

# ROCK PEBBLES

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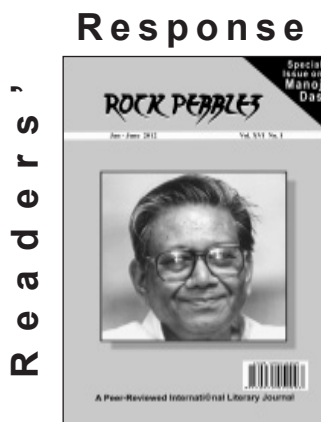
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..... I have gone through all the articles and it is a wonderful experience to go through these. The essays are unique due to their wide varieties of subject matters so well written.....

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..... The current issue is excellent. It has covered almost everything about Manoj Das. It is a great help for the researchers .....

- Dr. Nandini Sahu,  
Associate Prof. of English, IGNOU, New Delhi

### Editor Speaks



We have received a good number of positive response on the two special issues, i.e. the Jan. - June - 2011 issue on Jayanta Mahapatra, a noted Indo-English Poet from Odisha and the Jan. - June 2012 issue on Manoj Das, the noted story-teller and a pioneer of Aurovindian philosophy. Researchers of Indo-English literature & College / University teachers have appreciated these two special issues and we feel that our attempt is fruitfully fulfilled. The English teachers of different Colleges & Universities in Odisha are taking interest in Rock Pebbles, which is a good sign for us. The College / University teachers of English from South India, especially from Tamil Nadu, are taking much interest in Rock Pebbles which inspires us to make this Journal a Quarterly one from January 2013. As we intend to make this Journal spread all over, at home and abroad, we need active co-operation of College & University teachers / Researchers and dedicated writers from all states / cities in India and outside, who can help in circulating Rock Pebbles in their respective area.

This issue contains papers on the works of Indo-English writers i.e. A.N. Dwivedi, Girish Karnad, Bharati Mukherjee, Raja Rao, Shashi Deshpande and Rabindranath Tagore etc. We have also published poems & short-stories to encourage creativity. We hope, this issue will be useful to our subscribers / researchers and help further research on Indo-English literature.

## CRITICISM

### Abdul Kalam's ***Wings of Fire*** – A Doctrine for the New Integrated Man

Mrs. G. Sundari

*“Autobiography is looking at our life differently at different stages, like climbing a mountain while the landscape changes with every turn in the path. When one looks at things in the past, one at once gets submerged in a hot struggle of emotion, justified by thoughts and ideas that one’s judgment at that instant moment was wrong.”*<sup>1</sup>

Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam ardently feels that “every human being is a specific element within the whole of the manifest divine Being.” (P. 5) Human beings are basically spiritual beings and are capable of being inspired and also to inspire. The subtle difference in the way some veterans handle their experiences is noteworthy for, the super-intelligence within us gets stimulated to introspect our deeper layers of thoughts. His focus of interest understood perspectives. People with whom Abdul Kalam worked and his mentor and leader Prof. Vikram Sarabhai and his passion towards the profession renders an indolent flavour of individuation to Kalam’s ***Wings of Fire***.

Kalam enjoyed an unparalleled career as a defence scientist, culminating in the highest civilian award of India, the Bharat Ratna. Born to a little educated boat owner in a small island town, Rameswaram in Tamilnadu, by dint of grit and determination rose to the position as a chief of the country’s defence research and development programme by demonstrating the great potential for dynamism and innovation that existed in seemingly moribund research establishments. This is the story of Kalam’s own rise from obscurity and his personal and professional struggles, as well as the story of *Agni*, *Prithvi*, *Akash*, *Trishul* and *Nag* — missiles that have become household names in India

and that have raised the nation to the level of a missile power of international reckoning.

Autobiography may be interpreted as a re-presentation of the memoirs and events of one's life and also signifying certain truths. Kalam has restructured the events and often falls short of the chronological order. He is not a fiction writer to cover the interstices in his memory as to narrate his remembered facts and achievements connected most closely with himself. Interpreting an autobiography by a non-fiction writer like Abdul Kalam is an uphill task and something like breaking a way from anything that is regarded as hegemony. The narrative that oozes out can be comprehended as an extremely optimistic attempt to insinuate and guide the youth of the country that marches onward for scientific and technological innovation.

In general, childhood is looking at as the buried past, the place that is always there, within us, but never to be obtained. His early childhood days were more privileged in terms of love and affection that he enjoyed from his parents and especially his mother and his cousins Jalaluddin and Samsuddin and the concern of his sister who mortgaged her bangles in order to get him educated. Kalam speaks volumes of the impact of his father Jainulabdeen as an austere person in his life. He remembers his father's words thus:

*One of the important functions of prayer, I believe, is to act as a stimulus to creative ideas. Within the mind are all the resources required for successful living. Ideas are present in the consciousness, which when released and given scope to grow and take shape, can lead to successful events. God, our Creator has stored within our minds and personalities, great potential strength and ability. Prayer helps us to tap and develop these powers.* (P. 32-33)

His father's reinstatement of scriptural truths and the rejuvenation of basic human values at a time of decadence when people were caught in the web of ignorance and confusion and how he overcame the most fearsome threats and tests in his life with his unflinching faith on God, serve to inspire humility and devotion. Kalam's explorations of the inner space of thought and heightened feeling along with his venturing into outer space and muted feeling, sometimes leave his readers earthbound. His expressions possess a rare perspective that transcends all the other pretenses to truthful explorations. He is a honest writer in depicting a life time of industrious endeavours fit to be as a literary device but most of his revelations sanctify his deepest conviction towards the development of space and research programme in a country which was just independent then.



Kalam quotes his teacher Iyadurai Solomon who said, "To succeed in life and achieve results, you must understand and master three mighty forces - desire, belief, and expectation." (P12) His experience with his teacher Sivasubramania Iyer who encouraged, "Kalam, I want you to develop so that you are on par with the highly educated people of the big cities," (P. 10) and his association with his friends helped him to develop certain traits that made him strong in the basis of practices. Kalam's revealing autobiography is influential in turning the Indian youth's gaze towards the ultimate goal of life.

In every significant turn in his life, Kalam indulges in memorizing bouts of poetic lines of the famous poets like Khalil Gibran, Lewis Carroll, Robert Frost and a host of others that suited his mood. Kalam is a poet innately and cherished to remember their inspiring and soothing lines most often. At one instance, he says that he fell in love with literature and did not miss to read any book that he stumbled upon. He dedicated his Autobiography to his parents and especially, to his Mother. He writes thus:

*My Mother, you transformed into pious strength  
With kneeling and bowing five times  
For the Grace of the Almighty only, My Mother.*

.....  
*Sleeping on your lap to the envy of my elder brothers and sisters  
It was full moon night, my word only you knew  
Mother! My Mother!  
When at midnight I woke with tears falling on my knee  
You knew the pain of your child, My Mother.  
Your caring hands, tenderly removing the pain  
Your love, your care, your faith gave me strength  
To face the world without fear and with His strength.  
We will meet again on the great Judgement Day, My Mother!*

We can find a subtle trace of postcolonial tone that should inevitably be considered on an account of the truths that he has delivered aiming at the future citizens of India. I personally feel that **Wings of Fire** is not merely an autobiography but a doctrine to be observed by the global citizens of tomorrow. It is definitely not a self – portrayal or a craft to "illustrate, manifest and reflect the complexities inherent in the internal structure of this genre....."<sup>2</sup>

Kalam wondered at the painting prominently displayed in the reception lobby at NASA because the soldiers on one side who were launching the rockets were not white- skinned but dark – skinned. He could not resist his curiosity anymore, "One day, got the better of me, drawing me towards the painting. It turned out to be Tipu Sultan's army fighting the British. The painting depicted a fact forgotten in Tipu's own country but commemorated here on the other

side of the planet. I was happy to see an Indian glorified by NASA as a hero of warfare rocketry.” (P. 36)

He stressed on the indigenous development of sufficiently strong missiles in India. The successful launch of *Prithvi* “sent shock waves across the unfriendly neighbouring countries. The response of the Western bloc was initially one of the shock and then of anger. A seven-nation technology embargo was clamped, making it impossible for India to buy anything even remotely connected with the development of guided missiles upset all the developed nations of the world.” (P. 146) The observation of Mr. N.R. Narayana Muthy in his ***A Better India A Better World*** suits at this instance:-

*“Take risks you must, but take carefully thought out risks. We know that ships are safest in the harbour. But they are not meant to be there – the best ships are destined to ply the wide oceans and brave the stormy, heavy seas, before returning to the welcome safety of the port.”<sup>3</sup>*

Kalam was a person who teamed up with enthusiastic minds in his endeavours to produce a wingless, light, swift machine. He felt that his mind got stretched to a new level while working on the project. Moreover, the then defence minister’s (shared with them the dream of designing an indigenous hovercraft) keen interest and encouragement ignited their enthusiasm. His senior colleagues were not satisfied with their explorations that enthused his ever optimistic mind. After a multitude of efforts that were put in to design the hovercraft, it was christened Nandi. He told his colleagues, “here is a flying machine, not constructed by a bunch of cranks but by engineers of ability. Don’t look at it – it is not made to look at, but to fly with.” (P. 29) Though the project did not see the light, his steadfast effort on the project opened up a new avenue for him, when he was offered the post of rocket engineer at INCOSPAR, formed out of the TIFR talent pool at Bombay (presently Mumbai) aimed to organize space research in India. His interview seemed to him as a ‘total moment of truth, in which my dream was enveloped by the larger dream of a bigger person’, which was really a breakthrough that a young man like Kalam dreamt of.

*“Indeed, the creative human brain has perhaps an excessive proclivity for emotionality ; quite understandably, given that creativity is often inspired: and inspiration in all forms requires feeling!”<sup>4</sup>*

*“Indeed, going beyond the creative pursuits to other professions and trades, every one of us will possibly have at least one moment in our life, profession or vocations when we experience this spark of “enlightenment”, however brief.*

*In these periods there is sudden clarity that often follows a period of confusion and turmoil. In these periods we often make momentous decisions and take definitive actions that may have an impact on our whole life. In these periods we experience true “self-actualisation”. One may contend that the more frequent and more sustained these experiences and more willing the person to explore and follow up on them, the more successful and productive he is. Clearly these are precious moments when our thoughts, beliefs and emotions meet with our inspiration. When our brain, mind and soul meet!”<sup>5</sup>*

Vikram Sarabhai's guidance was an all consuming experience for Kalam. Because he was the mentor of SLV-III project, who was willing to invest time and effort required for the challenging project. It was a task with a vision. Their collaboration did not happen through serendipity<sup>6</sup> ( the making of happy and unexpected discoveries by accident) but it was an honourable recognition for his amorous efforts that he has put in, while working on the indigenous hovercraft which he christened Nandi that reflected the place of his birth, Rameshwaram. What he unflinchingly believes is that “ The entire encounter seemed to me a total moment of truth, in which my dream was enveloped by the larger dream of a bigger person.” (P. 31). What we understand is that for a successful innovation, individuals who seize the initiative and challenge the accepted norms are inevitable. A wise leader, as he was, pressed for as much involvement as possible. What he feels was that the learning experience of the young members should be focused on the activities with singular concentration. With his leadership, DRDL turned vibrant with renewed energy and vigour for, the culmination of the youth and experience hugely expanded their egos and effectively displaying their competencies. In actual sense a leader should look at some different events and accomplishments, mix up the training or the coaching programme a little bit and conduct some experiments. He should prepare the members understand that they have accomplished a particular set of goals and they all have to dare to venture up to set the next set of goals that excite them and start working towards them, right from the moment. They have to swim every single day and there should never really be an off-season in the continuous way of working. The IGMDP required more scientists to get involved with for, it was a prestigious project. Kalam selected productive leaders capable of instilling enthusiasm in their team. The philosophy behind IGMDP was positive thinking and he selected the leaders according to this concept of thinking. Moreover, Kalam compared positive thinking to Draupadi, who accepted to espouse the five Pandavas in accordance to their pledge to

their mother Kunthi that they would apportion any kind of a fortune, impartially among themselves.

The philosophy behind IGMDP was questioned every where, but Kalam made it clear that the participation and involvement of the production centres and user agencies was inevitable right from the design stage until missile systems had been successfully deployed in the battlefield. He created panchayat to check the inherent set backs and disappointments and where the community would sit together and take common decisions. The positive impression that they had on Kalam, his reputation worked fantastically well in the background, eventually leading them to accomplish the targeted projects. The management structure should effectively be put in such a way as to attempt to expand the abilities of the team members, the stalwarts in their own fields.

One needs to make small and smart changes to the way one looks at various situations that one faces at work often. Actually, the little difference in people at times makes a splendid difference. It's the Positive Mental Attitude (PMA) that guides one to step into prospective arenas in professional life. To be with a positive attitude in life opens us up to new avenues to navigate the new means to surmount the peaks. To try to take a positive approach towards various perspectives helped Kalam to reach up to amicable solution. He did not antagonize the people who commented him on the selection of the team leaders. Obviously, it was this positive attitude that made his work life a more pleasant and rewarding experience. He was always a man of right attitude and was unstoppable from achieving his goal. When he looks back of why he was selected to work on India's prestigious project, was that Kalam would suit for the fourth stage of the project, for, " The fourth stage was to be a composite structure and called for a large number of innovations in fabrication technology; perhaps that was why I was brought in." (P. 58) He fondly remembers all those anxious, nerve-racking moments spent at each stage which are vividly recounted from his collective consciousness. He often feels that whichever work that one takes up in one's life should be able to bring to it a "personal touch of magic based upon their individual character, personality, inner motives, and perhaps the dreams crystallized within their hearts ." (P. 46) One should emotionality get involved in the work, he opines, because implementation of the system is more important than system formulation.

As the prestigious president of India, he left golden and awe-inspiring thoughts behind him. It was these thoughts that made him populous amongst the youth of India, who look at him as a scientist-leader, for inspiration. What he believes is that anyone can do anything they want if they really want to. The experiences that he absorbed in life are evoked and recalled with well-reasoned

conclusions and are churned along in his expressions with eloquence born of frankness and acceptance. He renders his life's momentous moments with a philosophical insight and did not cling to fate but strived to achieve his dream.

Kalam maps the growth of his consciousness and his will to account his memoirs that offer a rare opportunity to get to discover the forces that made him one of the most distinguished scientist-leaders of our time. He indulges in the act or self-representational writing delving into his past and as his memory elaborates, the question of the importance and relevance of whatever memory that gets retrieved from his own history is the cause of concern. He sometimes opens himself up to the perspectives and emotions of others experiencing the painful rawness of his own loneliness and untold emotional life, at times.

Autobiography is a work of recapitulation of the nostalgia of the past, a continuous reconstruction and recycling of memories that are continually absorbed and reconfigured in the present. It is the most powerful that contributes to an accustomed view of the past and personal experiences which are momentous and memorable. In the memory of the writer there are sweet spaces of nostalgia and the tough place of resistance. Kalam's rendering gives us an insight into what exactly an individual needs to prove with his / her commendable work as a dedicated professional. And for this, he recommends to work towards the goals right from their school days. Today's youngsters do not completely recognize the value of "soft skills" such as creativity and adaptability and don't always see the relevance of these qualities for their future. They understand the need to work hard and gain qualifications, but they seem to miss the wider skills that allow them to drive the expansion of an innovative economy. They need a proper synthesis of hard and soft skills, and to inculcate in one's self, a feeling of confidence that we can be successful in this era of globalization. To be precise, today's knowledge workers need to focus on these economically valuable skills for, the employers would benefit from a more skilled workforce in a more productive and effective manner in this age of social transformation.

Kalam had an essential trait that distinguished him from the others. He knew his job well and strived to perform well upto the expectations of his leader and mentor late Mr. Sarabhai. He cared for others even though it did not benefit him for any reason. He knew the art of getting along with people. He did not allow even an inch of resentment to breed in him when he came to know about how they reacted on the eve of the Republic Day in the year 1981, when he was conferred Padma Bhushan by the Government of India. He considered himself a sapling planted by Prof. Sarabhai which finally bore fruits that were appreciated by the people of India.

Kalam desired only to uphold the science of rocketry in his country, which he considered very pleasant rather to satisfy the demands of family re-

relationships. He opines that one should rightly strike the major chords of life, so that the ups and downs of life may affect one's creative pursuits. He contends that the more frequent and more sustained these experiences and more willing the person to explore wider avenues and follow up on them, the more successful and productive he is. "I wondered about these issues, attempting to sort out the vexing question of 'scientific temper' and my own spiritual interests. The value system in which I had been nurtured was profoundly religious. I had been taught that true reality lay beyond the material world in the spiritual realm, and that knowledge could be obtained only through inner experience." (P. 19) He often suggests the youth/ students to traverse into new terrains and unravel the unsolved solutions and "certain myths woven around the concept and the process of innovation in industry and business." (P. 50) He fondly remembers George Bernard Shaw's quote, "The gist of the quote was that all reasonable men adapt themselves to the world. Only a few unreasonable ones persist in trying to adapt the world to themselves. All progress in the world depends on these unreasonable men and their innovative and often non-conformist actions." (P.49)

*Professional intellectuals are the voice of a culture and are, therefore, its leaders, its integrators and its bodyguards.<sup>7</sup>*

The need for intellectual leadership was never as great as now. Kalam states that the present day youth is the resource on par with money or machines. He explores many a layer of thought that the human resource should be managed at first and then should be used to the optimum. And so Kalam herein tries to tap the virtues, the values and the enormous power that is scattered all over the sub-continent. He ardently believes that the youth of the country is a valuable resource whose self-esteem and crusading spirit should be unleashed to brave the new world and to achieve a certain level of not only material but also scientific and technological progress. To day, we are living not in a wonderful and fascinating world but in a world of cut-throat competition and to relish the ecstasies of success, intelligence, hard work and taking challenges head-on, is direly needed. No magic wand comes to their rescue and it is faulty to hope that the stars and planets in the heavens would never come to their aid but rather their tryst with destiny would only make them survive in a world that capriciously thrives on the cult of success. The youth should thoroughly understand of what the present day professional world aims at for all those who intend to transcend its highest summits.

Kalam valued the inputs of the academicians that insinuate the development in the project work. His regard for them made him opt for a collaborative endeavour to create a synergy of scientific talent to achieve their advanced technological goals. Kalam cherished the desire to be more than what

he was as a young scientist. He never made use of any influence to advance his career. He ardently believes that one has to have 'the inner urge to seek' more within one's self. The key to his motivation was that he always carries in his mind about the many miles to go rather of what he covered.

The kind of working environment and a different attitude towards life flows as an undercurrent throughout, that lends a sense of authenticity of portrayal which transforms the work with a rare value. While working on Prithvi project, Kalam and his team stressed on building competence in core guidance and control technologies in such a manner that their successful testing of Prithvi, was a cold reality 'that silenced the critics to whispers that sent "shock waves across the unfriendly neighbouring countries. This scientific achievement paved the path to emerge as a self-reliant country in the field of guided missiles and the fact upset all the then developed nations of the world for, India could prove within just a decade of gaining independence. The testing of the missiles was considered as an opportunity accompanied by major challenges.

The day of the successful launch of *Agni* was something like waking up to a beautiful morning from a nightmarish sleep and he feels that the successful launch was something like 'a wonderful culmination' of their years of labour. He comments on the launch of *Agni* thus:

*Do not look at Agni  
as an entity directed upward  
to deter the ominous  
or exhibit your might.  
It is fire  
in the heart of an Indian.  
Do not even give it  
the form of a missile  
as it clings to the  
burning pride of this nation  
and thus is bright.* (P. 152)

When Kalam was conferred an honorary degree of Doctor of Science from the IIT, Bombay, the same year of the successful launch of *Agni*, Prof. B. Nag, read a citation, describing Kalam, on the occasion thus:

*"an inspiration behind the creation of a solid technological  
base from which India's future aerospace programmes can be  
launched to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century".*  
(P. 166)

We accept his finer convictions with a growing nationalistic fervour when he pronounces "the latent fire in the heart of every Indian acquire wings, and the glory of this great country light up the sky" (P. 168). We are driven to spells



of contemplation on his ardent passion that revives our jaded spirits and feel rejuvenated to embark on building competencies in competition. My rendition of Kalam's autobiography is like drinking a fresh elixir of life in sweltering heat and that we would be in an oasis of wellness, if one pursues one's endeavours with a passion to win.

We are wondered at his emotionality and ability for lateral thought that clearly did influence me personally in my career as an academician. His interlinked passions have been blended in a most effective way as a blessing in itself to have a scientist-leader that the sub-continent has ever witnessed. What Kalam spoke of himself is true to the core:-

*I am a well in this great land  
Looking at its millions of boys and girls  
To draw from me  
The inexhaustible divinity  
And spread His grace everywhere  
As does the water drawn from a well. (P. 177)*

We accept Anand Parthasarathy's statement on the cover page of ***Wings of Fire***,

"...a Warm and intensely personal, deeply passionate story of a common boat owner's son who has become India's most distinguished living technocrat....the book is "all-Kalam" in feel... Kalam's personal story is a valuable document that... Indians can be world beaters...with no foreign training or degree. For this upbeat message alone, his autobiography is worth a 100 management tomes".

**-The Hindu, February '99.**

Kalam, at the outset executed hard work and industriousness to reach his goal and then articulated the virtues of workmanship. He never opened up to chase success, but believed in sustained brilliance in culminating his efforts to reach his long cherished goals. His main objective is to communicate a finer notion to the youth that:-

*"We are all born with a divine fire in us. Our efforts should be to give wings to this fire and fill the world with the glow of its goodness". (p. xvi)*

Mr. Narayana Murthy also echoed the same feeling in his book compiled of his lectures that he delivered around the world, *A Better India A Better World*. The volume is considered to be a manifesto aimed at the youth especially the Indian youth, the architects of a better India in future, that holds the key to a better world. Kalam tries to stimulate the young Indians and ignite their minds that they march forward to build the Nation strong in every field. He feels:



*"Ignited young minds, we feel, are a powerful resource. This resource is mightier than any resource on the earth, in the sky and under the sea. We must all work together to transform our 'developing India' into a 'developed India', and the revolution required for this effort must start in our minds."*<sup>8</sup>

He quotes Thirukkukral in his **India 2020-A Vision for the New Millennium** who said:

*If those who think to achieve,  
Have a firm and focused mind,  
They will realize what they thought of,  
And even as they have thought of.*

In **Orientation** and **Creation** and **Propitiation** we notice various meaningful influences and inspiring moments working towards self-authentication and at times to self-discovery. We, along with him contemplate that our country's youth is blessed with the highest potential that India would likely be among the five major economies in the first half of this century. The creative talent should think like a united nation and make the country to take strides in all the fields. Kalam seems to have been endured with the secrets of receivership *"as to walk through life with an invisible inverted umbrella. This image will constantly remind us of our God-given right to receive in abundance. Unfortunately, most of us walk through life with a protective upright umbrella that prevents anything from reaching us."*<sup>9</sup>

As our understanding deepens and start improving our dexterity, we are flashed with different insights and messages from the same pages. By reading and rereading the uncovered truths that prowess him to take control of his life and realize many of his dreams, we find more excited to manifest our own dreams.

We are profoundly clear that Avul Pakir Jainulabdin Abdul Kalam is blessed with 'the soul in the brain', if we too are blessed with that fine ability to grasp his finer thoughts, we understand that the soul turns out to be a vital force that inspires, energises and stimulates the human beings in all human activity. He, very fondly narrates his inspirational experiences in life that dwell in the exclusive purview of the heart, elaborates them in the mould of skill-oriented concepts to the young learners at their entry level, his trials and tribulations in life as a young professional.

*"Autobiographies and novels, in different ways, concern the relation between public and private versions of the self. The autobiographer must reconcile some form of the face he presents the world with an acceptable rendition of his personal self-image. One uses such terms as role, images, appearance*

*even pose, to describe self, but the reality of self-presentation in action to the world is in fact as meaningful as that to feelings largely concealed, perhaps only dimly recognized. The novelist, revealing his / her characters through their feelings and actions, also exploits the complex relation between the appearance a human being offers to his society and his experience of his own existence.”<sup>10</sup>*

It all happened when Arun Tiwari asked him if he had a message for young Indians, which fascinated him immensely that pondered over 'to pen them down before they were buried irretrievably under the sands of time' (P. ix). When Kalam started to sit with him to narrate. Tiwari was enchanted by Kalam's profundity and his range of ideas fascinated him to the core. He says, "He had tremendous vitality and obviously received immense pleasure from the world of ideas. His conversation was not always easy to follow, but was always fresh and stimulating. There were complexities, subtleties, and intriguing metaphors and sub-plots in his narrative, but gradually the unfolding of his brilliant mind took the form of a continuous discourse." He adds in his Preface, "Many of you may never meet Dr. Kalam in person, but I hope you will enjoy his company through this book, and that he will become your spiritual friend", that's what exactly happened to me. The book is written for the ordinary people of India and we derive an intuitive rapport with the humblest and simplest of all the beings on earth.

*"Above all, if autobiography is to be elevated to the status of a literary genre that fulfills aesthetic criteria too then it must bristle with energy that shows it up as a unified work of art.”<sup>11</sup>*

Undoubtedly Kalam fulfills this concept to the core and to account Mathew Arnold's seven culture can be applied to this genre because an ideal autobiography may be seen as expressing humanity's "approaches to totality, and to a full, harmonious perfection.”<sup>12</sup> □

N.B:- All the references with page nos. are from A.P.J. Abdul Kalam with Arun Tiwari's **Wings of Fire**.

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## Indigenous Imagination and Structures of Feelings : A Reading of A.N. Dwivedi's Poetry

Dr Sthitaprajna

An established critic and essayist, A.N. Dwivedi's outstanding achievement as a versatile and prolific poet remains largely neglected primarily for two reasons. First, because the cultural demands made on lyrics are very different from those on prose, so Indian poetry in English is dismissed or ignored as Indian at all. Second, the *bhasha* or vernacular writers overtly evaluate a writer's regional linguistic loyalties and correlate those loyalties to the writer's degree of "Indianness." When Indian critics wonder whether India can ever produce poetry in English they are actually challenging the poet's linguistic competence in English accusing him with lingering colonialist sensibilities and alleged mimicry. For them, English can never become a proper medium for Indian poetic because it cannot describe the Indian ethos.

It is here that Dwivedi's poems come in as a befitting response to these vernacular critiques which comment that Indian poetry in English is a failure of national conscience perpetuating colonialism in a post-colonial era and fails to reflect a native tradition in India. Asif Currimbhoy rightly remarks : "The first thing that strikes a reader on going through Dr. Dwivedi's poems in his commitment to the Indian thought and feeling, which though expressed in English, has its roots in the indigenous culture. This enhances his originality and avoids the pitfalls which many poets who have a Western orientation fall a victim to" (Dwivedi 1994 : 9). His deep-rootedness in Indian tradition and culture makes him a home-grown poet. His poems, by and large, convey a theme that could be seen as representing the vast canvas of India. The discussion of Indi-

anness in Indian English poetry always reminds an important consideration with Nissim Ezekiel. At a time when Nissim Ezekiel was trying to achieve his poetic distinction and cultural identity, India was increasingly divided with a growing consciousness of Indianism. He was dismissed by some as a foreigner but he always had a strong urge to feel himself an Indian. His definition of Indianness was beyond all narrow considerations.

Like Ezekiel who said: "I read myself essentially as an Indian poet writing in English, I have a strong sense of belonging, not only to India, but to this city. ...It's a series of commitments—at the notion of being a world poet, I feel a little empty, rootless," Dwivedi is also essentially committed and rooted to the Indian ethos. Just because he writes in English does not mean he has lost the concept of being a native Indian, drifted apart from his motherland and 'went on to swim across the English channels'.

He writes on a wide-range of topics ranging from Hindu philosophy and mythology, metaphysical longings, social concerns, political awakenings to everyday problems of the contemporary, modern India. Nevertheless, all his poems have a strong distinct Indian voice. Dwivedi seems to be ready to take up the challenge of the *bhasa* or vernacular critics when he says : "Since Indian poetry in English is an integral part of 'Indian Literature', it has to be much more indigenous and authentic..." (1994 : 9). His poems are imbued with native culture and tradition. He largely relies on the classic Indian epics, the Hindu scriptures, Vedas and Vedic philosophies. His strong grounding in Indian philosophy and mythology can be seen in most of his poems. The poem "Launch the Boat, O Sailor", is a powerful allusion to the Hindu concept of *Bhava-Sagar*. At the same time one is reminded of the *Puranic* story of *Samudra-Manthan* where the churning of the great ocean brings forth nectar and poison :

*If you cherish the desire for nectar  
You must also be ready for the poison;  
If you have a thirst for flowers,  
You must come forward to caress thorns,  
For both are the touches of the same brush. (1994 : 17)*

The poeticism of these lines reminds us of poets like Hopkins, Keats, Whitman. The profound philosophical insights and rich symbolism reminds us of our basic Hindu tenants—that true happiness lies not in this illusory material world which holds out false promises and temptations but in self-realization, realization of God-head in us. Similarly, the poems "Be A light unto Thyself" and "At Death's Door" convey significant philosophical messages. The sheer beauty of the lyrics lies in its simplicity. When Ananda, the disciple of Buddha, asks him in his death bed: What shall we do? / Whom shall we go hereafter?/

The Buddha raised his trembling hand/ in a mood of compassion/ and blurted out thru gasps-/ 'Be a light unto thyself'." (1994: 37)

In his other poems, "At Death's Door" and "Death", Dwivedi brings out the one and only universal truth, the concept of death, through vivid imageries. Dwivedi talks about the ultimate reality with an ease and defiance that makes a rather painful experience a comfort zone for the weary souls. He very rightly points out:

*People were in and out,  
But none kept my company  
When I stood at death's door. (1994 : 46)*

He brings home a powerful, dark truth that you always die alone. Your greatest of friends would not accompany you in this journey. There seems to be a connection in all these poems — a kind of philosophical interconnectedness in a myriad of illusion.

Dwivedi uses a hybrid language-English generously peppered with Indian terms—to convey a theme that is indigenous. Deciphering the meaning of some of his poems needs cultural familiarity, for instance, his poem "The City of Legends" exploits the various myths and legends associated with *Haridwar*, a famous Hindu religious centre and pilgrimage. The poem is not only aesthetically charged, it is also a rich source of information of Indian mythology. As he himself once said to Dubey :

*Indianism certainly lies in the application of some unavoidable native stock words and phrases... 'Indianism' at once evokes the whole Indian ethos-indigenous customs and rituals, myths and legends, cultural and literary heritage, ways of behaviour and eating and dressing and not merely medium of articulation. Definitely, it includes the painting of Indian scenes and landscapes. (Jan 2001, 14)*

Dwivedi's poems are set in the immensely physical landscape of North India. Born and brought up in the sacred banks of the Ganges, the holy river seems to be the life blood of his art. The beautiful description he gives of river Ganga in his poems "The Grandeur of Ganges" and "Thoughts of Lakshmanjhula" takes us by awe. Ganga is not just any other river for us Indians. The significance of Ganga runs deep down our ethos. From birth to death and even after death and at each step of our spiritual journey Ganga plays an indispensable role. The lines : "Then, she works as a good cleaner of dirt, refuge n garbage, (1998: 83) give a clear message—let's keep Ganga clean because she not only purges us of our sins but also cleanses the pollution, dirt and filth that's dumped in it.

