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Readers' Response

..... I am glad to receive the July- Sept. 2013 issue of the Rock Pebbles. This issue undisputedly contains many research articles of varied choice ranging from essays on the western writers as well as on eastern. Thanks a lot for covering all the length and breadth of literary arena in English literature. I think it has become indispensable reference journal for the literature lovers. I'd not forget to thank the board of editors for the cover page design which carries a photograph of Dr. P. Raja, while addressing in a function of Rock Pebbles in KIIT Campus which I had attended. At the same time Mr. Uttam B. Parekar deserves appreciation for writing such a beautiful article on a poem of the last issue of Rock Pebbles. One thing I would regretfully say that unfortunately no story has been incorporated in the present issue. Expecting Rock Pebbles to pilot a long, immaculate and pristine literary flight in the skies of creativity.

- Gobinda Sahoo
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..... This is to tell you that while I have written a number of poems I have not published any of them. It would be very kind of you if budding writers like me are offered some space in your journals. I believe will surely touch your heart. Hope you will take notice of me. Thanking you.....

- Sourav Upadhyaya
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Editor Speaks

This issue is a tribute to Nelson Mandela, Apostle of World Peace.

In this quarter we received many e-mails from young writers. They have expressed their desire to build their career in writing, especially in poetry writing. Also they requested to offer some space to them in Rock Pebbles to publish their poems and to inspire them. Indeed, this is a very good sign in our times and also for the younger generation.

Like last year, we will also hold Rock Pebbles National Literary Award giving ceremony of 2014 in KIIT University, Bhubaneswar on the 16th day of February, 2014. Dr. K.V. Raghupathi, an Indian-English poet & novelist from Andhra Pradesh is the awardee. Now, he is Sr. Asst. Prof. of English at the Central University of Tamil Nadu. Our Best wishes and compliments to Dr. Raghupathi. May God bless him and increase his clan.

This issue is enriched with some valuable papers by Prof. Prafulla Kumar Mohanty, Prof. Raseed Basha, Dr. Narayan Panda, Dr. Bikram Mahapatra, Kironmoy Chetia and many others. We hope, they will be useful to our teachers in Colleges & Universities. The creative corner containing the short-story of Gopinath Mohanty, poems by Dr. Adolf Shvedchikov, Dr. P. Raja, Dr. M.A. Nare, Rajib Pani, Sourav Upadhyaya is a grand feast for the general readers.

Merry Christmas and Best wishes of the year 2014 to all our contributors, subscribers and well-wishers.

Chief-Editor

Myth Reversal and Critical Realism in Odiya Fiction

Prafulla Kumar Mohanty

A society has dreams of well being which become myths. Society's dreams are culturally accepted values which are meant to keep the moral life of a group together. The myth of Katalamma in Thakazi Shivasankar Pillai's *Chemeen*, binds a community together. When the myth is broken or flouted disaster envelops the community. The father of Odiya fiction Fakir Mohan Senapati in his monumental work *Chha Mana Atha Guntha* has shown that when the socially accepted myths are reversed man and the community suffer. Odiya fiction starts with this myth reversal and gradually moves towards a critical realism in subsequent writings. Odiya fiction is primarily realistic in its narrative approach to reality but the moral myths never escape the eyes of a discerning reader.

Fakir Mohan's *Chha Mana Atha Guntha* begins with a deceitful self-will imposed on a cultural-moral practice. Ramachandra Mangaraj shows to the village-society which is his entire world, that he fasts on all *ekadasis* but next morning when a servant enters his room to collect the bowlful of Puja offerings, he finds the bowl empty. The familial values which sustain the family and society are reversed in the Mangaraj household. His wife Sa'ntani is a devoted hindu woman epitomizing all feminine virtues. But Mangaraj breaks the marriage bond and spends his time with Champa, a low caste woman without any grace, character or beauty. He makes Champa his evil consort and

plots all nefarious schemes to grab other people's land and property. Mangaraj has no family tradition behind him. Literally he is an outsider. He enters the society by manipulation. He grabs the Zamindari from Dilabar Mian, another rootless exploiter, by deceit. Mangaraj graduates from an outsider to a ruthless vile Zamindar without the restraining values of culture ever catching up with his conscience. Another myth reversal is noticed in Fakir Mohan's description of the village pond, *Asuradighi*. Fakir Mohan describes it as fully polluted, putrified, bereft of its purifying powers. Water in all myths, eastern or western, is a purifier. It washes away all sins. It is called life and also love. But *Asuradighi* is a symbol of moral and physical putrefaction. Even the people who come to bathe in her waters sit around to plot how to ruin and defame others. There is a temple at the head of the village Gobindpur called *Budhi Mangala*. But this temple has a deity who is manipulated by evil forces of the society. The deity has no voice, no eyes and no spirituality which are the traditional graces associated with a god or goddess. This deity is used by the evil agents of human greed like Champa to beguile and entrap simple, godfearing people which is the central event that happens in Fakir Mohan's novel.

The title *Chha Mana Atha Guntha* means six acres and a third. This plot of land belongs to Bhagia and Saria, a dull-witted childless couple. The worst reversal of nature's creative power is shown here. Saria is barren, the natural gift of motherhood is denied to her. Ramachandra Mangaraj lusts for this piece of fertile land and also Saria's cow, Neta, a fertile milching cow of the infertile Saria. The theme of infertility and corruption suggests that nature has suspended all her benign functions. The family of Mangaraj is a living illustration of discord, alienation, lovelessness and manipulative incursions into the natural familial and societal values to create moral chaos. Post-colonialists may say that individualism and lust for money and power are the British traits which have corrupted the Indian society. And this has been borne out by no less a scholar in global myths than Joseph Campbell in his Television interviews collected in *The Power of Myth*. Campbell writes:

You've seen what happens when primitive societies are unsettled by white man's civilization. They go to pieces, they disintegrate, they become diseased. Has'nt the same thing been happening to us since our myths began to disappear?

(*The Power of Myth*, P.15)

But I do not agree with the post-colonialists particularly in the case of Fakir Mohan's novel. The novelist has a much larger purpose here. He shows that the earth is no man's personal property and all your machinations to own this

earth will end in disaster.

In *Chha Mana Atha Guntha*, the master story-teller has shown that the fertility of the earth is non-negotiable like nature's : similarly a woman's natural fertility too is non-negotiable. But Champa plays on the unthinking mind of Saria and convinces her that if she worships *Budhi Mangala* and mortgages her six acres and a third- nature's fertility- to Mangaraj for the puja expenses, she will definitely bear a child. Saria walks into this trap and mortgages her land. Champa's accomplice, the barber Gobinda, standing behind the deity speaks to Saria that she should acquiesce in Champa's proposal. Saria accepts that as the aetherial voice and does as Champa directs. What follows is chaos and disaster.

Mangaraj forcibly takes away the cow Neta, Saria's child substitute, and when Saria complains she is beaten to death. Thus the life myth for which she lost her entire property to Mangaraj reverses into death. This death naturally brings into the novel the law of the land and Mangaraj's moral-legal transgressions ripen for both legal and moral reckoning. Mangaraj has already "killed" his pious wife, the Sa'ntani who fasts unto her death at the basil plant platform silently protesting her husband's moral violations. Thus Mangaraj is morally guilty of his wife's death and legally guilty of Saria's murder. Mangaraj lands up in the jail, alone, sick of mind and heart, forsaken even by his partner in crime, Champa. Ramachandra Mangaraj loses both worlds- the world he transgressed and the world he had built by manipulating the sustaining myths of the society. All his property is looted by Champa and her barber accomplice Gobinda. But they could not enjoy the loot. Gobinda kills Champa to be the sole owner of loot but is killed by watery creatures when he jumps into a river to escape. The slush and mud- the earth- is the final recipient of the ill-gotten wealth of Mangaraj. The Zamindari which Mangaraj had taken away from Dilabar Mian is finally taken away by legal jugglery by his lawyer Ram Ram Lala.

We notice another ingenuous myth reversal in the temple of divine faith and the modern temple of justice, that is the law court. The novel has a deity in the beginning of the plot-line and the modern deity of justice at the end- one traditional and the other modern. But both the spiritual and the legal systems are reversed by Fakir Mohan to show that the earth or the universe is beyond faith and justice. Man cannot master this earth by religion or rationality or justice. The earth moves from hand to hand without bothering about man's faith, logic or justice. She is a moral order and acts on her free will. No Dilabar Mian, no Mangaraj nor any Ram Ram Lala can own this earth. If the Ram Ram Lala is

the present owner some other Lala will snatch it from him. But the earth will go on. Fakir Mohan's narrative is realistic spiced up by his subtle humour and understatements but primarily he shows in *Chha Mana Atha Guntha* a myth reversal which demonstrates that by evil, guile and manipulation, no human order can survive.

Before I discuss the next significant novel *Paraja* of Gopinath Mohanty, I will just gloss over another important novel *Matira Manisha* of Kalindi Charan Panigrahi which also reverses myths within the realistic frame. Panigrahi shows that the two brothers in a rural setting, fortified by inherent values of joint family traditions cannot live together. The younger brother Chhakadi wanted ownership over the paternal land and quarreled with his brother to divide the landed property. The property is divided. The house is divided. The myth of the joint family cracks. The elder brother, Baraju, leaves the village forsaking his share of the land and house to his younger brother, inspired by the time honoured value of sacrifice. But this sacrifice is of no avail as the joint family breaks. The novel marks a turning point in familial relationship and the traditions of rural society.

Gopinath Mohanty's *Paraja* relives the *Chha Mana Atha Guntha* experience with a new awakening of the consciousness of Being. The *Paraja* psychic area is a time-honoured faith system of the Konds, parajas and other inhabitants of the mountainous territory covered by primordial forests. They believed that Darmu and Dartani (Heaven and Earth) take care of life on earth and man is free to till the land, hunt the animals and cut the jungles to satisfy his needs. But this faith is disturbed by the laws of civilization which impose restrictions on their freedom. Here too we have a nihilistic exploiter in the Sahukar (Moneylender) named after Fakir Mohan's Ramachandra (Ram Biso) who exploits the unlettered poor people of this area in the Koraput district with the help of cynical policemen who sell their conscience for a few coins. The patriarch Sukru Jani mortgages his land to pay bribe to the lawkeepers and serves with his elder son Mandia Jani as bond slave to the Sahukar to repay the loan. Gradually Sukru Jani loses all his children, his two sons and two daughters to the Sahukar. He goes for legal redressal of his problems to a court of law. But the lawyer and the system of civilization cheat him. He loses his faith in Darmu-Dartani, he is deceived by the justice system of civilization and finally wakes up to his innate sense of justice. In *Chha Mana Atha Guntha* the victims Bhagia and Saria blindly submit themselves to fate and machinations of the evil agents of life. But in *Paraja*, the hero Sukru Jani wakes up to his rights and asserts his rights by beheading the Sahukar. Sukru Jani is the first

fictional hero in Odiya literature who asserts his being. He refuses to confine his faith in traditional religious beliefs or to submit mindlessly to the marauders of justice. He grows up and wakes up to his human rights and acts. Thereby he creates a new myth of the free man who cannot compromise his right to live in the society. The inherited societal values he eschews to emerge as an agent. He is no more an instrument on whom the winds of change produce tunes. He is now a free man who is his own master.

Gopinath's more prolific elder brother Kanhu Charan Mohanty, however, continued with the village based worldview in a realistic manner. The flurry of economic and political activities that came in the wake of independence in 1947 opened up the villages to the urban centres, particularly to Cuttack and new capital Bhubaneswar. The village values of submission to exploitation – both religious and economic – changed. The urban values and the new knowledge coming through modern education, however, rudimentary and miniscule, slowly changed the mindset of the village people. Exposed for the first time to roads, schools, some health care and information about the world, the Odiya mind moved towards some self-belief. Kanhu Charan Mohanty in his novels – *Bali Raja*, *Ha Anna*, *Shasti*, *Ka*, *Bajrabahu* and a host of others created a novel reading population in Odisha. He wrote about 50 novels in 40 years and his motto was “to tell a story” in a realistic frame. He brought out familial and social relationship with a rare sense of sympathy for the common man. At the same time he tried without propagandist fervour, to make women conscious of their rights without sacrificing the family morals which sustain life in Odisha.

The other novelists from 1940 to 1965 often times tried to change the society with left-wing ideals. The main writer in this mode was Laxmidhar Nayak who in his novels like *Ha'Re Durbhaga Desh*, *Sarbahara*, *Rakta Jhara Bhor* advocated for a revolutionary change in the society. But he shows a confusion between Marxian and Gandhian values and does not go beyond a stasis of irresolution. But his masterpiece is *Mo Swapnara Sahara*. This is written in a realistic mode but the revolutionary streaks peep from behind Gandhian values. Other novelists like Ananta Prasad Panda, Nanda Kishore Bala, Nityananda Mohapatra and Upendra Kishore Das and others portrayed Odiya life with a critical insight into the urban values.

But the novelist who brought about a change in style, technique, theme and narratology is Santanu Kumar Acharjya. He followed an existential mode within the framework of realism and made his man and woman search for their own essences. His *Nara Kinnara* (Man and the Heavenly Singers) has an

abandoned gutter child as the hero. He grows up as George without knowing who christened him, and when he gains some awareness he finds himself among other such abandoned specimens of humanity growing on the footpaths or street corners. George lives among outsiders where religion, caste, creed or status have no tangible meaning. At the centre of this group is an old woman with elephantine legs symbolising the old demoness of classical stories or the original Mother Goddess made ugly by non-believers. George finds love, care and even some friendship in an asocial sense. These outsiders constantly search for social acceptance as human beings but they fail. He joins a group of left-wing ideologues but gets sick of the regimentation and enclosed ideas. He could not enter the so called authentic mainstream society nor could he identify himself with the regimented society. He wonders whether man is fated to seek his own identity without any intelligence from above before he is killed by a stray bullet. His birth as well as his death have no social relevance. Acharjya is a real trend setter. In his other novels like *Satabdira Nachiketa*, *Dakhinabarta*, *Shakuntala* his characters encounter the hypocrisy, corruption and religious and economic horrors and toy with the idea of armed violence to make the society a rightful place for civilized life. But he finds that unless there is divine intervention society cannot be changed. His other masterpiece is *Dharitirira Kanda* (The Lamentations of the Earth) where Lord Jagannath is shown as the epicenter of values. But it depends on the individual how he utilizes those values to mould his life. Acharjya creates a sensation by showing a muslim entering the temple and getting the Mahaprasad from inside the temple despite all restrictions. And he is saved from drowning in the sea by surrendering to the deity Jagannath in the temple. Acharjya has the courage of creating and breaking myths. He goes beyond the realistic narrative to symbolic and mythical heights.

In this brief paper I do not propose to discuss all novelists and storytellers chronologically. But all important writers including Chandra Sekhar Rath, Surendra Mohanty, Krushna Prasad Mishra, Gobinda Das, Raj Kishore Patnaik, Basanta Kumari Patnaik, Satakadi Hota, Bibhuti Patnaik, Nrushingha Charan Panda and Prativa Ray are realists. Realism in the hands of a novelist, however, is not like a camera with its shutters open. The novelist depicts reality mythically, critically, psychologically or poetically. But he or she has a vision. Chandrasekhar Rath in his *Yantrarudha* narrates a story which ultimately reaches the myth of moksha. Surendra Mohanty in his *Nila Saila* delineates the myth of Jagannath going underground while giving a historical account of Odisha during the reign of Ramachandra Deb. He weaves mythopoeic imagination and mythic folklore in such a manner that myth becomes history. But he does not

sacrifice fiction to history or myth.

Some novelists like Anadi Sahu, Laxmipriya Acharjya, Surendra Satapathy, Binapani Mohanty and others have used myths, episodes and characters from the epics in their novels. But these remain as interpretative accounts of myths. Laxmipriya Acharjya, however, has very successfully created the mythic atmosphere in her novels although her narrative technique is realism in essence.

Prativa Ray has used myth in the most innovative manner. Her novels treat myths not to recreate the classical fervour but to update myth into modern reality. Her most popular novel *Yagnaseni* transcends the character of Draupadi to a level of sophisticated humanism – one may say feminist humanism. The liberated frame of mind which she gives Ahalya in her *Mahamoha* lifts the character out of the rigid moral frame to a state of sexual freedom and spiritual emancipation. In all her novels the story telling is within the confines of realism. But she goes beyond realism to a state of universalization of the human being. Her *Magnamati* is technically realistic. But she takes realism to mythic and epic heights by her vision.

Dinanath Pathy and Hrusikesha Panda take realism to the level of myth. But an over imagistic depiction of familiar reality does not allow the myth to consolidate or transmit time-honoured values. Pathy's *Punarnaba* and Hrusikesha Panda's *Subarna Dwipa* engage the heart but alienate the mind.

Realism is native to the Odiya novelists for the novel form is not even 120 years old. The novelist had to demystify the old superstitious and religious beliefs to create a new generation of readership. The novelist became a substitute for the historian. The only material before him was the scattered, unlettered society with the culture of poverty engulfing them in fear and fatalism. It was the duty of the novelist to show man's moral richness as opposed to the existing depravity, exploitation and self-enclosed dumbness, in order to awaken them to their reality. The novelist therefore created myths through realism, to lift the morale of the people to fight the stifling order in the society. The Odiya novelist has played his role in history and I hope posterity cannot blame him for either mythic or realistic fixation in his craft. ■

A comparative Study of the poetic vision of A.D. Hope and Jayanta Mahapatra

Bikram Kumar Mohapatra

Great Minds often meet commonly in the process of creativity, analysis and observation. Their introspection stretches from the earth to the sky. They make the trivial things glorified and the beautiful things remain significant in their approach. In the poetic progress the geographical land blooms in the island of mind. Here history time, myth, memory and vision remain as the ideological burden in the spectrum of reality and moral order.

While observing two great minds like A.D. Hope and Jayanta Mahapatra, it is marked that the basic strength of their poetic force lies in their rootedness of the land they become. It has become the most familiar symbol of Bush for the Australian poets like Hope and also it has become the matrix of hope and despair for the Indian English poets like Mahapatra.

Though contemporary literary themes have taken a move towards urbanization and globalization, these two poets consciously make a balance between the pastoral and the highly urbanized ones. Landscape, history, myth and memory collectively sustain the poetic virtue for the identification of the national spirit and outlook. Such a mechanism in creativity adds the potency and power by making the poetic vision eternal.

As a witty poet Hope is celebrated in Australian poetry with his sparkling wit in verbal felicity. He projects the commonplace experiences

in a new light and in a new meaning. He uses satire as a tool to uncover the uncommon sensitivity, liveliness and insight of the creative mind. His satire does not aim at the harmony and order of the deteriorating world around him. But his satire projects a very real anger and sense of outrage at what he has seen are deteriorating values and it is this sincere outpouring of intense feeling that makes the satire live and strike the theme with telling effect.

The poem 'Australia' depicts Hope's best known satires and takes its theme, the idea of Australia's qualities as a nation. The description sustains a map of the geographical and physical aspects of the country with its perfect boundary of mind and spirit. At the outset Hope describes such a landscape that contrasts that of the romantic outlook. Hope's landscape bears the natural beauty with dejected and muted state which is coloured in "drab green" and "desolate gray":

A nation of trees, drab green and desolate grey
In the field uniform of modern wars
Darkness her hills, those endless outstretched paws
of spinx demolished or stone lion worn away.

Here there is the direct comparison to the colours of army uniforms an image replete with suggestions of horror, destruction and waste. There is no hint of vitality or growth but only a stark picture of desolation and emptiness. The image of spinx does not express the power or vigour rather it points out the geographical darkness, as the darkness of hills. Hope laments the death of a distinct Australian culture and identity for it is a country without songs, architecture history. Though it is old but seems young with the civilized white dominion. There seems not any hope of fertility or vitality. Hope broods over the bleak prospect, painting a picture that is without colour and vibrancy. There is the attempt to accommodate the past – their European roots and the present – their life and exile in Australia and to form a coherent meaning out of this complete reality. The present civilization which is accommodated by the cultured apes, a perfect proposition for the model of a new society.

While analyzing Hope's work the American scholar Robert Darling points out:

From the beginning white Australians have taken two different approaches regarding their country. One is to embrace its newness and proclaim independence..... The other at its most extreme is an attempt to maintain their customs as if the old country had never been left (9-10)

Hope establishes that people in this country do not live but survive. In the context of the survival of the fittest, there is nothing delicate, artistic, subtle or innocent about them. 'Australia' has become a mouth piece of Hope's vision where he establishes a culture in second hand European state being deprived of the mainstream of European consciousness.

Hope's modern man emerges as being incapable of inspiring romantic piety. In general they are vulgar and lonely even sex obsessed and in their insignificant way, trying to escape the awful monotony and mediocrity of their lives. He deals with myth and reality in very sensitive and artistic manner. In his "Prometheus Unbound" he brings an ancient myth to comment on the ecology of our planet brought to ruin by modern man. Prometheus has become the friend of man who has stolen fire from the gods and there after he was punished. In another poem 'The End of a Journey' Hope presents a transgression, Prometheus became free from Zeus custody. In another poem 'A Commination' Hope deals at length with the idea that today's world is inexorably, irrevocably rotting. The poem attempts to picture the degeneration and debasement of treasured values of today's world where the spirit of love and humanity is lost in a greater extent.

