime ideals through the prayer, is annoyed to remember the petty quarrels among the people of the six villages simply because he had spoken the truth before the white man. His rigorous moral behaviour is not appreciated by the people of Umuaro who have vested interests to satisfy.

> He put the *ofo* back among the *ikenga* and the *okposi*, wiped his mouth with the back of his hand and returned to his place. Every time he prayed for Umuaro bitterness rose into his mouth, a great smouldering anger for the division which had come to the six villages and which his enemies sought to lay on his head. And for what reason? Because he had spoken the truth before the white man. But how could a man who held the holy staff of Ulu know that a thing was a lie and speak it? How could he fail to tell the story as he had heard it from his own father? Even the white man,

> Wintabota understood, though he came from a land no one knew. He had called Ezeulu the only witness of truth. (7)

The Africans believe in the supernatural element like spirits of ancestors and departmental gods. Ezeulu being a religious priest has a good enough knowledge of his religion and mythology. Once his son Obika returns home terrified and tells Ezeulu how he has seen a spirit between two villages i.e. Umuachala and Umunneora, "I knew it was a spirit; my head swelled. . . . Taller than any man I know. . . . He was dressed like a wealthy man. He had an eagle's feather in his red cap. . . . He carried a big tusk across his shoulder." (8) Obika's ignorance is removed by Ezeulu's knowledge. He assures him, "There is no cause to be afraid, my son, you have seen Eru, the Magnificent, the One that gives wealth to those who find favour with him. People sometimes see him at that place in this kind of weather. Perhaps he was returning home from a visit to Idemili or the other deities. Eru harms those who swear falsely before his shrine." (9) Ezeulu has, thus, a deep knowledge of African religion including its ritualistic, supernatural and philosophic aspects.

When the six villages solidarise their life by accepting a common god i.e. Ulu and the god's priest Ezeulu, they heave a temporary sigh of relief. Their faith in their religion offers them spiritual peace and security. But their institutional religion is threatened by a rival religion i.e. Christianity as a consequence of the colonial encounter. As part of the imperialistic agenda, the British people have conquered part of Africa and have been trying to establish their rule there. Religious propaganda and conversion have followed the political conquest. The Africans have no choice but to accept the contingencies of life and make the best out of them. Just as the British have entered their nation without their invitation, Christianity also has come there as an uninvited guest. Ezeulu, the spokesman of the African religion, does not oppose Christianity, but on the contrary, tries to understand it, as he thinks that the white man is very wise.

> The place where the Christians built their place of worship was not far from Ezeulu's compound. As he sat in his *obi* thinking of the

> Festival of the Pumpkin Leaves, he heard their bell, GOME, GOME, GOME, GOME, GOME. His mind turned from the festival to the new religion. He was not sure what to make of it. At first he had thought that since the white man had come with great power and conquest it was necessary that some people should learn the ways of his deity. That was why he had agreed to send his son, Oduche, to learn the new ritual. He also wanted him to learn the white man's wisdom, for Ezeulu knew from what he saw of Wintabota and the stories he heard about his people that the white man was very wise. (42)

Because of his initial curiosity for the knowledge of new religion and respect for the whiteman's wisdom, Ezeulu has allowed his son Oduche to be converted into a Christian so that the latter can understand the new rituals of the Allen religion and also spy on the white man's activities. Oduche goes to the church every Sunday and is trained in the Biblical lore.

But as days go by, Ezeulu begins to have new doubts about the new religion and the ulterior motives of the people of that religion. "But now Ezeulu was becoming afraid that the new religion was like a leper. Allow him a handshake and he wants to embrace. Ezeulu had already spoken strongly to his son who was becoming more strange every day. Perhaps the time had come to bring him out again. But that would happen if, as many oracles prophesied, the white man had come to take over the land and rule? In such a case it would be wise to have a man of your family in his band." (42) Ezeulu tries to come to terms with the colonial contingency in his country. Whenever a politically, economically and organizationally weak religion comes in contact with a strong religion (in all the three aspects), the former is sure to be overwhelmed by the latter. Oduche who has been influenced by Christianity interprets the message of the church bell as 'Leave your yam, leave your cocoyam and come to church.' But Ezeulu feels a sense of doom in the same message. He explains to his youngest son Nwafo, "It tells them to leave their church and their cocoyam, does it? Then it is singing the song of extermination." (43) Ezeulu feels a great threat to his own native religion by the arrival of Christianity.

Ezeulu cannot foresee the exact effect of Christianity on the native religion. His allowing his son Oduche to be converted to Christianity is resented by his wife. "Oduche 's mother, Ugoye, was not happy that her son should be chosen for sacrifice to the white man. She tried to reason with her husband, but he was impatient with her." (46) Ezeulu's reconciliatory attitude to Christianity is deeply upset by the unpredictable events in life. Oduche, far from using the knowledge of Christianity for the reinforcement of the knowledge of his own native religion, feels more and more attracted to Christianity and English language. "He found that he could learn very quickly and he began to think of the day when he could speak the language of the white man, just as their teacher. Mr. Molokwu had spoken with Mr. Holt when he had visited their church." (46) Oduche is even more impressed by the West Indian missionary, Mr. Blackett. He makes very good progress and grows very popular with his teachers and members of the church. Mr. Goodcountry impresses the converts of Umuaro with the tales of the early converts of the Niger Delta by highlighting the Christian values and denigrating the native religious values.

> Mr. Goodcountry told the converts of Umuaro about the early Christians of the Niger Delta who fought the bad customs of their people, destroyed shrines and killed the sacred iguana. He told them of Joshua Hart, his kinsman, who suffered martyrdom in Bonny. 'If we are Christians, we must be ready to die for the faith,' he said. 'You must be ready to kill the python as the people of the rivers killed the iguana. You address the python as Father. It is nothing but a snake, the snake that deceived our first mother, Eve. If you are afraid to kill it do not count yourself a Christian." (47)

There is thus a semiotic war between two systems of signification. In the African religion Python is a sacred animal which symbolizes the divine spirit, but in Christianity the snake symbolizes Satan, evil and temptation. The Christian missionaries try to superimpose the Christian symbolism on that of the native religion in order to distort, suppress and destroy it. Oduche who is an apostate with great enthusiasm and admiration for the new religion fails to understand the confusing and distorting interpreta-

tion of the native religion. His knowledge of the *Bible* has enabled him to accept the Christian interpretation of the snake. When there is a controversy between Unachukwu and Mr. Goodcountry, Oduche defends the latter by saying, "It is not true that *Bible* does not ask us to kill the serpent. Did not God tell Adam to crush its head after it had deceived his wife?" (49) Oduche is not able to understand the symbolic meaning of the python in his own native religion because of his ignorance, innocence and indifference. His ignorance of the native religion comes in handy for the Christian missionaries to brainwash him thoroughly. Mr. Goodcountry appreciates Oduche's knowledge of the *Bible* so much that "He turned to Oduche. 'When the time comes for your baptism you will be called Peter; on this rock will I build my Church'." (49)

Oduche being a new convert to Christianity is overenthusiastic about the Christian values and ideals. Forgetting the native symbolic significance of the sacred python, he begins to view it from the perspective of Christian mythology and consequently considers it as an incarnation of Satan and evil tempting Eve and causing the fall of man. He, therefore, decides to kill the sacred python that is domesticated in his hut.

> At that moment Oduche took his decision. There were two pythons—a big one and a small one, which lived almost entirely in his mother's hut, on top of the wall, which carried the roof... Oduche decided that he would hit one of them on the head with a big stick. He would do it so carefully and secretly that when it finally died people would think it had died of its own accord.
>
> Six days passed before Oduche found a favourable moment, and during this time his heart lost some of its strength. He decided to take the smaller python. He pushed it down from the wall with his stick but could not bring himself to smash its head. Then he thought he had heard people coming and had to act quickly. With lightning speed he picked it up as he had seen their neighbours, Anosi, do many times, and carried it into his sleeping room. A new and exciting thought came to him then. He opened the box, which Moses had built for him, took out his singlet and towel and locked the python inside. He felt a great relief within. The python would die for lack of air, and he would be responsible for its death with-

> out being guilty of killing it, which seemed to him a very happy compromise. (50)

But Oduche's expectation has not come true. Far from being choked to death, the python has been wriggling and struggling within the box thereby attracting the attention of the inhabitants of the hut. Akueke, Matefi, Ugoye and others notice that Oduche's box is moving and draw Ezeulu's attention to it. Puzzled by the news of the moving box, Ezeulu comments, "There is nothing that a man will not hear nowadays." (43) They bring the box from Oduche's room into the central room. "Oduche's box was not actually moving, but it seemed to have something inside it struggling to be free. Ezeulu stood before it wondering what to do. Whatever was inside the box became more violent and actually moved the box around." (43) Then Ezeulu carries the box outside. First he thinks of opening the box with a matchet, but later he changes his mind and tries to open it with a spear. Everybody in his household is curious and afraid of seeing what is inside the box.

> He took the spear from Obika and wedged its thin and between the box and its lid. Obika tried to take the spear from him, but he would not hear it.
>
> 'Stand aside? He told him, 'What do you think is fighting inside? Two cocks?' He checked his teeth in an effort to lever the top open. It was not easy and the old priest was covered with sweat by the time he succeeded in forcing the box. What they saw was enough to blind a man. Ezeulu stood speechless. The women and children who had watched from afar came running down. Ezeulu's neighbor Anosi, who was passing by branched in and soon a big crowd had gathered. In the broken box lay an exhausted royal python.
>
> 'May the Great Deity forbid,' said Anosi.
>
> 'An abomination has happened,' said Akueke.
>
> Matefi said, 'If this is medicine, may it lose its potency.'
>
> Ezeulu let the spear from his hand. 'Where is Oduche' he asked. No one answered. 'I said where is Oduche?' His voice was terrible. (44).

Ezeulu as well as his relatives and neighbours are flabbergasted by Oduche's locking in of the sacred python, which is a great sin according to the native African religion. Ezeulu is so angry with his son's sinful act that he vows, "Today I shall kill the boy with my own hands. . . . I have said it." (45) Noticing the terrible anger of Ezeulu and its consequences, Oduche's mother Ugoye begins to cry. Anosi asks Ugoye to send a message to Oduche not to return home lest his father should kill him. Matefi exclaims, "We are fortunate the python is not dead." (45)

Oduche's sin is attributed to the missionary zeal of Christians converting the natives into the new religion. Conversion is a very disturbing aspect of colonial encounter between two cultures. Anosi who is on his way to Umunneora to buy seed-yams from his friends comments, 'I have already said that what this new religion will bring to Umuaro wears a hat on its head.' As he went he stopped and told anyone he met what Ezeulu's son had done. Before midday the story had reached the ears of Ezidemili whose deity Idemili owned the royal python." (45)

The python episode has, thus, created a lot of disturbance among the natives of Umuaro and the neighbouring villages. The believers are shocked by the event and want the sin to be expiated properly. Idemili whose priest is Ezidemili owns the royal python. Now Ezeulu has to answer the community for his son's abomination. One day a young man from Umunneora comes to Ezeulu and says, "I am sent by Ezidemili. . . . Ezidemili wants to know what you are going to do about the abomination which has been committed in your house." (53-54) But Ezeulu refuses to give any answer to him. The whole community is unhappy with Ezeulu who has allowed his son to be converted into a Christian and to commit the unpardonable sin. Being a religious man, Ezeulu attributes the solution of every problem in his wife to the grace of his god, Ulu. When his son-in-law Onwuzuligbo takes his wife Akueke after a gap of few days, Ezeulu advises him to treat her well and not to beat her. He is grateful to his god for solving the matrimonial problem of his daughter and son-in-law. "Ezeulu was grateful to Ulu for bringing about so unexpectedly the mending of the quarrel between Akueke and her husband. He

is sure that Ulu did it to put him in the right mind for purifying the six villages before they put their crops into the ground. That very evening his six assistants come to him for their orders and he sends them to announce each man in his own village that the Feast of the Pumpkin Leaves would take place on the following Nwko." (63-64) Being in a happy frame of mind Ezeulu decides to conduct the Feast of the Pumpkin Leaves and his assistants announce the date of the Feast in all the six villages.

People gather for the market-day. Matefi and her younger companions go to the market place. The women are heavily dressed in ivory and velvet. "The market place was filling up steadily with men and women from every quarter. Because it was specially their day, the women wore their finest cloths and ornaments of ivory and beads according to the wealth of their husbands or, in a few exceptional cases, the strength of their arms. Most of the men brought palm wine in pots carried on the head or gourds dangling by the side from a loop of rope." (66)

The Feast of the Pumpkin Leaves has the religious significance of binding the people of the six villages psychologically, socially and spiritually. It acts as a means of achieving solidarity and unity for the people. "A stranger to this year's festival might go away thinking that Umuaro had never been more united in all its history. In the atmosphere of the present gathering the great hostility between Umunneora and Umuachala seemed, momentarily, to lack significance. Yesterday if two men from the two villages had met they would have watched each other's movement with caution and suspicion; tomorrow they would do so again. But today they drank palm wine freely together because no man in his right mind would carry poison to a ceremony of purification; he might as well go out into the rain carrying potent, destructive medicines on his person." (66) The festival has a great purificatory value. Ezeulu's younger wife, Ugoye has been feeling a sense of guilt because of Oduche's defilement of the house. She wants to pray for the purification of her hut. "In previous years she would have been among the first to arrive at the market place; she would have been carefree and joyful. But this year her feet seemed to drag because of the load on her mind.

She was going to pray for the cleansing of her hut, which Oduche had defiled. She was no longer one of many, many Umuaro women taking part in a general and all-embracing rite. Today she stood in special need. The weight of this feeling all but crushed the long awaited pleasure of wearing her new ivory bracelets which had earned her so much envy and hostility from her husband's other wife, Matefi." (66-67)

The Festival of the Pumpkin Leaves provides the people of the six villages an opportunity to recognize and reward the talent of people for their lifetime achievement. On this occasion they wish to confer the *Ozo* title on the old drummer, Obiozo Ezikolo. "Obiozo Ezikolo was now an old man, but his mastery of the king of all drums was still unrivalled. Many years ago when he was still a young man the six villages had decided to confer the *Ozo* title on him for his great art which stirred the hearts of his kinsmen so powerfully in times of war. Now in his old age it was a marvel where he got the strength to work as he did. Even climbing on to the Ikolo was a great feat for a man half his age. Now those who were near enough surrounded the drum and looked upwards to admire the ancient drummer." (69)

The women with their pumpkin leaves come and stand in a circle to watch Ezeulu's religious performance. The *ogene* sounds again. The Ikolo begins to salute the Chief Priest. The women wave leaves from side to side across their faces, muttering prayers to Ulu, the god that kills and saves. Ezeulu's appearance is greeted with a loud shout that must have been heard in all the neighbouring villages.

On this religious occasion, Ezeulu is not an ordinary man but one possessed with supernatural or divine presence. His special make-up and costumes signify his incarnation of the divine presence of Ulu. His appearance easily brings to our mind the possessive dance of Puravantas in Karnataka incarnating the spirit of Lord Virabhadra. "He wore smoked raffia which descended from his waist to the knee. The left half of his body—from forehead to toes—was painted with white chalk. Around his head was a leather band from which an eagle's feather pointed backwards. On his right hand he carried *Nne Ofo*, the mother of all staffs of

authority in Umuaro and in his left he held a long iron staff which kept up a quivering rattle whenever he stuck its pointed end into the earth. He took a few long strides, pausing on each foot. Then he ran forward again as though he had seen a comrade in the vacant air; he stretched his arm and waved his staff to the right and to the left, and those who were near enough heard the knocking together of Ezeulu's staff and another, which no one saw. At this many fled in terror before the priest and the unseen presence around him." (70) Then Ezeulu approaches the centre of the market place and enacts the First Coming of Ulu and how each of the four Days put obstacles in his way. Then he goes to the centre of the market place and dances. He jumps forward and begins to go round the market place. The women wave their leaves round their heads and fling them at him. Ugoye murmurs her prayer when Ezeulu comes near her circle, "Great Ulu who kills and saves, I implore you to cleanse my household of all defilement. If I have spoken it with my mouth or seen it with my eyes, or if I have heard it with my ears or stepped on it with my foot or if it has come through my children or my friends or kinsfolk let it follow these leaves." (72)

The offering of leaves is a typical African ritual, which symbolizes purification of life in general. Chinua Achebe describes the ritual minutely and graphically. The final phase of the ritual is described as follows, "The six messengers followed closely behind the priest and at intervals. One of them bent down quickly and picked up at random one bunch of leaves and continued running. The Ikolo drum worked itself into a frenzy during the Chief Priest's flight especially its final stages when he, having completed the full circle of the market place, ran with increasing speed into the sanctuary of his shrine, his messengers at his heels. As soon as they disappeared the Ikolo broke off its beating abruptly with one last KOME. The mounting tension which had gripped the entire market place and seemed to send its breath going up, up and up exploded with this last bent of the drum and released a vast and deep breathing down. But the moment of relief was very short-lived. The crowd seemed to rouse itself quickly to the knowledge that their Chief Priest was safe in

his shrine, triumphant over the sins of Umuaro which he was now burying deep into the earth with the six bunches of leaves." (72-73) By burying the pumpkin leaves, Ezeulu ritually, hence symbolically, buries the sins of the six villages and unites them psychologically, socially and spiritually. Ezeulu feels a great physical strain in dancing and enacting the religious ritual. His wives worry about his health, but "Ezeulu was not as broken down as his young wife had feared. True, he had pains in his feet and thighs and his spittle had a bitter taste. But he had forestalled the worst effects of his exertion by having his body rubbed with a light ointment of camwood as soon as he returned home and by ensuring that a log fire burned beside his low bamboo bed all night. There was no medicine equal to camwood and fire. Very soon the priest would rise as sound as newly fired clay." (86-87)

The colonial situation in Africa has created certain peculiar problems for the British rulers. They, for example, could not understand the African languages, their behaviour, their rituals, religion, mythology, and superstitions. Without a proper knowledge of the cultural specificities of Africa, it is very difficult for the British rulers to control or win the hearts of the native Africans. Nor can they hope to achieve an inward knowledge of an alien culture within a short span of life. They, therefore, think of introducing an indirect rule in Africa by appointing the local chiefs as their liaison officers between the British administrators and the natives. Winterbottom, the District Collector of Okperi thinks of appointing Ezeulu, the fetish priest, as one of the Paramount Chiefs on account of his truthful nature. Winterbottom expresses his opinion to Clarke, "I think I told you the story of the fetish priest who impressed me most favourably by speaking the truth in the land case between these people here and Umuaro. . . . Well I have now decided to appoint him Paramount Chief for Umuaro. I've gone through the records of the case again and found that the man's title is Ezeulu. The prefix *eze* in Ibo means king. So the man is a kind of priest-king." (107)

Winterbottom sends a Court Messenger and his escort to Ezeulu. Accordingly the two messengers travel from Okperi to Umuaro, enquire people about Ezeulu's house and reach there.

After the exchange of amicabilities between the Court Messenger and Ezeulu, the former comes straight to the business, "It is now time to say why I have come, for a toad does not run in the day time unless something is after it. I have not come all the way from Okperi to stretch my legs. Your own kinsman here has told you how Kaputin Winta-bor-tom has put me in charge of many of his affairs. He is the chief of all the white men in this part. . . . Your friend Wintabota has ordered you to appear before him tomorrow morning." (138) He further tells Ezeulu that he would arrange a meeting with Winterbottom at the earliest. "There are many people waiting to see the white man and you may have to wait in Okperi for three or four days before your turn comes. But I know that a man like you would not want to spend many days outside his village. If you do me well I shall arrange for you to see him tomorrow." (139)

Although ordered by the District Commissioner Winterbottom, Ezeulu is such a self-respected man that he does not want to oblige him. He does not recognize the superior authority of the British Officer. He, therefore, answers quite curtly, "You must first return however, and tell your white man that Ezeulu does not leave his hut. If he wants to see me, he must come here. Nwodika's son who has showed you the way can also show him." (139) The messenger is really puzzled by Ezeulu's point-blank answer. He asks him in utter disbelief, "Do you know what you are saying my friend?" (139) Ezeulu is firm in his decision and says, "Go home and give my message to your master." (139) He does not yield even to his close friend Akuebue's persuasion.

But Ezeulu wants to consult the elders of the six villages. He, therefore, sends an old man to beat the *ikolo* drum in the six villages and call a meeting. When the elders come to his place of meeting, Ezeulu tells them how he has been ordered by the white man to go and meet him at Okperi and seeks their opinion about the same. "I thought about it for a long time and decided that Umuaro should join with me in seeing and hearing what I have seen and heard, for when a man sees a snake all by himself he may wonder whether it is an ordinary snake or the untouchable python. So I said to myself: Tomorrow I shall summon Umuaro

and tell them." (142) Since Ezeulu is a representative of the six villages, he wants to consult the elders of the villages before taking a decision. The elders deliberate about the matter thoroughly, and conclude that it would be rather foolhardy to ignore the call of the white man. Nwokeke Nnabenyi suggests that six elders of Umuaro should go with their Chief Priest to Okperi. But Ezeulu does not want any escort to go with him as he has the moral courage to face the white man, "You yourselves know whether Ezeulu is the kind of man to run away because the white man has sent a message to him. If I had stolen his goat or killed his brother or fucked his wife then I might plunge into the bush when I heard his voice. But I have not offended him in any way. Now, as for what I shall do I had set my mind on it before I asked *Ikolo* to summon you. But if I had done anything without first speaking to you, you might turn round and say: Why did he not tell us? Now I have told you and happiness fills my mind." (145) Thus after bringing the news to the notice of the elders of six villages, Ezeulu decides to go alone to Okperi to meet the white man.

But Winterbottom, who learns from the Court Messenger about Ezeulu's refusal to oblige him, feels insulted and therefore issues a warrant to bring in Ezeulu and asks Tony Clarke to lock him up as soon as he comes. "Winterbottom was understandably enraged when the messenger came back with the insulting reply from the self-important fetish-priest. He immediately signed a warrant of arrest in his capacity as magistrate for the apprehension of the priest and gave instructions for two policemen to go to Umuaro first thing in the morning and bring the fellow in. 'As soon as he comes,' he told Clarke, 'you are to lock him up in the guardroom. I do not wish to see him until after my return from Enugu. By that time he should have learnt good manners. I won't have my natives thinking they can treat the administration with contempt'." (149) Accordingly the corporals go to Umuaro in search of Ezeulu.

When Ezeulu goes to the DC's office, he is arrested and kept in a guardroom by Tony Clarke's order. Meanwhile Winterbottom has collapsed into a delirium and people fear that he may not

see the dawn and even attribute his plight to Ezeulu's magical powers. At night in the jail Ezeulu sees a dream in which the people of Umuaro feel that their god Ulu has become powerless now, "He saved our fathers from the warriors of Abam but he cannot save us from the white man. . . . Then the people seized the Chief Priest who had changed from Ezeulu's grandfather to himself and began to push him from one group to another. Some spat on his face and called him the priest of a dead god." (159)

The dream seen by Ezeulu has the quality of an ominous vision prophesying the destruction of the native god by the white man and his god. Anyway Ezeulu spends four days in the jail rather mechanically and helplessly. During his leisure hours he begins to think about his own people who had not listened to his advice because of jealousy. He, therefore, decides to fight with them and take revenge against them. He considers his own people and not the white people as his real enemy. The feeling of revenge against his own people remains clearly defined in his mind.

On the fourth day, when Ezeulu receives a summons to see Mr. Tony Clarke and meets him, the latter asks the former through an interpreter if Ezeulu is willing to be the Paramount Chief of the British Government. But Ezeulu flatly refuses the offer. He tells the interpreter, "Tell the white man that Ezeulu will not be anybody's chief, except Ulu." (175) Although the white man wants to do a favour by elevating him above his fellows, Ezeulu scorns the offer. Tony Clark considers him a madcap and orders him to go back to the prison. He is really angry at Ezeulu's arrogance and indifference and exclaims, "A witch-doctor making a fool of the British administration in public." (175)

Ezeulu's refusal to accept the post of a Paramount Chief is unprecedented in the history of the six villages of Africa. Day by day his reputation grows fast. His rejection of the prestigious offer is variously interpreted by his friends and enemies. Nwaka of Umunneora attributes Ezeulu's so-called madness to his mother's madness. But his friends consider him a dignified man

of high principles. Ezeulu is retained in the prison for thirty-two days. He, therefore, earns the sympathy of his fellowmen.

In the absence of Captain Winterbottom who has been recovering slowly from his illness, Tony Clarke does not know what to do with the fetish-priest. Having realized the utter futility of detaining him in the prison, Tony Clarke releases Ezeulu one day. Ezeulu laughs at the sheer absurdity of the whole situation and travels home with a sense of elation as well as bitterness.

Ezeulu's experience of imprisonment has not only humiliated him but also awakened the feeling of revenge against his own people, and against Idemili. He thinks of revenge and reconciliation alternately. "Meanwhile, Ezeulu had pursued again his thought on the coming struggle and began to probe with the sensitiveness of a snail's the possibility of reconciliation or, if that was too much, of narrowing down the area of conflict. Behind his thinking was of course the knowledge that the fight would not begin until the time of harvest after three months more. So there was plenty of time." (191)

But when Ezeulu is thinking of the alternatives like revenge or reconciliation with his enemy i.e. Idemili, he is supernaturally reminded by his god Ulu that he is only a medium and an arrow in the bow of God; that he should only play his role as a mediator and not as an independent power. "'Ta! Nwanu!' barked Ulu in his ear, as a spirit would in the ear of an impertinent human child. 'Who told you that this was your own fight? I say who told you that this was your own fight to arrange the way it suits you? You want to save your friends who brought you palm wine he-he—he—he!' Only the insane could sometimes approach the menace and mockery in the laughter of deities—a dry, skeletal laugh. 'Beware you do not come between my victim and me or you may receive blows not meant for you! Do you not know what happens when two elephants fight? Go home and sleep and leave me to settle my quarrel with Idemili, whose envy seeks to destroy me that his python may again come to power. Now you tell me how it concerns you. I say go home and sleep. As for me and Idemili we shall fight to the finish and whoever throws the other down will strip him of his anklet!'" (191-92) Ezeulu is re-

minded by his god about his role only as mediator or representative. Now Ezeulu understands the past events in the light of new knowledge that he has acquired. "After that there was no more to be said. Who was Ezeulu to tell his deity how to fight the jealous cult of the sacred python? It was a fight of the gods. He was no more than an arrow in the bow of his god. This thought intoxicated Ezeulu like palm wine. New thoughts tumbled over themselves and past events took on new, exciting significance. Why had Oduche imprisoned a python in his box? It had been blamed on the white man's religion; but was that the true cause? What if the boy was also an arrow in the hand of Ulu?" (192)

Ezeulu realizes that his own thinking about the white man and his religion as his enemies had been nullified by his decision to allow his son Oduche to be converted to Christianity. He attributes this phenomenon to the triumph of the spiritual side of his personality over the mundane human side. He thinks he has obeyed the dictates of his god subconsciously. He realizes the deeper pattern of events in his life.

> And what about the white man's religion and even the white man himself? This was close on profanity but Ezeulu was now in a mood to follow things through. Yes, what about the white man himself? After all he had once taken sides with Ezeulu and, in a way had taken sides with him again lately by exiling him, thus giving him a weapon with which to fight his enemies. If Ulu had spotted the white man as an ally from the very beginning, it would explain many things. It would explain Ezeulu's decision to send Oduche to learn the ways of the white man. It was true Ezeulu had given other explanations for his decision but those were the thoughts that had come into his head at the time. One half of him was man and the other half *mmo*—the half that was painted over with white chalk at important religious moments. And half of the things he ever did were done by this spirit side. (192)

Ezeulu, thus, sees everything from a higher, i.e. spiritual perspective and accepts his own role as a mere medium in the cosmic pattern. He has realized that his real enemy is not the white man or Christianity, but his own people.

Ezeulu has decided to hit Umuaro at its most vulnerable point—the Feast of the New Yam. The annual festival is intended to bring together all the six villages and renew their sense of solidarity. When Ezeulu refuses to announce the date of the Feast of the New Yam, some people, like Nwosisi from the village of Umuogwugwu and Obiesili, approach Ezeulu and remind him about the announcement of the festival. But Ezeulu snubs them by saying, "I have never needed to be told the duties of the priesthood." (204)

The news of Ezeulu's refusal to call the New Yam Feast spreads through Umuaro very rapidly. It is indeed an unprecedented thing in their life. So some ten men with several prestigious titles go and meet Ezeulu and remind him about the announcement of the date of the festival. Ezeulu explains the reason very clearly; "I need not speak in riddles. You all know what our custom is; I only call a new festival when there is only one yam left from the last. Today I have three yams and so I know that the time has not come." (207) The people understand Ezeulu's religious point of view and are helplessness in the matter. They know that the delay in the eating of the last three yams is caused by the white man's imprisonment of Ezeulu. But Nature cannot wait for Ezeulu's delayed action. The people of Umuaro have to harvest their yams at the right time to keep themselves alive and to prevent the ruin of crops by the delay of harvesting. Thus there is discordance between the pressing need for the festival of yam and the technical fulfillment of the religious formality culminating in an emergency. In order to overcome the emergency, ten elders of Umuaro request Ezeulu to eat the yams and announce the Festival of New Yam and promise to take the blame on them, "Yes, we are Umuaro. Therefore listen to what I am going to say. Umuaro is now asking you to go and eat those remaining yams today and name the day of the next harvest. Do you hear me well? I said go and eat those yams today, not tomorrow; and if Ulu says we have committed an abomination let it be on the heads of the ten of us here. You will be free because we have set you to it, and the person who sets a

child to catch a shrew should also find him water to wash the odour from his hand. We shall find you to water." (208)

But Ezeulu clarifies the point that he is helpless in the matter, as he is only a medium of his god. "I am the Chief Priest of Ulu and what I have told you is his will not mine. Do not forget that I too have yam-fields and that my children, my kinsmen and my friends—yourselves among them—have also planted yams. It could not be my wish to ruin all these people. It could not be my wish to make the smallest man in Umuaro suffer. But this is not my doing. The gods sometimes use us as a whip." (208) Thus Ezeulu pleads his helplessness in the matter and has brought the grievance of his god to the notice of his people. The elders want to appease the god with a sacrifice and rectify the wrong i.e. the gap of time in the eating of yams by the priest. The elders request Ezeulu to consult his god for the right message. Ezeulu wants to kill two birds with a single stone. In his refusing to eat the remaining yams, he not only fulfils the religious formality but also secretly wants to take revenge against the people of Umuaro for not taking care of him during his imprisonment by the white man. His egoism has been working very sophisticatedly and secretly. Nevertheless, he wants to consult the oracle of Ulu to solve the problem of his people. He, therefore, goes to the shrine of Ulu.