Geography and politics are integral to Dwivedi's narrative. His poems often investigate intersecting points of politics, history and culture. Poems like

“Emergency” and “Reflections” move between different domains of experience. The poem “Reflections” starts with these lines:

*I'm fifty now.  
It is the time  
to take stock of myself  
n my surrounding. (1994:19)*

Initially a seemingly reflective narrative, where the poet visualizes his present, past and future, the poem has deep existential and realistic implications. The poem which starts as a personal narrative engulfs the society at large. The personal sin, repentance, purgation and self-realization turns into the journey of Indian democracy since independence. The poet laments the pathetic fate of our country and very rightly says: “Democracy, ‘the last refuge of scoundrels.’” There’s sarcasm, there’s irony, there’s a profound agony and there’s helplessness of not being able to change the political scenario. But there’s a ready reconciliation when the poet says:

*Let it march, let it march  
they also serve who ‘stand n watch’ (1994:23)*

The symbolism transforms an ordinary experience to a meta experience like:

*I see the past swimming before me  
like an eddy of swirling smoke  
rising from a chimney pot (1994:19)*

“Emergency” is one such poem where a historical event comes to life with the piercing symbols for example:

*The scepter n the crown  
come tumbling down  
like a house of cards  
pulled down by a storm (1994:28)*

His poems simultaneously evoke multiple worlds. We find a collage of myth, history, religion, rituals, the contemporary political, economic and academic scenario along with the murky world of poverty, crime, war and terrorism. Dwivedi fails us in our intellectual endeavour to categorize him for his wide canvas accommodates a truly Indian scenario. He is at the same time a romantic, a social realist, an existentialist. As he himself confesses in an interview with Bijay Kant Dubey :

*The poetic canvas...of my English poetry covers a large area.  
Professional predicaments, socio-political concerns, providential  
calamities, popular persons, places and things, amorous itchings,  
decays and deaths, movements of planets and stars, degradation  
in human values, creative process, conditions of some women to-*

*day, and some family relations...As for the landscape it is perfectly indigenous but incorporates the whole of the country, mostly North India. (Jan 2001 : 14)*

Dwivedi's poems were drawn from his own life— everyday tasks, travel experiences and spiritual upbringing. His poems show deep appreciation of natural world and sensibility about human aspirations. His images are usually taken from everyday life. With his down-to-earth approach to his subjects, readers find it easy to follow the poet into deeper truths, without being burdened into pedantry. Often he uses the rhythm and vocabulary of ordinary speech or even the looser free verse of dialogue. For example, his poems "Scientist Versus Poet" and "Young man n Young Woman" make an interesting read. "Scientist Versus Poet" seems to echo Eliot's preference of poetic discourse over scientific discourse because poetic discourse like Eliot, Dwivedi also believes :

*Perennial are the poetic pleasures.  
You can't know the rhythmic measures.  
So, you want to disturb me  
In my dreams 'n' visions  
That lift us all to heavens  
Where the blessed souls live. (2008 : 46)*

As a contemporary poet, his poetry, even when deeply rooted in the past, cannot help but reflect contemporary experience. He has consciously constructed a web of multilayered idioms in his poetry which can invoke the lost world of poetic traditions of India and the West through subtle phrases and images. Dwivedi, in this context, says : "All modern Indian poetry, including Indo-English poetry, is sustained by the living waters of our racial tradition and by the continuing breezes from the West... The 'new' Indo-Anglican poetry aims at bringing together the 'best' of Eastern and Western ideas, myths, poetic forms and techniques" (1979: 247). His poetry displays a brilliant amalgamation of the poetic theory of Anandavardhana and Kuntaka of the East and T.S. Eliot and W.B. Yeats of the West.

It is his use of irony, satire and humour that lights up the page and transforms what reads as a statement on the mundane into a deeply felt experience of anguish about contemporary life. His poetry renovates the sensibility of an age and a living society. When poets and writers do not raise their voices against injustice and they remain silent, Dwivedi adopts a satirical mode to write about the elements which have silenced them.

Dwivedi manages to remain a poet of the grassroots and the globe. Overtime he has managed to carve a quiet, tranquil poetic voice of his own—distinctly different from those of his contemporaries. His ability to assimilate an



interior realm of self-doubts within a larger discourse of social criticism makes him an exceptional poet. As a poet active over the last two decades, Dwivedi has registered an impressive presence both in terms of his range and the quality and consistency of his output. At the same time, he has not been content simply to inhabit his own private universe as a poet. He takes his responsibility as a contemporary intellectual seriously. □

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Felicitaton to the Editor Dr. Udayanath Majhi in his native town.

## Psychological Loss in Tennessee Williams's *The Glass Menagerie*

\* S.Mohamed Mumtaz Begam

American drama got a new start and came out of the morass into which it had got bogged down, the credit is freely given by one and all to Tennessee Williams. He treated drama as a means of bringing about fresh insights into hidden layers of individual life. Learning his art from great writers like D.H. Lawrence, Dostoevsky, Anton Chekhov, Henry James, Shakespeare and the contemporary **avant-garde** dramatists, Williams was helped by them in getting a better understanding of the baffling experiences he went through and the sufferings of the people.

In understanding Williams's art, it is necessary to realize that he always kept closer to life, both in its surface manifestation and psychological turmoil that went on under the surface. His own life experiences, chequered as his career had been with many an emotional see-saw, fed the fuel into his spirit turning art for him into a suitable medium to explore the drives and urges of people involved in complex relationships. Closer to social life of a class whose station was at the lowest and whose emotional life presented a complex of conscious and subconscious urges, Tennessee Williams projected in his plays the tragically aspects of their life. His world, therefore, comprised of personalities he actually met and contemplated. He seemed to have been fascinated with individual zest, struggling in the midst of frustrating situations to assert and find its right tone. It is notable that while he kept a realistic grip over the externals

giving us the visual verisimilitude of the location of his characters; the more imposing traits of their personality dominate the total dramatic texture. Drama is essentially a clash and interaction between these rather incompatible currents of psychological traits, releasing intense heat which overwhelm the audiences.

This paper focuses on the theme of psychological loss in Tennessee Williams's *The Glass Menagerie* with reference to the main characters of the play. The theme of loss permeates Tennessee Williams's *The Glass Menagerie*. Indeed, the fact that it is a "memory" play based on Tom Wingfield's recollection of a part of his life that he has never been able to reconcile or escape sets the stage for the "loss" that will serve as the driving force of the play. Williams's characters are the victims of fate (Laura), of time (Amanda), and of a prosaic and destructive reality.

The more Tom tries to free himself from the ties that bind him to his mother Amanda and sister Laura, he realizes that the freedom he craves is never going to be what he had imagined. As Tom gains a better understanding of self, he realizes that he can never escape his real dilemma – loss of psychological space. No matter where Tom travels in his attempt to escape his predicament, he cannot free himself from the guilt he feels for abandoning his family. *The Glass Menagerie* is not merely a story of a tragic series of abandonments that leaves a family emotionally bankrupt; nor is it only a story of a family destroyed by its inability to accept reality. It is a story in which the image of loss is a device by which Williams is able to get to the "marrow" of a universal truth—the human condition of an individual's inability to escape a psychological loss of space no matter how much physical distance is attained. Tom's love for his mother and sister is the root cause of his guilt. Thus, memory becomes his eternal prison as he struggles to reconcile his past and present.

The theme of loss permeates the play from the opening lines of dialogue in which Tom Wingfield mentions, "that the time period of the play was the thirties, when the huge middle class of America was matriculating in a school for the blind". Thus, the social significance of the play contributes to the theme of loss. The fact that America was on the brink of war and going through the depression conveys poignantly how past events can affect the present. By the same token, social forces greatly impact the lives of the Wingfields and others as the youth of America depart on ships to join the war effort. Just as Tom struggles to exorcise the demons of his guilt of abandoning his mother and sister by going back in time to the painful memory, America poises itself to do battle with formidable enemies as well. To further heighten the atmosphere of loss, Tom refers to his long absent father as "a telephone man who fell in love with long distances" (23). Another visual feature that enhances the impact of

loss on this family takes place when Tom first appears on stage and is dressed in a merchant sailor's uniform as he faces the audience while making his commentary and then "strolls across to the fire escape," foreshadowing his departure at the end of the play (*Menagerie* 22). Consequently, within the first few lines of the play, Williams, by employing innovative dramatic techniques and poetic language, conveys the social, personal, and dramatic significance of past events to the present situation.

Tom, as narrator, gives us "truth in the guise of illusion" (*Menagerie* 22). He does this by giving us his recollection of a certain time period in his life. Through the use of poetic license to present truth, Williams is able to seamlessly alternate between illusion and reality. By the same token, Williams uses the image of loss to play within the dynamics of illusion versus reality to allow each character to create his own individual reality. In effect, truth is made more bearable by the use of illusion and the theme of loss becomes a universal truth. For example, Tom's perceived dilemma of loss of physical space results in his retreat from the relationship that he most treasured and, as a result, is not the freedom that he imagined. Tom's escape from his physical environment results in a psychological loss of space, and, as he states in one of the most poignant scenes in the play,

"I didn't go to the moon, I went much further—for time is the longest distance between two places . . . I descended the steps of this fire escape for a last time and followed, from then on, in my father's footsteps, attempting to find in motion what was lost in space . . . I would have stopped, but I was pursued by something . . . Oh, Laura, Laura, I tried to leave you behind me, but I am more faithful than I intended to be! (*Menagerie* 114-115)"

Although Tom physically abandons his mother and sister, he is unable to escape his psychological burden. Tom, Amanda, and Laura are inextricably linked to the past, and are unable to escape the psychological losses each has suffered. Consequently, they are powerless to deal with the harsh realities of a contingent and bewildering present.

Ironically, in *The Glass Menagerie* the fire escape provides no escape at all. In scene one the apartment "is entered by a fire escape, a structure whose name is a touch of accidental poetic truth . . . the fire escape is the landing of it and steps descending from it" (*Menagerie* 21). The structure cannot provide escape from the fire of guilt that burns in Tom's heart. In another scene, Laura trips on the fire escape on her way to the grocery store, dramatizing her ineffectual attempts to escape her illusory world (*Menagerie* 47). In addition to the visual quality of the fire escape looming in front of the audience, a "blown-up photograph" (22) of the absent father hangs in the living room of the lower

middle-class tenement of the Wingfields and represents the embodiment of loss, the collapse of moral nerve and responsibility, and serves as a constant reminder of the crippling past they cannot ever escape. Ironically, the fate of the characters is established in the first scene of the play. The harder the Wingfields try to overcome their unfortunate circumstances and take a stand in reality, the further they are pushed into the world of illusion.

Since the abandonment of his father, Tom has been the primary caretaker and breadwinner for his family. Although his job at the shoe warehouse stifles his creative aspirations as it deadens his will to live, and his mother's constant complaints, accusations and "Rise and Shine" (*Menagerie* 41) wake-up calls make him wish he really were dead, Tom valiantly tries to forget his miserable circumstances and attempts to forestall his inevitable departure by inoculating himself with his narcotics—going to the movies, drinking alcohol, and smoking cigarettes. Certainly, Tom understands his mother's anxiety to keep the family intact and improve their economic situation; however, her desperation causes her to chatter incessantly, resulting in constant arguments with her son while fragile Laura watches helplessly. Amanda fears that Tom will leave his job at the shoe warehouse to pursue his dreams and abandon her and Laura just as her husband had done. Consequently, Tom's desperation surfaces as his dreams of being a writer are squashed by the realities of being forced to work to support his mother and sister. By the same token, the helplessness Amanda feels at her inability to prevent Tom's inevitable departure causes her to berate him about most aspects of his life.

Amanda's love and concern for her son are superseded by her fear of losing him. Similarly, Tom's anger at having to give up his dreams in order to care for his mother and helpless sister surfaces, but it is temporarily restrained by the guilt he feels at the thought of abandoning them and following in his father's footsteps. In one of the most powerful scenes of the play, Tom's growing frustration at his mother's lack of concern for his hopeless predicament causes him to strongly rebuke his mother:

*Listen! You think I'm crazy about the warehouse? You think I'm in love with the Continental Shoemakers? You think I want to spend fifty-five years down there in that—celotex interior! With fluorescent—tubes! Look!! I'd rather somebody picked up a crowbar and battered out my brains—than go back mornings! I go! Every time you come in yelling that Goddamn "Rise and Shine!" "Rise and Shine!" I say to myself, "How lucky dead people are!" "But I get up. I go! For fifty-six dollars a month I give up all that I dream of doing and being ever! And you say self—self's all I ever think of. Why, listen, if self is what I thought of, mother, I'd be where he is—GONE! [He points to his father's picture.] As*

*far as the system of transportation reaches!* (*Menagerie* 41) Unfortunately, no amount of alcohol, cigarettes, or escapism in the form of movies can prevent Tom from his fate.

The loss suffered by Amanda Wingfield is both physical and psychological. In the opening scene we are told that she has been abandoned by her husband who “gave up his job with the telephone company and skipped the light fantastic out of town” (*Menagerie* 23). As a result of a series of abandonments, Amanda retreats into a distant past that is as much myth as it is reality. Indeed, Amanda is a survivor; however, she is able to survive only by clinging to a mythical past—an illusion necessary to deal with the harshness of her present reality. Amanda’s forays into the past allow her to temporarily forget the misery of a life she had never envisioned for herself. The pain of being abandoned by a man that she loved and the burden of having to care for a daughter fragile in mind and body in a time period (1930’s) when single-motherhood was a much greater burden both socially and economically than in 2007. There were very few options open to her.

Although the loss that Amanda suffers is great, her strength to persevere and her optimism and even her attempt to face reality can be noted when she states “in these trying times we live in, all we have to cling to is—each other” (*Menagerie* 49), and “Life’s not easy, it calls for—Spartan endurance!” (50). Ironically, even though Amanda bears the greatest burden as a result of her losses, she is the one who makes the greatest effort to deal with the harsh realities of the present. For example, although Amanda pushes Tom to continue working in the shoe warehouse, she also works hard at two menial and depressing jobs in an attempt to improve her family’s dire economic situation—one selling magazine subscriptions and the other demonstrating brasieres at Famous Barr. It must be kept in mind that the time of the play is during the Great Depression and America is on the brink of World War II.

The Wingfield’s dire economic situation mirrors that of many Americans at that time who were faced with the harsh realities of an uncertain future. Through losses Amanda has gained an understanding of her present predicament. Although she needs the mythic quality of her “gentlemen callers” in Blue Mountain, Amanda is the only character in the play who shoulders the responsibility of the gravity of her family’s situation. She is aware of the physical and emotional limitations of her fragile daughter and she understands that her son may abandon the family in the same manner as her husband. Thus, she pays tuition to send Laura to Rubicam’s business College to obtain a practical degree that would enable her to obtain employment and earn a living. The universal truth that emerges as the image of loss permeates the life of Amanda Wingfield

is her genuine concern for the well being of her children and hope for a better life for them. Tennessee Williams himself felt that Amanda was a central figure in the play, “the mother’s valor is at the core of ***The Glass Menagerie***,” . . . he explains, “She’s confused, pathetic, even stupid, but everything has got to be all right. She fights to make it that way in the only way she knows how”.

Certainly the temporary loss of hope Amanda suffers when she realizes that Laura will not be going back to business college is overshadowed by her genuine fear for her daughter’s future and can be noted in one of the most poignant scenes in the play:

*“So what are we going to do the rest of our lives? Stay home and watch the parades go by? Amuse ourselves with the glass menagerie, darling? Eternally play those worn-out phonograph records your father left as a painful reminder of him? We won’t have a business career—we’ve given up that because it gave us nervous indigestion . . . What is left but dependency all our lives. I know so well what becomes of unmarried women who aren’t prepared to occupy a position. I’ve seen such pitiful cases in the South—barely tolerated spinsters living upon the grudging patronage of sister’s husband or brother’s wife! Stuck away in some little mousetrap of a room—encouraged by one in-law to visit another—little birdlike women without any nest—eating the crust of humility all their life. (Menagerie 34)”*.

Amanda’s genuine concern for Laura’s future comes through in this scene. Despite all the mythic talk of the many gentlemen callers in Blue Mountain and the need to keep up the formalities and manners of the genteel south, a strong, protective, maternal instinct keeps Amanda grounded in reality and her “take charge” attitude resurfaces. In this situation, Amanda must assume full responsibility for her fragile daughter’s well-being and must ensure Laura has a secure future. As a result, Amanda does not linger in hopelessness. If her daughter will not pursue a degree at Rubicam’s Business College, then it is time to move to the next plan of action befitting the universal mother-daughter plight—marriage. This tenacity can be noted when Amanda states to Laura in a poignant scene,

*“Of course some girls do marry” (Menagerie 34).*

After making this statement, she does everything in her power to find a gentleman caller for her delicate daughter. The mother-daughter relationship in any culture is complex. The relationship between Amanda and Laura is no exception. This is a mother-daughter relationship that is hindered by the effects of loss, abandonment, and guilt, but is still filled with love, genuine affection, and concern.

Another feature that adds to the complexity and sets the pair apart is



that in *The Glass Menagerie*, it has been established that the majority of the caretaking will be the mother's responsibility and because of the daughter's fragile mental and physical condition, she will never be able to care for her mother in the future. Nevertheless, there are poignant moments throughout the play in which Laura patiently humors her mother and encourages her to speak of her Blue Mountain days. One such example occurs in scene one:

AMANDA. *Why, I remember one Sunday afternoon in Blue Mountain*

—

TOM. *I know what's coming!*

LAURA. *Yes. But let her tell it.*

TOM. *Again?*

LAURA. *She loves to tell it.*

AMANDA. *One Sunday afternoon in Blue Mountain — your mother received—seventeen!—gentlemen callers! (Menagerie 25-26)*

Laura encourages Amanda's stories and even flatters her mother when her mother asks if they are to receive any gentlemen callers by exclaiming, "I'm just not popular like you were in Blue Mountain. . . ." (*Menagerie* 28). Therefore, although Laura may not be able to physically take care of her mother in the future, it appears that she may be able to provide some moral support. Although Amanda digresses into her Blue Mountain days and longs for a time when her youth, beauty, and charm were much admired, her maternal concern for the future of her daughter brings her back to reality. Amanda's practicality and love for Laura can be noted in the manner by which she suppresses her own concerns about her daughter dropping out of business college and with renewed optimism asks Laura, "Haven't you ever liked some boy?" (*Menagerie* 34).

The love and concern Amanda feels for her daughter makes Laura even more fragile by exaggerating the nature of her physical handicap. Amanda's zeal in helping Laura to overcome the slight limp, which is the result of an early childhood disease, only draws more attention to her condition. Amanda's well-meaning but often overpowering need to overcome her "slight disadvantage"<sup>8</sup> can be noted when she responds to Laura's exclamation, "I'm — crippled!" (*Menagerie* 35) with the following:

*"Nonsense! Laura, I've told you never, never to use that word. Why, You're not crippled, you just have a little defect—hardly noticeable, even! When people have some slight disadvantage like that, they cultivate other things to make up for it—develop charm—and vivacity—and—charm! That's all you have to do!" (Menagerie 36).*

Certainly Amanda's overzealous manner contrasts starkly with the quiet demeanor of her daughter; however, her love for Laura and her desperate



concern for her future come through in this scene. In fact, Amanda's desperation makes her fragile and vulnerable at times. This vulnerability arises out of her impossible predicament and her sense of her own mortality. Whereas Tom, regardless of the hardships he faces, can still take care of himself, Amanda knows that her daughter is completely dependent on her. Amanda fears that if she is unable to secure Laura's future, she will fail as a mother. Considering the unique nature of the mother-daughter bond, it is not difficult to believe the measures Amanda would take to ensure Laura's security. Ironically, although Amanda's fear for her daughter's future grounds her firmly in reality, each attempt she makes to help her daughter compensate for her slight disability results in Laura's further retreat into her illusory world of glass figurines. In the same scene Amanda turns to the "larger-than-life-size photograph" (*Menagerie* 23) of her absent husband, as she does many times throughout the play, and ends her discussion with her daughter by stating,

*"One thing your father had plenty of—was charm!"* (*Menagerie* 36).

In this particularly revealing scene, the image of loss is dramatized on many levels. First, we are made aware of Laura's acute self-consciousness of her physical condition. Second, we see Amanda's determination to not lose hope in procuring a better life for her daughter. Third, and by far the most poignant, is the looming photo of the absent father and husband who, by his absence, has disabled his family to such an extent that each remaining member must retreat into his own world of illusion in order to survive the harsh reality of his present situation. Tom's narcotics include movies and alcohol, Amanda retreats into her world of Blue Mountain and gentlemen callers, and Laura's only outlets are her old phonograph records and her delicate world of glass figurines. Ironically, the phonograph and records are relics left by her father—once again drawing prominence to the devastation his "love of long-distance" (*Menagerie* 23) has caused his family.

The loss permeating *The Glass Menagerie* is heightened by the fact that Williams gave much attention to stage directions, lighting, and music. These aspects can be observed in the details Williams provides in the stage directions preceding scene one: *The apartment faces an alley and is entered by a fire escape, a structure whose name is a touch of accidental poetic truth, for all of these huge buildings are always burning with the slow and implacable fires of human desperation. The fire escape is part of what we see—that is, the landing of it and steps descending from it . . . The scene is memory and is therefore nonrealistic. Memory takes a lot of poetic license. It omits some details; others are exaggerated, according to the emotional value of the articles it touches, for memory is seated predominantly in the heart. The interior is therefore rather*

*dim and poetic . . . At the rise of the curtain, the audience is faced with the dark, grim rear wall of the Wingfield's tenement. (Menagerie 21)*

Just as Williams gave poetic license to Tom Wingfield so that he could serve as narrator and a character in the play, thus giving significance to the language and text of the play, so he has given the performance aspect much importance. By combining innovative dramatic techniques with carefully orchestrated language, Williams is able to convey the depth of loss that imbues the life of the Wingfields. The extensive stage directions from scene one to the last scene convey the misery of the Wingfields and the dim, dark and gloomy stage reflects the pain and the suffering felt by Tom. (3). Thus, by the creative and unique use of language, Williams is able to give the audience, as Tom states in the first scene, "truth in the pleasant guise of illusion" (*Menagerie* 22).

The loss of psychological space is the human dilemma that Williams captures in *The Glass Menagerie*. Tom's refusal to deal with reality makes him abandon his family; however, his inability to escape the guilt he feels at abandoning his family is the universal truth that he can never reconcile in his tortured mind. Undeniably, the extensive stage directions throughout the play remind us that this is a story to be performed. Nonetheless, Williams's stage directions possess a poetic quality and capture the humanity that is contained within "*those vast hive-like conglomerations of cellular living—units that flower as warty growths in overcrowded urban centers of lower—middle population*" (Williams, *Menagerie* 21). We are reminded that the events we see before us are from Tom's memory, hence they are selective and Williams goes a step further by suggesting that since memory "omits some detail" (21) it may not be very reliable. To be sure, the audience and reader are challenged to form their own opinions on the reliability of Tom's memory. Nonetheless, Tom's struggle to deal with a very painful segment of his life comes through the dialogue and stage directions. Consequently, by acknowledging his dilemma we feel the plight of these people who are physically and emotionally imprisoned by "the huge buildings" that "are always burning with the slow and implacable fires of human desperation" (*Menagerie* 21.) As Tom acts as both narrator and a character in the play, we can feel the inner turmoil as painful memories resurface and are presented on stage in an attempt to come to terms with an overwhelming sense of guilt – of abandoning his beloved family. Thus, since "memory is seated predominantly in the heart" (21) it is appropriate that the audience sees on stage a reflection of the guilt ridden heart of the narrator.

The image of loss translates to the "public issues"<sup>11</sup> and "private tensions" of many cultures. Certainly, the universal truth distilled from the play translates beyond the St. Louis tenement of the Wingfields to many diverse

cultures, firstly, because of Williams's "ability to peer into the depths of human nature without abusive curiosity but with understanding and compassion" and secondly, because of "Williams's concept of people's eternal need for one another—a need strong enough to overcome arrogance, brutality, and egoism". However, their dilemma goes beyond that crisis and rests on the fact that once they have made that connection, they are unable to sustain it. For example, although Tom and Amanda come close many times during the play to making a real connection, their individual insecurities and fears make the connection impossible. This attempt and ensuing failure to connect can be seen in scene four when Amanda states to Tom, "*I've had to put up a solitary battle all these years. But you're my right-hand bower! Don't fall down, don't fail!*" and Tom replies, "*I try, Mother*" (*Menagerie* 48). That being so, it is inevitable that their individual anxieties and disillusionments will not allow for the type of compassion, selflessness, and unconditional love to surface that would sustain a real connection between mother and son. Consequently, Tom and Amanda's failed attempt at connecting can be noted in the stage direction that follows their discussion of Tom's insatiable desire for going to the movies for "adventure" (51).

To this extent, the stage direction announces,

*"Amanda looks baffled, then hurt . . . Tom becomes hard and impatient again"*

It is at this point that the audience realizes that a genuine sustained human connection is impossible between mother and son. As the image of loss permeates this scene, we feel the time slipping away. In fact, time is the enemy for mother and son. Amanda has been abandoned by her husband and has raised two children by herself. Her only consolation is her mythic Blue Mountain days which exist in her imagination, and therefore, outside the ravages of time.

The images of loss that permeate this play and include the absent father, Tom's escapism into the world of movies, alcohol, cigarettes and poetry writing, Amanda's mythic Blue Mountain, Laura's fragile world of glass and ultimately, Tom's abandonment of his mother and sister—all the noise of human drama, reality and illusion, converge in this final silent mother-daughter scene. Ultimately, Amanda has to face reality whereas Tom cannot. Nonetheless, despite the weaknesses and flaws of the Wingfields as they journey between reality and illusion, there is a sense that at least mother and daughter have connected and, as a result, may have a better relationship. Although the absent father never makes an appearance on stage, he epitomizes the abandonment and loss the Wingfields can never escape.

The stage directions capture the photograph's significance and at the same time solidify Williams's philosophy on the "unimportance of the photographic in art" (7): "*It is the face of a very handsome young man in a doughboy's*  
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*First World War cap. He is gallantly smiling, ineluctably smiling, as if to say "I'll be smiling forever" (22).* His smile is frozen in time. It transcends the misery and devastation that his permanent departure wreaked on his family. In fact, the smiling, immutable photograph of the handsome, absent father is the embodiment of loss and a crippling past that his family can never escape. Ironically, the photograph, like the play itself, exists outside of time. As Williams explains in his production notes "Everyone should know nowadays the unimportance of the photographic in art" (*Menagerie* 7). Undoubtedly, the absent father is the "fifth character" (23) in *The Glass Menagerie*, and Amanda glances at his photograph in particularly poignant scenes throughout the play, as if to seek his advice. The play ends with Amanda glancing at her husband's photograph, establishing the devastating consequences of this abandonment as Tom follows in his father's footsteps. Just as the absent father is established by Tom as the fifth character in the first scene of *The Glass Menagerie*, Jim, the gentleman caller, Tom announces, "is the most realistic character in the play, being an emissary from the world of reality that we were somehow set apart from" (23). In the same scene, Tom goes on to establish Jim's significance by explaining, "But since I have a poet's weakness for symbols, I am using this character also as a symbol; he is the long-delayed but always expected something that we live for" (23). That being so, Jim also represents the myth of the American dream.

The theme of loss infiltrates the world of the Wingfields in *The Glass Menagerie*. Tennessee Williams uses this theme not only to come to terms with a painful part of his own life, but to distill a larger truth of the human condition that although life is fragile, as are the attempts that human beings make to establish a genuine connection, the real strength lies in the resiliency of the human spirit in its quest to survive. Thus, Williams states that, "*The monosyllable of the clock is Loss, loss, loss, unless you devote your heart to its opposition*" (*Menagerie* 17); this takes place in the final silent scene and in Tom's closing speech, reinforcing the idea that individual choice is still involved and can make a difference. Tom's guilt makes him face his past actions; Amanda gains grace and dignity as she comforts her daughter, and fragile Laura is able to look up and smile at her mother. Loss can result in something more significant – in other words, although time can be the enemy, it can also allow a certain compassion to surface. Although the rapid motion of time hurls human beings through their daily lives filled with pain, suffering and grief, it can also heal, nurture and awaken us to greater truths. Ironically, Williams, by capturing time in a work of art, opens our minds to the beauty of life despite its imperfections. Indeed, there is hope for a deeper compassion to surface that is strong enough to resist the ravaging forces of time. Ultimately, the essence of theater lies in

its ability to “freeze” time on stage—however briefly—so that we can glimpse a part of humanity that reflects our own fears, hopes, anxieties and desires. By filtering out the noise of everyday life, drama has the ability to transport us to a self reflective moment that we may have never experienced otherwise.

“***The Glass Menagerie*** has a deceptive simplicity.” Williams uses the image of loss as a vehicle to distill the universal truths that are revealed as illusions accede to reality—the reality of the ability of the human being to survive. Undeniably this is an idea so complex that Williams himself referred to it as a “*mystery*”. □

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## FUNDAMENTAL AMBIGUITY OF HUMANITY A STUDY OF **HAYAVADANA**

Dr. M. Punitha Priya

Robert Browning's '*And thus we half-men struggle*' could very well be the motto for Girish Karnad's experimental play. **Hayavadana**, which is a memorable treatment of the existential theme of the fundamental ambiguity of the human condition. This theme is suggested in the play itself in phrases such as "Search for completeness" and "this mad dance of incompleteness" (p.57). Karnad's handling of the sources of his plot in the play makes it abundantly clear that his interpretation of the ancient Indian story not only differs substantially from his originals but also indicates a bold attempt at investing an old legend with a new meaning, which has an urgent relevance to present day thinking about man and his world.

The main plot of **Hayavadana** is based on the 'Story of the Transposed Heads' in the Sanskrit **Vetala Panchavimsati** (Twenty-five stories about King Vikrama and Vetala, the Goblin) which forms part of Kshemendra's the **Brihat Katha Manjari** and Soma Deva's the **Katha Sarit Sagara** (both 11<sup>th</sup> Century). Each of these stories poses a riddle at the end, which Vetala challenges the king to solve. All these riddles are capital brain-teasers. For instance, in one story, of three lovers of a girl who dies of snake-bite, the first burns himself on her funeral pyre; the second decides to pass his whole life near the spot where she was cremated; and the third gets hold of a magic book with the help of which he revives the girl, along with whom the first suitor who died with her also comes back to life. The riddle posed is, which of the three deserves most

to marry the girl? The answer is: Suitor One, who is reborn with the girl, has thereby become her brother; Suitor Three, who gave her life is now her father; Suitor Two thus wins.

