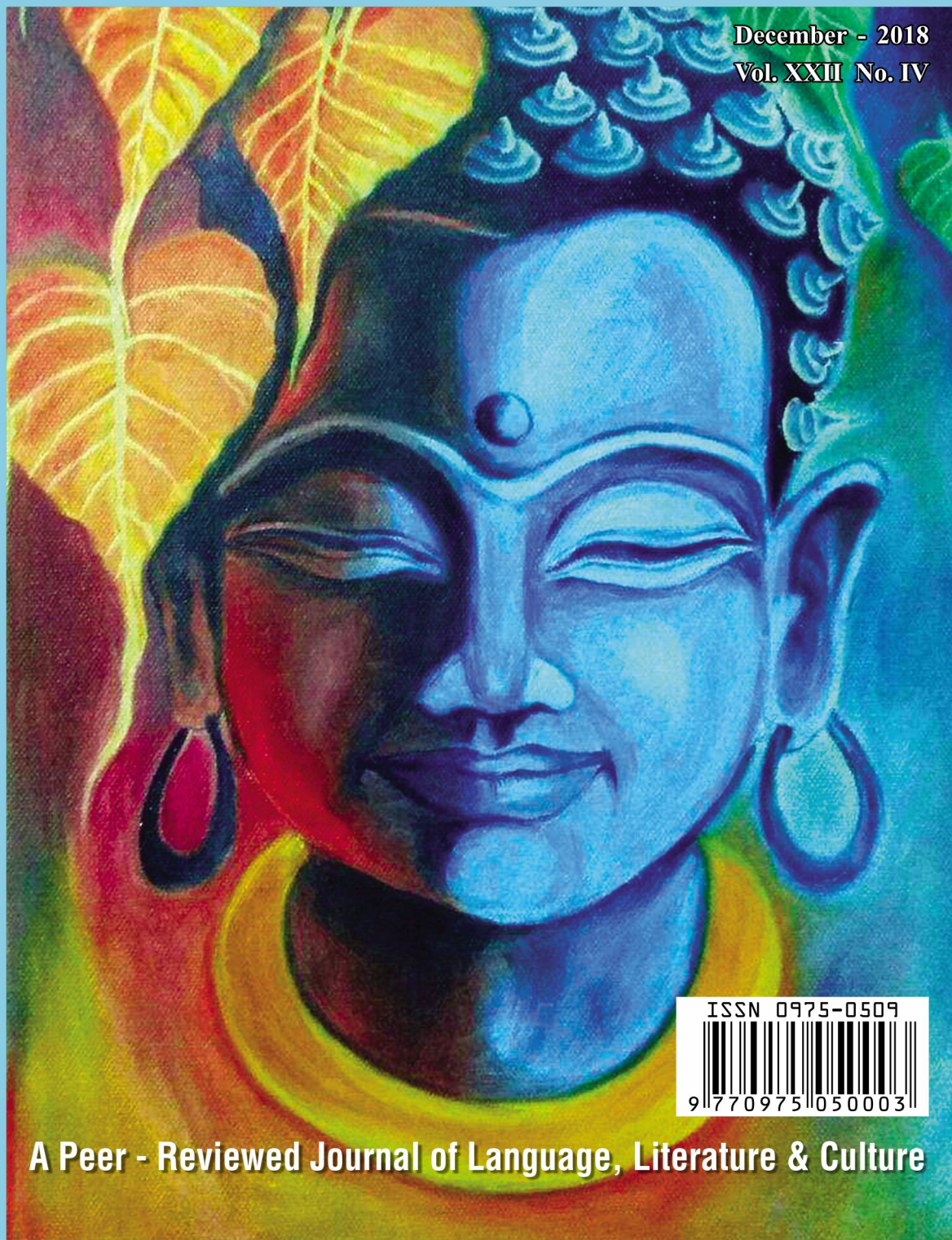


# ROCK PEBBLES



December - 2018

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# ROCK PEBBLES

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(UGC Approved Journal)

December 2018 Vol. XXII No. IV

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### Editor Speaks.....

Among the most frequently treated subjects in literature, life and death are two major themes and nearly all other subjects come under these two major subjects. These two major events of living beings are bracketed by two major events - birth and death. But in some cases death fails to put an end to the journey of the human beings. It is simply the end of the mortal body, the physical being. The achievements, particularly the creations by the creative beings make them live for some more days, until the creations are entirely wiped out from the longings of the readers.

Beginning its literary journey, ROCK PEBBLES comes to being from 1987 and winning the hearts of numerous readers across the globe it continues to be one of the leading literary journals of the country. It was included among the UGC approved journals with serial Nos. 3858 and 5016 in the category of Arts and Humanities and in the Subject Linguistics & Language on date 12.5.2017 in UGC website. Afterwards UGC modified the norms that Peer Reviewed Journals are at par with UGC approved Journals. (Source : The HINDU, dt. 12.09.2018). However, the ROCK PEBBLES management is in touch with UGC authorities to re include ROCK PEBBLES in UGC website. Moreover, the serial nos allotted to ROCK PEBBLES in UGC website, are not allotted to anyother journal till date.

The 32nd Annual day of ROCK PEBBLES will be celebrated on 7 April 2019. For the year 2019 Poet Dr Anwer Ghani of Iraq will be conferred ROCK PEBBLES International Literary Award, Poet Pankajam Kottarath of Chennai will be conferred ROCK PEBBLES National Literary Award and Odia Poet Biraja Bal of Jajpur (Odisha) will be conferred ROCK PEBBLES Regional Literary Award. Congratulating the Awardees, we sincerely request our readers and contributors to join us to make the occasion a grand culmination.

The dawn of the year 2019 has witnessed the sad demise of two illustrious luminaries of literature M. Q. Khan and P.N. Das. We express our deep sense of gratitude to the departed souls and pray for their works to continue to be popular to keep them alive among the literature lovers.

**Editor**

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## Modernism : A Divine Contemplation

**Basudeba Bharati**

Modernism is a much speculative term. It is intuitive in sense and incorporative in meaning. Primarily, it carries the literary sense of 'present or recent times'. The word 'modern' is derived from the Latin, 'modo' meaning 'just now'. Although the birth of the modern world is described as the outcome of the 'Renaissance' and 'Reformation' movement of sixteenth century, the 'modern' itself is an unstable entity-an onward motion and thought – with new scientific expansion and invention. To keep rapport and rhyme with the mechanistic culture of the nineteenth and twentieth century, the word, 'modern' is used to designate a movement in art, labelled as Modernism, which is later followed by Postmodernism.

Celebrating the triumphs and astounding wonders, and angers of modern science and art, Modernism is essentially viewed as a literary movement in the early years of twentieth century, particularly from 1910 to 1930, which is marked with distinctive and innovative features in themes, forms, and styles of art and literature. Thus, Modernism entails a period of creative innovation and novel experiment in English literature and also in music, and painting which gathers tempo in both European and American literature. It stirs

and stimulates the creative imagination of the modern literary stalwarts like James Joyce, T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis, D.H. Lawrence, W.B. Yeats, Virginia Woolf and Ford Madox Ford who bring new thoughts and extraordinary ideas, and wisdom to match and tally with the neurotic and nihilistic tendencies of our modern and bewildering urbanity.

Springing from a mood of rebellion and revitalization, Modernism is very much entwined with the spirit of iconoclasm which is a bold reaction against the preceding Victorian complacency and docile acceptance of authority. Moreover, the rebellious attitude, carrying its sway between 1900 and 1930, is an offshoot of the moral bankruptcy and degeneracy of the European culture which is quite unworthy and impotent to sustain the gravity and the new valency of the rising world of science and technology. Hence, the modern thinkers and artists run after new thoughts and cultural patterns to fit into the novel mind of the destabilised and disintegrated modern society. The spirit of interrogation, scepticism, enquiry and search, and all the more, the loss of belief in religion and morality increase our dependence on science and technology. Moreover, the expansion of market and the commodification of human

resources by capitalism, the growth and impact of mass culture, the invasion of bureaucracy into our private life and the changing beliefs about the relationships between sexes exert force and influence on art and literature which mark a radical break with the established norms and standards of writing. Hence, the literary artist is made to redefine the moods and modes of his artistic nuances which will resonate with the cataclysmic upheavals of the modernist shock and sensibility.

The experience of modernity and modernization is not obscure. It happens in the street, homes, the factories, in the political and economic sphere, on the battlefield and in the world order. Thus, Modernism and Modernity are interrelated. Modernity refers to the new technological surprise that evolves from the process of modernization and affects our social life and living. Modernity is not only a concept of 'newness' but also a belief in rationality and progress. It is inseparable from the economic and technological conditions of the society. It is always political and democratic. In order to comprehend the total meaning and sphere of Modernism, it is worth pausing here to discuss about modernity as it is interwoven with modernist culture and life-pattern.

Modernity is akin to culture, because culture is always striated by the past and the future. Hence, modernity is as much a question of cultural understanding as of technological evolution. As a question of progress, it is associated with the discourse of 'labour saving device' which makes a man lose his individuality and the purpose of his life. Thus, modernity is a movement from

the sublime to the ridiculous. It is defined by *The Oxford English Dictionary* as the 'quality or condition of being modern; modernness of character'. George Hakewill in his book, *An Apologie or Declaration of the Power and providence of God in the Government of the World* (1630) reads 'modern' as: 'yea but I vilifie the present times, you say, whiles I expect a more flourishing state to succeed; bee it so, yet this is not to vilifie modernity, as you pretend'. (David Punter6)

Hakewill observes that modernity does not vilify the condition of the present and needs not to be rejected on this ground. He alters the thought-wave prevalent in seventeenth century and asserts that modernity is not considered as a single state. Rather, it is envisioned as a process, *a trajectory*. The moment of modernity is not simply the present, the- here-and-now. It is deeply entangled with the 'succession' of states. So, modernity is both a temporary and transitional term. It asserts both the *onset* of a condition of things and at the same time the *passing away* of other things. Paradoxically, modernity is kind of nostalgia which is a moment of regret for that which is superseded within the advent of the new. Although modernity gives us access to new forms of knowledge, new amenities and lifestyles, it curtails the certainty of our life and an uncertainty always looms large behind our backs.

The 'modern' is opposed to what is 'older than it' and also to the 'classical' and as such 'modernity' is different from the past and even it is not merely the same as 'the present'. Hence, it is always different from 'what is'. It is not static, but a dynamic



process through which the present also passes away under the tides of the new. Hence, 'it is different from itself.'

We can not identity what is 'modern' in an age, because the modern is always resistant to canonisation and codification of a standard of state. Although, initially the 'modern' is merely the same as the 'contemporary', it at the same time maintains certain distance from canonisation for a period of time. The modern always sprouts as a plethora of projects and programmes keeping pace with the rising technology and rapid commercialization of the 'culture markets'.

A term of complex character, modernity has a secret rapport with the 'foreign' and it grows differently at different places. The 'imports' of foreign artefacts, be it of a civilized culture or of a primitive culture, affect 'modernity' to a great extent. Thus, modernity stands in opposition to the *heimlich*, that with which we feel 'at home'. So modernity welcomes us as a new challenge and reminds us of the other and thereby decentres and destabilises our day to day domestic assumptions and presumptions.

Life is not a rootless creeper and a disoriented debate. Although the 'modern' feeds on new aura and order, and discards, the 'ancient', the 'archaic' and the 'classical', it can not avoid its collision with the past. And out of this encounter with the past, it absorbs, assimilates and recasts the fragments and remnants of the traditional which throw the modern mind into doubt and dilemma and to a nostalgic desperation for the shards and the broken images of the past glory and faith. Hence, T.S. Eliot

laments over the spiritual sterility of the modern man on the 'arid plain' of *The Wasted Land* :

Son of man,  
You can not say, or guess, for you  
know only  
A heap of broken images, where the  
sun beats,  
And the dead tree gives no shelter,  
the cricket no relief,  
And the dry stone no sound of water.  
(*The Waste Land* 61)

The traditional images, such as 'sun', 'tree', 'stone' and 'water' used in the above poetic lines no longer give life and relief to the modern man living in the ruinous landscape of the modern industrial world. The complex emotionality, inherent in the above emblematic expression gives the vision of a degenerated and dehumanized society which is the new Eden of modern science and technology.

The dimension and literary direction, ingrained in Modernism is wide and divergent. According to George Steiner, "it was an art of the 'extra-territorial', the art of an age of modern relativism and of a time when all frontiers were in vital and often dangerous flux" (Malcolm Bradbury and James Mc Farlane 13).

Thus, Modernism is an artistic display of an age of growing cultural relativism and improving communication. It is the only art which is inevitable and appropriate to our stylistic heterodoxies and pluralistic world views. It is an art imbued with new sensation and outrage. It represents an era of artistic migration and internationalism. It is multi – cultural and

multi-dimensional, and communal in style. It is not the literal imitation or representation of nature and reality. Neither it is the romantic exuberance of emotion nor it is the refined sensibility of eighteenth century neo-classicism, but it is the 'tradition of the new' as Harold Rosenburg calls it. It is experimental, formally complex and elliptical. It contains the waves of shock and surprise, the elements of creation as well as de-creation, and the quality of abstraction and highly conscious artifice. An art of artistic liberation, it frees the artists from the notions of realism, materialism and traditional genre and form. The elements of disintegration and devastation, cultural apocalypse and disaster, and the sense of disorientation and nightmare form the matrix of modernist writings and revelations.

Modernism is uniquely labelled as an *avant-garde* art. The term, *avant-garde* is a French military metaphor which means "advance-guard". Thus, *avant-garde* is a group of self conscious artists and authors who deliberately foster the notion, what Ezra Pound calls, to "make it new". Deviating from the accepted norms of art and social discourse, the *avant-garde* artists introduce the forbidden and neglected subject matter in new artistic forms and styles and thereby shock the sensibilities of the conventional reader by challenging the norms and pieties of bourgeois culture. A bohemian life-style, Modernism is a drive towards sophistication and mannerism, towards introversion, technical display and internal self-scepticism. It is anti-representationalism in painting, atonalism in music, *vers libre* in poetry and *stream of consciousness* narrative in the novel. It is an inward excursion to

the meaningful subjective domain of the human subconscious along the conscious terrains of complex and dissonant realities of a trouble - torn industrial society. To elevate the context, the Spanish philosopher, Ortega Y Gasset rightly observes that the aesthetic refinement in modernism involves a dehumanization of art, the "progressive elimination of the human, all too human, elements predominant in romantic and naturalistic production"(Bradbury.....26).

A radical remaking of form, Modernism is not only a new craze and mannerism in the arts, but a chaotic disaster for them. It is sort of cultural crisis where bleakness, darkness, alienation, doubt and disintegration reign supreme. Imbued with a sense of moral degeneration and spiritual destitution, it is an art of our private and existential agony. It is also an awareness of contingency as a disaster in the world of time, which W.B. Yeats explicates:

"The falcon can not hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre can not hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world" ("The Second Coming" 170).

Although Modernism delights us as a playful art, it does not grant us spiritual certainty, but creates a chasm between man and God. A descent fraud and a form of self-hate, Modernism as an art, celebrates the anarchic condition and the moral decomposition of the modern civilization after the terrible turmoil of the first World War(1914-1918). T.S. Eliot, the sensitive antenna and the conscious barometer of the modern literary climate and taste, very

sincerely paints the desiccating human faith and the spiritual vacuum of war-torn civilization in his monumental modernist innovation, *The Wasteland* (1922). The other pioneering works of modernist trend are James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room* and many other experimental works of literature. While reviewing Joyce's *Ulysses* in 1923, Eliot highlights the inadequacy of the inherited and traditional modes of literary order to accord with 'the immense panorama of futility and anarchy' which characterizes the harsh and dissonant realities of the postwar world. To represent the nadir of human brutality and soulless remorse of our conscious world of pride and power, the modernist masters carve out new literary genres and styles to give voice and vision to the unconscious human feelings which emit the spark of divine certainties to reconcile with the discontent and disharmony of a technologized culture of the sick-hurries and divided aims of a bedevilled mankind. Hence, the modernist art is a sort of automatic writing which is free from the control of the conscious and purposive mind. In other words, it is allied with the *stream-of-consciousness* technique in the novel which undertakes to reproduce the full spectrum and continuous flow of character's mental process, where sense perceptions mingle with conscious and half-conscious thoughts, memories, expectations, feelings and random associations. Thus, there is the violation of standard English syntax and sentence structure in the *stream-of-consciousness* narrative. Among other European and American writers who bear modernist spirit and stamp in their writings are the novelists like Marcel Proust, Thomas Mann, Andre Gide, Franz Kafka, Dorothy

Reichardson, and William Faulkner.

In the domain of music, the atonal music of modernist composition by musicians like Arnold Schoenberg and Igor Stravinsky inheres in the irregular rhythmic constructions and unconventional tonal structures which do not have any chordal relationships, but a freedom of association between sounds. Similarly, the poetic experiments of Guillaume Apollinaire, Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot August Stramm and Filippo Tommaso Marinetti with fragmented narratives without syntactic and logical connectives amply represent the discordant and disharmonious life of the modern man in a disjunctive and disintegrated industrial society. To substantiate and suffuse the context, the following utterances from Eliot's seminal work, *The Waste Land* are here worth quoting:

Unreal City

Under the brown fog of a winter noon  
Mr. Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant  
Unshaven, with a pocket full of  
curants

C.i.f .London: documents at  
sight,...(*The Waste Land* 68).

The broken rhythm of the above poetic lines symbolically paints the incoherent ugly scene of the modernist material culture which is profane with our perverse passion, greed and lust. Mr. Eugenides, the 'Smyrna merchant' symbolises the rootlessness of the modern man who is commercial and tainted with amoral pleasure in the sad modern wasteland.

Modernism is also an amalgam of novel ideas and notions which deviates and

digresses from the traditional norms of writing in the world of drama and painting. In the domain of tragedy, the new aesthetic philosophy of Nietzsche and Schopenhauer about the tragic affirmation and acceptance of the cruel struggle of life by the tragic protagonist and the ultimate surrender of the protagonist's "will to live" to the "Eternal will" remind us about the archetypal truth of the triumph of human spirit over body. Thus, modern drama is not Greek imitation of action. Rather, it is the drama of human life and blood. It is noteworthy to mention here that real Modernism in the sphere of drama begins with Henrik Ibsen and August Strindberg, the two Scandinavian dramatists, who instill and infuse the spiritual rhythm and psychological realism into drama and create a milestone in the world of modern drama. It is because of these two dramatists, Eugene O'Neill is hailed as the father of modern American drama who dramatizes the metaphysical angst - the private agony - the spiritual conflicts of modern man in the new society of industrial complexity.

Although our literary history is suffused with revolutions for bringing new taste and standard to literary art and culture, Modernism does not seem to be a literary revolution in totality. In this context, Herbert Read has rightly pointed out that it is not so much a revolution, implying a turning over or turning back. Rather, it is a sudden break-up. It is catastrophic and claustrophobic – a devolution and dissolution of art. In other perspective, Modernism is an art of geometric pattern - a cubist painting-which is a collage art pregnant with contradictory shapes and abstract concepts without coherence and

conventionality. Kirk Varnedoe, the American historian describes it as a 'utopian billboard for machine age urban life' (Christopher Butler-7).

In fact, the reduction of images and pictures to abstract geometrical complexes-cubes-in modernist painting by painters like Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque tells about liberal democracy in modernist art.

A new context and irony in art and poetry, Modernism is a Great Divide between the art before and art now. It is a modern betrayal of the traditional and the artistic past. It is informative rather than illuminative. It is an art of dislocation and devaluation of human values and culture. Contemplating over the divisive dimension and the isolating idiosyncrasies of modernist literary tide and temper, the late C.S. Lewis has aptly remarked:

I do not think any previous age produced work which was, in its own times, as shatteringly and bewilderingly new as that of the Cubists, the Dadaists, the Surrealists, and Picasso has been in ours. And I am quite sure this is true..... of poetry..... I do not see how anyone can doubt that modern poetry is not only a greater novelty than any other 'new poetry' but new in a new way, almost in a new dimension. (Bradbury and McFarlane 20)

A new discovery and dream in the domain of psychology, Modernism aims at adopting images and symbols which stir both our intellect and emotion in a moment and put us in the land of our mysterious unconscious where we explore new psychic



stances and strands to redeem the complex enigma and the bizarre notes of modern chaos and conflicts embedded in false self-images and sham values of the modern bourgeois society. Hence, Modernism is a study of the human psyche to search is out new spiritual heights for getting release and relief from our rootless existential pain and despair. In this context, the innovative psychic excavation of super –ego by the Austrian Psychologist, Sigmund Freud in his *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) and the unconscious theory of human mind by the Swiss literary psychologist, Carl Gustav Jung in his famous book, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (1930) are noteworthy which attach new myth and meaning to human subconscious where lies the secret wisdom of human soul . In this connection , we are reminded here of Eugene O’ Neill, the pioneer of modern American drama, whose intuitive psyche portrays human subconscious as the ‘Mother of all gods and heroes’.

Great literature and the wisdom of the mankind do not lie in the scientific world of the new treaties and peace pacts, but in the inner garden of human psyche which is the fountain of peace and meaning of life, and religion. To substantiate the point, Jung has aptly observed in his famous book, *Modern man in Search of a Soul* :

It is obvious enough that psychology, being the study of psychic processes, can be brought to bear upon the study of literature, for the human psyche is the womb of all the sciences and arts. We may expect psychological research, on the one hand, to explain the formation of a work of art, and

on other to reveal the factors that make a person artistically creative. (155)

The pristine world of human myth , meaning and mystery is hidden in the ‘collective unconscious’ where Jung discovers the primordial roots- - the archetypes -the common psychic structures of the humanity that bestow new images and thoughts on the creative artist. Every creative artist is a dual entity or a synthesis of contradictory aptitudes. Primarily, he is a human being with a personal life. As a creative artist, he is impersonal and a man of higher sensibility- “a collective man”- who carries and shapes the unconscious psychic life of the mankind for a higher and nobler end. Thus, art is an innate and impersonal drive and it is what Eliot calls an ‘escape from personality.’

The profound uncertainty and growing anxiety inherent in the crucial advances of science and the technology have made us pseudo- moderns without spiritual anchor and enlightenment. The true and staunch modern is the old fashioned and the divine tongued primitive who never swells with material ego and never says, “I think”. Rather, he believes that “something thinks in him” which is the real focus of our religion and the secret way for human salvation from our gross worldliness. Thus, Carl Gustav Jung observes that religion serves a ‘vital link’ with our unconscious psychic forces that bring us ‘protection and salvation’. To quote Jung again, “we can never legitimately cut loose from our archetypal foundations unless we are prepared to pay the price of a neurosis, any more than we can rid ourselves of our body

and its organs without committing suicide.”

(Richard Ellmann and Charles Feidelson,  
Jr. 647)

In fact, the modern world of our material security and futile sensuality will never give us any metaphysical solace and serenity to breathe freely, and lead a congenial life of peace and spirituality in an industrial society of stormy progress and pace.

Although Modernism, in common parlance, imbibes a consciousness of the present, it is not really a sense of the present. Rather, it is a historical continuity - a time before and after- the present. Hence, Modernism is not only a rendering of the present, but also a conscious awareness of the past and future. “Today” is not an independent and separate identity, devoid of the tenets of the “yesterday” and “tomorrow”. Hence, Modernism is a timeless stream - a ‘mythical process’-a ‘coherent whole’. It is a continuous perception and an unbroken link between past and future. It is not the mere cultivation of immediacy, but a total awareness of the timeless moment where there is the intersection of time and eternity. To illuminate the context, Eliot foresees the vision of ‘Infinite’ in the finite moment:

Time present and time past  
Are both perhaps present in time  
future  
And time future contained in time  
past.  
If all time is eternally present  
All time is unredeemable. (*Four  
Quartets* 171)

The above Philosophic lines espouse the concept of the time and the timeless. The world is conceived as a timeless present where human beings can attain the ‘still point’ of life. Man is a timed-being with possibilities of divine realization. His birth and his consequent sojourn in the world are subject to the conditions of time. His whole life is to be viewed as a series of intersections between the conditions of time and realization of Eternity. Our God –gifted life in the world is the only opportunity, left to us to make our life fruitful, meaningful and hallowed by noble deeds. Our unstable and uncertain life in the world is only a river flowing to the sea of Eternity. Thus, the course of our life is likened to the course of a river, moved by the pressure of our fate and constrained within the levees of character. Hence, Eliot contemplates:

“I do not know much about gods;  
but I think that the river

Is a strong brown god \_\_ sullen,  
untamed and intractable, ...” (*Four Quartets*  
184).

The end of our all thinking and doing points to one end, i.e. to recognize and realize the ‘self’ within us. The river of God which is within us has no beginning or end. The sick complexities of our troubled time of ‘the coupling of man and woman and that of beasts’ can only be redeemed in the final unity with God. Our ‘time past’ and ‘time future’ point only to one end-the present-which is the meeting and atoning point of man with God.

Eliot’s conscious speculation over time can be related to Albert Einstein’s ‘space-time continuum’. Einstein observes

that space has got three dimensions. The time- dimension is added to the space- time continuum. Thus, all objects and events are four dimensional. Every event or object has got position and momentum in the universe. The position refers to the three dimensions of length, breadth and height of space and the momentum refers to time which is the fourth dimension. The space- time theory of Einstein relates time to motion or occurrence of events. Thus, time dimension gives location to all events and objects in the universe through world-points which are otherwise known as world-lines. It means that every event or object has got a location on some set of world-lines. The time dimension incorporates both past and future. According to Hermann Minkowski, all events are determinately present in the ‘space–time continuum’. Thus, in the four –dimensional ‘space- time continuum’, every event is fixed. Our future as well as the past is predetermined. Hence, Modernism, as a concept of time, is not aimed at newness. Nothing is new under the sun. There is an unseen power behind the flux of phenomena. We are finite beings. Time is a divine flow and we are spotted moments in the timeless thread of Time. To control and calculate time is beyond our human capacity. We are mortal beings and petty puppets in the hands of all devouring time and powerless to measure and master time, and add newness and novelty to it. To elevate the context, we are reminded here of the sacred lines of The Supreme Lord in The Bhagavad-Gita:

“prahladas casmi daityanam  
kalah kalayatam aham

.....  
.....

aham eva’ ksayah kalo  
dhata’ ha visvatomukhah”(Chapter -  
10. 30-33).

The above Sanskrit text may be explained as follows:

The Supreme Lord Krishna sermonises that He is Prahlada among the demons and Time among the reckoners. He is the letter ‘A’ among the alphabets and the Dual (Dvandva) among the compound words. He is the imperishable Time and the Sustainer facing in all directions.

Time can be conquered through time. We have come from Time for a test of time to merge with Time. It means that to rise above the enticing snares of the material world of time and tide, we have to row the boat of our life in the stormy sea of our worldly existence with divine musings to remain unscarred and unattached to the mundane thoughts just as a lotus leaf remains untouched by water in the muddy pond.

The materialist reasoning of a scientific age and the chaotic complexities of the muddled world of ego and anger do not bring any solution for modern man to achieve the point of union in and outside time, and between him and God. The real and the meditative mode of Modernism is associated with an ascetic sense of consciousness and it asserts an inward transformation that defeats and transcends a life of ‘desire and attachment’ to the things of the world. T.S. Eliot, the spiritual diagnoser of modernist condition has aptly chanted the holy hymn for modern man to rehearse and cross the ‘twittering world’ of material gaiety and grandeur in his epochal poem, *Four Quartets*:

And do not think of the fruit of  
 action.  
 Fare forward.  
 'O voyagers, O Seamen,  
 You who come to port, and you  
 whose bodies  
 Will suffer the trial and judgement of  
 the sea,  
 Or whatever event, this is your real  
 destination'.  
 So Krishna, as when he admonished  
 Arjuna  
 On the field of battle.  
 Not farewell ,  
 But fare forward, voyagers. ( *Four  
 quartets 188* )

A visionary priest of spiritual insight, T.S. Eliot synthesises the religious wisdom of both Hinduism and Christianity and spins a sense of detachment from the material world of mazy mire in his poetic embroidery. He is conscious of the 'time of death' which is 'every moment'. Since, death is the last part of the game of our life, we should mend and mould our life in a saintly manner for the time of departure which will enlighten and illuminate us to enter into the spiritual plane of the Eden of peace and bliss. It means that we must "fare forward" without being entangled in the net of mundane distractions. We are voyagers in the sea of life and we are to reach the shore of Eternity. What Eliot means to say is that the worldly desires should not constitute an inescapable matrix to pull us back from our upward journey. Eliot opines that we must "Descend lower" into a "world of perpetual solitude" which is 'World' not 'world' but "Internal darkness" where there is 'deprivation' and 'destitution' of all property, and 'desiccation of the world of

sense'. In this context, it may be argued that the suffix, 'Ism' for the true 'modern' is not meant for a restless wrestle for new frontiers of intellect, trade, technique and new life-styles of killing speed and beauty. Rather, it is meant for divine ascendancy. It presupposes a search for the prelogical, the primitive, the prelapsarian and the intuitive in man. It warrants a flight from our material pride towards humility, which is the final wisdom. It is confessional in tone, liberating in temper and mythical in order. It is what Frank Kermode calls the opportunity – to "short circuit the intellect and liberate the imagination, which the scientism of the modern world suppresses"(Bradbury.....82).