> As he promised the leaders of Umuaro Ezeulu returned to the shrine of Ulu in the morning. He entered the bare, outer room and looked round vacantly. Then he placed his back against the door of the inner room, which not even his assistants dared enter. The door gave under the pressure of his body and he walked in backwards. He guided himself by running his left hand along one of the sidewalks. When he got to the end of it, he moved a few steps to the right and stood directly in front of the earth mound, which represented Ulu. From the rafters right round the room the skulls of all past chief priests looked down on the mound and on their descendant and successor... As Ezeulu cast his string of cowries the bell of Oduche's people began to ring. For one brief moment he was distracted by its sad, measured monotone and he thought how strange it was that it would sound so near-much nearer then it did in his compound. (209-10)

Ezeulu has drawn a blank in his consultation with his god. "Ezeulu's announcement that his consultation with the deity had produced no result and that the six villages would be locked in the old year for two moons longer spread such alarm as had not been known in Umuaro in living memory." (210)

Ezeulu's unwillingness to solve the problem of six villages on the pretext of religious formality makes him lose the public sympathy. He fails to understand the basic truth that it is the clan which has created its god rather than the god creating the clan. He fails to realize the truth that gods are meant for the advancement of human happiness rather than for ruining it. He could easily have exercised his spiritual magnanimity by ignoring the rigid religious formality and eaten the remaining yams to save his people from the emergency of hunger and starvation. Far from channelising his raw emotions into sublime ones, he indulges in the negative emotion of revenge by neglecting his higher responsibility of protecting the community. Naturally, as he has displeased the community, he has to face the wrath of the community. "Almost overnight Ezeulu had become something of a public enemy in the eyes of all and, as was to be expected, his entire family shared in his guilt. His children came up against it on their way to the stream and his wives suffered hostility in the market." (211) The people of Umuaro begin to dislike Ezeulu and the members of his family as they see through his action. As Akuebue the elderly man explains it to Ogbuefi Ofoka,

> I have not said that Ezeulu is telling a lie with the name of Ulu or that he is not. What we told him was to go and eat the yams and we would take the consequences. But he would not do it. Why? Because the six villages allowed the white man to take him away. That is the reason. He has been trying to see how he could punish Umuaro and now he has the chance. The house he has been planning to pull down has caught fire and saved him the labor. (213)

Akuebue rightly identifies Ezeulu's concealed pride in his non-compromise with the situation. Ezeulu forgets the basic fact that it is the clan who have created the god rather than the god who has created the clan. Though a religious priest and leader, he has not understood the fundamental truth of religion and not surren-

dered his private self to the public self. In spite of the request of the elders of six villages, he refuses to yield to them merely on the pretext of non-approval of the same by his god. Nwaka, the rival of Ezeulu had said about him, "I have been watching this Ezeulu for many years. He is a man of ambition, he wants to be king, priest, diviner, all" (27). His assessment of Ezeulu's nature has come true. Ezeulu's egoism has culminated into his intransigent and non-compromising behaviour. Ezeulu's egoistic intransigence affects the economic life of the six villages, especially Umuaro very adversely. The family of Ogbuefi Amalu is hit hard by the postponement of the harvest. Before Amalu dies in the rainy season, he ordered his son Aneto to conduct his second burial and feast within four months and slaughter a bull. Since yams are not available, Aneto consults the oracle and asks the spirit of his father if he could delay the second burial and feast for some more time until yams are available. But the oracle says 'no'. So Aneto has got to arrange it immediately.

Everyone blames Ezeulu for delaying the harvest. The people of neighbouring villages begin to have profit by selling their yams to the natives of Umuaro. Ezeulu's technical adherence to his principles causes a great inconvenience to his society. His unwillingness to cope with the emergency earns the wrath of his people and affects the moral order. Consequently he becomes more and more lonely and alienated from the natives of Umuaro.

> Because no one came near enough to see his anguish—and if they had seen it they would not have understood—they imagined that he sat in his hut gloating over the distress of Umuaro. But although he would not for any reason now see the present trend reversed he carried more punishment and more suffering than all his fellows. What troubled him most—and he alone seemed to be aware of it at present—was that the punishment was not for now alone but for all time. It would afflict Umuaro like an *ogulu-aro* disease, which counts a year and returns to its victim. Beneath all anger in his mind lay a deeper compassion for Umuaro, the clan which long, long ago when lizards were in ones and twos chose his ancestor to carry their deity and go before them challenging every obstacle and confronting every danger on their behalf. (219)

The non-availability of yams in Umuaro has, obviously, created a great problem of starvation and financial scarcity. The people of Umuaro are beset with the problem of survival. The Christian missionaries want to take advantage of the situation to attract the natives to their religion. Mr. Goodcounty is ready for a little war against the royal python. He wants to build a church at Umuaro at the New Yam Festival time. He even announces that the natives may bring not only one yam but also many yams, crop, and live stock or money to the Almighty God instead of taking it to Ulu. Akuebue, who knows and sympathizes with Ezeulu's helplessness, tells him how the Christian missionaries have been inviting the people of Umuaro to harvest their yams with donations to the church. Ezeulu is really very angry with Oduche for not reporting the matter to him. He reminds him that he has sent him to the church to be his eye and ear. Thus Ezeulu's delaying tactics have created a great crisis of survival for the people of Umuaro.

After biding his time, "At last another new moon came and he ate the twelfth yam. The next morning he sent word to his assistants to announce that the New Yam feast would be eaten in twenty-eight days." (221) But by that time, more than sufficient damage has been done to Umuaro. As Ezeulu has violated the moral order of life, he has to pay a heavy price for that. When Aneto requests Obika to help him in the second burial of his father, Obika initially refuses on account of his fever, but finally agrees to go with him. Ozumba ties a skirt of ropes to Obika and conducts the ritual of night spirits. Eight men start singing the chorus where Obika has left. But Obika dies suddenly and unexpectedly. Ozumba takes Obika's dead body to Ezeulu who is shocked beyond measure and starts crying. Ezeulu suffers great sorrow and humiliation. He asks his god Ulu why He treated him the way he did. "At any other time Ezeulu would have been more than a match to his grief. He would have been equal to any pain not compounded with humiliation. But why, he asked himself again and again, why had Ulu chosen to deal thus with him, to strike him down and then cover him with mud? What was his offence? Had he not divined the god's will and obeyed it?" (229)

Ezeulu persists in his thinking that he has been right in his action and wonders why God should snatch away his son. He fails to see the other side of the coin. But the people of Umuaro think that the haughty priest Ezeulu has rightly suffered retribution and that the clan has won at last. "So in the end only Umuaro and its leaders saw the final outcome. To them the issue was simple. Their god had taken sides with them against his headstrong and ambitious priest and thus upheld the wisdom of their ancestors—that no man however great was greater than his people; that no one ever won judgement against his clan." (230) That is the reason why the novel may be described as "a tragedy of power, of historic confrontation where Ezeulu, the obstinate, overbearing and overweening Chief Priest of Umuaro is ruined by his lack of ancestral wisdom and by the historic forces beyond his control. In the end Ezeulu is betrayed by his own villagers, is disillusioned and is punished by his own deity."[2] Ulu has not only destroyed Ezeulu but also brought disaster on himself. "If this was so then Ulu had chosen a dangerous time to uphold that truth for in destroying his priest he had also brought disaster on himself, like the lizard in the fable who ruined his mother's funeral by his own hand. For a deity who chose a moment such as this to chastise his priest or abandon him before his enemies was inciting people to take liberties, and Umuaro was just ripe to do so." (230) Now that the native god has become powerless, the Christian god grows powerful in Umuaro and attracts many people to the church. "The Christian harvest which took place a few days after Obika's death saw more people than even Goodcountry could have dreamed. In his extremity many a man sent his son with a yam or two to offer to the new religion and to bring back the promised immunity. Thereafter any yam harvested in his fields was harvested in the name of the son." (230) The novel thus shows the final triumph of Christianity over the native African religion as part of the colonial situation. "In *Arrow of God* the traditional culture is still a forceful and vital aspect of life. Achebe highlights in the novel the weaknesses and the disruptive forces within the organic and coherent society represented by Ezeulu's rivals like Nwaka, which are more responsible for the

disintegration of the traditional society than the mere presence of the white man's culture."[3] It may thus be said that the triumph of Christianity in Umuaro is brought about by the triple factors like the disunity among the native Africans, the concealed pride and ambition of the priest and the liberal approach of the Christian missionaries.

Arrow of God is a complex novel in which Chinua Achebe has foregrounded the religious conflict against the background of colonial encounter between African and British cultures, acting as a historical force. Chinua Achebe has enriched the texture of narrative with innumerable African proverbs, descriptions of folk beliefs, myths, dreams, visions, oracles and supernatural events. He has created a graphic socio-anthropological picture of the Igbo society thereby setting a model for the other Commonwealth writers of other countries.

NOTES

1. Chinua Achebe, *Arrow of God* (London: Heinemann, 1980), p. 3.
2. A. Khayyoom, *Chinua Achebe: A Study of His Novels* (New Delhi: Prestige, 1997), p. 55.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

Feminism in the Groves of Academe: Illusion and Reality

MELVA POPE

Feminism, like Coke and Pepsi, has virtually swamped the Indian market. Transported from its essentially western moorings, it has pervaded the scene of Indian academe in a big way. A tidal wave of seminars, symposiums, workshops, national and international conferences on various aspects of feminism have resulted in an uninhibited deconstruction of texts of Kamala Das, Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy and a host of others. Recent trends in feminist publications are dominated by summaries, retrospectives and anthologies, re-prints of 'pathfinding' feminist essays, merely as a means to 'get by' as a feminist critic/writer and give the appearance of a continuous growth and development of feminist thought.

In the cacophony of diverse opinions, the feminist movement has begun to lose not only its edge but also its sense of direction. Theoretical feminism has so engrossed the academics that one seems to have lost track of what feminism actually represents or stands for. As a starting point for what this paper aims at, I would like to cite the example of how, about four decades ago, a group of seven illiterate and semi-literate women from the Lohana community of Gujarat ventured out on an economic drive using the only skill they had: cooking, and with a borrowed sum of Rs. 80/- went on to build one of the best known corporates, the Shri Mahila Griha Udyog Lijjat Papad, which now boasts of a 315 crore turnover, a network of 40000 sisters and a corporate czarina, Jashwantiben Popad, who has won the *Economic Times* corporate award for the business-woman of the year 2001-02. Jashwantiben's rise to fame unfolds a story from which we academics have a lot to learn.

The achievements of Jashwantiben stand out as a new milestone in the feminist movement in the Indian context because of her unique vision of comprehending ground reality wherein she could evolve a system that permitted women to be architects of their own fate. The names of Germaine Greer, Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Millett and others may not mean anything to her. She may be totally ignorant of the fame of Mary Wollstonecraft or John Stuart Mill but what this virtually unknown lady with no idea of pioneering any feminist movement succeeded in achieving was based on her understanding the quintessence of the agenda of feminism which may be defined as women's ability to think about their subjugated role in history and then to do something about it: a historical self-awareness accompanied by purposeful change that goes beyond heated debates and scholarly discourse. It is quite obvious that the problem with theoretical awareness is the disjunction between feminist theory (as a growth industry) and feminist politics.

The dichotomy that exists between academic and political feminism has far-reaching implications. The underlying social hierarchy, veiled by the rhetoric of universal sisterhood and equality is what seems to create the main antagonisms within feminism. Women workers—secretaries, clerks, teachers, cleaners, cooks, housewives etc. form an hierarchical structure common to societal perspectives; they derive little or no support from their 'sisters' who collectively struggle under the design of the 'patriarchal' order. This hierarchical image clearly undermines the scope of feminist intellectual pursuits which in actual effect further the principles of 'patriarchal' ideologies. The obsession to outsmart the other in a marketable academic enterprise lacks ethics and becomes merely a 'career' less identifiable as oppositional politics. This is the paradox—the academy that promotes and propagates women's studies and gender sensitivity is also responsible for perpetuating and reinforcing patriarchal perceptions of social reality.

Feminism in the groves of academe in India seems to have sprung from the idea of sophistication and nostalgic moods which came to the fore in the 1980s and 1990s whereby an at-

mosphere of exclusionism endemic to a feminism—seemed to be the end result of all feminist aspirations. This is a kind of feminism that work-a-day women find difficult to identify with. The statement of Evelyn Tension, who entered the feminist movement of conferences and meetings, is representative of this large section of women: "it's about hearing millions of words flying around our heads and it's not that we don't understand them, it's that they come from a different reality, a middle-class woman's consciousness."[1]

Academic feminism seems to thrive on a language specific to the experiences of women to facilitate the articulation of such experiences as manifestations of oppression due to gender. However, buzz words like 'patriarchy,' 'gender socialization' and 'sisterhood' have been challenged for their over-simplistic universalism. The coinage of such terms in the feminist context was, therefore, the beginning of a language of resistance. Moreover, in the race for theoretical sophistication, the purpose of communication to express specific hardships and formulate social change has been forgotten. Any reference to 'sexuality' is often flooded with negative connotations in a wider sphere, where definitions of female sexual response are construed as obverse to male sexuality—the passive to complete the active. Further, responses to feminisms perceived threat are regularly cast in more evenly balance with newer terms such as 'male feminists' and 'female patriarchs.'

It is evident that feminism is quite seriously flawed in its modern conceptualization and its rhetoric of universal sisterhood. The result is a certain growing bitterness in order to establish who has the most 'authentic' voice in the Women's movement. For instance, post-modern feminists such as Camille Paglia and Naomi Wolf blame women for the evils of patriarchy with a view to discrediting 'old' feminism. According to Susan Faludi, Paglia's vitriolic attacks on feminism were motivated out of sheer spite: "Rival literary scholars who were feminists, she complained, had grabbed all the 'acclaim' and failed to be 'respectful' of her prodigious talents, a situation that consigned her to the non-tenure track at the unsung Philadelphia University of

the Arts and allowed her book to be snubbed by seven publishers. It was then that she began 'preparing my revenge' against feminist academics."[2]

Even a cursory glance at the situation that exists in the world of Indian academe will reveal that cases like the above are not isolated instances. The preparation for revenge, so to say, is certainly more pervasive and subtle. We shall see how Feminism's investment, or lack of it, in interrogating contemporary social life has greatly been compromised by such internal divisions that move away from the main focus—that of oppression at all levels—and has ultimately become entangled in a maze of inconsequential feminist thought leading to a critical impasse that is characteristic of feminist writing and feminist politics today.

If we lose ourselves in sophistication of language and discourse, allow patriarchy to be the sole target of our myopic vision and treat our sisters with disdain at the first opportunity, the future is ours to lose. The academe should work towards building forums for issues never before confronted, issues that do not fall into the purview of 'patriarchy' and are opposed to traditional 'social perspectives.' Any agenda for empowerment must begin from the foetus and must aim at wiping out all kinds of oppression rather than focusing largely on socio-economic, socio-political issues in isolation that concern a small group of the academic upper-middle class. Feminists in academe need to root out this confusing and contradictory blaze, and work towards a feminist revolution in consciousness, to critically re-evaluate the ever-shifting ideological construct of the 'feminine' rather than be diverted by a series of pyrrhic victories such as the emergence of women's studies in the UGC curriculum. It is the tide taken at its flood that could either crest further to change the landscape forever or it could recede once again.

Let us thus move out of the groves, away from the negative influences of the 'founding fathers' of mere academic discourse, to unmake the web of oppression and re-weave the web of life. Despite our grounding in the ocean of literature on women's liberty and empowerment, let us be humble and take a cue from

what the likes of Jashwantiben have to teach us from the book of life.

NOTES

1. Quoted in Imelda Whelehan, *Modern Feminist Thought: From the Second Wave to Post-Feminism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), p. 247.
2. S. Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War against Women* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1992), p. 353.

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A Plea for Social Space: Lesbianism in Some Canadian Short Stories

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A common notion about lesbianism is that it is a deviant sexual behaviour which is necessarily promiscuous. It is believed that all that the lesbians are interested in is sexual gratification in complete disregard to the emotional aspect of relationships. It is this perception that has been responsible for the outright condemnation of lesbians by the heterosexual society which feels threatened that the lesbians would corrupt the "straight" women, too. The manifest hostility towards them has put lesbians on the margin of society and the lesbian experience has been put under erasure. The homophobic heterosexual society has successfully prevented the lesbian experience from forming part of the mainstream epistemology and, thus, there has remained a big silence on the subject. The lesbians on their part have also sought to curtain their lesbian identity from the inhospitable gaze of society for fear of ridicule, social ostracization and even blatant discrimination/torture in the area of employment or workplace.

The Academia is known for its informed and liberal attitudes, but even here the lesbians were not allowed a safe and comfortable niche. Jeri Dawn Wine in her article, "Lesbians in Canadian Academe," records the harassment of a student in a small denominational college on a large campus: "She had revealed her lesbian identity in a sociology class in which homosexuality was under discussion. She was subsequently subjected to considerable verbal harassment by male students both in and out of the classroom." (159) Wine goes on to say that "that was accompanied by more subtle devaluation by the male instructor in the class: for instance, failure to see her raised hand in class

discussions, or dismissal of her contributions as inappropriate or invalid." (159) Then Wine cites the case of the four women having tenure at an academic institution as instructors who felt sure that they would have been rejected if their lesbian identities had been revealed at the time of their appointments.

It was, therefore, natural that a majority of lesbians withdrew into their shells and were compelled to lead a double schizophrenic existence: one at home and the other at the workplace. In many cases, this duality of self caused psychic complications requiring psychiatric treatment, as it did in the case of the student who was harassed inside and outside the class. Micheline Grimard-Leduc writes that many lesbians, having become victims of the societal torture, resorted to self-destructive measures like taking to "drugs, alcohol, smoking, to suicide, in addition to suffering from various psychosomatic illnesses." (173)

Two reasons are responsible for the animosity society exhibits towards lesbians: first the lesbian experience is seen as entirely sexualized and second the lesbian sex is considered as unnatural. Adrienne Rich attempts to put things into perspective through her concept of "lesbian continuum." According to her, lesbian continuum includes "many more forms of primary intimacy between and among women, including the sharing of a rich inner life, the bonding against male tyranny, the giving and receiving of practical and political support. (156-57) And Rich believes that the concept can help us "begin to grasp the breadths of female history and psychology," obscured because of narrow "colonial" definitions of lesbianism.

With the confident assertion of feminism in the Sixties the situation has undergone a significant change. Lesbians grouped together to form Lesbian Combines/Collectives with the specific purpose of articulating the lesbian experience and putting this social phenomenon in perspective through sociological tracts and creative writings and publishing such endeavours. The three short stories discussed in the present paper form part of *Dykewords: An Anthology of Lesbian Writing*, published by the Lesbian Writing and Publishing Collective (Women's Press), Toronto.

Though lesbians became somewhat confident only after the feminist movement gained strength in the Sixties and later, they came to realize that the issue of the oppression of lesbians was not adequately addressed by women's liberation and preferred to organize separately from both men, that is, gay activists, and heterosexual women. Many of these lesbians identified themselves as lesbian-feminists to emphasize their connection to all women and many of them identified as lesbian-separatists to stress the connection they felt to lesbians everywhere and the strength they got from being with other lesbians. The Lesbian Caucus of the British Columbia Federation of Women was formed because lesbians realized that they could not rely on heterosexual women to take up their concerns as a matter of course. Four years after the Lesbian Caucus began organizing in British Columbia, lesbian mothers founded their own organization in Toronto. Lesbian Mothers' Defence Fund spent close to ten years breaking their silence about the existence of lesbian mothers and defending their rights. LMDF came to mean a great deal to lesbian mothers and non-mothers alike.

I would like to examine three stories by Canadian writers, "Salina's Balls" by Michele Grace Paulse, "Primrose Path" by Candis J. Graham and "Sex is a Verb" by Pinelopi Grammatikopoulas with a view to demonstrating the humanness of lesbians. They are scared to reveal their dyke identity. They are vulnerable to the same anxieties and hurts as the heterosexuals are. They, too, worry about the constancy of their relationships and are questing for lasting, fulfilling female bonding. And above all, the stories suggest that the lesbian contact is symbiotic in nature, because both the partners join in the experience as "We" rather than one of them being treated as the "Other," as is generally the case with the heterosexual contact.

In "Salina's Balls," we come to know that the nature of lesbian sexual attraction is no different from the heterosexual one. It is passionate, intense and the narrator loses herself in fantasies of love-making with Salina. Talking about one of her fantasies, she says: "Salina was gorgeous. She drove me crazy. I used to go in bed thinking about her kissing me. All over. Her tongue teas-

ing the corners of my craving, wet, warm sexy mouth. She'd hold me frantically next to her and breathlessly tell me how much she too had been waiting for this moment. My overwhelmed body would go limp in her arms as I begged her to do with me what she wished. And she did." (Paulse: 127) The narrator confesses her acute need of Salina: "I wanted to hold her, squeeze her and pull her tightly against my seventeen-year-old blossoming, lusting body. Put her gorgeous lips smack against mine; never to be separated." (127) What the writer seeks to be aiming at through these details about the narrator's passion for Salina is to make lesbianism a component of the larger human urge, that is, sex–whether heterosexual or homosexual. Pleasure is an important element in sexual activity and as Joan Blackwood, a Canadian lesbian sociologist tells us "lesbian sex produces (or has the potential to produce) as much (and perhaps more) pleasure for women as heterosexual intercourse. On the grounds of pleasure, therefore, lesbian sex is, or can be *at least as good*. (155) The narrator, no doubt, fantasizes about the athletic Salina, who has a beautiful body, vibrating with vitality, but she dare not tell either Salina about her feelings towards her or confide into her best friend, Anna, for fear of losing her as a friend. The narrator is so frightened at the prospect of her exposure as a girl with lesbian feelings that even though she wants to, she does not defend Salina against the mischievous rumours about her (Salina) having "balls." She says: "I didn't know how to talk about Salina and defend her without fearing Anna would say that I stuck for her because I liked Salina. I was sure I'd die if anyone said that." (128) Makeda Silvera in her article, "Men Royals and Sodomites," writes poignantly "of the strong women who were part of her childhood in Jamaica, and of how she learned only later that some of them were lesbians. Just as their stories were silenced in Jamaica, Silvera discusses the silencing of Afro-Caribbean lesbians in Canada and their invisibility." (14) Paulse also brings out the tendency of lesbians not to be "out" and continue to grapple with their "craziness" or "queerness" because they are terribly scared of losing their niche in society and losing friends. Paulse, however, advises lesbians through the

climactic moment in the story that they need not be squeamish about their being what they are. The narrator was afraid of telling Anna about her lesbian leanings, but Anna herself has been a dyke all along, continuing a lesbian relationship with Salina. Also the lesbians group into open forms like the Diamond Dykes team, in which Salina plays and which Anna is going to join soon.

Candis J. Graham in her story, "Primrose Path," also underlines the anxiety of a lesbian who feels afraid, lest she should lose her lesbian partner, if she told her of her fantasies to which she is prone. Incidentally, the fantasies she indulges in are also lesbian in nature, but she is hesitant in telling Marie-Therese about them. Alice feels guilty, even though she argues to herself that it is only a disembodied voice and an imaginary body who she feels attracted to. What if Marie-Therese came to know about the fantasies and accused her of infidelity? So, Alice wants to come clean with her friend. Graham shows that there is much better understanding and empathy between lesbian partners than the heterosexual couples. Heterosexual relationships are often characterized by jealousies and vitiated by them. But it is a near-perfect relationship between Alice and Marie-Therese. It is marked by tender concern and love for each other. The writer tells us "like last Saturday, when Marie-Therese left their bed early to make bread, because the evening before Alice said she had been craving for homemade bread for days. No one had ever done anything like that before for Alice." (84) No wonder Alice is worried. Under no circumstance would she like to lose Marie-Therese. And yet she wants to be honest, perhaps to a fault. Here again, the intention of the writer is to show that emotional fidelity is as much an element of lesbian bonding as it is of male-female relationship. When Alice tries to tell Marie-Therese about her fantasy, with diffidence and apprehension, Marie-Therese is not at all disturbed. On the contrary, she takes it rather casually, as if it we were of no consequence. I would like to reproduce the conversation between the two:

"I have something to tell," Alice's teeth pulled at the corner of her lip.

"You're wet."

Alice stood up. "Yes, but something else."

"What?"

"Do you want to hear my fantasy?"

"A fantasy about sex?"

Alice nodded, turning her face slightly and looking sideways at Marie-Therese.

"Come on, give me the blanket and take my arm. Tell me as we walk home."

This indeed seems to be a paradigm of an ideal relationship, based on sound understanding. Their boat cannot be rocked easily.

The third story, "Sex Is a Verb" by Pinelopi Gramatikopoulos is the most important of the lot, in as much as it vehemently stresses the superiority of the female bonding in which both the partners enjoy a mutually nurturing relationship. The story demolishes the binary opposition of Active/Passive or Subject/Object in the sexual contact. Both the participants in the sexual experience are active, both are assertive and both derive *joissance*, something which has come to be regarded as extremely important by feminists. It is the story of two active sextants. The narrator tells us: "And the story started with a sigh. Two sighs. And a sign between two women." (1990: 66) It is a story in which the sextants are "We." The beauty of the experience is described thus by the writer/narrator: "This is the story of two women who went outside and played games with each other, chasing their sensuality round and round the tree–We? We. We We . . . until they drove it smack into each other and were forced to stand silent for a moment while its perfume slowly diffused and plied its way like tender-stemmed flowers, into their hair." (66) It is noteworthy that the writer ends the story with a significant statement which constitutes an important message for the lesbophobic "straight" society. She says: "A woman sexing another woman activates her world. Some women forget they can be active verbs and believe they are nouns." (68)

Thus, the three stories discussed above strive to establish that lesbianism is only a variant of sexuality and, therefore, needs to be accepted as such. Lesbians are as much humans as others, because they, too, are questing for lasting human relationships and happiness in life. And above all, the lesbian sexual bonding eliminates the category of the "Other," thus giving equal dignity and identity to both the partners.

In short, the lesbian writers seem to be making a fervent appeal to the lesbophobic society for acceptance and integration with the mainstream of life. They are pleading for a bit of social space for themselves.

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Entrapments at Home and Abroad in Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting*

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Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting,* as it is implied in the title itself, is a novel of contrast between two cultures, the one, Indian, known for its pious and longstanding customs representing 'fasting,' and the other, American, a country of opulence and sumptuousness epitomizing 'feasting.' The plot unveils through the perceptions of Uma, in India, and of Arun, in America. Both of them are entrapped, irrespective of the culture and enveloping milieu, by oppressive bonds exercised by their own parents, MamaPapa. They are just MamaPapa or PapaMama but remain nameless throughout the novel. Yet, this namelessness does not indicate their anonymity but signifies their universality. They are the prototypical parents found everywhere in the middle-class families of India, who discuss, plan, plot, control, govern the activities of their children, be it marriage or going abroad for studies. And in their over-domineering concern, they tend to ignore the inadvertent possibility of entrapping their own offspring. Thus, they do not give contingency to the fact that perhaps their children too can have a life to call their own. Maybe even their own preoccupations, their own priorities, may be an agenda for themselves that goes beyond what they actually want for their children.

The novel begins with a snapshot of MamaPapa in a contemplative mood: "The parents sit, rhythmically swinging, back and forth. They could be asleep, dozing—their eyes are hooded—but sometimes they speak."[1] That is when a sudden deluge of ideas hit them and they order their eldest daughter, Uma, to carry them out without delay. Uma is asked first to in-

form the cook to prepare sweets for her father, with neglectful impatience that she has been already asked to pack a parcel to be sent to her brother Arun in America. While she comes literally running on her toes, she is entrusted with an additional job of writing a letter to their son. Somewhere in the middle of the novel, the reader understands that it is the usual scene that goes on in the household of MamaPapa. "All morning MamaPapa have found things for Uma to do. It is as if Papa's retirement is to be spent in this manner—sitting on the red swing in the veranda with Mama, rocking, and finding ways to keep Uma occupied. As long as they can do that, they themselves feel busy and occupied." (133) In this manner, living under the demanding rule of MamaPapa, Uma is repressed, suppressed and is imprisoned at home. The first part of the novel tells us in a flashback as to how she became a reluctant victim of entrapment at home. The second part of the novel shows how her brother Arun, who leaves his home for higher studies, but feels trapped by the very education that is meant to liberate him.

Usually, at home, it would be an oppressive atmosphere even if one of the parents is overpowering. With regard to Uma, both of her parents appear to have merged into a single identity MamaPapa/PapaMama, as if they have a "Siamese twin existence." (6) Hence, whenever MamaPapa say something, and whoever says it, it comes with double the intensity and power that it cannot be defied at all. "Having fused into one, they had gained so much in substance, in stature, in authority, that they loomed large enough as it was; they did not need separate histories and backgrounds to make them even more immense." (6) Despite a slight variation in the roles they have chosen to play, Papa's of "scowling" and "Mama's scolding," (10) in terms of opinion, they never differed from each other. Therefore, if one refused there would not be any "point in appealing to the other parent for a different verdict: none was expected, or given." (14)

Furthermore, the women are not allowed for outings usually, but when Papa feels that the women laze around the house too much, then they would be taken to the park for walk. On one such occasion, Uma gets easily distracted and fails to keep pace

with her Papa. Though Papa is far away, and she is left in the company of Mama, she would not dare attempt to buy some eatables on her wish though it is highly tempting: "Uma finds saliva gathering at the corners of her mouth at the smell of the spiced, roasted gram but decides to say nothing." (12-13) In the end, Uma is blamed for being "slow" when all the while Uma could not reconcile herself as to why they are hurrying just to go back home. Likewise, the children are not allowed to have any sense of privacy even when they have grown-up. They are not allowed to shut any doors in the household. For this meant secrets, especially nasty secrets, which are impermissible: "It meant authority would come stalking in and make a search to seize upon the nastiness, the unclean blot." (15)

MamaPapa also decide which of their children should have education and how much of it. As far as Uma is concerned, a pleasant escape from her claustrophobic conditions at home is her school going. The convent school for her is "streaked with golden promise." (20) Hence, she always goes early to the school and later finds some excuse to linger there for longer time. Conversely, she feels deprived during dull weekends when she is left at home: "There were the wretched weekends when she was plucked back into the trivialities of her home, which seemed *a denial, a negation of life* as it ought to be, somber and splendid, and then the endless summer vacation when the heat reduced even that pointless existence to further *vacuity*" (21, emphases added). Regardless of Uma's verve for convent education, she is forced to stop going to school when Mama gives birth to the third baby, Arun. Even as Uma shows disagreement, she is coaxed, cajoled and finally threatened to accept her Mama's decision:

> 'But ayah can do this—ayah can do that—' Uma tried to protest when the orders began to come thick and fast. This made Mama look stern again. 'You know we can't leave the baby to the servant,' she said severely. 'He needs proper attention.' When Uma pointed out that ayah had looked after her and Aruna as babies, Mama's expression made it clear it was quite a different matter now, and she repeated threateningly: 'Proper attention.' (31)

Later, Uma looks forward towards her marriage to give her the much-needed relief, yet, unfortunately, she returns home frustrated after a deceitful marriage and subsequent divorce. Back at home, she gets a rare job offer through Dr. Dutt, but MamaPapa refuse to send her. When Dr. Dutt persists on taking Uma for the job, Mama lies of an illness for which she needs Uma to nurse her. In like manner, when Uma receives an invitation for a coffee party from Mrs. O'Henry, MamaPapa refuse to send her to the party because of the apprehension that Mrs. O'Henry might ensnare her and convert her into a Christian nun.

Reduced thus to a baby-sitter at her earlier days and an unpaid servant for her self-centred parents for the rest of her life, Uma finds no escape from her entrapment. Uma experiences, however, a brief repose of happiness and freedom once when she is allowed to accompany her ailing aunt, Mira-Masi, on her pilgrimage. During her stay at night in an ashram, Uma finds a strange link of her life with the barks and howls of the dogs:

> At night she lay quietly on her mat, listening to the ashram dog bark. Then other dogs in distant villages, out along the riverbed and over in the pampas grass, or in wayside shacks and hovels by the highway—barked back. They howled long messages to each other. Their messages travelled back and forth through the night darkness which was total, absolute. Gradually the barks sank into it and drowned. Then it was silent. That was what Uma felt her own life to have been—full of barks, howls, messages, and now—silence. (61)

At this juncture, one is reminded of Anita Desai's characteristic way of making her internally turbulent protagonists find expression by association with external surroundings. Thus, for instance, in *Cry, the Peacock*, Maya's feelings of isolation and longings are coupled with those of the crying of the peacocks. Still, one locates a kind of sublimity in the agonized inner cry of Maya when it is likened with peacocks. When Uma's pain is related to the barks and howls of dogs, the poetry of Maya's anguish is to be seen in sharp contrast to that of the excruciating poverty of Uma's entrapment.

