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- editorial office -

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DIST: JAJPUR, ORISSA, INDIA-755007

e-mail : rockpebbles 2007@rediffmail.com

website : www.rockpebbles.in

Tel - 06728-223005 Cell - 9437449490 / 9861012630

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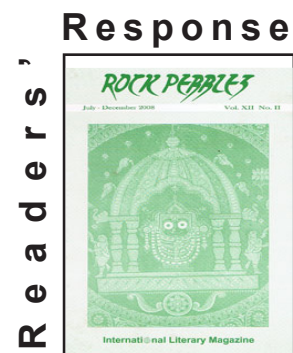
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..... ROCK PEBBLES (July - Dec. 2008) is rich with a variety of writings ranging from articles on travelogue, folklore, myth, prison-writing, detective fiction to contemporary Indian writings in English. The article on Niranjan Mohanty is one of the few that have appeared after the untimely death of the poet. The most important thing about ROCK PEBBLES is that it provides a forum for young researchers to publish their articles - to exchange their ideas among their counterparts all over India

-Dr. Amiya Kumar Patra
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FEMINISM IN ARUNDHATI ROY'S WORKS

* Narendra Tiwary

Feminism is a global phenomenon to-day. Again, there are varieties of feminist theories and practices. The feminists enormously differ in their approaches and perspectives. Some critics prefer to use the word "feminisms" in stead of mere feminism. There is, however, one common strand, i.e., feminism is a movement against patriarchal ideology. It is a movement of reforms in the interests of women. Feminism is an off-shoot of Women's Liberation Movement. This movement was initiated in 1960 by politically committed women. These women were active participants in the civil rights movement or in the protest against Vietnam War or the members of progressive or Marxists groups. But these women were disappointed with the blatant sexist attitudes of their associates of the progressive group. The National Organization of Women, popularly known as NOW, is one of those organizations in America. Betty Friedan, the author of the *Feminist Mystique* founded this organization so that women could voice their grievances and fight for their own rights. Feminism is a movement from the point of view of, by and for women. The early feminists had major concern for social and political changes. Initially, they did not pay attention to literature and literary criticism. Very soon they realized that systematic subject- deprivation of woman had been a fact as much in life as in literature. Literature and literary criticism have been powerful weapons in the hands of male hegemony for justification of oppression of women by men. The feminist academicians, oppose such claims, extended their political movement to the literary texts and hence, emerged feminist literature and feminist criticism. The feminists, as artists or critics, express their protest against socio – political or socio – economic subjugation and subordination of women. They seek to discover and change the more subtle and deep-seated causes of women's oppression as they had done it in other spheres of

* *Principal at Mount Olive College, Kohima, Nagaland, India.*

life. "Feminism," as Linda Gordon observes, "is an analysis of women's subordination for the purpose of how to change it" (Qtd. Singh, Sushila 1991:8). To be precise, feminism is an ideology which seeks not only to understand the world but to change it to the advantage of women.

Feminist literature in English is certainly not a recent innovation. The inequities against which the feminists protest – legal, economic, and social restrictions on the basic rights of women – have existed throughout history and in all civilizations. Naturally, the principles of feminism also were articulated long ago. John Kelly, in her brilliant study *Women, History and Theory* has identified Christine de Pisan (1364 – 1430) as the first modern woman to have feminist views. Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* virtually anticipated all the demands – education, legal representation, the right to vote, the right to property, and admission to professions – of the women's movement. J. S. Mills' *The Subjection of Women* is a significant contribution for the arousal of feminine consciousness. Mill held the view that women's position is not natural but the result of political oppression by men. Similarly, Simone de Beauvoir in her classic book *The Second Sex* expressed her protest against situation of women saying that "She – a free and autonomous being like all creatures – nevertheless finds herself living in a world where men coupled her to assume the status of the other." Confidently she says, "One is not born a woman, but becomes one" (ibidem 1991: 13).

Clearly, feminism has its long history and, therefore, feminism is neither a fad nor a logical extension of the civil rights movement. Feminist criticism is an approach to literature that seeks to correct or supplement what may be regarded as a pre-dominantly male-dominated critical perspective with a feminist consciousness. It places literature in a social context and uses a broad range of discipline, including history, sociology, psychology and linguistics, to provide a perspective sensation to feminist issues. Feminist theories also attempt to understand representation from women's point of view and to explain women's writing strategies as specific

Feminist criticism can be divided into three distinct divisions – (i)Phallocentrism, (ii)Gynocriticism and (iii) Prescriptive Criticism. ‘Phallocentrism’ is concerned with image of women reflected in male created literature. Elaine Showalter has explained that in its earliest years, feminist criticism concentrated on exposing the misogyny of literary practices: the stereotype images of women in literature as angels or monsters, the literary abuse or textual harassment of women in classic and popular male literature and the exclusion of women from literary history. In this respect, three books deserve special mention – (i) Katherine M. Roger’s *The Troublesome Helpmate* (1966); (ii) Mary Ellmann’s *Thinking About Women* (1968); and (iii) K. Millets’ *Sexual Politics* (1969). ‘Gynocriticism’ is concerned with women as the creator of literature. ‘Phallo-centrism’ deals with woman as reader whereas ‘Gynocriticism’ concentrates on woman as writer. Finally, there is a phase of self-discovery; a turning inward freed from some of the dependency of appropriate terminology for women writers is to call these stages, *feminine*, *feminist* and *female*.” The British female tradition has also been divided into three phases:

- a) The feminism phase from 1840 to 1889,
- b)The Feminist phase from 1880 to 1920, and
- c) The Female phase from 1920 to the present day.

“Prescriptive Criticism” attempts to set standard for literature that can serve the purpose of feminist movement. First, the feminist writers should concern themselves with the issues of oppression of women, their economic, social, sexual exploitation by men and male-centred system. Second, feminist writers should provide literature as a forum for women and help to achieve cultural androgyny. Third, feminism in literature must reflect women’s

of the fact that women characters should not be presented in traditional “feminine” roles. Fifth, in the game of oppression of women by men, women have equal share in literature. The feminist movement, therefore, attempts to promote a feeling of sisterhood

among women in stead of working knowingly or unknowingly as agents of patriarchal oppression. Sixth, in order to realize the dreams of feminist movement, literature should provide realistic insights into female personality development, self-perception and inter-personal relationships. This will increase consciousness among women and thereby their sense of confidence to change the situation to their favour.

Feminism in Indian English literature is, of course, a by-product of the feminism in the West. It is just the same as feminism in literature of other countries of the world. However, feminism in Indian English literature is not the true copy of the Western feminist literature. This is also true with feminism in English literatures of the world. Although the feminists of all shades and nationalities share the basic paradigms of feminism with the western feminist, they at the same time have been conscious of maintaining their identities independent in their own respective ways. Issue is the same but cultural and social background differs. A peasant woman from Konkan cannot have a common bond with her metropolitan, middle-class sister from Delhi. Chandra Talpade Mohanty observes, “Beyond sisterhood,” of the First World feminists, “there is racism, colonialism and imperialism” (Qtd. Palkar1996: 192). Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak also notices a “colonialist move” in the white feminist criticism and clearly points out that it “celebrates the heroines of the First World in a singular and individualist, and the collective presence of women elsewhere in a pluralized and inchoate fashion” (ibidem 193). The Indian feminists have a strong desire to fight against oppression and injustice suffered by women in India, at the same time, they suspect any kind of sympathy or help extended by the British colonialists for liberation of women from traditional practices in India. Susie Tharu and K. Lalita detect imperialistic note in the work of Anglo-American feminist critics.

the Pre-Muslim and the Post-British India taken into account, can be considered as honourable and satisfactory. During the Vedic period, India had a highly permissive society in which men and women's freedom co-existed into each others' well-being, and where right to education and thinking was not patented by men for the benefit of their institutions. V. Janapathey in her noted book ***Indian Woman Through The Ages***, says, "Many women rose to become Vedic scholars, debaters, poets and teachers. Some remained unmarried and indulged in life long pursuit of knowledge and were known as Brahmvidins". And the Brahmvidin "appeared in Pandita Parishada and was honoured as intellectual" (ibidem xii). After the departure of the Vedic age and the beginning of the Epic, the conditions of the women were deteriorating. The early marriage also steadied the downfall of the girl-child whose life was limited to breeding children and looking after the home affairs.

With the advent of the British, the condition of the women improved as she was freed from many obsolete social taboos, given education and a will to prove her abilities before the world. Missionaries and social reformers played important role for an honourable status of women in India. Through legislation and social movement, they brought some drastic changes in society – especially the status of women. Women were seen equally active in the freedom movement of India. With the spread of education among women, they began to take active part in social reform. They had their own organizations like Rabindranath's Visvabharati, the Seva Sadan and the Bharat Stri Mandal organized by Sarala Devi Choudharani in 1910 working effectively for social reform in the interest of women. After independence, India had its women on the highest post of Governor and Prime Minister also. This is, however, equally true that oppression of women continues. Women are excelling in every field. Men are towards deterioration. Still men are superior to women. Women are the victims. Men are the victimizers. Women are colonized. Men are colonizers.

Obviously, an Indian feminist, either male or female, "shall have to answer questions that are social in origin but can be made literary in implication" (1998: 159), observes Charu Sheel Singh.

They shall have to explore all the possibilities to evolve a "perfect society" (ibidem) where men and women both can live together and prosper together reflecting a single identity. "Feminist literary criticism," says Charu Sheel Singh, "cannot be supported by a philosophy of isolationism and exclusionism in the Indian tradition where the concept of *ardh narishwara* forms the pivot of sensibility. Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak, Charu Sheel Singh, Tharu and Lalita strongly object women oppression at the hands of native patriarchies. At the same time, they do not favour representation of the Third World Women – particularly Indian women – as victims by the mainstream feminists. Charu Sheel Singh agrees to wage a battle against oppression of women. But he categorically points out that men are also the victims of oppression. He observes that in spite of legislations and social movements "Women are continually being marginalized as the male are also treated unconstitutionally and inhumanly." Therefore, he suggests that men and women both should be united against oppression. Women must be supported by men in their families. In India, "women's movement," he suggests, "must keep in mind that the institution of family should not be broken up unlike its counterpart in America. Feminism is always a growing and changing concept. Rather, male and female are two halves of one single self. Thus, subjugation of women by men or men by women is subjugation of the self. Man is called *Purusha* and woman is called *Prakriti*. Both of them form cosmic harmony. Suppression does not exist between *Purusha* and *Prakriti* or man and woman. Ecofeminism relates domination of women to domination of natural environment and holds the same social system and ideology responsible for domination of both. Hence, it is relevant to deal with Ecofeminism as well in order to interpret and understand feminist literature.

Ecofeminism, as a modern critical theory of literature, links ecology with feminism. Richard Kerridge defines, "Ecology is the scientific study of natural interdependencies of life forms as they relate to each other and their shared environment, as their environment produces and shapes them. It is based on field work and the concepts that illustrate the works of ecology, are

ecosystem, ecological niche and food chain" (2006:535). According to David N. Sen, "The earth's total skin of air, water, soil and the biosphere, the planetary system, agriculture, industry, biological processes and everything whatever exists on the earth organic or inorganic constitute the ecology" (1978:2). The clarion call today is to return to nature and observe an organic life style. There is a worldwide social and political movement for preservation of nature and environment. In the post-modern literature, ecofeminism is a dominant revolutionary ideology in order to stop destruction of ecology and create a culture of love for nature opposed to so far dominant patriarchal ideology.

Ecofeminism primarily focuses on the importance of living in harmony with nature. Instead of exploiting the ecosystem of the earth for our needs, we need to change our lives to live within the system. There is an implicit belief that the past was a time when people lived in balance with nature. People were forced because of lives directly link to the earth to value it and its resources. The coming of development broke that link for many and the earth's resources were exploited and the earth was wasted. While it is men who are responsible for the violence towards women, it is women and men alike who are responsible for the waste of the earth. Women living out their lives in developed society are also responsible for the damage they inflict upon the earth. As the growing degradation and perversion of nature have been creating havoc for the posterity, safeguarding ecology is of utmost necessity. The non-human environment is present not merely as a framing device but as a presence that begins to suggest that human history is implicated in natural history.

If the ecology is not safe, the human civilization will certainly not be safe. So the main aim of ecofeminism is to protect the ecology. Our basic ethos has taught us to live in harmony with nature, in a relationship of mutual independence. Ecology is an intricate web of life. Development causes annihilation of this living organism (ecology), as it destroys the natural resources rapidly. As have been dilated in several of the world literatures, nature as feminine, so the destruction of nature is ravish/

oppression of the Mother Nature, the rearer of humankind. So for the upliftment of humankind the environment should be maintained properly. For this purpose:

There are two ways of transforming and maintaining a harmonious relationship with our physical and social environment. One, to think or act with Ecofeminism. Two, to expose the western mode of totalizing theory with totalizing tendencies and also go for an alternative model of development which will allow for the rhythm and movement of human life to be in accordance with nature (Kerridge 2006:537).

Indian English writers and critics have taken up the issues of feminism and ecofeminism together with all sincerity and have been able in creating social awareness for a sustainable development where both man and nature would be in perfect harmony. The feminist and ecofeminist criticism, in India or in other countries of the world, have various strands. The first world feminists and ecofeminists have their own ways of dealing with feminism and ecofeminism. The Third-World feminists and ecofeminists have their own concerns, priorities and their own means of dealing with them. Both feminism and ecofeminism can be taken up separately and applied to Arundhati Roy's works.

Feminism can be viewed as a major trend in Indian English fiction. Arundhati Roy draws special attention. Being a writer as well as a social activist, she has taken up the issue in principle and action as well. There have been cultural movement, social movement, religious movement, literary movement and finally most important of all women's movement in order to establish the identity of a woman different from 'Second Sex'. Ecofeminism or Ecological feminism is a strong movement parallel with feminism. Like feminism, Ecofeminism has always been an important subject for social thinkers, artists, philosophers and scientists. They have always tried to develop love and respect for the nature and its importance for physical, intellectual and spiritual development. Like the human rights, the animals' rights, and nature's rights must be honoured to assert safety of the human civilization. So it is said "beliefs that legitimate the oppression of women also legitimate

environmental degradation. This is ecofeminism's key insight" (Kerridge2006: 538).

Arundhati Roy, the celebrated artist and social activist, has done a good job as a feminist. In her debut novel *The God of Small Things*, she has presented the story of four generations of a respectable Christian family in Kerala. This is the family of John Ipe. The family is conspicuous for promoting human values. Women and outcasts, however, are not included in this group. For men, life is a thing of 'pleasure'. For women, it is their lot. It cannot change. As a feminist, Arundhati Roy studies and goes deep into the root of oppression of women even in a developed and civilized family. Arundhati Roy stands all for subalterns like women and outcasts. Her feminist vision can be well understood from her non-fictional works – *The Great Indian Rape Trick I* and *The Great Indian Rape Trick II*. In both the articles, she has strongly objected to Shekhar Kapur's film *Bandit Queen*. The film *Bandit Queen* deals with the life of Phoolan Devi as a bandit queen. At the very outset, Arundhati Roy laughs at the false claim of Shekhar Kapur regarding the film *Bandit Queen*: "I had a choice between Truth and Aesthetics. I choose Truth, because Truth's pure."(1994:1). Arundhati Roy laughs at false claim in Shekhar Kapur's statement that the film *Bandit Queen* is nothing but presentation of Truth. She is shocked to see Shekhar Kapur rejecting social and revolutionary theme and largely dwells upon rape theme and prefers to make a commercial film based on an event in the life of Phoolan Devi.

In the opinion of Arundhati Roy, heroic part of Phoolan Devi has been ignored in the film because she was an illiterate woman belonging to low caste poor family. There are many poor and innocent people like Phoolan Devi's father who are cheated and deceived in society by cunning people like Biharilal. Phoolan was only ten years old. She was not afraid that she was a girl child. It was a challenge against male dominated society by a girl child like Joan of Arc, the brave maid of France. Phoolan Devi did never think that she was different from boys and only a son could fight for paternal property in a patriarchal society.

Phoolan revolts against child marriage. She revolts against social injustice. There have been social, political and literary revolutions against such social evils. After coming back from her in-law's house, Phoolan Devi again had to protest against Maiyadeen for her father's property. As revenge, he destroyed Devideen's (Phoolan's father) crops. Arundhati Roy writes, "Phoolan Devi's first war, like almost every dacoit's first war, was fought for territory. It was the journey into dacoitdom" (ibidem), whereas, "According to Shekhar Kapur's film", says Arundhati Roy, "every landmark – every decision, every turning – point in Phoolan Devi's life, starting with how she became a dacoit in the first place, has to do with having been raped, or avenging rape. It's a sort of reversed male self absorption" (ibidem). *Bandit Queen* is a film based on the life history of Phoolan Devi. Shekhar Kapur, according to his statement, depended on Mala Sen's book and the interview of Phoolan Devi taken by Shekhar Kapur himself. *Bandit Queen* was released when Phoolan Devi was an M.P. Many people were invited to witness the film. But Phoolan Devi was not invited. The film was prepared on the life of a living woman. Instead of sending a message to fight against domination of men on women, a sense of horror is created among women as a result of protest against social injustice. Attention has been focused "on rape and gang – rape – romance" (ibidem). "Arundhati Roy is not at all emotional. When the film-maker is a man and the cause is rape. And when it is a gang-rape of a low caste woman by higher caste men . . . don't even try it. Go with the feeling" (ibidem). And this is how, Arundhati Roy expresses her feminist voice against men's concept of women.

Arundhati Roy continues with the same issue in her article *The Great Indian Rape Trick II*. She highlights double standard maintained by the Censor Board in making documentary film or films based on life of the living persons. She has quoted the statement of the chairman of the Censor Board in defence of the delay in clearing some films on Rajiv Gandhi. "The trouble with political films" he said "is that they are about real people. They must be absolutely true"(1994b:1). Arundhati Roy clearly

exposes the discrimination still maintained between a man and a woman ; big and small ; rich and poor . Rajiv Gandhi and Phoolan Devi are both political leaders . In order to understand the position of women in society , Arundhati Roy has quoted at length the extract from Mala Sen's book on Phoolan Devi . Phoolan Devi was reluctant to even discuss rape and Mala Sen appreciated the helplessness of Phoolan Devi . Arundhati Roy quotes, "I was not surprised at her reticence to elaborate". Phoolan Devi , like many other women all over the world , feels she will only add to her own shame if she speaks of this experience" (ibidem 5). This is the feeling of a woman for the women . But Shekhar Kapur has created romance and has made the film commercial according to Arundhati Roy . She questions "Who are we to assess a living woman's rape? How true – to – life?" (ibidem 6).

She, too, discusses in detail what Shekhar Kapur has done in his film *Bandit Queen*. Further, Arundhati Roy questions the murder scene committed by Phoolan Devi of twenty Thakurs in the form of revenge of rape. She argues like an experienced lawyer that Phoolan Devi never accepted that she had committed murder. Arundhati Roy is, of course, a committed feminist. She has the courage to stand for women's cause even if such a step invites any consequences against her. In *The God of Small Things*, Arundhati Roy has presented four women characters – Mammachi, Baby Kochamma, Ammu and Rahel . All the four women characters are representatives of their own contemporary culture and concept of women. Arundhati notices gradual change in the status of women in society. With gradual change, she, however, does not agree that women have cause to suffer. In her attempt to study and analyse, she finds that patriarchal forces are always operative in different forms and different ways and women are still victims at the hands of men . In spite of social, political and literary movements, women are treated as 'the other' and 'the outcasts'. And hence , she voices her feminist note in her novel *The God of Small Things* for a real change in favour of women.

Elaine Showlter, one of the strongest champions of feminism, traced the development of female literary tradition in

three different phases –feminine, feminist and female. Arundhati Roy, in her novel *The God of Small Things*, has beautifully represented the three phases through three different characters –Mammachi, Ammu and Rahel . Ammu is the main character through whom Arundhati Roy voices her feminist note. In the novel *The God of Small Things*, she concentrates on a typical Syrian Christian family of Rev. John Benam Ipe , popular as Pappachi in the novel, is his son and Soshamma, popular as Mammachi, is his daughter –in–law. As a man, he is suspicious of the emerging woman finding a voice and vocation for herself. As a woman, her husband is all in all. In the second generation, Ammu is not as submissive as her mother, Mammachi. In a similar situation, her brother Chacko enjoys love and respect in the family and society as well whereas Ammu and her children are tortured and neglected. Mammachi behaves as if she does not recognize her . Pappachi has more confidence on Mr. Hollick than on his daughter. It is the daughters like Ammu who are nuisance for whom Manju Kapur titles her novel *Difficult Daughters* (1998). Ammu is not a good daughter because she breaks the tradition of arranged marriage and again divorces her husband. Sophie Mol, being the daughter of the son, belongs to patriarchal group . Estha and Rahel are the children of Ammu who has no "Locusts stand I" (159) in the family. After Sophie Mol's accidental death, Ammu is asked to leave the house. Thus, Arundhati Roy presents pictures of women suffering and struggling for their existence from generation to generation and still it has not come to an end. In both cases, society does not provide satisfactory alternatives to women who fall out of the usual pattern of accommodation to wifehood and integration in the husband's family.

Mohit Kr. Roy is, however, optimistic about change in society: "Seen from the feminist perspective, the novel records a progress, albeit slow, in feminism, offers some rays of hope and seems to suggest a distinct possibility of redemption" (2001 : 77). No doubt, tradition is losing its hold. Change is noticed. But domination of woman by men still continues. For a perfect harmony, it is believed that feminists should be ecofeminists and end the subordination

man and nature both. Environmentalists believe that it is the same patriarchal authority which is in command of and responsible for destruction of woman and environment. They suggest that protection of environment is the protection of woman and vice – versa.

Judged from this point of view, Arundhati Roy is a complete feminist or a complete ecofeminist. She shows her equal concern for safety of women and environment. Ecofeminism is a political manifestation of social ecology. Arundhati Roy was called a literary artist for her novel ***The God of Small Things***. Her essays “*The Great Common Good*” and “*The End of Imagination*” placed her among social activists. She strongly resented to it. She thinks that her works, fiction or non-fiction, sensitize the social issues. As such, there cannot be any definite line of demarcation when she is an artist or activist. As an artist or activist, she highlights the issues of marginalized in the colonial and post-colonial context, ecological balance, neo-colonialism in the name of globalization and operation of power in different forms at different levels active in defeating the purpose of a meaningful and desired change. It is for the readers to study her works in the light of feminism or Ecofeminism.

Amitabh Roy writes, “Arundhati Roy is not an intellectual, preaching nice things from ivory tower. She has shown her serious commitment by joining like-minded people on vital issues related to environment” (2005 : 130). Most important example of her concern for environment is her association with *Narmada Bachao Andolan* led by the social activist Medha Patkar . Her essay “The Greater Common Good” was first published in a booklet form by India Book Distributors, Bombay in 1999. She has assigned the royalties of her booklet *The Greater Common Good* to *Narmada Bachao Andolan*. With Medha Patkar, she led hundreds of campaigners on an eight-day rally under the banner of “Free the Narmada Campaign” which ended in August 1999. The rally covered eight hundred kilometers beginning and ending in Indore. Amitabh Roy writes, “when the rally halted at Baba Amte’s Ashram in Kasravad, the veteran Gandhian social worker

“ the Gangotri of global mobilization of the intelligentsia” and hoped that Arundhati Roy will continue to stir the world’s conscience” (2005 : 131). As an ecofeminist, she has, of course been working as a conscience keeper.

Ecofeminism is a global phenomenon today. Women are organizing to resist patriarchy and defend the natural world. Terry Leahy has pointed out three main typical actions ‘clearly considered to epitomize ecofeminist politics’ (www.octapod.org.8000/gif/economy//content/zedgendtwo.html:1-5).

- (i) Women protesting against nuclear war and nuclear power.
- (ii) Movement like the love canal struggle in the United States and
- (iii) The Chipko struggle in India (ibidem).

Arundhati Roy, as an ecofeminist, qualifies all the three tests. She joined a seminar on the Hiroshima Day and there she presented a paper on Pokhran II test of India in May 1998. Later it appeared in booklet form under the title, *The End of Imagination* published by D.C Books, Kottayam in October 1998. The copy right of the booklet is held by N. Ram, convener, the Campaign Against Nuclear weapon in India.

In 1981, a group of women blockaded the Greenham Common Air Force Base in protest against the deployment of nuclear missiles in Britain, and nuclear technology in general. The occasion of the protests was the decision by NATO to set 96 U.S Cruise missiles at the base. Participants in the protests were women. They called themselves as feminists. They saw nuclear technology as the patriarchal destruction of life on the planet. The group called itself Women for Life on Earth. A key action took place in December 1982 when thirty two thousand women created a human chain around the nine mile perimeter fence (ibidem 1).

Arundhati Roy has not formed any such a big group in order to register her protest against nuclear weapons or technology. She, however, has been speaking and writing against nuclear weapons since 1998. She has been trying for global awareness

against Cruise missiles. In her essay “The End of Imagination”, she has categorically explained the horrors of nuclear world. She observes, “If there is a nuclear war, our foes will not be China or America or even each other. Our foe will be the earth herself. The very elements– the sky, the air, the land, the wind and water – will all turn against us. Their wrath will be terrible” (2001: 5-6). Therefore, she dares to speak in Gandhian style:

If protesting against having a nuclear bomb implanted in my brain is anti-Hindu and anti-national, then I secede. I hereby declare myself an independent, mobile republic. I am a citizen of the earth. I own no territory. I have no flag. I'm female, and have nothing against eunuchs. My policies are simple. I'm willing to sign any nuclear non-proliferation treaty or nuclear test ban treaty that's going. Immigrants are welcome (2001: 21).

Since then, she has been a regular campaigner against war. Expressing her strong confidence in Gandhian philosophy of life, she has tried to expose the American Policy of World Peace through her essays ‘War is Peace’, ‘Peace is war’, ‘The Algebra of Infinite Justice’, ‘Come September’ etc. She has tried to focus our attention on basic needs like water, electricity, education, sanitation, etc. Instead of developing nuclear power and strength, she suggests that the nations should wage war against poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and social evils, instead of against countries for neo-imperialism.

Movement like the *Love Canal* struggle in United States led by women in majority was associated with women's natural right ‘for the care and nurture of children’(www.octapod.org.8000/gifteconomy//content/zedgendtwo.html:). Arundhati Roy has, of course, concern for children. But she has not taken up this issue as sensitive as the issues of cruise missiles and environment.

The third example of ecofeminist actions is the Chipko struggle of India. This has been etched into the world's consciousness through the writing of the Indian ecofeminist Vandana Shiva. She gives a number of reasons for considering

this movement as ecofeminist. This movement is inspired by traditional Indian religious beliefs which represent the forests and nature as a whole as “feminine.” Initiated by women, forests, agriculture, hills, mountains, etc. for survival of the poor and marginalized. A good example is the statement of Iswari Devi, a village elder who has guided the Chipko movement. She said:

Shakti (strength) comes to us from those forests and grasslands, we watch them grow, year in year out through their internal Shakti, and we desire our strength from it. We watch our streams renew themselves and we drink their clear and sparkling water that gives us Shakti. We drink fresh milk, we eat ghee, we eat food from our own fields – all this gives us not just nutrition for the body, but a moral strength, that we are our own masters, we control and produce our own wealth. That is why ‘primitive’ and ‘backward’ women who do not buy their needs from the market but produce them themselves are leading Chipko. Our power is nature's power, our Shakti comes from Prakriti (ibidem 7).

If Arundhati Roy's works are read and interpreted in the perspective of the Chipko struggle of India, she proves herself to be the strongest champion of Ecofeminism. In her essay “The Greater Common Good”, she looks Wordsworthian in her approach to nature. In this essay, she deals with the beauty of nature and its importance for the poor *Adivasi* people who depended exclusively on forests and its products for their survival. But the imagination of ‘Big Dams’ and its construction has led to the depletion of forests and displacement of a large number of poor people from their parent location. They were given dream of a happy and prosperous life with all modern amenities. Contrary to the hope and expectations given to them, they have been homeless and living a life much below dignity. Arundhati Roy has mentioned comparative details of their lives before and after the construction of ‘Big Dams’, ‘the temples of modern India’ as Jawaharlal Nehru once said this. Instead of a forest from which they gather everything, they needed –

Food, fuel, fodder, rope, gum, tobacco, tooth powder, medicinal herbs, and housing materials they turn between ten and twenty rupees a day with which to feed and keep their families. Instead of a river, they have a hand pump. In their old villages, but they were insured. If the rains failed, they had the forests to turn to. The river to fish in their livestock was their fixed deposit. Without all this, they were a heartbeat away from destination (106).

As an ecofeminist, Arundhati Roy opposes the projects to build 'Big Dams' in the Narmada valley, both on the constructions of the adverse effect it has on the environment as well as the infinite misery it has brought to many. In her opinion, 'Big Dams' have hardly any sign of development of India and its people. She says that big dams have brought famine, diseases, poverty, barrenness of land, and ecological imbalance. She quotes the statement of Ram Bai, whose village was submerged when the Bargi Dam was built. She now lives in a slum in Jabalpur: "why didn't they poison us? Then we don't have to live in this shit hole and the Government could have survived along with precious dam all to itself" (2001 : 55). Such is the reaction of one of those people who were supposed to be the beneficiaries of the big dams.

Basing on the Government studies and her personal observations, on the 'Big Dams' Arundhati feels that they have not been less harmful than the nuclear weapons. She concludes:

Big dams are to a Nation's 'Development' what Nuclear Bombs are to its Military Arsenal. They're both weapons of mass destruction. They're both weapons government use to control their own people. Both twentieth century emblems that mark a point in time when human intelligence has outstripped its own instinct for survival. They're both malignant indications of a civilization turning upon itself. They represent the severing of the link – the understanding – between human beings and the planet they live on. They scramble the intelligence that connects eggs to hens, milk to cows, food to forests, water to rivers, air to life and the earth to human existence (136-137).

Eco-conscious as Arundhati Roy is, her concern for the environment finds an adequate expression in ***The God of Small Things***. The novel lays bare how the environment is subjected to decay and destruction and points out the reasons that lie behind it too. Once Ayemenem was rich in vegetation. Esther and Rahel dreamt of the river Meenachal in their childhood because:

It was warm, the water. Grey green, like ripped silk with fish in it, with the sky and trees in it. And at night, the broken yellow moon in it (40).

After twenty – three – years, Rahel returned and the river "greeted her with a ghastly skull's smile, with holes where teeth had been and a limp hand raised from a hospital bed. Though it was a month of "June, and raining, the river was no more than a swollen drain now. A thin ribbon of thick water that lapped wearily at the mud banks on either side, sequined with the occasional silver slant of a dead fish. It was choked with a succulent weed, whose furred brown roots waved like thin tentacles under water. Bronze – winged lily – troglodytes walked across it. Splay – footed, caution". The river was no more than "a slow, sludging green ribbon lawn that ferried fetid garbage to the sea" now (124). Estha too found that the river "smelled of shit, and pesticides bought with World Bank loans. Most of the fish had died. The ones that survived suffered from fin-rot and had broken out in boils (13).

Besides the river Meenachal, the village Ayemenem once known for freshness, matchless greenery and rural quietness has changed. Its population has swelled to the size of little town. Estha finds "the new, freshly baked, iced, Gul-money houses built by nurses, masons, wire benders and bank clerks who worked hard and unhappily in far away places (ibidem). The state of Karri Saipu, known as History House has been renovated and converted into a five star hotel called 'Heritage'. The locality is described as God's own country' in hotel brochures. But the locality is quite unhygienic because of its ball smell. The Ayemenem House, "a grand old house" having history of its own is in a miserable condition.

In short, there is affluence in Ayemenem but its scenic beauty and natural harmony has gone. A dismal scene of pollution and decay is visible everywhere. As a minute observer of both civilization and nature, Arundhati Roy has presented a clear picture of India through Ayemenem. In hot and senseless pursuit of immediate gain, man has broken relations with living beings and inanimate things. In search of material pleasure and comfort, future is rejected, and hence, there is clarion call from Arundhati Roy to preserve nature and save future.

Arundhati Roy believes in action. She knows that women and the environment are both exploited as passive pawns in the race to domination. Those people in power are able to take advantage of them distinctly because they are seen as passive and rather helpless. Arundhati Roy is neither passive nor helpless. As an ecofeminist, she feels that women must work towards creating a healthy environment and ending the destruction of the lands that most women rely on to provide for their families (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/feminism:14).

In her effort of *Narmada Bachao Andolan*, she was arrested along with the women and was put into jail. During her interview to David Barsamian, she relates the story:

It was absolutely fantastic. I was in a village Sulgaon. All night, all over the valley, people started arriving, by tractor, by motorcar, by foot. By three in the morning there were about 5,000 of us. We started walking in the dark to the dam site. The people already knew that the dam site would be captured, but they didn't know from where the people would come. There's a huge area of devastation there. So we walked in the dark. It was amazing. Five thousand people, mostly villagers, but also people from the cities – lawyers, architects, journalists – walking through these byways and crossing streams in absolute silence. There was not a person that lit a *bidi* or coughed or cleared their throats. Occasionally, a whole group of women would sit down and pee and then keep walking. Finally, at dawn, we arrived and took over the dam site. For hours, the police surrounded us. Then there was a baton charge. They arrested thousands of people, including me. The jails were full (www.progressive.org/mtv.0401.html:4).

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Obviously, Ecofeminism is one of the core issues of Arundhati Roy. She can safely be included in the group of "Women for Life on Earth" who initiated the movement against nuclear weapons and nuclear technology in 1981. She can be included in the group of women of the Chipko struggle of India, the group of women who initiated an organized movement to bring *Purusha* and *Prakriti* together (Shiva 1989 : 38) in a perfect harmony towards a better world and safe future (www.octapod.org.8000/gifteconomy//content.zedgendtwo.html).