Thus, the modernist essence emanates from the irrational and the subjective source of the unconscious mind. It is not the progressive world of scientific inquiry. It is imaginative, allusive and a traditional way of rooting our disjointed life in the soil. The modernist anxiety leads us to a road of mystic search not for the alluring sight, but for the harmonious rhythm of our immortal soul. The harmonious music of our inner 'Being' can be related to Eliot's "auditory imagination": "The feeling for syllable and rhythm, penetrating far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling, invigorating every word; sinking to the most primitive and forgotten, returning to the origin and bringing something back, seeking the beginning and the end". (John Xiros Cooper 101).

The modernist analysis of 'auditory imagination' bores deep into the unconscious state of our mind and touches the primordial root of our psyche. Thus, the



true pursuit in Modernism is to hit at the primitive mentality of the modern man. Eliot rightly observes that the pre-logical trait also persists in civilized man, but it can be activated and stirred up by the poet only.

The silent wisdom inherent in Modernism is meant for reconciling the world of human desire with the kingdom of Divine love. The twilight of Modernism dilutes the differences of both the contraries of life and becomes the meeting ground of both life and death, and emerges as a harmonious whole. Hence, Modernism is allied with the Freudian concept of 'ambivalence' where the opposite ideas of love and hate merge into a single whole. The Jungian theory of *enantiodromia* – 'the turning of each thing into its opposite' - adds new dimension to the meaning of Modernism. In this context, the Aristotelian Philosophy is worth quoting here which says that the highest harmony springs from opposites. In fact, life is a queer compendium of binary opposites and warring emotions.

The new and amazing mode of Modernism preserves the validity of a rational and mechanistic stance which coincides with Hegelian synthesis of a higher unity that nourishes the essence of two conflicting elements and simultaneously destroys them as separate identities. To cope with an era of modernistic vows and visions, we are to befriend both the 'yes' and 'no' of life which constitute the pious path to ultimate wisdom and understanding in Hegelian philosophy. The modernist mind is not satisfied only with the Hegelian notion of 'both / and' inclusiveness. Rather, it shares with the Kierkegaardian concept of

'either / or'. Kierkegaard observes that the concept of 'either / or' should not be considered as disjunctive conjunctions. They emerge as one word in face of their structural plurality. They bring life's contraries into an intimate rapport with each other and at the same time maintain their contradictory validity. Hence, the Modernist mind becomes a sound resolution between Hegel and Kierkegaard and comes out as a consolidated formula of 'both/ and and / or either/ or'.

The metaphysical mood of Modernism is best revealed through the Tiresian vision encoded in T.S. Eliot's innovative modernist composition, *The Waste land*:

"I Tiresias, though blind, throbbing  
between two lives,  
Old man with wrinkled female  
breasts, can see  
At the violet hour ..... " (*The Waste Land* 68).

In *The Waste Land*, Tiresias is a unified symbol where the two sexes (male and female) meet and merge. The visionary blindness of Tiresias is beyond discrimination. To him, squalor and grandeur are indistinguishable. As a blind spectator, Tiresias sees at the violet hour when the day and night converge and lose their separate entity. The steady and transcendental wisdom immanent in Tiresian modernist insight sees no distinctions between vice and virtue, good and bad, light and dark, and past and present because they enter and evaporate into a higher unity- a spiritual substratum- where all dualities disappear and dwindle in the divine Incarnation. To illuminate the

contextual view-points, we are here reminded of the sacred sermons of The Bhagavad-Gita:

“gatir bharta prabhuh saksi  
nivasah sarana suhrt  
prabhavah pralayah sthana  
nidhana bijam avyayam  
tapamy aham ahavarsa  
nigrhnamy utsrjami ca  
amrta cai’va mrtyusca sad  
asac ca’ ham arjuna”  
(chapter-9.18-19)

The above Sanskrit illustration may be explained as follows:

‘The Supreme Lord admonishes us that He is the goal, the supporter, the master, the witness, the abode, the refuge, the foundation, the substratum and the immutable seed of the universe. Again the Supreme Godhead sermonises that He gives heat, withholds as well as sends forth the rain, and He is immortality as well as death. He is Sat (Being) and Asat (Non-being) both. Thus, all the diverse qualities in human beings like pleasure and pain, fame and ill-fame, and fear and fearlessness arise from the Supreme Power alone. Hence, in the modernist divine vain, we should accept the gain and loss, and the victory and defeat of our material life indiscriminately to incur spiritual solace and grace.

The chaotic accounts of our modernist condition with its unethical and anti-historicist perspective render an unimaginable and unseeable phenomenon which necessitates a blind vision of divine perception to meet the stormy and terrifying terms of our new life of modernist dishevelment. To quench the modernist urge

of relating things, unrelated and to cope with the modern wrath of our life springing from the new concept of our space and time, we need a philosophy of contingency – a blind seeing of devotional stance-for our survival in the disintegrating and deluding world. In this context, I am reminded here of Elias Canetti’s novel, *The Blinding*. A professor of Oriental studies, the hero of this novel, fortuitously, discovers for himself the full visionary power of blindness as a cosmic principle to concentrate his attention, distracted from his books and research by the spectacle of the tawdry bedroom furniture, displayed by his wife in his library. With the power of blind vision, he selects his book ‘blind’ with eyes closed. Hence, the saving panacea and the healing trance in Modernism may be envisioned as a meditative contemplation-a spiritual invocation-for divine succour and certitude with eyes, blind-folded with tears of modernist angst and pain, streaming out of our desperate existence. Paradoxically, the kernel of modernist condition is a human submission-a prayer of ‘surrender’-before God with blind devotion for redemption from the despair and dilemmas of our fragmented and decentred human-condition in a mechanical society of material progress and techno-culture. ■

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Dr. Rajendra Padhi (our Editorial Board Member) receiving  
Universal Inspirational Poet Award - 2016 from the O/o the President of Ghana  
in World Friendship Poetry programme at Accra, Ghana, Africa

# Life's Ineluctable Problems and their Solutions: A Study of Select Vignettes of Gourahari Das

**Manoranjan Mishra**

Gourahari Das, a Central Sahitya Akademi and Odisha Sahitya Akademi award winning writer, is a novelist, short-story writer, screenplay writer, dramatist, columnist, journalist, editor, translator, travelogue writer par excellence. Six collections of Das's vignettes have been published so far, with the total number of pieces crossing five hundred, written over a period of more than thirty years. The researcher has taken into account six pieces of vignettes that were published between June 2017 and February 2018. All these pieces have something in common. They present some problem that the protagonists encounter in their lives. In the end, they come to a solution, evidently hinting at the fact that despite absurdities, trials and tribulations, life is to be lived.

**Key Words:** Romance, reprehension, craving, foresee, prevail, intimacy, compel, procure

Gourahari Das, born on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1960 in Sandhagada village, is an accomplished Odia writer. A winner of the Central Sahitya Akademi and Odisha Sahitya Akademi awards, Das has carved a niche as a novelist, short-story writer, screenplay writer, dramatist, columnist, journalist, editor, translator, travelogue writer—all blended into one.

Six collections of Das's vignettes have been published so far, with the total number of pieces crossing five hundred, written over a period of more than thirty years. The collections have been entitled *Jibanara Jalachhabi*, *Chinha Chouhadi*, *Bhinna Bhumika*, *Parichita Paridhi*, *Asamartha Iswara*, and *Hatalekha Chithi*. The researcher has undertaken the task of translating about a hundred pieces into English.

A vignette can be defined as a short graceful literary essay or sketch. What makes the essays spectacular is the fact that the characters are drawn from the very world that we inhabit. The incidents that they get involved in might have happened with any other individual on different occasions. The characters are not drawn from the unreal world or, the plot does not involve witchcraft or magic, as it happens in case of a 'Fantasy'. They do not deal with the exploits of ideal heroes and beauty queens and are not stories of chivalry and love as 'Romances' are. They are faithful and realistic portrayals of contemporary people and the situations they find themselves in, in their daily lives, no matter how sordid or unpleasant they might be. Das himself agrees, "Not a single incident delineated here is purely imaginary." He believes in what Mark



Twain, the famous novelist believes in, “Truth is stranger than fiction.” Das has seen “uncommonness among the commoners” and “absurdity among the normal”. Therefore, he has drawn his characters from the very world which we also inhabit. The characters’ “hope, faith, greed, dream or the shattering of it, despair, regrets, ill-wills etc. are not exotic but very much like what we possess. (Das, *Jibanara Jalachabi* xi)

The researcher has taken into account six pieces of vignettes that were published between June 2017 and February 2018. All these pieces have something in common. They present some problem that the protagonists encounter in their lives. In the end, they come to a solution, evidently hinting at the fact that despite absurdities, trials and tribulations, life is to be lived. Despair and despondence cannot bring an end to the problems but participation and hopeful action can.

Das’s **Change is Inevitable**, published on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2017, is about the courage displayed by a student Ayushi in thwarting the uncivil behaviour of a bus-conductor in a jam-packed bus. Sidharth Jena was the principal of a college where Ayushi read. Ayushi commuted from Cuttack to Bhubaneswar daily. Taking advantage of the jam-packed bus, the conductor started misbehaving with the girls by touching their sensitive organs. When things went beyond control, Ayushi slapped the middle-aged conductor. Soon the other passengers intervened and hurled the conductor out of the bus. As the Principal, Sidharth felt elated at the news and organized a reception ceremony as he thought it was “great to light a lamp in stead

of cursing the darkness a thousand times.” However, a great shock awaited Sidharth when Ayushi rang him up that night and informed him that her parents did not want to drag the matter any further apprehending reprehension of the society. Sidharth felt discomfited to think how life would go on if everyone became so cowardly. The next day, a similar news was published in the newspaper. This was about ill-behaviour shown to a girl by a police personnel at the holy town of Puri. The brave girl took the matter to the Director General of Police and got an enquiry ordered. However, she backed out later on the ground of social backlash. Her parents thought, “If our daughter is disreputed, it will be a great shame for the family. Those who praised her today would leave no stones unturned to defame her.” However, the story ends with a sense of hope that when “ten years ago a girl in Odisha could never raise a voice of protest against such incidents,” atleast “she has started protesting.” The day the girl turns a mother, there’ll be a sea-change in the situation.

**Address of God** was published on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2017. God has always been an enigma. People visit temples situated at different places of the world expecting to have a darshan of the lord, so that they can be absolved of their sins and consequently, lead a blissful life. During a trip to Jaisalmer, Sidharth had the opportunity of visiting three temples. The first temple was the “Karanimata Temple” of Bikaner, where the visitors had to wade through about two thousand black rats and a few white rats to visit the goddess. The legend says that Goddess Karanimata had convinced Yama to give ‘rebirth’ to her sons. Pilgrims visiting

the temple offered *bhog* to the rats to appease the goddess and wish their children and family long life. The second important place of pilgrimage was the “Bullet Temple” where a bullet was worshipped as god incarnate. The bullet belonged to one Om Singh Rathore, who met with an accident while taking a ride from Bangdi to Choutila. Om Singh died on the spot. Police seized the motorcycle and brought it to the police station but surprisingly, every time the bullet would be found missing at the police station but parked at the accident site. The unsolved mystery converted the bullet into “Bulletbaba”. The third place of pilgrimage was the Gautameswar Shiva Temple near Udaypur. The reason for visiting the temple, according to the guide Narpal, was to absolve oneself of the sins, committed knowingly or unknowingly. The temple also provided certificates proclaiming absolution of the sins. “After taking the sin-absolving bath paying ten rupees, one has to pay an additional one rupee to receive the certificate proclaiming absolution of sins.” Sidharth is reminded of what his school teacher had Rammohan sir had told once, “the inventor of the two main causes of man’s misfortune is man himself. The first one is religion and the second one is God.” He had further gone on to say that God exists in the mind of man because “fear exists in the mind of man. Had there been no fear in the mind of man, God would have bid goodbye to the earth long ago.” The two lines of a Sufi song that Sidharth hears after coming out of the temple teach him a lesson. The meaning of the lines goes on like this: “While searching for God, I found I had discovered myself, and while searching for myself I found God.”

Sidharth thinks when man realizes this, a craving for the darshan of the lord would come to a halt.

There have always been conflicts between blind beliefs and traditional thoughts on one hand and modern reformatory thoughts on the other in our country. Such beliefs might have ceased to exist but for televisions and newspapers, which try to fuel the fire by promoting items in their favour. “In most channels, one finds the cinestars or babas discussing horoscopes and promoting the sale of stone-rings, rudraksh and many more items” (**“Conflict”** 10<sup>th</sup> September 2017). The uneducated gullible people easily fall prey to the promises of good fortune that these items make. “Throughout the evening one can watch many serials and films dealing with ghosts and witches, incantations and charms, rebirths or human sacrifice.” The problem, in this story, arises as Sanatan’s mother takes him to task for performing the Ganesh Puja himself without inviting a brahmin priest to conduct it. He also conducted his father’s shraddh as per the Christian calendar instead of the lunar calendar. Sanatan had started Ganesh Puja at his home as his only daughter’s school was far off from his place of residence. The brahmin whom he invited to conduct the puja would never show up before one o’ clock. Besides, on being offered a more lucrative fee he would give him a miss also. In addition, Sanatan found himself in grave trouble when the time for immersion came. During the Ganesh Puja, which usually came during the rainy season, he would find ponds and canals full but during the Saraswati Puja, usually held during January, there would be a problem. Once, Sanatan had to

repent for a long time as he had to dispose off the idol into the dirty drain water. He was compelled to procure two stone idols of Lord Ganesh and Goddess Saraswati, to which also his mother firmly objected. Sanatan's mother wanted Sanatan to organize his father's shraddh as per the lunar calendar. She asked him to offer some food to crows and dogs, whom she believed to have direct connection with Yamaraj. She also asked him to invite learned brahmins for the puja saying "hurried, greedy or limbless brahmins" were of no use. The problem was where one would find brahmins who were not greedy? Sidharth believed that such blind beliefs would come to an end when man realized that he was the child of God. He advises Sanatan to meet his mother and inform her how he was facing trouble in arranging for what she demanded. "Every mother keeps a special place reserved in her heart for her child. Forget about outsiders, she doesn't even allow her husband to occupy that spot," says Sidharth. The moment she learnt that her son was getting plunged into serious trouble, she would stop making demands.

Das's **Mutation** was published on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2017. Sidharth's brother living at Rourkella, had been frequently demanding for necessary changes to be incorporated in the property papers that their father had bequeathed to them. He wanted to obtain a bank loan to complete the construction of his house, to get his ailing wife treated, and to get his daughter admitted in college. Sidharth found the visits to the tehsil office tedious as the "Unit four fish market was better organized" than that place. The heap of files on both sides of the

verandah created the delusion of a pre-historic cave. Besides, he was reminded of his deceased father from whom he had never thought of getting separated. Returning home after office that evening Sidharth found his son Sonu sitting on the ground and scribbling something with a pen. A close scrutiny revealed that Sonu had pulled out a few books from his almirah and was writing something on the first page of each one of them. Sonu had been erasing what his father had written, i.e. "Sidharth Das

Third Year Arts (Hons.), Ravenshaw College, and was found replacing it with "Sanat Das, Standard Three, DAV Public School, Unit Eight, Bhubaneswar." On being asked why he was doing that, the innocent Sonu answered, "Father himself had told me that these would belong to me after him. That's why I am striking out his name and writing my own. One day or the other, I have to make corrections; where is the harm if I do it today?" Sidharth finally comforts himself by saying that Sonu had given him an opportunity to foresee what was going to happen in twenty or thirty year's time. Life is a continuum. What we sow today will surely bear fruit and come back to us in future. Hence, we must be careful in following the right values in life.

Another vignette **Key to Happiness** was published on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2017. Sidharth's friend Nilalohit meets him one day with complaints against his wife Chaitali. Nilalohit rants against his wife, "It's not possible on my part to compromise any longer. I don't like the bickering and arguments every day. She is progressing rapidly with her career, but I'm not able to

concentrate because of the lack of peace.” Both Nilalohit and Chaitali were contemporaries. Chaitali worked as a lecturer. Both of them earned handsomely. They had got married after years of love. The problem between them had intensified over the last one year. Sidharth knew that Nilalohit had to be blamed for a major part of the problem. “A dominating person by nature, Nilalohit’s expectations were infinite. He craved to attain much within a short span of time. Of course, there was no dearth of hard work and sincere effort on his part. However, at times, the desired goal eluded them. Another problem with him was that he judged everything, keeping him at the centre- stage. He wished to be opposed by none; his appearance exuded a word of caution in this respect.” Sidharth knew Chaitali intimately as she was the daughter of his former colleague. He knew quite well that she gave importance to their relationship and therefore, didn’t hesitate to say ‘sorry’ without even having committed any mistakes. Sidharth tries to solve the problem by referring to what his holiness the Dalailama had said once. ‘Every human being who wishes peace to prevail in the world should love his family; adore his children; treat his wife or husband with abundance of love and affection; and treat his parents with respect. This is how peace will surely be established in this world,’ he had said. Problems in life occur due to lack of understanding. When one speaks constantly without giving an opportunity to others to speak, he repeats many things. But many problems can be solved automatically if one listens to others. When Nilalohit gets irritated on getting a phone call from his wife, Sidharth explains that he should

consider himself quite fortunate. The reason that he gives surprises Nilalohit. “I know hundreds of people who wait for a phone call from home but it doesn’t come at all.” The story ends with the resolution that man must look within to find out what ails his relationships instead of searching for the causes outside.

### **“The Unacquainted World”**

published on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2018 centers around our growing intimacy with gadgets on one hand and the growing distance in relationships. Rudramadhav’s daughter Archana had just returned from London. She had asked for TV sets to be switched off, mobile phones to be kept away once a week, and breakfast and dinner to be served together for the entire family. Rudramadhav had retired five years ago. After the demise of his wife, he lived with his two sons, two daughter-in-laws, and their children. His problem was that he was left alone, with no one to share his feelings with, as the family members were either busy with their laptops, mobiles, or TVs. They were always lost in their own worlds with no time for the old man. He was searched for only when required. Consequently, his daily chore was confined to switching off the lights before going to bed and checking whether the gates were locked. The problem in today’s world is that the modern gadgets, mobiles, laptops, tvs had been invented to serve man but they have started ruling over them. This has resulted in the growing alienation of man. Archana gave the example of the British Government which had decided to deal with the ninety lakh people who suffered from alienation and aloofness by opening a new department for them. Under the clutches of machines we have conveniently forgotten



the value of relationships. “Just as we need food to suppress hunger; just as we need water when we are thirsty or a doctor when we are sick, similarly we need someone’s company when we are alone. If a man does not get the opportunity to talk to someone for a long time, he would turn mad.” Sidharth found the intense desire of his friend to remain amidst his children and share his feelings with them. The frequent power cuts that evening irritated his children but made Rudramadhav happy as he could

spend some time with them. Thus, the vignette ends with the message that happiness would return only when man understood that relationships were more important than gadgets.

It is evident that each one of the vignettes discussed above presents some problem that modern man faces. The pieces end with solution to the problem as Das believes that problems would end some day and peace and happiness would usher in. ■

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# Redefining Education : From Heaven to Earth - Focusing on Religion with Particular Reference to Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* and Shashi Tharoor's *Why I am a Hindu*.

Gayatri Goswami

## ABSTRACT

If we define Education as outcome, accumulated knowledge, sagacity evolved out of the act of research to create a contrapuntal movement for the betterment of society thereby influencing the researcher in simulation, the fundamental impulse behind this paper is to construct such conduciveness. This paper is intended to include all-inclusive development of society through meaningful research taking particular consideration into religion. To highlight this point, here in this paper two diverse literary texts have been taken into account—one is Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* and the Other Is Shashi Tharoor's *Why I Am a Hindu*. Thomas Hardy is a 19<sup>th</sup> century British novelist and Shashi Tharoor is a contemporary Indian writer. Both the creators and their creations belong to different age, space and genre. So, the primary and basic concern of this study is that how religion is constructed through the narrative and how it recreates a profoundly influential role in shaping mass culture and opinion thereby transforming society for the benefit of all. Here, the term Heaven is designated to imply the theoretical perspective of religion as reflected in two diverse texts – diversity from the point of

view of time, space and genre as stated – and by Earth, its practical implications. Thus, the present study is an attempt to arrive at a critical understanding of religion and society in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* and Shashi Tharoor's *Why I Am a Hindu* from thematic point of view. It entails an engagement in a close study of both the texts examining how religion as an idea and reality is expressed in the narrative influencing society. Because religion as an idea represents moral views of the society and all-pervasive influence of religion in any society cannot be denied. So, an effort has been made here to study the aforesaid texts in this direction.

Key Words: Education, Religion, Society.

## Introduction:

In any society, religion always has all-pervasive influence; because, religion functions as a belief system imposing a sense of order in society. The influence exerted by religion on the minds of the people in a society is so imperious that it sometimes results in somewhat regressive way reversing the order alluding paradigm shift of the very fundamental impulse and intention of religion—it is often seen in practical context that religion begets

violence instead of peace and serenity. Keeping in view this reverse impact, with a view to exploring and understanding the true nature and basic tenets of the very concept of religion to fit into a larger developmental context of society, it is attempted here to study the idea and reality manifested in two different texts. Thus, through the re-reading of the nineteenth century British novel—Thomas Hardy’s *Jude The Obscure* and Indian non-fiction work of Shashi Tharoor –*Why I am a Hindu* emphasizing on the spatial and conceptual concerns reflected in these two diverse texts, an endeavourer has been made to bring out the concept of religion in the true sense of the term. But the argument of this paper is sometimes veered towards the polemic stressing on the praxes placing the whole issue on larger context of society.

### Discussion:

**Thomas Hardy’s** *Jude the Obscure*, a product of late Victorian Britain publishing in book form towards the end of 1895, focuses on the main character Jude Fawley’s hopes and aspirations to become a scholar. While his first dreams are of going to Christminster - ‘the heavenly Jerusalem’ (Hardy 60) to be a classical scholar, he eventually thinks of going there to pursue religious goals, because, “It’s a wonderful city for scholarship and religion” (Hardy 68). Thus, considering the novel from this particular concern positing religion as key feature of contemporaneity, the nature of religion can be perceived and this thrust opens up an unexplored angle of the novel making it more meaningful, because:

There has been a greater recognition in recent years that to

ignore religion is to misunderstand the Victorian era completely. The nineteenth century was the last period in British history when Christianity was suffused into almost all aspects of life. .... late Victorian Britain was a strongly religious nation. (Boyd 233)

Jude Fawley, the protagonist of the novel was initially influenced by the air of religiosity, one of the dominant aspects of ‘Victorian frame of mind’:

As another outcome of this change groove he visited on Sundays all the churches within a walk, and deciphered the Latin inscriptions on fifteenth century brasses and tombs. (Hardy76).

His consciousness is occupied by religion and decided to pursue the dream of becoming a Bishop some day:

And then he continued to dream, and thought he might become even a bishop by leading a pure, energetic, wise, Christian life. And what an example he would!... Well, on second thoughts, a bishop was absurd. He would the line at an archdeacon. Perhaps a man could be as good and as learned and as useful in the capacity of archdeacon as in that of bishop. Yet he thought of the bishop again. (Hardy 79).

But in course of the novel Jude confronts relentless disappointment as his dream and ambition of becoming a university-educated person and a bishop is totally shattered:

Strange that his aspiration—towards academical proficiency—had been

checked by a woman, and that his second aspiration—towards apostleship—had also been checked by a woman... it had been his standing desire to become a prophet, however humble, to his struggling fellow-creatures, without any thought of personal gain. (Hardy 279).

In the novel, we meet Jude, the poor village lad with his longing for an intellectual career, the crude village beauty Arabella, the neurotic, semi-educated girl of 'hyper-sensitive' instincts, Sue and the schoolmaster Phillotson—these four failures are inextricably tied together to drag one another down. Disappointments, depression, the process of attempting and failing—these are the all-pervasive features of all the four lives. As a result of their own aspiration and ambition which appear in their lives—only as a tantalizing force, they have to undergo the deepest of distress and frustration. But this paper basically addresses the protagonist's ambition of becoming a prophet finally turned to frustration and becomes a pathetic figure finally facing death. He yearns for a better social status and intellectual attainment but his forward looking urge in the social context is subsequently reversed. In fact the novel presents us an account of "the doomed existence of the protagonist" (Kramer 164).

His urge for the academic progress has been reversed when he grows into a young man and trapped by marriage with Arabella:

'...Of course I never dreamt six months ago, or even three, of marrying. It is a complete smashing

up of my plans—I mean my plans before knowing you, my dear. But what are they, after all! Dreams about books, and degrees and impossible fellowships and all that. Certainly we'll marry: we must!' (Hardy 101)

And from that point onwards his hope for education is thwarted seriously. After this, in such a crucial moment of life, he transforms his aspirations from the reason and knowledge of the schools to the faith of the church. In this phase of his development, this religious impulse pervades his hopes. He starts practising the rituals of the church in the expectation of finding a meaning for himself, but Sue always tells him that the church is not the way to the realization of his idealistic notions of intellectual life. At the beginning Sue is a sceptic who gradually influences him questioning the 'absurdities' of orthodox belief but she switches back to fundamentalism concluding that—"It is of no use fighting against God" (Hardy 443). Throughout the novel, Sue is always important for Jude as a symbol of his aspirations and ideals. For a while, Jude and Sue have a reasonably satisfactory relationship together, physical and intellectual. But its breakdown under the impact of the children's death thwarts Jude's ambition and when he loses her to Phillotson in this phase of life he is struck even more by the "scorn of Nature for man's finer emotions and her lack of interest in his aspirations" (Hardy 212). Sue finally withdraws from him both physically and intellectually and thus, Jude's progress is once again obstructed and he becomes lifeless and disillusioned.

The subsequent phase brings in a

transitional moment to Jude's life presenting the decay of the values of the past. Jude, studying theology and church rituals with a last weakening hope, is only vaguely aware of the decay and aridity around him. In part IV chapter—III Sue's confession of her misery as Phillotson's wife troubles Jude throughout the night. Next morning Sue leaves the village to go back to her husband's house. Before parting they impulsively embrace each other and behave passionately. Jude realizes the contradiction between his ambition of becoming a priest and his passion for Sue and in this critical moment he burns the books of theology. Here he is passionately in love with a married woman. He realizes that even after that to aspire to become a licentiate in the church would be sheer hypocrisy. Thus, he feels that he is unfit "to fill the part of a propounder of accredited dogma" and burns all his books on theology:

'At dusk that evening he went into the garden and dug a shallow hole, to which he brought out all the theological and ethical works that he possessed, and had stored here. He knew that, in this country of true believers, most of them were not saleable at a much higher price than wastepaper value, and preferred to get rid of them in his own way, even if he should sacrifice a little money to the sentiment of thus destroying them.' (Hardy 279)

Thus, his ambition of further development in the context of religious education is totally shattered in a universe full of adversity.

