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Response



..... Congratulations for having ROCK PEBBLES as a quarterly magazine from March, 2013. Thinking of an International English Literary magazine from Odisha, where vernacular magazines are struggling a lot for existence, is really praiseworthy. I personally feel honoured to get myself attached to your esteemed institution. There is no doubt that Rock Pebbles has carved a niche in the History of English Literature. It is helpful not only to the research scholars for reference but also to the new writers of English literature who struggle to write in an era of language crisis. Praying for a long, philanthropic life of Rock Pebbles

- Gobinda Sahoo, Lecturer in English,
S.M. College, Golamunda,
Kalahandi, Odisha

..... It gives me immense pleasure to be a part of the Rock Pebbles coterie, which seems to do current trends in literary criticism by subsuming the traditional and canonical trends as well.....

Debajyoti Biswas, Asst. Professor,
Deptt. of English
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..... The Journal is improving day by day, rather issue by issue. Congratulations.....

Sajal Dey
Birbhum Dist. W.B.

..... I have read your magazine. Really it is creative and encompassing, all the works of literature in an artistic and beautiful way

- Prof. S.B. Desai, Bijapur, Karnataka

..... At the very outset, let me privilege to congratulate you for running such a wide-ranging and qualitative international literary journal

- Shri R.D. Gholap
Nashik, Maharashtra

Editor Speaks

A few months back, one of our life-subscribers, a noted poet in Hindi, Dr. Anjana Verma wrote me a letter seeking my views on publishing a new Literary Journal. Now I am expressing what I wrote to her. That, these days purely literary magazines are very expensive. Nobody is there to support. If you give someone a copy, expecting that he/she will donate something, atleast the printing price, you will be disappointed. He will take it as a gift, throwing some general comments, i.e. "A nice-job you are doing. Keep it up. Thank you" etc. This much is not enough to support one for publishing a literary magazine. Literary Journals are not able to generate funds from commercial advertisements. For they don't get them easily. They are like toothless dogs, unable to bite. They live on recommendation. Only subscription money sustains them. The writers, who contribute papers for publication are to be subscribers. Otherwise, literary journals can not continue.

The teachers of English language and literature in colleges & universities should develop professional insight. They should make intensive study and write thought-provoking articles for scholars and researchers. Rock Pebbles is the only platform for them in our state and the best in the country.

This July – Sept. issue is rich with valuable papers by Dr. Indu Swami, Dr. Bishnu Ch. Dash, Dr. P.C. Swain, Dr. P. Ilamaran, Dr. K.R. Sharma, Dr. K. Harikishan, Dr. R.N. Samantaray and many more. We hope this issue will be useful for our readers – subscribers.

Chief-Editor

Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* : A tragic tale of Partition

Indu Swami

Literature being the mirror of a nation , the history, growth, development and all other related activities of man and society are effectively reflected in it.. Fiction being an effective genre includes the historical events to be recreated truthfully. The tragedy of the partition encounter has given rise to fictional explorations with an attempt to define the inner turmoil and social complexes that plagued the Indian subcontinent. Discussing the treatment of Partition and its effects in fiction, Shashi Tharoor observes:

By representing the Partition in 'Universal' terms as outrageous, and its effects as a metaphysical disorder that can be restored to equilibrium only by the artist who is imaged as a magician-healer, these texts inaugurate a narrative and a subjectivity that translates history and politics into a failure of humanity (6).

In Indian English fiction, a large number of works have been completed on partition theme which is a great event of historical importance. In the partition novels, the writers have analyzed the issue of partition from their respective viewpoints.

Chaman Nahal, a well known partition novelist was a direct victim of partition. He was an inhabitant of Sialkot and had to leave his own home for India. He witnessed and suffered himself all the agony of partition. His own sister was killed in a train journey at the hands of fanatic Muslims. As a

refugee of partition he underwent untold suffering caused by the partition. He reflected:

I was born in Sialkot and after 1947 we were driven away to India.

I can understand the suffering and loneliness that such an exile imposes on the persons involved in a class by itself (Dhawan 96).

Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* is a historical novel dealing with the partition of Indian sub-continent in 1947. The novelist recreates the incidents that actually happened and the manner in which it happened. *Azadi* depicts a convincing picture of the real horror and tragedy caused to the people of north-western part of India around 1947. In the book, India-Pakistan Partition Perspectives of the Indo English Novel, V. P. P. Rao has reviewed the themes of *Azadi* concerning the perspective of partition. In this connection, he considers the novel as a "classic" (Rao 60).

Here, the writer has portrayed the horror of partition experience by concentrating on the plight of Lala Kanshi Ram, a grain merchant of Sialkot. The novel reveals Lala Kanshi Ram as a representative of the Hindus who suffered at the hands of communal Muslims as consequence of the partition. Lala Kanshi Ram led a contented life in Sialkot, a city where Muslims formed the majority. There was unity and harmony between the Hindus and Muslims of Sialkot till the partition. The friendship of Lala Kanshi Ram and Chaudhuri Barkat Ali proves this fact. *Azadi* has very truthfully portrayed the turmoil, fear and tension of people due to the effects of partition. The story, concentrating on the tragedy of Lala Kanshi Ram, the protagonist, brings out very truthfully the various aspects concerning the tragic effects of partition.

Azadi opens when on 3rd June 1947, the viceroy was to make an important announcement which would declare the independence of India. The novel is divided into three parts- 'Lull', 'Storm' and 'Aftermath' that make it clear that the novel is about the silent atmosphere, peace and harmony before the partition; the horrible incidents caused by the partition; and the pitiable condition of the uprooted refugees after the partition.

The narratives of *Azadi* take place in Sialkot, which was a Muslim dominated city where there was unity and peace among the people of all caste and religion. Hindu-Muslims unity of Sialkot before the partition was remarkable which is very nicely depicted by the author. In this respect, the friendship of Lala Kanshi Ram and Chaudhuri Barkat Ali, the two prominent characters of *Azadi* is worth mentioning. They were not only friends but like brothers. Gandhi's speech at Ramtalai in 1929 deeply impressed both Kanshi Ram and Barkat Ali and they sworn to be lifelong friends:

Immediately after the speech and before the renewed shouts of ‘Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai’ had died down, Chaudhuri Barkat Ali turned towards Lala Kanshi Ram and said seriously: ‘You’re my brother from today’, Lala Kanshi Ram chuckled. He had always regarded Chaudhuri Barkat Ali as brother; he did not need a Gandhi to make him aware of that (101)

The unity and secularism of both Hindu and Muslims of Sialkot are also referred to by the facts such as Arun-Nur love story. Arun, the son of Lala Kanshi Ram loves Nurul Nissar, the daughter of Barkat Ali. Although Arun and Nur professed different religions, their love relationship was not affected by it. This secularism is again evident in the role of Munir, the brother of Nur. Munir not only approves of the love-affairs of Arun and Nur but also inspires them to get married. When Arun is ready to become a Muslim for marrying Nur, as suggested by her, Munir advises Arun to keep religion separate from their love-relation. He suggests Arun not to change his religion but to keep it separate from love and marriage. He argues that even if they get married they can profess different religion.

The harmonious relation among different communities of Sialkot is proved by the fact that Urdu was commonly used by both Hindus and Muslims. Generally, Urdu was considered to be the language of Muslims. But it has been noticed in *Azadi* that Lala Kanshi Ram knew and used Urdu, though his mother tongue was Hindi which neither spoke nor wrote on paper. He spoke in Punjabi and wrote in Urdu, which he learnt from his father and a primary school teacher both of whom were Hindus. From the very beginning of the novel, it has been evidently shown that Urdu was a popular language used by both Hindus and Muslims of Sialkot city. This proves the fact that there was unity regarding the use of language among different communities. Even the members of Arya Samaj, whose language was supposed to be Sanskrit, used Urdu. Thus there was no prejudice against any language and complete harmony prevailed in this respect too.

But the atmosphere of peace and harmony was disturbed by the announcement of partition. The very announcement of partition had adverse effect, though not on a few people like, good, humanistic Barkat Ali but on many other bad natured Muslims like Abdul Ghani. This fact is evidently expressed in *Azadi*. As soon as the partition is declared, Abdul Ghani, a representative of fanatical Muslims, feels ecstatic about it and begins to hate the Hindus. He asks Lala Kanshi Ram as to when he is leaving Pakistan. When Kanshi Ram in soft words restraint him from uttering any worse speech, he is infuriated and

thus reveals his ugly nature:

...Deflated, he sat on the wooden platform and looked at the ground". Remembering he was speaking to a Kafir after all, he flared up again. 'I want you to leave because you're a Hindu and you don't believe in Allah.'(128)

Abdul Ghani, who is a friend of Lala Kanshi Ram, thus turns hostile due to the effect of partition. Such instance of friend's turning into enemies is really tragic. Thus the partition-novels refer to the holocaust that followed the partition. Regarding partition-holocaust, M. K. Naik's remark is worth-quoting: "In the political sphere, the traumatic experience at the birth of the new nation was that of partition. The lack of adequate preparation and safeguards, when the country was hastily partitioned into India and Pakistan, led to a communal carnage of unprecedented proportions resulting in 6000,000 death and 8.5. million refugees" (Naik 187)

In *Azadi*, the tragic effects of partition are reflected in different spheres-individual, social, cultural and psychological. The impact of partition on the psychology of common, simple, illiterate Muslims made them prone to communal thought and hatred which inspired them to commit violence and atrocities on the same Hindus whom only recently they considered as their friends and brethren.

Individual Sphere:

In the individual sphere, *Azadi* portrays the effects of partition very strikingly. The tragic end of Arun-Nur love affairs is a fine example. It is the partition that separates the two lovers. Arun has to leave for India as it is impossible for Arun to stay in Sialkot amidst such turbulent situation. Moreover, the partition has the provision that Hindus must leave Pakistan as it is meant for the abode of Muslims only.

Munir is another individual who is a victim of partition. As a secular minded and wide-hearted young man, it is a tragic matter that Munir has to change his attitude compelled by the situation. In other words, he is bound to narrow down his wider attitude compelled by the sensitive environment caused by the partition. Due to the aggravated situation, Munir suspects that the inter-caste love affairs between Nur and Arun may create communal clashes and even endanger the life of Arun. Therefore, he warns Arun to stop meeting Nur and moving about with her.

As consequence of the partition which caused communal violence all over the fanatic Muslims of Sialkot too, becomes brutal and begins to disturb the peace and happiness of the Hindus by stabbing them, burning and looting

their houses and property and raping their women. Lala Kanshi Ram is a strong example of the victims of partition whose individual loss and mental agony due to becoming landless, homeless and uprooted men are very clearly reflected:

Lala Kanshi Ram could not sleep at all that night. It became clear to him how vulnerable the minority community was and that soon he too might have to leave. It hurt him, he thought of it, and he paced his room restively. 'Refugee, refugee, indeed'! He shouted, when he understood the word, 'I was born around here, this is my home-how can I be a refugee in my own home?' (124)

Lala Kanshi Ram's sorrow was out of control that he begins to cry: 'His eyes filled with tears as he felt so unprotected and forlorn' (125). He is reluctant to leave his home: 'Lala Kanshi Ram refused to accept his family's suggestion that they pack and leave. How could he leave? He would rather die here' (125).

The separation of friends like Barkat Ali and Kanshi Ram; Arun and Munir are really tragic incidents. When Kanshi Ram and other members of his family are leaving for India, Barkat Ali and Munir covered a long distance to bid them good bye. The final moment of separation of life-long friends is so painful:

'Khuda hafiz, brother Kanshi Ram, he said folding his hands.'
'These have been good years', said Lala Kanshi Ram, taking Chaudhuri Barkat Ali's hand in his own.
There were tears in the eyes of both men.
They had nothing more to say, having exhausted themselves of emotion in all these weeks.
'You took a lot of trouble for us.'
'Now brother Kanshi Ram!'
Facing Probha Rani, Chaudhuri Barkat Ali said, 'Sisiter, Khuda hafiz.' (271)

There are many references to the individual loss in *Azadi* - all families lost something or the other. Sunanda is raped and Chandni abducted, Madhu and her husband lose their lives in train a journey, Bibi Amar Vati loses her son Suraj Prakash. Lala Kanshi ram loses his bosom friend Barkat Ali and his property and home.

The *Azadi* reflects very truthfully the effects of partition in the society. As a tragic result of the partition, the peaceful environment of Sialkot is disturbed. Fear, tension and suspicion gripped the social life and affected the minds and attitude of people. Communal feelings contaminated like germs into people's minds which indirectly affected the society. The critics like K.K Sharma

and B.K. Johri, in the book, *The Partition in Indian English Novels* have dealt with the analysis of Chaman Nahal's novel *Azadi*. Here, they have pointed out and analyzed how the novelist in *Azadi* is concerned with the theme. The critics have found out how the partition had an adverse effect on the psychology of the common people which is dealt with by the novelist very truthfully in his delineation of the incidents created by the partition, in Sialkot, a Muslim dominated city.

In the article, "The Trauma of Partition in *Azadi*," Basavraj Naikar has analyzed the traumatic experience of the partition as delineated in Chaman Nahal's *Azadi*. He tries to evaluate the impact of partition concerning man's psychology-emotion, fear, tension etc. Naikar observes that *Azadi* is "an important novel which deals various aspects of the traumatic experience of partition..." (Naikar 187). Mohan Jha, in his article, "Chaman Nahal's *Azadi*: A search for Identity", tries to point out how the novel *Azadi* deals with the theme of man's identity. He has argued that the novel portrays "a particular aspect of man's identity i.e. man's *Azadi* or freedom from beastliness, from moral, psychological and spiritual malady" (Jha 44).

Azadi refers to such social troubles through an account of the atrocities committed by the fanatic Muslims upon Hindu women in the parade at the bazaar of Narowal to prove the fact that how fatal and nasty could be the outcome of communal hatred:

...There were forty women, marching abreast. Their ages varied from sixteen to thirty, although to add to the grotesqueness of the display, there were two women, marching right at the end of the column, who must have been over sixty. They were all stark naked. Their heads were completely shaven; so were their armpits. So were their public regions. Shorn of their body hair and clothes, they looked like baby girls, or like bald embryos one sees preserved in methylated spirit. Only the breasts and hips gave away age. The women walked awkwardly looking at the ground. They were all crying, though their eyes shed no tears. Their faces were formed into grimaces and they were sobbing. Their arms were free, but so badly had they been used, so wholly their spirits crushed, their morals shattered, none of them made any attempt to cover themselves with their hands. They swung their arms clumsily, often out of co-ordination with their legs. The bruises on their bodies showed they had been beaten and manhandled. Their masters walked beside them and if any of the women sagged or hung behind, they

prodded her along with the whips they carried. At the head of the procession marched a single drummer with a flat drum, thumping heavily on it and announcing their arrival... The procession moved through the bazaar and along with the procession moved a river of obscenities- foul abuses, crude personal gestures, spurt of sputum, odd articles like small coins, faded flowers, cigarette butts and bidis that were thrown at the women. As soon as the women came near, that section of the crowd became hysterical 'Rape them', 'Put it inside of them' 'The filthy Hindu bitches', 'The kafir women'. Some said worse things. Then came the shower of spittle. Almost everyone spat... Many men in the front rows of the crowd lifted their lungis to display their genital to them... And almost to the last man, whether they spat or shouted or threw things or just stood with their mouths open, they stared at the public regions of the women. Through indelicate exposures those areas had lost their glory, lost all magic. And there was only a small slippery aperture you saw there. But men's eyes were settled on these apertures. And the moment the women had passed ahead, the eyes were settled on the bruised buttocks.' (292-294)

Thus, Nahal effectively establishes how Partition affected the two nations in general, and women in particular. Urvashi Butalia raises a pertinent question about the predicament of women during Partition:

Why was it that we heard so little about them? How had they experienced the anguish of the division, the euphoria of the newly-forming nations? My assumptions were simple: firstly, that these questions had remained unasked because of the patriarchal underpinnings of history as a discipline. I also believed (and this view has been considerably qualified since) that in times of communal strife and violence, women remain essentially non-violent, and are at the receiving end of violence as victims, and that they are left with the task of rebuilding the community (55).

Thus, the society was affected too much in moral and cultural sphere. People's morality was so degraded that they had completely forgotten the honour and dignity of 'women' of whom they were born. The cause of such degradation was nothing but communal hatred grown by the partition.

The tragic effect of partition did not last with the division of the country but continues even after the partition. This fact is visible in the pathetic condition of the refugees of independent India. Thousand of the refugees wished to

settle in Delhi. The properties left by the Muslim refugees were not sufficient. Therefore, prosperous and respectable persons like Lala Kanshi Ram and Bibi Amar Vati had to live in hut like camps like slum-dwellers. Sunanda, a dazzling beauty of Sialkot, Isher Kaur and her father, a fruit merchant and many other had pathetic experience while living as refugees in Delhi after independence. Thus, *Azadi* brings out the pathetic picture of partition –affected refugees in independent India, too.

Factors Responsible for the growth of Communalism:

Various factors were responsible for the growth of communal hatred which is a predominant cause of the partition-tragedy. Inactive role of the government is one of the major causes for the spread of communal violence. If willing, the government could stop or restraint the violence. But it seemed that the government was unwilling or negligent to put down the rising storm. The Hindus felt unprotected and frustrated in the declared land of Muslims.

People lost faith and confidence on the political leaders and government appeared to be against the people. Lala Kanshi Ram felt grieved at the role of the government. His grievance reflected thus:

“Father we’ll have to leave” – Arun said.

Before he could finish his sentence Lala Kanshi Ram cut him off.

“Why will we have to? Why? ‘Well the government seems unable to protect us and we’ll have to go to save our lives.’ (98)

“Why can’t the government protect us? I’ve seen communal riots before in this country. How were the English able to put them down?” ‘Let’s say the government is incapable or unwilling to control the situation. What then? Shall we wait here and perish?’ ‘He is right’ said Prabha Rani, fear gripping her heart. ‘Aha! Incapable or unwilling- which precisely?’ Lala Kanshi Ram ignored his wife and addressed himself to his son: ‘If unwilling, the government is party to murder. If incapable, we Indians had no right to ask for freedom’ (124).

Secondly, the communal elements in the government were also responsible for the growth of communalism. It is apparent from the incident of murder of the Hindu Deputy Commissioner by his Muslims bodyguard. The intentions of the communal leaders are revealed by Chaudhri Barkat Ali who says to Lala Kanshi Ram:

Let me put it like this. Either the congress Muslims were a fraud to begin with or they have changed sides. I’m afraid there is no organized body of Muslims denouncing what is happening in the city (140).

Lastly, the communal force led by the fanatic Muslims contributed much to the growth of violence in the Muslims dominated areas. In Sialkot, with the

announcement of the partition, the Muslims led by the fanatics became like mad and came down to the streets to celebrate the creation of Pakistan. Such incidents emotionally collapsed the mentality of common, illiterate and ignorant Muslims who really had no bad terms or enmity with the Hindus. Abdul Ghani is an instance of such a fanatic Muslim who was initially not so bad and found to have retained good terms with Lala Kanshi Ram. But the impact of communal uprising so collapsed his mind that he became a 'bad Muslim'. And such 'bad Muslims' contaminated or spread the germs of communalism to the Muslims masses.

Rumours, incidents of violence committed upon either side of the border and its impact on the psychology of men too, were responsible for the growth of communal hatred. Again, violence followed violence as a natural process. For all these reasons. Communal hatred and feeling spread beyond imagination and deteriorated the situation unbelievably.

Amidst mass inhumanity, hatred and violence, there are some forces generally appear to be advocating in favour of humanity, love and fraternity. *Azadi* had not left this aspect of the truth and reveals it through a few good characters like Chaudhri Barkat Ali, Lala Kanshi Ram, Asghar Ali Siddique, the Muslims police superintendent and Pran Nath Chadda, the Hindu Deputy Commissioner. Humanism of Chaudhri Barkat Ali is well reflected in his words at the final moment of Lala Ram's leaving for India:

If not in our life-time, Insha-Allah in the life-time of our children this folly will surely be undone', Said Chaudhri Barkat Ali, looking at Lala Kanshi Ram. "We are one people and religion can't separate us from each other" (271).

Lala Kanshi Ram is another representative of love, friendship and humanity. His friendship with Barkat Ali is well known. He considered Barkat Ali as a friend as well as brother. He never hated people concerning caste, community or religion. The communal violence and even his personal suffering due to it could not turn him hostile to the Muslims. Therefore, he continues his friendship with Chaudhri Barkat Ali till the time of leaving Sialkot. Even when Abdul Ghani, a communal Muslim teases him asking about the time of his leaving Sialkot, Lala Kanshi Ram tries to convince him to be secular through his words of, love and fraternity:

Why do you want me to leave, Abdul Ghani?" said Lala Kanshi Ram, "we have been good friends for years we have been such good friends! (128)

Some secular officer played humanistic role in suppressing the violence. How-

ever, the numbers of such officers were very few. *Azadi* has portrayed two such secular, minded officers, the Deputy Commissioner Pran Nath Chadda and the police Superintendent Asghar Ali Siddique, who were trained in England and were very impartial in their duties. Though they belonged to different communities, they remained true to their profession and never took side with their respective communities. Their secular and impartial role is evident when they appear to halt the communal police Inspector Inayat Ullah who take side with the Muslims celebrating the creation of Pakistan.

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Unearthing the ‘Inner Voice’: Search for Identity of / for the Black in Rita Dove’s Poetry

Bishnu Charan Dash
Pawan Kumar Upadhyay

Search for identity has been a continuous phenomenon in African as well as Afro-American literatures right from Phillis Wheatley to Chinua Achebe, Rita Dove, Ngugi wa Thiong’o, Alice Walker and Maya Angelo. Often acclaimed as a poet endowed with disinterested imagination, Rita Dove is no less concerned about the rootless identity of the black Africans dispersed in America, as she endeavours to make constant exploration of their African cultural roots. The Africans dispersed in the real context of America are marginalized geographically, socially and culturally, and have a desire to reconstruct a new identity in the new cultural context with an intense love for their homeland. It is not only the traumatic ‘past’ of their race that haunts the African-Americans’ mind, but the very ‘present’ of which they are both the observers and participants. And it is this sense of being the observer and the observed that has made Dove take an essentially distinctive course of writing poetry where the shocks – psychological, socio-political and cultural – that she as a poet and as an individual has received get reflected in their own way.

The term ‘Search for identity’ connotes that one’s identity is either lost or challenged. Different factors may work behind the distortion and misrepresentation of the identity in question and in the long run it is quite

possible for the distorted identity to be regarded as the actual one. The question of identity took a topical turn in the backdrop of the process of colonization and hegemony which subsequently played a significant role in postcolonial criticism. And as far as the black people's search for identity is concerned, it can be viewed either as a desperate attempt to revisit the pre-colonial past or as an effort to adjust themselves in the domineering land of the whites. Frantz Fanon aptly observes:

Colonization is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it. (1986:170).

Being a poet of the Afro-American community, Rita Dove's poems and writings are most often found to be concerned with the identity question. Her artistic caliber is well nourished by her knowledge of world history and literature, and her treatment of the themes in her poetry can be regarded as one of the reasons for her increasing popularity across the globe. She can efficiently utilize the art of Negative capability in her poetry as Keats and Shakespeare could do in their writing – the ability to become what he or she is not. While dealing with her themes Dove brings the readers closer to the facts or incidents described and she is so deft in her process that the reader never feels detached or bored. Most often we find Dove writing about a variety of themes including herself, her grandparents, mythological characters, Chinese princess, German woman widowed during the World War II or even a fossilized fish. But whatever may be the theme, Dove always grounds her work in her own intimate, ordinary experiences as a daughter, grand daughter, wife, mother, African-American, woman and teacher, thus giving her poems a universal look, perceivable to all.

There is no denial of the fact that Dove's poetry is written in a spirit of reaction. Her reaction is seen not only against the age-long oppression of the African-Americans, but also against the subsequent movements. The Black Art Movement of the 1960s, which came into existence in an initiative to preserve the essentially black culture and tradition, was opposed by Dove. Her opposition can be apprehended from her vision not only as an Afro-American, but also as a poet. For her, poetry should be for the sake of poetry alone, and associating poetry with any propaganda is not a welcome idea. Dove must have been aware of herself as a poetic reformer, one with great potential as a leader, even if she hardly ever condescends to expose her indignations. Dove sees poetry, its dignity, nature, and functions, in a way quite different from most of the writers who came just before her.

That Rita Dove regards poetry as essentially an art and not a means of

propagating some of the ideas of the poets is evident from her own statement where she compares poetry to dance. In other words, like dance or any other performing arts, poetry also demands artistic treatment from the side of the poet. And it is in this field that Rita Dove doesn't want to make any compromise as a result of which her poetry always displays some poetic control, craftsmanship and structure. Further, we cannot call Rita Dove escaping from the bleak history of the blacks by sternly adhering to artistic quality of poetry and not propagating their causes and demands. Rather her loyalty can be perceived from the very comparison that she makes between poetry and dance. In African American culture, dance has always been a key element – a communal activity that soothes and unites people of all levels. Hence, her poetry can be described as a nice combination of the artistic quality and ethnic culture.

Like many other contemporary writers, Rita Dove's works often convey the importance of recognizing one's connection to a particular place and need to remember the past, even when the past evokes painful memories. Her grandparents, on whose lives she loosely based the sequence of poems *Thomas and Beulah* (1986), were among the many African-Americans who left the South for North during the Great Migration that occurred during the early 20th century. In most of the poems of *Thomas and Beulah*, mandolin is a recurrent motif:

Ever since they'd left the Tennessee ridge
with nothing to boast of
but good looks and a mandolin. (*The Event*)

The playing of mandolin can be symbolically interpreted as the way to preserve rich black cultural heritage and the communal values which many of them lost when they migrated from the rural South to the industrial North. While depicting the same in her poetry, the poet inherits at once her grandmother's imagination and her grandfather's art of storytelling.

As a poet, Dove is well aware of black history, and consequently, her sense of history gets reflected in a number of her poems. For example, one of the five sections of *The Yellow House on the Corner* (1980) is devoted entirely to poems on the theme of slavery and freedom. These pieces are inspired by nameless but strongly representative victims of the "peculiar institution". In these works and others such as "Banneker" in the later volume *Museum* (1983), Dove shows a fine ability to evoke the psychological terror of slavery. Rita Dove's response to the history of her own community can further be perceived in one of her most poignant poems, namely "Parsley", where she deals with the figural 'black' history of the literal blacks. This poem depicts the merciless killing of the blacks by Rafael Trujillo (1891-1961) for the reason that they could not pronounce the letter "r" in *perejil*, the Spanish word for parsley.

... El General
searches for a word; he is all the world
there is. Like a parrot imitating spring,

we lie down screaming as rain punches through
and we come up green. We cannot speak an R—

She portrays the pathetic scene of brutal massacre and the feelings of the victims in a dramatic manner. At the same time, she creates a nice dramatic contrast by introducing the image of a parrot:

... Even
a parrot can roll an R!
“Parsley” can rightly be called Rita Dove’s tribute to those innocent people who were brutally massacred. She creates a dramatic contrast between the oppressor and the oppressed, the exploited and the exploiting hands of the colonial master who strangled the freedom of the blacks by reducing them to the state of a voiceless voice bereft of any capacity to protest. The image of the parrot succinctly shows the blind imposition of the white’s hegemonic torture over the helpless parrots representing the black race. They have absolutely no freedom and are born to blindly imitate, like a parrot, the dictates of the colonial masters. The brutality of the massacre has a deep impact on the minds of the Afro-Americans and the following lines show why it is still lingering in their mind:
The general remembers the tiny green sprigs
men of his village wore in their capes
to honour the birth of a son. He will
order many, this time to be killed.

Thus the sprig or twig that the village people wore automatically becomes a symbol of death for the newborns as the general has already counted their number and is readily waiting for killing them. Killing of the children for their parents’ faults can never be permissible under any circumstances, and the general’s intention of doing so can be arguably related to his suppressed desire of erasing the identity of the blacks.

Rita Dove’s treatment of history in its varied aspects can be observed in many of her poems. Based on a little known historical incident, the poem “The Transport of Slaves from Maryland to Mississippi” focuses on an enslaved woman’s decision to help a wagon driver wounded during a violent slave revolt. The speaker helps the individual because she represents humanity which is the other name of Divinity:

I am no brute. I got feelings.