The story of 'the Transposed Heads' (No. Six, Vetala Panchavimsati) tells of Dhavala, a young washerman who marries a beautiful girl, called Madana Sundari. After the marriage, the couple accompanied by the wife's brother sets out to attend a festival in a city. As they approach the temple of the goddess Durga (Kali), the husband in a fit of devotion cuts off his own head as an offering to the goddess. His brother-in-law, shocked at this, follows suit, and when the wife too is about to kill herself, the goddess asks her to replace the heads, which would bring the two youth back to life. Confused owing to her excessive eagerness, the wife sticks her husband's head on her brother's trunk and vice versa. The question now is, which of the two is her rightful husband? The answer, as in the case of the earlier story, is a test of one's powers of reasoning and mastery of logic. The conclusion is, "that one of the two, on whom her husband's head was fixed, was her husband, for the head is the chief of the limbs, and personal identity depends upon it". It is obvious that the original Sanskrit story is an excellent exercise in ingenuity but little more than that. In his study of **Vetala Panchavimsati** entitled *The King and the Corpse*, Heinrich Zimmer has argued that the main story of King Vikrama and Vetala has a symbolic significance in that it suggests the monarch's education in self-knowledge in which the goblin, the sorcerer in the garb of an ascetic who puts the king into touch with self-knowledge in which the goblin, the sorcerer in the garb of an ascetic who puts the king into touch with Vetala inhabiting a corpse and Vikrama's battle of wits with the goblin-all play their part. But each of the Vetala stories will hardly bear the weight of a symbolic interpretation of this kind, for some of them are more diverting than edifying like the one of which asks the question: What are the mutual relations of two couples, of which one comprises a young man married to a widow, and the other of the young man's father who marries the daughter of this widow by a former marriage? Apart from that, Zimmer's interpretation concentrates on the main story, using the chain-stories only as minor elements in the symbolic structure raised on it.

A modern source of the plot of **Hayavadana** is Thomas Mann's long short story, *The Transposed Heads*, which the author himself called a 'meta-physical jest'. Mann, who got the story from Zimmer (to whom he dedicated it) changes and elaborates it further, making it a vehicle for the expression of his favourite idea-viz., the ironic confrontation between opposites in human life. The two opposed forces here are the spirit represented by Shridaman, the Brahmin husband, and the flesh symbolized by the cowherd Nanda, his friend, the wife



Sita being the Feminine Principle. The original story ended with the two youths being restored to life. Mann develops it further by showing how initially Sita is extremely happy at the transposition of heads, for it gives her exactly what she wants—a husband with an intellectual's brain and a strong, working class body. But gradually, the intellectual head transforms the body, making it lose all its virility and Sita is dissatisfied again. The only solution now possible is that the two friends must kill each other and thus cut the Gordian knot. Mann also adds a sequel, by describing the career of the son born of the marriage. He is called 'Samadhi' or 'Andhaka' and is extremely short-sighted. Owing to this, he is solely interested in things of the mind and becomes a thinker and a scholar.

In a perceptive article, Naresh Guha has noted the symbolism of the names of Mann's characters. 'Shridaman', the husband is literally the 'subduer of Beauty' and his son, 'Samadhi' is one who concentrates (only on things of the spirit) and is blind ('Andhaka') to the appeal of the flesh. Developing this point further, one may also note how Nanda is named appropriately in more than one way, for it was the name of Krishna's foster father and he was a cowherd; and secondly 'Nanda' literally means 'happiness'. The ironic suggestion in the name Sita ought also to be stressed, for she is traditionally the paradigm of the constant wife.

Thomas Mann himself has pointed out the significance of his version of the story thus: "The world is not so made that spirit is fated to love only spirit, and beauty only beauty. Indeed the very contrast between the two points out, with a clarity at once intellectual and beautiful, that the world's goal is union between spirit and beauty, a bliss no longer divided but whole and consummate. The tale of ours is but an illustration of the failures and false starts attending the effort to reach the goal".

If Mann's aim was to stress the ironic impossibility of uniting perfectly the spirit and the flesh in human life, Karnad tries to pose existential ideas like the problem of Being and the metaphysical anguish of the human condition. For this he combines the transposed heads plot with the **Hayavadana** story, which is entirely his own invention. The importance of this addition is clear from the fact that the play derives its title from it. The Hayavadana story tells of a man with the head of a horse ('haya': horse; 'Vadana' = face, mouth). He is the son of a prince who had fallen in love with a horse—a situation reminiscent of Robinson Jeffers's verse narrative, *Roan Stallion* (1925); but the difference is that the American poet's stallion is an externalization of the wild sexual-religious urges of the half-breed girl, California, while Karnad's is a gandharva (a celestial being) cursed to be a horse for a misdemeanour. Hayavadana's problem is how to get rid of his horse's head. He goes to the Kali temple and threatens to chop off his head (a motif which establishes a firm link between the Hayavadana



story and the transposed heads plot) and once again, as in the main plot, the goddess's ambiguous boon creates another problem while solving one. In response to Hayavadana's prayer, "make me complete", the goddess makes him a complete horse, not a complete man and in addition to this, Hayavadana still retains his human voice. His liberation is complete only when the five-year old son of the woman in the transposed heads story (he has, significantly enough, no name) asks him to laugh and the laughter soon turns into a proper neigh. Hayavadana himself, in turn, brings about a welcome transformation in this boy, who is predictably abnormal, for he has forgotten how to laugh. It is Hayavadana's laughter which has earlier restored the boy to normalcy. The chief motif in the **Hayavadana** story also recalls Eugene Ionesco's *Rhinoceros* but the thematic thrust of the two plays is in different directions. The protagonist in *Rhinoceros* resists conformism until he finds himself to be in a hopeless minority of one pitted against a society turned into rhinoceroses; then, losing his nerve, he longs desperately to conform and become a rhinoceros himself; and lastly, when he finds this impossible, he tries to trick himself into believing that he is a hero fighting a lone battle for humanity. What Ionesco is trying to show is the absurdity of the human condition in which there is a yawning gap between Man's ideals, capabilities and actions. It is obviously not these aspects of absurdity that Hayavadana specifically stresses.

The two threads of action woven together in Hayavadana unitedly present a theme which may be summed up as the totality of being to be achieved through the integration of the self and the wholeness of personality a theme stressed in Samuel Beckett's "you must be there better.... if you want them to let you go". The play presents as many as five examples of fractured personality suffering from want of integration. Hayavadana's plight has already been described; the two friends, the woman and her son in the transposed heads plot have been given new names which carry their own symbolic suggestions at once similar to and different from those in Mann's story. Shridaman is now called Devadatta (literally, 'the God-given'), the only son of a learned Brahmin, 'Vidyasagara' (= 'Ocean of learning'). Shridaman's friend, Nanda becomes Kapila, the only son of the ironsmith, Lohita (= 'iron'). The reverberations of meaning in the name 'Kapila' are interesting. The word means variously tawny, reddish; it is synonymous with 'Lohita' which means blood; and it is equivalent to a dog too. It should be remembered that Kapila is also the name of a famous sage who was the founder of the Samkhya School of Indian philosophy, though this has obviously an ironic significance when applied to the humble ironsmith's son in the play. Devadatta's name stresses his primacy in the social hierarchy but also indicates ironically his failure to secure happiness on God's earth. The

name of Kapila's father suggests strength and Kapila's own, 'blood' and hence the fleshly appetites; and as far as the social hierarchy is concerned, he is certainly the bottom dog. The wife, called Sita by Mann becomes Padmini in the play. The suggestions in this name are: the literal meaning of the name is 'the lotus plant' or the 'lotus pond', which is traditionally the abode of Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity; secondly, it also denotes a special type of feminine beauty according to a well-known classification made by Vatsyayana, the author of the Kamasutra. While it is ironical that Padmini brings no prosperity to the two friends with whom her lot is cast, her name also makes her the eternal female. As already noted, the child, named Samadhi-Andhaka by Mann has no name in the play, not only because the spirit-versus-flesh theme is not the one that Karnad wishes to stress, but also because it is an archetype, as will be shown later.

After the transposition, Devadatta and Kapila naturally became fragmented creatures, while Padmini, torn between the two is also a house divided against itself. The presentation of the child's predicament is interesting. This son of Devadatta becomes an orphan and is initially accepted by the forest people as Kapila's son. Soon rejected by them as a child of the city he is an alienated creature, dumb and morose. He is hopelessly incomplete, for he has not the child's natural privilege to laugh and to wonder at things.

A clear pattern seems to emerge from this presentation of several characters deprived of the wholeness of being; it is a pattern that appears to cover all the three basic areas of human existence viz., the lives of Man, Woman and Child, represented in the play by Hayavadana, Padmini and her son respectively. Hayavadana's parentage (it will be recalled that he is the son of a celestial being in an equine form and a princess) symbolically suggests the combination of the three elements of the divine, the human and the animal in his make-up. Living in a world of men, he finds himself incomplete with his equine head and tries to be all man with the help of the divine (i.e., the goddess Kali). Through sheer indifference (as Thomas Hardy would say) or malice, the divine force makes him all animal in form with the further disadvantage of retaining his human voice. The significance of the fact that his final, total liberation comes through laughter at the bidding of the child is plain. Modern man must recover his sense of childlike curiosity, wonder and amusement at the sheer incongruity of life in order to achieve integration, though on a lower level of existence.

Padmini's plight suggests Woman's vain attempt to unite Man as intellect and as flesh in order to further her creative purpose. But these two aspects of the masculine personality are basically at war with each other and hence the attempt ends disastrously in destruction for both Woman and Man. Integration cannot be achieved by trying to reconcile the irreconcilable, but by accepting

cheerfully the fundamental disharmony in human life.

The alienation of Padmini's child is total. The boy refuses to communicate with any person but is passionately attached to his dolls, resisting fiercely any attempt on the part of anyone even to touch them. This suggests his absorption in a world of make-believe from which he has no desire to emerge. The sight of a laughing horse, however, suddenly breaks the barrier, as his innate childlike sense of wonder and delight in the strange is roused in a flash, and it is this laughter that restores him to normalcy, after which he drops the dolls. The suggestion here is plain: the child and Hayavadana have both learnt the same lesson, but Hayavadana has learnt it rather late in life, and this has inevitably reduced the quality of his existence, the child's realization has come in time and the future belongs to it. Hayavadana thus presents the typical existential anguish but does not stop at existential despair; going beyond it, the play suggests a strategy for the achievement of integration in a world inevitably cursed with absurdity and irrationality.

In addition to its thematic richness, Hayavadana is also a bold experiment in dramatic technique which holds a revealing lesson for all practitioners of Indian English drama. The modernity of its theme, is, paradoxically enough, admirably matched by the antiquity of its dramatic model. The entire play is cast in the form of traditional Indian folk-drama, which took several features of ancient Sanskrit drama but adapted them to its own special needs as a popular form of art. The particular form of folk-drama which Karnad has drawn upon is the 'Yakshagana' of Karnataka but this form has much in common with traditional folk drama in other Indian languages also. The play opens with the offering of worship accompanied by singing to the god Ganesha by a narrator-figure called the Bhagavata, who is an avatar of the Sutradhara in ancient Sanskrit drama, just as the ritual worship and singing recall the nandi (The singing of a benedictory verse) with which every Sanskrit play begins. Apart from its ritualistic function, the nandi often suggested the major concerns of the plot through the use of either symbols or play upon words. Hayavadana employs this device skillfully, by choosing the god Ganesha for ritual worship, for this god with his human body and animal head aptly suggests a major development in the action as well as the central theme of completeness of being. In his prayer to Ganesha the Bhagavata stresses this point: "An elephant's head on a human body, a broken tusk and a cracked belly-whichever way you look at him he seems the embodiment of imperfection, incompleteness. How indeed can we fathom the mystery that this very Vakratunda-Mahakaya, with his crooked face and distorted body, is the Lord and Master of Success and Perfection? Could it be that this Image of Purity and Holiness, this Mangala Moorty, intends to

signify by his very appearance that the completeness of God is something no poor mortal can comprehend?" (p.1).

The Bhagavata's role is crucial in the play, since he performs a great variety of functions. He is the narrator who introduces the major characters in the story, and later supplies the connecting links in the action, informing the audience about major developments such as marriage of Devadatta and Padmini in Act I and the rishi's verdict on the problem of the transposed heads in Act II. Some of his songs reveal him as a choric commentator on the action. Occasionally, he is a vehicle for the revelation of the deepest thoughts of a major character, as in the scene in Act II where Padmini meets Kapila with the transposed head in the forest. At places, he becomes a minor character in the action, as when he tells Devadatta where Kapila lives in the forest. Midway through the drama, we find him signaling the end of the action by telling the audience, "there's a break of ten minutes now. Please have some tea, ponder over this situation and come back with your solutions. We shall then continue with our enquiry" (p.39). We even find him assisting the stage-hands as when he places a sword near the curtain with the picture of the Goddess Kali which indicates the Kali temple in Act I (p.27). And it is his privilege, at the end, to lead the benedictory final prayer (Bharatavakya of ancient Sanskrit drama) with which the play closes. The Bhagavata indeed out-Bottoms Bottom, but in a far more constructive way than Shakespeare's comic weaver. In discharging his choric function, the Bhagavata is joined by a chorus of female singers also: their role, however, is restricted to this alone.

The setting is minimal and is indicated by printed curtains held up by stage-hands in full view of the audience. Change of locale is shown by characters walking around, and miming does duty for stage property as when Devadatta, Padmini and Kapila undertake the fatal cart-ride to the forest in Act I, and when Kapila brings flowers to Padmini, Devadatta and Kapila wear appropriately coloured masks, the former's being palehued and his friends's a dark one. There is frequent use of asides, characters freeze when the Bhagavata is commenting on the action, and the sword fight between the two friends is stylized like a dance, with Padmini's reaction too being similarly stylized. A feature characteristic of the Indian ethos is the effortless bringing together on the same plane of the human, the supernatural and the inanimate worlds, 'willing suspension of disbelief' being secured by endowing supernatural beings and inanimate creatures with human faults and foibles. Thus the Goddess Kali, who restores the dead friends to life is presented as a sleepy, bored, cynical curmudgeon; and the two dolls of Padmini's child are jealous of the baby and watch the growing flabbiness of the post-transposition Devadatta's body and Padmini's sinful dreams of Kapila with ironic glee. Unlike in Western realistic

drama, there is no attempt to present the dramatic action as a slice of life; the fact of dramatic illusion is stressed as in Brecht's epic theatre. Thus, at the end of Act I, while state hands hold a curtain before the frozen characters, the Bhagavata announces an interval and sips tea on the stage itself, along with his associates; and in the final benedictory prayer, all the characters join, including the three chief ones who have died during the course of the action.

The dialogue is in prose but it is frequently interspersed with songs which contain suggestive and trenchant comment on action and character. The oriental colouring appropriate for the action is secured in several ways. Descriptions sport romantic hyperbole in the tradition of ancient Sanskrit poetry as in the Bhagavata's account of Devadatta's mental equipment: "Having blinded the greatest poets of the world with his poetry and wit, Devadatta is as it were the apple of every eye in Dharmapura" (p.2), and Padmini's wealth is described as "In her house, the very floor is swept by Goddess of Wealth" (p.19). The imagery is specifically Indian when Devadatta characterizes Padmini as "the Shyama Nayika-born of Kalidasa's magic description- as Vatsyayana had dreamt her". (p.14); and also when Padmini describes the coming of the dawn in the forest: "The shadows of twigs draw alpanas on the floor. The stars raise arati and go" (p.52). Instance of Indian idiom are: "One has to collect merit in seven lives to get a friend him" (p.21) and Padmini's description of her husband as "you are my saffron, my marriage thread, my deity" (p.21).

But the style is not all purple and brocade. A strong admixture of the comic element has always been a feature of the folk drama. This comic element covers the entire spectrum of humour ranging from farce and slapstick to irony and wit. In the opening scene the Actor's encounter with the horse-headed Hayavadana just as he is about to relieve himself on the roadside is a capital example of farcical humour. The irony is often at the expense of the audience itself, as in the Bhagavata's sly references to it in: "There is our large-hearted audience. It may be that they fall asleep during a play sometimes. But they are ever alert when someone is in trouble" (p.3). The irony, however, scores its most memorable triumphs, when it suddenly effects a marriage of antiquity and contemporaneity in the manner of Joycean fiction and Eliot's poetry. This is achieved as in the following:

Actor I : (after his clowning has failed to raise Padmini's morose child to laughter): "No response-no reaction. When he grows up he should make a good theatre critic" (p.66).

Actor I : "Fellow-Pilgrims"

Hayavadana: "But not fellow-travellers" (p.67)

Hayavadana: "So I took interest in the social life of the Nation-Civics,  
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Politics, Patriotism, Nationalism, Indianization, the Socialist Pattern Society... I have tried everything" (p.9).

In fact, the final, traditional benedictory prayer, after invoking divine help in the cause of general prosperity as usual, ends with an unorthodox, ironical touch: "give the rulers of our country success in all endeavours /and along with it, a little bit of sense" (p.71). And since Hayavadana, now a complete horse, stands by the side of the Bhagavata as he leads the prayer, the kind of sense required is also appropriately suggested. This sudden dovetailing of the ancient and the modern emphasizes how an ancient fable can have urgent relevance to our own age.

Both in its thematic and technical strategy, Hayavadana has thus an important lesson to offer to the modern Indian English playwright. The lesson simply is that if he aspires to march ahead, he can only do so by going back first. Only a return to its roots in ancient Sanskrit and Indian folk-drama can revitalize his art. As Adya Rangacharya, a distinguished modern Kannada dramatist, who himself has achieved this consummation in a play like **Listen Janmejaya** has said in reference to ancient Indian drama: "Like parentage it lives in us even in these days. We may denounce our father but we cannot empty ourselves of his blood in us. It is more blood that modern Indian needs. Anaemia is already there". Modern drama in the Indian languages notably in Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, Kannada and Hindi has during recent years successfully increased its artistic haemoglobin count by following this advice. Why must modern Indian English drama still continue to remain 'lean and pale'? □

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THE DILEMMA OF DUAL IDENTITY:  
A Study of Bharati Mukherjee's  
***THE TIGER'S DAUGHTER.***

Gyanendra Kumar Dhall

**B**harati Mukherjee, an Indiaborn American writer is one of the most significant contemporary writers of Indian diaspora. Her works have been receiving world- wide recognition from time to time and she has been awarded many times in her writing career. Her numerous awards include the Canada Arts Council Award in 1973 -74 and 1977, the Shastri Indo-Canadian Award in 1976 -77, a Guggenheim Foundation Grant in 1978 -79, the National Book Critics Circle Award in 1988, and the Pushcart Prize in 1999. Mukherjee's writing career duly corresponds her professional career. She has worked as Instructor, Lecturer, Asst. Professor, Associate Professor and Professor at different colleges and Universities in Canada and America.

As a post-modern writer Mukherjee deals with issues relating to identity crisis faced by immigrants migrated to other countries in search of better future prospects. In her fiction Mukherjee focuses on the immigrants in America and records their interaction with the unknown forces of the New World. Posing as a mainstream American writer, Mukherjee identifies herself as an American. She does not want to be called an expatriate writer. For her, immigration from the Third World to the United States is a metaphor for the process of uprooting and rerooting. This process forms the central theme of her first three novels, *The Tiger's Daughter*, *Wife* and *Jasmine*. Here, she uses Indian female protagon-



nists to present the conflicts between East-West cultural clash and consequent quest for identity in the New World. Thus, her protagonists are caught by the dilemma of dual identity-one that is left behind and the other yet to acquire.

Bharati Mukherjee is a representative voice of the new generation writers in multi-ethnic America. Critics have compared Mukherjee to V.S. Naipaul, Anton Chekov and to Bernard Malamud. Like other immigrant writers, such as Arun Joshi, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande and many other post-modern writers, Mukherjee makes a psychological analysis of her protagonists. The world which Mukherjee depicts in her novels and short stories is the realistic world of hardship and suffering, mental trauma and tension, alienation and identity crisis felt by Asians in America. She herself admits her responsibility as a writer in an interview with Bob Moyers, "I want to be the person who sees the problems... who wants to stay and fight the battle and correct the problem" (**Conquering America**). Like Meena Alexander, Bharati Mukherjee seems to have an acute sense of 'double consciousness'. This is the tension that stimulates ethnic writers in their respective areas. Mukherjee confesses, "I am an American writer, in the American mainstream, trying to extend it.... I look on ghettoizations - whether as a Bengali in India or as a hyphenated Indo-American in North America as a temptation to be surmounted" (**Four- Hundred-year-Old Woman** 34). She is not greatly concerned with depicting the history of her native country in her novels. She is more interested in depicting the present social reality of the Asian immigrant's life in contemporary America.

Bharati Mukherjee is a familiar name in the diasporic literature. She was born in 1940 to Indian parents in Calcutta. As a child she lived in a traditional Bengali joint family. The strains of living in a conservative family left a deep impact on her impressionable mind. As a result she developed a sense of isolation within herself at an early phase of her life. From that time, she became conscious to discover her own identity. She had a great inclination to writing. As a child she was drawn towards the world of fiction. Her trip to England and Switzerland at the age of eight proved to be a turning point in her life. Her westernized outlook encouraged her to dislike the absurdity of different aspects of her culture and heritage. This found a profound expression in **The Tiger's Daughter**, a novel Mukherjee was to write many years afterwards.

Mukherjee's experience at Iowa marks her feeling of expatriation which became her major theme. In Calcutta in the 50s there was no talk of 'identity crisis'. It was unimaginable of a person not knowing who he or she is. One's identity was fixed by birth, parentage, religion and mother tongue. Bharati Mukherjee discovered her identity rather very early in life. Till her marriage with Clark Blaise, Mukherjee's identity was strongly connected with her ancestral



soil. The five minute act of marriage in a lawyer's office suddenly changed her into a transient with conflicting loyalties to two very different cultures. At this point the novelist, in her real life encounters the 'dilemma of dual identity'. And, this reality gets fictionalized in her first novel ***The Tiger's Daughter***.

In ***The Tiger's Daughter***, the Tiger's daughter is Tara Cartwright Banerjee, who returns to Calcutta after a seven years stay abroad with her foreigner-husband. When she arrives, her views are seen to be coloured by her stay abroad. In her quest for identity, the self of Tara is seen to be an ambivalent self. She is not sure whether she is better off in the US as David's wife, or whether she is more comfortable back here in India as Tara, the daughter of the Bengal Tiger. She had a privileged childhood and a westernized upbringing and education. She belongs to the richer sections of Indian society; she never has had to suffer want. She is against Indian convention like an arranged marriage, which is a traditional custom under Indian conditions. So the very act of falling in love, and marrying a foreigner, is in defiance of convention. But her expectations that her daring act of marriage to a foreigner would bring in its wake the admiration of her friends proves futile. Rather, they view her act with condescension. Tara finds it difficult to achieve the state of mental equilibrium where there is a tension between her past Indian identity and the newly acquired immigrant identity.

Thus, the 'dilemma of dual identity' pressurises upon her mind and she tries to solve it by running away from reality, going away to the comparatively safer west, where she would no longer be mentally troubled by contradictory selves.

The immigrant women of Bharati Mukherjee's fiction find it extremely difficult to evolve their new identities on a foreign soil. According to M. Sivaramkrishna such crisis arises because of

... the retention of their identity as Indians is in  
constant tension with the need for its renunciation  
if they have to acquire a new identity as immigrants  
(73-74).

Tara belongs to a western educated Indian family. She is the daughter of the rich Bengal Tiger Banerjee. Tara was grown up in Camac Street. She had received her training from the good nuns at St. Blaise. They had taught her to remain composed and lady-like in all emergencies. As a student in America, Tara showed all signs of homesickness. The following passage highlights Tara's expatriate sensibility as it brings out her homesickness and a desperate longing to stick to her Indian identity:

Tara saw herself being pushed to the periphery

of her old world, and to save herself she clung to the loyalties of the Camac Street girls. For them she stood in line at the post office, hugging poorly wrapped parcels of shampoos and lipsticks, trying to understand the jokes of the ill-tempered Negro clerk (10).

In an effort to maintain her Indian identity, Tara, "on certain days when she cannot possibly survive, she shakes out all her silk sarees, irons them and hangs them to make her apartment appear more Indian" (34). So it is evident that in America Tara is not completely complacent with her immigrant identity. This shows Tara's obsession and nostalgic longing for India, her motherland. Even after her marriage, Tara continued to feel an alien and suffered from loneliness of expatriation and pangs of nostalgia. She could not assimilate with her newly acquired identity – American, not at the cost of Indian.

Tara's return to her native land after a gap of seven years, compels her to be in dilemma of the dual identity. On coming back, she finds herself alienated from the society to which she once belonged to. She clings to the thought of David in an attempt to maintain her own identity in Calcutta that is changing beyond all recognition. Now it is through a foreigner's eyes that Tara views Calcutta rather than through the point of view of an Indian. She did not consider herself as a native but as a westernized Indian who looked at the west as role models.

In fact, Tara did not care to understand real India, nor did she reach out to the people of India. It is Joyanto Roy Chowdhury who opens her eyes to the 'mystery and death' and poverty. Tara becomes increasingly impatient and uncomfortable. Mukherjee tells us how Tara was not at home, while at home :

*Now she was home, surrounded by imported furniture in house that filtered sunlight and unwelcome guests through an elaborate system of coir blinds, rose-water sprays, durwans, bearers, heavy doors, locks, chains and hooks. She was home in a class that lived by Victorian rules, changed decisively by the exuberance of the Hindu imagination (34).*

But this is hardly real India. Tara was already an alien in her homeland. She is constantly being haunted by her Indianness in America, and her Americanness in India. Now her Indian identity is at stake. She starts feeling the pinch of being a foreigner in India. In Calcutta, her home city starts feeling rootless. She becomes confused about her own identity, her own existence. She seems to belong neither to David's world nor to her own. With growing

uneasiness, Tara notes that her Indian friends disapprove of her:

*They suggested her marriage had been imprudent, that the seven years abroad had eroded all that was fine and sensitive in her Bengali nature. The best that could be said for David, She sensed, was that he was, nominally at least, a Christian and not a Moslem (55-56).*

Thus, we see that Tara, the western educated girl, already separated from her Indian background by the education and training she received at St. Blaise, finds herself an expatriate. But on her return to Calcutta she realizes that she is an alien at her birth place too. In India she is a 'foreigner' and in a foreign country she is an ailing alien suffering the pangs of expatriation. In the following words, Mukherjee describes the immigrant psyche of Tara:

*Tara started guiltily as if something she had hoped to hide had suddenly been forced out into the open. She envied the self confidence of these people, that passionate conviction that they were always right. She could not imagine her friends as immigrants anywhere, much less looking for jobs and apartments in Chicago or Detroit (59).*

The novel ends where it began, at the Catelli- continental. Tara's mental conflict has reached its inevitable conclusion. Her Indian dream is shattered but Mukherjee leads Tara to a final reconciliation:

*She felt she had made her peace with the city, nothing more was demanded. If she were to stay, she thought, there would be other concessions, other deals and compromises, all menacing and unbearably real, waiting to be made (202).*

According to Jasbir Jain, Tara's decision to leave India is an act of escapism. Tara is leaving India because she is, "rejecting India and her Indianness, unable to grasp its meaning and equally unable to understand the America she is going back to" (Jain, 15).

Tara seems to be speaking for the author who was also glad to leave India for good after a yearlong sojourn in the country. The following lines show the resolute mind to win over the 'dilemma of dual identity':

*My year in India had showed me that I did not need to discard my western education in order to retrieve the dim shape of my Indian one. It might*

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*have been less painful if I could have exchanged*

*one locked trunk of ethics for another, but I had to admit that by the end of the year in India I no longer liked India in the unreal and exaggerated ways I had in Montreal... I believed that if I stayed on, the country would fail me more seriously than I had failed by settling abroad (**Days and Nights in Calcutta** 284-85).*

Tara was already alienated from India through her western education. Her training had already eroded her Indianness and altered her mindset. She watched India from a point of view that is already foreign. It is therefore natural that she should decide to leave a country, which seemed alien to her. The resolution came in the wake of the knowledge that the India of her childhood does not exist anymore. With the disillusionment came the realization that she must go back to her husband's country, which is also her country now. With this resolution, Mukherjee has taken Tara's dilemma to its natural end.

***The Tiger's Daughter*** explores the process of coming over the dilemma of dual identity. And, this becomes possible only when the old order is thrown to the wind. Tara, the expatriate protagonist faces *this* dilemma as a result of emigration. As an immigrant, Tara feels the need to sever herself from her homeland and its culture in order to facilitate assimilation and form a lasting identity in the New World. Thus, Tara brings an end to her dual affiliations and conflicting cultural affinities.

The story of Tara Banerjee is in a way the story of Bharati Mukherjee herself, a Bengali Brahmin from Calcutta belonging to the aristocratic, educated elite. Imre Salusinkary records the novelist's interview with Edward Said:

*My background is a series of displacements and expatriations which cannot ever be recuperated. The sense of being between cultures has been very strong for me. I would say that's the single strongest strand running through my life; the fact that I am always in and out of things, and never really of anything (128)*

Mukherjee's novels are representatives of the expatriate sensibility. ***The Tiger's Daughter*** offers an understanding to probe into the psyche not only of the protagonist but also that of the author. According to M. Sivaramkrishna, ***The Tiger's Daughter*** is "visionless because it is voiceless" (73) but to S.P. Swain, "it is voiceless because it is visionless" (238).

Women refashioning new identities are a major theme and matter of deep concern in Mukherjee's novels. She had admitted an issue very important to her:

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*The finding of a new identity... the painful or*  
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*exhilarating process of pulling yourself out of the culture that you were born into, and then replanting yourself in another culture* (Nityanandam 63).

In ***The Tiger's Daughter***, Bharati Mukherjee presents the 'dilemma of dual identity'. Tara, the protagonist is pushed to the edges of both the worlds. Her native world; the old world of India, stands in striking contrast to the new world of America. Tara's frantic effort to keep balance between these two opposite worlds leads her to face the dilemma of dual identity. She is torn between her two socio-cultural milieus. She is caught by the currents and cross-currents of two worlds, two ideologies, and two ways of life. As it is not possible to keep a fine balance between the twos, Tara takes her final decision, though crucial. She has to decide whether India or America, between her husband and her father. Finally, in the process of finding her roots, she uproots herself. This uprooting and rerooting puts an end to her dilemma. As Willa Swanson observes, "Tara's westernization has opened her eyes to the gulf between two worlds that still makes India the despair of those who govern it" (2).

Tara's final and decisive journey is decided though remains mysterious at the end of the novel. The novel ends with these lines:

*And Tara locked in a car across the street from the Catelli-Continental, wondered whether she would even get out of Calcutta, and if she didn't whether David would ever know that she loved him fiercely* (210).

The novel ***The Tiger's Daughter*** is a true reflection of Mukherjee's real life experience. Several critics have agreed upon the strong autobiographical overtones in the novel. During an interview with Sybil Steinberg, who profiled Mukherjee for ***Publisher's Weekly*** dated 25 August 1989, the novelist says that her first effort is the wisest of her novels in the sense that she is between two worlds (46).

The publication of ***The Tiger's Daughter*** heralded a great literary career of the novelist. Currently working as a Professor of English at the University of California, Bharati Mukherjee remains in close touch with female issues in the contemporary society. Her journey as a novelist from ***The Tiger's Daughter*** (1971) to the latest work ***Miss New India*** (2011), attracted due attention, on the way, from countless readers, critics and scholars both in India and abroad.