After Jude's disappointment

regarding religious education, the novel portrays Sue still as a free spirit who can no longer live with Phillotson and goes to Jude. In this phase of life, Jude is ready to project his desires for meaning entirely onto a union with her, physically and mentally. The next part of the novel presents Jude and Sue wandering from town to town; they are seen as husband and wife in all respects except the sexual, until Arabella's arrival. Progression from town to town signifies lack of stability and rootlessness and confusion in the lives of the characters. The vacillating state of mind of both Jude and Sue are seen in part fifth, Ch.-IV. Sue has serious doubts and misgivings about the very institution of marriage and therefore shrinks from confronting the reality of it. Jude too lacks proper strength and assertiveness to brush aside Sue's objections and to prevail upon her. Thus, in this last novel, in a comparatively modern kind of set up, Hardy creates an arguably pessimistic universe focusing on the main character Jude. The words of David Lodge in his article "*Jude the Obscure*: Pessimism and Fictional Form" express the pessimistic tone of the novel:

Jude the Obscure is, by general agreement, Thomas Hardy's bleakest, most pessimistic, most depressing novel. What I want to examine in the rest of this essay is the way the form of Jude works to articulate and reinforce the pessimism of its vision of life. (Kramer 195)

Thus, the novel traces the fortune of the protagonist from childhood to death and his progress throughout the novel shows frequent fluctuations between the binaries



of rise and fall, union and separation leading to premature death. Thus, the end of the novel presents the pathetic fate of Jude. Incurably deep melancholy takes such a grip on him that he dies in extreme pain. According to Frank Kermode the end is the “desire for consonance” and here the ‘consonance’ is achieved in the tragic death of Jude releasing him from grief and perpetual struggle (Kermode 17). Structurally, the novel embodies the shifting relationships between the two couples, trapped by incompatible partners at the end. The plot consists of two marriages, two divorces and two remarriages. These events happen with the frequent shifts of the character’s outlook while Jude’s changes from religious belief to scepticism, Sue’s changes from scepticism to religious belief. Arabella changes from worldliness to religiosity and back to worldliness, and so Phillotson changes from conventionality to unconventionality and back again to conventionality. Thus, the intricate pattern of shifting and vacillating outlook towards religion among the characters pervades the novel leading to the tragic end. As Thomas Hardy is a sensitive Victorian, so the whole issue of this religious outlook has resonance with Victorian reality as the perception of religion varies from temporal point of view:

...The religion of the first half of the century was predominantly ‘evangelical’. It assumed that man is inherently sinful, in need of redemption... the earth is a place of trial, in which god tempts us, tests us, and decides which of us will go to heaven and which to hell.....(Boyd 238)

But in the second half of the century, it assumed a different colouring becoming predominantly liberal:

God wishes us to make earth as much like heaven as possible and so he sent Jesus down among us, not just to be sacrificial offering but to guide and show us how to make a heaven on earth. This is why Jesus came to be regarded by many members of the labour movement in the later nineteenth century as ‘the first socialist’. (Boyd 238)

Though Hilton placed ‘religion’ as a key to the Victorian frame of mind in his article *Religion, Doctrine And Public Policy* (Boyd 236) yet Victorian intelligentsia underwent “crisis of faith” (Boyd 236) because it was an “age of doubt”. Thomas Huxley coined the term ‘agnostic’ to define the space of the Victorians regarding their faith towards God meaning ‘Unknown, unknowing, or unknowable’ pointing out their religious belief – thus, the term includes “religious doubters of various sorts including those who, like Hardy, had lost a firm religious faith.” (Ingham 68) Jude explicitly rejects Christianity after Sue’s reversal as well as children’s deaths: “You root out of me what little affection and reverence I had left in me for the church as an old acquaintance.” (Hardy 426) Further, he not only rejects the established church but any form of religion: “You make me hate Christianity, or mysticism, or Sacerdotalism, or whatever it may be called”.

As scientific thought dominated the age and revolutionized the Victorian ethos as well as climate of contemporary intellectual current, men’s perceptions of

religion resulted in flexibility and flux as reflected in the bleak world of the *Jude the Obscure*. But the other text of my concern Shashi Tharoor's *Why I am a Hindu* illuminates a different angle while designating religion conceptualizing Hinduism. In the Author's note it is apparent that the author intends to bring out the ideas and practices and challenges of ideology:

I seek to bring together ideas of Hinduism from ancient religious texts, their development by many thinkers, and the practices and challenges of Hindutva ideology. (Tharoor xi)

Thus, with a view to shedding light on 'one of the world's oldest and greatest faiths and its contemporary existence' the author gives a lucid and reflective account of Hinduism recreating a trajectory of faith and religion objectifying with an open and scientific outlook. In the first section of the book i.e. 'My Hinduism' he talks about his own belief in Hinduism, Hindu way, Customs along with the great souls of Hinduism such as Adi Shankara, Patanjali, Ramanuja, Vivekananda etc. In the second section entitled 'Political Hinduism' the author vividly depicts the ways in which political leaders, strategists, thinkers and their religious allies have attempted to adopt the faith for their own ends raising a pertinent concern over the dangers involved if religion is used to fulfill vested interest of people. The third section 'Taking Back Hinduism' highlights how Hinduism can be freed from perversions and restored it to its essence to make it an ideal faith for twenty first century world. Here in this paper, for spatial constraint and keeping in mind the

basic argument of the paper which necessitates a conceptualization of religion, while analyzing the text, the first section 'My Hinduism' is taken into consideration.

Going beyond the shackles of anyone's 'own ideological certitudes' he defines it from its origin in this section of the book—how the very word Hindu originally means people beyond the River Sindhu, or Indus. The author points out the unusual feature of Hinduism because it is a religion without any 'obligatory credo' as it has 'no compulsory dogmas': ... Religion is an intensely personal matter, and that prayer is between you and whatever image of your Maker you choose to worship.(Tharoor 4)

Considering Hinduism 'a venerable tradition' and talking about its rich heritage and great linearity, he regards this religion as an opportunity of adventuring in his 'ancestral past' (Tharoor 5). Thus, in the chapter 'My Hinduism' Tharoor focuses on the uniqueness of Hinduism giving considerable space to a poetic passage from Rig Veda explaining the 'unknowability of God', he reiterates:

...I appreciate the fact that Hinduism professes no false certitudes. Its capacity to express wonder at creation and simultaneously scepticism about the omniscience of the Creator are unique to Hinduism.(Tharoor 7)

Thus, starting with a tremendous positive note on the spirit of this age old religion, he delves deeper into some other relevant aspects such as The Hindu Way, Questioning Hindu Customs, and Great Souls of Hinduism in this first section of

the book. He talks about the great souls like Adi Shankara, Patanjali, Ramanuja, Swami Vivekananda, Ramakrishna Paramhansa, and many others who made major contributions to the essence of Hinduism along with Hinduism's most important schools of thought such as Advaita Vedanta. Particularly an elaborate view of religion with its broad appeal is comprehensively explained in this part: Dharma is often translated as faith, and that is an inadequate translation. The concept of dharma is much broader, embracing an entire system of social ethics covering law-abiding conduct. (Tharoor 46)

Tharoor asserts that dharma is an untranslatable Sanskrit term because it is loaded with meaning. He readily defines dharma from Sanskrit root 'dhr' to hold that means dharma holds a person and governs its being and existence:

...to live according to dharma is to be in consonance with the truth of things. A moral life, for a Hindu, is a life lived in accordance with his dharma, which in turn must be in conformity with the absolute truth that encompasses the universe. (Tharoor 46)

Thus, if we equate dharma with religion, the nature of religion is all inclusive and broad rather than sectarian and radical narrowing down its true essence and the fundamental impulse behind the concept religion is reflected as such in Tharoor's book. Tharoor's ratiocinative analysis brings out the concept religion illuminating its true spirit with an objective standpoint. This basic formation reminds us Dr Radhakrishnan's vision of religion making

it instrumental towards universal peace, harmony and brotherhood:

In the present dangerous divided state of the world we may perhaps find in religions an overriding bond that would bring the nations together. (Radhakrishnan 50)

### **Findings and conclusion:**

Realization and understanding of the 'essence' of religion is a must for the welfare of mankind. So, it is necessary to study the theoretical perspective of religion postulated here as 'heaven' to bring out the true spirit of religion. Besides, it is necessary to be concerned with the practical and true implications of religion in society which is designated as 'earth' here, as religion regulates the lives of the society through mass consciousness.

Both the texts represent two diverse aspects of religion. In the context of the 19<sup>th</sup> century reality Thomas Hardy depicting a bleak universe with flux and flexibility of religious faith instead of steadfast and fixity of a belief system destines the eventual tragedy of the towering figure of the novel. Whereas, it is observed in Tharoor's book of our concern that internalizing the true spirit of religion with an objective and broad outlook, one can create a tapestry of a solace in this world turning the earth to heaven. Having observed the nature of religion in these two diverse domains, it is found that in spite of empirical fact of plurality of religion, there is a transcendent unity of religions giving "a fundamental unity of vision of all mankind" (Radhakrishnan 50). But that realization is evolved out from the understanding of the true spirit of religion as explored here. ■

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# A Feminist Study of Nayantara Sahgal's *Storm in Chandigarh*

Veena Varma & R.C. Sheila Royappa

Feminism, in general, can be seen as a collective and individual endeavour on the part of women at different times and in different countries to strive for equality of rights and opportunities in all walks of life. Women's movement originated in the eighteenth century with the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's essay "A Vindication of the Rights of women" in 1792. In this essay, she presented revolutionary idea on women's need for economic independence, a political activism and personal freedom from injustice at the hands of men. It created awareness among women about the bias against them in the domestic and social sphere of life. Virginia Woolf's essay "A Room of One's Own" in 1929 vividly presented the unequal treatment given to women, seeking education and alternations to marriage and motherhood. French Feminist Simone de Beauvoir in her book, *The Second Sex* (1949) takes up the most fundamental question, "What is a woman?" She claims that there is no such thing as feminine nature when she says, "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman."

Nayantara Sahgal's concept of free woman transcends the limits of economic or social freedom for woman. According to her it does not merely mean the defiance of old-established conventions, it must also

make her aware of herself as an individual and refuse to tolerate injustice. Through her novel she tries to put forward the view that in the modern society woman should not be seen in the stereotypical passive roles of a sex object or as the one who is fit only to manage home chores and children without any self-identity of her own. For the smooth functioning of family and the society at large, woman needs to be seen as man's equal and honoured partner. In her novel, Nayantara Sahgal, 'pleads for the new marital morality based on mutual trust, consideration, generosity and absence of pretence, selfishness and self – centeredness.' From the feminist perspective, Sahgal exposes the emptiness of man-woman relationships based on age-old pattern of gender inequality and injustice. She portrays self-willed individualistic women who are not only deeply aware of their emotional needs but also fervently strive for self-fulfillment. These women show the courage of rejecting orthodox traditional social set up in favour of liberal and unconventional ways of life.

Her Novel *Storm in Chandigarh* presents a scathing protest against the denial of freedom and individuality to woman. It deals with complex human relationships in which love, friendship, honesty, freedom



and equality play a vital role. The 'storm' in the lives of three married couples, Inder and Saroj, Jit and Mara and Vishal and Leela is portrayed. Vishal Dubey, an honest and promising central officer, goes to Chandigarh from Delhi to solve the political impasse but unwittingly involves himself in the private lives of the estranged husbands and wives especially those of Saroj and Inder.

Saroj, the female protagonist in the novel is married to Inder. He runs the textile mills of Saroj's cousin Nikhil Ray's company in Chandigarh. There is no emotional communion between Saroj and Inder in spite of the fact that they have been married for the last four years and have two children. Saroj emerges as a victim of male tyranny and chauvinism in the novel. She fears rather than loves her husband. She represents the new woman trying to retain her individuality and breathe freely in the suffocating atmosphere of passionless and emotionally unfulfilling marriages:

The New Woman is determined not merely to live, but to live in self respect, thus implicitly demanding a re-alignment of the parameters on which marriage function, Marriage without emotional involvement, sex without passion, love without respect are anathema to her as she manoeuvres her way through the changing times.

Saroj had a physical relationship with a person before her marriage but she did not consider it as a sin rather as a part of growing up. After her marriage she has been faithful to Inder to the fullest degree. She is a person

who values mutual trust, consideration, honesty communication and absence of pretence in a relationship.

Hailing from a liberal family, believing in openness and trust as the hallmark of relationships, Saroj had naively presumed that her husband shared those values, not realizing that he was the product of an atmosphere where male dominance is the most formidable of cults.

She is thoroughly truthful to Inder and her honesty in marital relationship can be gauged from the fact that she even confesses about her pre-marital relationship to him with the intention of looking forward to a clean break from the past. But this confession actually dooms their marriage. Inder 'was maddened by it. When it came over him he sat looking at Saroj with a revulsion that had ancient, tribal, male roots' (96). Inder represents the traditional patriarchal attitude of society toward woman which puts high premium on female chastity and virginity before marriage. While in the same patriarchal set up, the idea of male chastity is never thought about, let alone questioned. The double standards of patriarchal morality is visible from the fact that Inder who wants to make Saroj feel 'ashamed' of her pre-marital affair himself has many sexual experiences before marriage as the third person narrator tells, 'he had been precocious and successful in sex, robustly collecting experience where he found it' (134). But women have no right to question male promiscuity or indulge in practices which are considered to be male prerogatives. This patriarchal attitude is

aptly summed up by Dubey when he says, 'The one thing you could not crave, the thing that was a crime was that they should inhabit the world as your equals, with splendor and variety of human choice before them' (190). Men like Inder who are the products of conventional 'orthodox patriarchal society and whose consciousness is sticks to male chauvinism can never' accept non-virgin women as wives. Inder felt deeply cheated as he recalls, 'Somewhere he had read they were primitive societies that demanded the blood of virginity as there were evidence of female purity. No man need be cheated of that. He had been cheated' (106). Human civilization, irrespective of time and space has always demanded that a woman should be pure and virgin before marriage. In the ancient times even the most virtuous woman like Sita had to go through the test of purity after she was abducted by Ravan, in order to return to the fold of marriage. In the nineteenth century, Angel Clare of Hardy's *Tess of d'Urbervilles* who was deeply in love with Tess leaves her when he comes to know that her virginity was ravished by another man before their marriage. And in the post-independent India, there has been no change in this age-old trend. This shows that in spite of technological development, ideologically human race has progressed very little. Vishal Dubey who emerges as the spokesperson of the novelist rightly sums up patriarchal prejudice against woman when he says, 'A woman was not entitled to a past, not entitled to human hunger, human passion or even human error. In the fires and desolations of living she ranked as not quite human' (190).

Inder, instead of reaching out and valuing the precious human being in Saroj,

has never been able to forget her pre-marital affair and nor let her forget it. He keeps on torturing her mentally and physically ever since her confession. But as every cloud has a silver lining, modern society in spite of its male dominated ideology has men who believe in gender equality and women's liberation. Vishal Dubey's views on female chastity are like whiff of fresh air in suffocating patriarchal atmosphere as he says,

"If chastity is so important and so well worth preserving... it would be easier to safeguard it by keeping men in seclusion, not women... The biological urge is supposed to be much stronger in men, so it is they who should be kept under restraint and not allowed to roam free to indulge their appetites. The entire East might Flourish under this sort of reversal of purdah." (191).

Saroj symbolizes modern women who want to establish a new order with changed standards where they can be their true selves and where character is judged by the purity of heart and not chastity of body. According to Sahgal, 'Saroj's premarital act of sex has nothing to do with the pollution of flesh, promiscuity or immorality.' But Inder's attitude towards her has always been of disgust, contempt and revulsion. He always abuses her and sometimes even brutally beats her because of the act before marriage. On the other hand, in spite of all this torture and tormentation, Saroj has never let her inner strength; her pride and her self-esteem get completely obliterated. "Even in extremity, she had never said, 'Forgive me.'

For each time she had lived through a night's torment, she could wake to the sunlight and find herself unsullied in it" (94). Saroj tries her level best to adjust and compromise at every point with Inder because she feels that she is responsible for the failure of their marriage. She always remains vigilant not to do things which could annoy Inder and tries to talk on 'safe' topics which could not make him burst into anger. Because of such conscious living with Inder, where there is no room for spontaneous behaviour, she always feels tensed and pressurized. Her mental burden is evident when she frankly tells Vishal,

"Half the time one is afraid – you know – saying the wrong thing or of being misunderstood – just for being oneself and being punished for it. So one spends such a lot of time acting or at least hiding and that's very tiring." (89)

There is no passionate bond, affection, emotional communication or understanding between Saroj and Inder. He treats her with total indifference and regards her only as a sex object. When he comes to know that Saroj is pregnant in spite of their already having two children, he felt irritated and rebukes her as if only she is responsible for her pregnancy. He puts the whole blame on her when he says, 'Hundreds of women use the damned thing successfully it's madness to have three children nowadays' (46).

After her pregnancy, when Saroj first feels the flutter inside her body, she is overjoyed and wants Inder to feel it move but for Inder 'the touch without sexual significance, the caress of affection was different. It cost him an effort to make it'

(175). While sex with her came to him without any effort and difficulty and it was a mere performance of act without any emotional involvement for him.

Saroj is a person who is fully involved in life. She wants to feel every moment of her pregnancy. When she first feels the flutter inside her body, she wants to laugh and celebrate. She even tells Vishal that her flutter is nine inches long. For her, to have babies without being completely involved in the process is same as dogs and cats have their babies. According to her, by feeling the every step of the process, one is not troubled by the pain rather one feels dignified. Saroj is a woman who is interested only in living things around her. She is not at all bothered about the untidy things in her house, for example, she does not mind if sofas and chairs in her house need to be upholstered or if children's socks need darning. The things, which are not alive, are not important for her. On the other hand, she is very careful that her garden looks beautiful and orderly. She takes infinite pains with a stray animal and spends hours in the company of her children. But Inder is unable to reach to the deep core of her inner being. He feels irritated at her slip – shod housekeeping at her careless way of dressing and at her wonder at every flutter in her body. He never thinks of her as a person with feelings and emotions and is therefore unable to comprehend her need to be deeply involved in things happening around her.

"He is a businessman and thinks of his wife also in business like terms for him. A wife was one half of an enterprise, the complaint

business partner who presided over house and children and furthered her husband's career. Saroj had not interest in any of it and not because she was gifted with any accomplishment that took her time. It was her preoccupation with herself that unnerved him. That and curious concentration of her spirit upon whatever came her way" (53).

This makes evident that Inder allows no individuality and freedom to Saroj. Inder, in this sense, behaves like a typical representative of patriarchal society in which, as Julia Kristeva points out, woman is always marginalized by the male symbolic order. He wants to control all her actions and wants her thoughts to be in agreement with him. When Saroj finds a good friend in the form of Vishal Dubey and frequently goes for walk with him, Inder gets deeply infuriated. He snubs her for being absent from home. Saroj's utterance – 'I like to talk to him. He is a good man' – inflames Inder and he blunts, 'I don't give a damn if he is Jesus Christ' (193). So saying, he thrashes her not only with words but also with blows. This attitude of Inder, it will be agreed, is typical of Indian men, who regard their wives to be possessions, meant to be used for furthering their careers and looking after their homes and children. That, this is the approved norm proved by the wife's passive acceptance of the whole situation. Saroj's marital relationship with Inder is completely contrary to her image of ideal marriage where 'it would recognize that somewhere within the desirable woman, behind the eyes, the mouth, the breasts, there was a struggling, imperfect human being to

be valued for her own sake' (192).

Saroj's yearning for acceptance communication, honesty, liberty and lack of pretence in a relationship draws her near Vishal Dubey, with whom she completely shares her emotional cravings. He, like Saroj, is also a victim of marital unhappiness. His wife, Leela who dies six years back due to the surgery of an incompetent abortionist, has never been able to reach the inner core of his personality. She marries Dubey because he is a successful civil servant with promising future. The mismatch between the two is evident from the fact that Leela was used to the life of social parties, hypocrisy, adultery and pretence while Vishal wanted a person with whom one can 'talk to when the day's work was done, the friend with whom one could be naked in spirit and to whom one could give the whole of oneself' (69). His loveless and faithless wife is not able to fulfill his needs for companionship and understanding. Vishal and Saroj's common ideas about marital relationship, which according to them should be based on emotional communication, honesty, complete acceptance of other person's weaknesses and lack of pretence and their lack of realization of such relationship with their respective spouses bring them close to each other.

Vishal Dubey is a feminist in the real sense of the term. Toril Moi says in his essay 'Feminist Literary Criticism' that, men can be feminists and, it is the sole prerogative of woman to be a feminist. Most of Dubey's ideas in the novel show his deep concern about the lot of women in present times.

“He thought of his own country women as the subdued sex, creatures not yet emerged from the chrysalis, for whom the adventure of self-expression had not even begun... there had long been a figure of humility, neck bent, eyes downcast, living flesh consigned to oblivion.... Their sphere was sexual and their job procreation” (189).

He wants people to think that the world consists of human beings, rather than men and women in watertight compartments. He has always treated his wife as his equal and has wanted her to give him her natural self but unfortunately she always maintained her fiction and proves to be an adulterous lady. With Saroj also, he wants to have a relationship in which there is no pretence but frank communication. He loves Saroj not because she is a woman, in the physical sense of the term, but because he likes the beautiful human being in her.

Mara is childless and runs a school for small children to fill her emotional lack. In the initial period of their affair, both Inder and Mara experience fulfillment and happiness. For the first time, Inder realizes that love does not just mean sex rather it means involvement. His misconception, of Saroj being impure, has never let him experience a sense of emotional involvement with her while making love to her but his brief affair with Mara fills him with new revelation about love. He tells Mara,

“Do you know the strangest thing about you, Tamara? Talking to you and kissing you are all the same. It all blends. I don’t know where one

leaves off and the other begins.... Suddenly all the difference between loving and not loving had become apparent to him” (173).

On the other hand, Mara, in spite of having loving and considerate husband in the being of Jit, gets drilled towards Inder because she wanted, best of both the worlds, the hardness of Inder and softness of Jit. But Mara who has been brought up in the comparatively free environment of Europe has fully developed individuality of her own. She cannot tolerate that women should be regarded as an object of possession. When Inder says about his wife, ‘She belongs to me’, Mara quips, ‘Belongs to you? So do your shoes’ (138). It means that it is not ‘belonging’ but understanding that she expects from her man. Time and again, Mara shows that she is a woman of independent self. On one of the occasions when Inder shows his disgust at woman talking and behaving like men, Mara immediately asserts that it may be because that they have started behaving more ‘like human beings and less like possessions’. Their relationship comes to an end when the understanding dawns on Mara that there is some part of Inder which she could never fully know in spite of her best efforts.

At the end, Inder is left alone as Saroj decides to go to Delhi for her confinement and with the view of spending rest of her life with Vishal. Inder himself is responsible for his loneliness because it is his own inflexible and indomitable self which prevented him from establishing an enduring relationship with Saroj or Mara. It is not as though Saroj wants to throw her life with Inder away and walk out. On the



other hand, she makes every effort on her part to make her marriage with Inder successful. The following quote makes clear her feelings for him. 'A yearning to reach Inder possessed her, stirring a desire she recognized as old and unfulfilled. She wanted to love him in unpermitted ways, to make love to his doubts and dreams, to the private worlds within him that were locked and barred from her' (200). But all her efforts to go near him remain as useless as of a bird beating against the window pane to go inside. She wants to be a good wife, but not at the cost of her individuality. She longs for 'oxygen of understanding' with Inder which she actually finds in her friendship with Vishal. Her friendship with Vishal makes her realize the hidden potentialities of herself. She realizes that she can no longer submit to the injustice of the dual morality anti-double standard adopted by Inder. She learns that endurance is no virtue and human relationships cannot be left to chance. In the end she becomes symbolic of modern women who not only aspire for freedom, dignity and equality in a relationship but who actually has the courage to leave the rotting relationship in favour of one which is full of possibilities without caring about patriarchal society. Comparing Anita Desai and Nayantara Sahgal, K.Meera Bai argues that Anita Desai's women either succumb or survive

the existential problems within the family fold, whereas Nayantara Sahgal's women come out of the bond, if need be, to live as free individuals. ■

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# Cultural Identity in Jaishree Misra's *Afterwards*

J. Martin Prabakar & V. Nagarajan,

## Abstract:

Cultural identity is the identity that gives where we belong to. It states our nationality, ethnicity, religion, social, class, generation, and locality of social group. Each social group has shade of its own distinct culture. Cultural identity gives self-conception and self-perception of one's identity. It is an essential criterion for survival as well as for development because without culture, there is no socio, economic, scientific and spiritual development in a nation. Alienation of culture leads to mental dilemma, suppression and failure in life. One cannot lead a peaceful life without aware of one's real identity. The person who does not know about his/her own past history and culture is like a tree without roots. So the people must have the knowledge of their past history and about their culture. This knowledge will lead them to lead a fine and a peaceful life.

**Keywords:** cultural identity, culture, development, tradition, history.

Cultural identity shows one's personality, emotions, customs and nature of living. Culture helps people to measure one's behavior, character and attitude. Its primary concern is revitalize the personality of human and restore the human spirit.

Culture helps to express one's emotion in independent way. It is like healing one's mental illness and attaining self-salvation. The diffusion of same cultured people in different nations unites them through the culture. It helps them to encounter the barriers of alien culture. This leads to the great art reaches beyond ethnic and national barriers to move people all over the world. It paves the way for interrelations among nations. It helps to know the occurrence of history, culture, community, and customs of one nation with another. This leads to world-historic population of mankind to dismantle the differences of opinion and creates the solidarity among one another. Humankind's antagonism and contention are replaced by synchronization of people. These cultural notions are clearly discussed in the novels of Jaishree Mishra. The present paper discusses the significant role of culture in Jaishree Mishra's *Afterwards*.

Cultural identity is an essential criterion for survival as well as for development because without culture, there is no socio, economic, scientific and spiritual development in a nation. The world has been seeing tremendous changes in culture from tradition to modernity. Claude Levi-Strauss rightly observes:

Civilization has ceased to be that delicate flower which was preserved and painstakingly cultivated in one or two sheltered areas of a soil rich in wild species. I am caught within a circle from which there is no escape: the less human societies were able to communicate with each other and therefore to corrupt each other through contact, the less their respective emissaries were able to perceive the wealth and significance of their diversity (Tristes Tropiques 64).

In India, the battle between the tradition and modernity is ubiquitous. The old traditional culture is being questioned by modern thinkers. In India, the issues of culture were started from pre-independence period. It uncovers differences between the Western and the Indian culture. Presently, Indian society encounters two problems. One is to formulate a new identity and another is to discard the cultural identity created by traditional society. Certain writers focus their cultural identity in modernity but some gives importance on the hybrid of past and present of culture. Very few writers put forth the generalized nature of culture. Jaishree Misra's *Afterwards* is such a novel that deals with neutral analysis of culture. She speaks about the various instances to illustrate the value systems of culture.

In *Afterwards*, Jaishree exposes both traditional life and modern life through the characters of Rahul Tiwari and Maya. The former arrives in Kerala from London and befriends with married woman Maya. The latter already vexes over her marital life. She finds the opportunity to escape from her

bitter life. She takes efforts to end her loveless marriage through Rahul.

Maya is the heroine of the novel. She gets married to a man who does not know the meaning of love in marriage. The life with her husband is like a caged bird. She is ready to do anything to break the shackles of stereotyped life. Her need of freedom is increasing every day. To get that freedom, she adopts herself to lose anything. She is neither care for her identity nor to protect Indian culture and tradition. Her only intention is to run away from the vague life that she is living.

Indian women face many problems after getting marriage. Drunkard husband, drug addiction, having extra marital affair, unemployment, physical pain, mental torture and verbal abuse are the most common incidents of married women life. But the irony is that despite of more tortures women tolerate it hardly. They are trained by their parents to bear it silently. They are not given chances to expose their grievances in their domestic life. Betraying of husbands or eloping with someone or filing a divorce is all prohibited for women. They should not leave their husband whatever happens in their life. Woman's parents rear their daughter as they are the protector of tradition and heritage. Jaishree does not want to produce such stereotyped women in her novel. She clearly conveys her point through Maya that not only physical beating, and verbal abuse lead mental dilemma but also the suspicious nature of mankind also does. Maya shares her personal life to Rahul. In her narration about her life, she agrees that her husband Govind never beat and scold her. She has all facilities at her

husband's home. In spite of that luxurious life, she decides to leave her husband. Her prominence is for love rather than materialism. These material aspects never give her happiness. Her house has "three bedrooms, three attached bathrooms, stainless steel sink in a fully tiled kitchen" (Afterwards 56-57).

Her yearning for love and escape from home are revealed when she asks Rahul to get her a job in Delhi:

'Please help me to get a job—in Delhi or somewhere. Any job, please!'

'But you haven't even got a degree, Maya,' I reminded her gently. 'And you have little Anjali.'

'I could work in a nursery or something. Keep Anjali with me. I could study part-time—I used to be a good student.' (Afterwards 57)

Maya wants to escape from mental pains at any cost. She has enough guts to throw off her identity. She relieves from her mental pain by eloping with Rahul. She does not care about her identity and culture. Her courage and self-pity urges Rahul to live with her. Though he knows very well that it is a blatant mistake, he could not resist the wish of marrying her.

And so it came to pass that Maya left Kerala with Anjali and with me. It wasn't quite an elopement, but that was certainly how it was seen by everyone else. Trivandrum would have reeled from the shock of it for days after that. But we were not to know what was being said. (Afterwards 67)

Maya and Rahul travel to England and begin to live together there. Their three years of marriage life comes to end when Maya unfortunately met an accident.