His poems on love frequently equate it with the creative principle of the universl. But in some of his poems he delinates the sex and death as being closely related. In "Antechinus" and in "The Gateway" he celebrates love as the vital theme. His love poetry is an essential part of his total vision of man and society. He has frequently drawn analogies between the transcending, creative experience of love and poetry and their inter dependence.

The frequent use of myth is a prominent characteristic of Hope's poetry. The familiarity of the ancient, cliché- ridden off repeated tales is however offset by Hope's shift of focus. From the different angle of vision the boring stale pictures of the past become fresh in Hope's art. Myth adds the philosophical and artistic height to his poetry. Alex preminger defined Myth as:

..... a story or complex of story elements taken as expressing and there fore as implicitly symbolizing, certain deploying aspects of human and transhuman existence. (538)

Hope uses myth as the best poetic advantage by revitalizing old stories and bringing out their significance in contemporary reality. He himself commented on the function of myth in "An Epistle from Holofernes", a poem worth reading to observe the rope of Myth in our lives:

..... the Myth define
Our figure and motion in the Great Design,

Cancel the accident of names and place
And speak to us the truth of what we are
.....
So when we take our legend for guide
The firmament of vision opens wide

As a passionate poem of memory and love 'The Aeroplane' stands unique. The theme revolves round myth and with familiar prayer in terms of that ubiquitous feature of Modern life. "Ulysses" is his most important poem. Unlike Tennyson's hero looking out "the dark broad seas", muses that some work of noble note, may yet be done" Hope depicts the twentieth century anti-hero. As a type of contemporary anonymous man, he is a fitting hero, perhaps he is cut off from the sustained ritual of love and family.

In Hope's poem some times we see the monuments in stone, the myth and muse that make a trinity of love. His "The Tomb of Panthesilea" brings the memory of great Trojan war. It reveals the interfusion of body and soul which so often, comes from the violence that appears as the hallmark of the lower, instinctual passion, the vexed beauty of love:

The Hero's tomb is gone
Yet here beside
A solitary stone
Speaks for the hero's bride.
Truce Traveler, with the tired
And dusty staff
Her epitaph :
Stranger, here rusts the bright
Bare weapon won.

The wonder of the muse springs from the summit of silence. As Walter Tonetto points out : In the poetry of A.D. Hope as much as in any human endeavour – there is an awareness for the presence of poetic ridges that have not always a peculiarly Australian topography, but reach deeply is to the common soil of the world's poetic tradition. (28)

The poetry of Jayanta Mahapatra originates from the closest circle from where he belongs. These are the rivers, sea-beaches, magnificent temples, ruined monuments and the crowded streets of his native state Odisha. He admits that Odisha is the land in which his 'roots' lie and lies his past and in which lies his beginnings and his end where the wind keens over the grief of the river Daya, where the waves of the Bay of Bengal fail to reach out to day to the twilight

soul of Konark. In this regard Niranjana Mohanty outlays the importance of Mahapatra's belonging to his birth place:

Out of this alleviating sense of belonging to his place of birth – however small, uncanny, solid, dirty it is – Mahapatra revitalizes the spirit and mettle of his identity (111)

In this way he acknowledges his debt and relationship to his place of birth, where his identity and roots lie. In the process of searching he authenticates his quest motif in recollection in which he celebrates his own soul. Like the other Indian poets writing in English Shiv K. Kumar, R. Parthasarathy, Nissim Ezekiel, A.K. Ramanujan, Mahapatra projects the local colour in his art which is not an extravagant gesture in art and but appears as a composite global human conditioning.

Mahapatra has a very insignificant past. His grand father, Chintamani Mahapatra was affected by poverty during the famine and accepted Christianity to survive. In the poem 'Grand father', Mahapatra describes every detail of such condition:

The separate life let you survive while perhaps
the one you left wept in the blur of your heart
Now in a night of sleep and taunting rain
My son and I speak of that famine nameless as stone.

The law of accepted religion distanced Mahapatra from the Hindu Culture, its esoteric ritualistic practice. It appears him as the closed door for ever. Bruce King rightly observes that his poetry often records a distance between himself and that customs of his surroundings. While making a study of contrast between the poetry of Mahapatra and Mehrotra he sustains a praising record on Mahapatra; "Mahapatra's vision and obsessive writing of poetry as hopeless search for meaning in the human condition is, however, a characteristic of post-modernism as found in Beckett's later work". (195) Sometimes Mahapatra's protagonist is mute and observes everything in alienation. In the poem "Some where my men" Mahapatra tells:

A man does not mean anything
but the place
sitting of the river bank throwing pebbles
in to the muddy current
a man becomes the place.

The landscape influences the psychic self. In Mahapatra's poetry the places like Puri, Konark, Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Balasore are very much important for

the embodiment of recollection of tradition and history. Mahapatra consciously celebrates his private moments of desire, despair, guilt and illumination in many of his poems describing Indian landscape, seasons and environment. The poem like “Evening Landscape by the River”, “The Captive Air of Chandipur on sea”, “Village”, “Dawn”, “A Summer Afternoon”, “Twilight”, “A Day of Rain”, “October Morning”, reflect his ecstatic vision for the place, time, culture. His sympathy for the dead who had once inhabited the place is remarkable:

Here the memory for the faces
of the dead never appears
(Evening landscape by the river)
Or
The cries of fishermen come drifting through the spray
Music of what the world has lost.
(The captive Air of Chandipur on sea)

The factor of recollection has become prominent in Mahapatra. It appears as a circular motion having the points to realize, past, present and future. Mahapatra seems to have been influenced by T.S. Eliot for the theme of time. It is now linear development that passes straight in the direction of past present and future:

Time faces me there
Like the locking madness in a tyrant
Is the womb of another day
(Today)

As Eliot, Mahapatra also relies on the paradox that time can be conquered only through time. In most of his poems Mahapatra celebrates the lost glory, the lost ecstasy of the culture of his land. Myth also plays a vital role in his poetry. Mainly he broods over Hindu Mythology. His use of myths are linked with the world of history and sculptures. He tries to recollect the native tradition and myth of the land with its recurrent symbols in his poetry in order to reproduce the past in modern terms. In the random selection of descent themes in his latest volume of poetry “Random Decent” he observes different images of the physical world that subsequently create the portrait of psychic state. He speaks of Genesis, Palmistry, blue of the sky, rain, shadow, violence, silence, stones, evening light, freedom etc. The other poems like ‘Mother Teresa’ and “Madhuri Dixit” in this volume present a kind of metaphor for peace and dream respectively. With a profound sense of articulation Mahapatra touches the spirit of humanity and joy.

Though Mahapatra depicts hunger, lost glory of his land still perversion

and political exploitation remain as a part of every situation, Hope broods over the delicate indigenous identity which appears him as drab desolate gray. Mahapatra sustains a retrospective vision of his past Hindu religion, Hope feels estranged from his past home, England. Hope laments over the present status of his land like Mahapatra.

Australian poets and writers are very much concerned with the uniqueness of their land and get inspiration from it as their home without looking any parts of the Europe. Poets like Judith Wright and A.D. Hope have the strong pronouncements in their verse regarding the dangerous ground, the desert, the hills the barren land and many other unfavorable geographical conditions. These elements of nature appear beautiful in their art because of their aboriginal indigenous feeling. Like all other poets of Australia, Banjo Paterson, Judith Wright, Barrey Hills and David Brooks, A.D. Hope is very much comfortable to establish the glory of his land killing the idea of colonial brutes. He is indebted to Augustan and Romantic traditions of 18th Century. The directness, impishness of Pope and Swift as well as the visionary apocalyptic tradition of the writers like Blake, his works sustain the blending of divergent beautiful forces in to the convergent composite whole of presentation. Like A.D. Hope, Jayanta Mahapatra also writes in particular with the isolation and alienation of modern man. But Mahapatra is far from politics, neither affected by colonial brutes nor lived in a postcolonial happy home. However both the poets remap humanity going deep into the situation. The subjects of their verse are equally varied; the condition of man, the state of society, the nature and artistic achievement, love, the absurdity of man's ideas and follies.

The best Australian poet is similar to his best counterpart of India because they are aware of the fact that true poetry arises and evolves in the ideas and emotions of human beings, they use a vivid picture of an Australian scene and Indian scene, it is not merely an attempt to provide a native taste in art but their poetic gesture evokes a kind of universal ethos not being confined in to Australian and Indian alone.

It is interesting to note that both Hope and Mahapatra use myth as the function of metaphors, affording insight into the mystery and philosophy of life and relationships. Also the geographical and cultural markers of their land are transformed in to metaphors in the process making them the "middlemen" who for the price of a poem, mediates between their exotic world and the 'other'. Though Hope is more explicit in expressing the aboriginal feeling in poetry still both the poets fuse the vision of reason in to the imaginative frame work with a better view of their country. The Australian and Indian insights in the

poetry of Hope and Mahapatra evoke a kind of exotica for better appreciation and analysis. ■

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Recreating History through Fragments of Memory in *Midnight's Children*

Kironmoy Chetia

For ordinary men, the term history means history of a country, primarily its political history, which deals with the names of kings and monarchs and the details pertaining to 'who succeeded whom and how' at a particular point of time. In more recent times, it is understood to engage with constitutional changes and the power politics behind them. However, it is difficult to define and describe the nature and subject of history. In order to get a comprehensive idea of any particular period of time, it is necessary to take into account religions, inventions, warfare, expansion of trade and other cultural and economical activities.

History is in reality a complex of relationships between the past and the present. The term 'traditional history' refers to the history that members of an ethnic or other community tell about themselves in their own terms. A traditional history can encompass beings, acts and events that are plainly mythical or legendary, as well as oral history and conventional history.

Historians often miss the circumstances that influence the morals and manners of people, the transition of communities and silent revolutions, as they are not acquired by armies or enacted by Governments. On the other hand, the literary writers try to find out such gaps in history and fill these gaps with lively events, engulfed by literary imaginations.

In post-colonial discourse on history, hybridity occupies a central place. Homi Bhaba developed his concept of hybridity from literary and cultural theory to describe the construction of culture and identity within the condition of colonial antagonism and inequity. According to him, it is the indeterminate spaces in-between subject-positions that are landed as the locale of the disruption and displacement of hegemonic colonial narratives of cultural structures and practices. Bhaba places hybridity as a form of in-between space, where the 'cutting edge of translation and negation occurs and which he terms the 'third space'.

The third space is a mode of articulation, a way of describing a 'productive' and not merely reflective, space that engenders new 'possibility'. It is an 'interruptive' interrogative, and enunciative' space of new forms of cultural meaning and production blurring the limitations of existing boundaries and calling into question established categorizations of culture and identity. The post-modern philosophy of history bases its arguments on post-structuralist theories which claim the textuality of reality. Post-structuralist thought makes it clear that history is a text, 'a discourse which consists of representations, that is, verbal formations' (Abrams, 1999:183). Post-structuralist impacts open the way to a historicist study of literary texts, analyzing literature in the context of social, political and cultural history, and regarding literary history or a part of a larger cultural history. This view of history 'rejects the idea of "History" as a directly accessible, unitary, past and substitutes for it the conception of 'histories', an ongoing series of human constructions'. (Cox and Reynolds, 1993:4)

The post-modern philosophy of history – an understanding of history and historiography under the influence of post-structuralist thoughts – constructs the theoretical background to the analysis of historical novels written in the post-modern era. It has become influential in many disciplines of study including history. It reflects both the fixity of language and text and the assumed connection between language and reality, turns into a 'denial of the fixity of the past, of the reality of the past apart from what the historian chooses to make it, and thus of any objective truth about the past. '(Gertrude Himmelfarb, 1997:72). Thus post-modernist view of history argues against conventional history writing and its claims to present historical events truthfully. Post-modern fiction rejoices in the coming into existence of the recent understanding of historiography. Post-modern historical novels insert historical documents, events and historical personages into the fictional worlds of their works, drawing attention at the same time to this process.

Post-modernism in literature today is usually characterized by intense self-reflexivity and overtly parodic intertextuality. In fiction this means that it is usually metafiction that is equated with the post-modern. The term 'post-modernism' when used in fiction, may be used to mean the fiction that is at once metafictional and historical in its echoes of the texts and contexts of the past. The post-modern relationship between fiction and history is a complex mode of interaction and mutual implication.

The intense self-reflexivity in post-modern fiction denotes the author's consciousness of the rhetoric of the text. Instead of reflecting on external reality, the post-modern author refers to the rhetorical devices used to create the illusion of external references. The presence of a self-conscious narrator who points to rhetorical devices constructing a text is a means of breaking the illusion of reality. The connection between self-reflective and metafictional challenge can be built through the theory of metafiction as stated by Patricia Waugh in her work 'Metafiction'. She defines metafiction as 'fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality'. (1984:2)

The metafictional novel helps in revealing the fictional construction of history by handling historical figures, events, sources and self-conscious narrative at the same time. The questioning of historical reality is pursued through the self-conscious construction in this type of novel. Since the publication of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981), there was an increased thematic interest in Indian English novels in the affairs of the public arena. The public sphere of Indian society, national politics and history, with which the protagonists' individual lives are intertwined, figured prominently. Many of the historical novels written after it challenge and question the established conventions of traditional historical writing.

Regarding recreating history from his exiled state, Salman Rushdie has described his feelings in the following words:

It may be that the writers in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back even at the risk of being muted into pillars of salt. But if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge – which gives rise to profound uncertainties – that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will in short create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands,

Indias of the mind.

(*Imaginary Homelands*, 1991:10)

After the loss of roots, routes and identity, Rushdie along with the characters portrayed by him searches for the homeland. In the process, they had to encounter identity crisis, disintegration of disposition and geographical and cultural dislocation. As such, Rushdie clarifies:

When the Indian who writes from outside India tries to reflect that world, he is obliged to deal in broken mirrors, some of whose fragments have been irretrievably lost. (*Imaginary Homelands* 1991:11)

Salman Rushdie in his novels *Grimus*, *Midnight's Children*, *Shame*, *The Moor's Last Sigh*, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* and *The Enchantress of Florence*, has presented history from his memory.

With *Midnight's Children*, he paved the way for post-colonial literature in India. He portrays the protagonist, Saleem Sinai with his own experiences and narrates how he wanders among three countries, i.e. India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, but never finds a proper place for living. He narrates the trauma of displacement and rootlessness resulting from relocation. While doing so he creates a fragmented history of India.

Due to his expatriate identity, Salman Rushdie depends on fragmented memories to retell the story of post-independent India. Though he no longer lives in India, he still feels a deep sense of attachment for it. According to him, for any displaced Indian writer, the fragmentation of memory and identity forms a common attribute.

In *Midnight's Children*, Salman Rushdie portrays the state of exiled individuals moving from one place to another. Like Rushdie, his characters in the novel i.e. Saleem, Shiva, Padma and Parvati lost their roots, routes and identity in the process of searching their homeland. Being dislocated from their original home, they never feel at home in any place they go. They feel themselves to be culturally displaced. For these migrants, it is impossible to emotionally recall any native place and nativity.

In *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie gives expression to his own feelings while living in an adopted land and for the purpose; he has made Saleem Sinai, his mouthpiece. Saleem is presented as an archetype, the microcosm of all diasporic generations who were given 'venomous treatment' in the newly inhabited territories. His story is a representation of plural identities of India which resulted from the feeling of being in exile and consequently there is a fragmented search for self through memory.

Memory becomes a prime factor for a man in exile who happens to be displaced from his original space. Rushdie stresses on the importance of memory in the life of an individual because everyone has the capability to remember and reconstruct the past relatively. Commenting on *Midnight's Children* in his essay, 'Imaginary Homelands', Rushdie states that it is a novel of memory about memory. He believes that individual history does not make any sense if it is not seen against the national background: and national history is meaningless if it is not seen from the context of individual lives and histories. It is memory which helps to reconstruct history for the man in exile.

Through Saleem, Rushdie puts forward his belief that many of the problems infecting post-independence India can be traced back to the tendency of the Indian people to lapse occasionally into myth-ridden and retrogressive Indian past. Independence has given India the opportunity to remain free from the 'fabulous antiquity' of Hindu India and accept the novel ideas of modernity and multiplicity and embrace secular, democratic ideals. Unfortunately, people forgot the new myth of freedom immediately and reverted to their old ways and 'regionalist loyalties' which ultimately created cracks in the country's democratic fabric'.

The driving force behind Rushdie's decision to write *Midnight's Children* was his strong desire to reclaim the India of his past. When he realized his eagerness to restore his past identity to himself, *Midnight's Children* was his first effort in literature to recapture Bombay, India. Through the retelling of individual experience, the novel explores the manner in which history is given meaning. History is narrated subjectively through the eyes of the protagonist, Saleem Sinai. Therefore, the retelling of history is not only fragmented but also turns out to be erroneous at times.

At the exact stroke of midnight, August 15, 1947, Saleem Sinai was born – a twin of the newly independent nation of India. From that instant onwards, the novel follows its convoluted path through the twinned histories of Saleem's family and India itself. Yet Saleem's narrative often veers widely from the commonly accepted order of events, causes, and results that make up India's pre-and post-Independence years. However, the mistakes, elisions, exaggerations, and solipsism that litter the book are not simply the result of a foolishly unreliable narrator. These alterations and additions are not only intentional on Saleem's part, but they are also intentional on Rushdie's part. In his book of essays entitled *Imaginary Homelands* Rushdie states that he made Saleem – suspect in his narration "through – mistakes of a fallible memory

compounded by quirks of character and of circumstance” to show the inevitable problems in any historical discourse. (*Imaginary Homelands* 1991:5)

Throughout the novel, Rushdie consistently works to deconstruct not only the established method of historical discourse but to question the very notion of what history, in its broadest sense, means. In its place, he offers up Saleem’s narrative – expansive, meandering, and at times fantastic – to attempt a new way of writing one’s own history, one which allows for the infinite variety of experiences, lives, cultures, and perspectives that make up our world.

Midnight’s Children is an effort to create a history of India which does not simply retell the – received history, the story of the nation as made by middle-class nationalist politicians. It has a – well-defined narrative form: established origins, turning points and climaxes, and an agreed chronology of significant events.

Throughout *Midnight’s Children*, Saleem alters the facts of India’s history, mixing up dates or altering the reasons and consequences in order to fit the specific story he wants to tell. While some of these errors could be attributed to Rushdie’s mistake or Saleem’s ignorance, many appear to be quite intentional. He later explains that the error is simply a part of his narrative, indicative of the true nature of memory. He explains, - “Memory’s truth, because memory has its own special kind. It selects, eliminates, alters, exaggerates, minimizes, glorifies, and vilifies also; but in the end it creates its own reality, it’s heterogeneous but usually coherent version of events” (*MC* 292). Thus memory, which is inherently malleable and flexible, plays an integral role in the creation of history or story. Re-imagining history fills in the gaps of a person’s memory, in a manner that may or may not concur with recorded fact. Saleem describes the inevitable gaps and errors in memory and proceeds to re-imagine his history in a manner that provides meaning to him. Saleem consistently reminds the reader of the necessity of re-imagining history in order to have a concept of one’s own past and even re-imagines the points from which he was absent.

Saleem consciously remarks on several of his historical “errors” to emphasize the re-imagining of individual histories that comprise a new reality, which serves as an alternate to historical fact. This post-modern destabilization of traditional historical discourse is also explored in the focus of Saleem’s narrative. As he proclaims, his story tells of the life of India, not just his own. Yet, the story is extremely egocentric, constantly connecting Saleem to the major events of the post-Independence years. Saleem’s self-centered view of

his own importance to India is clearly represented through his role as the most powerful of the – Midnight Children, the 581 children born during the midnight hour of August 15, 1947, all of whom have fantastic powers. These Midnight Children symbolize a new, hopeful generation of Indians. Yet Saleem sees his own version of the story to be more important than the external history, such as when he narrates the moment of Independence of India. He says – “For the moment, I shall turn away from these generalized, macrocosmic notions to concentrate on a more private ritual. . . . I shall avert my eyes from the violence in Bengal and the long pacifying walk of Mahatma Gandhi. Selfish? Narrow-minded? Well, perhaps; but excusably so, in my opinion. After all, one is not born every day” (*MC* 150). He claims that he is – “linked to history both literally and metaphorically, both actively and passively” (*MC* 330). Ultimately, Saleem’s individualized perspective suggests a new way of seeing history, one that embraces the inevitable influence of a narrator on a story. Saleem not only alters the facts of the story or focuses on himself – actions which go entirely against the traditional sort of historical discourse – but he frequently remarks on the very nature of history and historical discourse, questioning his role as a narrator. In *Imaginary Homelands*, Rushdie discusses the writing of *Midnight’s Children* and how he “went to some trouble to get things wrong”(23). Introducing these errors into the story, Rushdie mimics the workings of memory and how a person’s memory creates a reality that may not conform to recorded facts, yet is as valid for that person as those recorded facts.

