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for the opportunity to consider unsolicited
research papers. ■

Editor Speaks.....

Genesis, growth, saturation, decay and
death are steps of the law of nature. New seedlings
and saplings are sprouting to life with the advent
of monsoon and Mother Earth is filled with all
cheers, dreaming of the new lives on her lap. New
rays of hopes flicker every now and then and
farmers as obedient and deferential caretakers
have all praises for the Mother Nature. Advent of
monsoon clarions for advent of new life.

So is the atmospheres in the academe
and the academics are all thrilled to get new
seedlings and saplings for nurturing and shaping
their future, and that of the nation and the Mother
Earth at large. Over the years innumerable
changes have occurred in the life of the earth
and each change is a step towards a new
development. History has witnessed innumerable
inventions over the years. But so far, human
being has not been able to create even a particle
of his own. What is invention is but modification
of the natural resources. And hence change is
the development. It is the growth of civilization.
And in this way academe and academics have
played vital role in the development. So selection
of saplings and seedlings is vital in the season
of admission.

Literature as reflection of all
developments on the earth has codified each pace
and has remained as witness to the development.
Nature for man has changed over the years.
While, to some, she is the deity supplying all
needs to the living beings, or some others, she
bears all those features that a hungry creative
genius craves. She has the key to all problems
and those keys are the steps of development.
Whatever new or novel has taken place is only
creativity, theories, concepts, philosophy and
notions. And they all are parts of literature. Many
-isms have popped up in the process of reflecting
the society in literature. It would be a wrong
conception to think that coinage of -isms was
prior to their use. Theories are used much earlier
than they are named so.

Rock Pebbles family expresses
gratefulness to all the venerable creative geniuses
and researchers for their roles for the
advancement of literature by adding new feathers
in the form of creative and critical writings.

-Editor

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Submissive and Dissenting Dalit Voices in Two Plays: *Munivahana* and *Daham (Thirst)*

D. Murali Manohar

The plays Kolakaluri Enoch's *Munivahana* and M. Vinodini's *Daham (Thirst)* deal with the concept of caste discrimination based on the theory of purity and pollution. On the one hand, we have religious discrimination-Dalits considered polluting people based on *Manusmriti*-and social discrimination-one that has become very 'popular' during pandemic period- 'social distancing'- on the other.

Keywords: untouchability, Dalit, caste system, hegemony, purity, pollution, human dignity

Background to the paper

The paper is an outcome of teaching an optional course on "Telugu Dalit Literature in Translation" to the fourth semester M.A. English students. Having taught these two texts in detail the researcher has written this paper. The researcher has shared the project that was done during the sabbatical leave in the university. Having written the book on the Dalit¹ and Non-Dalit writers with a superficial level of understanding on the comparisons of submissive and dissenting voices of the characters in the plays, this is a specific paper on Drama. Unlike the project, this paper deals with the two Dalit playwrights being male and female in order to maintain gender sensitivity.

Introduction

The Indian caste system has been practiced and is being practiced for centuries based on *Manusmriti*. It gives a clear license to practice untouchability on the lower castes such as scheduled castes. According to *Manusmriti* there are four Varnas which is also called Chaturvarnya such as the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas and the Sudras; and Athi Sudras who are called Harijans, panchamas, untouchables, Dalits in the broad sense; parayas in Karnataka and Kerala; pallars in Tamilnadu; Mahars in Maharashtra; Malas and Madigas and other sub-castes in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, and others in the regional context.

On the contrary *Bhagavadgita*, which is also a sacred text according to Hindu

religion, does not talk about Athi Sudras but it only talks about the above mentioned four castes. This is one of the contradictions of Hindu religion. Are Dalits part of Sudras or not? There is no clarity according to *Bhagavadgita*.

Who are Dalits?

In my theory, Dalits are Scheduled Castes of this country. Dalit Panther Movement has been oldest organization among Dalit groups. They had also given a political colour to it and tried to get benefit from all. The Dalit Panther Movement called Dalits as all those people who are destitute farmers, neo Buddhists, women, tribal and others who have been socially, politically, economically and religiously oppressed, suppressed, discriminated against humanity. Kancha Ilaiah calls them 'Dalit Bahujans' (See Kancha Ilaiah's *Why I am not a Hindu*) which also consists of backward castes and scheduled castes together form 'Dalit Bahujan'. I would consider it as a political motif rather than religious idea. Across the country, there have been groups consisting of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribe/ Other Backward Classes and Minorities (Christians, Muslims, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists and Parsees) All these groups are fighting for political power, both at the state and central level, of democracy.

Role of Theatre in highlighting Dalit problems

So far, one has seen different genres being used to highlight Dalit problems such as poetry, autobiography, memoir, fiction, short story and recently there have been a few short plays that have projected Dalit problems. I have chosen two plays that have been written by Dalit writers. They are Kolakaluri Enoch and M. Vinodini. Both of them deal with theory of purity and pollution in their respective plays. Whether it is religious or social, both of them attract the concept of caste discrimination based on the sanction of *Manusmriti*.

Enoch confines to the sanction of *Manusmriti* whereas Vinodini questions the hegemony and makes the non-Dalits depend on the Dalit woman for the breastfeed of infant. One is conventional, the other is radical in portrayal of Dalit problems.

Submissive Voice of Tiruppan and Dissenting Voices of Dasu, Souramma and Others

The Dalit is prevented from entering the temple for darshan, despite the lord's order on the chief priest of the temple in Kolakaluri Enoch's *Munivahana* (2002). The priest believes that he is more important than the lord and the casteism is practiced, discrimination showed, hegemony displayed. How did the playwright use this situation in the play? The conversation between Sri Ranganatha, the Lord and Loka Saranga Muni, the priest of the temple of Sri Ranganatha Swami in Sri Rangam, Trichi district in Tamilnadu located and enabled the characters in highlighting the discrimination. The Lord Sri Ranganatha says that the devotee Tiruppan Alwar is an untouchable, yet he should be provided darshan, whereas the priest refuses to allow the untouchable to have darshan because he is an outsider of the caste system. To go deeper into this is that, one of the reasons why Dalits move out of religion is this kind of religious discrimination. The mindset

of upper castes, especially the Brahmins, is unchangeable even if god were to intervene on behalf of the Dalit. God is not fighting on behalf of all Dalits but only one such Dalit who is an ardent devotee of Sri Ranganatha. Has god appealed to provide darshan in general? No. It is a specific case for which the god himself appears. The playwright has effectively used his literary talent and genre for showcasing the attitude of the upper castes towards Dalits. Historically the priest is so happy to provide the darshan of Lord Ranganatha due to ardent devotion of Tiruppan, for whose sake the Lord himself appears and appeals to the chief priest to provide darshan. On the command of the Lord, the priest goes in search of the untouchable. When the priest runs after Tiruppan, he runs away from him to escape beatings from him. In fact, the priest is running after him to persuade and take him inside the temple to provide darshan. The Brahmin has been given this gift of seeing and blessings of the lord Ranganatha owing to Tiruppan's devotion. After he catches Tiruppan, he explains to him that he has been assigned to personally carry Tiruppan on his shoulders and provide darshan. Tiruppan is so blessed to know that Lord Ranganatha would like to provide darshan to him through the priest.

However, there is a twist here. Even in the real story which goes back to 8th century AD, the story is that, when Tiruppan steps are touched on the floor, it may be polluted. Thus, Tiruppan is carried on the shoulders of the priest so that his feet do not touch the premises of the temple. Thus, the practice of untouchability and purity of the temple are intact. In real story, there is no debate between the priest and the Lord. It is created by the playwright. It is created in such a way that in spite of Lord's request the priest adamantly argues that the lord is only a statue which has no power whereas the priest who has the ultimate power of who is to be allowed and who is not to be allowed. The religion has sanctioned such power. That has been carried out by the priests since time immemorial.

Tiruppan is a Dalit, who has not used his brain at any point of time. When he is stoned by the priest for being obstacle on the way to Kaveri River, he does not question the priest. He, moreover, apologizes to the priest and leaves with submissiveness and humbleness. In a way he accepts discrimination and oppression meted out to him. The societal conditions were such that he had no courage to question. Nor does he have any intention of questioning.

The play has the same characters as they have been the realistic people. In addition to these real people, the playwright has added two imaginary characters such as Devadatta and Vedavedya. It will be an interesting play if it is enacted.

On the other hand we have another play entitled *Daham (Thirst)* (2012) -originally written in Telugu language*, one of the South Indian languages, by the Dalit woman playwright M. Vinodini who is also an Ambedkarite, translated into English by K. Suneetha Rani, in which one finds totally contrasting characters Dasu, his uncle and other young boys who question the system, society, individuals along with submissive older generation Dalits such as Tata and Pedda Mala. Most importantly, Souramma, the wife of Narsaiah, is

the protagonist of the play who rebels against the upper caste women in defying the dictum of waiting, pleading, requesting, appealing for getting a pot of water. Above all, she also puts the rope on the well to draw water, which is not allowed, is also equivalent to committing a crime. The plot of the play revolves around this incident. The action which is motioned in the opening of the play continues till the end of the play. This incident also becomes the very base and victory for entire Dalits in the village.

The upper castes, mainly Reddys in this play, are one of the peasant communities called Reddys of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. In both the states, Reddys are dominant castes from village level to city level. The reason being financially they are sound and caste wise, they fall under Sudra community according to the *Manusmriti* and the *Bhagavadgita*. The characters are namely Pedda Reddy, Chinna Reddy, unnamed sister-in-law. They also practice untouchability on the Dalits which has been sanctioned though caste system based on *Manusmriti* which is the reason why they consider themselves as upper castes and they look down upon the untouchables. Two generations of Dalits have different perspective on the lifestyle. The older generation representing Tata, Pedda Mala, Narsaiah fall under submissive nature like Tiruppan Alwar who do not question conventions and accept the fate of their lives. On the other hand, we have younger generation such as Dasu, Chandraiah, Raju, Dibbadu, Ganga, Chinnenkati etc. question and raise their dissenting voices against the hegemony of upper castes such as Reddys in this play.

The playwright has effectively used the device of creating a situation of Reddys depending on the Dalit woman. The situation is that Chinna Reddy has a son from his wife who has been unnamed and called daughter-in-law who has no breast-milk to feed the infant. Dasu's wife goes to Reddys family to breast-feed the infant out of humanity. The younger generation of Dalit, Dasu takes this situation as an advantage and tries to resolve the water problems for the community. Given the situation Dalits try to collectively fight on behalf of Dalitwada. Dasu and his wife refuse to breast-feed the infant and will do so only on certain conditions. The conditions are (a) until and unless the fifth pulley has been allowed for Dalitwada to draw water from the village well, (b) apologize to Souramma for abusing, shouting and beating her up, (c) Ganga will not breast-feed the infant. The situation is such that the Reddys have almost begged the Dalits for saving the life of the infant.

In the beginning it was said that the whole play revolves around the village water well and the pulley with which the villagers draw water where Souramma breaks the dictum and draws water on her own for which there was an objection and fight among them. The upper castes had also ordered Souramma to pay ten thousand rupees as fine by next two days. If the family fails to pay, Souramma would be paraded naked in the entire village for abusing, beating and shouting at the upper caste women. In fact this condition infuriated entire Dalit community and the younger generation revolted and dissented and raised their voices. In a way it is the beginning, the middle we have seen the younger Dalits forming unity to fight against the Reddys and the end which resolves the water problem for the Dalits which is also like fulfilling the poetics of Aristotle. Aristotle theorizes the play

should have the beginning, the middle and an end. The solution is that the Dalits can put the fifth pulley on the well and draw water for drinking purpose. In fact Subba Reddy the father of Pedda Reddy proposed that the well needed to be dug by all the villagers irrespective of castes. In practice it was the Dalits who dug the well and politics played by the upper castes in the name of superstitious and ill omen; the Dalits were deprived drawing water from the well.

Conclusion

The two plays that I have sampled are to show how the upper castes such as the Brahmin priest Loka Sarangamuni and the Reddys namely Pedda Reddy and Chinna Reddy and their women show untouchability on the Dalits. In the first play one can see Tiruppan accepting the rule of law of his time and be a submissive model. On the other hand we have the dissenting voices such as Souramma, Dasu, Ganga and others encash the opportunity of getting approval for the fifth pulley on the village well so that they can draw water without any waiting. Thus their thirst is released. ■

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Ilaiah, Kancha. *Why I am not a Hindu*. Samya, 1987.

Notes:

*The misrepresentation of the playwright's language and the play is to be corrected in the article entitled "Observe, Revolt, Win – The fight against Untouchability in Vinodini's "Thirst" by Dhaval Kataria published in *IOSR Journal Of Humanities and Social Science* (IOSR-JHSS) Volume 22, Issue 10, Ver. III (October. 2017) PP 28-32. The playwright has been written in Telugu language and has been translated from Telugu to English not in Kannada.

(Footnotes)

¹ Dalit is the caste that is associated with the Scheduled Castes in India in general and there are 56 sub-castes among Scheduled castes of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana states in particular. The major sub-castes of Dalits are Mala and Madiga.

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Sustainability and Human Welfare

Kavita Arya

Prabhakar Palaka

Agriculture is the mother of all cultures and the marker of the overall development as it has the responsibility to provide food to the increasing population, fodder to the livestock and raw materials to industries. India is one of the leading countries in South East Asia and the world's fastest-growing economy. Agriculture is the backbone of the Indian economy because it provides employment opportunities, directly or indirectly, to approximately 70% of the workforce and contributes 17% of the national GDP. But Indian agriculture's dependence on unpredictable Monsoons and its shrinking farmland, depleting water resources, climate variations and uncertain weather conditions pose a serious challenge to its sustainability. The Green Revolution increased food production but brought in problems in the way of sustainable agriculture. India needs sustainable agricultural development for food security and human welfare. Only sustainable agricultural development could ensure food security for its ever-rising population and empower the rural population, particularly women who are closely associated with farming. India has taken sustainable development initiatives in agriculture taking into account its rich agricultural traditions, geographical and climatic conditions, and national needs and aspirations. The initiatives aim at optimum utilization of land available for cultivation, selective cropping patterns, integrated water management, use of advanced biotechnological techniques, etc. but, at the same time, proper steps are being taken to synergize modern agricultural activities with the indigenous wisdom by seeking the cooperation of all potential stakeholders like agricultural scientists, farming communities, dairy farmers, and others to make agriculture sustainable and resilience to climate change. Planning and implementation for sustainable agricultural development apply to all of India including its Eastern and North-Eastern parts which have lower economic growth than Northern, Western and Southern parts of India.

Keywords: Agriculture, Livestock, Resources, Development, Sustainable, Initiatives, Management, Welfare.

INTRODUCTION

The need of sustainable agriculture has a historical background. Man is regarded as the deadliest species in the annals of history and biology as he holds the record among all organisms for driving the most plants and animal species to their extinction creating ecological imbalance ever since our ancestors domesticated between 9500-3500 BC, most

of plants and animals bringing in the agriculture revolution. In India, agriculture is the main occupation and it needs to be sustainable. Sustainability means the proper use and successful management of resources /inputs to meet the requirements without adverse effects on the environment and resources so that these are not exhausted but are left for use by the generations to come. Therefore, sustainable development besides conserving natural resources should be technically sound, environmentally non-degradable, economically viable and socially acceptable. Sustainability has a wide scope as agriculture in India holds a peculiar position. India is a rural, developing democratic country with a huge population, diverse geographical features and climatic conditions and a rich heritage of the traditional system of farming. Agriculture in India is centred in the rural areas where resides its 75% population whose lives depend on farming. Moreover, in India, there is mixed farming system- crop cultivation and livestock farming and their interdependence.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The paper is not based on self-conducted experiments in laboratories or agricultural farms or empirical studies conducted in any purposively selected area. It is entirely based on the researchers' study of the latest books and research publications pertaining to the subject with a layman's approach and humanistic concerns within the social and scientific arena. Obviously, the materials prepared for and used in this paper are explored in and derived from the experiments and findings of the agricultural scientists which are duly acknowledged, but these are properly selected, classified, analyzed and inferences are drawn to develop sound insights, provide quality information, enhance knowledge and create a fresh perspective.

Some illustrative case studies, well documented in research works, have been used as important tools to generate an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of a complex issue like sustainable agriculture in its real-life-context and gain some insights about the recent trends emerging in sustainable agricultural activities and farm practices. The cases reported in the paper examine the real-world unique phenomena within the set context of agriculture farms and help in the identification of the focal problem being faced in implementing sustainable agricultural development initiatives in India.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is found in the map of the world that South East Asia is a sub-region of South Asia, which includes the countries of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India (especially East India and North East India) and Nepal. Geographically, it lies between the Eastern Himalayas and the Bay of Bengal. Two of the world's largest rivers-Ganges and Brahmaputra-flow into the sea through Eastern South Asia. This region includes the world's highest mountain terrain and the world's largest delta. It is the home to 6% of the world's population and 25% of South Asia's population. Though the East India Region (West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha) and the North East Region (Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura) of India form the part of South East Asia, and

these regions have lower economic growth despite India being one of the fastest growing economies in the world, initiatives for sustainable agriculture in India are national level programs and apply to all India including its Eastern and North-Eastern parts.

Agriculture had been almost sustainable till the Industrial Revolution. But, as the Industrial Revolution picked up and awareness of ecology and the environment increased, the word 'sustainable' came into vogue. According to the American Society of Agronomy (1989), "Sustainable agriculture means an integrated system of plant and animal production practices having a site-specific application that over the long term will satisfy human food and fibre needs, enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base upon which the agricultural economy depends, enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole, make the most efficient use of

non-renewable resources and non-farm resources and integrate, where appropriate, natural biological cycles and controls, and sustain the economic viability of farm operations". Sustainable agriculture is one that produces abundant food without depleting the earth's resources or polluting the environment. It follows the natural system of raising crops and livestock that are, like nature, self-sustaining. Sustainable agriculture sustains social and human values. According to Powlson *et al*, "A system is regarded as sustainable if the biophysical and socio-economical objectives of the system are met. The sustainable mean to keep alive/effective and useful for future. Thus the system should survive to be sustainable"(1998: 17).

I

In India, agriculture production comprises two main sectors-crop sector and animal sector-and both are equally important sources of food to human population. Amit Tomar *et al* state, "In India, the mixed farming system (crop-livestock farming) is practised. Agriculture production depends on livestock. The livestock is an integral part of this system, as the crop cultivation and animal husbandry are dependent on each other (2015:38)". The crops provide feed and fodder to the animals and animals provide milk, meat and several useful things to human beings and manure to maintain soil fertility and food production. Integrated farming system of mixed crops and animal farming is quite useful, efficient and more sustainable in a synergetic manner.

The agriculture sector is the chief producer and the end user of most of the commodities. But agriculture is directly influenced by its physical environment (soil, rain, temperature, etc.), social-cultural milieu (land holding, technology, workforce, irrigation, marketing, food habit, cropping patterns, etc.). Obviously, an optimum use of agricultural resources is necessary to meet the growing need of a tremendously increasing population but, at the same time, judicious utilization of resources is equally necessary for the sustainability of soil health, ecosystem and environment to make agriculture a sustainable human activity and occupation. Without sustainable agriculture development, overall growth and development is not possible.

The following initiatives have been taken by the Government of India for sustainable agricultural development:

(1) **National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture:** This mission which is operational from 2014-2015 is a programmatic intervention to make agriculture more productive, sustainable and remunerative and climate resilient by promoting location specific integrated/composite farming systems, soil and moisture conservation measures, comprehensive soil health management, efficient water management practices and mainstream rain-fed technologies.

(2) **Soil Health Card Scheme:** The scheme, launched in 2015, issues soil cards to farmers and carries crop-wise recommendations of nutrients and fertilizers required for individual farms to help farmers improve productivity through judicious use of inputs based on the strength and weaknesses (micronutrient deficiency) of the soil.

(3) **Traditional Agricultural Development Planning:** It supports and promotes organic farming which also improves soil health. Farmers are encouraged to adopt eco-friendly, economical and socially acceptable use of natural resources in favour of organic farming via cluster approach and reduce their dependence on chemical fertilizers for good yield. The Union Budget 2015-2016 allocated 300 crores to implement cluster organic farming – one cluster having 50+ farmers and 50+ acres of land was to be given, Rs. 20,000 per acre in three years from seed to harvesting crops and to transport them to the market. The government planned to form 1,000 clusters in three years and cover an area of 5,00,000 hectares under organic farming.

(4) **Rashtriya Gokul Mission:** Cattle rearing is a traditional occupation for livelihood in rural parts of India and is closely linked to the agricultural economy. India has 199 million cattle i.e. 14.5% of the world cattle population and, 83% of cattle in India i.e. 166 million are indigenous. Though there is a craze for hybrid cattle because of high profitability, it is necessary to conserve the indigenous breed for sustenance. So, this mission was launched under National Programme for Bovine Breeding and Dairy Development, with an outlay of Rs. 500 crore for three years from 2014-2017 for the conservation and development of indigenous breeds in a focused and scientific manner. It envisaged the setting up of integrated cattle development centres called “Gokul Gram” with a capacity of 1,000 animals each to develop indigenous breeds and maintain milch and unproductive animals in the ratio of 60:40.

(5) **Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture:** Horticulture is a sub-division of agriculture dealing with the cultivation/gardening of plants like fruits, vegetables and ornamental plants and flowers. India has a wide and varied horticulture base that includes, besides fruits, vegetables and flowers, tuber crops, mushrooms, spices and aromatic plants, flowers and foliage and plantation crops like coconut, areca-nut, cashew nut, cocoa, bamboo, tea, medicinal plants, etc. Obviously, horticulture is an engine of growth for the rural economy. This mission lays emphasis on the production of quality seeds and planting

materials, production, enhancement, reduction in post-harvest losses, and better marketing of products with the active participation of all stakeholders, particularly farmers' groups and farm producer organizations. It also takes initiatives in promoting and sponsoring cultivation of certain items like coconut, bamboo, etc. in certain specific regions like hilly or Himalayan regions.

(6) **National Water Mission:** It is one of the eight national missions under the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC). Its main objective is conservation of water, minimizing wastage of water, and ensuring equitable distribution of water through integrated water resources development and management. Al Gram Yojana (Village Water Planning) implemented at the grass-root level, is an integrated water security plan, water conservation, water management and allied activities being planned for villages by the Panchayat Level Committee to ensure optimum and sustainable utilization of water. A card known as the 'Sujalam Card' is being prepared for every jalgram which would provide the yearly status/information on the availability of water for the village from all sources. Indian agriculture is rain-dependent and drought-prone and, in case of rain shortage or drought-like situation because of Monsoon Deficit, if sufficient is not available for farming, the situation transforms from bad to worse. The plan includes repair, renovation and restoration of existing and abandoned water bodies, along with its distribution system, rainwater harvesting and artificial recharge of groundwater, recycling of wastewater and mass awareness for judicious use of water and minimizing wastage. As agriculture consumes most of the available water, there is need to (1) reduce crop-cycle to only one in a year, not two, because of the water level going down (2) avoid water-intensive crops like rice which consumes approximately 5000-litre water per kg. (3) favour short-duration crops, (4) promote organic farming, and (5) achieve zero levelling of land to improve water coverage and reduce weeds up to 40%.

(7) **National Agriculture Market:** It was launched in 2016 as a pan-India electronic trading portal for farm produce which creates a unified national market for agricultural commodities by integrating the existing Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC) markets. The portal provides a single window service for all APMC-related services and information, such as commodity arrival and prices, provision for responding to trade offers, buy and sell trade offers, etc. The government plans to introduce an electronic trading platform for farmers in its efforts to build a national market for the digital trading of farm produce by connecting markets from different states in India. It will enable farmers to showcase their farm produce through their nearby markets and facilitate traders from anywhere to quote prices. The national e-market platform will ensure transparent sale transactions. But some states like Kerala and Bihar, having no APMC, may hinder the implementation of the plan and cause delay. Besides, trading of non-standardized agricultural commodities will be difficult on it.

(8) **Krishi Amdani Bima Yojana:** This plan gives an impetus to the dying agricultural practices as the small and marginal farmers leave farming because of uncertainty over the produce and return. Under the scheme, such farmers do not bear any financial burden if their produce gets destroyed due to unexpected weather or any other reasons.