Rahul's role in the novel gets primary concern. He is Maya's neighbor. Maya's exchanges food and daily visit makes changes in Rahul. She feels happy whenever she meets Rahul. Rahul too realizes her visit. Through Maya, Rahul understands the problems of Maya and her uncaring, and suspicious husband Govind. Generally, Rahul is very kind, patient and selfish person. He rents a house and lives lonely when he reaches here. Even, author Jaishree does not give enough details about his other relations. Hers focuses on Maya and culture is obvious. Rahul's confession about himself is evident for his selfish nature.

My sort of existence can feel like a very selfish one sometimes. I just do what I want to do, go where I want to go ... big, important things, like family ties and statehood and even nationhood seem to have passed me by completely. (Afterwards 40-41)

Though Rahul knows of his odd attractive towards Maya, he can never give up the relationship with Maya. He feels guilty of desiring married women and cheating her husband. It is reflected during his statement:

... goddammit, you couldn't just go falling in love with some poor kid's mother, could you? Some things ought to be sacrosanct. Other people's lives, other men's wives, the trust of little children, most of all. (Afterwards 50)

Rahul impresses with the culture of India. Hence he afraid to maintain relationship with married woman. Though he is from foreign, he knows very well the culture of India. He is oscillating in his decision whether to marry her or not. The bond created by Maya within Rahul breaks the traditional values within Rahul and changes his mind to marry Maya. He expresses his opinion on Maya:

... that another man's wife was sitting here, next to me, looking for all the world as though she were indeed mine. Worst of all, worst of bloody all, her small child was looking at me now, as though already aware that I was about to transgress that one final rule. And change the course of her world along with ours. (Afterwards 50)

Rahul's love and Maya's hatred towards Govind encourage them to go against social and traditional set up of India. Govind's presence in the novel begins only after the death of his wife. His daughter Anjali is left alone and strived hard to survive in England. Social service minded people inform Govind about the status of his child Anjali. As he is brought up in traditional way and having a soft nature, he reaches England to take care of his daughter. Meeting with Rahul reminds him what his wife is done to him. He expresses his humiliation to Rahul what they did to him:

I could tell he was uncomfortable with this and remembered that in India women did not usually shake hands. Unless they moved in very westernized circles and met a lot of foreigners. I knew from all the things

Maya told me that Govind was old-fashioned, full of conservative beliefs. (Afterwards 201)

Govind realizes that intruding of alien culture only destroy his life. Hence, he takes his daughter with him to India. He states: "I think she should go back with me to India. That is her home, she should never have been taken away from there at all" (Afterwards 202).

It is Govind's right observation that living in foreign culture may stain the life of Anjali. His decision to rear her in India will teach her how to live the life. He believes that his inculcation of traditional and cultural values in her will prevent her to go as her mother did.

The prominence for cultural identity given by Jaishree is evident through Govind's prominence to cultural identity for his daughter. Culture has both the destructive power and creative power. When we emulate culture, it creates our destiny to peaceful life. If we transcend or brushes aside or ignore cultural values, it destroys life. Govind's life and Maya's life are great examples of that. Emulating culture and living with cultural identity are the life force without which one cannot survive in this world. ■

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# *Gulliver's Travels: A Feminist Analysis*

Navdeep Singh

A female has always longed for equality, self-respect, justice and belongingness in the male oriented society. Since ages women have been trying to assert their personalities, but so far they have failed to do so in its totality. The clash between male and female, altogether, is not a new phenomenon; a female has always tried to air her voice in this patriarchal setup of the society, though her voice is hardly heard or recognized. Earlier writers, except few, never bothered to show the strengths of female, rather she was portrayed as a 'toy' in the hands of men, whose sole purpose was to seduce men or to serve them in one or the other way. This biased outlook sustained even in the Augustan Age of English Literature. Jonathan Swift, a prestigious and one of the most outstanding writers of the eighteenth century, also failed to appreciate the role of women in his world classic *Gulliver's Travels* (1726).

First of all, it is quintessential to understand what actually feministic approach to literature is. Feminism simply means the advocacy of women's rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes. Feminism is a movement that focuses on political, social, economic, and cultural exploitation of women in the male dominated world. The goal of this movement is to help women to define their role in this

society and also it seeks equal rights for women as compared to men. A feminist reader always asks the questions like, how does a literary text represent women? What does it has to say about gender relations and how does this recognize the issue of gender difference? Many a times, a text is silent about women- which in itself would be a comment on its attitude towards women, and it purely means that women are of no magnitude. In the connection of feminist criticism, M.H. Abrams opines,

As a distinctive and concerted approach to literature, feminist criticism was not inaugurated until late in the 1960s. Behind it, however, lie two centuries of struggle for the recognition of women's cultural roles and achievements, and for women's social and political rights, marked by such books as Marry Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication for the Rights of Women* (1792), John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women* (1869), and the American Margaret Fuller's *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845). Much of feminist literary criticism continues in our times to be interrelated with the movement by political feminists for social, legal

and cultural freedom and equality.<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Swift failed to portray women in a true light rather his approach was biased, prejudiced and limited towards the women in his *Gulliver's Travels*. There is no denial of the fact that throughout *Gulliver's Travels* references to female sex and body are replete with a vision of womanhood in intolerable and repugnant ways. He deliberately tries to degrade women. The scarcity of love in author's childhood and the little exposure he had to women when he was growing up also ascribed to the acidic personal isolation.

Swift's view of woman was influenced by the times and the society that he lived in. The paucity of love in author's childhood and the little exposure he had to women when he was growing up also attributed to the corrosive personal isolation. Some critics like Lord Orrery, Middleton Murry and Norman O. Brown have suggested that Swift was a misogynist, because of the way in which he is attacking women's physical aspect. Jonathan Swift often mentions the female body with repugnance. He very often dwells with exaggerated horror at the sight of a woman's body performing its normal bodily functions. Many have concluded from this that he hated women and considered them inferior to men. Gulliver hates humanity through women. Swift portrays women as inferior creatures, comparing them to lusty, dirty, and ignorant animals, ultimately leading to Gulliver's disgust in women in general at the end of the novel. In the moral domain, women

inspire as much aversion as they do on the physical side.<sup>2</sup>

Looking up close at the women's anatomy, Gulliver notices that their skin seems very rough, discolored and greasy. The first incident of this happens when Gulliver was on his second voyage, A Voyage to Brobdingnag, where he confesses his disgust on seeing a woman who was feeding her child. He remarks on her nipples and the crudeness of her skin when seen so close. This tendency shows his bitter outlook towards the females. He gives a minute description of female body in order to mock at it. Definitely, this attitude cannot be called a rational approach. His remark "nothing could appear more nauseous" on female body completely shows Swift's satirical remark, which no feminist reader can tolerate in any way. Gulliver gives this account as follows:

I must confess no object ever disgusted me so much as the sight of her monstrous breast, which I cannot tell what to compare with, so as to give the curious reader an idea of its bulk, shape, and colour. It stood prominent six feet, and could not be less than sixteen in circumference. The nipple was about half the bigness of my head, and the hue both of that and the dug, so varied with spots, pimples, and freckles, that nothing could appear more nauseous: for I had a near sight of her, she sitting down, the more conveniently to give suck, and I standing on the table. This made me reflect upon the fair skins of our English ladies, who appear so beautiful to us, only because they are

of our own size, and their defects not to be seen but through a magnifying glass; where we find by experiment that the smoothest and whitest skins look rough, and coarse, and ill-coloured.<sup>3</sup>

Here, clearly the microscopic vision of women is presented in all its aversion. He even goes on to say that even English ladies look fair because they are not examined under magnifying glass; otherwise they would also lose all their physical charms. Again in Part II, Chapter 6, Gulliver feels disgusted at the sight of women's huge pores, hair and moles. Being biased towards women, Swift only comments on women body, no man is described in the same way as women are described in magnified ways in his novel. This side clearly raises questions on Swift's vision and ranks him as being an anti-woman writer. Gulliver thinks of women as objects of disgust and further remarks,

That which gave me most uneasiness among these maids of honour (when my nurse carried me to visit then) was, to see them use me without any manner of ceremony, like a creature who had no sort of consequence: for they would strip themselves to the skin, and put on their smocks in my presence, while I was placed on their toilet, directly before their naked bodies, which I am sure to me was very far from being a tempting sight, or from giving me any other emotions than those of horror and disgust: their skins appeared so coarse and uneven.<sup>4</sup>

This bitter attitude of Gulliver towards women continues in third voyage too, where he describes the women of Laputa as blatantly sexual and adulterous. Women are again projected in a negative shade whose sole purpose is to deceive their husbands and to ditch them. Women are represented as unfaithful and totally unreliable. They are shown as exceedingly fond of strangers. Here any one can treat this text as an anti-feminist and misogynist. Swift portrays women as inferior creatures, comparing them to lusty, dirty and filthy animals.

The women of the island have abundance of vivacity: they, condemn their husbands, and are exceedingly fond of strangers, whereof there is always a considerable number from the continent below, attending at court, either upon affairs of the several towns and corporations, or their own particular occasions, but are much despised, because they want the same endowments. Among these the ladies choose their gallants: but the vexation is, that they act with too much ease and security; for the husband is always so rapt in speculation, that the mistress and lover may proceed to the greatest familiarities before his face, if he be but provided with paper and implements, and without his flapper at his side.<sup>5</sup>

Swift reaches on the apex of disgust for the females when his protagonist in *Gulliver's Travels* reaches to the land of Houyhnhnms, a race of intelligent horses. Part IV: A Voyage to the Land of Houyhnhnms, further

degrades women and again presents them as excessively sexual in desire. Women are shown as lazy too, those who delay every work. Swift attacks the female frivolousness and laziness. Gulliver tells master horse, “this globe of earth must be at least three times gone around, before one of our female Yahoos could get her breakfast on a cup to put it in.”<sup>6</sup>

Master horse tells Gulliver that female yahoos on this land are not virtuous enough and further says, “that a female Yahoo would often stand behind a bank or a bush, to gaze on the young males passing by, and then appear, and hide, using many antic gestures and grimaces, at which time it was observed that she had a most offensive smell; and when any of the males advanced, would slowly retire, looking often back, and with a counterfeit show of fear, run off into some convenient place, where she knew the male would follow her.”<sup>7</sup> On hearing this, Gulliver remarks, “I could not reflect without some amazement, and much sorrow, that the rudiments of lewdness, coquetry, censure, and scandal, should have place by instinct in womankind.”<sup>8</sup> Here again yahoo women are shown as if they are prostitutes, who would do anything to appease their sexual desires. They are shown as trying to keep on hunting men for sex. Same incident took place in Part IV, when Gulliver goes out with sorrel nag and weather being hot, Gulliver decides to take bath there. When Gulliver goes into the water after putting his clothes off then at the same time one Yahoo woman jumps into the water so that she could have sex with Gulliver. This makes Gulliver sick and he condemns Yahoo woman.

Being one day abroad with my protector the sorrel nag, and the weather exceeding hot, I entreated him to let me bathe in a river that was near. He consented, and I immediately stripped myself stark naked, and went down softly into the stream. It happened that a young female Yahoo, standing behind a bank, saw the whole proceeding, and inflamed by desire, as the nag and I conjectured, came running with all speed, and leaped into the water, within five yards of the place where I bathed. I was never in my life so terribly frightened. The nag was grazing at some distance, not suspecting any harm. She embraced me after a most fulsome manner. I roared as loud as I could, and the nag came galloping towards me, whereupon she quitted her grasp, with the utmost reluctancy, and leaped upon the opposite bank, where she stood gazing and howling all the time I was putting on my clothes.<sup>9</sup>

In *Gulliver's Travels*, sharp and stinging criticism of women and expression of hatred for women by Swift, confirms him as a misogynist. However, many critics come to defend Swift from such charges and claim that this work is a great satire on human race, and women being the part of the society are also attacked by Swift and Swift's hatred and detestation of women is a part of his misanthropic rather than misogynistic vision of human life. However, this explanation seems to be flawed one as Swift has derided female body organs and that can not be excused on any grounds. Some critics like

Lord Orrery, Middleton Murry and Norman O. Brown have suggested that Swift was a misogynist, because of the way in which he is attacking women's physical aspect. The fact remains that *Gulliver's Travels* brings out misogynistic views. This text has biased approach towards women in which women characters are depicted with utmost cruelty and they are ridiculed and presented as ugly and sex seeker. ■

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# Scott Fitzgerald's *This side of the Paradise* : A Symbolic Study

Pradip Kumar Ghosal

Fitzgerald's symbols are multidimensional in nature. Most of the symbols seem to be private, somewhat personal and others traditional. Perhaps *This Side of the Paradise* (1920) is the most important of all his novels and short stories. The novelist Fitzgerald may be asked to handle different symbols in various incidents, situations and sequences. The symbols dealing with the situation may be classified as situational and sequences known as incidental. These symbols are to be categorized as Personal Symbols.

In the novel, *This Side of the Paradise*, Patrick O'Donnell, the protagonist, is a professor of English and editor of MFS (Modern Fiction Studies) at Purdue University in West Lafayette Indiana. He has previously taught at the University of California at Davis, the University of Arizona and West Virginia University as well as in Germany and France. He is a scholar of eminence. He has authored several books, essays on the modern context and contemporary American fiction relating to the socio-cultural-economic ethos of the nation. The best of all may be John Hawke's *Passionate Doubts*, *Designer's Interpretation in Contemporary American Fiction* and *Echo Chambers*, figuring voice in modern narrative. Besides

these, he has earned a reputation in journalism and editing periodicals. His journalistic pieces posed a wide range of symbolic meaning relating to contemporary society. He is currently working on a book about paranoia and contemporary narrating. He has consistently insisted and analyzed the symbolic significance of Fitzgerald's book saying, "one of the most wonderful writers of the twentieth century". (Financial Times, Patrick O'Donnell) He has analyzed various scenes, sequences, incidents and situations and sorts out its symbolic significance. Further, he says:

"Like Jay Gatsby, the character he created in what may still be considered to be legendary 'Great American novel', F. Scott Fitzgerald has acquired a mythic status in American literary history chronicler of the Jazz Age, friend and counterpart of Ernest Hemingway (and the frequent victim of his gossip and caustic satire; doomed lover of the equally doomed Zelda in a tragic romance recapitulated in the fictional pairings of Gatsby and Daisy, Dick and Nicole".

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"The author" conveyed through both life and work. (Patrick O'Donnell).

This shows that the author has represented his autobiography in the form of fiction in a symbolic way. Hollywood writers would have taken the Purple Patches of author's decadent life into their scripts. His biography, letters, memoirs, reviews and the critical responses of couple, family and state affair may be symbolic ingredients of several modern authors. From his early stage, his writings were infatuated with traditional symbols like Yeats's and the others were led to private and personal symbols. The most horrible autobiographical collection *The Crack-up* (Published posthumously in 1945) was harrowing in symbols. Then his short stories seem to reflect the contemporary picture of the society undermining contrive consciousness and disorder of the society in the symbolic pattern.

Fitzgerald's first novel *This Side of Paradise* carries countless traits of the Bildungsroman the novel of moral and psychological perspective, the author has developed his later work with a greater profile of symbolism.

'Paradise' is the symbol of the object of heavenly peace and bliss. Here Paradise is highly and hugely symbolic. So far as the genesis of the Bible is concerned it has the Garden of Eden where our Grandparents Adam and Eve were given the responsibility to watch over it. They were strictly instructed not to taste the fruit of the forbidden tree. Any violation of the instruction would ultimately bring universal chaos and confusion, trials and tribulations, fears and frustration and death and decadence. Also, they would be administered the rigorous punishment. So,

our Grandparents were expelled from Paradise and suffered from countless miseries, death and decadence.

This Paradise may remind one and all to be over conscious of violation. This may be symbolic meaning of the one corner of the Paradise and we have to see other corners and overall one's own existence. This Side of Paradise symbolizes the real myth of God's creation. The purpose of the symbol is to demonstrate this side of the Paradise to see and to discover another side. "Everybody is a moon, and has a black side" — Mark Twain. Evil and good are two sides of a coin and two wheels of the same carriage. The potent of good is not felt if there is no evil, as the essence of light is not felt unless there is darkness. Here "this" symbolizes paradoxically to "that". The author Fitzgerald symbolically means that one must see both the sides of an object and to calculate the total effect on his own desk of mind.

Therefore, the title of the novel is highly symbolic. Further, this reference reminds "Pandora's Box" in Greek myth. The Box was opened without permission which brought the misery and calamities. Fitzgerald would have been very conscious before captioning the novel keeping the contemporary American society close.

The novel is thematically symbolic. Let us see how far Fitzgerald is able to handle the symbol in the story. The story is about Amory Blaine's adolescence and his undergraduate days at Princeton as he progresses through a series of relations with mentors, old flames, roommates, and girlfriends. Intended to typify the youth of a generation that would become "lost" in

the aftermath of World War I, Amory is in the process of revolting from the old order as he tests out philosophies that his elders would regard as radical behaviors they would see as dissolute. The emergence of sexuality is an issue (Fitzgerald is characteristically frank in this regard), as Amory successively experiences and rejects childhood romance with Beatrice; the conformity of marriage with Isabel; an affair with an “older woman” in Clara; a disastrous relationship with the “debutante”, Rosalind; various one-nighters; and a final, brief and intense affair with Eleanor, who serves as Amory’s double. An old course, in the age of Prohibition, he drinks – Fitzgerald’s renowned obsession in life and art with drinking thus begins early. Each sexual episode mirrors Amory’s own self-love or self-hatred: as the title of the first version of the novel “The Romantic Egotist” suggests, Amory’s problem is one of narcissism, and his “education” in the novel involves both the formation of a “personage” and an encounter with that which lies outside the self. In *This Side of Paradise* Fitzgerald stages Amory’s slow and incomplete advancement from masturbatory to mature sexuality, though it is possible to read the character’s final cry as merely a return to the narcissistic self – the “I” of involuted self-knowledge – rather than a movement toward the world beyond Princeton.

The conflation of intellectual vocation and sexuality in the novel, along with Amory’s struggle with parental authority and received wisdom in the form of Monsignor Darcy, or the intellectual friendship he forms with Tom D’Invilliers at Princeton, suggest the depth and

complexity of this “appearance” work in which a “personage” is described by Monsignor Darcy as one who “gathers. He is never thought of apart from what he’s done. He’s a bar on which a thousand things have been hung – glittering, sometimes, as ours are, but he uses those things with a cold mentality back of them”. What Amory must learn – what he must bring to his experience, in Monsignor Darcy’s terms – is a paradoxical combination of detachment and investment in a “self” constructed from the outside in: This signifies for Fitzgerald the position of the modern subject of the Great War generation dissociated from the stable contexts provided by belief in “progress” and traditional cultural values.

For many who view *This Side of Paradise* as a hodgepodge of Fitzgerald’s early creative efforts, the novel is an uneven assemblage of anecdotes, aborted novelistic sequences, poems, one-act plays, passages from the author’s letters and diaries, and variously integrated short stories and set scenes. Despite their association, Edmund Wilson, Fitzgerald’s friend and literary mentor who was a year ahead of him at Princeton, remarked in an assessment of Fitzgerald’s early novels that “Amory Blaine ... had a very poor chance for coherence ... He was ... an uncertain quantity in the phantasmagoria of an incident which had no dominating intention to endow it with unity and force ... In short, *This Side of Paradise* is really not about anything; intellectually, it amounts to little more than a gesture – a gesture of infinite revolt”. In essence, Wilson, who admired much of Fitzgerald’s work, suggests in this review that Fitzgerald had not learned the lessons of detachment

and formation (the merging of “act” and “intention”) that Monsignor Darcy attempts to teach to Amory in the novel. For Wilson, there is both too much and too little of Fitzgerald in the novel: too much undigested early work; too little of Fitzgerald the mature author who could transform gesture into art.

Yet if *This Side of Paradise* is seen to portray Amory Blaine’s identity in the process of being formed rather than fully composed (and, parallel to this, the staging of Fitzgerald’s authorial identity-in-process), a different view of this pastiche of Fitzgerald’s youthful writings emerges. Like many first novels, *This Side of Paradise* is heavily autobiographical, and it must be read within the context of Fitzgerald’s early life through his matriculation at Princeton. At the same time, it is also a highly experimental novel that displays the author trying out a variety of genres and styles as he attempts to break away from the past and invent a kind of writing that will identify him as a modernist in his mature work. These twin projects – the stitching of autobiographical fragments and youthful writing into the design of a novel, and the exploration of voices, styles, and forms that

would allow him to extend not merely a “gesture of infinite revolt” but portray the process by which Amory comes to identity – mark *This Side of Paradise* as crucial to an understanding of Fitzgerald’s life and work. Anyhow, the novel is a symbolic representation of the author’s life in particular and The American civilization’s vision and dream, that amount fracture, fragmentation and fragile attitude in general.



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# Undertones of Mythology in R. K. Narayan's Novels

Janardan Bhat

The “Indianness “ in the novels of R. K. Narayan has been discussed enough by critics. We can find a mythological structure in the plot of *The Man Eater of Malgudi* , in a more methodical and organized way than in any of his other novels. In other novels of R. K. Narayan, one can see it in bits and pieces. Applying the legendary anecdotes to fit into the modern world requires a great skill. Without spoiling the vigour of the original myth and without making the story he is developing antiquated, the author has to strike a balance to get the best of both the worlds. In fact, we can find glimpses of structural parallelism with mythology in *The Guide*. A character like Raju, rises to mythical level from a mediocre debauchee. In *The Financial Expert*, the unexpected catastrophe results in Margayya's overnight abysmal fall.

*The Man Eater of Malgudi* can be read as an allegory, which structurally imitates the structural pattern of classical literature in Sanskrit. We find Narayan himself mentioning this in his foreword to the *Gods Demons and Others*, that was written closely on the heels of publishing *The Man Eater of Malgudi*. The mythological truth is, though in the beginning, the evil seems to have an upper hand, ultimately truth triumphs over evil. The creation of such roles as gods, demons and sages and kings looks anachronistic in the modern social fiction. But characters

are created with such types of features, though not physical, by temperament and action.

The structural unity of *The Man Eater of Malgudi* is based completely on the mythical parallel than on the philosophical concept. In this novel, Vasu the robust bull-necked shrewd taxidermist may be equated to a demon, while the dynamic Dr. Paul in *The Financial Expert* proves to be another evil character. Just as the demonic characters in mythologies possess enormous strength, sharp evil mind, and extra ordinary powers, Vasu possesses the skill of a master artist in taxidermy, a rare sense of humour, despite being evil, a dashing impressive nature and lust for carnal desires.

Having been frustrated by Vasu's exploits and running out of ideas to subdue him, the writer at a point resorts to divine intervention. He says none of the mortals are so powerful as to get away from the stern hand of the divine justice. The indomitably strong and selfish Vasu, has the end of a rakshasa.

Though his death is caused in the lines of Bhasmasura, at one point in the novel, he is compared to another rakshasa Ravana who was slain by Rama. The philosophical character Shastri narrates the moral quintessence in the novel: Yet the universe has survived all the raskshasas that



were ever born. Every demon carries within him, unknown to himself a tiny seed of self-destruction, and goes up in thin air at the most unexpected moment. Otherwise what is to happen to humanity?

The mythological character Bhasmasura gets a boon of immortality from the lord, in addition to which a strange power that would scorch everybody on whom he lays his hand. R. K. Narayan compares Vasu to Bhasmasura who was killed by his own hands. Though Vasu was a very strong and powerful man, he would not use all his power during sleep on himself, to kill just a mosquito. Logically and sensibly this may not be acceptable. But the whole intention for the novelist was to bring in the revival of the concept of Bhasmasura. Or else, he should have resorted to Rangi to do the job. Then she would have been Durga, in the form of Mahishasura Mardhini, yet another mythological incident where a demon was slain by goddess.

The central theme of *Mr. Sampath* and *The Financial Expert* and *The Guide* is concerned with the sense of limits and its transgression. The use of myth in those novels is not arbitrary but done with the definite purpose of delimiting the author's total scope and imposing a deeper pattern on the literal level of his narration. The parallel design is complicated enough to make a sudden recognition of the total design at the end a gratifying experience.

Northrop Frye speaks of two kinds of recognition in fiction. In that connection, R.K. Narayan's novels, particularly, *The Man-eater of Malgudi*, assumes a new meaning as soon as the recognition of the

identity of the total design has been experienced.

One is the continuous recognition of the credibility, fidelity to experience, the other is the recognition of the identity of the total design into which we are initiated by the technical recognition of the plot. (Fable of Identity. Give the page number)

Narayan is conscious of the total design of the plot of the novel, he succeeds in maintaining the integrity of the structure. About the inevitable triumph of virtue over vice in the classical mythology, Narayan says in *The Man-eater of Malgudi*:

'The strong man of evil continues to be reckless until he is destroyed by the tempo of his own misdeeds. Evil has in it, buried subtly, the infallible seeds of its own destruction and however frightening a demon may seem, his doom is implied in his own evil propensities'. (Source and page number)

Narayan executes this idea of the mythical demon in the novel and describes its relevances to modern times. Thus Vasu, the outsider is typed fairly early in the novel:

"He shows all the definitions of a rakshasa, persisted shastri, and went on to define the make up of a Rakshasa... he said, every Rakshasa gets swollen with his own ego. He thinks he is invincible, beyond law, but sooner or later something or other will destroy him". (Source and page number)

The mock-heroic method as used by Narayan in the story depends on a balance

between credibility and irrationality. Once Vasu's image as a rakshasa is established and his tenacity and aggressiveness are exposed with fullest measure, all encounters with him take on the character of mock heroic skirmishes with an invincible demon. Vasu is too confident of himself, too sure of his superiority over others and too quick to challenge the knowledge and authority of others. The following observation of Nataraj on his nature gives a clue to his being called the 'Man-eater' :

'Now it was like having middle-aged man-eater in your office and home, with the same uncertainties, possibilities and potentialities.'  
(Source and page number)

Yet, all events in the novel remain credible while the final explanation of Vasu's death alone is deliberately absurd. Rangi's explanation of his death tormented by mosquitoes is as follows:

'Next minute she heard a sharp noise like a thunder clap. The man had evidently trapped a couple of mosquitoes which had settled on his forehead by bringing the flat of his palm with all his might on top of them.'  
(Source and page number)

Vasu had smashed his own skull. Such an explanation may sound ridiculous, but that matters little. His death is an established fact which was inevitable in course of time. Like every demon, Vasu also carried within him a tiny seed of self destruction, which brought about his end. Shastri returns to Malgudi having shrewdly absented himself when the police investigation was going on in the press. He

offers Nataraj the mixed holy ash of his pilgrimage, as if absolving him from his involvements with Vasu. The story that Vasu killed himself is a parody of the well-known myths about demons.

Though it was a fulfilled intention of R. K. Narayan to be recognized as a writer of realistic novels, it is surprising to observe that his novels are studded with a great repository of mythological allusions, parallels, and parody of myths. It is no exaggeration if we say that almost every other novel of R. K. Narayan has mythological undertones and overtones. The best part of those adaptations is that even a foreign reader who is not aware of these allusions, can equally relish the works, as an Indian deeply aware of his country's mythological roots enjoys. Being born and brought up in a very pious and conservative south Indian family, the vivid images of the great epics stayed firm in his mind and nurtured the imagination of innumerable episodes, characters and plots during his successful and popular career as a writer.

A person well versed in his classical mythology is never in dearth for creativity. The distinct character, incidents and the anecdotes trigger a creative mind to adapt them to the writer's contemporary world. At the same time the writer will be modern and traditional. These adaptations, modifications and parodies become a great success with the readers because, extra-ordinary characters are clad in the guise of a lay contemporary man. The form and the situation may vary, but the profound impact on the readers will not vary. This is probably because, these characters, incidents and plots have a sound backing of human, social

and ethical values which are timeless. They represent the conflict between the good and the evil where the evil seems to gain an upper hand in the beginning, however truth or goodness triumphs at the end.

Malgudi is not just a geographically defined sleepy little town, but it is a miniature world. The events and incidents that happen there could happen anywhere in the world. In varying degrees, the use of mythology can be found in R.K. Narayan's almost all the short fiction and novels.

Let us take, for example, a very simple story, *Swami and Friends*, that superficially appears to have no traces of mythology. A story of purely contemporary society involving the pupils and the teachers. But the incident of Swami letting a paper boat floating in the drain is reminiscent of the mythological stories that portray devils, fairies and nymphs influencing human lives, making their lives more comfortable, treating with rewards and punishments to the deserving. All the characters in his grandmother's tale come alive with him to accompany him in his games.

Narayan describes the event of the boat making as a beautiful swerve to the right and avoiding destruction. It goes on and on, rearing the fatal spot where the waters were swirling round in eddies. The boat and its cargo were wrecked beyond recovery. He takes a pinch of earth, uttered a prayer for the soul of the ant and dropped it into the gutter. This certainly has an element of mythical bearing.