Catering to the whims and fancies of MamaPapa, but keeping her remorse self-contained, at one point of the novel, Uma feels utterly friendless and alone, even when she is at home and surrounded by her MamaPapa. In desperation, she thinks of writing a letter to a friend to share her grief but it only ends up with the realization that she has none to confide with:

She could write a letter to a friend—a private message of despair, dissatisfaction,

> yearning; she has a packet of notepaper, pale violet with a pink rose embossed in the corner—but who is the friend? Mrs. Joshi? But since she lives next door, she would be surprised. Aruna? But Aruna would pay no attention, she is too busy. Cousin Ramu? Where *was* he? Had his farm swallowed him up? And Anamika—had marriage *devoured* her? (134)

However, it would be wrong to presuppose that Anita Desai shows Uma's unattractiveness, clumsiness and dullness of mind as causes for her entrapment. Uma's polar opposite, her graceful, beautiful and brilliant cousin, Anamika's confinement is more poignant. While Uma's failure in her school exams pressurizes her to stay at home, Anamika does so excellently in her final school exams, that she wins a scholarship to Oxford. Yet, Anamika lives in a patriarchal society that considers higher education to be the prerogative of males, and marriage as the major preoccupation of females. The scholarship obtained is used only as a means to win her a husband who is considered an equal to the family's prestige. Anamika's parents are unperturbed by the fact that he is so much older than her, so grim-faced and conscious of his own superiority, and is "totally impervious to Anamika's beauty and grace and distinction." (70) But it is Anamika, who starts another life of entrapment the moment she enters her in-laws' house. Anamika's husband is a typical 'Mama's boy' to the extent he could be a silent witness to his mother's beating of his wife regularly. Anamika, who won scholarship to Oxford, spends her entire time in the kitchen cooking for a very large family that eats in shifts—"first the men, then the children, finally the women." (70) After a miscar-

riage; which followed a brutal beating, and the belief that she could not bear more children, finally, the family ties her up in a nylon saree, pours the kerosene over her, and burns her to death.

Here again Desai is not implying that the un-burnt brides and the well-settled ones may live a content life. In this regard, she portrays the story of Aruna, Uma's smart and pretty younger sister who makes a discreet choice and marries "the wisest, . . . the handsomest, the richest, the most exciting of the suitors who presented themselves." (101) Aruna's marriage to Arvind who has a job in Bombay and a flat in a housing block in Juhu, facing the beach is just a like a dream-come-true. Yet to live that dream-life fully, she transforms herself and desperately seeks to introduce change in the lives of others. She cuts her hair, takes her make-up kit wherever she goes, and calls her sister and mother as 'villagers' once they refuse to accept her sophisticated and flashy style of life. For that reason, she avoids visiting her parents' home and the rare occasions of her short visits are spent in blaming the untidiness of the surrounding and the inhabitants. Even she goes to the extent of scolding her husband when he splits tea in his saucer, or wears a shirt, which does not match, with his trousers.

In this way, Aruna's entrapment is different from the rest. She has liberated herself from the customs and dominating home rules that bind the rest of the characters like Uma and Anamika. Yet, in negating those codes, she ensnares herself in her mad pursuit towards a vision of perfection. And in order to reach that perfection, she needs to constantly uncover and rectify the flaws of her own family as well as of Arvind. When none other than Uma sees through the entrapment of Aruna, she feels pity for her:

> Seeing Aruna vexed to the point of tears because the cook's pudding had sunk and spread instead of remaining upright and solid, or because Arvind had come to dinner in his bedroom slippers, or Papa was wearing a T-shirt with a hole under one arm, Uma felt pity for her: was this the realm of ease and comfort for which Aruna had always pined and that some might say she had attained? Certainly it brought her no pleasure: there was always a crease of

> discontent between her eyebrows and an agitation that made her eyelids flutter, disturbing Uma who noticed it. (109)

While Uma, Anamika, Aruna present the female versions of entrapment in *Fasting, Feasting*, Arun pictures the male version of it. Unlike his sisters, right from his birth, Arun desists eating the food of his family which is symbolic of its values. Much to the dismay of his father, he shows his preference for vegetarian food. Simply because it revolutionized the life-style of his father, Arun cannot be forced to eat non-vegetarian food. This, of course, is a cause of disappointment for Papa:

> Papa was always scornful of those of their relatives who came to visit and insisted on clinging to their cereal-and-vegetable-eating ways, shying away from the meat dishes Papa insisted on having cooked for dinner. Now his own son, his one son, displayed this completely baffling desire to return to the ways of his forefathers, meek and puny men who had got nowhere in life. Papa was deeply vexed. (32-33)

Nonetheless, Arun cannot fully come out of the clutches of Papa, especially, in terms of his education. And ironic enough, it is education which, instead of offering the desired autonomy, paves way for Arun's entrapment.

Papa, in order to give "the best, the most, the highest" (119) education to his son, takes charge of Arun's life from his childhood. Although Arun's school examinations are over, Papa cannot allow him to go to his sister's house in Bombay during holidays, since he has planned that time for taking up entrance examinations and preparation for sending applications to go abroad for 'higher studies.' However, in the eyes of Aruna, her father's manic determination to get a foreign scholarship for Arun, is actually on account of his unfulfilled dreams, which he tries to impose on his son. That is why, when the letter of acceptance from Massachusetts finally arrives, it stirs no emotions in Arun:

> Uma watched Arun too, when he read the fateful letter. She watched and searched for an expression, of relief, of joy, doubt, fear, anything at all. But there was none. . . . There was nothing else—not the hint of a smile, frown, laugh or anything: these had

> been ground down till they had disappeared. This blank face now stared at the letter and faced another phase of his existence arranged for him by Papa. (121)

As a reviewer rightly observes, "With a deft touch, Desai shows us that MamaPapa's ambitions for Arun are as stifling as their lack of ambition for Uma."[2] From America, Arun's letters come just to indicate his endurance and survival. His messages are diluted, and are devoid of any emotion and substance. "The most personal note he struck was a poignant, frequently repeated complaint: 'The food is not very good'." (123)

The ties, though invisible, are so overwhelming that even in a country that feasts on individuality, Arun fails to manifest his identity as an individual. Caught in the prison house of his own family's food habits, he can neither nourish the alien food nor develop a sense of belonging with Patton's family that shelters him during his vacation. The smell of the raw meat being charred over the fire by Mr. Patton for steak or hamburger is loathsome to Arun. Conversely, Mr. Patton fails to understand why Arun really refuses to eat a good piece of meat. While Mrs. Patton sympathizes with Arun, and gives him the vegetarian food items, particularly tomato slices and lettuce on bread, Arun finds them detestable too. Because he thinks that "in his time in America he has developed a hearty abhorrence for the raw foods everyone here thinks the natural diet of a vegetarian." (167) Hence when Mrs. Patton, quite satisfied with her job of a host, watches him eating with pride and complicity,

> Arun ate with an expression of woe and a sense of mistreatment. How was he to tell Mrs. Patton that these were not the foods that figured in his culture? That his digestive system did not know how to turn them into nourishment? (184-85)

Where Mrs. Patton's daughter, Melanie, bluntly says she finds the food revolting and refuses to taste it, Arun has to helplessly eat it. Melanie, however, suffers from bulimia—a disorder in which overeating alternates with self-induced vomiting, fasting, etc. Her bulimia, along with her mother's frenzy for buying food items to fill the freezer, signifies the consumerist society that she

hails from, where excess becomes the malady. This seen in contrast to Rod, the fitness fanatic, who spends all his time and energy in jogging, baffles Arun who wonders that "one can't tell what is more dangerous in this country, the pursuit of health or of sickness." (204-5) He apprehends that like Melanie, who eats, vomits and lies on her vomit most of the time, the people of her country too, go through an inexplicable pain and a real hunger. Yet he cannot reconcile to the unanswerable question: "But what hunger a person so sated can feel?" (224)

Anita Desai, in portraying the stories of entrapment in *Fasting, Feasting*, presents one version after another; each contributing together to a master version, and each simultaneously subverting the other towards an open and contingent version. Accordingly, in the story of Uma, we find her unattractiveness leading to her eventual entrapment. Yet, if we pass a final verdict on this account, we would be proved erroneous since Desai presents the versions of Aruna and Anamika, Uma's appealing sister and charming cousin, respectively. Beauty cannot offer them escape from entrapments; in truth, it is rather their good looks that victimize them. Further, if we think again that it is Uma's lack of education that has led to her entrapped situation, Desai presents us the subversion of Anamika, where foreign scholarship fetches her an equal match but fails to provide her the required escape, it suffocates and kills her literally. In like manner, if as Uma thinks, "A CAREER. Leaving home. Living alone" (130) would bring in the necessary freedom from entrapment, Desai presents us the story of Arun, who leaves home, lives alone for a career but feels the pangs of entrapment despite it.

Also, in providing a male version through the story of Arun's entrapment, Desai negates any feministic verdict based on the other female versions of entrapment that is likely to put the blame on the patriarchal, male-centred society. Thus, Anita Desai, often described as one of the finest writers of this country, has moved from her earlier, typical way of sympathizing with her characters, females especially, to a different level of sensibility now. Where it would be easy to presuppose her overt feministic concerns in a novel like *Cry, the Peacock*, it would be

unwise to approach her *Fasting, Feasting* with any such preconceived notions. Desai herself speaks out in a recent interview that she has been deliberately shifting her focus from female characters to male characters. She rather feels she needs to address and voice out themes which concern males too. She says:

> Specially in my earlier work I found myself addressing the same things over and over again: very much about the life of women, specially those women who are confined to home and family, also the solitude from which a person can suffer even if living within a big family or surrounded by crowds. But after several years and several books I began to feel suffocated myself by the confinement of these subjects. I felt I was limiting the territory to such an extent that it created a kind of suffocation even for me. So I deliberately opened the doors, to widen the canvas, and started writing more about male characters and their lives, because I felt they had a wider experience of the world, and I could address a greater variety of experiences.[3]

Finally, if we consider the male version represented by Arun and the female versions constituted by Uma, Anamika and Aruna as Indian versions, Desai offers American versions to counter them. The story, thus dangling between two countries and cultures shows to prove through the characters of Uma and Arun, and their counterparts Melanie and Rod, that attempts of escape from entrapments can only be temporary, illusory and self-destructively futile since entrapments through familial knots are ubiquitous, all encompassing and universal. And perhaps the salvation comes when one accepts entrapment of one kind or another envisioned as an inescapable fact of life.

NOTES

1. Anita Desai, *Fasting, Feasting* (London: Vintage, 1999), p. 3.
2. Sylvia Brownrigg, "Fasting, Feasting" by Anita Desai. http://archive.salon.com/books/review/2000/02/17/desai/print.html [15 Sept. 2002].
3. Magda Costa, "Interview with Anita Desai, *Lateral* (March 2001). http: //www.umiacs.umd.edu/users/sawweb/sawnet/books/desai_interview.html [15 September 2002].

Transformation and Migration in Bharati Mukherjee's *The Holder of the World*

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Since times immemorial man's undeterred curiosity to know the unknown and distant has made him break the barriers of time and space. Some have migrated to distant lands in search of fortune, some to fulfil their dreams and others have travelled in quest of identity and stability in life. Various postmodern writers have taken up this theme.

Among the writers of Diaspora, Bharati Mukherjee has been regarded as one of the promising novelists and is "the clear eyed but affectionate immigrant in American society."[1] Immigration and cultural alienation are global phenomenon in today's modern world. Bharati Mukherjee, like many other postmodern writers, has taken up the problems and experiences faced by the Indian immigrants in the U.S. or the western world. As Bharati Mukherjee points out: "immigration was a two way process and both the whites and immigrants were growing into a third thing by this interchange and experience."[2] She feels that in "literary terms, being an immigrant is very declass. There is a low-grade ashcan realism implied in the very material. . . . The exiles . . . come wrapped in a cloak of mystery and world-weariness. By refusing to play the game of immigration, they certify to the world, and especially to their hosts, the purity of their pain and moral superiority to the world around them. In some obscure way, they earn the right to be permanent scolds, soaking up comfort and privilege and nursing real grievances until privilege and grievance become habits of mind."

Bharati Mukherjee's migration to the other country could not sever her familial ties with her motherland. She even after four

decades continues to write about India and Indian immigrants to the west. In *The Tiger's Daughter*, she depicts a satirical portrait of Indian society from the perspective of Tara Banerjee Cartwright, a young expatriate. Her second novel *Wife* is an intensely modern novel, which brings out the inner dimension of the heroine Dimple. The inner conflict of Dimple has been depicted using symbols as 'centering nodes.' *Wife* was followed by her most popular and 1988 National Book Critic Award winning short story collection, *The Middleman and Other Stories*. It consists of eleven short stories describing artistically the problems of people migrating to America and the dream of a new life, which tempts them to go there. The characters hail from different parts of South Asia. Her next novel is *Jasmine*, which truly reflects the energy and passion of America. Mukherjee claims it to be more about America than about 'immigrants'. From *The Tiger's Daughter* to *Jasmine*, one can observe a steady metamorphosis from acculturation to self-actualization in Mukherjee's writing.

Transformation and migration have been Mukherjee's two major themes. Even her fourth novel, *The Holder of the World*, which has been taken up here, has the theme of transformation and migration, but with a difference. In this novel, it is not the modern American world coming into clash with ideas belonging to the old country. Here we have the Puritan American seventeenth and early eighteenth century world trying to come to terms with the Mughal Indian view of life. Seeing a miniature painting titled 'A European Woman in Aurangzeb's Court' at an auction of Sotheby in New York made Mukherjee write this novel. Unlike the other protagonists of Mukherjee's novels, Hannah Easton, the heroine of *The Holder of the World* travels not from East to West but just the opposite, from West to East. The novel is about time travelling. The opening lines of the novel, "I live in three time zones simultaneously, and I don't mean Eastern, Central and Pacific. I mean the past the present and the future"[3] take us to the seventeenth century Mughal India full of riches. Mukherjee has recaptured the past reality; she has described the grandeur and exotica of then India:

> Those Indian guys wore earrings, dresses and necklaces. When they ran out of space on their bodies they punched holes in their wives' noses to hang more gold and pearl chains. Then they bored holes in their wives' ears to show off more junk, they crammed gold bracelets all the way to their elbows so their arms were too heavy to lift, and they slipped new rings on their toes and thumbs so they could barely walk or make a fist. (13)

She has compared 'our' wonder with 'their' dread:

> no paintings, no inlays of rubies and pearls. Our men wore animal skins or jerkins . . . women's virtue was guarded by bonnets and capes and full skirts. (13)

She beautifully blends Mughal India along with mythological illustrations from *Ramayana* with the modern day computech age. In other words, the novel is a form of 'computerized history.' Man's search of his identity, in a world of rootlessness and uncertainty, takes him back to history or past, which gives him a base to hold on to. This is exactly what Bharati Mukherjee seems to bring out in this novel. Her modern American women Beigh Masters, who does 'assets research' reads Auction and Acquisitions and ferrets around for antiques and precious stones, both as profession and hobby, is in search of the precious diamond 'Emperor's Tear.'

Her lover Venn Iyer of MIT, a computer engineer from Madras, makes use of Omnipotent technological wonder, the computer and its latest database program # 61620; 2929 and reanimates and recreates history by feeding all the information collected by Beigh Masters after consulting five hundred books, endless number of paintings and engravings, trade records and picture journals and artifacts to get to 'Salem Bibi.'

Like Jasmine the heroine of Bharati Mukherjee's third novel, the journey of Hannah Easton is not by chance or a forced one. It is more an escape from the rule-bound, claustrophobic influence of Puritan world. Hannah's early life points most emphatically a fascination for passion and feeling, which she weaves her colourful, bright tapestries: 'The embroidery is the embodiment of desire' a desire to escape from the dull, grey of Puritan outpost.

Her embroidery even shows her hidden and imaginary world, which the narrator describes as "'On a field of light blue', Hannah created 'uttermost shore.'" She says that it is unusual for

> a twelve year old Puritan orphan who had never been out of Massachusetts imagined an ocean, palm trees, thatched collages, and black skinned men casting nets and colourfully garbed, bare-breasted women mending them; native barbs and on the horizon, high masted schooners . . . through bright-green foliage, a ghostly white building it could even be the Taj Mahal—is rising. (44)

Hannah Easton's memories of her mother's abduction by her Indian lover and her disappearance into the wilderness, physically breaking the barriers of her Puritan society, remains in her mind forever. This later helps her to embrace the new, exotic world of Mughal India in its entirety for it is the world that she was in search of. So, when she meets a swash-buckling adventurer, Gabriel Legge, she agrees to marry him, not because she loves him but just to squeeze out her constrictive society. She did not believe him, but she too longed for escape. (64)

At this point or level, the novel is, like Bharati Mukherjee's other novels, a fiction of expatriation, of a quest and a journey, not only to culturally variant societies, which help to question and abandon conventional moral and social values. Hannah's life succeeds in questioning and discovering new ways of defining reality in a world, which was essentially orthodox.

After Gabriel's death, Hannah meets Raja Jadav Singh of Devgad who loves her and there is transformation of Hannah Easton to Bibi. She enjoys her new identity. Hannah delves for new roots, and with her fine quality of adaptability, she steps into the New World of Hinduism. She and Jadav Singh woo each other, ignoring the sword of Damocles, the Nawab Haider Beg, Governor of Aurangzeb's state. The Nawab dispatches his most ruthless commander, Morad Farah, to arrest Raja, usurp the diamond, Emperor's Tear, and bring Hannah, the firangi lady. Raja Jadav Singh puts Hannah and her caretakers and good companion, Bhagmati into a palanquin, but on way to Nawab, the Raja attacks the Mughal army. Hannah kills Morad Farah, saves Jadav

Singh's life and brings him back to Panpur. She tries to transact with the emperor and end the war but she is taken hostage by him. She disdains the emperor for the bloody war and suffering of numerous innocent lives. Wherever Aurangzeb comes to see her, she is reminded of Ravana, the demo king, in Muslim disguise. Though she fails to armistice between the Raja and the Emperor, somehow, she purloins the diamond the Emperor's Tear from Aurangzeb's war tent and escapes towards the fort of Panpur. There she hands it over to Bhagmati. The diamond is ultimately found by Beigh Masters in cyber spatial finale. Venn takes Beigh through the miracle; Bhagmati thrusts world's most famous diamond into her dying womb. It is in her grave that they find the holder of the world of the seventeenth century.

In Hannah's character, we find adaptability. She proves to be "a pure product of times and space, her marriage and her training, exposed to range of experience that would be extreme even in today's world but none of it, consciously, had affected her outer behaviour." (220) The Salem Bibi provocates Beigh Masters to unravel the mystery, which surrounded her life and the diamond. Mukherjee devotes her attention to female issues in historical times as well as in the contemporary society. She seems to concur with the view: "People are continually remaking their culture, and in so doing, redefining the past, reconstituting the present and reconceptualizing what they derive from the future."[4]

Like any other feminist writer Bharati Mukherjee's women characters offer "a frontal challenge to patriarchal thought, social organization and control mechanism."[5] In the novel, we can see two advantages of Women's liberation, which Bharati Mukherjee thinks, is not only twentieth century phenomenon but was prevalent in the epic period as well as the seventeenth century. First, it allows women to realize their potential as individuals in the wider society. Secondly, it is the only means by which it can attain personal recognition.

The title of the novel *The Holder of the World* is after the name of Aurangzeb who was also called Alamgir in Urdu and the World-Holder in English. Fictional characters, incidents and

events coalesce with historical personages, places, events and incidents to give it a local colour and habitation like historical plays of Shakespeare.

This makes the novel interesting and exciting. But, at several places in the novel, there is a lack of passion, feeling and poetry so essential for a work of art to make it simultaneously exciting and readable. Hoping to humour her Indian and American readers, Mukherjee fails to please both.

Bharati Mukherjee, despite everything, does a brilliant work when she interweaves the historical and the imaginative reality through database, the technology, which will help any one of us "make infinite reality withdrawals" from both time and space. Mukherjee has used two narrators who belong to two diverse time periods separated by a time span of three hundred years. But this distance in time is bridged when Beigh Masters in process of her research finds her familial link with Hannah Easton at the distant past and all her energies in present are directed to track down the history relating to Hannah Easton. The whole novel acts as a bridge between transformation and migration and piles up meticulous details and information as Bharati Mukherjee recaptures history in the most aesthetic sense.

NOTES

1. Bharati Mukherjee, "Introduction," *Darkness* (Ontario: Penguin, 1986), p. 3.
2. Interview in *Hindustan Times*, Feb. 9, 1990, p. 3.
3. Bharati Mukherjee, *The Holder of the World* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 1993), p. 5.
4. Elizabeth Long, *The American Dream and the Popular Novel* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), p. 202.
5. Sushila Singh, "Recent Trends in Feminist Thought," *Indian Women Novelists*, ed. R.K. Dhawan (New Delhi: Prestige, 1991), Set I, Vol. 1, p. 65.

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Looking beyond the Screen: A Study of Shashi Tharoor's *Show Business*

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Tharoor's *Show Business*, published in 1991 is the result of his research into the ways of the Bombay film world. His detailed access to the sets, studios and locales, active co-operation of the film crews who allowed him to make a close study of their work and the filmy magazines of India helped him write this book that makes Bollywood (as the celluloid city is popularly known) come alive before us. Tharoor, however, makes it clear that "I remain solely responsible for what I have made of the material."

Bombay, the film capital of India, has always held irresistible glamour for generation of moviegoers. Year after year, it churns out films to provide entertainment. Exquisitely charming heroines, handsome heroes successfully fighting injustice (often single-handedly), the good invariably triumphing over evil—the make-believe world has never ceased to fascinate the masses. But the grim reality that lies behind this apparently beautiful and tempting facade remains unknown to many. Tharoor takes it upon himself to tear open the mask, as it were, and expose to us the real colour of the tinsel town.

Though the book primarily deals with the life of a superstar from a humble beginning to dizzy heights—the author makes an incisive study of a variety of issues closely associated with film industry such as appearance and reality, inner story behind star-dom, plight of the junior artists, generation gap, filial ingratitude leading to parental anguish, politics and cinema, extra-marital relation etc.

In this paper, however, I intend to highlight another aspect of the book. Quite often, in course of his narration, Tharoor looks

beyond the show business and reflects on issues of deeper significance that concern all of us. I have picked up few such instances and have tried to present them in this paper.

Ashok Banjara, termed a mega *star,* the hero who earns in a day what the President of India makes in a year, heartthrob of millions lies suspended between life and death in the intensive care unit of a plush Bombay hospital. As he lies fighting for life, memories crowd in on him.

His father, Kulbhushan, a politician, had always wanted Ashok to embark on a political career. Naturally, he disapproves of his son's decision to join film industry. The ambition he has harboured is going to be ruthlessly thwarted. But the determined son goes to the tinsel town and, after initial struggle, attains stardom. The adulation he gets is awe-inspiring but his cinematic accomplishments fail, to make his father happy.

Now, in the Indian context, a father has some ambition about the career of his son. The psychologists attribute it to the unfulfilled wish of the father who wants to materialise it through his son. It does not occur to him that his son might be having entirely different ideas about his career. Besides the father thinks he has an undeniable and unchallengeable claim over his son: 'a father never switches off his fatherhood whatever his son may do.' (114)

Kulbhushan has intense dislike for film industry where a star, despite his money and fame, 'earns his status by wearing drainpipe trousers and shaking his hips before the camera' (116) and that it presents a 'never-never land' that bears 'no relation to any accurate perception of the India in which we live.' (117) He advises his son to stay away from the make-believe world but while from his point of view it is the essential transmission of parental wisdom from father to son, the latter almost switches off his mind to the advice and guidance given with love. A hurt father tells his wife about the acute sense of disappointment he feels and she replies quietly: "Why are you surprised, K.B,? Love, like water, always flows downwards." (121) Parents love their children as much when they are tiny and weak and vulnerable as when they are growing. But every child's love for his

parents is born out of need and dependence. That needs decreases with every passing year while the parents only grow. It is an uneven emotional balance.

Tharoor's vision of a peaceful happy life is dependent on healthy interactions between the parents and the children. While the former should, not unduly impose their views on the children, the latter's attitude to them should be one of love and respect.

Another thing Tharoor hints at is not to get carried away by so-called modern trends lest we should fall into a dangerous trap. The institution of marriage, for example, has been there to meet one's sexual need and raise a family whose peace depends upon the loyalty of the partners to each other. When an extra-marital affair develops, the smooth rhythm at the home front is broken. A sort of discordant note is struck and it produces a jarring effect on the melodious tune achieved earlier. Ashok is happily married to Maya but starts a relation with his co-artist Mehnaz Elahi and defends his stand with these words: "Every actor in Bombay has extra-marital affairs, Ma. It's sort of expected of us. It would be unnatural if I didn't." (123) It does not occur to Ashok what might be going on in Maya's mind when, especially, she was undergoing a difficult pregnancy and bringing his 'heirs into the world.' A puzzled father only quietly asks: "And what about the values we brought you up with? Was it not unnatural to abandon them?" (123) Tharoor seems to say that to accept something immoral in the name of modernity and fashionable trend can have disastrous consequences.

Ashok Banjara, at the height of his popularity in the film industry, thinks of joining politics and does get elected to the Parliament, but finds himself a total misfit in the new set up: "I'm out of place in this world. I clap my hands to applaud the PM: the others thump their desks." (261)

His initial spurts of enthusiasm soon get dampened as he looks around him at his fellow backbenchers in the teak-panelled sanctum of national legislation. The general atmosphere is one of absolute indifference to the ongoing affairs. Some are even more

sonorously undisturbed in the innocence of their ignorance. The most knowledgeable seem to be the most powerless.

> I'm just a backbench MP, the political equivalent of the fat-arsed females with tree trunk thighswho dance behind the heroine. (266)

In sheer disgust he resigns. Tharoor shows why a film star does not necessarily make a successful politician. Through Pranay, an important character, he tries to make an analysis: "Did you ever wonder why you were so much more popular a filmi hero than a politician? Elementary, my dear son. Your screen image was that of the angry young man, the righter of wrongs, the rebel against injustice, the enemy of the establishment. But when you became a politician, you were revealed as what you were—the opposite of your screen image. A part of the establishment. The son of a politician. The Prime Minister's man. The people who cared for you as a hero could not came for you us a leader. You no longer meant anything to them." (294)

Tharoor seems to convey most of his significant message, views opinions through the character of the Guru. The self-styled godman, who can be sometimes taken lightly, does make thought-provoking statements and, to some extent, we can take him as Tharoor's mouthpiece. Some of his striking lines are:

> Learn detachment . . . Take life as it comes. (185)
> There is no use worrying about what might happen, because it is already willed. Why shed tears about the workings of destiny? . . . Does the river weep because it must flow to the sea? (188)
> The present . . . is an illusion each moment has either already happened or has not yet happened, it is either past or future. The problem with Westerners . . . is their obsession with the present, which means they are living for something that does not exist. (195)

It is difficult to know exactly what Tharoor aims at. Does he suggest that there is a force, beyond our control, governing our life and activities and that, for our peace of mind, it is wise to yield to that force? Does he suggest something that goes against what H.W. Longfellow spoke in his celebrated poem 'A Psalm of Life':

> Trust no future however pleasant
> Let the dead past bury its dead
> Act, act in the living present
> Heart within and God overhead.

We may not be very sure, but about one thing, perhaps, Tharoor is very emphatic. Again through the Guruji it comes:

> From dharma comes success, from dharma comes happiness, everything emerges from dharma, dharma is the essence of the world, (300)

However successful a person may be, some of his wishes remain unfulfilled. He repents for some of his actions. He often finds himself in the world of 'what might have been.' In short, he has some regrets. But then that is part of life and we should not grudge it. Tharoor seems to say that a "life without regrets is a life lived without introspection, without enquiry. That's not a life worth living." (300)

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The Erotic Scenes in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*

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It is a common habit of women writers of Indian English literature to create some erotic scenes in their works which may be physical, spiritual or ethical. From Toru Dutt to Arundhati Roy, there is a rare woman writer who has not grappled with the idea of love to express her own inner feelings just as Albert Mordell explored that "works of the imagination open up to the reader hidden vistas in man's inner life just as dreams do."[1] It is a fact that the dreams of Booker Prize winner Arundhati Roy are the dreams of her own social awareness to which she has stated vigorously in a very authentic way in the novel. But it is obvious that she wrote the novel from the western point of view because erotic vulgar scenes as narrated in *The God of Small Things* do not seem to adhere to the boundary of Indian milieu. However, the depiction of love relationship between Ammu and Velutha and Estha and Rahel, the twins may not be proper but it has its own significance keeping in view the ambivalent sexual and thematic concern of the novel.

As a modern novelist, being influenced by Western civilization, Roy has employed unusual sexual culture in the novel through twins Estha and Rahel who think nothing but dream about some vital link missing in their individualities. Their mutual familiarity at the physical level has been highlighted in the following words: "That the emptiness in one twin was only a version of the quietness in the other. That the things fitted together. Like stacked spoons. Like familiar lover bodies. In addition to this, Roy has also aggressively advocated against the inhumanity and brutality inflicted on the breakers of "Love Laws" through the eyes of children, being much closer to the basic ma-

ternal instinct. Ammu, as mother of Estha and Rahel and her lover Velutha are sufferers and fellow travellers into "History House" by the same boat "the boat that Estha sat and Rahel found. The boat that Ammu would use to cross the river. To love by night the man his children loved by day." (202) While conveying the basic maternal instinct through the incest between Estha and Rahel unlike Lawrentian theory, the novelist clarifies that "they had never been shy of each other's bodies, but they had never been old enough (together) to know what shyness was." (92) When Rahel observes Estha's wet body in her room, she gets sexual pleasure from watching him undress and hence an erotic feeling occurs which is more maternal than incestuous or sexual. For instance, consider the following lines:

> Rahel watched Estha with the curiosity of a mother watching her wet child. A sister a brother. A woman a man. A twin a twin . . . she flew those several kisses at once. . . . He was a naked stranger met in a chance encounter. He was the one that she had known before life began. (93)

This kind of sexual attitude shown by Roy is more or less akin to Lawrence's Oedipus complex theory which focuses on the illicit relationship of mother and son as in *Sons and Lovers.* But unlike *Sons and Lovers,* the heat of sexual passion supercedes the maternal instinct of Rahel and both the twins are no more brother and sister but like lovers united in the charm of opposite sex. After twenty three years, the brother and sister behave like two lovers in Ayemenem vindicates the fact that socially impermissible incident of physical mating at a rainy wet night has become possible in erotic luxury based on western culture. What stimulates them for this act is not sexual happiness but hideous grief which results in hollowness. Such kind of sexual images are not simply used to convey sexual emotions but something more as what Edward Said remarked that "the images, themes, motifs that circulate in the text can be useful indicators of its ideological underpinnngs."[3]

Modern psychology regards sex as one of the most important aspects of life, and hence it is that sex-relationship and sex con-

flict predominate in the novel. Arundhati Roy is an explorer of human relationships and her modern novel deals with the idea of unusual sex with a different angle in its free and frank treatment of sex relationships. Through the protagonists like Ammu and Velutha, the novelist has endeavored to unravel their hidden sexual desires along with physical relationships and amatory activities. However, both the central characters of the novel, Velutha, the untouchable God of Small Things, and his beloved Ammu, the touchable divorcee daughter of Mammachi, belong to the minority class whose lives are guided by an inner light and not by the laws of society. As Arundhati Roy says: "That it really began in the days when the Love Laws were made. The laws that lay down who should be loved, and how, and how much." The description of Ammu, the heroine of the novel, who has been humiliated by a daring police Inspector, Thomas Mathew in the Kottayam Police Station by tapping her breasts with his baton, highlights the transparency of language through unusual sex. The novelist's play with language to unravel the immoral activity of Police Inspector is noteworthy: "As though he was choosing mangoes from a basket." (8)

Ammu, the mouthpiece of the novelist is not a kind of lady who is obedient, submissive, and of serving nature according to patriarchal demands of the society. Regarding the love and sex of the female class, Simone de Beauvoir observes that the term "female is derogatory not because it emphasizes woman's animality, but because it imprisons her in her sex; and if this sex seems to man to be contemptible and inimical even in harmless dumb animals, it is evidently because of the uneasy hostility stirred up in him by woman."[4] But now things have changed and Ammu, selecting a man of her own choice who will be her life-partner, had already claimed her right of taking decision regarding her own body. However, by chance it was not a right choice and the marriage could not succeed due to the drunkard man (father of the twins) who wanted to offer the beautiful wife to his white officer to avoid a transfer in his government job. At the same time, Ammu took a very bold decision to quit such a type of husband who is not faithful to his wife. Ultimately, she re-

turned to her mother and thus joined the company of Man-less father Mulligan-less Baby Kachamma and widow Mammachi. Moreover when the footprintless man Velutha started visiting her dreams, she could not control herself. The novelist expresses vividly the dreaming of Ammu about her lover in the following lines:

> Somehow, by not mentioning his name, she knew that she had drawn him into the tousled intimacy of that blue cross-stitch afternoon and the song from the tangerine transistor. By not mentioning his name, she sensed that a pact had been forged between her dream and the world. (220)

As a woman, she has a full right over her body and claimed her body back from twins Estha and Rahel who hugged her while she dreamed of her lover. When she thinks about her lover, she also becomes conscious of her own physical beauty and somehow tries to maintain her attractive look while defying age like Shakespeare's Cleopatra. Roy minutely unravels the naked physical reality of Ammu with all its erotic angularities: "Ammu undressed and put a red toothbrush under a breast to see if it would stay. It didn't. Where she touched herself her flesh was taut and smooth. Under her hands her nipples wrinkled and hardened like dark nuts, pulling at the soft skin on her breasts. The thin line of down from her belly button led over the gentle curve of the base of her belly to her dark triangle. Like an arrow directing a lost traveller. An inexperienced lover." (222)

In the meantime, she began to assess her own past husband who had played with her body and made "not big in itself." But "big only because the rest of her was so slender. It belonged on another more voluptuous body." (223) Later on, Roy also narrates the physical shape, size and colour of Ammu's body in a thrilling and realistic manner to create sensuous sensibility. For instance, she is "A slender, naked executioner with dark nipples and deep dimples when she smiled. With seven stretch marks from her two-egg twins, born to her by candlelight amidst news of a lost war." (223-24) There are many scenes in the novel where the novelist has openly described the naked voluptuous

body of Ammu who dreams more about Velutha than anybody else as someone could provide husband like feelings in the modern complicated society.