He might have been a friend of mine. (*The Transport of Slaves from Maryland to Mississippi*)

The speaker represents the inner feelings of the blacks regarding America and its people. They are always sympathetic towards the whites in their distress and are ready to extend their friendly support to them. They do not only have some feelings for the land America, but also for her people. The black people's collective consciousness is deftly represented by the speaker's statement "I am no brute. I got feelings." At the same time, it interrogates the brutality and arrogance of the common white self that treats the blacks as brutes. The ungrateful white, after getting the assistance of the black woman, rises, mounts his horse and rides for help and ironically recaptured the slaves. Dove relates this woman's story from a detached perspective, leaving questions of morality, betrayal, loyalty and salvation up to the reader. Thus we see that Dove interrogates history with suspicion and doubt in so far as the official records could be arbitrarily prepared at the instigation of 'a selected few' of the society with vested interests. So, here it can be conceded that Dove is not blind to the history of oppression experienced by the blacks and the very title of the poem "The Transport of Slaves from Maryland to Mississippi" can be intertextually negotiated with Phillis Wheatley's poem "On being Brought from Africa to America" and Langston Hughes' popular poem "The Negro speaks of the River". Mississippi is an extended metaphor of suffering for the blacks and the very image of Mississippi in this poem recalls to one's mind the entire history of the sufferings of the black race which Hughes articulates in the poem under question:

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep
I looked upon the Nile and raised pyramids upon it...

(*The Negro Speaks of River*)

Rivers form an inseparable part of the black people's lives and they most often identify themselves with the rivers. Just as rivers sustained a number of civilizations across the globe down the history, the blacks also have their intimate association with rivers for the enhancement of human civilization. At the same time, the rivers also bear true testimony to the trials and tribulations, misery and sufferings of the blacks down the ages.

What is pertinent to mention here is that unlike the black male writers who in their writings proclaim the efficacy of their masculine self against the oppression of the whites, black women's writings tend to assert their position not only against the whites, but also against the hegemony of the black men. There was a stage when the writings of the Afro-American women were 'simply

invisible' in the development of the black literary history because of the male hegemony. It is for this reason that Barbara Smith attacks Robert Bone's *The Negro Novel in America* (1958) for betraying the black women's writings and thereby exerting what she calls "white racist pseudo-scholarship" (Barbara. 1977: 4). As a result, black women critics have had to reconstruct the African-American literary tradition to include women writers and also eradicate stereotypes of black femininity and myths about black women's roles. The focus is on the cultural importance of black women writers and on a reassessment of black literature and literary history in an attempt to discover multiple black feminine styles.

In the backdrop of the aforesaid discussion, one can confidently argue that Rita Dove's poetry can be interpreted from the standpoint of two distinct views i.e., from the racial point of view and feminine point of view. As has been discussed earlier, Dove is deft enough in expressing her response to her racial past in her own distinct ways; she is no less dexterous in her expression of feminine self and feminine experiences in her poems. The trilogy of poems *Adolescence* (namely "Adolescence I", "Adolescence II", and "Adolescence III") shows how she presents the doubly marginalized self of a black woman. The black 'feminine self' is initially marginalized from the 'male self' and thereby doubly marginalized from the dominant 'white self'. During one of her many interviews with Robert McDowell, Rita Dove once commented in *American Poets* (Fall 2003):

In a society that could not be trusted to be fair, you'd be a fool to show all your cards, to reveal your weak spots. As I've grown older, I have tried to be more open (personally), since all effective masks obscure vision somewhat; besides they're hot and uncomfortable. A corollary caveat, though: As I struggled to work through my own shyness-oh, how horribly self-conscious I was! – I began to realize that perceptions shaped reception: If I imagined everyone was looking at me critically when I entered a room, I would behave in a way that might evoke critical (or at least curious) stares; if I let my struggle show, others might be uncomfortable watching that struggle and therefore make the task just that much more fraught with anxiety and difficulty.

The self-consciousness that she possesses since her childhood has a deep impact on her writing and her individual self-consciousness finally turns out to be a collective one while she starts writing poetry. The art of Rita Dove as a poet here reminds the reader of the Negative Capability of John Keats and the theory of impersonality emphasized by T. S. Eliot. Her idea of not showing one's weak points in naked terms is a justified one. The long history of the weak blacks

has taught her how to cope and adjust with the male dominated world which, like the world governed by the whites, is equally “untrustworthy”. In the poem “Adolescence-III”, the speaker experiences changes caused by adolescence in her body, which is essentially a thing to rejoice for a feminine self:

With Dad gone, Mom and I worked
The dusky rows of tomatoes.
As they glowed orange in sunlight
And rotted in shadow, I too
Grew orange and softer, swelling out
Starched cotton slips. (*Adolescence-III*, ll. 1-6)

The female speaker, who has recently reached her adolescence, has to acquaint herself with the distinctly ‘female’ world. As she says:

In my room
I wrapped scarred knees in dresses
That once went to big-band dances;
I baptized my earlobes with rosewater.
Along the window-sill, the lipstick stubs
Glittered in their steel shells. (*Adolescence-III*, ll. 8-13)

That the feminine body is a source of attraction for the males irrespective of their colour, is evident from a number of her poems. The speaker in “Adolescence-II” records her experience, which has nothing to do with her race or caste:

Although it is night, I sit in the bathroom, waiting.
Sweat prickles behind my knees, the baby-breasts are alert.
Venetian blinds slice up the moon; the tiles quiver in pale strips.

Then they come, the three seal men with eyes as round
As dinner plates and eyelashes like sharpened tines.
They bring the scent of licorice. One sits in the washbowl,

One on the bathtub edge; one leans against the door.
(*Adolescence-II*, ll. 1-7)

Rita Dove, however, is not totally indifferent towards her racial past. She knows well from which part of their history they can at least get something to rejoice upon or to feel proud of. As the history of modern America is unimaginable without taking into consideration the massive contribution of the blacks towards it, the blacks in turn, shouldn’t always feel deprived, neglected or oppressed. Rather, it is the blacks that the entire white population of America is indebted

to. Dove's poem "Banneker" deals with such a glorious incident in the bygone history of the Afro-Americans. Benjamin Banneker (1731-1806) was the first black man to devise an almanac and predict a solar eclipse accurately in America, who was also appointed to the commission that surveyed and laid out what is now Washington, D.C. The Black people in America can definitely feel some pride in it, and Rita Dove gives him a tribute in her eponymous poem:

Venerable, the good people of Baltimore
 whispered, shocked and more than
 a little afraid. After all it was said
 he took to strong drink.
 Why else would he stay out
 under the stars all night
 and why hadn't he married?
 ...The clock
 he whittled as a boy
 still ran. (Banneker)

Thus Rita Dove's originality as a poet consists in the fact that she writes poetry in her own distinct ways, without being heavily influenced by the Black Art Tradition that took the form of an aggressive propaganda and that prompted the black writers to write exclusively about their deprivation, marginalization and oppression. No doubt, she reacts against the 'black past'; and her poems do speak about the black past. But she does so in a comparatively moderate way by avoiding the radical line of thought. Poetry should take its own course without being blindly guided by propagandistic ideology. Moreover, her capacity to negate personal agonies and woes of the community at large could be considered as a viable medium for transcending the narrow domain of the black colour and race thereby lending universality to her poetry.

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*Dr. N. Kar, Chief-guest Prof. K.B. Das
(Vice-chancellor) and Dr. Udaya N. Majhi, Chief-
editor light up the lamp at the beginning of the Release
Ceremony at Bhubaneswar, on June 9, 2013*

Indian Thoughts in Sri Aurobindo's Sonnets

Akshaya Kumar Panda

Sri Aurobindo was a front ranking poet writing from India in English who experimented with various poetic forms such as the epic, the lyric and the sonnet. It was a great challenge for Indian poets depicting Indian themes in terms of foreign literary forms and foreign idiom. Sri Aurobindo is known for his epic poem '*Savitri*'. He was also very good at composing lyrics and sonnets.

Sri Aurobindo sought to express yogic experiences in a sustained manner in his sonnets. In the course of his adventure, he used special diction which could be termed as *vedantic*.

"Certainly these poems provide a royal gateway to his world of yoga".
(Nanda Kumar, Prema, 1996, p. 5)

The sonnets written between 1936 and 1944 as well as the thirteen undated sonnets which belong to this period can be categorized in different ways. Broadly speaking they fall in to two patterns. One is characterized by the visual incidents and the external phenomena while the other pattern is discovered in the landscape of the mind. In other words, the poet undertakes, a spiritual voyage in the deeper level of consciousness through *yoga*, *dhyan*, and spiritual experiences. Sonnet form becomes the medium through which his visions are communicated. For example, his famous sonnet like "The Stone Goddess" and "The Hill-Top Temple" belong to this category. Obviously the "Stone Goddess" refers to the *Mahakali Temple* at Chandod, Karnali which Sri Aurobindo had visited when he was a professor in the Maharaja's College at Baroda. The concept of "Kali" as the mother, the presence of Ramakrishna in

the Dakhineswar Temple, the Durga, worshipped in Bengal, his own composition “Durga Stotra” reveal the fact that he was defining the concept of the mother in a poetic way in such a sonnet. This is another example of the recreation of the sonnet form in which he develops the typical Indian Thoughts in relation to the concept of The Mother. The attitude of the worshipper, the spiritual progress, the vision of the mother, are transmitted through the sonnet form. In this connection, Sri Aurobindo remarks, “The expression of spirituality in the English tongue is needed and no one can give the real stuff like easterner and especially Indians”. (Letters on Poetry Literature and Art. P. 165)

The thematic design of Sri Aurobindo’s sonnets is subdivisions, such as : (a) Addressed to the beloved (b) Sonnets dealing with Nature (c) Sonnets carrying on dialogues with Brahman. From thematic point of view as presented in Sri Aurobindo’s sonnets, love has three fold dimension, relating to woman, the nature and the universal soul. However they are not separate from each other because there is a steady growth and transmutation of the sensuous love to spiritual love.

Some of the early sonnets are written as love poems, but we are not sure with regard to the identity of the woman to whom these sonnets are addressed. There is of course a difference between Petrarchan love sonnets and Sri Aurobindo’s love sonnets. Unlike those of Petrarch, Sri Aurobindo’s love sonnets appear as casual lyrics, which do not form a sonnet sequence. Yet, one suspects, he is talking of the same woman in “O Face that I have loved” “I can not equal”, “Because thy flame is spent” and “Rose, I have loved”. However, there is a blending of the mundane and the spiritual in the image of the woman, who is not the prototype of Petrarch’s Laura. One of his sonnets “My Life is wasted” has a distinctly Petrarchan voice, when he writes:

I Learned and know not why;
I sink to hell
Fruitlessly and am forbidden to rebel.

One immediately recalls Petrarch’s sonnets 25, 132 and 267.

one sees from out side how I burn within.....
If I burn willingly why weep and grieve?
It is for you I burn....

(Translated by Mark Musa)

(Ghosal Goutam, Sri Aurobindo and world Literature : 2000, p. 105)

The mystery of his ladylove haunts his memory and imagination but it lacks the emotional intensity which we discovered in the Petrarchan Sonnets. In case of Sri Aurobindo this emotion of love is purified and manifested as “The soul of the emotion”. So Petrarch and Sri Aurobindo are different from each other in the treatment of the theme of love in their sonnets, because Sri Aurobindo adopts

the confessional mode because he expresses his emotion directly at the moment of suffering or he produces the full memory of his suffering. But sometimes, the memory is less torturing when the poet maintains the objective distance and begins to examine his own self. The common element discovered between the two poets is the element of neo-platonism. This allows Petrarch to grow deeper after Laura's death. Sri Aurobindo hints at the greater reality which is behind the world of appearance. However, both Petrarch and Sri Aurobindo seem to be attracted by the beautiful eyes of their beloved. Petrarch writes, "For your lovely eyes, had bound me" While Sri Aurobindo writes, "I can not equal those most absolute eyes". (Sonnets, Sri Aurobindo : 1991, P. 77)

Some of the sonnets reveal his intimate address to Nature, but ultimately through Nature he arrives at the supernatural, the mystic and the divine landscape. For example, as a spiritual Voyager, he undertakes the journey with strong determination and great faith in his heart. In the sonnet "The Hidden Plan" he writes : "Are all that God reveals in our life scheme, The last result of Nature's cosmic task". (Sonnets, Sri Aurobindo, P. 22)

These lines reveal Sri Aurobindo's attitude to Nature. In his view mother nature is constantly engaged in a great cosmic task. But this task is not performed just by giving birth to an egoistic creature, the greater presence is operating in nature's dark night. This task has been undertaken to illuminate every aspect of nature with divine consciousness. The whole process of nature is only indicative of the evolution of consciousness. This evolution is transformed from object to object, form inanimate to animate, from clay to plant, from plant to the animal, from the animal to man. Nature has to pass from mind to super mind, from consciousness to supra-consciousness, from man to superman. The role of Nature is to form unity and to bridge the gulf between one and the other. The hidden plan of Nature has to be fulfilled with the holy plan of god-head. So there is a marked difference between the early sonnets like "the cuckoo" and the later sonnet on the theme of nature, Particularly in his matured sonnets on nature, Sri Aurobindo deals with the theme of evolution. This theme includes some of his seminal ideas. Firstly, he believes that it is the destiny of an individual to rise from mind to God. Secondly, it is the destiny of whole nature to illumine for every part with divine light. Thirdly man is primarily a mental being who holds the central place in the entire scheme of evolution. Fourthly the whole cosmic play is only for divine delight. Fifthly, at one time the sub-human was supreme in nature. Then it was the human being who replaced the sub-human. But the supramental is waiting who is yet to be born. Nature is not complete until the superman is born. This philosophy of nature constitutes Sri Aurobindo's system of yogic thoughts which are derived from the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*.

Sri Aurobindo's address to Brahman in some of his sonnets reveal his divine mystic vision. He depicts the realities that belong to some Super-nature. We can discover the Supra-natural scenes which he depicted through his mystic visions. The yogic experiences are translated into poetic sequences. The sonnets served the purpose of the religion of earth in which there is a synthesis of the yogic personality and the poetic personality. The sonnet "The Inner Fields" provides a poetic description of the interior landscape. There is no doubt that the green earth is beautiful but the inner world is more beautiful. Similarly the other sonnet "The Other Earths" presents a photographic scene of the world of the mystic. The world after world opens its mystery. A similar type of sonnet appeared under the title "The Kingdom within" in which he provides a metaphysical exploration of the depth of the soul. There is a kingdom in our inward being which is not created by the thoughts or by the minds but this kingdom can only be described in terms of the divine attributes. Another sonnet "The call of the Impossible" reveals that there is a call from within every human heart to reach such a kingdom.

The Indian Thoughts have been developed and incorporated in the poetry of Sri Aurobindo include the ideas received from Indian Philosophy as embodied in the *Gita* and the *Upanishads*. It also includes the ideas, derived from Indian mysticism, metaphysics, occult and *Tantra*. So the sensibility is deeply rooted in the Indian Spiritual tradition, but Sri Aurobindo's uniqueness and striking originality is perceived in terms of his ability to manipulate these Indian materials in a foreign language. He believed that the language, the style, the form and techniques must be blended with the thematic presentation in such a way that it can create a unifying structure like that of a symphonic note. The central themes, such as the themes of love and death bind the content of the sonnets and with that of his masterpiece "*Savitri*". Sri Aurobindo believed that the treatment of themes should acquire a philosophical dimension and a mantric height in poetry. In his view "There is no great poet who has not tried to philosophise there are flights of unsurpassable poetry in the *Gita* and the *Upanishads*". (Letters on poetry, Literature and Art. P-30-31)

He also believed that the poet has "to convert it into truth of poetry, and it would be still better for his art if he saw it originally with the poetic insight, the creative, intuitive, directly perceiving and interpreting eye; for if poetry is to do all it can for us in the new age, it will include increasingly in its scope much that will be common to it with philosophy". (The Future Poetry, P-23) He affirmed that the *Upanishads* embody the philosophy, spiritual intuition in the language of poetry. Only the incantatory poetry written by the poet – seer, the prophet and the philosopher can bring this order of poetry which can create magical effect on his readers. Sri Aurobindo insisted that the greatest

poetry gives expression to the realization of the Divine in the world of mundane reality. The great poet discloses and explores the Divine possibilities for man. These poetic theories and assumptions have been infused into the body of his poetry, and it was possible on his part for synthesizing “yoga”, “metaphysics”, “philosophy”, “occult” and the incantation of poetic language.

Sri Aurobindo believed that poetic creation is a part of the evolution of the self. In one of his letters he wrote “Certainly if you want to achieve a greater poetry more unique, you will yourself have to change to alter the poise of your consciousness.” (Letters on poetry and Art Vol. – 27, Page -22)

The evolution of the self within leads to the transformation of consciousness and to the evolution of poetic process. Therefore, he states, “The expression in poetry and other form must be, for the yogi, a flowing out from a growing self within and not merely a mental creation or an aesthetic pleasure like that the inner-self grows and the poetic power will grow with it. (Letters on Poetry, Literature and Art. P – 218)

The single minded objective of Sri Aurobindo was to transform his mystical inspiration into the creative flow of language, deeply embedded with Indian philosophical materials. Mysticism has been defined as “The immediate experience of oneness with ultimate reality in Encyclopedia Britannica. In this context Sri Aurobindo was a great mystic not only in his system of philosophy, but also in his poetic creation. In one of his letters he mentions “I use the word “mystic” in the sense of a certain kind of inner seeing and feeling of things, a way which to the intellect would seem occult and visionary”. (Life, Literature and Yoga, P – 42) Therefore, one may write poetry from different levels of consciousness, sources of inspiration and can express his spiritual realization, but at the same time he can use the poetic intelligence as the essential medium. It is by this he can give them the shape in speech and utterance, He believed that poetic expression is the divine utterance being burst out from the interior soul. At this level poetry acquires the quality of “*mantra*”.

In *The Future Poetry* Sri Aurobindo writes, “what is the highest power we can demand from poetry; or, let us put it more largely and set nearer the root of the matter, what may be the nature of poetry, its essential law and how out of that, arises the possibility of its use as the *Mantra* of the Real”. (*The Future Poetry* – P-12) Sri Aurobindo believed that the highest achievement of poetry is to attain the mantric transformation of the real through the poetic language. In fact the meaning of the Sanskrit word *mantra* is viewed as the “Vedic hymn or sacred prayer, a sacred text”. To find an exact English equivalent of the word *Mantra* is impossible, although some people have treated *Mantra* as synonymous with magic. According to Sri Aurobindo the connotation for the word *Mantra* is the poetic expression of the deepest spiritual reality. Poetry can attain

the height of *Mantra* at rare moments of poetic creation when a synthesis is achieved among the intensity of rhythmic movement, the verbal form and the texture of thought and the soul's profound vision of the spiritual truth. This is the origin and manifestation of *Mantra* in poetry. It is the rhythmic revelation and the epiphanic manifestation of deep intuitive thoughts about God, Nature and Man.

In Sri Aurobindo's view "*Mantra*" is "The highest intensest revealing form of poetic thought and expression. Many English poets and critics like Coleridge, C. Day Lewis, W.B. Yeats have emphasized the significance of poetry as magic that achieves a profound evocativeness. C. Day Lewis observes that poetry has "Its roots incantation and its effect has always been to treat a state of mind". (C. Day Lewis, P – 30) But the unique achievement of Sri Aurobindo is that he manipulates a foreign language that reveals the Indian philosophical thoughts and yet he could produce this incantation in this foreign language. So Sri Aurobindo's achievement is unique, because he provides a new intensity and depth of meaning to the "*Mantra*". He remarks "What the Vedic poet meant by the *Mantra* was an inspired and revealed seeing and visioned thinking attended by a realization of same in most truth of God and self and Man and Nature and cosmos and life and thing and thought and experience and deed". (The Future Poetry, P – 217). He also had the conviction that "The *Mantra* is born through the heart and shaped or massed by the thinking mind into a chariot of the Godhead of the Eternal of whom the truth seen is a face or a form". (*The Future Poetry*, P – 218)

The *Mantra* is distinguished from other verse in terms of the fact that it is something more than a realization of the ideal of beauty. Poetry acquires mantic height when it is the utterance of the deepest truth, expressed in the poetic rhythm of highest power. This quality of poetry was already manifested in the Indian Spiritual texts like the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*. Sri Aurobindo acquires it from the Indian tradition and suffuses this magical power to English Language. In one of his letters Sri Aurobindo writes that the *Mantra* is derived from "Over the mind's inspiration". The characteristics of *Mantra* include a language of special rhythmic power that emanates from the Infinite and assimilates into the Infinite.

Most of Sri Aurobindo's lyrics are the sonnets that are characterized as the poetry of *Mantra* even if they deal with the themes of love. The transformation of the self are associated with the evolution of the attitudes to love, realized at various stages. These sonnets correspond to the thoughts and substance in keeping with the Indian Philosophical concepts. These concepts have already been formulated by him in the *Life Divine*. In various sonnets such as: "The Kingdom Within", "The Indwelling Universal", "The Inconscient", "Libera-

tion” “Cosmic Consciousness”, “Immortality”, “Evolution”, “Transformation”, “The Dumb Inconscient” and “Nirvana”, he not only deals with the profound Indian Philosophical Thoughts, but he also expresses the deep spiritual truth in an incantatory language. These sonnets appear to be the poetic presentation of his conviction that “There is also a poetry which expresses things with an absolute truth but without effort, simply and easily”. In his sonnet “Transformation” he hints at the process of divine being manifested in various parts of his corporeal being.

I am no more a vassal of the flesh,
A slave to Nature and her leaden rule;
I am caught no more in the senses’ narrow mesh.
My soul unhorizoned widens to measureless sight.
My body is God’s happy living tool,
My spirit a vast sum of deathless light.

(*Sonnets*, Sri Aurobindo, p.1)

The Philosophical concepts in relation to evolution are expressed in his two sonnets entitled “Evolution”.

All is not finished in the unseen decree;
A Mind beyond our mind demands our ken,
A life of unimagined harmony
A waits, concealed, the grasp of unborn men.

.....
O Thou who climbest to mind from the dull stone,
Face now the miracle summits still unwon.

(*Sonnets*, Sri Aurobindo. P-7)

These lines do not appear as the lines of ordinary verse. Rather it is a recreation of the philosophical subject matter as a mantic evocation of an epiphanic experience.

It is a spectacular achievement on the part of Sri Aurobindo that he has attempted a unique synthesis of *Mantra* and *Tantra*. In Indian Tantric Tradition, the beloved or the female partner is treated as *Shakti* or the creative energy. The male lover is symbolized as “*Purusha*” or the pure consciousness. The consciousness is energized and activated to higher state with the ascent of the *Kundalini*, when the female power or *Shakti* operates on him. This is the significance of the woman who can lift her lover to a state of highest realization of truth. This essence of *Tantra*, rooted in the Indian Tradition, was not only accepted by Sri Aurobindo, as a means of Spiritual practice, but also for the achievement of highest artistic excellence. This content in relation to *Tantra* is in some of his sonnets like “The Golden Light”, “*Shiva*”, *Krishna*” and the “Dual Being”.

Sri Aurobindo's concept of *Yoga* is multi-faceted and it is also integral. He believed that all life can be taken up as a starting point of *Yoga*. All life is *yoga* and the only aspiration is *yoga*, rejection is *yoga* and surrender is *yoga*. "Having given up all *dharma*s, surrender unto me alone. I shall free you from all ills. Do not fear". Such is the assurance of the Lord in *The Gita* (Chap. 18-66). The theme of surrender is revealed in so many sonnets of Sri Aurobindo. One of the examples is "Surrender" itself, where, the poet says that faith in the supreme's compassion is vital for man's surrender to be effective. Hence the statement that follows immediately. "I feel the greatness of the power I seek/surround me". Then comes the act forcefully accented in the sonnet "Surrender".

O Thou of whom I am an instrument,
 O Secret Spirit and Nature housed in me,
 Let all my mortal being now be blent
 In Thy still glory of divinity.
 I have given my mind to be dug Thy channel mind,
 I have offered up my will to be Thy will:
 Let nothing of myself be left behind
 In our union mystic and unutterable.

(*Sonnets*, Sri Aurobindo, P-42)

To be effective, surrender has to be total and integral. The aspirant will be just an instrument for the Divine's work. The surrender completed, the acceptance assured, the aspirant becomes an effective worker for the Divine, a soldier in the Supreme's Army against the forces of darkness, Ignorance and Nescience. So some of his sonnets reveal how the aspiring mind of man leaves the physical nature and makes a quest for the unknown. But the unknown is not the unknowable. Everything depends on our strong aspiration, which is symbolically represented through the character of Aswapati in *Savitri*. This theme of spiritual quest in *Savitri* prefigures in his later sonnets. "The Divine Worker" describes the transformed being in clear terms:

I face earth's happenings with an equal soul;
 In all are heard Thy steps: Thy unseen feet
 Tread Destiny's pathways in my front. Life's whole
 Tremendous theorem is Thou Complete.
 No danger can perturb my spirit's calm:
 My acts are Thine; I do thy works and pass;
 Failure is cradled on Thy deathless arm,
 Victory is Thy passage mirrored in Fortune's glass

.....

No power can slay my soul; it lives in Thee.

Thy presence is my immortality. (*Sonnets*, Sri Aurobindo. P-43)

Another sonnet entitled “*Lila*” contains the essence of divine play. The word “*Lila*” is a pure Hindu word, mainly in *Vaishnava* conception related to *Lord Krishna*. We can somehow substitute the word by “Play” or “Sport” but no English word could be used as an equivalent to the term “*Lila*”. Therefore the poet entitles the sonnet “*Lila*”. The one Supreme Soul is seated in the heart of every individual creature and each “*jiva*” has his own unique relationship with Him. He assumes the form and nature conforming to that relationship and according to the quality of the aspiration of each.

“*Ye yatha mam prapadyante tanstathaiva bhajamyaham*”. (The *Gita* Chap. 04.11) There are thousand fold forms of that one Supreme Lord in the millions of *Jivas* and their individual organization of consciousness:

In us is the thousand-fold spirit who is one,
An eternal thinker calm and great and wise,
A seer whose eye is an all regarding sun,
A poet of the cosmic mysteries

.... ..

A King of greatness and slave of love,
Host of the stars and guest in Nature’s Inn,
A high Spectator Spirit throned above
A pawn of passion in the game divine
One who has made in sport the sun and seas
Mirrors in our being his immense caprice.

(*Sonnets*, Sri Aurobindo, P – 41)

The concept of surrender is important for the Aurobindonian World-view.

It may be mentioned here that the philosophical content does not make the sonnet somber. There is a lightness of touch throughout illumined with poetic phrases that have coiled significance. Difficult words and *Vedantic* diction are kept to a minimum. There is even a stroke of occasional humour as in “Self”.

He said, ‘I am egoless, spiritual, free,
Then swore because his dinner was not ready.
I asked him why. He said, “It is not me,
But the belly’s hungry god who sets unsteady”.
I asked him why. He said, ‘It is his play.
I am unmoved within, desires, pure.
I care not what may happen day by day.
I questioned him, ‘Are you so very sure?’
He answered, ‘I can understand your doubt.
But to be free is all. It does not matter
How you may kick and howl and rage and shout,
Making a row over hour daily platter.

To be aware of self is liberty.
Self I have got, and having self, I am free.

(*Sonnets*, Sri Aurobindo P – 59)

In the light of the above observations, it may be concluded that Sri Aurobindo was a great experimenter with regard to the execution of Sonnet as a poetic form in Indian context. He was obviously influenced by the western poets, such as, Petrarch, Shakespeare and Milton in using the traditional rhyme-scheme in a Sonnet and in depicting the ideas and thoughts in a close, compact poetic form. But at the same time his sonnets are marked by his uncanny poetic potentiality and individual talent. Particularly no Indian poet has been successful in incorporating Indian thoughts within the frame work of a western poetic form as Sri Aurobindo. The other aspect of his significant contribution to the Indian poetry in English is that he not only developed a system of Indian metaphysics, mysticism, & *Tantra* in such works as *Life Divine* and 'Synthesis of Yoga', but also he has successfully incorporated those ideas in his immortal Sonnets.

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The Screwed IITians and their Personality Types : A psychological study of Chetan Bhagat's *Five Point Someone*

C. Ramya

Five Point someone is a story about three friends in IIT who are unable to cope. The book starts with a disclaimer, “*This is not a book to teach you how to get into IIT or even how to live in college. In fact, it describes how screwed up things can get if you don't think straight*”.