Though these initiatives are working well for sustainable agriculture development, it needs a socially, economically and environmentally viable collaborative effort in land and water management to make agriculture and natural environment systems mutually responsive. Rural and urban areas need to be supportive to each other. Rural farm supply grains and vegetables to cities; cities can give back to villages organic fertilizers made from solid waste and treated sewer water for farming. A few steps can give more pace to sustainable Agricultural Development:

- 1. Multi-prong Approach:** The agro-ecosystem is made up of many interacting components with multiple goals- soil, water, climate, weather condition, etc. Conservation of soil, water and energy, management of cropping patterns, pests and weeds and organic wastes, judicious use of fertilizers and machines, careful selection of crops, maintaining the biodiversity of crops, animals, native plants and aquatic life and profitable occupations like silk-production, honey-production, fish-farming, chicken farming, goat farming and pig farming are essential steps to get to the goal of sustainable agricultural development.
- 2. Training:** Training of farmers in sustainable practices of agriculture like pre-cultivation, cultivation, harvesting, storage, marketing and management of farm loans, subsidies and supports, is essential for sustainable agriculture.
- 3. Use of Biotechnology:** Biotechnology uses biological systems, living organisms or derivatives thereof to make or modify a product or process for specific use. It brings changes in crop and livestock production, processing and utilization. It can increase food production by manipulating biological systems for the benefit of mankind using gene-based techniques and environment-friendly methods.
- 4. Animal Husbandry Strategies:** There is a need to adopt sustainable animal breeding strategies for the genetic improvement of animals by identification and multiplication of superior germ-plasma/breeds by using Frozen Semen Technology (FST), Embryo Transfer Technology (ETT), In-Vitro Produced (IVP) embryos, Embryo Splitting, etc. and to keep the improved animals in the proper environment by arranging proper housing for protection from adverse climatic conditions, cleaning and sanitation of animal sheds, vaccination, feeding balanced diets, etc.

The need of the hour is to develop genetic engineering to convert C-3 crops (the crops which use C-3 pathway where the photosynthesis takes place only when the stomata are open e.g. cereals, rice, wheat, barley, cotton, tobacco, soybean, spinach, etc.) to more carbon responsive C-4 crops (the plants that use the C-4 pathway where photosynthesis takes place while stomata are closed e.g. maize, sugarcane, millets, etc). When stomata are open to let CO₂ in, they also let water vapour out, leaving C-3 plants at a disadvantage in drought and high-temperature environments. Converting C-3 crops to C-4 crops will increase their photosynthetic efficiency for obtaining increased productivity. Dilip Kumar stresses

the need for innovative technology in the following words: “Adoption of strategies for low input sustainable agriculture by producing crops with enhanced water and nitrogen use efficiency may also result in reduced emissions of greenhouse gases, and crops with greater tolerance to drought, high temperature, submergence and salinity stresses. Appropriate use of biotechnology, nanotechnology and microbiology can mitigate the adverse impact of climate change on agriculture sustainability and food security.”(2015:4)

II

Food Security which ensures all people, at all times, should get access to basic food for their active and healthy life, is a major concern in India. Food security is closely linked to economic stability and public health. As per 2020 ranking, India ranked 71st among 113 countries in the Global Food Security Index(GFSI). Food security implies availability, accessibility and affordability of food. India through its National Food Security Act, 2013 has given legal entitlement for existing food security programmes of the government and there are agencies like Food Corporation of India (FCI), Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and there have been schemes like Antyodaya Ann Yojana (AAY), Midday Meal Scheme (MMS), Priority Household (PHH) and PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKY), Annapurna Scheme, etc. But the availability of food is entirely dependent on agricultural production and the implementation of schemes could be possible only after availability. Over 60% of the Indian population depends on agriculture for their daily meal. Obviously, agriculture is central to achieving food security and only the promotion of sustainable agriculture development can ensure that the food supply remains sustainable.

III

Sustainability is closely associated with welfare as only sustainable human activities could ensure human welfare. So, sustainable agricultural practices need to be not only economically viable but also environmentally safe and socially acceptable. Chemical fertilizer intensive farming may be sustainable economically as the fertilizer cost can be easily born by higher production but the system is not sustainable environmentally or socially as there will be leakage of chemical fertilizer from the system to pollute ground water, drinking supplies and distant coastal fisheries, and the system does not cover the cost of environmental damage or social cost. The practice of stubble burning is another example. In India, sustainable agriculture is closely associated with human welfare because agriculture plays a vital role in women employment. Agriculture provides employment opportunities, directly or indirectly, to a large section of population. Though agriculture has been the main occupation here for long, it is not by choice but by compulsion. It is the general perception that there is hidden employment in agriculture. The farmers are ever looking forward to leave agriculture in favour of some jobs in towns and cities. A gradual shift from the farm to factory has been witnessed for long because the social value of agriculture is declining and a man dependent on agriculture is considered unemployed while one having even a temporary government or private job is considered to have a better prospect. So it

must be born in mind that sustainable agricultural development measures are socially acceptable without a feeling of social injustice to reduce alienation, exploitation, migration and poverty of the broad masses of people. It has been observed that, the Green Revolution in Punjab-Haryana marginalized the farmers with small holdings and low capital and forced them to sell their farm land and opt for other occupations. One of the fallouts of modern agriculture system is seen in the form of farmers' suicides which are blots on the basic concepts of economic parameters in developing democratic country like India and a matter of shame vis-à-vis achievements in the 21st century. Though some suicides are assigned to the concerned farmers' habits of alcoholism and gambling, etc., most of the suicides occur because of failure of crops, drought, inability to repay debts, and non-accessibility to protective covers and welfare and social security schemes due to wrong policies of the government. The number of farmers gradually decreasing is a matter of grave concern as it is widening the gap between India and Bharat.

CONCLLUSION:

As the earth's resources are finite, there is urgent need to tap into viable sustainable use of resources for development in any field, including agriculture. Sustainable agricultural development requires execution of various policies and programmes effectively through proper capable and efficient agencies, motivation of the stakeholders to create multipurpose farming systems integrating livestock and cultivation to ensure maximum sustainability. India is facing challenges due to decline in agriculture productivity *vis-à-vis* rapid population growth and globalization. The Planning Commission projected the demand of 247 million tones food in 2020. Over-exploitation of natural resources and indiscriminate and irrational use of synthetic inputs like chemical fertilizers and pesticides are putting the environment in jeopardy. By 2050, India's population could go up to 1.8 billion. The earth is likely to get three degree hotter by 2100. One degree rise in temperature may reduce 10% food supply. But scientific developments alone cannot ensure sustainability in any field including agriculture. Man's mindless exploitation of natural resources to make his own life rich and comfortable needs rethinking. Man needs to turn to Nature and learn the lessons of sustainability from Nature. The thinkers and philosophers say that doomsday is something that humanity will bring upon himself through its own selfishness and destructiveness. The man who treats equally the human world and the world of Nature-the world beyond the human world- can never be selfish and avaricious and can never exploit and hoard. Over 200 years ago, William Wordsworth (1770-1850), the greatest Romantic Poet in English Literature, found Man suffering from Nature Deficit Disorder (NDD) and invited him to come closer to Nature and learn from it:

“Come forth into the lights of things
Let Nature be your teacher...
Enough of Science and of Art;
Close up those barren leaves;

Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives. (“The Table Turned”, Lines 14-16 &29-32).

It is right time to accept the invitation whole heartedly and act upon his advice. Otherwise, Man will be face to face with the doomsday, contemplated in epics and religious scriptures, marking the annihilation of the age-long human civilization on the earth. ■

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Socio-Cultural Diagram of Contemporary Odisha in *Sarala Mahabharat*

Abhinna Chandra Dash

Sarala Mahabharata is a unique art gallery. Like historical, geographical and political pictures in Sarala Mahabharat, the social and cultural pictures have been portrayed in this epic. It has reflected the socio-cultural milieu of contemporary Odisha and Odia national life. Through the delineation of different characters, their dresses and ornaments, food and drink, games and entertainment, behavior and demeanor, education and religious belief in his epic, the poet was able to reflect the clear picture of social and cultural life of contemporary Odisha. Through different narrations in this epic, the poet has described marriage, festival, religious fast and vow, customs and traditions, hospitality, sacrificial and ceremonial rights, trade and commerce, agriculture and farmer, measurement of land and land revenue, food and cooking, war and peace, mystic charms and worship, fine art, artistic skill, goods, decoration, cremation, offering of oblation to deceased ancestors etc. Everywhere it reflected the multiple pictures of social and cultural life of Utkal.

Religion and faith:

From the point of religious faith and thought, poet Sarala Das was a great devotee of Goddess Sarala. Besides that, Siva, Ganesh, Kartika, Durga, Parvati, Ram, Balaram, Parsuram, Varaha, Vamana, Madhav, Laxmi and Saraswati. The poet has shown his great devotion Shaiva, Shakta and Vaishnav Gods and Goddesses. If we consider from this point of view in *Sarala Mahabharat*, we will find that, there is no narrowness reflected in the field of religion. Rather the poet has narrated the religious faith, customary tradition, institution and conduct of people towards the religious community in contemporary Odisha.

During the time of Sarala Das, Odisha was the centre of all sorts of religious beliefs. So, during that time, different religious faiths such as Shaiva, Shakta, Baishnav, Boudha, Jain, Natha, Soura and Ganapatya, had influenced the people of Odisha. The poet in his epic has tried to reflect these religious faiths and philosophical theories with the help of description of different characters, incidents and subject-matter as well as he has unified it with Jagannath philosophy and culture. Sarala Das concentrated on explaining the greatness

of Lord Jagannath and presented him as a great hero in his epic. In the words of the poet-

“Oh Lord Nilagiri! you are all green, beautiful and great
Shri Purusottam incarnation of Brahma Rudra.
Mahaprabhu resided here for extinction of Kali yug
Together with nine crore holy places,
Reside in the feet of Puskara.
You are the supreme spirit to give protection
I worship your lotus feet in every birth”.(‘Musali Parva’-119)

Faith of People and Social Life:

In all ages, people of Odisha have deep respect for their own traditions and values. From the respect towards their own tradition and value, social belief was created and it has been reflected through various social manners. In ancient Odia literature, *Sarala Mahabharata* is the only epic in which the then social life and faith of the people have got reflections. It is not the convention of the 15th century A.D., rather it was the reformation of social life of Odisha moved from time immemorial. This reform is visualized through the belief of people and social manner in the epic poem.

During the time of Sarala Das, it was considered as guilt if husband and wife were not having coition after marriage. Similarly, it was considered as sinful if they had coition without giving importance to the days of the week, time and lunar days etc. The poet Sarala Das, through the advice of Vishma, has instructed the married couple to follow this social manner and maintain a disciplined life. At the same time he also viewed that if an unmarried girl began her periods at father’s home, then the ancestors would fall into hell. The poet has described-

“If a daughter began her periods at father’s home
Forefathers will fall into hell.
x xx xxx xxx xxx.
Unmarried daughters if menstruated at father’s home,
Then up to twenty-one forefathers will not get salvation”.

(Adiparva-15-18)

At that time, it was considered as crime, if a girl was having premarital relation with any unknown person. Poet Sarala Das in his epic ascertained this subject matter by giving an example of coition between Parasara and Satyabati, Kunti and Lord Surya. That is why, child marriage was given importance at that time and the main purpose of this marriage was to have a male child. If a childless person was unable to get a male child from his married wife, in that situation in order to get away from death penalty, he had to take the help of sacrificial rites and religious practice to have a male child or otherwise it was not considered as crime to produce a child from other woman.

On the other hand, if a husband was impotent of producing a male child, then it was a tradition in the society that the wife could have extramarital relation to have a male child.

The Poet has explained this matter in the topic of Bidura and Pandavas birth incident. Apart from this, the outcome of illicit relation was considered to be a crime or worst sin in the society. In the narration of Sahaja Sundari, Srikrishna has said-

“It is not right to have coition with other’s wife
Anyone in relation with other women will fall into death.
This situation will occur by this illicit relation
Why did I do this sin to get what?
Other’s wife tastes like nectar
Now came to know that attraction towards
other’s wife is dangerous”.

(Adiparva-526)

At that time people believed that if God, Brahmin, saint, father, mother, teacher, scripture, Laxmi, mystic, medicine, son and wife etc were condemned, then people would be suffering from a lot of difficulties.

English rendering-

“To condemn Shiva, was to suffer from leprosy
To condemn Bishnu, was to fall into hell
To condemn Brahma, family would be destroyed

If teacher is condemned, one would be illiterate and ignorant.
If Brahmin is condemned, life span would be reduced
If Laxmi is condemned, man would be poor.
If the earth is condemned, scarcity of food would occur
If parents are condemned, bad time would occur”.

(Birataparva-104)

During the time of Sarala Dasa there was a popular belief that if the desire of a person remained unfulfilled during his life time, then he was to sacrifice his life at the place named Prayag, the confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati for the purpose to gain rebirth. The poet described this people’s belief and manner by giving an example of Amba and Ambalika character. In the words of the poet-

English rendering-

“Amba went to the holy place Prayag
Worshipped Madhav after holy dip in Triveni.
Oh Madhav you will witness
Due to Bhishma, I was helpless.
He would be responsible for my death
In the witness of Madhav, she plunged into Prayag”.

(Adiparva-67)

There was people’s belief that sweet fruit would be available if you put Sahada leaf on the

head and the curse of monk cannot go in vain. The poet narrated this people's belief by giving an example of the context of Madri and Pandu coition and the importance of Sahada tree. At that time, it was considered as sin if one ate before her husband. Similarly, it was also a tradition for the son-in-law not to stay at in-law's home for more than two and a half days. If he disobeyed this tradition and stayed and maintained his life with the food of father-in-law's, then he was treated as a coward in the society. The poet Sarala Dasa described this matter in the context by giving an example from the episode of marriage of Lord Shiv and Parvati.

“If any son-in-law comes to father-in-law's home
He should not to stay more than two and a half days
Anyone who maintains his life with the food of father-in-law.
Despite having power and ability
He was counted as wicked person”. (Barnaparva-1/90)

At that time in society people had deep faith in Astrology. If we go through the entire subject matter of Sarala Mahabharata the topic of astrology has been extensively analysed. Some critics have viewed that it could have been made a separate book. Since Sarala Dasa had deep knowledge in Astrology, different aspects like the birth of child, festival, marriage, thread ceremony, succession to throne, sacrificial rites, war and peace in the beginning of every incident the poet has clearly described in terms of astrology.

In addition to this; sorcery, ghost and spirit, omen scripture, offering of oblation to ancestors, ascending royal throne, worship of God, prayer, sacrificial rites, righteous conduct, duty of house holder, beginning of holy ceremony, starting of invasion and style of trade and commerce etc. the poet has clearly described the faith of people and social manner of the then society.

Agriculture and farmer:

Mahabharata was an unprecedented creation of farmer poet Sarala Das. In certain places of *Sarala Mahabharata*, the poet has described that he himself was a farmer and involved in farming. From that point of view, at various places, the poet has narrated different pictures which reflect the rural agricultural, culture and tradition of his age. It is still seen in rural life of Odisha. The poet has given the agricultural picture: the farmer, ploughing, cultivation and many more. Ghost tales related to agriculture and protection of grazing land etc. are still heard in every household of Odisha. Hence *Sarala Mahabharata* presented the sound financial status of farmers and golden era of the then Odisha.

If we go through Adiparva chapter, we come to know that he was farming sugarcane, cucumber, paddy etc. To supply water with the help of water lift to sugarcane field was an easy procedure during that time. In Udjoga parva, through the context of Babana ghost, the poet has given a clear picture of ploughing of farmer, at that time with the apprehension of fear bullock fleeing from the site.

In Shanti Parva, Vishma's advice to Yudhisthir about the moral duty of the king as to not to exploit wealth from farmers is praiseworthy. It is clearly manifested in the kindness of the king towards the farmers.

The poet Sarala Dasa in different parvas has clearly described different agricultural productions like paddy, green gram, black gram, cotton, turmeric, sugarcane, mustard, potato, maghi sesamum, arum, banana, brinjal etc. From the above analysis it is clearly visible that the poet had experience in farming.

Measurement of land and rules of land revenue:

During the time of Sarala Das kings were collecting revenue according to the measurement of land. In view of the historian Stalin, measurement of land and rules of land revenue was in practice since the reign of Ganga Dynasty king Anangabhim Dev of the 12th century AD. But in later period, these rules and regulation were changed by Kapilendra Dev of Surya dynasty.

Kapilendra Dev had introduced a unique measurement system of land. The land was counted as one rod (nala) consisting of twenty hands and one bati (A unit of twenty acres of land) consisting of mana (A measurement of land consisting of Gunthas or one 25th of an acre of Mana). During his reign though the subjects had given one pauti (A measure of corn measuring 20 Gaunis) to the treasury of the king as revenue from his harvesting crop from one bati land but farmer had full rights over trees and fruits. The system like rod measurement of land and rules of revenue which was in practice during the time Kapilendra Dev was changed at the time of Purusottam Dev. By giving this information.

During the time of Purusottam Dev though measurement of land was changed but the rules of revenue were not changed. The Gajapati kings of Odisha collected revenue from the subjects on the basis of amount of crops harvested from the land. Hence, the people of Odisha were living happily because they were giving small amount of revenue during the time of Sarala Das.

Art of play:

Since time immemorial Utkal has been a country of excellence in the field of art of play. Art of play has been the inspirable part of culture in Utkal. When classic poet Sarala Das wrote his national epic he did not forget to express his ideas about art of play. In every parva of Sarala Mahabharat he has reflected Bodily (Angika), Verbal (Bachika), Getup (Aharya) and pious (satwik) expression of

Odishi art of play. When the poet described the characters like God and Goddesses, royal female dancers, heavenly nymph and demigods etc, he tried to give information about Odishi art of play.

In heavenly festivals demigods and heavenly nymph and in the earth different events like succession of throne, royal court marriage ceremony and in auspicious occasions the

harlot male and female dancers were presenting their dance which was clearly described in his Sarala epic In Virat Parva the presentation of dance by arjuna groom selection ceremony of Chandrabati and Draupadi, Kidnaping incident of Surekha ascending royal throne Yudhistira and presentation of dance in heaven after Nirbata kabacha killed by Arjun are the great example of Sarala Mahabharata.

In the above description the poet has discovered the nature of Odia classical dance written by Bharat Muni in his book *Natya Sastra*, in which the practice of Odishi dance, song, music, tune, time of music Cloth and ornaments of the then Odisha have been described. These elements have been able to prove the glorious culture history of Odia nation and the symbol of art of Konark.

Art and Architecture:

Art and architecture from the pre-historic era till date has made Odia culture uninterruptedly prosperous. *Sarala Mahabharat* reflects the unprecedented real picture of skillfulness of artists of Kalinga. The poet has informed about the clear picture of art and architecture of the 15th century AD Utkal through the narration of construction of house, palace, assembly house, altar and sacrificial place, temple, statue, fort and cottage industry of different kings. The way Duryodhan constructed the prison on the mountain with the help of artists and architects for extinction of Gandhar dynasty and constructed the house with the help of Purochan for the destruction of Pandav family, which clearly depicts the unprecedented art and architecture of Utkal.

During those days, wooden beams, roof plates and split bamboo were used in the construction of house. The interior of the house was decorated with different types of picture drawn and installations of images. Sarala Das has also described that doors, windows, aldrops and door way etc were seen in the house.

By giving an example of Swayambara - the groom selection ceremony of Bhanumati, Chandrabati and Draupadi and in the *Sabha Parva* the construction of Sacrificial place the poet proved his poetic charm through the analysis of construction of pendal, temple, statute, building, assembly house and sacrificial place etc similarly from the description of dining hall, pottery, black smith house, we get information about the development of cottage industry in rural Odisha during the 15th century AD. In Bana Parva the narration of Bajrakita, the poet has described the art and architecture of image and temple made in stone. The description of Kalakala fort, Ranastamba fort, trench and compound wall in Swargarohan parva clearly reflect the capital city and fort of ancient Odisha in the 15th century AD. ■

(To be contd....)

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The Reception of T.S. Eliot in Odia Literature

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T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) as a landmark in English literature has an enduring impact on the writers of many languages across the globe because of its grandeur, appealing concerns, and treatment of human predicament. It could influence many poets in Indian languages, and it has a lasting impact on the formation of their literary imagination. The poet Ageya introduced Modernism to Hindi poetry under the influence of Eliot in his compilation titled *Tar Saptak*. In Bangla, poets like Tagore, Bishnu De, Jagannath Chakravorty weaved modernist sensibilities in their poems in many creative ways. Marathi and Malayalam also witnessed similar kind of developments. In Odisha, poets such as Gyanindra Varma and Guru Prasad Mohanty adopted *The Waste Land* into Odia. Other noted poets such as Bhanoji Rao, Sachi Routray, Binod Chandra Nayak, Sitakant Mahapatra and Ramakanta Ratha and others drew heavily from the style, theme and techniques of Eliot for their creative inputs. In this paper, some of the select translated texts, written following the style of *The Waste Land* have been studied to unearth how far they are influenced by the poet and his style. The methodology adopted is analytical and comparative study of select texts in the backdrop of the techniques of Eliot and the observation and discussion are supported by the extant literary theories in general and modernism and its style and techniques in particular. Efforts are made to substantiate that these poets have made creative use of these elements in their endeavor.

Keywords: Literary imagination, Modernism, Theme, Style, Technique, *The Waste Land*,

Introduction

Modernism is a movement in the fields of art, literature and culture that began in Europe in the early part of twentieth century and spread to other parts of the globe. After the first world war there was a change in the mind of people. They gave up hope in machines and western mode of development. They thought that machines which should have given comfort to them could serve as obnoxious instruments of destruction. There was uncertainty and anxiety in the human mind. A sense of disillusion and depression also could be seen in the minds of the people. With the advent of industrial revolution, a new kind of mass culture and reading public also emerged. It was realized that literature was not so much

appealing to the masses. Hence the modernist writers wrote about the masses and for the masses. Modernism in literature was a reaction to the existing literary trend which appealed to the elite readership. Writers experimented with new style and idioms.

Writers also reacted against Victorian morality. New ideas emerged in philosophy and psychology. There was different understanding of human being. For instance according to Freud, even educated people could have “greedy instincts and destructive urges of animals” (Tew and Murray 39). The philosophical thought of the time encouraged people to question the traditional beliefs and norms. The influence of the modernists can be seen in arts, poetry, novel and play. About its influence, Lawrence Raine opines, “the modernists were giants, monsters of nature who loomed so large that contemporaries could only gape at them in awe” (IX). Poetry was deeply influenced by the modernists, and we can witness the features of modernism in poetry. The features of modernist poetry maybe summed up as the use of a few important literary jargons such as: myths and images, sensuousness, free verse, use of symbols, inwardness, blend of abstract and concrete symbols, history and contemporariness, expressionism, disillusion, allusiveness, expression of despair and change of emotion.

The Waste Land: A Representative Poem of Modernism

T. S. Eliot’s poem *The Waste Land* (1922) is the representative poem of modernism. It reflects the mindscape and the geo-political state of that time. It represents the fragments, disillusion, and sterility and emptiness of spirituality and urges for renewal and redemption. As a representative poem of the modernist movement embedded in it are almost all the features of modernism. It reflects a sense of pervasive disillusionment on human thoughts and actions and also about future. London has been the epicenter of the poem and it has been depicted as the waste land. In the poem, it has been said about ancient fertility rites hinting at the futile action. The five sections- the Burial of the Dead, A Game of Chess, The Fire Sermon, Death by Water and What the Thunder Said represent sterility and destruction and the last section is about renewal. The ghostly figure like Stetson represents moral and spiritual decay. The reference to saint Augustine and Buddha indicates Eastern and Western philosophy.

The poem has been written in free verse. It is full of allusiveness. It is meant for scholarly readers as there are references, allusions, and combination of myths. It is referring mostly to the urban life. There are references to London, pervasiveness, disillusion, and despair. It has fragmented thoughts and abstract ideas. It combines aesthetics and politics. Manju Jain points out: “Allusions from a variety of contexts and historical epochs are juxtaposed, as in a collage, to create an effect of simultaneity and to undermine the idea of evolutionary progress” (136). The allusions are from different fields and require a reader to refer to many texts. They make a reader interdisciplinary. Another aspect of the poem is the use of myth and anthropology. Eliot acknowledges his debt to two works of anthropology; Sir James Frazer’s *The Golden Bough* and Jessie Weston’s *From Ritual to Romance* (1920)” (136).

The Influence of *The Waste Land*

This poem had a lasting impact on the style and theme of many writers in India. Harish Trivedi discusses its impact in his paper 'Eliot in Hindi Mode of Reception.' Namvar Singh asserts that modernism in India began to take shape in the writings of the progressive writers:

"I'd state that in the thirties, our writers were taking to modernism ideologically. There was a powerful trend towards 'progressive writing' that abetted the freedom struggle, but concern for development was more or less theoretical. That was one kind of modernism, literature being created in an ideological frame. Eliot's modernism certainly created new waves of thought in literature the world over" (qtd. in Kumar 101).

I have mentioned its impact on Bangla above. In Odia literature too it has a great influence. The poet Gyanindra Verma translated the poem in Odia as *PodaBhuin* to which Eliot wrote a Foreword. Verma has closely translated it into Odia. Guruprasad Mohanty on the other hand has done a transcreation (Anukriti) of the poem and called it *Kala Purusha*. He has localized the scenes and presented situations in his own terms. He followed T.S. Eliot and adapted *The Waste Land* as *Kala Purusha*. Though modeled after *The Waste Land*, it is located in the Odisha soil. This is found in a collection called *Samaudra Snana* (1970). Most of the lines rhyme in his poem and they have an internal rhyming pattern. He also uses Indian myths such as that of Akura. Akura was a minister in Kansa's court. The Kansa's kingdom was full of despair and the anxiety of death loomed large. The poet tries to present the despair and disintegration of human relationship and traditional beliefs in his poem "Picnic" as given below in original English transcript and its translation:

Amara sarichisokasakala o sandhyaraprarthana
Amara sarichijanmasangrama o saptara sadhana
Amara sarichimrutyudehaatmapranarabedana
Amara sarichimuktirabana o Radhara bandana (qtd. in Das 332).