As a feminist writer, Roy has successfully delineated the biological need of Ammu for sex and her illicit love relationship with Velutha in the last chapter of the novel "The Cost of Living." It is the secret charm of opposite sex which attracts her attention towards the well-built stout body of Velutha and spontaneously her suppressed womanhood gets aroused after several years. Her hidden sexual desire wanted an outlet to flow in love with male friend like Velutha. But the conservative Indian social system rooted in caste and creed never gives permission for such type of thoughts and emotions. Her elopement with him and night escapades in the History House for thirteen days under the threat of continuous heavy downpour due to cyclonic disturbances give her physical fulfillment which she cannot forget and neglect. Apart from this, her bold and daring step to meet Velutha at the haunted house on the riverbank is the best example of a true lover who can go to any extent to meet her lover. Ammu ultimately decided to go to her lover with her erotic feelings. The novelist unravels their physical attachment in the following lines which is replete with sensuousness:

> He went to him and laid the length of her body against his. He just stood there. He did not touch her. He was shivering. Partly with cold. Partly with tenor. Partly aching desire. Despite his fear his body was prepared to take the bait. It wanted her urgently. His wetness wet her. She put her arms around him. . . . She unbuttoned her shirt. They stood there. Skin to skin. Her brownness against his blackness. Her softness against his hardness. Her nut brown breasts (that wouldn't support a toothbrush) against his smooth bony chest. (334-35).

The character of Ammu is like Shakespeare's Cleopatra who can flirt with Antony with her infinite variety and goes to any extent for the fulfilment of love. Their love crosses the boundary of time and space but Ammu and Velutha's love relationship crosses the boundary of caste and creed as to express their harmony and warmth in love keeping aside the anxiety of the mod-

ern society. Shakespeare's Cleopatra is naughty, fickle in flirting with Antony but Roy's Ammu is simple, sober and faithful in establishing a love affair with Velutha. As tragedy of love, the character of Ammu and Cleopatra bear resemblance in the sense that their love is sincere, intense and irresistible. Unlike Shakespeare, Roy has openly described about free sex through the character of Ammu which is acceptable to any lady in the female world. As an unsatisfied lady both physically and mentally, Ammu comes closer to Velutha. When her sexual passion becomes uncontrollable, she gets united physically to satisfy the oppressed lover more deeply and intensely than herself:

> Ammu naked now, crouched over Velutha, her mouth on his. He drew her hair around them like a tent. . . . She slid further down, introducing herself to the rest of him. . . . She sipped the last of the river from the hollow of his navel. She pressed the heat of his erection against her eyelids. She tasted him, salty, in her mouth. He sat up and drew her back to him. She felt her belly tighter under her, hard as a board. She felt her wetness slipping on his skin. He took her nipple in his mouth and cradled her other breast in his calloused palm. (336)

Here it becomes obvious that the novelist could not control her emotions being a woman and it appears that she has personal relation with someone who can understand her feelings of love, lust and sexual desire.

However, this romantic affair of Ammu and Velutha seems to be akin to the affairs of Madeline and Porphyro in Keats's famous thrilling poem "The Eve of St. Agnes." Keats describes how the union of Porphyro and Madeline was prevented by the hostilities between their respective families. But their deep passionate love transcended the barriers of family feuds and Porphyro made bold to risk his life, entered the castle of his enemies and, helped by an old lady, succeeded in eloping with his beloved. But in the case of Ammu and Velutha, Roy has reversed the gear and one can easily find Ammu on the place of Porphyro who as a beloved stepping out to meet her lover untouchable Velutha at the river bank keeping aside all the social norms. Unlike Madeline, Ammu being a married lady who has already had

twins, is ready to flirt with Velutha with whom she can get physical satisfaction in love and romance and something more beyond this as a human being. The following erotic lines can be cited to grasp the sensuous, passionate and vulgar loving scenes of Ammu and Velutha:

> He lay over her, careful not to put his weight on her. Small stones pressed into the skin of his forearms. He kissed her eyes. Her ears. Her breasts. Her belly. Her seven silver stretch-marks from her twins. The line of down that led from her navel to her dark triangle, that told him where she wanted him to go. The inside of her legs, where her skin was softest. Then carpenter's hands lined her hips and an untouchable tongue touched the innermost part of her. (336-37)

Ultimately, at the end of the novel, in the closing lines of "The Cost of Living," the novelist has been successful in presenting the inner tumult of love between Ammu and Velutha which binds each other emotionally. Nevertheless, it was not that Ammu was attached with Velutha only for sexual fulfillment but also for a man who can provide her protection, affection and submissive feelings like a husband with whom she can survive in this world. Philosophically, Velutha was not a God who can rule over her body (that is small things) but in reality he was a simple footprintless man who can give Ammu his own body and heart as a true lover. And, therefore, it is Ammu who "smiled to herself in the dark, thinking how much she loved his arms the shape and strength of them, how safe she felt resting in them." (338) Particularly, the bond of love established between Ammu and Velutha at the physical and emotional level is really a unique one. Besides Ammu, the innocent children, Estha and Rahel also loved Velutha forgetting their own personal anxieties. But the love relationship of Amnu and Velutha highlights a kind of relationship which is possible between the two opposite sexes in this modern world crossing the boundary of caste and creed as part of the natural phenomenon.

NOTES

1. Albert Mordell, *The Erotic Motive in Literature* (New York: Collier, 1962), p.1.
2. Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things* (New Delhi: Indiaink, 1997, p. 20.
3. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Victoria: Penguin, 199), p. 21.
4. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (Le duxieme Sex, Paris 1949) trans. and ed. H. M. Parshley (London: Jonathan Cape).

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Kiran Desai's *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* as a Satirical Novel

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In the age of television and information explosion, much is said and written about the glory, beauty and spirit of India. We perpetually mention and refer to the Vedic Myths, the incredible Ayurvedic cures and our centuries-old yoga. We tend to get euphoria about India's greatness. We also tend to get oblivious of our weaknesses. The novel, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* by Kiran Desai, comes as a shock to the reader. It brings the reader down to earth. The novel can best be described as a catechizing process for the Indian reader. It compels us to face the realities of our motherland.

'Like mother, like daughter' would not be appropriate to describe Anita Desai's daughter Kiran Desai and her maiden effort at writing fiction, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*. Kiran Desai does not write like her mother. While Anita Desai dwells deep in the realms of inner psyche, intuition and the dynamics of relationships, Kiran Desai has written a light ironical novel mocking the common illogical ways of India. The essence of everyday existence in India is caught by the novelist in a satirical vein.

The story and the plot are simple and straightforward. The reader is transported to the town of Shahkot. Shahkot stands for an average Indian town with bazars, schools, a degree college, government-offices, banks and its inhabitants. The protagonist Sampath Chawla is an eccentric youth who works in a post-office. His job is dreary and boring. He fills the monotones hours by reading others' letters and by enjoying afternoon siestas. But then fate has something else in store for this erratic boy. One day, on behaving wildly at the marriage of his boss's daughter,

he loses his job at the post-office. Life gets hellish for him. Although in his heart of hearts he is glad to be free from the dull job, he is continuously tortured by his father's cynical remarks.

On way to escape the painful perusal of his father for searching a new job, this suffering soul climbs on top of a tree in a guava orchard in the outskirts of Shahkot. When people come to cajole him, he mischievously leaks out personal details of the lives of some of the visitors. Obviously this knowledge comes from his unethical habit of reading others' letters at his previous workplace i.e. the post-office. But these ill-mannered utterings are taken as the vision of a godman. His cowardly escape is considered his lack of interest in 'maya,' this worldly web. Before anyone can grasp the developments, the whimsical lad transforms into a 'Baba,' a Guru, a 'Sanyasi.' Sampath's father, the practical Mr. Chawla smells a great business opportunity in this. He efficiently advertises the newly-thurst spirituality of his son. He himself is not at all deceived about the reality of Sampath. He knows his son is the same old moron. But Mr. Chawla is more than glad about the change in others' perception regarding his son. His good-for-nothing son has made it as a godman. It is happy time for the Chawla family. There is money. There is fame. There is power. There is respect for them all around. Sampath is called 'Monkey-Baba' as monkeys also dwell in that orchard.

Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard is an ironical novel satirizing Indian mentality. It openly makes fun at our sense of propriety and logic. The major satire of the novel is the Indian sense of religiosity. Anything sells in the name of religion. I am reminded of Pascal who once said, "Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction." Different 'Babas' and their followers are growing each moment like a swelling ocean. Just like population or crime, the Godmen are also on an uncontrollable rise. Every region, city, township or even locality has to its credit some kind of spirituality personified. While going through this novel, what strikes home is the absurdity of blind faith and fanatic beliefs. These godmen have the power. But they are not accountable to anyone.

Their authority, therefore, stands unchallenged. They bathe in milk, eat rich food and maintain hefty bank accounts. They can occupy government land and use all official facilities free of cost. Kiran Desai has skillfully brought out the modus operandi of the making of a saint. There are business tricks involved in the trade. It is just a trade like any other trade. Production, advertisement and selling are in operation. One feels that spirituality is the most lucrative business in India.

Later on the monkeys develop a taste for liquor and create havoc in the orchard. Sampath's father, Mr. Chawla wishes to get the orchard, the place of his great business free from monkeys. But then passions run high on all sides. A monkey protection society is formed to save the animals as they are considered sacred in Hindu religion. Indians are showing wasting their time and energy in futile fights.

Sampath answers the questions of his devotees in a moronic fashion. But then he is no more Sampath; he is Monkey-Baba because monkeys have taken abode around him. He has an aura around him. His each word is thought to be loaded with deep meaning and suggestions. Whenever anyone asks him a question, Sampath replies symbolically. For example, a lady is worried about the bad company of his son. She asks Sampath the solution. Sampath begins to reply by saying. "Add lemons to milk and it will grow sour." (74) He answers like this following the great Indian tradition of symbolical discourse in religion. He keeps on pronouncing crazy sentences like one mouse is different from the other or one can digest fish or moth will go to the lantern etc. Symbolism is a great asset to Sampath as it curtains his mental deficiency in layers of mystery. People spin their heads in getting at the meaning and the Monkey-Baba is regarded as a great mystic.

One character in the novel is an atheist. He is a member of an atheist society. He is sent to Shahkot to make enquiries regarding Monkey-Baba. He is a pathetic, lonely figure in the novel. While the mob is in the trance of spiritual waves, this fleet fellow is portrayed as a ridiculous loner who is trying to gather facts against the fraud. His condition is wretched. He follows

Sampath's mother, Kulfi, when she goes to nearby forest to gather herbs and spices. He is convinced that she mixes some intoxicants in Sampath's food. He keeps a vigil at nights. He makes his logical notes. But what happens to him at the end of the novel? His curiosity takes him to a tree just above the huge cooking pot of Kulfi. When there is the final hullabaloo in the guava orchard, he falls inside the boiling cooking pot and the pot is covered by Kulfi. The meaning of this incident is deep. Reason and rational thinking in India are boiled to death in the cauldron of frenzy and fanaticism.

Apart from the above discussed theme of satirizing the Indian sense of religiosity, the novel has innumerable other ironical comments. From endless transfers of Civil Servants to the repetitiveness of Indian schooling environment to our frequent illegal arrangements of electricity supply or water supply, nothing eludes the author's eyes. Everything is captured so flowingly, realistically and naturally. Kiran Desai is not hostile. She is not bitter while writing all these details. She only narrates a funny tale recounting the corruption, the mess and the rule of chaos as necessary details. For example, describing the post office where Sampath worked, she writes about the barbed wire fencing: "Naturally the barbed wire fence was not entirely intact" because the people of Shahkot on seeing the wire, were reminded of its need in and around their houses. Slowly but surely, the poor fencing stands broken. Our tendency to scratch names on monuments is also boldly brought to light in this novel.

Similarly when it rains, the electricity supply goes off, "Ammaji placed buckets outside to catch rain water and brought out candles and kerosene lanterns in preparation for the inevitable breakdown of electricity." This is how the novel moves. The minute delineation of common Indian habits forms the bulk of this novel. Government service and afternoon naps are totally interlinked to each other. Come elections and all the leaders get ready to take the residents of Shahkot to the 21st century. Our patriarchal set up, the edge the boys enjoy in matrimonial settlements, the way the gods are appeased for a male child or the recurrent wrong numbers on Indian phone system are well written.

Everything is accepted by the novelist. There is no sermonizing. This is just how things stand in Shahkot.

Indians predict weather in a final tone. If the wind is blowing from west to east, it will rain or if the atmosphere is still, storm is on the cards. Similarly, as soon as a lady gets pregnant, the predicament regarding the sex of the child picks up momentum. Relatives, friends, neighbours, all are engrossed in thinking, 'Boy or girl'? The breath of the mother is "released happy and full of relief if the baby was a boy, released full of disappointment and resentment if it wasn't." (7)

Overpopulation, stink dust, lack of space in Indian homes and the obsession of taking bath with Lifebuoy soap are touched in such a way that one cannot resist laughter. At times, the novelist reaches subtlety. Our frequent elections, election-promises and slogans have become a laughing stock: "Not one of the street lights worked and they wouldn't work, everyone knew, until the next election. Then there would be flurry of excitement, with five-and ten-point plans . . . to send Shahkot and its residents bounding into the twenty-first century." (16)

Thus India with all her darkness, sweat, heat, congested localities and houses, dirt and drainage is the background of the novel. One may be allowed to say that basically it is a western way of looking and analyzing India. Although no one can deny the grotesque details of our country, nevertheless the novel appears to be a slice of India served to the egotist West.

Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard is a welcome change for a reader of novels. It changes the mood entirely. A practical novel with pragmatic subjects and characters is refreshing. It makes us think. Loving our own selves is easy. But analyzing, criticizing and accepting our weaknesses is a difficult task. This task is well, achieved by Kiran Desai.

NOTE

1. Kiran Desai, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* (New Delhi: Viking Penguin India, 1998), p. 9.

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J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace:* A Study in Conscientiousness

MADHOO KAMARA

Art is something more than transmission of ideas, an imprint of cultural and racial temperaments. It may, as Nietzsche argues, may tame man's understanding to the demand of the reality around or it may be an interpretation of "reality to men and men to themselves." Tolstoy in his essay, "What is Art" declared that it is "the transmission of emotions." Disgrace affirms in its intellectual depth, Nietzsche and Tolstoy's intellectual and profound truths. Here the aesthetic sensibilities come out fresh and the emotional response embodies the pleasure of reading a genuine book of art. To an intelligent reader, the novel holds moral and philosophical debate issues and there is sufficient excitement and compulsion to embrace critical process.

Born in Cape Town, South Africa on February 9, 1940, Coetzee is the first author to win the prestigious Booker Award twice. On 25 October 1999, this South African novelist was awarded the Booker Prize for the second time for his novel *Disgrace*. The other shortlisted novels over which *Disgrace* prevailed were *Fasting Feasting* by Anita Desai, *Headlong* by Michael Frayn, *Our Fathers* by Andrew Hagan, *The Map of Love* by Ahdaf Sourif and *The Black Water Lightship* by Colm Tobin.

Disgrace is a heartbreaking novel about grace and love shared individually and in its own recognizable individual ways by David Lurie and his daughter Lucy. Situating his character David Lurie in the folds of a crisis, Coetzee explores "what it means to be human." The lateral roots of his psychological abasement and physical torment lie in his insatiable desire to relate himself to Melanie (his student) after having failed in real-

izing his being in his relation with Rosalind (his wife) and Soraya (a whore). At the outset, David comes out as a full flesh human being, an English professor to whom the primary essence of love and sex defeats. The meaning is fathomed at the close of the novel when subjected to disgrace he rises to 'grace,' which defines tile art and dignity of living

With David as the central character, Coetzee explores how a man of eminence may be a non-entity in a moral and philosophical way. Satirically he is depicted as an authority in 'Communication Skills' but ironically the basics of communication, which makes a fulsome living, is yet a remote territory in which fate would soon drive him in. He imagines himself with a disgraced face, a life no worth than an ugly reptile or a filthy animal. He imagines Melanie and his colleagues shuddering over him "as one shudders at a cockroach in the washbasin, in the middle of a night" and wonders how he can tame his sexual desires. The denouncement of David comes in the early pages of the novel and much narration is devoted to how David admits his guilt but refuses to yield to pressure, to repent publicly, resigns and retreats to an isolated small holding of his daughter Lucy. "Guilt" stares at Lurie's face when Lucy is assaulted by three rapists during his passive helpless presence. Lucy, "ashamed of herself," recedes into self-confinement. She refuses to go to the market and David for the sake of his daughter "endures the stares of the curious, responding politely to those friends of Lucy who choose to commiserate."[1]

This terrible sickness now confronts Lucy double-faced. The society declares him a moral and spiritual sinner and "the sin and the crime" directed to his daughter staring with cruel eyes. The target of legislation now upsets his soul; he accuses his 'sexual self' as violent and unlicensed for the first time. This psychological and moral phenomenon gains visibility and meaning once Lurie's daughter is victimized by the three rapists. John Caroll in his book *Guilt* says: "The existence of sensitivity in human relationship means that moral guilt is easy to provoke, and equally that remorse and desire to repair are even at hand."[2]

Lucy senses the intention of the rapists who poured hatred on her as a show of resentment for trespassing their boundaries of society, culture and 'living.' She feels

> They see themselves as debt collectors. Why should I be allowed to live here without paying? . . . when it comes to man and sex. You are a man, you ought to know, . . . isn't it a bit like killing? (158)

As a matter of fact, guilt is the distiller, David is now 'a protective father' and not 'a body' enslaved to 'sex.' To channel his guilt in a viable way of life, he takes up a penance by sacrificing his career, his world of glamour, a quest for academic research and settles down in Grahamstown to provide her companionship, parental love and humane refuge. The vital question now is "Did guilt demand a right answer?"

The archaeology of David's trauma makes *Disgrace* a novel of intense feelings. David's experiences school him into a matured consciousness. David's mutilated self (after Lucy's rape) initiates a soul-searching phase, yielding a better reasoning and a sensitive being who stands now fresh and eminently impressive. The traditional concept of romantic love is not communicated; rather love and sexuality are clinically probed through a microscope to seal the boundaries between the two. Lust is the modern version of love and the novelist lashes at it. He candidly says:

> Repentance is neither here nor there. Repentance belongs to another world to another universe of discourse. (58)

This is how Coetzee records with fluidity the psychological metamorphosis that gradually glides through the fluidity of narration making a sensitive report of change at work within Lurie. Coetzee makes this change audible through his effective characterization, with striking narration and neat and logical syntax, resounding with the "tick of a clock in a man's soul."

The novel is transparently plain, the setting with the use of local colour adds credibility to the surface and deep design of the novel. There is a noticeable "spiritual affinity" between the landscape and the changing climate of David and his daughter's lives. The meticulously detailed environment whether of Cape

Town, Georgia or Grahamstown is not merely a background to the eventful happenings in the lives of the major characters but is a reflection of the "many vistas of a crowded larger world." Care- is taken to avoid lavish strings of adjectives in the exposition of the physical background. Professor Lathrop suggests that the setting has become even more important in contemporary fiction because we increasingly recognize a man's background as one of the factors that has shaped him. The active pressure of environment in forming personality is widely acknowledged now. The setting is seen as a force; the plot is often represented not as a thing in itself, but as something caused and conditional possible and characteristic only in its own milieu. Hence the greater demand to have the setting authentic and realistic.

The book is in a racy style, with intelligible details running one after the other in quick succession. Care is taken to avoid a heavy traffic of images, thoughts and details. Coetzee appears to be on ascetic who has subordinated the rules for writing properly. He seems to echo what Conrad had declared as his creed in the preface to *The Nigger of the Narcissus*: "My purpose is by the power of the written word to make you hear, to make you feel—it is, before all to make you see." A scrutiny of Coetzeeian sentences bears this mark:

> Women can be supringly forgiving! (69)
> Eating is a ritual and rituals make things easier. (111)
> Vengeance is like a fire the more it devours the hungrier it grows? (112)
> Life from moment to moment is not as before. (3)

These sentences carry a sense of immortality transcending present, past and future with a heavy rhythm of knowledge and illumination.

To sum up, *Disgrace* is a representation of life as a victim of natural instincts, malignantly feeding upon the normalcy of those around and later upon the consciousness within. It is a work of art in its own right for the universal validity confirm the expansive dynamism. The novel metaphorically ends in the triumph of both love and goodness; and the triumph of the integration of the

'man' and the "father figure." The fullness of his creative vision makes us feel what Srinivas Iyengar describes as: "We must always come back to the soul quality in literature, for without it we have no literature but only a bundle of dead words. This soul quality is the spark that gives life to literature and keeps it alive. . . . Great literature must, by the very intensity of its presentation of human characters and actions, transport the reader to the imaginative plain where soul communicates with soul, and rounded and serene apprehension of the true inwardness and rich manifoldness of life is possible"[3]

NOTES

1. J.M. Coetzee. *Disgrace* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1995), p. 115.
2. John Caroll, *Guilt* (England: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), p. 17.
3. Srinivas Iyengar, *The Adventures of Criticism* (New Delhi: Creative, 1995), p. 35.

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Ties and Trials: Rohinton Mistry's *Family Matters*

PARMANAND JHA

Rohinton Mistry is a widely acclaimed writer of Indian English fiction. Born into a Parsi family in Bombay in 1952, Mistry studied Mathematics before he immigrated with his wife, an English teacher, to Toronto (Canada) in 1975. Even as he had no definite plan to be a writer, he began writing stories in 1983, while doing the job of a bank clerk by day and attending night courses at the University of Toronto. His attempts at short stories won him two Hart House Literary prizes and Canadian Fiction Magazine's Annual Contributor's Prize for 1985. In 1987 Penguin Books Canada published his *Tales from Firozsha Baag*, a collection of 11 short stories. Four years later, in 1991, Mistry published his first novel *Such a Long Journey*. It won him the Governor General's Award, the Commonwealth Writer's Prize for the best book and the Smith Books in Canada First Novel award and was shortlisted for the Booker Prize as well as for the Trillium Award. It has been translated into German, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish and Japanese. His second novel, *A Fine Balance*, published in 1995, won the prestigious Giller Prize, the Commonwealth Writer's Prize for the best book, the Los Angeles Times Book Prize for Fiction and the Royal Society of Literature's Winfred Hotby Award. It was also shortlisted for the Booker Prize, the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award and the Irish Times International Fiction Prize. It was recently chosen as the first Canadian Pick for Oprah Winfrey's Book Club. *Family Matters* is Mistry's latest novel, shortlisted again, for Booker Prize.

Mistry has been described as a genius by a leading British newspaper[1] and a " true literary Map Maker."[2] His writing, he

often admits, is the outcome of his passion for reading a variety of great authors from Enid Blyton to Chekhov, Joyce, Bellow, Updike and Naipaul. Living in Toronto for the last 27 years, Mistry has remained deeply rooted to his native place India. All his four books are set in Bombay that he "recreates and agonizes over with the close attention to detail of a homesick exile."[3] His novels are skilfully textured and compassionate stories of his native India and offer a genuine relief from the spicy, exotic 'Mango-school' of Indian writing. Unlike many writers of the South Asian diaspora, Mistry "doesn't engage in manic polemics or god-filled heights of fancy; instead his stories are careful, patient accounts of people trying to find answers in a world that seldom offers any. Reading his simple, moving tales of struggle and affliction, you are less in the company of Salman Rushdie or Arundhati Roy than in the company of Victor Hugo, perhaps or Thomas Hardy."[4]

Family Matters (Faber and Faber, March 2002) offers an excellent portrait of an Indian Parsi firmly, struggling to deal with their ageing father ailing with Parkinson's disease. Beautifully paced and superbly crafted, it chronicles an intricate account of domestic conflict. Set in Bombay in the 1990s, the novel "tells the story of familial love and affection, of personal and political corruption, the religious complexity, the power of memory to keep truth alive, and the ultimate peril of memory denied."[5] The story centres round a 79 year old Parsi widower, Nariman. A former professor of English, Nariman suffers from Parkinson's and a number of other debilitating diseases of age. He lives in a 7-room apartment in the complex called Chateau Felicity, with his two grown-up stepchildren: Coomy a bitter woman who seems intent on plaguing Nariman with rules 'to govern every aspect of his shrunken life' (2) and her brother Jal, a mild-mannered good-for-nothing fellow.

When the novel opens, Nariman feels a 'vague pang of abandonment' before he rises to prepare for his evening walk, much against the wishes of his stepchildren—Jal's reminding him of the hazards of walking, pot holes, lawlessness on the streets of Bombay and Nariman's answer, 'Ditches, potholes,

traffic cannot extinguish all the joy of life.' (3) Nariman goes out and returns home with 'abrasions on his elbow and forearm, and a limp' (6) as he falls while crossing the lane. Reprimanded by Coomy for not acting responsibly, Nariman warns her: 'In my youth, my parents controlled me, and destroyed those years, thanks to them I married your mother and wrecked my middle years. Now you want to torment my old age. I wont allow it.' (7) And Coomy's retort 'such lies! . . . you ruined Mamma's life and mine and Jal's. I will not tolerate a word against her.' (7) This reflects the complex nature of their relationship, their love and hate bickerings and bondings.

Life, thus, is not particularly happy at Chateau Felicity as Nariman and his ineffectual stepson Jal are continually verbally lashed by Coomy. Matters turn for the worse when Nariman has a serious fall breaking his ankle. After a brief stay at hospital, he comes home and is confined to bed. Looking after him becomes a tedious job. The need for bed pans and the resultant stink greatly upsets Coomy and she breaks down weeping, saying it is too much for her. 'Looking after Pappa had been hard enough when he was not bedridden.' (74) Jal advises her to inform Roxina, their half-sister, but Coomy brushes the idea aside as she didn't want a rush of Chenoys here, spending evening after evening, telling her how to nurse Pappa. Besides, she had no energy to be their hostess, 'offering tea and cold drinks between bedpan and basin.' (75) Coomy has many grievances against her stepfather—his treatment of her mother and his supposed favouritism towards his own daughter Roxana. She decides that he is best handed over to her half-sister. She silences Jal when he tries to remind her of filial duties: 'I don't owe Pappa anything. He didn't change my diaper or wash my bum, and I don't have to clear his shit either.' (82) Both of them carry Nariman in an ambulance and dump him at the door of Roxana unannounced, confident that the loving daughter will welcome her father in, despite the fact that her family of four lives in a tiny two-room apartment in the complex called Pleasant Villa which Nariman had bought for her as a marriage gift.

Nariman's arrival at the tiny flat shared by Roxana, her husband Yezad and their two sons--Jehangir and Murad, opens the door to family conflict, tension and disruption. Yezad's job at a sports equipment store only pays enough to keep the family together and the addition of an elderly relative with attendant medical bills increases the pressure. Besides the scarcity of food and space, there are the realities of bodily decrepitude. Bowel movements and bedpans, stinks and sores become 'not only a helpless old man's cross to bear but a burden to those who love him most.'

Meanwhile, as the weakening Nariman tries not to be a burden to Roxana, he mumbles in his dreams, night after night, which gradually reveals the pain and secrets at the heart of the family. Mistry uses the device of flashback in italics at intervals to reveal the painful past of Nariman. As a young man, Nariman challenged the hierarchy of the Parsi faith he was born into by falling in love with a Goan Christian, Lucy. But due to his own weak will and lack of courage, he bowed to the relentless pressure of the 'marriage arrangers, the wilful manufactures of misery' (85) and married Yasmin, a widowed Parsi woman who had two children—Jal and Coomy. It was a joyless marriage, the only joy in their marriage being Roxana, the daughter they conceived together. Lucy, however, never stopped loving Nariman often coming by his house, staring up at his window longingly and eventually demeaning herself by taking up ayah's job at the house of Nariman's hostile neighbour, Arjani. Nariman felt compelled to go and meet her. This upset Yasmin greatly and led to a significant amount of animosity between husband and wife and kids. The end of this scandalous relationship was very tragic—both Yasmin and Lucy fall from the terrace to death. The whole drama of the novel stems from this. Nariman-Lucy relationship, even as "Mistry's touch here is very delicate and reserved and the melodramatic core of the story is revealed almost as an aside, in the epilogue."[5]

Nariman's proposed three-week stay at Pleasant Villa prolongs as Coomy pushes Jal into wrecking part of their apartment so that they will have the perfect excuse of not taking their step-

father back. The drama of pseudo-repair, which involves the help of their awesomely incompetent handiman neighbour, leads to a terrible accident resulting in Coomy's death. Roxana's family, meanwhile, reverts to subterfuges to survive financially. Yezad hatches doomed plans to raise money to fill the almost empty envelopes Roxana keeps in a drawer from which to pay the family expenses. Guilt and failure become Yezad's constant companions and prompt his fanatical return to religion.

Jal approaches Yezad with a plan. 'The solution,' said Jal, 'was for the whole family, along with Pappa to move into Chateau Felicity. It would be best for all of them. Also a way to honour Coomy's memory—something good at last after years of unhappiness (428). They dispose of their apartment at Pleasant Villa for forty lakhs, use a part of the amount to repair Chateau Felicity where they finally move along with the bedridden Nariman. A hospital ayah is hired to nurse him. Instead she gives him horrible bedsores, and is sent packing by Roxana. A wardboy in his thirties is hired as a replacement. A year after moving into Chateau felicity, Nariman dies with a 'serene expression' on his face.