Similarly in *The Bachelor of Arts*, superficially, one can not perceive any mythological overtones. But the Ashrama

Dharma that existed in the traditional India is clandestinely portrayed in the life of Chanom's character. Brahmacharyashrama, Grihasthashrama, Vanaprasthashrama, and Sanyasashrama.

R K Narayan has created several resemblances to the mythical characters in *The Dark Room*. The character Savitri appears differently each time we read the novel. She can either be considered as a replica of Shakuntala claiming for her rights to be free who later realizes that surviving bereft of a family and home is impossible or very hard or as a rehash of Dasharatha's wife, Kaikeyee, or even Sita of *The Ramayana* who was forced to be away from her husband for a significant period of time.

We can look at Savithri as a typical Indian housewife, faithfully donning the role of an ideal woman of the Indian mythology, setting an example for self sacrifice. She can also be compared to the characters of Henrik Ibsen who resolve to be courageous in the hour of crisis to protect their identity.

In that sense, it would be relevant to compare R. K. Narayan with Mulk Raj Anand, in this context it would not be out of place to compare her with Mulk Raj's Gauri. We could hear these words from Savithri as well: "I am not Sita that the earth will open up and swallow me. I shall just go out and be forgotten of him...." (Source and page number)

The trauma and turmoil undergone by Savitri is no less than Sita, the epitome of patience. Anand defines myth as the aspiration of a character to be and being in only important through our becoming. The old being is irrelevant to changed situation.

R.K. Narayan emphasizes the relevance of mythology in the contemporary world as they are timeless and eternal. His method has been to allow the original episodes to make their impact on his mind as a writer and rewrite them from recollection, just as he would write any of his other stories normally out of the impact of life and persons around him.

It is not just one single incident or a particular character. The very plot of *The Dark Room* is based on the concept of Punarjanma and Karma. The birth, disillusionment and death, and rebirth is a well known Indian philosophical cycle which is found in *The Dark Room*.

A disciplined and serene life that Savitri lived was of a short duration. Situations force her to quit her house as antagonism and envy seizes her wits. Being too supercilious she abhors the task of a scavenger. But this was just a momentary phase, after which she recovers her composure to resurrect her noble qualities of patience and being a suitable wife of Raman.

The anecdote displayed in the doll show, the episode of lord Krishna slaying the huge python Kaliya, fills Savitri with moral and psychological courage and support to fight against her husband's subjugation and tyranny. But, at the same time, she is influenced by the ideal "mahapativrata" characters like Ahalya, Draupadi, Sita, Savitri, Mandodari and others. becomes mellow, mature and submissive. She succumbs to the tortures her husband gives her, tolerates them generously to raise to the level of a pativrata. She rises to the extent of bringing concord at her

family level by sacrificing her personal feelings and emotions. She also saves the esteem and respect of her family unmindful of her own sacrifice.

There is not a single novel written by R. K. Narayan, which passes without an allusion or undertone of mythology. Another novel that comes to our mind is 'The Painter of Signs' where the incident of Ganga, marrying Shantanu under certain conditions are adapted. Being unaware of the social, cultural and moral background of a woman, if a person marries just by her looks and other superficial qualities, one is bound to undergo turmoil and panic.

Though the intentions are noble and for the best cause, the way in which we perceive makes all the difference. There are chances of misunderstanding a person or his or her act. Each time Ganga delivers a child, she mercilessly throws them in the river that is most inappropriate and improper for a mother to do. Consequently she appears to be a very cruel and insensitive woman.

Similarly, Daisy, a character that appears out of thin air, all of a sudden on the scene of Malgudi, is an intrigue to Raman. His inquisitiveness and curiosity is not satiated by her. But he cannot help being entranced by her. She does not provide him with the required information, deliberately, to quench his curiosity.

She has appeared on the scene of Malgudi all of a sudden. Nothing is known about her caste and her previous life. Raman is curious to know about her, but she keeps him deliberately in the dark. However, the facts about Ganga in the myth and those of Daisy in the novel are revealed by themselves.

However, the plot does not go parallel to the mythology throughout. It takes a sensible deviation at a certain point on the entry of the hermit, who gets to know about her background. Though her background is not fully revealed, she continues to stay there with her mission of spreading the family planning programme across Malgudi.

The mission of birth control in a way is similar and more sophisticated than what Ganga did. Ganga waited until the embryo developed into a foetus and a full fledged live baby and then killed it by drowning, to give it a “salvation”. What Daisy did was less cruel, and quicker, though ultimately this also amounted to killing. Different methods of birth control she propagated for a social and personal concern was intended for the noble purpose of getting Salvation of poverty, and population explosion as Ganga intended to get the ‘Ashwini Kumaras’ their liberation from the curse.

While Shantanu had just one woman, Ganga, to be fascinated with, Raman had two women. Sarayu impersonates the mythical river Ganga. And the reference to water comes over and over again in the course of the novel. Both were enamoured by the mesmerizing qualities of a woman that leads to the further development of the plot.

A creative work of art must not be the rehash of the already existing piece of literature in whatever form. As T S Eliot says, it is not just the tradition alone that matters, it is the individual talent also that modifies the tradition and finds a niche for itself. R K Narayan takes enough support for the skeletal work of his plot, but makes

necessary deviations wherever required.

R. K. Narayan, known as a pragmatic novelist, knows how to fuse the mythology with the issues of contemporary world. He says that “The myriad gods and demons in our ancient literature are all symbolic figures. Though their actions take place in the world of legends and super terrestrial geography, still they could be read in plain terms in relation to contemporary life.” (Source and page number)

The details may be different but the pattern is the same today, as it was in ancient times. It convinces R K Narayan that motives and methods remain unchanged whether we are watching the epic age or the events of today.

The time, characters and the society may change, but the interpersonal relations, feelings and the human temperament remains the same, whether it is a mythology or a contemporary society. A characteristic feature of R K Narayan is his use of humour. Decent, gentle humour blending harmoniously with all situations. Killing the new born babes by mother Ganga, and performing the birth control operations for the public is an act not only of mythological parallelism but also bringing in a satirical humour to the situation.

A person who is not aware of the mythology would not miss the quintessence of the plot of R K Narayan’s novels, however, the awareness of the allusions to the mythology would add a contributing dimension to the entire novel. The present reality is embalmed with the sugar coating of myth. It never gives us an impression that R K Narayan is being redundant and



monotonous using the mythical stuff. He knows mythologies have a timeless relevance and they can never be out dated. The human prototypes portrayed in the mythologies stand eternally.

As mentioned earlier, the magnitude of using myths varies from novel to novel. In the early novels of R. K. Narayan, there are not any significant parallels of mythical anecdotes or characters. I have mentioned earlier in this paper, the existence of different phases of Ashrama dharma, though not mythology, in *The Bachelor of Arts*, and the parallel of Kaikeyee is seen in the character of Savithri, in *The Dark Room*. We have also observed parallel characters of Satyavan and Savithri in *The English Teacher*. *The Man Eater of Malgudi* creates the character of Vasu who represents the Mythical character of Bhasmasura who becomes the victim of his own extraordinary might. The depiction of the rivalry between the mythical Saraswathi and Lakshmi could also have been added to this list, as observed in *The Financial Expert*. R. K. Narayan has created a character similar to the mythical Narada in his last novel *The World of Nagaraj*.

R. K. Narayan has mastered the art of blending humour with mythology relevant to the contemporary society. His in-depth knowledge in indology, the culture and ethics has reflected in creating a typical Indianness in his short stories and novels. It not only includes mythology, it also involves the indigenous folk tradition and literature and Indian philosophy.

This cannot be called dogma or superstition, a strong belief in mythology, customs and traditions of a country stays

unaffected though the science and technology has advanced and rational awakening has enveloped the masses. They operate in two different social and cultural spheres of our lives.

We can trace his characters as a journey from the world of innocence to the world of experience with a blend of mythology which is a unique idiosyncratic empirical narrative of contemporary life. The local vernacular literatures of our country and the Greek and Roman literature, are considered as classic when they have mythical background. Thus R. K. Narayan certainly has attained the level of classical status with his humorous and creative ingenuity blended with the mythological references in his literature. ■

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# Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing* : A Source of Solution of Social Conflicts of Man

Sima Acharya

Doris Lessing is an Afro-Marxist-Feminist who has been awarded Nobel Prize for literature in the year 2007 for her debut novel *The Grass is Singing*. She as a writer professed and proclaimed an artistic commitment to effect a social change through her writings, and recognised the social responsibility of the artist. By nature, she is a humanist and a humanist of the first order who dreams about an idea of an ideal-Byzantine city of robust optimism, in spite of grim terrorism, violence communalism bloodshed of the modern nuclear holocaust. She is further known as a writer who is mentally odysseyous inquest of true friendship, fellow universal love and colour. She is a writer of an epic scale, more as a social Scientist than mere chronicler of human history. This present article deals with the inseparable relationship between man and society in her debut novel *The Grass is Singing*.

Man and nature are closely associated and quite inseparable. The Influence of Nature on men is massive. Nature is the storehouse of knowledge and wisdom. Many philosophers, thinkers, sociologist and Naturalist have been strongly influenced by Nature. And they have studied the universal relationship between man and nature. The Romantic

generation, both elder and younger, can reveal well how the poets like Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Byron and Keats were strongly influenced by the grandeur of Nature. Wordsworth has philosophized Nature, Keats has intellectualized where Shelley has prophesized Nature. Shelley in his 'Ode to West Wind' Says:

*"The trumpet of prophecy!  
O, wind, If winter comes  
Can spring be far behind?"*

This shows that Nature has its grand influence that philosophizes men in various aspects. Doris has speculated Nature and as most of her characters have studied it and derived peace and bliss. The solitude of men can be overthrown by speculating Nature's beauty. A man returns to Nature with a view to finding peace and tranquility to forget the worries and anxiety of life. Lessing's view of men in her present condition is bleak; nevertheless, it extends a glimmering hope from her fellow being rather a man can find the solace and potentiality to overcome the green pessimism through the symphony of Nature. The universe is a roaring form out of the darkness Lessing has forced her utopian vision of future. There is a prophetic warning and beatific vision which shows her hope in mankind.

Her novels teach how better to manage the world, they expose a world out of control. Her themes show her deep concern and they seem to naturally flower out of the earlier – a kind of experimentation, an effort to seek a solution. Dissatisfied with communism as a means to solve human problems she turns to seek new words through her inner and other space fiction. The racial colour concern, the communist form of Government, the communist form of society and its present context, the social condition of South Africa and Britain almost all sociological and political pattern of society are presented in the novels and short stories of Lessing.

The socialist realism is recalled both in her fiction and non-fictional world. Lessing emerges in an age in which women wrote about gallantry and crusading about poverty, slavery, class conflict and women's suffrage. She is a writer of epic and startling surprises. In her more than 35 books, she ranges from social realism to science fiction, with brief forays into speculative mysticism, after completing five books in her science fiction series *Canopus in Argos*. Lessing startled away from the public by turning to reveals of post-war London with welfare states, terrorism and ageing population. It is hard to think of a writer of her stature in the past half century who has demonstrated such range.

Doris Lessing has devoted much of her skill to the annotation of the racial position in South Africa- the relationship between black and white, ruled and ruler in a British dependency, *'The Times Literary'* Supplement reviewed her as-

“Forthright, incisive, controversial,

winter in July shows one of our most brilliant writers grappling with the most bitterly explosive in our age Africa. Written with all the angry compassion of first hard knowledge, these stories reveal Africa in the raw an Africa unknown to the vast majority of Europeans. Here is a vivid, Strong, unforgettable evocation of its sounds and smells, its stark power and savage grandeur, its agony and ultimate tragedy.”

Lessing's literary career was forged through Africa, not only in terms of a professional reputation which enabled her to make a living as a writer, but in the very act of writings itself, the problem of what to represent and how, which increasingly came to dominate Lessing's fiction, are grounded in the problem of how as a white settler to represent the relation of oppression, the internal and external dimension of her situation as an exile, both within and when distant from her country.

The seeds of racialism, colonialism, injustice, inequality and the feelings that allocate rights and privileges on the basis of physical characteristic was really tantamount to Sin, which was later to take fictional shape, was shown in her very childhood when her father migrated to Rhodesia with the family.

Rhodesia the last frontier for Maudice and Michael Taylor turned out to be the decisive first frontier for Lessing. The enforced isolation of the farm life and chronic conflict with her mother developed the urge for freedom and oppression. Her relationship with her father was close, she urged with him the politics of the racial

situation at the age of eight, and she absorbed his idealism, his skill for fantasy and his sense of Justice. Again and again, in her conversations and interviews, Lessing speaks directly of that life and her own early indoctrination into racist values, her view of the third world struggled for liberation and of the class-bound life of her own English neighbourhood.

Even during her adolescence, Lessing's understanding of the socio-economic condition and the effect upon human potential was well established. At home she watched her parents suffer the gradual depletion of their resources. They lived in rustic circumstances – in a house of mud and thatch often improving furniture from crates and empty gasoline drums – which would have been unthinkable in England or Persia.

Sexual relation between the races was a powerful challenge to their Separateness, here as a double standard prevailed. Miscegenation between white men and black women is shown to be tolerated although not generally approved, as in the short story '*Leopard George*'. George is a bachelor, with a huge harm and a swimming pool holds bathing in parties during the weekends, where the young girls of the neighborhood flirt with him. At one such party, a native African girl appears wanting to talk to him. She gives the clear impression of being his mistress: his white guests notice this and feel irritated which was a reproach for not preserving appearances. George is very angry with the girl. She is the daughter of the granddaughter of his boss boy and her liaison with George had lasted for five years. He sends

for smoke and complains that the girl is making trouble, a few weeks later a younger girl presents herself to George. Mere prostitution of a native girl would have been acceptable, but she breaks the rule by allowing herself to be seen by his white visitors.

Sexual relation between white women and black men were unthinkable. Although it brought to the conscious consideration of white society, rape, one assumes, would have been preferable to willing acquiescence. The idea of a white woman actually being attracted to a black man was unthinkable. Lessing's very first novel *The Grass is Singing* gathers much of its power from the analysis of this taboo. The novel is set in Africa and in the first chapter; we learn that a white woman, Mary Turner, has been murdered by her black servant. In an extended flashback, is recounted her courtship and marriage. She had escaped from childhood of misery and poverty to work happily in the town. In her thirties, she marries a lonely farmer, Dick, who takes her to live on a remote farm in the bush. Mary is sexually cold, socially reserved and her marriage bitterly unhappy. The only intimate relationship she was, in her life, is within the black servant, Moses, who gains a certain psychological dominance over her, when he sees the relationship threatened he murders her.

The Colonial myth Questioned in *The Grass is Singing* is that of white superiority and separateness from the native people. Thus, the most shocking aspect of the novel became not so much the murder but the neighbour's attitude towards it. The Turners failure at farming, through poverty

and then Mary's getting herself murdered, somehow to let them down. It had severally threatened white solidarity, a quality carefully cherished in the colonial society. Turner lived in extremely primitive conditions, and this is a source of irritation to the scattered white community.

Since Lessing's personal life goes through ups and downs in most of the places she is seen to be outspoken about the personal agony of a woman. Somewhat the feminist consciousness in the society is reflected in both her fictional and non-fictional works. Lessing often gives an impression that she is to warn the people of her time not to be so callous to this section of the society, at the same time her African writings represent to the governing empire's expatriate dreary and delusion of a white supremacy. The novel *The Grass is Singing* fused the social relations of man and women which are required, disintegrated and distorted. Her outspoken attitude towards the colour, prejudice and inhuman activity of the white towards the black race, is much discussed in the paper.

Doris Lessing is supposed to be a crusader who searches for Social Justice and human right, as she has once told in her book *Going Home*-

"When I became political and communist it was because they were the only people. I had ever met, who had fought the colour born in their lives. Very few did, not the labour party-not the liberals – and not the members of the churches. But when you joined the communist, you meet, for the first time people of other races and on equal terms."

World War-II precipitated a new influence into the settler society of Southern Rhodesia and disturbed its ingrown conservatism. Lessing too became politically involved. Englishmen with known sympathy towards communism, serving in the Royal Air Force, brought with them what was then the first Marxist idealism of the 30s contacts with them brought Lessing in the communist folds, she was impressed. "There was a time in my life when I was a member of a communist party which was pure, they had no contact with any kind of reality. It must have been blessed by Lenin from the grave, it was so pure – for period about three years a group of enormously idealistic and most intellectual people created a communist party in a vacuum, who no existing communist party anywhere in the world would have recognized as such. It was speculatively rootless."

In 1957, a reaction against this political malaise and of the apparent sterility and incoherence of the British National culture, itself had developed. It was loudly proclaimed by the *Angry young Men*, expressed through their writings in the Declaration. Osborne, Lessing, Kingsley Amis were some of the main contributors. In socialism and the intellectuals, Amis discussed the different positions and stances of various categories of intellectual in the immediate post war period. He distinguished between academics particularly those in provincial universities who had traditionally veered towards the political and the right one, the one hand, on the other, the literary and party man, the writer, in the widest sense, the critic, the journalist, the self employed intelligentsia if you like. They had formed the basis of the Marxist intelligentsia



of the 1930's but since the early 40's they had fallen into pessimism and passive acceptance. This was not only in the overt political response to Stalinism, but also because of structural transformations and ideological lacuna with in English intellectual and political institutions. Amis concluded his essay voicing his confused reaction to the rising generation of radical intellectuals formulated the post war impasse in the opening editorial of universities and left review (1957).

The post war decade saw every political concept becoming a weapon in the cold war of ideas, every idea had its label, every person had his place in the political spectrum, every form of political action appeared in someone's eyes, a polite treason. Between the high citadel of Stalinist Russia and the welfare state ..... there seemed to be nothing but an arid waste.

In these tight compost materialized world, buttressed by bans and proscriptions, suspicious and fears, supported by texts from Lenin and Stalin, mottos from Burke and Bag hot, protected by massive armies with nuclear stock piles and mutually exclusive military pacts, British socialism suffered moral and intellectual eclipse. Lessing's concept of nature relates to the concept of men. The nature of men is to oppress other that is the inborn activity of mankind. The social pattern of men is deeply rooted and is difficult to wave out its various norms and forms.

Nature's soothing influence upon men can remove some social maladies. Lessing has formulated her literal message to the modern world; men are born to be free and frank. The social marginalization

in no way forbids human freedom bestowed by men. There should not be any gender and sex discrimination. All are equal in the eyes of God; nobody displays his supremacy on other.

Eco-Feminism is another factor which is a rapid movement in the literature now. That is potential voice of Lessing; she herself raises such voices in most of her fictional and non-fictional works. Specially in the African writings, this eco-feminist pictures are reflected. The concept of nature in Lessing's work is highly symbolic and significant, though she is not outspoken and emotional in the romantics in their poetry, Philosophers, like Thoreau, Emerson and others, predominance of Nature grandeur, is reflected in the characters, situations and sequences. Especially nature's picture is more ruled in the Novel *The Grass is Singing* then other works. Her African stories and her first novel *The Grass is Singing (1950)*, *Children of Violence* and *he Golden Notebook* are woven about politics, specially communism and paint pictures of Nature's dramatic glance. The soul of the motives of Lessing is to express the human agony and the class torture. That leads to the conclusion that all the characters are coming from lower middle class situation and come under the spell of rustic atmosphere and nature's lap as we find this picture most probably in Hardy's works.

Most of her African writings, deal with the racial struggle. Even in the work *The Golden Notebook* which is not directly set in Africa, there "constant presence of Africa noticeable in many subtle and inescapable reference Lessing said earlier-

"I was the daughter of a white

farmer, although he was a very poor man in terms of what he was brought up to expect could always get loans from the land Bank ... But he employed anywhere from fifty to one hundred working blacks. An adult black earned 12 shillings a month less than two dollars, and his food was rationed to corn meal and beans and a pound of meat each week. It was all grossly unfair.”

So explicit has Lessing been in citing this injustice in detail, particularly in those works specifically concern with Africa that after her return trip in 1956 to southern Rhodesia and south Africa she found herself in the company of many of her friends in ‘being prohibited’. As she called it being permanently in exile from the country she grew up.

Anna’s own constant thinking about the African situation most often takes the form of entries in *The Black Notebook*. Thoughts and convictions the end of *The Black Notebook* entries, she describes a dream she had had, a recurring dream about the individuals she had previously known in Africa. This particular entry contains a series of new items every one of which refers to ‘violence, death, rioting and hatred in Africa.’ In her note book, she recalls several

Africans she has met and talked to, Tom Msthe long represent, the consistently ethical and trustworthy extreme. Charlie Tampa believes in no racial exclusiveness, he longs, for political power for personal gains, he is an opportunist. There is another type though not named but described in terms generally applicable to a purely opportunistic politician the world around – bombastic and rabble rousing who drink and where who has all the touch and Qualities of a Prime Minister. ■

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# Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao as the Trio of Indian English Fiction

Suresh S.B

The British ruled India for more than 200 years. The East India Company rule was firmly established in 1818, once the British conquered the Marathas. The event of Sepoy Mutiny concluded the Company rule, and with it, began England's direct administration. The English monarch became India's monarch too. Mahatma Gandhi came to the Indian scene in 1920, and the Gandhian Age (from 1920 to 1947) brought independence to the country. Of course, India's partition was a blot on Indian politics. Thence, India became a member of the British Commonwealth.

The British Raj could not understand the linguistic complications. So it imposed English in administration. Lord Macaulay argued for English as a medium of education, which Raja Ram Mohan Roy supported. Lord Bentinck, the Governor-General, immediately yielded and the Government resolution of 7 March 1835 (a red-letter day in the history of Modern India) unequivocally declared that "the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India, and all funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone." (Sharp 130) The

extremism of this policy was sought to be corrected some time later by Sir Charles Wood, a member of the Select Committee of the British Parliament in 1852-53. Then, there appeared three universities in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras in 1858.

The Bengal Renaissance is something like Irish renaissance. Raja Rama Mohan Roy, Maharishi Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Iswarchandra Vidyasagar, and the Dutts, created a great cultural awakening in India.

M. K. Naik calls the period from 1920 to 1947 as Gandhian whirlwind. This age saw the rise and growth of Indian English fiction. K.S. Venkataramani (1891-1951), A.S. P. Ayyar and K. Nagarajan (1893) were the beginners of English fiction.

**Mulk Raj Anand (1905- 2004):** Mulk Raj Anand, the eldest of the three trio, has also been the most prolific. Born in Peshawar (now in Pakistan), in a Hindu coppersmith family, Anand has narrated the story of his upbringing in his autobiography *Apology for Heroism* (1946).

Anand's fiction has been shaped by what he himself calls 'the double burden on my shoulders, the Alps of the European tradition and the Himalaya of my Indian

past.’ (Give the source with page number) To his Indian past, however, Anand’s attitude is ambivalent. Anand’s first novel, *Untouchable* (1935) describes an eventful day in the life of Bakha, a young sweeper from the outcastes’ colony of a north Indian cantonment town. This particular day brings him his daily torments and more but in the end it also suggests three alternative solutions to his problem. The novel ends with Bakha thinking of everything he had heard, though he could not understand it all.

In his two chronicles of coolies—*Coolie* (1936) and *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937), Anand turns to the lot of another class of the under-privileged. The range and scope of his fiction have now widened, and there is also an orchestration of themes which are barely hinted at in *Untouchable*—themes such as the contrast between rural and urban India and race-relations. *Coolie* is the pathetic odyssey of Munoo, an orphaned village boy from the Kangra hills, who sets out in search of a livelihood. The novel is an indignant comment on the tragic denial to a simple peasant of the fundamental right to happiness. Munoo and his fellow coolies are exploited by the forces of industrialism, capitalism, communalism and colonialism.

A luckier Punjabi peasant is the protagonist of the ambitious trilogy—*The Village* (1939), *Across the Black Waters* (1941) and *The Sword and the Sickle* (1942). The first novel offers a realistic picture of life in a typical Punjabi village in early 20th century seen through the eyes of young Lai Singh, who is an insider turned outsider, as he is a rebel against all the village mores which he finally escapes by running away.

*Across the Black Waters*, which shows Lal Singh joining the army and fighting in Flanders in World War I, is perhaps the only major war novel in Indian English literature. The last volume of the trilogy however, comes as a sad anti-climax. *The Sword and the Sickle* is an extremely confused book. It shows Lal Singh returning home from a German prison, hobnobbing with Communists and ending up in prison again.

Anand’s *The Big Heart* (1945) is undoubtedly one of Anand’s better efforts, though marred at the end by compulsive preaching. Fortunately, Anand returned to his peasant in *The Old Woman and the Cow* (1960). The ‘cow’ is Gauri, a simple peasant girl forsaken by her husband and actually sold to a rich merchant by her mother, whose logic is reminiscent of that of Hardy’s peasants. *The Death of a Hero* (1964), a short novel about a Kashmir freedom fighter again reveals how Anand resorts to mere conventionalities when he is cut off from his native Punjab scene. In the 1970s, Anand returned to the autobiographical vein, which he first exploited in *Seven Summers*. *Morning Face* (1970; and *Confession of a Lover* (1976) are parts of a long fictional autobiography reportedly planned in seven volumes. The strength of Anand’s fiction lies in its vast range, its wealth of living characters, its ruthless realism, its deeply felt indignation at social wrongs, and its strong humanitarian compassion.

#### **R.K. Narayan (1906-2001):**

The art of Rasipuram Krishnaswamy Narayan offers an interesting contrast to that of Mulk Raj Anand. Narayan’s delicate blend of gentle irony and sympathy, quiet realism and fantasy stands poles apart from

Anand's militant humanism. A Tamilian who spent the major part of his life in the quiet city of Mysore, Narayan was the son of a school master. Except for brief stints of working as a school master and a newspaper correspondent, he devoted himself exclusively to writing.

Narayan's early novels *Bachelor of Arts* (1937), *The Dark Room* (1938), and *The English Teacher* (1946) did not turn popular. His art is still content to skim on the surface in *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937), the story of Chandran, a sensitive youth caught in a conflict between the western ideas of love and marriage instilled into him by his education and the traditional social set up. *The Dark Room* (1938) is Narayan's only attempt to write in a fictional register totally unsuited to his talent—a wholly serious tale of silent suffering. *The English Teacher* (1946), Narayan's last novel before Independence, clearly demarcates the areas of his strength and weakness, by neatly dividing itself into two halves of equal length.

*The Guide* (1958) is Narayan's masterpiece. Nowhere else is his irony sharper or more firmly wedded to the moral imagination, nor has his technique been subtler. As in *The Financial Expert*, the central theme is ironic reversal, but not only is the irony multiple here; it also piles comic complication upon complication until finally the pyramid collapses, crushing the hero to death. 'Railway Raju', a tourist guide, has an affair with Rosie, the unhappy wife of an unwordly scholar and makes her a successful professional dancer; but is jailed for forgery, trying to prevent a possible reconciliation between her and her husband. Mistaken for

a sadhu upon his release, he is prompted both by necessity and vanity to play the part well, resulting in many ironic developments, until finally the saint's halo becomes a deadly noose when he is compelled to die fasting, to bring rain to a drought-stricken village. The ending is charged with a Hawthornian ambiguity. Narayan's later novels include *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955), *The Vendor of Sweets* (1967) and *The Painter of Signs* (1976).

**H. Raja Rao (1908-2006):** Raja Rao, the youngest of the trio, hails from an ancient South Indian Brahmin family from Hasan, which counts among its ancestors Vidyaranya Swami, perhaps the greatest teacher of the philosophy of non-dualism after Sankaracharya. Part of Rao's childhood was spent with his grandfather, who was spiritually inclined and this fact becomes significant when one considers the concern with spiritual values that characterizes this novelist's later work. Raja Rao's passionate attachment to the Indian ethos has, curiously enough, been actually strengthened by his long exile from India since 1929 when he sailed for France to do research on the mysticism of the West.

Raja Rao has not been a prolific novelist, having written just four novels beginning with *Kanthapura* (1938), which is perhaps the finest evocation of the Gandhian age in Indian English fiction. It is the story of a small South Indian village caught in the maelstrom of the freedom struggle of the 1930s and transformed so completely in the end that 'there's neither man nor mosquito' (Give the source with page number) left in it. In this little village situated high on the ghats up the Malabar



coast, the most important event has traditionally been the ploughing of the fields at the first rains. In 1930, the harvest reaped is the Gandhian whirlwind. Raja Rao offers no dreamland vision of the freedom struggle. In fact, the initial reaction of Kanthapura to Gandhian thought is one of bored apathy. But young Moorthy, the Gandhian, who knows that the master-key to the Indian mind is religion, puts the new Gandhian wine into the age-old bottle of traditional *Harikatha* and thus indoctrinates the Kanthapurans. The struggle is even harder for the simple, illiterate village women who do not understand the why and the wherefore of it all, and only know that the Mahatma is right in the tradition of the Hindu avatars. They

have their moments of temptation, cowardice and backsliding but still hold out to the bitter end, until Kanthapura is a deserted village. *Kanthapura* is a brilliant attempt to probe the depths to which the nationalistic urge penetrated, thus rediscovering the Indian soul.