Our mourning, morning and evening prayers are no longer there.
Our endeavour for struggle for survival, endeavour for our dream is also over.
Even our death and sorrow of the soul is no more.
Even the prayers of Ravana and Radha are gone!

Here the poem laments the death of tradition, belongingness, and family bonding. The poet roots his poem by employing folk elements, the story of Budhiasuruni who saves her life in *amenda* (sheep) treasured in a *pharua* and in the night the *mendha* becomes a *bhenda* (young man). We find many instances of parallel between Eliot and Guruprasad Mohanty. It is worth mentioning a couple of them. Eliot's London is Mohanty's Cuttack, Eliot's London bridge is Mohanty's Ranihatapola, when Eliot emphasizes the moral degradation by showing sexual relationship between the house agent and the typist, Mohanty shows in

his description of the relationship between Mr. Ghosh and the poor girl. When Eliot seeks redemption and renewal by invoking Om shantih! Mohanty does so by citing ‘Asatomaamrutamgamayah; Tamosho ma jyotirgamayah! Thus, Mohanty has localized the setting, style and tone and presented to his readers in a very creative way.

Apart from these two, there are many poets who followed Eliot and modeled their poems. They include Binod Chandra Nayak, Bhanoji Rao, Sitakantha Mahapatra, and Ramakanta Ratha. All these poets were among an enlightened few and most of them had access to English literature. Dasarathi Das rightly points out, “The modernist poets of Odisha were highly educated. Most of them were students of English literature. They had exposure to Marx, Freud, Hulme, Eliot, Ezra Pound, Kierkegaard, Camus, Frazer and Sartre. Some of them have already travelled abroad” (311). Das also mentions a few features of modern Odia poetry. They include self-consciousness, blending abstract ideas with the concrete, self-contradiction and the divided self and the alienated man. They were concerned with the problems faced by the world. Many poets in Odisha were influenced by the modernist elements I would like to study only three of them namely Sachidananda Routray, Sitakanta Mahapatra, and Ramakanta Ratha.

Sachidananda Routray who is popularly known as Sachi Routra is the main figure when it comes to modernism in Odia poetry. Educated in Kolkata and Cuttack, he was trained in Labour Welfare at ILO, Geneva. He published more than twenty collections of poems and won the Sahitya Academy Award and the Jnanpith Award. He wrote poetry following modernist trend. He also advocated modernism in Odia poetry, in his book *Kabita 1962*, he urged to strike a balance between speech and writing. He also made a case for discarding ornate poetry and used prose style. His poetry is rich with serious emotions, new metaphors, and break in thoughts. He also combines history and contemporariness. He followed Eliot in his style and structure. We find abstract ideas linking to the concrete ones. He employs the working-class characters as his main subjects in his poems. We meet figures like nurses, clerks, schoolteachers, and wage earners in his poems. Meeting characters like Pratima Nayak, Alaka Sanyal and others is an obvious example in his poem. Sensuousness is another feature that figures in his poem again and again. He also employs the urban metropolis in his poems.

Sitakanta Mahapatra is known not only as an Odia poet but as an Indian poet of repute. He has won many prestigious awards including the Sahitya Akademi, Jnanpith, Soviet Land, and so on. He was in the IAS and studied Social Anthropology for his research. His important collections of poems are “Dipti O Dyuti”, ‘Astapadi’, ‘Sabdara Akasha’, ‘Aaradrushya’ and so on. Mahapatra uses symbols and images drawn from everyday life, puranas, myths and from Odia milieu. We can find words used in Sarala Mahabharata in his poems. J.N. Mohanty compares Sitakanta Mahapatra with Guruprasad Mohanty and describes ‘Kalapurusha’ as a precursor to Mahapatra’s ‘Asthapadi’. Mahapatra’s first poem in the collection *Astapadi* titled “Mrutyu Nacha” gives a barbaric picture of human civilization depicting the dryness and despair of human world and universe.

The poet invokes God to save humanity from such despair and destruction.

If we observe the treatment, he uses words and scenes that are common to Odia milieu. Unlike the poetry of the other modernist poets, Sitakanta's poems are simple and based on common experience of life. He calls his poem a familiar village dawn. A few lines of his poem in original and translation, for instance, follows:

He morokabita
Tumenuha Kashmir, Dal hraada
Poplar Paine jungala
OOty aba dura Nainitala
Tumeparichita (O ascharya) gaunlisakala (qtd in Das 86).

Oh my poem,
You are not the Dal Lake of Kashmir.
Nor are you the popular pine forests of Ooty and Nainital.
You are actually the familiar dawn of our own village!

Sitakanta Mahapatra uses earthy experience and language, and he is successful in recreating indigenous locale through words. He did not blindly follow the trend set by Eliot and Sachi Routray but followed his own way of using images and metaphors. He also uses myth as a metaphor to express himself. We have Kubuja, Duryodhana, Trisanku, Solon myths used in many of his poems.

Ramakanta Ratha's poems too carry some of the features of modernism. Ratha was also critical of the directions given by Sachi Routray and oriented his poems in his own unique way. In his poems we find a blend of traditional Odia mode with the technique of modernist verse libre. We also find his poems rich in symbols. Take the poem "Introspection" for example:

"A fistful of butterflies, violet, black, and brown,
Polka-dotted, and plain and will do so long as they butterfly be.

Ratha's poetry also represents love, loneliness, and death consciousness. His famous poem Sri Radha is on illicit love. He is fascinated by the love of Krishna and Radha and uses this myth in his poem. Though he denies that *Sri Radha* is a based-on-myth, we find this myth dominating the poem as a theme. Like Eliot, the poet uses *verse libre* but uses Indian sensibilities by alluding Gita Govinda, Mira Bai, Chandi Das, and Vidyapati. Thus, though his poems show certain modernist elements, they are created in his own style and based on Indian sensibilities.

The other poets who were influenced by modernism and the *Waste land* are Bhanoji Rao, Binod Chandra Nayak, Hara Prasad Das, Deepak Mishra and many others.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, we find that modernism in general and T.S. Eliot in particular had a lasting influence on the poets of Odisha. His poems are translated, transcreated, adopted and also prescribed in courses taught and learned across universities and colleges. Different elements of his poems are followed and used by many Odia poets. Poets like Sachi Rout Ray, Guru Prasad Mohanty, Sitakanta Mahapatra, Ramakanta Ratha and others modeled their poems and borrowed elements of modernism, but they infused Indian sensibilities in them. Thus, their contributions proved to be richer and appealing. Although they borrowed western elements, they did not follow the western poets blindly, instead they recreated their themes, style, and techniques in terms of the flora and fauna of the very local settings and milieu. These poets also vary in their style and treatment. There are also engaging discussions and criticisms taking place on *The Waste Land in Odia*. Volumes of books and essays are available even now. Thus, the poem has been a great source for literary imagination and intellectual interaction. ■

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“Each in his Prison Thinking of the Key”: The Indian Connection with *The Waste Land*

Parth Joshi

A close reading of T.S. Eliot’s high modern poem *The Waste Land* (1922) reflects the influence of the ancient Indian philosophy and mythical structures on the mind that created the masterpiece. References may be found in the poem to the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavad Gita*, Patanjali’s *Yoga Sûtras*, early Buddhist texts and episodes from Mahabharata. This should not surprise any reader of Eliot who is aware of Eliot’s deep interest in Asian philosophies – especially Chinese, Japanese and Indian – during his studies at Harvard, and the influence that teachers like Irving Babbitt Charles Lanman, James Woods, each one expertized in one or the other branch of Indian philosophy, left on him.

The very texture of the fabric of *The Waste Land* is conceptualized as an amalgamation of Indian and Western culture. Prof. G. Nageswara Rao in his famous article “The Upanishad in the Waste Land” states that two out of the five section headings of the poem are borrowed from Indian sources.

This paper tries to examine (i) how an alternative archetypal source of the poem can be found in Indian mythology. (ii) what does Eliot have to borrow from the Vedic/Upanishadic philosophy and Patanjali’s *Yoga Sûtras* while rendering his vision of the Western civilization in the poem, and (iii) how relevant are these borrowings a century later.

Keywords: *Yoga Sûtras*, Rishyashringa myth, detachment, Upanishads, Eliot

Introduction

The Waste Land, first published in *The Criterion* in October 1922, exactly a century before this is being written, underwent a long process of composition, not ‘borrowing’ but ‘stealing’ (dexterously) from multiple sources. ‘The horror! The horror!’ – thus ends the earlier epigraph of Eliot’s initial draft of *The Waste Land* submitted to Pound in 1921. The epigraphical passage from Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1899), rejected by Eliot’s *il miglior fabbro* on account of it not being “weighty” (Davidson 121) enough for an epigraph, was found the most “appropriate” and “elucidative” (121) by Eliot. In that case, if Eliot’s earlier version is to be believed, *The Waste Land* (1922) is a poem about *horror* – horrors emerging out of various factors. A comparison of the earlier epigraph with the final also

confirms that the poem is about desire, temptation, the resultant horrible circumstances, comprising “crying whispers” (121), death-in-life surrender and the desire to escape the living death.

If the number of languages used by a poet are to be taken as a parameter to decide his universality, Eliot has used six foreign languages and alluded to more than thirty-five foreign authors in *The Waste Land*. Among these, “the essential meaning of the poem”, for Pound, “is reducible to four Sanskrit words” (qtd. in Kenner) – *Datta, Dayadhvam, Dayadhvam, Shanti* – which immediately establishes a *prima facie* connection, if not the centrality, of Indian thought while writing and interpreting the poem. That the poem spans from ‘April is the cruelest month’ to ‘Shantih’ itself reveals the range of Eliot’s erudition and at the same time his consciousness of the past – not only of a tradition but traditions. Biographical studies have made it clear that Eliot had already interestedly read Indian philosophy and scriptures by the time he started drafting *The Waste Land*.

Texts, Teachers, and Tradition/s

According to Cleo Kearns, Eliot’s earliest exposure to Indic thought came from Sir Edwin Arnold’s *The Light of Asia* (1879) – a poem based on Buddha’s life. “Eliot read it with pleasure in his boyhood. It set a tone for his later, more extreme study of Indic texts and traditions, a tone of respect, admiration and even a kind of curious intimacy.” (Kearns 21) In 1911, when he enrolled at the Harvard Philosophy Department for his undergraduate studies, Eliot’s first teacher Irving Babbit (who was also the most influential one according to critics) introduced him to a more sophisticated understanding of Indian philosophy, especially Buddhism. Babbit would often put “Confucius behind Aristotle and Buddha behind Christ.” (21) In his first year at Harvard, along with Western philosophy, Eliot studied elective courses on Indic Philology and Elementary Sanskrit under Prof. Charles Lanman – the editor of Harvard Oriental Series. The following year, he studied Pali under Prof. Lanman, and also enrolled for an advanced course on Philosophical Sanskrit with Prof. James Woods, wherein he studied Patanjali’s *Yoga Sūtras* which left him “in a state of enlightened mystification” (58) In the third year, he gave seminars on logic, ethics and metaphysics, and learnt Buddhist philosophy (especially *Mahayana* Buddhism) of China and Japan under Prof. Masaharu Anesaki – a visiting faculty at Harvard. His Ph.D. thesis on Bradleyan metaphysics (a topic that Eliot had later said he found interesting because of its affinities with Indian philosophy) was supervised by Josiah Royce, who himself studied Sanskrit under Lanman.

During these courses, he was required to read thoroughly portions from the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, *Yoga Sūtras*, *Panchtantra*, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, etc. in Sanskrit, and *Jātakatales* and *Nikāyas* in Pali. According to the investigation made by Kearns, Eliot owned a copy of Deussen’s *The System of Vedānta* and *The Philosophy of Upanishads*; for his classes he used a copy of *The Twenty-eight Upanishads* edited by Laxman and Phansikar in 1906, in which Lanman had marked eleven important passages including those from the

Brihadâraryaka found in Section-V of *The Waste Land*. (The copy has preserved in King's College Library with Eliot's pencil-notes.)

Why this account is important is because the texts he studied during these years are all texts written in different styles and containing different perspectives or epistemological frameworks. They certainly cast an influence on the mind that was preparing to write *Prufrock* and then *The Waste Land* – a 'collage' of different styles, voices and semantic-philosophical problems.

Influence of *Yoga Sûtrason The Waste Land: Select Instances*

Patanjali's *Yoga Sûtras* contain what Eliot called an "extremely subtle psychology" and are "something more than an arbitrary system of classification." (Kearns 57) Jessica Cloud, in her dissertation "*T.S. Eliot, The Waste Land and Yoga Philosophy*"(2018), states:

Among the many literary and philosophical sources of *The Waste Land*, the *Yoga Sûtras* have not yet been fully acknowledged or explored... I do not argue that Eliot provides a full and adequate understanding of yogic philosophy in the poem but rather that yogic philosophy informs the structure of the poem. In *The Waste Land* one can see yogic philosophy in the form of a journey. This journey gives shape to the poem which I argue begins with the recognition of suffering and pain, and the obstacles to overcoming that pain... Taken together, the five sections of the poem depict a yogic journey similar to that depicted in the *Yoga Sûtras*. (3)

The first line of the poem is about mixing 'memory' and 'desire', 'breeding' flowers out of 'dead land' and 'stirring dull roots' with 'spring rain'. To mix memory with desire is to mix past with the future, nostalgia with hopes/ambitions, the 'seen' with the 'unseen'. Even an initial reader of the *Yoga Sûtras* could relate these phrases with the formulaic exposition of the patterning of consciousness given in the first chapter therein. Unlike the popular perception, *yoga*, for Patanjali is not merely some physical exercises but a method of training the consciousness to calm down its ripples, deviations: *Yogaschitta-vritti- nirodhah* (*YS 1.2*). James Woods, Eliot's teacher, translates this formula thus: "Yoga is the restrictions of the fluctuations of mind-stuff." (Patanjali 8) (A recent translation by Hartranft uses the phrase 'patterns of consciousness' for 'fluctuations'.) For Patanjali, 'memory' is one among the five types of 'fluctuations' that hinder the attainment of concentration. These fluctuations bring pleasure and pain and infatuation that are nothing but hindrances. "Desire is that which dwells upon pleasure; aversion is that which dwells upon pain." (*YS 2-7.8*) Since memory retains past experiences without does not let them away (*YS 1.11*), and desire always reinforces them, the cycle of pain and want of pleasure continues. From these "dull roots" grows the tree of *karma*. It is this latent deposit of karma and the resultant bondage that makes April the cruelest month for many a character in the poem viz. Marie Larisch, Stetson, Phlebas, etc. Madame Sosostiris, who plays her wicked tarot cards (According to Weston's *Ritual to Romance*, Tarot came from India to Europe via gypsies.), furthers the Karma concept by presenting her symbol of wheel.

“All of these figures indicate the ambiguity of unfulfilled and deeply repressed forms of memory and desire. Unless brought to the surface, these can only lead to “death by water” in the ocean of samsara or worldly experience – or to change the metaphor – fear in a handful of dust.” (Kearns 202)

Similarly for Jessica Cloud, phrases like “a heap of broken images” and “Unreal city” represent nothing but hindrances in the attainment of calm of mind. While “Burial of the Dead” takes place outside, “A Game of Chess” portrays an indoor scene. It appears to be a sort of meditation upon material objects and sexual relationships. The psychological instability of the woman “troubled, confused and drowned the sense in odours” For Patanjali, “And by the application of the organs to enjoyments, one cannot make one’s Self free from the thirst... Surely one aiming at pleasure permeated by objects is sunk in the deep bog of pain.” (Woods 133)

Part-III of the poem introduces Terasias – a much-discussed character in the poem, who according to Eliot, sees what is the substance of the poem. G. N. Rao finds the Indic counterpart of Terasias in the concept of “*draṣṭa*” (seer) found in Patanjali. The Seer as given in the *Yoga Sūtras* is an entity that merely observes the phenomenal world in a detached manner without indulgence or participation. According to Eliot’s own notes, Terasias is “a mere spectator and not indeed a character” (Eliot 23), that is to say, he sees but not knows or does. However, the connection of the detached yogic seer with Terasias – a sufferer of death-in-life – is only a partial one according to many critics.

It is well-known that the ‘burning’ in “The Fire Sermon” is the fire of cleansing the spiritual self from the material world as said by Buddha, where we see the beginnings of the yogic ‘means of escape’ from the sufferings. The “Death by Water” section, the shortest one, has been hailed the most significant in the entire poem. Read through the frame of Patanjali, its significance increases because it is an “essential preparation for the peace and unity of Part V” (Kearns 211). For Cloud, the fourth section is about the achievement of the final state of *kaivalya* – emancipation through isolation of pure awareness as given by Patanjali. “it is a condition that when achieved, “all hindrances subside; all acts of the Self are spontaneous and free; absence of limitations which thwart one who wishes to attain the ultimate ideal of his own nature” (32) The ten lines about Phlebas, when read with the spiritual imagery of ‘burning’ at the back of one’s mind, indicate that he is now free from the worldly realms – he was once “handsome and tall”, thinking about “profit and loss” (Eliot 15) – all of these have become irrelevant to him. He has passed his “youth” of worldly pleasures and is now about to undergo the “transformative change” of spiritual awakening. “Phlebas’s death may be read, then, not as a merely natural or fated one but as sacrifice, the final sacrifice of the individual ego that must precede the full release of insight and liberation.” (Kearns 210-11) In this context, then, ‘Death’ caused by water is a new birth of the emancipated yogic self. In continuation, in the lines “He who was living is now dead / We who were living are now dying” (Eliot 16), ‘death’ stands for ‘a new life’ and paradoxically the “we” are not dying but rather moving towards awakening, a new birth of

the emancipated spiritual self – the regermination of new life, that immediately sets the last part of the poem positively apart from the rest of them.

Now, to interpret the passages containing the Upanishadic triad *Datta-Dayadhvam-Damyata*: what the seeker is supposed to ‘give’ is “the awful daring of a moment’s surrender” (Eliot 18) i.e. surrendering one’s attachments, how is he supposed to ‘sympathise’? He must be utterly careful not to get in the ‘prison’ of attachment while ‘thinking of the key’ of mercy and compassion. It is then that our ‘lifeboat’ responds gaily to “the hand expert with sail” i.e. the controlling hand – not that of God or any external authority but that of one’s own fully conscious Self. When the narrating persona in the poem, by the end of the poem, has undertaken this spiritual journey, he is in a state of absolute calm and peace of mind – ‘*Shanti*’. To recall the last sutra from Patanjali: “Freedom is at hand when the fundamental qualities of nature... are recognized as irrelevant to pure consciousness; it stands alone grounded in its very nature, the power of pure seeing. That is all.” (4.34)

In this way, both “The Burial of the Dead” and “A Game of Chess,” sections explore the causes of suffering. The journey continues in “The Fire Sermon” section as it explores the concept of disgust and the process of detachment fundamental to *yoga*. In the section “Death By Water”, the journey moves towards attainment of that state where all hindrances subside (the very goal of *yoga* for Patanjali). Finally, “What the Thunder Said”, written when Eliot was himself mentally stable under the treatment of Dr. Vittoz (in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1921) reflects equanimity, peace in everyday life and revival of the cultural-spiritual wasteland.

The Legend of Rishyashringa: An Alternative (?) Mythical Source

In his own notes to *The Waste Land*, Eliot famously states that Jessie Weston’s *From Ritual to Romance* (1920) could explain the difficulties of the poem more soundly than his notes. In the preface to her work, Ms. Weston expresses her indebtedness to Prof. von Schroeder, the famous German Indologist, myth-scientist and a translator of the *Bhagvad Gita*, whose references have been “of the greatest assistance” to her. Incidentally, in 1911, the year when Eliot enrolled for Indian philosophical studies, Ms. Weston met Prof. Schroeder and discussed the Fishing myths, Grail legend, etc., that form the crux of her work and the basis of *The Waste Land*.

In the second chapter of *Ritual to Romance*, Ms. Weston observing the nature of Grail legends across cultures, remarks that the common feature of these legends is “the insistence upon sickness and disability of the ruler of the land, the Fisher King. Regarded first as the direct cause of wasting the land, the task of the Quester becomes that of healing the King.” (12) Infirmary, wounds, sickness, old age etc. of the King “reacts disastrously on his kingdom... either depriving it of vegetation or exposing it to ravages of war.” (19) This immediately brings to the readers’ mind the image of the Fisher King in the poem, pleading to at least set his lands in order. The Fisher King’s arid plains in the poem, bearing no water but only rock, need rains and fertility. Lesser people know about a similar story – that of

Rishyashringa (literally meaning ‘dear-horned’) recurring in different versions *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and Buddhist *Jataka* tales – a story which Ms. Weston had read in Prof. Schroeder’s work and has been placed in the third chapter of *Ritual to Romancetitled* “The Freeing of Waters”, stating: “What, however, is of more immediate interest for our purpose is the fact that the Rishyashringa story does, in effect, possess certain curious points on contact with the Grail tradition.” (19) Rishyashringa is a young ascetic brought up by his father Vibhandaka in an isolated forest, unaware of any human except the father-son, and had never seen a woman. Meanwhile, there is a drought in the neighboring kingdom of Rompada who had insulted a brahmin. Since no brahmin is ready to perform fire-sacrifices for Rompada, Indra, the rain-deity, freezes rain-waters over his kingdom unless a perfectly chaste man comes to the place. Afraid of Vibhandaka’s rage, the king sends a few courtesans to Rishyashringa in his absence, who take Rishyashringa along saying that they were hermits. As soon as Rishyashringa visits the kingdom, there are abundant rains, and he marries the king’s daughter after which all ends well. Ms. Weston compares Rishyashringa to the Grail heroes, his chastity with their woodland youth and the Fisher King with Rompada. For Prof. C. D. Verma:

“The myth of Rishyashringa is a prototype of the Grail legend as it is incorporated in *The Waste Land*. It contains all the features of the Fisher King myth and the Grail Knight Perceval. The common element in both the myths is the affirmation of life and rejuvenation of the vegetation-gods symbolized by freeing of waters by Rishyashringa and Perceval in the Indian myth and the Grail legend respectively.” (151)

In connection with release of rains for the revival of waste land – both physical and spiritual, Ms. Weston also refers to the Rigvedic encounters of Indra and Vritra – the heroic god of rain and prisoner of river-waters, representing good and evil metaphorically. Several hymns by the Vedic seers are found to have written on the slaying of Vritra by Indra. Eliot’s conception of a poet is essentially that of a seer. Kearns and other critics have considered *The Waste Land* as a prayer composed Eliot, who could see through the future of Western civilization, to the rain-God to destroy the inherent evils of the contemporary modern society and bring ‘Shanti’ – spiritual peace.

Conclusion

Every great work of literature transcends spatio-temporal boundaries, as does *The Waste Land*. Moreover, great works of literature have multiple windows and keys to open the doors on interpretation. Eliot indeed provides keys in the poem for a variety of interpretive communities of various geo-cultural and social situation. The fact that Eliot was a great synthesizer of ideas and cultures is undeniable. Out of the many sources of this poem, the *Yoga Sûtras* remain lesser known. However, a deeper reading of both Patanjali and Eliot ascertain the degree of influence Patanjali had on Eliot’s critical concepts and the *Waste Land’s* poetic structure and technique what is presented in a few select instances in the analyses to justify the premise of Indian concept. Detachment is the only way to liberation:

teach *The Waste Land* as well as the myth of Rishyashringa and Patanjali's *Yogasutras* - the two out of many Indian influences on the poem. Rishyashringa stands for *Logos* through *Eros* unlike the troubled characters in the poem – ancient and modern – which is the very cause of their suffering as well as the suffering of modern man. Archetypal reading of the Rishyashringa's myth (several thousand years old), the European Grail tradition (almost a thousand year old) and the echoes of these in *The Waste Lands* suggest that *datta-dayadhvam-damyata* - sacrificing personal benefits for universal welfare (as Rishyashringa or Perceval sacrificed his chastity for the kingdom) and restraining oneself while savoring on the sensory-material pleasures/privileges in order to save for the less-privileged are the ways to ultimate spiritual peace as propounded by Patanjali in the ancient times and envisioned by Eliot for the modern society. ■

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Analytical Survey of Black Feminism in the Selected Works of Maya Angelou, Audre Lorde and Alice Walker

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Black feminism centers on the need of liberation for Black women. They want autonomy as feminism aims for equal rights for every woman in every sphere of the society. All Black women of the world come under this movement. However, Black women feel inferior and are not at ease with white women. Not only are they tortured by whites but also by the Black patriarchy. They want equal opportunities as enjoyed by men and specifically by white women.