There are quite a few sub-plots revealing the encroachments of a vicious, corrupting world. The troubles in Roxana's house are paralleled in the city of Bombay, ruled by the gangsters like Shiv Sena, who oppress Muslims as they preserve India from western festivities and morals. A substantial portion of the story unfolds at the Bombay Sporting Goods Emporium, where Yezad's boss Mr. Kapur decides to run in the next Municipal election to save his beloved, adopted city; who insists all faiths be celebrated in his shop and is eventually killed by the Shiv Sena for his abusive behaviour. There is also an echo of sectarian intolerance in orthodox Parsis' obsession with purity, fearing extinction through inter-marriage or migration. The novel both affirms Zoroastrian ritual and derides bigotry. Though the sceptic Yezad returns to the fold, his insistence that his sons marry Parsis threatens in to replicate Nariman's tragedy. Yet while his family is baffled by this 'non-stop' praying stranger," (487) the

reader is aware that Yezad's fundamentalism is born of guilt—yet another response to a corrupting world."[6]

But the focus throughout is on the struggles of the family; their binding ties and the trials they have to suffer through. Mistry's humanism reveals itself in the depiction of a family who are closer and loving in spite of all their differences. There are shades of King Lear in the novel. Nariman himself says, 'To so many classes I taught Lear, learning nothing myself. What kind of teacher is that, as foolish at the end of his life as at the beginning?' (190) Banished by Coomy who is the custodian of all her stepfather's retirement money, the elderly patriarch, like King Lear, is forced to seek the generosity of his progeny Roxana, who welcomes him in spite of her tight space and resources. The ailing patriarch has only this to say, 'Can care and concern he made compulsory? Either it resides in the heart or nowhere.' (116)

Caring the old, the novel stresses, is not only a measure of our humanity but a means of grasping it thoroughly. In the hospital, Nariman, pondering over an older orderly, wonders if collecting faeces and urine from the beds of the lane and the halt and the diseased might be the necessary conditions for achieving enlightenment.' (57) When Yezad loses his cool over the need and cares of Nariman, Roxana reminds him of Gandhi's teachings, 'that there was nothing nobler than the services of the weak, the old, the unfortunate,' (278) Mistry reveals, in a moving way, small triumphs of humanity over distaste, minute shifts that beacon leaps of compassion. Roxana beams with joy that 'our children can learn about old age, about caring—it will prepare them for life, make them better human beings.' (278) Yezad also comes to realize that, with death, helping one's elders through it is the only way to learn to take on one's own. As Roxana watches her nine year old son feeding 79 years old grandfather, the boy wiping a stray grain of rice from his lips. 'She felt she was witnessing something almost sacred.' (108) There's a subdued note of optimism at the end of the novel. 'Aren't you happy?' Roxana asks her youngest son. 'Yes,' he answers, 'I'm happy.' (487) "Family matters can be difficult, and

Mistry doesn't shy away from showing, in all their roughness, the real truths about them."[7] There are trying situations, there are trials and ordeals but the ties of the family ultimately survive.

The novel does have some overtones of a morality tale. 'Trifling peccadilloes like a class monitor taking money or Yezad getting two stage actors to pose as people from the Shiv Sena and frighten his boss bring about a terrible nemesis.' Asked about the role of destiny in the novel, Mistry answered: "There is enough in the book to support the notion of destiny and enough to show that every thing happens as a result of what the characters choose to do. If Yezad had not undertaken the scheme with the actors, everything would have been different, Mr. Kapur would not have been killed. If Coomy had listened to her brother and said, right, 30 years have gone by, it is time to forgive and forget, things could have gone differently. It is the choice of each character that leads to the denouement."[8]

A master of telling detail, Rohinton Mistry has created a 'beautifully realized world.' with all too human characters. Hardly any character is uni-dimensional, except perhaps the very funny Villie cardmaster, the Matka woman. There are some unforgettably decent characters, like the beautiful Daisy, the violinist, who leaves her concert rehearsal, and dressed in glittering black, rushes to play Schubert's 'serenade' for Nariman as he lies dying.

Written in a flawless style with a well-knit plot, *Family Matters* has "all the richness, the compassion, the gentle humour, and the narrative sweep that have earned Rohinton Mistry the highest of accolades and prizes around the world."[9] Drawing a fine balance between skepticism and a affirmation, faith and bigotry, family nurture and control, Mistry has "once again given us something absolutely painfully pleasurable, a bitter sweet rendition of life in its most ordinary intimate setting." [10]

NOTES

1. *The Independent*, April 14, 2002.

2. Michael Ondaatjee, Guardian Unlimited@GuardianNewspapers limited, accessed on October 7, 2002.
3. Jane Seyed, *Coast Reporter,* May 19, 2002
4. Michael Ondaatjee, *Guardian Unlimited.*
5. Keki N. Daruwalla, *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, Sunday May 26, 2002.
6. Maya Jaggi, *The Guardian,* Saturday April 13, 2002 (Accessed on Oct 7, 2002).
7. Charles Foray *The Times*, 10 June 2002.
8. An Interview with Rohinton Mistry, *Canadian Fiction Magazine,* (http.com.aceessed on 7 Oct 2002.
9. Julia Flynn, *Sunday Star Times*, May 5, 2002, Accessed on Oct. 7, 2002.
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The Quest for Identity in Anita Nair's *Ladies' Coupe*

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Ladies' Coupe is essentially a novel of woman sensibility but it does not fit into the category of women writing that depicts women as "battered, bartered and abandoned on the shoals of low self worth."[1] It rides triumphantly against the tide, giving us a glimpse of the innate strength a woman has to reconstruct her life. Perhaps that is why Nair has called her novel a story about "ordinary women with indomitable spirit."[2]

Ladies' Coupe is Nair's second novel. Her first *The Better Man* has a male protagonist, a retired bachelor, who overcomes childhood fears imbedded deep in his psyche with the help of Bhasi, a friend. The journey of Mukundan Nair in *The Better Man* is similar to that of Akhila or Akhilendeswari, around whom Nair's *Ladies' Coupe* is woven. A single forty-five year old pen-pusher in the Income Tax Department, Akhila, one day sets to seek certain answers for herself, mainly to the question whether a single woman can live alone, away from her family. She buys a ticket to Kanyakumari and is placed in a ladies' coupe along with five other women giving her company for the overnight journey. These women share their life experiences with her, thus helping her to gain her full potential as a woman and grapple with the answers to the questions she's been seeking so long.

The novel has also been called a 'novel in parts' perhaps because the lives and experiences of six women have been welded together by the author into a consummate whole, with Akhila as a magnet in the centre. Nair seems to have resorted to one of the oldest ploys. i.e. by taking a "leaf out of Chaucer's mixed crowd of pilgrims travelling to Canterbury, telling tales to each other.[3]

The narrative grammar might be similar but the unique bonding among the women in *Ladies' Coupe* makes each life story (not told publicly as in Chaucer) a learning experience for Akhila who contemplates upon the various aspects of her life after each session of tale-telling. If helps her to break free from the claustrophobic multiple identities as daughter, sister, aunt and provider, and places her in the piquant situation of 'Quo Vadis' ('Wither goest thou'). This paper seeks to analyze the soul-searching journey of Akhila as she arrives by degrees as to how she should live her life and assert her identity.

Akhila's tentative overture to the women, her co-travellers, to help her to make up her mind about whether a woman should or can live alone gives rise to contradictory responses. Janaki, the oldest of the group and married for forty years, says, "Why should a woman live by herself. There is always a man willing to be with her."[4] But Margaret, a young and smart woman tells her that she should "trust her own instincts."[5] And no one can really help her.

Janaki's response is akin to what Akhila has always been led to believe since childhood. Born in a simple, South Indian Brahmin family, Akhila's father is one of those familiar figures who work in the Income Tax Department. Akhila, being the eldest, is a witness to the unique togetherness between her parents. It often makes her wonder about marriage "that makes it possible for a man and a woman to mesh their lives, dreams and even their thoughts in such a complete fashion."[6] Married to her uncle, as is the custom in most South Indian families, Akhila's mother has her own theories about what a good wife ought to be, which is that she should always be inferior to her husband.

But Akhila has her own opinions. She has seen how her father's hasty decision to sell off the small piece of land for only a pittance, has deprived her mother of her only inheritance from her wealthy father "who had left everything else to his sons."[7] Akhila's mother does not question her husband, averring that her husband knows best. To Akhila this is strange. She is grateful that she does not "have a uncle waiting in the wings"[7] to marry her.

The devotion of Akhila's mother to her husband is reversed in the case of Janaki. It is Prabhakar, Janaki's husband, who is the devoted husband, so much so, that Janaki finds the situation stifling. Tired of being treated as a "fragile creature" and resenting Prabhakar's intention to 'control' everybody, she admits that a 'foe lived in her mind' that questioned her marriage. (31)

It is much later, when they go visiting their son and daughter-in-law, she realizes that she cannot do a single thing without her husband. She reflects on her marriage and tries to fathom what it is really based on: "There was a certain something he and she shared. A tensile connection that is there between most couples who have been married a long time. She didn't know how to describe it. A companionship? A friendship? Or a mere complicity that springs between people who share a bed, a child and a life?" (31-32)

Janaki's realization of her dependence on her husband is driven into her mind by her son and daughter-in-law. Siddharth compares her unfavourably to his own mother-in-law, who widowed young, had to fend for herself and calls Janaki 'spoilt,' and the former 'generous.' It is Prabhakar who takes up cudgels for her against their son and they decide to leave as early as possible. Janaki is at last aware of the importance of 'friendly love' and she cuddles together under the blanket letting his warmth slip into her. Janaki has already admitted earlier that though she could cope perfectly well if she were alone "it wouldn't be the same." (23)

Janaki's words reverberate in Akhila's mind and it occurs to her suddenly that she could not find answers in her own life by "treating other people's lives as if they were books." (23) She muses: "If I were to make up my mind on what Janaki had to say of her life, then I should continue to live with my family. I might not love them but at least they are there." (40) But, Prabha Devi, another co-passenger, and around Akhila's age, tells her not to be disappointed. After all, Akhila has heard only one story and already there is a marked change in her. For the first time, as Janaki points out to her there is 'life' (41) in her eyes.

When the night descends and Akhila's co-passengers retire for the night on their respective berths, Akhila again delves into her past. She remembers her father who was essentially a misfit for the clerical job in the Income Tax Department and also his silent stomaching of humiliation at the hands of his colleagues because of his 'foolish' integrity of not accepting bribes. She remembers those "Sundays, which were a full-fledged weekly dress rehearsals for that day when he would retire and could live life on his own terms again." (42) Akhila remembers her mother's pampering of her father with her exclusive cooking and the rhythmic movement of the swing on which her father spent the afternoons with his head cushioned in his wife's lap. Akhila's father is a born loser and could never get the promotion due to him mainly due to the manipulations of superiors who black marked his confidential files. Akhila's father has a perennial air of suffering about him and Akhila compares him unfavourably with Subramanyam Iyer, a counterfoil to the character of Akhila's father, and also a neighbour and family friend. He is the husband of Sarasa Mami for whom Akhila has a soft corner. Iyer is just a peon and has a growing daughter and a dependent blind son. But he is full of the *joy de vivre* of life and has none of the aura of suffering around him, which Akhila's father has. The negation of life seems to be the lot of Akhila's father. His death too has an element of mystery. Did he deliberately plunge into his death by stepping in front of the bus? Anger fills Akhila's heart and tears dry in her eyes as she takes on the mantle of the provider, her sole inheritance from her father.

When Sheela, a fifteen year old girl enters the coupe around midnight, "something about the way she sits reminds Akhila of her brother Narayan, on the day their father died." (60) Sheela is grappling with the shock of the death of her grandmother who was a strong woman, living life on her own opulent terms. Dying of cancer, 'ammumma,' as Sheela calls her makes her home with her daughter (Sheela's mother) because of an altercation with her sons. Sheela is a witness to her grandmother's great dislike for imperfections and also, her fondness for manifestation of femininity and jewellery.

When death finally claims her, her body lies in a van 'smelling of urine and eu-de-colonge. Sheela realizes how much her grandmother would have hated to see herself now. So in spite of the displeasure of her parents and relatives, Sheela applies make up on her dead grandmother's face and adorns her with costume jewellery (the real ones already confiscated by her aunt). She instinctively knows that her grandmother would have been pleased.

This act of defiance of tradition, good conduct and convention on the part of young Sheela reminds Akhila of her own father's death—of how Sundays became just another day of the week and of how Akhila became the man of the family at the tender age of nineteen. Like Sheela's act of courage, Akhila, in the first flush of pride at her new status as head of family forbids her widowed mother to shave off her hair and "exchange her pretty madisars for a saffron sari." (76) She is then caught in the quagmire of family responsibilities, ceases to be a woman and has already metamorphosed into a spinster. Akhila's brothers settle down with jobs and family but no one broaches the subject of Akhila's marriage, not even her mother. So at the age of thirty-four, Akhila, the spinster, is expected to marry of her youngest sibling Padma by amassing a sizeable dowry.

Akhila's situation turns out to be like that of Nandi at the Shiva temple in Thirumulavayil whose back, unlike all other Nandis, rested towards the sanctum sanctorum. Akhila feels that this Nandi is an aberration like herself because it has turned his back to Shiva at the call of duty, thus berating the holiness of the temple. Akhila too has jeopardized her life at the call of duty by allowing herself to become the sacrificial goat at the altar of family responsibilities. She thinks of Subramani Iyer and his sudden death and draws parallels in the situation of both their families. She recalls how Sarasa Mami, with a young daughter and a blind, dependent son resorts to one of the oldest professions of the world i.e. prostitution. She trades her daughter to meet the necessities of living even at the cost of being ostracized by the whole Brahmin community. Akhila's family's situation could have been similar but as Akhila's mother says: "I had

you." (84) Akhila again feels her identity being lost in the role she's expected to play. Young as she is, she hopes that one day she will have a "home and family her own." (85)

Akhila's friendship with Catherine, a colleague and an Anglo-Indian introduces her to the pleasures of eating an egg, a strictly prohibited item in her Brahmin household. She brings the egg into the house and her kitchen. This is perhaps her only act of rebellion and self-indulgence, as the head of the family, Akhila's mother "has to accept her taste for eggs like she has endured Akhila's father's fondness for snuff." (89)

The guilt of self-indulgence runs deep into the psyche of Akhila. In one of her erotic dreams, she confronts her sexual desires, gives into them. But even as she allows herself to be swallowed by its pleasures, she sees the ashamed and accusing faces of the members of her family. But even then, Akhila is carried away by her desires, gives into it fully—until her dream is cut short by the banging of the coupe door.

It is Margaret who tells her that the 'truth as I know it and as I live it is that a woman needs a man but not to make her feel whole.' (95) Margaret tells Akhila the story of her life, her married life—to drill into Akhila that a man is after all not needed by a woman. It is a myth that has tried to twist into reality. Being a Chemistry teacher, Margaret identifies each individual with a chemical. She classifies herself as water—the universal solvent-also a solvent that has the power to dissolve and destroy. Her husband's mistake was that he dismisses her "as someone of no significance." (96) because for years the 'water' i.e. Margaret has remained in a frozen state. But something snaps and a chemical change occurs. Margaret realizes that she hates her husband Elbenzer Paulraj more than she has ever hated anyone. After the initial euphoria of marriage when 'Ebe,' as she calls him, had "streaked her thoughts with jewellers rouge," (100) her state of disillusionment begins. Her first pregnancy is terminated at her husband's behest and wrecked by guilt and a feeling of emptiness, Margaret visualizes him as he really is—an egoist, bully, a sex pervert, and a drawer of genitalia in library books. Margaret bides her time and she eventually takes her revenge in

a unique manner i.e. through his taste buds. She learns to cook to perfection and knowing her husband's weakness for good food, she stuffs him with her gourmet dishes until his body is sheathed in layers of fat. When he becomes a fat man he becomes an easy man to live with—"a man whose fondness for eating blunted his razor edge." (134) She becomes pregnant for the second time. Ebe has to go off to a health club in Bangalore to shed off his extra kilos. But as Margaret says, "It is imperative that I should keep Ebe from reverting to his earlier self. For if he did, I couldn't even begin to think of the evils that would be visited upon us. I had my little girl to think of." (134)

Margaret departs with a parting shot at Akhila by telling her to live her life without worrying about what others will think of her. Akhila realizes that "all these women Janaki, Sheela and even Margaret who wear their self-sufficiency as a halo, are trying to make some sense of their own existence by talking about it to anyone who will listen." (136)

Akhila examines her own feelings about love after hearing Margaret's story. Margaret made love seem 'a wild beast she had domesticated.' (137) But had Akhila chosen to marry Hari, would her love turn out to be like this? She is compelled to think of Hari, whom she had met on the daily train to work and wonders at how this transient togetherness could blossom into love and also one night of physical intimacy. It is Hari's age which restrains her from furthering the relationship. She asks herself whether her relationship with Hari—so much younger than herself—would be an "anomaly.' (152) Could she live with the constant fear that she would age before he did and he would turn away from her? She finally breaks off her relationship with him in spite of the pangs of regret and loss. She dwells hopefully on a "second chance." (155)

Akhila does get a 'second chance' which is to break free of the family when she is transferred to Bangalore and has to live alone. But sister Padma insists on staying with her, along with her own family, in the name of duty. So, once again Akhila feels swamped by her. The invasion of space and privacy in the small government flat which Akhila has been allotted takes many

forms. She has to steel herself against the "muffled noises that crept in through the crack between the bedroom door and the floor" (165) when Padma's husband Murthy is at home. She has then to share her own room with Padma's little girls, who do not sleep even with a tiny flicker of light in the room. Akhila agonizingly thinks of Hari and her inability to revolt. Prabha Devi tells her: "I used to be very much like you. Quiet and timid and afraid to try anything new. Then one day, I discovered I didn't like the person I had become and so I changed." (167)

Prabha Devi has been through none of the hardships that Akhila has gone through. Ensconced in comfort, Prabha Devi realizes one fine day, soon after her fortieth birthday, that enough was enough and she should now do what she has always wanted to do. She remembers her protected childhood, and the pampering of her mother. An early marriage to the son of a wealthy diamond merchant compels her to play the role of the traditional daughter-in-law. But Prabha Devi soon discovers an amusing angle to her personality, i.e. to live life to the hilt, to experience the joy of sensuousness and test the ultimate power of her beauty. Her first foreign trip enables her to break free of the traditional attire and wear western clothes. She gains expertise in applying cosmetics and enhance her good looks to capture the attention of every male in the vicinity. When Pramod, a member of the club she frequents, refuses to succumb to her good looks, she entices him with her body language. But Prabha finds that she is incapable of handling his ardour—and does not want to have a fling at the cost of her family. She recedes into her old shell of docile domesticity of a wife, mother and daughter-in-law, until she is forty years of age. The old yearnings re-surface and she learns swimming with a steely determination, in the face of many odds. Her desire to stay afloat is perhaps not only learning the art of swimming but also about breaking free of tradition and keeping her identity intact. She finds immense fulfillment. It is perhaps because of this that Akhila finds her the most 'self-confident in the group,' one who could "triumph over her innate timidity and rise above traditions to float." (208)

Akhila learns her lesson from Prabha Devi's story. She realizes she must "learn to move on with the tide of life rather than be cast on the banks." (208) The last woman in the compartment/coupe to keep Akhila company is the thirty-one year old Mariakonthu, which in Tamil means a fragrant grass akin to lavender. The foreigners with whom she's been working call her 'sister to the real thing,' i.e. lavender and the term becomes the theme song in her life. Mariakonthu, as she herself says, doesn't 'belong' to the group of women in the coupe because unlike them she has not led a sheltered life with a family. She has seen how life can take its toll and how cruel the world can be to women.

Mariakonthu is an unwed mother. She becomes a victim of rape at the hands of one of the relatives of the Chettiar family, who have made their money through silk trade. It is her widowed mother, who works as a cook in the Chettiar 'kottai' who finds a place for her as the caretaker of the grandson of Chettiar. Young as she is, Mariakonthu is infatuated by the patronizing attitude of Sujata Akka, the child's mother, and cannot stop herself from talking about her all the time. But her mother warns her "you give your heart too easily, child. They'll break it into a thousand pieces and leave it on the ground for others to trample into the dust." (216)

For Mariakonthu, however, it is Sujata Akka who becomes the epicentre of her life. When she gains puberty and the changing shape of her body attracts the hungry looks of the Chettiar males, she is sent away by Sujata Akka to another town to work for two ladies who are foreigners. But Mariakonthu cannot escape her destiny. She comes home to tend to her mother who has cracked a bone. Dressed in the finery that Sujata Akka has given her on the occasion of Pongal, and amidst all the celebrations, she is dragged to a lonely corner and brutally raped by Murugesan, the brother-in-law of Chettiar's elder son. She turns for solace to Sujata Akka, who is unable to help her and Mariakonthu gives birth to a male child whom she detests with all her heart. She returns to her work with the foreigners but now there is a huge vacuum in her heart.

She returns again but finds that things have changed at the Chettiar Kottai, with the death of the Chettiar. But Sujata Akka is there and so is the mad woman in the west wing of the house who is the Chettiar's wife and mother-in-law of Sujata Akka. Mariakonthu readily takes up the job of caring for the old mad woman against the warnings of her mother. She has no feelings and lives her life through a haze all the time avoiding meeting her son growing up in her home. She is released from her job when the old woman dies but Mariakonthu stays on at the 'Kottai' as the handmaiden of Sujata Akka. She does not realize when and how she becomes a reflection of the latter, i.e. sister to the real thing. She becomes embroiled in a lesbian relationship with Sujata Akka, when she senses the latter's need and finds pleasure in satisfying the sensually starved Sujata Akka. She also sleeps with Sujata Akka's husband so that he may not go to other women. But when Sujata Akka discovers this, she turns her out and she accuses her of black magic. Aghast, she goes home and is compelled by her brothers to take custody of her son as their mother is no more. Her troubles do not end. She soon discovers that she has got a tumour in her uterus which has to be operated upon and it will cost her five thousand rupees. She has no money, as she does not collect her wages also from the 'Kottai.' Mariakonthu sells her son to the loom factory for a sum of Rupees five thousand. The irony of the whole episode is that the loom merchant is none other than Murugesan, the father of her son. It is only after the death of Murugesan that love for her son blossoms and she decides to collect money in order to buy him back. It is for this purpose she's going to Nagercoil to approach the two foreigners, her erstwhile employers, for money.

Mariakonthu's story is of a woman who is tossed about by the vagaries of fate and it makes Akhila aware of how cruel life can really be. Life after all is to be taken by the horns and to go through the gamut of experiences that it offers—not shy away from it. It is perhaps because of this that Akhila, staying alone in a hotel in Kanyakumari, invites an unknown willing young man into her room and samples the forbidden pleasure of physical intimacy. She does not bother even to ask his name and neither

does she divulge hers. How could Akhila, the very doyen of middle-class morality take such a drastic step? Akhila has at last learnt to live life on the surface and has learnt to control her emotions. This is why she feels the primal strength inherent in every individual, in every woman. Not goaded by any type of guilt she even ventures to ring up Hari and that too after nearly a decade, suppressing thoughts that he may now be married and not as easily available as he was. The metamorphosis of Akhila into Akhilendaswari is a slow but sure process. She discovers power within herself and is no longer swamped by thoughts of what life is going to be when she is alone. She discovers that she likes being alone. "She has no more doubts about what her life will be if she lives alone. It may not be of what she dreamt it to be, but at least she would have made the effort to find out. And perhaps that is all she needs to ask of life now. That she be allowed to experience it." (271)

Anita Nair has emphasized the fact that it is not the answer to the question which has been alluding Akhila so long, but the quest for finding it which is more satisfying for the protagonist. Akhila's burden has been considerably lightened. She has found the strength to emerge afresh from the prison-house of her old self as symbolized by the stiffness of the cotton saris she always wore to work. She can at least go back to her old life where perhaps nothing may have changed on the surface but on a mental plane a sure process of evolvement has taken place. A cock-a-thumb at the world laugh of Karpagam childhood friend has now become a reality for Akhila.

NOTES

1. www:\anitanair.net\pages\articles\India Today—She's Got a Ticket to Write by Geeta Doctor-lc.it.htm
2. Acknowledgements, *Ladies' Coupe* (Penguin India, 2001).
3. www:\anitanair.net\pages\articles\India Today—She's Got a Ticket to Write by Geeta Doctor-lc.it.htm

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Career Woman's Predicament in Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors*

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Most of the Indian novels that deal with woman issues gives often a peripheral treatment of the subject or end up glorifying the stereotypical virtues of Indian woman, like patience, devotion and abject acceptance of whatever is meted out to her. *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, the first novel by Shashi Deshpande, is a totally different novel in the sense that it explores the myth of man's unquestionable superiority and the myth of woman being a martyr and paragon of all virtues. It is based on the problems faced by a career woman, a refreshingly new phenomenon in Indian English fiction. *The Dark Holds No Terrors* is a feminist novel not on the lone basis of the female centrality in it. The novel focuses on woman's awareness of her predicament, her wanting to be recognized as a person than as a woman and her wanting to have an independent social image. Saru's feminist reactions date back to her childhood, when she had to contend with sexist discrimination at home. Her mother loves her brother but hates her. And when he is drowned, she blames her for no fault of her own: 'You killed him. Why didn't you die? Why are you alive, when he's dead?" (10) This is the plight of not only Saru but millions who are born girls. The fault lies with their gender, not with them. It brings into focus the concepts of gender which are man-made. As Simone de Beauvoir observes: "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman. It is civilization as a whole that produces this creature—which is described as feminine."[1]

When Saru expresses her wish to stay with her mother all her life, her mother says: "You can't." But her brother Dhruva can stay: "He is different, he is a boy." (40) This gender difference in

her mother's treatment of her son and daughter enrages Saru. She rebels against her: "If you're a woman, I don't want to be one." (55) It is this which makes Saru resent the role of a daughter. She looks forward to the role of a wife with the hope that it will give her relief from oppression of the mother, and will give her freedom.

This novel projects the postmodern dilemma of a woman, who strongly resents the onslaught on her individuality and identity. The antagonism is faced mainly from two persons—Saru's mother and Manohar, Saru's husband. Both of them represent the values and norms established by a patriarchal society. Ironically a female can be made an agency for the effective promotion of a male point of view as in the case of Saru's mother. Saru wanted to join Medical College but her mother is against her, she says to Saru's father: "Let her go for a B.Sc.—you can get her married in two years and our responsibility will be over." (130-31) This reflects that girls are seen as belonging to a different family altogether and their socialization stresses their future role as wives.

Saru breaks the umbilical chord—leaves home. This is her first public defiance of the patriarchal power system. Saru's defiance is further expressed, when she becomes economically independent and marries of her own choice. The institution of home, which is supposed to foster the growth of a child, robs the woman of her right of respectability and individuality. The rejection of home and family at this juncture in the novel is Saru's first foot towards independence. She remembers:

> Her joining medical college in spite of her mother standing up against her, asserting her will against her—that seemed impossible. But she had done it. I won that time. (139)

She encounters Manohar and falls in love with him. She defies her parents and enters marriage with Manohar. Saru's marriage is a means to get away from her mother and her home. P. Ramamoorthi says: "The departure of the heroine from the mother is the first step towards autonomy; for, the mother is the first pedagogue of the do's and don'ts on the woman."[2]

Saru is disappointed with her married life. Marriage, the promised end in a traditional society, in feminist fiction becomes only another enclosure that restricts the movements towards autonomy and self-realization. Saru is reminded of a room whose doors are closed whenever she looks at her daughter, Renu. Saru, even when she comes back home, "felt herself enclosed." (12) When she enters her room, she finds male clothes hanging in the wall and realizes that she has no room of her own. *The Dark Holds No Terrors* reacts against the traditional concept "everything in a girl's life—is shaped to that single purpose of pleasing a male." (148) There are references to the Women's Liberation Ideologue Betty Friedan and Virginia Woolf's idea of a woman's right to "a room of her own".

Saru became a famous doctor and he turned out to be simply a lecturer. This made her socially and economically his superior. Slowly "an affected indifference" started gleaming through his tone because "there were nods and smiles, murmured greetings and namastes. But they were all forms, only for me. There was nothing for him. He was almost totally ignored." (36) The esteem she earned around her made her inches taller and him riches shorter. Earlier, "he had been the young man and I his bride. Now I was the lady doctor and he was my husband." (36) The ego clash becomes inevitable because "I am something more than his wife and he has become what he is." (70) This upside-down alteration—"this terrible thing" (37)—destroys their marriage. She realizes the falsity of the notion of equality she had read in books:

> a + b they told us in mathematics is equal to b + a. But here a + b was not, definitely not equal to b + a. It becomes a monstrously unbalanced equation, lopsided, unequal, impossible. (37)

Saru tries to escape from the drudgery of her life with her husband. Not just drudgery but brutality—both physical and psychological. In a tormenting saga of a tormented wife, Shashi Deshpande portrays the brief rebellion (rather an escape) of a young bright woman. Saru, a successful doctor, is sexually abused by her not so-successful teacher husband: "This was not

to be death by strangulation, it was a monstrous invasion of my body." (10) Although she neither possesses the self-effacing quality of her mother nor the resignation of her grandmother, she is still unwilling to publicize the relationship she has with Manu, her husband, for it is like syphilis or leprosy diseases that cannot be revealed. All she wants is to "sleep peacefully the night through. To wake up without pain. To go through tomorrow. Without apprehension. Not to think, not to dream. Just to live." (23) As she is too imbued with traditional ideas about separation and divorce, the only way she can rebel is by going back to her father's house. She remonstrates against the injustices done to her by her unwillingness to comply unconditionally with the accepted norms. She wants society, her husband, her children, her father to realize that she is not just a wife, mother, daughter, sister, but much more. But her rebellion has to be aborted. She will go back with her husband for she is not bold enough to break the bonds of tradition. She "could do nothing—can never do anything but endure." (182)

This is a sad commentary on the incompatibility in and hypocrisy of married life, which the novelist has presented realistically. What Saru wanted is the freedom to think and decide for herself and the liberation from her womanhood. For she finds her "womanly self" trapped and suffocated within her family. Hence, she tries to escape from the tailored role. Saru's silence against her sexual predicament only reveals the modern woman's dilemma—of knowing the psychological nature of the problem but hesitant to talk it out. She says: "I could do nothing. I can never do anything. I just endure." (182) For endurance is still the Indian woman's way and the discussion of sex in public still seems "indecent", like "removing your clothes in public." (38) Saru's experience compels her to deny the existence of "love":

> Love—There was no such thing—only a need which both (man and woman) fought against futilely turning into the thing they called "Love". Hence, for her, the code word of our age is neither love nor romance but sex. Fulfillment and happiness came, not through love alone but sex. (120)

Saru's way of looking at love and marriage only from a sexual perspective aligns her with the feminist, for they define these categories only with sex/lust and give no importance to their familial connotations. Saru experiences disillusionment in sex and silently suffers the sexual humiliation. She strives for expression through an extra-marital affair with Boozie and Padmakar Rao. What is significant about this relationship is that she suffers no guilt, thus evolving a new code of sexual ethics.

Saru is unable to endure her husband's torture and decides to leave for her parent's home, which she had rejected earlier. Saru is taken in, but finds herself still "a homeless refuge," "a fleeting interruption." The epigraph of the novel says:

> You are your own refuge.
> There is no other refuge.
> This refuge is hard to achieve (The Dhammapada)

It gains its total significance when Saru realizes that the parental home cannot be a refuge. She understands that neither her father nor her husband Manohar can be her refuge. She is her own refuge. She has to overcome herself; she has to kill the ghost that haunts her; she has to find her own way to salvation. The parental home initiates the protagonists into an understanding of the meaning of human life. Saru reflects on the human situation:

> All right, so I'm alone. But so's everyone else. Human beings—they're going to fail you: But because there's just us, because there's no one else, we have to go on trying. If we can't believe in ourselves, we're sunk. (200)

Saru has gained the assertion of will and confidence in herself. She learns to trust herself. Saru, who has instructed her father not to open the door for her husband Manu, now tells her father: "And oh yes, Baba, if Manu comes, tell him to wait. I'll be back as soon as I can." (202)

In the very first part of the novel Saru says, "as long as there is a patient before me, I feel real." (18) She refers to the profession as a crutch, which speaks for its indispensability. The novel's ending with Saru setting out to attend to a patient indicates the assertion of her career. There can be no compromise

about it. This is the assertion of her individuality, her willingness to confront reality and not to run away from it. The doctor in Saru is much more important than wife and mother in her. She realizes that her profession as a doctor is her own and she will decide what to do with it. "My life is my own." She will no longer be a puppet. Her marriage is a shadow.