An analysis of Rushdie’s novel reveals that the novelist makes an attempt to rewrite an alternative and post-colonial Indian history by privileging plurality over national homogeneity and by making the historian and the narrator complementary figures. In a post-modern way, history in *Midnight’s Children* is fragmented and provisional. In this novel, he alluded to both European and indigenous sources. He gives voice to a whole range of sections in society from the leaders to the slum-dwellers, men as well as women. In this context, Jasbir Jain’s comment that we, as culture, due to whatever pressures on us brought about by imperial frameworks, projections, conceptualizations choose to forget a part of ourselves, seems to be much applicable to Salman Rushdie. As a result, the rewriting of modern Indian history and the knowledge regarding who constitutes the nation are common concerns for contemporary Indian novels in English and in recent Indian historiography.

The pivotal moment of independence in India’s history and national consciousness has long inspired Rushdie. Four of his major novels take place in the years surrounding the moment of independence, while *Midnight’s Children*

uses this moment as the hinge for the entire story. Yet even in this time of great optimism, shadows of the conflicts that would plague India for decades were evident. At the same moment of India's independence, Pakistan – made up of two large northern provinces of British India – was declared to be its own separate nation. This Partition, as it was called, sparked brutal violence, rioting, and mass displacement throughout both nations. Since the partition, the two nations have been gripped in tense conflict, going to war over the disputed Kashmir territory in 1947, 1965, and 1971. The moment of Partition and its ensuing violence have been a major source of material for Rushdie's novels, particularly *Shame* and *Midnight's Children*.

In *Midnight's Children*, we are able to see the psychological effects of colonial domination on a nation and its people. Instead of mirroring the colonial ideologies of India's past to retell the story of her Independence, Rushdie recreates the history, though fragmented, of his homeland from the subjective and fragmented memory of his narrator. By paralleling Saleem's life with the events following India's independence, Rushdie, with an exiled mind, ties the identity of the post-colonial country directly to the individuals that are products of it. The result is a text that vividly represents the plural identities of a country and its people who are seeking to define themselves in the state of diaspora. ■

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The Hero and the Hero Myth: A Critical Analysis on Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* and *A Farewell to Arms*

Pradeep Kumar Debata

The word 'hero' has been defined in various terminologies in different languages—in Sanskrit 'vira', Greek 'heroes' and Latin 'vir'. Hero is defined as a man of gallantry. The Oxford Advanced learner's Dictionary is on the opinion that "a person, especially a man, who is admired by many people for doing something brave or good". So, we may say that Don Quixote, the eponymous hero of the novel by Cervantes, or Einstein is the all-time hero of many scientists. The Collins Cobuild Advanced Learner's English Dictionary expresses "The hero of a book, play, film, or story is the main character, who usually has good qualities. We can say that the hero of Doctor Zhivago dies in 1929. As per the view of Webster's Universal English Dictionary "a person of exceptional bravery; a person admired for superior qualities and achievement; the central male character in a novel, play, etc." The Merriam-Webster Dictionary also denotes "a mythological or legendary figure of great strength or ability. According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, the word signifies "a man of great courage". John Lash in his book *The Hero: Manhood and power* points out that the true ancestry of the hero lies deep in prehistory and it is "undeniably he", incarnating ideally "masculinity in its best, most noble aspects". In all cultures the hero is charged with the responsibility to use violent force, as the situation

requires, without being consumed by it. Usually the mythological hero is defied person or a demigod, being the offspring of God (father) and a mortal (mother). *Encyclopaedia Americana* points out that the ‘hero’ stands out from ordinary men by his superiority in one or more spheres and is held up as the embodiment of certain ideals or values of the society or group that honours him”. The concept of hero is connected to one particular group or culture: the original hero was a hunter who later on became a warrior, sometimes a saint or a person of extreme cunningness. Ultimately we do find as per the *Wikipedia*, the free encyclopaedia coined in English 1387, the word *hero* comes from the Greek (*heroes*), “hero, warrior”, literally ‘protector’ or ‘defender’ the postulated original forms of these words being *hçrwôs*, and *Hçrwâ*, respectively. It is also thought to be a cognate of the Latin verb *servo* (original meaning: to preserve whole) and of the Avestan verb *haurvaiti* (to keep vigil over), although the original Proto-Indo-European root is unclear. According to the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, the Indo-European root is ‘ser’ meaning to protect. According to Eric Partridge in *Origins*, the Greek word *Hçrôs* is akin to the Latin *seruâre*, meaning *to safeguard*. Partridge concludes, “The basic sense of both Hera and hero would therefore be protector”.

An attempt has been made to portray the Hemingway hero in the light of the tradition of hero–quest, to view him in a heroic prospective. Further it aims at portraying the mythological heroes in their search for identity, where they reflect upon the “essential facts of life,” unlike Hemingway’s quest in his hunting saga “ideals single perfect shot” shares a common narrative pattern is of much significance that goes beyond the individual work. The hero is a human being. He embodies human dignity. The later aspect is very strong in the so-called romantic hero, whatever may be the other aspects of his personality, is always a person with a deep sense of dignity.

The features of romanticism are however not the focal point of discussion, but it is important to point out that the romantic sensitivity is not tied up to a certain period of time, mainly the beginning of 19th century, but has in various forms been existent in the arts of the earlier periods and lives up to present time. The features of the romantic or the Byronic heroes are much older than the Romantic Movement, but it was Byron who made him famous. In his *Fables of identity* Northrop Frye argues that “Byron is romantic only because the Byronic hero is a romantic figure”. In *The Romantic Agony*, Mario Praz sums up the main features of the fatal man: mysterious origin, traces of burnt–out passions, suspicion of a ghastly guilt, melancholy habits, pale face and unforgettable eyes. He also points out that some of these can be seen in

Shakespeare's *King John* and Cassius in *Julius Caesar* and in Milton's *Satan* in *Paradise Lost*. Northrop Frye mentions that this type of characters had already been popularized in the gothic thrillers or horrid stories of Mr. Radcliffe, whose work Byron greatly admired.

The fatal heroes of romantic literature diffuse all around them, the curse which weighs upon their destiny. They blast those who have the misfortune to meet them. They destroy themselves, and they destroy the unlucky women who come within their orbit. Byron realizes the extreme type of fatal man described by Schiller in the *Die Rauber*. The romantic robbers, brigands, pirates etc., have a noble side: they fight for freedom and they remain true to themselves, even if it means self-destruction. This type of hero has been extremely influential not only in the arts of the romantic period but dominates romances until the present day. Modern fiction would be miserably impoverished without the Byronic hero: Balzac, Stendhal, Dostoyevsky, have all used him in crucial roles. He is seen as a force of creative energy which is associated with genius.

According to Campbell, a hero is someone who is "looking for something" (p.25) and physically goes to get something and this involves a physical and spiritual act and therefore a change. This definition could include a lot of things and many people, but for the purpose of this class, a hero is someone who goes out to discover something.

In history, the people who we have heard the most of or we have read the most of are the heroes who left their homes in search for freedom or material things. However, a hero does not have to go to a different continent and make a big discovery. A hero does not need to be Mother Teresa, although she is definitely one of the great heroes in the history of humanity. Any human being can be a hero in his or her way. In addition, a hero does not need to fulfil the "hero's cycle" that Campbell talks about: "departure, fulfilment and return". A hero is he who does something meaningful and remarkable.

Northrop Frye identifies the central myth of literature, in its narrative aspects, with the quest of myth. He sees the significance of quest of myth in *The Anatomy of Criticism* (1955) "in its vision of the end of social effort, the innocent world of fulfilled desires, and the free human society" (p.30). Perhaps the most complete form of this utopian vision is found in the combined Old and New Testament of the *Bible*. Together they comprise the archetypal story of loss and recovery of identity. Greek mythology has the same general framework though not as complete as the *Bible*. There we also find the story of man's creation, his relationship with God, and his loss of the Golden age. The Golden age is recovered in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* with the establishment of ideal Kingdom,

in case of the Roman Empire.

Campbell's description is an enlargement on the basic formulae represented in the rites of passage; separation-initiation-discovery-return. The quest of the hero is an extended search for something that has been lost or taken away from him, something that ought to have been his birth right. He encounters fabulous forces and wins a decisive victory. The successful completion of this search reveals to the hero the secret of his "true identity" and enables him to return from his mysterious adventure and take his rightful position in the society.

The common thread that ties the work of Frazer, Jung and Campbell together is the idea that we all share the recurring patterns of behaviour. It is with Northrop Frye, in his book on myth and archetypes, *The Anatomy of Criticism* (1955) that a systematic study of the recurring patterns and their relationship to literature brought the scientific findings of the mythographers to bear on literary criticism. It seems to me that Frye completes the "cycle of thought" (P.42) begun with Frazer's observations of basic recurring pattern of ritual behaviour, Jung's notion that mythology arose from the impulse to express these common experiences, possessed by all men in the "collective unconscious", is completed by Frye, who saw in the recurring pattern of imagery in mythology the basic of all literature. It is precisely at the point that Jung's unconscious archetypal images become consciously expressed in myth that Frye begins to evaluate the importance of these images in literature. For Frye, archetypes are the recurring patterns of imagery (wastelands or garden), character type (scapegoat or hero), events (rites of passage), stories (Monster-slaying), or themes (good vs. evil) that provide the structural principles that give literature its unity.

Taking cue from the evolution of hero from the Aeonian and romantic traditions, the focus should be now shifted to the concept of Hemingway's heroes that have puzzled the critics from time to time and yet remains inscrutable in all kinds of literary works. From the pedagogical point of view however the study will be limited to a discussion of two of his major novels *The Old man and the sea*, and *A Farewell to Arms* as a sample representative of the code heroes of the major novels of Hemingway.

The typical Hemingway hero is generally a wounded man. He is wounded both physically as well as psychologically. Unlike the real Hemingway who tends to break away from the organized society, his heroes evolve a code by observing which they could live properly in the world of violence of disorder and misery they inhabit. He is troubled by his thoughts and suffers from sleeplessness. He may learn how to live with some of his troubles and how to overcome others, but he never completely recovers from his psychic

wounds. This Psychic wound, being the leitmotif there is invariably an urge in the hero to equate his longings with death. Further he may be able to adopt certain principles of honour, courage and endurance which make a man and enables him to conduct himself well in the losing battle that is life. Whether victory or defeat he is always at the vanguard of this battle, the battle of life. He is a rationalist and a pragmatist, who brings everything to the test of experience, even at the cost of life. Thus he may face trepidations, trials and tribulations, sorrows and sufferings, resulted in 'death' but he is not a coward and his capacity for a stoic endurance of his troubles and difficulties is more than his victory over death.

Further, he finds much satisfaction and relish in the life of sensation. In fact he is a believer in the cult of "physical sensation". As a consequence, he drinks and indulges freely and without inhibition in acts of womanisation. In such a context, the typical Hemingway hero is the protagonist and often described as the code hero –usually an older man who has realized the potentialities and known in the field of his operations, a professional man, a bull fighter, fisherman, a soldier, or a prize fighter. Being confident of rising and excelling in the field of his choice, he is endowed with indomitable courage and endurance.

Wyndham Lewis describes a typical Hemingway hero as "a dull-witted, bovine, monosyllabic simpleton, who speaks with the violence of the folk" (p.15). Sean O Fallon calls these heroes "brainless with no past, no tradition and no memories" (p.35). The most critical of their traits, it is criticized that they lack inwardness; they are bull fighters, hunters, and soldiers and fisherman with autobiographical traits. They have physical and emotional injuries. They are not parrots, but they form their own code of conduct and a separate peace. They can adjust themselves to the outward reality, and move out of America and leave their homes in search of freedom and liberty. They have power of endurance, strength and valour and they live in a world of nightmare, and may be devitalized by the war and wounded and live in a grim world. They have the overtones of Nietzschean Superman (Moloney.) In them there is triumph of urges over reason. They are guided by anti-thoughts.

The supreme treasure of the Hemingway hero is his ordeal. The trauma of the situations, from moment to moment, places him under different circumstances, for him to join battle whenever it comes on his way, as a man of duty he distances himself from such abstract notions as a faith, honour and patriotism. He can somewhat hope for a night, simple pleasures like Frederic, or longs for a mug of beer on the 'terrace' like Santiago. But like Christ he also

undergoes a great trials and returns to society having experienced something what others cannot. Unlike many war stories however, his heroes do not glorify the experience of combat as they are traditionally conceived.

They exude a specific, type of man-hood, and the theme of the masculinity of his character is a recurring theme through the novels. Readers of Hemingway's fiction will quickly notice a consistent thread in the portrayal and celebration of a certain kind of man, domineering supremely competent and a swaggering virile. *A Farewell to Arms* holds up several of its minor male characters as examples of fine man-hood. Rinaldi is a faithful friend and an oversexed womanizer. Dr. Valentine exhibits a virility to rival Rinaldi as well as a bold competent that makes him the best surgeon. Similarly, during the scene in which Henry fires his pistol at the fleeing engineering sergeants, Bonello takes charge of the situation by brutally shooting the fallen engineer in the head. The respect with which Hemingway sketches these men, even at the lowest points, is highlighted by the humour, if not contempt with which he depicts their opposites. The success of each of these men depends in part on the failure of another : Rinaldi secures his sexual prowess by attacking the priests lack of lust: Dr. Valentine's reputation as a surgeon is thrown into relief by three mousy, overly cautious, and physically unimpressive doctors who precede him ; and Bonello's ruthlessness is prompted by the disloyal behaviour of the soldier whom he kills.

Henry is characterized initially by a sort of detachment from life though well –disciplined and friendly, he feels as if the has nothing to do with the war. These feelings of detachments are pushed away when Henry falls in love with Catherine and begins to realize the hostile nature of the world. In this way Henry serves the function of a character who becomes initiated in Hemingway's of an indifferent universe and man's struggle against it.

In *The Old Man and the Sea*, Santiago acts bravely and truly, and like a man gives meaning and purpose to his struggle. The final, material outcome of the struggle that is, whether he returns home with the fish – becomes irrelevant. The fish too has acted well and bravely and truly. It has been a brother to Santiago, and it has died like a man, indeed Hemingway tells us the sex of the fish. There is thus meaning and purpose in the fish's death. This reinforces the male dominated world-view that Hemingway creates in the novella. It is no mistake that there are no notable female characters in *The Old man and the Sea*.

Heroism in Hemingway's, novels is treated more than adventure or sheer thrills for thrills sake. His hero is not like the action-hero, nor is she or he a simple 'Matador'. In his writing, Hemingway began by exploring themes

of helplessness and defeat, but in the late 1930s he began to express concern for social problems. His novels *To Have and Have Not* (1937) and his play *The Fifth Column* (1938), celebrating “the nobility and dignity of the Spanish people in the Spanish Civil war”, strongly condemned economic and political injustices. Among of his best short stories, *The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber* and *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* are published alongside the play in *The Fifth Column and the First Forty Nine Stories* (1938). In the novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940), based on his experiences of the Spanish Civil war.

Hemingway argued that the loss of liberty anywhere in the world should be a warning to all that liberty is endangered everywhere. This novel was his most successful work in terms of number of books sold, and commanded over the unprecedented sum for the film rights. During the next decade his only literary efforts were *Men at War: The Best War Stories of All Time* (1942) which he edited and the novel *Across the River and into the Trees* (1950), about a World War I, veteran returning to the battle field where he was wounded.

When we look at the history of the world travellers we consider them all heroes. First of all, they all got out of their “Comfort zone” in search for something; this search could be a material search, such as the one that ended up with the discovery of the American continent or like Buddha who travelled to find his spirituality. All of the heroes left their places to discover something. They all knew that the places where they were located were not going to give them the answer of what they were looking for. But not all heroes need to go miles away from their homes to find what they are looking for or to discover something. Not everybody consider heroes those who stay and discover things in their own places. This happens because they are not as visible as the one who physically leaves a place. These people are heroes anyway. This relates to “hear the call”. This call might mean for some to leave their places in search for new lands and for others just to look around and find what they have not looked at before. This call and the way we discover things have to do a lot with whom we are and what we want out of the life .

In history, the people who are heard the most or read are the ‘heroes’ who left their home in search for freedom or material things. Columbus was a hero because he believed in something. This something is important to be a hero. He believed that the world was different from what he was told and that he would find gold for the queen and obviously for himself. This took a major enterprise that ended up with the discovery of a whole new world, literally. Unfortunately, this hero has been taken to history lightly. A hero depends on the level of humanity of the people who consider him a hero. However, Columbus

was not a hero but “a bold adventurer”. A hero then is someone more humane, more like a service-learning type. A hero depends on the travel of humanity of the people who considers him or her a hero. The Hemingway heroes are ‘heroes’ because they are not merely “bold adventures”, but more humane more like a ‘learning’ type.

But a hero, after such a long description, does not have to go for a different continent and make a big discovery. A hero does not need to be Mother Teresa although she is definitely one of the greatest heroes in the history of humanity. Any human being can be a hero in his or her way. In addition, a hero does not need to fulfil the “Hero’s cycle” that Campbell talk about: “departure, fulfilment and return” (p.85). A hero is then anybody who does something meaningful to her life path. Hemingway’s heroes just do not travel or take the adventure. They do them for gaining the opportunity for learning many times from their experience. They often wish (‘I wish’) they had yet some more reflection in many of these doings. This means that many thoughts are enlightening and others painful. ■

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A feminist Reading of Zora Neale Hurston's *Sweat*

R. Sheela Banu

Women and men do not enjoy equal status anywhere in this world. Violence against women is widespread in every country and society. Patriarchy legitimizes violence against women, making it an ordinary occurrence in their daily lives. Women experience patriarchy vastly differently depending upon their race, class, and other social markers of identity.

Black women are the most disadvantaged group in the American continent. The double-bind of living in a racist and sexist society has jeopardized their lives. Placed in the lowest rung of the social ladder, they are economically exploited and physically assaulted by both whites and blacks. Katie Cannon rightly observes, "While the Black man struggles with God, the Black woman struggles with the man" (*Cannon* 131).

Intimate partner violence is an alarming problem in black culture. Zora Neale Hurston (1891-1960) was a pioneer in the critical canon of Afro-American feminist literature. Her works present a real picture of black American women trapped in a patriarchal society. Hurston's story *Sweat* is a harsh, unrelenting indictment of the economic and personal degradation of marriage in a racist and sexist American society. The key thematic concern of this short story is the quest for female empowerment. The main character in *Sweat* is Delia, a washerwoman. Her household is a troubled one. When the

story begins, she is presented as singing a melancholic song and wondering where her husband Sykes has gone. While she is lost in thought, she suddenly feels something like a snake fall around her shoulders and screams, only to find her husband standing behind her with a bull whip. The striking image suggests that Sykes is an imposing and oppressive figure. Purposefully, he makes the bullwhip look like a snake only to scare Delia. When she gently scolds him for his mischief, he yells at her. When she tries to ignore him, he continues to fight with her and keeps on provoking her with harsh words. Tired of his verbal abuse, Delia laments how hard she had been working and picks up an iron skillet from the stove as if to strike him. Sykes is flabbergasted by her action because he has always seen her controlling her anger. The narrator says, “ It (Delia’s action) cowed him and he did not strike her as he usually did” (Wall 27). He leaves his wife alone only to ponder about her unhappy life with him.

Sykes is a terrorist. He is physically and psychologically always abusive toward his wife. He makes it his mission to inflict as much pain and fear in Delia as possible. For example, he winds his whip around Delia’s shoulders to make her think that it is a snake. Even when she asks him why, he terrorizes her just to amuse himself, ““Course Ah knowed it! That’s how come Ah done it”” (Wall 263).

Sykes is a man with no scruples. He lives on Delia’s money and squanders it too. He has illicit relationship with another woman named Bertha and spends all his wife’s money to please his mistress. He remains a perennial source of pain to Delia. Spending the night with Bertha, he returns to his wife at dawn, only to create some new trouble for her. One day, as Delia walks along the road, she finds Sykes flirt with Bertha. Noticing Delia, Sykes deliberately aggravates her agony by telling Bertha that he would buy whatever she wanted just to win her love. The narrator says, “It pleased him for Delia to see” (Wall 32).

A careful reading of the story shows that Delia and Sykes fight all the time. There are no peaceful interludes. They sleep and eat in silence. Even when Delia extends friendliness towards Sykes, she is repulsed and rebuffed each time by him. Thus, it is plain that the breaches between the spouses remain agape. But, even though Sykes is completely evil, Delia finds strength and survives his hate and disdain for her.

Female independence emasculates men. Delia’s work is the only source of income for her family. She is the breadwinner of her house. Her husband is a roustabout. In the early days of their marriage, Sykes was employed, but he squandered his wages in the jukejoints of Orlando. He has no interest in

working and relies entirely on Delia for his livelihood. Fed up with his parasitic nature, Delia points out to him, “Mah tub full of suds is filled yo belly with vittles more times than yo hands is filled it. Mah sweat is done paid for this house.”(Wall 27) Her sense of ownership is perceptible in her verbal outburst. Her words drive home the traditional work ethic that if one works hard, one can lead a self-sufficient life.