Keywords: Male chauvinism, domestic violence, sexual harassment, aborigines, freedom, etc.

Introduction:

Feminism aims at ensuring equal rights in politics, economics and in social sphere for every woman. It provides equal opportunities for women in education, and even in every field of the society. It protects women from domestic violence, sexual harassment and sexual assault. The founder of feminism, Mary Wollstonecraft argued for women's education for the first time in 18th century.

All women of the world come under this movement. However, Black women feel insulted before white women due to inferior complex prevalent in society. It is more grievous when Black patriarchy tortures them.

Black feminism centers on the need of liberation for Black women. They want autonomy. They want equal opportunities as enjoyed by men and specifically by white women. They oppose sexual harassment not only by the white males, but by their black kinsmen. Since long it's seen that they are suppressed to remain indoor and to suffer under the whims of not only their husbands and kinsman but by the society.

'Harlem Renaissance' is a remarkable revolution for the blacks to express their views. The 'Combahee River Collective' (1974-1980) is a group of black feminists, who

speak for black women. The “Combahee River Collective” focuses on the oppression based on sexism, heterosexism and racism. It is due to the lack of basic human rights provided to black women in comparison to other groups, such as white women. The ‘Women’s Liberation Movement’ (WLM) is a political alignment of women and feminist intellectualism that emerged in the late 1960s. It also works on racism.

Black activists and intellectuals formed organizations such as the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) and the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW). Black feminism rose to prominence in the 1960s, like the civil rights movement. From the 1970s to 1980s, Black feminists formed groups that addressed the role of Black women in Black nationalism, gay liberation, and second-wave feminism.

Alice Walker (b.1944), Audre Lorde, Maya Angelou, Bell Hooks, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Angela Davis, and Patricia Hill Collins have emerged as leading academics on Black feminism. Alice Walker is an American novelist, short-story writer, poet, and social activist. In 1982, she is awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, for her novel The Color Purple. She is the first African American to win the prize.

Walker’s feminism focused on the women of color. In 1983, Walker coined the term womanist in her collection In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens. It refers to “a black feminist of color.” The term was made to unite women of color and the feminist movement at “the intersection of race, class, and gender oppression.

Likewise, Audre Lorde is an American Black writer, womanist, radical feminist, professor, and civil rights activist. She is a self-described “black, lesbian, mother, warrior and poet,” who dedicated both her life and her creative talent to redress injustices of racism, sexism, and homophobia.

As a poet, she is well known for technical mastery and emotional expression. Her poems express anger and outrage at civil and social injustices she faces throughout her life. Her poems deal with the issues related to civil rights, feminism, lesbianism, illness and disability, and the exploration of black female identity.

Lorde’s 1979 essay “Sexism: An American Disease in Blackface” is a sort of protest to confront sexism in the black community in order to eradicate the violence within it. Lorde insists that the fight between black women and black men must end.

Lorde focuses on race, gender, socioeconomic status/class and so on to assert the differences, such as skin color and sexual orientation. She protests against toxic black male masculinity.

In this way Maya Angelou is another civil rights activist, who worked for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X. She is also an educator and served as the Reynolds professor of American Studies at Wake Forest University. In 2000, Angelou was awarded the National Medal of Arts. In 2010, she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest

civilian honor in the U.S., by the President Barack Obama. Angelou was awarded over 50 honorary degrees before her death.

Angelou's most famous work, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969), deals with her early years in Long Beach, where she lived with her brother and paternal grandmother. Angelou describes how she was first hugged and then raped by her mother's boyfriend when she was just seven years old. When the man was murdered by her uncles for his crime, Angelou felt responsible, and stopped talking. When Angelou was twelve and a half, Mrs. Flowers, an educated African American woman, finally got her to speak again.

Angelou joined the Harlem Writers Guild in the late 1950s and met James Baldwin and other important writers. It was during this time that Angelou had the opportunity to hear Dr. Martin Luther King jr. Inspired by his message, she decided to become a part of the struggle for civil rights. The poem, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* chronicles Angelou's childhood and ends with the birth of her son. The anthology won immediate success and was nominated for a National Book Award.

Part-I

Maya Angelou in her poem, "Still I Rise" asserts the dignity of marginalised people under the cover of oppression and torture. Here she writes for Black feminism and anti-racism. She presents her love for her own community. She puts the word, "rise" to point out the development of her race. Though whites try to suppress her race, they swear to rise or advance. Nobody can check their progress.

She goes against the society that tries to suppress the voice of the black women. She raises her voice and informs all that they are no longer mute in this regard. They are rising to higher level. She condemns others, who hate them.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like tear drops,
Weakened by my soulful cries? (L. 13-16)

The poem, "awakening in New York" by Angelou presents the inferiority complex of the blacks. They fear discrimination. Here the black children are ignored, while the white children are given more importance in the society. The poet writes that they are "unmasked and unheeded" (L. 11)

In Angelou's autobiographical poem, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" she voices for a bird imprisoned in a cage. Here she compares herself with a free bird. It may be assumed that the caged bird refers to the Blacks in the society, who do not have freedom as it is enjoyed by the whites. Hence, poet sings the song of freedom for the Black people, who have no freedom like caged birds. She writes:

his wings are clipped and his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill (L. 29-33)

Angelou's another poem "Phenomenal Woman" advocates that freedom is not just a political topic, but it relates to human emotion and understanding. It is the capability of human heart, which can live with fraternity, without having hatred and having love for an egalitarian society. Angelou presents her pride as being a woman. She possesses a strong confidence on herself being a black woman. Here phenomenal woman refers to a pretty woman of beauty and integrity. Men are attracted to her. She writes:

Men themselves have wondered
What they see in me.
They try so much
But they can't touch
My inner mystery. (L. 30-34)

Likewise, in the autobiographical poem, "A Plagued Journey" Angelou is disappointed for not achieving success in life. But she is hopeful that good time is coming. She thinks herself imprisoned in a 'dark prison'. She ironically criticizes it as a 'safe life' as there is no end of racial discrimination. She ironically says that it is a grace. So, she writes in grief:

"I cannot scream. A bone
of fear clogs my throat". (L. 17-18)

Part-II

In the poem "Now" Lorde explores the power of woman. She thinks that in the present time, Black women are no less powerful in comparison to any other human being. She possesses a special quality, for which she is boastful. She thinks that she can counter others in any matter in the society. She informs that Black women are no more weak, and they can challenge every odd in the society.

In the poem "a Woman Speaks" Lorde focuses on the Black women, who are ignored and they lose identity in the society. Such Black women have to shape their career bravely. Though they are ignored by the White feminists and by the Black patriarchy, they have to face them bravely. Black women are no doubt skilled even though their magic cannot be measured.

Their magic is to fight for the racial injustice. They are confident that they cannot fall and fail in the society and even cannot be beaten by anyone else.

Lorde speaks about the sisters and mothers of her race of past years. They all had the ill fate and had suffered a lot then. In the poem the analogy of Dahomey refers to the

infamous fierce women warriors. They were strong fighters, but their strength is seen as evil. She feels herself as Dahomey woman and advises Black women to be brave like them. In the end part of the poem she focuses her pride for being a brave woman unlike White women. Though she suffers for 'old magic', i.e. , for tradition, still then she is brave enough to face every racial odds and hazards.

In the poem, 'Power' Lorde presents the pathetic condition of Black's life. The poem is about the murder of an Afro-American boy. The poet encompasses several themes in the poem. The major theme, however, is the inhuman treatment to Afro-Americans by "white" men. The "ten year old" boy is killed for his color, nothing else. The poet quotes on the police officer, who killed the poor boy. She writes:

"I didn't notice the size nor nothing else
only the color."(L. 26-27)

It reminds readers about the inhuman treatment the race faces.

Another important theme of the poem is "hatred and destruction". Poet, Lorde focuses on the hatred against "black" people and the destruction of humanity at the hands of "white men". Poet also touches on the theme of the indignity of "black women". In the poem, the poet says how they abuse an old woman to manipulate her statement at the court.

Lorde herself was a lesbian who spent much of her life fighting for LGBTQ rights. The poem "A Litany for Survival" explores how marginalized people of the society can't live freely and openly in the way that other, non-marginalized people can. Instead, they endlessly have to adapt to the oppressive forces around them. The speaker mentions having to "love in doorways" at night, for example, which is likely an allusion to LGBTQ people who are unable to express their love in public out of fear for their safety.

Understanding their suffering, the speaker encourages them to consider that they have nothing to lose by protesting. The poem argues that it is better to speak. Otherwise they "were never meant to survive". So, they have to be brave to face all opposite circumstances.

Lorde's another poem on racism is "Coal". Here she expresses how Carbon makes 'black coal'. It also makes bright, precious diamonds when enough heat and pressure is applied to it. Diamond glows and sparkles and shines. Likewise, silence of black people can be transformed into the poetry of revolution. They are to sparkle with good qualities and noble deeds.

Though the poet is black, her words are like jewels. Loving words are from her heart. They can attract others. Like diamond her words from her black body can attract others. Though there are certain evil words, still then she will suppress them and express the words of love and affection. She would say the words of fraternity, not of venom. She writes:

Love is a word another kind of open-
As a diamond comes into a knot of flame
I am black, because I come from the earth's inside
Take my word for jewel in your open light. (L. 22- 25)
Here she criticises the whites, who abhor blacks due to the feeling of racism.

Part-3

Alice Walker's "The Colour Purple" explores the discrimination to Black women in the society. She tries to empower the Black women in the novel. Celie is continuously tortured and raped by her step-father and her husband mercilessly. She presents how women are treated as sex objects in the society. She also portrays lesbianism in the novel through her protagonist Celie. Celie loves Shug, the beloved of her husband. Shug takes Celie out of the trap of her husband. She helps her to build confidence and gives her voice to raise herself in the society. Celie becomes an independent woman. Her sewing business gives her profit and makes her self-sufficient. Headstrong Celie transforms herself to a happy, successful and independent woman.

Even through a subordinate character Sophia, Walker presents the power of a Black woman. Sophia's husband, Harpo always tries to dominate her like his father. But he is unable to control her as she is physically stronger than him. To control her, Harpo tries to beat her as she is a wrestler. She feels suffocated in her house, where patriarchy matters a lot. She leaves her husband to build her own life. In this way, Walker portrays the suffering of Black women. She presents how their own kinsmen torture them

In the poem "The Kiss" Alice Walker memorises that there was no love or affection in a white man's kiss. He kissed her, because she was beautiful and not looking ugly like aunt Jemima. To her regret, later on he forgot her. She became remorseful as she could not get a fine heart.

In the poem "When You Thought me Poor" Walker focuses on the poor condition of Blacks. She opines that the poverty of her race is shameful as others ignore them. They are treated not equal to the Whites, which creates a pathetic situation in their life. So, in grief she wants to remain indoor. Walker criticizes the society for social inequality. For the purposes of activism Walker's stance is on civil rights and social equality.

Further she says, when a black man gets success, then the world sees him/her differently. If a black becomes successful, then people of other race are surprised to see their success, as if it is not meant for them. Their hatred continues. They say:

success! Blackness, who
knows how?
Became suddenly
in! (L. 19-22)

But the present condition of the writer has fetched success for her, which causes surprise to others and they even become envious to them. When she is loved by a white man, it surprises her. It seems to be a magic, because it was not love, but an intention to fulfil sex desire only.

In another poem “Women” Walker refers to the African women, who were slaves in the USA. Here she raises voice for such black girls, who were restricted for study and were engaged in slavery. They were engaged in work, while the Whites tortured them being the masters. In this way the Black women lost their entity and identity.

Walker feels like an outcast due to racism, and after being damaged in eyes by a gun. Many of her inner thoughts and feelings were subsequently expressed in writings. Later in her life, Walker met Martin Luther King Jr., an event that inspired her to join the Civil Rights Movement. Since then she published stories and poems, which focus on the suffering of blacks.

Walker’s poem “Remember Me?” is written in first person and it makes reference to Walker’s own childhood. The girl in the poem is actually the personification of many black women, whose lives are darkened by the injustice of being black and being a woman in a world that favors the whites.

Walker feels the suffering of black women as they take all the burden of their family from child-birth to all home-works. They take care of the family, cook meals, get engaged in sweeping, and wash all clothes of the family. In this way they perform multiple duties in a family. She writes:

“I am the girl
holding their babies
cooking their meals
sweeping their yards
washing their clothes.” (L. 9-13)

These duties make them rotting housewives. Hopefully, women now have a choice about their familial duties with the introduction of women’s rights in the workplace and birth control.

In the fifth stanza, Walker contradicts the historically imperialist symbol of darkness as evil. He presents the words like “Dark, / repaired, healed.”

Her last two stanzas tell mankind what women do hope for. She uses chiasmus: “Justice and Hope / Hope and Justice” (L. 37-38). The women hope for a world of justice. There cannot be justice without hope, and there cannot be hope without justice. According to Walker these are the two flowers of society. With a sense of calmness, Walker tells her audience, “let us begin” the struggle to establish those twin flowers as a reality. ■

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From the ‘Triumphant-Anglicist’ to the ‘Dialogic Polyphony’ of Bilingualism : Bilingual Approach as a Tool for Teaching English Writing

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Teaching English writing to students inhabiting a preponderantly bilingual , bi-literary milieu invariably presupposes a pre-existent, hierarchical binary opposition and foregrounds the stridently unequal power relations that are clearly discernible . Even when we attempt writing in one language there is as Bakhtin puts it a ‘dialogisingheteroglossia’ that we have to contend with. In this context, I have focused on the creative polyphony of bilingualism in the English classroom and how it facilitates a creative spurt in the students and kindles their literary creativity. The pedagogy of University English teaching in Indian classrooms has been inexorably monolingual and to frame it in rather excoriating terms of Harish Trivedi , an unequivocally “triumphant-Anglicist”, (Trivedi, Colonial Transactions:English Literature and India, St Martins Press, NY,1996, p.294) banishing the mother tongue and other ‘Bhashas’ from the English classroom. If we trenchantly re-examine the terrain of the discursive field of the ‘English’ classroom within which English writing is produced in the contemporary Indian subcontinent, it is needless to say that there are heterogeneous, subterranean,linguistic voices that are tumultuously trying to seep into the English lexical repertoire of the students.

There is a need to broaden our empathetic imagination in relation to understanding of bilingualism and expand our constituencies to legitimize an alternative pedagogic premise rooted in cultural and linguistic specificities. As a teacher in the Department of English in Bangalore University, I see that majority of my students hail from rural and mofussil towns and have had a vernacular medium of instruction in the local language Kannada. Therefore, it stands to reason that they often gravitate towards non-metropolitan texts for boosting their morale in an increasingly intimidating ‘English’ environment. A rather circuitous, more inclusive strategy of the deployment of a bilingual approach through translations has helped my students hone their writing skills in English with an unprecedented sense of vigour and enthusiasm.

Keywords: ‘Bhashas’, bilingualism, dialogic heteroglossia, discursive, hierarchical binary oppositions, polyphony, triumphant –Anglicist

“We must not forget those areas where the spread of English is bad news, and where people are antagonistic towards the language, for a variety of social, economic or political reasons ... The question is not so much do people use English internationally, but in what state of mind, with what attitude, do they use it? Are they proud of it, or ashamed of it? ... should not the quantitative view of English in the world be supplemented by a rigorous qualitative view – a pragmatic or ergonomic view – in which we recognize levels of acceptance, acquiescence and antipathy amongst those who have come to use the language and in the end is not this view of far greater importance for those involved in world English teaching and research than a simple awareness of the unity and spread of the standard language?”¹

This pertinent observation made by the British linguist David Crystal is a salutary caveat to English teachers in postcolonial countries like India. Most English teachers will be compelled to engage willy-nilly with this thought-provoking, disturbing and self-reflective remark at some juncture in their teaching career. Teaching English writing to students inhabiting a preponderantly bilingual, bi-literary milieu invariably presupposes a preexistent, hierarchical binary opposition between the vernacular language and English, consequently foregrounding stridently unequal power relations that are clearly discernible where English is being perceived as prestigious and normal and the need for the learners to use the language, additively or subtractively. Even when we attempt writing in one language there is, as Bakhtin puts it, a ‘dialogic heteroglossia’ that we have to contend with. Also a ‘diglossia’ situation where the two languages namely the mother tongue and English are used under different conditions which unmistakably connote a hierarchical orientation. The pedagogy of University English teaching in our Indian classrooms can sometimes be inexorably monolingual, marked by a subtle disdain towards Indian languages or the ‘Bhashas’, often pejoratively dismissing them as ‘contaminants’ defiling the sanctimonious precincts of the English classroom with a chaste adherence to class bound elitist curricula, often projecting colonial world views. Purloining a phrase from the excoriating critique by Harish Trivedi, it is disconcertingly, ‘triumphantly Anglicist’² in its orientation. If we trenchantly re-examine the terrain of the discursive field of the ‘English’ classroom within which English writing is taught in the contemporary Indian subcontinent, it is needless to say that there are heterogeneous, subterranean linguistic voices that are tumultuously trying to seep into the English lexical repertoire of the students. English teachers even at the post graduate level perforce need to be sensitized towards tapping the learners’ literary competence³ in the regional language. Ignoring these implications can adversely impact upon the learning process of the learners. The ‘subaltern’ student from the vernacular medium and rural background is rendered invisible in the classroom because of the neocolonial condescension on the part of the English teacher or even by her/his attitude of postcolonial benevolence as Aniket Jaware points out in his essay “The silence of the subaltern student”⁴.

There is a need to broaden our empathetic imagination in relation to understanding of bilingualism and expand our constituencies to legitimize an alternative pedagogic premise rooted in cultural, linguistic and regional specificities. We need to be cognizant of the very unique and in a sense, an artificial position that English occupies in the socio-economic context of the learners in our English classrooms. It is a verity that although functional English percolates to many levels of life in India, as a language of creative expression, it is limited to the economic and cultural elite of the country. Therefore cultivating and honing the writing skills of the students through translanguaging appears to be the most efficacious strategy.

In her essay ‘Mapping a Territory: Notes on framing a course’⁵, Meenakshi Mukherjee, alluding to her inclusion of Indian language novels in English translation in a course entitled ‘The novel and society’ affirms that since we live in a multilingual society, our literature courses should make our students aware of this very important dimension of our cultural existence, rather than shut them off from it. She bemoans the tendency among our ‘good’ English literature students to be oblivious of this polyphony and to live in an illusory, monolingual world. Furthermore, she states that an absurd corollary of this is the belief that literature – meaning the kind of texts that are analyzable with the critical tools taught in the classroom – can only exist in English. By introducing her course she hopes that she could indirectly contribute towards dispelling this unarticulated but widely held notion among Indian students of English literature.

As a teacher in the Post Graduate Department of English in Bangalore University, I see that the majority of my students hail from rural and mofussil towns and have had a vernacular medium of instruction in the local language Kannada. Therefore, it stands to reason that they often gravitate towards non-metropolitan texts for boosting their morale in an increasingly intimidating ‘English’ environment. Today we are sufficiently distanced from our colonial past to raise important questions about the relevance of reading English literature. The most persuasive argument for reading English literature lies in the fact that by comparing and contrasting our literature with an alien literature, we can prevent inbreeding, prevent our becoming kupamandukas (frogs in the well), enjoy the cross-fertilization of ideas across cultures. I remember Robert Phillipson’s earnest expostulations with English supremacy, here when he says if ‘lingua franca’ is not defined in such a way as to rule out inequality and asymmetry in intercultural communication but instead quintessentially becomes a jubilant celebration of English to the detriment of other languages, it degenerates into ‘lingua frankensteinia’ rather than ‘lingua franca’⁶. Phillipson expatiates on this further by stating that in post-colonial settings, educational policy should have multilingual /bilingual aims and means and build on local resources, rather than being articulated in terms of the false dichotomy between a local language and English.

The English teacher needs to be critically aware of the propensities towards linguistic imperialism and jettison the monolingual and subtractive fallacies (the fallacious argument in favour of disuse of other languages fuelled by a fear that use of other languages might

lead to a decline in the standards of English) which plague the English classroom . For me as an English teacher, it means being attuned to a plethora of bottom up signals and measures. It presupposes a willingness to subject my own professionalism to scrutiny and to be guided by a sense of inexorable self reflexivity. Otherwise, there could be vital losses. We may be coopted into new forms of inequitable dominance, a precarious monolingualism functioning as a smokescreen for English hegemony, which the position of English as the language of global hedonism and success, risks making us blind to. Harish Trivedi in his work *Colonial Transactions* proposes the concept of ‘Interliterariness’ or multi-lingual intertextuality⁷. I would also like to usher in the notions of ‘exonormativity’ and ‘endonormativity’ here apropos English teaching methodologies. These concepts are derived from ‘Global English’ and ‘World Englishes’ paradigms which are indeed brilliant parameters for formulating an emancipatory , democratic and pluralist English pedagogy that can successfully ignite the creative potential of learners using English as a vehicle for their creative expression. Robert Phillipson raises a few sharp questions in his book *Linguistic Imperialism Continued* which are listed below.

“Can Englishization be seen independent of globalization and Americanisation ? Are there ways of counteracting inequality in international communication that avoid privileging different users of English? If it is possible that monolinguals will miss out in future, whereas multilinguals will thrive, is aiming at parallel linguistic competence a valid and realistic educational and social goal? If globalization is intrinsically neither good nor evil, just as no language is, what language policies should be adopted so as to maintain a balanced language ecology?”⁸ .

As an English teacher in a classroom predominated by students who are speakers of Kannada language , these questions which I have listed above weighed on me heavily , goading me to think deeply about language policies and the possibilities for adopting democratic, egalitarian strategies to teach English writing to my students , steering clear of linguistic chauvinism or authoritarianism . I came close to achieving my desideratum in my ‘World Literatures’ classes where I taught Amos Tutuola ‘s classic quest tale *The Palm-Wine* (1952) and Azar Nafisi’s memoir *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (2003) The students had already read Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*(1958) and Ngugi’s formidable essay on decolonization, ‘On the Abolition of the English Department’ (1972) which inspired them to interrogate the mandate of our discipline postcolonially and initiate a fearless , uninhibited engagement with English. Using non metropolitan texts from the Third world had its overwhelming advantages as my students could easily identify with these narrations . Verily , these works had a magical value in transforming their disposition from reticence and indifference to active participation and articulacy .

As in Kenya and Nigeria, in India, English is the language of neither classical culture nor popular culture but a language of empowerment. Explicating the notion of empowerment, Harish Trivedi in his *Colonial Transactions* argues that the unstated aim of a majority of Indian students in their chosen study of English Literature continues to be to

increase their proficiency in the English language⁹. But language is not a neutral medium of communication, drawing from the famous Sapir- Whorf hypothesis , we can say that language shapes our worldviews. It is also intricately bound up with our identity and culture. If it creates a hierarchical binary opposition between English literature of the mainstream seen as basically different and more important than those emerging from other countries or our own Bhashas, we as English teachers will have to resist this imposition . Denouncing such a self- marginalization , in his essay “ Abolition of English departments “ Ngugi states : “ the primary duty of any Literature Department is to illuminate the spirit animating a people, to show how it meets new challenges and to investigate possible areas of development and involvement. In suggesting this name , we are only clearly mapping out the directions and perspectives , the study of culture and literature will invariably take in an African University”¹⁰.

Moreover, I would like to reiterate what Svati Joshi in her cogent preface “Rethinking English : An Introduction” in *Rethinking English : Essays in Literature, Language*, when she contends that the trajectory of English Studies in India is , in a sense, the trajectory of the urban middle class¹¹ . So for my students coming from disadvantaged groups with their rural/ small town upbringing, insufficient exposure to English , study of English literature was a demolishing experience , leaving them linguistically and aesthetically alienated . “This kind of linguistic and aesthetic dislocation is the worst of the possible range of cultural dislocations, for language is the most central mode of self perception and aesthetics is the very form of the perception of the other.”¹² opined G.N Devy . Kannada writer Poorna Chandra Tejaswi the son of the famous Kannada poet Kuvempu humourously refers to his predicaments as a Kannada honours student struggling with the use of English orthography , bemused by the incongruity between the spelling of an English word and its pronunciation. This mismatch flummoxes him and he goes on to declare that only when he perceives English as an extension of Kannada and focuses on the ideas to be conveyed , does it become possible for him to communicate in English . It is a pre-requisite for him that in order to access English , he engage with it in conjunction with a simultaneous engagement with Kannada. So an efficacious strategy was to counteract this alienating, imperial construct of ‘Englishness’ with a bilingual , bi-literary approach in the classroom where the subjectivity of the subaltern student was not erased by those magnificent , edifying texts that rendered them taciturn , bemused and inchoate in befuddlement and confusion.