As an ecofeminist, she desires to end patriarchal domination both on women and environment. Obviously, it is interesting to study her works more in the light of ecofeminism than that of feminism. First, she is an ecofeminist and then feminist. She belongs to the group of Mera Behn, Bimla Behn, Sarla Behn and many others. □

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THEME OF SEARCH FOR COMPLETENESS IN GIRISH KARNAD's HAYAVADANA

* K. Rajmohan

Girish Karnad is a well known dramatist of the contemporary Kannada stage. His works are 'lasting things' in Commonwealth Literature. In his plays, he makes use of ancient myths and legends to create contemporary consciousness. His plays speak about the fundamental ambiguity of human existence. **Yayati**, **Nagamandala**, and **Hayavadana** are some of his best plays.

Karnad's **Hayavadana** is a memorable treatment of the theme of search for completeness. The main plot of **Hayavadana** is based on 'the story of transposed heads' in the Sanskrit **Vetala Panchavimsati**. A modern source of the play is Thomas Mann's *The Transposed Heads* which the author called 'Metaphysical Jest'. The sub-plot of **Hayavadana**, the Horse-Headed Man, is Karnad's own invention. It serves both as prologue and epilogue to the play.

The play opens with Lord Ganesh Puja. The Lord Ganesh with human body and elephant head aptly suggest the central theme of Incompleteness. 'Haya' means horse and 'Vadana' means face. Hayavadana is a horse-headed man. He is the only son of the princess of Karnataka. He longs for his perfection.

Devadatta is endowed with all the accomplishment expected of a Brahmin youth. He is comely in appearance, fair in colour and unrivalled in intelligence. Devadatta falls in love with an extremely agile and quick-witted girl, Padmini, the daughter of a rich merchant. Kapila, the son of an ironsmith Lohita, has an attractive body. Devadatta and Kapila are closest of friends. The Bhagavata describes them as

'Two Friends there were,
One mind, One heart' (2)

Kapila arranges the marriage of Padmini with his friend, Devadatta. At the same time, Padmini is attracted to the virility of
* teaches English at Periyar University College of Arts & Science, Mettur Dam, Salem Dist., Tamilnadu, India.

Kapila. Both Kapila and Padmini start drifting towards each other. Devadatta becomes jealous of this and shows in his thought

“Does she really not see? Or
She deliberately playing this game
With him?” (22).

Devadatta is a man of intellectual while Kapila is of body. Kapila is more attractive than Devadatta because as the representative of animal energy in human body. Padmini is a victim in the hands of the pulls of physical pleasure. She was very attracted by the ethereal shape of Kapila. She describes the Kapila's body as:

“What an ethereal shape!
Such a broad back-ocean like
Muscles rippling across it” (25).

Devadatta in a sudden outburst of emotions decides to sacrifice his life to Kali. That he is doing so because he was unable to bear the pangs of jealousy. He says:

“Good-bye Kapila
Good-bye Padmini
May the Lord Rudhra bless you” (28).

Padmini stumbles on the opportunity of having the better of the two - Devadatta's head and Kapila's body. Her predicament is the predicament of a modern emancipated woman. They went to a great Rishi in search of solution to their problem. The Rishi answers as: 'the man with Devadatta's head is the rightful husband of Padmini'. The play ends with Devadatta and Kapila fighting a duel in which the heads of both roll again. When the friends are dead, Padmini decides to perform sati.

Karnad's **Hayavadana** deals with the theme of 'Search for completeness. In the case of Hayavadana, the horse-headed man, he longs for perfection. He wished him to be a complete man. But, at the end, he turned completely into a horse. Hence, he failed in his desire of completeness. Similarly, Padmini longs for Devadatta's intellectual power and Kapila's physical power. Both are different personalities. So she also failed in her desire of having both Kapila's body and Devadatta's head. Hence, it is

saying that Karnad's **Hayavadana** deals with the theme of search for completeness'. This theme is suggested in the play itself in phrases such as:

“Search for completeness
This mad dance of incompleteness”

In essence, according to K. Narasimha Murthy:

“Karnad's **Hayavadana** is a play employing native folk theatre strategies to present man's tragic futile aspiration for perfection or completeness” (30). □

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D.H. LAWRENCE'S PSYCHIC SPACE IN SONS AND LOVERS :
A READING IN "SPATIAL FORM"

* *Gagan Behari Das*

Joseph Frank's Spatial Form, a theory dealing with narrative problem in modern fiction, explains reduction of temporality for the sake of spatiality. One can read a narrative one word after another, one line after another; in this sense the fictional narrative seems to be sequential but inside the presentation the author usually departs from the sequence of events and images, instead, he radically jumps from one time to a different time creating a sense of discontinuity or gap which requires the reader's perceptive ability to reconstruct the text; to bring out his own syntax out of dislocated / displaced units in the work. (Spatial Form... 3-62). "Spatial Form", therefore, refers to reading psychology, and its application in the narrative is metaphorical rather than literal as critics point out. The purpose of this article is to show how Lawrence's psychic space contextualizes spatial form in ***Sons and Lovers***.

Shklovsky's distinction between story and plot brings to focus of the term "defamiliarization" through which the writer modifies the reader's habitual perception by drawing attention to "artifice" of the text. This technique leads to diachronic and synchronic movement of the reader's consciousness - that he reads the text diachronically in time but defamiliarization prevents the forward movement of the narrative, "the stone is made stony", inverts the consciousness with a synchronic accretion of reading time and the reported qualities. Thus, the apprehension of plot as "defamiliarized story" has a synchronic component which, Rabkin states, "can always be metaphorically represented by spatial constructs". (Spatial Form...82) Formalist's presentation of synchronic/diachronic relation finds an obvious parallel to Frank's presentation of temporal/spatial dichotomy in reading a narrative.

* *Heads the deptt. of English at Madhabdev College, Dikrong, Lakhimpur,*

Narrative voice strongly recommending the position of Mrs. Morel against Walter Morel or Mrs. Morel's rejection of Miriam as a suitor for Paul is characterized by points of view of attending individual in that it can be well noted the relation between the lovers is perceived differently by Mrs. Morel, Paul Morel and Miriam. Similarly the conflict between the Morel couple is read differently by both of them; and by the author/narrator across the time. Between the interaction of characters and their response to the environment operates the understanding of the reader which seems to be very intricate, risky job since the real author has undermined his own authority and withdrawing from the text leaves the final responsibility upon responding readers. Plot, therefore, Rabkin maintains, is "a term which we must always remember reflects a reader's focus of attention, not some objectively definable series of isolable events." (83) This realization is a radical extension of formalist notion of plot into means of defamiliarizing techniques that Frank forwards in Spatial Form.

The objective of the discussion is to trace such techniques in ***Sons and Lovers*** for appropriation of spatialization – that the techniques of "defamiliarization" in the novel force the reader to see meaning not as authorial, stable, spread in diachronic temporal order but as generative one, moving back and forth and a synchronic and simultaneous perception. Larger part of the narrative turns attention inward to the psychic region of characters ignoring the sense of temporality. Two recent studies on the novel, of Elizabeth A. Campbell and Gerald Doherty, have been based on literal sense of space caused by language, imagination and theme of the novel, the space suggested in their studies indicates psychic space. In Campbell's analysis the container/content relation is the paradigm used to show how Lawrence foregrounds the content in stead of the container, a metonymic digression, departing from the Victorian realistic novel. Reiterating the formula of Campbell, G. Doherty has pointed out that the dialectic of space deals with the use of literal and metaphorical language towards a dichotomy of confinement

are different from “Spatial Form” of Frank that involves narrative structure as configuration of sequentiality and juxtaposition. In this discussion psychic space has a different significance and connotation from what the above two critical studies established calling attention to Spatial Form criticism.

In the opening chapter attention is drawn to the scene when Walter Morel thrusting out his wife bolts the door behind her:

Then she got air into her breast. She walked down the garden path, trembling in every limb, while the child boiled within her. For a while she could not control her consciousness, mechanically she went over the last scene, then over it again, certain phrases, certain moments coming each time like a brand red-hot down on her soul; and each time she enacted again the past hour, each time the brand came down at the same points, till the mark was burnt in and the pain burnt out, and at last she came to herself. (22)

Mrs. Morel’s consciousness in the quotation crystallizes the past event, enacts the scene again and again. Though the beauty of moon-lit garden – the tall white lilies, the white phlox, scent of flowers are depicted marvellously, she is past beyond their effect. “The night was very large, and very strange, stretching its hoary distances infinitely” – like the psychic space in front of her. If one has to define the time in her consciousness it would be both present and past which seems a contradiction of direction/movement in physical sense. The past is a memory and the present, a motion in space but if the memory is held fixed like a picture it dissolves the distinction of time and space, both the modes of perception are unified as one medium of knowledge. Mrs. Morel’s present is not felt one, while her past is all active which seems another question of absurdity from one’s common-sense point of view. This problem could be avoided if demarcating epithets of “past” and “present” are dropped leaving only the abstract time which is equivalent to atemporal of temporalities which, again, could be put as “spatialized time”; that time, here, has lost its independent identity turning into

of space, the fourth dimension as Lawrence has put it elsewhere. Confinement of character’s consciousness in such stasis can be designated as “psychic time”. H. Meyerhoff and A.A. Mendilow have related the above stasis with Bergson’s contention of “Duree”, the quality of changeless within succession of time, and suspension of one’s sense of gradual, dramatic unfolding, the sequence of narrative events. The distinction between physical time and psychic time is expressed in terms of sequence of disparate moments and the “unity” in the sequence as “duration” respectively. This distinction relates to Mr. Morel’s temporal action in the story and its continuity as “duration” in Mrs. Morel’s consciousness, repeated return of the action as “a brand red-hot” on her soul. This focalization turns one’s reading of diachronic event into synchronic, Frank argues.

Psychic time in the above discussion seems to be a misnomer of psychic space identified in Lawrentian sense with character’s unconscious self. Clara and Paul, in one outing, stand by a castle wall, their hands lay on the rough parapet, each is conscious of the other’s hands. Paul’s reflection here is thus presented:

The little, interesting diversity of shapes had vanished from the scene; all that remained was a vast, dark matrix of sorrow and tragedy, the same in all houses and river-flats and the people and the birds, they were only shapen differently. And now that the forms seemed to have melted away, there remained the mass from which all the landscape was composed, a dark mass of struggle and pain. The factory, the girls, his mother, the large up lifted church, the thicket of town, merged into one atmosphere-dark, brooding and sorrowful, every bit. (237)

Here one can notice the dichotomy of temporal and atemporal corresponding to the character’s conscious and unconscious self. Like the experience of Paul, (or the perspective of the narrator) the projected work holds a form which melts all its temporal marks – “once”, “one day”, “one evening”, “on that Friday”

etc leaving one matrix of textual motif, the “protoplasm in the leaf”. When the reader struggles to grasp the synoptic meaning he has to cross beyond the sequential events and incidents, the sign posts of time in order to comprehend the intended meaning in simultaneity of all verbal signs put together. The double existence of “shapes” and “forms”, and their “allotropic states” of universal “dark matrix” oscillate perpetually, one inserting into the other so that when Paul is reminded of the time in physical world – “Is that two o’clock striking?”, he starts “and everything sprang into form, regained its individuality, its forgetfulness, and its cheerfulness.” As in the literary text, the “form” in the quoted lines denotes externally imposed (forced) shape, the individual identity, associated with temporality. The abstracted materiality of psychic experience of the character, the “otherness” of form, has become the making of Lawrence’s fictional projection.

In the chapter “Derelict” Paul is stripped naked of all relations he has and leaving Clara in the hands of Baxter Dawes he withdraws; moving across the country he feels all is dead and still, little stars spread far away in the flood water, a firmament below. “Every where the vastness and terror of the immense night which is roused and stirred for a brief while by the day but which returns, and will remain atleast external, holding everything in its silence and its living gloom. There was no Time, only Space” (365). The polarity of light and darkness in the quotation indicates physical and psychic time which, in extension relates to conscious and unconscious self respectively. The verb “returns” with its suggestive repetition in the act of oscillation from one pole to the other significantly correlates, as it seems, the temporal form caused by stir of day, and stillness of the dark body. The figurative use of “Time” and “Space” with the capital letters catches attention to the process of conversion, and fusion as if they were telescoped into one mode. As in the previous quotation, Lawrence, here, equates conscious and unconscious levels with temporal and spatial experience of the narrative act. One can notice, yet in another level, the transposition / superimposition of darkness over light, a

continuous return of textual motif over historical/temporal incidents. Historical knowledge is synoptical perception of diachronicity for a synchronic knowledge of the whole in an instant of perception in the same way as the psychoanalyst perceives the patient’s responses and history together for an insight. If one applies this analogy to the critic’s perception of complexes of metaphors and images, meaning happens to be, for him, an insight in simultaneity of the whole in a moment of time. On this continuous return of authorial/textual motif over temporality of narrativity spatial understanding or “grasping together” is based.

Psychic space in the above discussion will be briefly examined below as the essential form of ***Sons and Lovers*** the spirit of which has a bearing in the form of painting of the novel’s so called hero. Stephen, an artist turns out the fictional protagonist in Joyce’s ***Portrait*** but in ***Sons and Lovers*** the protagonist, Paul Morel turns out an artist, however, in both the novels the character’s act provides form and structure to the works. The reader, here, is reminded of Miriam’s response to Paul’s painting that may guide to the point in discussion:

‘Why do I like this so?’

‘Why do you?’, he asked.

‘I don’t know. It seems so true’.

‘It is because – it’s because there is scarcely any shadow in it; it’s more shimmery, as if I had painted the shimmering protoplasm in the leaves and everywhere, and not the stiffness of shape. That seems dead to me. Only this shimmeriness is the real living. The shape is dead crust.

The shimmer is inside really” (133).

Lawrence has distinguished stiffness of “form” or “shape” from indeterminate “shimmering” of art work in the above quotation favouring the latter which, what he says, is not an imitation of other works. One may be reminded of his letter to Edward Garnett in reply to a charge – “Tell Arnold Bennet that all rules of construction hold good only for novels which are copies of other novels. A book which is not a copy of other books has its own construction, and

faults, he being an imitator, I call characteristics" (The Letters, 399). "Stiffness of Shape", a fixed form, is externally imposed one and is the product of conscious intellectualization upon spontaneous vibration, the quickness of impulsive urge. The intellectualization, that Lawrence views as immoral, connotes a motive of focus and control, a surrogated editorial exercise on behalf of the author. (morality and the novel) The reality in the art is its soul, the shimmering shadow that one has to feel inside, always indeterminate and provisional like a "presence", one has to experience.

The words of Paul in the above quotation give Miriam a feeling of life and vivify things which "had meant nothing to her". Paul's struggling, abstract speeches become the medium for her to apprehend life in the shimmering protoplasm, not to understand with her mind. The distinct implication of his words has been exemplified with the image of "God's burning bush", the bush that burns but does not burn away. The Biblical image precisely communicates Lawrence's idea of art as an alternative to what he says "dead form". Paul's painting of pine trees that catch the red glare from the west serves a comment on this image – "I wanted that. Now look at them and tell me, are they pine-trunks or are they red coals, standing-up pieces of fire in that darkness. There is God's burning bush for you, that burned not away" (134) The "shimmering protoplasm" in the novel likens "God's burning bush", a revelation of meaning that arrests sequentiality compelling one's perception as simultaneous whole. This transposition of the whole upon individual units of narrative events arresting one's sense of progress is a technique of focalization of motif which can be seen as extension of spatial dialectic to contextualize Lawrence's psychic space. Reading out meaning, here involves possibilities of – "pine trunks", "pieces of fire" or "red coals" and the painting becomes synoptic of the textual intention, always inexhaustible and indeterminate across time and attending readers drawing focus to its "multi-text". "Burning bush" further directs attention to metonymic digression from the container to the content. Campbell argues that Lawrence uses a style that

"He juxtaposes, repeats, moves in sequence of independent clauses. His relations are positional rather than causal" (Metonymy and Character...117). This remark suggests another spatial terminology of Lawrence's paratactic composition a composition, that develops, one after another, not one following the other. □

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Buddhist View of Violence : War and Terrorism

* Suchitra Mishra

Buddhism is basically a religion of moral philosophy and ethics. As we see in the life and teachings of the Buddha and in the more than 2500 years of the history of Buddhism, this religion has always emphasized on good life on the earth and addressed the practical problems in life rather than speculating on abstract ideas and situations in another life and some other world. Hence it is very pertinent and befitting to our times to discuss the Buddhist ethics as regards to violence in its different form and magnitude.

Theravada tradition denounces violence in any form. The discourses of the Buddha in the four Pali Nikayas describe the act of killing a living being as an unwholesome (*akusala*) act and as *suh* to be avoided. The first of the ten courses of the unwholesome action (*akuasalkammamapatha*) is to “kill living beings”. The first of the *Atthangasila* is to refrain from killing. The first precept of *panchasila*, as well as the first precept of the five “rules of training” (*sikkhapada*) is to refrain from killing. In the *Brahmajala Sutta* we are told how the Buddha “refrains from killing living beings, discard sticks and swords, and is considerate and full of concern, remaining sympathetic and well disposed towards all creatures and beings”. A verse from the *Suttanipata* (394) states : “Laying aside violence in respect of all living beings in the world, both those which are still and those which move, he should not kill a living creature, not cause to kill, nor allow others to kill”. Very often Buddhist ethics pose a practical problem. Are all types of killing the same? Is there no difference between killing a human being and killing a mosquito?

The *Vinaya* rules state three criteria for judging the degree of violence involved:

* Size: in the case of animals, the bigger the animal, the more serious the act of killing.

* teaches Philosophy at Kuchinda College, Dist. Sambalpur, Orissa, India.

* Virtue : in the case of humans, the more virtuous the human, the more serious the act of killing.

* The intensity of the desire to kill coupled with the effort involved in the actual act of killing.

The Intention to kill (*vadhak cetana*):

The *Abhidhamma* emphasizes not the actual act of killing but the intention or will (*cetana*) that prompts the act of killing : ‘Killing a living being is the intention to kill in one who is aware of a living being as a living being when this occurs through either the door of the body or of speech and produce the exertion that cuts off the life faculty’.

The *Abhidhamma* theory does not allow that the decisive intention leading to the act of killing can ever be other than *akusala* and associated with some form of *dosa* even when genuine compassion (*karuna*) might play some part in the act killing a living being. But at this point, as we shall see there is some amount of multivocality. The *Metta Sutta* and the *Upayakausalya Sutta* represent a deliberate challenge to the mainstream Buddhist ethics by proposing that metta, friendliness, and compassion might absolve the *karmic* effects of violence. The *Upayakausalya Sutta* tells the story of how the Bodhisattva in a life when he is indeed called “Great Compassion” kills a man in order to prevent him from killing 500 others - also bodhisattvas (Paul Williams 1989 : 144-145). Thus considering the *Vinaya* rules of violence and the *Upayakausalya Sutta* such acts as euthanasia and abortion might be regarded wholesome, *kusala*. In the contemporary Japan where the conservative estimate of abortion per year is about one million, such rituals called *mizuko kuyo* are performed at Buddhist temples, Buddhist household altars, and at Buddhist road side shrines. The act abortion which is the killing of the fetus is made consistent with Buddhist principles by making ritual apology to the *mizuko*, ‘child of waters’.

The Buddha was never explicit regarding war - rather he avoided commenting on the warring kings of his time. His own rule was : “*anujanami bhikkhave rajanam anuvattitun*” (*Vinaya* : 138 :

I ask you, O monks to act according to the law and order of the king). Once a warrior has joined the Order of the monks he is supposed not to take part in wars and observe the precept of not killing strictly. Being a *ksatriya* himself he applied the war metaphor often in his teachings against all kinds of negative psychic factors which prevent achieving final liberation : “If one man conquers in battle a thousand times, a thousand men, and if another conquers himself, he is the greatest of conquerors” (*Dhammapada* : 103). The Buddhist ethics rather aims at removing physical violence and the causes of conflict and war among men and nations. The popular *Theravada* scripture ‘*Dhammapada*’ draw our attention to a common human situation and reaction in the face of all forms of violence.

All tremble at violence,
 All fear death
 Comparing oneself with others
 One should neither kill nor cause to kill (129).
 All tremble at violence
 Life is dear to all
 Comparing oneself with others
 One should neither kill nor cause to kill (130).

In general, *Theravada* Buddhism holds the opinion that extreme violent activities like war arise due to sensual desires when one does not care to think of others’ interest. The *Mahadukkhanda Sutta* identifies sensual desires as the leading factor in creating disputes:

Monks, when sense pleasure are the cause, sense pleasures the provenance, sense pleasures the consequence, the very cause of sense pleasures, king dispute with kings, nobles dispute with nobles, brahmans dispute with brahmans, householders dispute with householders, a mother disputes with her son, a son disputes with his father, a brother disputes with a brother, a brother disputes with a sister, a friend disputes with a friend. Those who

another with their hands, sticks, and with weapons, these suffer dying then and pain like unto dying. This too, Monks, is a peril in the pleasure of the sense that is present... the very cause of pleasure of the senses” (The Middle Length Sayings 1.113-4).

In creating a violence - free context the *Theravada* ethics proposes a causal point of view towards violence. Since all phenomena are conditioned, there is nothing in this world that can be claimed to be independent from each other. Because of this interdependent nature, various forms of violence are also conditioned by other activities. By analyzing the causes which lead to violence and transforming violent context into non-violent social realities, Buddhism show a way out of the vicious cycle of violence. The *Cakkhavantisihananda Sutta* tells a story to emphasize the interdependence between poverty, crime and violence and concludes:

“In this way Monks, money not being given to the poor, poverty flourished; because poverty flourished, theft flourished; because theft flourished, weaponry flourished; because weaponry flourished, murder flourished; because murder flourished, these beings’ vitality decreased, as did their beauty...”

Violent conditions lead to decrease in life span. The *Cakkhavantisihananda Sutta* further states a transformation of these violent contexts through self reflection and by the practice of non-violent means :

“Let me kill no one and no one kill me... It is because we have undertaken bad deeds that we have for so long been murdering our own relatives. Why don’t we start doing good?... Why don’t we abstain from killing?”

This self-realization to do good and engage in non-violent actions, from a *Theravada* perspective, can be seen as the most important step towards transcending the vicious cycle of violence. Further this *Sutta* suggests that the State has an important duty to

provide sufficient means of wealth for all sections of the society in order to prevent unhealthy social problems and secure law and order. If we analyze such problems as the ethnic problems in Sri Lanka, it is evident that beneath terrorism, extremism, war and abuse of human rights lie a key issue : the growing unemployment for the youth and the lack of resource to provide a decent living for all sections of the population and the imbalance in distributing wealth. The last five decades show that the Governments which came to power failed to provide adequate resource for self-employment of the poor. But above all Buddhism puts stress on right understanding, moral clarity and degrees of realization and is pragmatic while dealing with violence. Whereas canonical Buddhism does not approve of violence in any form we come across the righteous war waged by the Buddhists of Sri Lanka, Tibet, Japan, and Vietnam. Buddhism grants that the large majority of people who are engaged in mundane affairs, although they may be devout Buddhists are sometimes compelled to fight wars. Buddhist teachings, by means of mythological tales and homilies attempt to introduce a sense of morality and a concern for justice and fair play in such situations. If we take a look at history we find that the people of Burma, Siam, Cambodia, China and Japan were of an extremely warlike and aggressive disposition. But their subsequent peacefulness was largely due to the influence of the teachings of Buddhism. □

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India Today as reflected in Arvind Adiga's novel The White Tiger

* Veena Nare (Thakre)

Let me at the outset say that with this brief critical paper I would like to show how the changing values in Indian life are reflected in the contemporary Indian English Fiction.

Some novels written before and after Indian independence and the partition have made a tremendous impact in the literary world. Novels like '**The Untouchable**' by Mulk Raj Anand, '**Azadi**' by Chaman Nahal have painted the Gandhian era in Indian life. They have shown the struggle of Indians for freedom through Gandhian principles of life. Gandhi appears as a character in these two novels. Mulk Raj Anand's **Untouchable** is based on the story of a young sweeper boy Ukha, by Mahatma Gandhi.

Khuswant Singh's '**Train to Pakistan**' shows how the old Indian values were murdered at the time of partition. The Hindu-Muslim unity fostered during the Gandhian era was completely shattered, hence the Indian secular life underwent a drastic change. No doubt India won freedom - 'Azadi', but at the cost of many things in life. Gandhiji, the great moral force in the freedom struggle was assassinated and since then the fall of Indian life began. In a paper like this one cannot show how and why the degradation in our life began.

In the novel '**The White Tiger**' Adiga uses the back drop of present day India to show the fall of values in Indian life through the story of the protagonist. The novel is the story of this central character

Munna narrated through a letter addressed to the Chinese Premier.

It brings out a facet of India Shining which is overshadowed by the glory and fame achieved by the IT Entrepreneurs.

He has divided India in the 'India of Darkness' and 'India of Light'. This division may appear odd to some readers and critics

quite convincing. The central character is a product of the Darkness who becomes a murderer and goes to the south to become an entrepreneur. He tries to convince the Chinese Premier through his letters; "Please understand, Your Excellency, that India is two countries in one: an India of Light and an India of Darkness". (WT14). The area near the oceans is the India of Light while India near the river, the dark river "Mother Ganga" is the area of Darkness.

The story highlights the class divide and struggle in the Darkness which spills into other regions in India and portrays the protagonist Munna as someone who strives to come out of it in his own way. Munna is thus **The White Tiger**, a rare creature that comes once in a generation. When Munna had correctly answered this question about The White Tiger asked by the School Inspector, he was given a parting gift, a book entitled - "Lessons for Yong Boys from the life of Mahatma Gandhi". We see how in his life Munna watches these very lessons being massacred right in front of Gandhi's images or statues and he eventually deviates far from them as he sets upon his journey to rise above the class divides.

The protagonist calls his story 'The Autobiography of a Half Baked Indian'. But he doesn't forget to remark "Entrepreneurs are made from half baked clay (WT 11). The story begins in Laxmangarh, a village near Gaya which is the home of Munna and also the family of the landlords. Mr. Ashok's father, the landlord from Laxmangarh, settled at Dhanbad and his brother represent the corruption that goes on in the business world. India today seems to have forgotten the Gandhian principles and ways of life and now Gandhi is reduced to a mere photograph in the background at the tea shops at Laxmangarh where people like Munna work as 'spiders'. Adiga uses Gandhi to show how Gandhi is missing in our life when Munna says: "Go to a teashop anywhere along the Ganga, sir, and look at the men working in that teashop. Men, I say, but better to call them human spiders that go crawling in between and under the tables with rags in their hands, crushed humans in crushed uniforms, sluggish, unshaven, in their thirties or forties or fifties but still 'boys'. But that is your fate if you do your job well - with honesty, dedication

Gandhi would have done it, no doubt. I did my job with near total dishonesty, lack of dedication, and insincerity - and so the teashop was a profoundly enriching experience". (WT 51) Under the big photo of Gandhi he quite knowingly killed the Gandhian principles and philosophy and experienced happiness. How could India degrade itself to this level? This is a question that pervades throughout the novel.

The oppression of the lower classes is painted beautifully by Adiga by using animal names for the landlords in four categories according to their appetite (greed), Buffalo, The Stork, Wild Boar, The Raven and Munna coins a fifth one as the Mongoose, the brother of Ashok. The life in Laxmangarh revolves around the landlords and they in their greed for power and money suck the marrow from the bones of the poor labour class.

Mr. Ashok and his wife Madam Pinky come from America to live for a few days in Dhanbad as the Stork, his father had settled there. The family was involved in the coal business and their strategy was to bribe the ministers to save themselves government taxes. Ashok was caught in this foul maze created by his father and brother Mukesh who entrusted Ashok to bribe the ministers in Delhi to keep the business going. Ashok's soft behaviour with his servants was resented by his brother and father. The gap between the rich and the poor became wider because of the hatred the masters showed to their servants. Ashok became the victim of this hatred shown by Mukesh to the driver Munna.

Adiga has described this book in the following words, "The book is an attempt to relocate India in a political and economic context" (Outlook Oct 27th 2008, Pg 62). The malls and call center culture in Delhi seems attractive to Munna and gives him an insight into the changing culture of India. It reflects the economic progress of the country but that is not real India. Real India lives in the villages. Adiga shows how the struggle rising out of a village in the Darkness has influenced the economic scenario and life in Bangalore.

Munna compares the life of Indian servants to that of chickens in a Rooster Coop where 99.9% people are trapped and hence

to come out of this country in the ten thousand years of its history” (WT 173) showing how the class divide is deeply etched in Indian history. He goes on to say that the trustworthiness of servants is the basis of the entire Indian economy. The coop has its own way of ensuring that no one leaves it and it is equally guarded from inside as it is from outside. The reason people stay in the coop, “is that only a man who is prepared to see his family destroyed-hunted, beaten, and burned alive by the masters - can break out of the coop. That would take no normal human being, but a freak, a pervert of nature. It would, in fact, take a White Tiger” (WT 176) and this is how Munna views himself as a social entrepreneur who successfully breaks out of this coop.

The prolonged inner struggle going on in Munna’s mind to murder or not to murder Ashok, his master is very well brought out by Adiga. The feeling of revenge after the car accident where he had to take up the blame for his mistress was held up against the goodness of his master. The thought of the aftermath that his family would bear if he ran away with the money was enough to boil his blood and ensure that he committed a deed that would warrant such an aftermath.

Adiga has also touched upon the current political scenario and showed how the ‘Great Socialist’ was progressing from the Darkness to Delhi (where there was Darkness as well as Light) and then on to Bangalore which was the India of Light. The elections were rigged and peoples’ votes were bought. The landlords had their way in the state of the Great Socialist because they regularly paid him his due. When he asked them for more than they could give, these landlords had to go to Delhi to bribe those at the top to keep the ‘Great Socialist’ in check. However a day comes when he rules in Delhi too and they have to go back to pleasing him. Finally we also see that he has reached Bangalore as well where he gives a terrific speech all about fire and blood and purging this country of the rich.

In his simple clear and lucid language Adiga paints the innermost thoughts of the driver, a real Indian who dreams to be a big

the letter form is one of the salient features of the novel. The use of the Chinese Premier as a person to whom the letters are addressed also shows Adiga’s awareness of the current times where India and China are always pitted as the two nations to win this economic race. Adiga uses irony to show some aspects of the Chinese political and economic situation as he contrasts it with ours. The Chinese Premier would visit India to study our entrepreneurs in Bangalore but these would be the Narayan Murthy’s and Azim Premji’s and not Munna’s the White Tiger Driver’s. It is interesting however that these BPOs claim social benefits by creating entrepreneurs like Munna in what is called as Trickle Down Economics. The creation of a BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) benefits many small enterprises and thus not only creates money for the owners but also the society as a whole. Unfortunately as we hail and create opportunities for the growth of the Infosys and the Wipros, we do not spare a thought for the White Tiger Drivers who use their ‘jungle ways’ to come out of their coops.

Adiga is an insider talking about the conditions of his own country and not an outsider. John Sutherland from the Guardian called the White Tiger, “A total flopperoo for the Booker....” While Sameer Rahim from the daily Telegraph dismisses it saying, “It reads like the first draft of a Bollywood screenplay. Every character is a cliché. The humour is bitter and unsubtle; the writing forgettable”.

I think Uma Mahadevandasgupta in her article, ‘Profoundly Indian’ aptly remarks that “**The White Tiger**, Adiga’s Man Booker Prize winning debut novel is the story of this underclass and its life begging for food, sleeping under concrete flyovers, defecating on the roadsides, shivering in the cold, struggling, in the twenty first century for its freedom. **The White Tiger** gives this underclass a voice: one that is intelligent, savagely funny and quite unforgettable. It is a voice that seeks out and understands the power of beauty: “If you taught every poor boy how to paint, that would be the end of the rich in India”. But it is also a voice of anger and protest, and

As S. Prasannarajan observes in his article 'Alone in Duskland', "It is not the sociology of his narrative alone that makes Adiga, 33, one of the most distinctive voices in fiction today, even though the sociology is steeped in anger and wit, satire and scatology. He is a writer who, like some of the best at work today, is in permanent argument with the world he has inherited. It is a world he first came into contact with as a journalist. And then he realized it was a world that could not be captured in its entirety, in all its moral and political ambiguities, in a reporter's notebook. In more socially motivated but less subtle hands, **The White Tiger** would have lost its soul. It is a novel whose architectural cleverness is matched by its inherent humanism. Adiga never misses the stirrings of denial and dispossession beneath the sheen of India Shining. (India Today, Oct 27th 2008, Pg 71). □

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CHINUA ACHEBE'S FICTIONAL ART : A CRITICAL OVERVIEW

* Dr. B.K. Sharma

The pre-colonial and colonial society of Africa was not considered to be the subject of literary discussion. It had almost lost its dignity and honour. Though a few African writers endeavoured to re-educate and re-generate African society and to restore its pride and dignity. But nobody succeeded in his attempts to such an extent as did Achebe. In the later half of the twentieth century it was Achebe who first stressed the writer's role in the rediscovery of Africa's past. He asserts that the European writers never cared a fig to glorify Africa's bright aspects. For this African writers were equally to blame. As such several writers including Achebe, Gabriel Okara, Cyprian Ekwensi, Onuora Nzekwu and Flora Nwapa have criticized the role of the Africans and outsiders alike.

Achebe, with his positive commitment to the contemporary issues in Africa, as an insider and critic of his society, participates in future renovation via past. He has, in his traditional novels - '**Things Fall Apart**' and '**Arrow of God**' which articulate the realities of Igbo 'tribal' life and refute the distorted accounts of life in Africa - glamorized the strengths of Igbo society (Kinship and Corporate Living) and its rich cultural heritage (Communal experience and Harmony).¹ At times he seeks to expose the unhealthy rituals viz. the killing of Ikemefuna, forsaking of twins in the Evil Forest, banishing Okonkwo for accidentally killing a village boy etc. in the novel '**Things Fall Apart**'. In '**No Longer at Ease**' he highlights other evils and ridicules them. Similarly he does not find favour with corrupt politicians, and vehemently satirizes them. He also discusses the relative importance of the individual and the tribe. At the same time raises the question of liberty, equality and fraternity.