Raja Rao's later novels are *The Serpent and the Rope*, *The Cat and Shakespeare*, *Comrade Kirillou*, and a few collections of short stories. Raja Rao's fiction obviously lacks the social dimension of his two major contemporaries.

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# Social Discrimination Vs. Social Activism in Contemporary India : A Study

**Pramila Kumari Das**

## **ABSTRACT**

This paper intends to highlight the causes and practices of social discrimination in India and traces its continuity from the ancient past to modern times, and also seeks to suggest how in contemporary India two trends are simultaneously moving; (i) defending the casteism by the fanatic and fundamentalist forces (ii) trying to oppose this specially by progressive democracy and forward looking global Indian intellectuals.

**Key words:** *Social discrimination, Cultural diversity, Dalit atrocities, and Social justice.*

## **Social System in India**

Culture, tradition and religion are three seminal factors which invariably influence the social systems in our country. The beauty of our country lies in its unprejudiced eulogy for diversity of our cultures. The importance of cultural diversity strengthens the secular character of our society. Cultural unity is co-ordinated by the social actions of every member of the society. Social structure, social institutions, social interactions and behavior are based on certain social values. Social life is permitted by hierarchy, and caste system is one of the expressions of the social hierarchy. Synthesis or unity has been the major characteristics of our society in spite of the system of stratification and hierarchy that is based on the principle of birth and

ascription. In this manner, the traditional caste system represents the hierarchy of status groups. Since the ancient times, the Hindu people have been believing in Dharma, Artha, Kama, Mokshya (salvation) and harmony of all these aspects of personality determines the whole actions of the individual in the society. According to S.K.Jena (2003), on the basis of the nature of the work, social organizations were formed and divided into different groups. Initially, these groups were known as 'varna' and later 'caste groups'. The fragmentation of society was based on labour, privileges and disabilities of various groups. Dharma, Karma or Ahimsa or non-violence is the very soul of Hindu social life. Dharma represents our social life and cultural norms. It decides the duties for different sections in the society. A man has taken birth to do work for his own interest and the welfare of the group. Charity to all is the very soul of Indian social system. (ISC.sec.1) Such a sacred social system is going to be demolished due to certain social discriminations such as caste system, child marriage, and unequal education system as well as gender discrimination.

## **Meaning of Social Discrimination**

Discrimination refers to the prejudice that denies social participation to a particular group of people. They are deprived of all sorts of rights in a democratic

country like India. The upper caste people basically Brahmins enjoy social privileges while Dalits are poor and neglected in society. The discrimination in attitude, manner and status distinguishes the individuals in various categories: Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisha and Sudra respectively. The ill-treatment of Brahmin towards Sudra people is the main cause of discrimination in the society. It is a kind of unequal social system. The feeling of discrimination and oppression of Brahmin on Sudra deeply affected the Dalits in India. The difference in race, colour, sex and education has great impact on socio-economic justice of the Hindu society.

### **Casteism: the major cause of Social Discrimination**

The Casteism is at the root of Indian social structure. It distinguishes the people on the basis of their 'caste'. The feelings of caste system divided the country men into various groups such as Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra. According to the report of the *World Values Survey 2011*, India is the second most racist country all over the world. The people from different countries are treated differently in India for their skin colour, and origin of the country. The 'division policy' started and violence arose throughout the country. That affected the peaceful living of human beings. Especially, the African black people are ill-treated, denied to live in better accommodations, attacked and killed in India. (Wikipedia.Org.)

### **Literature of Casteism**

The word 'Caste' is derived from the Portuguese word 'Casta' which means

'breed' or 'lineage'. It also means 'race' or 'kind'. In India caste is popularly known as 'jati' which means 'birth'. It is defined in different ways. M.N.Srinivas defined "Caste is a hereditary endogamous, usually localized group having a traditional association with an occupation and a particular position in a local hierarchy of castes. Relations between castes are governed, among other things, by the concepts of pollution and purity and generally, maximum commensality occurs within the caste". (Pattanaik,2005.ISC.18) Thus caste as a form of social stratification that divides society into various social groups. Dr.P.K.Mishra (2004) explores that it originated during the Vedic period when Aryans and non-Aryans were separated from each other by their skin colour or Varna. Aryans were fair-skinned and powerful while Dravidians were dark- skinned and maintained separate identity. Thus, Varna consciousness started, which gave birth to the Casteism. (ISC.unit-1.section.2) Amarjit S. Naranga (2017) viewed that British rulers used caste system as one of the instruments of 'divide and rule'. Some castes were mostly treated for certain jobs, like police and army, whereas some others were branded as criminals. In course of time, the effect of laws, according to Srinivas, increased caste consciousness and inter-caste competition. (Yojana.19) Vivek Kumar (2016) highlighted that Srinivas has listed five features of casteism: hierarchy, endogamy, purity, pollution, occupation and commensality. DR.B.R. Ambedkar accepted only endogamy as real feature of caste system. This system can be understood as one in which a minority social group enjoys cumulative "cultural capital" while majority

group is cumulatively excluded. (EPW.Dec.10, 2016: 85) Dalits are at the bottom of the Hindu caste system and laws protect them. They face widespread discrimination in the country. India is world's largest democratic country said Dr.Vinod Sonkar (a Dalit professor in Delhi University) and many other Dalits call it an apartheid—style state. (bbc.com) The Times of India(2013,2nd May) states that in accordance with 2011 Census, nearly 20.14 crore people belonging to various Scheduled Castes in the country. As per the 2001 census, the number was 16.66 crore. The dalit population showed a decadal growth of 20.8% where as India's population grew 17.7% during the same period. (www.bbc.com.news>world.....India)

### **Impact of Casteism**

Caste system is a hereditary phenomenon, unfair in modern society. The system is very rigid one, restricts one's choice and interest. It is decided by one's job specialization. The practice of caste system opposes 'dignity of labor'. The followings are the negative impacts on our society:

#### **Lack of freedom**

The rigid laws of caste restricted the practice of everything inter-caste. Dalits didn't protest for their democratic rights, against social inequality and untouchability.

#### **Lack of unity**

The caste feelings encouraged the rise of untouchability which is the major factor of dis-unity in India. The social prejudice against the schedule caste and schedule tribe and other dalits is anti democratic. Democracy calls for equality

but casteism breaks equality. The Brahmin and other high caste people enjoy social, economic and political rights but dalits didn't get chance to enjoy all sorts of rights and opportunities for their own progress.

### **Destroys human creativity**

A man belonging to a low caste did not accept business opportunity. He could not take job according to his own will but was bound to adopt hereditary profession whether he had his interest or not. Such system destroys one's creativity in job.

### **Threat to universal peace and social stability**

The untouchable group of people struggle for their own rights, equality and dignity. Always revolution is the main source of discontentment and frustration. The inter-caste relation is required for eradication of casteism.

### **Ignores human values and social welfare**

The time when man becomes caste oriented, works for his own caste and neglects the activities related to all human beings. He becomes self-centered and forgets to serve the nation.

### **Prevailing Caste Discrimination in the country**

With the progress of education, the human civilization goes ahead but the caste system is still prevailing in each and every corner of our country. A few examples are given below:

*The New Indian Express* (12 June,2018) exposed 'No Temple entry for Dalit Student' because of caste discrimination. Till now dalits cannot enter into the temple to worship

god in Odisha. The ugly face of social menace came to force when Rojalin Sethy an engineering student of schedule caste community was barred from entering a Shiva Temple. Her father said 'since we are Harijans my daughter was turned away from the temple by priest Narahari Panda. We have been deprived of basic social rights as Dalit families of the village continue to suffer from religious alienation'. It is illegal and unconstitutional to restrict entry of Dalits into the temples. The village chief with some upper caste persons discussed in the meeting with the tradition and restricted the entry of the Dalits into the temple. Then Dalits raised their voice and demanded for justice. Therefore, it is necessary to take steps in government and non-government level to resolve the dispute arise due to caste discrimination.

*The New Indian Express* (6th.Aug 2016)Amit Bandre, in the article 'Human Rights and American Hypocrisy', focused on the atrocities on Dalits in India. Many years have passed after independence, till now they live in miserable condition. For example, four dalit youth at Una in Gujrat suffered a lot which America promptly expressed concerning over 'rising intolerance violence' in India. It is also mentioned: 'the US commitment to ideals such as human rights, rule of law and democracy is confined only to whites within the American borders'. According to the Guardian study (the guardian.com) 1.134 blacks were killed at the hands of police in the US 2015. The study also reveals about 65 young black Africans are killed by police every year. Thomas Jefferson owned over 200 slaves, writes that 'Declaration of Independence would become a manifesto for

human rights and personal freedom in US.' The Bible advised the slaves that "servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart as unto Christ." (Ephesians 6:5) The atrocities on dalits in India has been seen since Hindu tradition such as killing of Shambook by Lord Ram or ace archer Eklavya of Mahabharat losing his thumb for lesson from Guru Dronacharya. British officials came to accept missionaries as partners in the noble task of shouldering the white man's burden. In America, atrocities against blacks are mostly committed by law enforcement agencies and ruling establishment. The white racist system exercises such ill power. In this system, the police officers killed unarmed innocent blacks seldom, get punished. In India, dalits are mostly targeted by individuals and once the incident becomes public, the system comes down heavily on the guilty. The strongest law of the parliament as well as social awareness would eradicate caste related crimes from the soil of India.

*The New Indian Express*, ( On 24<sup>th</sup> July 2016) highlighted on "The Time to Defend Dalits Against Cow Defenders". It puts emphasis on worship of one's work. The dalits who carefully skin the decaying corps of a cow and preserve it to make leather, hold their profession in high regard, but this community never honoured but torture on them for centuries. For example, at Una in Gir Somnath district of Gujrat, four dalit youth who were skinning a dead cow were tied and dragged to a police station while being beaten along the way. It is not surprising that dalit youth because of torture and dis-honourable death were prepared to



commit suicide. It is mentioned that in 2016 one person had lost his life. A strike or bandh was declared protesting the attitude of the State and police moved towards the plight of dalits. Unfortunately, the high caste people as well as government officials did not have their sympathetic attitude towards the dalits. Hence, the dalits suffered discrimination in social, economic and political sphere. They started revolution for their own rights. The dalit community cleans up the dead cattle and the garbage from the road. If atrocities continue they would stop cleaning the road and drainage too. In fact, they must be treated highly and worshipped for their selfless service. The people of Hindu society support democracy and justice should stand up for dalits.

### **Social activism**

Since the ancient times, it has been continuing to merge the untouchable people into the mainstream of the society. The progress of village, state and nation lies behind the upliftment of dalits. They should live with dignity. Therefore, certain activities have been conducted to decrease the atrocities on dalits in the government and non-government levels. A few of these are noted below:

*The New Indian Express*, (18th April 2018) exposed Hindu Priest Carries Dalit man on Shoulder, it highlighted that all human beings are equal irrespective of caste and colour. 400-years ago, near Sri Ranganathswamy Temple, was witnessed an incident where a Hindu priest carries a Dalit man on shoulders into inner sanctum of the temple to proclaim that all are equal irrespective of caste and colour. During the attack on the Dalits across the country and

allegations that Constitutional safeguards for Scheduled Castes are going down. The chief priest of Lord Balaji Temple in Chilkur C.S. Rangarajan on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2018 performed the unique ceremony named 'Munivahana Seva'. During the rite, the 60 year old priest carried Aditya Parasri, the Dalit devotee, on his shoulders. Later moved around the temple holding him on his shoulders, for three times. According to the Hindu legend, such ritual was first performed in Tamil Land 2,000 years ago. A sage named Loka Sarang after drawing water from river Kaveri, carried an outcaste man of Paanar community, traditionally treated as untouchables as per the Tamil hagiographical literature.

*The New Indian Express* (21<sup>st</sup> November 2017) explored a Bihar woman sells mangalsutra....it is explained here that in modern society, the dalit women are very conscious for their own dignity as well as the dignity of their family members. As far as possible, they try to live in a clean social environment. The paper focused on an exemplary act by an unassuming village Dalit woman Runki Devi in Bihar who sends out a positive message to build toilet for healthy living. The woman belong to Varuna village, Fatua block, near Patna in Bihar, sold her mangalsutra, ear-rings for the construction of the toilet for her family. Her two young daughters were happy to have a toilet at home. They would no longer have to go outside to answer nature's call. In fact, such a step was the self development of dalits. Even the dalit woman tries for the improvement of her social status and be equal with others.

*The New Indian express* (29<sup>th</sup>

December,2017) exposed “Dalits protest for action against upper caste men”. Hundreds of dalits of Talmunda village, under Babupali Grampanchayat blocked Binka-Rampur road, protest in action of district administration over demolition of the houses of a fellowman by persons belonging to the higher caste. The dalit Sadhu Charan Bagh filed the complaint. On the basis of his complaint two persons, Jaya Sahu and Subhransu Bhoi were arrested and sent to jail. No doubt, such type of revolutionary action of Dalits against upper caste people would bring certain reformation of the caste system.

*The Economic Times* (1st Aug.2016),” New Age Dalit Ready to Fight for Equality” focused on the struggle of the dalits for equality. In Ahmadabad a large rally was organized under the leadership of Jignesh Mewani to protest the Una incident and demand justice for the victims. Mewani as a convenor of ‘Una Dalit Atyachar Laldat Samit ’(Una Dalit Fight against Atrocities Committee) addressed the rally on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2016. The dalits carried the pledge with the slogan ‘Dalit will no more lift the carcasses. The revolutionary mob demanded that the state government should provide alternative job to the Dalits. They will give up the job of skinning dead animals and manual scavenging. The government also provides housing facilities to them in the urban areas. Still then, they face social untouchability all over the state. But our constitution strongly bans untouchability.

### **Observations**

Caste system is the major obstacle in the development of the democratic country like India.

- 1- ‘Casteism is determined by birth.
- 2- Developed due to ignorance and superstition.
- 3- Encourages communalism.
- 4- It is beyond humanity.
- 5- Leads towards disparity and untouchability.
- 6- Leads to cruelty and brutality.
- 7- Encourages slavery.
- 8- Destroys one’s dignity or self-esteem.
- 9- A threat to democracy.
- 10- Hampers social justice.

### **Suggestions for Eradication of Casteism**

In order to root out caste system from the Indian soil the followings should be followed:

- (I) The state should provide equal opportunities and advantages to the poor and neglected in the society irrespective of caste, creed and religion.
- (i) The politics should be above caste.
- (ii) Caste or religion should not find a place in the reservation.
- (iii) Opportunities must be available to those who sincerely deserve, may be they belong to any caste.
- (iv) The legitimate needs of a community and people should be given priority, but not to the caste they belong because this will lead to social confrontations and prejudices when the poor and the needy in high caste society are deprived of such opportunities.

### **Conclusion**

Casteism ignores human values and social welfare. Arise! Awake! Stop not till the goal is reached, pronounced by Swami

Vivekananda. These fateful words ring out to develop national consciousness among people of India. No difference, no separation does one feel among rich and poor, high and low caste people. Everyone should have responsibility to take care for those less fortunate not only with love but also with proper care for them. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar calls for the annihilation of caste system from Hindus and suggested for social equality, liberty and fraternity. As a victim of untouchability, he wanted to uproot this evil system for the development of India. Brahmins should have positive ideas for the liberation of dalits . Kanak T.V.News (2<sup>nd</sup> December 2017) declared; the former president of America, Barack Obama, in 'The Times of India' conference suggested to Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India, that no nation could be divided on the basis of religions and casts. India is the only state all over the world where Dalits feel proud and say that they are Indians. It means, they have the feeling of unity and integrity. It is our primary role to work hard for the upliftment of dalits. Now, though they are not living completely comfortably but still enjoying some facilities like reservation in service, education and politics to some extent than other groups. Still then cast discrimination is prevailing in India and it is our primary role to root it out and let them live freely. ■

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# Odia Poet Kalindi Charan Panigrahi and Gjurati Poet Narendra Modi : An Analogous Study

Subash Nayak

Padmabhusan Dr. Kalindi Charan Panigrahi is one of the bright luminaries of Odia literature and a pioneer of Odia Green literature (Sabuja Sahitiya) during 1921 to 1936. He shot to fame as a young writer and captured the attention and interest of readers by the brilliance of his literary output. He was a versatile genius, a poet, novelist, playwright, essayist and biographer. Alongside his rare creative artistry, scholarship, intellect and dynamic perspective towards literature, he was a critic par excellence. His works are remarkable in terms of quality and quantity. This great Odia poet has created a niche for himself in World literature.

Kalindi Charan was born to a Brahmin family of Biswanathpur Sasan in the district of Puri on 2nd July 1901. His father Swapneswar Panigrahi was an ideal teacher, elder brother Dibyasingha, an advocate, youngest brother Bhagabati, a creative writer of progressive thought and ideology. During childhood, his home was a veritable literary workshop and intellectual hub which was regularly visited by many reputed personalities including poets, writers, social activists and revolutionaries. They used to discuss matters concerning socio-economic, political and literary affairs

of Odisha. Such native ambience profoundly inspired young Kalindi prompting him to start writing early in life. During school days, he edited a magazine titled “Chhatra Darpan”. On completion of schooling from Puri Zilla School, he joined the prestigious alma mater Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, where his popularity grew among students and teachers alike for his blooming literary activities. Panigrahi set up a literary club in Ravenshaw College Campus along with four young eminent literary personalities namely Annada Shankar Ray, Baikunthanath Pattanaik, Sarat Chandra Mukherjee and Harihar Mohapatra. Kalindi Charan also founded ‘Non-Sense Club’, a literary Organization and published a popular magazine “Abakash”. The fame and popularity of Kalindi Charan rest chiefly on his two landmark artifacts, one a story titled “Mansar Bilapa” and the other a novel *Matira Manisha*. Both are supreme in delineating common human feelings and emotions and have been deeply stirring the minds of millions of readers. In line with *Matira Manisha*, he has written social novels such as - *Luhara Manisha*, *Ajira Manisha*, *Amarachita* which has brought him close to the hearts of innumerable Odias. He was a real son of the soil.

As a master storyteller, he has brought out collections of stories titled *Mo Kathati Sarinahi*, *Sagarika*, *Dwadashi* which vividly reveal the contemporary lifestyle, socio-economic, political fabric of Odisha and his humanitarian outlook.

Kalindi Charan's creativity is best exhibited in his anthologies of poetry – *Chhuritie Loda*, *Kshyanika Satya*, *Manenahi*, *Mahadipa*, *Sabuja Kabita*. His poetic ability is as brilliant as his art of storytelling and skill in weaving social function. The book of poems *Sabuja Kabita* was published when Kalindi Charan was still a student, reading in Ravenshaw College. Nature and rural backdrop find abundant representation in the poems of Kalindi Charan. His poem on Puri Mandir reflects the ideology of Biswakabi Rabindra Nath Tagore. The poem is based on humanism and socialism.

In another anthology of poems *Kshyanika Satya*, Kalindi Charan deals with his memorable childhood days. In the poem 'Ashesha Swarga' Kalindi Charan presents his past life. Prachin, Nabin, Suna Poems are based on Educationism. 'Jadu Ghar' and 'Kiea Sala Saitan' are two of the poems based on his progressive thought. The poem - 'Lohita Batha' and 'Pasoridelirea Similpal' touch the heart of the readers.

The poet's self dedication to the creator (Jagatshastra) is portrayed in his *Mahadeep*. The poems 'Prakruti Purusha', 'Aruparu Awhan', 'Pravat', 'Lotanipara', 'Ashada Sandhya', 'Shasadan', identify the poet's love for socialism. The poems 'Shandhya Akasha', 'Godhuli Lagna', 'Bashra Basant' deal with his concept of love. Other remarkable poems of Kalindi

Charan are – 'Jaya Bhagaban', 'Bhakti Chabuk- BajiRout', 'Jahughar'. The poem 'Manasi' deals with 'millan-virah', the union and separation in love. Kalindi Charan also penned some devotional poems like 'Prashadhana', 'Ashesh Swarga', and 'Biswara Aahwan'. The poems of Kalindi Charan reflect humanism and socialism.

Kalandi Charan also is an eminent essayist and biographer. His autobiography *Ange Jaha Nibhichhi* needs special mention for it is a reliable record of his long dedicated life of action in the backdrop of the contemporary social dispensation.

Kalindi Charan was a long time President of Utkal Sahitya Samaj, as a fitting tribute to his long, outstanding career in Odia literature. He was conferred with – Odisha Sahitya Academi Award and Kendra Sahitya Akademi fellowship as the first Odia. He was also the recipient of the prestigious Padma Bhusan Award for his extraordinary achievements. As a mark of respect - Sambalpur University bestowed upon him the honorary Doctor of Literature (D. Litt.)

Everything passes with the rotation of wheel of time. Kalindi Charan left for his heavenly abode on 25th May 1991 at the age of 91. But he continues to reign in the hearts of the Odias and lovers of Odia literature and thus, attains immortality in the golden pages of Odia literature.

Gujarati Poet Narendra Modi, born on 17th September 1950 in Badnagar in the state of Gujarat, to mother Hiraben Debi and father Damdor Das Modi, is a prominent figure of Indian Politics as well as Indian literature. He has seen many ups and downs



in life and has chosen writing as his passion. In his childhood Modi joined Rastriya Swayam Sevak Sangha (RSS) and devoted his life for the service of the Nation.

The author of this article has taken some of the poems from the anthology *A Journey*, an Anthology of poems translated by Ravi Manthan from original Gujarati by Narendra Modi. The book with 67 poems reflects his life story, his voice, vision and thinking. The translated version of the anthology with wide readership has been able to receive international readership. The author of this article has attempted to translate the book in Odia language which will be brought out soon.

The poem 'We, Together' reflects the secret of unity which is at the back of all successful deeds. The poem 'Hope' is in real term a ray of hope in the life of common man. The poem 'Kargil' reverberates the dedication and sacrifices of the Indian soldiers for the unity and integrity of our nation. The poet salutes the martyrs of Indian Army for sacrificing their lives to save the Nation. In the poem 'Garbha Dance' - Modi focuses on the famous 'Garba' dance of Gujarat which reflects Gujarati as well as Indian Humanism. In the poem 'Proud as a Hindu' Modi feels proud of himself as an Indian and a Hindu. In the poem 'River Narmada' Modi describes river Narmada as the lifeline of Indian culture and humanism. The poem 'God's Grace' expresses Modi's belief on the blessing of God which he thinks is the key to success of human beings. In the Poem 'Prayer' Modi expresses his feelings of the presence of power of God. The poem 'Love' is based on love, affection among human beings for the progress of an

amiable society. In the poem 'Mind's Eye, Third Eye' Modi feels the need of third eye or mind's eye for visualizing human civilization. The Poem 'Mother Give Me Spirit' is a landmark of his love for the mother land where he prays for being bestowed with the spirit to serve her through service to humanity. In the poem 'Towards the Goal' he asserts that every human being chooses his/her goal during lifetime. To achieve the goal of life one has to be very industrious. The poem 'Vande Mataram' is an epitome of his devotion to mother India. Here the poet expresses his reverence to the martyrs of Sepoy Mutiny of 1857.

The Poet Narendra Modi's Poems are the reflections of socialism as many of his poems express his concern for the marginalized section of the society with an aim to establish equality among human beings.

Narendra Modi's second collection of poems *Akha Aua Dhanaya Chha* in Gujarati language is an anthology of 67 poems in 2007 when he was the Chief Minister of Gujarat. The anthology was translated to Hindi Language by Dr. Anjana Shandir, Professor of Hindi Literature at Kalamba University. It is also translated to Odia Language from Hindi by Professor Dr. Smaryapriya Mishra - Prof. of Hindi - at Ravenshaw University with Dr. Amulya Ratna Mohanty.

The Poem 'Akhaya Aaa Dhnaya Chha' reflects Modi's vision, humanity, truth, love for God and humanism. Modi's creative longing is very clear for people, spotless politics, patriotism, high-mindedness and sincerity.

His poem 'Parabharish' reflects Modi as a statesman deeply evolved in people, river and water. In the poems – 'Swabhimani' and 'Evali Manisha' he deals with truth in the life of everyone. The poem 'Chhtrachhaya' deals with success and failure as the two-sides of a coin in human life. This poem deals with humanism in the society. In the poem 'Hope' the poet is always hopeful in his life. The poem 'AJIE' deals with past and uncertain future. To him present time is everything in life. His love is for the present time and he respects only present life. The poem - "Jananahie" reflects good and clean administration by Modi. The poem is based on 'Myth' which reflects clean governance as CM Gujarat and presently the Prime Minister of India.

The Poem 'Gourav' is based on Hinduism. Modi feels proud of himself as a Hindu. He always respects Hinduism as a religion. Narendra Modi is not only a poet but also a storyteller. His story book *Premtritha* is a collection of 12 stories which has been translated by Prasant Kumar Mohanty (OES) - Retd. Headmaster into Odia language from Gujarati.

Narendra Modi as a man of letters is not confined to Gujarati language and literature, only rather his creative genius spreads to the entire country and his place in Indian literature is remarkable. Many translators have translated his literary works in various languages and many research scholars are pursuing Ph.D on his works of art. But no work has been initiated by any scholar for Post-Doctoral research i.e. Doctor of Literature (D. Litt.) The author of this article is pursuing D. Litt. in Odia language and literature under the title "Odia

Sahityara Kabi Kalindi Charan and Gujarati Sahityara Kabi Narendra Modi nka Kabya Jagata : Eka Adhayana. Hope the study will provide a lot of inputs to the people of our generation to lead a better life. ■

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# Hate-Love Relationship between Father and Son in Harish Gore's *A Tribute to My Father's Struggle for Life*

A N Dadas

Nowadays we gossip about the generation gap, its reasons, advantages, disadvantages and so on. The Present generation is not ready to accept traditional views, customs and norms. They have developed their own and stick up to them very proudly. As a result, in a country like India, there is an increase in vridhashramas, the Old People's Houses. New generation people think that old people are obstacles in their progress. As per Indian culture, it is expected that the care of old people, father and mother, grandparents, should be taken by their inherent. But it is very rare in modern Indian society. In reality, old people in the house are the source of guidance, motivation and inspiration. They are the treasure of experience for young people. Today we have the culture of the nuclear family including husband and wife and their one or two children. Most of the people don't look after the old people. Hence they are spent to Old People's House. Yet there are a few people who know the importance and the role of old people in society in general and house in particular. *A Tribute to My Father's Struggle for Life* is one such non-fictional work that makes us open our eyes. This paper aims at the father-son relationship reflected in the internationally published book *A Tribute to My Father's Struggle for Life* which is really a guide to the young generation.

*A Tribute to My Father's Struggle for Life* is a biography divided into four parts with sub-titles that provide guidelines to the readers. Though it is a biography, the author's (Harish Gore) involvement in the story, particularly in Part III and Part IV, makes us realize that it is an autobiography. Part III of this book reveals mainly the father-son relationship. The author is a primary teacher. The role of primary teachers is very much important in the Indian educational system because the base of every new learner starts from this stage. So it is considered that primary teachers should have all sorts of knowledge regarding the psychology of all stakeholders – students, parents, well-wishers, politicians, etc. The author of this book fulfils all these expectations. Being a primary school teacher and well educated and cultured person, the author devoted his life (14 years) to nurture his father in critical condition and paved the ideal role for the young generation.

The father-son relationship in this work can be analyzed at various levels – earlier life, later life and after the death of his father. Hanumant Gore was the father of the author who was totally illiterate and whose parents died in his early age. In the words of the author, '..... who was born in utter poverty and had to face many odds.

He had to work hard as a child labourer – a farmer's servant. He struggled endlessly just to arrange for day's meal, had to face some unusual calamities, but still lived a simple, gentleman's life full of human values.' (Back cover page) The book deals with many major severe problems we come across in India such as child labour, illiteracy, malpractices in many fields (profession of doctors) and the problems of old and severely diseased people. Moreover, the book mainly aims at focusing on the son's pure love towards his father.

The father went through many stages of life such as a farmer's servant (child), worker, tailor and a real common man. But his passing through these stages was too much horrible. He was known as Bhau to all people who came in his contact. He lived in the village and worked beyond the imagination of these people. Aba searched a bride, Janabai, a daughter of Jagannath Raut for him. The father had his own house, his farm, cattle and tailoring business. He faced a quite horrifying situation of frequent droughts. But he never thought of suicide which has been happening in other parts of Maharashtra. He always believed in hard work. He was satisfied in life. His worst struggle compelled the author (his son) to pen about his father. The son wrote this book two reasons – treatment given to the diseased and old people by their family members. In short, the father wasted his childhood in misery, youth in slavery and hard work and old age in struggling against incurable, fatal disease cancer.