How can the language of academic knowledges be changed in such a way that it helps the subaltern students represent themselves and not remain locked in the stereotype imposed upon them by their encounter with academic knowledges ? is a question that has plagued me ad nauseum with compelling intensity . As Aniket Jaware puts it ,”it shouldn’t block the pathematic outflow of their selves by an act of self marginalization”¹² . English Studies yoday is recognized not so much a fixed subject as a shifting combination of many , not a single discipline, but what may be called an ‘interdiscipline’. English classroom has become a more democratized space inhabited by both men and women belonging to different

classes, castes, linguistic orientations and geographical locations including villages , mofussil towns , cities and foreign countries like Iran, Afghanistan , Syria etc. Therefore it is very important to revision the discipline and extend its scope . Canonical versions of English literary studies , their curricular protocols and their alliances with power have been critiqued from a variety of positions most notably perhaps by Marxists, feminists and increasingly by Dalits and Bahujans. In the classroom this has required a practice in which social and political heterogeneity of students is addressed and articulated. The contemporaneous present is also a time where a large number of marginalized and dispossessed people have made new claims to the nation and questioned the arrangements of power. We need to interrogate dominant ideologies of literature , be critical of the disciplinary violence of the curriculum, patriarchal mindsets , calcified pedagogic practices and orthodoxies that prevail.

In a thought provoking essay titled “Literary Translation : A Technique for Teaching English Literature in a Bi-literary context”, Vanamala Vishwanatha makes an insightful observation:”While we remember that English is a second language , we often forget that English literature is a second literature in our learning context. Our learners are already exposed to the literature in their first language or mother-tongue before they confront the literature in English, which makes their experiences essentially bi-literary. Thus while bilingualism has been a respectable issue in ELT research, the bi-literary nature of our English literature teaching context has largely gone unnoticed.”¹³ . In fact there are many bilingual Indian writers who have written successfully in both the languages. For example the eminent playwright Girish Karnad wrote his plays in the Indian language Kannada and translated his plays himself into English. Reflecting on this situation , recasting the remark of Rudyard Kipling in an ingeniously tongue -in cheek -fashion , Harish Trivedi frames his rhetorical question “What do they know of English literature who only English literature know?”¹⁴. From this subtle note , he goes on to make sonorously affirmative remarks when he states “It is arguable that such fascinating manifestations of literary amphibianism, ambidexterity, ambilingualism, ambivalence or what you will have not seen in the whole history of the world on such a scale before, with perhaps the francophone elite of the (pre-) *War and Peace* Russia providing the only distant comparison . It is a phenomenon which represents perhaps the deepest form of penetration by the culture of one people of the culture of another, even to the lowest stratum of the latter’s formation.”¹⁵

Often a metaphor from Kannada or a prosaic explanation in Kannada, helped my students come to grips with dauntingly esoteric texts in English . My students warmed up to these little exercises of formulating their responses to an English literary text in Kannada and thereafter translating them into English. This activity enabled them to surrender to the text fully and engage with the ideas uninhibitedly , thereby stimulating their creative urge to communicate in English. Translating their articulations in Kannada into English made my students switch back and forth between the two languages , It sensitized them to the fluidity of English language and filled them with a sense of wonder that they could express some of their idiosyncrasies tinged with the Kannada idiomatic flavor in English and these

English sentences could stand independently on their own ! This reminded me of a riveting interview of eminent Kannada writer and English professor U R Ananthamurthy by Chandan Gowda where Ananthamurthy voices his thoughts about literary translation . He refers to Raja Rao's brilliant classic *Kanthapura* which was a radical experiment in postcolonial fiction . For Ananthamurthy , Raja Rao's narration showed how generous English as a language could be to experiences alien to English ethos¹⁶. This was Raja Rao's intellectual conviction, his premise too. The Indianisation of English reaches its apotheosis in Raja Rao's novel. In his foreword to the novel , Raja Rao contends that English is the language of our intellectual make –up but not of our emotional make-up. “We are all instinctively bilingual, many of us writing in our own language and in English, We cannot write like the English. We should not . We cannot write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us. Our method of expression therefore has to be a dialect which will some day prove to be as distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American, Time alone will justify it .”¹⁷ The preface was of tremendous inspirational value for my students.

Our reading of Yoruba quest tales rendered in a quirky topsi-turvily captivating English by Amos Tutuola in *The Palm Wine Drinkard* (1952), Azhar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Teheran* (2003) extraordinary memoir narrating her experiences as an English teacher re-reading the English novels with her students in the classroom in Allame Tabatabai University , Teheran and the courage that these reading sessions gave to some of her girl students to rethink their choices, articulate their desires and make their own decisions was an exhilarating and a liberating experience for my students . It was a catalyst that had goaded them to react in English . Taciturnity changed into loquacity and groups were working in excitement to make their seminar presentations.

Reading the personal testimony of Revathi, a transgender woman in a Gender Studies class, motivated my students to work on a creative articulation of a transwoman's ordeals re-imagining the persona. The students worked in groups. One of the girls, a rural student was a poet. Engaging with the themes of alienation, gender identities and the experience of social ostracism , she wrote a poem on the mental anguish , ennui and the estrangement experienced by the transgender person who is a victim of gender discrimination. The entire class worked on the English translation of her poem written in Kannada.

Ardhanarishwara's Agony

I was the cherubic baby, the apple of my mother's eye a
little prince basking in my father's arms mollycoddled by
my mother

lording over my home in my father's protective arms
adhering to the cultural codes laid down by my grandmother
I grew up,

totally unaware of my metamorphosis
into an Ardhanarishwara in society's eyes.

Now, I am the unwanted child even to my mother,

who had held me lovingly in her lap,
nurtured me and fed me.
I am unwanted even to my father
who once pampered me and showered me with kisses
The conventional society of my grandmother
also turned me out of the house
What retribution is this? I am clueless
Why am I punished like this? O Lord will you please tell me?
I yearn to play with my friends, they
lacerate my heart with abrasive diatribes
lash at me saying 'you are neither a male nor a
female' 'you are the other gender'!
What if my gender changes,
isn't my mind the same as it was before?
What if my sexed body changes,
isn't the sentient heart that beats still the same,
O my friend?

I want to be well groomed, get an education,
When I go to school,
they shatter the castle of my dreams for my future
With two harsh questions
mocking me , tauntingly ask if I am a male or a female ?
Why don't you understand this simple fact?
I need an agile, inquisitive mind to learn, my gender doesn't matter.
I want to work like everybody , need my métier
When I beg them for employment with folded hands,
they cast me away looking at me as if I am garbage and slush
they drive me out of their environs, ridiculing me as a 'hijda'
Why don't you blokes understand my viewpoint ?
I need strength and my wits for labour, my gender doesn't matter.
For a morsel of food, I go out to work
They humiliate me and shoo me away
Should I beg so piteously to cover myself with clothing,
I cannot endure this ostracism, this brutality
I have no work, no livelihood
O Shiva! Begging is the only route
that I can traverse in the future

If I drape a saree around my body
will they call me a woman?

If I wear a man's apparel,
will they call me a man?
no place on this earth can accommodate me
Because I have both the physical features of a man
and a woman,
My deepest feelings are devalued
Till the very bitter end of my life,
I will not enjoy respectability in this world.
O Shiva, I don't understand the reason for this accursed existence.
Descent into the abyss of Dementia
I have turned sixty, the world makes me forget everything
My memory is vanishing,
I am hobbling towards dotage
dragging my weary body along.
Forgetfulness engulfs me, I turn oblivious of my household
Don't remember what I said just now, the very next moment
The scene I beheld a moment ago fades and becomes new again
I am forgetting everything, the entire world falls victim to my amnesia.
This amnesia made me forget my wife and children
O God please listen to my entreaty, I have forgotten my people
Abandoned those who placed their trust in me
I have lost myself in this whirlpool of amnesia
I have breathed my last on the corridors of the minds of my people.

The hitherto hermetic compartments of language had been broken and my students were enthusiastically working on the translation of these Kannada poems written by their classmate. As a teacher, I was the mediating agent noticing the invigorated students charged with integrative motivation to translate the poems into English as they wanted to reach out to non-Kannada speaking classmates of theirs. On purely linguistic grounds, we tend to exclude a great deal that is vital and immediate if literature is to be seen as an intrinsic part and product of the culture we inhabit. My choice of a bilingual approach was a small attempt to undo this rigid principle of exclusion which motivated my students to articulate freely in English without any hesitation as they could fall back on Kannada at any given point of time. Many of my post graduate students told me that the knowledge of English literature would help them to write creatively in English and it would also sharpen their mental faculties and help them expand their vocabulary. There is a significant study by Yasmeen Lukmani which establishes that there is an orientation to study English literature regardless of academic success, or performance in the field or exposure to the language or level of income¹⁸. So whether the students are placed high on the socio-economic scale or not, whether they are academically good or otherwise, are exposed to English or not, they wish to study English and also to write impeccably in English. But in the post-colonial

context , teaching them English writing can be accomplished “ when teaching of English literature is intimately yoked to the teaching of the literary or cultural production in the mother tongue”¹⁹ as Gayatri

Chakravarthy Spivak describes it. Spivak has a spectacularly unique proposition here when she contends that “In that persistently asymmetrical intimacy, the ‘topos’ of language learning , in its various forms, can become a particularly productive site”²⁰. It is an invigorating way of creatively negotiating with English through the mother tongue via interliterary peregrinations. Spivak calls it a “homeopathic gesture, scratching at the epistemic fracture by awkwardly assuming a language to be an ‘epistemic system’ and staging a collision by looking at literature as the staged background of epistemes.”²¹ It could also work as a powerful tool of decolonization and by erasing hierarchies and valorizing multivocality, anxieties and hesitations of a subaltern student towards writing in the English language could be addressed effectively .

In the Indian academia today English hegemony constitutes a sense of reality for most people. It is as described by Raymond Williams ‘lived system of beliefs and values ‘. This kind of linguistic hegemony needs to give way to linguistic pluralism or bilingualism where the student feels inspired to learn and articulate in both the languages without a sense of inadequacy regarding her/his deficient skills in English in a vitiating atmosphere of hierarchical binary oppositions. Bilingual approach certainly helps in the imaginative envisaging of transformative models of teaching English writing. The monolingual, metropolitan manner of teaching texts needs to be dismantled in favour of a bilingual way of doing English Studies which may become advantageous to our praxis . Our alterity must be made more conscious and where it is conscious , it must be consolidated says Makarand Paranjape²². I have perceived that ‘taming the alinenness of English’²³ , bilingualism in the English classroom helps us reclaim English in a unique manner , boosting the sagging morale of vernacular medium students as they struggle to use English as a language for communion. This also makes the language learning process becomes a level playing field for the students as the power equations change and ‘English’ the target language and ‘Kannada’ the local language or the mother tongue are no longer locked in an inegalitarian, hierarchical confrontationist configuration as two languages that are antagonistic to each other’s survival. Negotiating with the creative polyphony of our multilingual/ bilingual world and purging themselves of the illusions of a unilingual world, my students discovered a new route to acquiring writing skills in English. ■

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A Vision of Life: Defeat and Disillusionment in Anita Desai's *Voices in the City*

V.L.I. Isaac

Conflict of the inner self is the central theme of *Voices in the City* by Anita Desai that accurately depicts the battle of women in the society hampered by traditional values. It stands as an example of a strong manifestation of feminine sensibility duly focusing the predicament in which Indian women are placed due to the unending patriarchal norms. A striking point of the novel is the imaginary transition of a protagonist from deeply rooted traditional limitations to a fast transforming world of modernity. The novel also focuses on familial traditional customs wherein the younger generations lack a sense of a realization and fail to cope with the transition envisaged. It is obvious that the young generation find themselves moving forward trying to blend themselves with rapid industrial development which inwardly makes them more selfish harsh and cruel. It mirrors the bilateral relationships between a discriminated Indian women and a patriarchal man where the woman finds herself rudely treated and cheated. A wonderful attempt to investigate and equally so broaden the perception of human beings in general and that of Indian women in particular has been made in the novel by Anita Desai. She depicts her rich inner world and deep understanding of the prevalent problems of the society.

Anita Desai, a recipient of the Sahitya Academy Award and the Guardian Award, UK, is one of the most distinguished personalities among the younger set of Indian women writers in English. She is best known for her lucid and un-dramatic style of writing.

A close reading of Anita Desai's novels reveals that her real concern is with the exploration of human psyche. Her novel *Voices in the City* is considered for study to assess her characters in the light of their intrinsic nature. Like most of her novels, *Voices in the City* unravels the mystery of the inner life of her characters. For her it is "Depth which is interesting, delving deeper and deeper in character or a scene rather than going round about it"¹

She incorporates themes such as the agony of existence, the metaphysical void, the fears and trembling of her protagonists whose values, beliefs and structures are jeopardized, which in turn, stand in the way of the individual's self-realisation.

My writing is an effort to discover, underline and convey the significance of things. I must seize upon that incomplete and seemingly meaningless mass of reality around me and try and discover its significance by plunging below the surface and plumbing the depths, then illuminating these depths till they become more lucid, brilliant and explicable reflection of the visible world. ²

The novel's chief protagonists are Nirode, Monisha and Amla, who are brother and sisters of the same family. The novelist very distinctly draws their character. Nirode is the self that is ever alone despite its continuous search for connection. An obsessive repetitive quality in his terror in happiness and suffering is seen in his existential self. Nirode's experiments with his failures indicate his "quest for an abiding meaning in life." He achieves nothing in the end and remains a rootless drifter who can neither compromise with the world nor reject it as absurd. Nirode strives for freedom not in the manner of a healthy individual, but tries to adopt the strategy of withdrawal so as to escape conflicts. A deeper probing into the workings of his mind will show the psychological causes behind the dislocation of his psyche that suggests defeat. Nirode, the "congenital failure" goes astray while searching for his glorified self. His sister, Monisha, another character in the novel thinks of him lovingly "Nirode is like this broken bird I saw in the aviary." (VC, P. 125)

As Nirode's basic needs have been frustrated, he alienates himself from his essential nature."Frustration of the basic needs so alienates the individual from his essential nature and so disturbs the course of his development that he is no longer aware of his own best interests or able to pursue them". ³

The condition for and the symptoms of anxiety take roots in Nirode's home; the causes of self-alienation in early stages are very aptly dealt with by the author. Isolation and hostility of their apparently happy home, work towards emotional imbalance of the three sibilings – Nirode and his two sisters Monisha and Amla. Equipped with class, money, taste and intellectuality, this home suffers with an inner deficiency, which creates a strange mass of dark forces within to combat with. The most damaging situation arises when the children notice open hoastility and contempt between their parents. In fact, their indolent weak-willed and idle father has an unconcealed malice for his wife; their accomplished, polished but dominating mother reveals her disdain and resentment towards her spouse. The silent sufferers of this tension are the three innocent children. These situations cramp them and so they have no "room to grow" according to a child-psychologist. The lack of involvement on the part of the parents in children's self-creation results in a woeful life style of the young ones. Their personal prejudices "terrible contempt and resentment," in mother's eyes, the malice and spite in father's smile – seep into their young lives. They fail to grow as self-directed individual. The worst sufferer is Nirode, the eldest child.

Partially is yet another determined condition that Nirode falls prey to. His father

neglects him and reposes greater confidence in Arun. Consequently Nirode starts losing his basic confidence in others and in self and turns a “congenital failure.” Nirode’s inner strength and coherence is sapped by self-pity. A glimpse of this state is noticed in his nostalgic thoughts.

After bidding farewell to Arun, Nirode broods over his unfortunate boyhood. Only if he had been a promising child he would have sailed to England for higher studies instead of Arun.

It might have been he, he know that had he not, as a child an emotional and disorders school boy, fallen from his horse and declared to his father through tears, that he hated horses, spots ... if his father, had not weighed these distinctions before carrying aside some money for the education of one of his two sons. If Arun had not been the favourite, and Nirode a congenial failure. (VC, PP. 7-8)

It is essentially this basic anxiety generated by his uncertain childhood that prompts Nirode to “move away from others.” He shuts himself from others and becomes detached. He believes that by so doing, he can escape inner turmoil. He begins to glorify himself in his failures. His motive of life now, is to frustrate and humiliate others which reveal his neurotic need to be a dictatorial figure avoids his friends and well-wishers. He derives great pleasure over his stoical attitude towards life in general and family in particular. With his mouth sealed up and ears clogged, he presumes that he is blissfully at peace.

Nirode idealises himself in two images – one, that of an independent person free of all ties: familial, social or emotional; and second, that of a hero who would rise in spite of his failures. He asserts his freedom by denying his past, his family name and claim to property. Nirode’s ardent desire, throughout the novel, is to fail at everything. It is a negative attitude. However, he adopts this in order to fill in the unbearable vacuum created in him since childhood. To fail and to start on a new note gives Nirode, in a way, heroic dimensions. His friend David chides him for his defeatist tendencies and interprets it as “absolute negation.” Faith in self and in others is an essential attribute of real self-esteem. Nirode realises in rare moments of introspection “this lack of faith and this questing.” (VC, P. 39)

Monisha, the protagonist in the novel is the elder sister of Nirode. She is depicted as a lonely and dissatisfied protagonist. She is deprived of love and freedom. In her search for reality, for liberty, for meaning in life, for a moment of balance, her life is shattered. Married to middle -class dull husband, she is locked up in her in-laws house. Jiban, her husband, charges her of stealing money. She is left to her fate for her barrenness. These incidents in her life make her to alienate herself from the human circle. Her husband is a different man – “the complacent quoter of Edmund Bruke and Wordsworth, Mahatma Gandhi and Tagore.” (VC, P. 98)- a man of ‘non-entity and a blind moralist.’ Like a typical Bengali woman, she follows five paces behind her husband which makes her sick. She suppresses her emotions and makes no attempts to analyse herself. Amla, Monishas dear sister wonders,

“Why had Monisha, with that powerful silent stubbornness of hers, never rebelled.”(VC, P. 198) she neither accepts the life with Jiban nor revolts him. She silently takes shelter in her own diary which consoles her sometimes but not completely. She expresses “I am turned into a woman who keeps a diary. I do not like a woman who keeps a diary,” (P. 140) for her the diary is not the living thing to counsel with it. It is, “traceless, meaningless, uninvolved, does this not amount to non-existence.” (P. 140) Monisha adopts the strategy of resignation. The remoteness of home, the element of unknown in the home atmosphere makes her withdraw into her own world of loneliness. She withdraws herself from the material concerns of her family and retreats behind the barred windows. Her fear of touch, her withdrawal from passion confines her to her own private prison. Usha Bande aptly says:

She withdraws into a world of her own, remains aloof and retains in her relationship later. Her incapacity to relate herself to her family creates basic anxiety. She glorifies herself as a lonely and cold person almost stoic, different from the mass of women she sees around her. ⁴

Monisha is depressed psychologically by the shattering experience of her inability to rebel. She derives solace in her aloofness, which becomes her wisdom: she feels elevated in her silence and she courageously feels “My silence, I find, has powers upon others if not on me.” (P. 130)

Monisha undergoes physical, moral and spiritual miseries in her in-laws house. Her in-laws tease her for her childlessness and inability to beget a child. They talk about her impossible family, about her organs, the seasons she cannot have a child. This makes her reflect on the utter lack of conscience in the city of Calcutta. “Has this city a conscience at all, this Calcutta that holds its head between its knees and grins toothlessly up at me from beneath a bottom black with dirt that is its own.” (VC, P. 116) Once she is taken out by one of her uncles for sightseeing. She sees many important and worth visiting places. Besides, she has an encounter with the real life of the city. She sees “Vast businessmen sitting, picking their teeth and speculatively waggling their feet.” Here dwell the greedy people, the cut-throats. She finds the city a “dull, vacant and hopeless place.” The people of Calcutta represented by her in-laws are as cruel and rapacious as the city where there are no ethics expect greed for money and fattening of human bodies.

Brooding over these incidents puts her in a confused state. Life seems to Monisha “only a conundrum” which is to “brood over forever with” passion and pain and never to arrive at a solution. Monisha’s mean existence leads her to think that death is the only alternative of her agonised living, to her “confused despair.” The family here and their surroundings tell me such a life cannot be lived – a life dedicated to nothing that this husk is a protection from death. Ah, yes then it is a choice between death and mean existence, and that surely is not a difficult choice. (VC, P. 122) Monisha soaks herself in kerosene. A desire to extinct envelops her. “She wants to experience “feelings” and desire through fire,

so she soaks herself in kerosene and strikes a match-stick, to her astonishment the very first match struck fire and her kerosene soaked source responds to the flame with a leap of recognition; two elements had met, and in their embrace she was caught.” (P. 242) Monisha dies a cloistered death like her own cloistered life; Monisha finds escape from her mean existence death. Usha Bande rightly opines:

Monisha seeks just an escape from conflict-inner as well as outer by actualising her image by a silent suffers, the martyr. She builds around herself a wall of fantasy. As an inhabitant of her walled, secret world, she loses the ability to line in the moment. ⁵

To sum up, these characters have lost touch with their inner reality, the core of their inmost-being in childhood. Their experiences differ in their contents, and affect their as healthy individuals. Nirode ‘rejects’ everything and derives pleasure in alienation which is death in itself. Monisha prompted by her disillusionment embraces death by committing suicide. ■

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G. B. Shaw's Radical Approach on the Conventions of Dramatics.

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The nineteenth-century Britain drama became unstoppable and was closely linked with regional and provincial theatre. Most notable was the founding of the Abbey Theater in Dublin. Arthur Wing Pinero outlined the future of the theatre under the influence of Ibsen. A theatre of ideas and social comment risked dryness and dullness. It was to the credit of many of the Edwardian dramatists that their characters lived on stage to such an extent that the audience did not feel they had been buttonholed to listen to a dramatic lecture or sermon. Or perhaps the intensity of the issues and conflicts that the drama embodied carried its own charge of dramatic energy. Taking up the torch of Ibsenian realism, Shaw's aim was to replace the hack melodramas and farces that made up contemporary British theatrical fare with a new theatre of ideas. Though Shaw's discussion plays are crowded with incident, the incidents are not the merely mechanical working out of an artificial complication of a sterile plot; rather, they follow naturally from the characters' struggle to grapple with important ideas.

Keywords: G.B. Shaw, Ibsen, Drama, Modern drama, revival of drama, new concept of drama, theatre of ideas, modern dramatist.

In 1890, before Shaw even began his career as a playwright, he identified what he considered to be defining quality for a new, non-traditional form of drama. From Aristotle on, action had been the core of drama; now Ibsen offered a radically different model. In 'The Quintessence of Ibsenism' Shaw presented himself as a socialist and a realist, whose naturalistic drama exposed all collective abstractions as damaging illusions, and promoted the "individual will against the tyranny of ideals."¹ But beyond this, "the key factor was that instead of the standard final-Act climax, Ibsen's characters sat down and talked."² The clash of opinion replaced physical conflict, so that a play's resolution was the outcome of the discussion. Melodrama was performed on the stages of London patent theatres and has important connections with romantic closet drama and the late Victorian well-made play.

He looked forward to “a drama based wholly on observation and experience, which lays aside the worn-out puppets and proverbs of the theatre and illustrates faithfully modern social life.”³

Shaw entered the ring at a moment when Pinero and Wilde were the most highly-thought of playwrights: he respected neither. “I cannot say that I greatly cared for *The Importance of Being Earnest*,” he wrote. “It amused me, of course; but as well as amuses me, it leaves me with a sense of having wasted my evening. I go to the theatre to be moved to laughter, not to be tickled or bustled into it.”⁴

“The drama of nineteenth century Britain has often been cited for its alleged failure to deal substantially with the issues and ideas of its time. No one would claim that T.W. Robertson, Henry Arthur Jones, and Arthur Wing Pinero ‘belong to literature’; and it is only in Wilde and Shaw that the drama recovers ‘a measure of linguistic vitality and social function.’”⁵ True the question is one of vitality, but not necessarily of linguistic or literary kind. The question might be phrased in this way: does this drama reveal an extensive and penetrating relationship with contemporary life, and does it continue to shed light on the subject when examined from a later perspective? The question, it should be clear, is not of whether these plays have a specifically literary vitality: that is, of whether they present, in the text itself, significant and enduring ideas and images of human life viewed apart from the circumstances of their theatrical origin and the conventions of their rhetorical form. Rigorous application of the latter criterion may result in some surprising discoveries but, overall, obscures or distorts the true nature of the drama of that age. The relationship of dramatic text and performance, is, it seems, a problematic one for us. To our eyes, for example, perhaps the single most distinctive, sometimes painfully apparent feature of nineteenth-century drama in its textual form is the stage direction. The opening of Robertson’s *Caste* (Prince of Wales’s, 1867) is typical:

“A plain set chamber, paper soiled. A window C., with practical blind. Street backing and iron railings. Door practical 3rd E.R.; when opened shewing street door (prac.) Fire place C. of L.H. Piece, 2- hinged gas burners on each side of mantel piece. Sideboard cupboard, cupboard in recess 3rdE.L.Tea Things...”⁶

In fact, such directions, fully comprehensible to the modern reader only with reference to a glossary of stage terms, serve a purpose unrelated to literary needs. T.W.Robertson constructed a careful equilibrium between traditional theatre practices and theatre innovations which in turn contributed to the development and acceptance of a more ‘natural’ acting style. The plays of Robertson are based on the humorous and sentimental sides of common, and usually respectable, people. Robertson gently mocks the dreams and ambitions and loves of his everyday characters, at the same time gently mocking yet affirming the Victorian values of home, honour, and the inevitable triumph of virtue. By gently commenting on societal foibles, Robertson was able to promote ideals of culture in a way that was

acceptable to Victorian theatre goers. Caste and Robertson's other plays, were a source of prosperity that neither the playwright nor the actor managers found individually. The six Robertson plays performed by the Prince of Wales's theatre, of which five were written specifically for that company, were performed on nearly half the play bills throughout the Bancrofts' management. The Bancrofts certainly felt that Robertson's plays performed by their company, Society, Ours, Caste, Play, School, and M-P, made a significant contribution to the elevation of English theatre. On the whole, Robertson became a leading light for the future artists. He infused new life into drama and prepared the ground for others. His example was influential "both in domesticating the drama and turning its attention to social actualities and was an inspiration for later dramatists like A.W. Pinero, H.A. Jones, Bernard Shaw and even Oscar Wilde."⁷

The business of the playwright, he believed, was that of the politician:

To strive incessantly with the public; to insist on earnest relations with it, and not merely voluptuous ones; to lead it, nerve it, withstand its constant tendency to replace into carelessness and vulgar familiarity; in short, to attain to public esteem, authority, and needfulness to the national welfare...instead of the camp-follower's refuge of mere popularity.