In *Sweat*, Delia’s industry imparts her the ability to buy a house and support her family. This is quite a contrast to normal patriarchal families where the man is supposed to support the family. Delia’s sweat has offered her some meagre material rewards but her husband is enraged by her progress. He wants her to stop working so that he can have more control over her. He also harbours the idea of ousting her from the house so that he and his mistress Bertha can live there.

A close observation of Delia-Sykes’s marital life reveals that while Delia lives for herself as well as her husband, Sykes lives for the moment and for himself. For most part of her life, Delia remains a selfless docile woman. When the need arises, she emerges as a daring woman who lets her husband die for his vicarious deeds. Despite being oppressed, Delia is able to lead a life of some independence. Her work allows her to sustain not only herself but also Sykes. She is a landowner, which is a rare situation for blacks in America. With her small house, she possesses not only a piece of property but also gains the right to declare herself as a person. Sykes views Delia as his possession and is convinced that the house is his just because he is a man and that Delia is his wife.

One afternoon, Sykes comes home with a box and asks Delia to look inside. Delia finds a giant rattlesnake nestled within the box. The sight of the snake scares her to death. She pleads with him to get rid of it but he refuses to listen to her plea. The snake begins to grow hungry again and rattles around. One night, however, Delia comes home to find that the snake is loose. As she gets out of the house and waits, she sees her husband come home. He enters the house to ensure if Delia is bitten by the snake. Eventually, he is bitten by the snake himself. Delia, unmoved by his cries, simply lets him die without taking any effort to save him.

The author leaves readers to speculate the action of Delia. She deftly avoids giving details whether Delia was too afraid to move to get help for her husband, or she purposefully let him die. Indeed, Delia’s passivity when her husband dies is an active rebellion towards her long oppression. Through Delia, Hurston challenges the conventional role assigned to black women and

encourages women to resist to oppression and live for themselves.

The snake is the main symbol in *Sweat*. In fact, it binds the entire fabric of the story. It is mentioned at the beginning of the story and at the end. Sykes decides to bring a snake into their home, “Look in de box dere Delia, Ah done brung yuh somethin’ .Syke! Syke, mah Gawd! You tak..Sykes’s constant brandishing of bullwhip as snake in fact strengthens the mind of Delia. Though, frightened in the beginning, Delia gradually gains the strength to face even snakes.

Delia’s interactions with other characters allows one to see Hurston’s contribution to female empowerment and survival in a male-dominated patriarchal society. Despite her poverty, Delia is able to survive her everyday challenges and overcome obstacles set in her path by her husband Sykes. Her fortitude to face adversity and misfortune springs from her deeply pious nature. In her gloomy life, only two things console Delia. One is her regular visit to the church and the other is her well-maintained little house which she has constructed for herself doing hard work.

Empowerment is to improve the condition of one’s own life *and* the condition of other’s lives, especially those affected by discrimination and social injustice. Delia provides “inner empowerment” (*Weissberg 27*) for oppressed women. Hurston’s story *Sweat* thus broadens public awareness about female oppression and promotes the creation of compassionate and transformative responses to violence against women. Delia’s trials and tribulations accelerate empowerment of oppressed women and their survival in a patriarchal society. ■

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Authenticity Acceptance and Recognition in Bernard Malamud's Novels

R. Jothipaul

This study demonstrates that the struggle for recognition and acceptance is one of the most important motivational forces of Bernard Malamud's heroes. Notwithstanding some differences, the conception of authenticity and the means by which they achieve it, are similar in nature. Initially, an accurate appraisal of the totality of human condition, that is to say, one's commitment to one's own self consists of craving for external recognition either in the form of love and fame or social position. Eventually, it leads the protagonist to experience a coherent sense of self defined by a code of values. "The underlying paradigm in Bernard Malamud's novels is the universal archetypal heroic journey, which in itself reflects the problematic relationship between self and society.... All the heroes from Roy Hobbs in *The Natural* (1952) to Calvin Cohn in *God's Grace* (1982) are concerned with the search for a new identity and with the search for individual and social responsibility". The successful protagonists in Malamud's fiction undergo a process of inner transformation that ultimately allows them to reconcile their hard-won identity with a personal commitment to others.

At first in the course of his pursuit of individual happiness and freedom, the protagonist wishes to remain unscathed and untangled. His ambition is of a materialistic nature, selfish and inconsiderate towards others. Involvements incur responsibilities that he is not ready to accept for he fears that it will curtail his freedom. He desperately struggles to retain his freedom; however, he is gradually made to face upto freedom's restrictions. For Malamud, it would seem, "human freedom is perhaps illusory, but not commitment to life. In

Malamud's fiction, freedom comes from responsibility but not responsibility from freedom. Malamud believes that true freedom lies in not the rejection but the acceptance of binding commitments and relationships. In his world, the "demands of responsibility are tremendous, particularly since they cannot be set forth by a rigid code of ethics, but they impinge upon only a very contracted range of human relationships, particularly upon the relationships between lovers and between parents and children".

In Malamud's world of interpersonal relationships, a new free life is not to be found in a new place but in a new free self developed through a rewarding relationship with others. It is through meaningful relationship in which the need of the 'others' gains priority over the needs of the self, that the protagonist grows in awareness and he struggles to lead a fuller life. In fact, a part of the hero's quest for a new life has been the search for an authentic spiritual father through whose instigation self-recognition comes. It results in a hopeful struggle towards moral growth. The spiritual father alone leads the hero to his goal by teaching him the necessity of discarding his egoistic self-centeredness and assuming a responsible role towards others. The basis of the hero's success or failure is his choice of his spiritual father and the acceptance and practice of the values presented in the father figure. Furthermore, the hero must willingly assume fatherhood and the responsibility associated with parenthood. The hero's assumption of parenthood, his willing involvement in the lives of others is indicative of his moral growth.

Malamud shows a concern with situations which generate strong feelings such as of guilt, love and pity in the protagonist. What arouses such feelings in the hero is a new relationship he may have cultivated himself but which is more often implicated upon him against his desires. However, as the hero's involvement grows, the difference also diminishes. We see in Malamud's fiction the hero torn by desires that are contradictory to his conscience, and a conscience in disharmony with the desires. We have then a hero victimized by a self-destructive struggle between high aspirations and low lusts, the incompatible demands of the ethical and the erotic nature.

The Protagonist's future possibilities rest upon realization of the contradictory drives within himself and willful choice between the fulfillment of selfish desires and selfless commitment towards others. Gradually he is made to realize that within himself are the qualities that nullify his struggle for authenticity and face up to the conflicting demands of his moral and materialistic self. His decision to confront himself and change for the better leads to the movement from self-regard towards selfless commitment and ultimate

affirmation of the values Malamud has always propagated. Through a painful process, the protagonist changes himself and his priorities so as to make him worthy of a new life of value. In Malamud's world, anything of value is not easily acquired-it has to be earned and it is at the cost of materialistic aspirations that the protagonist gains moral insight.

Malamud firmly believes that people can change and become better human beings in spite of the denigrating conditions of life. He says, "A man is always changing and the changing part of him is all-important. I refer to the psyche, to the spirit, the mind, the emotions". In this change to the better lies the hope and promise of a better future for the protagonist.

Each of Malamud's novels is concerned with the hero's decision to seek a new life. The quest takes him on a journey into self. Before Malamud's hero can realize his desperate hope of living with others, he must live with himself. At first, we see a person trying to live by unfulfillable notions of himself. However, through experience and self-analysis he, in time, learns the necessary lessons of self-denial. He grows in heroic stature as he accommodates to the needs of others, but such heroism is also the hero's loss for he has to sacrifice his personal desires in favour of the needs of others. Eventually, he earns a free self but one quite different from the one he has envisioned at the onset of his quest. By the end he has learnt painful lessons and has matured to the point where he can fully accept his own imperfections and the reality of his situation without recourse to the fictions and illusions that had earlier ruled his life. Having gained an awareness of himself and the world, there is at least a thin chance that his future will be a little less painful than his past. By now, he has learnt that "it is in striving that the self exists and not in the end, not in the realized goal; that man is a becomingness and not being and that in this fact lie his hopefulness and freedom".

Malamud's morality, essentially, means "the necessity in this world of accepting moral obligations". Malamud's hero must not only try to make life better just for himself, he must assume the responsibility of making life better for others even at the cost of his own betterment. There comes the question of affinity between responsibilities of suffering. Malamud's protagonist suffers. He is the victim of adverse circumstances, other people's whims and above all his own personal failings. It is his search for materialistic gains and his irresponsible self-centeredness that leads to the protagonist's suffering and it is through suffering he achieves self-discipline and learns the value of love, charity and responsibility towards others. In Malamud's fiction, suffering is a test of character.

Malamud takes inordinate interest in the attitude that one should adopt towards suffering, a pre-condition of life-whether one should make it a value or just accept it as a necessary appendage of responsibility that must be for it is lesser evil than the alternatives. In his earlier novels, Malamud seemed to invest a moral capital in suffering. Suffering passively seems to be the only way to express self-sacrificial, loving concern for others. He seems to sanction passivity and acquiescence to the injustice of the existentially chaotic world. However, passivity is not explicitly praised as a virtue. Malamud is divided against himself as to the value of suffering.

Nevertheless, whether suffering is of value or not, it is only through suffering that Malamud's heroes grow. It is not the intensity of suffering that interests Malamud, it is what one learns from the experience of suffering once one accepts the inevitability of suffering in one's life that Malamud writes about.

Morris in *The Assistant* best expresses Malamud's theme of the inevitability of suffering. Important is the right approach to suffering. "If you live, you suffer" But what is more tells, "I suffer for you", for to be able to suffer for other is not the ill-fate of man but his. In *A New Life*, The protagonist Levin learns that if he wishes to start afresh and give meaning to his life, he will have to accommodate the possibility of much more suffering in the future than what he has suffered in the past. Indeed it is through suffering that the hero grows in personal maturity. Yakov in *The Fixer* is against suffering but understands the need to make the experience meaningful when both unavoidable and necessary. The hero's quest for a new life only ironically gives the hero the freedom to choose to suffer. In *Pictures of Fidelman: An Exhibition*, Fidelman suffers setbacks in his artistic pursuits because he shirks participating in the suffering of others. In *Dubin's Lives*, we see Dubin neglect his family in pursuit of selfish desires and as a consequences suffer physical impotency and mental block. His afflictions come to an end only when he returns to his wife with love.

For Malamud, even a new life is a life rooted in the suffering each hero has undergone in the past. In fact, the hero's struggle for recognition only makes him willingly choose to suffer again-this time for the sake of others. To suffer for the good of others is a redemptive value in Malamud's fiction, participating in the suffering of others adds value to one's life. Suffering is the "good willed and deliberate acknowledgement and acceptance of the common life of man. It is the expression of the way in which men are bound together in their loss".

It is their common fate of ill-luck and suffering which binds Malamud's Jews and his Gentiles; they all suffer frustrations in their materialistic ambitions

and carnal desires. Malamud believes that shared suffering unites people and leads to brotherhood and mutual understanding. He has said, “those who want for others must expect to give up something. What we get in return is the affirmation of what we believe in”.

Love, like responsibility, is akin to suffering. To love other, given Malamud’s imperatives, is to suffer. In other words, suffering binds people in love. “Suffering is the one possibility of love. Therefore, it is morality itself”. Thus in Malamud’s metaphysics. Suffering is an expression of love and each protagonist learns “what it is like to live by suffering for what one loves-indeed by loving what makes him suffer”. Malamud’s heroes, the unloved orphans, are in great need of love. It is through love that these imperfect beings learn responsibility and it is only through a commitment to love that they find salvation. The hero’s ability to love without selfish motives is his saving grace in Malamud’s moral world.

Suffering in Malamud’s novels has a peculiar Jewish flavour. Indeed, his fiction shows the hold of past on his psyche-of their familial hardships as poor immigrants, his childhood spent in slums, his maturing years witnessing persecution of the Jews by Hitler in Germany. All this led to Malamud’s realization of the martyrdom of the Jews throughout history. He writes of the Jewish experience but in such a way that it comes to stand for the experience of all modern men. “The Jewish experience as is known to all, refers to their profound suffering and known to all, refers to their profound suffering and meaningless persecution”.

The suffering, alienation and exile characterizing the Jew’s experience for two thousand years become in modern times everyone’s condition in the American culture and offers the Jew as a symbol of the modern predicament.

Malamud’s hero draws his moral perspective from the painful experiences of the historical Jew who suffered centuries of persecution but did not lose his dignity or his humanity. For Malamud, the Jew symbolizes the alienated individual who in spite of his existential anguish has the ability to learn selfless commitment towards others and thus pave his way to moral transcendence.

Malamud’s theme of suffering is closely linked with his use of mythic method. Malamud uses the ancient myths as a device, apt for emphasizing the necessity of preserving traditional values, which is contrasted with his use of the American Dream Myth with its “tawdry values of a new world commercial optimism”. Everyone of Malamud’s heroes is caught in the myth of the American

Dream that sanctions all materialistic values. In Malamud's world, the hero can find spiritual fulfillment only if he adopts the traditional values of unselfish love and responsibility as propounded in the ancient myths.

Integral to Malamud's theme and vision are humour and irony. The hero's painful initiation into his new life is somewhat relieved by the comic efforts of the Schlemiel hero to succeed in life. "Laughter serves in the capacity of a redemptive emotion; it is a reminder that the way of transcendence lies only through the ability to endure privation", writes Sidney Richman. Ironically comic, the characters can laugh at themselves and escape from their painful existence. The mixture of pain, irony and humour strikes one note over and over again-of compassion. His heroes are comic victims at whom we laugh yet associate ourselves within their search for authenticity. It is a serious search conducted with comic bungling. Moreover, humour in Malamud's fiction is an ironic technique that projects both the existentially absurd reality of everyday life and helps sustain hope in affirmation through the values of humanism.

Malamud's fiction is not depressive or gloomy nor does he write out of bitterness. Quite on the contrary, he writes with full faith in mankind and with love and compassion for human failings in this imperfect world. By presenting the apparently in fructuous, disorderly lives his protagonists lead, Malamud makes us aware of the modern man's dilemma and drives home the need for universal love and brotherhood more forcefully. In spite of the discouraging reality of the surface story, Bernard Malamud constantly reaffirms his faith in human values and man's ability to achieve authenticity, acceptance and recognition. ■

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Gender Identity in Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors*

S.Gopinath

Deshpande is one of most celebrated feminist writers of Indian literature in English she is a versatile genius in analyzing the day-today problems of women. Deshpande would have been considered that she is a neither feminist or a feminine writer but a humanist. Her contribution is fairly recognized by many critics and her contemporaries. *The Dark Holds No Terrors* is Shashi Deshpande's one of the foremost and well received novels of ambivalently projects deconstruction as well as reconstruction of gender roles as the female protagonist of the novel is constantly, and often unconsciously, in search of an 'inner space' which is instrumental in the reconstruction of gender identity in the wake of its being deconstructed. In this paper the concept of male-female polarity is treated as a natural and inherent factor in a social, psychological and biological framework. Central to the novel is the motif of home and family relationships which establishes the ambivalent aspect of female gender construction.

The novel projects the post-modern dilemma of a woman who strongly resents the onslaught on her individuality and identity. The antagonism is faced mainly from two persons –Saru's (the female protagonist's) mother and Manohar, Saru's husband. Both of them represent the values and norms established by a patriarchal society. Ironically, a female can be made an agency

for the effective promotion of a male point of view as in the case of Saru's mother. The mother-daughter relationships is marked with mutual hatred. Saru says to her mother: "If you are a woman I don't want to be one". Again Saru finds herself in "A kind of shame that engulfed me, making me want to rage, to scream against the fact that put me in the same class as my mother..." (55).

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

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

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

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

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

From the first 'inner space' Saru moves to another by marrying Manohar and raising a family and having a home-once again. And once again the home disappoints her. The very economic independence, on the strength of which she had become independence, now becomes her bane. "How does it feel when

your wife earns not only the butter but most of the bread as well?” (182). These words of the girl who came to interview, Saru, triggered a sadism in Manohar’s sexual relationship with Saru-thus, once again, hurting her, disenchanting her. Home has let her down-the second time. What was once beautiful-sex as well as her married life-has now become ugly. Once again Saru defies-this time her husband. She leaves home the second time-moves out of the ‘inner space’ again.

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

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

Erikson (1983) discusses the psychologists' play data where children were given play constructs to construct a scene. These constructs were studied comparatively, sex difference was obvious in spatial configurations. Girls and boys used space differently and certain configurations were typical of girls and boys. The girls emphasized inner and boys outer space. The typical features of girls' scenes was the interior of a house representing either a configuration with furniture without boundary or a simple enclosure with people and animals within. The enclosure is marked by low boundary walls and a peaceful ambience. The Biological and psychological unity results in typical male and female attitudes and reactions. Saru's search for a home may be viewed from this point of view.

A purely social interpretation of the concepts of 'inner space' may deny anything symbolic or somatic in the play constructs. "It takes it for granted that boys love the outdoors and girls the indoors, or at any rate that they see their respective roles assigned to the indoors of houses and to the great outdoors of adventure, to tranquil feminine love for family and children and to high masculine aspiration". Erikson says further that there may be a blurring of the boundary of duties but there are two clear vantage points upheld by the male and the female which are biologically, psychologically, socially, and culturally ordained. If a woman transgresses in the other area, she has to come back to the assigned place. Although male and female features co-exist in a person, women generally have a predominantly sensitive indwelling which determines their behaviour. When a woman moves out into the outer space, as for economic independence in the case of Saru, it is in the manner which may be hermaphroditic, if not totally masculine. The above analysis which may be hermaphroditic, if not totally masculine. The above analysis attempts to offer to total configurational approach to answer the first question regarding Saru's going into an 'inner space' again and again.

As analysed above, each 'inner space' disappoints Saru and results in a renewed quest for a home and her own identity. She goes out not merely for rejecting home but on the contrary for seeking one. Therefore, exit from an inner space may appear to be a deconstruction of her gender role, but inherent is the desire for reconstructing it. At the end of the novel Saru goes back home and enjoys her privileges.

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

accept these selves to become whole again. (201).

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

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Filial Relationships in Arun Joshi's *The Foreigner*

N. Priyadharashini

A genuine attempt has been made to analyse Arun Joshi's views and visions on the theme of an individual's isolation, from family and the society. Joshi's first novel, *The Foreigner*, was published in 1968. It centres round a youngman, Sindi Oberoi, who, as Meenakshi Mukherjee aptly observes, "is an alien after everywhere physically as well as metaphorically". Sindi Oberoi is an Indian Kenyan who returns to India after years in the West and finds himself incapable of achieving any emotional involvement with the milieu of his racial origin.

Sindi Oberoi is a born "foreigner", who alienated from all humanity. "The only son of an Indian father and English mother, and born in Kenya he is orphaned at an early age. He grows up without family ties and without a country". "My foreignness lay within me". (61) he confesses. He has very vague memories of his parents. When his American beloved June Blyth asks him how long he has been affected by asthma, he answers, "As long as I can remember. They say my mother had it".

In Delhi, when Babu's father Mr. Khemka questions Sindi about his parents, he brusquely replies: "I lost them when I was four". Sindi hates to talk about his parents for "I hated pity I got from people". (11) This assertion of course appears dubious in the context of the situation at Boston when June and her mother Mrs. Blyth come to know of Sindi's parentless life. They become

visibly moved. At this Sindi gets a feeling of genuine sympathy that people have for orphans: “This really hit the cockles of Mrs. Blyth’s kind heart. I almost expected her to fly at me and weep on my shoulder. Even June appeared visibly moved but she said nothing”. (64)

He is obviously glad on being addressed “Child” by June’s mother and feels as if parents are for soothing words and a soothing life. He experiences a blaming effect while discussing with June about Babu’s authoritative parents, Sindi expresses a peculiar sense of parental void: “I only know what it is not to have a father; I don’t know how it would have been if had one”. (123) In Sindi’s life, except for a very short time that he spends with his uncle, there is hardly any parental influence. Yet the filial love of his uncle adds definite meaning and purpose to his life. As his uncle’s death snaps the last thread of parental love, life becomes a purposeless existence for him, He says:

Somebody had begotten me without a purpose and so far I had lived without a purpose.... I hadn’t felt like that when my uncle was living... The thought that he moved about in that small house on the outskirts of Nairobi gave me a feeling of having an anchor. After his death the security was destroyed. Now I suppose I existed only for dying. (61-62)

Parentlessness has its manifold implications in the different facets of his life, like his religion and his love for June Blyth. He tells June: “Anyway, I can’t really be called a Hindu. My mother was English and my father, I am old, a skeptic. That doesn’t seem like a good beginning for a Hindu, does it?” (33) His love for June ends tragically both for the girl and his friend Babu Rao Khemka, primarily because “Sindi is afraid of marriage and its demands of possessing anybody and of being possessed”. He is masculine but frustrates June by his peculiar sense of rootlessness. When Sindi proposes love to June for the second time, she is afraid of being the beloved of Babu. When Babu dies of an accident, Sindi, in a state of despair, feels guilty like an erring child and dreams of his father: “My parents, my uncle, my lovers, Babu and June, their parents, and finally myself, one by one all were called by the invisible judges and asked to give their evidence”. (195)

Sindi is a child to none. A stranger to the world of filial relationships, he learns about four families, directly or indirectly. Sindi, first exposure to the filial situation is with Mrs. Blyth’s family at Boston. Mrs. Blyth is a divorcee who lives with her only daughter June. June loves Sindi, a student at Boston. Her father’s memory is alive and she yearns for a father: “I asked her if she

missed him. 'Yes; she said 'I would have liked to have had a father but it does not matter much now. You get used to things'. She apparently didn't want to talk about her father''. (45-46)

At first June loves Sindi, then Babu and then Sindi, But what she wants is not only love but motherhood. When there is the threat of her illegitimate pregnancy caused by Babu, she becomes panicky and decides to abort it. She dies of abortion. The absence of a father in Mrs. Blyth's family leads it to total destruction.