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## Identity in Taslima's *Amar Meyebela'* (My Girlhood)

Dr Nishamani Kar

*We women are sent by nature.  
Nature does not create women from men's ribs.  
We women are sent by nature.  
Nature does not place women under men.  
We women are sent by nature.  
Nature does not put women's heaven under men's feet.  
Nature says women are human beings-  
men have made religions to deny it.  
Nature says women are human beings-  
society has cocked a snook at it.  
Nature says women are human beings-  
men cry out NO!*

(Taslima, 'We Women', *all about WOMEN*, 2005, 39)

An attempt at understanding women's position in the pluralistic and culturally diverse Indian subcontinent calls for a different perspective. The division of sexes here is by and large socially defined and culturally articulated. As a result, two distinctly different images of womanhood come to the fore: one which equates her with *shakti* (goddess within the confines of home) and the other treating her as *stridhana* (property handed over by the father to the husband). The goddess image appears to be a psychological ploy to distance her from the mainstream, as an object of awe and fear; also perhaps to rationalize her sexuality. The property image entails that she be possessed. These contrasting principles give rise to a problematic situation- she is within the domestic shell,

being very much 'outside the frame', at the same time. She is marginalized being very much at the centre. She is pushed to the subject-deprived subaltern position.

In this paper I have tried to dig out the realities pertaining to the issues of such a social differentiation. My analysis focuses on man-woman relationship down the ages and explores as to how the women are at the receiving end for a pretty long period in Indian history. My intent, therefore, is to identify divergent lines of analysis and significant issues concerning gender construction and discrimination in the Indian subcontinent. Further, I concentrate on exploring as to how the authors situate themselves within the tradition and explicitly address a line of questions coming out of such a tricky contention. Discounting the risk of being hypothetical, I focus on a single author, that is Taslima Nasreen and her autobiographical masterpiece ***Amar Meyebela*** (My Girlhood), which narrates in great detail the socialization process, she has gone through in her 'salad days'. This will help us to connect the nuances of her childhood experience and provide the vantage point to scout through her 'self concept', which is perhaps shaped during those impressionable years. Eventually, this will lend a broader perspective, a model for understanding the socio-cultural determinants which fixate specific role-status matrix in an individual. Our effort, therefore, is to examine the textual constructedness of gender subjectivity, subject positions, identity and desire- the key structuring principles of the dominant patriarchal order- in Taslima's ***Amar Meyebela*** (My Girlhood).

A historical survey of Indian society and culture reveals that goddess worship was a major part of Vedic culture, which has been accepted as constituting with other factors the origin of Hinduism. In the Vedic civilization, the concept of *Ardhanareshwar* (Androgynous) points at the truth that the creator of the world is half man and half woman. The hymns and allusions in the *Rig Veda* often render equal importance to the male and the female, the male part being ascribed as *purusha* (the human self) and the female as *prakriti* (the nature). But this notion did not continue for long and after the fall of great Hindu Kingdoms at around 4th/5th Century AD and changing social norms thereafter, the women gradually lost their pre-eminent position in the society. Evidently, child marriage remained a prevailing practice during 6<sup>th</sup> Century AD. The Muslim invasion and the cultural practices making inroads into Hindu socio-cultural fabric brought in numerous restrictions including *purdah* and domestic confinement for women.

In the flow of events the medieval period found prevalence of child marriage, *sati* (self immolation of a wife in husband's pyre) and bans on widow remarriage, which inevitably ascribed the lowest status to women's position in the Indian society. However, the colonial rule, especially the colonial historiography took notice of the subordinate role women were playing in relation to men



and thus highlighted how the writings and other cultural practices had shaped the way, women were viewed in the society. Consequently, some benevolent colonial masters took efforts to save the woman from that downslide in status. The Indian nationalistic upsurge and the socio-cultural resurgence thereon led to female activism in public and private spheres thus lending a section of women a space to fight the oppression, to rebel against their situation in life and society. Obviously, the silent disobedience gave way to vocal protest, while giving a voice to the oppressed to stand up against male domination by publicly asking men to account for their action. In spite of such euphoric manifestations here and there, the hegemonic patriarchy of the Indian subcontinent subdued majority of women and treated them as the 'Other'.

In this context the onus lies elsewhere. The Indian women are socialized in a typical way that is controlled by an inflexible system of social dictates which provides men with certain advantages to hold the dominant position in the binary opposition. To elucidate the point further we must explore the myths, legends and customs which support the prevailing belief system and affective behaviouristic pattern.

Paradoxically enough, the feminine gender has an ill-defined manifestation in the epics like **Ramayana** and **Mahabharata**, which are still regarded as authoritative sources of Indian value system. Even in the classics like **Abhijnanam Shakuntalam** and **Panchatantra**, the portrayal of women bears testimony to a conscious effort to suppress her, to push her into the grooves of silent struggle. An interesting part of **Ramayana** is the story of Sita, who followed her husband Rama, the heir-apparent of the kingdom of Ayodhya, into exile in course of which she was kidnapped by Ravana. Finally, she was rescued by Rama after a long drawn out war. But in order to prove her chastity she had to undergo a fire trial, out of which she emerged unscathed, as no flame could touch her purity of body, mind and spirit. The moot point here is not the survival but the trial itself. Again, while in Ayodhya ruling over his subjects king Rama banished her to forest by responding to a commoner's (washerman's wife) charges against her, at a time, when she was in the advanced stage of her pregnancy. Dushyanta's treatment of Shakuntala in **Abhijnanam Shakuntalam** told a similar story of suffering and humiliation of Shakuntala at the hands of her lover Dushyanta, who demanded testimony to his love. Draupadi in **Mahabharata** was stripped off in the full assembly of kings, princes and generals and nobody could object to such a public outrage of her modesty. A deeper understanding of these episodes in the lives of the mythical women characters attests the truth that the woman has but no role to play independently; she cannot act and is always acted upon.

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In the Islamic tradition women's position is further disgraceful, as mar-  
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riage, divorce and property rights come under Muslim personal law or *Sharia's Law*, which is derived from Quran and the injunctions of the *Hadith* (the Prophet's way of life). The same law gives the sanction that a husband can divorce his wife by a triple pronouncement of the word *talaak*(divorce). Even, the folk lore based on Islamic tradition defines a chaste woman as one who surrenders all her needs at her husband's feet. Woman's dedication to domestic life, as per the *Hadith*, is equivalent to the glory of a *jihad* or a holy war. (Nasrin 1992, 99). A family's honour or *ijjat* is therefore dependent on the conduct of its women and their success in marriage. However, the Islamic gender practices push the women to the most gruelling disadvantaged position and solicit unconditional surrender on their part to the patriarchal order.

Since myths and religion are powerful linkages that keep social structures together, the woman's subordination and discrimination, however, get endorsed through such affiliations. Inevitably, the devoted image of the afore-said mythic characters remains permanently etched in our racial memory. Much at the same time such images are systematically (most of the time unknowingly) implanted in a child's mind, especially in a girl child's mind, by the parents and other reference group members, even through unsolicited mentoring. This strand of analysis now paves the way for probing the tenets of socialization process, through which certain affiliations are fixated in a child's impressionable mind.

Socialization is a process of gradual but continuous objectivisation of values and traits in a personality. Through this process, the ideological and cultural factors are also internalized by an individual. It is indeed a process of transmission of cultural meanings or symbols which transforms the biological entity into a social being. It entails changes in the structure of personality in conformity with the structural characteristics of society from familial to contractual to compulsive forms accompanied by subsequent changes in the dominant cultural ethos. Thus socialization is learning of roles which are contingent upon values and norms of society. This process, inevitably, starts with the family or home, extends to peer groups and then to school and other primary institutions. Since the basic norms or dominant patterns of value orientation are unique and uniform to each society and culture, the family socialization works as cultural leveler of personalities. For this reason, family and other primary institutions have been given due importance by the social thinkers for the understanding of social character and personality types in various societies (Parsons and Bales, 1960).

To stretch it further, we are to admit that the internalization of the basic values of culture and society takes place through socialization of the child in the family, as the child is most plastic and is exposed for long periods in dependent relationship with parents. Even the key to the autogenesis of authority values

emerges from domestic groups and wider kin circle. However, the process of internalization of values is rendered more effective in established societies due to the affectively charged relationship of the child with his primary role models and reference group. (Levine, 1963). But the whole process gets vitiated, if the receiver's ego takes an opposite turn; in the event of which the receiver reaches a different domain. Taslima's aggressive stand in life and literature is perhaps the result of the socialization process going in the negative way. As it appears, adverse parenting, freakish peer group relationship and candid reading of the affairs of social institutions like family, religion and tradition have been instrumental in according the unconventional stand she has taken against the prevailing norms of the society. With this background let us now analyse the socialization process and its effect on Taslima Nasreen, the lone sentinel in the crusade against prevailing patriarchal social order of Bangladesh.

Taslima's writings offer a strong validation of genuine female experience which is distinctly different from 'feminine' or 'feminist' considerations. She seems to have taken to weaving ('text as textile') numerous sufferings, dreams and fantasies associated with womanhood. Her major characters (Jamuna in **Aparpokho**; Jhumur in **Shodh**; Kiranmayee in **Lajja** and Nilanjana in **French Lover**) are 'isolated'; they aspire for a room of their own. Her oppositional discourse speaks about such characters, who inhabit the subaltern space of powerlessness irrespective of their class affiliation. Even in her autobiographical writings **Amar Meybela** (2001), **Dwikhondito** (Split into Two) (2007), she is stubbornly independent and distinctively aggressive in revealing her feelings and documenting her real-life experience. Since our concern in this paper is to explore gender construction and discrimination, and for that matter the socialization process fixating the gender identity, we will now concentrate on **Amar Meybela** (My Girlhood).

**Amar Meybela**, an autobiography narrated from a child's standpoint, encompasses thirteen years of Taslima's early life. It begins with the resounding success of Bangladesh Liberation Movement (1971) and ends with the brutal assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The first person narrative effortlessly travels back and forth to describe the childhood of Taslima's parents, circumstances of her birth and her grooming in the juvenile years. Her father Rajab Ali, in spite of his humble origin, could rise to be a promising doctor in Mymensingh through hard work. Her mother Idulwara Begum (Idun), a dark skinned frail woman had to struggle through her loveless arranged marriage, as she had to pull on with an otherwise arrogant and licentious husband Rajab Ali, who was having an illicit relationship with Razia Begum outside the marriage. Even the maid servant Renu's mother could not be spared by him.

Taslima as a child was the mute witness to her mother's suffering.

*Ma simply failed to grasp how Baba's mind worked. She was convinced that no one in the world has such a complex character.... The truth, Ma thought, was that he was devoted to Razia Begum (Taslima, 2001, 88). ...*

*This was the kind of man Ma lived with. People saw her as a doctor's wife, her life full of joy and happiness. Only Ma knew how the scent of another woman wafted up from her husband's body and doused her dreams and desires.... What kept Ma company during her sleepless nights were her own long, deep sighs (90).*

In her failure to follow the ideology of 'ethical motherhood', Idun searched for avenues to satisfy her longing. Her insecurity, her intense longing for marital bliss being flouted; she joined Amirullahpir's coterie and sought solace through religion. Eventually, she turned into a fanatic and cared the least for her worldly responsibilities. Even she forced child Taslima to follow her footsteps.

*One day, just as Ma was about to leave for Amirullah's house, her whole body hidden under a burkha, I asked her, "Ma, why do women have to wear a burkha?" ... "Why was Allah not asked men to wear burkhas? What if their bodies are seen by the outside world?" I enquired. Ma's grey eyes began glowing ominously, like two balls of fire. "You must learn to obey what Allah has said. He has ordered women to wear burkhas. He said nothing about men. You must accept that without question. It is a sin to question and to doubt (156).*

In course of time, Taslima could realise that Amirullahpir embodied the heartlessness of blind religiosity. She did not like the way the girls at pir's place were accommodated in a small windowless room. Forced by her mother to observe the practices she had learnt from the pir, Taslima discovered instead that religion did not make for an equitable and just world:

*How could the Quran – a book so holy that it had to be kissed before it could be lifted or replaced – speak of such discrimination? I could scarcely believe it. To tell the truth, I didn't want to believe it. It's time that I was not particularly enthusiastic about reading Quran, but it had never occurred to me that what it said could be unfair. So even Allah was not prepared to treat women equally? Was Allah no different from Getu's father? He used to beat Getu's mother because she did not obey his every command (166).*

An example of such a point-of-view is the story of Taslima's aunt FajliKhala, who was a bright extrovert girl before her marriage to an unfaithful and abusive Musha, son of pirAmirullah. She could accept the ritualistic practices in Amirullah's household without any qualms. "Amirullah changed her so completely that the same girl began draping herself in veil, and went about clutching her prayer beads... Then reading out from several holy books, he informed his son and daughter-in-law that it would please Allah to see a woman obeying and looking after her husband and his parents for the rest of her life".(116) Even FajliKhala tolerated the brutal thrashes of her father-in-law in his bid to exorcise her of evil spirits, that said to have possessed her.

When FajliKhala and Idun accepted the dictates of Amirullah's religious preaching, Taslima as a child reacted forthwith, as she could find no substance in such a stand. Inevitable, she got drawn towards her father, from whom she could not get genuine affection though. Again, when she got thrashes from the same father for not concentrating on studies, she felt very miserable. She confessed thus: "I have now lost count of the number of times Baba hit me and I prayed for his death.... I will never forget the pain as long as I live. I could escape from everyone else in the world, but escaping from Baba's clutches was impossible". In fact, Taslima was a victim of misdirected parenting. Her siblings also suffered the same fate – the stings of paternalistic authoritarianism. Norman could not complete his MSc from Dhaka University and opted for a job in a foreign medicine company, Komal eloped with a Hindu girl Geeta and Yasmin pursued a relationship with a boy quite early in life. Contrastingly, Taslima was the only one of the four, who followed the parental dictates; of course without subscribing to it heart and soul. Inevitably, she was a mutilated self all through. She confessed thus:

*No matter what I did or where I went, I appeared to be in some danger of sinning. It was a sin to turn left. But I turned right, I might sin again. I couldn't ask questions. All sinners would be cast into Hell by Allah. They would then be bitten by snakes and scorpions. I was terrified by both. But then, there was my maths teacher in school to consider. What he said was quite different. Every time he wrote out a sum on the blackboard, he said, "If you have a question, ask it. Anyone who doesn't ask questions cannot grasp mathematics." What on earth was I to do? (156)*

Eventually, such a traumatic state of mind found solace in peer relationship. Her ego took a tangential turn towards a senior student called Runi, in whose company she experienced the first love of her life- a case of self-revealing and uninhibited confession:

*Runi smiled very sweetly. "What is it? Do you want to say something?" she asked. I shook my head. What could I say?*

*"You are very shy, aren't you? You hardly ever speak. Why don't you come to my room in the hostel one day? We could talk for as long as you like!" said Runi, taking my arm and pulling me closer. Her body smelt of fresh flowers. It was like a fairy tale. Runi was a flower – a jasmine perhaps – turned into a princess by some magic spell. I began trembling. My heart thudded. Somewhere deep within my being I could feel a hundred lotuses unfurl (212).*

...

*Again and again I rubbed the spot of my arm where her hand had rested, feeling her touch once more. My dolls were forgotten, as were all other games. All that I craved for now was Runi's touch, to be sought out and experienced in absolute secrecy (213).*

In the same vein, she pursued her intimate physical relation with the servant girl Moni in her dirty bed within the kitchen. She fondled her breasts, kissed them and smelt them as if "I (she) had been reunited, after a long absence, with my (her) dearest friend. Moni was like a doll I (she) had bought at a fair, a living breathing doll". Obviously, Taslima's sexual explicitness was daring and her confession further embarrassing.

The other peers she interacted with were Munajjeba, Nazima, Nasima ('the daughters of someone important: a police officer, a lawyer or a senior govt official'), who were forced to have a stay in the windowless, dark room at Amirullah's place 'to be trained to fall madly in love with Allah' (189). She also heard about other girls facing their miserable fate - married off to the old lechers (Phulbahari's mother), kicked and burned by loutish husbands (Getu's mother), sexually abused and impregnated under the cover of religion (Mubassera, Fazli Khala's daughter who died of septicemia after a secret attempt at abortion). However, by reconstructing and rearticulating her own and other women's experiences of humiliation, abuse and discrimination, she strove to connect her personal and social identity to the larger context of social relations.

The helpless outcry 'I was like a dot, helpless and immobile' (164) and "I would hate our society and the rules it imposed; feel the invisible shackles placed on my hands and feet. I would realize that my wings had been clipped and that I was thrust into a strong cage where I would remain for eternity" (295) gave way to the conviction, "it was difficult to find my voice, but I had to speak somehow, ..." (228). *Amar Meyebela* ends with the audacious remark: 'I continued to grow up' (324). The concluding statement, however, attests the truth that Taslima has largely been successful in identifying the problems of gender discrimination and taking the effort to deconstruct it by reinscribing positive subject positions for the women. Her avowed affirmation goes thus:

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*I have torn as under the shackles*

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*I have jettisoned from the betel leaf I chew,  
the lime of tradition.*

(Taslima, **NirbachitoKabita**, 1993, 29)

To conclude, Taslima challenges the defined gender roles practised over time, which had naturalized male authority over women. Eventually, her assertion attests a cogent, yet complex, interrogation of gender discrimination in the Indian subcontinent. □

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## Awareness of National Disintegration in Post-independence Indo-English Fiction

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The need for national integration has been a burning question in post-Independence India. Though politically India has become one country since Independence there are many problems in the political field which prevent the growth of a national outlook without which national integration may not succeed. Regionalism and linguism have been two of the main obstacles on the path of national integration in India. One of the most important forms of regional rivalry that afflicts the post-freedom era in India has been the racial antagonism between the Aryans of North India and the Dravidians of the South.

The post-independence Indo-English fiction makes a numbers of references to the persistence of parochialism and regionalism which prevents the growth of the emotional integration and the national outlook of the Indian people. In Kamala Markandaya's novel **A Silence of Desire** (1960), the problem of the North – South racial antagonism has been expressed in the form of a clash between Chari and his clerks on one side and Ghose on the other. C.V. Chari, a South Indian I.A.S. Officer, is the head of the department of an office where most of the clerks are South Indians. The atmosphere in the office is congenial and the relationship between him and his clerks is full of understanding. Chari could easily understand the domestic troubles of Dandekar, a South Indian clerk of the office, arising out of his wife Sarojini's devotion to the Swamy, a



holy man of the locality. Chari allowed leave to Dandekar without asking for the reasons. But Ghose, Chari's deputy, was an officer from North India who could not understand the sentiments of the South Indian clerks of the office and became unpopular. The situation that Ghose faced in the office is described by the novelist thus:

*Ghose was almost a foreigner – a man from the North who spoke differently and thought differently from the clerks, most of whom were Southerners.<sup>(1)</sup>*

When, in Chari's absence, Ghose turned down the leave application of Dandekar and fined him for remaining absent from office without permission, all the South Indian clerks of the office united against Ghose. Joseph abused Ghose as "the knowall Northerner" and "bloodsucker". Sastri, another clerk, called him a swine and regretted his insensibility towards Dandekar's troubles, Sastri, who seemed to be the most fanatic among the clerks, also condemned all North Indians as brainless people. He told Dandekar:

*"..... These Northerners, they've got the brawn and the brashness, but when they want brain they've got to come South, to you and me and Chari, do you know that? It's fact admitted in Delhi ...."<sup>(2)</sup>*

When Chari was back in the office, he also supported Dandekar and granted further leave to him despite objections from Ghose. The reactions of Ghose are as follows:

*Ghose went out. He was too good a civil servant, trained and disciplined, to argue with his chief, but the encounter rankled. These bloody Southerners, he thought, resentfully, they all hang together.....<sup>(3)</sup>*

The differing physical features of the two people are brought out by the novelist in the descriptions of Ghose and the Southerners among whom he worked, plausibly to emphasise their temperamental disaffinity:

*Ghose with his long thin nose and passionate eyes, his height, his intense Northern ways, could hardly go unnoticed in a crowd of short, dark, mild-eyed and mild-mannered Southerners.<sup>(4)</sup>*

In this way the clash in the office took the shape of a clash between the South Indians and the North Indian Ghose and the suppressed racial antagonism was displayed in the form of abuses and exaggerated opinions. The situation which Ghose faced in his office does not appear exaggerated in view of the terrible ill-feelings, that have been witnessed between the people of North India and South India on occasions in the post-Independence India.

The racial prejudices of the South Indians against the North Indians have been depicted in Raja Rao's novel **The Serpent and the Rope** through

the characters of Ramaswamy and Little Mother. As far as anti-North feelings are concerned, Ramaswamy, the hero in the novel, remained a typical South Indian Brahmin in spite of his high education and sophisticated westernization. In his first meeting with Savithri in Allahabad, he interpreted her ultramodernism as a typical manifestation of the North Indian rush for modernism. He, as the narrator of the story, noted:

*I felt I did not like her, she was too modern for me: she had already started smoking. If I remember right, she was fixing up a dance engagement on the telephone. I could not understand these Northerners going from strict purdah to this extreme modernism with unholy haste. We in the South were more sober, and very distant. We lived by tradition-shameful though it might look. We did not mind quoting Sankaracharya in law courts or marrying our girls in the old way, even if they had gone abroad. The elder brother still commanded respect, and my sisters would never speak to me as Savithri spoke to her father.<sup>(5)</sup>*

Ramaswamy's anti-North feeling was further revealed in the novel when he claimed greater purity for the South Indian tradition:

*.... and truly speaking Aryan wisdom seems to have found a more permanent place in South India than in the Aryan North.<sup>(6)</sup>*

According to the critic M.K. Naik, Rama was so much a Southerner that even Bombay was "north" and hence "barbaric" to him.<sup>(7)</sup> Like Rama, his widowed step-mother, known as Little Mother in the novel, also gave expression to her racial hatred against the people of North India. While in Allahabad, Rama could mark how she longed for the south Indian environment and how even Banares seemed hateful to her: "the whole of the North, but for the Gangs, was one desolation of dirt."<sup>(8)</sup> On her return from her pilgrimage to North India, Little Mother told Saroja, her step-daughter, about the degradation she had witnessed there:

*"Say what you will, Saroja, the Northerners haven't the sensibility of living such as we have. You can see married women without kumkum on their faces, or men spitting on the floor. And as for dirt, well, the less said the better...."<sup>(9)</sup>*

She was also critical of the Bengali Brahmins who freely ate fish calling it "the vegetable of the sea." The deep-seated anti-North feeling of Ramaswamy and Little Mother makes the portraits of these two Southerners in the novel typical and real. The socio-cultural differences between the people the North India and South India have also been presented by R. K. Narayan in the novel

**Waiting for the Mahatma** in shape of the feelings of Sriram, the South Indian hero of the novel, traveling in a railway compartment crowded by the North Indian passengers:

*The people here seemed strange men who could swallow the very sweet "Jilebi" and wash it down with bitter tea the very first thing in the day: this only confirmed his feeling that he was in a strange, fantastic world. He yearned for coffee, his favourite, like a true South Indian; but coffee could not be had here.* <sup>(10)</sup>

Sriram's discomfort among the people of North India is one of the few traits that go to make his portrait in fiction truly South Indian and real. Jit Nair, a South Indian character in Anita Desai's novel **Voices in the City**. Is not free from the typical South Indian dislike of North Indians <sup>(8)</sup> in spite of his long stay in Calcutta. His anti-North feelings are revealed when, in course of his talks with Nirode about South Indian music which he had heard during his childhood days, he dismissed all North Indian classical music as "harsh and geometrical" stuff.<sup>(11)</sup> While welcoming Satyajit, a rich Bengalee industrialist, uncle Srinath, a Bengalee villager in Bhabani Bhattacharya's short story "Glory at Twilight", assigned the under-developed condition of Bengal to the presence of the non-Bengalees in the state:

*"It is only in trade and industry that Bengal has lagged behind sadly – the plums of business have gone to people from up-country or from overseas."*<sup>(12)</sup>

The parochial feelings of Jit Nair are within the bounds of moderation in keeping with the social status, sophistication and domicile assigned to his portrait in the novel. But by making one of the characters in the story talk in terms of Bengal for the Bengalees and show his anger against the upcountry people, the novelist demonstrates his awareness of the existence of the parochial feelings among the Bengalees living in the rural areas of the state.

Though the references are a few in number, the Indo-English novelists' preoccupation with the contemporary reality has made them depict the fissiparous and divisive tendencies and forces of disintegration existing in the post-Independence India. But there is the possibility that a literary work dealing with such tendencies may consciously or unconsciously, support such tendencies. This has been proved in case of Kamala Markandaya's novel **A Silence of Desire** where the novelist has been accused of partisan attitude in her exposition of the socio - racial antagonism of the Indians.<sup>(13)</sup> On the basis of the novelist's attitude towards his characters in the novel **The Serpent and the Rope**, the same accusation may be made against Raja Rao also. Bha-

bani Bhattacharya's reference to the regional feeling has been made through a character who spoke it with a tone of flattery and as such could not be taken seriously. Other Indo-Anglian novelists have reacted to the fissiparous tendencies and threats to national unity by ignoring them altogether from their fiction plausibly thinking that such ailments and evils can best be left alone to get cured. □

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## Rebirth of Gautama : An eco-critical reading of Zen-Buddhist Philosophy

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From Goutama to Gandhi, we can see that their philosophy influenced literatures of all ages and in turn these literatures played a vital role in bringing social and political change. Philosophy and religion have been shown to influence attitudes toward an array of social issues. It seems that religion and sustainability are not terms often used together, despite them having a role in sustaining nature and communities for centuries. Religion and philosophy are rarely static as they adopt and change with the differing needs of the environments in which they operate. There are processes of change and adaptation that enable them to sustain nature and communities, as well as to be sustained as living systems. Environmental crisis is essentially a spiritual, and religious crisis, and that its ultimate solution would itself have to be spiritual, philosophical and religious.

Down the ages, we can see that the world is credited with the birth of many philosophers and their philosophies. Their thoughts permeated into the literatures of their time and influenced the influential politicians/ reformers/ literatures who brought desirable changes in the social life of people. Among these Buddhist philosophy has had a profound influence in both the East and the West. In the west, the prominent reformers like Emerson, Thoreau and Abraham Lincoln were influenced by the Buddhist tenets of non-violence, truth and compassion. Ultimately, comprehension of this philosophy by these great humanists forces them to end slavery and oppression in their country (Prebish 34).

———Down the centuries, this river of compassion flowed into Martin Luther

King, Mahatma Gandhi and Mother Teresa. It does not stop here. The only watch-words of 21<sup>st</sup> century are 'Humanism' and 'Naturalism' in which lies our only real hope. We can see in a profound analysis that the comprehension of the same philosophy by the leaders and thinkers, who lived in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in America including "Beat Artists", gave birth to environmentalism. The contribution of Beat Artists to environmental movement was really amazing. But when we delve deep into their literature and culture, we will reach into the Eastern soil from where they imbibed the Zen-Buddhist philosophy which views all forms of life with great reverence.

The term 'Deep Ecology' was coined by their all time-associate, the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess. Beat fraternity pursued a radical vision which integrates Zen-Buddhism, American-Indian practices, ecological thinking and wilderness values. The term 'Planetarism' has been coined by the beat artists. This is a noble view which sees the whole planet and all its being as a 'Big Family' (seager 114).

After Gautama, it was Gandhi who practised Buddhist philosophy in the right perspective. Gandhi once remarked, 'I have nothing new to teach you, non-violence and compassion are as old as hills'. Today, however amidst the carnage and devastation left behind by one world war and the preparations going on for the next, modern civilization seems to be moving to a terrible anticlimax. Buddhism is a cosmological, psychological and religious system which maintains that all systems of life are interconnected. It has been established that the Buddhist approach to ecology is an approach of 'Deep Ecology'. The 'Shallow Ecology' is a conservationist approach to fighting pollution and resource depletion and which is anthropocentric, individualistic, and a western movement which is basically concerned with the health and affluence of people in the developed countries. As different from this, 'deep ecology' seeks to promote natural diversity, autonomy, decentralization, symbiosis egalitarianism and classlessness (Gottlieb 311).

Therefore, actually, there is no 'other' in the ecological programmes of the universe; all phenomenon are interconnected. Still human beings don't realize it. It is this lack of realization of the interconnectedness with each other in an organic whole, which opens the door of neglect of the other, which is actually not so other. The misapprehension of interdependence causes ecological imbalance, primarily due to the fact, human beings do not live on a holistic life pattern and emphasize too much on trivialities or what is also called peripherals (Hanh114)

Buddhists concept such as *pratityasamutpadavada*, *sangatvada*, *Bodhisattava*, *santanvada* and others deal with both internal as well as external

ecology. Whereas, the structure of internal ecology is connected with mental realm, external ecology pertains to various forms of environmental degradation such as air, water and soil. Therefore, there is a need to correct one's thought process in order to bring peace and harmony in nature. Buddhism maintains that the basic need is to remedy the internal phenomena, which in fact would result in an automatic treatment of the external one.

Today we are facing the dilemma: whether we want development and progress at the cost of destruction of the environment or we want the preservation of environment at the cost of under-development. The dilemma has been posed, because it is generally believed that without destruction of the environment, development is not possible. Many social and natural scientists have made an attempt to solve this dilemma by suggesting some changes in social, political and economic systems. But it seems that they are unsuccessful. It is because, the roots of the problem are not in the social, political and economic systems, but they are in the nature of man. So, it is necessary to bring change in human nature.

Buddhism endows us with a holistic vision to look into and beyond the life, so as to preserve and conserve the environment. Lord Buddha himself was an apostle of compassion and love for all living creatures, including human beings. The belief in reincarnation theory brings out tremendous change in the outlook. It leads us to think of our future life and next births. We must conserve natural resources, since we might need these in our next birth. Men, like other creatures, are co-sharers of natural resources, hence, they have no right to consume and exhaust these at a faster rate for their own benefit alone. Universal responsibility motivated by love and compassion for all is considered key to Buddhist ideal which is quiet significant for eco-ethics (Pathak 37).

According to the discourse of the Buddha in *Anguttara Nikaya*, when lust, greed and wrong values grip the heart of humanity, and immorality becomes widespread in society and timely rain does not fall, then crops fall victims to pests and plant diseases. There is one to one relationship and interaction between morality and human well-being. The world including nature and humanity stands or falls with the type of moral force at work. If immorality grips society, people and nature deteriorate; if morality reins, the quality of human life and nature improves. But modern humanity's unbridled greed for pleasure and acquisition of wealth is like the killing of the goose that lays the golden egg (73).

This wasteful attitude deplored in Buddhism is not only anti-social, but also criminal. Those who spoil environment, are described as 'wood apple eaters'. A man shakes the branch of wood apple tree and all the fruits, ripe

and unripe fall. The man collects only what he wants and leaves the rest to rot. The Buddha, as carried out today, would certainly condemn the excessive exploitation of nature in the strongest possible terms. Buddhism advocates a gentle non-aggressive attitude towards nature. According to *Digh Nikaya* a house holder should accumulate wealth as a bee collects nectar from a flower. The bee harms neither the fragrance nor the beauty of the flower, but gathers nectar to turn it into sweet honey(119). Similarly, a human being is expected to make legitimate use of nature, so that he can rise above nature and realize the innate spiritual potential. Buddhism express that human and beast can live and let live without fear of one another, if only humans cultivate sympathy and regard for all lives with compassion.