Instead of paying serious attention to the technicalities, Achebe is more concerned with the fable so as to give symbolic meaning to his novels. Time and again he seems to have presented

in his novels African social realities and communal experience. For Achebe art is important only in so far as it is suggestive to educate the reader. S.A. Khayyoom writes, "Some critics opine that the two 'tradition' novels of Achebe... are more documentary than creative and that their excessive anthropological and sociological detail".² To a great extent, it is correct to say so.

Achebe holds the view that art should be able to bring about a new way of looking at tradition. It should be intended to create a different order or reality through imagination. Achebe's novels do not aim at depicting the features of an individual, but at presenting the composite picture of the traditional in Igbo life. In '**Things Fall Apart**', the transition period is marked by a shift of Igbo values, dramatized in Okonkwo, a man of action and Obierika, a man of thinking. In '**No Longer at Ease**' Obi is faced with cultural crisis. In the words of his friend Joseph, "his mission-house upbringing and European education had made him stranger in his country"³. As such Achebe tries to represent the African culture in the most realistic terms in his traditional novels. To add he uses materials from culture as the most impressive and forceful fictional techniques. The culture he reproduces is first hand, seeking proper reforms and changes.

Achebe's novels explore and present sociological and historical importance of the basic cultural patterns and social past of Nigeria. His deep awareness of the sense of Negritude, and racial conflict is with his sense of historicity. The novel **Things Fall Apart** seeks to present Africans man treated by others as a secondary creature under whose external being there was the man. Achebe has tried to establish the bright aspects of the so called uncultured African society which was governed by the laws of nature, beliefs and superstitions, myths and legends as well as rites and religion. Particular rituals and customs, folklores and proverbs were cited as laws nazirs.

Since Africa is a combination of hundreds of ethnic groups, it consists of the existence of their separate identity. One is likely to come across many dialects, slangs and languages. In Nigeria we find round about two hundred fifty tribal groups. It is said that

Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo groups cover sixty percent of the whole population. For hundreds of year, Africa has been a poor sub-continent. Even its agricultural product was not upto the mark. "The result is that farming which was the only means of getting subsistence crops was subject to shifting cultivation. Besides, drought, swollen rivers, heavy rains made the fate of the masses grim and they felt defeated".⁴ Achebe artistically refers to successful farming in Africa. In **Things Fall Apart** he cites various rituals in the context of farming. The farmers who are able to grow heavy crops are proud of their success and manliness. Okonkwo is successful man in getting a good yield of yam.

"Yam stood for manliness, and he who could feed his family on yams from one harvest to another was a very great man indeed".⁵

Achebe's fictional art comprises his harmony with nature. At times he diverts the reader's attention towards the rhythms of nature, weather and seasons. Similarly he refers to the occasion of festivity, festivals, social system, entertainment, dance, music, and rites. The references to the local law-courts carries hidden meaning that they had their own rules and laws to govern their society. Throughout most of the continent, African societies framed their own laws on customs and traditions. For instance they in Africa neither sell nor buy land. Land-ownership is granted to the person who is the member of the particular community.

Achebe's fictional art is marked by the deft use of myths and legends. He never distances himself from the Umuofian culture. The presentation of a number of deities keeping the tribal world in order is very skillful and amusing, They are supposed to protect the Africans from war, disorder and bloodshed. In return the Africans obey the commands of their deities like Oracle of the Hills and Caves, and they consult them and perform certain rituals to please them for pleantiful crops to be harvested. Sometimes they need their help and blessing "... To know about their future or what their ancestors want, but this god helps those who help themselves and an idle man seldom finds a favour of this god although he offers him sacrifice".

Okonkwo's God fearing nature makes him a good man. The reference to his being a cursed places him in a precarious position.

"His life had been ruled by a great passion to become one of the lords of the clan. That had been his life-spring. And he had all but achieved it. Then everything had been broken. He had been cast out of his clan like fish on to a dry, sandy beach, panting. Clearly his personal god or Chi was not made for great things. A man could not rise beyond the destiny of his chi".⁶

Like every other writer Achebe too, makes an experiment with the use of the myth. In his novel **Things Fall Apart** he seeks to portray the collective cultural psychology which has been in vogue for a fairly long time. The use of the pre-historical knowledge on the part of Achebe is significant in the sense that as he indicates, it is still preserved by the modern men. One can easily admit that myths and legends justify the richness of cultural heritage as well as they glorify their past history. In the hands of Achebe these myths coupled with the norms, beliefs, superstitions, rituals and religion of a culture enrich its bright aspects and rich treasure of knowledge. Commenting on the importance of the use of myth Malinowski says:

"Myth fulfills a primitive culture an indispensable function; it expresses, enhances, and codifies belief; it safeguards and enforces morality; it touches for the efficiency of ritual and contains practical rules for the guidance of man. Myth is thus a vital ingredient of human civilization; it is not an idle tale, but a hard - worked active force; it is not an intellectual explanation or an artistic imagery. But a pragmatic character of primitive faith and moral wisdom".⁷

Achebe's efforts to employ the myths in his fictional works have metaphorical significance. Moreover they serve the purpose of adding charm to his fictional art. On one hand Okonkwo is presented as a legendary figure, symbolic of masculine qualities, on

the otherhand, is found to be representing feminine virtues. The novel abounding in the use of myths and proverbs indicates the literary alue of the Igbo culture.

Alongwith the depiction of mythical world that undergoes a transitional phase of change an ironic undercurrent of the novel essentially emerges from the central character Okonkwo who is a champion of masculine values, with which he tries to preserve his gods and culture. But his action and realization are basically feminine".⁸

Another distinctive feature of Achebe's fictional art is his dealing with the tragic climax in his novels. He deals with two ex-terms of religious faith, which are poles apart. Through his novels he gives out a picture of the conflict between the mythical gods and the Christian gods. On one hand he calls the Igbo gods, the mythical gods, and his religion the lunatic religion and also desires some kind of improvement over traditional beliefs, superstitions and customs. On the contrary the Christian religion is becoming popular day by day. Mani Meitei writes:

The breaking up of traditional religion in face of the new religion is confirmed by the happening, such as, the construction of a church in the Evil Forest, the bringing up of twins, cutting off long hair etc. by the missionaries without any harmful effect on them. Traditionally such are not done for fear of death".⁹

As already observed, Achebe attaches great importance to the role of oral tradition of Africa. He deeply understands the value of proverbs whose vital significance can be ignored only at a risk of loss to the charm and beauty of the work of art. In African societies, proverbs are as valuable as rules and laws. Maria Leach comments on the potency of the proverbs thus:

“Negro proverbs constitute one of the most potent factors for individual conformity and cultural continuity. In West Africa proverbs are cited in court trials in much the same way the European lawyers cite cases serves as legal precedent.... Among the Igbo art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the psalm-oil with words are eaten”.¹⁰

The essential feature of Achebe’s fictional art are visible in his use of the language of the common people besides standard English. This evinces his capability of adjusting with the spirit of the place. The proverbs he uses generally come from the commons. At times they help in making him an assimilative genius. Africans, as is usually acknowledged, believe in worship of the rising sun i.e. the man of prosperity. Even if the forefathers have died like beggars, they do not hesitate to respect the son if he rises to eminence. Explicitly, they honour the present achievement, status and authority.

“Now people forget his background and are rather charmed by the present position he occupies in the society”.¹¹

From the point of view of plot-construction, art of characterization, medium of expression, dialogue and atmosphere, Achebe’s novels are rich. All these characteristics combined together contribute to the appreciation of the novel as well as the plot concerned. Much to the delight and pleasure of the novelist, the novels have received wide acclaim for these qualities. It is amusing to think that these novels provide not only pleasure but also some lesson to the readers.

Technically, Achebe’s novels have well-knit plots with sub-plots have been inserted in the form of episode, mythical tale or legendary story which lend strength, grace and beauty to the main plot. The inclusion of social, religious, cultural and political events of the contemporary Africa make his novels historical novels. The customs, traditions, dialects, accents and slang add to the charm

Achebe’s technical art. Almost all his novels namely **Things Fall Apart**, **A Man of the People**, **No Longer at Ease** and **Ant-hills of the Savannah** deal with the issues related with several aspects of African life. The use of figures, humour, satire, irony, symbols and images is remarkable and appreciable. Achebe has made efforts to make the novel a strong medium of giving voice to the dumb, oppressed and suppressed sections of humanity.

To sum up, Achebe’s fictional art is characterized by remarkable features. His ability to construct well-knit plots, use good narrative art and a language of the masses as well as the elites, employment of proverbs, symbols, images and metaphors, add charm and dignity to his writing. References to various socio-political events and festivals exhibit the whole scenario of the pre and post-colonial, social and political life of the follies of the people, is his powerful weapon to reform, teach and guide the society. □

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Quest for Spiritual Identity in Kamala Markandaya's A Silence of Desire

* G. Arunadevi

Faith is essential for those who seek the Lord's grace. Faith and devotion are emotional states that are nurtured when feeling of awe and wonder at the Supreme Being's grandeur brings about an inner longing for Him leading towards spiritual realization. In this sense, Kamala Markandaya's **A Silence of Desire** portrays both spiritual and non-spiritual aspects of human life. Her novel renounces the issues related to the tradition and modernity, and faith and reason. Every society has beliefs and attitudes which are immemorial and refuse to be cast aside in the process of changing faith. If there is a conflict in faith, there can be a clash in rational explanation and behaviour of mankind: "He wanted to be equal, he wanted his country to be equal, of any in the west and being excluded even a hint of medievalism" (**A Silence of Desire** 209).

Even the modern Indian society is not free from superstitious beliefs, orthodox beliefs or conventional attitudes towards everything. Hence, Ezekiel criticizes the way of people's life in his poem "Night of the Scorpion": "*My father, sceptic, rationalist / trying every curse and blessing / powder, mixture, herb, and hybrid*" (36-38). Similarly Kamala Markandaya depicts the spiritual aspects of human life. She brings out the new attitudes, reasons, and reliance which appear traditional. Faith goes not only beyond reason, but if need be, even against reason. Though they are traditional, they cannot be ignored in the span of human life. According to her, a sense of permanent confusion haunts when the heart continues to reach after the different things. In **A Silence of Desire**, Chari himself contemplates the activities of Swamiji:

Differing view points produced conflicting evidence, and
the most he could do was to position himself, as well as
he could, outside, resolve the conflict fairly on the side of
truth. But it was like trying to balance a pair of scale

* teaches English at Annamalai University, Tamil Nadu,

standing on quick sands. As fast as he went, the truth
receded faster, Heart spoke one way, head the other and
sometimes two changed places. (204)

This absence of accommodation is between the philosophy of heart and head. Each draws upon different views of reality and influences the details of ordinary life, affecting the response to even the most trivial contact with others.

Kamala Markandaya offers a bold disquisition on the conflict between faith and reason. Its elements are loaded into the life of her characters and her milieu. In **A Silence of Desire**, the whole action and its larger resonances resolve around the lives of Dandekar and his wife Sarojini. Dandekar is a senior clerk in the government office and leads a contented life with his wife, Sarojini and children. When Sarojini secretly visits Swamiji to have the growth in womb cured, Dandekar begins to suspect his wife having an affair with Swami and tries to check her from going to him.

Sarojini has much faith in Swamiji's power of healing that she refuses to go to hospital for her treatment. Dandekar tries to dislodge Swamiji from his *ashram*. At the end, Sarojini agrees to undergo the operation in the hospital and is cured of her disease. Kamala Markandaya has made the story revolve round the conflict between faith and reason, superstition and science, religion and materialism and oriental backwardness and occidental progress. One should know the difference in the characters of Dandekar and Sarojini, and their attitudes towards superstition and rituals.

Dandekar is a man of progressive ideas and has no faith in the superstitions of his ancestors. This attitude sets out to give a quick description of Dandekar's home, and ends with a reference to the divine *tulasi* his wife worships. Readers are told of Dandekar's attitude towards *tulasi*:

Dandekar did not pray to it, he was always careful
to say; it was a plant; one did not worship plants:
but it was a symbol of God, whom one worshipped,
and it was necessary that God should hence

symbols, since no men had the power or temerity to issualise Him. (**A Silence of Desire** 5)

Hence, Kamala Markandaya makes a distinction between God and the symbol of God, a plant and the divine reality it represents; it provides room for Dandekar to retain respect for the old ways of faith. While he senses an excessive reverence by Sarojini to the *tulasi*, he concedes as fine point the difference between “the reverence due to a symbol and its actuality” (6).

Sarojini worships the *tulasi* plant considering it as God and tends it with due reverence. But the idea of worshipping is a mere plant as God. This aspect does not appeal to Dandekar who refuses to pray to it. He goes one step forward and tries to educate his wife on this matter but in vain. Her roots in the Hindu culture and religion are so deep that she is not prepared to listen to anything which goes contrary to her faith.

The conflict between the faith and reason of Dandekar does not end here but crops up again when for the treatment of her tumour Sarojini goes to Swamiji without telling her husband who has no faith in such things. But when Dandekar begins to suspect her character because of her stealthy movements, she makes secret visits to Swamiji, adding that the main reason of her not disclosing them to him is that she fears he may stop her going to Swamiji. Sarojini says:

You would have sent me to a hospital instead, called me superstitious, a fool, because I have beliefs that you cannot share. You wouldn't have let me be no you would have reasoned with me until I lost my faith, because faith and reason don't go together, and without faith I shall not be healed. (10)

This healing by faith is common in India where people are superstitious and have conflicting faith that Dandekar has, with his western perspective and his talk of ignorance and superstition. This can understand healing my faith. He does not know that there are some inexplicable things which lie beyond man's logical realm.

Sarojini is uneducated and superstitious. Her cousin, Rajam, expresses her absolute faith in Swamiji's power to cure diseases. On being asked by Dandekar whether Swamiji is true, she tells him that Swamiji has cured the pain in her stomach which the doctors had dismissed as her mere phobia. Dandekar is to believe in Swamiji's powers even if things do not happen as he might desire. But she doubts if he can have faith in these things due to his contact with Westerners. Both Sarojini and Rajam still belong to that generation which has so much faith in rituals, saints and quakes for curing all kinds of disease.

On the other hand, Dandekar is not ready to put Sarojini in the hands of a faith healer. His colleague, Sastri, has the opinion of Dandekar whose opinion is that his wife must go to hospital and get herself operated. Moreover, hysterectomy requires a simple operation so successfully done on so many people. But Sarojini is opposed to the operation fearing that like her mother and grandmother, she might also die due to it. Dandekar does not want to reason out things with her faith in Swamiji. And at the same time, he does not want to compel her to go to the hospital. This explains Dandekar's ambivalence caught between two worlds, scientific and traditional.

Even Sastri is vociferous in his opposition to faith-cure, and does not want to express openly his disbelief in Swamiji's powers to heal. In fact, all these things are part of the culture he has inherited and does not defy them. Hence, he persuades Dandekar to confirm his wife's disease from the hospital and also Swamiji's genuineness from others. Dandekar falls in Sastri's category in having the same cultural roots and rational outlook, and accepts Sarojini's explanation that she feels better every time she goes to Swamiji whose presence has a sort of healing effect on her, though the actual pain remains. For the time being, Dandekar's reason is to put at abeyance as people in distress behave strangely and lose their reason. But Dandekar never gives up his efforts to dissuade Sarojini from visiting Swamiji whose world is different from his own and the mixing of the two could prove to be disastrous.

Although Swamiji is not able to cure the growth in Sarojini's womb, he is successful in preparing her mentally to undergo the operation and assuring her of this success. Faith healing depends more on the faith of the sick person rather than on the power of the healer. Swamiji might have gone to death itself, but he is successful in giving confidence to Sarojini. But one cannot conclude that her departure to the hospital is the victory of reason over faith, though it cannot completely be ruled out.

The power of faith is also quite apparent in the transformation of Dandekar from being a skeptic to a spiritually elevated man. This is the evidence of Swamiji's genuine powers. This is evident when Swamiji leaves the town. By this departure, Swamiji brings a change in Dandekar's attitude which puts his relationships with his wife on a spiritual level. Dandekar confesses this fact: "My wife is part of me now - I didn't realize it in all the years it has been happening, but I know now that without her I'm not whole" (7). Hence Dandekar is aware of the deep spiritual attachment Sarojini has with the holyman.

Kamala Markandaya has tried to strike a balance between faith and reason by making Dandekar realize the power of Swamiji who leaves an indelible impression on his mind. Dandekar wishes Swamiji to come back who he learns from Sarojini that Swamiji has no attachments to keep him in this or that place. It is true that Dandekar becomes a "changed man" whose opposition to Sarojini's reposing faith in Swamiji is changed through her belief in getting cured by blessing rather than by surgical operation. Between the possible and the impossible, there is third state, beyond the possible, between the logical and the illogical, the beyond logic, between reason and unreason, the beyond reason. There is always the third ground. What is impossible, illogical and unreasonable become possible, logical and rational in this third ground. Faith has its roots in this third ground. Faith is faith in the impossible. What is rationally

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SEARCH FOR THE INNER-SELF IN ZORA NEALE HURSTON'S THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD

* R. Sheela Banu

Zora Neale Hurston is one of the most prominent African-American women writers of the twentieth century. She was notable as a novelist, short-story-writer, critic, folklorist and anthropologist. Born in 1891 at Notasulga, Alabama and raised in Eatonville, an all-black town in Florida, Zora Neale Hurston was an important figure of the *Harlem Renaissance*. *Harlem Renaissance* was the black literary and cultural movement in the 1920's. Zora Neale Hurston penned four novels during her lifetime. Her novels include ***Jonah's Gourd Vine***, ***Their Eyes Were Watching God***, ***Moses, Man of the Mountain*** and ***Seraph on the Suwanee***. This article shall explore the topic *female sexuality and independence* in Zora Neale Hurston's masterpiece ***Their Eyes Were Watching God***.

Published in 1937 Hurston's autobiographical novel ***Their Eyes Were Watching God***, is the story of a sensitive woman's

for identity and independence through love in a sexist Southern society of the early 1900's. The central character of the novel Janie Crawford is a beautiful, light-skinned *mulatta** woman. For more than thirty years Janie struggles to find her true self and she succeeds in her arduous attempt to discover her true worth as a human being when she attains forty years. Before learning Janie's story it is important to have some knowledge of her family background.

Janie had never seen her mother and father. She was brought up by her grandmother Nanny Crawford, an ex-slave. While young Nanny was raped by her white master and begot a female offspring (Janie's mother). Janie's mother was also a slave; she was sexually exploited by her schoolmaster. Unable to bear her wretched condition Janie left the babe under the care of her mother Nanny and disappeared.

Having experienced the perils and pangs of slavery, the aged Nanny fervently prays for a secure future for her dear granddaughter. She tells Janie, *"De nigger woman is de mule uh de world so fur as ah can see. Ah been prayin' fuh it tuh be different wid you"*. Thinking that marriage alone could bring safety to her precious grand-daughter Nanny gives the sixteen year old Janie in marriage to Logan Killicks, an aged and wealthy farmer in their village. But the ebullient Janie finds her marital life suffocating; she has no love for her husband. Logan treats Janie just as a mule; he never cares for Janie's romantic feelings. Janie gradually realizes that no matter how much she tries, she will never love Logan. Thus all her romantic notions about marriage was lost in her marriage with Logan. Hurston writes: "She knew now that marriage did not make love. Janie's first dream was dead, so she became a woman".

When Janie meets a handsome young man named Joe Starks she loses her heart to him and marries him hoping for a better life. But soon after marriage Janie begins to understand Jody's true colour. She is disappointed to find that Jody too is not upto her expectations. Joe is so obsessed with improving his wealth and status that he scarcely cares for Janie's feelings. Within a short span of time he rises to become the mayor of the town. As his wealth and

grow, his domination also increases. Janie can sense his chauvinism on many occasions. He never allows her to speak in public; insists that she wears a headrag to conceal her beautiful long hair; forbids her to take part in story-telling sessions and does not permit her to play the *dozens** an extremely popular, traditional folk game which consists of insults between players. Very often he humiliates and ridicules Janie in the general store mentioning Janie's age in front of many men. Once he slaps Janie for not cooking tasty food. The sensitive Janie loses all love she had for Joe but at the same time continues to live with him for twenty years.

Janie pockets all the affronts of Jody patiently but on one occasion when Jody mocks her calling her an old woman, she gets infuriated and boldly points to his impotency in front of the townsmen. She says, *"You big bellies round here and put out a lot of brag, but talk 'nothin' to it but yo' big voice. Humph! Talkin' 'bout me lookin' old! When you pull down yo' britches, you look lak de change uh life"*. An important point to be noticed here is that while Janie endures Jody's taunts for twenty years Jody collapses at this single insult from Janie. Shattered and heart-broken Joe never recovers from this incident. He falls sick and dies. At thirty-seven, Janie becomes a very attractive wealthy widow. Having no idea of marrying again, she leads a contented solitary life enjoying her new freedom. At that time a young man named Vergible Tea Cake Woods courts Janie. Janie and Tea Cake marry and move to the Florida Everglades. For the first time in her life Janie experiences the joy of marriage. Tea Cake treats Janie as his better-half in the real sense of the term. Janie finds greater joy in toiling as a bean-picker and living in a migrant workers camp than she had in her prestigious house in Eatonville. She discards her apron and headrag which symbolized her past confinement and begins to wear overalls which is an expression of her present freedom. Janie mixes freely with people and gradually discovers her talent for story-telling. Thus Janie and Tea Cake are happily married for two years until a terrible tragedy strikes their life - the couple are caught in a flood caused by a hurricane in the Everglades. Tea Cake is bitten by a mad dog

while grappling with it to save Janie. Obviously he contracts rabies and slides into a paranoid state. Tea Cake grows more and more suspicious of Janie's fidelity to him and he attempts to shoot her. Janie is forced to kill her beloved Tea Cake in self-defence. After a perfunctory murder trial, Janie returns to Eatonville alone. Although grief-stricken, she is more at peace with herself than ever before. She discovers her innate strength now.

On the surface, Janie's story resembles the women's magazine fiction which has been denounced as the most insidious form of sexism. But on a deeper level it becomes clear that Hurston's novel denounces not sexuality but sex-role stereotypes. A close look at Janie's three marriages reveal that the first marriage brings her safety, the second wealth and prestige, and the third love. Janie's first two marriages fail because there is no love between the spouses. Logan and Joe view marriage as a means of control over their spouse. The third marriage of Janie is successful because the spouses share the mutual bond of love. Janie and Tea Cake share not only the marriage bed but their resources, work, decisions and dangers. A particular incident in the novel testifies to the gender equity maintained in the relationship of Janie and Tea Cake. At one point Tea Cake is jealous of a suspected rival, beats Janie; at another, Janie having the same suspicion, beats Tea Cake. This incident gives us an insight into their intimate relationship - each respects the other as a person, and it is this respect that allows them to challenge the world's conventions and to find each other, and themselves.

A large part of the text is the story of Janie's life; the narrator presents it as Janie tells her story to Phoebe. An important point to be observed here is Hurston's effective employment of the *bildungsroman** and *kunstlerroman** techniques to show the protagonist's gradual maturity. As Janie narrates her story she also narrates the manner in which her identity has been revealed to her. The story is structured around successive scenes of self-recognition which are Janie's repeated attempts to create a clear picture of who she is. Janie learns to form her own dream and her own truth from her own life.

The novel inspires the reader to formulate his/her own personal image. Further the story of Janie is a revelation to the readers; in hearing Janie's adventurous journey the reader is led to reconsider the text within his/her own experience, and to act or do things accordingly. At first Janie has no experience of love and marriage. Yet she becomes disillusioned with Logan Killicks because her role as a married woman does not correspond to her dreams or images. She clearly says, "*Ah wants things sweet wid mah marriage lak when you sit under a pear tree and think*". Janie's gaining experience and understanding her self is poetically rendered by the writer thus:

".... when the pollen again gilded the sun and shifted down on the world she began to stand around the gate and expect things. What things? She didn't know exactly. Her breath was gusty and short. She knew things that nobody had ever told her".

The given passage indicates the fact that only experience has made her a "woman". When Janie marries Joe Starks, her inner desires are left unfulfilled since Joe has his own plans for his life. He never considers Janie as his life partner. He looks upon Janie only as a symbol of his wealth and status. He plans the role of his wife in his world and does not permit her desire to find their own words and expressions. Stifled and disappointed Janie once again withdraws into herself and experiences a new consciousness. She looks at her past, re-evaluates it and discovers what has been forgotten by her for quite sometime. At this point, she makes a clear distinction between her own "feelings" - her *inner-self* and the *outer-self* and how not to mix them. Thus she lives in a state of double consciousness and resumes her role as Jody's wife. At Jody's death Janie learns another lesson - 'the young girl was gone, but a handsome woman had taken her place. When her first marriage fails Janie becomes a woman; when Jody dies she evolves into a more knowledgeable and more secure woman. She recognizes her own desires to seek out experiences, to make a great journey to the horizons', rather than be attached to socially prescribed and defined roles.

While both of Janie's husbands impose a strict role on Janie by telling her what she should be, Tea Cake tells Janie what she is capable of becoming: "... *you got good meat in yo' head. You'll learn*". Janie feels quite comfortable with Tea Cake. She never has the feeling that Tea Cake is a part of the outside world; she recognizes him as part of her own personal being: "Seemed as if she had known him all her life".

While Janie receives well-defined instructional text of her role as a woman and wife she receives an invitation to live and formulate a role for herself. After marrying Tea Cake, Janie has gained two types of knowledge - imposed knowledge and experiential knowledge. Ultimately it is the knowledge that gleans from her personal experience is most "satisfying" and most "true" for Janie.

To conclude Hurston's **Their Eyes Were Wathing God** drives home the point that each individual must formulate his/her own "way of seeing". Another person's ideas are never adequate to lead our lives. □

Footnotes

**mulatta* - a half-black and half-white man or woman.

**dozens* - an extremely popular traditional folk game which consists of insults between players.

**bildungsroman* - a narrative form depicting an individual's emotional, physical, mental, sexual and spiritual development.

**kunstlerroman* - a special form of the bildungsroman which captures the growth and development of the artist.

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A VISION OF HOPELESSNESS IN THE SELECT POEMS OF C.K. WILLIAMS

* S. Shanmugam

Whether in his first volume of poems **Lies** (1969) or the 'Five Poems' published in **Salmagundi** (1999), there is a clear underlying factor that most of C.K. Williams' poems are delineations, in favour ways and degrees, of an uneasy interval before death. Consciously or unconsciously the poet allows his poems to carry an end-of-the-world syndrome. This is perhaps due to the major political, economic and social upheavals of the 20th century in which he is a partaker. Events like the two World Wars, the Great Economic Depression, the Nazi Holocaust, McCarthyism, the Vietnam war, the uneasy calm over the Star Wars Programme of the super powers, the ICBM's and the impending threat of total annihilation by the nuclear bombs, the international terrorism, poverty and Squalor, and mass unemployment of the Third World Countries - all these affected the impressionistic mind of C.K. Williams. His lyrics are invariably range bitterly against the insanity of all these unnerving events. He writes under this completing image. In an 'Interview' given to Lynn Keller, C.K. WILLIAMS says, "[...] poetry is at base language enacting itself. You are the medium of enactment, which is both humbling and exalting; I guess that's what my experience of sacredness is - the sense that you are being acted through rather than just acting itself" (172-173). Elsewhere in the same interview he observes succinctly "[...] the music of poetry has to do just with its connectedness to our real situation and plight" (169). Occasionally a chill went up his spine and he felt that "we are living a dream, the dream of our own survival" (Keller 175). Expressing his inner turmoil, he says to Lynn Keller, "I had this image of an atomic bomb coming and blowing all my poetry up. My god, what an absurd thought what repression!" (175).

* teaches English at Sri Ganesh Arts & Science College, Salem, Tamil Nadu, India.

The existence of evil, the blackness that lies deep buried in the mind of man, and the persistent attempt to tack it down, and encounter and root it out, if possible, have been the central issues in some of the important texts of America, whether early, recent past or right now. We see this very clearly in Hawthorne's narratives, especially in his **Scarlet Letter**, in Melville's **Moby Dick**, in Poe's stories and poems, in Miller's plays, and among many others in C.K. Williams' poetry too. This may be traced to the early settlers' puritanical attitude, their ideas of sin and salvation, impregnated with Calvinistic theology that man is a born sinner and he carries an enormous amount of guilt in his soul. It is this uncanny uneasy feeling in the poet which makes him aware of a regressive fantasy of self-extinction. The poet or the speaker in C.K. Williams' poems seems to be a descendent of Eliot's Perforce who is unable to confront the world he lives in. His own vision of hopelessness of his own life, and by implication the hopelessness of the human condition enables and compels him to gaze inward, always inward to the wound.

Having been in the post-nuclear age there has certainly been a dramatic shift in man's consciousness. It might be that humanity has finally come up with something so enormous that all one can do is to repress it. Williams asks, "How can one possibly deal with one's own extinction?" (Lynn Keller 174). An enormous cultural repression is needed when the world is agonizingly faced with a couple of mad men sitting in presidential palaces ready to push the button. Already the world is halted in its tracks to see a whole new layer of weapons on to the weapons that are already going to kill all mankind. Rippled with anxiety all over his face, C.K. Williams says,

... The mind that thought the thoughts begins to lose itself, despairing of itself and of its voice, this infected voice that infects itself with its despair, this voice of terror that won't stop [...] (Flesh and Blood

It is not surprising because, as has been pointed out by Carl Dennis, "The work of any particular writer is shaped by the discourse of the moment" (120). Examples are aplenty in literature. We find a clear link between Emily Dickinson's poems and the 19th century religious thought, or between Walt Whitman and American boosterism.

Believing that the very act of composing a poem is profoundly social, C.K. Williams displays an extreme interest in the conflicts and paradoxes of our common life in this terrible time. Poetry as he says in "Of Poetry and Justice" is "in its most profound definition, just exactly that relation between the most intimate self and the most public" (258). He believes that writing poetry is a very profound act. It must arise from and be received in the most intimate places of the soul. It cannot lie in its speaking, it cannot speak at all without a general vision "of that flow between the public and the private which is our spiritual adventure" (259). With penetrating gentleness a poem is grounded in its time, whether it brings out its consciousness of this or not and it does not have to reveal a direct awareness of its historical situation.

The three poems of C.K. Williams selected for closer scrutiny here - "Space", "Swifts" and "The Nail" bear the bipolar world's nuclear threat and the little interval that we have before forcing ourselves into total darkness. In the "Space", the speaker says that the space within which he occupies himself is rather a strange territory, for the self or whatever constitutes the 'conscious self' is elusive. It can be compared to the human eye which can perceive the external world but can never get to within itself. So with phenomenon called the self. This inner world is one in which we live and believe we understand but we are not sure of its boundaries and area. Sometimes it (the self) is so huge in its dimension like the wing of a bird or the parachute of a parachuter. This is especially so when we are conscious or vaguely aware of the collective consciousness or unconsciousness or as part of being a history. At other moments it becomes so compressed and repressed that we experience only the momentary life experiences, calm and confusion, prospect of

living or threat of extinction. But it is again only perception, and so “It’s rarely wholly congruent with it” (‘Space’ in Salmagundi 136). At which point the external world with its various associations enters into the stream of consciousness and when it departs is hard to decide. One needs only to pause and reflect. Sometimes a thing that we see brings more associations and meanings than just meets that eye that we are surprised by ourselves. The poet says at that instant, “I have to move myself aside within myself to make a place for it” (136).

When the poet tries to explain the inner space, he visualizes it as a room painted on all sides with a light colour, “being, or umber, with fleetings of gold, not the gold of icons, but paler, less emphatic” (136). The choice of this soft colour speaks more about the nature of the inner self. For instance, daytime has a pale golden colour in which we can focus on a single object or widen the vision and take in till the distant horizon. The same is true of our consciousness. We do this kind of auto-focusing and out-of-focusing all the time effortlessly that we are not conscious of it. The darkening and redness, when one closes one’s eyes is a periphery of this conscious self. Because this strange creature called ‘conscious self’ need no eyes, at least dies bit expand beyond the closed eyes because it is an inner reality and cannot exist in the objects that are perceived by the eyes.

This kind of unconscious activity, in the poet’s words, “Re-establishing myself like this always comes to pass” (136), and the external reality, the spatial and the temporal are kept in suspension. It is equivalent to sleep or meditation or *nirvana*. To achieve this certain amount of effort is needed, “something like faith” (136). This is very essential because the threat of nuclear war is very much central to our considerations of identity and of self. To quote C.K. Williams, from his “The Poet and History”,

I believe that the nuclear reality we
all live in now has demanded of us a
terrific act of repression of both the
individual and collective psyche. I

think that every morning when we
awake and don’t cry out in terror at
the vile death that looms above us,
we are reflexively defending
ourselves with walls of psychic

numbness as real and as debilitating as any neurosis. (199-200). Regaining consciousness from meditation, the poet is astonished at seeing it “clumps of light” (‘Space’ in Salmagundi 136) glowing. He is surprised at seeing that he is physically alive. To quote him, I hear my breath, feel my body; become aware of thoughts and language (136). However, this feeling of being alive, this complacency of seeing others around him living is not to be taken as certainty. It’s only an interval. It is a little space interval before death. It is not at all surprising because, we are constantly threatened by the death of all of us at once. As the poet says, the unexpected can occur: right now, a sharp, rolling - planetary horizon (136). We have allowed this potential sadness to subside into those quieter portions of our psyche. This may or may not impinge on our everydayness, our wish to live a ‘normal’ life. But if what we are scared of all through our existence comes through in an instant, “the annihilations of species and or consciousness” without quite even knowing it, then what awaits us is “darkness without end” (137). Now, though living in a state of despair, when the tangible eyes open, there are shapes, colour and light.