Three hostel-mates – Alok, Hari and Ryan get off to a bad start in IIT – they screw up the first class quiz. And while they try to make amends, things only get worse. It takes them a while to realize: If you try and screw with the IIT system, it comes back to double screw you. Before they know it, they are at the lowest echelons of IIT society. They have a five-point-something GPA out of ten, ranking near the end of their class. This GPA is a tattoo that will remain with them, and come in the way of anything else that matters – their friendship, their future, their love life. While the world expects IITians to conquer the world, these guys are struggling to survive. In the whole novel, the three different personalities of these friends are clearly obvious in all the situations they encounter. During the course of their studies, they come across many problems which each of the friends tackles in different ways, and it wholly depends upon their personality traits. Before psychoanalyzing the characters in the novel, let us see a brief synopsis of the novel.

The novel is set in the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, in the period 1991 to 1995. It is about the adventures of three mechanical engineering students (and friends). Hari Kumar (the narrator), Ryan Oberoi, and Alok

Gupta, who fail to cope with the grading system of the IITs. Ryan is a bit smart and outspoken, whereas Alok and Hari are mildly cry babies. The three hostel mates – Alok, Hari and Ryan get off to a bad start in IIT – they screw up the first class quiz. And while they try to make amends, things only get worse. It takes them awhile to realize : If you try and screw with the IIT system, it comes back to double screw you. Before they know it, they are at the lowest echelons of IIT society. They have a five-point-something GPA out of ten, ranking near the bottom of their classes.

While the tone of the novel is humorous, it takes some dark turns every now and then, especially when it comes to the families of the protagonists. Most of the action, however, takes place inside the campus as the boys, led by the ever creative Ryan, frequently lamenting how the internationally lauded IIT system has stifled their creativity by forcing them to value grades more than anything else. Uninspiring teaching and numerous assignments add to their woes, though the boys do find a sympathizer in Prof. Veera, the new fluid mechanics professor.

So, what makes Ryan, Hari and Alok totally different from each other though all the three of them are five pointers in IIT grade system – the symbol of underperformers? What is the reason for their attitudes and reactions to the same situations to be highly different from one another? It is all because of the difference in their personalities. This article distinguishes their personality types by studying them through Jungian style.

Psychoanalysts believe that your character is a mix of four basic personality types : sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric and melancholic. Around 50% of the variations in human personality are defined by genetic factors. However, the personality itself is built up of two completely different traits; character and temperament. There is a difference between character and temperament. A person's character traits come from their experiences, for example:

- habits, preferences and values of one's parents,
- Societal norms and values that one fits into.

Temperament, however, is the balance of one's personality. These are biologically based tendencies that each person inherits from their parents. This is one's disposition to think and feel in a certain way that appeared from one's early childhood. Learning about the temperaments will help us understand others and our personality in a much better way.

Ryan Oberoi belongs to the sanguine personality type as he is characterized by spontaneity, optimism, enthusiasm, high energy, mental flexibility, novelty seeking, impulsiveness and curiosity. These people often have very expressive faces and love using words like "adventure", "energy", "new", "fun", "active", "travel" and similar.

The Sanguine personality is affected by chemical called dopamine, which makes these people intensely curious and creative. Their curiosity can be expressed in their love for reading and different kinds of knowledge and they usually possess high amounts of energy, so they may seem restless and spontaneous. For an instance, when one of the professors mentions the definition of mechanics, Ryan spontaneously shoots his question of sheer brilliance. Professor says, "The definition of a machine is simple. It is anything that reduces human effort. Anything, so, see the world around you and it is full of machines". Ryan asks: "Sir, what about a gym machine, like a bench press or something? That doesn't reduce human effort. In fact, it increases it". The professor does not know how to respond. Though many felt he had a point, no one was courageous enough to ask the professor about it. There are several instances where Ryan's spontaneity, optimism, enthusiasm, high energy, mental flexibility, novelty seeking, impulsiveness and curiosity are in its high play.

For example, once a professor asks students to design a car jack to lift the chassis in case of flat tires etc. Ryan draws a 'modified screw-jack', in which one does not have to open manually and raise the jack. A flat tire does not mean the engine has failed. Hence one can attach a motor on the traditional jack and hook it up to the car battery. If one switches on the car ignition, the motor car derives power. Ryan is very happy with the design.

But the professor finds it difficult to accept this original thinking. Ryan's brilliance is taken as over confidence and misbehavior of not presenting what is essential for the study. He is successful in getting the students together and delivering his true thoughts without any fear:

You know guys, this whole IIT system is sick. Because, tell me, how many great engineers or scientists have come out of IIT? I mean that is supposed to be the best college in India, the best technology institute for a country of a billion. But has IIT ever invented anything? Or made any technical contribution to India? Over thirty years of IITs, yet, all it does is train some bring kids to work in multinationals. I mean look at MIT in the USA.... What is wrong in the system... this system of relative grading and overburdening the students? I mean it kills the best fun years of your life. But it kills something else. Where is the room for original thought? Where is the time for creativity? It is not fair.

He just inspires the students through his brilliant talks and gathers them together to follow his planned way of breaking the IIT system – 'Co-Operate To Dominate' i.e., according to Ryan, the IIT system is unfair because, it suppresses talent and individual spirit, it extracts the best years of one's life from the country's brightest minds, it judges students with a draconian GPA system that destroys relationships, the profs don't care for the students, IITs have hardly

contributed to the country. Instead, it just bugs the students to study more lessons, to write more and more assignments and test, giving each student hardly a limited personal space for fun and original thought. So he creates C2D as a plan to get rid of this crap and give room for some fun and creativity.

One more salient feature of sanguine type of personality is that they are the people who love the life of luxury; they like to impress others by their expensive clothes, designer accessories and sport cars. If choleric people thrive on money-making process itself, sanguine people know how to enjoy money, luxury and comfort like nobody else. Ryan is also a lover of luxury as he wears all branded clothes and accessories as he belongs to wealthy parents.

The sanguine personalities are risk-takers. Ryan is characterized as a person willing to take risks for the sake of pursuit of his numerous interests. These people feel bored if they are not absorbed by something intriguing and their constant cravings for adventure and novelty are the major motivating force behind their actions, decisions and choices. Ryan is definitely adventurous and a risk lover and there are several instances when he risks his entire education just for mere fun. For example, he draws a plan to steal the question paper from the head of the department's office, so that they can get an 'A' grade in Professor Cherian's course. He motivates Hari and Alok to accompany him to do this just because Hari can impress Prof. Cherian as he happens to be Hari's girlfriend's father. When the whole IIT system is very strict and the students hardly think out of the system. Ryan alone stands out as an epitome of adventure and fun.

Sanguine people are very poor at tolerating boredom. Routine jobs, repetitive experiences and boring companions annoy and irritate them, and for the most part, they will try to avoid routine and monotony at all costs. In actual fact, they love and thrive on interruptions because they get energized during these small changes in course. Ryan is definitely a boredom buster as he just skips the regular study every IITian does and just mesmerizes his friends to go to movies, restaurants, intake alcohol and have. While, the entire hostel is preparing for the surprise quiz, he just takes Hari and Alok to a science fiction movie. He made them skip all the boring study hours and then catch up every new movie, visit every tourist destination in Delhi, to have utmost fun that any IITian can dream of.

More than any other types of personality, this temperament is more susceptible to smoking, alcohol, drugs, gambling and risky sex. Ryan is known for his drinks parties in the hostel and his vodka plans on the top of the insti building. His spontaneity reflects in last-minute plans and moments of intellectual discovery. He just does whatever sparks in his mind. He helps Alok to do his assignment by attending to his sick father; even after Alok and Ryan were not in good terms for a year, he offers this sudden help when Alok was in

a desperate situation and this last minute decision made Alok understand Ryan better and be patched up with him once again.

Sanguine people are usually more creative than other types. Ryan's creativity is the symbol of his strong intellect as he spends sleepless nights to complete his lube project. Though the mechanical engineering department had coolly rejected Ryan's lube project, he takes a second attempt and makes a strong proposal for the project and holds pride in discovering a new product.

This personality type is characterized by curiosity and having a wide range of interests. Ryan is not only interested in his engineering but also in sports, entertainment, and physical fitness and so on. He does almost anything to satisfy his always present need to be absorbed by something meaningful and exciting.

Sanguine personalities are highly optimistic and confident. Ryan's self confidence is envied by everyone, including the professors. Hari accepts saying:

Ryan will blame anyone-his parents, his friends, his college, even god-anyone but himself. He is that boy with the grudge. (214)

Hari: Hari kumar is of Phlegmatic type of personality. These people always want to know other people's deepest feelings and strive to build intimate attachments with about everyone in their lives. They are interested in cooperation and interpersonal harmony, and this is why they preserve their family ties and friendships. When the major results are out all the three stood as five-pointers and Alok started blasting Ryan saying that Ryan's crappy plans of limited study hours turned them underperformers. Alok started swearing at Ryan saying that it was he who screwed up everything. Ryan was presented as somebody of least importance and this hurt Ryan a lot and he was blaming Alok for over reacting. As this argument is going on between Alok and Ryan in the presence of Hari, Hari could not take any sides. The argument grew so fierce that Alok decided to leave the company of Ryan and demands Hari also to leave Ryan and join him. At this point Hari just exclaims:

This was so damn unfair I had nothing to do with all this, yet I had to now choose between my friends. (67)

When there is a conflict, they seek to agree, to satisfy the needs of everyone involved. These men and women are very empathetic and compassionate. They try to understand what the other person is thinking and feeling, then to respond accordingly, which allows them to connect with that person. One year later, after Alok left Hari and Ryan to choose Venkat, the nine pointer, Hari and Ryan happen to eavesdrop a fight between Alok and Venkat. Alok was crying that he could not make up for the assignment as he had to take care of his dad, who has become unconscious. But Venkat claims that, Alok's mom overplays

his dad's illness and therefore Alok's skipping the assignment and making the trip to his home would not help him in any way. As Hari and Ryan overhear this, Ryan offers a help that he would take care of his father. At this position Hari analyses Ryan's and Alok's feeling as well. He could empathize Alok's state of mind. After a petty talk, he just hugged Alok and welcomed back into their team. There were several instances where Hari remained silent by just analyzing other persons' minds and then acting in a way that favors everybody. Moreover, people with phlegmatic personality are agreeable.

They could be described as cooperative, considerate, charitable, sympathetic, trusting and warm. Neha Cherian, the girl whom Hari admires the most as the prettiest girl he has ever met, spend just a few hours with him and trusts him to share even the deepest secrets that she never shares with anyone. She writes a letter to his brother, who is no more, describing about Hari:

..... there was something about him that drew me from the very beginning. Not very good looking or anything, or not super smart but there he was, this silly bumbler (133).

Whatever conflicts happen in his presence, Hari considers everyone's feelings and react warm so as to please everyone. He likes to express his feelings, sometimes dramatizing his experience. Once Hari, dreams of Prof. Cherian making a speech on the convocation day. He dramatizes Prof. Cherian's state of mind after getting to know about his own son's sad suicide story. Hari dreams Prof Cherian's speech.

Once upon a time there was a student in IIT. He was very bright, and this is true, his GPA was 10.00 after four years. He didn't have a lot of friends, as to keep such a high GPA, you only have so much time for friends. This bright boy thought his classmates were less smart than him, were selfish and wanted to make the most money or go to the USA with minimum effort Ten years passed, when his friends from college visited home. One of them had a GPA of seven point something, and he had his own software company. The turnover had reached two hundred million dollars. Another friend was heading a toothpaste MNC, and came in a BMW. But even this did not bother the principled bright boy. As you guessed, that bright boy was me. And at that time I thought it didn't matter if others had achieved more personally. He was still the one with the better GPA, the smarter one, the brighter one. Somehow, on that day, he decided my son must get into IIT. He wanted his son to carry on his family's strong intellectual tradition. But his son wanted to be a lawyer and hated maths. The professor hated him for hating maths. He pushed him hard just as he pushed students. He failed to get in the first time and the professor made life hell for him. His son failed

a second time and the professor made his life an even bigger hell. Then the son failed to get in the third time. And this time, he killed himself And that is when I realized that GPAs make a good student, but not a good person. We judge people here by their GPA. If you are a nine, you are the best. If you are a five, you are useless. I used to despise the low GPAs so much that when Ryan submitted a research proposal on lubricants, I judged it without even reading it. But these boys have something really promising. I saw the proposal the second time. I can tell you, any investor who invests in this will earn a rainbow. (259)

Later he came to know from Alok, that Prof. Cherian's speech was almost like how Hari imagined. This shows how Hari had a deep insight about others' feelings.

On the negative side, people with a phlegmatic personality can be indecisive, unable to focus on important details while ruminating on the bigger picture. On many occasions, Hari blindly follows Ryan and expresses his poor decision making capacity. In most of the vivas Hari stands tongue-tied and reason is that his father was a military officer and he maintained strict discipline which means no television, no music, no laugh aloud allowed in the house. He told Hari not to answer back. If he answers back his superiors he will be punished severely. This hurt Hari's deepest chords and that is why he remains a passive listener whenever others speak. Hard punishments from his father stuck those moments in Hari's unconscious mind and his repressed feeling suppresses him not to be decisive when someone dominates.

Alok : Alok comes under Melancholic personality type. Melancholics tend to be calm, loyal and orderly, just as their personality name sounds. They are cautious and conventional. These men and women inherited genes in the serotonin system and their favorite words are "family", "loyal", "respect", "caring", "values", and "moral". When there was a conflict between Ryan and Alok about they becoming the low performers of the class, Alok utters,

I am not over reaction. And it is not just stupid grades for me. I don't have my parents earning dollars like yours. I came to the institution with the purpose. To do well, to get a good job and look after my parents.

And you have ----- it up (64).

Men and women with melancholic personality share many traits – they tend to be loyal to their family and friends and extremely careful. Respectability and moral issues are particularly important to them and they will often love to follow typical "norms" of society and family traditions. Alok takes it as a matter of loyalty and respect to take care of his family. He keeps uttering his love and respect for his family each and every time he argues. For example, he keeps telling these words almost every time when Hari and Ryan plan for

entertainment

You don't understand that I have responsibilities. I have to do well to support my family. Half of my mother's salary goes to my father's medicine. She has not bought a new saree for herself in five years And my sister needs to be married. Everyone is counting on me and you guys don't understand. Ryan wants to play chess, see T.V., enjoy his ears. I hate enjoyment. (66)

Family and social ties are not seen by melancholics as something that limits their freedom and flexibility, as this could be with a sanguine or a choleric. In fact, to them these are safety nets, kind of a soft place to fall but in a much grander scale. It is also something that adds meaning to their life. Since society and family ties are such an important part of their daily lifestyles and routines, they absolutely can't see themselves without it. Take this part away from them and they will be devastated. They are respectful to authority, follow rules and feel comfortable in hierarchies, where structure, rules and order are implemented. Whenever Ryan makes fun of the system. Alok seriously gets irritated and he is very much ok with whatever rules and regulations the system employs. Melancholic personality traits are very orderly and don't like unpredictability – they enjoy making definite plans and keeping schedules. They love routines, which they find relaxing and nobody enjoys it more than a melancholic. For example, when he splits from Ryan and Hari, he choose who is supposed to be the class topper and nobody in the hostel wants to talk to Venkat as everyone felt that he had a good GPA but he was hardly human. He woke up at four in the morning to squeeze in four hours of muggings before classes. Every evening he spends three hour in the library before dinner. After that he studied on his bed for another couple of hours until he went to sleep. Nobody ever thought of hanging out with him but Alok finds Venkat orderly and systematic which is the route for his success. People with a melancholic personality are not only orderly, they are also accurate. They are process-oriented and like to pursue their goals in a precise straightforward way. Before Alok starts a specific task, they need to organize themselves and break down the task into the manageable steps.

Unlike the Sanguine personality, they hate distractions and get frustrated by them. The physics quiz episode broke Alok a bit so he was less vigilant when Ryan distracts from studies. He gets frustrated and shouts at Ryan for blaming the system. He just puts it simple,

And anyway who cares I want to get a degree and land a good job. (35)

Their orderliness is also reflected in their tastes. If you give a melancholic man one striped shirt and hundred shirts with asymmetrical design, he will be wearing that one striped shirt every day. Similarly, Alok wears one kurthi all the time and when his mother gives him a pairs of jeans which his sister got from

her saved-pocket-money, he just preserves it for a good occasion.

Melancholics are proud of their accomplishments and Alok keeps saying that he was the class topper all these years that he feels ashamed of being an underperformer here. He glorifies himself that took part in competitions, won most of them and prizes kept coming in.

On the negative side, people with a melancholic personality may become close-minded, dogmatic and stubborn. They also tend to turn to pessimism which may turn into fatalism, believing that nothing will ever change for better. His height of pessimism goes to the extent of committing suicide that he jumps from the nine storey building after hearing that the discipline committee had suspended all the three of them for a semester.

In a nutshell, most people are unique blend of four different types of personality, where all of the traits are present to some extent, However, some of these traits will be predominant. One's predominant type will be considered as their main temperament and while they most probably display all four temperaments to some extent; we still can easily identify two leading temperaments – the basic temperament and the secondary temperament.

Therefore, Chetan Bhagat has a deep insight of his characters' psyche and presented them with utmost sincerity that we feel Ryan, Hari and Alok almost living with every one of us.

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Autobiographical Narratives : Select Responses to Marathi and Hindi Dalit and Afro-American Literature

Ranjana Sharan

The word Dalit comes from the Sanskrit and means ‘ground’, ‘suppressed’, ‘crushed’ or ‘broken to pieces’. It was first used by Jyotiba Phule in the nineteenth century in the context of the oppression faced by the erstwhile untouchable castes of the twice-born Hindus.

Dr. Ambedkar observed: ‘Dalithood is a kind of life condition that characterizes the exploitation, suppression and marginalization of Dalit people by social, cultural and political domination of the upper castes’ Brahmanical ideology.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi coined the word Harijan, translated roughly as ‘Children of God’ to identify the former untouchable.

‘Adi Dravida’, ‘Adi Karnataka’, ‘Adi Andhra’ and ‘Adi Dharmi’ are words used in the states of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab respectively, to identify people of former “untouchable” castes in official documents. These words, particularly the prefix of ‘Adi’, denote the aboriginal inhabitants of the land.

Dalit is not a new word. Apparently it was used in the 1930s as a Hindi and Marathi translation of ‘depressed classes’. In 1970s the ‘Dalit Panthers’ revived the term and expanded its reference to include schedule tribes, poor peasants, women and all those being exploited politically, economically and

in the name of religion. So Dalit is a symbol of change and revolution.

In the introduction to *Literature of Marginality : Dalit Literature and African-American Literature* editor N. M. Aston identifies “Poetics of liberation” as the essential thread that links the two literatures. In this seminal anthology, several Indian scholars establish the similarity in terms of content, purpose, and aesthetics that underline these two marginalized groups of peoples and their literary expressions. Rangarao Bhongle in his article “Literature of Marginality – Dalit Literature and African – American Literature” compares the themes of two literatures and contents that all tackle similar issues of poverty, ignorance, oppression and the ultimate alienation which lead to protest, anger, aggression and discard in literary expressions. S. D. Kapoor sees collective memory, experience, and the rise of consciousness as similar themes in the two literatures.

One of the most important ways of carving their identities for themselves, in the late 1960s was the embrace of armed resistance and violent and virulent art. While the Black Panthers and the Black Power Movement rocked the United States and the Black Art movement published brilliant but furiously anti-establishment art, the Dalit Panthers in India in the early 1970s gave vent to a militant ideology by both organizing strikes and demonstrations and by composing art in a “voice of protest against middle-class Hindu who monopolized cultural expression.” This Black “discourse” in turn inspired the Dalit Panther founders, Namdeo Dhasal and Arjun Dangle. In both movements the literature and the politics were not separate.

The primary motive of Dalit literature is the liberation of dalits. Dalit’s struggle against casteist tradition has a long history. For example in Kannada, it goes back to the first vachana poet of the 11th century, Chennaiah, the cobbler. In modern times because of the legacy of Mahatma Phule and B. R. Ambedkar, Dalit literature got impetus in Maharashtra. But before the name came into being in the 1960s, such people as Baburao Bagul, Bandhu Madhav, Shankarrao Kharat were already creating Dalit literature. In its formal form it sprouted out of a progressive movement called ‘Little Magazine’ which was a kind of rebellious manifestation of the educated youth of those days against establishment. These Dalit youths found inspiration in the movement of blacks in the distant land of North America; their black literature and Black Panther became the role models of sorts for them. This protest gained its first expression in the form of a new literature called Dalit literature.

Starting with Marathi the Dalit literature emerged into prominence as a collective voice very soon in Hindi, Kannada, Telugu and Tamil languages, through self narratives like poems, short stories and most importantly autobiographies known for their realism and for its contribution to Dalit politics. It is

often compared with the African-American literature especially in its depiction of issues of racial segregation and injustice, as seen in slave narratives.

The journey from Shankarrao Kharat's *Taral Antarat* to the young writer Sharankumar Limbale's *The Bastard* is the whole saga of Dalit social history. Eighty six autobiographical narratives written in prose by contemporary dalit authors in their mother tongue Marathi have been traced. The most genuine autobiographical masterpiece of N. S. Suryavanshi *Things I Never Imagined* (1975) and the sensation caused in the literary circles of Maharashtra by Daya Pawar's *Balute* (1978) may be considered as marking the rising of the dalit autobiography at the horizon of the Marathi literary establishment.

The history of Dalit Sahitya in Hindi stretches back to times before Kabir and Raidas. An exploration of its foundations that emerged after the attainment of our Independence in 1947 would, however, require the researcher to investigate the period immediately preceding that of Dr. Ambedkar during which Swami Achhutanand 'Harihar', the founder of the Adi Hindu Mahasabha (an organization of the Depressed Classes) and of the newspaper Adi Hindu, and poet, dramatist, historian and propagandist of a distinct Dalit religious faith, articulated through his literary production a community consciousness of the Dalit people. On the issue of a separate culture of the Dalit people, there was an unanimity of opinions between Swami Achhutanand and Dr. Ambedkar. The two engaged in a cooperative partnership in associations and agitations that took up the causes of Dalits.

It needs to be stated that before Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit Panthers appeared on the scene to fight for the rights of the untouchables, Swami Achhutanand had made the terms 'Outcaste' and 'Dalit' current in Hindi vocabulary. Dalit writers in Hindi thus enabled the creation of an appropriate climate for the mobilization of a Dalit movement in the 1960s by the Republican Party of India.

The autobiographical impulse in Dalit writers from the Hindi heartland, in fact, manifested itself quite early. Around 1952-54, the autobiography of Hazari had appeared. Serialised in Hindustan under the caption, *Ek Harijan Ki Ram Kahani* (the grand Narrative of a Harijan's life), it was subsequently brought out in English translation from England under the heading *An Outcaste Indian. Jhoothan* (Left-Overs) (1997) the self narrativisation of his life by Om Prakash Valmiki has also attracted international and national attention after it was translated into English a few years ago. Another well known biography in Hindi is *Tiraskrit* (2002) by Surajpal Chauhan. The autobiography of Sheoraj Singh *Bechain, Mera Bachpan Mere Kandhaon Par* (My Childhood on My Shoulders) has just been released.

These autobiographies are the translation of pain into resistance. Om Prakash Valmiki begins his autobiography by asserting Dalit's life is excruciatingly painful, charred by experiences.

African-American literature is the body of literature produced in the United States by the writers of African descent. The history of African American literature is as old and varied as the United States itself, but there are several recurrent themes : combating racism, searching for a black identity and maintaining a unique quality of life. Slave narratives were one of the earliest forms of African American writing. These works, autobiographical in nature, later fostered other pieces of African-American autobiographies.

Eighteenth century "Slave Narratives", journals of personal experiences by slaves were (and still are) a source of insight and inspirational to readers. African – American literature of the 1800s was dominated by autobiographical works culminating in Booker T. Washington's *Up From Slavery*. Fredrick Douglass 'autobiography' *Narrative of the life of Fredrick Douglas, An American Slave* (1845) advocated education as a way out of the physical and mental bondage of slavery.

Nineteenth century African American women's autobiography is much more than a personal narrative that merely remarks on her personal growth; it is a social discourse that applies a unique black woman's voice to the interpretation and recording of her life experiences within a historical context that saw black Americans attempting to establish their humanity and self-worth in the eyes of a dominant white American society that granted them neither. Harriet Ann Jacob's (1861) *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* written by herself, the black female narrative most often studied and anthologized, offers an excellent example of an African American Woman's use of a revamped autobiographical genre as social discourse.

Black women autobiographies are the public texts by black women in which they have represented their resistance to the oppression of enslavement.

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A Spiritual Quest in J.D. Salinger's Art

Pragyan Paramita Pattnaik

J. D Salinger, the 20th century American writer who was totally disenchanted with the dominant materialistic culture of America, sought respite in Spiritualism and was particularly influenced by the eastern religions like Tao, Zen Buddhism and Advaita Vedanta. This disgruntlement found a vent in his writings. All his writings portray his experiences of life. The quest for enlightenment in his life was also inseparable from his art. This integration of art and life in Salinger has been clearly pointed out by Dipti R Pattnaik and Salinger's biographer, Ian Hamilton. Salinger started his writing career with stories that depicted social realism but his gradual dissatisfaction with the 'commercial vulgarization' is evident in his only novel, The Catcher in the Rye. This frustration with the dominant materialistic culture tilted him towards Eastern mysticism which is conspicuous from his writings in the later stage. This paper attempts to trace this progress in Salinger's art from realistic fiction to a writing steeped in mysticism.

Let us first analyse the early works of Salinger. Salinger's writings in the first half are packed in realistic experiences from life. Salinger's father wanted him to work for his farm but he was least interested in the idea. This is the plot of one of his early stories, 'A Girl I Knew' which appeared in Good Housekeeping in the year 1940. In the same year 'The Young Folks' was published in The Story. Here a girl, Edna, who is phony, snobbish, treacherous and not even 'terrifically good looking' engages herself in futile attempts to lure William Jameson at a college party. This story clearly projects the sexual licentiousness of the age.

~~Another story of Salinger, 'The Long Debut of Lois Taggett' is based on~~
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the unsuccessful marriage of Salinger's sister, Doris. In the story, Bill marries the debutante Lois Taggett for her money and few months after the wedding starts torturing her. This story clearly brings in the materialistic bias of America that had taken the place of human values. Again his 'The Varioni Brothers' can be interpreted as a parable on the evils of commercialism.

Apart from his dissatisfaction with the materialistic ethos, some of his early stories portray Salinger's experience of anger and anguish attached with war. His stories like 'The Hang of it', 'Soft-boiled Sergeant' and 'A Boy in France' narrate his front-line experiences while stories like 'Last Day of the Last Furlough' and 'The Magic of Foxhole' reveal the protagonist's anguish for war and its aftermath. In these stories he highlights the repercussions of war on the people who actively participate in the war and the people who are mute spectators. One of his protagonists, Gladwaller advocates that children should be taught to laugh at wars. Salinger's disillusionment with war coupled with his discontentment with the dominant materialistic culture of America led to a rejection of the realistic mode of writing. His later stories present a kind of transcendental realism where we find a mystic atmosphere. Salinger seeks the answer to the existing dilemmas in mysticism and spiritualism which find an outlet in his later stories. Salinger's novel Catcher presents a transition between his early and later fiction.

Salinger's frustration with the Faustian world view of the West is clearly highlighted in his novel Catcher. Holden Caulfield, the protagonist has been portrayed as a non-conformist, who rebels against the dominant culture of America. He can be taken as a representative of the counter culture movement, one who does not conform and is made an outcast in the society. Holden is an outcast who is constantly flunked from school and is always compelled to conform to the norms of the traditional society. James Lundquist has put it rightly by saying that, Salinger's Holden is a "moral hero forced to compromise his integrity with a pragmatic society. What disaffiliates the hero is his peculiar off center vision which sensitizes and distorts his sense of truth in a false world" (1965:24). Holden is a rebel against the 'phoniness' of his society which he considers to be life threatening. He screams against the society of convention, immorality and the potently false. He is no doubt in despair but he is not a character who illustrates the better pessimism and seriousness of a character of Sartre, nor does he convey the simple message of popular existentialism as suggested by Camus. He simply disregards the pretentiousness of his age and proclaims to escape from it.

The novel begins with a psychological crisis in the protagonist. Holden's crisis is the result of an accumulated experience of isolation. He tries to keep himself aloof from the dominant materialistic culture of the society. He

expresses his disgust with the entire materialistic ethos of America in a single line, "In New York, boy, money really talks- I am not kidding." (1958:73). Holden distastes every behavior that is not quite natural and instinctive. He does not like the way people start clapping insincerely after a show is over and the way the performer makes mockery of a humble bow to the audience. Holden's hatred is not confined to specific etiquettes of modern behavior, there are several characters in the novel whom he detests because they seem to him 'phony' or unreal. He simply dismisses the headmaster of Pency Prep School as a 'phony slob' (1958:7) and the headmaster of the school at Elkton Hills as 'phony bastard' (1958:18). Holden is also dissatisfied with some of his mates at school. He dislikes Ossenburger because he is very showy and does not behave naturally. He hates Robert Ackley, who is a nasty guy with lousy manners. Holden is also critical of his friend and room-mate, Ward Stradlater for his snobby personal habits, his conceitedness and his technique with girls. Holden also records his detest for actors who behave in an unnatural way both on the stage and in their actual life. He also dislikes the ministers of the church who give sermons in a very unnatural voice.