The simmering inferiority complex of Manu burst out the day a girl had come to interview her, who asked the following questions to Manu: "How does it feel when your wife earns not only the butter but most of the bread as well?" (200) Manu's male ego is hurt. His masculinity asserts itself through nocturnal sexual assaults upon Saru. Since that day Manu became a sadist. Thus, the benevolent, cheerful husband by day turns a lecherous, libidinous rapist at night. While the woman, out of economic necessity, goes to work, this economic independence, this illusory power, in a way enhances rejection by her man. Even when she does not take advantage of this independence, her husband does not appreciate her. The status of the man is not totally dependent on his being a provider, as Jessie Bernard seems to suggest. Although he may not be the absolute provider, he is still the dominant force and authority in the house. Often a man's frustration at not finding employment, at not being able to get along in the world outside, at being impotent to protect either himself or his family from the hostile environment make him a tormentor at home. Saru's situation is explicitly described here: "I had come away from my parents in a fever of excitement after the last battle. The die was cast, the decisions taken, my boats burnt. There could be no turning back. Then, this ridiculous anticlimax." (31-32)

P. Ramamoorthi writes: "Woman, in order to achieve her freedom, seeks marriage as an alternative to the bondage created by the parental family. She resents the role of a daughter and looks forward to the role of wife with the hope that her new role will help in winning their freedom."[3] Saru could not get the freedom, which she desired from her marriage. Saru compromises with the situation. In her utter desperation she addresses the girls in Nalu's College:

> If you want to be happily married, there is one thing you have to remember. If he's an M.A., you should be B.A. If he's 4'4" tall, you shouldn't be more than 5'3" tall. If he is earning Rs. 500, you should never earn more than Rs. 499. That's the only rule to follow—you can nag, complain henpeck, whine, moan but you can never be strong. That's wrong which will never be forgiven. (124)

Saru wishes if only she had belonged to another time "where a woman had no choice but to go on!" (70) It was so easier for women in olden days to accept, not to struggle, because they believed, they knew, there was nothing else for them. "And they called that fate" (70) But as Saru is a 'New woman', who is educated intelligent and economically independent, she could not accept her destiny as fate written on her forehead.

NOTES

1 Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex, trans. and ed. H.M. Parshley, 1953 (rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983) 295.

2 P. Ramamoorthi, "My Life is My Own: A Study of Shashi Deshpande's Woman," *Indian Women Novelists*, ed. R.K. Dhawan (New Delhi: Prestige, 1991), Set I, Vol. V, p. 41.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 43.

4 Shashi Deshpande, *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1980).

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Dialectics of Experience, Imagination and Memory in Salman Rushdie's Fiction

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"Who am I?" is the question that every writer confronts in relation to his writing, says the Indian poet Nissim Ezekiel. The identity question is of crucial significance in understanding Salman Rushdie's novels. Addressing the question, "who am I?" Rushdie says, "In my own case I have constantly been asked whether I am British or Indian. The formulation 'Indian-born British writer' has been invented to explain me. But, . . . my new book deals with Pakistan. So what now? 'British-resident Indo-Pakistani writer'? You see the folly of trying to contain writer inside passports."[1] There are three aspects of Rushdie as a writer: (i) his work as complex literary texts, (ii) the concept of freedom of expression as championed by liberal-humanists as well as the literati; (iii) the death sentence against the author which compounded an already confusing situation. In this paper, I confine myself to Rushdie's texts.

Salman Rushdie is a phenomenon of the 1980s. The decade saw Indira Gandhi back as India's premier, the Zia regime consolidating power in the aftermath of the execution of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Britain in early throes of the Thatcher revolution and the United States of Ronald Reagan as the still unregenerate cold warrior. The structure of the world retained its uninspiringly familiar form till the upheavals of 1989 and 1990 changed it beyond recognition. When we look at the receding decade, we find that the old was dying and yet the new held no promise of early birth. While according to Gramsci in this interregnum there arises a great diversity of morbid symptoms, Rushdie believes that bad times produce good books. His five novels—*Grimus*

(1975), *Midnight's Children* (1981), *Shame* (1983), *The Satanic Verses* (1988) and *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (1990)—are constructs of imagination and experience, as well as of language.

Dealing with memory is like dealing with broken mirrors. The broken mirror may actually be as valuable as the one which is supposedly unflawed. Before writing *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie wanted to reclaim his memories of the loved city. He spent many months trying simply to recall as much of the Bombay of the 1950s and 1960s as he could. He was amazed by how much came back to him. He remembered what clothes people had worn on certain days, school scenes and whole passages of Bombay dialogue. He even remembered advertisements, film posters, the neon Jeep sign on Marine Drive, toothpaste ads for Binaca and for Kolynos, the legend, 'Esso Puts a Tiger in Your Tank,' and the curiously contradictory admonition 'Drive like Hell and you will get there.' Old songs came back to him from the film Mr. 420, a very appropriate source for his narrator to have used the hit number, 'Mera Joota Hai Japani,' which could almost be Salim's theme song, he translates thus into English:

> O, my shoes are Japanese
> These trousers English, if you please
> On my head, red Russian hat—
> My heart's Indian for all that.

This song is also sung by Gibreel Farishta as he tumbles from the heavens at the beginning of *The Satanic Verses*. Rushdie realized that he was not gifted with total recall and says,

> It was precisely the partial nature of these memories, their fragmentation that made them so evocative for me. The shards of memory acquired greater status, greater resonance, because they were *remains*; fragmentations made trivial things seem like symbols, and the mundane acquired numinous qualities. There is an obvious parallel here with archeology. The broken pots of antiquity, from which the past can sometimes, but always provisionally, be reconstructed, are exciting to discover, even if they are pieces of the most quotidian objects. (*IH*, 12)

The truth of a story, for Rushdie, lies in its telling and is based on the complex process of selecting events from memory:

> I say yet again. "Memory's truth, because memory has its own special kind. It selects, it eliminates, alters, exaggerates, minimizes, glorifies, and vilifies also; but in the end it creates its own reality, its heterogeneous but usually coherent version of events; and no sane human being ever trusts someone else's version more than his own." Yes: I said "sane." (211)

In *Shame* also, the narrator finds the creation of history to be subject to memory as a powerful independent entity. The narrator faces "the problem of history: what to retain, what to dump, how to hold on to what memory insists on relinquishing, how to deal with change." (211)

Rushdie challenges the imposition of an imperialist view of India's history. The Indian version of the country's history based on its language and culture has been repressed in the process. Saleem, the narrator in *Midnight's Children* points out: "he was the child of a father who was not his father; but also the child of a time which damaged reality so badly that nobody ever managed to put it together again."[2] In his narrative, Saleem attempts to capture the Indian urge to "encapsulate the whole reality." (75) Presenting his view of history, he claims that history-making involves the "swallowing" of lives:

> I am the sum total of everything that went before me, of all I have been seen done, of everything done-to-me. I am everyone everything whose being-in-the world affected was affected by mine. I am anything that happens after I've gone which would not have happened if I had not come. Nor am I particularly exceptional in this matter; each "I," every one of the now-six-hundred-million-plus of us, contains a similar multitude. I repeat for the last time: to understand me, you'll have to swallow a world. (383)

Life in the literary world has never been the same ever since the publication of Rushdie's fourth novel, *The Satanic Verses*, leading to an overwhelming crisis of reading, interpreting and responding to a troubled and troubling text—the critic, Amin Malak, has convincingly argued.[3] While operating within a

postmodernist, counter-culture context, *The Satanic Verses* daringly presents itself as a historiographical metafiction. It deploys various tropes and encompasses multiple layers of signification. Rushdie's strategy is "pitting levity against gravity." (3) He declares, "it was and it was not . . . it happened and it never did." (35) The narrative transcends time and space, moves synchronically between England, India and Argentina and diachronically between the present and the early days of Islam. And yet, this expansive narrative is consciously bounded by the *doppelganger* motif, embodied by two survivors of a blown-up plane: Saladin Chamcha and Gibreel Farishta. These dual "angeldevilish" (5) heroes experience a series of tragi-comic, fantastic-realistic episodes narrated in multi-layered, multi-toned fashion. The most offensive part of the novel centres on the historical portion where the narrative depicts in a deliberately convoluted way the life of the Prophet Muhammad, referred to as Mahound. The choice of this name is obviously not innocent.

Rushdie's work is guided by postmodern views on history, which "confront the problematic nature of the past as an object of knowledge for the present."[4] For Rushdie, history is selective, reconstructive, narrative discourse that challenges the dominant versions of representation and provokes a counter discourse. Like all postmodern writers, he sees 'reality" as an unfinished project, a flux phenomenon that resists limits and closure and remains open to all sorts of renderings. Hence, one is aware, with a shock, of the clash of cultures and the conflict of representations.

Analyzing *The Satanic Verses* as a complex literary text, Amin Malak writes, "While we may mildly or severely critique *The Satanic Verses*, while we may quibble with its contentious discourse, while we may impute all sorts of mercenary, conspiratorial, or blasphemous motives to its author, the book remains impressive." (185) The critic Janette Tuner Hospital puts it this way, "[This novel is] a firecracker of a work whose every page fizzes with linguistic acrobatics and exuberance, with cross-language puns, with cliches suddenly rinsed and new(ly)-minted so that they shock and shimmer."

Following the postmodernist impulse to articulate, appropriate, parody or subvert contexts, *The Satanic Verses* delves daringly into various current political issues. Rushdie lucidly and unequivocally argues: "politics and literature, like sport and politics, do mix, are inextricably mixed, and . . . that mixture has consequences." (*IH* 100) Naturally, the response (responses) to such a polemical text is bound to be political. The text itself elicits and provokes a political response. The ensuing suffering and despair led Rushdie to write *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (for a full analysis of the novel see Sushila Singh 1992).

In his review of the novel, Khushwant Singh writes: "*Haroun and the Sea of Stories* is Salman Rushdie's answer to Imam Khomeini and his other tormentors. He may have tendered an apology to the Muslims for hurting their feelings with *The Satanic Verses* but like Galileo, in his heart of hearts he still feels that he had every right to write what he did."[5] *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* is Rushdie's flight to freedom—into that realm where defeating the forces of the Dark (silence), a writer enjoys full freedom of expression. As a strategy, he adopts the narrative mode of fable and the stance of a fantasist. In *Shame*, the writer confessed, "Realism can break a writer's heart. Fortunately, however, I am only telling a sort of modern fairy-tale, so that's all right: nobody need get upset, or take anything I say seriously. No drastic action need be taken, either. What a relief!"[6]

Rushdie's fascination with *Aesop's Fables* and *Panchtantra* is evident from his very first novel *Grimus* crystallizing ultimately in the marvellous feat of *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*. About the element of fantasy, Rushdie says, "I build imaginary countries and try to impose them on the ones that exist." A fantasist normally abstracts or extrapolates things from the real world with a view to pursuing their imaginative logic. At the same time he has something to say. As he further says, "the writer has a kind of vision which he tries to project on to other people, and the fit between that vision and other people's is the tension between the writer and the reader. As a writer I am trying to say, 'That is the shape of how it is,' and the more I can persuade you that that *is* how it is, the greater my success."[7]

Rushdie claims that books are interim reports from the consciousness of the writer and that consciousness is always in a process of change in accordance with the changing reality. Like his earlier novels, *Haroun* is also written in his response to the immediate. The novel is brilliantly structured with twelve chapters in the form of twelve stories around a central theme with the central figures of a father and a son, Rashid and Haroun. This is a protest novel as well as a plea for justice. It opens with the following lines:

> Z embla, Zenda, Xanadu:
> A ll our dream-worlds may come true.
> F airy lands are fearsome too.
> A s I wander far from view
> R ead, and bring me home to you.

The first letters of these sentences when vertically read, represent his son's name Zafar. In his forced isolation, Rushdie misses his twelve year old son and *Haroun* connects the writer to him. In the country of Alifbay (the name comes from the Hindustani word for 'alphabet'), there was a sad city located by the mournful sea. In that nameless sad city lived Haroun, the only child of Rashid Khalifa. In fact, Haroun and Rashid are twin protagonists, two faces of the same person that is Salman Rushdie. Both the characters are named after the legendary Caliph of Baghdad, Haroun al-Rashid. Haroun al-Rashid features in many Arabian Nights tales, and stands for creativity. The story-teller Rashid Khalifa was famous for his cheerfulness. His unmatched inventiveness earned him two nicknames: "the Ocean of Notions," and "Shah of Blah." His wife was Soraya who filled the house with *her* beautiful singing voice. But trouble was in the offing because while Rashid, in the words of Rushdie, "sped around the city and the country telling stories, . . . Soraya stayed home, turning cloudy and even a little thunderous and brewing up quite a storm."[8] All the same Soraya, like Padma in *Midnight's Children*, is a stereotype, a marginal non-being, while Haroun's tale is *the story*. Soraya is a woman and therefore the cause of Rashid's misfortune. One does not fail to notice several disturb-

ing sexist biases in Rushdie's treatment of his women characters.[9]

In the flat above the storytellers lived the Senguptas—Mr. Sengupta and his wife Oneeta. Mr. Sengupta was critical of Rashid and said to Soraya: "That husband of yours, he's got his head struck in the air and his feet off the ground, What are all these stories? Life is not a storybook or a joke shop, All this fun will come to no good, What's the use of stories that aren't even true?" (19-20) So on a rainy day, Soraya sent her husband on a search for some missing socks of Haroun, and precisely at eleven a.m. she eloped with Mr. Sengupta leaving behind a note for her husband: "your brain is full of make-believes, so there is no room in it for facts. Mr. Sengupta has no imagination at all. This is okay for me." (22) And then an unthinkable thing happened: "Rashid Khalifa, the legendary Ocean of Notions, the fabled Shah of Blah, stood up in front of a huge audience, opened his mouth, and found that he had run out of stories to tell." (22) Rashid's Gift of the Gab is lost with the disappearance of his wife. He could produce only a laboured, croak, "Ark." "The Shah of Blah sounded like a stupid crow. 'Ark; ark, ark.'" (26)

Since the time his mother left home, Haroun found that he was unable to keep his mind on anything far more than eleven minutes at a time. The reason for this was that his mother had left at eleven a.m. and his father has smashed all clocks in the house with time arrested practically at that hour. We are reminded of Miss Havisham in Dickens's *Great Expectations* who, when jilted at the altar, stops all clocks in the house. Haroun thus was stuck in time and developed a wandering mind.

Determined to recover his mother and to restore his father to his lost Gift of the Gab, Haroun sets off on a fantastical journey. On the back of Butt the Hoopoe and with Iff the Water Genie as his guide, he reaches the Gup city ruled by King Chattergy. The King's only child Princess Batcheat has been taken prisoner and kept in the Citadel of Chup, the Ice Castle of Khatam-Shud (which means 'completely finished,' 'over and done with'). He is the archenemy of all Stories, even of language. He is the Foe of Speech. There are characters called Prince Solo, Bezaban and

so on. Ironically the battle for freedom is fought on the plains of Bat Mat Karo, led by the straight-out-of-Sandhurst General Kitab, heading his army, fittingly called 'library.' The army is made up of Pages, ranked in battalions named Volumes. The Guppee forces advanced to battle for two reasons—to rescue Batcheat and to save the Ocean, The fight between the Gups and the Chupwalas is the eternal archetypal struggle between the tyrannical regimes and the human desire for freedom of speech and creative thinking.

The novel ends with a great victory for friendship and openness over hostility and suspicion. Rashid Khalifa was given back his story facilities and awarded the Land of Gup's highest decoration, the order of the Open Mouth, in recognition of his exceptional services. The father and the son return home and discover that the sad city in the country of Alifbay, in fact the saddest of cities which had forgotten its name, was totally transformed. A happy policeman tells the wonder-struck Khalifas, Rashid and Haroun: "I'll tell you what to be happy about, we remember the city's name . . . Kahani, isn't it a beautiful name for a city? It means story, you know." (209) And when they reach home, Haroun's mother was there who had begun to sing.

Writing about *Midnight's Children*, Uma Parameswaran employs the phrase "the decolonizing of English." Writing, language and history are intimately connected. Indian concepts of time and philosophical thinking are reflected in their language. For example, yesterday is the same as the word for tomorrow. English as the language used by the imperialists coloured, displaced, and obscured India's own languages. Consequently, while inheriting a rich literary tradition, Indian English writers must be constantly aware that they are continuing to displace their own tradition. They are not only working in, but also valorizing the language of their former colonizers.[10] Rushdie is acutely aware of this split. He tries to come to terms with this problem through irony and transformed use of language. In *Midnight's Children*, he correlates this to the uneasy political situation and confused historical sense of India and Pakistan. Rushdie sees India and Pakistan very different in terms of their sense of

history and their consequent construction of national "self." In *Shame*, he has shown that Pakistanis suffer from a lack of history as migrants. (63) He finds that the creation of a new national history of Pakistan is also problematic:

> It is well known that the term "Pakistan," an acronym was originally thought up in England by a group of Muslim intellectuals. P for the Punjabis, A for the Afgans, K for the Kashmiris, S for Sind and the "tan," they say, for Baluchistan. . . . So it was a word born in exile which then went East, was borne-across or translated, and imposed itself on history; a returning migrant, settling down on partitioned land, forming a palimpsest on the past. A palimpsest obscures what lies beneath. To build Pakistan it was necessary to cover up Indian history, to deny that Indian centuries lay just beneath the surface of Pakistani Standard Time. The past was rewritten: there was nothing else to be done.
>
> Who commandeered the job of rewriting history?—The immigrants, the *mohajirs*. In what languages?—Urdu and English, both imported tongues. (87)

Rushdie returns again and again to his dilemma of an Indian English writer. He knows that he will never be able to sever his connections with the east: "I tell myself this will be a novel of leavetaking, my last words on the East, from which, many years ago, I began to come loose. I do not always believe myself when I say this. It is part of the world to which, whether I like it or not, I am still joined, if only by elastic bands." (28) Writing in another language may further distance a writer from her or his literary heritage. Elaborating his views on this issue, he further says: "we know you, with your foreign language wrapped around you like a flag; speaking about us in your forked tongue, what can you tell but lies?" (28) Rushdie counters this charge by observing, "I, too, am a translated man. I have been *borne across*. It is generally believed that something is always lost in translation; I cling to the notion . . . that something can also be gained." (29) Thus Rushdie's work jolts its readers into an awareness of their "ethno- and linguo-centrism."

Writers in Rushdie's position are exiles or emigrants or expatriates and are constantly haunted by some sense of loss, some

urge to reclaim and look back. Rushdie writes, "our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost: that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind." (*IH*, 10)

Thus, the most important aspect of Salman Rushdie's work, perhaps, is his excessively self-conscious endeavour to connect personal and national histories to come to terms with postcoloniality. For this he uses particular experiences which enable imagination and focus memory to create the capacity to grapple with the alternative reality of the Third world. Rushdie's achievement lies in the statement he makes through his fiction that we do not live in three worlds but in one, mutually affected and affecting.

NOTES

1. Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands* (London: Grant, 1991), p. 67.
2. Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* (London: Pan, 1981), p. 420.
3. Amin Malak, "Reading the Crisis: The Polemics of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*," *Ariel*, 20.4 (October 1989), p. 176.
4. Linda Hutcheon, "Challenging the Conventions of Realism: Postmodernism in Canadian Literature," *The Canadian Forum* (April 1986), p. 37.
5. Khushwant Singh, "Salaam Salman," *Indian Express*, Magazine, 21 October 1990, p. 4.
6. Salman Rushdie, *Shame* (London: Pan, 1983)), p. 70.
7. John Haffenden, *Novelists in Interview* (London: Methuen, 1985), p. 247.
8. Charu Verma, "Padma's Tragedy: A Feminist Deconstruction of Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*," *Feminism and Recent Fiction in English*, ed. Sushila Singh (New Delhi: Prestige, 1991), pp. 154-62.
9. Salman Rushdie, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (London: Granta, 1990).
10. Aruna Srivastava, "'The Empire Writes Back': Language and History in *Shame* and *Midnight's Children*," *Ariel*, 20.4 (1989), pp. 62-78.

11. Sushila Singh, "*Haroun and the Sea of Stories*: Rushdie's Flight to Freedom," *The Novels of Salman Rushdie*, ed. Taneja, Dhawan (New Delhi: Prestige, 1992), pp. 209-16.
12. Uma Parameswaran, "Handcuffed to History: Salman Rushdie's Art," *Ariel*, 14.4 (1983), pp. 34-45.
13. Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses* (London: Viking, 1988).

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Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters*: A Postcolonial Analysis

GAJENDRA KUMAR

The last quarter of the twentieth century proves to be a milestone for the theoretical upsurge in general and creative writing in particular. Indian English writers through Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy and Manju Kapur hold centrestage in the modern literary ambit. Manju Kapur's debut novel *Difficult Daughters* is a feminist, postmodern and above all a postcolonial work of art. Psychoanalytically, Manju Kapur can be placed in the group of gynocritics who deals with the emotional and mental puzzling of an educated daughter in a traditional joint family. As a postcolonial creative writer she delves into the deep of the male chauvinistic society and offers an authentic conflict between tradition and postmodernity. The tapestry of the novel is structured around the postcolonial perspective though the novel bears the partition overtones. R.K. Dhawan, a critic of repute rightly focuses the historical trauma snapped and enlarged by the camera of the creative eyes: "A number of novels were written on the theme of partition, the destruction it bought and the plight of the refugees. They faithfully recorded the reign of violence that characterized the period and provided a sad, telling commentary on the breakdown of human values. A strain of despair and disillusionment is predominant in these novels."[1]

Manju Kapur is a noteworthy storyteller who without linguistic jugglery and gimmickry presents the postmodern novel in a traditional narrative thread. *Difficult Daughters* manifests autobiographical data and dimension in its syntactic norms and nuances. The novelist herself asserts that "conflict between daughter and mother is inevitable and I suppose I was a difficult

daughter. The conflict carries on through generations because mothers want their daughter to be safe. We want them to take the right choices—right in the sense that they are socially acceptable. My mother wanted me to be happily married, I want my daughters to have good jobs."[2]

To Irigaray, the beginning of patriarchy as everybody knows represents man as the legal head of the family or state coincided with the weakening of the female-female bond and especially the dissolution of the mother-daughter relationship. "This relationship was destroyed to establish an order linked to private property and to the transmission of possessions within a male genealogy. Such a system ensured that property and children belonged to the same genealogy."[3] In this factual framework, the texture of the novel has been knitted and knotted around a Punjabi family consisting women of consecutive three generations. The novelist begins the novel in an unconventional manner with a cryptic statement: "The one thing I had wanted was not to be like my mother." The gamut of the story revolves around Ida, the narrator and a divorcee, Virmati her mother gets herself engaged in marital knot with professor for love, and Kasturi, her grandmother who comes to terms with a difficult daughter, Virmati. The crux of the novel is the troublesome life and sad demise of Virmati, the central character. Ida wittingly expresses that she would not like to be a replica of her mother as her mother did not imitate her own mother. So, the novelist in her narrative schema weaves the plot of the novel and tells the story of Ida's mother Virmati. By giving full honour to Virmati's will, her dead body has been consigned to flame. Virmati in her lifetime used to utter "that some onewill value me after I have gone." The story moves ahead when Ida, the ever lonely daughter visits Amritsar and peeps into the past of her mother's life. She comes to acknowledge the girlhood of her mother and her typical motherhood looking for her daughter's safety. In a unique fashion narratology develops by co-existing past and present. Ida collects clippings and cuttings of Virmati's life from kith and kin.

Virmati is the eldest daughter among her ten brothers and sisters. Thus, Kasturi, the mother of Virmati, is addressed as

ever-pregnant woman. Her grandfather is a reformer and renowned landowner who attaches much importance to education for women. His sons look after the jewellery business. In a very traditional pattern, Virmati assists her ever-pregnant mother in domestic affairs, caring for the younger children and their studies. The family set up is thoroughly conservative so Virmati's family takes her to be eligible for marriage as she has expertise in stitching, cooking and reading. This is the focal point where the novel takes a dynamic turn. The new education and the life of Kasturi generate a new urge and emotion in Virmati to get herself free from the bondage of patriarchy that denies or deserts her freedom and choice. Her marriage is final with Inderjit but it is postponed because of the death of his father. She does not think of the marriage and child-bearing just after the high school qualification. She falls in love with the romantic Oxford-returned professor Harish Chandra who lives next door and is already married. The professor has illiterate but gentle wife, a daughter and lives with his mother and daughter. The professor seeks an intellectual companion in Virmati and Virmati's self-affirmation is accentuated by the professor's passion for her. Their love blossoms and after a hitch culminates into marriage. Prior to marriage, Virmati finds herself in a quandary because of her boring family duties, the desire to study and illicit affair.

The story takes a new turn when Virmati, out of utter frustration and strain of daily life, attempts suicide but is rescued. Her younger sister Indumati unites in wedlock with Inderjit and Virmati is confined in a storehouse. Virmati and the professor continue their exchange of love letters through the youngest sister Paro. Kasturi tries her best to enable Virmati to succumb to the wishes of the family, but of no use. Virmati is committed to continue her studies at Lahore. Virmati becomes centre of focus because of her revolutionary zeal and gusto. She neither yields to the age old traditions of Arya-Samaj family nor marries the person to whom she is engaged. Once the professor visits her in Lahore and Virmati becomes pregnant. Virmati thinks of her own love while the entire nation is entrapped by the fret and fever of the freedom movement. The novelist says:

> Strikes, academic freedom, the war, peace, rural upliftment. . . . Independence Day, Movement, rally, speeches . . . an outcaste amongst all women. She thought of Harish who loved her. She must be satisfied with that.

Virmati finds that women around her are sincerely engrossed in the freedom struggle and she is absorbed in her business of love with professor Harish Chandra. She thinks of abortion and then goes to Amritsar and joins as a principal of a school where professor continues his visit. Virmati resolves that if professor does not accept her, she will desert him for good but eventually he gives his consent and both of them unite in nupital tie and she comes to Harish Chandra's house as his second wife. Virmati's humble and heroic suffering in order to secure her love and marriage with the professor who is already married to Ganga and has a child symbolizes her assertiveness and 'self' who is destined to carve out a niche for herself. Suman Bala and Subhash Chandra rightly analyze the man-woman relationship in their theoretical formulation and argue: "But her acceptance of the treatment meted out to her by her lover, the professor totally belies these expectations. The professor's pursuit of Virmati even after she has been sent to Lahore as a part of punishment to study in women's college, his renewing sexual relations with her with full ardor, but his reluctance and constant postponing of the marriage in spite of her frequent entreaties to do so, are instances of the gratifications of the male 'desire'. "Male ego-centricism blinds men to the situation of women, who may be placed in agonizing circumstances on account of their relationship with men."[4]

It can be argued that the professor enjoys the bliss of both the worlds. Ganga, as a maid servant who fulfils his everyday needs, keeps his house tidy and his clothes washed and Virmati satisfies his academic urge which the professor cannot seek in his meek and mild Ganga.

Though Virmati succeeds to marry the professor yet she does not secure any space for herself in the family. Ganga and Harish's mother compel Virmati to lead a suffocating life in the tight walls of the house. It is significant to note that Virmati who gets high education despite social odds and obstacles aspires to play

the traditional role of a housewife so that she may look after the mundane needs of her husband but she is not allowed to. She is not even acknowledged for her intellectuality. On the other hand Harish commands respect for his scholastic ideas and ideologies. At times it seems that Harish and Virmati as a couple do not have companionship. In a wife-husband gossip when Virmati suggests a name for their baby it is dispassionately rejected by the professor. The professor was not considerate and calm in his decision and he also inflicts a long lecture on Virmati in order to silence her. Apparently the novel does not seem to profess or propagate feminist outlook but there is an undercurrent feminine point of view which gives a serious touch to the story. Vandita Mishra rightly argues: "Kapur never permits Virmati any assertion of power of freedom. Because even as she breaks free from old prisons, she is locked into newer ones. Her relationship with the professor, for instance. While it does provide an escape for a loveless arranged marriage; it is itself furtive and claustrophobic, offering only a stolen togetherness behind curtained windows. Even years of studying and working alone do not give her the confidence to strike independent roots and grow. She hovers uncertainly at the edge of each new world, never entering, lest the professor should call and not find her near. Eventually, marriage to the man of her choice is no triumph either. As second wife, she must fight social ostracism outside the house, and compete for the kitchen and conjugal bed with Ganga, the first wife, inside it."[5]

Virmati's father becomes a victim of communal frenzy but she is not allowed to attend and mourn. Ironically, the professor participates in the funeral ceremony but not Virmati, the daughter of the deceased. Kasturi blames Virmati for the trauma. In a topsy-turvy situation Virmati plans to do her master's degree. After completing her M.A. when she returns, she comes to know that all the members of the family have gone to Kanpur because of communal tension. Meanwhile Virmati gives birth to her daughter Ida, the narrator. Virmati never corresponds to the age-old family tradition but paradoxically she persuades Ida to make herself fit into the channel of the family. In her futile attempt she

tries to keep her under control. Ida emerges as a woman of uncontrollable person who is left alone having no issue, "engulfed in melancholy, depression and despair."

Thematically the novel purports a romantic story of Virmati but the heroine herself creates scene of partition. In the chain of events and eventualities Virmati becomes the difficult daughter for her mother as was Ida for her. *Difficult Daughters* has undeniably an autobiographical tinge and touch. Sumita Pal rightly focuses on the autobiographical element in the novel: "Like Virmati, Manju Kapur was born in Amritsar and teaches in college. Her family was victim of partition and was Arya-Samaji like Virmati's family. Manju Kapur's father too was a professor, like Virmati's husband. Manju Kapur admits that she herself had been a difficult daughter for her mother whose priority was marriage and she, in turn wants her daughters to have good jobs."[6]

In its stylistic devices the novel is straightforward, startling and evocative of Virmati's pains, puzzling and torn-personality. The use of Punjabi idiom and phrases manifests the linguistic colour and contour to the novel and makes it a wonderful work of art. It is rightly examined that "Indo-English is developing a distinct character and identity as distinct as American English, British English, Australian English. Style in a novel generally depends upon the writer's settled conviction of the single, unambiguous nature of his materials and of the novel's adequacy as vehicle for their serious presentment."[7]

Really it is a troublesome task to analyze and estimate the relationship between Virmati and the professor, which has been passionate yet misleading and mismatching. Whenever Virmati gets herself in emotional crisis, the psychotherapy of the professor meted out to her is not titillating. In his love letters to Virmati, the professor does not think it necessary to mention Ganga and her pregnancy. In fact, Virmati's visits to Lahore and Nahan have been sensitized and scandalized by a trip of the professor. Virmati's academic temperament goes in oblivion before the intellectual height of the professor. The professor neither visualizes the sociological fact nor emotional intensity of Virmati. He lacks objective correlation in the game of love and everyday life.

Virmati, like Manisha in Anita Desai's *The Voices in the City*, raises a million-dollar question through her endurance, passive suffering and suicidal attempt. Virmati's case is very akin to Manisha. Virmati attempts suicide and survives but Manisha commits suicide. Both the protagonists around whom the story rotates have their own urge and argument shaking and stirring the contemporary social engineering. Woman's voice against injustice and inequality tends to unravel the fact that feminism is the consequence of the culture or society shaped and governed by men to suit their needs and interest regardless of women's basic needs and happiness. In this man-made society, everything is meant for the pleasure and profit of male sexuality.