Of course Shaw's style could be uncongenial not only to the conventional theatre-goer but to some of his most discriminating contemporaries. Max Beerbohm, Shaw's successor on the 'Saturday Review', complained that "flesh and blood are quite invisible to Mr. Shaw...to all intents and purposes, his serious characters are just so many skeletons, which do but dance and grin and rattle their bones," and Shaw's long-time friend and sparring-partner, G.K. Chesterton, quipped that "Shaw is like the Venus de Milo: all that there is of him is admirable."

Shaw was entering his most productive period as a playwright, and his plays became more popular despite his continued insistence on forcing unpleasant realities down his audiences' throats. His new connection with the Royal Court Theatre under the management of Harley Granville Barker and John Vedrenne provided the most congenial working situation that he was ever to enjoy. When Shaw began writing for the English stage, its most prominent dramatists were Sir A.W. Pinero and H.A. Jones. Both men were trying to develop a modern realistic drama, but neither had the power to break away from the type of artificial plots and conventional character types expected by theatre-goers. The poverty of this sort of drama had become apparent with the introduction of several of Henrik Ibsen's plays onto the London stage around 1890, when *A Doll's House* was played in London; his *Ghosts* followed in 1891, and the possibility of a new freedom and seriousness on the English stage was introduced.

Shaw, who was about to publish *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* (1891), rapidly refurbished an abortive comedy, *Widowers' Houses*, as a play recognizably "Ibsenite" in tone, making it turn on the notorious scandal of slum landlordism in London. The result

flouted the threadbare romantic conventions that were still being exploited even by the most daring new playwrights. In the play a well-intentioned young Englishman falls in love and then discovers that his prospective father-in-law's fortune and his own private income derive from exploitation of the poor. Potentially this is a tragic situation, but Shaw seems to have been always determined to avoid tragedy. The unamiable lovers do not attract sympathy; it is the social evil and not the romantic predicament on which attention is concentrated, and the action is kept well within the key of ironic comedy.

Unafraid to satirize himself, or even the new movements he championed, Shaw next invented an "Ibsen club" and ironically portrayed the "New Woman" in *The Philanderer*. No one was willing to produce the play until 1905, but Shaw, undeterred, began a third, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, completed in 1893. This time the Lord Chamberlain, as censor of plays, refused it a license, although its ostensible subject, organized commercial prostitution, was treated remorselessly and without the titillation afforded by fashionable comedies about "fallen women" which long had been the West End's stock in trade. Mrs. Warren is drawn as a vulgarly flashy woman who found that being proprietor of her own body was more advantageous than sweating for a pittance in a factory or a pub and turned her discovery into a chain of profitable brothels.

Labelling as "Unpleasant", the first three plays in his first collection, Shaw explained that, their dramatic power is being used to force the spectator to face unpleasant facts. No doubt all plays which deal sincerely with humanity must wound the monstrous conceit which it is the business of romance to flatter. The three plays in this volume are Shaw's earliest plays. Considered extremely daring at the time – it proved impossible to produce *Mrs. Warren's Profession* for over twenty years – they can still in places shock us today. Each play is a blatant attack on Victorian society, on the hypocrisy of those who believe themselves morally blameless yet condemn the poor to live in degrading squalor and then live off the money this produces.

Shaw manages to avoid the pitfall of preachiness which traps so many who writes fiction to support a campaign, except perhaps in *The Philanderer*. The central location of this play is the fiction Ibsen club, which stands for everything progressive in society. Today Ibsenism is an obsolete word, and it is cleverer that Ibsen wrote about far more than Shaw thought, blinded as he was by his own social agenda. But at the turn of the century, plays like *An Enemy of the People*, *Ghosts* and above all *The Doll's House* seemed iconoclastic attacks on injustice in society. Ibsen was the subject of violent denunciation for the immorality seen in his plays, and this is what attracted Shaw-the social campaigner. These plays are far simpler than Ibsen's, and much more obviously making a non-dramatic point. Their effect was much the same, and Shaw (unlike Ibsen) revelled in it.

With plays unpleasant, Shaw issued a radical challenge to his audience complacency and exposed social evils through his dramatization of the moral conflicts between youthful idealism and economic reality, promiscuity and marriage, and the duties of women to others

and to themselves. The notion of art for art's sake, the guiding principle for so many writers of his generation, repelled him, and he insisted that he "would not lift a finger to produce a work of art if I thought there was nothing more than that in it." All of his plays, novels, and essays are intensely conceived political statements.

It is of course, a paradox of Shawian dimension that these serious sociological tracts in fact delight even more than they instruct, that they continue to delight, indeed, in an age when the historical setting of Shaw's theories and political credenda has receded into the past. One by one the mainstays of Shaw's world view – the Fabian creed of "permeation," eventually his Stalinism, his faith in "Creative Evolution" and the "Life Force" - have been toppled; but the iconoclasm, the lacerating common sense, the passionate social conscience, and the insistence upon the man's common responsibility for the state of his world live on because of the incomparable wit with which they are served up.

"Why should humour and laughter be ex-communicated?" Shaw once asked Tolstoy. "Suppose the world were only one of God's jokes, would you work any the less to make it a good joke instead of a bad one?" Shaw's life is covered with a scholarly thoroughness that still retains the lightness of touch without which any treatment of this brightly plumed subject would be intolerable. If one tends to bog down in the mire of detail, one is nonetheless grateful for the rich array of information. Shaw's character was bizarre enough to warrant a psychological approach, and that the roots of many of his eccentricities are traceable to his early life.

The biting tone of Shaw's first plays had brought him attention but hardly popularity. He began to see that if he wanted a wide audience he might have to compromise a little in the direction of that audience's expectations; it was no use writing shocking and provocative material if no one came to see it. With his early decision to publish his plays in book form, Shaw seized an opportunity to force his opinions upon the public that had so far refused him popular success. Taking nothing for granted from his readers, Shaw bolstered the text of the plays with lengthy prefaces and replaced traditional stage directions with discursive narrative. Thus, he created an entirely new and un-imitated genre, part play, part essay, part oratory.

A major sortie in what Maxwell Anderson has called Bernard Shaw's "furious critical assault on the romantic theatre" is the section entitled "Better than Shakespeare?" in the preface to *Three Plays for Puritans*.⁸ "Well-known today, this discussion offers proof of Eric Bentley's assertion that Shaw's Shakespeare criticism should be judged as polemic rather than criticism of more objective sort."⁹ Shaw's attack in that preface on Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* has naturally been a principal object of critical attention ever since it was penned, but this fact should not blind us to another, that Shaw was at least as much concerned with *Antony and Cleopatra*, and that in fact his own comedy, as one scholar pointed out more than a generation ago, was more of a counterblast to Antony than to Caesar."¹⁰

It is easy to forget that Shaw followed the lead of certain of Shakespeare's predecessors and contemporaries in re-introducing Cleopatra into a play about Caesar, whom he called "this greatest of all protagonists,"¹¹ whereas Shakespeare "keeps the two rigorously separate."¹² It is a queer quality in literature. It is a sort of cold extravagance; and it has made him all his enemies. ■

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Showcasing the Varied Shades of Modern Indian Marriage: A Dominant Theme in Prof. Vikas Sharma's Novel *498 A : Fears and Dreams*

Payal Sharma

Prof. Sharma, an emerging name in the genre of Indian English Fiction, has six brilliant novels to his credit. The themes of almost all his novels are woven around Indian socio-cultural fabric. His novels are purely Indian in their themes & approach. With the power of his acute observation, he deeply understands the changing trends of Indian society. He asserts that the concept of marriage in India has changed drastically during recent years. Prof. Sharma believes that each & every marriage is unique in itself, as both the partners involving into a marriage are having their individuality. They come together with their capabilities, weaknesses & limitations. In most of the cases, it's woman who is supposed to dissolve her individuality in this relationship. But, this is absolutely unfair, as one should not be ready to compromise his or her identity/ individuality at any cost. Where one has to be rigid & firm and where one has to be flexible on this thin demarcation depends the success or sustainability of the relationship.

Prof. Sharma's novel 498A: Fears & Dreams deals with all these post marital concerns. It also hits at the curse of dowry, in its all forms & aspects. Prof. Sharma believes in the notion that a good marriage can usher you into paradise, a bad one into hell and all the so called pre-conceived notions of our society like: 'Marriage is destined', 'Marriages are made into heaven', 'Marriage is a bond of seven births' seems futile, when there is infidelity in a relationship. What if, a relationship is abusive or one of the partners is betraying the other. Someone has truly said: 'Marriages are made in heaven, but so are thunder and lightning'.

Keywords: Marriage, Compatibility, Relationship, Individuality.

Gone are the days when trouble between mother-in-laws & daughter-in-laws was one of the major issues after marriage. In current scenario, when the couples are living independently in the nuclear family system, the focus on each of the marital partner is immense. Their responsibilities, pressures are having no end & thus causing tensions &

stress in their lives. From the household chores to financial arrangements, savings, investments all are the sole responsibilities of the young married couples. Besides, very soon, they are open book to each other. In joint family systems, it used to take time & sometimes years to know & understand one's spouse or partner, as the opportunities of communication & free discourse were less available and the partners were able to spend less time with each other. Now the scenario is completely changed, as very soon they know each & everything about their partner & fed up with each other even during initial years of their marriage. This is one of the major reasons of increasing numbers of divorce cases. Besides this, some other issues emerging post marriage are lack of understanding, lack of communication, lack of acceptance & lack of humor. According to Prof. Sharma, the compatibility between the partners should be good to sustain the relationship.

Prof. Sharma is a keen observer of life. In his novel 498A: Fears and Dreams, he highlights the post-marital concerns through the conjugal relationship of Jatin & Tanvi, Anjula & G.K., Veena & Salil Shanti, Joe & Sofia etc. Ms. Alpana in her article remarks: "This particular piece of art suggests the role of marriage institutions in the lives of millennial generation and how it is different from our previous ones".¹ Besides, unraveling the psyche of all characters as individuals, he also reveals the psychology of their families. For instance: how a marriage is settled; how the society & families of bride and groom manipulate and emotionally blackmail the other family and how this pious relationship is sometimes fixed like a business deal. Prof. Sharma says that the intentions behind the relationships are not always pure & honest and if a relationship is not based on truth and honesty, complications arise.

Prof. Sharma studies the pattern of marriage with reference to changing Indian socio-cultural milieu; he reveals the truth that this pious relationship which was earlier called a bond of seven births and a divine blessing has now become a deal or a matter of bargain. The couples are losing patience, perseverance, mutual respect & faith. Very easily, they shift from one person to other as they have no emotional ties. Ms. Megha Singh remarks: "This novel is more of a documentary that revolves around some married couples for whom marriage is not bliss but a curse instead."²

As far as the failure of a marriage is concerned, poor economic condition of the groom or his family is also one of the major reasons that can create havoc in this relationship, as a lot of wisdom is required to adjust with a poor person. Prof. Sharma states that quite often it happens in our society that the rich girl gets married with a man of low economic status, fails to adjust in adverse circumstances. The same happens with Jatin and Tanvi in the novel. Jatin works in a private sector and earns 40 thousand rupees per month. But the amount proves meager before the rising demand of his wife Tanvi Dixit, who was having high expectations from her life. Her demands and wishes know no bounds. With his little income, Jatin failed to fulfill her growing expectations of material comfort and lavish life. Her madness & pursuit for material desires and comfort creates the gap between them. Prof. Sharma states the reason that Tanvi is having no aim or noble purpose in her life. Her only dream is to live a lavish life full of comfort. She is so blinded and clutched in the web

of materialistic pleasure, that she ignores the real pleasure and essence of life, which was the pure and unconditional love of her husband, a sense of sexual gratification or physical harmony between both of them. Many times in our life it happens that we focus only on those things in life, which we don't have and avoid the bliss that God has rewarded us with. Thus the beautiful relationship at last comes to an end. Tanvi takes an immature decision, leaves for her parental home and their marriage comes to an end. Thus, the pursuit of materialistic pleasure, physical comfort and allurements to lavish life at last breaks their marriage.

Prof Sharma says that in most of the cases it happens that girls are tied in wedlock without knowing the real value and piousness of this relationship; rather they are having the false notion of marriage in their mind. Their only dream after marriage is to live a liberal, lavish & free life without any inhibition. It doesn't matter to them how miserable life they have led in their parental home. When their fanciful desires get shattered after marriage & they come on a realistic plane. They escape from this relationship; the only way out for them is to end the relationship.

Another prominent post marriage concern is extra marital affair. Prof. Sharma raises this issue in almost all his novels. His characters whether male or female are easily attracted to opposite sex & indulge in physical relationship. Jatin, while staying in U.S.A. meets Sofia, a widow and in very first meeting with her, he is attracted towards her, make physical relations, without slightly hesitating about being a married man, cheating his wife. Ironically, only in few months, he forgets his wife, Tanvi. This is unbelievable how Jatin changes his identity, becomes Joe and forgets all about his past life. Tanvi was still his better half. Without having an iota of remorse or guilt, he enjoys sexual liberty with Sophia.

In many cases nowadays this is not the married partners or married couples, who seek divorce from each other due to a stressed relationship but, it is the family members in many cases either of the bride or the groom, who tries to create tension and disturbance in a happy marriage. Tanvi's mother is not slightly perplexed at the decision of her daughters divorce, as she is having another scheme ready for her daughter's marriage and this time she is having plans not only to settle her daughter, but the whole family through a wedding. This time, she is plotting to give her daughters hand to a prosperous criminal lawyer. Blinded with her manipulative motives, she doesn't look even slightly worried about the happiness of her daughter and decides to give her hand to an adult widower, who will not be a suitable marriage partner for her young daughter. Besides this, the alimony amount of ten lac rupees, which Tanvi gets after her divorce from Jatin is consumed by her selfish family members. Her brothers buy a bike and her mother a necklace. One lac rupees was spent on Tanvi's father's disease, fifty thousand on his funeral, two lac rupees on the debt incurred on the family after her father's death and then remaining amount was spent on her caesarean delivery. Prof. Sharma describes how the whole family was busy in fulfilling their selfish motives and desires, purchasing luxurious items, completely neglecting the happiness and future of Tanvi.

Prof. Sharma mentions that division of household chores is also an emerging issue after marriage. Presently, women are not ready to perform double roles -the duty of a bread winner and a bread maker. Modern women believe that daily housekeeping & household chores are no longer her sole responsibility. Here the problem arises if husbands are not ready to share the half responsibility of handling home, then kitchen chores become a cause of tension and disturbance between them. Prof. Sharma describes that this is the beginning of a new crisis in the families. In the novel, the character of Tanvi is of such type, she is having high expectations in life, hates the kitchen chores. Prof. Sharma gives a lot of examples to support his point of view. He says that one Indian rich lady left her husband in U.S.A. by saying that it is not possible for her to survive there as a domestic servant. Everybody knows that domestic help cost a lot of money in foreign countries. Prof. Sharma explains:

“All over the world women today have tremendously changed after getting higher education and are not prepared to remain busy in the kitchen before and after the office hours. In case husband does not share the domestic responsibility, they seek divorce. Due to their strong belief in the right of equality, they are not prepared to perform double duties -that of office as well as kitchen.”³

Pursuit of materialistic pleasure, physical comfort and allurements to lavish life is also one of the prominent post marital concerns. According to Prof. Sharma, Tanvi Dixit, the female protagonist of the novel and wife of Jatin puts her marriage at stake in pursuit of materialistic pleasure. She found herself restless without material comfort. During the initial days of his career, she pressurizes Jatin to fulfill her demands one after another. Prof. Sharma explains that salary of Jatin fails to fulfill the raising demands of her wife for refrigerator, T.V. A.C. and costly furniture. Prof. Sharma describes: “the wind of the desert cooler didn’t please her senses and A.C. was given top priority by her.”⁴ Thereafter the demand for scooter, washing machine, costly furniture, nice curtains, then for personal phone. Thus her demands know no bounds.

Another major post marital concern is society’s worn out concepts regarding marriage. The society’s outlook towards the physical appearance of bride and groom also plays a major part in creating disturbance in marriages. The people give so much importance to physical charm that even higher education and other skills are not given any importance before physical beauty. Prof. Sharma says that even today the physical charm of a girl plays a major role in sustaining a marriage and keep the partners united, that’s why after a definite period of marriage many males & females are diverted to post marital affairs, as they find their partner is losing the physical charm and attraction.

Prof. Sharma seems concerned over the immature outlook of contemporary youth. He raises the question: “Why don’t they understand their duties towards their parents who spend their hard-earned money in the arrangement of marriage? Is it mere child’s play to marry and then get separated? Is human life merely a waste land? Is it enough to feel sorry for everything at the time of final separation and settlement? Who will take care of the emotional needs of the children, born out of wedlock?”⁵

Prof. Sharma gives precious suggestions to young married couples, as how they can be able to develop a harmonious relationship, how they can devote their life to a noble cause and live a meaningful life. According to him, a life of social service and national service is a life worth-living. He advises the youth: “Every couple has to prove its worthiness to create harmony in life. The married people may not behave like Lord Christ, Lord Buddha, Lord Mahavir and others and yet achieve the goal of life with the decent means, instead of becoming great like Ashoka & Alexander; they can become good people like Mother Teresa and Sir Aurobindo.”⁶

Believing in the fact that all earthly joys are momentary, he inspires the youth to serve the society and the nation to get fulfillment in life. To dissuade the young readers from the charm of materialistic pleasure and a life of comfort, he tries to persuade them with the remark of a great scholar. He says,

“Great philosopher Saul Lavine has pointed out the importance of four Bs in life- being, belonging, believing and benevolence. Life can be made decent when husband and wife accept the importance of earthly existence and don’t bother for material comforts. Let them belong to the family, society and perform their duties towards society and the nation. Let them believe in right knowledge, right conduct and right philosophy, and follow eight dictates of Lord Buddha.”⁷

Prof. Sharma reveals the real face of Indian marriage, he poses the question before society as he asks:

“Who is ready to follow the code of conduct as prescribed by society and law? Rare people bother for seven rounds of fire, the slokas pronounced by the priest, the purity of mangal sutra, vermilion etc. and accept symbols of pure marriage”.⁸

Dr. Apeksha Tiwari in her article mentions that the institution of marriage is a purest one that calls for a number of responsibilities and duties from both the wife and the husband. About the novel & the novelist she remarks: “Prof. Vikas Sharma shows us (through the novel) that marriage is not only an institutional ceremony, but rather a commitment that starts with two people but actually involves two families and the whole society as a matter of fact. If a marriage gets disturbed, it disturbs two families and it has an adverse effect on the whole society.”⁹ To conclude, we can say that this novel presents before us the complexities & concerns of a married life. The novel not only interprets the reason of maladjustment & failure of marriage but also offers the solution to their problems. ■

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Bengal Renaissance: Its Significance in Shaping Indian Heritage

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The Indian history may be divided into ages. Nirad C. Chaudhury divides Indian history into three ages – ancient, medieval and modern. M.K. Naik writes, “Chaudhuri’s thesis is that Indian history comprises three cycles during each of which a strong and creative foreign influence provided the primary motive force, the European Aryan, the Muslim and the British respectively.” (Naik 277) Later writers like Rammohun Roy, Swami Vivekananda, Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Roy and India’s critics including V.S. Naipaul agreed to this view. Naipaul’s three travelogues *India: An Area of Darkness*, *India: A Wounded Civilization* and *India: A Million Mutinies Now* speak of this. The present research article speaks of the historical significance of Bengal renaissance.

Keywords: -Renaissance, Nationalism, Bengal, Intellectuals.

Bengal renaissance speaks of British rule as most beneficial to India. The Hindus rulers created an age of anarchy; and the Muslims created an age of fanaticism and dictatorship. The British though ruled as with an iron hand, unified India and modernized it. The so-called English education with reference to Lord Macaulay, modernized India. They made India a greater part of South Asia, and the colonial world – the Third World. Michael Edwards thinks:

As British dominion spread slowly over India – the major areas were not absorbed until 1856 – it met anarchy and political chaos. But it also found a functioning society whose institutions had become petrified by the effects of a collapsed civil polity. Force was the sole arbiter, and it was superior force backed by purpose which gained India for the British. From the beginning, their primary task was to reconstruct some system of government and bring about civil peace. (Edwards 7)

It is because of the British rule Bengal renaissance was made possible.

There are cycles of progress in human history. We talk of Greek civilization,

Harappa, Babylonia, Romans, Confucius, European renaissance, Irish renaissance, and Transcendentalism.

These are great movements in human history that aim at humanism, progress, secularism and peace. Of all renaissances, European Renaissance was the most vibrant, and the most ideal. M.H. Abrams states,

‘Renaissance’ (‘rebirth’) is the name commonly applied to the period of European history following the Middle Ages; it is usually said to have begun in Italy in the late fourteenth century and to have continued, in Italy and other countries of Western Europe, through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In this period the European arts of painting, sculpture, architecture, and literature reached an eminence not exceeded in any age. The development came late to England in the sixteenth century and did not have its flowering until the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods; sometimes, in fact, John Milton (1608-74) is described as the last great Renaissance poet. (Abrams 337)

Bengal Renaissance: Bengal renaissance was a cultural, social, intellectual and art movement that took place from the late 18th century to the early 20th century (even upto 1947). It began with British East India Company’s victory in 1757 over the Battle of Plassey. Raja Rammohun Roy (1772-18) is the ‘Father of Bengal Renaissance’. Nitish Sengupta thinks the Bengal Renaissance ended with Rabindranath Tagore, Asia’s first Nobel Laureate.

For almost two centuries, the Bengal renaissance saw the radical transformation of Indian society, and its ideas have been attributed to the rise of Indian anti-colonialist and nationalist thought and activity during this period. The philosophical basis of the movement was its unique version of liberalism and modernity. According to Sumit Sarkar, the pioneers and works of this period were revered and regarded with nostalgia throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

The Bengali renaissance was predominantly led by Bengali Hindus. They were socially and economically more affluent in colonial Bengal, and therefore better placed for higher education. Well-known figures include social reformer Raja Rammohan Roy, writer Rabindranath Tagore, and the physicist Satyendra Nath Bose. The main Muslim figures in the movement include members of the Suhrawardy family, poet and musician Kazi Nazrul Islam and writer Rokeya Sakhawat Hussain.

Bengali renaissance took place in the fields of arts, science, literature, philosophy and religion. The so-called social reformers like Roy, Ishwarachandra Vidyasagar questioned Indian social evils like karma theory, varna system and ritualism and superstitions. They rejected gender inequality, sati, idolatry and opposed colonial governance. The pioneers tried for social reforms – humanism, secularism, modernism, industrialization and nationalism. These pioneers Roy, Vidyasagar, the Tagores, the Ghoses, the Dutts, the Boses,

Profulla Chandra Roy, Kazi Nazrul Islam, Bankimchandra Chatterjee, Satyajit Ray, Keshabchandra Sen, Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekanand, Jagadishchandra Bose, MeghnadSaha, Begum Rokoya, and others influenced Indian life later.

Muslim intellectuals shaped Muslim nationalism, Pakistan's identity, and forming of Bangladesh. Their Freedom of Intellect Movement, now inherited by writers like Taslima Nasrin formed in 1926, challenged Muslim dogmas. Calcutta was the capital of British India upto 1911, and it engineered Bengal renaissance, India's freedom movement and nationalism. The 1857 Sepoy Mutiny, treated as India's First War of Independence, furthered Bengal renaissance.