Holden dreams of an ideal world of his own where he would shun all human contact and lead the life of total seclusion from the proceedings of the adult world. He would not allow any body to enter his cabin except his loving sister, Phoebe. In the entire world it is only Phoebe with whom Holden has a completely satisfying relationship. Before entering into the life of seclusion, Holden meets Phoebe to say goodbye to her; but finally he has to drop the idea when Phoebe gets ready to accompany him to that solitary place. He is unable to move away from his little affectionate sister. The only way he finds at the end of the novel is that he will continue to be the isolated individual in the teeming modern world, giving up even the dream of the impossible escape to the forest and will gradually discover an affection for those other individuals who show some potentiality at least of decency and the ability to like and to be liked. So the answer that Holden finally discovers for himself through the love of Phoebe, is the answer that William Bradford on his frontier had given Americans three hundred years ago: "a man cannot live within himself in contempt of the world; he must be a part of that human race to which he is by nature morally committed, a decent regard, even a potential love for others, is the unavoidable requirement for life in America – if a man can avoid the torture of isolation that American life can bring." (1965:48). Finally Holden realizes that his quest for peace and happiness culminates not in isolation but he can attain it remaining within the mainstream culture. He adopts a new theory of action – a compassionate waiting without any motif of profit or success.

Through the character of Holden, Salinger reached the conclusion that

to attain peace and solace one does not need to keep himself away from the dominant culture. One can very well attain peace staying within the culture but changing his entire attitude towards life.

Thus, the conventional quest theme of Catcher gradually gives way to a kind of spiritual quest that can be traced in the characters of his later stories. All the later stories of Salinger spin round a note of mysticism derived from spiritual influences of Classical Catholicism, Zen Buddhism and Advaita Vedanta. All these stories contain direct and indirect references to the Bible and Christ. In the story Franny and Zooey we can trace a lot of quotations from the Bible. While trying to help Franny overcome her religious crisis, Zooey quotes "Pray without ceasing". Then he adds, "There is another similar line in Timothy- 'I will therefore that men pray everywhere'. And Christ as a matter of fact says, 'Men ought always to pray and not to faint' (1988:102). Franny is sick of the ego-centric world in which she resides. In order to get rid of this, she wishes to pray Christ incessantly. But Zooey convinces Franny that before going for Jesus prayer, she should first understand who Christ is. Zooey again quotes a passage in Matthew vi, 26, to pinpoint the crux of Franny's disenchantment with Christ, "Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns: yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them" (1988:120). These quotations from the Bible show that Both Franny and Zooey have studied the New Testament intensively.

Similarly, the Bible quotations in Seymour: An Introduction speaks of Seymour Glass' awareness of the New Testament. Different speeches of Seymour allude to extracts in the Bible. When Seymour says we are bound to see the essence of all things unfolding to us 'like a flower', the allusion is to Matthew xxiv, 42, in the Bible. Seymour's unorthodox way of reading the Bible is mentioned by Buddy when he reports a childhood incident when Seymour once woke him up from a sound sleep because "he wanted to tell me that he finally knew why Christ said call no man fool" (1981:136). Seymour thought Christ had said it because there were no fools. In Matthew v, 22 Christ says, "..... whoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." Seymour interprets; no man is in his essence a fool. When he acts foolishly, he is merely a dope, someone who has not yet achieved the enlightenment, we are all destined to achieve.

Seymour's unorthodox conception of Christ is best illustrated in 'Hapworth'. In the letter from Summer camp, Seymour quotes Matthew v, 48, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (1964:32). He addresses Jesus Christ as the "incomparable Jesus Christ". Seymour not only insists on the essential humanity of Christ but he also rejects the notion that Christ is part of a triune God. To Seymour, Christ is not only the son of

god but an individual who has achieved god consciousness, a true enlightened man, one name on his list of human beings, whom he respects, 'without countless reservations'. As a result of his religious training, Zooey also sees Christ in the same way as Seymour does.

Besides seeing Christ as one of the few truly enlightened men that ever lived, Seymour and his siblings also see him as a symbol of God's omnipresence both in man and matter. Buddy reports this in the Introduction when he says Seymour was one of those "persons who look for God in the queerest imaginable places- e.g. in radio announcers, in newspapers....."(1981:108). This idea of the omnipresence of God is also there in the famous story of the Fat Lady in Franny and Zooey. Zooey remembers the day when Seymour had stopped him on his way to the studio and asked him to shine the shoes for the Fat Lady. Later he explains to Franny, "There isn't anyone out there who isn't Seymour's Fat Lady..... Its Christ himself"(1988:156).

The atmosphere of Christian mysticism is also traceable in some stories like "A perfect day for bananafish" – where we find Seymour's mystical ideas about the bananafish and the mystical fashion of his committing suicide. In the story, "De Daumier – Smith's Blue Period", the young protagonist reaches out to help a girl who falls on her bottom but his fingers are obstructed by the glass of the window. There is a genuine mysticism in the incident.

Although these ideas are supported with the passages from the Bible, their interpretation has been coloured by Salinger's reading of Eastern religious texts. The theologian, Kenneth Hamilton, therefore comments that the Bible, "largely reflects light derived from other sources"(1967:44). Probably the western belief system was not adequate for the spiritual needs of Salinger and so he had to resort to the Eastern Philosophy.

Salinger's interest in Zen Buddhism is manifested in his stories. The *koan* (a process designed to produce spontaneous communion with the true reality of self and nature) which is an important way of Zen instruction can be traced in the famous epigraph of the 'Nine Stories'. The question there is, "We know the sound of two hands clapping. But what is the sound of one hand clapping?" The answer to this question is, "silence is the sound of one hand clapping". Salinger quotes yet another *koan* in Raise High the Roof Beam Carpenters. When Muriel's mother asks Seymour about his future plans, he replies, "if peace ever came again I would like to be a dead cat" (1981: 70). This could be interpreted by none. Later, Seymour explained that "in Zen Buddhism a master was once asked what was the most valuable thing in the world and the master answered that a dead cat was because no one could put a price on it".(1981:71) Salinger's attraction to *koans* was intended to bring about an intuitive perception of the Divine in facts and objects. The Zen students seek

enlightenment in the way of solving these *koans*.

Salinger's Glass children Buddy, Franny, and Zooey have accepted their brother, Seymour as the Zen master. Zooey follows the religious training given to him by his brother. Before taking his meal, he always says the four great vows that have been incorporated in Suzuki's Manual of Zen Buddhism:

However innumerable the beings are, I vow to save them; however inexhaustible the passions are, I vow to extinguish them; however immeasurable the Dharmas are, I vow to master them; however incomparable the Buddha truth is, I vow to attain it. (1988:104-105)

Buddy has also accepted Seymour as his guru. In an incident when Seymour and Buddy are playing marbles, Seymour teaches Buddy that the highest condition of Zen is when one surrenders himself to the flow of things.

The stories of Salinger not only abound in the ideas of Zen Buddhism but have several traces of the Vedantic philosophy. The Vedas have the idea of Brahman as omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. This idea of the omnipresence of God is expressed by Buddy when he says, Seymour looks for God in all places, "e.g. in radio announcers, in newspapers, in taxicabs with crooked meters, literally everywhere." (1981:108). This idea is also expressed in Hapworth, when Seymour says his "beloved shapeless God" is a "nameless hallmark, preferably without attributes" (1964:54). Seymour here refers to the idea of the *Nirguna Brahma*, the Godhead without attributes. According to *Advaita Vedanta*, man may not attain *moksha* or *mukti* from the cyclical pattern of life and death in just one birth. Normally he has to undergo the process of reincarnation. This concept of reincarnation is again associated with the theory of Karma. The past deeds of a person shall determine his present birth. This idea is clear in the story 'Teddy'. Teddy, a little boy of ten offers astonishing insights into the intricate details of Karma and rebirth. Teddy is a *Jatismera*, who has memories of his past life. He remembers being a saint in his previous birth who fell from grace before final illumination. More important than Teddy's gift of intuitive foresight are his desire for meditation, his dislike of sentimentality and his distaste for logic. As a master of Vedanta, Teddy advises that we should not feel sad about somebody's death because "it is not his actual death" (1986:211). When a person dies it is his physical body that perishes; the soul never dies. This idea has been explicitly explained in the *Bhagabat Gita*.

The Vedantic philosophy speaks of the four different Yogic paths – *Bhakti* Yoga, *Karma* Yoga, *Jnana* Yoga, and *Raja* Yoga. All the children of the Glass family predominately choose one of the paths to attain spiritual bliss. Franny Glass chooses the *Bhakti* Yoga, as she wishes to pray God without rest. Zooey Glass takes up the *Karma* Yoga. He hopes to attain transcendence by performing his duties well. Seymour Glass follows *Jnana* Yoga, the path

of study and knowledge. At the mere age of seven, he had finished reading all the religious scriptures (1981:62). Buddy Glass prefers the path of Raja Yoga. His self control and concentration in religious ideas is reflected in his decision to live in a forest away from home and family. Whatever may be their paths, their aim is to seek a blissful state of transcendence. All the spiritual questers in Salinger's stories are in the role of an *artih* – a seeker in spiritual quest in order to recoil himself from the imperfections and uncertainties of the mundane world of sense apprehensions.

Thus, Salinger's spiritual quest which begins with a general dissatisfaction with the existing order of sensual pursuits, through different stages of intensification like the intellectual awareness of alternative modes, meditation upon true knowledge culminates in the true realization of one's self. All the characters of his later works are engrossed in a continual search for enlightenment under the leadership of Seymour. Their desire to delve into a realm of spiritual transcendence keeps them away from the hypocrisy of the modern materialistic culture. Thus we find that the transcendental experiences in Salinger's writings are his own realizations of the Western and Eastern mysticism. So Salinger's own quest for peace and happiness culminates in the study of the different religious scriptures of the world which present him an insight into the realm of spiritual wisdom.

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Philosophical Musings in K.V.Raghupathi's *Wisdom of the Peepal Tree*

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K.V. Rathupathi, an established Indo-English poet and a renowned critic, hails from Tirupati, a temple town in Andhra Pradesh. He has published sixteen books which include nine books in English poetry: *Desert Blooms* (1987), *Echoes Silent* (1988), *The Images of a GrowingDying City* (1989), *Small Reflections* (2000), *Voice of the Valley* (2003), *Wisdom of the PeepalTree* (2003), *Samarpana* (2006), *Dispersed Symphonies* (2010), *Orphan and Other Poems* (2010). The present paper examines the element of philosophy in his sixth collection *Wisdom of the Peepal Tree*. In fact, Philosophy deals with the study of the nature and meaning of the universe and of human life. It is further a search for knowledge about life and the universe. According to Raghupathi, the Peepal Tree drops the ageless wisdom of ancient India through its leaves. The Peepal is sacred to Buddhists because the Buddha is believed to have attained enlightenment under it. Hence, it is also called the Bodhi Tree and the tree of Enlightenment.

The Peepal Tree speaks with the wisdom of eternity taking the reader along a mystical journey of revelations. The poet strolled to the colossal Peepal tree in his search for ancient wisdom. It was both enigmatic and mysterious. He sat under its firmament in a quiescent evening. He felt in that abysmal state of vacant mind a sort of uncommon, exotic, exceptional and sacred voice from the quiver of leaves. The voice was from the ageless ancient and primitive Peepal Tree which the poet Raghupathi called the most sacred. He felt as if he were

a fallen angel from paradise. The Peepal tree is a native of the cosmos. It is huge and tall and every cylindrical leaf is puffed with wisdom. The poet finds its presence everywhere in the world. It is a Tree of knowledge and wisdom. It is also a Tree of Enlightenment.

Let your roots of wisdom penetrate every cell of my body
Like the river and its tributaries and streams
That cut deep into the earth
Let your wisdom enter
My veins and arteries till I merge with Nature. (P.9)

The sparks of wisdom forced the poet to return to the Peepal Tree with an unqualified longing to become the Bodhisatva. It is the wisdom of the Peepal Tree that guided Raghupathi into its abode. The poet felt that man is of no importance and consequence in the vast and boundless cosmos. He is like the last falling leaf in autumn. Man leads a life of riddles until the end. It is like a coiling snake and remains shrouded in mystery. Man is as impatient and restless in his anxiety and tension. He takes refuge in his own self like the ibis in a distant land of water. He is beyond conceptions and descriptions, expectations and anticipations. Images of Pisa tower and the King fisher are used to signify the man's existing condition;

You are essentially and truly a believer
To the marrow of your bones;
A believer standing precariously like the Pisa Tower.
Why don't you throw that state of mind?
And remain like a King fisher. (P.13)

Man is fundamentally a skeptic to the last drop of blood. He is a skeptic like the unsteady butterfly in the unsteady wind. He is not justified in his actions like love which never claims by the passer-by. The poet presents his observations:

Why do you crave for the sun in the hot summer?
When the full moon gives your own reflections in winter? (P.14)

Man is a bundle of contradictions, opposites and contradistinctions. He lives, dies and rises like the mythical phoenix. Victory, honor, defeat and humiliation are part and parcel of life. Man has to accept death just as he lives and wishes to live a life of luxuries. It is like the tiny flower in the stormy wind. The Peepal Tree guides the poet in the philosophic in the essence of life.

Rise from the dust and din
Of your own creations
Like the wallowing donkey from the murky ground.
You shall reach sky-high, like the Andean condor.
Fly in the infinite sky like a falcon

You shall be terrestrial soon like a Kiwi
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You are primarily a human being
Be human and a being
Therein lies your essence. (P.15)

Man is a creature of clay. His pride places him farther from creation. His humility sees him nearer to Existence. Existence is one, indivisible like the wind. In his search for wisdom of the Peepal Tree, the poet finds that man is the victim of his actions.

You complain against the world;
the world complains against you.
Both are one and the same.
In both ways you are the victim.
In your complaints you can never fulfill yourself.
Nor can you land yourself to any one and anything.
Attain the unattainable
You will miss "nothing" in your life
Like the Bodhisattva. (P.16)

Life is full of weepings, sobbings and copious tears. It is further a life of agony, despair and despondency. Man fails to find the answer. The poet learns that the riddle is basically rooted in man and it can be solved by losing everything. It is like the stripped birches in autumn.

The Peepal Tree imparts universal wisdom of living and loving which are infinite. In fact, the basic Principle of life is to live and let others live in love and bliss. No saint, philosopher, teacher is needed to teach such morals of life.

Today with the Infinity you must live and love,
Love and live!
Tomorrow you shall resurrect like Christ.
Likewise end with the Infinity and be born like Christ.
Day in and day out with no trumpet blowing
Thus you become holy in the truest sense
No saint is needed to bless you;
No Philosopher is needed to disperse with your stupidity;
No teacher is needed to disperse your dark clouds. (P.17)

All living is rooted in beauty. Shrine is Man's own heart. Man is perfect only when he is perfect in love. It is possible if man empties his lust and narcissism. The poet points out that all suffering awakens man to religious consciousness. He suffers because he has a burning heart for the great. His prayer is answered in silence when it is full with the froth of his tears.

When you wax, you will burn like a candle and glow

And you are as serene

As still waters in the secluded forests. (P.18)

All givings and receivings don't exist in the world for long. The poet presents the philosophy in the following lines:

Ask not whatever you give in return
Like the tulip the beauty of its colour,
Return whatever you receive,
Like the reflected moon in the pool
Hence, there are no givings and receivings
In the end you are endowed
With more than those who ask and receive
You will have a perfect balance shed of life
And you quit this world like an Unknown bird
Dying in an unknown forest. (P.19)

Man comes back to lead a normal existence only after he experiences certain setbacks in life. All deceptions and illusions reflect his suicidal life which occurs every day. He is hundred times worse than what others have declared. He leads a life of conceived evil and infidelity. He is like a star absorbed in the lake. The poet traces the endless desires of man in his vain search; He uses certain natural images to reflect the original wisdom:

Your desire is rooted in the hopelessness to realize this
And your total despair is the beginning of this awakening
Because you lose everything in the world
Be silent like a lizard on the wall without clucking
For, you have refashioned and refurbished
Your house and doors.
And the key is with you to unlock it
To lock yourself like an owl in winter. (P.20)

Images of seasons are beautifully yoked to reflect ancient wisdom. Human life in wanderings remains useless. It brings no returns but an enhanced ego. He wanders like a dry valley in summer. He can wet it and fill it with cascades of love and compassion in the Monsoon. He is a ruined city in Autumn which he can rebuild it with sympathy and understanding in Spring. He wanders like a frozen forest in winter. He can still animate it with truth and beauty in summer. The true nature of man is philosophically dealt with. In fact, vanity of man is nothing but deceit.

All that comes from vanity is deceit
You are created weak in your dissimulation
You are self-assertive, yet you are untrustworthy
You are confident, yet you are unbelievable.

You are hopeful, yet you are in despair.
You are sympathetic, yet you are insensitive,
You are lovable, yet you are hateful.
You are constantly deluded
By your own bloated conceptions,
Rooted in hopes and desires
When you are alone, you are still astray.
This is you in opposites. (P.21)

The seeker learns from the wisdom of Peepal Tree an eternal truth in that Man never reaches the depths of his heart by mere achievements. He should abandon all his false claims, faults and distinctions so as to learn that Man is not supreme and dominant.

You can convert the explosive
Into a smooth running stream.
You can transform the crude coal into pure diamond
You can remake your brown life into evergreen Pine Tree. (P.22)

The wisdom of leading a moderate life is philosophically explored. All that unwanted has to be kept aloof. Whatever is excessive is to be deleted. Man has to realize that fact that though he is sailing in the ship, the ship does not belong to him.

Give your possessions to the dispossessed.
The excess is an unwanted disease.
You cannot live with it
As it eats your anatomy, like the pest
Your food is that which sustains your body;
Your clothing is that which covers your body;
Your dwelling is that which shelters your body;
Take what is required;
Give what is not yours;
Part with the unused.
Alone in the desert, like a camel move on
When death comes, die valiantly.
When others rot in their own possessions
You can be intact, not claiming that's not yours.
Take that which is essential for your living
And leave the rest unclaimed for humanity. (P.22)

Life is like abandoning the boat at the shore. And it is formed in the conception of good and evil. Though evil prospers only for a while, the good continues to shine for ages. True living, according to Raghupathi, is aligned to none.

He who is steadfast in true living
Has attained the very essence of all that is
Like a lotus leaf in the pond.
To whom shall you return?
Is there any one at the end to receive you. (P.24)

The wisdom of the Peepal Tree manifests that each passing moment is marred by irrationalities, absurdities and oddities. All those dead are a subject of no interest and attention. The poet invites the readers to learn such wisdom which ultimately seals up all that are mysterious.

Take your hands back
And open the gates of your heart
Welcome into the inner part the Great Joy
That manifests in everything. (P.24)

All knowledge is like a flowing river. It never goes dry when the man is fired by a desire of the deep search. Knowledge glows just like the river flows. It is a glaring truth in the universe.

That knowledge which springs from your heart
Never goes dry like the perennial Mansarovar
When it is awakened by a desire of the deep quest
It is a perennial flow like the Ganges.
Follow the flow and sail with it
Until it is one with the cosmic flow (P.25)

What is true renunciation? Poet Raghupathi answers the basic questions governing life human life. The answers are pregnant with philosophic wisdom.

‘Renounce happiness
You shall attain true happiness
Renounce salvation
You shall attain true liberation
Renounce “death”
You shall die at once; that may lead you to true freedom.
Be not passionate for life
You shall then really have true life.
Fear not hell
Crave not for heaven
Rear not and nurture not in fears and cravings.
Covet nothing, you shall possess everything.
Covet everything, you shall possess nothing, (P.27)

Existence is nobody’s property. It is not something like a thing of commodity for which there are buyers. Raghupathi philosophically presents the wisdom.

Claim not existence as yours.

As you claim ownership of everything you buy.
It is nobody's property.
When you have not known yourself first
Gaze until you are lost in gazing like
A bird-watcher. (P.27)

The poet invites the readers to remain like a Peepal Tree and seek refuge from it.

Flee not to a place of worship
In despair, defeat and desolation
But remain where you are like a Peepal Tree
And seek refuge in the recesses of heart. (P.28)

In his search for truth, the poet asks the readers to search for truth which they miss everything in creation. Creation is original, natural and unaffected. He exhorts the world to cherish nothing in life. All wisdom exists in creation.

In conclusion, I firmly hold that K.V. Raghupathi presented the wisdom of the Peepal Tree by taking symbols, images, similes and metaphors. Wisdom gets philosophically done in the collection. It is, no doubt, a gateway for the world to explore more out of the collection. To this end, Raghupathi is successful in his philosophical interpretations. Combined with universal wisdom, he has shown the world how it can live and lead happily in the midst of growing tensions, sorrows and challenges.

Works Cited

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Muffled Voice of Buddha in Nare's Poem 'On Visiting Dhauligiri'

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M.A. Nare's *On Visiting Dhauligiri* is a beautiful poem which reveals his experience during his visit to the Buddhist Shanti-Stupa built by Japanese on a mountain peak near the river Daya at Dhauligiri, Odisha*. The poet knows historical importance of the site: Emperor Ashoka's professing Buddhism in the wake of remorse experience over the unprecedented human massacre in the war of Kalinga. The poet makes a picturesque description of Buddha's white marble statues in various moods and poses installed at the entrance of the Stupa. He also watches two yellow lion statues in sitting pose on the compound wall *guarding the gate and watching the distant ring of the horizon*.

The poet looks downward at the valley and notices the trees and groves, the river, the greenery and the clear sky which appeared to him like *A Giant Painting on a Vast Canvas*. The bewitching beauty of the landscape literally enthralled the poet and the very next moment the poet gets himself lost imagining Ashoka's pangs of remorse, his compassionate heart and his devotion to Buddha's *Dhamma and Ahimsa*. Then focus of the poem shifts from the physical to the spiritual dimension: from the splendourous beauty of the Stupa to the piety and peace of the place.

The poem suddenly moves from pictorial to metaphoric overtone and the poet is approached by two persons: Buddhist monks, asking him as to *why no Indian Maharaja had ever thought of building a monument to commemorate the great historical event before the Japanese came*. They further ask him

as to *why Aadi Shankaracharya came to Puri all the way from Kerala*. The poet metaphorically calls the monks *white and golden snakes*. Here the white colour refers to Peace and Purity of Lord Buddha while golden colour stands for the golden coloured clothes of the monks. He calls them *Snakes* for they are functionaries of a religious institution. He has no high regard for religion as an institution for it gives more importance to the manner of saying prayers and performance of rituals rather than to propagate the enlightening thought of the Saints. Therefore, he looks upon all religions as serpents of various kinds.

On visiting the historical site of Dhauli the poet felt anguished and sat before the statue of Buddha in search of a remedy to end the ongoing *mutual slaughter* in the world. The thought of anguish and the resultant helplessness makes the poet upset. He turns, like a confused child, to the river *Daya* with a hope to get a remedy. The poet looks upon the river *Daya* flowing nearby the hill of Dhauligiri as an eternal consciousness. While observing panorama of the beautiful valley he hears *distant throbbing of Emperor Ashoka's heart*. The poet believes that the river *Daya* has witnessed violence of the Kalinga war, and Ashoka's conversion and sincere devotion to Buddhism that has sanctified the place.

Buddha and Ashoka preached Peace, Compassion and Service to the people. But the interlude of the Peace in Dhauli didn't last long. He describes with poignant images how the advent of Krisnaism and the work of Aadi Shankaracharya's spiritual revival of Hinduism muffled the voice of Buddha. In concluding part of the poem the poet feels alarmed imagining the imminent danger of nuclear war. However, his concern for safety of the earth and welfare of humanity grows manifold. As a disillusioned sensitive individual deeply moved with compassion for mankind and saddened with the bleak prospects of the beautiful planet, our mother earth, the poet turns to his neighbour and asks *Will it (violence) ever end, my friend?*

The poet, with no solution in sight, takes refuge into his inner recess of mind and wishes *I were a rock-edict at the foot of this hill* of Dhauligiri. The poem, after the style of a chronicle, depicts the events of violence, conversion, and the eternal violence influencing our day to day life. Under the pressing demand of a remedy on modern man's predicament, the poet gets overwhelmed with compassion. He feels broken hearted for he can do nothing to secure the life of mankind on the earth. The poem is a saga describing how the individual's efforts for World Peace are intercepted by the age old vedic tradition of Hinduism.

The poem ends in a romantic musing. Just as Eliot's 'Alfred J. Prufrock' folds the bottoms of his trousers to pose himself as a guide to the new couples

in love, the poet wishes to be a *rock edict ... proclaiming to the whole world the views of Russell, and Einstein on the imminent danger of Nuclear War.*

The poem *On Visiting Dhauligiri* is a faithful reflection of multiple ripples aroused in the poet's mind on visiting the Shanti Stupa at Dhauligiri. A man aware of the historic events of Kalinga war, the emperor Ashoka's subsequent remorse and his conversion to Buddhism. The poet knows that Aadi Shankaracharya who had revitalized Hinduism by installing a 'Shiva-Linga' at Banaras in which the 'Shakti' (Vedic deity) and 'Shiva' (Non-Vedic deity) began to be worshipped together. He installed a seat of Hinduism at Puri. During his visit the poet saw the history coming alive before his mind's eye. With his poetic flight of imagination Nare sees a great struggle that arose between the Peace loving Buddhists and devout Hindus resulting into taming the upcoming spirit of the Dhamma and Shanti. The religion that preached Peace, Service and Compassion abroad failed to become an apple of the people's eye. The poet feels broken hearted at this thought and feels utterly shaken. The imminent Nuclear war intensifies his anxiety. The poet's freely moving between the past memories and the menacing problem of chaos and violence in the present time has contributed in a big way to the greatness of the poem. The poet feels deep concern for safety of the beautiful planet, *Our Mother Earth* also. However, all these and many other concerns rioting in the poet's mind find expression in the form of a spectrum which abounds in multiple themes.

Religion and history go hand in hand in human life. The former moves the people for action and the latter records it with details. They occupy a place of importance in human life because they inculcate in people certain beliefs & values. In this sense they pose formative influences in shaping attitudes and aspirations of people living in a community. It has been observed in history that well organized groups of men in the name of religion and politics influence community life and change the traditional course of life from time to time. So it would be pertinent to say that history is a record of the mighty men's triumph over the weak by the way of violence. It is very paradoxical that religion teaches peace and history maintains record of the mighty men's violence. History and religious places are monuments of the cross currents of peace and violence taken place in a community. Therefore it would be futile to study human life outside the context of history & religion.

During his visit to the historical site of Dhauli the poet imagines with his mind's eye the heart rending scene of the violence ravaged Kalinga State and the subsequent reign of Peace & Dhamma in the valley after Ashoka's conversion to Buddhism. The poet is so impressed by the marvelous Shanti-Stupa situated on a mountain peak of Dhauli that the poem opens with sanctity soaked words

describing the Stupa's position and its majestic portal view. He describes;

Dhauligiri, the holiest
of the holy mountain peaks
stands like an Angel of peace
on the bank of Daya.¹⁵³

The poet, reeling under the marvelous look & grandeur of the Stupa, feels more impressed at the greatness of Buddha's doctrine that had tamed barbarous instinct of Ashoka and made him a monk. He says:

... in that trance-like state,
I began to hear the distant
throbbing of Emperor Ashoka's heart
being filled with remorse
and the pangs of his soul
at his 'Rebirth' as 'Devampriya'.¹⁵³

Many questions pertaining to the subsequent period of the historical event start pestering the poet's mind. Like the tourists the natives also feel enigmatic about suppression of Ashoka's Peace Mission. Therefore, during his visit, the piety evoked and peace inspired monks ask the poet as to why no Indian king after Ashoka ever thought of building a monument to commemorate the historic event. They further enquire:

Why did Aadi Shankaracharya
come to Puri all the way
from Kerala?¹⁵⁴

For raising a counter check against the flourishing Buddhism Aadi Shankaracharya came on the scene and there ensued a spiritual battle against the Buddhism. The following metaphors of *a mighty blood-stained Trident* and *A big Conchshell* are telling images of the spread of Shaivism in the ancient state of 'Kalinga-Utkal-Kongada-Odissa'. The flourishing Vaishnism and Shaivism in the contemporary times took the masses in their fold with the religious tools of mystic spirituality and folk traditions of dancing and singing, respectively. The images of *Hissing like a dark, poisonous King-Cobra, a King-size flute ... a missile* and *a mighty blood-stained Trident* are self expressive of the aggressive nature of the new sects. But the contemporary Buddhists, peace loving people, had no theological weapon at hand nor had they received any royal patronage to fight the battle for their survival against the Hindus.