Karl comes of another American family. He is a friend of Sindi and has a stepmother, who brings her lover after the death of Karl's father. The worst happens when the nymphomaniac stepmother makes an attempt to seduce Karl. So Karl runs away from home. He tells Sindi: "I hated the way my stepmother brought lovers home after my father died. And one day when she got drunk and tried to seduce me, I left". (27)

Sindi, while working for his doctoral degree at Boston, meets Babu Rao Khemka. He is an over-sheltered son of a Delhi tycoon. His association with Babu gives him a clear picture of an educated and rich Indian family. He comes in contact with the father and children of Babu's family.

Babu's father Mr. Khemka brings up his son with all the love and care as is expected. He tells Sindi: "I had brought him up with all the care that a father can give to a child. ... Even as a child, I had myself taught him what was right and what was wrong". (136) Mohan Jha aptly observes that Babu has innocence and simplicity but not the seriousness and toughness of experience as one thinks of his childhood's moralistic training. "Ever since his childhood, he has been fed on the hygienic diet of morals, even so he does not apply himself to his pursuit with the seriousness that is expected of him".

Sindi finds Babu as only "a kid", as an innocent little rich father's boy and tells Babu: "that father of yours who has made this bloody mess of you". Sindi also tells Sheila in this context: "Innocence concocted by you and your father". (56)

Babu was sent to America for his higher studies. Sindi feels it was not so much for Babu as for his father's needs and social prestige. It is perhaps because a son is a proud possession of an Indian family. Sindi tells Sheila: "he sent Babu to America so he would come back and add that much more weight to your family's social status. He could talk to friends at the club about his foreign-returned son". (56)

With the nature of Babu's upbringing he becomes unfit to face America in the absence of his father and sister: "Babu with his dependence on his father, his craving for his friends, his ignorance of American patterns is a square peg in a round hole". Even as Babu continues his studies at Boston, his fear for his father continues. June observes: "This father of his seems to be an awful bully. I am sure things would be much simpler if he were not always there in the background, sending those long sermons and telling him what's wrong with him and how he should carry himself". (123)

Babu's world is confined to his sister and his father. He loves his elder sister Sheila but is terribly afraid of his father. As a result, there is lack of communication between Mr. Khemka and his children. In the absence of the mother, the family is low-keyed and unemotional. The filial awe of Babu is remarkable when he fails in the examination and frustrates the expectations of his father. He writes in a letter to his sister: "Don't sow this letter to father. He would get angry, I'm afraid". (52) Babu is less concerned with his career than the fact that his failure would disgrace his father. He tells Sindi: "What would father say when he comes to know about all this?" And he started crying again... He kept on worrying about what his father would say, 'They would all be ashamed of me'. (111)

Babu comes in contact with Sindi's beloved June and finds an emotional anchor in her love. But he is conscious of the attitude of his father towards love and marriage. He tells Sindi: "He would be very angry if he found out that his son was running around with strange women" (21) When June asks Babu to marry her, he expresses his helplessness: "I'm a only son you see", he added with a touch a pride and regret... 'He'll be very angry if I married here'. 'You must have a terrible sort of a father', June said mockingly.... 'He is not terrible', he said sullenly. 'He is quite orthodox". (90) when June asks Babu as to why he was so afraid of his father, "For a moment Babu nearly clammed up. Finally he said he was not at all afraid of his father; it was just that he had a deep respect for him". 113)

When Babu's engagement to June is relayed to Mr. Khemka by Sheila, "He was furious. For two days he neither slept nor ate. Then he sent off a cable threatening to cut Babu off from his property if he married June". (54) Mr. Khemka also tells elsewhere: "It is ridiculous. I had wanted him to gain some polish. But now would I have known he would abandon all his morality in the process?" (136). Sindi's observation about Babu's father sums up his character. He tells Sheila:

Your father loved him like a factory. Babu was a pawn in your father's hand with no will or life of his own. That's why he couldn't bear the thought of Babu marrying June. It didn't fit his plans. He wanted to marry Babu to a fat Marwari girl whose dowry might bring him half a dozen new factories. (56)

As Babu in a state of frustration drives into an accident and dies, Sheila says: "He knew how much we all loved him and he had all these factories to come back to". (136) The grief-stricken Khemka says, "We never wanted him to do anything of the sort. It was bad influence on him that led him astray". (136) In the next moment, we find Mr. Khemka perfectly composed as he feels that the entire generation of Babu's unfit for life: "Living, but as bad as dead". (137)

Babu's elder sister Sheila is an M.A. in History and a record holder at the all India level. Babu tells June that Sheila is modern: "She has very progressive views". But she is an obedient daughter. She is next to her father in running the business's concern. She loves her father and her father's business. When the income tax people seal the office and Sindi informs her, she begins to sob. Like Babu, Sheila has also never ventured to explore the world. In that way, she is traditional: "Sheila, his daughter, living on the brink of life but never entering it".

Mr. Khemka is an anxious father. He thinks of the well being and welfare of his children. When Sindi accuses him of the lies and fabrications on which his business is based, he says: "I have worked hard just so that my children can live in comfort". (215) But Sindi is not satisfied with this explanation. He tells Sheila: "Your father is a selfish old man". (217)

In the economically weaker section, parental affection is better displayed than what one finds in the upper crust of the society.

Mr. Khemka as a father is inferior to Muthu who is low-paid employee of his business establishment. He leaves an indelible imprint on Sindi's mind: "Muthu.... a rather poor assistant makes him (Sindi) reverse his direction".

Muthu struggles not only for his own livelihood but also for all his co-workers, and for his children. His fatherhood is more intense and wider. He narrates all this when Sindi visits Muthu's "dingy shade". He thinks of the future marriage of his daughter when she is hardly a girl of about eight: "I have to start thinking of getting my daughters married". (220) Muthu is not only good as a father but also as a son. He performs his duty as not only good as a father but also as a son. He performs his duty to his father both during his

lifetime and after his death. He risks his role as a father to be a good son: "I sold my land to pay my father's debts". (225) When Sindi questions Muthu if he is frightened, he replies: "Yes.... it becomes difficult to remain calm when you find so many children going hungry most of the time'. Muthu had been trying to sound objective and cold, but his voice became thicker as he continued".(225) Problems with his peculiar philosophy of detachment. "Sometimes detachment lies in actually getting involved".

The two American families stand in direct contrast to their two Indian counterparts. Both the foreign families are economically well to do and matriarchal in nature. In Mrs. Blyth's family, the husband has divorced and left. Karl's father is dead. Mr. Khemka's family is rich and educated. Muthu is poor and lowly. In both these Indian families, mothers do not figure at all. Mr. Khemka sounds traditional only in his authoritative exercises, but Muthu presents a high tradition of parental sacrifice where filial relationship is warm and intense. In June's family, her mother is loving and affectionate, so also is June. In Karl's family on the other hand, there is nothing mother-like. In Mr. Khemka's family, love for the children is visibly absent. Muthu's family, on the other hand, is full of parental emotion and sacrifice in the midst of poverty. Sindi comes across all these families but accepts the ethics of Muthu's family as his life's guideline. Of all the novels of Arun Joshi, it is only in *The Foreigner* that one finds the portrayal of the life of non-Indian families.

Joshi's heroes never come of ordinary families. They are sons of parents with social recognition, either material or cultural, with noble and lofty ideals. Babu's father is an industrial magnate. Bimal of *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* is the son of a Supreme Court Judge. Ratan of *The Apprentice* is the son of a freedom fighter who died in the country's struggle for Independence. Som of *The Last Labyrinth* comes of an engineer-father's family. All have their childhood days in a world of make-believe, their growth becomes, as it were, a 'Pilgrim's Progress', a process of realization that the world outside is the hard reality whose full perception is inhibited within the confines of their families.

Babu with the high voltage of parental authority in his upbringing fails to adapt himself to the society, and ends his life as an oversheltered seedling. Billy from the family of a Supreme Court Judge enjoys traditional love of parents, absorbs them all from the older generation but does not reciprocate it to the old parents, nor transmits it to his children. He dies as an unruly son and as an irresponsible father. Ratan's father dies for mother India but Ratan has no time even to look after his own widowed mother. As a son, he is shameless and as a father, brazen-faced. Som Bhaskar is the son of a scientist and industrialist

father but as a father, he is insignificant. The older generation is warm both as son and as father, but the younger generation is rather cold and self-centred in both the roles of the filial relationship. ■

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War and Patience in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*

J. Sheela Rani

The prime object of this paper is to analyse how Nathaniel Hawthorne brilliantly delineates the two mad or scarlet letter. The novel projects the triumph of the individual who is considered a misfit in society.

“War” means inner and outer conflicts has seen in the characters of the selected work. “Patience” means their power of endurance during sufferings and struggles. Whether it is inner conflict or outer conflict of their only goal is “victory”. Patience attains its victory as the final outcome.

The Scarlet Letter consists of sin, isolation, sufferings, reunion, repentance and death. In this novel Hawthorne explores the conflict between ‘heart’ and ‘mind’. All men are born in sin and the wages of sin are death. Hawthorne calls it “a tale of human frailty and sorrow” (SL.8). *The Scarlet Letter* is a pseudonym for adultery against which the Bible lays down the Seventh Commandment: “Thou shalt not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14) Sin is the root cause of all evils. All inner and outer struggles of conflicts are caused by this sin. In this novel ‘adultery’ is considered as a great sin caused by Hester Prynne. Having separated from her husband, she has committed adultery and has given birth to a child. With the scarlet token of infamy on her breast with the sin born infant in her arms (SL. 22).

One morning Hester Prynne bearing her three month-old baby is brought out of prison and made to stand on the scaffold and is made fun of by

the public. The letter 'A' denoting adultery is embroidered on her breast of her gown.

In *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne clearly shows how sin is followed by isolation, and of how isolation causes deep mental and spiritual suffering. Hester spent most of her life in prison with the child. Both Hester and her child are unwell and suffer a lot in the prison. The punishment is given to Hester by the society is isolation. From these following lines one can realize the sufferings of Hester when she is in solitude.

Lonely as was Hester's situation, and without a friend on earth who dared to show himself, she however, incurred no risk of want (SL.39)

For women in solitude and with troubled hearts (SL.53)
mother and daughter stood together in the same circle of seclusion from human society (SL.51).

Perhaps there was a more real torture in her first unattended footsteps from the threshold of the prison (SL.36)

Hester's term of confinement coming to an end, she is released from prison. But her life outside the prison is even more miserable than it was inside. There is an endless struggle between her husband Chillingworth and her. Hester refuses to reveal the identity of her lover to Chillingworth also. Hester is on the horns of a dilemma. She does not want to betray her lover even though governor Bellingham prepares to revoke her punishment since she does.

When Hester is more courageous. She has extraordinary power of endurance. Then she is supported by an unnatural tension of the nerves, by all the comparative energy of her character, which has been enabled her to convert the scene into a kind of lurid triumph (SL.36)

It reveals Hester's patience in her pathetic condition. After her release from prison every day is a day of agony and ignominy. Looking the infamy, she carries will be remembered even after her death. Here Hester's outer struggle is seen.

Occupying a lonely-cottage on the outskirts of Boston, she earns out a meager living by embroidering the clothings of the rich. What she earns is barely sufficient to support herself and her child. In spite of her hand-to-mouth existence, she is very generous and kind to the poor to whom she donates the coarse garments, She herself makes with back – breaking pain. She suffers a lot to live in the world. Here after also her outer struggle is seen. The people

whom she goes out of the way to help hardly ever reciprocate her kindness. What is worse, they speak harshly and damagingly about her not only behind her back but right to her face. The very children when they see Hester in the streets are supposed to speak of her in this wise.

“Behold verily there is the woman of the scarlet letter.
Come, therefore, and let us fling mud at them” (SL. 58)

Hester is not disheartened. When she undaunts; She wears the scarlet letter before the angry of the public, because she is an object of fun. Children are afraid of her as a witch; the clergymen exhort her in the street; the priest delivers in the church, a sermon related to her sin and strangers gaze at the scarlet letter. Among all, she wins them through virtue of her strength, her candour, her great power of endurance, her deep motherly attachment to Pearl and her dedication to the reality of suffering.

Reverend Mr. Wilson says:

Speak out the name! That, and thy repentance, may avail
to fade the scarlet letter off thy breast. Speak; and give
you child a father “I will not speak”! answered Hester...
(SL.27)

Hester is in a sad predicament, as neither her lover nor her husband comes forward to acknowledge their sin or to protect her. Hence, there is no other alternative for her but to bear her hardship with tight-lipped patience. “It might be, too doubtless it was so, although she hid the secret from herself, and grew pale whenever it struggled out of her heart, like a serpent from its hole”. (SL.38).

In her skill with the needle, in her reposeful guidance of Pearl, in her wide control of the minister’s hysterical emotions, since she interviews with him besides her child. She is a true woman who has been born to comfort and command.

Hester’s little child Pearl is the anchor and mainstay of her life. Pearl, now three years old, is very naughty. It is felt that Hester is unfit to rear Pearl and that, therefore, Pearl should be separated from her mother and entrusted to some other capable person. She fiercely argues that nobody has the right to take away her child and that she will die if she is separated from her child.

God gave her into my keeping! repeated Hester Prynne,
raising her voice almost to a shriek. “I will not give her
up! (SL.69).

Hester’s sin, as Hawthorne’s interpretation of psychology is concerned, is one of

excessive passions. This is very passion which leads her to downfall, imparts to her, a strength and vigour that is lacking in Dimmesdale and Chillingworth alike. She compounds the sin of passion with the sin of pride. After Dimmesdale's death, Hester could have escaped to her native village in England or to some other European countries. There the severe puritanic code does not prevail where she can emerge from her shameful past into a new state of being. On the contrary she is fatally attracted to the place where she is insulted daily.

Later, Hester completely changes, after the death of Dimmesdale. She attends on the sick of the disabled state. Gradually people come to realize her worth and sterling character and being called her "Our Hester" (SL.215) and "Sister of Charity" (SL. 169). Through silent and persistent efforts she softens the minds of people. The people now view the letter. 'A' on her dress is not as a token of her adultery but as a sign of her ability. They are so much captivated by her unsparing charitable acts. Hester, the "woman taken to adultery" (The American Notebooks. 107), rises to saintliness as she becomes an "angel of mercy" (SL.215). Here she attains her victory. Her enormous patience changes everything and finally gets victory.

It was Henry James who stated that *The Scarlet letter* is primarily the story, not of Hester Prynne, but of Dimmesdale that "more wretched and pitiable culprit" (DWIVEDI. 133). Dimmesdale is more wretched for the simple reason that he puts up a false appearance throughout his life. Hypocrisy is a sin, in the part of Dimmesdale. He has no courage to face the condemnation of the people. Dimmesdale is, therefore a ceaseless sufferer. On many occasions he tries to confess his guilt; he pronounces from his pulpit is vile and degraded state; he confesses that he is "The worst of sinners, an abomination, a thing of unimaginable iniquity" (DWIVEDI.133) but they "reverence him the more" (DWIVEDI.133). It is Dimmesdale who is tormented by his hidden sin.

The sin of adultery sends him to fasts, vigils, scourgings, and penance, but his anguish is not abated. Dimmesdale is a greater sinner than Hester. His punishment is surely more severe than Hester. During his sleeplessness, he leaves his bed in midnight and goes to the scaffold, exacting self purification.

He (Dimmessdale) thus typified the constant introspection wherewith he tortured but could not purify himself. His inward trouble drove him to precious more in accordance with the old, corrupted faith of Rome than with the better light of the church in which he had been born and bred. (SL.100).

It is hardly a "confession" at all but rather a triumphant display of that ego -

centric conviction that man builds this universe from within.

“Hester”, said the Clergyman, “farewell”. “Shall we not meet again?” whispered she..... “The law we broke!- the sin here so awfully revealed! thenceforth vain to hope that we could meet hereafter, in an everlasting and pure reunion. God knows, ... He hath proved his mercy ... praised be his name! his will be done! Farewell!” (SL. 209).

Dimmesdale is cowardly weak, infirm, indecisive and hypocritical, but he slowly becomes self-conscious, retributive, determined, brave, unpretentious and truly penitent.

Chillingworth’s conflict is of a different nature. His vindictiveness dehumanizes him and turns him into a devil. He is a worst sinner than either Hester Prynne or Arthur Dimmesdale, for his design is retaliatory. He has wronged his wife, by enticing her to marry him not out of love but of greed and possession. He adds to the misery of the minister everyday. He goes as Dimmesdale’s friend, though he is his worst revengeful enemy. He keeps a close watch on his movements, He frustrates the plan of the lovers to ‘flee’ to another country. He dies within a year of Dimmesdale’s death, for the Devil has none to work his evil designs on. Whatever Chillingworth does is out of a feeling of guilt and revenge; he is greatly frustrated in his domestic life.

To sum up, Dimmesdale and Hester struggle from within contrary to Chillingworth’s neck to neck fight. Hurting none, Dimmesdale and Hester emerge victorious unlike Chillingworth who perishes as a burden to everyone. ■

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Social Realism in Jhumpa Lahiri's *A Real Durwan*

Raseed Basha

Society and Reality are the most dominant themes in Lahiri's novels and short stories. This short story shows a strong intention to focus the theme Lahiri's 'Social Realism'. The term socialist realism in reference to literary writing was coined by Maxim Gorky in 1934 and has been widely accepted since then specially in reference to Soviet literature. There was a time when certain critics flatly rejected socialist realism as an artificial product of a personality cult. As a critic, who wished to denigrate it said, "In the arena of the new art it looks like an old, worn-out boot, accidentally left by some slovenly decorator against the background of a glowing sky at sunrise" (Kharkov, 35). Socialist Realism is a complicated and many-sided phenomenon and has a definite concept of reality. A writer like Lenin repeatedly stressed that literature was a special form of social awareness which was depicted in the novels of social realism. Any artist in this mould must not become dissolved in reality (as the naturalist does), nor stand apart from it (as modernists tend to advocate) but rise above it, believes Gorky. However the term has special relevance to writings which address the problems of the down-trodden in any society. Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* or the novels of Premchand can certainly be called novels of Socialist Realism. As a critic John Webster puts it, "Portrayal of life is a general characteristic of art and comprises its very essence; but works of art often fulfill another mission-they explain life" (Webster, 92). In a sense such writing implies a fundamental agreement of the artist with the emergent

socialist world. For the socialist writer, there are no taboo subjects and such a writer is willing to describe the seamy side of life. Even by the end of the nineteenth century socialism had compelled the attention of major authors in many countries of the world.

Interestingly, Jhumpa Lahiri lives in a capitalist country and yet writes a short story which focuses on socialist realism. Socialist Realism clearly reflects the language of the subject and the writer has a definite world outlook. *A Real Durwan* is a brilliant collection of short stories addresses the problems of the poor people who really suffered from utter poverty. Even when they are ready to work to the best of their ability, there is no guarantee of continuous employment or proper wages. Boori Ma is the sweeper of the stair well of a “flat building” in Calcutta. “It was a very old building, the kind with bath water that still had to be stored in drums, windows without glass, and privy scaffolds made of bricks” (71). With her meager possessions, she had made her home under the letter boxes of the building. At 64, “she looked almost as narrow from the front as she did from the side” (70). She was fond of talking-to anyone who was within ear-shot-of the grand life that she had lived earlier. She claimed to belong to a zamindaar (landlord) family of East Bengal and the traumatic events during Partition have reduced her to her present pitiable condition. No one quite believed her when she spoke of “four daughters, a two story brick house, a rose wood almari, and a number of coffer boxes” (71). Though everyone believed that she was from East Bengal, no one could quite accept her descriptions of the glory or wealth of her family –the marble floors at her house or the food that was served at her third daughter’s wedding “the rice was cooked in rose water... mustant prawans ... fish” (71) or details of the number of servants that her family employed. She constantly contrasts and compares her past life with the menial jobs that she is now forced to do in order to eke out a living and the awful conditions in which she now has to live.

Lahiri is able to portray in detail the state of such people. Simultaneously she gives us a picture of the types of jobs that Boori Ma did for the tenants in the building. Though she was meant to be a sweeper as she slept behind the collapsible gate, she really “stood guard between them and the outside world” (73). As she ensured that unwanted salesman were kept out and all suspicious characters routed, as she could summon a rickshaw immediately or even carry up the flight of steps the new ceramic basins, she gradually became indispensable.