This line of thinking could be seen in C.K. Williams’ second poem “Swifts’ too. In this nuclear age what we face is not the death of, say, some million people; but the death of the entire species, human, the animal and the vegetation. So this sort of a whole collective extinction is of a different quality wholly from individual death. According to the poet,

[...] when we are threatened by the death of all of us
at once, of the species, there may very well be
something in our genetic structure
itself that makes our very organism
cry out to us to act, to avert this

encompassing disaster
("The Poet and History", 200).

In other words, we have to acknowledge in stark terror that we are living in a state of despair right now, without quite even knowing it. This unconsciously affects our very definition of poetry. This is precisely why C.K. Williams wonders when he looks at the colourful activities of the little swallow-like birds in his poem 'Swifts', as to how come they could experience so much of exultation. From morning till evening, the little one fly happily, 'drive', 'veer', 'a shimmer', 'swoop', 'swerve' and soar in the sky as if they could go on doing it for ever. In the same manner, human beings also live a care-free life, making special dresses for the Saturday evenings, weddings or birthday parties and dance, joke, make merry, make love, or make jolly-rides, and like the swifts even 'a shimmer' 'veer', 'swoop', 'swerve', and 'soar', using ecstasy pills or other drugs, all the time making a terrible miscalculation that they could go on doing it for ever. As the birds have spectacular wings to attract others, men and women buy or stitch colourful linens of their choice and wear them in the little interval that is granted to them before they fall "into the softening dust" which is a prelude to the eternal darkness. It is very wonderful to look at those fragile beings who manipulate themselves sky-long stylishly above man's concrete skyscrapers as if man's work counted a little. Man builds monuments and tall buildings skywards, which would reach up to heaven thinking that he could inherit the earth forever, without realizing his impending potential fate.

Though insignificant from man's point of view, the tiniest dear ones are very good chargers. They powerfully navigate the sky. Its spectacular sight to look at these 'godlings' fly and enjoy the sky-ride with their weightlessness. When the sunlight flows from behind, these lovely creatures look even more beautiful like "a wake of gold". Likewise, men too have invented machines to fly, to navigate, to charge and dive. His airplanes and the other automobile machines are a sight to see in broad daylight or after sunset in a city

through the mud flats to the water" like a fish, totally oblivious of the fact that

This is the last day of world.
There is deep fire fuming ash to the surface.
It is the last tide and the last evening and from
now Things will strive back downwards.

(C.K. Williams 1990 : 22).

C.K. Williams continues the end-of-the-world syndrome in his beautiful and powerful long-lined poem 'The Nail' too. In this poem he brings before us the blackness and grotesqueness of the human drama, and his vision of the hopelessness of man's life. Making the reader tense and worried, the poem reveals the tortures meted out to quite a good number of hapless victims in war time or otherwise. The dictator in reference may be any dictator either in a civilized modern nation or otherwise. Implicating innocent victims with crimes, the tyrant put them in prison and tortured. The way he tortured his victims is coming out one by one. His henchmen disposed of the tyrant's enemies "by hammering nails into their skulls" (138). This reminds us of the Nazi concentration camps in Oswiecim and Vichy where the cronies of Hitler disposed of millions of hapless Jews in unimaginably horrific manner. Our faces turn ashen when we hear how the tyrant in C.K. Williams' poem, did away with his supposed enemies. Even the very thought of it makes one shiver in their shoes. The feeling that one is being carried away to be nailed on the head by a long nail is enough to lose one's breath. The human mind will imagine all sorts of things; the placing of the nail in the center of the head, the gentle initial tap as one does when fixing something on the wall or shelf. When the slant is set, then the harder tap "to embed the tip a little more". It is horrifying and excruciatingly agonizing.

As in a movie or in a Shakespearean tragedy when a horror-packed scene to give the audience some relief, C.K. Williams deftly contradicts by saying, "This should be happening only in myth, in stone, or paint, not in reality, not here" (138). Sometimes it should be a sort of an emblem, a monogram but never meant to have

happened on earth. The world you and I live in is not that bad. Man created in God's image cannot imagine such acts against his own species. May be, it is a weird imagination of some strange artist, who tries to present "the image of an anguished face" (138). Certainly, no one among us is so grief-stricken. Thus, after disturbing the reader, the poet consoles him saying it doesn't concern him in any manner. This is a shift in the poem. Then, like a bolt from the blue, he hammers it down that it's we who do this and not any other denizen:

it's we who do such things, we who
set the slant, embed the tip, lift the
sledge and drive the nail, drive the
nail which is the axis upon which
turns the brutal human world upon
the world ('The Nail')

So, the whole world hinges on terror and terrorism. Man drives cruel joy terrifying, desecrating and humiliating the other. In the little interval given to man, man, instead of doing something noble, devices and engineers evil designs against his own brethren. The victims, in the little interval granted to them, instead of getting some respite, undergo excruciating pain. It's their lot. God's world is structured in such a cruelly-binarily opposite. It's awfully surprising that though man is a rational creature, he seldom realizes this.

C.K. Williams thus tries to postulate a kind of genre, a genre of despair in these poems. His witness of the Nazi Holocaust, Hiroshima, and the nuclear anguish mostly causes it, which are as depressing as our nuclear future. In his words,

"Wars, oppressions,
colonialisms, concentration camps:
the human animal hangs its head
in shame [...] (C.K. Williams. 'The
Poet and History' 203).

With profound sorrow, he is asking us,

"Did I write this / as I was /
dying?" (1994 : 41). □

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BHIMA BHUYAN - THE FIRST ORIYA NOVEL ON TRIBAL LIFE

* Dr. Bimbadhar Behera

Novel is the strongest literary medium as it depicts internal texture of society, culture and life in a serious imitation of reality¹. Other section of literary creations such as play, poems, satires, essays etc. cannot be compared with Novels though they describe something of the society. Novel emphasizes individualism. Novelists present all kinds of activities of the people and how these are impeded by social, cultural environment.

Now-a-days tribals and other neglected groups of people occupy vital role in the plots of the novel. These are not mere events but exhibit the changing attitude of elite and modern people in a sympathetic manner. Such new sensitive attitude towards weaker sections of the society evolves from modern scientific education, anthropological and sociological research in the 19th century by British administrators in Orissa and else where in the country.

The life and culture of tribal people is a subject of attraction due to manifold reasons. As told by Prof. (Dr.) Sunit Kumar Chatterjee that in the jungles and hills of interior Orissa are scattered earlier the people of India who are known as *Adivasies*, the people who had lived in this country before the beginning of the history². One of the great poet and tribal researcher of Orissa Dr. Sitakanta Mohapatra has referred them as the primitive tribals who are characterized by a very high degree of isolation, economic and educational backwardness, a cultural-self-image besides homogeneity and self-sufficiency³. Anthropologist Hibbel says that a tribe is a social group speaking common dialect, inhabiting a common territory and displaying a certain homogeneity in their culture⁴. Such homogeneity of tribal culture is the pre-dominant force of encouragement for the novelist and story-writers of Orissa. Gopalbalav Dash, Umesh Chandra Sarkar, Gopinath Mohanty, Kanhu Charan Mohanty, Prative Ray are the pioneers of the arena.

* a retired Professor from D.D. College, Keonjhar, Orissa, India.

The first Oriya Novel in this regard is the BHIMA BHUYAN written by Gopalbalava Dash who was an Administrator in some feudatory states of Orissa for which his experiences on tribal life motivated him to depict the theme. The novel was published in 1908 whose plot is enriched with the cultural picturesque along with romance between hero of the plot, the tribal youth BHIMA and princess of the kingdom. There was another incomplete novel **Kendujhara Bidroha** (Rebellion of Kendujhara) written by Umesh Chandra Sarkar which has an opposite romantic plot where a prince of royal family loves a maiden of Bhuyan Gadanayak Sardar (Leader). Both the plots are connected with social and cultural elevation of Bhuyan tribe in such a degree which was considered as somehow equal status of royal family in ex-predatory state Kendujhar.

The novel BHIMABHUYAN starts with a tribal and shifting cultivation of agricultural festival *Maghapoda* (burning with fire the straws and bushes to start the agricultural process). This is a great festive occasion of Bhuyans. They have a tradition of *Changu* dance in front of *Mandaghara* observed both by boys and girls on the occasion. The festival *Maghapoda* is described by Anthropologist S.C. Ray that "the present rite may be a mimetic representation of Jungle cleaning for the purpose of *Kammanna* cultivation and is intended to have a magic influence on their agricultural operations⁵.

The *Changu* dance of the festival is remarkable in their cultural life as it is an occasion to choose their life partner. As Bannerjee Brojesh told "a particular section of the community known as Bhuyan has developed their village past time in to a light hearted ritual of courtship**** the serious business begins, when a well practice party of young men sets off to a neighbouring village, laden with small gifts of sweet, meat, combs for the hair and other little trinkets calculated to win the esteem of the maidens to be visited. On arrival at the village chosen for the occasion, the young men proclaim their presence on the dancing green by loudly beating on their drums and tumborines, until a large enough hand of girls appear to constitute a dancing party. The offerings of the visitors are first of all gallantly

and graciously accepted and then the girls set to work to provide refreshment for their guests⁶. After the food stuffs have been consumed the boys and girls dance together until late in the night and next day more than one betrothal is announced to the village elders.

Banasura, elder brother of the hero BHIMA had observed *Maghapoda* through *Changu* dance with the beautiful belle Chinamali. Bhima thought that Chinamali loves him only but Banasura also was in this line. Chinamali does not know to whom she likes much. She was in dilemma. The hidden attitude of a woman is really a mystery. In this context, due to family arrangement Chinamali got married to Banasura. This incident was very painful to the hero Bhima. Out of frustration Bhima left the village later on. In the mean time once a royal representative called Nahara Bisoi while visiting the village had invited Bhima to the palace for royal patronage. Due to certain circumstances Bhima was not able to stay in this palace and left to the neighbouring state ruled by *Murdaraj* dynasty. Unfortunately the plot of the novel moves to describe the war between two states. On patronage of the neighbouring state the hero Bhima had emerged as a warrior which shows the bravery of Bhuyan tribe as mentioned in *Madala Panzi* of Puri Jagannath Temple. The princess of that state had heard the heroic story of Bhima and unknowingly felt weakness towards the hero. The romantic fiction is not a mere description but it shows the social elevation of Bhuyans in olden feudatory states along with nearer position to the royal family. The story aspect of the novel moves forward with the love affairs though it was not fruitful due to many reasons. In the mean time the King of the state was suffering from chronic unknown ailments and not recovered after many fold treatment of many ayurvedic medicines. Unfortunately Sahu Sardar, the father of Bhima Bhuyan and four others were imprisoned in the last war who were also sentenced to death. Bhima was in charge of executing the order. Here Bhima saved and kept him. He was a very good quack. When other quacks failed to cure the King, Bhima's father had started the treatment through Bhima and it was fruitful to recover the King. For this Bhima was awarded.

The end of the story was a tragedy but its background is full of tribal life. The psychological state of mind of tribal character as depicted by the writer is in an appropriate and realistic manner. Though the characters were tribal, they were not simple and the writer happened to be a non-tribal. The characterisation is natural because the tribals have the same kind of feeling as human beings of other general category.

In the end, the tribal life, forest-environment with economy and their cultural avenue are reflected nicely in the first Oriya Tribal Novel "BHIMABHUYAN". This creation has an encouraging effect on writers in the coming years. □

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IMAGERY IN DANTE'S INFERNO

* Dr. S.C. Roy

The terms image and imagery have many connotations. Imagery as a general term covers the use of language to represent objectives, actions, feelings, thoughts, ideas, states of mind and any sensory or extra-sensory experience. Images may lie literal, perceptual and conceptual. Literal images are conveyed without any figurative language such as the opening lines of inferno:

Midway life's journey I was made aware

That I had strayed into a dark forest

And the right path appeared not any where (Canto. 1, p.3)

The phrase 'strayed into a dark forest', is metaphorical and hence it indicates a perceptual image and the phrase 'right path' is an example of the conceptual image.

Throwing much light on the term image J.A. Cuddon states: 'Many images are conveyed (but by no means all) by figurative language, as in metaphor, simile, synecdoche, onomatopoeia and metonymy. An image may be visual (pertaining to the eye), Olfactory (smell) tactile (touch), auditory (hearing), gustatory (taste), abstract (in which case it will appeal to what may be described as the intellect) and Kinesthetic (pertaining to sense of movement and bodily effort)'.

Dante's imagery, as reflected in **Inferno**, are visual, Olfactory, tactile, auditory, abstract and Kinesthetic conveyed by metaphor, simile and symbols. Through beautiful tercets Dante conveys his ideas in excellent images which abound in the whole of the poem. At the outset let us examine how wonderfully he has presented his ideas at the very beginning of the poem through images and allegorical symbols. Having spent the whole night inside the dark forest, he visualizes the approach of the day through dawn when the early light of the sun illuminated the broad shoulders of the mountain at whose foot he stood. He compares his state of happiness with that of the drowning man who is fortuously saved from the deep waters.

* **Add: Gajapati Nagar, Berhampur (Gm.) Orissa, India.**

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As one, whom pantings of his breath exhaust
Escaped from the deep water to the shore,
Turns back and gazes on the danger crust,
So my mind, feeling still and stricken sore,
Turned back to gaze astonished on that pass
Which none hath ever left alive before. (Canto 1, p.4)

This is a conceptual or abstract image expressing the relief of a man from imminent death from drowning. As no image may be absolutely of one category, this image can also be a visual image reflecting the happiness of a man who escaped death from drowning. The line 'turns back and gazes on the danger crust' also suggests a Kinesthetic image.

Abruptly, symbols like Leopard, Lion and She-Wolf raise the thorniest question, as noted by T.S. Eliot about the allegorical nature of the poem. Dante used the medium of this poem to express his personal woes, political atrocities meted out against him despite his truthfulness and patriotism for Florence and his noble attempts to save humanity from medieval dogmatism. The Leopard stands for fraud and envy, the lion stands for violence and pride, and the ravening wolf stands for incontinence and greed. He describes the hyde of the Leopard as a hyde of 'mottled hair'. The lion ravening with hunger, was so terrible that 'the very air seemed of his breath afeared'. The famished she-Wolf frightened him so much that he lost the hope of the ascent. When the frightened Dante was descending down with panic he saw the spirit of Virgil whom he described in the following tercet.

While I was rushing on my downward course
Suddenly on my sight there seemed to start
One who appeared from a long silence hoarse. (Canto-1, p.5)

The phrase 'long silence hoarse' is a beautiful paradox. In Canto-III, the poets pass through the portals of Hell on whose lintel it is written in bold letters.

THROUGH ME THE WAY IS TO THE CITY OF WOE;

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THROUGH ME THE WAY AMONG THE LOST BELOW.

xxx xxx xxx

BEFORE I WAS NO THINGS CREATED WERE
SAVE THE ETERNAL, AND I ETERNAL ABIDE
RELINQUISH ALL HOPE, YE WHO ENTER HERE
(Canto-III, p. 14).

These writings present a conceptual image describing hell as a place of suffering. The very description of hell soon after is given in the following auditory image.

Here lamentation, groans and wailings deep
Reverberated through the starless air
So that it made me at the beginning weep.
Uncouth tongues, horrible chatterings of despair
Shrill and faint cries words of grief, tones of rage
And with it all smiting of hands were there. (Canto-III,

p.15)

Dante is full of pity for those numberless sinners portrayed in the following Kinaesthetic imagery that invokes irony:

I, who looked, behind a banner all a strain
Which moved, and, as it moved, so quickly spun
That never a respite it appeared to deign.
And after it I saw so many run
I had not believed they seemed so numberless
That Death so great a legion had undone (Canto-III, p.16)

This imagery suggests the misery and the anguish of a legion of sinners who helplessly run in hell holding the banner of remorse and pain. The last line of the quotation is very often quoted by T.S. Eliot, the modern poet. Then follows the terror striking words of Acheron, the ancient boatman in Charon, the river at the threshold of Inferno'.

An ancient, white with hair upon him old.
Crying, 'Woe to you, ye spirits misbegot!
Hope not that heaven ye ever shall behold
I come to carry you to yon, shore and lead

From the words of Acheron, we learn that hell is a place of darkness, heat and cold; a place of suffering for the damned spirits who undergo the ordeal in quantitative degrees as found in the succeeding cantica of Inferno. Unrevoked by protests and resistance Charon with eyes of glowing-coal threatens the spirits to board his boat on their journey to the underworld. Having heard the harsh words of Acheron the spirits, with despair and terror 'blasphemed God', 'blasphemed their mother's womb, mankind, the place, the time, the seed of their engendering and their birth and doom. Then keeping all together the spirits constrain themselves to proceed to the shore of hell. Dante describes their helplessness in a beautiful image:

And as the leaves of November fall
To earth, one after another, ever fewer
Till the bough sees its spoil gone past recall.
So by that river Adam's seed impure
Cast themselves from the Wharf, one after one,
At signals, as the bird goes to the lure
Thus are they borne across the water dun (Canto-III, p.18)

As leaves fall down from the boughs in the severe cold of November, similarly, the sinners who can also be named as 'Adam's seed impure', jump down the wharf of the boat and pass onto the accursed hell. Dante uses another simile such as, the bird lured by the hunter, that flies onto the net that constrains it to captivity, despair and death, in the similar manner the spirits enter hell. It is a splendid Kinesthetic image reflected in beautiful tercets.

In the first circle of Inferno Dante witnesses the unbaptised men, women and children. They were not baptised, hence they do not get the blessings of that fate. They were born before Christ. It was an untimely birth. Even Virgil admits that he was one among them. These spirits are lost without hope, languishing in suspense. Virgil narrates how Christ came to limbus, after the crucifixion and took the worldly souls of the old testament, such as Abel, Noah, King David, Israel with his father and sons and Rachel and blessed

In the second circle, the sufferings of the carnal sinners are described in the following Kinesthetic and auditory image:

And as the cranes in long line streak the sky
And in procession chant their mournful call,
So I saw come with sound of waiting by (Canto-V, p.27)

In Canto-VI Dante introduces Cerberus, the hellish dog through a palpable tactile and visual imagery:

Cerberus, cruel and uncouth monster there
Stretches his three throats out and hound-like bays
Over the people embogged about his lair,
His beard is slobbered black, his red eyes blaze
His belly is big, his hands clawed, and with growl
The spirits he clutches, and rends piecemeal and flays.

(Canto-VI, p. 31-32)

In the fourth circle (Canto-7), Dante describes how the sinners fight in the mash of river Styx:

And I who stood with fixed looks intent
Saw muddied people in that slough who stuck
All naked and with brows in anger bent
Not with hands only each the other struck
But with head and breast and heels that spurn:
At one another with their teeth they pluck (Canto-VIII, P-39-

40)

Having seen the angel who came to hell to help Dante in entering the city of Dis, the fallen spirits flee like frogs escaping from their enemy, the snake:

As frogs before their enemy the snake
Leap through the water, scattered at his threat
Till each squats on the bottom thereto quake

(Canto. IX, p.48)

Down a steep slope of shattered rock (caused by the earthquake at the crucifixion), guarded by Minotaur, the poets clamber to the seventh circle and find at the bottom of the cliff a River of Blood (Phlegethon) which flows round this circle. The Minotaur,

the Labyrinth. Having come to know that Dante was willed by God to visit hell alive, Minotaur forbids attack, yet with anger wriths:

As a bull bursts his tether to attack
Just when he feels the stroke that makes an end
And cannot charge but plunges forth and back

(Canto-XII, p.62)

Crossing Phlegthon by the ford, the poets arrive in the wood of suicide that had become withered and full of poisonous trees amidst which Harpis cry. Dante breaks a withered twig which bleeds and protests, if Dante had no sense of pity. It cried again that once they were men and now turned into trees. The visual and auditory images may be noted from these following lines:

As a green brand, that burneth at one end
At the other drips and hisses, from the wood
Where the escaping wind and fire contend
So from that broken splinter words and blood
Together came : where at, like one afraid

I let the tip fall and all silent stood (Canto. XIII, p. 69)

The third ring of the seventh circle is the ring of the burning sand, where the violent against God are tormented. These sinners lie supine on the ground; those violent against Nature and Art sit huddled and often others are made to move continuously. On all of them falls a fiery rain:

All over the wide sands descending slow
Were rained dilated flakes of dropping fire:

As without wind fall in the hills the snow (Canto-XIV, p.74)

The status of the old man in the island of Crete evidently suggests the depreciation of humanity at its successive ages. Ever since the Golden Age mankind had been depreciating; therefore the whole statue (narrated in the poem) except the golden head, is split by a crack and from the fissures flow the tears of the sinful generations of men which symbolically descend into hell in shape of rivers like the Acheron, Styx, Phlegethon and Lethe. The head of the statue was made of perfect gold; his arms are pure silver; his breast of molten brass; downwards, he is all iron except the right foot

which was made of clay. The visual imagery in the narration of the statue is outstanding in proving the genius of Dante as a master craftsman in the use of imagery appropriate to the medieval perception:

A head shapen of perfect gold he has;
Of pure silver his arms are, and his breast;
But to the fork he is of molten brass,
Thence down he is all of iron, proved the best,
Except that the right foot is baked of clay,
And on this, more than the other, doth he rest.

(Canto-XIV, p. 77)

The monster Geryon, who is the emblem of fraud guards the Eighth circle. The poets are to descend to the Eighth Circle on the back of Geryon, who is described in the following visual imagery:

And that obscene image of Fraud then bore
Onward, and landed with his head and chest;
But drew not up his tail upon the scur.
His face was as a just man's and expressed
The mildness that its outward aspect feigned
Like a Serpent's trunk was all the rest
He had two paws, upto the armpit maned
With hair, the neck and breast and either flank
Were freaked with knots and little whorls-ingrained

(Canto-XVII, p. 89-90)

The pretty images of fireflies in summer season at the hour of dusk is compared to the innumerable flames of the 8th Circle:

Like fire-flies that the peasant on the hill,
Reposing in that season, when he who shines
To light our world his face doth least conceals
At that hour when the fly to gnat resigns,
Sees glimmering down along the valley board,
There, where perhaps he ploughs or tends the vines,
So numerous the flames in the Eighth Circle-glowed

(Canto-XXVI, p. 138)

The 9th circle is formed by the frozen waters of Cocytus, into

Caina, from Cain who killed his brother, and contains those who have been violent to their own kin. The second is called Antenora, from Antenor, the Trojan, and contains those who like him betrayed their country. The other two are called Ptolemaea and Guidecca. The plight of the spirits are described in the following visual imagery:

Like, when the peasant-woman dreams of what
She will glean a field, the frogs that, everyone
With muzzle out of water, croaking squat
So livid, upto where men's shame is shown
The desolate shades were the ice confined

(Canto-XXXII, p. 171-

172)

The last ring of the 9th circle in Guidecca named after Judas Iscariot. Lucifer presides over this ring and chews Judas, Brutus and Cassius in his three months. Lucifer is presented here half in snow and half in the void. Dante puts his arms round Virgil's neck and Virgil climbing by Lucifer's shaggy side, lets himself down to his waist. There he turns round (at the center of gravity in the universe) so that his head is where his feet had been, and climbs in the opposite direction to ascend the Mount Purgatory. By a long passage in the rock the poets climb up till they emerge in the southern hemisphere on the shores of the Mount of Purgatory surrounded by the sea.

Like the other sections of the **Divina Commedia, Inferno** ends with the sweet and the hopeful word "stars".

Appeared those things of beauty that heaven wears
Glimpsed through a rounded opening faintly bright,
Thence issuing we beheld again the stars

(Canto-XXXIV, p. 187)

Inferno abounds in visual, conceptual, olfactory, auditory and Kinesthetic imagery, out of which I have selected a few popular images to bring home the fact that Dante was adept in the use of imagery. The Terza Rima metre has also made the poem highly enjoyable for its rhythm and music. Dante's style in **Inferno** is sober and simple. His brevity in style depended on the nature of the figurative language he used. Dante's vocabulary is poor, but

Dante's main weapon is the verb which he handles like a Chisel. Dante does not draw; he carves through the use of his arduous terza rima metre. Dante is great for his unification of the aesthetic and philosophic thought. Therefore he is called "the poet of integrity". Dante's poetry is called the poetry of redemption for the fact that he placed the evil and the good in a more impartial and clinical way. In his poetry he found place for a harlot and for a saint too. If the world is to see another poet whose moral fiber, and universal mind are comparable to Dante's it will only be in an age happily purged at the separateness which plagues our civilization and threatens its inner death. □

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Power Ideology and Murder: Fear and Power in Norman Mailer's An American Dream

* Dr.R.Rajavelu

Norman Mailer presents his vision of contemporary America through the theme of murder and sex in **An American Dream**. Through the crime story of Stephen Richards Rojack, a wife-killer, Mailer establishes the fact that the "American dream life is a 'concentration of ecstasy and violence'" (Gutman 125). The protagonist of the novel Rojack, professor of Existential Psychology, author, television talk show host, ex-congressman, war-hero and accomplished stud is separated from his shrewish wife, Deborah, a forceful woman who has noble blood in her veins. Though he loves Deborah, he hates her for her humiliations and insults. When he visits her apartment one night, she insults him to the utmost. Unable to endure her taunts any longer, he strangles her to death in her Plush Park Avenue Apartment and pushes her off the balcony to the busy street twenty storeys below. He informs the police, passes it off as a suicide and escapes arrest.

In **An American Dream**, the protagonist Richards Rojack who has been constantly humiliated and insulted by his shrewish and disloyal wife Deborah, employs murder as a weapon to achieve his 'Power ideology' that aims at reclaiming his liberation and power that he lost to her.

Rojack's 'fear' and 'hate' for Deborah, are the emotions responsible for his framing his 'power ideology'. He dreads her for her violence, shrewishness, murderous nature, wealth, and evil powers and he expresses his fear for her: "I was afraid of her. She was not incapable of murdering me" (33). Gutman, attributing Deborah's murder to Rojack's fear, says, "Rojack faces his fear and dread and commits one of the most heinous of crimes" (107). Besides his fear for her, Rojack hates Deborah for her immorality, infidelity, arrogance and aggression, shrewishness, and abusive nature.

* teaches English at Tagore Govt. Arts College, Pondicherry,

The major factors instrumental in Rojack's formation of his 'American dream ideology' based on power and wealth, and the consequent murder of Deborah are her infidelity, insults, violence and evil nature. Deborah's disloyalty to her husband stems up from her nymphomania, which forces her often to take rum, flirt with her young lovers and accuse Rojack of being incapable of doing anything. Rojack painfully reveals her illicit relationship with one of her lovers, an old man: "he [the old man] 'd been banging my blessed Deborah five times a year, five times each of the last eight years, forty glorious bangers upon the unconscious horror of my back ..." (17). Agonized by her infidelity, despite his love and care for her throughout her eight years of married life with him, Rojack woefully confesses:

I tell you in shame that for those eight years I could point with certainty to only five bonafide confessed infidelities by Deborah; she had indeed announced each of them to me, each an accent, a transition, a concrete step in the descent of our marriage, a curtain to each act in a five-act play: but beyond this, in the great unknown, were anywhere from two hundred to precisely no infidelities... . (18)

Her lecherous sexual contacts with her young lovers, her lack of love for him and her belligerent nature have made their life a battlefield and forced him to lead an unhappy life. His realisation that he "was finally a failure" (15) in married life makes him depressed and drives him twice to the point of suicide.

Deborah's constant humiliation of Rojack is the second major factor responsible for his 'fear' for her and the genesis of his ideology. She often hurts his feelings through her insults and humiliations in order to enslave him psychologically. She abuses him by calling him "a swine," a "bloody whimperer" (30), and an "awful", "contemptible-looking creature" (29). She calls his true love for his step-daughter pretentious, ridicules his heroic acts in the war and rails at his looks saying that he looks "like some pedlar from the lower east side" (31). When Rojack confesses his descendance from pedlars, she attacks the whole class of pedlars as "poor materialistic grabby little

people" (31). She humiliates and hurts him overtly saying, "I don't love you any more at all" (34). She insults him by adopting the method of praising her young lovers. These insults and humiliations are her ploy to deprive Rojack of his freedom and power, and he murders her to reclaim them.

Deborah's violence is the third important factor that is responsible for his insecurity and subsequently for his coinage of his power ideology. Her aggression arising from her wealth, arrogance and dipsomania forces her often to drink and quarrel with her husband. Rojack comments on her aggressive nature: "Deborah was violent. I had a bad scar on my ear ... Deborah had once bitten it half-through in a fight" (31). On another occasion, when Deborah had become pregnant after three years of marriage, she drank a lot and quarrelled beyond limit that the baby "came brokenly to birth" (34) and as a consequence she lost the chance of having a baby forever. The day of her murder bears classic evidence to her violence. When Rojack slaps on her face asking her to stop her description of her obscene sexual acts with her lovers, she charges at him like a bull with her head on his stomach. Afraid of her cantankerous and violent nature, Rojack strangles her to death in his attempt to protect himself from her fatal assault. Gutman's words are pertinent here: "Deborah's veiled violence and her need for mastery and cruelty bring Rojack to a fever pitch, so that in the space of at most an hour and a half the moon guides him through a murder" (106).

Deborah's devilish nature is the last important factor accountable for Rojack's fear for her and formation of his ideology. He believes that Deborah has got some magical, evil "power to lay a curse" (29) and that he has been a victim of her curse. Rojack, substantiating the power of her curse, adds that once after he went out following a fight with her, he was given traffic tickets thrice in fifteen minutes. He believes that Deborah is evil, for she herself confesses it to him: "I know that I am more good and more evil than anyone alive... I am evil if truth be told ... It's just that evil has power" (43). Also Rojack believes that she is "the Devil's daughter" (204) who taught him of "the long finger of God and the swish of the

Devil”(41). Therefore, when his marriage becomes a failure, he resents that his marriage to Deborah has been “a devil’s contract”(18). Gutman regards Kelley and his daughter Deborah as personifications of evil (122). Thus it is evident that Deborah’s *infidelity*, *insults*, *violence* and *evil nature* are the major factors which evoke in Rojack ‘fear and hate’ and necessitate him to conceive his American dream ideology of power in redeeming his liberation and power from Deborah.

After framing his American Dream ideology of power and wealth, Rojack plans to realize it by hook or crook. As a Professor of Existential Psychology, Rojack understands the importance of wealth and power in the materialistic world. To realize his power ideology, he marries Deborah Caughlin Mangaravidi Kelley, daughter of the fabulously wealthy and politically influential Barney Oswald Kelly, with a view to becoming a powerful politician. He confesses that her wealth and power are the motive of his love for and marriage to Deborah: “I loved her the way a drum majorette loved the power of the band for the swell it gave to each little strut” (25). After his marriage to her, he feels strong and powerful, and “with her beside” he is “one of the more active figures of the city” (25). But the moment he is separated from her, he feels that he has lost all his power because he believes that the power and stamina he got through his marriage to Deborah is only a gift and that “the gift was only up for a loan” (26). His ambition of wielding power crumbles when their married life becomes a failure. Her withdrawal of freedom and power from him through her separation necessitates him to regain them from her through his ideology.

Rojack, as a war hero, finds in murder a powerful weapon in achieving his goal—his power ideology. He strongly believes that murder gives him not only “vast relief” and freedom but also the necessary strength and power to create a new life and a new world. He is of the conviction that “death was a creation more dangerous than life” (15) and therefore he wants to create a new life and a new world for himself on the ashes of his cruel wife. He further believes that, by murdering Deborah he can free himself from her

all her power (Radford 35). Moreover, he feels that Deborah is an obstacle that has been impeding his way to a heavenly life—his life

of freedom and power (Leeds 128). So he resorts to murder as the means of realizing his ‘power ideology’. Consequently, while strangling Deborah to death, he feels as if “her strength began to pass” to him and he has the mental image that he is pushing with his shoulder “against an enormous door”, behind which “heaven was there” (38). Hence commenting on this scene Foster says that Rojack murders Deborah “in a moment of freeing impulse” (19). According to Gutman, Rojack murders Deborah, “ostensibly, as an act of liberation” and after the murder “he is free of her, of her malice toward him, and of his past” (106-07). When the time is ripe to Rojack to fulfil his dream, he murders her with his American dream ideology of power behind him.

After Deborah’s murder, Rojack realizes his American Dream ideology of power and wealth. He feels rejuvenated and regenerated after his murder of Deborah for, after strangling her, he says: “I opened my eyes. I was weary with a most honourable fatigue, and my flesh seemed new. I had not felt so nice since I was twelve” (39). Later he reiterates this feeling of his: “If Deborah’s dying had given me a new life, I must be all of eight hours old by now” (98). Leeds, commenting on Rojack’s feeling of rejuvenation, says, “The act of murder is described in terms of a vision of some heavenly city, and in the aftermath he feels as though he has been reborn” (128).

Rojack realizes his power ideology and enjoys power and wealth through his murder of Deborah. He has a good time after the murder; he makes love to a night club dancer Cherry, who is now involved with a gangster but was formerly the mistress of Rojack’s powerful father-in-law, Barney Oswald Kelley; he defends his right over Cherry by beating up her present lover, Shago Martin, a black whom he considers “the most talented singer in America” (181); he engages himself in a fierce, climactic confrontation with Kelly, who is associated with the criminal element in America; he suffers the loss of Cherry, who is killed by a friend of Shago; and he goes to west,

pays off his debts in New York and decides to desert America. At last he leaves for the primitive wilds of Guatemala and Yucatan.

Through his murder of Deborah, the personification of evil, Rojack implies that murder can also be good. Just as Rama, the incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the Preserver of the Trinity of Gods in the Hindu mythology, kills the demon, Thadaki, the incarnation of evil, for the good of the world, Rojack also kills his demoniac wife. He does not feel any remorse for his murder, instead he justifies his act; in this respect Rojack can be compared with Raskolnikov of Crime and Punishment, who also justifies his murder of Lezaveta, instead of feeling remorse. Rojack does not consider his murder of Deborah as a sin, but as a road to salvation, a holy act. Lucid endorses this view saying, "Rojack puts on his shirt after the murder 'with the devotion of cardinal fixing his hat'" (149). Rojack justifies his murder with the argument that the murder of a devilish woman like Deborah is neither a sin nor a crime, but a holy act of sacrifice that deserves approbation. Commenting on Rojack's murder Gutman says that it is a journey to the deepest part of him, which helps him for his self-realization (103-04) and that in his murder of Deborah, Rojack feels a *catharsis* or purgation of his soul and renewal of life (104).