Today humanity is facing acute ecological imbalance. There is a paucity of materials, struggle for existence, the concern for economic growth, and all kinds of pollution. We can no longer turn a blind eye to the situation, as we are already threatened with new pollution related diseases. Man, by nature, is not wicked. It is possible for him to change himself for the better. Buddha advocated a rigorous moral training to create clean internal environment. In *Buddhist Suttas* it was clearly narrated as to how humanity was denigrated due to the lack of moral standards. The knowledge of the true nature of the universe and moral standards restrain the defilements of mind and their overflow in unwholesome actions. Greed, hatred and delusion are three basic evils in life. If we allow them to take a firm hold in our hearts, then their outgrowth will spread far and wide like a jungle creeper, suffocating much healthy and noble growth all around. If we protect ourselves against these three evil roots, our fellow beings too will be safe. In short, it is for man to decide whether to go under the method of purification or to opt for global suicide.

The bio-chemical inventions of hydrogen and atom bombs have madened the sophisticated intellectual scientists to enter in a competitive race of technological skills and expertise. The basic matter of repulsion leads to reactions and counter-reactions and those head to re-counter reaction. This replaces the realization of the dependent reliance in the human societies. The devilish consumption of the humans based on selfishness and omnivorousness has resulted in degradation and exhaustion of the natural resources (Glotfelty 124). The selfish cruelty of the human beings, all over the globe, for consuming everything with no compassion in respect to other animate beings, leads to the extinction of the animate life on the surface of the solar Earth. Under such unprecedented biological crisis, it is very much required for the survival of the animate beings on the Earth, for that the 'mutual reliance' be realized, followed by the practice with utmost care and respect.



The most important Buddhist concept of *Pratityasamutpada*, also known as the law of dependent origination, could be an antidote to the present ecological crisis. The Buddhist sees the essence of civilization not in multiplication of wants, but in the purification of human character, which formed primarily by a man's work. The primary concern of a Buddhist is not goods and consumption, but people and their liberation. The aim should be obtain maximum of well-being with the minimum of consumption. The keynote of Buddhist economics is simplicity and non-violence. Both these are closely related (Pears 381).

Capitalism works on the basis of on maximizing profit. For the purpose, it brings new technologies to exploit nature and men. Thus, growth of capitalism inevitably results into limitless use and abuse of nature. To sustain the promised high standard of living for their own countrymen, an oppressive state with its military and industry complex formed to control natural resources of the Earth. Such a system can never give priority to ecological issues, as that will increase the cost of production and reduce the profit. Even if some scheme of environmental protection has been implemented, it remains within the same closed frame of reference of dominant technocratic mentality. Unable to visualize an alternative to capitalist modernity, these proponents simply assume that eco-crisis has emerged due to lack of adequate scientific expertise, and thus, remedies lies in a more developed science and more efficient technological management (Gottlieb 561). For example, automobile industry is launching more and more new model cars with the so called better emission standards. But actually there is only a slight reduction in the quantity of poisonous gases coughed up by these cars. On the other hand depletion of non-renewable natural resources remains the same. So the root cause of the problem is never addressed.

Moreover, one can say that without fighting the exploitative capitalist system, a harmonious eco-friendly world will never come into existence. Thus, ecological crisis can not be solved in isolation, as it is invariably linked with the struggle for a new social order based on sustainable development and an alternative model of modernity. Buddhism as we have discussed, can certainly provide some valuable insights for the purpose. The time has come to explore fully the possibility of a Buddhism inspired modernity to resolve 'eco-crisis' which is part of a larger crisis of western capitalist modernity. This is a challenge not only for the Buddhists, but also for all those perturbed by the dark side of western modernity.

In this regard, it is noteworthy that the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess gave the concept of deep ecology in 1972. He compared two opposing views about environment. He labelled the standard view of conservationists

as 'shallow ecology' and characterized it as concerned with fighting pollution and resource depletion, which threatened the good of humanity. It was mainly an anthropocentric, individualistic, western movement, concerned with the health and affluence of people in the developed countries. The concept of deep ecology has philosophical roots in Mahayana Buddhism. In the doctrine of *Vijnanavada*, the concept of *Alaya Vijnana* has the element of deep ecology. Mahayana Buddhism is comprehensive and shows universal love for all beings. The Zen Master Dogen puts it as follows:

"There are myriads of forms and hundreds of grasses throughout the entire Earth, and yet each grass and each form itself is the entire Earth." (15)

Our contemporary world-renowned Zen Master, Spiritual leader, peace activist and poet; Thich Nhat Hanh rightly remarked:

"You can see clearly that there is a cloud floating in a sheet of paper. Without a cloud, there will be no rain; without rain, the trees cannot grow; and without trees, we cannot make paper". (95)

The movement by deep ecologists delves deeper into the historical roots of our environmental crisis, arguing that shallow ecology is treating symptoms, not the disease. The disease is our completely materialistic, consumer-oriented, techno-centric, hierarchical and anthropocentric egoism. Unless we see this as constituting a set of false beliefs and misguided values and adopt a truer set of beliefs about our relationship to the environment, we will never solve these problems. We must, therefore, move from 'ego-centric' to the 'eco-centric'.

Our nation may be justly proud of its democratic institutions and general high quality of life, but from an ecological perspective, we have become victims of our own success, wasteful consumption and pollution. However, environmental concerns are not simply national. They are global. The ecological motto is 'Think Globally, Act Locally'.

It is true that we must begin at home, where we are, but we should not end there, we must also act globally, howsoever difficult it may be. Ecologically every person and nation is 'a piece of the continent'. Traditionally it is recognized that two basic skills- literacy and numeracy – require a person to be called minimally educated. 'Literacy' means ability to read and write, 'numeracy' means ability to use numbers in calculations. It was in 1985 that an American ecologist, Garrett Hardin, proposed a third requirement for a minimally educated person in today's society: ecolacy (Ecoliteracy). It means that the understanding of ecology or the natural environment and our relationship to it.

It has been more than a hundred years that Technology began to emerge after science. The process of development in technology advanced rapidly. It is needless to mention its present status. The order is perpetually

continuing. The evils associated with modern civilization touch practically every aspect of life. Due to the progress of science and technology the last hundred years have given man and greater mechanical mastery over nature than the rest of history. But this achievement, far from making man wiser or happier, has been his greatest misfortune. The bewildering complexity of life resulting from advances in 'machine mastery' has made understanding and self-control progressively difficult. Thus material progress has spelt moral ruin. Today, nations of the world over join alliances for peace while trading armaments and concocting plans of destruction so awesome and terrible as to destroy systems of life on this planet for generations.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century has already gone by and we have entered into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Science and technology have made human life easy in various ways. But the events of 'Hiroshima' and 'Nagasaki' or the episode relating to 'Vietnam' after the Second World War, were absolutely inhuman. To emphasize, wherever the development and advancement of Science and Technology was utilized like this, it was definitely against humanity. In case if it is utilized in the same manner today, it cannot be justified on any ground, whatsoever. The supremacy of human values must remain intact.

The world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is vastly different from the one which preceded it. It witnesses the global triumph of market economies and the generation of unprecedented wealth. Today's government promotes only the material well-being of a small minority. Contemporary notions of 'Good Governance' envisage an ideal state to be one which best facilitates markets. The quality of governance should be measured by what the state achieves for its most disadvantaged people. By this measure, if a state facilitates, rapid economic growth but dispossesses over poorest people of their livelihoods, lands and forests, government has abjectly failed its people.

There has been evolution in the popular consciousness of the middle class. They are satisfied with their acquiring of large limousines and large houses. They have exiled the poor from their conscience and consciousness. They comfortably forget their poor neighbour. What is the point in growth if millions continue to be left behind? In India, there are richest people who have been listed in the Forbes Magazine, and live in their 27 storied multiple mansion (Costing 4,000 crores). Also there are people in the same place who live in huts either mud-walled or with no walls at all. These two Indians live side by side!

We should consider this 'Nature' with the same care with which we care our own bodies. It is our greater responsibility to protect this planet for the next generation, which we borrowed from our ancestors. We use one car for every one person which in turn causes a faster depletion of fossil fuel reserve

and rapid change in the world's climate. The common man who walks on the road is forced to inhale all the poisonous gases coughed up by your car. Still we take pride in driving our luxurious limousine by conveniently forgetting the pedestrian who lost his health (perhaps his only wealth) due to our apathy. We should shun this status ego and ready to share our vehicles with others or rely more on the public transport.

This world is abounds with greed, jealousy and hatred. Man betrays man for self-gain or because he is envious of the success of another. Some people have power in their hands and they misuse that power to cause distress and disaster to men and nature. Unfortunately they fail to realize that on this world everything moves in a circle and whatever injuries or sufferings they inflict on others eventually come back to them. Zen Buddhist "Karma-Wheel" enunciates this fact. He who ruled by the sword shall perish by the sword. Similarly he who lives by the gun eventually is killed by the gun. Those who try to destroy the "Nature" in the end invariably destroy themselves.

Today, we are passing through a crisis-a crisis of identification of values. The world is entrapped in gross materialism. Man has become selfish as to have utter disregard for others whether an individual or a society or a nation or nature. In our good old days, we tend to love and respect the innate goodness of individuals without considering their positions and possessions. But today we often ignore individuals themselves and love their material wealth. Today's child knows all about the business tycoon "Anil Ambani" who is enlisted by the Forbes Magazine as the richest Indian. But he doesn't know the neighbour's child who sleeps hungry. Today's middle class trained their children to live with such pretentious ignorance.

In these days, the temptations of the glamour of the western civilization is becoming too strong to resist. But we would certainly oppose that western form of development (based on Himsa of Nature) that has caused the disappearance of thousands of plant and animal species, resulting in greater damage to the nature sustaining life and health. So man's only asylum lies with the philosophies of 'Humanism' and 'Naturalism' which have their roots in ancient philosophies. Hence there are only ancient cure for the modern ills.

It is high time to create a balance between Spiritualism and Materialism. Moral purity and Spiritual Stamina are of incomparably greater survival value to the civilizations than physical might and material prosperity. In this chaotic circumstances prevailing all over the world today, we are looking for peace and harmony as elusive as the mirage in a desert. I think, once again Gautama and his philosophy can serve as beacon- lights to guide us and lead us to steady peace and progress. □

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## ALIENATION TO VICTIMIZATION IN ERNEST HEMINGWAY'S ***THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA***

Dr.S. Shanmugam

Alienation is one of the dominant themes to be found in the novels of Hemingway. He presents man as alienated from society and associated, because of alienation, with evil and debasement. Taking an anti-romantic stance, he portrays his characters as anti-heroes or victims, suffering from either physical importance or psychic aberrations like monomania and the anxiety of insecurity. Therefore, men in his fiction appear as victimized because alienated, devoid of authentic selfhood which is necessary to meet the challenges of outward forces courageously.

The term 'alienation' in social sciences refers to the state of being estranged or separated from one's family, milieu or sect. The recorded entries on alienation did not appear in the books of social sciences until as late as 1935, yet the concept had existed in the nineteenth and early twentieth century's in the works of Karl Marx, George Simmel, Ferdinand Tonnies and Max Weber. The most famous use of the term was by Marx, who spoke of alienated labour under capitalism: work was compelled rather than spontaneous; workers had little control over the work process; and the worker himself became a commodity in the labour market.

Perhaps, the clearest expression of alienation is contained in Durkheim's notion of 'anomie' (from Greek 'anomia', meaning 'lawlessness'), a social condition characterized by rampant individualism and the disintegra-

tion of binding social norms. Weber emphasized the fundamental drift towards rationalization and formalization in social organization. Personal relations became fewer, and impersonal bureaucracy became larger. Thus, with respect to self-estrangement, one can be 'out of touch' with oneself in several quite different ways.

Existential philosophy has created a new image of man as a helpless creature, feeling isolated and at the mercy of forces he can neither understand nor control. Nietzsche's declaration of the death of God contributed not a little to the creation of this new image of man. "The central fact of modern history in the West... is unquestionably the decline of religion" (p.24). This decline of religious feeling in the life of the common man impoverished his life and deprived him of the "unquestioned home and asylum of his being" (p.24). Man's alienation from nature, as a consequence of industrialization, contributed to the radical displacement of man in the new universe. The existentialists bemoan the absurdity of man's existence alienated from God and religion. The new power conferred on man by science has heightened only his feeling of helplessness.

In the post-war world, the individual became identified with some particular function and thus lost his identity as an individual. No account was taken of what was unique and valuable in him. When man discovered that he stood alone in the universe, it became imperative for him to discover his 'essence' and his 'self'. Hemingway's remaining years were spent in precarious health and growing depression about his waning mental and physical powers. In the end, following the example of his father, he committed suicide with a double-barrelled shotgun.

Hemingway's fiction depicts life as he saw and experienced it. What alienation is and what it brings about are brought out very clearly in ***The Old Man and the Sea***. Hemingway's hero is never a towering figure of epic proportions. But he does have a clear conception of what is expected of him and he does his best, single-handed, to encounter courageously the hostility of fate. He is a man of honour, who never shivers under alienation or separation, but fights his private, lonely battle against an implacable fate. Hemingway's heroes exemplify that the heroic problem of life lies primarily in the struggle for freedom of will against the pains of the body, and the fear of death against fate. They know that they could not save their body from destruction, but could preserve an undaunted spirit.

The theme of alienation is more poignant in Hemingway's masterpiece, ***The Old Man and the Sea***. The very opening sentence of the novel, "He was an old man who fished alone in a skiff in the Gulf Stream and he had gone eighty-four days now without taking a fish" (p.5), is suggestive of the theme of

human isolation as the basic fact of human existence.

Santiago, the protagonist of *The Old Man and the Sea*, going alone into the far sea, may be taken to symbolize the artist who attempts the impossible by going 'too far out' in order to expound an existential message of love, brotherhood and sharing, despite isolation and tragedy. The very first paragraph introduces the old man, Santiago, "fishing alone" in a small boat without taking a fish for very many days. In the first forty days, a boy, Manolin, had been with him. But due to his fruitless trips during those days, he had come to be regarded as "salao", which is the worst form of unlucky, and Manolin had been ordered by his parents to go with other fishermen in another boat, who caught three good fish the first week. Santiago had thus been alienated from his only mate, who was sad to see the old man coming with his skiff empty, but could not do anything to help him but "carry either the coiled lines or the gaff and harpoon and the sail that was furled around the mast" (p.5)

Thus, we see the old man trying to fish alone in the sea. Quite often, he would remember the boy and wish for his company: "I wish I had the boy. To help me and to see this". Though he knew that no one should be alone in his old age, he consoled himself by saying that it was unavoidable in his case.

When Santiago was at last able to spy a huge marlin, which he was trying to catch, he felt so cheerful and proud that he wished Manolin to be there then both to see him "settled himself against the rounded planks of the bow and felt the strength of the great fish through the line he held across his shoulders moving steadily towards whatever he had chosen" (p.41) and to tell his parents that the old man was not so "salao".

Santiago, indeed, felt much for his alienation from Manolin and other fishermen who dared not venture such far, and for his choice to stay alone in the deep dark water far out. Somehow, he consoled himself, saying that he had at least one company, the marlin: "My choice was to go there to find him beyond all people. Beyond all people in the world. Now we are joined together and have been since noon. And no one to help either one of us". (p.41)

The vast sea around made him feel "how alone he was", but immediately after 'he knew no man was ever alone on the sea', when he saw flight of wild ducks etching themselves against the sea over the water. The cramp that developed in his left hand made him remember Manolin. For, if the boy were there, he could rub the cramp for him and loosen it down from the forearm. Fortunately, the sun and the steady movement of his fingers un-cramped his left hand so completely, that he could shift more of the strain to the left arm.

The endless and lovely fight with the marlin made him both sleepless



and tired. "But you have not slept yet, old man", he said aloud. "It is half a day and a night and now another day and you have not slept. You must devise a way so that you sleep a little if he is quiet and steady. If you do not sleep you might become unclear in the head" (p.65)

During the moments when the fish was out of sight and showed no sign of any revelation, the old man was tempted to rest. But, the fish quite unexpectedly and suddenly would appear and come towards the boat, forcing the old man rise to his feet to pivot and weave the line. He, of course, became "tired" than he had ever been, but he was left with no time to take rest. He had to console himself by saying that he could rest on the next turn when the fish would go out of sight, and in two or three turns more I will have him (marlin).

When the marlin was being eaten up by the sharks against which the old man had to wage another futile war, he fully realized that he had gone too far out, and he really felt sorry for that. His fateful helplessness is expressed in the following words: "I ruined us both. But we [the old man and marlin] have killed many sharks, you and I, and ruined many others. How many did you ever kill, old fish? You do not have that spear on your head for nothing". (p.99)

These words are expressive of not only his forced dejection but also his existential resignation. The pangs of alienation are felt more intensely by Santiago also, who is the protagonist of *The Old Man and the Sea*, because he himself feels very much for the separation. That the alienation from the rest was his own-making may be inferred from these words: "His choice had been to stay in the deep dark water far out beyond all snares and traps and treacheries. My choice was to go there to find him beyond all people. Beyond all people in the world". (p.41)

Santiago's endless journey on the sea in search of some huge fish made him "too tired even to examine the line and he teetered on it as his delicate feet gripped it fast" (p.45). When the fish (bonito) cut his arm, he shifted the weight of the line to his left shoulder and kneeling carefully, washed his hand in the ocean water, watching the blood trail away as the boat moved. He would have liked to keep his hand in the salt water longer, but he was afraid of another sudden lurch of the fish, and so he stood up to brace himself.

Santiago's left hand was so cramped that it was almost "as stiff as rigor mortis". He hated a cramp because he thought that it was a treachery of one's own body. It would be humiliating to have a diarrhoea before others, and the cramp likewise humiliated him, especially when he was alone.

The old man was very proud to have caught a huge marlin, but his joy was only short-lived, for more ferocious attacks came from the sharks that came to devour the fish. "They came. But they did not come as the Mako had

come. One turned and went out of sight under the skiff and the old man could feel the skiff shake as he jerked and pulled on the fish. The other watched the old man with his slitted yellow eyes and then came in fast with his half circle of jaws wide to hit the fish where he had already been bitten". (p.93)

The endless fighting with the sharks, immediately followed by his mortal war with the marlin, made him completely exhausted. He felt that perhaps he was already dead. He put his hands together to feel the palms. He was happy that they were not dead and he could bring the pain of life by opening and closing the palms. He was too tired to say the prayers he promised to say, if he caught the fish. He leaned his back against the stern and watched for the glow to come in the sky.

The old man became so desperate that he spat into the ocean and said "Eat that, galanos. And make a dream you've killed a man" (p.103). He knew that he had been beaten without remedy. He settled the sack around his shoulders and put the skiff on her own course. He had no thoughts, nor feelings of any kind, for he was past everything then and he sailed the skiff to make his way home as well as he could.

When he reached the harbour, the lights of the Terrace were out and everyone was in bed. There was no one to help him and so he pulled the boat up as far as he could, and made her fast to a rock. Then he shouldered the mast and started to climb to reach his place. It was then that he knew the depth of his tiredness, for he fell down and lay thus for some time with the mast across his shoulder. He tried to get up, but it was not so easy. Finally, he put the mast down and stood up; then picked up the mast, put it on his shoulder and started up the road. He had to sit down for rest five times before he reached his shack.

Thus, alienation to victimization is depicted in Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. □

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## The Psychological Turbulence and Rootlessness: A critical study of Bharati Mukherjee's **The Tiger's Daughter**

Mrs. Geetha Rajagopal

Bharati Mukherjee, an exponent of expatriate writing, is originally an Indian settled in America. She takes up the life of the Indian immigrants in the USA as the subject-matter of most of her novels. There she tries to vivify the image of those women who have tried to assimilate the alien culture and have tried to accept the changed identity, over-throwing the Indian cultural heritage in which they took their first breath. What is most important in them is their spirit with which they overthrow their old culture and adjust themselves with the new surroundings. The psyche of an immigrant is always tragic as a result of the tension created in the mind between the two socio-cultural environments, between the feelings of rootlessness and nostalgia.

Bharati Mukherjee's novels deal with the expatriate experience. Her novels express this nomadic impulses of Indians, often in deliberate search of a materially better life with the consequent tensions of adaptation and assimilation. Often the Indian particularly the Indian women, finds herself unable to comfort and live within a world so vastly different from the one left behind. Mukherjee's notable works are **The Tiger's Daughter (1972)** **Wife (1975)** **Jasmine (1989)** **The Holder of the World(1993)** and **Leave it to Me (1997)**.

There has been an ongoing quest from expatriation to immigration in her writings. Prominent writers who spoke on expatriation and cross cultural crises are Kiran Desai, Salman Rushdie, V.S.Naipaul, Vikram Seth, Amitav

Ghosh, Jhumpa Lahiri, Nissim Ezekiel and Ruth Parwar Jabwalla etc., Expatriation is actually a complex state of mind and emotion which includes a wistful longing for the past often symbolized by the ancestral home, the pain of exile and homelessness, the struggle to maintain the difference between oneself and the new unfriendly surroundings, the assumptions of moral and cultural superiority on the host country and a refusal to accept the identity forced on one, by the environment. The expatriate builds a cocoon around herself as a recluse from cultural dilemmas and from the experienced hostility or unfriendliness in their own country.

The state of mind of the immigrants are quite stormy, they are restless, and they are always in a confused mental makeup. The feeling of alienation and loneliness haunts the psyche of these immigrants and just as the pendulum sways to and fro, so also the feeling, emotions and the mindset of the immigrants undergo a psychological turbulence and their mind keeps dangling between their own native soil and to their alien soil, where they have landed. Such is the situation of Tara Banarjee Cartwright, the heroine of the *Tiger's Daughter*.

Tara in **The Tiger's Daughter** experiences a cultural shock on her visit to India after seven years. Tara is an autobiographical representation of the author herself who is married to an American. When the reader goes through her novel one could feel that she likes to adhere to Indian traditions and customs and much of the Indian blood throbs in her writings. Tara being a Bengali Brahmin girl is married to David, an American. When she comes to India after seven years, Tara is given a red carpet welcome and she is called by her relatives as "Americawali" and her husband a "mleccha". Her aunt Jharna and her old Catelli-Continental friends talk about her husband as a "mleccha". Such words of identification push her to deep agony, dejection and frustration. Tara is displaced, displeased and dispossessed psychologically and she experiences a mental trauma.

The novel is divided into four parts. Part one deals with the past life of Tara, her family background and her settlement in New York. Part two deals with her journey from America to Bombay and after a short stay Tara goes to her native place, Calcutta. The pathetic plight of Bombay and Calcutta, the beggars, sick people, dirty and sinking streets of Calcutta gives a very sick atmosphere to Tara. Part three focuses on Tara's life at Calcutta with her Catelli-Continental friends. Part four of the novel throws light on Tara's visit to Darjeeling with her friends to spend summer vacation. Her return to Calcutta causes boredom, alienation, rootlessness, and her victimization in a mob and her tragic end remains mysterious. Thus Tara's mind keeps oscillating between

America and India and she is much panic- stricken and absolutely restless. She is torn between the America and the Indian climatic conditions.

Tara Banerjee, a Bengali Brahmin girl of Calcutta and daughter of an industrialist known as Bengal Tiger, has her schooling at Poughkeepsie. When she goes to America, she falls in love with David, an American who is a writer. At the age of twenty two, Tara Banerjee makes a visit to India. When she comes to India she comes across the true picture of India, the unhygienic public places, poverty, the mad rush of people, different tradition and customs- all these factors make Tara feel uncomfortable, disgusting and irk-some. Tara finds very difficult to evince her feelings and emotions. She thought that her visit to India will give her solace and comfort. This mindset of her's is reflected in the following lines:

For years she had dreamed of this return to India. She had believed that all hesitations, all shadowy fears of the time abroad would be erased quite magically if she could just return home to Calcutta. But so far the return had brought only wounds. First the corrosive hours on Marine Drive, then the deformed beggar in the railway station, and now the inexorable train ride steadily undid what strength she had held in reserve. She was an embittered woman. She now thought, old and cynical at twenty-two and quick to take offence. (25)

It is to be noted that we Indians are ready to ape the foreign etiquette, foreign fashions, attire and we are very much crazy about speaking in English and we try to attach social status to it, but on the contrary we are not ready to accept an Indian getting married to an American. This is the outlook we have, when we view Tara Banerjee. The heroine Tara finds it very difficult to adjust with both the American and Indian culture. She is unable to bridge the gap. Tara decides to go back and live along with her husband David. Her father, the Bengal Tiger reads the mind of his daughter and in order to divert her gloomy dejected mind, he sends Tara to Darjeeling to spend the summer, but the new place does not provide her peace and harmony. The feeling of discomfort is experienced by her. Unfortunately Tara becomes a victim of violence, the fate of Tara remains mysterious and she being locked inside the car, keeps thinking about her husband David. The novel ends with these lines: "And Tara, still locked in a car across the street from the Catelli-Continental, wondered whether she would ever get out of Calcutta, and if she didn't whether David would ever know that she loved him fiercely." (210)

To conclude, Tara Banerjee Cartwright experiences the dark side of rootlessness. She is taken to a rude shock, when she steps in the streets of Bombay and Calcutta. Tara experiences depression, losses enthusiasm, very often she undergoes chronic mental instability and her future looks cloudy too.

The mental turmoil and the pangs she undergoes are inexplicable. The irony is that, the alien land New York and her husband David gave her comfort and happiness and on the other side of the coin her own native soil proved to be a sea of broken dreams. Tara's journey to India is best represented in her mood as presented in the following lines: "It is so vague, so pointless, so diffuse, this trip home to India." (130)

Thus Tara experiences and undergoes a cultural shock and undoubtedly the immigrants are like **fence sitters** and it is like an invisible umbilical cord which connects them between mother land and the alien soil. Bharati Mukherjee has very skillfully and meticulously interwoven, the above mentioned concept and brings to limelight the fine emotions of Tara Banerjee and her psychological, emotional hurricane is microscopically dissected and each and every line of this novel, leaves an indelible mark on the readers. Thus most of the novels of Bharati Mukherjee make a concerted effort to conceptualize the imagine of immigrants, who assert their claim to an American identity by struggling heroically to reinstate themselves successfully in a new cultural landscape. The novelist analyses crystal clearly the emotions, pangs and sufferings of the expatriates and she has taken her novels as a platform to showcase the emotions of the expatriates. □

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## **ELLEN GLASGOW AND HER PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN**

C. Malathi

In the early twentieth century the South which was considered by H.L. Mencken, as the Sahara of the Bozart transformed itself into “a nest of singing birds” (Rubin, p. 262). Lively and serious works from the Southern pens subjected Southern culture, history, region, and people to an intense scrutiny. Hence, the South witnessed a rapidly accelerated growth in literature.

The literature of the South “can boast a substantial, earnest body of fiction which deals with the three major areas where the freedom/repression issue was most poignant; colour, sex and the fate /free-will nexus” (Donaldson, p 153). The Civil War was a watershed in the self –confidence of women which expanded in a full fledged manner even after the war. Women, exercising wartime opportunity saw their daughters to become more assertive. Among the women novelists, the new women wrote with increasing authority on the freedom/ repression theme, which fabricated them as women and as human beings.

Early women fiction writers regaled the readers with treacle sentimentality. The old traditions were no more; Romanticism with its sentimentality and its polite shams was outworn. Realm of dreams, lassitude, pleasure, chivalry and the nigger no longer existed. The Old South of abstraction became dead and in its place emerging in literature was the New South. New people and their customs prevailed with a modern look. So, the latest women writers had a shift in focus.

Ellen Glasgow born to an elite family of Virginia developed in a different way from the traditional to women of her class. She always felt that the South offered the novelist richer themes than any other part of America “depth and a tragic past and gay and a gallant pessimism”.( ) Adding to her credit, Glasgow spoke at the first suffrage movement in Virginia. She knew well the value of her vital contacts with “the oldest roots of our Republic which were also the oldest roots of democracy and of her tie with the land itself “ ( Wagenkecht, p. 267). Her works were forward – looking and range wide constituting a picture of Virginia. Glasgow estranged herself from the inverted sentimentalism of writers like Caldwell and Faulkner. She was the kind of writer who knew how to employ the tradition that she had inherited. Rejecting whatever had become sterile, she made full use which was still valid in it. The purpose of fiction, as she conceived was “to increase our understanding of life and heighten our consciousness” ( Wagenknecht, pg. 269).

Glasgow offers stunning insight into the lingering subtle effects of history. The southern mystique consisted of a strong sense of family of land of seasons of the old biblical traditions and a stern sense of morality. She grounds her fiction primarily in the experience of the South especially Virginia. Her fictions portray how life was in Virginia, and how life is and can be. Without distortion and misinterpretation, she depicts the cultural history of the South. Glasgow fictions communicate both the shattering force and direct with grim reality its strength and beauty. Hence, one could see its violence, poverty, harshness and also its strong family ties, individual sense of determination and cultural tradition.

Being an important person in the history of American literature, Glasgow fictions gave compelling sense of immediacy for presenting intimate and particularizing details. Glasgow turned to the past for her settings, recovering unforgettable images of a country. To express the truth about human life, she embraced both the world within and the world of external appearances. Rejecting, sentimentalism she was after “blood and irony”- blood means passion, warmth and vitality and irony is the safest antidote to sentimental decay. Her works chronicle the social history of Virginia, offering a complete picture of the South in defeat, avoiding local colour and concentrating upon human impulses. Her novel “**The Battle Ground**” (1902) sold 21, 000 copies within the first two weeks, for realistically depicting South before and during Civil War. The values of her fiction are those of a skeptical, urbane, tolerant and highly civilized mind. She revolted against the genteel hypocrisies of the South and clung to her hard – won liberty “ not to believe “ and “ not to be glad”. The critic Elizabeth Monroe feels that Ellen Glasgow’s art only “appears to be objective”



while actually being “oriented in her own skeptical and realistic view of life”(qtd, in Wagenknecht: p. 279). Monroe admits that Glasgow tempers her “searing vision of disintegration with a vision of beauty blossoming in its midst, and with an ironic tolerance of good and evil as parts of a universal pattern (qtd, in Wagenknecht, p. 279).

A pioneer in the movement towards realism, Glasgow is lauded as an unacknowledged master for depicting her real feeling for landscape, expressing views regarding environment and general and for her language. “While she was out of sympathy with the crude industrialism that tends to dominate some sections of the South, she could not work up any enthusiasm over a rural civilization dominated by hook worm and fundamentalism”(181). Landscape is an emotion as well as a place of a living entity, which Glasgow describes as sentiment and changes involved in an intense life of its own. Glasgow employs the land and the landscape to delineate the characters of both men and women who are shaped by it. Thus, while shaping her fiction she has established a concrete means of portraying who her people and what their lives mean in such a social environment.

Glasgow’s dominant themes; individual, survival, identity, freedom, power and community-link her to the literacy heritage of South but, her structure and form address clearly to the uniqueness of her particular vision. She weds her intellectual themes to the life and experience of the rural folk who are mainly middle class. Glasgow’s South is peopled with impoverished Southern aristocrats, destitute whites, nouveau riche, bourgeoisie, coal miners, black slaves, matronly mamas, autocratic male and suppressed female struggling to assert their self-hood. Glasgow’s major thematic concerns are love, destiny, marriage, rigid class system, feminine fragility and defiance, oppression of the poor whites and blacks and the restraints of the conventional society.