In short, over the years, Boori Ma’s services came to resemble those of a real Durwan . Though under normal circumstance this was no

job for a woman, she honoured the responsibility, and maintained a vigil no less punctilious than if she were the gatekeeper of a house on Lower Circular Road, or Jodhpur Park, or any other fancy neighbourhood. (72).

This story presents the individual in a particular social environment echoing what Marx had once said about people being the product of their environment at a particular historical moment.

Boori Ma is a welcome presence in most of the flats and the tenants offer her an occasional cup of tea, some ginger paste for her stew, pickles to make her food tastier or powder for the prickly heat or bites of some mite-like insects.

She enjoyed drifting in and out of various households. The residents for their part assured Boori Ma that she was always welcome; they never drew the latch bars across their doors except at night. They went about their business scolding children or adding up expenses or picking stones out of the evening rice. From time to time she was handed a glass of tea, the cracker tin was passed in her direction, and she helped children shoot chips across the carom board. Knowing not how to sit on the furniture, she crouched instead, in doorways and hallways, and observed gestures and manners in the same way a person tends to watch traffic in a foreign city. (76)

Through the eyes of Boori Ma, we see some of the occupants of the building like the Dalals and the Chatterjees. The only incident of significance in this run-of-the-mill building is the decision of Mr. Dalal to install two basins—one in the sitting room of their flat and “the other one in the stairwell of the building, on the first floor landing” (78). This simple event is however met with great resentment by the other housewives in the building. Lahiri presents here an oversimplified picture of reality as each one seemed to have only one question in mind: “the Dalals had their own sink: why did the rest of them have to share?” (79). The Dalals set out on a ten-day holiday to Shimla and promise to bring a shawl for Boori Ma. The irony of the whole situation comes home: “Of all the people who lived in that particular building, Boori Ma was the only one who stood by the collapsible gate and wished them a safe journey” (80).

Boori Ma attempted to adjust to every change in the building. When renovations began in most of the flats, she shifted to the roof top and as too many workers were passing in and out of the building at all times, she could

not and did not keep track of them. “Her mornings were long, her afternoons longer. She could not remember her last glass of tea. Thinking neither of her hardships nor of earlier times, she wondered when the Dalals would return with her new bedding” (80-81).

It is on one such day, when she had gone out for some exercise and for a stroll that the basin on the stairwell was stolen. Suddenly the trusted Boori Ma becomes a bewildered individual. All the residents start screaming at her, accusing her of being in collusion with the robbers. The absurdity of the accusation makes it doubly tragic-the poor old woman suddenly finds herself stripped of everything she owned, out on the streets with not even a roof over her head and with no one to listen to or believe in her proclamation of innocence. There seems to be no mercy, no kindness for the poor and the helpless. “So the residents tossed her bucket and rags, her basket and reed broom down the stairwell, past the letter boxes, through the collapsible gate, and into the alley. Then they tossed out Boori Ma” (82). Once again Boori Ma is homeless, displaced and at the mercy of the elements.

In this short story, Lahiri succeeds in forcefully expressing the philosophy that society needs to take care of the lowliest of the low. The complexity of contemporary life for the down-trodden is perceptively portrayed. Socialist Realism is able to weld together the assertive, critical and analytical principles. By making the reader think, the writer lays the foundation for the creation of a more equitable society. ■

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Diversity of Themes: A Critical Assessment of The Plays of Mahesh Dattani

S. Koteswaran

Indian English drama has been thriving on translations and adaptations as far as serious substantial theatre is concerned. And the whole spectacle of Indian English stage fades into insignificance if it is not for a few names like Mahesh Dattani. Dattani is one of the most significant contemporary playwrights writing in English. His plays artfully touch some of the most serious concerns of our society today.

‘Naturalism’ is the expression that comes to mind when one reflects on the plays of Mahesh Dattani. The subject of his plays not only reflects life but deal with life head on. Gay-relations, communal violence, human relations and the ordinary, untouched, unthought-of conflicts between son and father, husband and wife, lovers etc. are tackled with a skilled frankness. Mahesh Dattani is a successful playwright is no more a contested issue. His art is revealed in his rendering of contemporary social problems in a manner that is unique to him. His characters are fully the character’s psyche is revealed through their dialogues which offer a plane for the dramatist to display his wisdom and wit as well as his honour. Themes of some of his plays are discussed in the following section.

Seven Steps around the Fire is a very modern play about the ancient mystery of a whole tribe. Uma Rao is writing her thesis on the origin and contemporary status of the ‘Hijra community’. Her genuine (re)search for truth bears fruit by her sheer effort and will. Yet she is not powerful enough,

in spite of being the daughter-in-law of a deputy commissioner and the wife of a superintendent of police, to bring this truth to light: Kamala, a beautiful Hijra, is murdered on a minister's orders and Subbu, Kamala's lover and the minister's son, commits suicide. Both the incidents are hushed up and the real culprit remains omnipotent and beyond reach.

Do the Needful is about two upper class families which do not understand their children's desires and want to marry them against their wishes. The children, a gay Gujarati boy and South Indian girl who fallen love with a Muslim boy, cleverly clinch the deal between their parents, get married and under the cover of a traditional happy married couple go their own ways. Alpesh can carry on his affairs with Trilok and Lata can meet Salim whenever she wants to. Both keep each other's secret. It is again about social restraints against gays and against the social inhibition of inter-caste marriage. Lata and Alpesh refreshingly come as honest, young people of the new generation who are frank and open with each other at least.

Bravely, Fought the Queen is a play about sinners and their secret guilts; it is about violence against women, about exploitation of the weaker, about the mean, squalid corporate world. The play seems to be approving Freud's theory about repression. Jiten, who had a very bad childhood, has turned into a demon of a man. He is a violent, alcoholics, lecherous wife-beater inclined to kill at the slightest provocation. Nitin, who is a gay, is duped by his own best friend and suffers a guilt-ridden relationship with his wife Alka. The women-Baa, Dolly and Alka-are all victims of male anger. Dolly, beaten by Jiten while she is pregnant, delivers prematurely and consequently the child is mentally retarded. Alka, who longs for her brother Praful's acceptance of herself, silently suffers a fruitless marriage with Nitin. Shadows of the past are felt throughout the present and since past can't be undone there seems to be no end to it. The play doesn't even end formally. Here is a remarkable merging of content and form.

Deep down under comedies are the most intense elements of a tragedy. Where there a comedy are the one such comedy where Hasmukh, a self-made millionaire, wants to control the lives of his son, his wife and his daughter-in-law. His house is a battle-ground of arguments and counter-arguments between him and his wife and son. The daughter-in-law is too clever to offer defense. Hasmukh dies with a will to reform everyone. This psychic will of mind mingles with the legal document that he bequeaths as his will. The document holds the powers to control others now that he is dead. Atrocities imposed by the will are nothing compared to the heinous desires of the survivors for Hasmukh's

money.

Tara is about the courage and spirit of a handicapped Siamese twin who could have survived but for her mother's decision to give the extra leg to her twin brother. Roop's joke about how the Gujarati is used to drown their infant daughters in the milk comes out to be true in the end. Tara's mother got a leg amputated from her Siamese twins when there was a great probability of the survival of the girl.

Final Solutions is a very serious and delicate drama on the well-worn subject of Partition, the violence it unleashed and its after-effects which are still reflected in the communal riots that often arise. Dattani, however, is successful in touching the deep sense of futility which fills the heart of those involved in committing such violence. Javed is not the only sinner. Ramnik, Aruna and Hardika-all have played their part and ultimately have to share the burden of guilt. The final solution seems to be a life proposed by the young Smita and Bobby who possess a consciousness that is liberated from sifting caves of religious cults and who meet their fellow beings at a secular plane.

In most of Dattani's plays the past is a constant presence in the character's consciousness; mostly past is relieved in the memory or narrated in the dialogue of characters. Old people are there in every play, they are neither stereotypically revered, morally perfect beings nor downright victimized beings. They are normal human beings with real shortcomings and vices and virtues. In fact they are the carriers of the past with which they interest or cleanse the mind of the progeny.

Mahesh Dattani is a leading professional playwright for whom theatre is an art with a function. In all, his plays are a refreshing treat for a reader as his performances are to spectators with the innovative use of theatrical space and other elements. ■

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Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*: The Saga of Love's Journey though Death.

Saroj Kanta Mishra

I have lost my beings in so many beings,
Died my life so many times,
Kissed my ghosts so many times,
known nothing of my acts so many times,
That death will be simply like going
From inside the house into the street

(McClatchy, 7)

Death is a stair, a door, a stumbling stride.
The soul must take to cross from birth to birth,
A grey defeat pregnant with victory,
A whip to lash us towards our deathless state.

(Sri Aurobindo, 600-601)

Death is the spirit's opportunity.
A vast intention has brought two souls close
And love & death conspire towards one great end.

(Sri Aurobindo, 459)

Sri. Aurobindo, the great seer-poet; he is, had always an uncanny sense of supraphysical existence. All his writings, be it the social & political thought, be it a treatise on spiritual development of being, be it poetry; bear the testimony

of this fact. Every writing of his; is a landmark in its respective field & *Savitri* perhaps is one of the best he has given to the mankind.

Savitri is poetry sublime & pure in its true essence and poetry could be elevated and sublimated, is truly reflected in Savitri. It is not a simple legend concerning love between two human beings, it is all about love & it is all about death also; or in other words, love has the ability to vanquish death, annul & transform it.

On the face of it, love does not accept death & death has nothing to do with love or for that matter any human emotions. Perhaps death is the most dreaded object, so far treated differently by philosophers & poets alike. Persons in love keep the thought of death at bay & 'death' as most of our thinkers say, is the great leveller annihilating everything that has relationship with human emotions. But Sri. Aurobindo has brought these two contraries together not only as a synthesis but one completing the other. The simple story of Savitri and Satyaban that has been taken from the Banaparva of the greatest epic, the *Mahabharata*, has attained a form that is simultaneously formidable & sublime at the hands of Sri Aurobindo. As the title of his suggests *Savitri*, A legend & a Symbol, he has not just narrated the love between Savitri & Satyaban, but gone beyond that. Well, he has taken the tale as a symbol, but has not stopped at that. The 'legend' here (the story of conjugal love between Savitri & Satyaban) has become a 'symbol' & symbol of what? It is the symbol of life immortal' reiterating the nullity of death that is normally so intimidating & awesome.

The story of Satyaban & Savitri in the *Mahabharata* goes like this. The Madra princess Savitri, given a choice to choose her own life mate, chooses Satyaban, the son of Salwa king Dyumatsena. Savitri is the result of long eighteen years of Tapasya by her father Ashwapathy, king of Madra. But the heavenly bard, Narad predicts, to the horror of all, that Satyaban has only a year to live. All hell breaks loose then, as if a doom has fallen & Savitri is advised to change her decision. But she does not & the saga leads us to the end of that year of conjugal love & Satyaban dies as per the foretelling of Narada. The king of death, Yama appears to take away Satyaban & Savitri fights with him to get back her Satyaban & she succeeds in doing so. How she does it, is not clearly elaborated in Vyasa's original writings, except to the fact that Savitri outwitted the king of death by demanding a boon of motherhood of one hundred sons by her husband & Yama, in a hurry to get rid of Savitri, grants that. And then Savitri lays a legitimate claim as per the boon to get back her husband & Yama has no other way but to give back Satyaban.

But Sri.Aurobindo has not accepted this as a part of his narrative.

Satyaban dies & his death is not in vain as death heralds a greater life for this mankind, for, love has enormous power to come out victorious over the dreaded thing, death. The 3 books that follow after Satyaban's death are' *The Book of the Eternal Night*(book-IX) *The Book of the Double Twilight* (Book-X), and *The book of the Everlasting Day* (Book- XI) depict the fight (single combat) between the God of Death & Savitri. Death does not put a full stop to everything in life, but rather it opens new vistas so that life can fulfil itself in renewed vigour & valour. It is nothing, but life- rediscovered, reinitiated, reoriented & recreated.

The three books are also titled symbolically. The book that follows Satyaban's death (The Book of Death, Book- VIII) is titled as "The Book of the Eternal Night" (Book -IX) The next book's title is" The Book of the Double Twilight". And the next book is 'The Book of the 'Everlasting Day'. So, we can imagine that Satyaban's death first brings an 'Eternal Night' which gradually changes to 'Double Twilight' & finally appears 'The Everlasting Day'. And in all these 3 books, it is again love that triumphs, love journeys through the Eternal Night and Double Twilight & then culminates in Everlasting Day.

Just after Satyaban's death, the Lord of Death comes, as the Hindu scriptures say & claims Satyaban as he no more belongs to this mundane world. But Savitri is in no mood to relent. She tries to defend love & defies it & Sri. Aurobindo puts this in his impeccable style.

Love's golden wings have power to fan thy word,
The eyes of love gaze star like though death's night.
The feet of love tread naked hardest worlds.
(Sri Aurobindo, 592.)

But Death replies to Savitri in a disconcerting tone that love is nothing but a deified lust, a physical longing.

"What is thy hope"? to what does thou aspire ?
This is the body's sweetest lure of bliss,
Assailed by pain, a great precarious form,
To please for a few years thy faltering sense
With honey of physical longings & the heart's fire
And a vain oneness seeking to embrace
The brilliant idol of a fugitive hour.
(Sri Aurobindo, 592)

So Yama replies to Savitri, to her defence of love that this so called love is nothing but lust, a desire physical & corporeal & this is no good as it is ephemeral & transitory. And Savitri is steadfast, resolute & confident of her

love & she retorts,

O Death, who reasonest, I reason not,
Reason that scars & breaks but cannot build
Or builds in vain because she doubles her work.
I am, I love, I see, I act, I will.

(Sri Aurobindo, 594)

And so the journey of love continues undiminished, unblemished & the seer poet further elaborates death,

All here is a mystery of contraries:

And death an instrument of perpetual life.

Death is a stair a door, a stumbling stride
The soul must take to cross from birth to birth,
A grey defect pregnant with victory,
A whip to lash us towards our immortal state.

(Sri Aurobindo, 600-601)

This is what death is. Though seem contraries, life & death complement each other, they complete the cycle of birth, growth, decay and death. It is an instrument, a whip to lash us towards an immortal state, for that is the curse the spirit has chosen.

When the Lord of Death argues in favour of inevitability of death & says that it is a part of the great dispensation that God has planned, Savitri replies,

Although God made the world for his delight,
An ignorant power took charge & seemed his will
And Death's deep falsity has mastered Life.
All grew a play of chance simulating Fate.

(Sri Aurobindo, 629)

Death is a consequence of the working of an ignorant power that tries to look as God's but it is a falsity that has mastered life. Savitri's confidence in her love is so vast & so comprehensive that she declares audaciously,

'My love eternal sits thronged on God's calm;
For Love must soar beyond the very heavens
And find its secret sense ineffable;
It must change its human ways to ways divine.

(Sri Aurobindo, 633)

Death cannot annul love, love is truly divine that guides us though the long & arduous journey & hence the contrary that love can annul death is possible, not only possible, it is predestined. The debate continues & Savitri further tells the lord of Death;

. . . I, the woman, am the force of God,
He the eternal's delegate soul in man,
My will is greater than thy law, O Death;
My love is stronger than the bonds of Fate.
Our love is the heavenly seal of the supreme.
I guard that seal against thy rending hands.
Love must not cease to live upon the earth;
For Love is the bright link twixt earth & heaven.
Love is the far Transcendent's angel here,
Love is man's lien on the Absolute.

(Sri Aurobindo, 633)

Love is the link, it has the power of transcendence of this ephemeral world & God has created love only to outwit this mortal world & go up to an exalted, sublimated state.

But Death again is a tough nut to break. He argues the futility & transitoriness of love, decries it & tries his best to intimidate Savitri & when he fails in his endeavour, challenges Savitri to show her power if any;

'O human claimant to immortality
Reveal thy power, lay bare thy spirit's force,
Then will I give back to thee Satyvan.
Or if the Mighty mother is with thee,
show me her force that I may worship her.
Let deathless eyes look in to the eyes of death,
An imperishable Force touching brute things,
Transform earth's death into immortal life.

(Sri Aurobindo, 664)

And to this call Savitri does not answer. She only looks at Death & she undergoes a tremendous metamorphosis. The Mighty Mother within her comes out with full vigour. Then it is the Mighty Mother speaks to Death, not Savitri,

“Thou art my shadow & my instrument
I have given thee thy awful shape of dread
And thy sharp sword of terror and grief and pain

To force the soul of man to struggle for light
On the brevity of his half-curious days.

Live, Death, awhile, be still my instrument.

But now, O timeless, Mightiness, stand aside
And leave the path of my incarnate Force.
Relieve the radiant God from thy black masks,
Release the soul of the world called Satyaban
Freed from thy clutch of pain & ignorance
That he may stand master of life & fate,
Man's representative in the house of God,
The mate of wisdom and spouse of Light,
The eternal bridegroom of the eternal bride.

(Sri Aurobindo, 666)

Satyavan is no ordinary man. He is a representative of man in the house of God & these two (Satyaban & Savitri) are eternal bride & bridegroom who symbolise the victory of love over death. Not only death, they go beyond all suffering, pain & this they are destined to do. So it is not prudent on your part to keep his soul.

But still resisted death unconvinced. Though his inner self gradually gives way, he still tries to maintain some audacity. But gradually a light encircles the darkness it bears & in distress he called everybody to help him. In the majestic words of Sri Aurobindo,

He called to Night but she fell shuddering back,
He called to hell but sullenly it retired:
He turned to the inconscient for support,
From which he was born, his vast sustaining self;
It drew him back towards boundless vacancy
As if by himself to swallow up himself:
He called to his strength but it refused his call.

(Sri Aurobindo, 667)

So Death tries his best to defend his necessity, but Savitri's will and determination do not allow him to do so. As the last resort he tries all the tricks he could use, but to no avail. Night, hell, Inconscient he appealed to but they did not respond. Even his strength refused him.

At last he know defeat inevitable

In the dream twilight of that symbol world
The dire universal shadow disappeared
Vanishing into the Void from which it came.

(Sri Aurobindo, 668)

This universal shadow (Death) at last vanished & this new world is a symbol world. It is devoid of death, it is devoid of darkness. It is a world of light, world of illumination and a world of everlasting day as Sri. Aurobindo says in his inimitable way & precisely the next book is listed as *The Book of Everlasting Day*.

In this book everything is justified, love, life & all that defy death. Death has been conquered at last & love is the instrument used to annul death. In a sense, as Sri. Aurobindo has elaborated elsewhere, that death has life embedded in it, it is a perversity of life. He says,

Man dies so that man may live & God be born. Savitri

Through this cycle of life & death, it is life that is perpetuated which ultimately paves way for the God to be born as that is the goal of this terrestrial evolution to manifest God. Sri. Aurobindo describes this most beautifully in another of his poem 'Life & Death'.

Life death – death life, the words have led for ages
Our thought and consciousness and firmly seemed
Two opposites; but now long-hidden pages
Are opened, liberating further undreamed.
Life only is, or death is life disguised, -
Life, a short death until by life we are surprised.

(*Life & Death* Sri Aurobindo, 54)

Not only the Eastern Metaphysics, but the Western literature endorses this view with radical recurrence. It is difficult to quote them all due to want of space. But Wordsworth's, 'Ode to Immortality' is one such example that tells us of a deathless state,

Our birth is but a sleep & a forgetting.
The soul that rises with us, our life's star
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
Not in utter forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come

(Duncan, 278)

So, this is our destiny & who else but Sri.Aurobindo could describe this in a sublime poetry like Savitri ! Savitri is all about love, Savitri is all about life, Savitri is all about death, Savitri is all about the sojourner 'love' that can turn this mundane life in to the life eternal, but has to pass though death to do that and Sri. Aurobindo describes this in his epic poem *Savitri*. ■

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Theme of Marital Harmony in Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence: A Study*

A.Lakshmi

Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence* is a revelation of Indian Brahmin marriage life. The two protagonists Mohan and Jaya are in a nice partnership. Marriage is indeed a gift to them. But they are not in total solace, because they are facing challenging situations occasionally.

Jaya and Mohan meet in a family feast function. Mohan is overwhelmed by Jaya's charm. He is dazzled by her radiant appearance. It is his childish dream that comes to be true. Mohan approaches the right person and their marriage is a sweet one. Mohan has got a wonder-wife and he takes her to his office quarters. He is working as a civil engineer in a public sector undertaking. Jaya is in tears all the time in the first wedding months. So Mohan is perturbed. He imagines that she is not pleased with their quarters.

So he tries for the next grade quarters. But he has to get the gift for Jaya, only by a compromise done by a colleague to favour him. But Jaya does not know of this gentle sacrifice. Then two children are born. Jaya becomes a classic wife of an upper middle class executive. Mohan is very proud of Jaya. Jaya is very proud of Mohan's pride. Jaya dresses well for the sake of Mohan. She is also pleased with her colleagues and her luxurious fashion life. They are proud of their children.