In the de facto summing up, the novel can be synthesized in the utterance of angry Ida:

> This work weaves a connection between my mother and me, each word--brick in a mansion I made with my head and my heart. Now live in it. Mama and leave me be. Do not haunt me any more.

Throughout the novel, Ida's declaration echoes that she does not want to be like her mother. The novelist scrutinizes a pertinent and persuasive subject like self-affirmation, man-woman relationship, and family-feud and above all the mother-daughter conflict and contradiction. The novel without any literary snobbery deals with a daughter's reorganization of her fractured and fragmented past hinging on her mother's story. The writer has all the fact and finesse of the great classical masters like Dickens, Jane Austen and Emily Bronte in creating and producing efficacious result.

NOTES

1. R.K. Dhawan, ed., *50 Years of Indian Writing* (New Delhi: IAES, 1999), p.14.
2. Suman Bala and Subhash Chandra, "Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters*: An Absorbing Tale of Fact and Fiction," *ibid.*, p. 107.
3. Irigaray, *Le Temps La Difference* (Paris: Librarrie General Franchise), p. 30.
4. Suman Bala and Subhash Chandra, p. 108.

5. *The Pioneer*, New Delhi, 1 August 1998.
6. Sumita Pal, "The Mother-Daughter Conflict in Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters*," in *Indian Writing in the New Millennium*, ed. R.K. Dhawan (New Delhi: IAES, 2000), p.137.
7. Gajendra Kumar, *Indo-Anglian Novel: Criticism, Tradition and Achievement* (Patna: Novelty, 1999), p.112.
8. Manju Kapur, *Difficult Daughters* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1998).

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Basavaraj Naikar's *The Sun behind the Cloud*: A Typical Indian Historical Novel

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In India there has been a distinguished past tradition of historical novels. Most historical novels of the past were written against the background of the reign of rulers of some particular lands. The writers collect some facts of history and use them for their imaginative reconstruction. While writing a fiction, a good historical novelist researches the chosen period thoroughly and strives for verisimilitude. The main aim of a historical novelist is to present human characters showing the life and manners of a bygone age. Such a novel may be truer than history because it recreates the spirit of the time, not objectively, but subjectively. It is not concerned with mere facts or chronology, not mere spectacle or pageant, not merely the humour of the ancients but with the changing physical, intellectual and spiritual environment and the spirit of the ancient people.

English has become, in the present time, a common language of expression to the writers of various nations of the world. Because of the British Empire that extended its fold over almost the entire world, the English language, the language of the British, was understood by most nations of the world. In India, too, writers are using today this medium of expression to reach a wider audience and a larger number of readers. Among the Indian writers of the present day, who use English as their medium of expression, the name of Basavaraj Naikar may be mentioned. Naikar, however, has not trodden the conventional path of restricting his vision merely to the exploits of a particular king, rather he looked back nostalgically to the past and tried to present before his readers a picture of the first ever battle of independence by the Indians against the British, while at the same time unfolding

the glorious past of a place named Naragund. The author has a sentimental association with the period he is writing about, as he himself has stated in his preface that his great-grandfather Virabhadranayaka was one of the army officers and also a confidant of Bhaskararao Bhave, king of Naragund, whose rise and fall he narrates in his novel. This is his first attempt at writing a historical novel in English, although he has to his credit a number of critical works and translations in his own native tongue, Kannada, as well as in English.

The Sun Behind the Cloud (2001) presents a native king's revolt against the powerful British rulers and may be treated as an account of the first battle for freedom by the Indians during the first half of the nineteenth century. The novel is a wonderful recreation of the age and the locale where the incidents took place. A historical novel gives an artist's view of a thing and not a photograph. It is an imaginative recreation of events or characters giving out the secret aroma of the past. As W.H. Hudson writes: 'The historical novelist is evidently compelled to rely upon indirect information for the specific characteristics of any period he undertakes to describe and it is the sheer power of realistic imagination which will often enable a writer to see more clearly and depict more convincingly a scene he has only heard or read of than could an ordinary person who had himself witnessed such a scene or even taken part in it.'[1] The historical novelist provides us with the human side of great events. And in this respect, Naikar is quite successful. He describes common incidents of daily life in so much detail that the readers are able to visualize the period in which they took place. Naikar uses his creative imagination to present his own vision of the world he portrays. Walter Allen observes: 'Every novelist, then, gives us in his novels his own personal idiosyncratic vision of the world.'[2] A wide knowledge of history and a romantic interest in the past are very essential for a historical novelist. Mr. Naikar has certainly gathered the relevant historical facts from different sources about the important events of Bhaskararao's time. This is evidenced by the various dates of occurrences he has mentioned in different parts of the novel. This adds to verisimilitude.

Naikar has not divided his novel into various sections or chapters, giving subtitles, as generally the novelists do. Instead he seems to have created breathing spaces in the continuous narrative by putting five star marks in between the narration, at sixty-nine places. I call them breathing spaces as the breaks in many places appear to be rather arbitrary. It would. have been better if the entire narration were divided into several sections with such subtitles as: (i) The birth and early youth of Bhaskararao, (ii) Bhaskararao's confrontation with the British on the question of adoption, (iii) Krishnaji Pant and Bania Bapu—chief conspirators against Bhaskararao, (iv) Manson and his men killed by surprise attack of Bhaskararao' s army, (v) Malcolm's attack of Naragund and Bhaskararao's defeat, (vi) Escape of Bhaskararao and his family from Naragund, (vii) Death of Yamunabai and Savitri, (viii) British atrocities after the capture of Naragund, (ix) Raghopant's capture by the British and his death, (x) Bhaskararao's arrest and death sentence by the British, (xi) The end of the traitors Krishnaji Pant and Bania Bapu, (xii) Bhaskararao's providential escape and his last life.

The entire novel, however, has its own organic unity. It tells the story of an illustrious son of Naragund from his birth till death. The various ups and downs in his career have been meticulously dealt with. Naikar mostly used the common method of narration, which is the epic method in which the author distances himself from the main story and narrates it as an omniscient narrator. R.J. Rees has described this method in his own inimitable manner: "Plain narrative is, of course, the technique most commonly employed by the novelist. He takes the position of an 'omniscient observer,' and describes not only the events of his story, but the thoughts and feelings of his characters, taking a sort of 'God's-eye view' of them.[3]

Naikar has used dialogues in many places. He has made the narration lively, no doubt, but had there been appropriate variations in the dialogue according to the nature and status of the speakers, it would have been more realistic.

A historical novel may necessarily have a large number of characters. *The Sun behind the Cloud* is no exception. But Naikar

has introduced only those characters that are relevant to the main action of the novel and are somehow related to the main character, Bhaskararao Bhave. The golden rule for the historical novelist is to give a subordinate position to real historical persons and incidents and to allot a prominent place to imaginary characters and invented situations. For, the danger of introducing important historical personages lies in the fact that existing records or traditional conceptions would hamper the creation of a truly living or a transcendentally imagined character. That is why historical characters are assigned a minor part or a subordinate position in historical novels. But Naikar's novel is somewhat different from the conventional historical novels. Here he has attempted to portray the life history of a glorious freedom fighter. Hence all his attention is focused on the protagonist, Bhaskararao Bhave. And for this he has painstakingly gathered detailed necessary information available in print. As he himself writes in his *Preface*: "I made a systematic study of the topic by reading the major recorded material in print and tried to reconstruct the history of the colonial encounter in a realistic manner without resorting to sentimentalism or glorification."[4] In fact, there has been scope for glorification of the principal character as the author himself has an emotional connection with him. For, his "great-grandfather Virabhadranayaka happened to be one of the army officers of Naragund and a confidant of Babasaheb." (viii)

Yet the novel does not 'exactly read like hero-worship. With his historical imagination, Naikar has presented before us a complete man in flesh and blood. By referring to minor and insignificant incidents he has been able to point out the various facets of the character of Bhaskararao. Thus we can have an idea of his courage and boldness when on a day of 'Holi,' a Hindu religious festival, he jumped, riding his horse, over the burning effigy of 'Lord Kama,' that blocked his way, and also when he defied the orders of the British Deputy Commissioner of Dharwad to surrender to the British Government all the arms he and his men possessed. His heroic demeanour is further illustrated by his at-

tempt to capture Manson and compel him to sign the order of adoption.

That Naikar has not attempted hero-worship in his novel is amply illustrated by the fact that he is not blind to the human weaknesses of his protagonist. Bhaskararao is heroic, brave, courageous, patriotic, yet a. bit sensuous, too. Mr. Naikar has, at least, given two instances of his hero's weakness for feminine charm when he mentions Bhaskararao's affair with a danseuse named Bhimasani and later, Bhaskararao's lust for Annapurna, daughter-in-law of Gangadhar, a merchant and friend of Bhaskararao. This may remind one how Marlowe humanized his king Edward II, the eponymous hero of his tragedy, although a comparison of the two works is not exactly tenable.

Besides presenting the graphic figure of the protagonist, Naikar has taken much pains to portray the loyalists and the conspirators. Bhimaraya, Vianu Kulkarni, Virabhadra Nayaka, Raghunatharaya and others are bright examples of loyalty, obedience and heroism and they never deserted their king in times of need. But, Krishnaji Pant, Bania Bapu, Chandralal Despande and others, who secretly joined hands with the British and brought about the ruin of Bhaskararao, have been portrayed in the darkest colours. Their cupidity, selfishness and meanness have been brought out by their behaviour and activities. Naikar has shown his imaginative perception of such characters.

Naikar has also portrayed the British officers like Manson, Thomson, Malcolm, Oglivey, not with 'my patriotic rage, but with the calm and dispassionate outlook of a psychologist. The British officers were in an alien land. Besides they were duty bound to serve their superior authorities. Hence, although sometimes they were sympathetic to the natives who had been arrested for some alleged crimes of sedition, they could not but give those natives the severest of punishments, including capital punishments to satisfy the whims of their superior masters. The presentation of this human side of some of the British officers made them realistic and convincing.

There are only a few female characters in the novel. But less attention has been paid to the development of those characters.

Yamunabai and Savitri are pathetic figures. When left to their fate, as Bhaskararao escaped from the palace to save himself, the two women became panicky and to save their honour they committed suicide by drowning in the river Malaprabha. Towards the end of the novel, we meet one Kashibai whose only role seems to be giving her niece, a young girl, in marriage to Bhaskararao, an old man of sixty-two. The other female characters are just passing figures.

The title of the novel, *The Sun behind the Cloud*, is symbolic. 'The sun' as a symbol is applied to both Bhaskararao and the East India Company. This is said by the author himself in the *Preface*: "Bhaskararao means 'the sun' who shines brightly and then is hidden behind the clouds as it were. Similarly the East India Company or the British Government which believed that the sun never sets in the British Empire was behind a cloud as it were until it annexed the kingdom of Naragund and began to shine brightly." (viii) Considering the spirit of the novel, the second interpretation of comparing the British Government to the sun seems to be rather inappropriate. For, certainly the writer's purpose is not to glorify the British Government. He has made an effort to show how an Indian king bravely stood against the mighty British for gaining freedom of his own people. The word 'Bhaskar' means 'the sun,' and this sun of Naragund went under the cloud of ignominy of defeat and lost all his brightness of kingly splendour and power and ended his life incognito, unwept and unsung, just as the sun covered by a dark cloud may pass, unnoticed by people, to the western horizon and set. In this respect the title may have got some significance.

The use of many native words in the novel makes smooth reading and comprehension of the text by a foreigner rather difficult. The glossary of eighty-six native words appended to the end of the novel does not give the English equivalent of many more native words used in the novel. Instead of this glossary it would have been more convenient for a reader if the English equivalent of the native words used in a page are given at the end of that page, with their indication numbers. Another small addition to this book would have made it more helpful to a reader.

This is a list of characters introduced into the novel with their mutual relationships. It might have been placed after the Preface. Again, the novel would have been livelier if some sketch of some significant incidents and characters were depicted at the relevant places in the novel. Last but not least, the medium of expression used for the narration of such a glorious tale needs careful attention, power and smoothness.

But despite all this, the novel as a whole is engrossing in its narration. The writer's patriotic zeal, ancestral pride, romantic imagination and attention to trivial details make the novel interesting reading. E.M. Forster says that the final test of a novel will be our affection for it, as it is the best of our friends, and of anything else which we cannot define. And we feel an affection for Naikar's novel for the qualities already mentioned. The patriotic Bhaskararao's betrayal by some timid, selfish and unscrupulous hypocrites has been dealt with, with extraordinary skill. The past glory of an almost unrecognized place and its brave patriotic king has been effectively presented by Naikar before a large number of readers eager to know about this almost unknown chapter of India's freedom struggle.

NOTES

1. William Henry Hudson, *An Introduction to the Study of Literature* (1913; London: George G. Harrap, 1961), p. 136.
2. Walter Allen, *The English Novel: A Short Critical History* (1954; Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1962), p. 17.
3. R.J. Rees, *An Introduction to English Literature* (London: Macmillan, 1968), p. 131.
4. Basavaraj Naikar, *The Sun behind the Cloud* (New Delhi: Atlantic, 2001), p. viii.
5. E.M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (1927; Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1968), p. 30.

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Morbid Morality: A Study of Tennessee Williams's *Sweet Bird of Youth*

ISHWARCHANRA PANDEY

Tennessee Williams, one of the best known and most controversial dramatists of America, is welcomed by the critics for his original talent and for his daring will power to explore the dark areas of human desire and compulsion. His plays highlight the theme of rape, castration, cannibalism and desperately troublesome, lonely, immoral and forgotten people. *Sweet Bird of Youth* (1959), a play of his later phase, is one of the most prominent plays dealing with the theme of immorality. It presents fleshy corruption and crippled sensitive life. It is the story of two fragmentary and bitter characters who live the miserable lives of hopelessness. Their lives are a struggle between real and ideal and the play faces a crisis of identity. The Princess Kosmonopolis (pseudonym of Alexandra Del Lago), a dissolute movie star and Chance Wayne a self-centred gigolo are close to each other at St. Cloud, a small Southern town on the Gulf of Mexico. Both have lost their charms and rhythms of life—one is an aging lady and has lost her beauty and charm and the second is a desperate and spoilt person.

The major part of the play is set at St. Cloud. We see Chance and Princess sitting in a hotel, Royal Palms's bedroom in the opening scene of the play. On a fine morning, Chance comes to meet Princess with hope of getting a chance to enter the beautiful world of the film industry. He is a "*good-looking* (15) "finest, nicest, sweetest," (49) young man of "twenty-nine years." (23) His aim is to find his childhood's sweetheart Heavenly Finleys the daughter of Boss Finley, a local politician, and an established person in the film world.

Boss Finely and his son Tom Finley Junior are figures of hate. Both are ready to avenge Chance who has infected Heavenly with a venereal disease. Chance neither knows about the infectious disease of Heavenly caused by him nor of his mother's death who was staying in the town. He couldn't get the message of death of his mother because of the changed address. The church authorities cremated her, and she was buried in their family graveyard.

Alexandra Del Lago, who is quite aged now, has been a successful film actress in the past. In her last premier of the film, she experienced herself the pale and wrinkled shadow of the old Alexandra. Now she is worried of the reality that her chief asset of youth has left her. On hearing the gossip of the people, she left the theatre and has been travelling since the time of the premier. Coming at St. Cloud, she met Chance at this hotel, where he has been working as a beach boy. Now both are fellow travellers and Chance is attending all her physical and mental needs. Most of his time passes in bringing her oxygen to relieve shortness of her breath and helping her in every way as a male nurse.

Though Chance stays with Princess, he thinks for his career in film world of Hollywood and his love for Heavenly humiliates him. He tapes Princess's conversation to pin down her because he thinks that he has been given false contact of the movies. She is ignorant of his dubious motives and recounts her experiences. Chance is very happy and tries to blackmail the Princess by asking a real contact of movies at the cost of the taped cassette. She denies to do so but comes to know that Chance is hopelessly miscast in his aim of blackmailing. Now he doesn't want to debate about her but has no other way to accept.

After sometime, both share the same bed and Princess asks him the story of his past life and family. Chance explains his handsomeness of infancy which made him different from his family and generation. He has not enjoyed the company of the right social circle. He has only craved to look more handsome in uniform and, therefore, has joined the Navy. But he was always afraid of death, and by presenting a false certificate, he made himself free from the restrictions of the soldiers and returned

home. Except Heavenly Finley, nobody welcomed him after his return from Navy, and she became the most lovable figure of his life.

Chance and Heavenly have been in love since their youthful days. Her father was ever against their relationship. Chance wanted to marry Heavenly for selecting the political field of her father. She was faithful to Chance until she caught infection of his venereal disease.

Princess is very influenced by Chance's sincerity and offers to help him. Chance proposes to organize a false beauty contest in which they (Heavenly and Chance) want to be winners and plan to grab a new film at the prize of contest. This proposal of Chance is turned down by Princess. Meanwhile, Boss Finley organizes a political rally the same evening and the rival group arranges the people to shout Heavenly's corruption for perplexing Boss Finley. He turns angry and wants to keep Chance far from the city and he decides to present Heavenly on the stage for clearing the rumours. After her objection, she is threatened to face similar consequences for her lover Chance and he has to meet the same fate like Negro who was castrated after messing the white woman.

Once again, the next scene takes place at the hotel in a big rally. Chance goes there with some of his old friends but their cold responses deeply hurt him. He too sings a song but nobody joins him. Miss Lucy, Boss Finley's mistress, takes pity on him and informs that her master intends to castrate him. But Chance doesn't want to leave the place without Heavenly. Even he wants to see her for a while who is taken away by her father. Her father warns her to castrate him if he stays in the town but Chance does not care for his warning.

At last Chance telephones a Hollywood reporter and forces Princes to tell about her discoveries to realize his reverie. But Princess does not respond properly and talks only about herself Now, she is very much happy and realizes that her comeback in movie is successful. She offers Chance the job of her companion which he refuses due to the fear of castration. He decides to re-

pent for his sexual transgressions and the play ends with a self-illuminative statement of Chance:

> I don't ask for your pity, but just for your understanding—not even that—no. Just for your recognition of me in you, and the enemy, time, in us all. (93)

In the play, Chance and Princess sell their youth for money. The loss of their sweet bird of youth is like a blow of death for them. Both cannot rise above the crushing disappointment. They are defeated by their high ambitions. The Princess has sold her everything—heart, soul and body—for getting the top position. She is a shameless opportunist, who picks up young men; uses them for her sexual gratification, and then casts them away. Chance has whored himself and recalls his past as an act of good will:

> I gave people more than I took. Middle-aged people I gave back a feeling of youth. Lonely girls? Understanding, appreciation. An absolutely convincing show of affection. Sad people, lost people something light and uplifting. (38)

Chance and Princess live in the world of illusions. Princess wanders in her days of sweet youth and takes refuge from the bitter reality of life and enjoys the nourishing diet of sex, hashish and pure oxygen etc., while Chance wants to cash his sound body before it fades. She insists Chance to act up to her wishes. She shows claws when he tries to outsmart her and reminds him of dictating terms in their relationship but after some time says:

> I want to help you. Believe me, not everybody wants to hurt everybody. I don't want to hurt you, can you believe me? (41-42)

In her life, Princess has been too busy to climb up the ladder of success for getting a faithful soul mate. After a great success also, she couldn't win a single permanent-mate. "For Alexandra, sex is an end in itself, rather than as for D.H. Lawrence, a means for exploring the otherness of the other partner."[2] Chance becomes aware of the fact about her and refuses to be her sexual slave any more. She offers him the role of a lap dog on a golden chain that Chance refuses as he is fearful of castration. However, she too is aware of reality.

The play is tragic in the sense that Chance, the protagonist, could not go to his home again. His youth, the beautiful sweet-bird-of-youth, is lost and he is sexually dying. Chance, a perverted creature, attempts in vain to reach his goal and Princess, devoid of human concerns, attains her goal in the most condemnable and animalistic way. Princess lacks love and human warmth.

An intimate relationship is seen between Chance Wayne and Alexandra Del Lago in the very beginning of the play as also the end of it. They use each other in the play in their downward journey. On the other side, Heavenly is always loyal to Chance. She opposes her father:

> Don't give me your Voice of God speech, papa, there was a time when you could have saved me, by letting me marry a boy that was still young and clean, instead you drove him away. (53)

Once again we see the dramatist involved with an Oedipal situation in which father is prepared to destroy the life of his daughter. Here, a father is destroying the life of his daughter in the same way as a mother destroys the life of her son in D.H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*. The portrayal of Chance is very close to Birkin—the phallic prophet in D.H. Lawrence's *Women in Love*. But "Birkin, like Chance, never ceases to proselytize 'the dark knowledge you can't have in your hand.'"[3]

Chance is himself responsible for his downfall. The whole town treats him as a criminal. When he states to Aunt Nonnie that everyone treats him as a criminal, she asks him to realize himself in his works:

Chance: Why does everyone treat me like a low criminal in the town I was born in?

Aunt Nonnie: Ask yourself that question, ask your conscience that question. . . . You can't be trusted. (61)

Chance has different faces for different people and he has different roles throughout the play: "Chance is an actor, obviously assuming various roles throughout the play—son, blackmailer, lover, young romantic with Aunt Nonnie, sophisticate in St. cloud and at the bar, and finally Fatalist, appealing to the audi-

ence for understanding. . . . He exhibits self- destructive tendencies and accepts his castration."[4] He is a combination of cheap values and has no real worth. In his personality, we find a volcano of hatred. His relationship with Princess is shameful which creates hatred in audience; they don't sympathize with him on his castration Though he is himself an evil, he has great love for Heavenly. He tells Tom: "I know I've done many wrong things in life, many more than I can name or number, but swear I never hurt Heavenly in my life." (77) Again, he describes his love for Heavenly to Miss Lucy: "Don't ask me her name. I respect her too much to speak her name at this table." (70) But Chance's love for his youthful relationship is not Williamsian; it is definitely Lawrentian who carries the naked photograph of Heavenly when she was fifteen:

> This is a flashlight photo I took of her, nude, one night on Diamond Key, which is a little sandbar about half a mile offshore which is under water at high tide. This was taken with the tide coming in. . . . This was her at fifteen. (40)

Chance's sinful past becomes the tool of his castration. He is the same kind of sinful creature as Val Xavier in *Orpheus Descending*. He represents the lost innocence, which can never be regained. But he differs from Val in the sense that if Heavenly's father had agreed, they would have been married a long time ago. He and Boss Finley are the opposite sides of the same coin. Chance becomes victim of the sex envy because of the unconscious feelings Boss Finley harbours for his beautiful daughter who reminds him of his dead wife. Williams describes him:

> It's important not to think of his attitude toward her in the terms of crudely conscious incestuous feeling, but just in the natural terms of almost any aging father's feeling for a beautiful young daughter who reminds him of dead wife that he desired intensely when she was the age of his daughter. (52)

Here, Signi Falk presents the same point of view, "This ageing politician watches his beautiful daughter with the same lust he had felt for her mother, at the same age when he had desired her so intensely."[5]

Boss Finley is a symbol of hatred and fascism in the play. His image is not less than a monster who wants to use his own daughter for his political purposes. He cares less for her life by curing her from sexual disease caused by Chance but is more interested to castrate Chance for causing her infection: "Boss Finley desires his own daughter, an incestuous motif which reflects Freud's association of incest with anarchy. Himself impotent, or so it seems, he urges his daughter into a relationship which will serve his political purposes. She, meanwhile, has contracted venereal disease from her lover and is incapable of bearing children while that lover is himself emasculated, at Boss Finley's command, on Easter Sunday."[6]

The play mirrors a universe of inferno. In the end, as Gerald Weals observes: "Alexandra and Chance, for whom the loss has made desperate,"[7] become fellow travellers in their journey to hell. Both share moments of life and feel that time is running fast. Like Val and Sebastian, Chance is an artist who attaches himself to an older lady. He also infects Heavenly whose cure requires removal of uterus, a kind of castration. She is unable to be a mother and to have a happy married life. Therefore, his punishment like Sebastian Venable in *Suddenly Last Summer* fits his crime.

The study of the play highlights a long tale of destruction in forms of impotence, sterility, frigidity and castration of major characters. George Niesen observes: "Indeed the entire play is one of destruction, castration, and impotence. Boss Finley disenfranchises voters. He is responsible for the Negro's castration and is more at fault than Chance for Heavenly's sterility. . . . Still, the Princess and Chance are alive at the end of the play though alone, powerless, and futureless."[8]

Chance and Princess have surrendered and atoned for their sins. The greatest punishment in life is that they will never be capable to enjoy a family life. Chance suffers more than Heavenly and Princess. But Williams is a dedicated existentialist philosopher who perceives his characters in light of his insights and values and tests them at the touchstone of reality of life. His

characters are sufferers as they deviate from the realistic bond of life and human values.

NOTES

1. Tennessee Williams, *Sweet Bird of Youth* (London: Martin Secker and Warburg, 1961).
2. Gulshan Rai Kataria, *The Faces Eve: A Study of Tennessee Williams's Heroines* (New Delhi: Sterling, 1992), p. 107.
3. Norman J. Fedder, *The Influence of D.H. Lawrence on Tennessee Williams* (The Hague: Mouton, 1966), p. 105.
4. George Niesen, "The Artist Against Reality" in *Tennessee Williams: A Tribute,* ed. Jac Tharpe (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1977), p. 482.
5. Signi Falls *Tennessee Williams* (Boston: Twayne, 1978), p. 120.
6. C.W.E. Bigsby, "Tennessee Williams: the theatricalising self," *Modern American Drama 1945-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 64.
7. Gerald Weals, *Tennessee Williams* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1965), p. 28.
8. George Niesen, p. 483.

BOOK REVIEWS

O.P. Mathur, *New Critical Approaches to Indian English Fiction*, New Delhi: Sarup and Sons, 2001, 146 pp. Rs. 300.

New Critical Approaches to Indian English Fiction by O.P. Mathur contains fifteen papers on eminent modern and contemporary writers of Indian English fiction and one article on a piece of writing by some critic that had appeared in *The Hindustan Times* on 29 August 1982. The book as a whole displays maturity of critical judgement, vast learning and full command of the critical idiom characterized by compactness and *mot juste.*

The most important aspect of Mathur's criticism is that he concentrates on a close reading of the texts and comes out with new interpretations that had gone generally unnoticed. For him the valve that opens into the deep levels of meaning is the symbolism employed by the writer. The leading symbols may come from Nature, Indian mythology or Indian philosophy and religion.

Anand's *Two Leaves and a Bud* has been shown to be much more that a realistic novel about the sufferings of workers in the tea gardens of Assam. The title of the novel suggests not only the mighty trident of Lord Shiva but also the three-pronged arrows of love, the charm of nature, and the strength and the hope of renewal "that enervates the hearts of men and women." (2) Taking into consideration the chief women characters in R.K. Narayan's *The Dark Room, The Guide* and *The Painter of Signs,* Mathur explains how the mythological archetypes of Sita, Urvashi and Amba in the legend of Bhishma and Santanu are invoked in order to "trace the roots of the present in the past of traditions and beliefs." (7) "*The Guide:* The Novel and the Film" not only fills a gap in Narayan criticism but is also a fine specimen of cultural studies. Mathur compares the novel with the film *Guide* directed by Tad Danielewski in English and by Vijay Anand in Hindi. He

shows how some of the changes made by the directors are justified but others intended to serve commercial gains are flashy and theatrical—and miss the finer effects of Narayan's prose narrative. Thus the film "is not so much a version as a 'conversion'" of the novel (17).

In the three articles on Arun Joshi that follow, Mathur finds his true ambience. He explores the fiction of Joshi deeply in order to reveal this novelist's inspiration in the philosophy of the *Gita*. I admire the learned critic's use of the original Sanskrit sources, when most scholars and novelists depend entirely on English translations. The third paper presents a well-researched study of "Imagery and Symbols in the Novels of Arun Joshi" in twenty-two pages. A lead had been given to this kind of analysis by Caroline S. Spurgeon, but her studies of Shakespeare's plays are static and depend on statistical calculations. On the other hand, Mathur presents a flowchart of imagery as it changes sympathetically with the movement of the theme. For example, as Sindi in *The Foreigner* proceeds from the state of confusion to that of enlightenment, the initial image of a cheap distorting mirror is replaced by symbols of clarity and profundity.

Neither Rushdie's *Shame* nor Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance* exhausts its themes by being treated as a story of gruesome reality in two different historical moments and locales. Below the surface of the first, we must discover through the fresh perspective of the filter of horror "the basic reality, the quintessential spirit of Pakistan"; and in the second, we must discover the panorama of change and permanence beyond the despair caused by the Emergency, after the achievements and miseries of which have been weighed in the fine balance of the novelist's perception.

There are two articles concerned with Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*. The first discusses, with a profoundly cosmopolitan approach, what may be called the intimations of immortality, the reality of spiritual strength and noble self-sacrifice, while the other explores the Indianness of this Indian novel in English.

In Paper 11, Mathur creates a strikingly new effect out of a familiar approach, namely comparative study. Using the method as a strategy he shows how the treatment of sex leads D.H. Lawrence in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* to the highest vision of human desire and fulfillment, while Khushwant Singh's writing in *The Company of Women* descends to the level of pornography which provokes. titillates and even tills with disgust. There is, however, a mitigating element in Khushwant Singh's novel which must not be ignored, in the interplay of heredity and environment in the character of the protagonist." (111)

The next article deals with the complex vision of Arundhanti Roy. Through her symbolism, which covers both the natural setting and characters, in *The God of Small Things* she invokes the workings of Divine Providence which lets small things suffer and also assume a supernatural dimension. It must have been felt by the readers of *Interpreter of Maladies* that like Jane Austen (on a broader canvas) Jhumpa Lahiri is an artist in miniature but it was for Mathur to analyze the small acts of omission and commission for their importance in the scheme of the story. Lahiri makes small unselfconscious gestures to carry a lot of cross-cultural meanings. The first title of Mathur's article, 'Meaningful Whispers,' is itself highly significant.

Coming to *The Great Indian Novel,* we know that its allegorical implications, view of Indian culture and character and narrative technique have been discussed by scholars. Mathur in his paper draws our attention to a cardinal element present in the Hindu way of life which underlies the various segments of Indian reality represented in *The Great Indian Novel.* Thus, Mathur elaborates on the element of tolerance which is suggested rather than explicitly fictionalized in the novel. With the help of suitable excerpts from the novel, he argues that tolerance emerges from the story as a positive and fundamental concept of Dharma.

It is to be welcomed that Mathur has devoted one article to the work of two new writers, Anand and Ranu Khare. Their method of gaining prominence has, probably, overshot its mark but there is no gainsaying that their work represents a humanistic purpose which is well served by their imaginative utilization of

the latest ideas in science, technology and psychology of desire. Mathur has examined the three novels that comprise *Passion's Creation.* There is a passing reference to the other works of the Khare couple, including their poetry.

The general stance of Mathur as a critic is that of a benevolent judge: he seeks to discover and bring out the positive element in a writer without condoning the serious lapses or without forsaking high seriousness. This will be clear to any one who reads the articles discussed so far. Still, lest we overlook his earnestness in evaluation, we must turn to the last piece in the book entitled, 'Sharply Speaking.' The object under scrutiny is an article published in *The Hindustan Times of* August 29, 1982 in which the writer had cried down the whole "Anglo-Indian World" and advanced the thesis that the Indo-Anglian novels published upto 1947-48 were superior to those that appeared after 1948. Mathur chooses to formulate a hard-hitting reply: both the points mentioned above are demolished by advancing factual evidence and the position of the author of that article is shown to be ridiculous and Gilbertian.

There is no doubt that a fresh intellectual wind blows through the pages of this book. It is not only a solid achievement in responsible criticism, it also opens up new avenues for critical practice and interpretation. The book is an indispensable addition to our scholarship in Indian fiction in English.

Varanasi **R.S. SHARMA**

M.K. Naik and Shyamala A. Narayan, *Indian English Literature 1980-2000: A Critical Survey*, Delhi: Pencraft International, 2001, 303 pp. Rs. 495 (Hb), Rs. 350 (Pb).