In his childhood age, the son hated his father like an enemy. He didn't like his

father's discipline. He didn't obey his father and always crossed him because of his strict discipline. It happens with many sons in the modern age. They don't like the disciplined life enforced by their fathers. The author also mentions that he hated his father strongly. He puts:

"I never liked Bhau. My father and we were not too close as father and son. I was of different thoughts. In my childhood, I had decided that my occupation would definitely be different from my father's. I never liked his nature. He was somewhat straightforward unlike me.

Everyone loves his father but I usually hated him. But those were the days when I fell in love with him when the enigmatical nature of my father got revealed to me. After that, I've paid great respect to him in his life. So far, I had observed only his outward appearance and nature. I started then, to know his inward nature to some extent. That is why I say that I fell in love with Bhau. Knowing his nature fully well, I was amazed and started loving him. (3-4)

Secondly, the son hated his father because of his hymns. The father loved singing hymns playing on the harmonium loudly. The son never understood to play the harmonium scientifically. He made many efforts but completely tuneless. He always hated his father for this or that reason.

Thirdly, the son tried to learn how to run the sewing machine. But his efforts were in vain. He confesses that he never loved his father because of his negative approach. He writes:



My negative approach towards my father was the main reasons behind it. The complete devotion to work makes us master it. While negative thinking may expel you out of that work. I had never loved my father, then how could I learn these skills? I was a high school boy at that time. My each and every act was to oppose father. Hatred and negative approaches usually have bad results. My life was thus infected by negative thinking. (6-7)

He failed to play the harmonium and to operate the sewing machine only because he hated his father. He did not live with his father in harmony in his early age. He supposes that negativity always keeps everyone from doing good things. As a child, he always opposed his father acting against his wish. He constantly opposed his father for no reason. It was his childhood foolishness that he could not understand his father. He puts:

I had never paid any respect to him. I had made it a deliberate habit of offending him. I had found in my life that my approach caused me too much loss but I never stopped to oppose him. (8)

In later life, the son understood the good qualities of his father and started loving him. His love for his father was not a sudden change. It had taken place after a long period and deep thinking. Strong hatred made the strong bonding between them. The son understood his father to some extent in his later life. But he worked as his caretaker because of his father's great human qualities within him. He started writing a book about

his father only to share his father's struggle against cancer and his old age. In part III of this book 'Struggle against Cancer' the author expresses the importance of love and accepts his own fault:

I have realized the importance of love in the case of my father. As I have stated earlier, I used to hate my father. My father was right, whereas I was always wrong. Caring for my father with love made my tough task easy. It was love alone which was the right medicine for his disease. During the whole period, I realized the power of love. It needs strength to heal incurable disease. Without love, it would have been rather difficult for me to serve him. Treating Bhau with love was indeed a rare experience. The whole journey of my father with me during this period really changed my life. His company changed me into a 'true human being', I insist. (112)

Love played a vital role during this crucial period. It was my love for my beloved father. I had thoroughly experienced its strength especially in the case of my father. It really worked nicely. I was totally helpless and I had to adopt the way of love in Bhau's treatment. (113)

The son was too alert about his father in his father's worse days. He puts: 'There came such situations that he had to obey me. He did so and our entire routine ran smooth until his end. Even if we both had a trouble in our journey, we were satisfied with it.' He felt respect for his father: 'My efforts for

my father were only for a person who was ideal in all respects and whose whole life was a big battle. I saluted the hard worker working in discipline throughout his life. It was my salute not to Bhau but to the person who had the right attitude to life that he always saw a ray of hope in life.’ (115)

Being affectionate towards his father, his life could have been unbearable without his father. Similarly, without his love, his father’s life would have no more than a desert. Now the son had changed himself and it had great meaning. His father took four years to trust him. The stench from his father’s mouth also made the bond between them very strong. Earlier the son portrays the father negatively that shows the love-hate relationship between them. His father had little emotional attachment with him. There is the detachment between the father and the son. The son compromises with the father by ignoring his treatment to him. The son too dislikes his father. Yet he could not escape from old belief – the father as God. Though his father is no more, his

relationship with his father has not drifted away. On the other hand, the sense of anger, frustration, injustice and alienation has drifted away. This type of father-son relationship is a fine example of ethics in Indian culture that should be followed by a new generation. ■

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# Kamala Das' *My Story* : A Questionable Autobiography

V.R. Badiger

Kamala Das (1934-2009) was recognized as one of the foremost the poets. She was the author of several novels, collections of poetry and short stories in English as well as in Malayalam. In which she wrote as Madavikutty. Some of the her works in English include the novel *The Alphabet of Lust* (1977), a collection short stories *Padmavati, the Harlot and Other Stories* (1992) a poetry collection *Summer in Calcutta* (1965), *The Decedents* (1967) *The Old Playhouse and Other Poems* (1973) and *Only the Soul Knows How to Sing* (1996). She received several awards for her poetry including PEN Poetry Prize and Sahitya Akademi Award. She was also nominated for the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1984. Her works have been translated into a number of languages including Fresco, Spanish, Russian German and Japanese.

The first version of *My Story* was Malayalam under the title *Enthe Katha* in 1973. K. Satchidanandan in his "Relocating My Story" writes in the very beginning : "With a frank and uninhibited longing of feminine desire, it had already created a sensation in Kerala when hit was serialized in the popular weekly *Malayanadu*, literally shaking up the prudish Malayali reading community used to shoving under the carpet all matters relating physical intimacy." (vii)

Kamala Das, like Shoba Dey and Geetha Hariharan, is one of the popular women writers of modern India. She is a basically a poet turned into a fiction writer as she wrote some stories and a novella and an autobiography and memoir. Her so called autobiography *My Story* created hue and cry among the orthodox minded readers of the women community and it was made her name more notorious than famous in the field of the writers. I ask the first question how far this autobiography sis true? How far it is false. As the authoress herself declares in the title story the word indicates some kind of falsehood or untruth about her own life. Perhaps the events and incidents and men and people she knew were exaggerated for the sake creating sensation among the readers. The preset work my story is the notorious work of the authoress who was basically fickle-minded.

If one readers the text carefully one realizes the authoress is basically a highly emotional being, a sensuous and quite sexually healthy person with the most sensuous appearance, For her bad luck the men she came in contact since her girlhood where all bad ones, lustful and cheating type. It seems that she never met a good and loving male except Carlo whom she declares to be first and the lat lover in her life. She

compares him to Lord Krishna and imagining herself as Radha in the end of her book, not in the beginning.

This north Indian religious spiritual cult of Lord Krishna and Radha is a kind of male construct for having a licentious life with sensuous women. Lord Krishna is said to have 14000 *gopikas* as his beloveds. It is something unbelievable but it may be wholly true also. The story of Lord Krishna is another work like *My Story* which is full of fantasy, myth and falsehood. Like Shiva, Lord Krishna is also bigamous having two wives. Is the method of having two wives is convenient for the true Indian male? One wife is not enough? So on the contrary one male is not enough for sexually satisfying a most sensuous sexy woman like Kamala Das. Whether she was like the image that she projected in her book is itself a questionable one.

The chief quality of the work is the language in which it is written—language is of most poetic and most perfect one. She is the master of English language in which it was translated from the Malayalam language. The translator has done full justice to the original text. As I do not Malayalam I cannot read and compare whether the English version is better or worse than the original. It is the poetic method she adopts to couch her terrible story of love, lust, sex and separation and longing etc.

In “Relocating *My Story*” K Satchidanandan writes: “The writer, ever mischievously enigmatic, kept them tantalized by dropping contradictory hints, for confessing it was nothing but truth and then declaring it was just a wish—fulfilling fantasy, an alter life she had created for

herself. The more orthodox readers of Kerala found it shockingly forthright and were quick to brand it immoral, denying to their sisters or daughters access to its agonized excitement. It is great author was looked upon as a seductress not someone to make friends with” (vii) This is similar to D.H. Lawrence’s publication of his last novel *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* which shocked the orthodox—minded Victorian readers. The book entitled ‘story’ like that of Mahatma Gandhi’s autobiography is partly false and partly true.

The story consists of 50 chapters starting from

‘Rule Britannia’ is about her experience in the primary school at Calcutta where she had some kind of racial inferiority among the Anglo-India and White children. The Park Street and House and The bougainvillea were about her experience of beautiful natural surroundings at the new House and it expresses her love for nature. “The Nalapat House” is about their returning to their ancestral house and their stay for some time. In this she briefly narrates the family history introducing their grandmother, great grand uncle and the great grandmother and great grandmother’s younger sister Ammulu who was a famous poet on Lord Krishna. “The Scent of the Ambergris” is about her family beautiful surroundings and the initial observation of sexual advances between the cooks and sexy maid servants in their house. “The Village School” deals with her experience of a primary school at Punnayurkulam where she befriends Velu Devalki and falls in love with naughty student named Govind Kurrup whom she wishes to marry. “The Feudal

System” is about the social structure of the Nairs among the society and how men were rough and rude and women were beautiful and docile and more often treated as a objects of carnal desire. Matriarchy is about the same society where women were treated as at the heads of family and about the worship of Shakti forces and also male gods alike Brahman, Varunam Kubera, Agni etc., who guarded the house from eight directions. The next chapter “Grand Uncle Narayan Menen” is about her great grand uncle who was a philosopher, poet and a journalist. From this period onwards again the children were shifted back to Calcutta and where she for the first time experiences her involvement in the theatricals. “The Convent” is about her experiences staying in the ladies hostel where she met her girlfriends Raji and Sharada and other Annie and Marian, the Christian girls. It tells about the strict atmosphere of the convent under the supervision of the Mother Superior. “The Borderers” continues the same experience further and tells how girls suffered from the congested atmosphere.

There is also some mention of lesbian relationship between herself and her girlfriend, the next chapter “Lansdowne Road” is about their stay in the new house of two bedrooms. The Bengal aristocracy is about her acquaintance with the Shantu, the daughter of a rich Bengali landlord and how she wished to marry a rich man in that period. “Liza Beck” is about her tutors, English and India. Liza Beck is an Austrian English teacher who came from Germany and went back later. The chapter “Mahabharatha” is about her early wrong notions of sexual relationship between men and women, process of pregnancy and

delivery of the children. She refers to Kunthi and how she begot Karna by praying to Lord Sun. She was kept totally ignorant of the fact of sex in the life.

“The Hindu Moslem Riots” is about the occurrence of riots in 1947 and how her doctor Abdul whom she wanted to consult for the teeth, got murdered during the riots.”5 Kale Avenue” is about her changing of the house to different location. The next chapter is about her mother’s illness of typhoid and her care by her one of her relatives. “A Brush with Love” is about her first lesbian experience with a handsome girl who kissed her aroused her erotic feelings. “An Arranged Marriage” is about her unexpected sudden engagement and marriage in Nalapat house with the fashionable young man who was working in the Reserve Bank of India in Bombay. It is also about her unpleasant experience on the first night. Subsequently, she tells about her rude advances of her husband, the first pregnancy and delivery of her son, Monoo and her shifting to Nalapat house. “The Brutality of Sex” reveals the rude sexual behavior of her husband who looked so sophisticated outwardly on the first night of their honeymoon. “The Toy Like A Son” is about her lack of enjoying her motherhood she delivered a baby boy who was a toy like for her. “Mental Depression” is about the strict atmosphere of her mother-in-law’s house afterwards. “A Desire to Die” is about her feeling of nausea for the own life and longing to escape from the misery of life. “The Psycho-Analyst” is about her meeting with psychiatrist treatment for her mental illness. “Sedation” deals with her treatment for the mental illness.”A Greed for Love” is about her unending desire for love of the



male. "Woodhouse Road" is about her love for Carlo who took her for expensive lunches in the big hotels. "A Misalliance" about her brother's wedding. "A Holiday at Panchgani" is about her husband's taking her and children to a hill station near Pune and their happy stay. "Dr. Mrs Karunakar" is about her consultation of a gynecologist in Matunga Bombay. "My Great Grandmother" is about the death of her great grandmother and her journalist and uncle politician. The next chapter is about the transfer to Calcutta. "The Cocktails Season" is about the vulgar life of the officers and their sensuous wives and lustful uncles in Calcutta. "Pen Friends" is about Carlo's love for her. "The PEN Poetry Prize" is about her winning of the PEN Prize for her publication of her poetry. "La Boheme" is about her continued life of a bohemian. "Jaisurya" is about her birth of her son and her happy feeling of motherhood. "The season of illness" is about the subsequent illness after the delivery of the baby boy. "The Poet's Notoriety" is about her experience of creative writing of herself as a notorious person, for revealing the inner side of her being. "The Bombay Hospital" is about her admission in the Room no 565 in Bombay Hospital for treatment of sickness. "The Long Summer of Love" is about her continued longing for love in spite of her sickness and her yearning for the union with Lord Krishna. "Fourteen Days War" is about the Bangla war and the atrocities happened with women and children. "For Each as Escape Route" is about her distancing from her husband as he turned into a more social thinker and less as husband. "The Intensive Cardiac Unit" is about her admission to ICU in the Bombay

Hospital. :A Columnist: is about her writing of columns in the newspaper and her speed of writing thousand words per week. "The Indian Poverty" is about her reflection of the poverty she saw in the city." A Freedom to Discompose "is about her observation of poverty and squalor around her in the city of Bombay and her becoming more and more philosophical. "The Death a Reality" is last chapter of this autobiography in which she anticipates death but does not die. She comes out of the hospital after complete recovery. Kamala das lived for nearly fifteen years after words and died in 2009 after her marriage to Mr Sadiq Ali and conversion to Islam etc.

The only literary excellence of the so called autobiography is their poetic languages which makes the literary text highly appealing to the sensitive and intelligent readers and make it a classic of its own kind. It is an oblique way of self exposure with sensational matter and more emotional approach to the subject of herself as more as "a dark skinned sensuous woman than as a rational, outspoken and libertine writer. Of course she had her own regrets for writing about herself so sensationally at the end of herself because her people openly disliked her though some of the critics appreciated her boldness of artistic expression. It seems that she was not satisfied what she wrote in this book and so she published 'memoir' recently.

In the so called autobiography, there is no mention of dates and years. The description of the events and incidents is more poetic. The events are narrated in a series of events logically going ahead till her hospitalization in Bombay. Till the

end there is her yearning for the union of Lord Krishna as if she were his Radha. The romantic cult of Krishna Radha is much haunting her mind, She sees Lord Krishna in her son, Monoo who embraces her and kisses her after recovering from sickness. There the autobiography stops perhaps at the age of 45. She remains a Hindu wither belief in the worship of idol but in the later life as we read in her other works she shifted her allegiance to Islam as she married Mr SadiqAli, the scholar and MP and embraced Islam as her ultimate religion. She attempted to build a political party but failed to concretize it. In 2005 she has published a book with the title *Ya Allah*. This shift from her adherence from Hinduism to Islam is mysterious. It is not understood why she being as a self conscious literature lady changed her religion in the declining years of her life. She shifted to her Lord Krishna to Allah from idol worship to the worship of Allah, the unseen God. This an instance of a emotional woman ,being fed up with extreme licentiousness to moved towards extreme zone of feminine self-imprisonment and obedience to the male dominance. This is another instance of traditional feminism of highly educated Indian urban wives as preached by Shashi Deshpande in her fiction. All her feminist writings become are nullified by her last move. It is something very significant and it is going on Kerala till today. The Hindu girls are getting converted to Islam by marriage. After that she has written several books including a

memoir which is recently published. This autobiography sounds more like a memoir than the autobiography.

The question of her sincerity as an autobiographer hangs in the air. In that sense, her autobiography, written in a traumatic period of her sickness in the hospital, is questionable of its genre-whether it is autobiography or memoir. It is Usha V. T's opinion that the "female autobiographer is viewed as radical and subversive when she writes the self and hence the diffidence and confusion that attends women's writing." <sup>2</sup> However, she had made it sensational by outpouring her heart's contents about love. Lust, and sex in order to frighten the orthodox readers of her state. Usha V.T says:" —her story is set in the once-matrilineal framework of the Nair Tharavad, Colonization and imposition of Western women notions of morality union the native systems brought into currency her peculiar individual position"<sup>3</sup> ■

### Works Cited

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## REBATI

Original Odia: **Fakir Mohan Senapati**

Translation: **Jagannath Parida**

‘Lo Rebat-Lo Rebi Lo Nian,  
Lo Chuli.’

One rustic village, in the province of Hariharpur, under Cuttack district, is Patapur. On the outskirts of the village stands a house with front –back adjoined four rooms, a cell of Dhinki Sala (place for Wooden Crusher) under the makeshift thatched roof in the veranda of the house, a well in the courtyard, the entrance door in the front and back-door in the rear side of the house. In the open space of front door the outsiders sit, the tenants come there to pay revenue. On behalf of Zamidar, Shyambandhu Mohanty is the revenue collector. Monthly salary two rupees, besides it some money slips into his hand at the time of issuing clearance receipts. All total income never falls off four rupees a month. Family runs well. “This is not done, that is not at home”-such words never come out from anyone’s mouth in the family. At home there are two milch cows for year round; remnant of milky water lies at the bottom of Degchi. Mixing with hush, old woman makes cow dung cake, no strain on fuel purchase. There stand two Sajana (Drum-stick) trees apart from green herbs.

The Zamidar has leased out three and a half acres of land for cultivation; rice grains neither go up or down.

Shyamabandhu is ingenuous; the tenants obey him and take pleasure. Moving from door to door he collects revenue by coax, never takes money by foul means. The tenants do not ask for receipts after paying revenue; he sticks four inch long receipts to the eaves in their houses, writing on the palm-leaves. He never lets the Zamidar’s informer come to the village; but sends him back, giving little money in his hand, touching his hands and lips. In the house of Shyamabandhu there are only four members- he himself and his wife, his old mother and ten year old daughter, nicknamed Rebat.

In the evening Shyamabandhu chants “Krupasindhu Badan.....” sitting on the veranda, sometimes chants Bhajan, sometimes reads out Bhagabat placing on the tiny wooden stand by the lamp. Rebat listens religiously, sitting there. She commits a lot of hymns to memory. To her childish face, it looks nice when she sings, sitting by her father. Some come to listen. Every day he asks Rebat to sing, she sings. Two years back, on a tour to rural area, a school inspector spent a night at Patpur. On the request of four to five village elders, the inspector got a school set up in the village giving report to the department of Odisha. Monthly teacher’s salary is four rupees. It is paid by the government. Besides it, each child pays one Anna per month.

The teacher, an alumni of the formal school of Cuttack, is Basudeva. The man looks like Basudeva, inner and outer of the lad is fine. While walking along the village road he never looks at others, raising his head aloft. In all likelihood age is twenty, comely glance, as if made of a single rice. During childhood, he was down with Pehula. His mother pressed the face of a hot bottle on his head. That spot is still visible; but it matches him. Ever since his childhood Basudeva is an orphan, brought up in his uncle's care. By caste, Basudeva is Karana and Shymabandhu is also Karana. Whenever cake is prepared on the full moon day or Thursday, Shymabandhu invites him, on reaching at school. "Dear Basu, could you visit our home in the evening, your aunt calls you". In this way of visiting, an intimacy has developed between them. "How much the motherless eats? Who cares for his eating?", says Rebati's mother, looking at Basudeva. In the evening, Basudeva sits for sometimes near Shyambandhu.

"Basu Bhai came, Basu Bhai came", speaks Rebati aloud. One day while discussing on sundry subjects, Shymabandhu came to know about a girls' school at Cuttack. There, the girls study, learn sewing. That day Shymabandhu made up his mind to send Rebati to study and disclosed it before Basudeva. Basu idolized Shymabandhu. "Sir, I was thinking to speak such said Basu. In consultation with two persons, Rebati's study was finalised. Rebati was listening to it, sitting aside

"Ma, Grandma I will study, I will study".

"Well, well, you will study".

"Study what! You are a girl child, learn

cooking, learn making cake, learn drawing Jhoti and learn skimming milk".

At night Shymabandhu was dining sitting on a Pidha (a tiny wooden stool). Rebati was also dining beside him. "Bring some rice, spill dal water, go and bring some salt", instructed the old woman, pointing to daughter-in-law. By the way of talking, she hinted "Yes, Shyama! Rebi will study- what study? What a study for a grown up girl?" "If she desires, let her study. The girls of Jhankad Patnaik's family are reading Bhagabat, chanting the verse of Baidehisa Bilas" said Shymabandhu.

"Go, you old hag", said Rebati to her Grandma, scornfully. Besides, she insisted on saying to father, "no, papa, no, papa I will study."

"Yes-yes, you will read" said Shymabandhu, that was enough on that day. In the next afternoon Basudeva handed over a piece of first part book of Sitanath Babu to Rebati. Curious, she turned over the pages of the book from first to last. There, she took a great pleasure seeing the picture of elephant, horse and cattle. First, she came running to show all the pictures to mother, and then to her Grandma.

"Yes, go, go" said Grandma, vexed. Rebati came back.

Today is an auspicious day - Sreepanchami. Taking a dip in the early morning and wearing new dress, Rebati is hanging about in and out; Basu Bhai will teach her. No arrangement is made for the commencement of the study in the dread of Grandma. At six o'clock, Basu began teaching. Everyday, study went on. Basu used to teach everyday in the evening.

Rebati learnt a lot in two years. She is voluble while reading the rhymes of Madhusudan Rao. Both mother and the son were talking, Shymabandhu was eating rice.

Shymabandhu- “Mother, will it not be good?”

“Well! It will be good. Do you know his caste!”

Shymabandhu- “Staunch Karana, pauper child, whatever it may be, the caste is good”.

Mother! No dowry. Think. First, ask about caste. Will he stay at our home!

Where! Should he go without living at our home? Uncle-aunt relation will continue!

Rebati is dining by their side. She sensed their word. Since that day we know her different attitude. She develops a sort of shyness whenever Basu teaches her before father; without having any cause she feels laughing, she hides smile closing two lips and drooping her face. Now she reads in a stuttering voice. Whenever Basu teaches, sometimes she utters only “Hum”. After study, she runs to the room with closed mouth and smiling face. Everyday evening, she stares someone holding the front door; she slips into the room when Basu comes, never comes out after a repeated call. Now Grandma is getting irritated if Rebati comes out home.

Those are the days of Falguna, nothing happened; all on a sudden diarrhoea came from somewhere. It is heard in the village that Shymabandhu Mohanty has been affected diarrhoea. Doors remain shut, whenever it breaks out in the village.

Diarrhoea, old woman, seemed to collect dead bodies, putting basket on her waist in the main village road. No one steps at others door. What should two women do? The girl is crying out, running here and there. On getting the news of sickness, Basudeva rushed for home from the school with gasping mouth. No threat, no fear, no heed to own health, sitting by the side he was rolling hand on Shyamabandhu’s foot and giving water drops into his mouth.

At the noon, Shymabandhu spoke in a stammering voice, “looking at Basu’s face.” Basu wept inconsolably. Wailing burst out the home. Shymabandhu departed, Rebati was rolling on the ground. Bana Sethy, a well-known washer-man of the village, has performed more than fifty burial rites during his life span. Fastening Gamcha around his waist and putting an axe on the arm, he stood at the door. That home was the only one of Karanas’ in the village; mother, mother-in-law and Basu did all rites together. We are unable to pen all the incidents of the gone by days. The evening star began to wink by the time they returned from the burial ground. As soon as they entered the room Rebati’s mother passed away following Diarrhoea in the afternoon. A consternation spread in the village-Rebati’s mother was no more.

Days roll on, time waits for none. Someone lives in clover, someone lives in squalor. Zamidar’s men carried away two cows of Shyamabandhu for non-payment of the rest money in the treasury. We know, Shymabandhu considers the Zamidar’s money as precious. He had two milch cows, Zamidar knew it earlier. Besides, three acres land, which the Zamidar had given him for



cultivation, was taken away. Why should a ploughman live in his house? He left the house on Dolapurnima. Two oxen were sold at seventeen rupees, that amount was spent on burial rites, and the rest lasted for one month. Basu comes twice a day, spends some hours at night, then goes home after two women retire to sleep. They never receive whatever money Basu offers them. Taking one or two rupees from the old woman, Basu purchases the grocery that lasts for two to ten days. The thatch has been removed, it needs mending. Basu has piled straw at the backyard, purchasing at two rupees, but the top setting is not done for Sarvana. Now, the old woman is not weeping day and night; but only at the approach of evening and crack of dawn. There, she lies weeping for long time and spends night. Sobbing, Rebati also lies there.

Now, the old woman cannot see clearly. She seems to be delirious and begins to chide Rebati instead of weeping. So terrible the suffering, Rebati is the root cause of misfortune, this is what she keeps in her mind. "Son died for Rebati's study, daughter-in-law died, ploughman left, the ox sold and Zamidar's men carried away ox. Rebati is ill-starred, ill-mannered and Laxmi leaver. Her eye sight is falling-that is the cause of Rebati's study". Tears roll down from the two corners of her eyes when Grandma starts rebuking her. She sits mute in the corner of the house or at the rear door like a piece of wood covering her face.

"Basu was miscreant. Rebati was not reading, only for him she began to read". The old woman did not say anything to Basu. Everything halts without Basu. Again Zamidari affair is not over. The Zamidar's

men are coming to ask for the account. Who will open the record without Basu? Sometimes in the absence of Basu, she gives her opinion on easy matter.

Now, Rebati is no more a child. No one listens her sound since the death of her parents. No one sees her at the front door. Her tiny life has been wrecked. Everything looks empty in her life, only two figures of her parents flash in her mind. Mother is sitting here, father is walking on- these two only appear in her eyes. No hunger in stomach, no slumber in the eyes, day and night her attention is at parents. She sits for eating in the dread of mother. When Basu comes home, she gets up from her sitting place, through her two large eyes she stares at Basu. When Basu looks, she looks down heaving a small breath. She keeps on watching so long as Basu stays by her.

Five months elapsed after the death of Shymabandhu. It was the day of Jyesthamasa. Reaching at the door in the noon, Basu called out. The old woman was at the door and opened "Grandma, the D.I of school will ask questions to the students in the police station of Hariharpur, students of all schools will go, I will accompany the children tomorrow morning". Standing at the corner of the door, Rebati was listening. Putting rice, salt and oil and vegetable in the lawn for five days, Basu set out in the semi-darkness of one Saturday, paying obeisance to the old woman.

"Dear son, do not stroll in the sun, take care of your health timely" said the old woman, heaving a strong breath. Rebati cast a fixed look at Basu; but today's glance is different. Earlier, she drooped her head if Basu looked at her; today she stares at him.

Basu went, day no more, darkness spread in and out, Rebati kept watching like before. She became alert when the old woman called her. Rebati is counting her days, sitting. Today is six day. She has made two rounds near the front door since the morning. Time is about 6pm, people began to talk each other as soon as students returned from school. Diarrhoea caught Pandite near the Hariharpur banyan tree, he passed pond water four times and died on the way back to Gopalpur in the dead of night. Villagers began to moan. Men, women, son and daughter burst into tears inconsolably. Some said: what a wonderful figure! Some said: what a sober! Some said: he never curses a fly to die while walking on the road.

Rebati listened, and the old woman also listened. The voice of the old woman got choked with cry “Oh son, you died for your own folly” It means Basu died for teaching Rebati; otherwise he would not have died. From the time of hearing it, Rebati kept lying on the floor. The old woman was getting crazy, no sound in the house, only chide at Rebati. The outsiders and the neighbours listened it anytime. It is not visible clearly to her eyes. She found Rebati groping here and there. She called her out, she rolled her hand on her body for not getting any reply, high fever, body parched, no sense, what should she do? Whom to call? She searched everybody on the earth but found none.

“You have brought misery on yourself; it means you are caught fever for study. What should I do?”

One day passed and two days passed, but Rebati was lying on the ground, not opening her eyes and nor replying to

anyone’s call. This was the fourth time, Rebati was crying out. The old woman went to her side, shook her head and hand. “Hum”, replied Rebati at the call, staring at her face. “The girl will wake up if something falls in her stomach. Sleep here, I bring some food for you”. What should she cook? She groped for her basket, Degchi and all; not a fistful of rice. Heaving a deep sigh, she sat down. Basu had given rice and dal for five days, with that, ten days ran smoothly. No utensil was at home, only a leaky mug fell in her hand. Holding that, she headed to Hari Sahu’s shop briskly. In the middle of the village stands Hari Sahu’s home; he had no regular shop; only rice, dal and salt are kept inside. In case outsiders drop in, they purchase it or sometimes villagers purchase those goods.