A crisis comes to Mohan in his official transaction. A commission is not sanctioned to an original vendor. Instead it is given to a usual commission related customer. Mohan is forced to make the compromise for Appa Rao. Algy is good for himself but not for Mohan. Mohan is put into trouble because of the

original compromise for quarters. A case has come against Mohan. So Mohan and Jaya go into hiding.

Mohan's marriage with Jaya is not in question, but Mohan's affection. Mohan is deeply worried. Jaya is thoroughly confused about the whole case. Mohan is not evil. He is caught in a trap. It is a first time discrepancy for Mohan. But Mohan's family is in doldrums.

Mohan is in love with Jaya still and Jaya is still loyal to Mohan. The children do not know anything. The parents want to solve the issue before the children know anything. This is done, but there is trauma for both before that. Mohan leaves Dadar home for clarity of vision. He feels that he cannot solve anything by being away from the centre of the storm. But Jaya is in turmoil. Even the phone rings to call her is a fearsome thing. When others are there, she is still more afraid to know the future. 'Marriages are made in Heaven' say the scriptures. But crisis increases the fear element. It tones down security and raises the question of continuity. Certain images perplex the mind at such times. Jaya also had read news about a family of four, the parents and the children tying each other by a single rope and walking into the sea to disaster.

Jaya is not forced to this end. Her family's harmony is not in peril. It is just in temporary abstinence of happiness. Jaya is fearful about Mohan's phone call, but she receives the shocking news of Rahul's disappearance. But in just one hour everything is solved just like that. Rahul returns safely with Vasanth, Rupa and Ashok who are happy to know that Rahul has returned home safe. Jaya receives Mohan's telegram 'All Well'. Mohan's telegram is from Delhi. Mohan has gone to the headquarters to explain the facts and stands vindicated from fault.

So Jaya's marital peace returns. Jaya has a harmonious relationship with her husband. The ills of life do shake their ferry, but love and affection are the anchor of their ferry. Rahul is not interested in going for a family tour with family friends Rupa and Ashok. But as his father is displeased, he relents responsively. So he says 'okay, I'll go. If I stay here, I'll have your nagging at me all day. I might as well go.' The child obeys the parents but later changes his mind. He walks out from the tour programme unknown and returns home safe with his uncle. Thus there is an inveterate good relation in the family. ■

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Quest for Self in Arun Joshi's *The Apprentice*

Manoranjan Mishra

Arun Joshi's third novel *The Apprentice* was published in 1974. By the time this novel made its appearance Indo-English novel had already established itself as a genre. The renowned triad of Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand and R.K.Narayan had given it a definite tone and texture. Political and social happenings, rural events, the traumatic experiences during and after the partition, communal carnages, Gandhian themes like Quit India, non-violence, untouchability etc. had been treated as themes of the novels written by them and their contemporaries. But with Arun Joshi, the focus shifted from the larger public issues of the society to the private problems of the individual. The attention of the novelist was diverted to the dissection of the disturbed psyche of the protagonists. Joshi transcended "the apparent and the phenomenal world" and entered into "the mysterious depths of human existence" (Saleem 19). In his novels man is confronted with the problems of Self and the questions of its existence. R.K.Dhawan points out in this regard, "Joshi's fictional world is revelation of a world where man is confronted by the Self and the questions of his existence. His search is directed at the inscrutable region of uncertainty and inscrutability" (8). In an interview with Sujatha Mathai, Joshi has pointed out that his novels aim at exploring "that mysterious underworld which is the human soul" (8). Joshi's protagonists are a group of sensitive individuals, who get alienated from their true selves by the pulls and pressures –both intrinsic and extrinsic, exerted on them. Finally, through self-introspection and self-scrutiny, they all make efforts to find moorings in the tumultuous sea of life.

Regarding the condition of man in the Modern Age R.S.Pathak observes, “Notwithstanding unprecedented scientific and technological advancements, which have added to his physical pleasures and comforts, the contemporary man is doomed to find himself in a tragic mess” (43). The abject poverty of the masses on the one hand and the economic affluence of a handful on the other, the drag of social conventions and traditions, the rapidly changing value system, social injustice, class inequity, the dehumanization of man in view of modernization and urbanization, the westernization of life, the city civilization with its vacuous sophistication, rise in consumerism, the inter-generational tensions, increase in corruption etc. have generated a sense of meaninglessness and purposelessness in life. The devastating effect of the two World wars, the destruction of the old traditions and cherished values not only created a sense of vacuity in life but also generated a sense of helplessness in man. Today, the world has shrunk to a global village. Distances have been conquered by the growth of modern communication systems. As a result, no geographical area can maintain its cultural homogeneity and retain its identity intact. Under such circumstances, cultural alienation is completely impossible and cross-cultural contact is bound to occur. The growth of sciences has led man to question the very existence of the idea of ‘God’ leaving the spiritual fountain bone-dry. Religion has failed to answer the fundamental questions of his existence. Man, today, has become spiritually uprooted. He is shocked to find that he no more is the master of his own destiny and that there are forces which can crumple him within no time. This has resulted in the growth of general pessimism and distraught. The hiatus between what an individual aspires for and what he achieves, between what he professes and what he practices, between what he deserves and what he gets, and between what he is and what he would like to appear, have created a sense of meaninglessness, purposelessness, alienation and drift.

The Twentieth Century has been regarded as the “Age of Alienation” as it has experienced great spiritual stress and strain. Growing hostility, mechanization, urbanization, depersonalization, changing values, self-misgivings, rootlessness, discontent, psychological and other maladjustments have either caused ‘anomia’- ‘self-alienation’, or ‘anomie’- ‘alienation from society’. Social alienation is the sense of estrangement brought out by the sudden discovery that the social system is either oppressive, incomplete or not in consonance with their (man’s) desires and ideas. Self-alienation occurs when coming under the grips of the lower-self or ego, man strikes strange bargains with the higher-Self or Soul. This alienation gets expressed through any one of the following variants, as listed by *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, such as

Powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, cultural estrangement, social isolation and self-estrangement.

Edmund Fuller remarks that in our age “man suffers not only from war, persecution, famine and ruin, but also from inner problem ... a conviction of isolation, randomness, meaninglessness in his way of existence” (43). R.S.Pathak opines that man, in our age, finds himself participating in a ‘rat race’. As a result, he is estranged not only from his fellow men but also from his innermost nature to such an extent that he finds hardly anything within or without him to fall back upon in the moment of crisis. Mukteswar Pandey quotes Karl Jaspers who believes that life today has grown “indefinitely vast” and without any proper “interlinkage” to hold it together from falling apart. He further quotes Victor Anant who has discussed the moral confusions of the modern Indians who live on an “ad hoc basis” in a “no man’s land of values”. Heirs to two sets of customs and torn asunder by a dual code of behavior, they live lazily ‘by opportunism, treachery, cowardice, hypocrisy and wit’ (46). This sense of meaninglessness can have a serious denting effect on an individual’s personality, initiative, feelings, wishes and opinions.

Joshi’s protagonists are tortured by the spiritual uprootedness, socio-cultural factors that govern life in general, and clash and confusion of values generated by a materialistic, self-centred and corrupt society. During the course of their journey they become aware of the intrinsic-isolation, powerlessness and meaninglessness of their existence. Then they make efforts to wriggle out of the world. They try to regain their capacity for love, affirmation and fulfillment but not before undergoing some very painful experiences.

The Apprentice is the story of a man, Ratan Rathore, who witnesses and recounts his gradual fall into the abyss of immortality, far removed from the ideal and meaningful existence that he had promised himself as an adolescent. Being enticed and ensnared by the corrupting influences of the society in which he lives, he is alienated from his self. Joblessness, privation and shattering of faith force him to abandon the world of honesty and morality, and make him an apprentice to the world of corruption. Initial hesitations notwithstanding, he submits himself completely to this world and thrives there. However, haunted by constant pricks of conscience and, also the knowledge of his degeneration, he finally makes an effort to wriggle out of that world and be an apprentice to the world of God characterized by truth, honesty, sincerity and humility.

T.K.Ghosh remarks in this connection, “*The Apprentice* is about a dark crisis in the human soul. It depicts the anguished attempt of a guilt-stricken individual to retrieve his innocence and honour. It is a story of crime and

punishment, of dislocation and search. It portrays the effort of ‘a man without honour... without shame... a man of our times’ to impose meaning and order on his life which lacks them” (90).

The narrative consists of a series of monologues addressed by Ratan Rathore, a government servant who hails from the foothills of Punjab to a national cadet from the same area, who has come to New Delhi to participate in the rehearsals for the celebrations of the Republic. During the three months of the latter’s stay in New Delhi, Ratan lays bare the perfidy, chicanery, cowardice and corruption of his own self. A.Rajendra Prasad divides the journey of Ratan’s life into four distinct phases. “The novel traces four distinct phases in Ratan’s life: the phase of youth and idealism, phase of adulthood and coming up in life the hard way, the phase of disillusionment and guilt, and finally the phase of repentance and atonement” (7).

Ratan Rathore was a child of double inheritance. In his childhood, he was exposed to the antithetical philosophies of his parents. Influenced by Gandhian thoughts, his father’s world was characterized by idealism and patriotism. On the other hand, Ratan’s mother, an impoverished tubercular woman, was more pragmatic and down-to-earth in her approach. Notwithstanding the concerns of his wife, Ratan’s father abandoned his lucrative career as a lawyer, gave away most of his wealth, and joined the freedom movement. One day while leading a procession he was shot in the chest. He left behind him an ill, tubercular wife, who spat blood night after night, and a patriotic penniless son with nothing but a bleak future staring straight into his face.

Imbued with a patriotic fervor, inspired by the national zealots contributing significantly to the struggle for freedom, and infused with a desire to “make a mark on the world, a mark as visible and striking” (Joshi 23) as his father’s, Ratan at times toyed with the idea of joining the movement himself. Like every adolescent he nurtured the ambition, “To be good! Respected! To be of use” (18). His father’s unflinching courage and sacrifice for the cause of the country weaned him over. But his mother’s pragmatic attitude and the down-to-earth realism with which she sermonized on the value and utility of money left him gaping. “Don’t fool yourself, son, she said. Man without money was a man without worth. Many things were great in life but the greatest of them all was money.” (19) For her money scored over patriotism. “It was patriotism not money, she said, that brought respect and brought security. Money made friends. Money succeeded where all else failed. There were many laws, she said, but money was law onto itself.” (19) She further said that if Ratan underestimated the power of money, he was surely going to be sorry one day and if he had no

money he “would be a little better than a beggar’s shoe” (19). Ratan was stunned into silence by the revelation of the “mystery of the universe” (19) of which he had no knowledge. Ratan was perplexed. He had to make a choice between the patriotic and ideal world of his father on one hand, and the materialistic and sagacious world of his mother on the other.

At this point in time his higher self was in the driver’s seat although it was not fully in command. He had not completely abandoned the ideal world of his father although the materialistic world had started sucking him towards it by creating confusion in his mind. While cycling his way to the clandestine recruitment centre to join Subhas Bose’s army he felt as if he was “on his way to greatness” and was “about to lay the foundation of a glorious future” (20). It was only after traversing a distance of seven miles that he came under the grips of his lower self. Innate cowardice, lack of courage to face the future, skepticism, fear of failure and lack of proper guidance force him to falter at a time when even the destination was at sight. Ratan had to abandon his plans to join Subhas Bose’s army. This ironic reversal of the situation hints at Ratan’s timidity as well as confirms the fact that he lacked his father’s courage.

What made Ratan feel unnerved and distressed was the unknown, ominous future. For Ratan life was a “bundle of mirrors, tempting and somewhat held together, but on the brink always of falling apart. Or, like a boat managed by incompetent hands, a boat that could any moment overturn and drown its riders” (17). Though he disagreed with his mother’s philosophy of money being the be-all and end-all of life, yet to completely disregard it was a luxury which he could ill-afford.

Bubbling with the enthusiasm and hopes of a youngster, and leaving aside the frustrating experiences of the past, Ratan arrives in Delhi in the summer of 1943 to make a mark on the world, “a mark as visible and as striking” (23) as his father’s but soon receives one jolt after another. He comes face to face with the harsh realities posed before him by an alien and insensitive city. Despite being a different cut, far superior to his roommates “in education, in polish, even in intelligence” (26) he had no job to be proud of whereas the others worked, earned and spent the way they liked. The betrayal of his father’s acquaintances, the exasperating experience of repeatedly being “looked at—examined, interviewed, interrogated and rejected” (29), and his declining health conditions had a denting effect on his psyche. He now starts suspecting that there is something decidedly wrong with him. The humiliating experiences, insult, starvation and trauma of physical breakdown drain out his reservoir of hope.

The ignominy of having failed to secure the lowliest of jobs in the “city of opportunities” (29) – Delhi constantly torments him. In order to put a veil of secrecy on his failures, to protect the modicum of respect among his roommates, and to avoid their pitying look he feigns to have landed on a job. He knows that he has added a new dimension to his life. Within six months of arrival in the city, at the age of twenty-one, he had become “a hypocrite and a liar; in short a sham... a master faker” (27). This was the beginning of his alienation. The hostile city engulfs him and he begins to forget who he really is. His dreams of idealism are battered and faith in the nobility of life is shattered.

After days of struggle, with the help of an inn-dweller, the stenographer, he is inducted into the Department of War Purchases as a temporary clerk. He convinces himself that the disastrous spell was only a temporary setback. Suddenly it dawns on him that he has come to Delhi in search of a ‘CAREER’ but he had completely forgotten about his mission in the face of the unjust onslaught of the world. Despite the feeling of alienation and estrangement from the society that held no promises for him, Ratan adapts himself completely to it. He devotes himself completely to advancements in his career negating his father’s advice “careers and bourgeois filth” (32). It was his father who denigrated any attempt to pursue a career as he thought that the freedom of the motherland was more important than looking for opportunities to make money. This attitude had made him abandon his practice as a lawyer. Ratan’s current thoughts trigger a movement away from his father’s ideals and his inner yearnings.

In addition to his diligence and enterprise, Ratan discovers two other qualities in him— his instincts for survival and docility. These “came naturally, like breathing to him” (33). He finds these “so effortless, so completely natural. Just as completely effortless and natural as was my [his] father’s rebellion” (34). With experience he learns that he can never become a man of the world, unless he masters the acts of obedience, docility, servility, cunningness, flattery and sycophancy. Gradually Ratan pawns away his soul to the devil in pursuit of a career. Instead of rebelling against the ills of the society, he succumbs to its pressures and becomes a part of it. His colleagues brand him an ‘upstart’, a ‘thick-skin’, a ‘washout’ and dub him a ‘traitor’ but such things hardly matter to him. Ratan realizes that he has not only become career-centric and “a man of ambition” (49).

Under the tutorship of the Superintendent, his boss, Ratan’s skills of manoeuver and manipulation get honed. Within six months he tastes the result of his docility and sucking up to the bosses. He is inducted as an assistant with

a dozen clerks working under him. The panic of the earlier days returns at the thought of a probable retrenchment, after the war is over. He shudders to imagine the days of struggle and humiliation. In order to save himself from the humiliation and denigration, Ratan strikes a deal—the deal to marry his niece.

Being coerced by circumstantial compulsions, he accepts the deal but the conflict between his higher self and lower self goes on. On his way to the village, in the train, he comprehends that life in the world runs on deals only. “Deals, deals, deals, my friend, that is what the world runs on, what it is all about. If men forgot how to make deals the world would come to a stop. It would lose its propelling power.” (48) On one hand the voice of his conscience constantly pricks him, reminding that he should not whore himself and “strike strange bargains with the world” (49). On the other hand, his lower self instructs him to pursue the goal that he had set for himself without getting distracted. Ratan finds the call of the lower self too tempting to resist. Then onwards, the Gandhian purity of ‘means’ is replaced by Machiavellian dedication to the ‘end’. Two days after the creation of the Indian Republic, Ratan is made an officer. The higher he rises in status and position, the lower he dives into the abyss of corruption, and the more he gets alienated from his authentic self.

The readers have a glimpse of the hypocritical, unscrupulous and fraudulent Ratan, when he takes an enormous bribe from Himmat Singh alias Sheikh to clear a big pile of defunct military materials. The son of a martyr, who had sacrificed his life and comforts for the sake of the country, barter his soul for money. He did this at a time when the threat of defeat loomed large over the country in the Indo-Chinese war. It was the same Ratan who was, a few days ago, filled with anger, horror and the determination to avenge at the sight of his motherland getting “trampled under the boots of a barbarian enemy” (52). He had felt that the “Indian character” was at the root of the downfall of the country. He had written a comic document titled “The Indian Character”, got it cyclostyled and circulated among the people. There he had described the Indian people as “a glorious monument in ruin, a monument of which even the foundations had caught canker. The pillars were gone. So were the sculptures and the sanctum sanctorum” (56). Such a person takes a bribe, that too when he needed it the least. If Ratan needed money it was when he had been offered it for the first time. It was those early days in his career when a half a page note of him had driven a contractor almost bankrupt. He was offered Ten thousand rupees as the bribe but he had felt righteous and proud to refuse it. Ratan’s refusal to accept the bribe when he needed it the most and his acceptance of the bribe when he didn’t need the money, exhibit his fall from grace. Apart

from the Superintendent's enigmatic reply about God and money, where he said "Money in the world always changed hands. God was only concerned with what one did with the money", what heightened his moral confusion, was the socio-political situation of the country. The situation had hardly changed although the masters had changed. 'They' or 'The Higher-ups' or 'The Authorities' had taken over. Men were weighed in money or power. There were no standards at all. Anything went so long as it was backed by sufficient power. It soon appeared to Ratan that a man without money or power was either "worthless" or "worse than a beggar's shoe" (62). How long could Ratan remain non-impacted by the influences of the wide world? It soon took him in its wake, overwhelmed him and smothered him.

Ratan realizes that he is no bigwig. He is only a pigmy. He lacked the courage and the spirit of rebellion of his father. He was like a "weather vane turning its head where the wind blows" (62-63) or a "blotting paper" that depending upon the ink, either becomes black or red. He finds it easier to swim along the current than to swim upstream. Ratan continues his treacherous pursuit of a career through "flattery and cunning" (66) and "manoeuvring and downright lying" (67). He soon becomes a "past master of the task" (66). He tries to seek solace from the fact that he was not the only one who had manoeuvred his way up the bureaucratic ladder.

Ratan soon realizes that not only had he failed to establish himself as a competent, sincere, hardworking officer in the office, but also he had failed as a husband. In the early years of their marriage, there was very little to satisfy her ambitions. The house, the food, the clothes, the neighbours, and the ornaments had disgruntled her. She was also not satisfied with a girl as she always yearned for having a boy. His wife's growing discontent unnerves him. The feeling of his own insignificance results in the loss of his own identity. He becomes a 'NOBODY'. He discovers himself lost in the labyrinth of life and finds his soul "turn to ashes" (71).

At Bombay, where he goes to strike the deal with Himmat Singh, Ratan comes face to face with the dung heap that he had been climbing all his life. He found people more concerned with how to earn a quick buck from the opportunities that the war would provide. Nobody was concerned about the humiliation or the spell of disaster that loomed large over the horizon with the war in the offing. He comes to know that he had all along run after money, but the more money he accumulated the more dissatisfied he became. He understands that he had digressed a lot. A great chasm appeared between what he wanted to become and what he had really become.

As a result of the perfidious behavior of the masses, including Ratan, the war is lost. The Brigadier, Ratan's friend, soon has a nervous breakdown as he is charged with deserting the war front and he has to face court-martial. Ratan is horrified and pained to see the dark dungeons into which he has thrust his friend. He has a glimpse of his crime and its wider implications. He wants to make amends but he lacks the determination or the will to do so. He is summoned by the S.P., who has information that Ratan had indeed cleared the file to purchase defunct war materials. He wants him to confess as there is no other documentary proof to establish his crime. A master of hypocrisy and pretentious behavior, Ratan dissociates himself completely from such an affair. The S.P. is not impressed, brands Ratan a liar and sends him to the lock-up. While in the lock-up, he thinks of confessing but does not go ahead. He writes and rewrites a confessional letter and leaves enough loopholes for him to wriggle out of the whole affair. The Brigadier commits suicide before Ratan can post the letter or own moral responsibility for the crime.

T.J. Abraham writes: "The Brigadier's suicide was an unexpected jolt which shook him violently out of moral slumber" (41). Ratan realizes that "something has gone seriously wrong with my [his] life" (Joshi 122). At the morgue, the sight of the Brigadier's skull filled him with a vision of the "vast pit at the bottom of which my [his] life crawled. Like a worm" (124). Ratan cries out in agony upon the realization that his life has been a "total waste, a great mistake; without purpose, without results" (135). Ratan realizes that he has committed a grievous sin. Secondly, he has decided to mend his life and redeem his soul from the devil whom he had sold it.