The British built the major Indian cities Madras, Calcutta, Delhi and Bombay, to use their own names. Roy led to the founding of Presidency College in Calcutta. The British founded the Imperial Library, printing press, newspapers and journals. "Print language and literature played a vital role in shaping ideas and identities in colonial Bengal from the 18th century onwards," writes Anindita Ghosh, continuing that "... commercial print cultures that emanated from numerous cheap presses in Calcutta and its suburbs disseminated wide-ranging literary preferences that afforded a space to different sections of the Bengali middle classes to voice their own distinctive concerns." For instance, SivanathSastri notes that Charles Grant, a British politician influential in Indian affairs who also served as Chairman of the East India Company, moved "that a thorough education be given to the different races inhabiting the country, and that the Gospel be preached to them... ." Moreover, ArabindaPoddar contends that the English education of Bengalis was intended to create "mere political slaves," arguing that, "the civilizing role of English education, stressed the need of creating a class of Anglophiles who would have a somewhat in-between existence between the rulers and the ruled." (Wikipedia, Bengal Renaissance 3)The Christian missionaries did the rest of the work.

Roy's Brahma Samaj created lot of changes in Bengal renaissance and the impact of the same is to be seen in various fields as follows.

Education: The traditional Vedic and Persian education taught to the elite children only literacy. It was only male education. The Company granted one lakh rupees for education. Lord Macaulay's *Minute* furthered this English education. The Baptist Missionary Society (est 1800) started schools and taught sciences, too.

During Bengal Renaissance science was also advanced by several Bengali scientists such as Satyendra Nath Bose, Ashutosh Mukherjee, Anil Kumar Gain, Prasantachandra Mahalanobis, Profulla Chandra Ray, Debendra Mohan Bose, Jagadish Chandra Bose, Jnanachandra Ghosh, Gopalchandra Bhattacharya, Kishori Mohan Bandyopadhyay, Jnanendra Nath Mukherjee, Sisir Kumar Mitra, Upendranath Brahmachari and MeghnadSaha.

Jagadish Chandra Bose (1858–1937) was a polymath: a physicist, biologist, botanist, archaeologist, and writer of science fiction. He pioneered the investigation of radio and

microwave optics, made very significant contributions to botany, and laid the foundations of experimental science in the Indian subcontinent. He is considered one of the fathers of radio science, and is also considered the father of Bengali science fiction. He also invented the crescograph.

Arts: The Bengal School of Art was an art movement and a style of Indian painting that originated in Bengal and flourished throughout British India in the early 20th century. Also known as ‘Indian style of painting’ in its early days, it was associated with Indian nationalism (swadeshi) and led by Abanindranath Tagore.

Literature: Bengal Renaissance produced a galaxy of writers, in Bengali and English. We shall mention the names of Bankimchandra Chatterjee, Toru Dutt, Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, and others.

Religion and Spirituality: Of all fields, religion and spirituality is the most fruitful one as it taught people about culture – or the way of life. The Tagores followed Roy’s BrahmaSamaja. Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, KeshabchandraSen, Sri Aurobindo, and others revitalized India.

Sanjeev Sanyal concludes his book *The Indian Renaissance*: “A thousand years ago, India was at the height of its power, influencing the world with its ideas and trade. Now, India’s economic performance is once again attracting world attention as the country reawakens not just as an economy but as a civilization.” (Sanyal cover page) ■

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Exponentiation of Culture and Nature in Association with Man and Woman in *One Part Woman* through Some Eco-feministic Concepts

Geesha G

N. Vijayasamundeeswari

Man is dependent on nature but seldom recognizes its importance. As Man is ultimately supreme among the other species, realizing his dependency on nature is quiet far. If nature is associated with femininity, culture is associated with masculinity. If both are facilitating each other, it would be like *Madhorubagan*. How women are associated with nature is proved here through the incorporated text passages and substantiated through the views of eco feminism. The imbalanced and unravelling of Eco-feministic perspectives on Ponnaand cultural constraints of Kali as a symbol of the entire men, in Perumal Murugan's *One Part Woman* are an objective of this research article. It highlights how women are associated with the degradation of nature in the male dominant society resulted with different ends due to ifs and buts.

Keywords: ecofeminism, women, nature, barrenness, concept of Arthanareeswar

Introduction

Man is dependent on nature for each and everything right from the moment he is born till he gets buried, yet he is considered superior to nature and other species in the hierarchy. As humans hold more power, they practice dominating and controlling qualities upon others, and ultimately it paves a way for the degradation of nature. Thus, ecology becomes an irresistible topic of discussion in the contemporary world. Eco-literature is a wide range of study which deals with the interconnection of human and nature. One step ahead, man exercises superiority over the part of his own being, none other than no man. He feels himself more superior than a woman. As a result of the long era of man's suppression on woman, different feministic movements also have upraised in different times.

Feminism is a social movement started to voice out gender inequality in the society. Feminist movement started in the year 1960s and it is continued till date undertaking various changes in it. "A major interest of feminist critics in English-speaking countries has been

to reconstitute the ways we deal with literature in order to do justice to female points of view, concern and values”(Abrams, Harpham 126). Feminism is against male-chauvinism, domestic violence, and sexual harassment. It supports gender equality and women’s rights. As a byproduct of different feministic movements ecofeminism also emerges.

Ecofeminism

Ecofeminism is the branch of ecology and feminism that deals with the relationship between woman and nature. Associating woman with Nature in a long-term practice, everywhere in the world. The term Ecofeminist was coined by a French feminist Francisco d’ Eaubonne in 1974 in her book *Le Feminism ou la Mort* which means Feminism or Death. Early works on ecofeminism largely consists of historical connections between women and the nature. The modern ecofeminist movement arose in late 1970’s and early 1980’s with the increasing consciousness of the relationship between women and nature as a series of conferences and workshops held in the US by a combination of various academic and professional women. They discuss the process in which feminism and environmentalism might be blended to promote respect for women and protection to nature, which have a long connection for the oppression of both. Women and nature are often portrayed as chaotic, irrational and in need of control. While men are frequently characterized as rational, ordered and thus capable of directing the use and development of women and nature. The hierarchical structure that grants power to men and allows for the exploitation of woman and nature, particularly how they are associated with each other. The exploitation of nature and women is basically deep routed as doctrines for the eco-feminists. To overcome this, one needs to restore and redefine the underlying patriarchal principles and structural relations of one’s culture and encourage equality, non- violence, non-hierarchical forms of administration to during about new social forms.

Women have intrinsic closeness to nature. The natural characteristics of woman have the specific interest for nature. They usually don’t like the violence and the cruelty. We used to call nature as “Mother Nature” and earth as “Mother Earth”. Both nature and women are associated with reproduction and nurturing. Both have ecological characteristics like reciprocity, co-operation, love, caring, etc. Nature is also an integral journey of a human being; it starts from mother’s womb and ends in mother earth’s soil. Women are associated with nature and men are associated with culture. In the notable paper entitled *Ecofeminism at the Crossroads in India: A Review*, Manisha Rao mentions that “Ecofeminist literature portrays the historical exploitation and domination of women and nature as going hand in hand and both are seen as victims of development. It is taken as self-evident that any harm to nature harms women equally, since women are seen as closer to nature than men”(Rao 127). Ecofeminism exposes the ways in which patriarchal society oppress women and exploit nature. Our society associates woman with nature and man with culture. “Feminine qualities such as co-operation, nurturing, being supportive, non-violence and sensuality are especially appropriate for creating an environmentally aware society. Because of women’s greater bodily involvement with the natural functions surrounding reproduction, she is seen as

more a part of nature than men” (Khanduja 106). When there is a disturbance in nature it affects women more than a man. That is why it is said, there is a strong interconnection between woman and nature. Ecofeminists claim that men dominate the nature in the same way they dominate women, and they view patriarchy as responsible for the current status of both women and nature. So, Ecofeminists support women to come out of the patriarchal dominance and help them live independently. They also assist women attain a respectable position in a society.

This paper intends to study the interconnection of women and nature in the male-dominant society, and it also details the oppression of women and exploitation of nature by male chauvinists. This paper also focuses on how patriarchy affects the woman and nature by analyzing the framework of the characters in the novel. The main objective of the study is to analyze and interpret the textual and conceptual aspects of ecofeminism in the select novels of Perumal Murugan.

Perumal Murugan is a famous writer, poet and scholar who writes in Tamil language. Perumal Murugan was born in 1966 to a family of farmer who had small lands near Thiruchengodu, a town in Tamil Nadu. Murugan began writing from an early age and some of his children’s songs were featured on ALL India Radio. He has written six novels, four collections of short stories and four anthologies of poetry. Few of his novels have been translated into English language. His notable work, *One Part Woman (Madhourbagan)* was short listed for the crossword Award and won the Prestigious ILF Samanvay Bhasha Samman in 2015. Perumal Murugan’s novel *Madhourbagan*, was published in Tamil in 2010 and later translated by Aniruddhan Vasudevan as “*One Part Woman*” in 2013. The title indicates the Goddess Parvathi in Arthanareeshwar. Aniruddhan Vasudevan was awarded Sahitya Akademi Translation prize in 2016 for this book.

In *One Part Woman (Madhourbagan)*, the writer Perumal Murugan weaves the story around an affectionate young couple Kali and Ponna, who have been childless for more than twelve years. The couple is mocked and humiliated by the society for her bareness and his impotency. Kali and Ponna are deeply plunged into this matter and fond of having a child of their own. They perform all the rituals and offerings that people have suggested them to conceive a child, but nothing helped. no other things have bothered them except this issue. Ponna and Kali are inseparable, thus Kali refuses the idea of second marriage. Kali’s mother along with Ponna’s family comes up with an idea to send Ponna to the Chariot festival. On this night the men in the festive ground are considered as gods and the consensual union of any woman and any man is approved by the society. Ponna is deceives everyone that Kali has permitted her to go to the festival but when Kali learns the truth, he is shattered, and he feels that Ponna has betrayed him. The story ends with Kali trying to kill himself by hanging on the branch of the Portia tree in his village.

The story is continued in two parallel sequel- *A Lonely Harvest (Aalavaayan)* and *Trial by Silence (Ardhanaari)* each with two different futures for Ponna. In *A Lonely Harvest*,

Kali who tries to hang himself succeeds. Kali is not able to accept the fact that Ponna has been with another man, he kills himself and torments her throughout her life. Ponna is devastated by Kali's death and confines herself to the barnyard. Meanwhile Ponna conceives a child and that slowly changes her life. Ponna's mother Vallayi and mother-in-law Serrayi help Ponna survive through the difficult situation. Growth of a child within her gives her a ray of hope and she takes care of the field in a good way. Finally, she delivers baby boy and learns to lead the rest of her life by herself.

In *Trial by Silence*, Kali who tries to hang himself survives his attempt, but he is unable to forgive Ponna and all others who have helped in conspiring against him. He punishes Ponna and his mother through his silence and confines himself to the barnyard. Ponna breaks her ties with her family for ruining her marriage life by lying to her about Kali's consent. Even when Ponna conceives, Kali doesn't come home to see her. In the end, Ponna delivers a baby boy, but Kali doesn't accept the child, unable to withstand Kali's silence Ponna tries to commit suicide, but she is stopped by Kali.

Women and Nature

In all three books Murugan clearly portrays the ways in which woman and nature are dominated by the men and society in various situations. It is an unwritten norm that a woman becomes complete only when she becomes a mother. Giving birth is the purpose of her existence. If she doesn't, she is oppressed and humiliated by the society.

Reproduction is considered as a major duty of women. The ability to reproduce is also a reason that connects women with nature. The protagonist Ponna is humiliated at various instances for being childless, she is compared with dry land, and even healthy seeds do not grow when the land is dry. "When his own wife is a dry land, what is he going to do with this new one?" (*One Part Woman*). She is compared with the barren land, the land which is poor to produce any crops. And she is also compared with wasteland, the land which is totally unfit for vegetation. People humiliate a childless woman saying even her touch is ominous. "That barren woman ran up and down carrying seeds. How do you expect them to grow once she has touched them?" (*One Part Woman*). Ponna has not been invited for any auspicious occasions or ceremonies. Even if she attends such functions, she is not allowed to stand in the front. The pressure from the society is so harsh and, in all dimensions, thus she restricts herself from being sociable. In the end, when Ponna has conceived, almost everyone in the village visits Ponna and bless her. Those who have told her she is barren now comes to her praising. Pregnant women are praised and celebrated by the society as she is carrying the family lineage. It is the offspring that makes husband and family proud.

Chellappan a man who has dealt with the cattle in the village, indirectly tells Kali, "Maapillai' That is just how some cows are. No matter what you do, they never get pregnant". Here Ponna is compared to a cow, which doesn't have the ability to get pregnant, he means that Ponna is infertile. He tells Kali to "Just quietly change the cow. If you say yes, I can fetch you one right away". (*One Part Woman*). He tells Kali to get ready for

second marriage. The preconceived notion of the society for many centuries about the childlessness is mainly due to some defects of women and impotency of a man is quite remote. So, women are susceptible and vulnerable to accept all blames. “When we tie a rope muzzle on a calf, it can’t do much. It’s the same thing with people” (*A Lonely Harvest* 128). Calf is compared to a woman, like the calf woman is also tied with the duties of her home and husband. cows, goats and women are treated in the same way. Only if they conceive, they are praised and kept at home. If they don’t conceive, they are considered worthless. Thus, women and animals are treated alike by male dominant society as a so-called social norm.

Ponna tirelessly practices all religious beliefs in all possible ways to get pregnant. Ponna and Kali together go to many temples they hear about for performing rituals and offering Pongal, to conceive a child but their hopes are nullified. The Maladikkal, the barren rock, is like Paalai - not fit for vegetation. The name Maladikkal, malady (᳚᳚᳚) refers to a woman who is infertile and kal (᳚᳚) refers to the stone. This refers to a symbolic worship. It is believed that “any woman would be blessed with a child if she walked around the barren rock”(One Part Woman). Walking around this rock is equal to suicide yet Ponna risks her life and performs the ritual, but it turns out to be of no use. Ponna’s mother-in-law together with Ponna’s parents sends her to Chariot festival, as it is the last possible way for them to have a child. Even though the day of consensual sex is approved by the society. The men who have attended the eighteenth day of chariot festival are considered as gods whereas the women who go to the festival are known as whores. This reveals how patriarchy portrays women biased. Though the protagonist Kali is in the same thought process, he says to Muthu, “When they play with the child that comes from this how they could not remember that it was some other man’s child? And the women who went there once - won’t they be tempted to go again? You have turned my home into a whore house!” (*Trial by Silence* 38).

Deities and demons are all named after women. This concept reveals that women are labelled as they are emotionally imbalanced ranging from serenity of Goddess to uncontrollable demons. Women have two natures. One, they are soft to people who treat her good. Two, they become wild and uncontrollable when someone treats them bad. Similarly, nature is good to the people who treat her good. If somebody tries to harm her, she too will become wild and uncontrollable and destroy everyone. “Like the Mother Earth images wild uncontrollable nature was associated with the female. The images of both nature and woman were two-sided. The virgin nymph offered peace and serenity, the earth mother nurture and fertility, but nature also brought plagues famines and tempests. Similarly, woman was both virgin and witch.” (Merchant 1983: 127). A young tribal girl was ravished and strangled by four men in the forest. This shows that men take women and nature for granted and make use of them only to satisfy their needs. Kali and Ponna fear that the curse of the girl has affected the family lineage of those four men. And they try to quench the anger and break the curse by performing rituals and offering Pongal. During famine, people find deity Bathrakali enshrined in the forest. Famine is considered as the outcome of the

anger of nature. Thus, famine is compared with goddess Bathrakali, Bathrakali is a ferocious goddess, who kills a demon. Here demon is referred to as the brutality of men. Nature and other facets of nature are associated with women. It can be viewed in the description of a goddess, “When he stood at her feet, she appeared to be lying there with full confidence that the entire land was hers. Her arms and legs were as big as the trunks of trees. She had a round face, her wife-open eyes met his in an unwavering stare. “(*One Part Women*) Men are trying to confine nature within four walls as they did to women, but nature has spread herself and shows that she cannot be restricted. “She roams freely around the forest. Can you confine her within walls? “(*One Part Woman*).

“When Kali survived Serrayi says that “we cannot have this tree here anymore. It has become Yamen to the very who planted and nurtured it”(*Trial by Silence*17). So, they cut a branch of the Portia tree. Blunder is committed by men, but the tree pays the price. Serrayi chopped off a rooster’s head and made an offspring of it under the tree. “She spoke to the tree: Is this enough blood for you? Did we let you grow and thrive here all these years so that you can take one of our lives? You must end it all with this offering, all right?” (*Trial by silence* 19). Nature and small creatures suffer so that a man can live. Nature is being exploited by man as he is considered powerful. “Wanting to express his irritation at the dirge, Kali picked up a club and hit the ox brutally on its back” (*Trial by Silence* 56). An animal is brutally beaten by the protagonist Kali as he was not able to show his anger on his mother. The animal is punished for the man’s mistake. Even after the childbirth whenever Kali is angry, he shows his anger on the cattle’s by “hitting the oxen chasing the sheep and throwing stones at the dog”(*Trial by Silence* 173). Women or animals both are same for men, superiority of men can be witnessed in the way they abuse women and nature.

Patriarchy doesn’t look at women as their equals, rather they try to dominate and degrade them in all possible ways. Nallayan’s brothers and their sons are ready to send their wives to sleep with Nallayan to acquire Nallayan’s land. Men neither respect their wives nor the land, they just make use of both. The brother’s wives are used as bait to inherit Nallayan’s property. The women in white, a widow is considered unlucky, and they are not allowed to take part in any auspicious function. They are not allowed to come before men, and they are mostly confined to their houses. Patriarchal norms mean that a woman is nothing without her husband, she is respected only when she is with her husband. Deity Madhourbagan stands combined with goddess to show people that, “There is no female without the male, and there is no male without female. This world goes on only when they come together” (*One Part Woman*). But the male-centered society do not accept this idea, they look at women as weaker ones and they expect the women to be dependent.

In *A lonely Harvest*, Ponna takes charge of land after Kali’s death. Ponna’s knowledge and experience in the field work shows how she is interconnected with the nature. She makes major changes in irrigation, sowing, storage and cattle rearing according to her convenience. Once she starts introducing new techniques in land usage and farming it gives her a new hope to survive in solidarity. In *Trial by Silence*, when Kali goes on for

pilgrimage trip, it is Ponna who has taken care of the land. She makes useful changes in the land and barnyard and takes care of it so well. But when Kali returns, he was not happy with the changes. “Looking at these changes, Kali felt like he was increasingly becoming old and irrelevant”(Trial by Silence 160). He is thinking that those women would have left the field as it is, and he can still do better next year. The field at good condition, triggers his male ego and makes him angry. He wants his wife and mother to be dependent on him. He doesn't like when women bring all changes on their own without his help. He doesn't want the women to be independent.

Men and Culture

Kali 's denial of remarriage of his, his refusal of the abandonment of Ponna, his strong objection of her participation to the festival for the sake of baby and keeping sexual intercourse with Sakti, as a permitted practice, made him commit suicide once he comes to know about his impotency and her betrayal of his impotency to the world in the second volume of *One Part Woman* , living his life as a walking dead man and being docile to Ponnaas a punishment for her and as it is a kind of self-suffering in the third volume of *One Part Woman* are the best examples to say how men are associated with culture .

Nature and women are unprecedented and unsteady in most of the occasions. But men and culture are slow and at times act as a catalyst for changes. Similarly, how nature is exploited by men and in the name of culture, they neglected both women and nature. When the oppression goes beyond, both show their hard and rude faces.

Conclusion

Perumal Murugan' s novel gives a transparent view of ecofeminism in his novels through a typical south Indian society. Androcentric attitude is also a cause for ecological destruction and gender issues. The current state of women and nature necessitates us to study further on this issue. It is important to address all the facets of ecofeminism. The consequence of dominating nature not only affects the environment, but it also has a deep impact on both animate and inanimate objects in the world. So, we should take proper measures to protect and conserve the nature. Finding possible solutions for empowerment of women and nature is crucial. It can be done by rejecting conventional and superstitious practice, broadening the thought process, and accepting that men, women and nature are interconnected, and we need each one's help for survival. ■

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The Dog Keeper

P. Raja

His face betrayed his pinching stomach. He was hungering for a job. Ashamed of begging for food he stood in all humility facing the man in the cash counter of a posh hotel and revealed himself.

“Any job, Sir... Any job... I can’t go home with empty hands to feed the hungry stomachs there. Ready to take up any job.” The young man in his early twenties was almost on his knees. He was on the verge of tears.

The man at the counter finished counting the currency notes and bundled them up.

“So you need food?” the man asked and betrayed his ignorance.

The young man nodded his head and said, “I need a job to buy food.”

The man at the counter lifted his eyes from the bundle and looked at the young man as he would a sage. “Name?” he asked.

“Harichandran... Hari for short,” replied the young man in a stentorian voice. Perhaps he was proud of his name.

“Good... an apt name” said the man before he moved on to his next question. “What were you till yesterday?”

“A job seeker”.

“Qualification?”

“A postgraduate in economics”

“And yet to find a job in some office?”

“I was trying for more than three months. All offices have displayed their ‘no vacancy’ board. My mom had spent every paise she had saved in educating me. Now is my turn. I have to feed her and my two younger sisters.”

“And your father?”

“In jail... for no fault of his own, he will be behind bars for life.”

“Ho-ho! Say that... son of a jail bird... Who will offer you a job? Go away,” the man said with a look of unspeakable irritability.

“What has that to do with this?” Hari sounded slightly disappointed.

“No arguments... Go away, go away,” the man at the counter muttered in a surly tone before he turned his head away.

Hari stood, feeling his heart turning heavy like a stone. He came back to life with the touch of a warm motherly hand on his shoulder.

“You need a job... I have one for you,” mused the whispering voice.

Hari’s heart began to beat in great thumps. He was listening as if his whole soul were an ear. At last he turned his head, asking in a deep but small voice, “Did someone speak?”

“Of course... It was me...” said a woman dressed in a red silk sari.

Hari’s eyes began to wander all over her face. Her hair parted at the middle of the head showed patches of grey. Emerald studded nose screw on both the wings of her well chiseled nose, diamond ear studs, dark big eyes and cute little smiling lips on a rotund face, fair- complexioned, reminded him of Goddess Meenakshi of Madurai.

“Ugh!” exclaimed Hari. With an involuntary shudder he brought his palms together and saluted her, tears threatening to spill over.

“Will you please carry these two little bags of food to my car? It is parked on the other side of the road.”

“Yes, madam... I will,” Hari replied lifting up the two bags, in one hand.

“Don’t call me madam. Call me Meena that would sound natural,” she asserted blithely.

They walked out of the hotel. In an instant she moved far. He raced after her. For all he was so young and limber, he had difficulty in catching her. At first he could scarcely see her, though he could hear the rustle of her silk sari. She sped with astonishing fleetness and crossed the two hundred feet highway and stood panting near her black coloured Chevrolet spark.

Hari lagging several steps behind managed to reach her and had a narrow escape from a speeding ambulance van. Together they stood panting, facing each other giggling.

“How old are you, Meena?” asked Hari, without knowing that women, young or old, hate to answer such a question.

“Guess and fail,” she replied.

He pursed his lips and tilted his brows. Before he could make any guess, Meena hurried to change the topic. “I was listening to your conversation with the hotel manager. I don’t care who your father is or why he is behind bars. Something in me said I should help you. To put it differently I should take your help.” She said quickly.

“Well, what if I do?” he laughed. “Anything I will do to keep my family above water.”

“Good! That’s the spirit. I would give you a decent salary of fifteen thousand rupees per month. Food and shelter free. How do you like it?” she said opening her handbag.

“You mean I should be in your house all the twenty four hours?” asked he, unable to pull his eyes off her handbag.

Meena nodded vehemently as she pulled out five currency notes each of two thousand rupee denomination. She pushed them into Hari’s shirt pocket, as he watched with glowing eyes.

“Go... Give it to your mom. This is only an advance amount. Report for duty tomorrow as early as you can... say six in the evening,” she said, as she passed on her address card to him.

Hari looked at the attractively designed card with Meena’s pass-port size photograph printed on it. She looked much younger and more attractive than she did in real life.

“Your house is not quite far from mine. Between three and four kilometers, maybe. I’ll come,” he said in all jubilation, as Meena opened the door of her car.

“You didn’t tell me the nature of my job,” he said curious to the core.

“You will be my dog keeper,” she said and looked at him.

“A dog-keeper!” exclaimed he, with the grimace of a sour smile. To Meena his face looked very odd indeed. He had several conflicting expressions all at once.

“Why? You think it below your dignity?” Meena asked softly gazing at him.

Hari stood silent.

“You said you would do anything to drive away hunger,” she said wonderingly.

Hari merely smiled at her. “No... no... no...” he said, as if it were one word slurred out.

“Then? Are you afraid of dogs?”

“A little,” he muttered, “will your dog bite?”

Meena broke into peals of laughter. “Mine is an old dog. He can’t even bark, leave alone bite,” she said curtly.

“And what am I expected to do? Take the old dog for a walk in the evenings, give him food, pat him now and again, scrub him and give him a bath?”