"Indian English Literature began as an interesting by-product of an eventful encounter in the late eighteenth century between a vigorous and enterprising Britain and a stagnant and chaotic India, and is now nearly two hundred years old. It is a literature written originally in English by authors Indian by birth, ancestry or nationality. . . . Sahitya Akademi has accepted 'Indian English Literature' as the most suitable appellation for this body of writ-

ing," says the blurb of an earlier book by M.K. Naik, namely, *A History of Indian English Literature*, 1982 (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1999), which has been reprinted five times and continues to be in print still, to which the book under review is a sequel. The earlier book, while tracing the growth of Indian English literature from the beginning, quotes Kamala Das's answer to those who then had questioned the very *raison d'être* of this body of literature:

> Don't write in English, they said,
> English is not your mother-tongue. Why not leave
> Me alone, critics, friends, visiting cousins,
> Every one of you? Why not let me speak in
> Any language I like? The language I speak
> Becomes mine, its distortions, its queernesses,
> All mine, mine alone. It is half English, half
> Indian, funny perhaps, but it is honest,
> It is an human as I am human. . . .
> It voices my joys, my longings, my hopes. . . . It
> Is human speech, the speech of the mind that is
> Here and not there, a mind that sees and hears and
> Is aware. (290-91)

Indian English literature was not yet "settled" then. Despite various literary forecasts predicting the early demise of this literature, Henry Derozio, the "first Indian English poet" shared his optimism with the students of Hindu College, Calcutta, in the early years of the nineteenth century:

> I see
> Fame in the mirror of futurity,
> Weaving the chaplets you are yet to gain. (291)

The earlier book concludes on this hopeful note and the last two decades have seen not only the survival but also a great proliferation of quality Indian English literature. Hence the need for a sequel to the earlier book!

With the publication of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* in 1981, a "new era had dawned in Indian English literature." Not only that, *The New York Review of Books* claimed it as

one of "the most important novels to come out of the English-speaking world in this generation." Therefore, the book under review considers the Rushdie book a landmark and a point of reference for all Indian English literature after that.

However, the first chapter of the book "The Lie of the Land" goes back a little and traces the scenario since the 1971 war, "the first major war won by the Indian nation since Independence" to the dawn of the new millennium. The progress and prosperity of early Seventies include the 1974 atomic explosion by India, which put it on the nuclear map of the world. But on the political front the latter half of the Seventies saw the dark period of declaration of Emergency in 1975 and the suspension of fundamental rights, which eventually led to an era of coalition governments and emergence of various regional parties in India. Assassination of two Prime Ministers—Indira Gandhi in 1984 and Rajiv Gandhi in 1991—tells us the tale of terrorism which continues to haunt India still. Issues such as the opening up of economy in the Nineties, the menace of black money and corruption, religious fundamentalism, "increasing corrosion of values in the Indian middle-class" are some of the continuing concerns of the times. The chapter notes India's achievements in the area of information technology, internet economy and cyber culture. On the literary scene, emergence of the marginalized groups such as dalits and women are specifically discussed. Apart from all this, "the leaders of the new fiction have mostly been a part of Indian diaspora," which incorporates significant modern western literary movements like postmodernism and magic realism.

Apart from this introductory chapter, the book contains four chapters on fiction, out of which one each deals with women novelists and the short story; three on poetry, out of which one is devoted to women's poetry. Then, there is a chapter each on drama and prose, apart from the concluding one.

"Twilight of the Old Masters: The Novel-I" serves as a bridge between the earlier and latter writings of masters like Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao—the big three and others like Manohar Malgonkar, Khushwant Singh, S. Menon

Marath, K.A. Abbas, Arun Joshi, Chaman Nahal, Ruskin Bond, Timeri Murari, Victor Anant, Ahmad Ali, Raj Gill, Pratap Sharma, Romen Basu and various others. "*Midnight's Children's* Children: The Novel II" deals with what is termed as "new" fiction which has been published by "prestigious firms on both sides of the Atlantic." This indicates "the ready acceptance of Indian English literature abroad now," both in terms of quality and money paid to the writers. Writers such as Vikram Seth, Arundhati Roy stand out in terms of advance money paid to them for their novels. Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh and Amit Chaudhari are some of many names who have left their mark on the Indian literary scene forever. This chapter devotes an exclusive section to Rushdie, while talking of "Other Practitioners of Magic Realism" such as Amitav Ghosh, Shashi Tharoor, Boman Desai, Farrukh Dhondy, G.J.V. Prasad, Indrajit Hazra, Mukul Kesavan, Vikram Chandra, Makarand Paranjape, Kiran Nagarkar and Randhir Khare. In the section on the "novel of social realism," one finds names such as Vikram Seth, Rohinton Mistry, Alan Sealy, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Anurag Mathur, Ranga Rao and others.

Borrowing from Virginia Woolf, "A Room of their Own: Women Novelists" categorizes women's writings under various heads. The section on the "Old Novelists" discusses the later works of Kamala Markandaya, Jai Nimbkar, Jhabvala, Anita Desai, Nayantara Sahgal and a few other writers. The section on the "Domestic Novel" clarifies that it is "not necessary to be a woman to write a domestic novel: Bhabhani Bhattacharya, for instance, wrote five women-centred novels." Later works of Shashi Deshpande, and works of younger writers like Raji Narasimhan, Anjana Appachana, Mrinal Pande, Githa Hariharan find place for discussion here. Besides, the first novels of writers such as Indu K. Mollah, Belinder Dhanoa, Zai Whitaker and her elder sister Shama Futehally make their impressive debut mention in this section. Interestingly, the works of Suniti Namjoshi, Anuradha Marwah Roy, Nina Sibal and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni are categorised as the novels of "magic realism." Then there are sections on what are called the "Campus Novel," the

"Regional Fiction" (which discusses the works of no less a person than Arundhati Roy among those of the others), the "Other Novelists" (perhaps, the writers who defy categorization) and then "Diasporic Writings." Granting the fact that all categorization is for the sake of convenience and various categories tend to overlap, putting Arundhati Roy in the "regional" category makes her novel rather a work of limited appeal. Or, how would one deal with Bharati Mukherjee who refuses to be considered as an Indian writer and a part of Indian English literature? She asserts that she contributes to the literary scene of the country of her adoption.

The two chapters on Indian English poetry reaffirm the relevance of poetry in today's world despite various hardships the practitioners of the art talk about. Keki N. Daruwalla laments that it is difficult to get poetry published as there is a dearth of poetry readers, but the scene in the last twenty years has not been all that bad. Apart from the well known names such as Nissim Ezekiel, Dom Moraes, A.K. Ramanujan, Gieve Patel, K.N. Daruwalla, Shiv K. Kumar, Jayant Mahapatra, Keshav Malik and Pradip Sen, the new entrants to the scene are poets like H.K. Kaul who find place in the first of the two chapters on poetry. More recent poets find place in the second chapter.

The chapter on women's poetry laments that only "less than half a dozen senior women poets have continued to write." But then, the "new" poets such as Eunice de Souza, Tara Patel, Kavita Ezekiel, Imtiaz Dharker, Charmayne D'Souza, Melanie Silgardo, Menka Shivdasani and Mukta Sambrani (all "Bombay Poets"), Sunita Jain, Meena Alexander, Vasantha Surya, Lakshmi Kannan, Sujata Bhatt, Debjani Chatterjee, Rukmini Bhaya Nair, Rachna Joshi and a host of others amply compensate for the "dearth" and emerge with a voice of their own.

The "drama scene" in Indian English literature remains lean and still looks up to the earlier practitioners like Girish Karnad, whose later plays enrich the field despite the lack of "opportunity of actual stage performance." However, promising playwrights such as Mahesh Dattani and Manjula Padmanabhan keep the flag high. Naik observes that the "sad Cinderella of Indian English

literature from the beginning, drama remains its Cinderella still, waiting for her prince."

The book under review has a chapter each on the genres of short story and prose also, which are usually neglected in the collections of essays on Indian English literature. Apart from these two, the most important and useful inclusion in the book is the bibliography at the end of the book. While the main body of the book takes care of the primary works, this list focuses on the secondary material, including bibliographies and research aids, bibliographies of individual authors, anthologies of creative writing, books an postcolonial theory and studies of English in India, collections of critical essays and also studies of individual authors. Shyamala A. Narayan surely has done extensive research for this compilation. This is certainly a valuable contribution to the study of Indian English literature–useful for both the scholar and the layman alike.

In addition to that, the book has been brought out very well and is delightfully free from editorial lapses. But the index at the end of the book is rather limited and incomplete. Since it is an important site for dissemination of information, a comprehensive index is always handy. Here, for example, an important entry like *Midnight's Children* is missing, while the book not only discusses it at length but also regards it a watershed in the field of Indian English literature. The next edition of the book needs to take care of that. In any case, the book remains an important and useful survey of the last two decades of the last century and a "must" for the student of Indian English literature.

University of Delhi **VIJAY K. SHARMA**

Bijay Kumar Das, *Shiv K. Kumar as a Post-Colonial Poet.* Atlantic, New Delhi, 2001. 133pp. Rs 295.

Bijay Kumar Das, an eminent critic of Indian English literature, deserves a pat on his back for the wonderful job he has done in giving us a fine, perceptive critical assessment of Shiv K. Kumar as a postcolonial poet. Shiv K. Kumar who received the Sahitya

Akademi (National Academy of Letters) award was also a distinguished Professor of English, had several stints abroad, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature of United Kingdom, and like Eliot whose influence can be discerned in Kumar's poetry in echoes, resonance and reverberations, Kumar has brought to bear his enormous learning on his poetry which is generally terse, measured, diverse and clinically precise. It is not an easy task to sum up the achievement of a poet of Kumar's stature.

In addition to a short Preface the book contains an Introduction, four chapters, Conclusion, Bibliography and a Postscript. In the Preface, Das tells us the reason for writing the book: "Having thoroughly enjoyed his poetry, I would like to share some of my ideas with the readers" (v). In the Introduction, Das gives us short critical overview of the poet and his poetry. He starts with the conviction that Shiv K. Kumar, "an academic turned poet has few peers but not many equals among postcolonial poets in Indian English literature" (1), and proceeds to justify this claim. Postcolonialism is a "state of consciousness" and Kumar, we are told, right from the beginning of his career is in search of truth and his poetry seeks to come to terms with reality in terms of Kumar's growing perception of life. In "The Making of the Poet" we are told how Kumar's first book of verse, *Articulate Silences* (1970) confronts life in the raw, tells us of the sufferings of the teeming multitude and, in consequence, does not sing the glory of the past but focuses on the agony of the present. In this very first collection it became clear that Kumar was determined to distil and transform felt experience and lived emotions into verbal artefacts. The poems become, by and large, profoundly autobiographical and not infrequently confessional.

Kumar's second book, *Cobwebs in the Sun* (1974), reinforces the theme of love already introduced in the first book. Like Eliot's *The Waste Land* where one of the major themes is the death of love and the love of death, Kumar's poems record different kinds of failures in love including failures of marital love on account of the physical incapacity on the part of the lover.

The third book, *Subterfuges* (1976) contains a number of love poems in the same mode and Kumar, Like Eliot, sees woman as an instrument of moral corruption and voluptuousness. The third chapter begins with a discussion of Kumar's fourth book of verse, *Woodpeckers* (1979) where in addition to the theme of love—frustrated, tortured, unfulfilled—a new development is discerned in Kumar's strong preoccupation with death. The fourth chapter examines Kumar's technique and confirms Kumar's own statement: "Ironic perception or irony as a mode of perception is there in all my poems" (68). Das goes on to show with illustrative references how imagery forms an integral part of Kumar's technique of poetry and shows how Kumar's imagery culled from different walks of life has an unmistakable postcolonial orientation. In course of his discussion of Kumar's functional imagery, Das calls attention to the striking affinities of Kumar in this respect with poets as widely different as Eliot and Kamala Das. Das thinks, and rightly, that "Kumar being a Professor of English brings all his knowledge of English literature and literatures in English (including American literature) into the realm of his poetry. Thus his poetry becomes vibrant and enjoyable" (87). The fifth chapter brings us back to the title of the book and examines the poetry of Kumar from a postcolonial perspective with the intention "to place Shiv K. Kumar on the map of postcolonial poetry in the global context in the light of his achievements as a postcolonial Indian English poet" (88). Das has done this job extremely well. Starting with the basic premise that "postcolonial literature (poetry included) is the result of the interaction between imperial design and national culture on the one hand and 'imperial language and local experience' on the other" (95) Das shows how Kumar's poetry abundantly fulfils this condition in his choice of themes, treatment of them and the technique employed. Das arrives at the intellectual conviction that the "themes of East-West encounter, hybridity, resistance to the former coloniser, and above all the Indian English idiom give his poetry a distinct identity, called postcolonial poetry in the recent critical parlance" (103). Das in the concluding section of his book neatly sums up the distinctive features of

Kumar's poetry—"a repository of knowledge derived from experience and intuition" (109) and charts out the course of development of his poetry and concludes: "Kumar's poetry which began in pain and moved in passion has become a tragic affirmation of life. This is an achievement that has not been equaled by many postcolonial poets in our time" (116).

The book also provides a good bibliography which any researcher will find quite useful. In the short "Postscript" that follows the Bibliography, Das offers a review of Kumar's forthcoming book, *Losing My Way* which further strengthens the position of Kumar as a postcolonial poet.

Bijay Kumar Das has really done a good job. Just in course of 133 pages he has opened up before us the fascinating world of Shiv K. Kumar's poetry, has identified all his special features and has finally placed him in the context of global postcolonial literature. Das carries his scholarship lightly and the book, though concerned with difficult theoretical issues, is lucid and eminently readable. More so, because of copious quotations from Kumar's poetry given in support of his critical utterances. The book is a valuable contribution to postcolonial Indian English criticism in general and Kumar scholarship in particular. I am sure both the scholars and the general lovers of Indian English poetry will find this book useful and interesting.

Burdwan University **MOHIT K. RAY**

Louis Menezes and Ignatius Menezes, ed. *The Cradle of My Dreams*: *Selected Writings of Armando Menezes (1902-1983).* Chennai. 278 pp.

The Cradle of My Dreams is much awaited commemoration volume offering glimpses of the varied aspects of an Indian English romantic poet, delightful prose writer, able translator, popular teacher, educationist, a great patriot, a pious Christian and a pilgrim. The cover design displays a portable Remington typewriter, the only material possession that happened to be a means of articulation of Armando Menezes' vision of life.

Armando Menezes was a romantic poet and a contemporary of Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Sarojini Naidu and Harindranath Chattopadhyaya. Sri Aurobindo described him as "one of the few Indians who really can write English poetry: poetry that will appeal even to the English, who have so far looked askance at the efforts of most Indian poets" (blurb). The first and substantial section of the present volume contains a selection of his poems written from 1933 to 1971, their themes ranging from the beauty of human life to that of Nation, Nature and God. Though inspired and influenced by the British romantic poetry, Armando Menezes has retained his distinctive individual stamp in his poetry. The rhyme, rhythm, the flight of imagination, the tenderness of his feelings and the musicality of his language are amply evident in his poems. Like a mystic, Armando Menezes wants to be part of the divine design by converting his pain and agony into delight and ecstasy:

Crush me in your ruthless wheels
    Infinite Pain!
Let me feel, Love, how it feels
    To be your cane.

Cut me till the hardened rind
    Is peeled from me;
Press me till my fibrous mind
    Knows ecstasy. . . .

Ready to be sweet and white
    Pure and free—
Turning to the world's delight
    My agony.

In addition to being a poet, Armando Menezes was an able translator. His Christian piety and mastery of the Biblical language enabled him to complete the monumental task of translating the Virasaiva scripture, *Sunya Sampadane* in five volumes in collaboration with S.C. Nandimath, R.C. Hiremath, S.S. Bhusnurmath, M.S. Sunkapur and the *vacanas* of Siddharama, Basavanna and Akkamahadevi in collaboration with S.M. Angadi. The four poems included in the section "From the Mystics" show

Armando Menezes' interest in translation and cross-cultural response to mystic experience. It is rather unfortunate that the poetry (as also the prose works) of Armando Menezes was neglected by Indian English critics partly because of lack of proper distribution of his works by small and private publishers and partly because of the parochialism and groupism of critics.

The second and equally substantial section of the volume contains selected pieces of Armando Menezes' prose. Through these essays Armando Menezes emerges as a great lover of Nature in general, Goa in particular which is the cradle of his dreams and of Konkani language. His identification with Goa enables him to define a Goan's dream. "For the cradle of a Goan's dream is not in Goa only, in the Goa he knows or thinks he knows. That is why the Goan may be alien in his own homeland; and also why the Goan exile is at home everywhere." The essays included in "The Motherland" section show his views on the humanism of Mahatma Gandhi, national integration and democracy. The section, "The Story of My Education" contains essays dealing with his teaching career at Rajaram college of Kolhapur and Karnatak college of Dharwar and his educational engagement with the establishment of the prestigious Karnatak University at Dharwar. The essays in "Some Eminent Goans" offer brief but delightful biographical sketches of Goans like Francisco Luis Gomes, Tristao de Braganca Cunha, Leopoldo Gama etc. and throw light on the history and mystery of Goa, a land affected by Portuguese and Indian cultures.

The articles in the section, "Tributes down the Years," contain the views and opinions by the members of his family as well as by his friends, admirers and students about his multilingual scholarship, sense of humour, rare humanism, artistic sensibility, and Spartan simplicity. "Milestones" records the important events of Armando Menezes' life. The bibliography of all his works including the miscellaneous poems, speeches, radio talks and critical articles is of great help to the diligent researcher. It is high time for Indian English critics to take a serious note of this significant writer who has been unduly neglected by them.

Karnatak University, Dharwad BASAVARAJ NAIKAR

Chhote Lal Khatri, *Kargil: An Anthology of Poems.* Patna: Cyber, 42 pp. 2000. Rs. 50.

Hegel said that war would awaken the patriotic feeling among the people of any country and unite them by enabling them to forget their minor difference among themselves. Quite in tune with Hegelian opinion, the Kargil war between India and Pakistan has awakened the patriotism and unity of Indians in spite of their conflicting interest. It is a matter of pleasure to note that the young poets of India like Chhote Lal Khatri have responded to the disturbing event at Kargil and articulated their deep-seated patriotism. Khatri has rightly dedicated the slim anthology to the Veer Jawans of Kargil. In one of the poems, the poet offers his salutations to the heroic soldiers of India:

> Veer Jawans of Kargil salute to you
> Who have reduced enemy's pride to nill
> Before whom the enemy says new mew
> While crawling in the caves, fleeing from the hill.

In another poem, Khatri deplores the proxy war and hypocrisy of the Pakistanis. Although Kargil war is to be the immediate point of reference, the poet extends the meaning of the situation from the political to the universal, ethical and every day experiences of life. Apart from the Kargil war, the themes of the poems in the anthology range from the cosmic and mythological to the contemporary and the style ranges from the ironical to the spiritual, from the affirmative to the interrogative. In "The Poet's Commitment" the poet affirms that

> Swear, I won't keep mum
> Mortgage my tongue
> Or wag my tail.

Khatri's poems in this slim anthology hold a mirror to his fine sensibility and contemporary consciousness. With a rigorous discipline, he is sure to emerge as a significant poet in future. My best wishes go with him.

Karnatak University, Dharwad **BASAVARAJ NAIKAR**

Amar Nath Prasad, ed., *Indian Writing in English: Critical Explorations*. Sarup, Delhi. 288 pp. Rs 600

The present book contains 24 illuminating essays by eminent teachers and scholars including O.P. Bhatnagar, R.S. Pathak, Basavaraj Naikar, Jaydeep Sarangi, Dushyant B. Nimavat, G.S. Jha, Indrani Acharya, to name just a few. O.P. Bhatnagar's essay "East-West Encounter in Indian Poetry in English" studies the encounter as a happy cross-fertilization. He says: "Indian poetry in English is a poetry of encounter. The encounter is not merely with language but with all the content of religion, culture, values, thoughts and attitudes which it unfolds as challenge to our sensibilities." He pleads for the regional writing and its incorporation into the national stream. He considers it a step towards national integration.

The article by the editor Amar Nath Prasad is on ironic reversals in *The Guide* by R.K. Narayan. He has rightly observed: "Right from the beginning up to the end, the novel rings the note of contrast and affinity, romance and realism. And irony heightens the effect of these confrontations going on in the characters and situations and sometimes in the core of the heart of the protagonist." R.S. Pathak beautifully analyses feminine sensibility in Anita Desai's novels. Anita Desai has rightly been called the Virginia Woolf of Indian English fiction. He says: "Desai's novels give an expression to the long-smothered wail of a lacerated psyche. They tell the harrowing tale of blunted human relationship."

The third section deals with drama. Basavaraj Naikar presents a through analysis of Mohan Rakesh's famous play *Halfway House*. He has rightly observed: "*Halfway House* may be described as an existential play in the Indian context." He also says: "But there is a difference between the European existentialism and the so-called Indian existentialism. The European existentialist predicament was the result of a metaphysical angst caused by the loss of faith in God. The existential dilemmas of the Indians are mostly social, economic and moral rather than metaphysical."

The book throws light on some new areas of fictional technique. S.P. Swain has traced the use of stream of consciousness technique in some of Indian English novels. He finds its use in *The Untouchable.* He quotes passages from it. Then he discusses its use in R.K. Narayan's *The Dark Room.* It is Anita Desai who has used this technique extensively and elegantly. Then he finds its partial use in Shashi Deshpande.

The foreword, written by O.P. Bhatnagar, contains some valuable suggestions for the promotion of Indian English writing. "The slavery associated with English can be overcome by making it serve as a tool of our needs and practice." He says: "Basically I am of the opinion that the whole English literature syllabus should be restructured by prescribing more of Indian literary masterpieces in English with selective British masterpieces to contest the British hegemony of literary tastes and judgement. Fifty years of independence should be enough for the Indian academic to free itself from the belief that there is no match to British literature in the world." In fine, the book by Amar Nath Prasad makes a valuable contribution to the world of Indian English writing.

J.P. University, Chapra **U.S. RUKHAIYAR**

Book Shelf

A Glimpse into Some New Publications

Mithilesh Kumar Pandey (Hindu P.G. College, Ghazipur), *Studies in Contemporary Literature* (Anmol Publication, New Delhi, 2002).
A collection of nineteen scholarly essays on contemporary poetry, fiction and drama. Divided into two sections, the volume deals with the commonwealth writers like Nissim Ezekiel, A.K. Ramanujan, Jayant Mahapatra, Kamala Das, Bharati Mukherjee, Margaret Atwood and Arundhati Roy, and British and American contemporary authors like Donald Davie, R.W. Emerson, T. Williams and Arthur Miller from different angles. The volume opens up fresh vistas of critical inquiry and interpretation in respect of contemporary literature in English.

Aroonima Sinha (C.M. College, Darbhanga), *The Chaos of Experience and Kingsley Amis* (Janaki Prakashan, Patna, 2002).
Kingsley Amis is one of the most significant novelists. He was awarded the prestigious Booker Prize for his novel *The Old Devils* in 1985. The study argues that Amis's novels present a panoramic view of the society he lived in. He exposes the hollowness, the pretensions, the foibles, and absurdities of life and conveys the view that wisdom lies in accepting comically the world of incongruous and disparate experiences.

Rosy Misra (Jabalpur) *The Fiction of Nathaniel Hawthorne: A Study in the Theme of Morality* (Prestige, forthcoming).
The book breaks new grounds in the corpus of American fiction. Going through Hawthorne's fiction, one notices that his treatment of morality is comparable to that of John Milton. Since all human beings are free to act according to their own conscience the virtuous must be rewarded and the evil punished. The author takes up the traditional charge against Hawthorne that he is pessimistic and argues that he is not pessimist as far as the realm of his writing is concerned.

Suman Bala (S.B.S. College, University of Delhi), *V.S. Naipaul: A Literary Tribute to the Nobel Laureate* (Khosla Publishing House, New Delhi, 2003). Rs. 500.
V.S. Naipaul is one of the best-known English novelists of the modern times; his popularity reached its zenith when he received the Nobel Prize for literature last year. Naipaul has been appreciated immensely both by critics and readers. He has been hailed as one of the greatest living writers in the English language, one who is an adept craftsman and master storyteller. The volume, a collection of recent essays on his writing, aims at paying the fittest literary tribute to the Nobel Laureate.

Creative Writing

AN INVITATION
With apologies to Mr. Prufrock

Oh come my love then let us go
And have a coffee cup or two.
The lecture's dull, and I am bored,
A steaming sip, I'd be restored.
Besides, 'twere sin to waste away
So fresh, so bright, so crisp a day.
And when we are passing through the garden,
I'll pluck a rose—I know the warden—
And plant it in your raven hair.
How you will blush and smile, I swear!
Why must you falter? Be more steady.
How oft I've told you this already.
What, if the boys are rowdy there?
What if they gossip, wink and leer?
We surely do not live to please them?
If I were you, I'd rather tease them.
For well I know when they see a belle
With another lad, they roast in hell.
Then good, my girl, do not refuse
But let's be off to the coffeehouse.

VINOD SENA
University of Delhi

WON AND LOST

"Does the imagination dwell the most
Upon a woman won or woman lost?"
But here's a different case, so sad, so shocking,
In the twentieth circle of Christian hell.

What of the woman won and lost?
You saw all the signs of good rain
Her cloud was heavy with thirst
And positive power to receive
The passion's primal burst.

Her hiding was the most revealing
The averted face's crafty smile,
The heady perspiration held in check,
And desire swirling like a whirling pool,

Then you fail to meet your death,
To rise to the occasion, to, to . . .
To let the waters race and plunge
Turn, return, and foam and fuse.

O tragedy of the over-subtle thought
That nipped the nature in the bud
Broke the wires of life in shreds
And gave the wound will not go.

R.S. SHARMA
B.H.U., Varanasi

IO UNO SOLO

You leave me in the lurch
You are a lurcher
You entice me, you lurk behind
I am not a fish that shall be baited
And die for want of water
Save yourself the trouble
I have learnt to live in the mother earth
Need no love, no gas, no water
I shall writhe in pain and die
I shan't beg for water, that would be stooping
Said Browning, and I choose never to stoop.

VINOD BALA SHARMA
University of Delhi

TIME—AN INSIGHT

No more can I endure
The agony of semi-sanity. . . .
I am scared of everything, every thought, sacred.
But I preserve it with love and care
I popped it today in the dust-bin
The same that I had put on my table
As decoration last evening .
And I cannot describe to myself
The agony of semi-sanity.

Blossoming flowers look withered
Visible are the wrinkles in the infant faces
Time is being transparent. . . .
Such insight did I gain
All visions appear blurred,
The veil between evil and divine,
Love and hate, mirror and image
Has vanished.
Thought like a lotus-root,
is uprooted with blade,
And what I view is a mix
of slush and saffron, light and darkness,
Pathos and satire. . . .
What times are we living in,
What moment is this,
No More can I endure,
The agony of Insanity.

V.T. GIRDHARI
People's College, Nanded

DIVINE BLAZE

Standing confused and bemused
Knowing not what to do
Everything seems stale and stolid
Inner turmoil ruins me all
Leading me in a great fall
Before me lay a weary path

Troubles and ailments stall my every walk

I raise my hands
To Him for help
Lurching forward with staggering steps
Leaving aside all the fake cures
Deftly slid in Thy hands
Gazing like a child with slight hope

Suddenly I feel
A divine light
Flashing before my inner eye
Some force pulling me out
How blessed I am to see
His holy image
Showering an enchanting smile
Soothing my wounded soul
Oh Great God!
Thy bestows sanity and wisdom needed
Guiding me through the blind alley
Fondling me with hopeful valley

PUSHP LATA
I.I.T., Pilani

MEMORIES

The end of December
Showers of memories
Of lost companions
United with son, stars and the moon.
Part of light
Still reflecting on my life
Changing my days and nights
The everlasting presence
Still looks after
The essence
Left behind.

H.A. SINGH
University of Delhi

MINGLING

They walked hand in hand,
swinging in unison,
singing the same tune.
keeping the beat perfectly.

Then they stopped
looked around
at trees, grass, flowers, butterflies,
inhaling the horizon.
the two parts, each likeness of the other.

Softness to softness,
lusciousness to lusciousness,
mounds pressing mounds,
fragrances mingled,
arithmatic redefined,
one plus one,
is equal to one.

SUBHASH CHANDRA
University of Delhi

GOA

Golden Goa, Rome of India
Idyllic Queen of the East
On whose beaches white all creeds light
Lamps of love, dance and feast

Sanctuaries three with wild life free
Lure the trekkers, hikers;
Verdant, lushgreen Western Ghats screen
Secret spots for lovers

Fauna and flora beckon fora
In Goa next to meet;
Milk cascades, jungle escapades
Sea, hill resorts will greet.

During rains Golden Goa gains
Glory, glamour and glow
Dark clouds land on fields green, white sand
Blue sky rides the rainbow.

KEDAR NATH SHARMA
Samrik Institute, Gurgaon

WHAT INDIA MEANS TO ME

There is nowhere like India
And people like Indians

I am fascinated by the past
In all its forms
Every inch a sacred land
Here, the gods came down to earth
And Lord Krishna, the saviour
Delivered sermon to Arjuna, the warrior

There is nowhere like India
Tempting fortresses, mighty citadels
The Taj Mahal
The Forts of Rajasthan
The sacred temple Konark

The great heroes
Gautam Buddha
Mahatma Gandhi
Sunil Gavaskar
Lata Mangeshkar

The stable democracy
The middle-class society
Intimate relationships
Ethos and culture
Human bonds
The sacred rivers

Ganga
Jamuna

Is India today at crossroads?
Has it no future?
I value the heritage
I trust the values

The rampant corruption
The growing indiscipline
The vicious politics
The religious fanaticism

Are all a passing phase

R.K. DHAWAN
University of Delhi

THE SINKING BOAT

No one cares the loss of culture
No one dares to water and nurture.
Faith and belief are losing ground
Folklore, dance are seldom found.
Culture is now a withered flower
Urgently needs irrigation or shower.

A man of worth always yells
A notorious man never fails.
He is praised everywhere
He is leader and a mayor.
What he does is always good
Corruption is his favourite food.

Classical songs depleting fast
Seldom we value the things of past.
The boat of innocence sinking deep
The pilot drives a radarless ship.
Cold philosophy dominating all

Science is master, man is doll.

I want to save the sinking boat
Though I am now a tattered coat.
I want to dive the depth of time
The world is now a bundle of crime.
I want to breathe a life in art
This way I should play my part.

A.N. PRASAD
Jagdam College, Chapra

POETRY MAKES A LOT TO HAPPEN

We tend to forget much,
but suddenly sometimes
we recollect a fascinating face
or an innocent smile
or a sweet body-smell
or a few intimate words
whispered way back
into once very willing ears.

Then, in a flash,
we are transported into another world,
transformed into a different creature
than a nagging woman
or a short-tempered man;
every other thing recedes into oblivion,
even for a few moments
we listen to a different music
altogether.

And then if we have
a heart that lives a little,
poetry makes a lot to happen.

PASHUPATI JHA
I.I.T., Roorkee

A RAINY AFTERNOON

After the agonizing heat
the rain a fresh-faced bliss
walked with stretched arms
across the earth scrunched-up
deep-cut in those loose sections
slipping, diminishing down the hill.
You sop your face straightaway
nearly at eighty's end
ignoring the childhood's suffering
from a severe rain-bath with friends
who left you with cherubic smiles
in a country hospital
with cries hovering like flies.

Shreya's three-year old son
sifting at the broken door-step
throws chunks of tentative delight
at those brimming teenagers
with full-throttle action
pushing one another
into those pools of assorted water
driving full-mouthed poverty away
to arm's length.

A soft slow pang hangs
between those cumulous clouds
taking shapes like water-hyacinths
behind the frayed temple wall
when the sole cry of the woodpecker
from the trendy suburb
presses down the spine
rises like a vision or plea.

KRISHNA BOSE
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