Though, Glasgow had been called a feminist, she did not at first make women’s roles as her major theme. In her earlier fictions, she focused the women slowly rather than men. Her men characters were the weakest but she was not bitter about them. Women characters became more significant only in her mature works. She started to write about women because their complexity interested her. Glasgow does not idealize her own sex and neither projects them as total victims nor as victors. Instead, she showed that the women have the power of endure and intelligence to adjust them to live an undefeated life even under the most unfavorable conditions. They also appear to be stoic.

Glasgow confronting with different perspective springs from a specific locality to show her crusade against the formal, the false and the affected sentimentality of Southern writing through the depiction of women characters,

Glasgow's interest in women characters stems from the fact that she herself is a woman. Hence, she is able to portray, define or redefine the essential female qualities and the matrix in which they flourish or wither. Glasgow amused by the difference between the traditional concepts of woman and her personal concept insists that if their happiness perished, their honour remained. This established herself as an outstanding southern writer of the era between the two world wars.

Occupying an unassailable position among the women writers, Glasgow in her fictions dismantles the stereotype and compels the attention of men to their problems. Glasgow does not make her women score over men but foregrounds women's issues and explores women's struggle to attain equality without pushing other people out of the way. Independence does not merely mean the freedom to do what one wants but also the freedom to resist being imposed upon or used by others. Glasgow proves through her fictional women that women are persons in their own rights, and as individuals they have the personal dignity that comes with intelligence, competence, flexibility, maturity and a sense of responsibility. All her fictions reaffirm without loss of charm or femininity. After all, the women either try to express their hidden aspirations or struggle for identities.

Glasgow fictions explore, expose and turn the traditional roles inside. Some women protagonist surprise and shock but they forge ahead rejecting roles of embalmed mummies, of being pitied or considered as inferior, or being confined to cook and do needle work. It is these domestic chores that had fettered the women more than the laws of country. This archetypal image of the Southern women as passive, mild and docile had given way to the new image of women as assertive, dominant and strong. Her later works display many of the attributes of women especially their involvement in the political movement. There is also a flowering of physical and spiritual self-hood. Glasgow aware that self-assertion is the crucial key to freedom stresses that true freedom lies in being authentic, in being oneself, in being liberated from conventions and from inherited view points.

Some of Glasgow's women try to salvage a sense of self within a system that tried to define self for them. They were against the system which tried to shape them with superficial graces. Some rebellious, venturesome women questioned boldly the Southern values and qualms which the society tried to ostracize them as they were not able to tolerate the new images of self-hood. They were made uncomfortable that they even fled from the South, rejecting their home, a symbol of tradition. They fled to return in full maturity, and to maintain their individuality to find their own way to salvation through trial and error. They also realize that they wanted involvement and not detachment.

The very purpose of their coming back is to be with determination and not to dominate or to be dominated.

The women protagonists being modern and new did not forget that they are women who have given up their feminine qualities like compassion and forgiveness. Glasgow has realized that "feminism is committed to the struggle for equality for women, an effort to make woman like men. But the struggle emphasizes the value as they are" ( Nahal, p. 23). So Glasgow takes pain to remind her readers, everything that is old need not be thrown away while making way for what is new. She is cautious enough not to go to the extreme levels in her concern for the welfare of women, and exhibits remarkable restraint without which her fictions would have simply become ordinary melodramas and not the sagas of sufferings and a hymn to successful women. Glasgow has made it possible by the incorporation of the cherished qualities like love and sympathy into the personal of her women characters. Glasgow demonstrated their maturity in distress. Without any reservation with a willing heart, they lend a helping hand and provide succor to those in distress. However, chaotic they unwind their personal problems, and invariably rush to the rescue of the needy and distressed, including the animals. In this angel-like compassion and consideration they seem to share the author's bent of mind. Often victims themselves and rebels they show tolerance too. They never harm anybody willfully, nor bear ill-will against anybody. Fortunately, they do not carry grudge in their minds to take vendetta, but forgive magnanimously and accept even those who have revenged them.

While some of her women are like puppets on a string, most of them are either angels of compassion or pillars of strength. A study of her women characters shows that Glasgow's stance is non-militant and quite conservative. In short, it indicates her embryonic feminism which is sure to grow full-fledged in future in the younger Southern women writers. □

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## Advaita Vedanta and Raja Rao: A Study of The Serpent and the Rope.

Sumitra Biswal

The present study has been made within the framework of Advaita Vedanta , one of the greatest philosophy of India. Raja Rao a Vedantist, a Brahmin and a spiritual disciple who writes on the line of metaphysical life, thinks writing as Sadhana and language as mantra and writer as Upasaka. For him human suffering, life, birth, death, sickness, marriage, love are not mere linguistic artisan but as an enquiry of higher and more man's immediate station. He himself accepted that his ambition as a writer is to write for metaphysics and it seems to him as the only form of writing. In **The Serpent and the Rope** Raja Rao has taken the very concept of Advaita Vedanta by choosing the title of the novel. Though an attempt was made to study the novel in the lines of Advaita philosophy yet the scope of study of Advaita Vedanta is very vast and broad as it is the carrier of Vedas and Upanishads. A further detail study can be possible for the theme.

**Advaita Vedanta** is a philosophical concept generated in India before 788 AD . This is sanskrit word where followers seek liberation by recognizing identity of the Self (Atman) and the Whole (Brahman) through long preparation and training, usually under the guidance of a [guru](#), that involves efforts such as knowledge of scriptures, renunciation of worldly activities, and inducement of direct identity experiences. This is the most dominated concept of school in hindu philosophy .Other major sub-schools of [Vedanta](#) are [Visishtadvaita](#) and [Dvaita](#); while the minor ones include [Suddhadvaita](#), [Dvaitadvaita](#) and

[Achintya Bhedabheda](#). Adi Shankara (788 - 820), also known as Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpādācārya and Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, expounded the doctrine of Advaita — a [nondualistic](#) reality. He consolidated the Advaita Vedanta, an interpretation of the Vedic scriptures that continued the line of thought of some of the Upanishadic teachers, Shankara's teacher [Govinda Bhagavatpada](#), Govinda's teacher [Gaudapada](#), and Gaudapada's teacher [Ajativada](#).

It is the most influential Hindu philosophy, Like all forms of Vedanta, it attempts to synthesize the teachings of the Upanishads into a single coherent doctrine. Unlike other forms of Vedanta, it teaches that there is only one real thing in the universe and that everything else is illusory. Advaita Vedanta is closely associated with Jñāna Yoga, the yoga of knowledge. People sometimes refer to Advaita Vedanta by other names including nondualism, nonduality, monism, Mayavada, or the Sankara School. People also sometimes abbreviate the name to “Advaita” or “Vedanta.”

This concept is hardly used in novels but Raja Rao distinguished from others used this concept in his novels and short stories. The concept of advaita vedanta is used in the novel “*The serpent and Rope*” as the theme of the novel,. It portrays man's quest for self realization which is the basic of Advaita Vedanta. Indian writers always try to put their religious thoughts in their works and Raja Rao is one of them. He accepted literature as sadhana and words as Mantra. The letter flows like flow of water and thoughts are scattered in the metaphysical plane. As an Indian writer he is always committed to the Indian thoughts and philosophy which reflected in his novels. Stefano Mercanti is right when he said that “ In classical Indian Tradition, literature has always represented through many paths (margas) to obtaining spiritual realization by meditating the empowerment with words, notably formulated by Patanjali and Bhatruhari”( *The Rose and lotus* by Stefano Mercanti, Rodopi publication,2009). The Serpent and rope of Raja Rao is one of the novel which leave space for the philosophers to think over the theme of the novel which itself is the part of the great philosophy “ Advaita Vedanta” ( the philosophy of reality and unreal). The Serpent and Rope is an ambitious attempt to search the abstract and finding their meaning in human life. In the very beginning of the novel Ramaswamy declares himself as Brahman and traces his link to Yajnyavalkya through Madhavacharya the great scholar of Advaita philosophy. Raja Rao inherited this philosophy in birth as his grandfather is a great follower of Vedanta and from childhood, he is surrounded with the thought of Vedas and Vedanta. Raja Rao never make him separated from these thoughts inspite of his continuous living in France. The present novel opines the same .The novel begins with a philosophical commitment, a statement of faith:

“ I was a Brahmin that is , devoted to truth and all that. Brahmin is he who knows Brahman. Etc. etc... But how many of my ancestors since the excellent Yajñavalkya, my legendary and Upanishadic ancestor have really know the truth expecting the sage Madhava, who founded an empire and wrote some of the most profound Vedantic texts since SriSankara? There were others, so I am told, who left hearth and riverside fields and wandered to mountain distant and hermitages to see God face to face- but when they died- for indeed they did die- they too must have known they did not die. I can feel them in me, and know they knew they did not die. Who is it that tells me they did not die? Who but me?” (p-5)

To Vedantin nothing can born and nothing can die. From the death there is another basic fact of consciousness- the spiritual ease and sense of vague. When Rama returns to India due his fathers death he realized the sense of nothingness. Metaphysically this sense of emptiness within the soul is one of the first step towards self discovery. Nagarjuna the great profounder of Sunyabad realizes that emptiness is the process of spiritual growth. As death provides a clue to life as dark provides the enjoyment of light so nothingness gives a clue to Being. Rama feels the same when he says that:

“Somewhere between the interstices of those trees, somewhere in the movement of the hinds, in the mountain stillness of Hardwar did I feel a new knowledge. I felt absence :((p-41)

At the core of existence nothingness is dissolving being into nothingness.” Is Heidegger’s dictum whose influence on Rao has widely recognized in his novels. The absence which Rama feels suddenly turn into discovery: there is no absence if you feel of your presence. The mountain echoed an absence that seemed primordial, a syllabic, a name”(p-41) from the negativeness Rao has deduced to his positive affirmation: the positive consciousness of the self, the Atman, an absolutely Vedantic position. Here Rao also finds a meeting ground for both Budhhisim and Vedanta however, they are separate in the thought of the self. Buddhist stand on the state of suchness Tathata, which is void of qualities and beyond description and this is not different when Vedantin’s Anirvachaniya Brahman. Rao carefully chosen the thoughts and drawn it in his own style giving justice to both the thoughts. There are three major schools of Vedanta. The Advaita expounded by Sankaracharya(circa A.D 788-820) the Visisthaadvaita upheld by Ramanuja ( a.c A.d 1017-1137) Dvaita propounded by Madhavacharya (A.D 1197-1276) . These theories are about the Jiva-Brahman relationship and they have separate path for man’s salvation. In Vedanta Brahman is supreme and the only preserver, ruler and destroyer of the universe. It recommends surrender of

the self, meditation, a sexual abstinence and non-attachment to worldly affairs. While Tantrism recommends the mother worship. Purusa and Prakrit are never separated. Without Shakti Siva is nothing. Tantra recommends worship of women as Laxshmi, Saraswati, Kali, Durga or Sita.

With a heritage link Rao never parted himself from these thoughts and the novel *The Serpent and the Rope* is the best example for it. The very title suggests that the life is full of ignorance from dark to light, from snake to rope. Man's life in Samasara is full of ignorance, he has to realize the Absolute reality that is Satchitananda. Ignorance will disappear when one has knowledge. Rama in the novel explains himself the theme:

"The world is either unreal or real- the serpent or the rope. There is nothing in between two and all that's in between is poetry, is sainthood. You might go on saying all the time no,no,no it's the rope and stand in the serpent, and looking at the rope from the serpent is to see paradise, Saints, Avatars, Gods . Heroes, universe for whatever you go you see only with serpent's eyes whether you call it duality or modified duality, you invent a believe door to heaven, you look at the rope from the posture of the serpent, you feel you are -the serpent- you are – the rope is but in true fact, with whatever eyes you see there is no serpent, there never was a serpent. You move your own eyes to the falling evening and cried, Ayyo! Oh! It's a serpent!" you run and roll and lament and have compassion for fear of pain, others or your own. You see the serpent and in fear you feel you are it, the serpent, the saint. One – the Guru- brings you the lantern: the road is seen, the long white road, going with the statutory stars. It is only the rope" he shows it to you and you touch your eyes and know there never was a serpent.(p-335)

This is taken from the non-dualistic philosophy of Sanakaracharya. He explains how there is superimposition of the not self of all pervading indeterminate self which is essentially unobjective (avisaya). Advaitin believes that when the illuminated soul passes into transcendental consciousness, he one realizes the self 'Atman' as pure bliss. In an apparent world Sankara says that an imagined snake proves on closer look nothing but a coil of rope. When the truth comes, the snake illusion vanishes into the reality of rope. Snake is the individual self or Maya and Rope is the reality. There is no world without Maya.

Ramaswamy the protagonist duals in this Maya and struggling to come out of the endless life.

He has to go through number of experiences and exposes to discover his own self. His failure as a husband to Madelaine, his failure as a lover, as a son and a brother make him ponder in this illusory world but his real problem



lies within himself which he realized after searching for his Guru. He exclaims: “ there never was time , there never was history there was anything but Shivoham, Shivohom, I am Shiva. I am the absolute.( p-197)

Savitri also plays a great role in Rama’s life for awakening his spiritual consciousness. He understands the real nature of love Rama Exclaims:

“ I could love, yes I could, I was in love, yes I loved, I knew love now, I spoke Savitri there had been days in Cambridge when I felt I could not say you to her, only ‘I’—can one really love lips or limbs no that could never be complete and a sin it would do. Love demands nothing it says nothing. It know nothing, it lives for itself(p-229)

This kind of love is best mode of worshipping the lord and their symbolic marriage is the marriage of Pursuha with Prakriti. It leads to spiritual illumination but Rama failed here as he is in the state of ego, ignorance or under the spell of Maya.

The same Maya is seen when news of Savitri’s marriage fills his heart with mental anguish. Yet he is not fully ready for the spiritual renunciation. After his second visit, he faced the change life of Madelaine. She has turned herself as Buddhist asceticism. Her life helps Rama in further direct of renunciation. The next Advaitic philosophy used in this novel is ‘Atman as Brahman’. As to Advaitin the real self is successfully identified with bodily self. The Serpent and Rope is the story of Rama’s quest for self realization. He realized the fruits of of his worldly life following the path to renunciations. He himself cried how one can get out of this worldly life. From very beginning also he is having that thought when he reacted to the death of his father as a normal way. He even once asked himself when aunt lakshamma died and he said to himself “for I must first believe there is death. And that is the central fact- I do not believe there death is.” (p-7). His detachment towards death is the symbol of his believe in death. The fact is he bears no love for them either his aunt or his father even his son also when death news comes to him. M.K Naik believes this happens because he is based on the principle of Vedantic conception of the unreality of death. Hearing the death of his son his reaction was “ in the bathroom, later when I stepped on the wash lab I laughed, I was neither in pain, nor was I releived ,I felt above both, like a child looking at a kite in the sky...”. The fact is that he is not realized the imperishable nature of self as distinguished from the perishable body. The Vedantin believes that life death are not two different things but only two different names for the same fact; the two sides of same coin.

The Davaita Vedanta clearly suggests the only existence of the absolute Brahman, a symbolized by the rope and the non-existence of the snake which simply appears to be for lack of knowledge or ignorance. Rao may be right that



Brahman cannot be described in words: Neti, Neti as the Vedas have declared. Here it is very relevant to quote one passage of Brihadaranayaka Upanishad. When yajnyavalkya replies to his wife when she asked about the immortality: "The husband is dear to the wife not for the sake of the husband, but for her own sake. The wife is dear to the husband not for the sake of the wife, but for his own sake. The sons are dear to the father not for the sake of the sons, but for his own sake. Riches are not for the sake of riches, but for one's sake... O! Maitriya! the Atman is worthy of seeing, hearing and contemplating and all this is inwardly brought home on acquiring Jnana (Knowledge). Accordingly all apparent perception are begotten of Ajnana (ignorance)." (Brihadaranyaka, published by Gita press, Gorakhpur)

Above description, it is clear that all the material relations or possession should serve as beneficiaries to an individual in his way of self realization. From here we may say that Raja rao making confusion to reader by giving the mixture of all other philosophy with Advaita Vedanta. In real he wants to show the real fundamentals of Advaita Vedanta by showing other philosophies side by side. The novel may well be a history of Rama and his many Mayas. He quoted Vedanta in many places through his dialogues with other characters but few realized the essence of it.

Rao said that one never knows where one may still be insidiously trapped in Maya. Like in his description of Banaras- 'one never knows where reality ends and illusion starts. When Madeleine started crying in the middle of the night and Rama tried to console her for a grief unexpressed and only half understood by him. He explains that: "as though her pain was first, the only one of mankind. There is no pain more acute than a pain unnamable." (p-133) suffering and its complete exclusiveness are wrought by Maya in its various processes. Rama did not understand this as he feels separate from her. There is another kind of Maya, the physical attraction between man and women. Which is separate from love. Love is seen as Bhakti. Love between man and women is of the body and mind and they are to change continuously, to fade and to perish. To Buddhist love is a personal emotion and so meaningless however Vedantin version is something different. They see it in greater spiritual legitimacy level as love between man and woman. The sexual union is more than biological; it is division within divinity itself.

As the last investigation we can take the line of water wave metaphor before we sum up the story. The epigraph "waves are nothing but water, so is the sea" is a patently Vedantic statement. The common substance in wave and sea is but water just as Brahman and Jiva are the same essential self. The experience of continuity unity with the absolute is basic in Vedanta.

Raja inherited in Vedantic tradition feels his way is the only way to him to where he can observe total fidelity to his experience, perception and progress of consciousness. He is trying to conduct a complete process of philosophic enunciation, investigation and axiomatic deduction. Since his path to truth can be shown by a guru in this novel but the whole story of Ramaswamy is a biographical temporal progression towards human experience. The whole design of the *Serpent of Rope* centers rounds the Advaita philosophy of appearance and reality. In over all investigation we shall comment that Raja Rao is a great admirer of the Vedantic philosophy, coupled with all his spiritual knowledge in other philosophies like Christianity, Taoism, Tantricism and Buddhism. Overall he succeeded to put all his knowledge and learning into the texture of the novel and landed himself into a world of creative chaos.□

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## GENDER IDENTITY AND INNER SPACE IN SHASHI DESHPANDE'S **THE DARK HOLDS NO TERRORS**

P. Balaji

Dr. J. Jayakumar

Shashi Deshpande's novel The Dark Holds No Terrors ambivalently projects deconstruction as well as reconstruction of gender roles as the female protagonist of the novel is constantly, and often unconsciously, in search of an 'inner space' which is instrumental in the reconstruction of gender identity in the wake of its being deconstructed. In this paper the concept of male-female polarity is treated as a natural and inherent factor in a social, psychological and biological framework. Central to the novel is the motif of home and family relationships which establishes the ambivalent aspect of female gender construction.

The novel projects the post-modern dilemma of a woman who strongly resents the onslaught on her individuality and identity. The antagonism is faced mainly from two persons-Saru's (the female protagonist's) mother and Manohar, Saru's husband. Both of them represent the values and norms established by a patriarchal society. Ironically, a female can be made an agency for the effective promotion of a male point of view as in the case of Saru's mother. The mother-daughter relationship is marked with mutual hatred. Saru says to her mother: "If you are a woman I don't want to be one". Again Saru finds herself in "A kind of shame that engulfed me, making me want to rage, to scream against the fact that put me in the same class as my mother..." (55). The mother is the

arch-rival in the filial power-structure.

In relation to her brother, Dhurva, Saru's status is belittled in the family. When he is alive, he is the mother's cinesure and Saru is neglected. What is worse Saru is later held responsible for Dhruva's death. So indelibly is the guilt stamped on her mind that even after years of the episode she is guilt-ridden: "But there can never be forgiveness. Never any atonement. My brother died because I heedlessly turned my back on him. My mother died alone because I deserted her. My husband is a failure because I destroyed his manhood" (198).

If Saru is attacked on the plane of filial relationships, she is also offended by the mother again-for her body. The mother once again torments her by projecting the values of a male-dominated society:

'You're growing up', she would say. And there was something unpleasant in the way she looked at me..."

"And it became something shameful, this growing up so that you had to be ashamed of yourself..." (55).

This is not generation gap. It is a power-struggle where the mother, as said above, is the spokesperson of a male point of view. Saru breaks the umbilical chord-leaves home. This is her first public defiance of the patriarchal power-system. Saru's mother condemns her: "Daughter? I don't have any daughter. I had a son and he died. Now, I am childless... I will pray to God for her unhappiness. Let her know more sorrow than she has given me" (178). Saru's defiance is further expressed when she becomes economically independent and marries of her own choice. The institution of home, which is supposed to foster the growth of a child, robs the woman of her right of respectability and individuality. The rejection of home and family at this juncture in the novel is Saru's first foot forward towards independence. She leaves the 'inner space', the home. The novel may be viewed as Saru's journey into inner spaces) one after the other.

From the first 'inner space' Saru moves to another by marrying Manohar and raising a family and having a home-once again. And once again and home disappoints her. The very economic independence, on the strength of which she had become independent, now becomes her bane. "How does it feel when you wife earns not only the butter but most of the bread as well?" (182). These words of the girl who came to interview Saru, triggered a sadism in Manohar's sexual relationship with Saru, thus, once again, hurting her, disenchanting her. Home has let her down-the second time. What was once beautiful-sex as well as her married life-has now become ugly. Once again Saru defies-these time her husband. She leaves home the second time-moves out of the inner spaces again.

From this 'inner space' Saru moves to another 'inner space', i.e. her father's home. If the 'inner space' with her husband was marked by his sexual sadism, then this one is marked by a psychological trauma. Her emotional upsurge breaks all barriers and she bares her sexual life to her father. All barriers and pretences are broken here but to no avail. 'it has been a fiasco, an exercise in futility, her coming here at all' (194). Her quest for 'home', the 'inner space', has been disappointing. "No she couldn't call it home. How odd to live for so long and discover that you have no home at all!" (195). Her father discourages her resentment towards Manohar and wishes her to go back to her home in Bombay. Summarily, Saru travels from one 'inner space' to another, but defies one after another. At the end of the novel, however, by implications she goes back to her home in Bombay.

The above resume raises two questions:

- (a) Why does Saru travel again and again to an 'inner space'?
- (b) Why does she defy the 'inner space' if she has to journey back into it?

The first question is answered from three angles-biological, psychological and social. And in all these angles the concept of the 'inner space' works. According to Erik H. Erikson, "marriage is an integration of two individual dispositions to bring up the next generation. Female identity is formed and influenced by the inner-space destined to bear the offspring of the chosen man". This is the core issue with which the difference between male and female becomes "polarized with finality". It facilitates the progression and procreation of human race. Therefore, there is an intuitive response to turn to an 'inner space' which is analogous to the womb. Women and men with their different biological programming react to a situation in their peculiar ways. Although Saru goes out a number of times, she comes back home the equal number of times. This turning to the 'inner space' is conditioned by her female biology-accepting as well as rejecting it, as puberty and pregnancy are reacted against but they are also accepted when children come. Saru reacts against puberty: "And it became something shameful, this growing up...." It was ".... Like death you knew it was there, you knew it happened to others, but surely it couldn't happen to you... It was torture"(55). But later Saru accepts this fact of life and is "released from a prison of fears and shame" (56). The body and mind work in union to result in the polarity of male-female reactions. The female experience of differentiation, to which the initial response is negative, is later accepted under "the ethos of enlightenment".

Erikson (1983) discusses the psychologists' play data where children were given play constructs to construct a scene. These constructs were studied comparatively. Sex difference was obvious in spatial configurations. Girls and

boys used space differently and certain configurations were typical of girls and boys. The girls emphasized inner and boys outer space. The typical features of girls' scenes were the interior of a house representing either a configuration with furniture without boundary or a simple enclosure with people and animals within. The enclosure is marked by low boundary walls and a peaceful ambience. Boy's structures were generally exterior scenes; people and animals were often outside and moving. "It may come as a surprise to some and seem a matter of course to others that here sexual differences in the organization of a play space seem to parallel the morphology of genital differentiation itself". If the play data is studied from a psychological point of view then this results in boys' and girls' preoccupation with outer and inner space, respectively. Biological and psychological unity results in typical male and female attitudes and reactions. Saru's search for a home may be viewed from this point of view.

A purely social interpretation of the concepts of 'inner space' may deny anything symbolic or somatic in the play constructs. "It takes it for granted that boys love the outdoors and girls the indoors, or at any rate that they see their respective roles assigned to the indoors of houses and to the great outdoors of adventure, to tranquil feminine love for family and children and to high masculine aspiration". An interesting account of the morphology of basic baboon organization is given by Erikson. The female baboons are kept in the inner space surrounded by the protective wall of baboons as a safety against any external danger. There are concentric circles and each one is performing its assigned task. The strength and weakness of a gender depends on its functional fitness in a social framework depending on division of labour. We have not yet reached a point of progress where a working woman's responsibility at home is reduced to nil. There is a duality of duties to be performed inside as well as outside and her primary duty is at home-inside the house. There may be a blurring of the boundary of duties but there are two clear vantage points upheld by the male and the female which are biologically, psychologically, socially, and culturally ordained. If a woman transgresses in the other area, she has to come back to the assigned place. Although male and female features co-exist in a person, women generally have a predominantly sensitive indwelling which determines their behaviour. When a woman moves out into the outer space, as for economic independence in the case of Saru, it is in the manner which may be hermaphroditic, if not totally masculine. The above analysis attempts to offer a total configurational approach to answer the first question regarding Saru's going into an 'inner space' again and again.

This takes us to the second question: If it is natural for a woman to be in the inner space under male-female polarity, then why does Saru move out of it? The root cause may lie in the protagonist's inflated ego and a cold

attitude towards the members of her family, which is the very negation of the stereotyped suffering Indian woman. The very fact that Saru moves out shows the emergence of the new woman who has stood publicly for what she upheld privately. Saru as an individual is convincing in her conflict between the inner and outer spaces. The walls which surround her are 'negative walls' which do not offer any peace or protection. Therefore the 'inner space' disappoints Saru and results in a renewed quest for a home. She goes out not merely for rejecting home but on the contrary for seeking one. Therefore, exit from an inner space may appear to be a deconstruction of her gender role, but inherent is the desire for reconstructing it. At the end of the novel Saru goes back home:

... all those selves she had rejected so resolutely at first, and so passionately embraced later. The guilty sister, the undutiful daughter, the unloving wife... all persons spiked with guilts. Yes, she was all of them; she could not deny that now. She had to accept these selves to become whole again (201).

Saru presents the process of forming a gender identity. In her exit she makes a distinction between her role and self, and performs what Kakar calls a "role distance", but by coming back home she identifies herself with the roles and feels fulfilled. Her gender identity is complete with the final going back to the 'inner space'. The identity formation by going back to the 'inner space' is also a reminder of the state of affairs in the present social set up- that in a patriarchal society man grants emancipation to woman according to the parameters fixed by him for her. The male-female polarity is kept up and a merger is not encouraged. Saru is a study in conflict. She goes out to deconstruct the socially imposed gender roles framed by a patriarchal society but she comes back into reconstruct her intuitive role(s). □

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## Luther's Resistance: A Reappraisal

Chittaranjan Bhoi

Resistance germinates from the psychic maladjustment of an individual. He, who resists, intends to bring about a valid change in the established system or norm. Psychic in- equilibrium and disorder often times give rise to aggression which manifests itself in the form of resistance. Sometimes the personal sense of futility tempts the individual to voice his resistance against something which he dislikes or disapproves. Many such actions are evidenced in the pages of history. It has its existence in past, present and footing in future as well. Man revolts against social injustice and disorder to carve out his own niche. His resistance suggests that what is, is not what he ought to be. If the resistance is valid and logical, changes take place in society.

Indeed, resistance can be demonstrated through verbal articulation or silent noncooperation or even violent physical assault. Osborne in his plays attempts to show how his heroes resist against the socio-politico-religious situations of the post-war England. Being the victims of the war-torn England the Osborne heroes desperately search for their identity and in the process rebel against all sorts of chaos. Besides socio-politico-economic chaos England also witnessed religious chaos which has been strongly confronted by Martin Luther, the protagonist of the play *Luther*.

While discussing the metaphysics of resistance it would be proper to quote the observation of Albert Camus's *The Rebel*:

Metaphysical rebellion is the means by which a man protests against his condition and against the whole creation. The slave protests against



the condition of his state of slavery; the metaphysical rebel protests against the human condition in general. The rebel slave affirms that there is something in him which will not tolerate the manner in which his master treats him; the metaphysical rebel declares that he is not only problem of pure and simple negation. In fact in both cases we find an assessment of values in the name of which the rebel refuses to accept the condition in which he finds himself.

(Albert Camus, *The Rebel*, 29)

A common man's contention is to grow up in an environment which is rational, coherent and conducive in all respect. But sometimes the lack of opportunity and favourable condition he finds himself helpless and hopeless. The similar predicament occurs in case of Luther. He considers himself to be a misfit in the condition in which he finds himself in. He then tries to get out of this condition by way of protesting against everything that he dislikes and disapproves. Indeed, *Luther* is a play of an individual's resistance against society, religion and civilization. Of all Osborne heroes, Martin Luther achieves some credibility in bringing the political and religious authorities to their knees. Luther's courage to confront with the established system is remarkable. By one stroke he shakes both the spiritual and temporal world of their foundation. Cardinal Cajetan justifiably says:

Cajetan: My son you have upset all Germany with your disputes about indulgences. I know you are a very learned doctor of the Holy Scriptures, and that you have already aroused some supporters.

(*Luther*, 68)

Brother Weinand further bears out that Martin is a remarkable person:

Brother Weinand: Martin is a brilliant man. We are all not as gifted as he is.

(*Luther*, 32)

Martin's father, Hans wanted Martin to become a lawyer. The conversation between the son and the father make the statement more evident. Martin could have been a very successful man of the world:

Martin: And don't say I could have been a lawyer.

Hans: Well, so you could have been. You could have been better than that. You could have been a burgomaster, you could have been a magistrate, you could have been a chancellor, you could have been anything!

(*Luther*, 39)

Why then such a person of commitment kicks at all the worldly opportunities and selects the difficult path of a monk's life, is rather intriguing. Perhaps his rejection of social life stems from his unhappy childhood. Indeed it is a questionable conviction of life. This fact comes out clearly in his conversation with his father:

Hans: Yes, we are all sorry, and a lot of good it does any of us.

Martin: I suppose father and sons always, always disappoint each other.

Hans: I worked for you, I went without for you.

Martin: Well?

Hans: Well! (Almost anxiously) And if I beat you fairly often and pretty hard sometimes I suppose it was not any more than any other boy, was it?

Martin: No.

Hans: What do you think it is makes you different? Other men are all right, are not they? You were stubborn, you were always stubborn, you have always had to resist, have not you?