Rojack's American dream comes true when he succeeds in realizing his ideology of enjoying freedom and power through murder. After he murders Deborah, he overcomes all his problems successfully and enjoys life the way he wished. Summing up Rojack's murder and the realization of his ideology, Gutman observes that Rojack enjoys his liberation through his act of the murder of Deborah (106-07). Though he commits a murder, he cleverly hoodwinks the police, escapes punishment and realizes his American dream ideology of power, freedom and material comforts. □

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THE RESCUE TRIANGLE IN TUGHLAQ, CALIGULA AND MACBETH

* B.J. Geetha

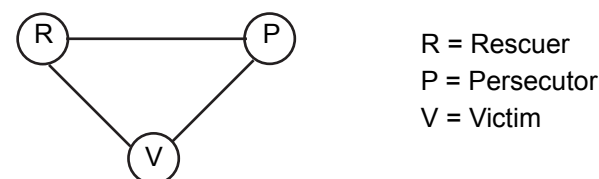
The protagonists in William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Girish Karnad's *Tughlaq* and Albert Camus's *Caligula* are all tarred with the same brush with different hues in every warp and weft. Each one is a man in the moon before tyranny and evil can cling them. They desperately and deliberately metamorphose to evil. Their vision sparkles with all the speckle of evil and all their idealisms turn to ashes and thereby they turn their land into inferno, Tughlaq's mad idealism and warped mind, Caligula's absurdity of human life and Macbeth's vaulting ambition eclipse their goodness. This paper makes a psychological study on their tyranny and shows how the good souls commit evil deeds simply because the evil in them takes an upper hand over the good.

The concept of the Rescue Triangle is borrowed from "Transactional Analysis", a Neo - Fruedian School of Psychology, originated by Dr. Eric Berne. According to it, there will be three roles in the Drama Triangle. The Rescuer, the Persecutor and the Victim. Almost all human beings suffer from various psychological problems without knowing the intensity of their damage on their life. Each of us tends to act any one of this role as accord with our situation. A racket of guilty feelings make one to play the Rescuer: a racket of angry makes one to play the Persecutor: and a racket of helplessness makes one to play the victim. The Rescuer feels that he is superior to the victim and that the latter is helpless and hopeless without his rescue. He sacrifices his own interest and comfort for the sake of rescuing which usually proves to be a failure. He is never thanked by the victim for his rescuing and he finds himself being exploited. This would turn him into a persecutor. When all his anger is spent he once again feels guilty for having persecuted his victim.

The persecutor also feels that he is superior and his favourite feeling is angry. He taunts his victims verbally or physically when

* teaches English at Periyar University, Tamil Nadu, India.

they go wrong or disbelieve him or his help. When their victims remain disloyal to him the persecutor uses his power to whip them. But when the Persecutor sinks with guilty he jumps back to the role of the Rescuer. On the other hand the victim feels helpless and allows others to take advantage of him: He sends verbal or non-verbal signals to the Rescuer to rescue him to come out of his trap. Later he bluntly resents and pushes the Rescuer down to the role of Persecutor. This is clearly shown in the drawing below:



This concept of 'Drama Triangle' is used in analyzing Tughlaq, Caligula and Macbeth. All of them assume their favourite role as Rescuer but later they play the role of Persecutor and in the end they turned into victims of their own actions.

This concept provides a better platform for our understanding of Tughlaq, Caligula and Macbeth. All the characters in **Tughlaq** are involved in this and this is evident from the beginning of the play where the old Muslim is persecuting Muhammad verbally and the young Muslim is rescuing the sultan.

Old Man : God, what's this country coming to!
Youngman : What are you worried about, grand father?

The country's in perfectly safe hands,
safer

than any you've seen before

(Scene I p.1)

Muhammad plays an indomitable role of a Rescuer. Even before the play opens he has floored some reforms to help his victims - Hindus. One of the reforms is the removal of the Jizia tax. But the Hindu victims criticize the sultan instead of thanking him. As a Rescuer, Muhammad foregoes even his physical comfort such as sleep and marital bliss. He wants to build an ideal kingdom

enjoys the feeling of guilty” (Scene - 4, p.28). When Mohammed’s reforms are not understood and acknowledged by his victims he feels that he is exploited by his ungrateful victims. He turns into a persecutor and whips them. He announces his capital is to be shifted from Delhi to Daulatabad. He says:

Najib; I want Delhi vacated immediately. Every living soul in Delhi will leave for Daulatabad within a fortnight I was too soft. I can see that now they’ll only understand the whip. (Scene-6, p.44)

When his angry feelings are spent, Muhammad again feels guilty he says -

God, God in Heaven, please help me
My skin drips with blood and I don’t know
How much of it mine and how much of
Others. I started in your path, Lord,
Why am I wandering naked in this desert now?

(Scene - 10, p.67)

Just like Tughlaq, Caligula, the Emperor prefers to play his metaphysical anguish through the role playing of the Rescuer. His sister Drusilla’s sudden death, with whom he had an illicit affair, awakens his mind to meaninglessness, finiteness, suddenness of death and impermanence of human life. Caligula wants to explore on this absurdity of human life. The death of Drusilla is more than a traumatic shock to him. This strange encounter forces the young Emperor to enact the role of Rescuer. He says, “I suddenly felt a desire for the impossible” (Act I, p.119).

Caligula feels that it is his missionary zeal to teach this absurd lesson to his people. Being the Emperor he enjoys absolute power and it is his sole duty to raise his people from their ignorance. Death metamorphoses his idealism and he traces a new philosophy in human life. He feels that his victims “are without understanding and they need a teacher: some one who knows what he is telling about” (Act I, p.121). But just like Tughlaq; he too realizes that they cannot understand him and therefore he wants to whip them to teach his philosophy.

He starts his teaching by ordering that every citizen, with any capital, must die by inheriting his children and leaving his money to the state. He creates an artificial famine; insults poets; takes away the wife of the citizens and forces her to work in a public brothel; relegates those who do not get the identity card by making frequent visits to the brothel; and rapes the spouse of another; compels his own old nurse to drink poison; murders his mistress and assumes himself as Venus.

‘Men die and they are not happy’ (p. 120) - this feature prevails behind all his inhuman activities. He thinks that power can enable him to teach his victims but he knows that labial teaching would end up only with partial success, so he uses tyranny and cruelty. According to Caligula the physical delight which we feel at being alive is tragic because it highlights the horror of our inevitable death. His rally is to teach his people who live on the mirage of false life. He wants to engrave the tyranny of existence in their conscience. Thus he voluntarily takes on the role of the persecutor.

Even he refuses to wage wars since human life matters much to him than the glory of military triumph. As the play progresses, Caligula feels that he is alienated from all around him and he gets his ease only in the company of the dead since they resemble him. When he has done enough damage he is engulfed with guilt and says -

I have chosen a wrong path, a path that

Leads to nothing, my freedom are not the right one (p. 122).

Unlike Tughlaq and Caligula, Macbeth wants to play his role for his selfish motive. He does not have any of their vision and idealism to the welfare of his victims. Yet Macbeth believes that he can make a good king of Scotland for he believes in his virtues; thus he spins his ambition which becomes his tragic flaw. He wants to impose his will to power as he believes in his strength to protect Scotland better than Duncan, the king of Scotland. His passion for power estates in him which stimulates him to murder the king Duncan. Thus he reveals his desire to play the role of the Rescuer. But he is haunted by the passion for absolute power which corrupts him

To safeguard his kingship he kills one after the other and mars his soul. When all the lords and people suspect him for his foul play in acclaiming the power he turns to the persecutor. Ambition by itself is not dangerous but the problem with Macbeth's is divorced from social consideration; individualistic advantage is gained outside of social benefits. What he thought was the murder of king Duncan would end up there itself and he could be the king of Scotland; but the presence of Banquo and Macduff shakes his confidence and thus he wants to get rid of them all.

When Macbeth regrets, it is already too late and he cannot hope for any rewards of life. He knows that he has fouled his soul beyond redemption. He says -

I have lived long enough; my way of life
Is fallen into the sere, the yellow leaf
And that should accompany old age

(Act-V, Scene-III, p. 152)

When all his persecution ended with nothingness he realizes that

Life is but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury
Signifying nothing.

(Act-V, Scene-V, p.160)

Thus all the three characters swift from one role to another simultaneously. Their idealism and divine inspiration are the reflection of their rescue philosophy; and the realism and the deft intrigue are the angry reaction of the rescuer or the victim who become the persecutor of the other. Thus this 'Drama Triangle' has helped to analyze these colossal figures psychologically to understand the reason for their metamorphism, their ideal vision and their colossal failure. But even in their failure they stand as great heroes and all their ideal dreams exalt them as tragic heroes. □

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Expiation in Arthur Miller's **All My Sons**, **Death of a Salesman**, **The Crucible** and **A View from the Bridge**

** Dr. S. Subbulakshmi*

Literature is highly moral in nature and it shows what is right and what is wrong, good and bad, high and low. The true function of literature is not to offer escape from unpleasant facts but to help the reader to face reality and cope with it successfully. The purpose of Arthur Miller is to reform people morally not in a didactic way but by presenting the truth that the wages of sin is death.

Miller conceives man as an amalgam of social instincts, psychological drives and creative will. But among all the component elements he considers the human will, supreme and dominant over other factors and by doing so he liberates the individual who is capable of independent action and self judgment. His heroes, whether good or bad, are not inane sensationalists, but willful men ready to act and die for their innate conceptions of good name, honour and dignity.

Commenting on Miller's handling of Sin and expiation, Allan Lewis observes as follows:

"Miller, in the true Puritan Spirit, seeks expiation for his guilt by returning to the problem of original Sin. Once doubt exists and God's perfection is questioned man's fall begins. Suffering and inner travail are atonement on the road to regain paradise or a transformed paradise after knowledge". (37)

Joe Keller in "**All My Sons**" is steadfast in his conviction that his familial loyalty is sufficient justification for his criminal action of permitting the export of cracked airplane cylinders. He tells his son that he did it only for his sake and argues with his disagreeing wife that he made money because she wanted money. The same faith drives him to death because by killing himself he can save the honour of his family.

* *teaches English at JKK Nataraja College of Arts & Science,*

In "**Death of a Salesman**" Willy Loman does not relinquish his dream of success even after his own bitter experiences of failure and his son's advice to take the phony dream and burn it before something happens. He commits suicide so that his son may inherit the insurance amount and live comfortably.

Similarly John Proctor in "**The Crucible**" and Eddie Carbone in "**A View from the Bridge**" sacrifice their lives for their innate conceptions, honour, justice and good name. Proctor believes that confession is a private affair of the human soul and that public confession will damage his good name and identity. He will not allow his conscience to be dictated by governor Danforth who demands from him a written confession. He prefers death to dishonour and goes to the gallows. In "**A View from the Bridge**" when Marco abuses Eddie for betraying him by informing the authorities about his illegal immigration, the latter takes it as an affront damaging his public image, and enters into an open fight with his adversary in the vain hope that by killing his enemy he can regain his lost name. Though Eddie does not win this dual and rather gets killed, his death comes as a relief which Eddie himself might have preferred to the ignominy of living in the neighbourhood after the loss of his "name".

Many of Miller's protagonists court voluntary death because they have come to the realization that death alone can help them cast off their false social image. Joe Keller in "**All My Sons**" and Willy Loman in "**Death of a Salesman**" commit suicide as an escape from their false notions from which they cannot otherwise get themselves freed. John Proctor goes to the gallows not because the choice of life is impossible to him but because the life he has to live, if he prefers it will be false. He knows that he can survive only with the name of a lecher. Eddie Carbone's death is also a kind of suicide in the sense that he seems to be aware that he will be called a sexual sinner and an informer as well, as long as he lives. Suicide in Miller's plays seems to be an inevitable part of the theme to inculcate the idea that moral perfection is essential to human survival and human happiness.

As Chatterji opines, “..... The disturbing sense of guilt that grips the characters as a consequence of their actions brings about different kinds of self-knowledge and self-recognition, which help the characters to make their final existential resolutions of facing death”. (85)

It was the depression that gave Miller a passionate understanding of man's insecurity in modern industrial civilization, his deep rooted belief in social responsibility and his moral earnestness. Man lives in society and Miller's plays depict the interaction between the individual and the society which in most cases is deviant resulting in sinful actions. These sinful actions are followed by a sense of guilt and the individual's realization to strive for atonement with his own inner self and with the social circle around him.

In **All My Sons, Death of a Salesman, The Crucible** and **A View from the Bridge** the protagonists expiate their sins. This expiation reveals the individual's preparedness to undergo punishment for the sinful action committed by him. To Miller, man is born to be one with the society. An individual has his own responsibility to be filled with love and concern for his fellow beings. Only then his life will be perfect and complete. One must give up one's greed, lust, jealousy, hatred, vengeance and selfishness. If each and every man realizes this all important truth, each human heart in itself will be a heaven and no one needs to look for it elsewhere. Through his plays pl Miller enlightens the readers with the notion that if only man has the courage to realize his inner worth, the world will become a better place for the human race to inhabit. □

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BERNARD MALAMUD'S THE ASSISTANT : A STUDY IN INTER-SUBJECTIVITY

* Dr. K. Jayapal

Bernard Malamud is a distinguished writer of international repute. He is a singular artist who pictures the human condition veritably. The modern world is a “disquieting world where the nature of human value itself is at stake” (Stevenson 308). Humanistic values like compassion, commitment, human involvement and responsibility are at stake. Malamud is painfully aware of the tragic under currents of modern life. His writings manifest that, human encounter would move towards a positive goal beyond eros-beyond lustful desire to possess one's object of love to agape - to a recognition of deeper inter-dependence of men and redemptive love of man.

A sound wading of Malamud fiction reveals a conflict between self-centered absorption and humanitarian instincts. At the early stage of his life a Malamud protagonist appears to be selfish. So, his character remains fragmented. But when he overcomes his solipsistic tendencies by relative himself to another he is able to liberate himself from the manacles of self-centeredness.

In Malamud writings suffering occupies a prominent place. Suffering is essential as it is reformative. It is through suffering a Malamud hero attains self-transcendence. Malamud employs the Jew as a metaphor for the human condition. The Jews are remarkable for their inter-subjective relations. The real Jew is identified by the quality of his heart. His Jewishness has all to do with his response to existence, his capacity for mercy and fraternal man. Malamud has made his Jew an Every Man.

The Assistant is a tale of hunger, privation and unrelieved sorrow. In this novel compassion and other-centered love leads to mutual sympathy and fraternity. It is a record of existence of a poor other loving grocer whose business is deteriorating. But the

* *teaches English at Govt. Arts College, Salem, Tamil Nadu,*

characters, who smart under the heavy weight of poverty pulsate with possibilities for inter-subjectivity.

Morris Bober, the hero of **The Assistant** acts as statement about the benevolent world characterized by inter-subjectivity. Malamud's **The Assistant** makes it very patent that man's being on earth is a being with others. On no occasion human beings could afford to be polarities. In the human situation man as a being cannot be separated from other human beings.

Inter-subjectivity means man, as subject must treat the other human being as a subject like him. It is a world of interpersonal involvement. In authentic human relationships gestures and looks play a vital role. They are an address for man to interact with them. On the plane of inter-subjectivity one's being is through the being of the other.

Sartre, the French existential philosopher, regards the world as one full of conflict. He says, one man stares at the other and the other tries to outstare at him. This process is a repetition. He says that human relationship is a stare and counter-stare. So in the eyes of Sartre, there is no possibility for amiable relationship in human existence. To Sartre even human love is a fraud and so no inter-subjectivity can take place. "Thus interpersonal relationship remains an attack and counter attack to reduce each other into object through the complete domination of other beings". (Micelli 229)

On the other hand philosophers like Gabriel Marcel, Emmanuel Levinas, and Martin Buber have evolved modes of inter-subjectivity. Marcel's terms like 'disponibilite and indisponibilite', 'being and having', 'presence and encounter' form an integral part of inter-subjective human relationship. When a man enters into relationship with another, the other arouses his interest. This makes each present to the other. This makes each stop being external to the other. In Marcel's philosophy the 'I' is not viewed in its self-centeredness but in a genuine dialogue.

Disponibilite means availability. In availability one man makes himself handy to the other. The disponible man is devoid of self-centeredness. He welcomes mutuality of presences.

means unavailability being unhandy to the other. It means a distance from the other. 'Having' is marked by a desire for possession. Being eliminates the urge to possess. Being is a living for the other, having is indifference to the needs of the other. Marcel "like Buber in particular... has stressed the possibilities of human communion, the meaningful dialogue of the I and the Thou" (Gill and Sherman (614).

Martin Buber, the Jewish existential philosopher speaks of two spheres of human existence-- I-thou and I-it. In his famous work **Ich Und Du** (I and Thou), he writes about these two spheres. In the I-thou sphere. the 'I' is a subject and the 'thou' is also a subject; but in the other sphere the 'I' is a subject and the 'It' is an object. The 'I-It' lacks reciprocity and in this sphere the other is treated as an object to be classified and judged. The 'I-Thou' relation entails the involvement of man's whole self and so it is spoken with the whole being.

Reciprocity, spontaneity and immediacy define 'I-Thou' relation; manipulation, control and exploitation are the marked denominators of 'I-it' relation. A human being may alternate between the two spheres of relation. But man must not reside in the 'I-it' relation permanently. He must come back to the 'I-Thou' sphere as soon as possible. Buber wants human beings to be connected dialogically.

Emmanuel Levinas, another Jewish philosopher deals with inter-subjectivity. He wants man to situate himself in the position of the other. Levinas deems human responsibility as inevitable and non-transferable. Nobody can be responsible for somebody else's responsibility. Levinas states that man is responsible for his own responsibility. In his opinion interpersonal responsibility keeps augmenting as they are assumed. This he calls infinity of responsibility.

For Levinas everything that happens on earth concerns man. The face of the other appeals to man and places before him a choice that cannot be avoided or evaded. This interpersonal man reacts in a manner "here I am, send me" (T.I. 149). The face of the other

The Jewish tradition itself bristles with inter-subjective situations. The synagogue fostered brotherhood and interpersonal responsibility. In his **Tales of Hassidim** Martin Buber refers to a sick man. The sick man's complaint to the Rabbi Israel was that his suffering interfered with his learning and prayer. The Rabbi in answer questioned. "How do you know friend what is pleasing to God, your studying or your suffering?" (21). The import of this question is that suffering is the necessary condition of compassion and it is a way of reaching to God. Compassion is also an essential element of inter-subjectivity.

The Sabbath and Festival Prayer Book used in most synagogues contains a prayer. "I am a Jew because in all places where there are tears and suffering the Jew weeps" (304). Another prayer, prayer before Kaddish reads as "Give us insight in the hour of grief that from the depths of suffering may come a deepened sympathy for all who are bereaved that we may feel the heart break of our fellowmen and find our strength in helping them"(38). This compassionate forwardness speaks volumes for the inter-subjective nature of Jewish existence.

Compassion conduces to a deeper awareness of other man's misery. The Latin word 'compassio' means to suffer with. Rollo May, a psychotherapist says "compassion is that form of love which is based on our knowing and understanding the other." Compassion arises from the recognition of community. It realizes that all men and women are brothers and sisters. For Fuller compassion means, "the sharing of a sorrow, a pity and sympathy, a desire to help feeling another's pain of flight as if it were one's own..." Feeling another's misery as one's own is a sure sign of inter-subjectivity.

J.C. Landis in referring to the Jewish ethical code called *mentshlekhhkayt* says, *Mentshlekhhkayt*... encompasses the very strong sense of community that has really been a feature of Jewish life. The principal traits of this code is "the moral imperative of man's responsibility to his fellow man".

The Jewish tradition has another significant fact. A tin container was kept even in the homes of very poor Jews in order

drop coins into it so that help can be rendered to Jews poorer than themselves. Here is the infallible evidence of inter-subjectivity. All Bernard Malamud's writings chart man's progress from selfishness to selflessness. In his fiction a human being who is conceited and reclusive and who has no wider sense of responsibility suffers defeat in the end. A love of the other and commitment to the other is the way to authentic existence.

The unique relationship of Bober and his assistant Frank Alpine in **The Assistant** illustrates inter-subjectivity. Helterman Jeffrey says that the theme of Malamud's novels have a bearing of Martin Buber's 'I-Thou' philosophy (8). Morris Bober is a poor Jewish grocer, a victim of unrelieved poverty. Though he has resigned himself to threadbare existence, Bober makes life easy for others. He is compassionate to people poorer than himself. "For Malamud it was those others and their struggle that was the subject of his work..." (Walden 160). The suffering man with a good heart is also a Jew as Malamud conceives. Bober is leading an entombed existence. Though he is slogging in the store for seven days a week, he gets only a meager proceeds. Though he is plagued by the acid gnaw of existence, he is an other-committed human being. "Bober's suffering transforms the grocery in to a secular temple. All those who enter are his congregations' (Rupp 174). Bober's grocery is a locus of regeneration.

Bober's wife Ida Bober and his daughter Helen Bober stand thwarted in their aspirations. Misfortune had been dogging them for a very long time. Malamud says. "The grocer... had never altered his fortune unless degree of poverty meant alteration, for luck and he were if not natural enemies but not good friends" (T.A. 10). To add to the instability of his existence Bober's customers have deserted him and gone in search of new fixtures. "Bober ... sixty years of age watches his business dwindle to the vanishing point" (Hicks 219).

Even in his reduced circumstances Bober is infallibly an inter-subjective human being. In spite of the wearing grind of the previous day's business Bober exactly opens the store at six after

the sour-faced Polish woman her three cent roll. If he opens the store late, the Polish woman will suffer in the wintry morning. Moreover, as Bober is an other - loving human being, he fulfils his responsibility to her by giving her the three cent-roll at the right time daily. For him the Polish woman is his 'thou' even though she is an anti-Semite. By opening the store at the usual time in the morning, Bober makes himself disponible to her.

Compassion underlies inter-subjectivity. Though proximate to starvation, himself Bober gives credit to the poor neighbours. The drunk woman, a customer of Morris is an irresponsible human being. She has already outstanding credits to be paid off to Bober. Still she sends her daughter to buy from Bober a pound of butter and a loaf of rye bread. At first Morris hesitates to give the required edibles on credit. But the girl's tear-filled face moves his heart to pity. He gives her the edibles. "The total now came to \$ 2.03 which he never hoped to see" (T.A. 238). Fearing Ida's wiggling, Bober even reduces the amount of the drunk woman's credit in the register.

Compassion is a force in human nature that impels a man to be with the other. This is what happens to Morris. It is never in his power to ignore the needs of another human being. "It is the least one man can do for another" (Baumbach 113). Morris Bober's existence is an inter-human existence. Compared to him the drunk woman exploits his generosity. She is a solipsistic human being belonging to the world of it. There is no sign of her making any effort to pay back her debts to Morris. When viewed with Levinas, the small girl's face appeals to Bober and places before him a choice (the choice to be lend credit) which he is unable to wink at. This in essence is what Levinas means situational responsibility. Because Bober situates himself in the place of the poverty stricken child.

Morris maintains inter-subjective relationship with people who are economic failures. Breitbart, the bulb-sales man is ailing from itch. To add to his agony his wife has betrayed him with his brother. Morris gives him coffee to ease his fatigue.

Another down trodden human being is Al Marcus. He is a paper bag sales man. He is dying of cancer. Even in his

circumstance Morris Bober has some order or other ready for him. Bober is "a compassionate and understanding man though close to starvation himself" (Walden 157). Morris is kind to those whose situation is more desperate than his. Handy says, that the subject of Malamud's fiction is interpersonal relationship (67). Like Dostoevsky, Malamud believes that shared anguish should lead to mutual fraternity and brotherhood (Siegel 123).

Contrasted with Morris Bober, his Jewish neighbour Julius Karp is a self-centered being. He is a materialistic and exploitative man. He treats others as objects to be used for his personal profit. Sinister possibilities conduced to his materialistic success. Karp prospered by the sale of liquour. His "ticket of admission was his luck, which he fathered whenever he reached at a loss... to somebody else" (T.A. 22). In Morris' opinion selling liquor is "a business for drunken bums".

Narcissistic as he is, Karp has moved away from the neighbourhood to a comfortable place. He lives in a big house on the Parkway complete with two car garage and Mercury" (T.A. 6). After exploiting the neighbourhood for his material advancement Karp deserted it "to die from his poison, a singular example of the abdication of moral responsibility in favour of financial satisfaction (Iska 11).

Karp's materialistic intentions do not deter him from jeopardizing the existence of his good neighbours. He knows well that Bober's wobbly business has made his existence ramshackle. One more grocery in the neighbourhood would cause business rivalry, which Bober could not meet. But Karp has rented his vacant store across the corner to another grocer. When Bober asks him why he did this to him. Karp callously replies, "Who will pay my taxes?" (T.A. 13) Karp sarcastically adds "the Norwegians will open next week a modern fancy grocery and delicatessen and you will see where your business will go" (T.A. 15). The ability and power conferred on him by money enables Karp to speak derisively of Bober and his store.

alien to Karp. He is unable to get rid of the sovereignty of self-centeredness.

Karp's exploitative character is evidenced by his marriage proposal on his son's behalf to Helen. He feels that if it comes off he will control the business of Bober. Karp regards Helen only as an object to further his prospects. Later when his liquor store is razed to the ground ignited by fire, Karp offers to buy the store of Morris so that he could convert it into a liquor shop. Karp does not want to lose the following month's business and profit. But Bober dies before the deal comes off.

Exploitative nature is anathema to inter-subjective existence. Karp is a monological man, the best example of individualism. Individualism is the bane of inter-subjectivity. Individualism considers man only in reference to himself. In this sphere man is not with man, nor alongside man; he is in isolation. Karp is more with his mercenary motives than with his comrades. He has failed to recognize the other in his otherness. He is Marcel's man of having who is indifferent to the interests of other. He will not achieve any wholeness of being. Martin Buber says "Man can become whole not by virtue of a relation to himself but only by virtue of a relation to other self" (B.M.M. 168).

Morris though poor, struggles on. Disaster clobbers him in the form of a hold up. Two bandits hold him up and rob him of his meager earnings. Bober "fell without a cry. The end fitted the day. It was his luck. Others had better" (T.A. 20). Frank Alpine, a Roman Catholic is one of the robbers, the other being Ward Minogue. He has the potential for reformation. By becoming his assistant, he tries to atone for the harm done by him to Bober.

In the beginning Frank is averse to inter-subjectivity. He is an anti-Semite. In spite of his being the admirer of St. Francis of Assisi he cannot bring himself to love Jews. His close association with Bober makes him an-other loving human being. Frank is a man of contradiction in character. He tells Bober, "With me one thing leads to another and I end in a trap. I want the moon, so all I

get is cheese" (T.A. 31-32). In Morris, Frank finds someone who could help him to find his place in inter-subjective existence.

On one occasion Frank wants to know why the Jews are suffering more than any other race. Morris tells him "I suffer for you ... you suffer for me:". This means a reciprocal attitude to suffering. Morris implies vicarious suffering. Vicarious suffering is also an inter-subjective element.

Frank before his transformation is malicious. He feels that "... somebody suffers as his own fortune improves". This is an egocentric attitude. Egocentric attitude is distanced from the sphere of the between - a mark of dialogical relation. At this stage Frank thinks of others as objects to promote his own happiness. Frank has to exercise this attitude.

After becoming apprenticed to Morris, Frank leers at Helen. He wants to make her an object for his lustful gratification. He turns voyeuristic. He spies on Helen in the bathroom standing on the airshaft. This voyeuristic impulse is at war with his ambition to be honest and to expiate. Instead of lusting for Helen he should treat her as his other - his 'thou'. This inter human attitude will enable Frank to participate in her subjectivity. Frank is not with the other.

In the same way he steals from Bober's till as business improves. He rationalizes his theft saying that if he were not working for them Ida and Morris would have less than they do. He is actually pauperizing the Bobers. This is another way of treating the Bobers as objects to further his own interests. His getting fresh with Helen and stealing Bober's money are sinister moves against what Martin Buber calls the sphere of the between.

But there is hope that Frank will opt out of this 'I-it' sphere and stay in the inter-human world. He experiences annoying physical symptoms and mutters to himself. Though he "kept dropping quarters into his pants pocket" (T.A. 57), in an instinct towards honesty he maintains a record of the money he steals hoping that he would pay it all some day. This is a sign of the twinges of his conscience. Frank will reconstruct the shreds of his being. He is plagued by the

need to confess his part in the hold up. "He wanted to clean it out of his self and bring in a little order..." (T.A. 72)

At this stage when compared to Frank, Morris Bober is the bedrock of honesty: "To cheat, would cause an explosion in him". Morris is nonplussed at Frank's question, as to why he does not practise deceptive tricks in business. Morris shoots back: "why should I steal from my customers? Do they steal from me?" (T.A. 68). Morris' definition of the Jewish act is doing "what is right, to be honest and to be good. This means to other people. Our life is hard enough. Why should we hurt somebody else" (T.A. 99). Morris would not abandon his ethics to get personal profit.

The statements of Morris abound in inter-subjectivity. The world of business is an inter-human world. The relation between the customer and the seller is a meeting where dishonesty and deceit have no room. The unbreakable mutual trust and honesty should be maintained between the customer and the seller. This is what Morris does, because he thinks of his customers as subjects - his 'thous'. An honest seller and buyer enter into relation with each other. A dishonest seller and dishonest buyer distance themselves from each other. The latter loses his anchor in reality - the reality of relation.

By these instances Malamud shows how man should take his stand in the world as a living human being, not merely a thinking, willing or sensing subject. Malamud expects man to discover for himself how his existence should be revealed in communication with the not self. He wants man to recognize the exclusiveness of another, beside himself. Dishonest modes of existence exclude the other.

Frank is later caught stealing money and is driven out. Frank meets Helen in the park. He finds her struggling hard to extricate herself from the grasp of Ward Minogue. Frank rescues her. But his concupiscence surfaces and he rapes her. He has sexually conquered her. Helen outrageously cries, "You dog. Uncircumcised dog". Helen who was in love with him feels a revulsion for him. Loveless lust is unholy.

The rape impelled by lust is an integral part of his reformation.

instrument of self-punishment. Frank's remorse after the rape and the attendant agony exhibit that he has been getting unlike himself - that is he is a rigorous ethical man.

The wrong he had done her was never out of his mind. He hadn't intended wrong, but he had done it; now he intended right. He would do anything she wanted, and if she wanted nothing, he would do something, that he should do, and he would do it all on his own will, nobody pushing him but himself. He would do it with discipline and love (T.A. 145).

Frank would do anything to keep the Bobers happy without expectation of a reward. He would do it out of an inner constraint. Frank is hanging about the store to be handy on succeeding emergencies. One day Bober due to gas leakage swoons. Frank rescues him. While Morris is convalescing in the hospital Frank takes over the grocery.

Frank's humanization is evidenced by his help to the Carls. Carl the painter owes Morris seventy dollars. He is still buying liquor from Karp. When he goes to Carl's home to collect the old debt, he sees Carl's emaciated wife, hungry children, the cabbage-smelling apartment. This sight moves Frank to compassion. Instead of waiting to collect, he runs back to the store, gets his last three dollars to give to the Carls. This act is reminiscent of a similar act of Bober. Morris once ran two blocks to give back the money the customer left on his counter absent-mindedly. This act evidences Frank's capacity for inter-subjectivity.

Frank takes the job of a counter man in an all night cafeteria to keep the grocery viable. In the morning he comes back to open the grocery and give the milk to the Polish woman. He has started suffering for the Bober's. In the human need to help one another there is suffering. It is a means of learning so that past mistakes are not repeated.

Frank is in dire need of a hair cut just as Bober did; he has his tea with the bulb-peddles. Frank has reconciled himself to the

cramped existence that ailed Bober. Helen recognizes the change in his character: "He has been one thing. low, dirty, but because of something in himself - something she couldn't define, a memory perhaps, an ideal he might have forgotten and then remembered - he had changed into somebody, no longer that he had been" (T.A. 191).

An opportunity arises to sell the decrepit store. Ida warns Bober not to talk of anything about the store to the buyer Podolsky. Ida Bober being very materialistic is willing to deceive Podolsky. She wants to get rid of the millstone the store has become. "That she might be imprisoning Podolsky, who had come to America for the mythical new life as Morris had so many years ago, is not her concern" (Iska, 15). She views the buyer as a commodity to be exploited. Other-centered responsibility is alien to Ida. Morris does not want to fob off the ramshackle house on the unsuspecting buyer. In spite of Ida's warning Morris falls into unconscious dilation of the store's defects.

In Malamud's fiction, society may be exploitative and materialistic and corrupt. But there should be no escape or evasion of responsibility on the part of the individual. Morris is an unswerving man of inter-subjectivity.

On a Sunday Karp's store burns. Ward Minogue sneaks into his liquor store and smashes bottles on the floor. They ignite from his match. Ward Minogue is consumed by the alcohol fed - flames. "Evil destroys itself" (Cohen 51). Karp offers to buy the store of Morris to convert it into a liquor store. Elated at the improvement of his prospects Bober shovels the snow. "It had been a hard life, but with god's help he would have an easier time". But Bober catches pneumonia and dies. Bober shoveled the snow to make easy passage for his customer. Bober died of an inter-subjective act. Shoveling his side walks on a Sunday morning became a necessity as "it don't look so nice for the goyim that go to church".

At the funeral of Bober, Frank accidentally falls into Morris' grave. But he comes out renewed by his commitment to 'replace the

After the death of Bober, Frank takes care of the Bobers. His life will not be definitely free from hardships. But he opts for this life in full knowledge. By accepting a life of suffering and anxiety Frank has found a new way of life, that is, to be with the others - a life of inter-subjectivity. "Each act of suffering for Bober and the rest of mankind strips away Frank's worthlessness" (Helterman 50).