Suddenly, a kind of screen spread
before my mind's eye
And a King-size flute rose
like a missile from the opposite bank,

Hissing like a dark, poisonous
King-Cobra:
The poor snakes quickly dropped
their heads and in a flash,
withdrew to their holes
in the neighbouring rocks.¹⁵³

The poet says that the theological battle took bloody turn resulting into human massacre & bloodshed:

ten thousand tridents
Began to dance in wild frenzy
and the whole valley was
reverberating with heart- rending
cries and screeching¹⁵⁴

The poet has dealt with the theme of 'Binary Relationship between History & Religion' in the context of Peace and Violence. The poet is highly rational & humanitarian in outlook therefore the overtone of dislike for fanatic devotion to religion pervades all through the poem. It seems that the poet has a question in mind as to why the tolerance nurturing religion (Hinduism) should rise against a cult dedicated for disseminating the values of 'Peace, Service and Compassion' in the world.

The poet feels more alarmed during his visit to the Dhauligiri Stupa thinking that today many nations are armed with Nuclear weapons of mass destruction and the voice of Buddha has been muffled at Dhauli. He is hopeful that when Buddha's doctrine of 'Peace compassion & Service' has converted barbaric Ashoka into a Buddhist missionary dedicating rest of his life for teaching 'Peace, Service and Ahimsa' (Non-Violence) in India & abroad, it can work wonderfully in the hearts of today's men and definitely convert them into the harbingers of Peace. He wishes that the teachings of Buddha should be taught to arouse awakening against the spirit of destruction in the world. The poet feels more aggrieved at the presence of Nuclear weapons which have been defiling the earth into ruins.

Dejected the man he is, the poet looks around for support to work for the cause of Peace in mankind & safety of the mother earth. Getting no response from his neighbour he finds refuge into the inner recess of his mind and wishes:

Will it ever end, my friend?
I wish, I were a rock-edict
at the foot of this hill,
Flanked by the sculptures
of Buddha and Gandhi

proclaiming to the whole world
 the views of Russell
 and Einstein on the imminent danger of Nuclear War,
 for the welfare of Mankind
 and a bright future
 of this Beautiful Planet:
 Our Mother Earth. ¹⁵⁴⁻⁵⁵

One of the prominent themes invested in the poem is 'Quest of Peace and Struggle for Existence' in terms of Buddha's teaching of Peace and humanism, and Hinduism's struggle to retain its prominent position. The time span covered in the poem ranges from 3rd century B.C. to 20th Nov. 2012 (The day of poet's visit to Dhauligiri). The poet has covered vast space and time in the poem and dwelt upon his concern over man's unethical behaviour which has been pestering the men of past and the present alike. The poet develops his poetic ethos by enumerating the operating spirits of Buddhism and Hinduism not in complementary manner. In fact the poet visited the historical site in search of Peace but paradoxically enough his memories of the past and experiences of the present terribly disturbed him. The poet wants to say that mutability is an eternal phenomenon of life and the teachings of Buddha and work of Ashoka are no longer important to people; it makes him intensely anxious. The poem could be divided into four parts for critical analysis in accordance with the poet's shifting focus in terms of time and space.

The first part the poem opens with a beautiful description of the monument of Dhauligiri built by the Japanese to commemorate the event of Emperor Ashoka's embracing Buddhist doctrine. In the poem the Stupa is a symbol of Buddha's preaching of peace: *Peace that passes all understanding*. For this reason the poet attributes to the Stupa an epithet *the holiest of the holy mountain peak* where as 'Kailash' is supposed to be the holiest mountain peak in Hinduism. The overtone of antithesis pervades all through the poem.

Dhauligiri, the holiest
 of the holy mountain-peak
 stands like an Angel of Peace
 on the bank of Daya,
 With the precious White Marble-
 Crown on its head,
 The Buddhist 'Shanti-Stupa'
 (The Tower of Peace) ¹⁵³

All through the poem the poet glorifies the Stupa for its Natural surrounding of serenity & beauty offering peace of mind to the visitors. The poet finds that the Stupa's sanctified surrounding has something magical about it so that he

hears remorseful throbs of Ashoka's heart (over the violence of Kalinga war). Needless to say that the poet has employed Coleridge's element of *Willing Suspension of Disbelief* in the following lines:

... the panorama
of the valley
below the hill:
... the clear blue sky:
The brown, green fields
in geometrical designs,
... a great feast to my inner eye:
... I felt, with me,
even my soul drank ...
in that trance-like state,
I began to hear the distant
throbbing of Emperor Ashoka's heart
being filled with remorse ¹⁵³

He also glorifies Ashoka for his faithful adherence to the Buddhist doctrine in his life. It is because of this Ashoka became 'Devampriya' in his days and Buddhism flourished abroad. He glorifies in high sounding phrases and images the majesty, beauty and magical surrounding of serenity and peace prevailing in vicinity of the Dhauligiri Stupa.

Dhauligiri ... stands like an Angel of Peace
... the panorama ... was indeed
a great feast to my inner eye:
as I was drinking its beauty
with my naked eye
... Emperor Ashoka's ...
love for all Creation
both great and small ¹⁵³

The Stupa, the Emperor Ashoka and Buddha belong to three different points of time in the past, but they stand for one cause: imparting *peace that passes all understanding*. The poet's style of depicting their glory is in a mood of celebration as if all three are unified one marking their auspicious presence in the form of Peace and Joy at the historical site.

The pangs of his soul
At his 'Rebirth' as 'Devampriya':
His edicts, pillars and Stupas
began to move
in a ring singing glory

to his compassionate heart
and his devotion to 'Dhamma and
Ahimsa'¹⁵⁴

Second part of the poem presents the ignorance of Buddhist monks about historic upheavals taken place in the vicinity of Dhauli. He attributes the metaphor of *white and golden snakes* to them for the reason that they represent institution of religion rather than the thoughts of Buddha. They are ignorant of the history of the place so they make a query with the poet as to why no Indian Maharaja built a Stupa to commemorate the historic event of Ashoka's embracing of Buddhism. They are also ignorant about the reason for which Aadi Shankaracharya installed a seat of Hinduism in Puri.

Some white and golden
Snakes stood before me
Asking: Why is it no Indian
Maharaja had ever thought of
building a monument at this site,
before the Japanese came?¹⁵³⁻⁵⁴

In the third part of the poem the poet's focus shifts to the eventful history of the place. The third century (B.C.) was the most eventful period in the history of Vedic Brahmanism for, in this period, essentially non-vedic religious sects were flourishing and the Vedic religion was being pushed back to the verge of extinction. Under Emperor Ashok's patronage Buddhism reached almost the peak of its power in the century. The rear-guard of the languishing Vedism wanted to reclaim its former position. In order to revitalize and reorganize its power the fanatic Hindus rallied together the vedic and non-vedic sects into a mighty force against Buddhism.

It must have, indeed, inspired the fear that it would soon overwhelm not only the declining vedic religion but also other non-vedic religious sects. Vasudevism-Krisnaism, therefore prepared itself to meet this serious challenge. It did so in two ways. It rallied together all the religious forces akin to it in the name of new Krisnaism by merging vedic elements of Vishnu and Narayan in it.²

Nare, a man conscious of the turbulent past of the place, is aware of the cultural heritage of the historical site. To resist the popularity of Buddhism, the devout Hindus, evolved *Avatar Theory* and subsequently Krisnaisation of Vishnu paved way for the Bhakti doctrine. Buddha's teaching was highly rational, so naturally, the Vaishnava's ritualistic devotion at societal level through dancing and singing interested the contemporary people more in the newly emerging

sect. However the Krisnaism posed itself as a mighty force to check the surging wave of Buddhism. The poet has invested suitable imagery in the following illustration to show how Buddhism was pushed behind on backfoot.

A big Conchshell, as big as an ass
began its hideous blaring
and suddenly a column of
ten thousand tridents
Began to dance in wild frenzy
and the whole valley was
reverberating with the heart-rending
cries and screeching ... ¹⁵⁴

The paradox of Hindu outrage against Buddhism disturbed the poet from within and consequently he feels sad for that. The aggressive attitude of the Hindus and royal patronage to the new sect of Vaishnavism are aptly conveyed through the following lines composed with the imagery of terror:

Suddenly, a kind of screen spread
before my mind's eye
And a King-size flute rose
like a missile from the opposite bank,
Hissing like a dark, poisonous
King-Cobra: ¹⁵⁴

Another imagery of aggression and fear is invested in the poem to serve a perfect contrast to the images of Buddha's teaching of Peace and Dhamma. The following illustration vividly communicates the rash and violent attitude of the devout Hindus unto the peace loving Buddhists:

Then a mighty blood-stained
Trident raised its head
From the river-bed and touched
the clouds gathered in the sky ¹⁵⁴

When Buddhism was flourishing, the Hinduism was in disorganized state i.e. divided into many Vedic and non-vedic sects. Rebirth of Ashoka as 'Devam-priya' aroused envy in the hearts of the orthodox Hindus who in turn grew restlessness. The very cause of the Hindu's grievance against the Buddhism was triggered by Buddha's discarding of ritualistic and magical practices.

The authoritative character of the Veda i.e. the ritualistic portion was questioned and the magical practices in the form of worships as mentioned in the Atharvaveda were discarded by Buddha³

The opponents of Buddhism were organized and strategic and Buddhists were

highly rational in outlook who gave no importance to singing and dancing in their routine religious prayers and services. On the contrary the orthodox Hindus popularized singing and dancing as forms of worship. Under the patronage of the contemporary Hindu kings the fanatic devotion to Lord Krishna with singing and dancing gained more and more impetus. The new trick of the Hindus hurled powerful blow at Buddhism which successfully resisted the force of Buddhist movement. The commotion caused by the Vaishnavas engaged in singing and dancing causes sound pollution. The poet in satirical tone calls it *hideous blaring of ass*; and as agonized by the unbearable sound of the Vaishnavas' devotional singing he takes refuge in the Stupa and ultimately experiences peace of mind:

Pressing my palms on my ears
I quickly ran to the Stupa and
stood before the statue of Buddha
... my fears vanished like mist,
and I began to see divine grace¹⁵⁴

As the time of some centuries passed by Aadi Shankaracharya installed a seat of Hindu religion in Puri with a view to reorganize and revitalize the spirit of Hinduism and thus laid foundation of Shaivism there. This was another attempt to resist the popularity of Buddhism. The poem grows on the binary columns represented by the peace loving Buddhist sect and the dominant Bhakti (devotion) sect of Hinduism. He turns to the river Daya, the only witness to the eventful history of Dhauli, to know the eventful past of the place. In the poem the holy river- 'Daya', is the image of eternal consciousness who has been a sole witness to the eventful history of Dhauli. In the words of T.S. Eliot the river is analogous to 'Tiresia'.

For answers, like a child,
I turned to the holy river 'Daya'
The sole witness to
'The Greatest Conversion in history'.¹⁵⁴

In the fourth part of the poem the poet shifts his focus of attention from the past to the present predicament of the world in which life is sizzling in restlessness. The poet feels that the cause for rise of the present predicament it is not the historical situation but the scientific progress. The ever-growing craze of people for self-indulgence and the struggle for existence among nations have spoiled peace of life in the world. So the men as well as nations of the world desperately need Peace. Like a responsible citizen of the world the poet sets on a journey to Dhauligiri in search of Peace. To him Dhauligiri is:

A Light House sending bright
signals in all directions

in this 'dark world'
lost in a bloody game of killing
and getting killed.¹⁵⁴

The purpose of his visit to Dhauligiri is clearly stated in the following lines:

... a cry rose
from the depth of my heart:
When will sanity return to the
warring nations of this world?
When will this 'mutual slaughter'
end? ¹⁵⁴

Looking upon the bleak prospects for the World Peace in near future the poet feels utterly frustrated during his visit to Dhauligiri; in addition to this he is deeply pained when the past memories of the place came alive to him. The poet becomes desperate about revival of the World Peace by constructing the Stupa and wishes to be a rock-edict flanked by the sculptures of Buddha and Gandhi at the foot of the hill of Dhauligiri. He wishes to speak about the World Peace in the words of the philosophers of the recent past.

I wish, I were a rock-edict
at the foot of this hill
flanked by the sculptures
of Buddha and Gandhi
proclaiming to the world
the views of Russell
and Einstein on the imminent
danger of Nuclear War,
for the welfare of Mankind
and a bright future of this Beautiful Planet:
Our Mother Earth. ¹⁵⁴⁻⁵⁵

The poet is a man of versatile reading possessing vast knowledge of Indian history and culture, and adept in use of poignant imagery in his poetry. This poem is what Matthew Arnold would have called a criticism of life which cover his reflections on various subjects with concern, intimacy, directness and simplicity. This poem presents criticism of human life in general and Indian life in particular with relevant references from the past and present. Nare is well versed with the Indian epics, Indian history with various cultural traditions and the Puranic literature; therefore remarkable images and trite expressions from them have figured in the poem. His use of archetypal images and literary archetypes enable him to transform his observation of simple events of life into aesthetic experience.

The poem is an extensive critical analysis of human life in terms of Peace and Violence. The poem presents the age old struggle between the forces operating for Peace and Violence. The poem has a global dimension as it has a wide range of time and space. The paradox of the glory of the Stupa and the majesty of Nature's beauty around at Dhauligiri contrasting with the threat of violence and manipulations posed by the rash fanatic Hindus is very painful. Towards close of the poem the poet shifts his focus of attention from Indian history to the prevailing danger of the Nuclear War.

Real charm of the poem related to the themes lies in the rich imagery and significant images of *white and golden snakes, King-size flute, Hissing King-Cobra, A mighty blood-stained Trident, and A big Conchshell* invested by the poet to reveal the theme of binary relationship between history and religion. Paradoxical situations delineated to show how Ashoka's efforts to propagate Peace in the world foiled are very significant. Rampant evil practices of the contemporary Hindu fanatics as suggested through telling images of violence, antithetical to Ashoka's Peace Mission, cast gloom all over the poem.

Like Russell the poet believes that war cannot provide a peaceful solution on any problem, and hence no war can be justified on any ground however for righteous cause it may be. Howsoever the voice of Buddha was muffled and efforts of Ashoka for propagation of Peace were foiled in the past, the immediate need of Peace in life cannot be ruled out today when the nations are armed with Nukes. Nare has used Buddha, Ashoka, Russell and Einstein as literary archetypes of Peace process in human life.

Peace and Violence have been inherent aspects of human life. They exist in life as binary elements. Peace is a divine quality and it is an important precondition for happy life. Nevertheless, Violence prevails in life. Just as in life the Peace and Violence co-exist as opposed binary elements, in the poem, Ashoka's peace mission is hampered by the contemporary Hindu fanatics. There is ironical situation in the poem. In the past Buddha preached that ignorance is the cause of man's suffering; but in today's world the science which is believed to be a boon for mankind has posed the danger of Nuclear War. When the efforts for Peace at institution (religion) level failed the poet feels disillusioned, he wishes to be a 'rock edict' at the foot of the hill at Dhauli 'proclaiming to the whole world the views of Russell and Einstein on the imminent danger of Nuclear War'.

Foot Note: A river in Odisha. In the third century (B.C.) Emperor Ashoka is said to have embraced Buddhism and the doctrine of Ahimsa 'non-violence' at Dhauli, after the bloodshed in Kalinga wa. In 1900 (A.D.) the Japanese built a 'Shanti-Stupa' here to commemorate the site of one of the greatest religious

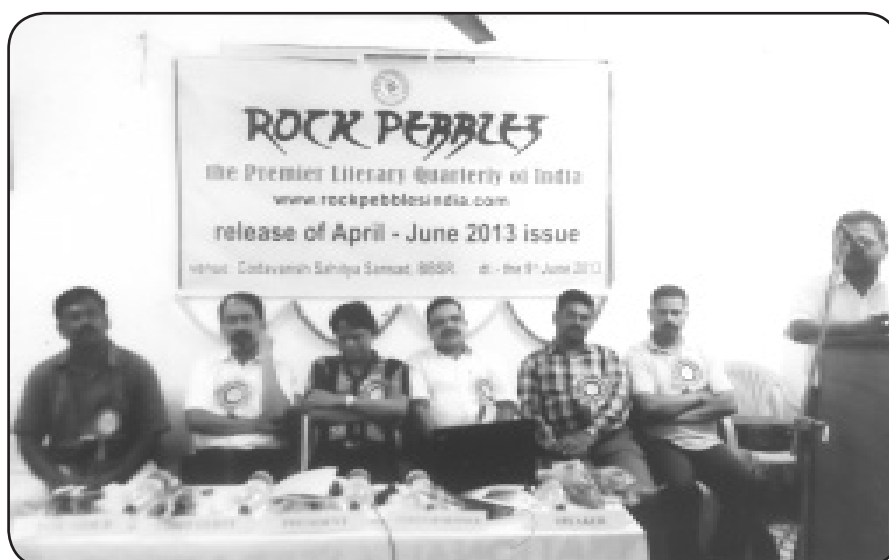
conversions in History. This poet visited Dhauligiri on the 20th November 2012 and wrote the poem. It is dedicated to the people of Odisha.

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Guests on the dais. Welcome-address by Dr. K. C. Pradhan, Adviser

Joseph Rudyard Kipling: A Contentious Writer

Prafulla Chandra Swain

The Britishers who ruled over India for nearly two centuries distanced themselves from the native people as their contacts were confined to offices, parade grounds, battle fields and “Whites Only” clubs besides their well furnished bungalows. But there were, undoubtedly, some scholars and writers who transformed their experiences and interactions with the native people and native places and composed memoirs, travelogues, poems, fiction, etc. in English. Such writing as a whole was given the nomenclature of Anglo-Indian literature (i.e. literature by English people on British India). A novel, titled *A Passage to India* (1824) and authored by E.M Forster (1879-1970) is considered as a classic of Anglo-Indian literature. *A Passage to India* explores the difficulty of reaching an understanding and full communication between the English and natives in British India. In contrast, Joseph Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936), the first English man to win the Nobel Prize for literature in 1907, was lauded as the laureate of the empire and a prophet and defender of British imperialism for his racist and imperialistic views. A bright example of his pride in his imperial legacy is the poem “Recessional”, which was especially composed in 1879 for Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee in that year. The poem begins thus.

God of our Fathers, known of old.
Love of our far-flung battle line
Beneath whose awful Hand we hold.
Dominion over palm and pine

Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget-lest we forget!

In another poem “The Flowers”, Kipling concludes echoing the catchy imperial slogan “Rule Britannia, Rule the Waves” in these lines:

Far and far our homes are set round the seven seas,
Woe for us if we forget, we that hold by these!
Unto each his mother beach, bloom and bird and
land-Masters of seven seas, O, love and understand.

Kipling Justified the British conquest of India as the “white Man’s burden” to civilize the uncivilized people of the sub-continent in the poem “The White Man’s Burden”.

Take up the White Man’s burden,
Your new-caught, sullen people,
Half-devil and half-child.

In another jingoist poem, “The Ballad of East and West” (1889), he ruled out any friendship and interaction with colonial people:

Oh, East is East, and West is West and never the twin shall meet.

After World War II, however, the white-brown relationship changed and the younger generation of the English people, far from being proud of their imperial heritage, were apologetic about it. Three young English writers, namely Charles Allen, David Gilmour and Aridrew Ly Cett, who authored three separate biographies on Rudyard Kipling and attended the seminar on the biographies, at the Jaipur Literature festival in January, 2013 advocated that there was more to the contentious writer Kipling than Jingoism and imperialism. Charles Allen, author of *Kipling Sahib, a Biography*, pointed out that Rudyard Kipling loved India, especially her country-side and its flora and fauna. After Kipling’s birth in Bombay on the 30th December, 1865, the child was taken to England. At the age of 17 years, Kipling the youth sailed back to India and took up the job of an editor of an English newspaper, first at Lahore and then at Allahabad. During his stay in Lahore and Allahabad, he extensively traveled in the towns, countryside and hill stations of North India. On the 9th March, 1889, Kipling left India by sea for United States of America via Calcutta, Rangoon, Singapore, Hong Kong and Japan and arrived at San Francisco. After traveling in U.S.A. for some months, he returned to England the same year. In 1891, he embarked on a voyage to South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and again reached India. But unfortunately, he had to return to England the same year circumnavigating the oceans of the Globe as he received the sad news of untimely demise of his girl friend in England. This shows that Kipling, despite his defence of imperialism, fell in love with India following his unique interactions with both

urban and rural people and places and country's flora and fauna. Indian locales, characters and plots figure frequently in most of his poems, novels and fables. His love of India found very clear and unambiguous expression in the poem "To the City of Bombay" where he thanked God for being born in Bombay which, according to him, was "no mean city".

So thank I god my birth,
Fell not in isles aside-waste, headlands of the earth,
Or warring-tribes untried – but that she lent me worth
and gave me right to pride.
Surely in toil or fray under the alien sky.
Comfort it is to say: of no mean city am I!
Mother of cities to me, for I was born in her gate,
between the palm and sea,
where the world end steamers wait.

After leaving India in 1891, he was nostalgic about the smell of Indian spicy foods and even the stench of city sewers of Lahore, Allahabad and Calcutta. While in British India, Kipling published his first collection of poems, captioned *Departmental Ditties* in 1886 and first novel *The Light that Failed* in 1891. While in India, he used to listen to fables recited to him by Indians about animals living in the Indian forests. Basing upon those recollections, he wrote the *Jungle Book* (1894) and *The Second Jungle Book* (1895). These two children's classics attempt to teach the lessons of justice, loyalty and tribal laws prevailing among the tribal people and to some extent, among animals, in the Indian forests. These Jungle Books include interesting stories like "Rikki-Tikki-Tavi" and "Mowgli" which appeal both to children and adults alike. Mowgli, the chief character of the story "Mowgli" was an Indian child who was lifted and brought up by a pack of wolves in the forest for about seventeen years. While roaming at the out-skirts of the jungle, Mowgli met a village girl and came to the conclusion that the jungle was no longer a suitable place for him and that he had returned from the wolf-pack to the "man-pack" to stay, for the rest of his life. The locale and chief character of Kipling's finest novel *Kim* (1901) also belong to British India and gives a vivid picture of the complexities of life and traditions of India under the British rule. The story of the novel revolves round the life of Kimbail O. Hara, an orphan born to Irish parents both of whom died leaving their son in the care of an Indian half-caste woman who nick-named the boy as Kim and brought him up in Lahore. Other important characters include a Tibetan Lama (Kim's teacher and a mystic), Mahbub Ali (a horse trader), Colonel Greigghthon (Director of British Secret Service in India) and Hurree Chunder Mookherjee (a civil servant). There is a great deal of action and movement in the story for

Kipling's vast fictional canvas is painted and replete with full details. There are clear touches of native shrewdness and native speech respectively in the actions and dialogues in the novel.

Many interesting personalities emerge from the sub-continent's colonial history. One of them happens to be Joseph Rudyard Kipling who, according to the new generation Kipling scholars, had two contrasting sides to him. One extolled imperialism as the white man's burden for bringing modern civilization and scientific education and establishing law, order and justice for the Indian people, and the other, loved the Indian country-side for its beautiful flora and fauna and cities and towns, notwithstanding, the stench of the city-sewers. In both cases, his literary genius put these two antithetical views and notions in words that have lyrical flavour and skill-ful cadence of superb writhing, Rudyard Kipling certainly has the skill in the narratives of adventure, but his forte is poetry, though he also excelled in short stories and novels. T.S. Eliot edited a book, titled, *A Choice of Kipling's Verses* (1941) and wrote in the preface: "of number of poets who have written great poetry a very few of whom I should call great verse writers. And unless I am mistaken, Kipling's position in this class is not only high, but unique." Mr. Gilmour, author of *The Imperial Life of Rudyard Kipling* concludes that being a contentious figure Kipling should be seen in all his complexity: "a Tory with his right wing awful political ideas as well as his literary genius".

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Shashi Deshpande's *Roots and Shadows*: A Feministic Study

P. Ilamaran

Feminism is basically a western concept which has definite political implications, but it is viewed as a mode of discourse in literature. Contemporary Indian writers, particularly women writers, have more or less experimented with feminism in their fictional writings resulting in wonderful narratives. Among these feminists, Shashi Deshpande has earned a name for herself through her work. G.S. Amur has aptly remarked: "Women's struggle, in the context of contemporary Indian society, to find and preserve her identity as wife, mother and, most important of all, as human being is Shashi Deshpande's major concern as a creative writer, and this appears in all her important stories". For her portrayal of the predicament of middle-class educated Indian women, their inner conflict and quest for identity, issues pertaining to parent-child relationship, marriage and sex, and their exploitation and disillusionment, Deshpande may be called a 'feminist'.

However, Shashi Deshpande is against categorisations. She doesn't want her writing to be called feminist writing. Many books are being written for women, by women and studied in the Women's Studies Department. She dislikes this 'women's lib' separating women's writing for it is self-defeating. Elsewhere also, Shashi Deshpande has made it absolutely clear that she has nothing to do with feminism in the narrow sense. In an interview to Ashvini Sarpeshkar Tondon, for example, she said: "I do not like to be branded this or that because life is more complex than that. My enduring concern is for human

relationships. I certainly do not think my novels are a man versus woman issue at all” (*Femina*, May 1993). Being a woman herself, she sympathizes with women, and, “If others see something feminist in my writings”, she told an interviewer, “I must say that it is not consciously done. It is because the world for women is like that and I am mirroring the world”. Deshpande does admit the influence of the Western feminist writers, but only, “to a small extent”. We have to consider Deshpande’s concerns for Indian women in this light because arbitrary appellations and dragging her work to the fold of militant feminism of the Western variety would be unjust.

As told earlier, Feminism emerged in the Western world as a movement in support of the same rights and opportunities for women as for men. Feminism means both the awareness of women’s position in society as one of the disadvantage or inequality compared with that of men and also a desire to remove those disadvantages. Deshpande has portrayed the new Indian woman and her dilemma her efforts to understand herself and to preserve her identity as wife, mother and, above all, as a human-being in the tradition bound, male-dominated Indian society.

Feminism, whether in the western context or in the oriental context, remains fundamentally the same. Women being at the centre of feminism and their problems all over the world are similar and their thoughts, concerns, and interests are typically feminine. Thus no feminist writer can afford to overlook women’s concerns albeit the fact that they handle it in their own ways. In this context, it can be rightly said that Shashi Deshpande’s novels contain a lot of material for feminist thought: Women’s sexuality, the gender roles, self-discovery, etc. But she can be called a ‘feminist’ only in specific sense. This is a highly sensible approach, and found in almost all her novels especially in *Roots and Shadows* which “deals with a woman’s attempt to assert her individuality and realize her freedom. It depicts how it brings her into confrontation with the family, with the male world and the society in general. In the end comes the realization that freedom lies in having the courage to do what one believes is the right thing to do and the determination and the tenacity to adhere to it.

Roots and Shadows can be called a novel which explores the inner struggle of Indu, who represents a set of modern women who are educated and are very much in contact with the society, dealing with the critical problems like love, sex, marriage, settlement and individuality. As O.P. Bhatnagar says: “The novel deals with a woman’s attempt to assert her individuality and realize her freedom. It depicts how it brings her into confrontation with family with the male world and society in general” (132).

The story revolves around Indu who broke away from her family out

of resentment and married for love in order to assert her freedom. The four generations of the family lived together in the ancestral house built years ago by Indu's great-grandfather. It was an ancient family over which Akka ruled like an inconsiderate tyrant, ruthless and dominating. Akka, who refused to go to the hospital simply because she did not know which caste the doctors and nurses belonged to and, who was so dominating that she could reduce Kaka to a "red-faced stuttering school boy by her venomous tongue", even after he had become a grand-father himself.

Right from her childhood, Indu had seen that women occupied a secondary place in the family. As a child she had been told to be obedient and unquestioning; as a girl she had been told to be weak and submissive. When she had gathered the courage to ask why, she had got the answer that this was the only way a female could live and survive. She had to accept everything, even defeat, gracefully, and her intelligence was only a burden, for women were not supposed to think.