Martin: You disappointed me too, and not just a few times, but at sometime of everyday I never remember hearing or, seeing you, but, as you say, that was also no different from any other boy. But I loved you the best. It was always you I wanted, I wanted your love more than anyone's and if anyone was to hold me, I wanted it to be you. Funnily enough, my mother disappointed me the most, and I loved her less, much less. She made a group which no one else could have filled, but all she could do was make it bigger, bigger and more unbearable.

Hans: I don't know what any of that means; I really don't. I would better be going, Martin, I think it is best; and I dare say you have got your various duties to perform.

Martin: She beat me once for stealing a nut, your wife. I remember it so well, she beat me until the blood came, I was so surprised to see it on my finger-tips; yes stealing a nut that is right ...

*(Luther, 43)*

When a child's psychology is not properly understood by his parents, he feels hopeless and as a result he gets demanded. So is the case with Martin. This is probably the primary reason for his entering the cloister, even though Hans gives another reason: Martin got frightened by a thunderstorm and prayed to St. Anne to save him and that he vowed to become a monk if he was saved. His decision to enter the church is in a way his resistance against parental tyranny.

No doubt his joining in church freed him from parental authority but dragged him into the clutches of stricter church authority-the church regulations which drown human conscience and faith in a series of hollow rituals.

Martin gradually explores the corrupt practices like the sale of indulgences and violation of the vows of celibacy and poverty, as we hear of John Tetzel, the indulgence pedlar, from the discussion of Martin and Cardinal Cajetan. This realization activates the sense of revolt lying dormant since his childhood. He further realizes that the Mother church intervenes in the way of individual's personal communication with God, by making itself indispensable. Therefore he resists his voice against the institutionalization of God. He thus writes in his thesis:

Martin: ... But the truth is that the just shall live by faith alone. I need no more than my sweet redeemer and mediator, Jesus Christ, and I shall praise him as long as I have a voice to sing; and if anyone does not care to sing with me, then he can howl on his own. If we are going to be deserted, let's follow the deserted Christ.

*(Luther, 63)*

His resistance is the offshoot of his desire to break loose 'faith' from religious dogma. Luther's long-suppressed sense of resistance finds a psycho-somatic manifestation in his constipation and epilepsy. His physical condition seems related to his psychic turmoil. Intermittently we see his clenched fist digging into his abdomen to relieve the pain. We notice him flying into a raging fit at the end of the first scene. We also see him clutching his belly while talking with Cajetan and Staupitz. He is confused and troubled by these afflictions when his conscience is not clear as to what he really believes in or, what course of action to take. But once his conscience is clear, his pain disappears and he feels very much relieved. Martin himself relates:

Martin: ... And I sat in my heap of pain until the words emerged and open out. "The just shall live by faith". My pain vanished, my bowels flushed and I could get up. I could see the life I had lost.

*(Luther, 63)*

This reveals the psychic disorder deep down Martin's personality which also leads him to talk inconsequentially and at times disjointedly. In his encounter with Cardinal Cajetan, when Cajetan asks him to recount his errors, he refuses to do it and tells:

Martin: Most holy father, I honour the Holy Roman Church, and I shall go on doing so. I have sought after the truth, and everything I have said I still believe to be right and true and Christian ....

*(Luther, 71)*

He expresses doubt about his own convictions which has been evidenced from

his dialogue with Staupitz, the Vicar General in the last scene.

Martin: I listened for God's voice, but I could hear was my own.

Staupitz: Were you sure? (Pause)

Martin: No (Staupitz kisses him)

Staupitz: Thank you my son. May God bless you? I hope you sleep better. Goodnight.

Martin: Goodnight, Father.

(Staupitz goes out, and Martin is left alone. He drinks wine)

Martin: Oh, Lord. I believe. I believe. I do believe. Only help my unbelief.

(*Luther*, 101)

He waves in his conviction. He is not sure of the truth he had sought after so long, and helplessly slumps into a state of doubt. This is certainly the symptom of an inharmonious personality.

The case study of Luther reveals that his resistance begins at home. He voices his resistance against parental tyranny and in order to spite them enters the holy order. But the main plot centers on a religious event of resistance. Osborne chooses Martin Luther as a convenient stock-symbol of resistance and non-conformism. Osborne seems to be in love with the image of a hero fighting a lone battle against his betters. Therefore Luther is just a variation on the same theme already dealt with Osborn's other plays: *Look Back in Anger*, *The Entertainer*, *Time Present*, *Epitaph for George Dillon* and *Bond Honoured* etc. seen in the light of the trend of these earlier plays, *Luther* easily falls into to category of drama of resistance. But for a change, Luther purports to resist against the church and not the stage. Luther is thus a conventional Osborne hero in a different cast. The violence and the rudeness of the historical Luther is ideally suited to Osborne's purpose of outraging yet another aspect of organized authority.

On the surface, however, we find the play dramatizing the confrontation between Catholicism and Protestantism. But the real tension of the play generates from the conflict between personal conscience and institutional dogma. Recovery of personal faith is the crux of the play. Luther is not portrayed as a simple stickler who points his accusing finger at every conceivable value. One can find him progressing from faith in the church-based religion to skepticism which is evident from his prudent acceptance and excessive adherence to the scriptural injunctions, like fasting and confessions still he realizes that the "just shall live by faith", (*Luther*, 63) Brother Weinand remarks about Luther's exaggerated emphasis on scriptural injunctions :

Bro Weinand: ... The moment you have confessed and turned to the altar, you are beckoning for a priest against. Why every time you break

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wind they say you rush to a confessor.

*(Luther, 27)*

Luther's tenacious clinging to the words of the text is only necessary to ridicule the Holy order which relies on hollow rituals for its existence rather than the real spirit i.e. the faith. Staupitz speaks to this effect when he says:

Staupitz: ...So what you do by your exaggerated attention to the rule, you make the authority ridiculous. And the reason you do that is because you are determined to substitute that authority with something else-yourself.

*(Luther, 54)*

Luther's disillusionment in the church-based religion is quickened by the exploitation underlined in the sale of indulgence which, it was claimed, could absolve the past and intended sins of the buyer. The character of John Tetzel, the indulgence pedlar, is a sad commentary on the hypocrisy of the Holy order. The play is at its funniest when Luther relates to Staupitz, how a Saxon noble man bought an indulgence letter from John Tetzel for thirty gulden which promised to pardon him his intended sins. Later the nobleman set a band of thugs who looted Tetzel on his way to Leipzig *(Luther, 59)* or when Cajetan confides to Luther: "I have discovered that he (Tetzel) has managed to father two children"

*(Luther, 70)*

It is against this 'consecrated rottenness' of the Holy Church and Luther is determined to wage a war. His iconoclastic conscience doesn't accept an intermediary-the mother church and its corrupt hierarchy-between man and God. He wants to establish a personal communication with God via faith. Luther thus conclusively puts it in his sermon:

The just shall live by faith alone. I need no more than my sweet redeemer and mediator, Jesus Christ and I shall praise him as long as I have a voice to sing and if anybody doesn't care to sing with me then he can howl on his own. If we are going to deserted, let us follow the deserted Christ.

*(Luther, 63)*

This brings him into a confrontation with Pope. He is branded a heretic and is summoned to the Diet of Worms, where we hear him speak gently but unequivocally when he is asked to recant his errors:

Martin: Since your serene majesty and your lordships demand a simple answer, you shall have it, without horns and without teeth. Unless I am shown by the testimony of the scriptures-for I don't believe in popes or councils-unless I am refuted by scriptures and my conscience is captured by God's own word, I cannot and will not recant, since to act against one's conscience is neither safe nor honest. Here I stand; God

help me; I can do no more. Amen.

*(Luther, 85)*

Luther follows his conviction like the 'old bear following his own breath'. He doesn't stop to think of the consequences of his action, because faith is entirely a personal equation. He is convinced that "no man can die for another, or believe for another, or answer". (Luther, 99) Therefore he carves out his own answers (in characteristic Osborne way) to the problems that face him:

Martin: ... Seems to me there are three ways out of despair. One is faith in Christ, the second is to become enraged by the world and make its nose bleed for it, and the third is the love of a woman.

*(Luther, 95-96)*

All through the play we see him following these ways. He affirms his faith in Christ in typical Lutheran way-by asserting the individual's right to personal communication with God through faith. He violates the rules of the monastic order and sets up a family with his nun Katherine for wife and begets a child through her.

The world indeed bleeds as a consequence of his revolution as evidenced by the peasant uprising in Act-III, Scene II. Luther's aim was to rehabilitate Christ in the soul of man, and having done so he was satisfied. We notice the confession of Staupitz :

Staupitz: We have taken Christ away from the low mumblings and soft voices and the jeweled gowns and the tiaras and put him back where he belongs. In each man's soul. We owe so much to you.

*(Luther, 100)*

The anti-climax comes in Act-III, Scene-II, when we find Luther give in helplessly to searching questions of Staupitz and suffers from the qualms of conscience which leads the reader to assume that the whole Lutheran movement was a farce-ill-conceived and half digested. Luther unfortunately does not live up to the image which had been built so laboriously. He confesses to Staupitz that he himself was not sure of what he was doing. The vicar general asks Luther as to why did he ask for extra time to answer the questions asked by Pope and the council at the Diet of Worms, even though he knew the answer for months :

Staupitz: You had known what your answer was going to be for months. Heaven knows, you told me enough times. Why did you wait?(Pause)

Martin: I was not certain.

Staupitz: And were you? Afterwards?

Martin: I listened for God's voice, but all I could hear was my own.

Staupitz: Were you sure? (Pause)

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Martin: No (Staupitz kisses him)

Staupitz: Thank you my son. May God bless yozu? I hope you sleep better. Good night.  
Martin: Good night, Father.  
(Staupitz goes out, and Martin is left alone, he drinks his wine.)  
Martin: Oh, Lord, I believe, I believe. I do believe. Only help my unbelief.  
(He sits slumped in his chair...)

(*Luther, 100-101*)

In spite of this serious discomfiture in Luther, he served Osborne's purpose admirably. Thus by brick-batting the church authorities with their own instrument viz scripture and dribbling black bile and fluffing it all over them he establishes his voice of resistance. □

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Felicitation to the Editor Dr. Udayanath Majhi in his native town.



## Between Fact and Fiction – Rabindranath Tagore's **Boyhood Days**

Amiya Kumar Rout

'Blessed is he, whose fame does not outshine truth', is the statement of a towering and most accomplished genius of our times, Rabindranath Tagore. Popularly known as Gurudev or Goethe or Shakespeare of Bengal, his words and expressions have an enduring power that lights up a melancholic heart, humbles the arrogance of one's soul, broadens a narrow mind immensely, strengthens the spirit of the weak, sharpens the conscience of the society and soothes the restless. Reading Tagore's sublime poetry, masterly prose, his enchanting life stories or auto biography, one wonders if mankind today has lost some of the finer sensibilities that inspired his works – the intimacy with nature, the quest for inner truth, the sense of solidarity and community that transcends the borders and breaks down the presumed barriers of religion, race and language. In all these the incomparable and sublime parts of his creations are his life stories, memoirs and autobiographies.

His autobiography **Boyhood Days** exhibits a great sense of fantasy, rhythm and vitality. A powerful imagination added an inexplicable strangeness to his work that is sometimes experienced as eerie and evocative. **Boyhood Days** (*Chhelabela*, 1940) Tagore's second memoir of his childhood days, written when he was nearly eighty. He describes without a trace of self pity, the spartan life he had to lead under his father's instruction. The sense of wonder and delight in the seemingly common place experience of boyhood helped him become a great poet. My life in my words, quite literally Tagore on Tagore paints a rare glimpse of his life. Seen through the amused eyes of a precocious young



boy growing up in turn of the century Calcutta, **Boyhood Days** describes the joint family he grew up in, the city he played in and the school he was sent to against his will. It is an exquisite portrait of both Tagore's child hood and his country, India at a turning point in its history.

"It is not easy to know oneself. It is difficult to organize life's various experiences into a unified whole," muses the seventy year old Tagore in *Amaparichaya* (self recognition 1943), a collection of six introspective essays published posthumously. Although he did not write a formal autobiography, many of his lectures and writings are attempts to reconstruct the narrative of his personal development as a man and as a writer. Impelled by the desire to understand himself and his environment, Tagore is also self conscious about the image he wants to present to the world.

**Boyhood Days** (*Chhelabela*) was published in 1940, shortly before Tagore's death. Requested by Nityananda Goswami, a literary scholar and teacher at Santiniketan, to write something for young readers. Tagore embarked on this delightful account of his childhood and adolescence, describing his experiences from his earliest recollections up to the time of his first visit to England in 1878. With an episodic structure that depends more on associations of memory than on chronological sequence, this impressionistic narrative captures child's wonder at the world around him and also offers a vivid picture of life during those times. He observes but often feels excluded from the sphere of adult activities, and thinks himself abandoned to a lonely and loveless existence. This solitariness is both a source of anguish and the wellspring of his creativity, for he compensates for his drab outer life by withdrawing into a vivid inner world created by his imagination.

There are no ghosts in **My Reminiscences**, but in **Boyhood Days** nature is a living presence, magical spirits lurk around every corner. In his preface to **Boyhood Days** Tagore says; "some features of this book's content may be found also in *Jibansmriti*, my memoirs, but that has a different flavour like the contrast between a lake and a waterfall. That was a story; while this is bird song; that belongs to the fruit basket, this to the tree (**Boyhood Days**, 4). There is something in store for the children too. **Boyhood Days** brings to life an era long past and traces the journey of an icon from childhood to the time he takes his first steps in the world of literature. In 'my school' a lecture published in the Modern Review in 1931, Tagore speaks of his other passion the mission to revolutionize education by rearing young minds in harmony with nature. He describes trauma of his own school days, his sense of liberation when he finally left school at 13, and the germination of his vision of a new form of education through his experiments with the school at Santiniketan. Here, as

in his other autobiographical writings, his key concern is freedom of the mind.

In April – May 1924, invited by Liang-chi-chao, President of the University Lecturer Association of Peking, Tagore delivered a series of lectures in China, which were later published as *Talks in China* (1925). Autobiographical, from this collection is Tagore's attempt to contextualize his life in relation to the broad historical trends of the time, and the personal and family influences that shaped his spirit in his formative years. In this piece, Tagore makes it clear that despite the many roles life has imposed on him, it is the poet that he wants to be remembered. **Boyhood Days**, Tagore's reminiscence of his childhood days is an insightful peep into discovering the wonder and delight in the seemingly common place experiences that helped him become India's the most cherished renaissance figure, a living presence.

**Boyhood Days** leads Tagore into the spectral world of the past. Its dimensions, internal and external, no longer correspond to the present-day world. As Tagore says in his preface, 'oil lamps those days, emitted more smoke than light. The world of the mind had not yet been surveyed by science, the possible and impossible were intertwined, the boundaries between them blurred. It is a nostalgic recollection of childhood days spent in absolute indolence. It is a vivid portrayal of the society and culture of Bengal. The author has put to paper fond memories of another era which he relished as a child and the passing of which he witnessed during his growing years. Young women in palanquins carried by 4-8 servants, hackney carriages all over the city, the wrestlers who entertained people, Badam tree in Courtyard, the ghost on the tree, women covered in veils, rumours about the presence of ghosts in dark corridors, the palatial bungalows, times when dacoit was respected, games of olden days like top spinning, hunting for a tiger in a jungle, street plays, water in the Ganges, the luxury of servants and care takers .....many more.

As Tagore believes in his preface, "my account has not been allowed to breach the boundaries of childhood, but these recollections arrive ultimately, at the threshold of adolescence. Pausing there, one can understand how a boy's psychology had evolved to maturity through an extraordinary convergence of accidental and inevitable circumstances. The special appropriateness of presenting this entire narrative as an account of one's boyhood days lies in the fact that the growth of the child also signals the evolution of his spirit. In the early stages of life, it is this process that is primarily worth tracing. From his surroundings, this boy easily absorbed the kind of sustenance that his spirit found congenial." Obviously Tagore's own account of his childhood days has intrinsic interest of its own, but it also tells us something about the development of the priorities that deeply influenced his later life.

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Rabindranath Tagore passionately disliked the school he encountered,  
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and as a dropout, he was educated at home, with the help of tutors. Already in his childhood he formed some views on what precisely was wrong with the schools he knew in Calcutta of his day. Some of the things he missed and longed for, he actually did get at his own home, like the presence of music and poetry in everyday life. There is plentiful creative dissatisfaction expressed about his early education in **Boyhood Days**. The tone in which the author expresses his displeasure however is not one filled with anger or frustration or fury but a tone full of poignance. A silent weeping of sorts ..... Yet his yearnings for substantive freedom in human life comes through very clearly in **Boyhood Days**, and it stays throughout his life as a constant thought. As we read through Tagore's account of his Childhood years, we can find many scattered remarks on what would prove to be critically important preparation for the emergence of the wealthy tradition of Rabindra Sangeet. **Boyhood Days** contains many glimpses, this is another hints of Tagore's exposure to the music around him which would ultimately help the birth of a new genre of Bengali Music.

**Boyhood Days** concentrates more clinically on Tagore's intellectual world with special stress on analytical and empirical enquiries and his expectations from them. However, since the beginning of Tagore's priorities and expectations are clearly noticeable in **Boyhood Days**, the subject deserves a little exploration here. Tagore's commitment to reasoning was strong sometimes fierce. This is well reflected in his arguments with Gandhi (whom he chastised for obscurantism), with religious parochialists (whose reasonless sectarianism upset him greatly), with the British establishment (for their crude treatment of India, in contrast with what he admired great in British intellectual life and creativity). Tagore's commitment to a reasoned understanding of the world around us came through also in his wholehearted support for scientific education (his school insisted on every child's exposure to the new findings emerging anywhere in the world. The same zeal and gusto to reason is seen also in Tagore's cultural evaluations. It is also seen in his refusal to see something called "the Indian Civilization" in isolation from influences coming from the rest of the world; this remains very relevant today, not just as a critique of what is now called the "Hindutva" approach, but also of the widely popular theses of the 'Clash of civilisations', which is frequently involved these days as a gross – and rather dangerous – simplification of the complex world in which we live. In every case, Tagore's firm convictions were driven explicitly by critical reasoning which is clearly spelt out.

And yet to any contemporary observers in Europe and America, Tagore appeared to be anything but a follower of reason. It was faith he was identified with, and with a penchant for mystification over seeking clarity. A clear formulation of that interpretation of Tagore can be found in two unpublished letters

of Bertrand Russel to Nimain Chatterji. In **Boyhood Days** Tagore recounts his growing up years with gently wit and judicious reason. He describes the life in 19<sup>th</sup> century Calcutta when the only light in the evening came of castrol oil lamp, when hackney carriages rest through the city's streets and women travelled in palanquins to the Ganga for their bath. He writes about his early love for music and poetry, the myriad influences that shaped his thinking and about the other members of his large, gifted family. The autobiography brings to life an era long past and traces the journey of an icon from childhood to the time he takes his first steps in the world of literature. Tagore's autobiography is an exquisite portrait of both his childhood and his country, India at a turning point in history.

**My Reminiscences** and **Boyhood Days** should not be read as a truthful account of Tagore's childhood, for not all details in these texts are factually accurate. Biographers point out, for instance, that the Tagores had two houses in Jora Sanko, not one, and that the young Robi was not denied adequate clothing as he claims. Such distortions, gaps, and silences hint at Tagore's reticence about certain private matters, such as tensions within the joint family, and his desire to underscore his loneliness, for which the lack of clothing becomes a metaphor. These memories are therefore best understood as "memory pictures" or literary reconstructions of the past in which imagination and sentiment play as great a role as factual detail: "I do not know who has painted the picture of my life imprinted on my memory. But whoever he is, he is an artist. He does not take up his brush simply to copy everything that happens; he retains or omits things just as he fancies; he makes many a big thing small and small thing big.... In short his task is to paint pictures, not to write history" (**My Reminiscences**, 17) Tagore's autobiographical writings blur the distinction between fiction and history. That is their special charm. □

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## SHORT - STORY

### THE BLACK BITCH

Dr. P. Raja

The bitch looked quite different. Different because it didn't bark at me as is expected of its clan before strangers. Neither did it wag its tail. At first it looked at me as if I were from another world. I was a bit perturbed for I was a stranger to that place. Then it simply ignored me by looking in a different direction.

I couldn't take another forward step for the bitch was close by the gate of my rented house I was yet to occupy. An unexpected transfer brought me to Karaikal and a colleague of mine procured a good-looking house in a decent locality by name Nehru Nagar. It was quite close to the college in which I joined duty as an English teacher. And so without second thoughts I took the key from the landlord.

The bitch was a real threat to me. Barking dogs seldom bite, they say. But how about this bitch that is indifferent? Having assisted my grandmother while she treated patients of dog bite with her miraculous herbs I was sure of what dogs were capable of.

I looked intently at the bitch. It neither looked ferocious nor friendly. It was bluish black in colour and not a single hair on its healthy body sported a different hue. Its ears were very long and its tail curved up to a point in a miniature sickle. "Oh, God! It will be invisible in the dark", I said to myself and decided to carry torchlight whenever I ventured out. Its amber eyes, I was sure, would reflect the light.

As I was involved in the thoughts of befriending the bitch, a milkman pedaled his way through the street pressing the air horn attached to the handlebar of his bicycle. Pee...po...pee...po...pee...po.

To my great surprise, the bitch imitated the sound of the air horn as meticulously as a human being would. I couldn't but admire the bitch for its imitative skills.

The sound of the air horn pulled out many of my neighbours from their respective houses, each one holding a vessel.

I smiled at every one of them and nodded my head in order to introduce myself and get introduced. But that morning hour would not allow any man or woman to be out of their houses. One smiled back, two ran back into their homes without responding and one was all the time looking at the ground.

My immediate neighbour stood for a time, adjusted her sari and then asked me: "Are you my new neighbour?"

I bobbed my head up and down.

"I am told that you are an English professor?" She asked.

"Yes, Madam," I replied with a gleam in my eyes.

"When are you shifting?" she asked.

"I am moving in now, Madam. My luggage will reach me in a day or two," I replied.

"Hm...by luggage you mean your wife and children?" She asked with a smile.

"No, no! By luggage I meant only luggage," I answered smiling back.

"Aren't you married?" She probed further.

"Of course, I am. I have three kids. But in Karaikal I will have to lead the life of a forced bachelor," I said and added, "I will be with my family on weekends".

"Oh, I see! Are you a vegetarian or non-vegetarian?" she asked me as if she were the landlady and I, destined to answer all her questions.

"I am a pure non-vegetarian, Madam," I said with a toothy smile.

"Then this Blackie will be yours forever. She rarely eats the leftovers from our houses. We are all vegetarians as you can notice from our looks," she said.

The cooker from her kitchen whistled. "Oh, I have to rush now. Come home, Professor, when you are free," she sailed back into her house as her words sailed back towards me.

I emboldened myself to take my forward step. The bitch didn't stir. Perhaps it was in a dreamy state thinking of where it could get the next bone.

The milkman went to the dead end of the street and returned, all the time pressing the air horn.

The bitch that so far maintained a yogic silence began to imitate again: Pee...po...Pee...po...pee...po...

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The milkman got down from his vehicle, parked it on its stand, searched

for a coconut shell, found one, cleaned it with his hands, blew the dust off it and then poured milk into it to its brim.

The bitch looked at the milkman, but did not wag its tail. It moved aside giving way for me to reach the gate.

"She is special to me, sir! I can't afford to keep a pet at home. She is very mischievous but has never harmed anyone. Can't see such a pious dog anywhere in Karaikal. I love her, sir!" certified the milkman.

I smiled as I unlocked the main gate of the house.

"Shall I supply you milk from tomorrow, Sir?" he asked.

I smiled at him and said, "I will let you know".

"Okay, sir," said the milkman, as he jumped on to his bicycle. He then said, "You too will love every action of Blackie, sir. Have a good day."

As I slipped the key into its hole and clicked it open, Blackie was slurping the milk up...A couple of dogs sauntered past her with their tails tucked between their hind legs. They claimed no share of the milk.

I took an undue interest in the bitch for reasons known only to the celestial beings. Since I cooked my own meals, I made it a point to feed Blackie twice a day. As I myself skipped breakfast to keep a fast developing tummy under control, I offered her only disappointment in the mornings.

I was in for a big surprise on the first night I brought food out of my house on a leaf plate. The plate was full of gravy mixed rice with a lot of chicken bones with stray flesh still sticking to them. I placed it carefully under a nearby tree and expected Blackie to wag her tail as a mark of gratitude. But the bitch stood up, stretched herself, yawned and then all of a sudden took to her heels.

"What? You think I am poisoning you, eh?" I asked. But by the time I could finish the sentence, Blackie was out of my sight.

I waited there for a few more minutes. Half-a-dozen dogs that were having a jolly good time in playing and teasing each other, slowed down their steps as they neared my house. One of them, perhaps attracted by the smell of food waiting to be eaten strayed away from the pack. But another dog, bigger in size, reprimanded it with a sharp yell. The dog that strayed sharply turned and joined back its friends. And all of them went away without letting out a yell or a bark.

"Strange are the ways of these dogs." It was my loud thinking.

"Hoi, Professor! Feeding Blackie?" asked the lady of the next door.

I nodded my head.

"Why don't you open your mouth and speak, Professor?" she said with a giggle.

I was sure that she was desirous of involving me in a conversation. She was only a few yards away. I moved closer to her. What separated us was

only the compound wall of her house that reached to our chests.

“Yes, Madam,” I said.

“Stop calling me Madam. I am Padmasani. You can call me Padma,” she introduced herself.

I giggled.

She looked suspiciously at me.

For fear that she would misread my giggle, I said, “I hope no one calls you by the other half of your name, except perhaps your hubby when angry”.

She broke into a peal of laughter, showing all her healthy and well-arranged teeth.

“Hm...you are full of humour,” she complimented. “Well! Jokes apart, don’t expect Blackie to eat in your presence. She is shy of men.” she said with a wink.

“Unbelievable,” I said.

“There are so many things that you can never believe about Blackie. She is a legend here. You will get to know more about her as time passes,” Padma said. As she continued feeding her grandchild seated on her voluptuous hip from a silver bowl filled with cooked and meshed rice, ghee and dhal, she added: “Please come home for tea tomorrow”.

An hour or so later, I went up to the terrace to walk a bit before I flopped into bed to hug sleep. Once on the terrace, I heard the sound of munching and crunching of bones coming up from the street. I leaned over the parapet and saw Blackie feasting on what I left under the tree.

She had almost finished eating when perhaps her doggy sense told her that someone was watching. She looked up at me, running her tongue all over her mouth. She then whined and looked at different directions. Ascertaining that there was no one around, she continued gobbling up.

On the morning of the next day, I carried my garbage can to empty it in the dump, a stone’s throw away from my house. Blackie followed me, without a bark or wag of its tail.

No sooner I neared the dump than a dozen or more sleeping dogs stood up startled. Later I understood from sheer observation that five o’clock in the morning was too early for the people of Karaikal to be out of bed. In Pondicherry, one can see women sprinkle water and draw kolams in front of their houses well before daybreak and this they do ceremoniously to give a grand gala welcome to the rising sun. But in Karaikal, these things happen not before seven. Early to bed and late to rise, seems to be part of their credo.

It was no wonder that the dogs saw in me a stranger loitering at that unexpected hour. They began to bark in a chorus and were perhaps preparing to attack me.



Blackie growled.

A sepulchral silence prevailed and all the dogs disappeared without a trace.

While sipping tea with Padma in her house on that evening, I narrated how Blackie played guardian angel to me.

"I told you, you know, Professor! She loves you," Padma said with a stress on the four-letter word with layers and layers of meanings.

I tried to suppress my laughter. Seeing me struggle Padma broke into a guffaw and I could see her eyes glitter.

"Blackie is very pious, you know," Padma said in an attempt to change the topic.

"What?" I asked because I could not resist the temptation of probing into the matter.

"Yes, Professor. She prays everyday," she said and after a pause added, "It is to be seen to be believed".

"No, Padma! Blackie is of a different mould, different from the rest of the canines I see in Nehru Nagar," I said expressing gleefully my discovery.

"And Nehru Nagar is infested with street dogs. It is dangerous to go out after dark," Padma added.

"Infested? How many approximately?" I asked as fear began to grip me.

"There are six crosses in Nehru Nagar...not less than a hundred houses in each cross. I am sure that each cross feeds a minimum of twenty five dogs," Padma gave statistics.

"Why not give a complaint to the municipal authorities? The dog catchers will be here," I suggested.

"Oh, no! The dogs are the real policemen of Nehru Nagar. Not a theft was reported here so far," Padma said with a lot of concern for the dogs.

A week or so later, I experienced the truth in what Padma had said.

I was returning home after watching a late night horror movie in Shamina theatre, in the vicinity of Nehru Nagar. The time was an hour or so past midnight and I was on foot.

I crossed the first main road and took the street that connected all the six crosses. When I reached the third cross, a stray dog let out a blood-curdling howl. And God knows where from they came...they came in a battalion and sent a chill down my spine. My body began to shake as the barking pack came galloping towards me.

I was told that the best way to face dogs was with stones. But wisdom told me to remain inert. I was not sure what portion of my dear flesh would be mine after everyone had his or her share of the booty.

Blackie too must have been there for I heard her growl and all the

dogs as if obeying the command of a captain traced back their steps leaving me to myself.

I heaved a sigh of relief. From that night onwards no dog dared bark at me. I felt I was special to them.

Watching Blackie and her day-to-day activities became my pastime. I was surprised at her talent for mimicry. Every time the milkman came to our street, she mimicked the pee...po...pee...po...sound of the air horn.

No hawker's voice ever posed any problem to Blackie. She was always at the heels of the fisherwoman who carried a basketful of fish on her head and whenever she cried *meenu...meenu...* Blackie reproduced the first syllable of the word and stretch it beyond measure. To see her mouth go in different directions in her attempt to pronounce the syllable is to be seen rather than described.

Blackie's favourite was a greens vendor. He used to come pushing a cart loaded with all sorts of greens and country vegetables. And when he cried *keerai...keerai*, she simply repeated the words, of course in her doggy accent.

And on one Sunday when I was at home relaxing in an easy chair spread on the sit out and reading an excellent book on animals titled **Wonderful People** by Dr. Howl L. Barker, the call for prayer from a nearby mosque broke the silence.

Blackie mimicked the voice of the muezzin in the way it was uttered. At first I thought it was a kid trying to imitate the muezzin. I rushed out to admonish the child. To my great surprise, I saw Blackie standing on its hind legs and repeating the voice from the mosque.

"I told you, you know! Blackie is a very pious bitch," said Padma, standing and watching Blackie pray, "Be it the clink clanking of bells from the temple, or the gong from the church or the call for prayer from the mosque Blackie mimics and that is her prayer."

Padma's words made me think highly of Blackie for what bitch knows about religion and think that all religions are one and the same and that there is only one God for the whole universe.

My quota of food for Blackie went up.

I was sure that I had disappointed Blackie for nearly four weeks when I was away in Pondicherry enjoying the holidays after semester exams.

On Fridays before sun down, I used to pack my sling bag and start for the Nehru Nagar bus stop to catch a bus to Pondicherry. On such days Blackie was unhappy and expressed her disappointment by rolling over on its back on the street like an adamant child and whimpered till I disappeared from her sight.

And on Monday mornings, the moment she sighted me, she expressed her joy by running hither and thither on the street regardless of the careless two wheelers.