“Right... That’s what is expected of every dog keeper. But you don’t have to do any of these. My dog can’t even walk. So you can’t take him for a walk. Scrubbing him and feeding... well! That’s my maid’s duty. You have nothing to do with that. He sleeps all through the day except a few minutes with food. But he is awake all through the night. And your duty is to have an eye on him when he is awake,” Meena spoke to him delicately, reassuringly.

Hari could not make up his mind. At last he said, his lips working with a theatrical gesture: “Okay! I’ll take up the job... just to help you as you have helped me.”

Meena looked at Hari with a heavy, somber kind of stare, before she occupied the driver’s seat and drove off.

Hari’s new job, which he was yet to take up, gave him a sleepless night as a quiver of questions his mind began to pose.

Dog keeper? What sort of a lousy job is that? Why should one pay such a huge amount to take care of a dog? Dog! After all a dog! That too an aged dog that can’t even run or chase! Huh! It can’t even bark. What is the need for keeping such a dog at home? If Meena has real love for the dog, she should have called a dog doctor and peacefully put the dog to rest.

More such questions rose unwarranted and began to badger him. “Everything has to wait for its time,” he consoled himself. “My questions will find their answers when I meet Meena and her dog.”

What sort of dog is that? Show dog? Working dog? Labrador? Pomeranian? Greyhound? God knows what? Definitely not a cur. Hari brooded deeply over this.

All the mind boggling questions will find their answers when the day breaks.

The day did break. The much awaited hour too came. Hari found the house of Meena and stood before its huge iron gate.

“This is no house. This is a bungalow. Meena should be stinking rich. That’s why it is fifteen thousand to a dog keeper,” Hari mumbled as he pressed the door bell.

Cluck... opened a little window on the left side of the gate and out peeped a face with a handle bar moustache. “Are you Harichandra?” the gate keeper asked looking at Hari anxiously and searchingly.

Hari smiled a funny little smile and looked into the gatekeeper’s eyes.

The gate pushed back a little, allowing Hari to squeeze his way in. He looked around. Not a squeak...not a quack... not a bark... but absolute silence.

“This way,” the gate keeper said pointing at the path hedged with massive and bushy flower bearing plants that shone almost blindingly in the sunlight.

“Where does it lead to?”

“To Meena’s office. She is waiting for you,” said the gatekeeper and as if notready for further enquiries, he moved into the sentry box.

Wasting no time, Meena took Hari to the backyard of the bungalow without entering the main building.

“Is it a greyhound?” Hari asked to keep the conversation going.

Meena looked at Hari attentively. Under his impassive mask, she knew he suffered. “Didn’t have a good night’s sleep?” she asked.

“Not a wink,” he said, “curiosity gave rise to a parade of questions...”

“And you are unable to find answers to any of them,” interrupted Meena.

Hari sighed deeply. She gave a short laugh. “That little house will clear all the fog,” she said directing her finger towards a hut-like concrete structure that stood a few yards away, padded off from the rest of main building and the servant’s quarters.

“Oh, is that the kennel?”

“No... It’s a small house built with the greater purpose of accommodating an old dog.”

It was Hari’s turn to give a short laugh.

Meena smiled and said nothing. She moved on. They reached the small house. Hari’s heart began to beat faster than before. From the outside the house looked a little dark, though one of the two doors was kept ajar. Meena pushed the door a little. It opened with a creaky noise.

A muffled little, shriek came from the inside and Hari was standing looking into what was probably the dog’s bed room. As light shone from the open doorway, everything budded into view.

A steel double cot that had never seen a second coating of paint occupied the major portion of the room. A long enamel coated iron chain, its one end tied and locked to the frame of the cot betrayed the movement of the dog, whose neck was perhaps chained to the other.

“Dog”, Meena called softly.

“Who’s that?” came a howl from the backyard of that house.

Hari moved a couple of steps backwards, unable to digest the idea of a dog speaking human language.

At that moment the sound of the iron chain dragging on the concrete floor created a sense of fear in Hari and he looked dazed.

The backyard door did open a little and out peeped a man who looked older than his age. There was not a single hair – black or grey – on his head and his pate shone like a well polished silver plate. He had a capsicum for a nose on his face and his small eyes were surrounded by many wrinkles. Yet his face told me that it was not withered by age but by worries.

“Is this old man the custodian of the old dog you were talking about?” Hari asked innocently.

“No... He is the dog,” she said. Hari looked at her in dismay, his mouth half-open.

“Don’t you notice the other end of the chain tied to his ankle?” she asked.

Hari scratched his head contemplatively, while the old man dragged himself towards Meena and stood with a bent head.

Meena hurriedly picked up a sturdy cane that stood leaning against the wall and began to wag it in front of the old man’s face.

Panicky old man moved back with fast but unsteady steps, knocked against a deal wood table. There was a clatter and a fall.

“What are you doing?” Hari asked.

There was a long pause. “She is training you,” Dog said in a trembling voice.

“Why are you called Dog?” Hari asked.

“Because we can’t call him God,” Meena replied.

“What is he to you?”

“Nobody... This old dog is my boss’s ex-husband. I manage her property and caring for this dog is a part of my duty. That’s why I have brought you here.”

“Does your boss visit this kennel?”

“She does... occasionally... when she feels bored she comes here to give a good thrashing to this dog.”

“Is she a sadist?”

“Don’t know... You are asking too many questions.”

“Unless the fog gets cleared, I will not be able to work with you.”

“Then ask... Let them not be beyond my answering capacity.”

“Why should this old and haggard looking man be thrashed by his ex-wife?”

“I told you... When she is bored.”

“That can’t be the answer. You are trying to hide the truth from me,” Hari said laughing softly.

“That’s the truth... Only that much I have heard from my boss... Believe me.”

Hari sensed in Meena a persistency which made him uneasy. “How can I take up this job unless I am given to understand what for I have to do this,” he said.

“For money”, came the curt reply from outside the kennel. “Beggars can never be choosers. Do what Meena says and take home a fat salary,” the voice was floating in the air and entering the Dog’s house, as a short plump old lady made her appearance. She looked fresh as if she came straight from a beauty parlour, and looked very pretty. Her grey hair dyed black instead of being rolled into a bun, was coiled in a knot low down. She sailed on with a sweet, womanly gravity.

“She is the boss... She is the boss,” whispered Meena, as a jangling feeling came upon Hari.

“What’s it that you want to know?” So saying the old lady took the long iron chain in both her hands and started pulling towards her gently and softly the haggard looking old man who showed his head a few minutes ago and disappeared.

As the chain pulled the boss’s ex-husband inside the so-called small house, he came in trying to balance himself with whatever say the door or the wall he could hold.

The old lady began to laugh like a witch in fairytales driving the old man to the edge of insanity. As if cubes and cubes of ice were sent down his not-straight spine, he began to wriggle at her very sight.

She pulled out a short iron rod from god knows where and hit the old man on the head. Every time she hit him, the old man jumped up. As he jumped up, the old lady too jumped up for he was quite taller than her. The two looked like old children playing on a seesaw.

A few seconds later, the old lady stopped. “Painful, isn’t it?” The old lady asked giggling all the time.

The old man nodded his head with tears rolling down his cheeks and his palm was trying to crush the bulge trying to show up.

“Oh, how painful it was to me whenever you suspected me? You will compensate my suffering every day... And this young man will teach you the art of suffering,” she said and then turning her eyes towards Hari asked, “Will you?”

Hari kept his mouth tight and studied the old man for some moments. “I must talk to you,” he said to the old lady.

The old lady gave a nod and signalled to him to go ahead.

“Is this the way to wreak vengeance on a helpless old man? You could very well have killed him.”

“Killing him is not anywhere on my mind. My goal is to show him death in life as he had done it when we were young. What is your next question?”

“Why do you want to involve me in your personal feud?”

“Don’t you need money?”

“Of course, I need. But my conscience will never allow me to stoop so low as to play the role of a heartless thug.”

“Put your conscience in your pocket. Make this old man weep every day and carry home a big fat sum.”

“That’s what you and Meena are doing to him. Should I add to this old man’s grief?” Hari asked.

“Listen! Neither Meena nor I have the strength of a youngman like you. We can’t swing the sturdy cane and treat this Dog the way he deserved. That’s why we have bought you here.”

“A paid goonda!” The question loomed large over the other. Hari thought for a while. Curiosity drove him to accept the offer. He said, “My family members have to eat. Okay... okay... I’ll do all that you say.”

“Give him some more sticks,” said the elderly lady and sailed away. Meena wagged her finger at Hari. Hari understood and smiled.

“Money Matters”, he whispered. A cunning smile crossed his face. ■

Dr.P.Raja, noted story teller. A retired Prof of English, now living at 88 - Poincare St, Olandai Keerapalayam, Puducherry.

My Days at American Campuses

Author: Prof. Basudeb Chakraborti

Reviewed by: Chittaranjan Bhoi

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It is seldom knotty to distinguish the genre of a literary text. The reading of a text may substantiate an impression of a novel, a memoir, a life-writing, a travelogue, a story, a non-fictional prose and so on. But a thorough reading and understanding of the text may help resolving such confusion. I am one such reader who got puzzled when started reading Professor Basudeb Chakraborti's *My Day at American Campuses*. The title gave me an impression that the book would either be an autobiography or a travelogue wherein the author depicts the experiences of his life in America. But the appropriate blend of reality and fictitious narrative convinced me that it could be a novel with a great deal of personal narrative.

However, the illustration of a comparative socio-cultural analysis of India, America and Italy in the text is worth reading. The socio-cultural differences between India, America and Italy are aptly presented in the book. Chakraborti's self-depreciation and self-revelation establish him as an unprejudiced and carefree individual. The author's journey in isolation displays the diasporic sensibilities he possessed. The self-discovery and self-evaluation of the protagonist express the ethical values and culture-centric attitude of an Indian. At times, Chakraborti is critical about Indian attitude and at other times uncompromisingly resistant about the degenerated American values and myth.

It has also been noticed that the author/protagonist suffers from Hamletian dilemma. He is often seen indecisive and ruminating over the past, present and future. He is caught between nostalgia and lofty aspirations. His nostalgia is due to his socio-cultural bonding and great affinity with his motherland. On the contrary his ambitious effort for self-establishment in an elian land puts him in sticky situation.

The diasporic elements prevalent in the text are but the beauty of the text. Chakraborti's judicious decision in many occasions perhaps guided him to move on in right direction all through his life. The oscillatory life through the plethora of incidents in America made him more forceful and brawny.

The mixed experience of the author in American Universities perhaps made him more decisive and firm. It is difficult to figure out the degree of struggle-intellectual and moral, he passed through during the days in foreign land.

His association with American friends-male and female could not impact his ethical values and moral obligation towards his kith and kin and his homeland. He escaped of being jeopardised by the ‘Myth of American Dream’.

I am not sure how unprejudiced Chakraborti was while explaining the events of his life. Nevertheless, he has confessed his biasness in the text. He says, “To me every social being is a decent liar” and “I will say that every autobiographer is an inventive liar”. The aforesaid statements put across his honesty, integrity and truthfulness. The admission of the author’s use of ‘smart trick’ demonstrates how forthright he is.

The cultural distinction i.e. forwardness/backwardness binary has been strictly rejected by the author. He is of the opinion that “Culture cannot be genetically transmitted. The culture of a community is an integrated manifestation of ideas, beliefs, tradition, education, economic condition etc”. The socio-cultural and civilizational values modulate the lives of the men. Perhaps the values imbibed at the early phase of his life brought back Chakraborti to his homeland, India. Hence, the psychological quandary of an American diaspora of Indian origin resolved by virtue of his strength of mind to embrace a culture he was born and brought up in.

I am still not able to decipher whether the book is a novel, memoir, autobiographical novel, a travel story or a unique genre. This is again up to the readers to perceive as they wish. However, the volume is tinged with powerful emotions. For its candidness and linguistic simplicity, I strongly believe that the book indeed will get readers approbation. ■

In Between Blooms

Author : Amlaan Akhyansu Sahoo

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Amlaan Akhyansu Sahoo's second anthology *In Between Blooms* was published coincidentally one century after the publication of *The Waste Land*, and hence seeing it through the lens of T.S. Eliot's epoch making collection of poems would rightly judge it. In this sense if Eliot's experiment was the reflections of Post World War I Europe, Amlaan anthologizes the post Covid Pandemic period, a period where literally everything around us turned to standstill with the world flipped upside down. So it is obvious that the anthology contains poems dealing with misery and dejection, mistrust and isolation reflecting the hollowness of life. Coincidentally enough *The Waste Land* having five sections begins with the line 'April is the cruelest month....' And *In Between Blooms* having five sections begins with the plight of 'Summer'.

If we see the contents, it is divided into five sections, five seasons, felt in Indian subcontinent – Summer, Monsoon, Autumn, Winter, Spring – all section having nine selected poems each.

The first section, 'Summer', deals with poet's loneliness and annoyance, angst and vexation, may be due to pandemic afflicted world or due to personal isolation felt deep in his heart. The title as well as the five sections therein gives us the impression that it deals with the birth, growth, innocence and earning experience in life leading to ultimate merger with the super soul. But on the other hand it is an expression of the seasoned sensitivity of the poetic persona, his anguish and torment, grief and distress encountered every now and then amidst the hollowness of the mundane but eventful world. Every beginning has its end, and every end heralds a new beginning. Journey of life is not change but transformation. The philosophy lying behind Amlaan's poems in this subsection testifies that life on the Earth is not easy; it is not bed of roses. The very first poem 'Deficit' reflects that the poetic persona is not at all satisfied with the life he is leading. He has undergone multiple losses, that stick to the mind and remains for a long time. "Most losses are given names, /post-mortems and frames/ and bereaved brains to remember./Tonight, mine is too deep, too vacant,/and perhaps too.... Imposed?" ('Deficit' p-25)

Though symbolically the poems in all sections are well arranged, the dissatisfaction, 'dissonance' within gives a reference to all summer year as felt in Indian subcontinent owing to the global warming. The symbolically rich poems on varied themes loaded with figurative language will definitely give the readers an impression that Amlaan is a matured poet, though he is yet to cross his teens. At the same time the poet does not forget to sing thoroughly through the internal rhythms and rhymes that reverberate all through the anthology. His use of alliteration at some places makes his songs more soulful.

Amlaan's second anthology is packed with Imagery and images. His existentialist's concern in themes of plights and predicaments of modern men finds place reflecting meaninglessness of the universe. Loneliness is the best friend of a creative mind but pensive mood kills living. Amlaan's poems reflect his loneliness. But give indications to his intimacy with his family members, his life being. Imagery of death consciousness persists at many places. As both of his parents are in medical profession and he too is a medical student, every now and then medical terms intrude into his poetry, it seems.

In 'Kalopsia' the poetic persona is trying to assert that he is not alone against the backdrop of loneliness all around. "I am not alone. / Although the gods / have sucked life out of the city, / and smashed coruscant dreams to dust / I'm not alone'. The poet is very realistic in expression. He is very straightforward. He boldly expresses- "No, I am not perfect / Hiding my own crystal colors, / I never hope to be / what I long for is far, / true but out of reach." ('A Chance to Colour' p.35)

The poetic persona wants to grab things more. Achieve a lot in a very short span of time, which is but the expression of his inner conflict, that he fails to share with others. In "Opaque" he writes "peace is an illusion, like / afternoon dream that never conclude." Again "yet my tears haven't dried" in "Afterthought". But the poet is optimistic to reach the horizon, the destination, all green, which he often dreams. If a reader reads any poem randomly but consciously (s)he will easily make it out as to which section the poem belongs. In the concluding section "Spring" the poetic persona frisks at the signs in the 'golden horizon'. He continues singing "Dependence wilts like ageing leaves / in the silent hours of dreamless nights, / while a wholeness blooms, / warm and whitewashed / as the promise of a golden horizon....O my latent hopes, rejoice! / let the song of spring begin. Perspective is a fruit of choice, for wholeness comes from within." ('Whole' p. 101-102)

So, to conclude, the poet's presentation of the anguish and angst of the modern men in 'Summer' and his call for 'rejoice' with the 'fruit of choice' as a consequence of achievement of wholeness from the within is but the poet's optimism for transformation from within. And thus, the very title of the anthology is apt. ■

Old Wound

Saroj K. Padhi
Odisha

Of't I wonder
why time and again
I'm drawn
to lick old wounds
despite myself,
when arrested time
sulks like a dolorous wind,
rattling bones babble
a prayer in dark;
not being able trundle back,
as morose I sit
not being able
to ride the horse of happiness
on way to peace;
back I'm caught
in the awful journey
of modern times
with its thousand indecisions,
restless revisions,
lack of certitude
and mercenary calculations,
that doesn't allow you
to be yourself in the world
of mutual suspicions.
Why do I tend so oft'
to grovel
in scented ashes of youth
that mock me?
Today I decide to bury
this heart under some old book
emanating the musk of your love
before silently withering into eternity,
in some kind of death
it seems
there lies a little certainty. ■

Beyond My Reach

Rajat Kumar Satapathy
Madhya Pradesh

I ran after my shadow
in the faded darkness of early morning
till afternoon.
I did not find it at all
to hide my tears
in its darkest zones.

In the afternoon
I ran after my shadow
till evening
to hide my pains inside it.
I find it but could not touch it at all.

In the evening also
I ran after the shadow.
I did not find it
to hide my feeling of the whole day inside it.
In the faded darkness
I lost my address
and could not find the way back home.

In the night
in the thick darkness
I traced my shadow
but I failed to recognise it
and to hide my dreams inside it
till I go to bed.

In the next morning
I find one day of my life
I lost yesterday
in the process of hiding
something of mine;
which is beyond my reach. ■

Learning of Nothing

R.M. Prabhulinga Shastry
Telangana

Why am 'I' being ever remembered
Meditated upon and worshipped?
Why am 'I' being thought over on
Certain context even uncertain?
Why am 'I' being listened whenever
Taught about anywhere at all times?
Why am 'I' being studied with the best
By means of all the sources available?
Why am 'I' being debated on various
Forums established with the purpose?
Why am 'I' being preached on Scriptures
By those who are supposed as authority.
Why am 'I' being taught all preachings
To be understood with extent possible.
Because, 'I' am Nothing other than any
One or Thing which or who is created. ■

Heart Wrenching

Smruti Ranjan Mohanty
Odisha

The Harrowing Tale
Know not
How to console that mother
Who has lost her heart and soul
That old father
Who has lost his eyes and ears
The newlywed
Who has lost all her tears
The sister
Waiting for his loving brother
Since days, months and years.

Know not
How to console
All those friends
Waiting for their near and dear
The family
Which has lost its bread and butter.
All those who are part of this nightmare
and those who witnessed it from
close squatre

Know not
How to console the man in me
Silently enduring the pangs of sorrow
Like a mute spectator
And all like me
Lost in a pool of sorrow

Will there be any taker
If I say things happen contrary to will
But life goes on?
Who will accept it
When their love and blood
Are on the funeral pyre
And life on a burning cauldron?

What to do
Except putting our little bit like a squirrel
To help ameliorate the situation
Praying for the departed soul
And the bereaved family
Being with them
in their moment of agony and tear. ■

Last Few Days of December

Pragya Bajpai
Maharashtra

The last few days of December are like
a wide window view from a running train
hurrying towards the station
Glimpses of earthly vestiges
huts, houses, heaps of hay roll by
The blanket of sky, the bumpy hills and
everything fleeting in sight
from dawn to twilight
merge seamlessly into a reel of episodic life
The taste of cinnamon and lemon
mixed in old wine
lingers on my tongue

Daily chores and banality
are reasons to believe we exist
Like victors, miles ahead of global crisis

Mind switched to reflection mode
Longings, nostalgia stuck with a lump
in throat
Compulsively remembering moments
like students writing exam
in pin drop silence

Farewells are filled with gratitude
for bitter-sweet times
Just the way it should be
from beginning to end
of year and life too. ■

Mirror

Nagasuseela Panchumarthi
Andhra Pradesh

Are we the adults?
Just to say we are dying
The evidence is in abundance!
Mirrors are a lot more!

With a relationship with each other
Every once in a while
At the age of one
Just getting away with it...
On each floor of the house
One by one
In a way that can't be thought of
We are going to lose it

Wearing a pen with all my heart
All the relationships
Once in a while in a while
They keep going and going ...
From the depths of the heart
All the attachments ...
Just disappearing out of nowhere
They will go away

The heart beat is not the same
Keeping it in control
The mind explores the ways
To the wounds of the heart
Taking on the occasion of peace
In the process of being healthy ...

Bridging the generational gap.
Realizing
Keeping up with the
All the attachments ..
Just disappearing out of nowhere
They will go away

The heart beat is not the same
Keeping it in control
The mind explores the ways
To the wounds of the heart
Taking on the occasion of peace
In the process of being healthy ...

Bridging the generational gap.
Realizing
Keeping up with the mistakes
Accepting the ups and downs
Achieving goals and goals
Just going on and on

With the memories that flow in
With a past that hurts
With a touch of thoughts
With the moments that melt away
At the age of fading away
Fighting the unseen battle
I'm not sure if you're not going
to be able to do it.
Understanding and understanding
with the life.
With the fight it is
For the rest of my life....
Might as well go on! ■

My Dear God

Borna Kekic, Croatia

My hands serve you
I will survive all the pain
I will live you by prayer
Every day with you
I'm waiting for a better dream
a new day is coming
my sadness passes with you....
I write in my dreams
My new victories. ■

The Sparrows I Miss!

Sampath Kumar, Kolkata

The chirpy little homely birds
are forever shy but come in hordes
for the little grain that i spread
every day in the morning
chitter-chatter they do in joy
as they peck the grains in a hurry

they are back as the sun is down
from their tiny beaks
a bit of grain again they peck
as they slurp of a bit water for the day
they all hurry to their nests
somewhere away from my eyes

some say it's the fumes from the autos
the naphtha adulterated in the petrol
some say it's the cellphone towers
others maintain it's a disease
but suddenly they are unseen
and have vanished from my windowsills ■

Wearing Smiles

Gajanan Mishra, Odisha

A lie, there in the sky,
Floats over my head.
I devote with loving note,
In quiet and dream
In my timeless shadows.
Everything here grows,
And I sit therein
Wearing smiles. ■

Time's Tentacles.

Debarati Sen, Kolkata

Time died in this place
trying to find a home far away from home
that bore the fragrance of sunflower
kisses.

A penchant for nostalgia fluttered midst
the crevices where periwinkles bloomed
and the sourdough of memories sprouted
Reminisce flipped through the pages
of my heart

and spoke to the cerulean bosom in
metaphorical sighs.

Wearing clouds on my eyelids
I looked for the effaced graffiti
on unfinished pages.

An archipelago of memories laid ahead.
Peppered by the rose-colored islands
that had witnessed the sunsets
of our childhood.

The orange horizon's serenade
in the cold and the fragrance of Komorebi
on winter noon.

Days of la dolce vita plummeted
the spiral staircase
of the cavernous house whose inhabitants
had long been decimated
by time's grinding wheels.

The coffee stains on the table calendar,
the unused kettle in the sink where
the cassoulet of remembrance brewed
muttered unfinished tales of love, loss,
and changing times.

This place was once a happy home
now churned the bricks of loneliness.
My happy place is now a kryptonite
that makes my head dizzy
with the migraine of grief.

The good old days rush like a forest fire
and burn through my veins.

I now belong to the ranks of the doomed.
Constantly fighting the battle called life. ■

The Lord, Puri and the Sea

Aswini Kumar Mishra, Odisha

Once the Lord
alighted upon the road
from Nandighosa, his chariot
for a blessing from his unseen hands
that broke over the multitudes.
Not that everyone was shaky,
infirm or a widow, helpless,
the round eyes
mounted upon all eyes, helpless.
Cocoanuts glided to
the Lord's invisible feet
the oceanic waves crashed on the shore
the Lord, as if chased them
to read the episode of his birth
from unchanged faces
of the turbulent waves.
holding the *Daru* aloft,
At once, the well-built devotees
turned away from the street
became lovers of bay bath
clenched around each wave and their eyes
dissolved into the watery expanse.

Once a bather wrenched himself
out of the waves,
hunger seized upon his belly
star rated non-veg
began to outreach the *Mahaprasad*
a psyche, divided
whether like a pilgrim
to sit with a devout for the deity's food
or to engage oneself a
traveler, entering a windy hotel.
Puri passes through each one's heart
and each heart through Puri. ■

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THE HINDU

Dt. 12.09.2018

Peer-reviewed Journals are at par with UGC Approved Journals

In a bid to make it easier for university and college teachers to earn points to enhance their research score for recruitment and promotion, the University Grants Commission has decided to treat all peer-reviewed journals at par with its own list of approved journals.

The recently-notified UGC minimum qualifications regulations make the point amply clear. The methodology for calculating academic/research score offers points for "research papers in peer reviewed or UGC listed journals". For each paper in languages, humanities, arts, social sciences, library, education, physical education, commerce, management and other related disciplines, teacher will earn 10 points.

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