Indu had always been choosy about her affections but when she met Jayant, she knew that he was the only man for her. It was she who proposed to him and married him, which was another way of fighting her womanhood. As, R.A. Singh has remarked,

Shashi Deshpande's women seek anchorage in marriage. They perceive it as an alternative to the bond imposed by the parental family and opt for it.... They are caught in the conflict between responsibility to one's self and conformity to the traditional role of wife. However, they do not accept to be considered objects of gratification. They challenge their victimization and seek a new balance of power between the sexes. Thus, Indu willingly surrendered herself before Jayant, he did not have to pressurize her to do so. She only thought about what he wanted, what he liked and what would please him. It was as if they were on two different planes, and she chose her plane according to his. It puzzled her to realize that she who had considered herself to be so independent, so intelligent, so clever; she who had been so proud of her logical and rational thinking; she who had been all set out to reform Indian womanhood, had fallen into the trap waiting for her.

Earlier, Indu has thought that she wanted detachment and non-involvement, but it was Naren who made her realise that this was not so. Naren's own detachment made him possible to remain unaffected by anything. Since he could not be anyone's husband or lover, he remained untouched when Indu rejected him. Indu realized that Jayant would be shattered if she were to reject him and this is what made him so precious to her.

Thus, not only in *Roots and Shadows*, but in her other novels as well,

Shashi Deshpande has employed withdrawal as a tool for both introspection and self-realisation for her protagonists. These characters withdraw, not into a world of fantasy but into a world away from the suffocating circumstances of their lives. Unable to adjust to the social demands on them, they attempt a temporary psychological as well as sociological withdrawal.

Thus, Shashi Deshpande, makes her protagonist choose security through reconciliation. The ethos in the novel is neither of victory nor of defeat, but of harmony and understanding between two opposite ideals and conflicting selves. This is quite representative of the basic Indian attitude. Indu's predicament also is representative of the larger predicament of women in contemporary India where the new socioeconomic forces have shaken old cultural modes.

Deshpande has very exquisitely pin-pointed the inner struggles and sufferings of the new class of Indian women through the character of Indu who has raised many basic questions regarding modern women who are rooted and shaped by the Indian customs but influenced by the scientific knowledge of the West. Indian women was hailed as a 'Pativrata', 'a Sati' and some one who has to be protected by a man, but now she is a changed person who is aware of the stirrings of her conscience, her quest, her identity, her individuality, her place and role in the family and society. Indu represents this women, and now the question before the society is whether to reject and condemn her or to encourage and co-operate with her in her efforts to establish a new image.

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Deconstructing Ethnicity and American Dream in Bernard Malamud's *The Assistant*

Rabi Narayana Samantaray

Jews were characterized in the late nineteenth century as a degenerate race - with Jewish men being the most degenerate in their feminized subversiveness - was partly a result of Darwinian ideas of descent, and enlightenment-driven interest in knowledge systems, including languages. Findings were interpreted as demonstrating a significant racial separation between Aryans and Semites with Aryans claiming descent from the Brahmins of India through the Greeks and consequently, greater linguistic capability and therefore greater intellectual and spiritual capacity. During this same period, Jews were emancipated in Europe, beginning in such places as the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Germany, and were allowed to work and live outside ghettos. As a result, Europe eventually saw the Jews as being 'let loose' as a force in society, causing fear that this 'inferior' people would take over and rule through their economic ruthlessness.

The rise of nationalism during the 19th century was yet another stroke against Jews because it was often based on blood similarity of a people comprising a national population, and Jews, of course, had no "racial origins" in any European country. Despite lacking territory of their own at the time, Jews can be characterized as a colonized people because they suffered psychological colonization, with all that the colonized suffer, including self-hatred and powerlessness. Driven, in part, by a resurgence of Hellenist ideals,

the image of the Aryan male in literature, science, and popular culture became almost hyper-masculine while the Jewish male became feminized. There was a long tradition in which Jewish men were perceived as cowardly. They didn't work for the land, and weren't in the military since Jews had no country. As dictated by an often watered-down Judaic sensibility, Jewish men tended to be concerned about women, marriage and family. They were positioned as almost anti-male, undermining and threatening European hyper-masculinity. Seen like this, "the Jew" became problematic to the maintenance and re-evaluation of patriarchal power. That, this also was the era of the "new woman" figures into the investigation as well, in that women who didn't conform to traditional expectations were, like Jewish men, seen by some as aberrant and subversive. By the post-Holocaust era, however, the gender mythologizing of the Jew had disappeared resulting in a transformed image what is described as one of "Zionist colonial brutality." The central political shift associated with the change is, of course, the establishment of Israel and the post-1967 thrust of centrist Zionist politics, but also significant is the maturation of American Jewry, whose consciousness has been formed through breaking away from old-world constructions of Jewish weakness, piety, fearfulness, and by implication, effeminacy. The shift in intellectual discourse surrounding 'Jewishness' has taken different forms in the United States, where the re-masculinization of Jewishness has not rescued it from a sense of "Otherness," and Israel, where Jews are no longer the "Other" but the dominant power. Understanding the continuing, problematic representations of "the Jew" in literature, is crucial to the understanding of the relationship between discourses of gender, class, ethnicity, race and territory and the formation of western ideologies. Even in works of fiction that aren't about Jews, references to Jewishness abound, although representations of "the Jew" in literature changed dramatically over the course of the 20th century. During the early century, the air was rife with the Jewish question, almost like an octopus that spread through the period. Particularly following the Holocaust, the whole world had a Jewish consciousness in the way anti-Semites had before the war.

Although *The Assistant* is Malamud's second novel, Malamud has shown tremendous improvement in his artistic skills as compared to his first novel *The Natural*. *The Assistant* is considered to be a mini classic. Though the novel has a strong Jewish theme, Malamud's approach to it is not a parochial one, but on the other hand, he casts it as a type of secular humanism. The main characters of the novel, Frank Alpine and Morris Bober add to the uniqueness of the novel. Frank is shown to be imbibing "Jewish" values from Morris and Morris' death. Frank replaces him both in the store and in terms of having

become an ethical man. At the end of the novel, Frank gets himself circumcised and becomes a Jew symbolically signifying his transcendence of ethnicity. In most cases, ethnicity which acts as a force to disintegrate people, acts as a unifying factor to bring Morris and Frank together. Frank Alpine, who was initially very indifferent to Morris and Judaism, became a part of this ethos. Morris' definition of Judaism is extremely broad. He tells Frank, "What I worry is to follow the Jewish Law...this means to do what is right, to be honest, to be good. This means to other people. Our life is hard enough. Why should we hurt somebody else?" (*The Assistant* 115). The point is that although Morris defines Jewish Law in terms of Torah, the basic principles that he chooses to live by are universal. Most of the laws of the Torah are universal, but there are many which Morris chooses to ignore that are directed particularly to the children of Israel.

Morris' Jewishness is starkly contrasted with the values of modern America. Indeed, those values are seen as diametrically opposed to the Jewish-humanistic-traditional values for which Morris stands. Honesty and integrity do not lead to success in America, where the possession of money confers a status beyond material wealth. Thus Julius Karp, Morris' successful liquor-store owning neighbor feels no compunction in lecturing Morris about worldly things. The concept of "law" has different connotations in the United States of America. The central irony in *The Assistant* is that Morris considers himself a failure. The irony moves into paradox when we realize that "Morris' failure is his success" (Cohen 42). Morris attains success at a spiritual level that has nothing to do with the materialistic world of the Americans. He is able to influence a gentile because of his personality. When Morris came to the USA, he was not primarily preoccupied with the materialistic gain. He came to the Promised Land with a mission: to lead a life governed by the principles of Judaism. The attitude of Frank towards the Jews and Jewishness is a negative one for a long period of time until he realizes that, given his dual nature, one that is attracted both to crime and to the spiritual, he must choose the spiritual, he must choose the sacrifice and self-discipline that he sees in Morris and attributes this entirely to his Jewishness. Another foreshadowing of the role that Morris will take on for Frank and of the significance that Jewishness will have for him occurs early in the story when Morris offers Frank coffee and a roll for helping him with the milk cases: "Jesus, that is good bread" (*The Assistant* 33) says Frank candidly. Despite the fact that Frank still places great value on the American dream of wealth, there is a side of him that is deeply attracted to goodness and the non-material world of the spirit. Morris may be his Jesus at this point, a giver of bread and a Christ-like figure who suffers for others,

and he will become a living St. Francis of Assisi to Frank, someone who will teach him how to reject the moneyed values of America for those of an older culture that stresses love and responsibility for others. Although Frank is not an observant Roman Catholic, as Morris is not an observant Jew, he interprets Morris' virtue, his sheer ability to endure suffering and yet remain moral, in terms of the catholic tradition within which he was brought up. Frank thinks that Morris' Jewish tradition must be at the root of his actions, but Malamud makes it clear that any humanistically oriented philosophy can have the same effect.

St. Francis and his life represent an unreachable ideal to Frank as he sees him as having been born good. Morris, on the other hand, is flesh and blood. Helen Bober is a complicating factor in Frank's understanding of Jewishness. She wants the success promised by the American Dream and attempts to achieve it both through reading great books and by trying to ensnare Nat Pearl, who is well on his way to material and social success. Her problem is that she does not wish to relinquish anything: "Because she desires simultaneously the American Dream and something more, she loses both" (Cohen 47). To Helen, Jewishness is the religion of her parents, a burden she must consider when deciding whether or not to allow her feelings to flow towards Frank. Ida Bober, Helen's mother, takes a very narrow view of Jewishness. She reflects the fearful approach to the new world of one who has never been able to become a part of it. Her view of America consists of the little she knows and the vast amount she does not know and of which she is afraid. She wants Helen to breach the walls of the hostile American fortress, which she was too timid either to conquer herself or to allow Morris to take the necessary risks to succeed in. Her fear has made her a confirmed materialist and she has taken on the corrupt values of the American world. Malamud is very critical of the intention of Helen as to her social commitments. In the guise of wanting the best for her daughter, Ida denigrates Morris' morality and constantly tries to persuade him to abandon it. Morris wants a better life for Helen, too, but is not willing to abandon his ethics to achieve it. Morris' view of Jewishness as love and responsibility for all humanity is alien to Ida. At the end of the novel it is Frank who will replace his teacher in the store. By formally becoming a Jew at the end, Frank illustrates Malamud's point that "paradoxically, a character may become more Christ-like as he becomes more Jewish" (Helterman 2). In *The Assistant*, Malamud seems to have taken a different stand as to his belief in ethnicity. He is trying to celebrate it instead of admonishing it. American Dream stands on the way of realizing the values of Judaism. It is worth mentioning that "Morris is the English equivalent for Moses..." (Freedman 162). Moses led the Israelites

through forty years of suffering in the wilderness until they, without him, were able to enter the Promised Land. While the nature of the Promised Land in *The Assistant* is highly problematic, Frank is certainly better off morally and possibly physically, at the end of the novel. Morris, Frank's Job-like teacher and guide, takes his son/assistant far enough along the path to righteousness that he can carry on unaided, his own formerly submerged strength of character in control of his less admirable qualities. Father-son relationship forms another underlying structural pattern. There are three biological father-son relationships in the novel and in no case the father has succeeded in producing a moral son. Showing no love for his Ward, detective Minogue desires only respectability, something Ward never provides. Sam Pearl bets on horses and has produced in Nat only a materialist and social climber. Julius Karp is a complete materialist who accepts that his son Louis steals from him. He believes that money is everything and will even buy Helen. Selling liquor has made him rich, whereas selling food has left Morris in poverty, a reflection of American values. None of these relationships is morally fruitful. A fourth father-son relationship exists between Morris and Frank. Though not related biologically, they nonetheless provide what each needs for his own fulfillment. Although at first Morris does not fully recognize Frank as a suitable substitute for Ephraim, eventually he is touched by Frank's persistent attempts to change. Morris needs a son, and Frank, an orphan, needs a father who can teach him to value the right things. In the sense that a father guides his son in the right direction, this relationship is a more successful father-son pairing than that of the natural fathers and sons. Even though Malamud has been referred to as a Jewish-American writer, he never relishes such a title. The basic reason for Malamud's resistance to being classified in this way has to do with their feeling that they are being underrated as writers concerned with the human condition when they are assumed to be interested in only a subgroup of humanity. Malamud's works show that his concern is with humanity and not with Jews alone. Malamud presents the Jews as Everyman in his attempt to cope with the pressures, human demands, and responsibilities of life. It is difficult to believe that Malamud deliberately chose Jewish subjects as a result of the gain in impact that the Jewish figure has had on the American psyche. For many reasons, it is fitting that Malamud has dramatized the Jew as moral doppelganger to the American. Jews and Americans have this characterization in common historically: they worry. Both have been thought of as prone to constant self-examination. Both tend to be moralistic and tend to see life symbolically and allegorically. There is some irony in the fact that much of the prejudice against Jews in America came not so much from religious hostility, as from super-energetic pursuit of the American Dream. The

stereotype before World War II was largely one of acquisitiveness – Jews will make a place for themselves, acquire money, goods, and status regardless of the moral cost. They became the archetypal immoral materialists but they have become the archetypal moralists at the hands of Bernard Malamud.

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From Suffering to Self-Definition : Women Characters in the Select Short Stories of Tagore

K. Harikishan

It is an undeniable fact that women have been neglected throughout the ages and the so-called civilization is man-centered. The issues of women and the attitude of society regarding the place of women are reflected in the short stories of many Indian writers. Women's predicament in the face of male supremacy has been the subject of many writers. The early writers whether they were Hindi, Punjabi, Bengali or Indian English, all of them presented the suppression of women in their stories. In Hindi Premchand, in Bengali Eswara Chandra Vidya Sagar, Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, Tagore and others wrote about women and they revolted against the social oppression on women. The Indian English writers like Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand portrayed women in their respective societies. By and large the picture that has been presented by the early writers is that of archetypal woman: the *Sati*, *Sita* or *Savitri* image. Though these writers seem to have accepted woman as a human being, they fail to come out of the bounds imposed by centuries of social conditioning. Even in the stories dealing with the awakened and enlightened women, the ideal woman is that of self-effacing and all sacrificing being, as Mary Ann Fergusson observes:

One peculiarity of the images of woman throughout the history is that social stereotypes have been reinforced by archetype.¹

Most of the writers used to eulogize the self-sacrificing characteristics in women. They advocated self-sacrifice, meekness and such other virtues of women, however by projecting women's predicament, these writers have successfully awakened the reading public.

Rabindranath Tagore is the most outstanding name in modern Bengali literature and indisputably one of the most renowned writers in Indian English

Literature. Tagore does not go in line with those writers who eulogize the stereotypes by advocating self-sacrifice, meekness and other such virtues of woman in their stories. Tagore does not think woman as commodity and the value of which will be assessed in the open market. Woman, to him, is not a lump of flesh, but she carries a deep inner meaning. She is the product of rhythm and image of wholeness. She does not work, but serves. She imparts enchantment to the things she touches. She stirs up the man. She is a delight, with her tenderness, she purges off all the crudeness of the world.

According to Tagore, man's imagination finds the greatest delight in women and there is no shame in it. Woman is the picture, not of a photographer, but of an artist. It requires some imagination to understand her. Tagore thought that the society had deprived her due position of her honour. But to win that place, women must rise to that position, for true honour does not come as a gift from outside. It has to be acquired consciously or unconsciously and also implores women to come forward to rescue the world by imparting her life rhythm to this reckless movement of power. Tagore, in this regard implores women:

At the present stage of history, civilization is almost exclusively masculine, a civilization of power in which woman has been thrust aside – This one sided civilization is crashing along a series of catastrophes at a tremendous speed because of its one-sidedness and at last the time has arrived when women must step in and impart her life rhythm to this reckless movements of power.²

The plight and predicament of women was one major issue on which Tagore wrote in his novels as well as in his short stories. When one looks at the women characters in his short stories written from 1891 to 1940, one can find some transformation in their psyche i.e. from stage of suffering to self definition.

The Exercise Book is a story about the suffering of a young girl. It is a satire on the child marriages as well as the denial of education to girls. It is set against the Hindu revivalism towards the late nineteenth century. This story reflects his opposition to Hindu revivalism and to child marriages. The story concerns with three notebooks belonging to Uma, her brother Gobinda Lal and her husband Pyarimohan. The notebooks of the two young men resound with the revivalist and Hindu rhetoric, Uma by contrast reflects nothing but her own heart. Uma is very interested in education. She wants to learn reading and writing, she draws pictures and letters here and there, nothing is exceptional. Once she would spoil the book of her brother, Gobind Lal and in rage he beats her severely, later in repentance he himself presents an exercise book to his sister. From then the book becomes a best companion to Uma. After the tearful marriage at the age of nine, Uma has to leave for her in-laws' house. The kind

hearted Jashi, the elderly maid servant of Uma's house, took Uma's exercise book along with her and stayed with Uma sometime and left her there. From then she secretly writes in it whatever she feels to write. But for a Hindu wife holding a pen and paper is considered to be a sure prelude to widowhood. Her sister-in law catches her once, while she is writing down the song of a beggar woman whom she has just heard. Later she is severely scolded and the book is confiscated by her husband and thrown away. The story ends, while Uma falls on floor crying helplessly. It seems as though she seeks shelter in the bosom of mother earth but unlike the epical *Sita* the girl is even denied of that refuge.

Living or Dead? is a pathetic story of childless widow Kadambini. The plight of widowhood is most effectively depicted in this story. Kadambini stays with her brother. No one in her brother's house cares her. Her brother's son is her sole comfort. She showers all her love and affection on him, but she has no claim on him. Her affection on her nephew is a convenience for other members of the family that they can chat with each other and play cards. Under severe pressure and pain once she loses her consciousness and her heart suddenly stops functioning and then everyone thinks that she is dead. But at the cremation ground, she gains consciousness. The pallbearers mistake her for a ghost and an evil spirit that they leave her there itself and run away. Fear of disclosing the fact that her body is not cremated—they would say, the cremation has been done, when she comes back home, every one is quite shocked at her existence. Some are fainted at the very sight of Kadambini, and some pray to her (believing her to be a ghost) to leave them forever and to let them live peacefully. Shocked by this treatment, she moves to her friend. When her friend comes to know about her death from her husband, they too pray her to leave them and have pity on them. When her anguish reaches to an intolerable level, Kadambini tries to prove her existence only by committing a suicide. It is quite moving when she bursts out:

I am not dead. How do I explain you that I have not died? "Look, here's proof that I'm alive". She picked up the bell metal blow and struck it against her forehead again and again and blood spurted from the wound: I'm alive she said finally and dies off.

Subha is a character from the story of the same name *Subha*. She is a dumb girl and a neglected child. The full name of Subha is Subhashini that means 'who speaks sweetly'. It is the irony about her name. Subha is a typical Indian village girl who likes to spend her leisure out doors, on the riverside, under the trees and pastures. She has only two friends, i.e., two cows and a village lad Pratap. Though everyone speaks of her deformity in her very presence, she never blames anyone. Mother is supposed to be a source of a consolation to anyone in hard times, but her mother turns out to be an enemy in Subha's

case. Her mother thinks of Subha as a stain on her womb and a lapse on her own limb. Playmates of her age never allow her to play with them for they have fear of her. Now she attains marriageable age, her marriage is a big problem for her parents. They think as if she were a curse on them. They fear of society that if she is not married, they may be blamed for it. So, without disclosing the fact that Subha is dumb, they would marry her to a boy from Calcutta. In the beginning the bridegroom mistakes her dumbness for her shyness. Later he realizes and punishes her by neglecting her altogether. She has to be alone forever, leaving her village companions she has to suffer among the unfamiliar faces for no fault of her own. She has been alone even she is with her parents or with her husband. The loneliness and sense of isolation that she is subjected to is most effectively depicted in the following line:

She was like the lonely noontide, wordless and friendless.⁴

There are two women characters from the story, *Punishment*. Radha is the wife of Dukshiram, elder brother and Chandara, the wife of Chiddam, the younger brother. The story may seem to be a story of petty quarrels between the wives of two brothers. But it is more than that. Radha and Chandara quarrel quite frequently. Every neighbour knows that they can never live peacefully, never come to peaceful terms. Chandara and Radha are different from each other in their temperaments as well as in their appearances. Chandara is not more than seventeen or eighteen. She is very active and attractive whereas Radha is unattractive, indolent and untidy woman. Chandara loves gossiping and she herself is a subject of gossip in the village. Often there is a quarrel between Chandara and her husband but soon they come to terms. They mutually blame each other for their misconduct. There is a sudden rift in their lives when Dukshiram, the elder brother kills his wife in anger by hitting her head with a chopper. Once Radha's husband returns from his work very hungry and asks Radha for food. Then her resentment re-doubled with the day's quarrel she has with Chandara that she shouts at her husband angrily:

Where is the rice? That I should serve you, did you bring me any rice?
Am I to earn it myself?⁵

When Radha's husband too loses his temperament and hits his wife with a chopper. As a matter of fact Radha would not say anything wrong to Chiddam and their poverty might also be a cause of their frustration. Their poverty and her ill temperament are not the only factors, which bring her disaster. She is basically a woman, she does not do any physical harm to her husband, whereas Radha's husband in his self-consciousness of male dominance he kills his wife. Even one considers the crime is not his fault, but of his hunger, it is also inadequate. For if he has fear for his life or respect for his wife he would have resisted and restrained his anger but he simply kills her. Another act of op-

pression is that when Chiddam asks Chandara to take the blame of killing of Radha on to her. Chiddam thinks for a while, like Adam contemplates some time before he eats fruit of knowledge that if he loses his wife, he can have another, but if his brother is punished and sentenced to death he cannot have another therefore he instructs his wife to tell before the judge that Radha hits her first and in defense she hit her and unexpectedly it happened. But when Radha comes to court her natural love for her sister comes out. She does not wish to tell false things about her sister who is no more, at the same time she does not wish to expose Chiddam's crime. When her husband asks her to tell a false tale in the court she is half dead. She says to the judge that she has killed Radha. Chandara's submission in court shows her utter despair, and dejection. Her way of taking the blame and punishment seems to be a passive resistance and protest against the male dominated society. Uma, Kadambini and Sudha and Radha and Chandara are the subjects of the male oppression. What they know is only suffering. The case Radha and Chandara may be a little different. Radha loses her life in the hands of her husband whereas Chandara loses her life in despair and utter helplessness, lack of understanding and love on the part of her husband causes her alienation. In great dejection, she accepts the wronged punishment as a silent protest. The seeds of protest, though it is of a silent one can be seen in Chandara.

Mrinal is a very interesting character from the story *The Wife's Letter*. One would know about her through her self – revealing letter that she writes to her husband after she has left him. She is an educated woman, she is individualistic in her thought and her action, and she is an assertive lady right from the beginning. Even her mother worries about her expressive nature. Her self-assertive nature is reflected from her own words when she remarks:

It is impossible for me so to limit myself in every point, when I decide that something is right it is not my nature to be persuaded for someone else sake that it is wrong.⁶

Mrinal is married for her beauty. After her marriage even her husband soon ignores her beauty, but now and then her husband is forced to remember that she too has some brains and she is blamed for it. Bindu, the younger sister of Mrinal's co-daughter-in-law after the death of her widowed mother and being refused by her cousins for a shelter she comes to stay with her elder sister. Bindu's sister is too much submissive in her nature that she is always anxious to prove to everyone, especially to her husband and her in-laws that she has secured Bindu at bargain for the least price, she tries to prove Bindu yields much labour but it costs little. Bindu's sister has no courage to show her affection to her sister openly. She feels insecure of her position. She is dependent wife without individuality. After the arrival of Bindu into their family, she always

pretends that the whole matter of Bindu as a great nuisance and that she would do anything to get rid of this burden. She tries to demonstrate it through the coarseness of clothes and food, she provides for Bindu. Bindu is also put to work at the most menial household duties. Mrinal thinks the treatment of Bindu is quite inhuman. Bindu's sister i.e., the elder co-daughter-in-law of Mrinal plays a dual role with regard to her sister, Bindu. When Mrinal invites Bindu to stay with her, she feels so relieved inside for two reasons, one, the burden of the blame would be shifted on to Mrinal, the other is her sister gets love from Mrinal which she herself cannot show or share with her. Much against the will of her husband and other members, Mrinal gives shelter to Bindu. Mrinal has to curtail her expenditure to meet the expenses of Bindu.

When Bindu develops some rash on her skin, everyone rejects her, Mrinal stays with Bindu and serves her. Bindu's sister does not leave her pretensions even at the critical moments in the life of her sister. She tries to show extreme irritation at this, even she proposes to send the poor girl to hospital. The people are so cruel that when the rash disappears completely, they said that it is undoubtedly small-pox, and it has settled deep into her for she is Bindu. Unable to get rid of Bindu by their own means, they arrange a match for Bindu. The groom is a mad man and everyone knows it. When the match is settled Bindu cries incessantly. She even asks to provide her some little corner in the cattle shed, but it was refused. Soon after marriage, Bindu escapes from her in-laws and comes back to her sister's house. She hides in the coal shed. When she describes the fact that her husband is a mad man and her in-laws torture her, others blame her that she is liar, only Mrinal takes sympathy on Bindu. Again, by force she is sent to her in-laws. Mrinal plans out to save Bindu with the help of her cousin, Sarat. She asks Sarat somehow to put Bindu on the train while she is going to Poori. Sarat assures that he would put Bindu on the train. When Sarat arrives at the appointed time he informs Mrinal that Bindu has set her clothes on fire and has killed herself, and also he informs about the poor response of the members of Mrinal's in-law's family when the killing is reported. Bindu's death does not evoke any sympathy in their hearts. Moreover her husband's inconsiderate and cold remarks that she hears from Sarat make Mrinal determined that she should never go back to her in-laws she breaks up her bond with her husband and his family altogether. She sends a letter in which she assures her husband thus:

Do you think I'm going to kill myself? Have no fear; I shall not indulge in such a stale jest with you. Mira Bai too was a woman like me. Her fetters were not light either, but she did not need to die in order to live. I too shall live. At last I live.⁷

She realizes finally what life means, she resolves to lead her life in the service of

god and the suffering. Depth of thinking, understanding and sympathy towards the fellow suffering make Mrinal an ever-memorable character.

Anila in *House Number One* is another interesting character in the stories of Tagore who deserves best appreciation. Her husband is boastful about his intellectual accomplishments. He takes pleasure in having around him all the time some aspirants for debates and discussions. He thinks women do not deserve to take part in intellectual discussions and an intellect does not have to prove his worth before a woman. Anila's place in her house is only to cook and serve the intellectual companions of her husband. He speaks little to her. One may think that she is a passive, traditional sort of woman therefore she does everything silently but ones true admiration comes from the fact that her conformity to her bond of marriage though she receives an irresistible temptation from the man, Raja Sitangshu Mouli from the house number one in the form of letters. He is a man more talented and multi-talented than her husband and handsome in appearance. Those letters may not effect a happy wife but a neglected wife, who has been constantly looked down upon by her own husband, does not have to wait for being tempted, they themselves are in a position to tempt others. But when the other man's admiration becomes intolerable for her what all she says to her husband is:

The people next door are becoming a nuisance; let's move to some other house.⁸

She could indeed enjoy receiving letters of admiration. At least she could secretly cherish the thoughts of her being with the other man, if she has no courage to violate openly. But, in thought, in word, in action she is pure. So, she suggests her husband to move away from the house. When her husband orders her to prepare dinner on the very day, she returns from her father's house, when her brother commits suicide due to his failure in his examination. He does not even enquire about the reason of her sudden visit to her father's house. One can understand how alienated she must have been! She prepares an elaborate dinner, and she leaves that very night, leaving her husband a small note and the charge of the house. Her husband finds the note that reads as:

I'm leaving don't try to find me. You won't succeed even if you try.⁹

Expression is brief only between strangers. The expression in her small note denotes her estrangement and her sense of alienation from her husband. Her husband finds a tin box containing all the jewels of Anila, even the bangles she always wear, everything expect conch shell bracelets and iron bangle indicating her married state, in one compartment there is a bunch of keys, in other various coins in paper packets. Whatever money remains from the monthly household expenses is accounted to the last paisa, a notebook contained a list of utensils and other household goods, as well as of the clothes sent to the washer man, the

milk man's and grocer's accounts are also there except her address. This shows how responsible she is, in her household duties and how self-respected she is. Finally she determines to lead a life of her own. She does not degrade herself by being attracted to another man in spite of all the attraction she receives from the house number one. At the same time she does not lose her individuality till the end through her false devotion and worship to her husband. She realizes in the middle and she chooses her own way. Therefore, she stands above most of the women characters in the short stories of Tagore in her dignity and decorum.