The world Frank has occupied is fraught with penury and deprivations. Later Frank becomes a Jew to assume total and veritable identity with Morris. He becomes a Jew because "he elects to suffer for Morris who has suffered ... for him (Baumbach 453). The conversion makes Frank "discover through another human being - a law of conduct which might give meaning to the burden of suffering, to life" (Francis 94). Frank in reality has converted himself to selflessness and to human involvement.

Frank has rejected the moneyed values of the American society for a life of responsibility, commitment, and self-repudiation. Frank will suffer but his suffering will save others from suffering Frank her attained spiritual harmony through suffering. He has become the life-giving center.

Frank was an admirer of St. Francis who was fond of poverty and sacrifice. Like his patron saint Frank has made ample sacrifice to dedicate his life alienatingly for the weal of the Bobers. Like St. Francis, Frank has ceased to be self-centered. He has become a father, a new lover, "the lover for whom the other exists not an extension of his ago but as a unique being for whom is responsible" (Richman 72).

In the end Frank is seen sitting in the tomb like store, reading the Bible and thinking of St. Francis. Inter-subjectivity has enabled Frank to tide over the demands of the self. The divergent elements of his personality have got unified due to his inter-subjective character.. □

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Pursuit Hindu Philosophy on Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman

* Dr. Charu Chitra

The Romantic Movement paved the way for transcendentalism through which the literary men of America drew a life of self-reliance and a view of life, which came from Oriental philosophy and Emerson, Thoreau and Walt Whitman immersed themselves in that stream. They shared a common philosophic habit of mind; a similar mood or temper; a similar method. It was a sudden resurrection from the mechanical world to the good old Oriental philosophy, an intuition or insight which made them pass through the land of '*Rishis*', 'Full of legends', 'Land of *Shashwat Sukham*' and 'Land of *Sa Kashtha Sa Para Gati*'. They went back to the Laws of *Manu*, *Baghavad Geeta* and *Katha Upanishad*.

Emerson, the first known writer of America who went through the books of the Orient, was both an original thinker and tireless eclectic. He was looking for the great common denominator of man's spiritual nature, which sent him to the literature of the East. In his essay on Plato, Emerson wrote: 'In all nations there are minds which incline to dwell in the conception of the fundamental Unity --- This tendency finds its highest expression in the religious writings of the East, and chiefly in the Indian scriptures' (Fisher 106). In his writings Emerson appears as the great prophet of spiritual idealism, which insists on an original relation to the Universe. To him *Vedas* are as sublime as heat and light and breathless ocean. It contains every religious sentiment and all the grand ethics, which visit in turn each noble and poetic mind. Nature makes him a *Brahmin*. Eternal necessity, eternal compensation, unfathomable power, unbroken silence is nature's creed to him. He finds in Hindu scriptures especially in *The Bhagvad Geeta* and the *Upanishads* a way of expounding social and moral values, which proved his own point

* *teaches English at Govt K.R.G. College (Autonomous) Gwalior, M.P., India.*

concerning morality and will. He discovered the secret of the world that all things subsist, and do not die, but only retire a little from sight and afterwards return again.

In many different ways Emerson was bound up with the idea of external flux, the indestructibility of matter or energy, the transmigration of spirit, the fundamental oneness of the Oversoul, the ideal of one Deity in which all things are absorbed. He believed that there is an essential unity in apparent variety that there is a correspondence between the world and the spirit, that nature is an image in which man can perceive the divine. His beliefs were a balance of skepticism and faith, stirred by moral fervour. He was a seer and a poet and an honest seeker, looking within his own experience. In Katha Upanishad, Yama says to Nachiketa -

*'Yatoshvodeti suryostam yatra ch gachati
Tamdeva sarve arpitastadu natyati Kashvan'.*
(Katha Upanishad 2.1.9 p. 189)

[Whence the Sun rises and where it goes to rest, in it are all gods founded and on one ever goes beyond that.]

Emerson also says in Nature:-

*'A subtle chain of countless rings
The next unto the farthest brings:
The eye reads one as where it goes,
And speaks all languages the rose.* (Michael 108)

For him Nature is but an image or imitation of wisdom, the last thing of the soul. Philosophically considered, the universe is composed on nature and the Soul. When Emerson is in the woods, he returns to reason and faith. There he feels that nothing can befall him in life-no disgrace, no calamity, standing on the bare ground, his head bathed by the blithe air and uplifted into infinite space and all mean egotism vanishes. He feels that he is but a part or particle of God. Thus for his understanding of the secret of the world Emerson drew an oriental wisdom. The raptures of prayer and ecstasy of devotion lose all being in one being. This tendency finds its highest expression in the religious writing of the East, and chiefly in the Indian Scriptures, in the *Vedas*, the *Bhagvad Gita* and the *Vishnu*

It seemed to him that the Indian scriptures are more to our daily purpose than this year's almanac or this day's Newspaper. This reflects in the essays *Compensation* and *Illusions* and probably his most oriental essay *The Oversoul* and his poem *Brahma* are apparently based on the philosophy of *Bhagvad Gita* 'Na Hante Na Hanyte'

*'If the red slayer think he slays
Or if the slain think he slain
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep and pass, and turn again.* (Egbert 13)

The Katha Upanishad, for instance, has passage, which Emerson read,

*Hanta chenmanyte hantu hatshchenmanyte hatam
Ubhau tau na vijanito nay hanti na hanyate.*
(Katha Upanishad 1.2.19 p. 152)

[If the slayer thinks I slay, if the slain thinks I am slain, then both of them do not know well. The soul does not slay nor is slain.]

Emerson is very close to Hindu Philosophy and this poem has been widely read and it has taken many readers towards oriental thought. The doctrine of fate is one of the points where Emerson's relationship to the oriental thought is revealed best. Here is a similarity in the direction of Emerson's thought and also a decided difference in application, which is emphasized throughout in Emerson's Journals and essays. The Hindu has its basis in transmigration that fate is nothing but the result of the deeds committed in prior state of existence.

The Hindu scriptures assert that all that man suffers and enjoys is the harvest of his own actions from previous existences. No one inherits the good or evil deeds of another and sin ultimately leads to suffering. That nature has its own fatal strength was the law, which Emerson found as the basis of the human mind. In his essay "Fate" he asserts that Fate is immense. According to Mazoomdar, an Indian scholar - 'The character of Emerson shine upon Indian scene as the evening star. He seems to some of us to

Certainly one of the real excitements of the 19th century America was the discovery of Indian thought. It was Henry David Thoreau who made himself into an Indian *Yogi* and it was the spiritual influence that moved him much. Like Emerson he also believed in transcendentalism that God is inherent in nature and in human beings and that each individual has to rely on his or her own conscience and intuition for spiritual truths. In one of his Journals he wrote -

'I cannot read a sentence in the book of the Hindoos without elevated upon the tableland of the Ghauts The impression which those sublime sentences made on me last night has awakened me before any cock crowing. Their influence lingers around me like a fragrance. The simple life herein described confers on us a degree of freedom even in perusal and repleteness'. (Fisher 35) The greatest influences that moulded his mind, heart and soul came from India. Thoreau was influenced by *Bhagvad Gita*, *Vishnu Purana*, *Manu Smriti* and *Hitopadesa*. Later he came under the influence of the *Rigveda*, the *Upanishads* and other Texts. The important text that led him to seek the meaning of life and to seek the self in solitude was the *Manu Smriti*. In his Journal for May, 1841, he recorded his delight with 'The Laws of Manu' - The sublime sentences of Manu carry us back to a time when purification and sacrifice and self - devotion had a place in the faith of men, and were not as now a superstition. The Laws of Manu are a manual of private devotion, so private and domestic and yet so public and universal, a word as is not spoken in the parlor or pulpit in these days". (Egbert 35)

In *A Week On The Concord and Merrimack Rivers* he has ample space for *Gita*. In Emerson's library, Thoreau read the teachings of the *Buddha*, the *Hindu Upanishads* and the *Vedas*. He sings to himself in the woods by Walden Pond -

*'Men say they know many things,
But lo, they have taken wings,
The arts and sciences,
And a thousand appliances,
The wind that blows, Is all that any body knows'.* (Fisher

In these lines, like Emerson, he also feels some presence, the relation of man's spirit to nature, a relationship in which one, both gives to and receives from the other. He feels oneness with the objects of this universe. As it is said in the *Rigvedas* -

'Sangachdhvam Samvaddhvam savo Manasigyanatam'.
(Keith 82)

[Come together, speak together and think together and you'll get the *Moksha*].

Thoreau sought throughout his life to live a meaningful life-a life in which he could understand his own nature, his relationship with other men, his relationship with nature and with the universe: In the '*Bhagvad Geeta*' Thoreau found clues for his quest of truth. In '*Walden*' Thoreau wrote -

'Rather than love, than money, than fame, give me truth'.
(Fisher 38)

In '*Isa Upanishad*' it is said -

'Satyen Labhyastapsa hvesh Atma'. (Keith 89)

[By truth and *tapasya*, we can get our soul].

He again and again enters into his journals that man who having abandoned all lusts of the flesh walks inordinate desires unassuming and free from pride, obtained happiness.

Thoreau's reading led him to become a '*Yogi*'. According to him the '*Yogi*' is free in this world as the birds in the air, disengaged from every kind of chains. Those who practise '*Yogi*' gather in *Brahma*. In '*Walden*', Thoreau describes a state of mind that has a close resemblance to the experience of *Yoga*. In his essay *Where I Lived, And What I Lived For* he admits that all memorable events transpire in morning time and in a morning atmosphere and quote *Vedas*. The *Vedas* says, "All intelligences awake with the morning'. (Fisher 141) It is similar to the transcendental self of the *Upanishads*, the '*Sakshi*' or spectator who merely looks on without participating in the pageant of the world. We hear him say in the beginning of the chapter '*Sounds*' in *Walden* that when the divine absorbs human, it is the meaning of contemplation by the Orientals. He advised the Oriental thought in these words -

"What extracts from the *Vedas* I have read fall on me like light of a higher and purer luminary, which describes a loftier course through a purer stratum, - free from particulars, simple, universal". (Egbert 37)

It is to Asia that Whitman also turned for his ultimate spiritual quest. It is through the symbol of Asia that he found his ultimate poetic handling of this subject grow out a large interest in and some familiarity with both the real Asia and the rather fanciful Asia which tickled the American consciousness of Whitman's day. Gay Wilson in one of the articles in the English Journal states: - 'Tagore says that no other American has so accurately got the spirit of Oriental mysticism', (The English Journal) He is aware of a universe with distant lands as real and near to the inhabitants of them as his to him. He says this was the East, the Orient' the nest of Languages, the bequeather of poem, the race of *Brahma*.....' (Egbert 135)

In 'Song of Myself' he sings -

*'I celebrate myself, and sing myself
And what I assume you shall assume,
For even atom belonging to me as god belongs to you
I loafe and invite my soul,
I lean and loafe at my ease observing a spear of summer
grass'* (Michael 156)

It is a theory of '*Ahm Brahmasmi*' in *Katha Upanishad* we read that the knowing the self who is the bodiless among the unstable.

His greatest poetic treatment of the subject is his 'Passage to India' Whitman passes from nations to nations and from continents to continents. And at last he could pass through the ages - from past to present and from present to future and at the end he can bind all in the present. He says -

*'O Soul, voyagest than indeed voyages like those?
Disportest than on waters such as those?
Soundest below the Sanscrit and the Vedas?
Thou have the bent unleashed'*. (Michael 158)

He qualified the opening of the Suez Canal as the passage to India, but India too is more than a fact in history for Whitman as

he considers man's destiny. He knows that man seeks more than India, and in his poetic visions he sees that man can steer with confidence where all the seas are seas of god.

Going back to the world, that Whitman necessarily means going into the heart of Asia, and especially to India. The passage is more than a passage to India. Man with his infinite reaches to spiritual power may take the passage to the secret of earth and sky. He sings-

*'Reckless O soul, exploring, I with thee, and thou with me.
O daring joy, but safe, are not all the Seas of god?
O farther, farthr, farther sail'*, (Michael 158)

Whitman never lost a transcendental sense of the unity of all things, all of life and experience, reality itself, were process, a ceaseless, continuing all embracing flow. 'Leaves of Grass' is a passageway to something rather than a thing in itself concluded.

The greatest poet hardly knows pettiness or triviality. He is seer. He is individual. He is complete in himself. He exhorts.

*And I know that hand of God is the promise of my own
And I know that the spirit of God is the brother of my own'*
(Michael 161)

In the battlefield of *Kurukshetra* Lord *Krishna* says to *Arjun* -

*'Pashya me Parth rupani shatshoath sahastrasha
Nanavidhani divyani nanavarnkritani ch.*
(*The Bhagvad Gita* XI.5, p.270.)

[Behold, O Prince, My manifold forms, By the hundreds
and thousands, divine of various shapes and colours.]

The Hindu Scriptures may have taught him that the Supreme reality unfolds itself in every form of creation and that whatever exists is a manifestation of the Eternal. All is *Brahman*, all is in Him and He is in all. In the line with the Hindu thought, Emerson conceived of a Universal soul in the Individual Soul. He regarded Nature as Divine. Under the influence of these philosophic theories Whitman formed his own philosophic convictions and, consequently, his idea of Universal love.

Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman were the pioneers. The Hindu philosophy became a part of their life, thought and expression. Perhaps the most fitting commentary on their relationship to Indian literature, was made by Gandhi after reading Emerson's essays.

'The essays to my mind contain the teaching of Indian wisdom in a western 'Guru'. It is interesting to see our own sometimes different fashioned.' (Egbert 18) □

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MULK RAJ ANAND : A Champion of Underdogs

* Dr. Arbind Panjiara

"Though the Indian constitution has made it a crime to practise untouchability, there are still 60 million people in India who are discriminated against" (Saroj Cowasjee), and this gives Mulk Raj Anand his contemporaneity, and makes his fiction extremely relevant today, as the reflection of caste system largely constitutes his realism from which emanates his protest, commitment and ideology.

The major theme of Mulk Raj Anand's fiction is clash between the establishment and the outcaste. A down-to-earth fiction writer, Anand's experience is deeply rooted in the social conditions of his time. Indian society is his prime concern, and his characters, with all their authenticity, represent the most fundamental pattern of Indian society. He presents a society charged with the evils of untouchability, communal disharmony, caste compartmentalisations, and appalling economic differences. Having progressive leanings, Anand is a committed writer, his sympathies lying with the untouchables, the outcaste and the starving multitude.

Notwithstanding his commitment and propaganda, he remains the greatest realist in Indo-Anglian literature. This realism spares him any wrong bias, and enables him to take a balanced view of man and society and thereby makes him a great artist. He says, "My knowledge of Indian life at various levels had always convinced me that I should do a *Comedie Humaine*. In this, the poor, the lowly and the untouchables were only one type of outcasts. The middle sections, the nabobs, and the rajas were also to be included as species of untouchables. Unfortunately, there has not been time to show the poor - rich of our country, who deserved pity more than contempt". Therefore, his propaganda is not for any particular social group or sect, but for "Man" himself, and in his novels, he has demonstrated how the social evils crush the potentialities of a man. Though "Man"

is concern, he has seen man against the background of a society where conventions, corruptions and taboos cripple him. Of all the ills, the caste system as it is found in the Hindu society today is the crux of the problem Anand has taken as the background of his novels.

Dr. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar refers in his Indian Writing in English to a discussion some years ago with D.J. Enright and Nissim Ezekiel, in which Sudhin Ghosh remarked that 'most of the Indian writers writing in English are in revolt against traditional Hinduism... they believe that they have got a mission that a novel's function should be seen through society..... They are more or less writing a social criticism of Hindu society'. Sudhin Ghosh obviously was commenting on the insularity and limitations of Indian fiction in English but he had undoubtedly Mulk Raj Anand, more than he had undoubtedly anybody else in his mind, while drawing such conclusions. However, indirectly Sudhin Ghosh gave Mulk Raj the honour of being the most representative writer of fiction in the Indo-Anglian field.

And that he really is. Anand voices the most fundamental sentiments of a man whose life is a strange amalgam of helplessness, anger, protest, despair and anxiety. The typical Indian lives life on many layers each of which is inextricably linked up with the other. The caste system is one such layer and it is a very vital thing for him. He cannot help it, so ingrained it is in him, and yet he is a victim of it. Mulk Raj Anand's realism lies in the depiction of a society in which the caste factor operates so easily and naturally, conditions everything so effortlessly, that often it ceases to be an issue even; it simply remains as backwater. But if a writer ignores this backwater he misses the very essentials of the society.

In **Untouchable**, caste is the theme whereas **Coolie** is about the new caste system, the economic 'classes' being so rigid as to be almost 'closed'. In **Two Leaves and a Bud**, the story is about the poor Indians suffering untold misery and ignominy in the hands of the British, but the Indian life that it presents is subdivided and fragmented on account of caste and community divisions; the obvious suggestion is the torture of the British in direct proportion with the disharmony amongst themselves. **The Big Heart** is about

business communities in an Indian town. These four novels were written in that phase of the writer's career when casteism was in its worst form in India and Anand was young enough to react against it and to register his voice of protest. About these novels of Anand, Iyengar says that they came 'fresh from contact with the flesh and blood of everyday existence'.

A class, on the other hand, is a social group of those people whose social status, largely decided by economic status, is more or less the same. The Englishman in **Coolie** represents a class but he is as fixed or closed as a caste determined by birth. The privileged merchant class is also a closed society, almost as rigid as a caste. In **Untouchable**, it is determined by birth; in **Coolie** economic group, which have become so rigid that a man of one group can hardly think of joining another, determines it. So, as far as the theme is concerned, basically **Coolie** of Anand is extension of **Untouchable** and there is much similarity between Bakha of **Untouchable** and Munoo of **Coolie**. In **Untouchable**, Anand culminates social evil that has run its course through Indian history right from the time when *Varnasharm* was invented or came into being as a matter of necessity in those dark days when all sorts of superstitions crept into Indian life to corrupt its tradition of philosophy and culture. A strong believer in the dignity of man and equality of all men, Anand is naturally shocked at the inhuman way the untouchables and coolies are treated by those who belong to the superior caste.

Mulk Raj Anand is a champion of underdogs because of his graphic portrayal of Indian society including its unpleasant aspects and categorical indictment of the hypocritical values, mutilating India's social harmony and dynamism. Anand believes that man can make his own destiny. He has immense faith in man and his powers. He is convinced of the immense manpower to master nature through rationalism, science and technology, and visualises a renovated social order in India, base on reason and faith in human ability. Being an artist, Anand does not pour his sentiment in black and white, but gives artistic form to the painful experience of a man of sensibility who has seen the terrible evil from close quarters. His protest and warning lie within the framework of his art. □

“I See You Face to Face” : The Poet-Reader Relationship in Walt Whitman’s Leaves of Grass

** Falguni P. Desai*

This paper proposes to argue how Walt Whitman’s poetic program i.e. his ***Leaves of Grass*** brings the reader and the poet face to face. The argument is built up in the following order:-

I : Walt Whitman, the Real Cosmos.

II : “Closer Yet I Approach You” : Whitman’s

Understanding of the Role of the Poet.

III : “What Is It Then Between Us?” The Poet-Reader Relationship

IV : “We Understand or Do We Not?”

By intensifying the emphasis on individuality and personality, Whitman overcomes the limitations of his vastness by allowing for intimate contact with a future reader. I shall continue to argue that his poems “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry”, “Out of Cradle Endlessly rocking”, “Songs of Myself” and most of his poems exemplify the emphasis on individuality and personal union. Instead of assuming a relationship with his reader, Whitman sets for himself the goal of making this relationship possible.

To show Whitman for what he is one does not need to praise or explain or argue, one needs simply to quote. (Jarrell 99) In choosing to write about Whitman, I have been faced not with a poet or a man, but with something greater than the world itself, something that resists description and definition. To say the least, this is joyfully and excitingly overwhelming. In reading the grandiloquent, sometimes grotesque, but ultimately gratifying lines of the globe-like Whitman, I am inclined to echo the thoughts of the above-quoted Randall Jarrell, one of Whitman’s fondest admirers. Jarrell states that at certain points in the poet’s work, “It is like magic: that is, something has

** teaches English at V.S. Patel College of Arts & Science, Bilimora, Dist: Navsari, Gujarat, India*

been done to us without our knowing how it was done”. In the critical history of ***Leaves of Grass***, much has been written that confounds and obscures this ability of the text, and much has been written that miraculously mirrors the grandeur of Whitman’s accomplishment. Although Jarrell may be a bit extreme in demanding that the only way to write about Whitman is to quote him, I agree with the spirit in which he writes this. Far too often, criticism attempts to encompass the work it evaluates, to enclose it in one of ever so many flimsy and fragile frames, boxes that cannot ever contain or support the overflow of emotion, feeling and expression that great artists have struggled to create.

In ***Song of Myself***, Whitman states, “*I resist any thing better than my own diversity*” (16.349), “*I do not trouble my spirit to vindicate itself or be understood*” (20.410), and “*I too am not a bit tame, I too am untranslatable*” (52.1332). If Whitman is a world, then I in no way intend to encompass that world in these pages. If anything, these pages are a record of my journey through that world, a journey not without its obstacles, and a record not without its faults. If at times I state the obvious, forgive me that error, for, as Jarrell states, “There is something essentially ridiculous about critics, anyway: what is good is good without our saying so”. If Whitman is a world, “How inexhaustibly interesting the world is in Whitman!” (110).

To consider Walt Whitman, the poet of universal equality, one must be able, paradoxically, to see distinctions as both essential and mutually inclusive. A man whose biographical details are hardly epic, Whitman must be seen through the lens of his poetry, where we find a primitive “man without qualities”, a speaker who is capable of all human action, who embodies the supreme individual and the supreme democracy. Moreover, the “simple separate person” and the expansive, universal “I” must also be seen as the same speaker, or rather, different aspects of the same speaker. To begin to understand the nature of the poetic self and its relation to the reader in Whitman’s poetry, we must begin with Whitman, the person. Although the self is a conscious creation of the poet, the autobiographical nature of the “I” in his work is impossible to ignore completely, for it necessarily

forms and informs the speaker to a great extent. To gain a sense of the multifaceted nature of Whitman's "I" we must know the multifaceted nature of Whitman himself. David Reynolds comments, in his cultural biography, **Walt Whitman's America**, that Whitman had a keen eye for the changes taking place within his society. Reynolds quotes Whitman as saying " 'Remember... the book [**Leaves of Grass**] arose out of my life in Brooklyn and New York from 1838 to 1853, absorbing a million people, for fifteen years with an intimacy, an eagerness, an abandon, probably never equaled,' Before producing what he called 'the idiomatic book of my land,' he listened to his land's many idioms" (82-3).

Sectional conflict strained the party system as well, to the point where the Whig party disintegrated. "America," Reynolds states, "desperately needed a poet to hold together a society that was on the verge of unraveling" (113). Whitman felt that he was that poet. His poetic project was not all too different from the American project envisioned by the founding fathers. Whitman even states in the 1855 **Preface to Leaves of Grass** that the "United States themselves are essentially the greatest poem" (Moon 616). In an environment of sectional conflict, Whitman felt that the poetic voice was what was needed to argue both sides of the story, without negating itself in contradiction. As a channel, the poet would be able to accept all things equally, democratically, and send these things back out of himself, equally democratically, but now also filtered. Above all, Whitman's goal in the 1855 edition was to heal the nation, to handle the seeming contradiction of the individual and the mass, while at the same time affirming the divinity of mankind. Thus his creation of self in this edition is largely symbolic. The unified, multifaceted "I" of **Song of Myself** is equal to the Union itself.

It is all encompassing:

I am of old and young, of the foolish as much as the wise,

Regardless of others, ever mindful of others,....

One of the Nation of many nations, the smallest the same

and the largest the same (16.330-4)

By encompassing all, he variously becomes all, and sees the world from that perspective. As a pure subject, Whitman's "I" possesses a universal understanding of the world, while, at the same time, he remains in that world. He is not perched above his society, looking down from a great height; rather "Whitman doesn't *write about* his culture but actually *inhabits* it and *inscribes* it from within" (325) - Reynolds.

Whitman's struggle is to find a hearing and to find his place in society. He felt that poetry was so inextricably tied to its readers and their response, he placed a great deal of faith in his book as a means of making that relationship possible. He maintains at the end of his 1855 Preface that the "proof of a poet is that his country absorbs him as affectionately as he has absorbed it" (Moon 636).

Whitman's personal life at the time of writing also contributed to his enterprise. Justin Kaplan, in his biography of Whitman, states that he had been writing under 'great pressure, pressure from within', that had made his book, 'launched from the fires of *myself* inevitable and necessary" (185). Not only did he feel it necessary to fix the union of the nation, but also the union of his personal self in relation to the world. In his poem "There Was a Child Went Forth", we find the speaker dealing with his world as it appears to him. All that he sees and feels becomes part of who he is, and so, as a result, what is negative around him has just as strong an effect as what is positive. Though Whitman successfully crafts a poetic identity, he is fully aware that his actual, personal identity is created by his surroundings, his specific place and time in the universe.

We must also examine the physical appearance of the first edition of **Leaves of Grass**, since it had great and revolutionary importance for Whitman. The 1855 edition is by far the fanciest of all the editions. It is the largest in dimension, and also the most unique in form. Intended as a physical symbol of the distinctly American blend of high and low culture, it appears at first as an elaborate, fancy, coffee-table book, but upon closer observation, we find on the inside a more democratic, newspaper type and form. Reynolds comments that its 'exterior announced elegance, but its interior

announced utter democracy and rough simplicity” (313). The absence of the poet’s name on the cover indicates and emphasizes the importance of what is being said over who is saying it.

Whitman clearly had ambitious hopes for his book, indeed much higher hopes than his public’s response was able to fulfill. Whitman’s hope for mutual absorption remained one-sided. As much as he absorbed his world, his world would not fully absorb him. Ralph Waldo Emerson’s oft-quoted letter expressed the sentiment that Walt Whitman was just the poet for whom Emerson himself had been calling. Though these affirmations were quite meaningful for Whitman, he could not ignore the fact that the masses, his intended audience, took little note of him. Though literacy rates were surprisingly high in America at this time the general public was far more concerned with practical matters of political fragmentation than of a utopian, poetic unification. Whitman clearly felt the need to radically change his poetic formula, and so he continued writing and revising. Not only was the form radically different, but the content as well underwent a transformation in 1856. The poems added to the 1856 edition show increasing despair, but also increasing hope. The poet appropriates these seemingly negative aspects of life, considers them, remingles upon them, and ultimately discovers in them a hidden level of divinity. In the poem “To Think of Time”, originally titled “Burial Poem”, the speaker offers an obsessively detailed description of a funeral march, while the speaker ruminates upon what is left, he lists with great detail the physical surroundings. The reader is asked to reevaluate everything, to question appearances. “Song of the Open Road”, originally called “Poem of the Road”. The speaker of this poem addresses the reader by stating “*Be not discouraged, keep on, there are divine things well envelop’d / I swear to you there are divine things more beautiful than words can tell*” (9.118-9). This introduces another major theme in the 1856 poems, that of the call to the reader. Though the relationship with the reader had been an extremely important aspect for Whitman. Here the speaker states with great certainty the possibility of real, actual communion with the reader. In his poem, “On the Beach at Night Alone”, originally “Clef

ponders the nature of existence, maintaining that a “vast similitude interlocks all” (4). Though the speaker asserts a great deal about the interconnectedness of life, we must not forget that the only way that interconnectedness can be realized in this poem is in contact with the reader, for the speaker is indeed standing alone... Similarly, in “To You”, originally “Poem of You, Whoever You Are”, the speaker indicates that his entire poetic project is tied up in the reader. He claims:

O I have been dilatory and dumb, I should have made my way straight to you long ago, I should have blab’d nothing but you, I should have chanted nothing but you. (9-11)

Realizing that he has been negligent of the reader in the past, he reaches out to that reader with some degree of despair. He also insists that the reader needs him just as much, in a relation of mutual dependency; he states that no one “has understood you, but I understand you”

Considering the drastic differences between the first two editions, we should investigate both the conscious and unconscious purposes behind those differences. If the first attempt failed in his eyes, then the purpose of the second attempt would be to reach out to the reader in a radically different way. In the first and most obvious sense, we see that the public’s response to the first edition had a massive impact on Whitman. A passage from Whitman’s notebook revealing his feelings of depression runs as follows:

Everything I have done seems to me blank and suspicious. - I doubt whether my greatest thoughts, as I supposed them, are not shallow - and people will most likely laugh at me. - My pride is impotent, my love gets no response. - the complacency of nature is hateful - I am filled with restlessness. - I am incomplete. - (349)

Interestingly, these private feelings become public in perhaps the finest addition to the second edition, “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry”, originally known as “Sun-Down Poem”. Considering his relationship with his audience, we must not forget that Whitman seeks union with the reader. In addressing the reader throughout the new poems, he

in constituting who and what that reader will be. Conversely, one might argue that by addressing a future reader, Whitman is ultimately avoiding his relationships with his contemporaries. As we shall see, "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry", the finest of the second edition (1856) poems, uses this tension between the speaker's present and future relationships as a starting point. By making his poetry important to readers, he attempts to make it meaningful for them. One poem in particular stands out as representative of all the goals and aims of the 1856 edition. In his poem "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry", Whitman stretches his hand out to the reader, in a spirit that is both desperate and hopeful. He maintains that communion is possible by making that communion possible. By considering the true nature of time and space, Whitman transcends the limitation of his particular location in history. Nevertheless, he does not negate his own existence. Though his connection with the reader takes precedence over his connection with those around him in his own time, he still affirms the importance of the spatio-temporal, physical world. It is this world, with all its shows and appearances that allows him to see what lies beneath the surface of existence. We board the ferry with our senses in company of the poet, on a journey with him when we read the poem and when we finish the poem we get down from the ferry experiencing the power of soul. This poet is privileged over the reader, for he possesses knowledge of the inner workings and magnificence of both himself and the reader.

We read in **Song of Myself**,

Has any one supposed it lucky to be born? I hasten to inform him or her it is just as lucky to die, and I know it.

One is not greater than the other, but it is only that the poet more fully understands that greatness. Necessarily then, readers are in need of the poet, who will be able to inform them of their greatness and persuade them to act upon it. He states in the preface that folks expect of the poet to indicate more than the beauty and dignity which always attach to dumb real objects. They expect him to indicate the path between reality and their souls. (621 *sic*) Whitman's vast universality of personality oversteps its intentions; it attempts to show

the infinity of individuality, but goes so far that his poetic individuality is unrecognizable, perhaps abolished. He does not neglect the individual reader. He writes about his thoughts, "*If they are not yours as much as mine they are nothing, or next to nothing*" (17.356).

He exhibits, in an embryonic form, his growing dependence on the reader. He senses the importance of this connection with the reader and states, through direct address, "*This hour I tell things in confidence, / I might not tell everybody, but I will tell you*" (19.387).

He even goes so far as to say that he sees a new America stepping out of the shadows of anonymity, "to stand compact upon that vast basis of the supremacy of Individuality", the new America that will allow both individual citizens and the states as representatives to meet "face to face".

I conclude my argument by saying that: He seeks his consummation through one continual ecstasy: the ecstasy of giving himself, and of being taken. The ecstasy of his own reaping and merging with another, with others; the sword-cut of sensual death. Whitman's motion is always the motion of *giving himself*: This is my body - take, and eat. It is the great sacrament. (Moon 827) Although this may seem to be an extreme interpretation, there is more than enough evidence to suggest this possibility; Whitman himself states in **Song of Myself**, "*Divine am I inside and out, and I make holy whatever I touch or am touch'd from*" (24.524), thus commingling the physicality of relationships with the divinity of the individual.

The text is our only link to the reality Whitman has created. However, it is also a barrier between his existence and our own, an intermediary between our respective selves, and a link, from which Whitman himself is notably absent. As an imaginative work that must be read within the flow of time, its own assertions about the negation of time and space are brought into question. We cannot help but notice the clock before and after our reading of the poem; we cannot help but realize that time has elapsed; we cannot help but realize that we are indeed sitting in a chair in a room while reading a book we are holding in our hands. Whitman is quite aware of our relation to time and space, and perhaps this is the reason he ends

his poem with a salute to the physical world, for it is in that world that we are situated and in that world that we read the poem. Nevertheless, just as the actor removes his costume and resumes his own individuality, the speaker ends the poem and we conclude its reading. Our imagination, deeply enriched as a result of the reading, is faced again with the solidity of real things, perhaps seen in a new light. Nevertheless, this reader cannot help but look twice at his own reflection, and even over his shoulder, while reading the poem. Throughout our reading we are face to face with the poet and in the end when its time to say goodbye to the poet we do not lament because its all over but we rejoice and celebrate because it happened. □

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Across Cultures Discussing Yasmine Gooneratne's Masterpiece

* Dr. Sangeeta Das

Yasmine Gooneratne, a Sri-Lankan born Australian writer, having no definite perspective of rich Indian culture, just heard a story about the life of a Sanskrit poet from her Indian colleague and could not be left bereft of the ever engulfing influence of the great Indian culture. She was greatly intrigued by the story of Jayadeva and his bold attempt to literally present the symbolic gesture of victory in their erotic play imagined by him. Though Jayadeva could not complete his play himself treading on such tentative grounds, Lord Krishna himself had to come down to complete it. Selection of this theme by Yasmine Gooneratne justifies the fact that no-matter wherever one may be born and brought up, one's imaginations and thoughts know no boundaries and flies across the wide oceans and seas and investigates unhindered the cultures of lands known and unknown. Yasmine Gooneratne has also indicated a cross-cultural ease that underlies her delightful wit and urbanity. In her two novels, **A Change of Sky** (1992) and **Pleasure of Conquest** (1995) she had explored at length the cosmic possibilities of the experience of dislocation and some not so cosmic consequences of post colonial mobility. As an academic she may theorise about migration and

diaspora, but as a fiction writer she deals with specific situations vividly, without explicit judgement, sometimes assumed at the absurdities produced by the mismatch of cultural assumptions, at other times anguished at hostilities that waste human lives.