Holding a mug in hand, she got at Hari Sahu’s shop. Hari Sahu made a sense of the purpose very nicely, seeing the mug in old woman’s hand and then, she expressed her purpose. “No, no, no rice at home, who will give you rice in exchange of this leaky mug?” What should I do? The girl is just coming out of fever. What should I give in her mouth? She sat down for a while, day was receding. She looked twice at Hari. “Try, what the girl is doing?”

When she got up with her mug, Hari said “give me the mug. See, what is in the home?” Keeping the mug, Hari gave four Mana rice and half mug Jai and some salt. Halting at four to five places, the old woman got at home. Till that time no brush touched her tooth. Reaching home she called out Rebati. She feels Rebati has got over fever. She will lift water from the well and cook rice. She frets for not having any response

from Rebati. She cried, “Lo Rebati, Lo Rebi, Lo Nian, Lo Chuli”. No response.

Rebati’s typhoid got worsened by the by; unbearable pain, body got cold; extreme thirst. She came out rolling round the house, got no comfort. She sat down leaning against the fence. She looked around the courtyard. “Last year, father planted this banana tree, two years ago Ma planted guava tree in the backyard, then, she watered that tree fetching half mug water from the well”. Seeing that tree, the memory of mother flashed in her mind. Evening fades and darkness comes out from the branches of the trees. Nothing is visible. She looked at the sky. She stared at the star. The shape of star was gradually widening, it looked like a circle. Oh! What a wonderful figure in the midst of the star? Sitting there, loving mother was calling her to come to the lap. Mother put out her two bright hands. That

light entered her heart. There was no sound in the darkness, only breathing sound. That sound got louder and louder, a long shy. At last two sounds, Ma, Ma were heard. All silence.

The old woman searched Rebati in her bed room. No one was there. She searched the house, front lawn and under the wooden crusher thinking that Rebati might have recovered from fever or be strolling in the backyard. She went to the rear door, mounted to veranda, groping. Veranda is of two feet height from the ground. “Hey, you sit here?” touching her body. She got startled first; again rolled her hand carefully from foot to head; gave out a grating sound, suddenly a thumping sound under the veranda. On the earth, no one has ever seen a soul in Shymabandhu’s house. Neighbours heard the last sound in the first spell of night- “Lo Rebati, Lo Rebi, Lo Nian Lo Chuli”. ■



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## A Neem Tree

Original Odia: **Chintamani Mahalik**

English rendering: Gobinda Sahoo

This way the Daru proceeded  
Amidst holy sounds  
Of conch, *hulahuli* and *Haribola*  
In Ecstasy rejoice the earth and heaven.  
An innocent neem tree am I,  
Vanquishing all my pangs in me within  
In some novel thought  
I bowed down in reverence  
Completely drenched.

To amass this much  
From the vacuum world around me  
Perhaps is the fruit of my destiny!

The fate of being the Daru  
The prospect of getting divine invitation  
The sight of conch and chakra in me  
Are but poles apart.

As a roadside tree  
Since sapling  
I bear the encumber,  
The pangs of  
Losing the gains.  
Before realising  
The pith in me is yet to ripen  
The axe of the woodcutter on me falls  
For fuel meant for hearth.

The tender faith in each neem tree preserved  
Though Daru it could not become

One day the world will view  
Its mature age,  
But the demonic hands of the unfaithful man  
Did not show the path  
Of being the Daru to all neem trees  
Rather  
The sharpness of the dazzling axe  
In his hands lick out its green age. ■

## The Crow

Original Odia: **Bijay Ray**

English rendering: Gobinda Sahoo

Say, if you  
It is astute!  
If in its move it has confidence  
measuring each step the entire path  
It had not to walk,  
Or thinking ordure to be butter  
It would not baste its beak  
Or, to quench its thirst  
Would not play in beak deep dust  
Thinking it pebbles.  
With the dawn's advent  
It breaks the cells of many leeways.  
It becomes difficult to know  
If it is earth or heaven  
Whilst one rides on the back of cool  
breeze!!!  
For it knows not  
How to sink in deep water  
Floats joy, wealth and good luck  
In a country boat.  
Has it any greed or expectations  
From anything in return?  
For an off-season coo  
You lend your ears,  
But how do you say others shrewd??? ■

**Three Poems by  
Anwer Ghani, Iraq**

**A Magic Veil**

My palm tree is as beautiful  
and concealed as abigail.  
Her eyelash is tall  
as a river  
and her veil  
had come with  
the ancestors' souls  
to unloose our tight dreams.  
I can feel her wavy pulse  
and I can see her treasurable earnings  
behind the shawl.  
Near her foot,  
there is a spring of magic water,  
and beside her wishes  
I see my face  
which had been stolen  
as a yellow bird.  
I want to tell you,  
that her magic veil is unable  
to hide her soul,  
and despite of its breathtaking colors,  
it can't conceal  
her candle lighter fingers. ■

**(ii) Our Curtain**

We have a thick curtain,  
which is unintentionally colored  
by our pale moments  
and, she is, without delay,  
coming in the evening  
with the strange winds  
to comb our ragged hair.

In fact, I can't differentiate  
her mien from the faces of our days,  
and because of this confusion,  
sometimes I think  
that she is my mother.  
She was standing there  
to lessen the voice of the light  
and to magnify our internal awareness,  
but because of its redness,  
she has always recalled  
the sad stories of our stolen life  
and the insolent visages of the wars. ■

**(iii) The Mantle**

My heart is bright,  
not due to its soft whiteness,  
but because of the bloodless dreams  
which had sat on my rocky chest.  
I have, as any shadowed tale,  
tried to hide my dead flowers  
by a worn-out mantle,  
so you can't see any picture  
of the revived fragrance.  
Here, in my heart,  
all the remote dry wishes,  
which they cover her nudity  
with a cloak.  
I am the mantle man;  
my water is dirty  
and all these cloaks can't conceal  
its sadness.  
Yes, I am the nude man,  
and it is not strange  
to see my feet immersed deeply  
in every futile tale.  
I am the mantle of sadness;  
my land is a picture of crying  
and my women are  
the boats of the hardship. ■



## To Err in Pain

Bipul Ch. Kalita

The hole in sight  
misleads me  
pushing out light  
catching you at night  
to feel myself in darkness.  
Bathing in twilight  
I greet green views  
on morrows  
to feed the man in me  
to feel warmth of desires.  
To err in pain  
is a coined experience  
in a world of love and peace  
if man stands and fights for man.  
My pains refine me  
turning sufferings into life's logic  
burning treasured gold to glitter better  
even in the gloomiest corner  
of my heart. ■

## If the Poet Wishes

Original in Odia : **Lingaraj Rath**

Translation : Basudeba Bharati

If the poet wishes,  
The White tulips blossom unseason  
To emit out its fragrance sweet  
For  
spring-wind to blow  
in sprightly spirit.  
Mango-fruits full of juicy sauces  
Hang in bunches  
down from its branches.  
Untime it rains to stream in torrents  
And the cuckoo chants its charming notes  
to lull the poet's unseason urges. ■

## Sea

Sharmila Roy

I have come back once again  
  
Standing on a jutting land  
alone with the sea.  
Enveloped again by sea patterns,  
my eyes softening,  
I learn from all my desires-  
With age a body can hold a lot of secrets.  
Each memory a photographic negative,  
the waves come in and ebb away  
one by one.  
The moments are liberated silhouettes  
against breakers and the salty spray floods  
my cells lift me  
above the flash floods of love.  
The effortless sea exhilarates me,  
like a black hole sucks my soul.

I realize I'm the sea. ■

## To My Wife

Gajanan Mishra

Go not against  
My mother,  
Remember,  
My mother is my life-giver  
and you are here to enjoy  
only my life,  
Be the clear, Dear.  
  
My father is also your father.  
For him only  
we are here together.  
Against him, no word is there  
With you to utter.  
Cautious, Dear.

Go not against my brother,  
Who is the only one,  
my true advisor,  
My brother, my soul researcher,  
My land-lighter, riser. ■

## I Could Keep Walking

Lipsa Giri

I could keep walking this road  
Maybe pick a flower or two  
I may step on a few thorns  
But I've got my shoes on  
And I can turn back  
When I start to tire.

Mondays are always hard  
Just the way mundanity tends to be  
But there will be Fridays,  
Saturdays and Sundays  
To slack  
And get out.

I see trees  
That never stop growing  
Repeating their cycles  
Year after year;

I see people getting old  
Repeating their cycles  
Year after year after year.

I know where this bridge leads  
Each step crumbles the one before  
I will pick up some flowers  
Here and there  
Step on so many thorns

But I haven't got my shoes on. ■

## And the Snow does not Melt

Namita Nayak

Where I am standing now  
is an edge  
It may be the edge of a river  
or of a boat  
of a stream or of a sea.  
Stepping ahead, there is a fear  
of being exiled  
Stepping back, plagues me the fear  
being reduced to ashes.  
The forbidden-line starts  
when I am standing transfixed  
The voice that reaches  
my ears can never be mine.  
Are you thinking of reaching  
the sunless region  
crossing the forests and fields  
rivers and hills?  
Listen to me, do not commit  
that mistake again  
Here the sea is over flowing  
the coast  
the fine-flowers are dancing  
bright near Swargadwar  
I feel sandwiched between  
the sea and the horizon.  
This is the season of melancholy  
the season of snow fall  
Needless to remember  
the by-gone days  
An encounter after a decade  
You did not utter a single word.  
What are you holding in your hand?  
The enchanted flute  
or peacock plumes?  
Water from the untrodden

river bank or  
 empty egg-shells?  
 A howl of nectar  
 or a bottle of poison?  
 Hand if to me whatever  
 you nourish in your  
 heart for me  
 Your hatred, your betrayal  
 Your apathy, your infidelity  
 My throat feels dry  
 due to thirst  
 I am a woman, eternally  
 blind in love.  
 What's this? Who has poured  
 buckets of blood on the street  
 in the April noon  
 Such a deep wound on the  
 thigh of Krishnachuda!  
 A drop of blood from  
 my nameless finger  
 is streaming down towards  
 my detached wrist  
 like a crawling cater-pillar.  
 I was thinking of putting  
 out the candle on my table  
 to pen down songs  
 in the light of the stars  
 But alas! Mephistopheles  
 snatched away the pen  
 from my hand  
 sucked all the ink from my  
 ink-pot.  
 Apparently, nothing can be  
 done now  
 only have to endure  
 false labour pains  
 only have to suffer the  
 pangs of infertile moments  
 carrying the dead fetuses of poetry  
 inside the womb. ■

## A Line of Smile

Original Odia - **Chittaranjan Misra**

Translation : **Ashok Mohapatra**

A hair-thin smile now  
 Only the residue –  
 What'd you call  
 The aged flesh ends into?  
 What of the shades at the day's end?  
 And heart throbs at the edge of age?  
 Thin line of a smile  
 On a withered face?  
 Fading in the corner  
 Of parted lips  
 Like pebbles wearing off  
 In still water  
 Into syllables of silence  
 Skein of a smile  
 Is what remains  
 Of what's gone  
 Tells what's waiting  
 Around the corner  
 Life hangs as it were  
 On thin line of a smile  
 Or stands as a door  
 On your yard  
 You'd not know though. ■

## Pralaya Poyodhi Jole... (In the Troubled Waters)

**Bidyut Prabha Gantayat**

When no one was there,  
 He was there  
 When no vibration was there  
 He was the omnipotent Omkar  
 When words yet to sprout

He chanted Gita  
 When stillness, stagnancy prevailed  
 every where ,  
 He bestowed momentum to our lives  
 and aspirations .  
 It was He the super being of all beings ...  
 Yoshoda's Kanha  
 Brij' s Kanhaeya  
 Radha's Madhab  
 Draupadi's Sakha  
 And Multitude's Madhusoodana,  
 The great saviour of  
 Human race, man and mankind ...  
 The marvelous teacher,  
 The magnificent preacher,  
 The master orator of the eternal,  
 pious verses of The Srimad Bhagbat Gita .  
 The Amrit of rights and righteousness.  
 I bowdown to his lotus feet,  
 I celebrate his earthy incarnation ....  
 The ascendance of His Omnipresence  
 on earth.  
 None but he who enlightens us,  
 leads us and protect us  
 from all sin and suffering,  
 From all darkness and despair,  
 From all ignorance and incapability.  
 May He rise in our minds sky  
 Like the morning sun  
 To enlighten every flickering corner  
 of our thought and deed .  
 Sri Krishnaye Gobindaye  
 Gopijana Ballavaye Namah. ■

## Melody

**Ram Sharma**

Sweet melodies of birds  
 lull of morning breeze  
 singing of trees in spring  
 touched my mind  
 to do something  
 throw the blanket of the yester days  
 wear new melody of the dawn  
 little drops of the dew  
 will satisfy your mind  
 opened every field of hopes  
 awake , arise and walk across the zenith  
 spread new energy of youth  
 by piercing the fog of desperation  
 your mind will win now  
 by blossoming new melody of life. ■

## Prescription for a Poem

**Alicja Maria Kuberska**

It is not easy to write a poem  
 You have to gather your thoughts  
 Swirling quickly like snowflakes  
 during a blizzard  
 Catch them before they melt  
 and disappear into oblivion  
 Later add fever of feelings  
 and strength of emotion  
 Decorate your sentences  
 with your dreams collected  
 from the silver dust of falling stars.  
 You can also pick out  
 a melancholy longing  
 from the bottom of the lake  
 and hang it on eyelashes  
 to shine with tears

Then collect the wet haze of sadness  
 shimmering like drops of dew  
 on calamus,  
 add grayness of the November's landscape  
 Season it with a bit of bitterness  
 and regret  
 Or you can capture the laughter  
 suspended by an echo  
 Between high mountain peaks  
 Catch the merry words  
 in the net of butterflies  
 carried by the warm breath of the wind  
 Turn the rainbow over  
 to add a smile to the sky  
 Sprinkle it with a touch of humor and joy  
 Finally, crazy metaphors must be released  
 Let them draw colors  
 from the imagination  
 That the poem would acquire  
 a transparent lightness  
 and like a soup bubble  
 rise above everyday life  
 Allow it to fly off  
 in an unknown direction. ■

## Just for a Moment

Eliza Segiet

If the world stopped for a moment,  
 I could sit,  
 listen to the silence that becomes,  
 watch how  
 a river stops flowing,  
 how the trees congeal into motionlessness.  
 If the world stopped for a moment,  
 and I with it?  
 I would not see  
 flowering meadows,  
 where a river becomes just a line,  
 and the still trees

look like sculptures,  
 I would not hear the ubiquitous silence.  
 If the world stopped  
 even for one day  
 then people –  
 could not hurt people. ■

## After the War

Minati Pattnaik

The king of the mighty Mauryas  
 thought kalinga was the 'missing jewel'  
 in Ashoka's crown.  
 That time kalinga was renowned  
 for its trade, its rich and pluralistic  
 tradition.  
 It is affluent, fertile and independent  
 nation.  
 In the ninth year of his kinship  
 Kalinga was conquered,  
 after a huge battle  
 between soldiers of armies  
 the land thundered with choriots.  
 a hundred and fifty thousand people  
 were deported.  
 Another hundred thousand slaughtered.  
 The river Daya turned red after the  
 bloodshed  
 the battle field turned into a sacrificial  
 'yajna'  
 The outraged sky screamed  
 Villages burnt  
 Who counted how many mothers, wives  
 and children  
 had to shed their tears and blood!  
 children became fatherless  
 Women became widows  
 mothers lost their young warrior sons  
 everywhere stinking corpses.



Could the sky ever hear and measure the  
 poignant sigh ?  
 Could the rain ever wipe out the tears  
 dropping from their souls?  
 where does the pain stay-in the tears or in  
 the hearts?  
 People called Ashoka as heartless warrior,  
 ruthless, mercyleless, slayer of enemies,  
 warmonger, 'Chandashoka'  
 could he scoop the suffering in their hearts  
 If this is victory, what is defeat?  
 who won and who was defeated ?  
 who are the victors,  
 Who are the vanquished in war?  
 has anyone ever won?  
 Surveying the aftermath of his victory-  
 the king experienced the remorse,  
 the plight of people  
 wandering disguised in his realm  
 he is haunted by one thought-  
 have I destroyed another country's  
 splendour ?  
 have I ruined many happy families ?  
 am I the cause of many bravest  
 young soldier's death?  
 am I the messenger of evil ?  
 The name A-shoka signifies without  
 sorrow or pain  
 how can I do good for my people  
 No good can ever come from hatred  
 king could not stop grieving  
 determined to grieve, to repent  
 He resolved to renounce violence and  
 vengeance  
 when he came across a 'Bhikku'-fearless,  
 blameless,  
 content with unflinching eyes  
 he renounced everything-his right to the  
 throne,  
 the palace, him family the royal quilt.  
 But it was harder than

returning triumphant from battle.  
 Being the Chakravarthi Samrat, the  
 universal emperor  
 took a tough task of begging alms in the  
 streets  
 followed the path of truth and suffering  
 the true nature of "Dhamma"  
 He learnt to see the world  
 with new eyes  
 Ashoka led a life of duty, decency and  
 devout.  
 Gifts are meritorious,  
 favours are hard earned  
 yet no gifts or favour is greater  
 than that of 'Dhamma' .  
 Thus began his long journey from  
 "Chandasoka to Dhammasoka"  
 Wisdom of the world is revealed to him. ■

## Laxmi

**Rajendra K Padhi**

When I hear a tapping somewhat louder  
 Flung the door with flirt and flutter  
 To save few money quickens herself  
 From door to door folds the day  
 Jumping out to routine works  
 Our maid servant Laxmi cleans  
 Spoons and dishes, socks and shirts  
 Scrub the frying pans  
 There are 6 rooms and the corridor  
 Uses the broom as there is no vacuum  
 cleaner.  
 Sitting on the cushion velvet lining  
 I didn't ask until she winked and whisper  
 Barring her lowered teeth  
 Shredded like twilight rays flicker  
 Multiplies words for her drunkard husband  
 The difficulties in bringing out children

But her silvery smile  
 Never measures out her miseries.  
 Walking on the criss-crossing roads  
 Caring not hate, love and smirks  
 A perennial warrior  
 Never whimpers  
 Though beautiful never gone for harlotry  
 Falls a prey for works only  
 The vacuum cleaner for shabby rooms  
 Chops off her life  
 Like the vegetables under a knife. ■

## Spring

**Bijan Ray**

Spring arrived.  
 The same neighbouring village girl.  
 Returned after visiting  
 the other side of the globe.  
 In a elegant colourful attire.  
 with a fine bloom, thin smoky cap  
 looking captivating, enthralling and fair.  
 In mango grove, it begins to sprout , buds  
 tender leaves and tiny flowers.  
 titillating fragrance in the air  
 smells like your musky body odour.  
 A humming bee plays  
 with a lovelorn flower.  
 serpentine fountain looks like a mermaid  
 with its crystal clear water  
 dance to the tune of the melody  
 of a cuckoo  
 accompanied spring here.  
 crimson red petals of palasa reminds me  
 the sweet subtle lips of yours.  
 gentle breeze caresses your sleek hair.  
 you look like a full bloomed fresh flower..  
 whisper echoed in the air  
 beautiful spring has come,  
 She dwells here. ■

## Fragrance

**Ashutosh Meher**

God created this beautiful universe  
 With fragrances filled everywhere  
 One can search it meaningfully here,  
 And can smell all those right there.

When the morning Sun rises  
 One can see the fragrance of light  
 When the morning breeze touches  
 You can sense its fragrance right.

Morning flowers smile & bloom  
 The smell of fragrances spread  
 Chirping birds sing praise of nature  
 You can hear the fragrances made.

Fragrances exist every nook & corner  
 They drive human life forces ahead  
 We all are the creations of nature  
 Let us pledge to make fragrances spread. ■

## My Love and the Moon

**Malaya Kumar Jati**

I am in love with the moon  
 And flying to reach her soon  
 Over the miles of killing silence  
 I got a call with no tint of violence  
 Sourmounting the mountains of hatred  
 I stepped on the peak of love  
 but not tired  
 No labour is labour in love  
 Rather an impulse to catch a dove  
 Sliding on the glaciers of peace  
 Forget me in the moon's classic kiss

Roaming in the divine sand of love  
 Start flying with the wings of my dove  
 Flying above the clouds of hurdle  
 We shall find our laps to snuggle  
 In the light of her face darkness flies  
 In the honey of her lips  
 my hunger dies  
 Oh with her how sweet the taste  
 of solitude!  
 Far beyond the pagan cries  
 of multitude  
 Sleeping under the luminous roof  
 of the galaxy  
 On silvery clouds against the world's  
 fallacy. ■

## When You Left Me

**Subhra Souranshu Pujahari**

Seven colours of rainbow  
 have been changed  
 into a perpetual darkness  
 with your sudden flight  
 now I can see the drooping  
 face of the rueful sky.

Yesterday, I again saw  
 The same sort of bangles  
 In the temple fair  
 Which you had once gripped  
 With a tender care.

But those gewgawish bangels  
 had no delicacy as if  
 they were missing  
 the gentle touch of  
 someone's hand. ■

## Poesy

**Basudev Mallik**

Celebrating life and beauty  
 Since birth of the Earth  
 I'm the virtuous offspring  
 of the Oum.  
 Chant of the Creator's  
 primordial mirth.  
 With my feet dipped deep  
 in the golden soil  
 I fly in the space  
 under the blue dome  
 And much, much beyond,  
 light years away  
 Where a lay mundane mind  
 can't dare to roam.  
 I revel in the magic purple  
 of the dawn  
 In the beauty of the ever  
 Ecstatic setting Sun  
 The golden grandeur  
 of the boozy moonlight  
 And the brook's murmuring,  
 lulling delight  
 The floating clouds  
 and the scary lightning  
 The pearly rain drops,  
 the dazzling autumn dew  
 And the sizzling summer's  
 venomous sting.  
 I am the glorious offspring  
 of the all-pervasive echo of Oum!  
 I ruefully sink in the luckless tears  
 of the poor  
 I deride at the derisive laughter  
 of the rich  
 I drink from ripples  
 of the sunny smiles  
 Overflowing the lovers'

flourished lips.  
I melt in the waves of  
gangrenous surrows  
Helplessly hitting their head  
on Time's unrelenting beach.  
I live in the sanctum  
of rainbow words,  
Deafening clang of crossing swords  
Am a silver cascade of sacred sound  
With lucid echoes all around  
Up from heaven down to hell...  
I swim in the gentle caressing breeze  
I ruthlessly blow  
with the strongest gale. ■

## The Schizophrenic Mind

Sarita Sharma

The lone man reading  
and rereading the days  
old newspapers  
Plastered against the straight chair  
In the verandah, is so similar  
To my father, your father.  
The patient in those rheumy eyes  
is disconcerting  
Frightening.  
What is it that the old look for  
in the newspapers?  
The times that they have left behind!  
The times that have left them behind!!!  
It could also be a ploy  
To hide unfulfilled desires  
unspoken aspirations  
In the dank and dark of the words.  
Could it also be a charade of usefulness  
Of gainability,  
A réaffirmation

Of all things being in control  
Their control.  
When grey and tired  
I too shall mourn the passing away of a  
beautiful life  
Which I was too tied up in not living  
Which I wasted in ugly bickerings  
And frustrations and despairs  
Which were never really my own  
But of the myriad masks that I had put on.  
I too shall grieve the end of time  
And look for lost happiness  
Assurances  
Under the shield of the days old  
Week old  
Stale words  
Of insensitive betrayals and brutal ideas.  
I turn back from the lone man  
On the verandah  
I turn my back on his life  
And its nuances.  
I have my own stories to make  
Of my own failures and heartaches  
Of some smiles soaked  
in those grainy cheeks.  
I move away from the man  
with the days old newspaper  
Towards a life  
Which is hurtling me  
Towards a nook completely of my own  
A nook replenished with  
Dead stories and  
Past dramas. ■

# The Quiet Angel

**P.G. Rama Rao**

(A short elegy for Sankarshan Parida)

I miss your daily call  
From a noisy bus  
on the road to Kendrapara.  
The vacuum calls up  
The image of an eager  
Student busy writing  
His answers on a piece of paper.  
As he was observing  
A vow of silence on that day.  
He must have given up  
That rigorous discipline  
After becoming a lecturer.  
Now I know  
those spells of Silence  
were filled with seeds  
Of poetry that sprouted later.  
Sankarshan, beloved student and  
Dear friend, how can I forget  
Your affection for me and enthusiasm  
For My Days in Tulasi Kshetra?  
How can I forget your charming  
Way of putting me in touch with  
Many other old students on the phone,  
Thus helping me relive happy memories?  
Quiet Angel of Pattamundai,  
Relax and write glorious poetry  
in whatever blissful world you may be,  
Far from this sad, bad, mad world. ■

## Looking For

**Lopamudra Mishra**

The hours of night  
Expects the complacency  
Of twinkling stars  
the pristine images  
dwell fervently  
in the inward casket of heart  
Proximity for the moon clad earth  
Stipulates the divine fountain  
to flow  
Immaculately .  
Struck between the curves  
of imaginary lines  
I heave...  
the tussle of ebb ,  
questions regarding the nativity  
of the rising star  
Whose celestial light is sufficient  
to glorify the earth.  
The transparent images clash  
With the sensitive waves  
Para mounting thoughts look ahead  
for a beautiful sky. ■



## There 'i' am

R.M.Prabhulinga Shastry

"I"ntellect am "I".

"I" could th'i'nk about "I".

As both Who do and am done about  
Are One and the Same, 'i' could be 'I'.

"I" would be cause for 'i'.  
'i' could be mission for "I".

"I" would be director for 'i'.  
'i' could be player for "I".

"I" would be canvas for 'i'.  
'i' could be artist for "I".

"I" would be the idea for 'i'.  
'i' could be the language for "I".

"I" would be the dance for 'i'.  
'i' could be the music for "I".

"I" would be the inspiration for 'i'.  
'i' could be the execution for "I".

"I" would be Nothing for 'i'.  
'i' could be Everything for "I".

As "I", "I" am Nothing that only Ex'i'st.  
As 'i', 'i' am Everything that only Em'i't.

In both Ex'i'st and Em'i't, 'i' am there.  
When both merge,  
'i' and 'i' would be only "I". ■

**Note:-** "I" stand for the Almighty and 'i' stand for the Atman(Soul).

## On The Way To Innisfree

(to Liza—my niece, the daughter of Udaya Majhi)

Gopal Roy

While crossing the street  
Lathicharge may be upon me or you  
Any moment  
This is but the age of total disorder  
and anarchy.  
In Syria-Iraq-Kashmir or somewhere  
Guns and ammunition  
Making children forget how toys or books  
look like  
Or how pleasant is a playful open meadow.  
Symbolic Ailaan victimized lies  
on the seashore.  
Cirlization digitalized with new  
and newer technology behind  
And cancer in soul  
Releases selfies and post pictures in social  
media  
Posing as if something unique is done.  
These burn me in words made of fire.  
Graceful touch of your father's hand save  
And transform me into Golden Eagle.  
In eternal flight to Lake Isle Of Innisfree  
I see you decorated in Wedding Dress,  
Tears in eye.  
Warmth of relation made sacred and sublime  
By hymns from mellifluous voice.  
Roses talking with nightqueens  
in soft fragrant tone.  
Let my poem make a sweet home for you,  
Now look at your father – my soul's soul  
Who know how to flow like a stream nearby.

■  
**Note:** Ailaan— A child's ( West Asia) dead  
body was found on the seashore,  
dangerously affected by war and destruction  
created by the terrorist and the militant.

## Salvation

**Sujit Kumar Satapathy**

Sorrow,  
that lies in face  
like a smile  
always shines in me.

It's enough to explore  
the root of universe  
from a spoon of rice.....!

Succeed in kindling  
the hearth,  
is life's emotion;  
neither, just  
fib salvation...! ■

## Since Long

**Udaya Nath Majhi**

Since long I have not looked at the sky  
Not seen the stars, full-moon  
And the rising sun.  
Since long I have not watered the plants  
in my garden  
Not touched soft petals of Rose, Jasmine  
Not inhaled their sweet fragrance.  
Since long I have not walked barefoot  
On my village dusty road  
Not sat on my neighbour's veranda  
Not talked to my village friends  
Not taken salty red tea.  
Since long I have not been  
to my village paddy fields  
Not slept on the grassy divider  
Not touched the grazing goats, cows.  
Since long I have not walked barebody  
in rains  
Not bathed in the village-end pond  
Not played Kabadi or Khokho  
With my village friends  
Since long.....? ■

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