Sohini is the most memorable character of Tagore. She is the central character in the story *The Laboratory*. She is a fine blend of tradition and modernity. She is traditional in her love for her husband and in her commitment and dedication to carry out the mission of her husband she is modern. The means that she employs to achieve it makes her appear most modern. She is very bold and expressive. She is the wife of Nanda Kishore. Nanda Kishore has a goal in his life that he wants to establish a laboratory for the young researchers and scientists of India and that it should be a gate way for scientific research and experiment. He establishes a laboratory, but soon he dies before his dreams come true. Then Sohini takes up the task and she tries to carry out her husband's mission. She is not a weak and fragile woman. Many people try to grab the properties belonging to laboratory. There are people to dampen and discourage her spirit. She faces a lot. She fights legal battles and saves the property. With courage, with singleness of mind, with love she carries out her mission, she does not even count her daughter when she becomes an obstacle in her mission, finally she succeeds in her effort. She is free and frank in her expression. She gives a free expression of her private and passionate feelings. She makes a bold statement about weakness of entire women kind. And she also says she is not an exceptional one. She tells it is very difficult to maintain inner weakness of a woman and make oneself look genuine. She cannot wear the mask of purity and it is reflected in her own words when she says to Chaudhuri:

Don't you know the heart is greedy? It hides its fire under flesh and blood, but it flares up with a little prodding. We, women are not lifelong ascetics. We have tough time to keep up pretence. Draupadis and Kuntis have to be pretended to Sitas and Savitris.¹⁰

One might think that she speaks with a freedom of a prostitute. But Sohini never seems to have committed any adultery after she enters the life of Nanda Kishore. And she also gave an open expression before her husband that she charmed many men. And her relation with Chaudhuri is not for convenience. Their relation is built up on mutual trust and understanding and it is an emotional kind, not physical. The strength of the character of Sohini lies in her transformation from the stage of a weak-minded lady with a taste and desire for physical pleasures

to the strong and bold lady who would face the harsh realities life alone without commitment to anything low or mean. Her widow-hood has never made her weak but it strengthens her personality. Her self-confession may be useful to prove this point. Once she confesses to Chaudhuri thus:

I have been smirched in my body, but in mind, nothing could take hold on me. Anyway my desires have been cast on flames of his funeral pyre. My heaped up sins are being burnt away one by one. The sacrificial fire is burning right in the laboratory.¹¹

Sohin's love is not extinguished with the death of her husband but it increases. It is the sign of true love. She worships her husband in her heart and she worships laboratory as a temple, in thought or action she is not even slightly deviated from her husband or her mission. In that sense she is most traditional and she is most loyal. She never claims any credit from others for herself if anyone compliments her for her greatness in carrying out the mission. She always acknowledges that it is the credit of her husband, which really makes her strong. She admires her husband always. Her great regard for her husband is known when she remarks:

Other men make fools of women to entrap them: he entrapped me by imparting knowledge day and night. You know, a husband's faults can never be hidden from his wife. But I tell you, I have never detected the least dross in his makeup. When I saw close at hand, I thought he was a great man, now from a distance, he seems even greater.¹²

She does not like the unusual freedom of woman. One can understand this point in her treatment of her daughter. She believes in mutual dependency of man and woman on each other. Therefore she wants someone who can take charge of the laboratory. She selects Rebati for the execution of her mission. To entice Rebati she does not hesitate to employ her own daughter Nila. She also takes the help of Chaudhuri, Rebati's teacher in bringing Rebati into laboratory. When Sohini finds Nila is an obstacle for Rebati to get on with his research in the lab, she threatens her. When Rebati himself falls into the clutches of Nila, she protects him from his fall. She never avoids her obligations to anyone. Though it is a crucial time for her to streamline the affairs of laboratory, shielding Rebati from all kinds of diversions, mainly from the attacks of Nila, when she receives a telegram from Ambala from her grandmother that she is ill she immediately goes there. Nila takes advantage of the absence of her mother to tempt Rebati at her best. When Sohini wants Rebati to get on with his research and conduct experiment in the laboratory seriously, Nila spoils him with spreading of charms before him. When he deeply engrossed in research on magnetism, Nila goes into the lab disturbs and provokes him with her beauty and her talks. During the absence of Sohini, Rebati falls into the trap of Nila. He is also pleased to

be made himself the president of awakener's club, his attraction for Nila is growing more and more. For Nila, Rebati is a matter of convenience. When the laboratory comes into Rebati's hold, somehow she could tackle him and get hold on the property. It is the intention of Nila and also she hopes that she can enjoy freedom of moving with any man she desires. For Nila, sex is a matter of enjoyment but to her mother it is functional. As she can assess the true nature of her daughter, she never allows her into the affairs of the laboratory. Nila represents a large body of women at the present age, who scream themselves hoarsely to prove that they are not women. They feel their pride is hurt when they are taken as mere mothers of the race. They never realize what are their basic functions of being women. Sohini never neglects her duties and obligations as wife, as mother, as an individual member of society. Her involvement with Chaudhuri is not a physical involvement. It is a part of fulfilling her obligations and promises that she has made with her husband and society.

The brief study of women characters from the short stories of Tagore shows that there had been a gradual progress and development in the psyche of the women characters. They have changed from the oppressed and unexpressive individuals to revolting and self-expressive and self-reliant individuals. Changing conditions in society would certainly bring about a change in the living conditions of an individual. The influence of English education and Western culture was felt first in Bengal society because, Bengal was the first province to come under the rule of the East India Company in 1757. English Education and Western Culture brought about a progressive outlook, liberal thinking, and rationality in Bengal society in different spheres of life. It also paved the way for social and religious reforms. The influence of Brahmo Samaj and the influence of certain reformers and the national movement also gave a scope for new outlook in women.

After examining the above women characters from the stories of Tagore, from 1891-1940, one can see a considerable change in the thought and outlook of women. Oppression of women was the dominant feature of the stories that were written during 1891 to 1893, for instance Uma from *The Exercise Book* (1891), Kadambini from *Living or Dead?* (1891). Subha from the story *Subha* (1893) Radha and Chandara from the story of *Punishment* (1893). Chandara is representative of the class of woman who show a silent protest against oppression. Anila from *The Wife's Letter* (1914) and Mrinal from *The House Number One* (1917) are the women, who belong to the class of educated women, with some potential for thinking and decision-making. Whereas Sohini, from *The Laboratory* (1940). In whom, the spirit of modern woman can be witnessed at best. She does not fight a battle with man for the rights of women. But her freedom of thinking and self-expression without inhibition, facing challenges

from others, their and her dedication and commitment to the task she undertakes, will prove every way she is much above the so-called modern women. Thus, one can find a gradual change and transformation in the thought and the lives of women characters of Tagore that they raised from suppressed individuals to self-expressive individuals.

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‘Theurgism’ in the Fictional World of William Golding

Prakash Bhadury

Theurgy usually is the practice of trying to gain the knowledge and conversation of one’s Higher Self, or Inner God. Two inter related stages of development i.e. progression of the Self and progression of the World occur successively but until self is not purified one cannot do any good to the society as the individual is the unit of any given society and William Golding while showing the regression in the present day Godless world, ushers in the way to the transformation of the world via the individual souls to God’s timeless presence. Theurgist contribution has been unconscious percolation of the original purity of man and non-duality against essential human depravity. This paper explores how a religious mythopoeia is constructed in the background of spiritual void and moral relativism of the post-war era while showing as a true evolutionist that the secret of evolution is the manifestation of perfection which is already in every being. A pantheistic belief is insisted on attaining the mythic powers of perception for uniting the trinity of head, heart, and soul so that the whole man is born, who alone could be capable of right faculty of judgment and could avoid any distortions common to limited beings. The characters prove the dignity and importance of human action through which they find a pattern that neither man nor can the world be made to fit in any rational formula. Volitional struggles help abjure the rough magic through conscious effort.

Theurgy, derived from Greek terms, was used in ancient times as a traditional religious purification ritual. It is formed by combining two terms namely, ‘theos’, meaning gods and ‘ergeia’, meaning work and together they express divine working or functioning of god (Wiki). Theurgy as a first

recorded use of the term was found in the mid-second century neo-Platonist work, the Chaldean oracle and the source of Western Theurgy can be found in the philosophy of late Neo-Platonists especially Iamblichus. It holds that, “The spiritual Universe is a series of Emanations from the One. From the One emanated the Divine Mind (Nous) and in turn from the Divine Mind emanated the World Soul (Psyche)” (Theurgy, wiki). Neo-Platonist insisted that the One is absolutely transcendent and in the emanations nothing of the higher was lost or transmitted to the lower, which remained unchanged by the lower emanations. Although the Neo-Platonists are considered Polytheists, they embraced a form of monism. Later on, it was adopted by the magical wing of Platonism as a process of cleansing the lower aspects of the self to establish a foundation for higher philosophical contemplation. During the first centuries of the Common Era it developed into a distinct school and served as part of the same fusion of Platonic philosophy and popular occultism which gave birth to ‘Hermaticism’ and many ‘Gnostics’ traditions. The chief contributor to its formulation was Iamblichus of Chalcis (Bowker: 330).

A Christian interpretation of it is ‘divine action’ and further interpreted it to be “the inducement of a direct action of God through a human agent” (Greer: 483-484). Theurgy calls on help from divinely powerful saints and angels who are intermediaries between God’s power and common human being. It invokes the powers opposed to demonic forces and hence, in sharp contrast with black magic. In Esoteric Christianity, “Theurgy usually is the practice of trying to gain the knowledge and conversation of one’s Higher Self, or Inner God, to teach one spiritual truths and wisdom from God that one couldn’t learn from man”(Nelstrop:109-110).

Theurgy develops in two stages: Progression of the Self and Progression of the World, successively. Both are inter related, one helping the other, but until self is not purified one can not do any good to the society as the individual is the unit of any given society and Golding while showing the regression in the present day Godless world, ushers in the way to the transformation of the world via the individual souls to God’s timeless presence. ‘Universal pessimist’ what he was thought of initially was his power of Theurgy to help every soul, who is otherwise the purest being, diagnose the root of the disease of human predicament, the only way to lead to the original purity and realization of the non-duality of existence. In the present chapter all his major works would be analyzed as to show how different characters face extreme situation, even magical and their encounter and learning help the readers to unlearn their modern cramped values and in the process Golding plays his role as a theurgist.

The structure of Golding novel plays through binary opposition

and identifiably it moves from the loss of culture to corruption, innocence to experience, ignorance to knowledge, and rational knowledge to spiritual knowledge and the texture is superbly woven through the artifact of fictional characters to force the readers into forming the conjectures of either of the two. The magic spells that go between the two are his symbols and metaphors and an omniscient third person narrator consolidates the reader's judgment. In *Lord of the Flies* (1954) "Ralph weeps for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart" (116). The symbols are darkness, conch shell, fire, the people, the head on a stick, face paint, double tongue, incoherent babble, fall etc. which pulsates in the reader's mind as a magical spell to remind them of their true self of oneness, which is apparently darkened by the heat and dust of the phenomenal world.

The Industrial Revolution of 'getting and spending' in Victorian period soon witnessed the moral vacuum and the death of God. For Nietzsche, "The death of God meant that traditional 'soft' Christian values would be lost over time" (Moral relativism: 3). He felt that these morals, which limited the individual's creativity and potential, would be replaced with man-made values over time. Man's next task, For Nietzsche, would be to create a new grounding for morals in the absence of a divine order which he felt was a tremendous opportunity and chance for human beings. But ironically, political parties such as the Nazi party have referred to Nietzsche's work to support their anti-Semitic ideologies. Most philosophers argue that this was a misinterpretation of the author's ideas, and that Nietzsche was not a libertine who denied humanity should not have morals. Rather, he urged the re-evaluation of morals often taken for granted in society.

As a theurgist, Golding shows in the *Lord of the Flies* how different people feel the influences and instincts of civilization and savagery to different degrees. Piggy has no savage feelings, but Roger is utterly savage. Ralph attempts to bring order on the island while Simon is engaged in his spiritual quest of finding the source of evil. Golding implies that the instinct of savagery is far more primal and fundamental to the human psyche than the instinct of civilization. Moral behavior, as the boys' world displays, is something forced upon them by the so called civilized society, or else the choir school boys could not have turned the idyllic island into blood and violence. The bloody sow's head impaled upon a stake in the forest what Simon discovered is symbolic of innate evil in all human being. Lord of the Flies or the Satan is the product of our own mind, not something external.

The *Lord of the Flies* falls into the category of island literature like that of the *Tempest* in which Prospero using his rough magic transforms the island into an allegorical space. A comparative study would make it clear as to

how and why this instinct varies. The black magic in that island is repressive against Caliban and other spirits, even Miranda suffers her chastity. Devices like magic, spiritual element and monstrosity fill the allegorical space. The drama is close to the *Lord of the Flies* as at the initial stage both islands were full of charm and nature's plenty. Slowly, both degenerate into a place of repression and torture under the superior masters. When Prospero lands on the island he uproots Sycorax's black magic and replaces his own. The play begins and ends with magic to remind the readers the instability of our lives. His verbal power was derived from books and creates beautiful pageants, sweet music, apes and a power to subdue even the nature. Magic delights the senses throughout the play as it tames the fairies, enjoys negative pleasure of torturing Caliban deploying the apes, and raises storms both at the beginning and at the end. Prospero's magic represents the colonial repressive power.

The magic of the adult world is imitated by the small boys who ransack the island searching for evils outside and in the supernatural. The natural man, Caliban suffered in the hand of Prospero by his wrong use of language and cultural power. Piggy, the archetype of intellectual 'other' sacrifices his life but very curiously he leaves his glass which is the magic telescope for Golding to show the somber magic the world is has pushed in for. Society manipulates people what Golding wants to put forward. Each character in the LF represents a different part of man as he has evolved in the course of the progress of the story.

When Golding utters through the omniscient voice, "You know there are oracles everywhere" (Double Tongue 78), he accepts that the goodness, the truth is everywhere present in this world and we need to live up to that leaving behind all narrow judgments. Spiritualist Golding has understood well the value of purity, patience and perseverance in life. If one does not have it, one must try patiently. Arieka began to loathe the lies of Ionides in matters of pronouncing oracles as when Ionides used to prepare the place of oracle and he would sit near the sacred tripod keeping a place for her to sit, she would avoid as she says, "I turned away" (81). But the omniscient voice reminds the readers that, "The day would come soon enough. Why run to meet it" (81)? Here, the day is the time of purification through our *karma*. Ionides is a Victorian skeptic who always doubted the presence of god or of any spiritual power. He does not mind committing blasphemy of lying or stealing the words of Arieka in the name of god, but Arieka condemned blasphemy as it is made clear through Ionides, "That is exactly as it should be...I wish devoutly that when you go down there god will really speak through you-I wish it but I don't believe it" (83). Further he confesses, "Look. I speak in all seriousness. I am a flimsy creature, not solid like you. But when you go down those steps and climb on

to the sacred tripod, you are free. You are the freest woman in the Hellas-in the world! You will say what you will say” (83-84). A skeptic now is a transformed person having understood the power of Arieka’s Theurgy and the darkness begins to evanesce. In *the Tempest*, we find that Prospero is willing to return to Milan abjuring his ‘rough magic’ and forgiving his enemies. He, no longer, is now interested in his dukedom, hence, no magic. The entire tempest that began during the course of his worldly duties has calmed down now. Time for rough magic for I Sammy suffered the conflict between science and religion. Two times he faces such conflicts, one is homogeneous, another, a succession of immeasurable moments. That each one of us is a morally flawed creature is put forward as a perfect Theurgy in all the fiction. In an age when many writers have found it difficult to codify man’s experience or they are lost in the maze of existential dilemma; Golding has come out with his well constructed fables with allegorical metaphors suggesting the reality, the performance of man’s nature that almost rest on the validity of their Christian parallels.

As a Spiritual cosmologist he has shown this reality of man’s nature, and the knowledge of good and evil without forcing any artificial pattern on them. He has himself proclaimed that names or labels do not matter; it is the ultimate reality that counts. He is sometimes charged as being trite, but he contends that: “what is trite is true, and a truism can become more than a truism when it is a belief passionately held” (Handerson: 374). Man grows up in an illusory world built through his senses and rational intellect.

He has assumed the role of a pattern maker ever since he acquired rational consciousness. Martin is an extreme case of forcing a pattern of his consciousness even at the cost of his life. He forces an artificial pattern “to fit everywhere over the rock and the sea and the sky”(PM: 162). But a cosmic pattern of death annihilates his self imposed pattern of separate identity. Both the LF and DV depict that evil reside in humanity’s innermost nature and civilization suffers dissolution by such sinister force.

A civilization cannot perpetuate longer if it is divorced from right morality and ends. In the process of seeking pattern man imposes his own evil motives, ill will on others and brings misery to all. Martin’s Promethean struggle, Jocelin’s big dare or Sammy’s Dantesque quest are all conceived in a rational mind divorced from right moral purpose. They act to their voracious ego and suffer hubris.

The Spire (1964) is termed as a comedy as well as a tragedy. The spire with all its imperfections stands as an object of glory and Jocelin, the central character, ultimately comes out victorious thus, rendering the novel as a comedy. It is also tragic in so far as it describes the lowly fall and destruction of Jocelin

and his four human pillars, a chronicle of the down fall of great men. The novel is more akin to Greek tragedy in its theme and structure. The ritual murder of Pangal provides the structure of the novel quite as much as the construction of the spire does. The action of the book is Joceline's progress from ignorance to self-knowledge.

The works of Aeschylus is evident in the tragedy of Jocelin: man's fall as a result of the violation of the limits set by the order. "Jocelin commits hubris and is punished with nemesis" (Subba Rao: 82). Aeschylus says that men learn through suffering. Jocelin also suffers the nemesis and regenerates into a true tragic figure. In 'the spire' the pattern of agon (conflict), Pathos (suffering) and epiphany (revelation) are vividly present. Jocelin achieves, like King Lear, a new awareness, a new humility and compassion, as he is purged of his ego. Indeed, Jocelin emerges in a heroic light in the death bed and achieves a true tragic stature who can be compared with great tragic figures like Oedipus and King Lear.

The interlocking story of Matty and Sophy in *Darkness Visible* (1979) is set in a specific time of 60's England to present contemporary moral disintegration. The book is set in the age of 'getting and spending', 'free-love' and 'anything goes', yet it opens with a fire-storm in London during the blitz that speaks of an apocalypse during World War-II. Matty appears like an Old Testament prophet representing a theurgist and Sophy, for her sexual excesses and criminal behaviour forms the antithesis of Matty representing the black magic. Sophy must come to terms with her spiritual counterpart; Matty and Sophy is sent on an exploratory journey to come to a full circle from an apocalyptic London to his saintliness via the failure in human love. Thus, he is Sophy's positive counterpart who has sought redemption from the very beginning of his conscious life. The novel emphasizes more on 'visibility' than on 'darkness'. Viewed in this way, "good and evil are evaluations primarily based on perception, rather than absolute moral values" (McCarron: 41).

Golding as a theurgist consciously constructs a religious mythopoeia in the background of spiritual void and moral relativism of the post-war era. He is disillusioned with man's myth of progress as it results in war giving rise to man's inhumanity to man. The Theatre of the Absurd represents the attitude of man most genuinely as life is absurd and meaningless. Martin Esslin observes the post-war atmosphere as: "the decline of religious faith was masked until the end of the second world war by the substitute religious of faith in progress, nationalism and various totalitarian fallacies" (23).

Golding wants to destroy artificial patterns. He represents himself theologically, as what used to be loosely termed as Deist. He believes in human

evil; he also believes that human being can get back to the lost paradise by clutching the holiness that lies scattered among the fragments of our world. There are saintly people like Simon who, like the incense sticks leave fragrance of goodness, themselves sacrificing their lives. The wisdom Simon offers that the beast is within us is disturbing and negative. But his life and death offer some hope in the pervasive gloom inasmuch that one good man at least has been found who is capable of redeeming the world.

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Decoding the Enigmas of Marital Ethics in Shashi Deshpande's *Ships That Pass*

Khem Raj Sharma

Happy marriages begin when we marry the ones we love,
And they blossom when we love the ones we marry. TOM MULLEN

Marriage, ideally speaking, is a universal institution which brings two people so close that they become soul-mates. But perfection level is reached/achieved in rare cases. This theme of marriage has been examined minutely in all the genres of literature across the ages. The twentieth century has been the age of transformation in almost every arena, and the institution of marriage also has been transformed considerably. "Our Epics, Vedas and Puranas envisage marriage not as a mere social instrument, but also as a moral weapon to both stabilize and elevate the moral stature of an individual. But unfortunately, it is an irony of fate that in a post-modernistic world, such esteemed institutions are currently subject to doubt, cynicism and erosion." (Sarada 57) There are many Indian women writers like Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Gita Hariharan, Rama Mehta and Shobha De, who have presented the predicament of women within the framework of marriage. Shashi Deshpande has dealt with this institution in its varied colours. She has analysed the socio-cultural modes and values related to marriage in most of her novels. Almost every novel by her opens at a critical juncture in a woman's life. Most of the time, Deshpande analyses her marital life and balances all the arguments in order to gauge the things closely.

Marital adjustments have been the crux of Shashi Deshpande's novels,

wherein ordinary women seek to discover what happens behind the closed doors of marital and family life. In her first novel, *Roots and Shadows*, Deshpande depicts the agony and suffocation experienced by the protagonist Indu, both before and after marriage, in a male dominated and tradition-bound society. *The Dark Holds No Terror*, her second novel, is about the gradual awakening of a woman trapped in a stifling marriage. *That Long Silence*, her third novel, gives us an account of traditional marriage in which the protagonist, Jaya places the sacred icons of marriage under examination till she affirms herself. *The Binding Vine*, her fourth, deals with the personal tragedy of the protagonist Urmi on victims like Kalpana and Mira—victims of man’s lust and woman’s helplessness. In her novel, *A Matter of Time*, Sumi is not reduced to a weeping child after Gopal has walked on her but she puts her best efforts to make her life meaningful. *Small Remedies* is about Savitribai Indorekar, the aging doyenne of Hindustani music, who avoids marriage and home to pursue her genius. In *If I Die Today*, there is something rotten in the state of women’s domestic and married life where, Manju the protagonist becomes a victim of a passive aggressive husband whose sly comments make her life miserable.

The present paper seeks to decode the enigmas of marital ethics in Shashi Deshpande’s latest novella *Ships that Pass*. The story, as Deshpande informs us in the author’s note has been originally conceived 30 years back as a ‘crime’ short story and was serialized in *Eve’s Weekly* in 1980; and which, more than three decades later, has metamorphosed into a novella of 136 pages. Deshpande adds the epigraph to the novel from a quote by poet H. W. Longfellow, which provides the title to it, and is quite baffling. It says:

Ships that pass in the night, and speak each other in passing,
Only a signal shown and a distant voice in the darkness;
So on the ocean of life we pass and speak one another,
Only a look and a voice, then darkness again and a silence.

This epigraph sets the tone of the story. Though an account on life, yet on deeper thought, the novella seems to be a metaphor on marriage. It discusses the issues related to marriage and the underlying social values. It questions all the beliefs, myths and details that populate the institution of marriage as it happens among Indians. One of the profound statements underlies the core of this novel and reads thus:

Marriage is a very strange thing. It’s a very public institution, it’s meant to tell the world that two people are going to live together, to declare that their children will be legal, that these children can inherit their property. It’s meant for social living, to ensure that some rules are observed so that men and women don’t cross the lines that are drawn for them. At the same time, marriage is an intensely personal affair.

~~No outsider will ever know the state of someone else’s marriage. It’s~~

a closed room, a locked room. (60-61)

It is the story of a young woman, Radhika, the narrator-protagonist, who decides to get married on a whim but over the course of the story, discovers the meaning of love in the face of the tragic breakdown of her sister's near-perfect life and marriage. It is also the story of Radhika's sister Tara and her husband Shaan, who become strangers to each other after the death of their young daughter. Radhika tries to grapple with the nature of human relationships and struggles with her own feelings for an older man. The story is simple, the pace slow, but in Deshpande's hand and effortless style, the book becomes a mature and emotional probe into a question people spend their whole adult life trying to understand – what is a perfect marriage? The book, as a result, becomes an exercise in rumination, one that looks for answers in love and in self-realization.

Radhika is an honest, straightforward, broadminded, kind hearted and intelligent girl, who on 'the brink of life' (4) chooses to get married on a whim instead of a career, as the society often points out, marriage seems like a perfect solution. Like Buddha, She feels the "Enlightenment" while crossing the road behind the Bombay University building:

One of the certainties of life was marriage. Everyone, but just everyone, wanted me to get married—united in this, if differing in my career options. ... So why not get married first and get that part of my life over with and behind me. There would, then, be just one Uncertainty left—my career. (9)

Radhika surprises her family by declaring that she is done with studying and that she wants them to find a suitable groom for her. Much to their disappointment, the family takes it "immodest and unwomanly [as she expresses], so openly and casually, a wish to get married." (10-11) She feels astonished by their lukewarm reaction as she says:

Did any other girl have a family trying to dissuade her from marrying? From what I'd seen, most often it was the other way round. Girls say, not now, not so soon. And families say, why not now, what's the problem. (11)

She prefers an arranged marriage because "[She] couldn't afford to sit waiting for Prince Charming to arrive. An arranged marriage seemed sensible and practical; no uncertainties, all the facts laid bare. 'His father is so-and so, his family is such-and-such, he does this for a living, he earns precisely this much money, he has one sister, two brothers....' (10) When, too-good-looking for her, Ghanshyam accepts her proposal and are engaged, she gets utterly surprised. Except that when she meets Ghanashyam, the 'suitable' groom, she is not too comfortable with the way they act their roles and try to be individuals they aren't with each other. She behaves artificially with him and it makes her wonder whether two strangers who are playacting with one another can possibly make a marriage work in a spirit of love and understanding. She is unable to decide

what is right for her: Is it Ghanshyam? Or marriage? She is unable to talk to him openly and honestly. “What a fool I’d been to think that marriage was the solution, the answer to everything. I’d felt so sure of myself then, it seemed so logical, so sensible. Suddenly, I found myself full of doubts. I couldn’t call it off either.” (23) Now she started to think about arranged marriages where the couple behaves like lovers. She thinks of her brother Dinkar and his wife, Mona who seem “quite happy together, though they had not known each other until they met ‘officially’, surrounded by their families. And suddenly, after marriage, they were a couple with all the classic symptoms lovers are supposed to exhibit.” (23) Mohana transforms into Mona and Dinkar becomes Dinks by his success in career. The second thought takes her to the luck that her sister Tara has to have her man. “In any case everyone can’t have Akka and Shaan’s luck to fall in love the way they had done and to be so sure of each other, to know with absolute certainty that this was the person with whom you wanted to live the rest of your life” (24). She takes solace in thinking that like millions of other couples, she will also start off with Ghanshyam as strangers and soon become lovers.