In this grand story '**Masterpiece**' which rightly justifies the title, the author recounts the tale which she had heard from an Indian colleague during a train journey. This masterpiece which happened to be the **Gita Govinda** created nine centuries ago, is called as '**The Song Of The Shepherd**' in the west. This masterpiece deals with the love of God Krishna for Radha, the herd-girl. The Indian colleague of Yasmine Gooneratne recounts the story as discussed in the seminar in which he happened to be invited. The subject chosen to be discussed in the seminar was **Gita Govinda** itself, its status in relation to India's classical heritage and to world literature, its literary qualities and the process of its composition. Taking into account the composition of the '**Masterpiece**', a well-known storyteller of the region was asked to speak in the seminar. The narration of the composition of the masterpiece and interaction between the storyteller and the Australian professor throws light on the difference in thoughts, beliefs, cultures and progress between the two countries.

We must not forget that the **Masterpiece** was written in the 12th century when the social stratification was vastly different than what it is today. Old people upheld the old social set-up and look down upon the progressive development of recent times. In those days, women were like decoration pieces to be treasured and kept confined in the house. Their education was unnecessary. Their qualification was how good they can serve their husbands who used to be double their age. Dedication to housework and on toes in serving their husbands was the grid on which the suitability of a girl was gauged. This advantage was enjoyed by Jayadeva, the Sanskrit poet who wrote the masterpiece and was the hero of the story. He had a complaisant wife who never argued with him and served him diligently over the days considering her husband's success as her own thus facilitating Jayadeva to reach smoothly to the completion of his work. The Australian professor who had come on a visiting

Delhi and had got just married was quite impressed with Indian women especially the endurance and docility of Jayadeva's wife.

Credibility and eminence of Jayadeva was never questioned or doubted either in the 12th century or today. We Indians have great deference for our Gods, Goddesses and the literati who have written many great pieces like **Mahabharata, Ramayana, Gita Govinda** etc. Nobody ever dare refute these great people and their works. Both the works and their composers are intricately and intimately attached to our sentiments. Knowing Indians are sentimental and emotional both, any encroachment in that direction was sure to be met with irritation and intolerance. Such instance can be seen in the conversation between the story-teller and the Australian professor.

When Jayadeva got stuck in the midst of his writing, the story-teller had no reason to put before for such a clog while the Australian professor came up with a practical reason of 'Writer's Block' which usually happens to a writer while writing. This was strongly refuted by the story-teller for Jayadeva was not any just writer but a writer of genius and geniuses never encounter the flaws faced by ordinary men. He should be looked upon with reverence as he had done a masterpiece upholding the Indian culture and surely couldn't have been able to do so without divine blessings. The story-teller's irritation towards the professor was evidence enough of the staunch credulity of Indians for their scholars.

Too much interest shown towards the poet's wife by the professor was also met with bitter rebuff by the story-teller. The professor was plainly mesmerized by the obedience and compatibility of the wife and having married an Indian girl was filled with happy expectations of receiving such a pleasant demeanour from his wife. His inquisitiveness was nothing but appreciation for the lady's endurance and acceptance of her husband's progress and consequent success.

The most ironical and depressing revelation comes when after so much devotion, subservience and endurance, she receives doubt on her fidelity by her husband just because the poem was completed by someone else, in his absence. This doubt reined so

mind that he could not rejoice over the completion of the poem. His wife in turn was intensely pained and took him to the temple where an ink stain on the finger of Lord Krishna established the fact that it was God Krishna who had come disguised as Jayadeva, ate his meal and completed the poem. The point not to be overlooked in the story is the utter vulnerability of a woman's identity and credibility in our society. She was not only kept uneducated but also expected to be homely i.e. good in house-hold work and serve her husband as best as possible, in return, she was constantly in danger of being emotionally and mentally exploited. The wife had a great heart and forgave her husband whom she placed next to God.

The idea of a woman put above a man was excessively objectionable and the idea terrifying to the story-teller. This was evident when the professor suggested an alternative interpretation to the conclusion of the poem. Interpretation was quite practical viewing the circumstances.

The poet's wife was sad to see her husband's hunch of despair and may be to ease his trouble she had made an attempt at completing the poem. This interpretation of the poet was vehemently opposed by the story-teller. He not only admonished the professor for having woman on his mind but also condemned him of sacrilege. He found the whole idea totally ridiculous and impossible as a respectable woman of 12th century never had any association with palm leaf and stylus. The concept of woman education was extremely unacceptable in those days and no man of senses would marry a girl who could read and write. Looking back to those days, we Indian women of today surely feel ourselves lucky and fortunate. In stark contrast, no man of sense, today would marry a girl who could not read and write. Nine centuries gap has turned the tables and has changed the social scenario completely. The dilemma of the professor is quite natural and justified. He belonged to 21st century and the story-teller was the spokesperson of 12th century. There had to be a cultural and thematic clash between them. The concept of 'homely' itself varies between India and Australia. In India, homely means a woman besides attractive should be good at household

believed that 'homely' meant a plain and simple looking woman. Beauty and attraction was secondary. Expertise at household work was given priority.

Though the story-teller has repeatedly stressed that the story-dealt with Jayadeva and his masterpiece and not influence of women or men, his antagonism over professor's indication of the poet's wife completing the work and consequently threatening him with not giving too much precedence to his wife for a happy married life, does not enhance the position of man in our eyes rather leave a bad taste by ignoring the sacrifice of a wife for her husband's success.

Yasmine Gooneratne may have been wonder-struck with immense capabilities of scholars in India with their endurance and perseverance under stringent circumstances but could not have overlooked the indifference and silent ignorance of the equal contribution of women in their husband's work.

While Jayadeva deals with Lord Krishna's boundless love for Radha, he strangely ignores the silent and deep love of his wife for himself. How can a man, dealing with such an elevated theme in his work which turned out to be a masterpiece could remain immune to so much love and devotion in his personal life? Jayadeva's greatness is shadowed to some extent by his doubt for his wife's fidelity who has been shown to have only his happiness uppermost on her mind. Our culture may be very rich and immense but such ignorance and indifference towards woman in a country of rich heritage before an Australian professor who has all appreciation and sympathy for the wife conveniently forgotten, fills me with shame. A foreigner has the eyes to see the greatness which we Indians have always failed to notice and acknowledge.

I don't know exactly what Yasmine Gooneratne had in mind when she recounted the story but through the professor I can get

MODERN INDIAN ATTITUDES IN NISSIM EZEKIEL'S DON'T CALL IT SUICIDE

* Dr. J. Jayakumar

** R. Jothi Paul

Modernity has multiple applications when it is applied to various aspects of life and literature. Basically it involves encounters with change or the possibility of change. This may be either in a country, in a court or in a family. If it takes place in a country there will be change of King or Ruler or Chief Minister or Prime Minister. If it is in a King's court, it also may change the fate of the country; heads may roll; new and confidential ones may be installed as Ministers and Secretaries. If it is in a family, tension may prevail, temperature may change; death may occur. However it may result in other things too or the chain of actions and reactions. It may bring something very interesting to study.

Nissim Ezekiel's **Don't Call It Suicide** is a tragedy in two acts. In this play, we can see how modernity – Indian Modern attitude involves encounters with change. It affects everyone in the play. Individuals are affected and they grant themselves the power and the mandate to change. Finally it deviates from humanism and takes a path from humanism to the catastrophe of totalitarianism.

Though this play was first published in 1993, it was first staged by the British Council, Bombay in 1989. The theme is a complex one and it has its origin in real life. It is as Ezekiel himself says, 'I was told about the event by an acquaintance of mine in an Indian city. It was about his son and family. The real life incident served as a catalyst to explore the nature of suicide and its effect on the survivors' (quoted by Anand Kumar Raju in his Introduction to **Don't Call It Suicide**, Macmillan 1993, viii, ix).

The play revolves around the recollection of the suicide of the eldest son of Mrs. and Mr. Nanda. It happens in a middle class family of an Indian society. The action takes place in the domestic circle itself. When the play opens, the two male characters, Mr.

* teaches English at N.G.M. College, Pollachi, Tamil Nadu, India.

** teaches English at Sowdeswari College, Salem, T.N. India.

Nanda and his business acquaintance Mr. Sathe are engaged in a conversation. They meet after ten years. Mr. Nanda recalls to Mr. Sathe what happened fourteen years ago, the suicide of his eldest son.

His eldest son never did well in his exams. He neither failed nor did his best. He was intelligent and very sensitive. His problem was that he didn't like most of the teachers and students, though he had two or three good friends. Although he got his B.A., he didn't want to continue his education. Mr. Nanda's second son and daughter were doing very well. His second son got married and his daughter also to a very successful business executive. Both of them are quite happy.

As dutiful parents, Mrs. and Mr. Nanda arranged a marriage for their eldest son in a different place. The girl was not much educated. After two years of their marriage, when they had come on a visit, this unexpected and unwarranted incident took place. When all the family members were out (Mrs. and Mr. Nanda with their second son and daughter for an appointment with some friends; the eldest son's wife, to the bazaar), he had carried out his plan. When they all had returned, they found him hanging from the rafters of the bed room. With the help of their neighbours, a doctor was sent for. We don't see this on the stage but everything is called by Mr. Nanda while narrating to Mr. Sathe.

The death of a youngman (the eldest son) at the age of twentyfive is horrible. Later his wife went to her parents' house but they would not support her for the rest of her life. They sent her here saying, "How can we support her for the rest of our lives?" This shows how calculative the parents of a girl are, thinking their duty is over when the girl is married to somebody. But her in-laws sympathetically wrote, "Send her here, we'll look after her. We are not rich either but will look after her". (Text p.5). This reveals the mental power of Mr. Nanda to change, i.e., accepting the widowed daughter-in-law as long as she lives. This is a cross section of the calculative and benefits seeking society, revealing the attitude of many girls' parents.

by discussing it?" The dialogue between them throws much light on the relationship. She is a very persistent person. Even if he makes fun of her, she doesn't mind since she will win the argument in the end. If he goes on quarrelling, she always tries to stop it. She tries her best to change his attitude. When he goes out like an offended man, she requests him to come back. He follows suit and for this her comment is, "You didn't come back because you wanted to come back." This reveals both her domineering nature and intention of belittling men, and how he is meek.

Act I Scene II begins with the lengthy speech of Meeta, the widow of the eldest son. It reveals the truth about her late husband and other in-laws. He was a very good husband in every way; treated her well; never said that he was unhappy; didn't talk much; whenever he talked, talked nice. People were under the impression that his parents did not treat her well because she was non-matric and had no job-prospects. She respected everyone in her in-law's house. Though she couldn't earn, she helped in all the household work.

Her husband died just after two years of their marriage. She did not even have a child to love and bring up. Her only consolation is that she has a home. Her father-in-law and mother-in-law provide what all she needs. Except them, she has no friends in the whole world! She is incapable of living alone. For people like her, there is no place in the whole world. She prays God everyday not asking for anything big but only a little food, some clothes and shelter.

To see a woman of this sort in the 80s and 90s is a rare sight. We hear her voice very directly and assertively though she has no power to lead a life of her own. As an individual, she is very meek – she is neither ambitious nor over-ambitious; just satisfied with some food, clothes and shelter. Her existence is almost like a servant- woman in that house. She is not permitted to meet her sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law by her mother-in-law. She doesn't believe in her relationship with her father after her marriage; now she cannot live lonely. Just for safety and security she is in her in-law's house. She can live alone if she has the gust and a job and if the society is a Gandhi-dreamed one – a pious one where there is no

weaker sex even if they walk in the street with so much of jewels over them. By associating herself with her in-laws only, she has the mandate to change her way of life. But Mrs. Nanda is very adamant. She will not allow Meeta to dine with her in-laws even for a change. She even goes to the extent of warning Mr. Nanda, "If you want Meeta to eat with us and talk with us, then I will do the work or you do the work". She fails to recognize the voice of her husband and doesn't want to recognize the identity and relationship between husband and wife, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law.

Act I Scene III opens with a soliloquy of Hari, the younger son of the Nandas. His speech makes everything clear for us especially about his brother. What was his problem? He was very peculiar with strange kind of sensitiveness. He suffered a lot in normal situations. A student need not be miserable when some teachers are bad or when some students don't care about education. Let them be what they are. We have to be tough and develop a thick skin only. When he had seen a beggar-child, very pretty and blind, he became sentimental. If he had overcome his repugnance, for school and college and studied hard like Hari and his sister, he would have done well in life with a promising career. He would have been alive today. He was a sensitive idealist. He wasn't pragmatic. He is unnamed and yet the protagonist, because even after fourteen years of his death, he does "affect the lives of everyone in the family.....involves everyone in his guilt". (Introduction A.K. Raju p.x) As a misfit he had withdrawn from life. By his alienation he found himself a stranger in his own natural environment, in his own home and society. Like Meeta, the eldest son was also a victim.

When all the characters, Hari and his wife Malati, Nanda's daughter Shiela and her husband Gopal meet, they discuss as how things change. Mr. Nanda feels strongly that whatever happens 'Humans beings remain human beings.' Gopal, his son-in-law opines that human beings are not human enough and we overlook the inhumanity we see in ordinary, everyday life and also those who are in power, boss over others, treating badly and it is nothing but humiliation. In this way, Mr. Nanda and Gopal belong to the

Humanitarian group. He realizes the void created by his late eldest son; it breaks him down leaving others also in a not-happy-dinner mood.

Scene IV is a very portrayal of the modern relationship between husband and wife. It is the dialogue between the daughter Shiela and Malati, Hari's wife. More of the relationship is learnt. When they refer to the suicide of the eldest in the family, Malati tells that she is not allowed to have any opinion of any subject. This is the reality in almost majority cases – the daughters-in-law have no say in their in-law's places. Like the first daughter-in-law Meeta, the second one Mrs. Malati also has become another victim.

When we analyse Mr. Hari, about him, his sister Shiela herself comments: "Even as a brother he was very dominating. He learnt that from our mother. She was very dominating....." How does he treat his wife, Malati? She herself frets and fumes, "Freedom! I am nobody and nothing since I got married. I can't call my mind my own. I can't even call my body my own. Hari can do anything with it whenever he wants to". She even calls herself 'his Devadasi' which means only a wife's mere submissiveness. When he himself intervenes and is about to pick quarrel with her, Malati quips "I agreed with my husband because I had to agree with my husband. Otherwise, life is hell for me". When Shiela counsels her not to be afraid of Hari but to argue with him and he ought to know her views. This is not only Malati's plight but it is of millions and million of women in our country.

Malati informs Shiela that whenever she does what she recommends: 'He tells me to stop arguing to obey him to carry out his wishes or to get out of the house'. Shiela again comes o her rescue, "tell him you are his wife and not his slave". Quick came the reply from Malati. "I am his slave and wife. What I have become is a happy slave.....It is better than being an unhappy slave. There is no other choice." Shiela persists" "Tell him you are a happy slave, no more than a slave. He may feel ashamed." Malati recalls her past : "He won't be ashamed. He will only be angry. He will tell me to shut up. He will beat me. He has already beaten me so many times.

Hari who has been overhearing their talk so far, comes out abruptly telling Shiela, not to spoil his relationship with his wife. Though

she tells it is only to improve, he leaves the place because he doesn't want it to be improved. He is the replica of his mother, the insensitive autocrat and a male chauvinist.

Scene V is a fine comment upon the functioning of companies in India. It is the scene between Mr. Nanda and his son-in-law, Gopal. Since both share the same kind of views, they are the Humanitarians. Gopal dos have a balanced matrimonial relationship with his wife Shiela. During their conversation Nanda says : "My wife told us all not to talk about anything serious". It makes the point clear that he is a meek husband and he has fear for his wife which is going to drive him to a fatal end.

The company in which Gopal works is very efficient. Nanda comments: "Many Indian companies are run in such a slipshod way, inefficiently, indifferently. Government run companies are of course bureaucratic." Gopal observes, "Every individual is treated according to the power level on which he functions. A branch manager will always treat another branch manager politely but he will not be polite to his executive assistants those who work under him....his head clerk or other subordinates. No one below you on the management scale is treated as human being". Thus it is a pen portrait of the two communities – the ruling and the ruled in government and private offices. We are helpless as how to put up with the things we hate. We continue to blame ourselves and become insensitive in the modern world. There is no prospect of changing it. Thus communities and individuals don't have the power and the mandate to change except to wallow in empty hope and faith. At the same time individuals like Gopal can do in their own small way.

Act II Scene I opens with the soliloquy of Mrs. Nanda who is a very practical person, running her household working for her husband and children. She has allowed her eldest son's widow, Meeta, to live with them because she does the washing, cooking

of her husband. After this, her meeting with Hari reveals many of her features to us.

To both of them, Mr. Nanda had all kinds of silly ideas about how to treat children. He was always weak when it comes to action. She boasts that she believes in teaching them discipline. She used to disagree so many times and she had her own way. She was always strong. She has the power to change her husband and children. They dance to her tunes. Hari also tells us about himself. In this world one can win if only he is strong and not if he is just right. That is why he doesn't allow anyone to boss over him, but he bosses over others – equals, company friends and others. Thus both their modern ways of life deviate from the path of humanism to the catastrophe of mental disturbance of others. Both conspire to prevent Sathe from meeting Nanda.

Act II Scene II testifies for her control and dominance over her husband. To her Mr. Sathe is an unwelcome visitor. But to Nanda, he is objective about everything, wise about business matters, personal relations thoughtful and sensible. He is the unwilling catalyst, psychologist-cum-sociologist. She prohibits Sathe from using the term suicide (for what her eldest son did) because it upsets her husband but to call it death. Sathe explains to her that he came just for a business consultation. The conversation between Sathe and Nanda gives us a very clear picture about a class of people who are entirely different from the rest – not the philosophers, poets and artists but ordinary people who accept all unpleasant and puzzling things in life which others accepted as ordinary or extraordinary. These classes of people have been good and bad qualities as other people have. But the power some essential power causes non-adjustments to things. Many in this group feel helpless and sensitive to their own helplessness. Others have to be close to them and need not become like them. In life they are a complete failure. It may be his fault or it may not be. Temperamentally he is incapable of meeting society's standards of success. If those standards are more flexible and provide more spare-freedom, tolerance and understanding, the so-called failure would feel free to live his own life according to his own preferences and inclinations. There is no point in insisting our own terms but acceptance of their temperament. His eldest son

class, who thought he was a failure and to him a failure real or imagined had no right to live by society's standard. A failure has to be treated sympathetically – to help him by loving acceptance. Since it didn't happen, he committed suicide.

The last scene (Act II Scene III) is the end of the play – the result of the totalitarianism of insensitive autocrats like Mrs. Nanda and Hari who put down ruthlessly those who oppose. Unable to tolerate the humiliations, Mr. Nanda consumes a whole set of pills leaving the family once for all. Is this death? No, suicide only. It is the second suicide in the family against the gender inequality. There is a double-layered irony in the play, as Mr. A.K. Raju writes, "Meeta is victimized not only by a man (her husband) who abrogates all spousal responsibilities by committing suicide but also by a woman Mrs. Nanda who strips her of her status as a daughter-in-law and treats her worse than a servant. But a far greater irony emerges when the oppressor, Mrs. Nanda herself becomes a victim of her husband's suicide. She becomes a widow like Meeta, in whom she instinctively finds kinship at the end of the play".

Through this very impressive, evocative, tragedy, Nissim Ezekiel with the social awareness, especially for the middle class, emphasizes the need for freedom, tolerance and understanding for a happy, peaceful and domestic life which has to be lived fully and not to be ended half way through by committing suicide. Any encounter should be for good changes; similarly modernities for good social order. Will (the readers who read this play and the spectators who see this play) they change and be like Gopal and Shiela, the co-equals in their balanced matrimonial relationship or be like insensitive autocrats like Mrs. Nanda, the dominating wife and mother and Hari, the male chauvinist or become he victims like Meeta and Malati or become the misfit like the eldest son and the ultimate sufferer, the humanitarian Mr. Nanda who finds no other way at last but to follow the footsteps of his eldest son to the grave? It is left to them. □

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A CRITICAL STUDY OF ANNE TYLER'S TREATMENT OF DEPRESSED SEGMENTS

* K. Balamurugan

Though America's artist class has drawn many of its subjects and much of its financial support from America's middle class, our painters, sculptors, novelists, and poets have never quite learned to like that majority of Americans who are neither rich nor poor, powerful nor powerless, particularly sophisticated nor hopelessly parochial. Anne Tyler is a case in point, and her attitudes have affected the quality of her fiction.

For her much-acclaimed previous novel, **The Tin Can Tree**, Miss Tyler chose two out-of-the-ordinary characters as her protagonists: the highly eccentric Macon Leary, a Princeton-educated writer, and the highly marginal Muriel Pritchett, a single mother and poverty-stricken dog-trainer. Doing so, she produced a small prodigy of charm and warm humor. In **Breathing Lessons**, her latest, she has chosen to write about just plain folks: Ira Moran, owner of a Baltimore picture-frame shop, and his wife, Maggie, a housewife. For those who, after **The Accidental Tourist**, judged Miss Tyler one of America's best novelists, **Breathing Lessons** will be a disappointment. While Macon and Muriel were a gracefully drawn and highly sympathetic couple, Miss Tyler struggles to make Ira and Maggie halfway likable.

The whole of **Breathing Lessons** takes place during the Morons' trip to Deer Lick, Pennsylvania, for a friend's funeral. On the way up, they squabble and Maggie jumps out of the car in a huff. On the way back, they squabble and take a detour to visit their former daughter-in-law, Fiona, and her daughter, Leroy. Despite the tightly woven quality of its prose, like most books whose action spans only a day or so, **Breathing Lessons** staggers under an excess of narrative fabric: Miss Tyler gives Maggie three pages to maneuver her Chevy out of a tough parking space.

* teaches English at Bharathiar College of Engg. & Tech., Karaikkal, UT of Puducherry

Miss Tyler is interested in the kinds of compromises people like Ira and Maggie have to make in order to raise children, to maintain a household, even just to stay together. Before the unplanned birth of their first child, for example, Ira had intended to study medicine. Instead, for a living, he ended up "cutting 45-degree angles in strips of glued molding. "When his son, Jesse, remarked once that he refused to believe he would die unknown, Ira, "instead of smiling tolerantly as he should have, had felt slapped in the face." Once, Maggie recalls, her daughter, Daisy, asked her if there had been "a certain conscious point in your life when you decided to settle for being ordinary?"

Though such compromises are built into the conventional system of marriage and parenthood. Miss Tyler believes we need no despair over the institution of the middle-class family. Climbing into bed at day's end, Maggie finds Ira playing a game of solitaire. Like solitaire, she reflects, a marriage starts out easy. But by now Ira had "arrived at the interesting part of the game. He had passed that early, superficial stage when any number of moves seemed possible, and now his choices were narrower and he had no show real skill and judgment. She felt a little stir of something that come over her like a flush, a sort of inner buoyancy, and she lifted her face to kiss the warm blade of his cheekbone." As the book concludes, Maggie has come to believe she will find happiness in her marriage, but only be doing her best to overcome the innumerable, mostly insurmountable, challenges the years are bound to present. In short, Miss Tyler turns the bored housewife into a kind of domestic Sisyphus.

Breathing Lessons is meant to end on a hopeful note – Camus, after all, said we must suppose Sisyphus happy. But it's too much to ask us to suppose the same of Ira and Maggie Moran. How could anyone be happy married to either one? On a couple of occasions Miss Tyler has Ira acting almost human. More typical, though, are the two scenes – one in real time, the other a flashback – in which he drives his son and daughter-in-law apart by loudly informing the latter that her husband is sleeping around. When Maggie needs him for support, she generally finds him deep and unreachable in a game of

solitaire. When he's not playing solitaire, he's talking about auto routes or gas mileage.

Maggie, for her part, is pathetic. Twice in the space of perhaps three hours she resolves to leave Ira forever and twice backs down entirely. She's stupid, too. Once, we're told, she spent a whole evening fretting over a wrong number:

"Hello?" she'd said into the phone, and a man had said, "Laverne, stay right there safe in your house. I just talked to Dennis and he's coming to fetch you." And then had hung up Maggie cried, "Wait!" – Speaking into a dead receiver; typical. Whoever it was, Ira told her, deserved what he got. If Dennis and Laverne never managed to connect, why, that was their problem, not hers. But Maggie had gone on and on about it. "Safe," she moaned. "Safe in the house," he told me. Lord only knows what that poor Laverne is going through. "And she had spent the evening dialing all possible variations of their own number, every permutation of every digit, hoping to find Laverne. But never did, of course.

These are not sympathetic character – at best they evoke our pity. Some novelists can write successful fiction about people like Ira and Maggie. Flannery O'Connor could. John Updike can. Anne Tyler cannot. The Morans are just too middle-class for her tastes, and it shows. In Maggie's own words, they are the kind of people "you would classify in an instant and dismiss"; their creator plainly finds their lives dreary and dull:

Ira [sat] endlessly on his high wooden stool, whistling along with his easy-listening radio station as he measured a mat or sawed away at his miter box. Women came in asking him to frame heir cross-stitched homilies and their amateur seascapes and their wedding photos.....They brought in illustrations torn from magazines – a litter of puppies or a duckling in a basket. Like a tailor measuring a half-dressed client, Ira remained discreetly sightless, appearing to form no judgment about a picture of a sad-faced kitten tangled in a ball of yarn.

Indeed, from an "easy-listening radio station" to a "picture of sad faced kitten tangled in a ball of yarn," **Breathing Lessons**

its action in a dense atmosphere of depressing class signifiers: The author's distaste is palpable. So is her condescension. At one point, Fiona announces she has taken up the study of electrolysis: Leroy pronounces it "a genuine science," while Maggie "couldn't help feeling impressed. This was a highly technical fieldsomething like dental hygiene."

Why Anne Tyler thought she could pull off a novel like **Breathing Lessons** – a novel that asks us to sympathize with and suppose happy a pair as unstintingly ordinary as Ira and Maggie Moran – is hard to say. The reader is left wondering what kind of contractual obligations the talented Miss Tyler had than convinced her to dig this one out of her manuscript drawer. □

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FEMINIST APPROACH IN ALICE WALKER'S THE COLOUR PURPLE

** R. Aswath Begam*

Alice Walker is one of the most prominent and highly acclaimed authors of America. She has been appreciated for a wide variety of works like poems, essays, short stories and novels. But besides these she is also a social activist and participates in movements for preservation of environment. Infacts she has even written an anthology of poems for this purpose *Horses Make a Landscape More Beautiful*. She has played a pivotal role in redefining Black Feminist Movement as 'Womanism'. This new concept has been devised from fold expression commonly used by Black mothers for their daughters. 'You are acting womanish'.

The term womanish refers to outrageous, courageous and matured women who act in an independent manner. She gave a new term because it was free from the considerations of the color, the 'black' Feminist Movement which reminded them of being different. A womanist is the one who speaks out against or in defense of something important – a woman who loves herself, her culture and who is committed to the survival of whole people.

Unlike the white feminists whose main agenda includes opposition of men, they fight against suppression of women by men. The Black Feminists aim at fighting out racism and sexism. But they are not against men for they believe in growth and development of humanity as a whole. Thus, the black feminists do not aim at gender war but have a positive outlook towards the possibilities of change that can be brought about in men. It is the concrete historical background the pain and suffering of the past which accounts for their matured outlook.

Alice Walker being a staunch womanist writer mostly deals with the plight of women in society. The recurring theme of her works is preservation of black culture and male female relationships. **The Color Purple** articulates the complexity of the struggle of black women

in America. The novel has been constructed on a thematic base of multiple concerns. The novel has been interpreted in terms of spiritual and religious developments. But besides female relationships, racial issues, gender bias, oppression, slavery, search for the identity, sexism have also been discussed

Thus, the novel **The Color Purple**, fully exhibits these concerns. It explores not only these issues but also black women's determination to overcome these barriers and emerge as liberated and whole individuals.

Walker's use of epistolary form in **The Color Purple** has been highly appreciated. It tends a personal tone to her work. She uses Black American Vernacular to capture the flavour of native culture. She has used devices of tone, symbolism and juxtaposition to develop her characters. The tone keeps changing with circumstances, characters and time.

The title **The Color Purple** is a symbol of royalty and it represents the vast capabilities and potentialities in black people. Given a chance they can come up as independent and empowered individuals. They can rule their life with out any support. Walker herself admits that the colour purple is representative of women purple with rage, purple as restored royalty, purple blossoming wild in an open field.

Walker has been admired for her prose style. We find a balance in her writings. She is neither a stern feminist nor advocates patriarchy, rather she believes in equality of sexes. She believes in 'womanism', development and growth of community with out any demarcations of male and female.

Walker in her novels takes characters which are uneducated, inarticulate, deprived, abused by their family and usually trapped by circumstances which seem to be out of their control. In other words she picks up those characters where there is ample of opportunity to explore growth and change. Celie is representative of this type of character.

Alice Walker and other feminist writers like Toni Morrison, Jamaica Kincaid, Rita Dove, Maya Angelou have been interested in speaking out women's plight in their novels. They have been fighting on behalf of millions of black women in America. They are attempting to break the image of black community as presented by whites and now they endeavor to present black community as complete, whole and independent. They are with rich cultural heritage and concrete historical background, using these instruments they are redefining themselves. The painful experiences of the past account for the bitterness we often find in their writings. The black writers are successful in capturing the essence of black womanhood in their novels.

The pioneers of black writers were Paule Marshall, Ann Petry, Zora Neale Hurston, Jessie Redmond Faust and numerous others which remain unknown. The work of these writers was not acclaimed because first due to their color and then they were female writers. However, the credit for revival of Hurston's works goes to Alice Walker.

Walker's **The Color Purple** is closely connected with Hurston's **Their Eyes were Watching God**. Both the novels deal with the same theme of uncovering the soul of black women, the rise of women above sexual and racial oppression for place and independence. Janie the protagonist of **Their Eyes Were Watching God** and Celia of **The Color Purple** are forced into marriage which proves to be fruitless. They break away from suffering, suffocating, loveless marriages in search of their identity.

Celie is presented as a poor black girl who has no identity, faces sexual and physical abuses at the hands of her step father Alphonso and husband Mr —. But in the end she emerges out as an independent and liberated being. Similarly, Janie is forced by her nanny to marry Logan Killicks for money. But she is unhappy with him as he is unable to understand her desires as a woman. She then leaves him and marries Joe Starks. But he is too inconsiderate towards her, imposes many restrictions upon her. But after his death Janie marries the third time to a boy much younger to her, Tea Cake,

restrictions. Though in the end Tea Cake dies, yet Janie is content in life for she had found true love.

Thus, both Celie and Janie break out from the conventions of society to redefine themselves.

Thus, in the end it can be said Alice Walker's literature and works have been an expression of splendor of love and life. They have arisen from Walker's immersion in the lamentations and outcries of black women. She has spoken out of life and loving kindness through her poems, short stories, novels, essays, journals, feature films and documentaries. Therefore, it is rightly said by Donna Haiti that Walker indeed comes to see her works as prayer. She still believes as she did when she wrote once (her first book) that literature saves lives. □

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TRANSCENDENTALISM IN HENRY DAVID THOREAU'S WALDEN

* A. Pradeep Kumar

"If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavours to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours".

—Henry David Thoreau

Transcendentalism is a word which has been variously interpreted, and even misinterpreted, by various writers and critics. 'Transcendent means 'beyond' and 'above', hence transcendentalist is one who believes in the existence of a divine world, beyond and above the world of senses. The divine cannot be known by ratiocination or reason, but it can be felt and experienced by the spirit through intuition. Emerson called in his own day, "the sage of Concord" is "the father of American Transcendentalism." It was an important movement in philosophy and literature that flourished during the early to middle years of the nineteenth century (about 1836-1860). It began as a reform movement in the Unitarian church. For the transcendentalists, the soul of each individual is identical with the soul of the world and contains what the world contains. Transcendentalism owed its pervasive moralism to puritanism. Basically, it believes in the superiority of intuition over logic. The transcendentalist believes that the truth comes through inspiration and more valid than any other truth arrived at through reason and understanding.

The transcendentalist awakening to Oriental thought in the late 1830s was a decisive event. For the first time the Americans representing a major movement turned seriously to the East. The major interest was in Hinduism and the deeply spiritual and intuitive quality of Oriental thought struck a responsive chord. The eclecticism of transcendentalism was a second factor. As eclectics, the transcendentalists found little difficulty in incorporating selected

* *teaches English at Vivekananda Institute of Technology & Science Karimnagar, Andhra Pradesh, India.*

Oriental ideas into their view. Had they been more rigorous and consistent in approach, the possibilities of assimilating Oriental thought would have been correspondingly lessened. The method, as much as the trend of their thought, was conducive to a favorable response to the Orient. Again, by the late 1830s the Orient was more accessible than it had been at the beginning of the century.

A philosophical and literary movement, centered in Concord and Boston, which was prominent in the intellectual and cultural life of New England from 1836 until just before the civil war. It was inaugurated in 1836 by Unitarian discussion group that came to be called the Transcendental Club. It was this club in which the celebrated writers like Ralph Waldo Emerson, Bronson Alcott, Frederick Henry Hedge, W.E. Channing, Theodore Parker, Margaret Fuller, Elizabeth Peabody, George Ripley, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry David Thoreau, and Jones Very were included at one time or another. The very term "transcendental," as Emerson pointed out in his lecture "The Transcendentalist" (1841) was taken from Immanuel Kant, the German philosopher. (1724-1804).

A combination of factors contributed to the favorable transcendentalist response to Oriental thought. Intellectually, its spokesmen were ripe for new ideas. In rebellion against the Calvinistic Christianity, rationalistic Unitarianism, and materialistic Lockeanism that then dominated New England intellectual life, leading members of the movement were receptive to the new currents of idealism they found in the Orient.