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After the vacation I reached back Nehru Nagar. I found no dog...not

a single one.

Where have they all gone?

There was no one in the street to answer my question. And then I too have forgotten all about the dogs.

Three days later when I was returning from a colleague's house in the sixth cross, I found a bitch lying curled up near the street corner. It was Blackie.

"Hoi, Blackie! Nice to see you back," I said and moved towards the bitch. She looked gravely from one side to the other for a moment and then dropping her chin on her paw closed her eyes with a grunt of discontent.

Not willing to leave her at that, I bent down, pawed her head and in a cajoling tone said, "Come on, Blackie! I have food for you..."

Blackie rose to her heels with a start, growled and bared her teeth at me and threatened to tear my flesh.

Nervous, I drew back in fright. Blackie growled again and ran as fast as ever.

Everything remained a mystery to me till Padma came home with sweets and snacks that she had brought from her in-laws in Kerala.

Padma talked at length of how much she missed my company and what urgent call from Kerala made her rush to that place a few days ago.

"Oh, God! What a tedious journey! I am dog tired," Padma said amidst a huff and a puff.

I was reminded of the dogs in Nehru Nagar. I asked her what had happened to them.

"Huff... The chairman of Nehru Nagar Landlords Association complained to the municipal authorities. The dog catchers did their job very well and carried every one of them away," Padma said in a dull voice. She shuddered but looked away.

"But I saw Blackie a few days ago," I said.

Padma was silent for a time. I saw a tear drop or two trickle out of her eyes.

"They came in three vans...these dog catchers," Padma began. "They parked their vehicles in three different corners of Nehru Nagar. And several men, all khaki clad, plunged into action. Throughout the day Nehru Nagar was reverberating with yelps and whimpers of dogs. I saw our Blackie too inside the van parked in the shade of the tree in front of your house". Padma paused.

"So you bribed the bitch catcher and pulled Blackie out," I interrupted.

"No, Professor, no," she said. "That is the interesting part of the story. Just before sundown, there was a call for prayer from the mosque. Blackie stood on her hind legs, brought her forelegs together and imitated in her doggy accent the voice of the muezzin."

“My God! And then?” I sounded curious.

“And then...the driver of the van admiring at Blackie’s piety, told one of the catchers to pull her out and release her. The catcher too very much pleased with the doings of the bitch allowed her to live long. And this is how she is here, while all her friends and mates by this time would have reached Heaven,” Padma said.

She then continued: “But Blackie is dead wood now. I am told that she refuses to take food...always thinking of her lost companions. She is a different Blackie now.”

“She is always different,” I said suppressing a tear threatening to spill over. □



In response to the felicitation the Editor Dr. Udayanath Majhi on dais.

## THE RIPPLES

Dr. Alekha Padhiary

Translation : Sapan K. Jena

It was the TEACHERS' DAY. Lots of programmes were organized on behalf of the Lion's Club of Dhenkanal (a small town in Odisha). Alike past years this year too, some National & State Awardee teachers shall be felicitated along with conduct of various competitions like debate, song and recitation. The President of the Club Dr. Khadanga, a retired Govt. officer, joined the function along with his granddaughter, Lipsa at Standard-IV. (Now a days Dr. Khadanga spends a lion's share of his leisure hours in the affairs of the club). Debate competition among 20 selected students from different schools was one of the main attractions of the event. By the time Dr. Khadanga reached the venue with his granddaughter, the debate competition had begun. Lipsa occupied a seat among the audience to listen to the debaters.

The topic for the debate was "The Role of Teachers in the Contemporary Scenario". After four competitors, a standard X student named Amitav came upon the dais. He deliberated, "In olden days the teachers used to explain and teach their classes through exemplary stories and poems. Now a days they take recourse to dictating notes whether it is a classroom or a coaching class. The objective of education has become examination oriented, not knowledge centered. In Gurukul Ashramas the teachers used to consider the students as their own children. But the contemporary teachers have developed a commercial relationship with their students. Hence, there has been a gradual deterioration in the teacher-pupil relationship. If that were not the case, why don't we have another Gandhi or Gopabandhu with us?"

The next competitor after Amitav was M.R. Rao - a standard - XI student of Midford School who debated "I can't agree with what my predecessor Amitav deliberated. The contemporary teachers are in no way inferior to the Gurus of the past. The teacher community of the present era have created cine-stars like Amitav & Vinod Khanna, sports stars like Tendulkar & Leander Paes, business tycoons like Ambani & Haji Mastan and religious preachers like Chandra Swami & Rajneesh. My friend was talking of singing songs in the classroom. There are instances of teachers visiting the cinema with the students for the sake of their entertainment. In the cultural and infotainment programmes conducted in the educational Institutions, the teachers and pupils take equal parts together in every walks of institutional life and they behave like friends, not as dictators. The process of education has undergone a drastic change with the passing of time. And, therefore, the teachers take recourse to the present day examples to make their teaching-learning process easier and simpler for students' perception. For example : the legend of the epic **Ramayan** was once explained by a teacher as follows: One day Ram, Laxman & Sita went on a picnic to a jungle. There a villain named Ravan kidnapped Rama's wife Sita. A monkey traced out Sita in an island and informed Rama. Rama defeated Ravan in a duel and saved Sita. The teacher explained the legendary **Ramayan** in such an easy manner that it was highly appreciated by the pupils."

The next debater was Soumya Sorupa, a standard-X girl student who from the beginning of her speech went on criticizing the teaching community of today- "Today's teachers are devoid of any principles, aims and objectives. As a result the student community lacks right ideals. The teachers of today don't cultivate anything beyond the syllabus. They only take up private tuitions / coaching in lieu of some extra payment and create some elite degree holders; they don't do anything beyond this. In order to transcript ideal students, they should shoulder great responsibility. Otherwise, they themselves would be the first victims of the wraths of the *Bhasmasura* created by them and consequently our social life is in a peril.

Soumya's speech was highly appreciated with loud claps by the audience. Not only claps, someone among the audience even commented "Lo! The granddaughter of Gopabandhu".

The next turn was of Abhijit Raysingh alias Tulu's. The sound of clapping was still on. By the time he reached the dies, it still surged into an echo. Tulu said, "The hon'ble judges on the dais, my fellow classmates and dear friends! It would be an inexcusable coinsure and disdainful cruelty on to the modern teachers community if we weigh them on the valueless balance of remote past. In fact it is as true as the sun that the teachers of today in the emerging society have been able to shoulder the multifarious problems of

the student of today. From classrooms to multiplex, political crisis to hunger strikes, from schools to universities, the teachers follow the students as their friend, philosopher and guide. The teacher of today emerges as an ideal *guru*, a well wisher and above all a responsible guardian. Beyond teaching, they help the students inside the exam hall to solve their multifarious problems or else it would immensely harm the students due to mounting pressure on them. If the teachers would not selflessly guard the interest of the students at the time of evaluation, many a students have been deprived of their rightful claims and recognition. And this is not all. They also corrugate the mistakes of any kind committed at the tabulator's level. Moreover, they guide the students posing as their guardians while searching for jobs with the farms and companies. This prompts me to thank and regard the contemporary teachers. They have been able to adjust suitably to the changing situations. Instead of over burdening the soft brains of the students with the monotonous classroom teaching, they immensely help the student-community by supplying notes in forms of bullets and capsules vide tuitions and coaching classes. The revered teachers are really the pride and backbone of the country".

The warning bell went immediately with lapse of time. The auditorium echoed with endless applause of claps. The clapping went on until the judges were influenced in favour of Tulu's speech. Eventually, Tulu was declared as the best debaters by the judges.

While returning home with her Grandppa Lipsa asked, "Grandppa, what if we felicitate some teachers of today who work in consonance with ways of life of the new era instead of awarding Governor or President award to the outdated teachers of past era?"

Dr. Khadanga was speechless. It appeared meaningless to him to try to stop the gushes of water with the help of a straw?

Still the old man inside him was not ready to admit defeat so easily. A ray of hope was still burning like an indomitable lamp in the deepest of darkness.

Dr. Khadanga replied "It's eleven O'clock, my dear! It is not too late for dawn.

Lipsa couldn't guess anything. She thought her grandppa might be feeling for sleep. □

## POETRY

### Am I that Bird ?

Mrunali Patnaik

Dabbed with dainty,  
lavished with grace,  
multi-hued ,she was.  
clumping in the sky,  
evanescent in the high,  
enamoured everybody  
with her pace !  
Years have passed by,  
she sits there  
swirling, suspending and twirling,  
with hopes in her eyes,  
with despair in her cries.  
Its choking, its freezing,  
but fate had played the game,  
and look here  
she is totally shattered  
and lame !  
she says, its not the right place,  
better  
have something with quite a grace !!  
To be best in a place where you  
like to be or be the worst where  
one does not even dream to be,  
is the base?  
smiles to efface the stories  
of annoyance.  
she is flummoxed, aloof, disturbed,  
and when something  
of importance goes  
awry,  
how on earth can one be unper-  
turbed ?  
I'm that bird, the scared,  
the tired, the lost one,  
the master of my fate has caught me,

and I'm in this cage.  
This ain't my place,  
this ain't my aim !!  
Endowed with the gift of plight,  
she was emancipated!  
Caged, her talent dilapidated !  
Freedom, she craves for  
The sky, its vastness, she wants  
to explore !  
someone open the cage,  
someone end the ordeal,  
someone hear the appeal. □

### Where Are You ?

Dr. Phani Mohanty

Who's that painter  
Who decorated the sky  
- ancient and silent -  
With lamps of stars ?

And you have gone -  
One wonders, how many ages ago,  
To the sky's ken like this,  
No trace of yours  
No information whatsoever,  
Where are you ?  
In some middle heaven  
in some kingdom  
Beyond senses ?  
Or in the sparkling colour  
of the blue sky,  
Or in silent, still, expansive garlands  
of light,  
Or in pieces of clouds that float  
like cotton wool.  
Or in the golden diamond place  
in deep space ?  
Where ?  
Where are you ?



Where are you, O graceful lady  
 Wearing invisible dress  
 In the ringing noise of the dark  
 cloudy nights.  
 Or in the wrong tunes of clattering  
 guitar?  
 Or in the unforgettable rhythmical  
 cackling  
 Of birds returning home,  
 Or in the sweet, soft, calm songs?

Where are you, O graceful lady,  
 In which invisible planet?  
 Here, everything is half-done  
 without you  
 Drinks half, the drinking pot half  
 Enjoyment half, mendicancy half  
*Nirvana* half, the bondage half  
 The life is half, death is also half.

Are you really the fine, soft tune  
 Of a sweet song?  
 Are you really a fine unknown  
 signature  
 Of an unforgettable memory?  
 Oh, handsome lady, where are you?  
 Where? □

Translation : Prof. Jatindra Mohan  
 Mohanty, Bhubaneswar, India

## A BIRD'S LIFE

\* Prajnyashree Rath

One day I'll not be here.  
 My breath will mingle  
 with the winds.  
 Arrival and departure  
 is a ritual here.  
 My footprints will be lost

On these trodden paths....

My dreams would sleep  
 on this earth.  
 My teardrops will flow  
 down the stream.  
 The petal of memories will fade  
 in the wet dewdrops.  
 The lust of life will be lost  
 In the light mists...  
 O Bird !

I would lay as soil or ashes  
 Till the rain of love  
 Reincarnates me  
 as a shady tree....□

\* Originally written in Odia &

published as an anthology

**PAKHEE JANMA (Bird's Birth)**

Translated to English by : Anwesa

Nanda. Poet's add: Unit-VIII,

Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

## Life at Brick Kiln

\* Nirakar Rout

Brick Kiln  
 the storehouse of  
 torture, rebuke  
 and frustration,  
 Labour of the downtrodden  
 the symbol of poverty,  
 burns aglow  
 on the outskirts  
 of the town.  
 The coolie's life  
 loses identity  
 Youth fades away  
 complexion beyond recognition.  
 Life's struggle  
 for bread

never ends.

Life's merriment  
fulfillment  
conceals in despair.  
Outcry of babies  
for soaked rice  
finds clear expression  
in their tearful eyes.  
Helplessness and hopelessness  
walk hand in hand  
Tyranny and apathy  
of capitalists  
in store for them.

Indeed! the coolies,  
the incarnation of  
tolerance and patience. □

\* Deptt. of English, Mandosil  
College, Dist: Baragarh, Odisha

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### To The 8th July (for Jyoti Basu)

\* Niebha Dey

We have seen his facade,  
not his face.  
We have seen his indifferent act  
But we have not seen the light  
and shadow in his heart.

We know there is enchanting  
sunrise across the hills.

That decks the sky,  
We have seen the glory of sunrise  
Let the sunset remain oblivious to  
us.  
Where does magic hide beneath  
iron curtain  
Who is lucky enough to feel its  
mystic touch?

~~We are ignorant - only grey hills~~

---

cloud our vision.  
Sudden lustre in rocks caused by  
lightning and thunder catches our  
eyes.  
We seen in it omens of stormy  
weather  
Some times white, sometimes  
imaginary dark. □

\* Ms. Dey is a noted poet in West  
Bengal. She edits JALPRAPAT - a  
literary magazine in Bengali. This  
poem is translated by Anindita  
Chatterjee. The poets address:-  
Patuatola Lane, PO: Sukchar,  
Kolkata (WB)

### the reckless wanderer

Raymond Federman

refusing all categorization  
he perplexes the experts  
who cannot grasp / where he  
comes from

born nowhere but  
being everywhere / at the same  
time  
he constantly arrives / and departs  
carrying  
with him a bundle  
of souvenirs tattooed  
in his flesh / lest he forget

with effrontery / he abuses a  
language  
unknown in the land  
that lies between / here and  
elsewhere  
between memory / and  
forgetfulness

he plays with words / that construct  
in spirals  
a tale made of digressions / that  
cancel the old souvenirs

but he fears nothing  
because his infernal tale  
is spiced with indifference  
and sweetened with laughter □

### Advice

Pitambar Tarai

You say, today is an auspicious  
day.  
On such a day,  
One should recite a couplet or so  
from *Bhima Bhoi*  
or *Saria* poor,  
Must consume pious food,  
bear compassion in mind  
And if possible,  
A pilgrimage to Puri or Prayag  
would be a better kind.

What to speak of prayer, food,  
or mind?  
Ours is but petty ordinary lives  
Of hunger, alms and rags;  
Thousands of *Bhima Bhoi* rattles  
in our brittle bones,  
Soaking every vein with their  
melancholic music.  
Hundreds of *Saria* live under the  
shades of hapless hearts  
And can drink only a palmful of  
rice-water or so  
As alms when they find.

We can't live here, as you suggest,

In the midst of such a life stream,  
Carrying shame on faces,  
And burying hunger in stomachs.

We the despicable can't bear  
This strange realm's burden  
With our heads bowed down.

We can't commit ourselves  
to truth.

We are the vulnerable cows  
Treading on jungles and scared of  
the tigers' paws.

We can't live tortoise-like  
Recoiling repeatedly our cowardly  
lives.

We can't afford the illusive run of  
Ramachandra  
After an agile and alert golden deer  
Playing hide and seek.

So far, we have had a life of ideals  
and advices.  
Like soft clouds,  
We have immersed ourselves  
Into the fog of false promises.  
We are the flowers of tender grass  
Do not dictate us  
How we should live the rest of our  
fragile lives.

Know that we, the slaughtered  
trees  
Intricately crafted in the  
multistoried mansions,  
Seek to be alive again;  
We, the mountainous heaps of rice  
On your threshing floors  
Want to be unleashed;

Swarms of fish are we  
Crying for mothers' milk and the  
shield of our fathers.  
We are the bricks and stones of  
temples and mosques  
Desperate to be freed from the  
dictates of scriptures.

We are the innocent multitudes,  
The ill fates of whose try to abstain  
From rules, offices, courts and  
their corridors,  
To accept or reject the 'ten un-Dalit  
incarnations',  
To decide whom to embrace-  
*Rama* or *Ravana*, M.K. Gandhi or  
*Ambedkar*,  
To read the *Gita* or the *Koran*,  
To decide which salt is suitable for  
our body,  
And what to sow on our field-  
Hybrid or native seeds,  
Whom to marry - a washerwoman  
or a Bramhin lady -  
Are all our private decisions.

Even if we visit *Srikshetra* on this  
day,  
Do not say  
Which comes first - mating or  
meeting the god, or the heavenly  
gate there.  
Do not advise which is right -  
Fasting or carnal feasting, wine  
or women, or the corridor's divine  
dust.  
Let us live  
And leave our ways to ourselves  
now. □

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## Hard Times

Hrudananda Panigrahi  
Translation : Kishore Panigrahi

What is there in this world  
except to breathe pretence  
and artificial trees,  
perfumes from plastic flowers  
and rings of smoke  
from chimneys?

Mirage and mirage  
is there every where  
the hoods of poisonous snakes  
and loves famine  
the sky shivers  
with the echo of falling trees.

The honey dries off the heart  
the lusture fades off  
and away breaks  
the golden string of love.

Everywhere  
conspiracy rules over  
in the blaze of wrath  
burns man's pathetic splendour.

Everything on fire  
houses, buildings,  
the mercantile anxiety  
of cunning eyes

The advertisement  
promises made  
and sleepless nights  
conspiracy rules over  
every where.

Strike is on  
looting  
roaring

fight  
and conflict  
blood and bullet  
the cling clang or weapons  
unknown  
from the Kurukshetra  
upto the river of blood  
wounded bodies make their way  
across.

Desperate in faith  
hungry humanity every where  
crying and craving  
fills the air.

Breathless engines run  
and crude eyes quest  
rubbed of dream,  
horns sound pathetic  
suspicion sweats  
and the souls go in slumber.  
morning and noon are the same

The river flows silent  
like sobbing,  
the grey moon sinks  
in the bloody river  
sighs come out fluttering  
like wounded birds  
darkness floods all over

Long since lost  
Love, Hope and Faith,  
long since  
some black  
hairy, apish hand  
has poisoned the Eden  
and its unailing mirth. □

## Thy Supreme Shelter

\* Ambika Prasad Samantaray

O' God, what on earth  
Thou art has wrought!

The sun strews rays  
Cloud pours droplets  
The darkness of night  
Thus, punctured by the moon.

The mountain stands a bastion  
The river in meanderings  
Fire is a boon  
The ocean solemn.

Fish at ease in water  
Birds in flight  
in the vast blue expanse,  
The breeze with no form, no home  
wanders in silence.

From the earth cave  
Emerges blest shoots  
off the sight flowers bloom  
The earth wrapped  
In myriad colours.

Blind to the divine fruition,  
Our depraved souls  
snarled in sensuous lure  
seek thy supreme shelter. □

\* Deptt. of English, Sri Jagannath  
College, Rambha, Ganjam, Odisha

## The Open-Sphere

\* Dr. Ram Bahadur Yadav

I will go to hill's pot  
And'll make a bamboo's hut.  
I have suffered a lot

the weather capricious  
the waves moody and sullen  
gale-force winds  
blowing from all directions  
gather momentum  
like cross current  
before a storm brews up  
as if to devour the daylight.

Wisps of dark clouds  
press ahead on  
like belligerent armies  
to seize a beleaguered city.

Today  
honest to goodness  
I don't feel quite at home.

A chain of reminiscences  
crowd into  
the meanderings of my memory  
an absolute nuisance  
to the treasure trove  
of my peace and quiet.

Here I am  
gazing into the void spaces  
in silence  
as far as the eye could see  
awaiting  
whatever is due  
for the deeds  
over and done with  
till I put pen  
on this slip of paper. □

Here healthy peace is not.  
There many trees will be planted  
by me

And many flowers will be  
blossomed by Thee.  
I'll take the pleasure of slow wild  
winds

And there birds will sing sweet songs.  
Some have mom, some've dad.  
But I have neither mom nor dad  
Mom comes in grief to solace me  
Dad comes in dream to provoke me.

Besides it, I've suffered lot's  
decree  
That's the death of my only sister  
dearly.

Now, I've no courage to face further.  
So, I've decided to go into the  
open-sphere. □

\* Deptt. of English, MP Govt.  
Degree College, Sikandar Rao  
(Hathras), U.P.

### The Day doesn't go Smooth

Pradip Biswal  
Translation : Sarat Sahoo

Today

## BOOK REVIEW

**Title :** *Ecocriticism in Practice*

**Author :** Dr. U. Sumathy

**Publisher :** Sarup Book Publishers, New Delhi – 110 002.

(I)

Teachers of literary criticism in the universities of Tamil Nadu have ever been drawn to two of its facets. About two to three decades back it was comparative criticism; today it is ecocriticism. We have been of late engrossed in the emerging culture of environmental concern and the promising field of eco(logical environmental) criticism. Dr. Sumathy's book *Ecocriticism in Practice* is a significant addition to this budding field.

The objective of this book, the author states, is to apply "ecocritical theories to the chosen literary texts, ranging over varied *genres*, thereby bringing out their ecological orientation". Accordingly, in the chapter on "Nature Writing", the author rightly drags into the discussion big names like Cheryll Glotfelty, Lawrence Buell and Glen Love and discourses on the design and development of ecocriticism.

The later chapters – Ecopoetry, Ecofiction, Ecodrama and Ecoliterature – on their own contain environmental perspectives and conservational wisdom ensuring large reach for the world's eco-concerns today. This, Dr. Sumathy has done using a wider lens – samples from early and late modern and post modern poems, fiction and drama in Indian, British, American and Australian literatures; and thoughtfully respecting the aforesaid inherent comparative nerve in us by including prominent texts from modern and ancient Tamil classics.

The discussions by themselves are very credible and convincing. Take my own example. I have visited the Sunderbans and the Tiger Hill; I am aware of the biosphere of the hills, the Royal Bengal Tiger and the Irrawaddy Dolphin. I was not, then, so much appreciative of these things. But the persuasive manner in which Dr. Sumathy has described this "territory of natural markers" and this "domain of consciousness" has drawn me to the source novel, Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*. Judging by the way the discussion has filled me with profound ecological comprehension, I am sure other readers will also experience similar realization.

But it has to be said, without injury to the narrative talent and technique of the author, that she has not effectively applied the principles in her discussion of some of the selected texts. My impression is that the book and the texts which

are analyzed in the book, contain excellent examples of eco-culture and eco-creativity; but with less emphasis on eco-criticism or eco-critical theories. Dr. Sumathy is found to apply a “popularizer’s technique” instead of “professional descriptions”, to use an expression Detweiler uses to describe Rachel Carson, which Dr. Sumathy has quoted in her book (P.55). May be she had only the popular readers in her mind when she scripted the book.

Overall, the book ***Ecocriticism in Practice*** is a good primer for readers / scholars who wish to specialize in ecocriticism. □

*Reviewed by Dr. V. Lakshmanan Former Professor of English at Annamalai University, Tamil Nadu, India.*

## (II)

Great literature deals with the inter relationships of god, man and the world of nature. Man and nature are creations of god. Man should realize god through nature and through his soul. ***The Bible***, Shakespeare’s plays which contrast courtlife with pastoral life, Milton’s presentation of the life of the first parents of mankind in the garden of Eden in the unfallen and fallen states, William Wordsworth’s pantheistic philosophy presented through his nature poetry, the spiritual significance of nature as presented in the *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, epics, *puranas* and secular literature, emphasize the importance of the ecosystem or environment of the world.

To day, the world is seized with the serious problem of global warming and its dire consequences. Hence, ecocriticism of literature is of vital interest in the modern world as it helps to create a serious awareness of the deteriorating environment. Thus ecocriticism serves the social purpose of awakening social conscience and inculcating in humanity the need for containing the over exploitation of the resources of nature.

The modern mega problem of the depletion of the ecosystem has enhanced the importance of applying the principles of ecocriticism to the traditional *genres* of literature with new appellations as ecopoetry, ecofiction, ecodrama and eco-literature for children.

In the introductory chapter, the author Dr. U. Sumathy enlists, with a sense of indignation, the damages done to the eco system by the insensitive and insatiable industrial civilization.

The chapter on Nature Writing emphasizes the duty and responsibility of man, the crown of creation, to protect the world of nature with his boundless knowledge and scientific power.

The chapter on Ecopoetry points out how modern man is blameworthy for unleashing ecoterrorism. Human community should desist from depleting



and destroying natural community.

The chapter on ecofiction with its prolific use of narrative and descriptive techniques emphasizes the responsibility of man to protect and preserve bioregion and biodiversity. Indiscriminate deforestation leads to the near extinction of animal species and a serious imbalance in biodiversity. Ecoliterature and Ecocriticism can help to increase the number of secular saviours or ecosophies who can bring about eco – salvation.

The chapter on Ecodrama deals with the great havoc caused by the mindless and monstrous machines in the world of defenceless nature.

The chapter on Eco-Literature for children rightly catches children while they are young so that they, as the evolving future generation, can protect the ecosystem of the world. Man, instead of being an egoistic and autocratic ruler of the world of nature, should be a friend and protector of nature.

The concluding chapter stresses the serious employment of ecocriticism in evaluating literature so that a happy balance can be maintained between the world of man and the world of nature. The scholar has effectively applied the principles of ecocriticism to diligently selected texts from English literature, American literature and Tamil literature.

This book, with its lucid and simple presentation of its subject matter, is a valuable addition to the body of ecocriticism. □

*Reviewed by Prof. C.V. SESHADRI, Professor of English (Retd.)  
Annamalai University, Tamil Nadu, India.*

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Felicitation to the Editor Dr. Udayanath Majhi in his native town.

### Contributors of this issue:



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Dr. Sthitaprajna (1977), a teacher of Business Communication and Researcher, has written **Stories that Stir** – a story book for Children. Her other books include **Parables of Jesus and Buddha, Speak and Write Well : Communicative English for Everyday Use, Poetics : East and West** etc. Her research papers have been published in many Journals of national & international repute. At present, Dr. Sthitaprajna is working as Associate Prof. of English in the Institute of Technical Edn. & Research, (ITER), SOA University, Bhubaneswar, Odisha. She may be contacted at [sthitaprajna@rediffmail.com](mailto:sthitaprajna@rediffmail.com).



Dr. (Mrs.) M. Punithapriya (1981), teacher of English literature, has participated in many state & national level seminars. Her special interest is to make her pupils interested in literature and spread awareness about women issues. At present, she is working as Guest Lecturer of English at Govt. Arts College, Salem, Tamil Nadu.

Mr. Gyanendra Kumar Dhall (1971), a Research Scholar and a promising Indo-English poet, presently teaches English at Anchalika Degree College, Siminai, in the Dist. of Dhenkanal, Odisha. He has presented papers in a number of National Seminars held in the state.



Dr. Nishamani Kar (1960), a poet and translator, a group “A” officer in the Ministry of Defence, Govt. of India, has taken keen interest in English and Indian *Bhasa* Literature. He has participated in more than 30 National & international seminars and is published in many referred Journals. Presently he is working as Associate Prof. of English and Officer-in-charge of Publication Cell, at National Defence Academy, Pune, Maharashtra, India.

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Ms. Sumitra Biswal (1979), an expert of Communicative English and Business Law, has organised many training programmes and National Seminars and presented papers on Corporate Communication, Advertising & Marketing strategies. Presently, she is working as Asst. Prof. of English at Sudhananda Institute of Engineering & Tech., Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India.



Dr. J. Jayakumar (1971), a critic and researcher, has published a good number of articles in many referred journals of national standard. He has presented papers in many international & national conferences. He is a member of Rock Pebbles family. Presently he is working as Asst. Prof. of English at Govt. Arts College (Auto) Salem, Tamil Nadu.



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Mr. Amiya Kumar Rout (1968) is working as a Lecturer in the deptt. of English at Biju Pattanaik College of Science & Education, Jayadev Vihar, Bhubaneswar, Odisha.



Dr. P Raja (1952), a bi - lingual writer and a translator, has authored 32 books. He is a member of the English Advisory Board of the Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi. He has creative, critical and journalistic writings to his credit. He edits TRANSFIRE - a Literary Quarterly Journal on Translation. At present, he is working as Prof. of English at Tagore Arts College, Pondicherry, India. He may be contacted at [rajbusybee@gmail.com](mailto:rajbusybee@gmail.com)/[rajbusybee@sify.com](mailto:rajbusybee@sify.com)



Dr. Alekha Chandra Padhiary (1953), a poet, story-teller and an administrator as well, has published two books of poems (lyrics) and two books of short-stories in Odia. The present short story is taken from his story-book (odia) "**BIPANNA BASUDHA**" and translated

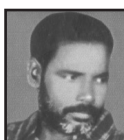


by Mr. Sapan Kuamr Jena, our sub-editor. Dr. Padhiary is now working as Divisional Commissioner of Northern Revenue Division at Sambalpur of Odisha state, India.

Raymond Federman (1928), a distinguished Professor of French, English and Comparative Literature at the State University of New York at Buffalo, is one of the most radical thinkers, influential authors and critics of contemporary Literature. Born in Paris (France), he survives deportation to Auschwitz at the age of 14 and migrates to the U.S. in 1947. He retires in 1999. A bi-lingual writer, Prof. Federman has written several books of criticism on the works of Samuel Beckett and numerous essays on contemporary Literature. His works have been translated to many languages of the world



Dr. Phani Mohanty (1944), a noted Odia poet and recipient of Sahitya Akademi Award (for Odia poetry) in 2009, has written 17 poetry collections & a collection of short-stories, and a novelette to his credit. He has been writing Odia poems since last four decades and received many awards i.e. Odisha Sahitya Akademi Award (1995), Utkal Samman (1994), Bhanuji Rao Poetry Award (2006), Rajiv Gandhi Poetry Award (2004) and many more. He is a member of the general council of Odisha Sahitya Akademi and editing SHREE- a literary periodical in Odia. He retired as a Prof. of Philosophy from Ravenshaw College, Cuttack and now staying at Bhubaneswar.



Mr. Pitambar Tarai (1959), a poet, Journalist and Social activist, is a noted name of our time in Odia literature. He has written 06 books of Odia poetry and 01 book of Short-story for children. His poems are translated into Hindi, English and Bengali. He is the recipient of Odisha Dalit Sahitya Academy Award, Basanta Muduli Memorial Award for poetry, Chandrabhaga & Prajatantra Award for poetry and many more. The present poem is translated by Panchanan Dalai of Banaras Hindu University. The poet's address:- Mangarajpur (Kujanga) Dist. Jagatsinghpur in Odisha state, India.



Dr. Hrudananda Panigrahi (1955), a poet, critic and researcher, has written 12 books of Odia Poetry and one book of criticism on Odia literature. He is the recipient of many literary awards which include Prajatantra Visuva Award / Kanta Kavi Memorial Award / Bhadrak Book Fair Award and many more. At present, he is serving as the Head of Odia Deptt. at BNMA College in Bhadrak Dist. of Odisha, India



Shri Pradeep Biswal (1960), a poet and administrator, has carved a niche of his own in Odia poetry over a period of 30 years. He has five anthologies of Odia poetry to his credit. His poems are translated into Hindi and English and published in many prestigious publication of NBT, India, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi and Odisha Sahitya Akademi. Presently Mr. Biswal is working as Director of Local Funds Audit & Ex-officio Addl. Secy to Govt. of Odisha in Finance Deptt. at Bhubaneswar.