During the time this confusion of ‘to have or to hold’ sets in her mind and she begins questioning herself on the very purpose of getting married, her brother-in-law, Shaan’s call to attend her sister Tara provides her the opportunity to “get away from her dilemma for a while” (27) as she seems caught in the whirlpool of marital engagement. She feels “like [she]’d been let out on parole.” (48) But Shaan’s letter disturbs her as it urgently asks her to come and stay with them for a few days as Tara is apparently not well and not communicating even to Shaan. His emphasis on the line “I have no influence over her at all” perturbs her, and she begins to think about how can such devoted lovers, become estranged from each other. As a determined younger sister, Radhika packs her things and comes to stay with her older sister whom she hardly knew, liked or understood while they were growing up. What she discovers in her sister’s near perfect life devastates her. She begins to think seriously, and as Swapna Raghu Sanand has aptly averred, questions emerge in her mind:

- i. So called ‘perfect’ couples as perceived by the society – does anyone even have a clue what their real, pain filled lives are like? What is the point of creating an illusion like that and living it for the rest of one’s lives?
- ii. Is marriage a riddle that others can never understand? Why?
- iii. What creates a perfect marriage? (Sanand 1)

What possibly Radhika thought of/ or rather takes jokingly becomes a crucial predicament and perhaps a perfect ‘revelation’ for her. The entire narrative rests on her understanding about the enigmas of marital ethics. Her being a student of literature makes her to explore the connotations that stand hidden behind

the garb of the most intense human relationship. She declares:

I thought of my own idea of marriage—it seemed so puerile now, as if I'd really believed in the huge lie of 'they lived happily ever after'. Whoever did? There was disappointment, disillusionment, disenchantment—so many 'dis'es. Yes and affairs. How far I'd travelled from that silly girl who thought marriage was the solution to the problems. On the contrary, it was the beginning of the problems, some so bad that they could never be resolved. (68)

A onetime exceptional beauty, Tara (Akka, as Radhika calls her) looks "like a Mughal miniature, with large lustrous eyes, straight nose, a perfectly shaped face with high cheek bones and a delicate jaw line." (14) She has been the centre of the household, beautiful and talented. Besides being a poet, she has been a marvelous actor, who has acted in a Marathi play. She and Shaan have been together since childhood since his family is their neighbours for umpteen years. Tara abandons her idea of becoming a doctor to just to be free to marry Shaan. The day Shaan gets a job, she gives up everything: her family, her studies, her friends, everything. Literally Shaan was her world and she left everything behind for him. But now, the situation has changed extraordinarily. Radhika gets more disturbed when she learns from Shaan that her sister is addicted to painkillers and sedatives. He even complains that Tara is not willing to show to any doctor while she is in great need of it. Gradually Shaan knits his web of psychosis on Tara by telling that she is grieving for her dead child Geetu and she is still listening her dead child's voice and footsteps, and her presence even after the two years of child's death. To substantiate his words he says that she had attempted twice to kill herself. He explains his position thousand times in thousand different ways but the reality was something else. When Radha meets her Akka at the outlook she was absolutely fine. Radha says "I could sense a restlessness, a turbulence in Akka. Not physical, physically, she was quiet and still. Yet I felt, I don't know why, that she was not at peace." (33) But all the doubts and unpleasant thoughts which have been hovering in Radhika's mind find expression thus:

Shaan was rarely at home. He left early in the morning and returned late at night. His excuse of 'too much work, we're in the last phase' was accepted by Akka with an equanimity which looked suspiciously like indifference. Well, in a couple married for fourteen years, some difference is to be expected, I told myself. But what happened that Sunday afternoon was a different matter entirely. (42)

Radhika feels shocked when Akka asks her to empty the cup of tea prepared by Shaan. Although Akka explains her action quite cleverly by saying, "I don't much like Shaan's tea. And I don't want to hurt his feelings either" (43) but

this frightens and distresses Radhika. Again, after witnessing Tara's painful attack on that Sunday afternoon as she reveals, "Fear it isn't always made up of creaking boards, of darkness and shadows and footsteps following up. It doesn't always come from outside; often, it's lurking within us, waiting to emerge at odd times, taking us unawares. And there are times when you don't understand it, because you can't put your finger on what it is that fills you with dread" (44). Knowing that Radha is hurt, Tara tries to soothe her by saying her that pain has become her good friend. "It's almost family. It starts off so timidly, I feel it won't venture any further. Then bit by bit, so gradually that I don't notice it, it advances. And there it is, with me, a part of me. I never let it feel it has the upper hand. And in a while it goes and I'm fine" (46). Shaan as a secret tells Radha that Tara has closed herself against him completely after Geetu's death. As if she thinks he is responsible for what happened to their child. Even he tells her that Tara had tried twice to commit suicide and now he is afraid that she may repeat it. Radha though shocked is sure that Akka may not take such a decision as she loves Abhi. Even when Ram Mohan and Tara discusses a news item of suicide Tara had said "*I can't ever imagine doing such a thing, it's so negative and worse, it makes a mockery of life*" (59). The next day the atmosphere of the house seems quite delightful as Shaan and Tara are friendly. Abhi is also happy and relaxed.

Life of Radha changes after Akka's death. Ghanshyam's father nicely withdrew the marriage proposal as it was clear that they are not interested further to connect with the family having murder background. It is not clear if Tara killed herself or it was a lust murder by her husband as both remain silent. But it is evident that Tara is killed due to her husband's infidelity. Tara voluntarily remains silent towards her husband's extra marital affair. She loves him so much that she is unable to leave him and wants to safeguard her marriage, "Shaan has been part of my life for so long, I can't think of life without him but he...?" (102) *Ships That Pass* sets a mirror to the couples in troubled marriages throwing light on the extra marital affair which destroys the sanctity of the institution of marriage. Healing of the wound of infidelity by a spouse is not that easy. To quote from John Paul II's wisdom from *Love and Responsibility* to couples who are struggling with the issue of troubled marriage, "The strength of such a (mature) love emerges most clearly when the beloved stumbles, when his or her weaknesses or sins come into the open. One who truly loves does not then withdraw love, but loves all the more, loves in full consciousness of the other's shortcomings and faults, without in the least approving of them. For the person as such never loses his/her essential value. The emotion which attaches to the value of the person is loyal." (Wojtyla 135) But Shaan has changed his love and is ready to kill Tara for another woman. Tara is not 'psychosomatic' but to

cover up his deeds Shaan projects her so. Normally a man who indulges in an affair tries to portray himself as a decent person to the society. Even though he is aware of the consequences of his actions, he continues with the relationship, with or without the feelings of guilt. He justifies his affair by accusing his loyal and ever faithful wife with any negative and unforgivable behaviour. This is done intentionally to gain sympathy for his patience and endurance which he had suffered throughout the entire marriage. Shaan gets arrested for the possibility of the murder of Akka. He retreats “into a determined silence. Was this a sign of guilt? Or was it anger at the injustice of being accused of murdering his wife? Shaan had become an enigma.” (106) He does not seem either angry or frightened. People talk about his murdering his wife for the sake of another woman. Shaan speaks only to Ram Mohan and entrusts Abhi on him and not to any relatives of his or wife’s side. This may be the giving of final tribute to his wife as Ram was her confidant, and the man she turned to for comfort and companionship.

At the time when Radhika is staying with her sister, she meets Ram Mohan, her sister’s old friend and loyal admirer. She is irritated by his adoration and close friendship with her beautiful sister but she also believes he is extremely kind, compassionate and sincere. Gradually, she begins to trust him and in certain moments of distress, she finds herself turning to him and relying on his judgment than that of any others. Despite his being a divorcee, Ram Mohan had looked after his wife when she got cancer, brought her back home and cares for her until her death, “A death he is still grieving over.” (65) Although Shaan is accused of Tara’s murder, still Ram Mohan wants to save him because he thinks more about Abhi, who has already lost his mother and should be left with father. For him, “The living matter more than the dead.” (102) Radhika falls in love with this older man which people may call “calf love... or puppy love” (70) She feels that whereas Ghanshyam is ambitious and determined, Ram Mohan is none, but ‘poised’ and ‘contented’ (70). For Ghanshyam, she feels that there’s was not “even a proper engagement” so she can get away with this relationship. But for Ram Mohan, who is not so handsome conventionally, she feels more perturbed as she questions herself, “was I going to spend my life languishing for a man who thought of me as a little girl?” (74) Despite the fact that Ram Mohan tells her: “I’m at the end of so many things. You are at the beginning of life” (125) Radhika marries him through a “simple registered wedding” (128) in a dusty government office and feels happy as she says, “I loved our wedding. It was perfect because the right man was with me.” (130)

Tara’s valuable suggestions echoes in Radhika’s mind, which makes her to decide her courtship with Ram Mohan. It is her expertise that Radhika realizes the true nature of marriage whether it be love or arranged or both.

When Radhika reaches at her sister's home, Akka asks her about her fiancé, Ghanshyam and she laughs at her suggestively "the time of courtship [is] the best time. Men are at their best. You will never get this time again." (31) In a very unenthusiastic tone, Radhika says, "I really don't know, Akka. How can you get to know a man in a few hours?" Tara retorts in the same tone, which cracks at the very ideals of marriage, "You can't know him even after years. It's all a big gamble, Radhu. If you are lucky you win, otherwise..." (32). Akka experience in the marital life shows how wise she has become as is evident from the advice she gives to Radhu: "When you marry, whoever you marry—keep yourself intact. There's always a real you inside. Don't drown that real you in a man, in a family." (91) When Radhu shows her intention to break her engagement, Akka says, "Never, never marry a man who doesn't seem right to you. And when you find the right man, never let him go. Promise me you'll do that. (91)

Children play a very important role in the success of marriage. Although Shaan is involved in extra-marital affair, still his relationship with Tara is because of their son, Abhi. Tara becomes sick, as per Shaan's presentation, because she cannot keep herself out of the sorrow of the death of her girl, Geetu, who dies of Leukaemia. Their girl Geetu was a bundle of energy and excitement, an adorable and loveable child and her death had been a great blow for the parents. But it was only for Akka and not for Shaan. Radhika explains marital predicament taking Akka's situation:

Children, whom you loved so much, you could die for them; instead you had to watch them die. Was that why Akka was keeping her distance from Abhi, afraid to get too close, because it might mean suffering? These were waters too deep for me. I wished I could go back to the girl who'd had fun with her friends, argued with Aai, provoked Dada. (68)

Children also become the victim of the unsuccessful marriages. Abhi happens to be "more self-sufficient and self-contained than a boy of his age should be. Very silent as well. Now an only child, he should have been the centre of the household. But he seemed to efface himself and do it so well that he was often forgotten. ... He played cricket by himself all the time, bowling to himself against a wall ... This apart, he was remote and aloof, with occasional outbursts that seemed to baffle and infuriate Akka. (32)

To conclude, *Ships That Pass* is rumination on the nature of love and marriage. The tale subtly uncovers the relationship that co-exists without love behind the perfect façade of a harmonious marriage. This novel unravels the puzzles of marital beliefs. Through this, Shashi Deshpande raises some pertinent questions like: are human beings meant to be together? can two individuals be thrown together and actually live the rest of their life happily, with no one but

each other? and, is marriage an institution that really works among humans? Through her stance, Radhika demonstrates how a once ideal marriage can become pointless, and how she struggles with her own feelings for an older man. She realizes that while life may seldom turn out as expected, the only hope lies in finding the courage to take one's chance as she says, "I looked back at the girl who had imagined that she had solved the conundrum of life by choosing marriage. I had thought of my life as a piece of clay I could mould into any shape I wanted. Now, I was understanding that it was actually the other way round: we are shaped by the things that happen to us" (108-9). In her ultimate assertion, she says, "Ships that pass each other in the night, that's what we are. That's what we all are to each other." (86) As such through her final remark, Radhika seems to have reasonably deciphered the enigmas of marital ethics as she realizes that togetherness is all. She now knows with whom she can be her 'self' as she has restored her faith in love. Each day for her is a new beginning as she wakes up every morning with a sense of anticipation— an understanding that surpasses all her misperceptions and confusions about marital ethics.

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POEMS

Washing Place

Phani Mohanty

One day untimely
I went to the lonely washing place
in a hurry.
Not the known washing place,
but elsewhere.
The person I first met there, I thought
I had seen her before, somewhere,
Along some inaccessible roads
Or in deserted washing places,
Thousand times in dreams
Even in moments before dreams
end.
Whoever I met in the deserted wash-
ing places
Who's she to me?
Is she my beautiful wife - indulgent,
headstrong?
Or my first and the last beloved?
Or the graceful princess
Of some imaginary crystal king-
dom?
Whoever she might have been
If she had wanted
Wouldn't she have come
to some other washing place
Other than this lonely one?
But why -
Why should she come at all?
She came secretly, in desultory
dress.
Didn't she know she looked bright
Like the Goddess

at the time of bathing?
In the dazzling illumination-light
Her pair of unforgettable bewitched
blue eyes
Looked red like the sultry sky,
Her white red puffed lips
Trembled like leaves of banyan tree
Her half-seen, half-hidden
Tempting pointed breasts,
Thin waist, coloured lines of hair
And fascinating limbs of the body
Any poor stupid fool
Could never think of her
Other than a Goddess.
Once we had met face to face
In the lonely washing place
Then, after that meeting
The canards spread in the village
And in the areas around the village,
Not just among the small business
people
Who had their colourful shops open
In the false market places -
Unending canards went round
and round.
In fact who was she to me?
How was I related to her,
For how many days, months, years?
She was neither my companion in
life Nor after-life
Nor my intimate brother,
May be because of some good work
in the past birth
I got tied to her in love
And stayed as a slave to her
Like a shadow side by side.
Yet I could never see her
even in my dreams.
It was my destiny

To be humiliated for no fault of mine.
 If there was no way out,
 If the whole of life was to be spent
 in pretences,
 Somebody could have spoken to me
 in time -
 "O", enough, my friend, get ready
 to go,
 All your benevolence was gifted
 at wrong place
 What else is left with you,
 You better wash off your hands
 And wait readily".
 In a dirty lane of this busy world
 Where I lay like a dead rat
 With head and hands cramped
 The champak-coloured smiling lady
 was with me.
 And then by coming
 to the lonely washing place
 She killed me every minute. ■

Original in Odia.

Translation : Prof. Jatindra Mohan

Inside a Dead Picture

Amarendra Khatua

Hide the bite marks,
 Darkness has only turned sides.
 Here shadows grow
 Barbed hunger inside the
 Waiting beast, snoring violence.
 This untamed animal of colourless
 Cruelty has barged into
 Many silent pictures.

It has drawn macabre graffiti
 in human blood
 splattered in failures.
 It was also printed bloody tattoos of
 disorder in silent curses
 and unsung death,
 on our dreamless chests.
 We have forever manuscripted
 Sacred texts, we have composed
 anthems and drawn new maps. Yet
 this eyeless gape has
 scurried past the ceasefires of
 love and humanity,
 with claws of incessant ruin,
 damning men and machines.
 Hide the wounds,
 Now the night roars, for
 How long who knows.
 The Darkness has only turned
 Sides. ■

City Scape

Amarendra Khatua

Across the broad streets
 the buildings shape shadows
 and human whimpers
 Clutter the sideways.
 We nurture emotions
 Like unwanted money plants
 sprouting
 Patchy colours on corroded win-
 dow hinges.
 Always the city tosses sleepless on
 its own over
 A bed of dead neon lights. A train
 Shivers in its rush to deliver lonely
 Passengers to deserted stops.

Darkness shimmers with overhead
stars and loses eyesight.
This is my city.
My homecoming
Coos with pigeons on the acute
ledges
And the city overacts in wordless
Gurgling of lost noises
And unwritten autobiographies,
before yawning again. ■

Going Away

Amarendra Khatua

Our mangled sighs will furl atop
Such distances yet not adorned
by the bleeding stones,
the road left sometime
Back as hungry bookmarks forgot-
ten
In an unread manuscript.
You said, who
Read monuments of breaking
hearts now a days
And a lonely bird cried whole
night
With chillingly dark memory
strings.
Nobody could sleep. How could
Measured dreams that climb with-
out love
Resist the temptation of dying
without even knowing?
And you easily survive
All these. Distance has its own
excavation
inside the journey of lovenessness.

The museum of pebbled sighs
is now no more
Free, charges entry fee in quorum
of lost relations.
You said, who reads
The history of unused emotions

Rain in the Jungle

Anjana Verma

It is raining incessantly,
In the woods ahead
Dense, green trees sprawl endlessly
Creating the impression of a jungle
It is raining incessantly
I am on the sixth floor
And I am amazed
Seeing the green trees atop
Bathing in the rain
Having fortunately escaped
A metro's
'Chop Trees and Settle Drive'
Breathing in relief
Spared from their death
Dancing and enjoying
In the tipper-tapper of rain
Joyously
From the view above
Trees sway from side to side
A damp breeze blows
Hanging from the sky
Innumerable pearl-strings
of droplets
Pushed by the breeze
Move left to right

in a wave
 These dark-bodies drink up
 The falling droplets endlessly
 They are busy drinking this elixir
 In hiding from the world
 Surely we're connected
 They must be our ancestors
 Their blood running in our veins
 Walking in their journey
 Standing, they rested
 And got planted to the ground
 Tired, they halted in their path
 But they are always ready
 To offer to the caravan
 that moves ahead
 All that they have
 Even themselves. ■

Original in Hindi.

Translation: Shefalika Kumar.

Fire

Namita Nayak

Rocks over rocks
 over rocks
 over rocks.
 Ether over ether
 over ether
 over ether.
 Beneath grass
 beneath grass
 beneath grass.
 In the crevice of the rocks
 is burning a tender fire.....
 a tender fire.....
 a tender fire.

On the jungle road
 are walking some passers –by
 some passers-by
 some passers-by.
 The fragrance of the fire
 is reaching
 their nostrils
 their nostrils
 their nostrils.
 Yet they are trudging
 through another
 thorny path
 ignoring the pull
 of that sensitive
 blue fire. ■

Will you take it?

Mamata Dash

The moment I saw you
 In this waterless city
 A sudden sea burned up
 In the sunshine of a sudden morning
 And waves after waves,
 spread all around.
 Countless barges come
 from all directions
 In the speed of the wind.
 All the dirt heaped for centuries long
 Got filled up
 With layers of green.
 My entire life concentrated
 on a single point.
 It seemed
 This is the much awaited moment,
 If I pray now,
 God will incarnate or
 A pain struck god shall come down

from the cross
amidst mankind's welcome
and acknowledgement.
I saw the past as a distant
and desolate tin-house
broken to pieces at once
A shadow of certain faint acquaintances
Walked out of that ruin,
Walked in reverence
towards a future
That is coming from all the sides,
engulfing.
Something or other was happening
here and there
That would have happened
But you went to the beginning
Of all the incidents in a strange way.
And there you filled all my needs
And desires simply by your touch.
Did I tell you anything?
How could you understand
Everything from the very beginning,
Skillfully snatching my words
Before they could come
out of my lips?
Had I asked for anything
It would have been
the timelessness of that moment,
That did not happen,
You drifted away from me
to a distant horizon
I saw you suddenly rise on this side,
And set on that side
with a smile.
Today I reached a place,
Beyond my destiny, where
Every hope of mine, every despair
Have flowered in a single stem
A flower, always fresh, always wet

With my tears, vibrating
with expectations.
Will you take it, will you come? ■

A Mother in Town

Bipin Patsani

Brought to live in town
with her working
daughter-in-law,
a mother woke one morning
and found herself surrounded with
all affluence of the middle class
home
heading up, she did not know
where.
It was a whole new world
of concrete,
shining wash-basin,
cream and colour;
the washing-machine,
T.V., fridge and cooler
occupying their place
in the dining space
and images in the dressing mirror
looking taller.
But onething was missing there,
one very important thing
was not certainly there,
the thing which was very impor-
tant to her
in all her life, held so dear.
In the grand show of glistening
gadgets
And home appliances.

she saw herself nowhere.
 Lonely in a son's house,
 contrary to
 the long summer
 when she had her way,
 all that she could do among several
 odd things
 was to keep watch.
 An old woman in her seventies
 out of her mud haven in village,
 she felt so much a stranger
 In the artificial world
 and was scared of
 late night parties
 that one such night
 she had to hide herself under a cot
 until her son returned
 with his wife and kids,
 lest some burglar should break in,
 strangle her or cut her throat.
 Neither the smooth marble floor
 nor the bathroom shower
 could tempt her to stay there.
 So she came back to her soil
 at home
 where the air was humble
 and sky clear.
 There were of course
 no more *rotis*
 to slide in with some meat
 and curry
 unbecoming of a poor widow;
 but she had nothing to be afraid of,
 none to make her feel
 ashamed and sorry. ■

Life as a Poem

Minati Pattnaik

Like pain or a prayer
 it spreads within.
 Whether reading a poem
 or writing it
 brings one closer to life
 closer to whatever constitutes life.
 While writing these poems
 I feel a different pulsation
 a different sensation
 an excitement that goes deeper and
 deeper
 into the layers and layers of reality
 that makes my life meaningful.
 Then I begin to understand life
 better
 and accordingly I learn
 the secret ways of living
 it is continuous with living itself.
 I discover, it is inseparable from life
 I always wonder about
 the mystery of the creative process,
 The secret act of ordering words,
 It seems to begin a tussle
 or tug-of-war
 in the self within.
 Poetry is perhaps a blackboard
 Where golden voices of my heart
 Gets recorded automatically.
 Yet it enables me to accept life
 as a poem.
 It gets inscribed on my breath,
 on the flowing quality of my blood,
 it comforts my weary, tired soul.
 Then I listen
 the whisper of rhythmic reflection
 of life
 that makes my existence matter. ■

A Singer of Heart

Bijay Kant Dubey

A singer of heart I am
As go I singing of heart
Where from originate
the songs of mine.
What it is in my heart,
what it is in yours
Can feel I,
How the joys, how the sorrows
of yours -
This much can feel I.
A singer of heart I am
As go I singing the songs of heart,
Humming and whistling
all the ways,
As my love your love, yours mine,
If something wets you,
depresses and saddens,
It also saddens me,
If something marauds the spirit
and poorself of yours
It also that of mine.
As you know it not,
my love your love,
Your beating my beating,
The beating of my heart,
Your love my love.
And the songs that sing I
are the song of heart,
My heart,
Your heart,
My love, your love.
And as thus go I singing, weeping
and wiping all alone.
As your depression the cause of
my sorrow,

As your silent weeping and bearing
The cause of my anxiety.
A singer of heart I am
As sing I
When the heart fills with emotions
and feelings,
When I yearn to put them before.
And the songs that sing I
Carry the pains and pines
of your heart,
The sweet sorrows of yours
What it ails you. ■

The Headword

K.V.Raghupathi

I know he would never get
the meaning for the word
he has been intently looking
like an excavator in ruins
for the meaning of "History".
Only broken artifacts he discovered.
He glued the pieces to get a form
but only a post structural Derrida's
image.
He went in
brought out three dictionaries
piled them on the writing pad
of his mind.
He joined scattered words
like a bone setter
but never gained the natural.
Meanwhile
his brown wife joined him
in the venture that became pathless.
Both were lost in the thick jungle
of words.
They rushed to library

like accident victims to hospital
 poured into book after book
 dictionary after dictionary
 encyclopedia after encyclopedia.
 A futile exercise, indeed!
 But somehow the meaning
 they were searching for
 has eluded me too,
 of course "history" itself.
 Harassed, annoyed
 they never got tired like Arctic terns.
 And when I neared
 they weren't there.
 The dictionary was there
 upside down on the table
 like a ridge tent.
 What does the dictionary say
 about "Life"? ■

The Himalayan Tsunami

Dhirendra Mishra

I dreamt-
 Raindrops falling
 On the roof of my mind
 and the door of my soul.
 The flower-like rain
 The forty-five degree rain
 The running rain
 Or a drizzling rain
 'Midst the sound of thunder
 And a howling wind
 Drenching my scorched body.
 How I would love riding down
 a mountain hill

On my bicycle
 Gazing at the fresh tiny sprouting
 buds
 Blooming out of the hill.
 The tenderness of a rock- savage
 and stubborn ripped open.
 Alas!
 As was I inhaling the fresh
 scent of a mother earth
 Wet with drops of love
 A booming cloud burst
 I flew down the hill
 Swept by the gust
 The rains of Death poured
 On and on and on and on
 The torrents shattering my soul
 I thought- Was
 it a deluge –
 a dance of death?
 The fury slowly receding
 as it all cleared
 I looked at mother earth
 violated and shaken
 Anger in her eyes
 Civilization swallowed
 I saw only
 as far as my eyes could lead
 A fluttering *neta* (flag)
 against a sky azure
 Atop the temple of *Siva*
 Standing aloft.
 I ran inside the shrine
 in an act of desperation
 When God asked me-
 Are you also going to run away
 from Me, my child
 I looked at Him
 And answered

Intrepid as my faith in you,
O Lord!
Unwaivering like the rock
that saved your shrine
It cannot be swept away
by Your angry whisper

Down the Memory Lane

Dhirendra Mishra

Some enchanted evening
of my boyhood days
I saw you a stranger
On my memory slate
was no scratch ere
But that leaves but to this day
a rose-smell trail.
Your footfalls still echoing
in my memory lane
Down the infamous passage
of the Commerce Block
That could have led into
the rose garden
But did not!
I don't recollect
if we met in July first
Or in end December
whether you were early
or I was late!
How many times had I knocked
on your moon-lit door
Opening to the sun-dial

on the porch
I remember not!
The heart-aches of bygone days.
Are shackles no more
But are garlands now
Of lost perfumes!
I wish I could remember
The first day,
the first hour, the first moment
of your meeting me
When we shook hands
In trembling trepidation.
Bright or dim the day that was,
Summer or Winter
What can I say,
So unrecorded , did it slip away!
Unsure at times, these days,
In recognising
my own poor-self in the mirror,
I think,
When shall we meet again ?
Under bright hot sun
or a rainbow rain
I know not- Know not where,
know not when ,
shall we meet again,
But I know this much- if we meet
on this crowded earth again
I will spot you out for sure
Be it haze, be it sun
In moments ecstatic
with your thoughts sweeter;

Material Fortune

Srikant Mishra

The walk from zero to one crore
Of course very difficult and rare
But somehow if one arrives there
Hundred and its multiples
are not very far.
The journey, the challenge
that are there
From zero to a crore
Indeed very tough an affair
Many a falls, many a rise
Greeting faces of compulsion
and compromise.
Every rise a milestone,
Every fall a lesson
Full of suspicion and apprehension
unfazed with falls,
unchanged with rise
All they reached there, were all wise.
Falls are sweet dear a teacher
Keeps on track an everyday-warrior
Rise are needs, watch it closer
Never overwhelm
when they are near.
Achieve and so look like
are far from each other
Wait as it culminates
and then work further
Satisfaction contradicts growth
though it's so pure
The clue to growth is the craze
for more & more.
Fortune inherited and fortune made
The latter keeps working
always up head
Inheritance takes both itself

and the master on a ride
The end is unfortunate
Leaves one from everything de-
prived.
A life with challenges,
happenings and hope
is more cheerful,
works ever non-stop
Every moment
live to the fullest extent
Since of achievement and usefulness
gives enjoyment.
The real fortune that one gets
Is the opportunity to serve others
always
Who gets so is blessed,
dwells in bliss divine
Living for others is the nectar
he drinks, not wine.
Wealth worth a fortune is bound to
be of origin
Crime can never give happiness
or joys the superfine
Fortune is the nectar one should
of course drink.
Serve, love, give, go gay,
Need not rethink. ■

The Antagonist

Poonam Pradhan

Necessity peeps through weary
ways,
Just like exploring death-caves.
Faster than Malabar rains
And swifter than high flying cranes
An evil spider,

That spins its web till decades
Victimizing many innocent beings
of barren red earth.
It's a crawling serpent
When grows to adult
Society comes to a halt.
Insecurities set in
Pouring in mysterious crimes,
Which murmurs sinful hymns.
Rises like a phoenix,
Builds up as ozone gas,
Shadowing the canopy of evil ash
Spreading its aroma of harsh
smelling corpse of truth.
Time asks what is it?
It is the world of banes,
Air filled with corruption.
Fading dawn awakens worthy
souls,
To bury evil goals of the Blacks,
However, fail to crumble
its concrete cave
Which is as hard as diamond
As stable as graphite.
Howsoever,
clock of time demands
Creation of paradise,
By curbing the vices,
Ushering in rejuvenated hopes
of renewal,
To open doorways
to corruption- free world... ■

Rain.... from a Running Car

Pallabi Nayak

The blackish Highway
Embraced
by thousands of cloudy hands
Is engrossed in
obsessed hugs
And kisses.....
Love
Is it really
So cheap!!
The wiper washes
the front-glass,
the car speeds up
70/80 kms./hr.
The winged mind
Rushes
Yet
in a greater go.
If -
If I'm inside,
And my hands
On the wheel,
Who is it??
That resembles me
showers outside
In the rain?? ■

Original in Odia.
Translation: Sapan Kumar Jena

Those Worn out Brushes

Debashrita Dwivedy

The worn out brushes
lie in the store-room
They have seen my success
and failure
They still love me
I am sure
They have seen
how I have dodged trouble
Used them to do so,
I still love them
they very well know
I painted with my heart
And they very well did
their part
Now when I use them
Everybody says
they are in a bad state
And to use them
it's a time waste!
Now I am an artist,
a perfect one
Those worn out brushes
still wait for me
to use them
They become restless
as the time passes
Those worn out brushes . . .
Those worn out brushes ■

Agony

Debashina Dwivedy

From a sapling very small,
I rose . . .
The time, when for the first,
The light fell on me,
I smiled,
I smiled to a world so new,
The world too welcomed me,
With a pleasant looking face.
I grew ...
The first time I bore fruits
and flowers,
My heart was filled with
Boundless happiness.
The first time the child plucked
my fruits ...
I thought him to be my first child
...
But what happened that day . . .
I don't exactly remember.
The same child came to me,
That day, with a smile,
I smiled too –
he was so adorable,
I was very happy to see him . . .
Then I felt a sudden pain,
A very unbearable one . . .
Three strokes of axe,
And I was gone forever ...
What a pleasure it was,
To die for my child.
God!
Please take care of him. ■

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