The timely appearance of the *Laws of Manu*, the *Vedas*, the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the *Sakuntala*, and the *Ramayana* in authoritative translation made it possible to approach the Orient more directly and more confidently than before.

Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), an American Philosopher, a Unitarian, social critic, transcendentalist and writer, was born in Concord, Massachusetts, in July 1817. He graduated from Harvard in 1837, the same year Emerson delivered "The American Scholar". It is uncertain whether or not Thoreau heard the oration, but it is

is not a novel, a narrative poem, or a play; there is no clear story line, no plot line. Nor is it an autobiography, although much of it is based on Thoreau's life at Walden pond. The question of its structure has puzzled many critics, with some focusing on the cycle of the seasons as symbolic death and rebirth, and others on whether it is unified in spite of the oppositions it contains. It is not an easy book for a reader — especially a first time reader — to sort out and to find order in.

Thoreau was a leading figure in the Transcendentalist movement which held, as one of its premises, that the human connection with nature is necessary for intellectual and moral stability. It was Ralph Waldo Emerson who aroused in him a true enthusiasm for India. Lowell said that Thoreau was among the pistillate plants kindled to fruitage by the Emersonian pollen. The force from the *Upanishads* that Thoreau inherited emerged in **Walden** and inspired not only those who pioneered the British labor movement, but all who read it to this day. Meandering in northeastern Massachusetts, his reverent outer gaze fell upon Walden Pond. He alluded often to water—the metaphor is clear—the **Gita's** wisdom teachings are the purifier of the mind: *"By a conscious effort of the mind we can stand aloof from actions and their consequences; and all things, good and bad, go by us like a torrent."* He had found his sacred Ganga (Ganges). Living by it and trying to "practice the yoga faithfully" during his two years at Walden, he wrote: "In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonical philosophy of the **Bhagavat Gita**, since whose composition years of the gods have elapsed, and in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seem puny and trivial; and I doubt if that philosophy is not to be referred to a previous state of existence, so remote is its sublimity from our conceptions. I lay down the book and go to my well for water, and lo! there I meet the servant of the *Brahmin*, priest of *Brahma*, and *Vishnu* and *Indra*, who still sits in his temple on the River *Ganga* reading the *Vedas*, or dwells at the root of a tree with his crust and water—jug. I meet his servant come to draw water for his master, and our buckets as it were grate together in the same well. The pure Walden water is

Bhagavad Gita to the test, while proving to his generation that "money is not required to buy one necessary for the soul."

Transcendentalism was one of the formative influences in Thoreau's life. Thoreau was greatly indebted to the Orient. He immersed himself in Oriental religious books, especially in the *"vast and cosmogonical philosophy of the Bhagavat-Gita"*. In addition to that, he also read with particular keenness the *Vedas*, the *Vishnu Purana*, the *Institute of Manu*. Nature for the transcendentalist is an expression of the divine mind and idealism is the very basis for the transcendentalist's philosophy. In his transcendental thoughts, the world at large conglomerate into one big divine family. He finds beside his Walden Pond *"the servant of the Brahmin, priest of Brahma and Vishnu and Indra, who still sits in his temple on the Ganga reading the Vedas... their buckets grate together in the same well"*. The pure Walden water is mingled with the sacred water of the Ganga". Thoreau, the Concord sage, said, *"The Vedanta teaches how by 'forsaking religious rites' the votary may obtain purification of mind. One sentence of the Gita, is worth the State of Massachusetts many times over."*

In 1845 the much-talked-of **Walden** episode began to take shape. Thoreau had for years meditated a life of retirement, and his friend Ellery Channing wrote: "I see nothing for you in this earth but that field which I once christened 'Briars'; go out upon that, build yourself a hut, and there begin the grand process of devouring yourself alive". Thoreau took his advice, borrowed an axe, and began to cut the timbers for the famous hut built on the edge of Walden Pond, where for over two years he laboured and studied in seclusion. The book, **Walden**, or Life In The Woods, is a record of Thoreau's experiences and reflections during the period of his stay there. It is, beyond any iota of doubt, Thoreau's masterpiece. It is his account of the two years, two months, and two days he spent at Walden Pond. Thoreau saw more than Nature itself; he saw what familiarity with it could mean in the spirit of man, and used his own life to demonstrate his conviction. **Walden** is a humanist manifesto,

he was still near enough to Christianity which he outwardly rejected to be quite certain that man without the spirit is not man. **Walden** bears the unmistakable stamp of transcendentalism. There are umpteen number of passages which stand as an evidence of Thoreau's transcendental attitude to life and Nature. Thoreau gives an account of his stay near Walden Pond very earnestly in response to queries from friends and townsmen. In the first chapter, Economy, he tells, *"If I am to speak truthfully, I must speak of myself because I am the only person thoroughly known to myself. The townsmen were very anxious to know various things such as mode of life, which some would call impertinent, but considering the circumstances very natural and pertinent, what he got to eat, about his lonesomeness, fearlessness, and so on; some were interested in knowing about his charity"* (Economy). In fact, Thoreau feels it is better that such things are spoken in a simple and sincere way. Manu's influence was clearly exerted on the mind of Thoreau here.

Thoreau wonders in the same chapter that how man can be so frivolous. He exclaims how man can be so indifferent towards the prevalent burning issue of Negro-Slavery in the southern states of the U.S.A. which is a gross and intolerable violation of the human spirit. But most people in the Northern states undergo an equally degrading form of servitude. The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation. What is called resignation is confirmed desperation. Thoreau advises the weak and discontented, though rich but enchained on how to keep the vitality of the inner self, not the outer self. In the three basic necessities of food, shelter and clothing, simplicity is to be followed. In education, the student should learn the art by experiencing it and living in it pragmatically. Thoreau states the **Bhagavad-Gita** is more powerful than all these pseudo-relics of culture. Man must not labour but earn his food as a pastime.

In the chapter, Sounds, Thoreau writes that we must confine ourselves to mere reading but must become seers and have a vision into future. He sits in his doorway from morning till noon, lost in contemplation. He listens to the sounds of birds, the fish and the

road. He feels mechanization is suppressing the manual labour. *"Up comes the cotton, down goes the woven cloth, up comes the silk, down goes the wollen"*(Sounds). This is in keeping with his transcendentalist philosophy, which emphasizes direct, intuitive experience of nature, truth and the divine. In this chapter, Thoreau focuses on the sounds he experiences at Walden, from the singing of birds to the whistle of a train, and on how these sounds affect his mood. The sounds of animals especially cause him to feel the unity and joy of all things. Thoreau then goes on to say that people will not feel bored with life if they were to regulate their lives by the best mode they have learned. "Follow your genius closely enough, and it will fail to show you a fresh prospect every hour". This emphasis on contemplation and on the value of inner voice ("genius") is a part of Thoreau's transcendentalism.

In Solitude, Thoreau makes his case that the companionship of nature is more fulfilling than that of humans, and that he could not possibly be lonely in nature because he is a part of it. The plants and animals are his friends and, amid the peace of nature, God himself is the author's visitor: *"I have occasional visits . . . from an old settler and original proprietor, who is reported to have dug Walden Pond, and stoned it, and fringed it with pine woods; who tells me stories of old time and of new eternity; and between us we manage to pass a cheerful evening with social mirth and pleasant views of things"* (Solitude).

Equally important are some of the experiences and observations in the chapter called "**Higher Laws**". Here Thoreau speaks of the appeal of the wild aspects of Nature:

"The wildest scenes had become uncountably familiar. I found in myself, and still find, an instinct toward a higher, or, as it is named, spiritual life, as do most men, and another toward a primitive rank and savage one, I reverence the both. I love the wild not less than the good"(Higher Laws). Here is an intuitive (not rational) approach to Nature. And Thoreau extends by telling that fishermen, hunters, woodchoppers and others, spending their lives in the fields and woods, are in a peculiar sense a part of Nature themselves, and

a more favourable mood for observing her than philosophers or poets. In this same chapter Thoreau quotes the *Vedas* to tell us that a command over our passions, and over external senses of the body is quite essential in the mind's approximation to God.

Thoreau insists on the importance of the inner life and he says in the final chapter of **Walden**: *"Explore your own higher latitudes. Nay, be a Columbus to whole new continents and worlds within you, opening new channels, not of trade, but of thought. Every man says, Thoreau, is the lord of a realm which lies within himself. Thus Thoreau asserts the value of self-knowledge". "Explore thyself" (Conclusion), he says. He urges us to obey the laws of our being and not the laws of society. We speak of common sense. But the commonest sense of men is asleep, which they express by snoring. It has been pointed out that the verses of Kabir have four different senses –illusion, spirit, intellect and the esoteric doctrine of Vedas. Thoreau also calls upon us to be mentally wake and alert: "There is not one of my readers who has yet live a whole human life. Most have not delved six feet beneath the surface, nor leaped as many above it. We know not what we are. Besides, we are sound asleep nearly half our time"(Conclusion). Thoreau concludes his book by indicating future possibilities in a pithy manner: "Only that day dawns to which we are awake. There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star. Walden personifies Thoreau, informing us that material possessions are burdens, bidding us to simplify life as the condition of knowing what it is, exhorting us to dramatic self-discovery.*

Transcendentalism is a name that was applied to a social and literary philosophy that was holistic and distinctly American in nature. Henry David Thoreau is one of the most renowned of Transcendentalists. He devised a theory and practice of living that sought to bring individuals and society back to the most simple, natural, and straightforward beliefs that could guide human behavior and foster a health society. The transcendental movement and the natural world were intertwined as among the basic beliefs of the transcendentalism movement was the belief in the intrinsic value and importance of nature.

Throughout **Walden**, Thoreau keeps asking us to live the higher life, to make our lives 'sublime' to elevate ourselves, to raise ourselves above the animal level. The millions, he tells us, are awake enough for physical labour; but one in a million is awake enough for effective intellectual exertion; only one in a hundred millions to a poetic or divine life, "To be awake is to be alive", "I know of no more encouraging fact", he says, then the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavour". To effect the quality of the day; he goes on to say, is the highest of arts. The transcendentalist takes pains to give us an ethical interpretation of life. In **Walden**, Thoreau establishes kinship with Nature. He becomes a part of Nature. The Ponds, the pains, the hills, the woods-he describes them with rare facility. The birds, the animals, the fish-he dwells upon them with a rare love. He speaks of all Nature with enthusiasm. □

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C.L.KHATRI: A POET OF SOCIAL ETHOS

* P.V.Laxmi Prasad

Literature is a mirror of society. Accordingly, Dr.C.L.Khatrī, as a poet, has mirrored the real faces of society. In his two collections of poetry (i) **Ripples in the Lake** (ii) **Kargil**. Hailing from the land of lord Buddha and of course, a god forsaken state like Bihar, all his poems are a humble attempt to reflect social ethos or records of daily happenings. No doubt, Dr. Khatrī has both poetic bent of mind, collective and calculative mind in composing poems in different themes. They are either evils plaguing the society or chaos, horrors in human relationships. Dr. Khatrī, besides being a keen observer, echoes his voice not only in his motherland Bihar but also around the world where he perceives life from poetic perspectives. His writing is filled with simple but human emotions pictured so beautifully that readers find them in between the lines. As Dr.Mahashwetha Chaturvedi rightly remarks that “the poet is highly social conscious and humanistic so full of mysticism. The poems of his collection are simple in the context but powerful in concept”. As such, the poet Khatrī depicts the plight of Rag – Picker in the poem.

*“With the boulder of the day
Laden on my back
I start roaming these alleys
Filled with filth with the dawn of the day”.*

In another poem, “Divine Desire” the poet stresses the need for mutual love, compassion and bliss when he said.

*“Let an endless stream of love
Runs through the universe
Wash away the shadow lines
That separate cause from effect”*

The poet prays that there would be an unending stream of love which is devoid in the universe where the dark world is casting its shadows. In the poem “Kargil”, the poet patriotically goes poetic in the lines composed,

* *Add: Karim Nagar, Andhra Pradesh, India.*

Rock Pebbles / Jan. - June. 09/P. 169

*“Neither the freezing wind nor defiant sea
Neither the Himalaya’s odds nor foe’s friend
Can come in your march forward to victory
Can touch the apron of your mother proud”*

The poet recalled the sacrifices made by Indian VeerJawans who emerged victorious in their cause for mother India. While echoing the spirit that VeerJawans of Kargil brought us, the poet asks his fellow countrymen to follow their footsteps and emulate them.

*“Let’s be Jawans of Kargil
Arise, Awake, Ascend and fight to the end”.*

In the poem “Returns” the poet is socially conscious while depicting the horrors of working masses, labours and poor people who serve the society in more ways than one.

*“What’s the return of my toil,
Starvation, exploitation, disease, death and
what else?”*

“What makes Indo-Anglian Literature an Indian literature and not just an overflow of English Literature, is the quality of Indianness – in the choice of subject, in the texture of thought and play of sentiment, in the organization of material in terms of form and in creative use of language”. A socially sensible Dr.Khatrī fits perfectly into this category.

“Water,water” is another poem in which C.L.Khatrī has rammed into the veins of society where public are denied their share of food grains despite over-stock of godowns in India.

*“Food grains are over-stocked in public barns,
Not a handful of rice for the public who earn”*

What the poet feels here is true to the Indian context where the poor are still struggling for food. “Tears” is another poem which I reckon Dr.Khatrī socially understandable. The poem bids tearful farewell to the newly married daughter in the traditional Hindu families.

*“A stream of tears swelled up
From her eyes as she out of
Her house with a socially assigned*

The extremity and intensity of moment is further magnified in the lines below:

*"Wailing like a cow whose
Calf is being taken away,
A daughter's palanquin
Goes out of a father's house".*

In the poem titled "Children", the poet goes optimistic in the opening lines as the poem progresses, he is painting their real miseries. The poem shows how children are used as labourer and exploited in the present day India.

*"Children—they are the Future of nation:
They are waste particles of the Factory
They are dust of your dustbin you keep for the night
And throw away in the morning".*

In the poem on "Laws" the poet laments that the jury is whimsical, swerving, and shifting stands of the day. He has framed a short quote in one of the lines of a poem as "Might is right".

*"Laws are kept of the mighty
A whimsical jury,
Swerving. Shifting stands of the day
Might is right"*

The poet is quite critical of Indian judicial system where justice due for is denied and laws are meant just to those having muscle and money power.

According to Dr.S.L.Peeran, the poet Dr.C.L.Khatri is much affected with the happenings around him and about the happenings of the modern age. The poet in the poem "pitirir" exposes the hollowness of the present generation in following the rituals. The poet pities that so long our elders are living, we do not look after their interests nor do we pay much attention. We step into conduct post-death rituals once they leave this physical world.

*"He who has never fed
His ailing , paling pa with his hand
Gives mukhagni to the dead"*

In the poem "He Who Rides The Man" the poet coined beautiful poetic lines on the fate of modern man whose very existence is taken for a ride.

*"He who rides the man
Rides the number , the equation, the words
The house, the relation between you and me".*

All kinds of relationships are shattered when man is haunted by fellow man in his hunt for gamblings, cheatings, pretences and that ultimately buries values in the world. In another poem addressed to 'Bapu', the poet makes a fervent call to the Father of the Nation to revisit the country and set things right once again.

*"Bapu come, come once again
For my sake, for my country's sake
It's more difficult to fight against own people
Godsey killed you once, they kill you everyday."*

The poet delves deep into disorderly chaos that plagues the Indian society in all spheres of life.

To conclude, Dr. Khatri is a poet who analysed society in multiple dimensions. No doubt, he has championed the cause of the sufferers whether individuals or groups in society. The simplicity of his verse shines throughout his poetry. His world of poetry leaves a deep impression on the reading minds. All the poems lead the readers to thoughtfulness, making them pensive, sad and socially conscious. There are pointed remarks and didactic sayings. Almost all the poems have bearings, directly or indirectly upon the social things. He goes from political to universal and ethical to social experiences of life. He has in his womb of poetry – timeless message that is, Life is Kargil – a philosophical path of life taken from Kargil war. The maps of human life are examined in social but critical perspectives, poetically, thoughtfully, emotionally and socially. Above all, he is a bard to the core of society. □

SHORT STORY

DHANANJAY'S LAST WISH

* Harihar Choudhury

Eventually, after fourteen years of judicial proceedings, the forty-two year old Dhananjay is destined to move unto the pedestal of the hang-post. Possessed by a momentary wild passion resulting in consumation of nefarious activity, he is, now, opportuned with ample of time inside the four walls of the prison cell to analyse himself.

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Duty-bound over-burdened professionalism of a security personnel resulted in loss of his balance of mind. Coming across a comely deer at hand in a solitary atmosphere, he turned into a violent wild beast. Blind with burning passion, he unwarrantly attacked on the freedom of the fourteen year old spinster-student, ravished her and finally annihilated her from the breast of the earth. Truth superceded over his fruitless endeavour to prove his innocence by living behind the safe cordon of the so-called security services. Taken into custody, he was put behind the bar. Blamed, abused and censured by one and all, a verdict was finally, ordained - 'to be hanged till death'. People from all corners appreciated the ways of justice. On the other hand, being burnt with the fire of repentance, he himself censured his sinful body during prolonged imprisonment. As for penance, he regreted before the invisible lord for his evil deeds. He penanced a lot to free himself from the hell of sensuality and pined only for the love of his blissful father, affection of the mother who begot him and cuddles of his long-awaiting better-half. He begged for mercy before the Head of the State 'to change the verdict from death penalty to life-imprisonment to enable himself one last chance for repentance inside the prison. The penal codes of law followed its traditional, critical, zig-zag cater-pillar movement. The "Dhananjay Episode" became a burning topic before the democratic nation, in the mass-media, for Human Rights

* *Headmaster at Shyamalai Vidyapitha (Govt. High School)*

Commission and among the conscious citizens of some foreign lands. Discussion was on. The court unanimously adjudged that

'the ultimate punishment (death penalty) was quite judicious for the terminator of a fresh budded procreative flower'. Still, the accused has uttered a 'but'..... 'I am an innocent fellow.... Don't put an untimely full-stop to my life; Please, allow me some more time for my penance and resurrection... Don't grumble, my lord! Do stress on the death of crime, not the death of the criminal'. The cycle of time, however, has ill-omened the accused. It retortedly echoed that 'you too should feel the taste of untimely death, Dhananjay; only a'tit for tat' dictum might warn the criminals of the future generation.

The hang-man, Nata, marked some diversified mannerisms in this man. For, he was heading towards the hang-post unruminatingly. Uncontrolled lust caused his down-fall; how could he be so gentle a prisoner touching the hearts of his colleagues like co-prisoners and the wardens....? This thought impressed Nata to a great extent. His executive empowered hands trembled while preparing to perform his duty. He was gasping for breath.... In his mind of minds he begged forgiveness from the blotted personality moving slowly and steadily towards the hang-post. Dhananjay consoled Nata that he had nothing to do with it. Because he was simply performing his duty. Every perfect work is sanctimonious that earns one's bread and butter. Still, for reason unknown, Nata felt his heart throbbing against his ribs in some secret corners. The man expert at operating on unsocial cancer germs that deteriorates a living body, now, observed that these deadly germs, in some unknown corner of this uncommon accused, were frantically trying to commit suicide; and tentacles of budding life force began to sprout in the deepest self of the infinite soul....! Nata wondered at the renewed creative power reflected in the stony eyes of this old criminal....! Inspired by the authority concerned.... with accumulated strength of courage..., he was trying to get rid of his confusion....! As if gravity of repentance lay heavier on the low pressured crime of extermination. Like wise, Nata too became

the heng-post. But tension at heart increased the pressure of his blood. The closed doors to the chamber of tear opened automatically.

Nata cried over the hanging dead-body.

A sea-change came upon Nata at the eleventh hour of his life as an executioner. There was an echo on his ear drums from the forest full of so-called civilized metropolitans : Nata, you have to take right steps during the remaining period of your life....! You have to struggle hard in this metro.... to ensure justice. There are several masked rapist and murderers in dignified posts... They have in their hand the golden rod of power. Even today, the evil minds in the guise of gentle saviour (political) party with their high sounding false promises and slogans confuse the common and ordinary people... Now-a-days, Democracy treads on a wrong path. Only the crimes of the poor innocent subjects are punished seriously.... Let it be so....! And this is a proven truth. But, side by side, the word "Excuse" be equally honoured. In a sovereign state, pardon or punishment, both should be equally applicable to all the criminals. But, very often, criminals belonging to rich and affluent section of the society and surrounded by muscle-men and *goondas* and the corrupt class or belonging to creamy layer of the society escape unscathed from the hands of law and justice.

As such Nata has become a common but rare personality. Now, perhaps, he has been able to enlighten a renewed ray of hope in the minds of the common and ordinary people. Nata is, now, a symbol of social reform. He has torches a fresh movement to uproot evils from the dusty arena of politics. People have dreamt of Nata as an inaugurator of a crimeless society. Perhaps, this special and unique hang-man has been able to gauge and study this last wish reflected in the deep looks of Dhananjay minutes before his execution. □

The Oriya short-story entitled 'Dhananjayara Shesha Ichha' is translated

POETRY

STORY OF AN UNKNOWN INDIAN

* Shashi Bhusan Nayak

Helpless Confusion!
Redemption beyond
Atonement! But.....
Cookies are crumbling
Solitary hamburger is missing
In order to ruin
what he was given
Measuring his life in big pills
with some mortal confusion
A Heart consumed with
helplessness,
Hunting reminiscences of past,
Corresponding emotions,
Missing scheme of big things,
The extension of space
between a drunken father
and a feckless mother,
And a Blind date
With a free spirited ladylove
With some Installment of love
And Incentive in relationships,
Emotional hijacking,
Glorious gambles and
Used emotions
to a revolutionary road
From rag to riches
to a no man's land
From troubled waters
to green miles of hope
From men of god
to those who kill
in the name of god,
From black comedy

to Political gymnastics
From Drama of suffering
to Multiple dilemmas
From events that defy
any explanation
to Celebration of beauty
And from Slumdog
to Millionaire??? □

* teaches English at CV Raman
Engineering College, BBSR, Orissa

AGONY

* Dr. Gangalaxmi Patnaik

An around it's dark now
For the Professor has been
felled
By invisible, unknowable saws
of silence.

The Professor that sheltered
The chitter of tiny scholars
Depraved and hungry.
We clatter and totter
in the dark
To whose inspiring
and warm roots
Shall we clutch and cling?
Where we listen
the poetic vision
Of silencing the words,
Oh! This Bloody Game
Prayers to Lord Jagannatha,
Krishna.
Life lines, On touching you
The House of Rains,

Tiger and Other Poems
Are mellowing your memory.
You are now turned into
a flower
Whose fragrance would enliven
us

Enkindle us, ennoble us. □
*written on the death of Dr. Niranjan
Mohanty, Prof. at Viswa-Bharati, who
passed away 28th July 2008.*

WISH

* Dr. Asim Ranjan Parhi

Years roll by as minutes
In a semi transparent face
Days never moved....
Once stumbled and panicked
A moment later
Everything rush towards
A quasi-finality
Of self destructive passion.
They make mockery
Of this transitoriness
But life satisfies in fractions
Such bits of love
with echo of death
Of melancholy, of day long
pain
And nights of sighs.
Standing outside
days and nights
Moonbeams and sunrays
One seeks
the wearisome answer
Pangs for yesterday's looks
Of time past and time present

Inspired by timid footsteps
Silenced by watery eyes
And Weighty smiles.
Inhibitions, taboos,
moral systems
Furthered by ancient chains of...
Yes, this cannon of life;
You cannot step out
You cannot get beyond
You cannot move along.
Still a life awaits
Full of the mystified
empty space
Vacated by you and what next-
Years roll by like minutes. □

* teaches English at Itanagar Central
University, Arunachal Pradesh

MOHAN BANSHI

* Bipin Patsani

Truth and honesty, embodied
in the most compassionate form
of non-violence and presented
in simplicity, became Gandhi
to bring down
the *Bhagirathi* of freedom.
No, it was not so simple as that.
When English grew
in the Indian soil
and the revolutionary elite, di-
vided,
looked confused in their con-
cern,
Gandhi was back home, global;
yet, more Indian than all others,
and people accepted him
at the core

half clad, half naked
and talking to them
of the essence of living
a life of honour with humility,
while fighting peacefully
for the basic needs
one inherits from nature
and nativity.
And this, the people swal-
lowed
like holy water from the bowl,
and as in the Pied Piper's
spell,
they stepped on to the streets
responding to the conch nad
of his call,
this time to drive away
the suppressive Sahib Raj
from the soil.
Like Buddha he behaved.
He bled like Christ,
forgiving still the unfeeling bul-
let
that struck his chest.
The August Sun
that had dawned at midnight
mourned the total eclipse
that January end,
and the broken banshi,
hung heavy in the air,
whispered to the empty morn-
ing,
"Is war, Allah tero nam,
subko sanmati
de Bhagaban". □

MOD POETRY

* Dr. R.R. Menon

Never be structured, wander
with words, uneven lines,
and wonder
later what it was all about.
Meanings meander with wings
broken, the jerk-move brings
the demise of common sense.
Stamps like Haiku cover up
the babble, the metric haze
charms on the surface.
Unable to think, the speech
draws a lowly bullock-cart
and hails it as mod-art...
Render poetry into prose
and holler, here is a rose
in a dissident pose.
Fancy heated runs riot
subsisting on a skewed diet
of sensations sans sense.
Mod pundits then proclaim:
the rhythmic resonance
of rhyme
intrudes on the thinking time.
As if unfathomable seas
of meanings in the lines tease
the readers to bent knees.
Pretenders always herald
what ponderous Gurus behold
as epitomes in pure gold,
and consider them as over-
sold.
But the truth alas!
remains untold.
Commoners writing poems
relish the freedom from norms
and rake up tea-cup storms.

Good poems can respect
forms
as much as
the bad one conforms

to amoebae-shaped gnomes.
□

** A retired I.A.S. now living in Bangalore, India.*

A DOODLE ON OUR WALK-WAY

** Dr. V.V.B. Rama Rao*

Our walk-way is symbolic -
a ten minute circle
The wan sign suggests -
'walk clockwise'
Walkers "ghoom" anti-clock-
wise
Perhaps some find pleasure
in violation if only for a change
Men, women, young and old,
from behind and ahead
and abreast
Many in senile single file
Pitiful it is to see flesh-hills
slowly dragging themselves
Limping, languid, or, even ag-
gressively brisk
Well-shaven super superann-
uated govt. servants
Dreamy, leering lechers, non-
chalant lasses,
Sung as buxom, blithe
and debonair
Aged dames and double-
chinned sagging spectacles

When a not-yet-yoked damsel
brushes past rustling
With heavy breasts having up
and down in showy cadence
An art-loving stingily careful
bachelor drinks in the sight ap-
proaching
The dog on the grass with
a hanging tongue dribbles
Looks at the passing scene ab-
sent-mindedly, wagging its tail
The jostling, milling crowds has-
ten to finish the chore
Appear to be running, hoping
to live a little longer, if possible.
□

THE RIPPLES OF SHADOW

** Abani Pradhan*

It is the shadow of time
that I see
on my return,
from defeat or victory
I know not
for what my mind pulls my feet,
to retreat.
The shadows of the past
go past my hand's reach
and still I yearn for it
whether to be or not.
I know not
to what tune my heart plays,
tells me stories
of kings,

and lets me go asleep.
As solitude never sleeps
this shadow is.
Lone
a traveller I am
dettached from the caravan
loaded with trunks of grief
dragging my feet,
pulling my whole lean
forward and forward.
My shadow does follow
in search of existence
as a devotee blind
in me to find its identity,
loses all potency.
At times
across the innocent limitless
blue
falls the shadow of a dianoc-
eros.
Strange to itself
my shadow speaks nothing.
Dreams after dreams
It dreams and forgets every-
thing.
Shadow spreads as fluid
on the head of the light
being scared of the air
around.
Beneath the shadow
of thy eye-lids
my innocent love shelters
and its nature comes into play.
Be there from where
you approach into the horizon,
and poor me
out of shame can say nothing.

and I jump over the walls
of my conscious existence,
Joy and woe,
regret or love,
and its echo,
what I have made my own
are but me,
my desperate shadow.
No harm can do
this naked wind of April.
Only it can blow off
the shroud, the question pa-
per,
answers, the hairs,
the scared moments of anxiety
the thickness of the dark,
the pledge and prayers,
yearings,
the echo of the suppressed
tears
And the heart
the sigh trapped inside.
But some thing will budldge
wanting in shape
or be hardened "Salagram",
innocent infancy
or adolescent gone astray,
and yet as a sparrow
In my little home of pangs

I am patted and pecked at
by my shadow. □

BOOK REVIEW

A POET'S JOURNEY ON THE WINGS OF THE SEA-GULL

*Dr. Amiya Kumar Patra

In Review: *POEMS 2007* by Bruno Rombi; Rock Pebbles Publication, 2008;
Pages XVI + 130, Rs.100.

POEMS 2007, a collection of eighty-six – mostly short and a few long — poems by Bruno Rombi, in English translation, would certainly offer a refreshing sensation – in fact a whiff of Mediterranean Sea air — to readers largely nurtured in the English and American poetic tradition. Rombi (1931) is born and brought up in the Mediterranean island of Sardinia, Italy. Thus geography plays a vital role in the evolution of his poetic art. The diction, cadence, images, and above all the tone of most of the poems in the collection in question are shaped by the Mediterranean Sea, the vast line of horizon, the sun, and the flora and fauna of the poet's native island. Readers would find many such instances to corroborate the fact that but for his Mediterranean experience Rombi possibly could never have composed these poems. The opening poem definitively sets the mood and the tone of the rest of the poems of the present volume:

Sun-drops are today raining down the sea
shining like foolish starred sky,
A slow backwash puts out on the wide cliff
vertically on the reflected firmament.
And Head-land of Salt-mine is sleeping
Like a tired siren in the October's noon.

("Noon"-1)

Such unusual – but typically Mediterranean images would amaze the readers for their forceful appeal. Another instance:

Yellow water
moves, with green shimmer,
the shimmer of light.
At superimposed peaks
the hot golden air

stagnates
indifferent to the rustles
of the sea-gull which tears away,
with naked wings,
the edges of horizon.

("Water Games" -12)

Words and phrases like sea, sea-gull, infinite horizon, fiery horizon, gangrenous sea, sea wave, sea beach, sea weed, sea shell, white foam, reef, cliff, orchid, voyage, vessel, sail, keel, quay and anchor etc. abound in Rombi's poems to give them a distinct Mediterranean flavour.

Perhaps the presence of the sea and the alluring horizon is largely responsible for the leitmotif of voyage – both mundane and spiritual – in many of the poems of this collection. The voyage, readers would notice, is in search for the poet's roots, for childhood innocence, for beauty of nature, divine grace, meaning of love, life, and death. Let us consider these lines:

My soul unanchored from the quay
never again known
similar to a Mediterranean keel
furrows formerly-gone-over enigmas
new purposes looking for.
And she does not know how many
horizons does open the sea
in its mysterious silence.
In them for my soul,
daring fluttering moth,
unusual landing places
along circular routes.
For lifelong travel or
May be towards the mystery.

("My Soul in Malta" -11)

An isle, a beach,
And nearly a murmur, the sea,
revealing to me a day-break.
My childhood rises to a high rank
In the sun, on the sand, under the wind

And in games among the junipers.
Then a cry, may be a flight
a secret way:

An emerging dream.

And so many travel starts

Like an adventure

In search of my roots where the sea

In rivulets disperses along the coasts

Its humor and mine: our blood,

My lymph is deep in the water.

("Myself the Sea" – 21)

Rombi's voyage is endless and to be ever renewed. When he believes, exhausted, after every journey that "he had no lives left", a bright shadow appears and goads him on "to rise up again to what I had been" (107). In "Mariner" Rombi tells of his desire:

I dream of isles and atolls

of fire with gangrenous seas

and wider and wider

becomes the desire of a new shipwreck

after every sorrowful voyage. (18)

Here it is important to note that the Sea-Gull whom Rombi often treats as the spirit, beauty and grandeur of the sea, is also an agent and symbol of the eternal journey. While the Sea-Gull offer wings to the poet, at times it ensnares and chastises him as well.

Poems like "The Leaps of the Sun", "Between night and day", "A Square of Sand", and "The River" etc. testify that Rombi is not content with just the verbal exposition of things. He is rather, in the poems under review, in constant search for "The Meaning of Things" (65). He goes beyond the phenomenological to arrive at what Bergson calls the "*élan vital*". Hence his philosophical approach to things which may seem even trivial and inconsequential.

Notwithstanding his existential concern, philosophical speculation, and an extraordinary weakness for solitude and silence Rombi's poetry is not detached from everyday reality, political, economic or apocalyptic. "The Open Sky on Iraq" is a hair-raising description of the human tragedy, the frenzied dance of death in Iraq. "To Nivola – Singer of our Mediterranean Mother" is a tribute

the nobility of Nivola in the face of poverty, squalor, and color, class, and race discrimination. "Tsunami" records the recent devastation which took away the lives of millions of humans and animals along the coastal lines of the southern hemisphere. This is not all — the poem also questions the human action, the implications of civilization and progress.

POEMS 2007, along with its other merits, I must admit, has some memorable pieces which are quite remarkable for their craftsmanship. To name a few: "And now Behold We are Alone", "If the Sea", "Bitter Love", "My lover", "When the day offers you Life", "It Happens Sometimes", and "You will never Know..."

Apart from the obvious and inevitable shortcomings that poetry in translation suffers from, Prof. Oliver Friggieri has skillfully translated Rombi's poems from Italian in order to convey the spirit and the rhythm of the original (A complete Glossary of the Sardinian / Italian expressions retained is missed). Friggieri's introduction to the collection: "The poetic identity of Bruno Rombi" would no doubt be useful to foreign readers in appreciating the poems.

Except for a few harmless printing errors the book in question is neatly done and is worth collecting by poetry lovers.



* teaches English literature in Kuchinda College, Sambalpur University, Distt. Sambalpur, Orissa, India.

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