The Sheikh reminds Ratan that despite being the son of a revolutionary he had pawned away his soul. But there was some chance for the souls that were pawned, to be retrieved. Ratan should try to put himself to use. It may be too late but he must give it a try. Earlier, Ratan believed that life was a zero and one could never take away anything from zero. But now he realizes that one can make things negative by taking things out of zero. Life becomes negative when one takes out one's "sense of shame" and "honour" (142). He understands the meaninglessness and purposelessness of the life that he so far has led. He wants to salvage his soul from the mess that he has created.

Instead of renouncing the society for the purgation of his soul he shuns his vanity, expectations, and his cleverness. Every morning before going to office, Ratan sits on the steps of the temple and wipes the shoes of the congregation. Ratan knows pretty well that he has started the struggle late but he must continue it. Beaming with a sense of hope he says, "I am learning to

be of use. I know it is late in the day. But one must try and not lose heart, not yield, at any cost, to despair” (143).

Finally, Ratan understands that he has been alienated from his true self by falsity, hypocrisy, corruption and immorality. Pricked by his conscience, he tries to find the meaning of his actions, and finally strives for enlightenment. He undergoes the sternest apprenticeship in the world. Symbolically, he starts at the lowest—dusting the shoes of the congregation. He begs forgiveness of a host of people whom he harmed in some way or the other with deliberation and with cunning. “Without vanity and without expectations and also without cleverness” (143), he tries to learn to be of use. The knowledge of the sins committed by him, his willingness to own moral responsibility for his actions, and his attempts to set things right make him an earnest traveller in the journey of life. Thus, he tries to expiate his sins by becoming an apprentice to the world of God. ■

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Cosmopolitan Conspicuousness of Fakirmohan's Literary Creation

Narayan Panda

The literary excellence of Fakirmohan Senapati makes him a grand success in the context of the world literature. He was the uncrowned monarch in the arena of Odiya literary creation commanding the unprecedented clairvoyance which was reflected in his concept of composition. Inadvertently he soared beyond the circumference of his environment and imbibed the essentials of contemporary world literature in his writing. World poet Rabindranath Tagore, Premchand - the Indian sovereign in story-telling, have been accorded their right places; Fakirmohan can't be relegated to the background in view of his wondrous world of literary adventurism. Strange enough, crystal-clear coincidence is found in the literary world of Hawthorne, the American novelist and Fakirmohan who never dreamt of going abroad.

The appearance of Fakirmohan gave a new direction to creation of fiction in Odiya literature. Rightly has it been said that Vyasakavi Fakirmohan was the founding father of Odiya novels and short stories. In keeping with the international trend in the literary creation, the aggressive genius of Fakirmohan found its manifestation in a unique way and it brought about a new era in Odiya literature.

He was a writer of erupting nationalistic ethos; he was caught to the quick at the disparaging deterioration of Odiya language and literature. His creative potential couldn't be buried in oblivion due to penury, vicissitudes of fortune, worries, anxieties and vexations of avocation and calling; rather it spread wings and soared high touching unexplored horizons.

The feeding ground of Fakirmohan literature is two hundred years' social, political and economic life of Odisha. His fictions project the prevailing circumstances in the long-drawn-out span of creative life. The Marahatta oppression from 1761 to 1800, the British annexation of Odisha, expansion

of foreign rule, efforts at the spread of new education policy, ideological and commercial conflict between the British Frankenstein monsters, the newly created Zamindars and conventional Zamindar class, their avarice for the aggrandisement of Zamindars, the tyranny unleashed by the Bengali Zamindars during the period 1803 to 1840, eagerness for English education, lust for Government service, cut-throat competition for accumulation of money through subtle betrayal, the spread of drink and drug habit, brothel going pastime from 1841 to 1920, founding college in Odisha, efforts of educated class for eradication of obscurantist evils, aristocratic contempt of the Zamindars etc. - constitute the literary components of Fakirmohan's four novels.

The novelist has ingeniously applied all his experiences in his life-the realistic philosophy and knowledge in practical life. There is no shadow of a little doubt that Fakirmohan was a unique artist in the skill of permeating the trends and features of the folk in the society in his novels. The weal and woe, the harrowing happenings of his own life have been translated through the medium of his character in his novels.

Fakirmohan reflected the essence of man discovered through meticulous socialisation. He came across divinity and demon-personified in man. He found out wolves in sheep's clothing, honey tongues with hearts of gall; man that can be monstrous for self-aggrandisement. All such heterogeneous elements are depicted in his novels *Chhamana Athaguntha*, *Mamun* and *Prayaschitta*. His farsightedness could encompass cities and countryside: the prince and pauper. From the bathing ghat of pond to the harem, he could scrutinise the esotery and behind the screen mysteries. He described them with masterly marvel.

Hawthorne and Fakirmohan were literary champions of different nationality but contemporaries. They were born when their respective nations were passing through a critical phase of time; they faced cut-throat struggle and by the virtue of their genius brightened their own literature. Strange enough, homogeneity is distinctly marked in their advent into the field of literature and style of functioning.

Both Fakirmohan and Hawthorne were born with aristocratic background. Hawthorne's family was recognisably affluent in the Salem city in America. Due to untimely demise of Hawthorne's father, the name, fame, glory, pre-eminence of the family met with rack and ruin. In much the same way, Fakirmohan's family was widely known for conspicuousness. His ancestor Hanumalla was a sword-bearing Paika and Nayak. His grandfather Kushamalla was appointed Zamadar in the court of Mursidabad. Soon after Kushamalla's death, ruin overtook the family. Both Fakirmohan and Hawthorne were born with silver spoons in the mouth but vicissitudes of fortune prevailed thick and

fast, they were beset with penury, privations and unmitigated problems in life. Such facsimile in the life history of both the novelists can hardly be traced in the case of any other of the clan. In calm acknowledgement of the disaster and decay, their melancholic minds portrayed the pathos in the novels of their creation. In Hawthorne's *The House of The Seven Gables*, the cursed 'Pin Chan family' and in Fakirmohan's *Chhamana Athaguntha*, the 'Bagha Singh family', are clear-cut portrayals of their individual ancestral downfall. Born in the port city of Salem, Hawthorne witnessed his prosperous birth-place engulfed in the civil war that collapsed the monetary marvel of the city. Similarly Fakirmohan's birth place Balasore port in which he himself was engaged in sail making met the wretched condition due to fall in the profession as the place was neglected by the British administration. It is a strange parallel in the life of both the novelists.

Hawthorne's father - a captain, was taken fatally ill near a port and was carried away by the cruel hands of destiny when the novelist was only four years old. Finding no other way to make both ends meet, his mother took shelter in his uncle's house. Similarly Fakirmohan's father on his way back home from a pilgrimage to Puri, fell ill near Bindusagar Pond and left for heavenly abode. Both the novelists were brought up in the wretched conditions of fatherless shelters that had an imprint which had lasting repercussions in their life and found place in surreptitious reflection in their creations.

Both the novelists were brought up by destitute and decadent guardians who were women through troubles and tribulations. Of course Hawthorne was doled out charity from his uncle whereas Fakirmohan had none to get succour and relief from. From psychological point of view, both of them were mystery-clad and solemn. Considering their formal education, Hawthorne was highly educated but he was confronted with encumbrances beyond description in the grip of financial stringency.

From educational point of view, Hawthorne was sent to University. He was obstructed by financial imbroglios and horde of other troubles. Fakirmohan was inconvenienced due to incalculable penury. He couldn't pay his school dues. But by virtue of his perseverance, he could achieve uncommon command over Parsi, Bengali, Sanskrit, English Grammar, dictionaries. Though less educated, his perspicuity prompted him to write pot-boilers for letting the cat out of the bag regarding the subterfuge of British administration. He executed the writing of novels prominently as his American counterpart going through fire and water.

Fakirmohan and Hawthorne were hand twisted from boyhood to enter into the worries and anxieties of the work-worried and wearied life. During his sojourn at uncle's, Hawthorne badly injured one of his legs inadvertently

while playing football and was bed-ridden. In later life, the remembrances of the sorrowful event gave him indescribable anguish. On the other hand, Fakirmohan was suffering ailments all his life. The prolonged fever for years in his childhood remained an unforgettable reminiscence in his life. Both the parentless novelists in the dawn of their life were bereft of love and adoration without mother's love and father's care.

Parentless Fakirmohan thrived on a vacillating social background and through insurmountable odds and obstacles, built up the edifice of his literary creation; similarly Hawthorne in the wake of his father's death and the corollary vortex of family imbroglios rose to the occasion of bringing out his latent potentialities in the form of undying literature. The literary world of both the novelists is inextricably interwoven with their personal problems, predicaments and perplexities. Undeniably their creations are oblique analysis of their respective life and living. The homogeneity in life history corresponds to the homogeneity of their literature.

Novelist Hawthorne made an entry into the kingdom of literature through some thrilling essays to begin with. At Bodwin College, Hawthorne wrote essays for competitions which couldn't be published for illustrating his commencement of the writer's career. In the same way, the compositions of Fakirmohan's at the outset *Rajaputrara Itihas*, *Vyakarana* or *Vidyasagar's Jibana Charita* due to want of publicity couldn't illumine the writer's thrust into his literary world.

Hawthorne's *Seven Stories of My Native Land* consisting of stories couldn't be published due to lackadaisical attitude of the publicists he met which disappointed him; in deep dejection and utter desperation, Hawthorne set fire to the manuscript. Fakirmohan wrote *Rajaputrara Itihas* while working as a teacher at Mission school, Balasore and for want of the burgeoning amount of Rs.300/- demanded by Cuttack Mission Press for publication, the book couldn't be brought out; the manifestation of the vivacious genius of the writer.

Both the writers earned the aplomb by the opportunity to publish their stories in papers and magazines. Embarrassed by disheartening attitude of publishers, one day Hawthorne emerged from obscurity into the lime light. With the accedance of Goodrich, he could publish mostly of his short compositions in *The Token* and *New England* magazines. Goodrich's inspiring role hitched Hawthorne's prospects to a star which he acknowledged all his life. Correspondingly the unforgettable role of Biswanath Kar, the editor of *Utkal Sahitya* brightened the credentials of Fakirmohan by publishing his essays and stories in his Patrika and it endeared the writer to umpteen readers.

Hawthorne published his writings in *The Token* and *New England*

magazine under the pen-name and so also Fakirmohan assumed the incongruous epithet *Dhurjati* for the publication of his literary creations in *Sahitya Patrika*. It reveals lack of pride and arrogance in them.

Hawthorne began his writer's career with stories and essays but they weren't taken into consideration for judging his excellence. He is reckoned as a world-class writer for his novels; Fakirmohan started his debut in literature as a text-book writer, translator and poet but he is mainly recognised and appreciated for his classic and thrilling stories in later period. In case of both of them, the literary creations in the first stage is relegated to the background by the critics.

Hawthorne as well as Fakirmohan created four novels each during their life time. Hawthorne's four full-fledged novels are *The Scarlet Letters*, *The House of the Seven Gables*, *The Marble Faun*, *Blithedale Romance* and Fakirmohan's *Chhamana Athaguntha*, *Mamun*, *Lachhama*, *Prayaschitta*.

The House of The Seven Gables and *Chhamana Athaguntha* present almost facsimile characters from all points of view. The hero colonel Pinchan and villain George Pinchan in case of the former; Ramachandra Mangaraj and Champa in case of the later are aptly comparable.

The contemporary world literature is fortified with the cornucopia of umpteen creations of both the genius. It is extensive and evasive vis-à-vis the 19th century literature creation. The writers who have been well recognised and acclaimed for literary unique contributions to the world literature, Fakirmohan and Hawthorne figure prominently among them. Paradoxically, both of them had no ulterior designs for world-wide acknowledgement for their conspicuity.

Undeniably they have paved their way inadvertently to the annals of international glory by dint of their prominence and the world lionises them for had they not put up their penmanship in spite of repulsive adversities, the world would have been lop-sided.

America was under the permeating impact of British literature, culture, social consciousness due to long-drawn-out rule of Britain. Even after the attainment of independence, the deep-rooted foreign impact couldn't be warded off so easily. Despite the prevailing situations, Hawthorne started writing that emanated his idiosyncrasy nourished in the indigenous environment. Although his predecessor James Fennimore Cooper was the harbinger of detachment from British heritage in the field of literary composition, Hawthorne didn't follow his footpath; rather he was absolutely original and a long way apart from him. He pioneered a new era in the American literature and many a contemporaries as well as successors were deeply influenced by Hawthorne's trend. For example, his contemporary Mark Twain, Herman Melville, Henry James, William D. Hails owe a debt to him; in their writings, the influence of Hawthorne is writ large. As

a mark of respect to Hawthorne's personality and genius and implicit admittance of his impact, novelist Melville dedicated his famous novel *Moby-Dick* to him. Hawthorne's influence wasn't circumscribed in American ambits, it extended far and wide. He shines brilliantly among Turgenev, Tolstoy, Taine, Vergas, Hardy, Shaw, Kipling, Dickens, Thackeray, Harriet, and Becker, Stau, George Eliot, Flaubert and Zola - the world famous writers of the time. Especially the pioneering role of Hawthorne paved the way to usher in the new age in American literature which enriched the nascent horde of American novelists. Not only did he influence the 19th century American novelists by virtue of his undetering creative potentialities, his influential impetus prevails even today.

Fakirmohan and Hawthorne seem to be the two sides of the same coin from viewpoints of creative style, influence and long-standing impact. Fakirmohan assimilated his characters from his native land but lo and behold! His novels run parallel in style, excellence and evasiveness with the contemporary world writers that attained eminence. For that matter he was admitted into the galaxy of writers in the international firmament. The western researcher Dr. J. V. Boulton was intoxicatingly enamoured by Fakirmohan's creation and naturally carried a research on him; he got Ph.D. for his excellent research work. He admitted in explicit term that Fakirmohan stands shoulder to shoulder with the celebrated literary figures of world fame since his writings were pregnant with thoughts and elements to accord him this rightful place. Fakirmohan's style of writing hasn't been overtaken by writers yet. He is justly compared with famous Indian story-writer Premchand, Bankimchandra and similar authors for his unprecedented exploits and adventures in literature so far as originality in composition is concerned.

Some critics indulge in the usual habit of mud-slinging that Fakirmohan was explicitly influenced under the genius of Bankimchandra. But it can be told without least little exaggeration that Fakirmohan's originality and individual style prevails in the pages of his novels which keeps his place secured and superbly sacrosanct in Indian literature as well as world literature.

The time when Fakirmohan embarked upon writing novels, Hawthorne, Melville, Tolstoy, Charles Dickens, Premchand, Bankimchandra, the thought provoking and mind-bombarding novelists as well as thinkers had already set up themselves as world-class writers. I would dare say Fakirmohan's classics can't be duped and damped as a bag of borrowings or reflective recollections under any circumstances. The unique element of originality executed in his work is none-to-second in contrast to any world-class writer. The pivotal points around which Fakirmohan's thought revolves and upon which the edifice of his creation evolves are the societal utilitarian idealism. Throughout the length and breadth of his novels, be it *Mamun*, *Lachhama* or *Prayaschitta*, the social condition

prevalent is portrayed through his representative characters. Such characteristics hitched his prospects to international prominence. Retrospect at John Stuart Mill, the 19th century thinker and philosopher of England and Bankimchandra, the Bengali litterateur par excellence who derived their source of thought from the contemporary society. The advent of the age of reason in the eighteenth century instigated Germany Bentham to bolster up social utilitarianism as the prime mover in literary composition. In the Fakirmohanian thought process, the uplift of the society- the weeding out of all obscurantism, absurdities- is explicitly manifest. It goes without saying that taken all in all Fakirmohan's novels are microcosm of the macrocosm of the whole international literature of the time. For his original trend and ramification of thought, style, he is justifiably reckoned as one of the founders in the world literature. He couldn't be lost in the wilderness of writers; he has been well-established among the literary creators preceding, contemporary and succeeding him. The priceless treasure of his creation- the gimmickry in stories, realistic touch, in the portrayal of characters, befitting setting of figures and representatives accord him a place of glory among the world-class writers.

In the second half of the 19th Century and 1st phase of the 20th century, the Indian novels were romantic and history oriented. In the context, Pyarichand Thakur's *Alel Gharar Dulal* burst forth with social undertone. It was appreciated and acclaimed by linguist Sir John Beams as one of the best-ranking comic-tinged novels in English literature. In this connection, it is a paradox to note that in spite of plaudits and popularity attained by the novels, Pyarichand's such leaning in novels was outright extinct in the face of Bankimchandra and Ramesh Chandra's romantic and historical novels.

The remarkability that characterizes Fakirmohan's work is his curious contradiction to the prevailing taste, temperament, tempo, trend and tradition in novel writing which revolutionised the entire gamut and an altogether new dimension was prevalent far and wide not only in Odiya literature but elsewhere. He was the mastermind in diverting the attention from hallucinatory, somnambulistic attitude to the present-day society- its hideousness, realistic facts and figures that promenaded the roads, towns and villages. He was the unique wizard who fascinated the writers, thinkers and readers to the avant-garde idea, aptitude through complete concentration on society in its multifarious manifestations. By the gimmickry of his literature, he brought out an outright 'U' turn in effecting estrangement with the romanticism, history-leaning novel writing convention; it won't be an exaggeration to say it initialed an epochmaking metamorphosis in the field of novel-writing in India with its echo reverberating the world.

Born and brought up in humble surroundings, sorrows and sufferings, weal and woes, prejudices, and predictions being his constant companions, Fakirmohan flourished as a novelist who by dint of his perspicacity and perseverance assimilated all the sweet and sour experiences in life in his writing which was matter-of-factly ways apart from the long-drawn-out tradition and it placed him securely among the world renowned writers. His style is appropriately compared with that of Charles Dickens, his humor with that of Fildinra and his selection, symmetry, subjugation and subordination of elements of subject matter, character sketch with that of Hawthorne. ■

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Language, Society and Culture

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&
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The history of languages in the world endorses one valid point that the origin of all the languages is one point. This point can be a cry, sound, yawning, laughter, grunt, grimace and so on. From noises to gestures to sensory communication to language is the exact evolution of a language. The source of substance of a language is that it is inseparable from its culture. This paper analyses the various factors which enable language to undergo numerous changes due to culture. Language of a society embodies and expresses a community's culture. Since English is indispensable in the Globe, it is given dominance in the study. Changes and developments in education, commerce and technology bring changes in the culture. The paper further analyses social factors relevant to present day communication technology which again brings changes in the usage of language.

The evolution of symbolic communication called language has its origin from sensory communication. It started from non-verbal gestures, grunts and grimaces to the verbal, and then to the written, printed and communication is the process of sharing knowledge, information, thoughts, ideas and feelings with other through verbal and non-verbal methods. Language is used as a tool for communication. One cannot detach language from culture. Keval J. Kumar (2010) says that language embodies and expresses a community's culture. The arts have grown out of this same fundamental desire and need to express oneself and to reach out to others. Ancient men and women adorned

their caves with paintings of animals and hunters. The modern artist shows a preference for the abstract and 'pop', for the electronic and computer arts, for 'virtual reality'. But the human need to communicate has remained the same.

Speech is the prime means of communication and the structure of the society itself would be substantially different if we had failed to develop communication through speech (John Laver, 1994). Language teachers play a pivotal role and take the responsibility of introducing language learning situations and language using situations. In later stages, society or people use and develop language with their own culture. The way one speaks may provide clues, in terms of regional accent or dialect, to where he/she also contains a number of features which are unrelated to regional variation. People growing up in the same place (geographically in one area) may speak differently because of numerous social factors. The social factors cannot be overloaded since in many ways, speech is a form of social identity and is used, consciously or unconsciously, to indicate membership of different social groups or different speech communities.

Education, occupation and social class have effect on the speech of individuals. A famous study of Labov (1972) combined elements from place of occupation and socio-economic status by looking at pronunciation differences among salespeople in three New York City department stores, Saks (high status), Macy's (middle status) and Klein's (low status). Measurable differences were indeed found to exist. In British English, where social class differences in speech may be more widely recognized than in United States, the use of [n] as opposed to [ŋ] for the sound of -ing at the end of words like walking and going has been found to be much more common among working class speakers, in several regional varieties, than among middle class speakers.

Certain procedures, structures, systems, regulations, habits and conventions close to the culture ensure the method of using the language. Creative thinking by elite people who by profession are writers and speakers further ensure the development of language. Some people may argue that rules are temporary and systems are readymade. But they are in a situation to accept that culture meets reformation rarely may be once in a century because culture is documented in the method of life. Kamelesh Guptha (2012) acknowledges that a development or changes of rule in an established culture, intermediate impossible are ideas that deliberately use impossibility or outrageousness to provoke new ideas. Considerable research in language and culture has revealed that they are closely interconnected. Language exhibits one's culture or the vice versa. It is very hard to make an Indian speak like an American. An Indian will be in dothies (His cultural attire) and speak fluent Indianised English. Kamath

Seth (2009) affirms that it is difficult to create an irreversible reaction or to keep the snowball rolling.

Age and sex are the other factors which brings differences among people who but belong to the same social class. The noticeable point is that the differences will not affect their customs and beliefs but they create impact for the flourishing of the language. Especially the new technological society poses changes in bringing concepts more authentic. Youngsters with higher intrinsic motivation, which refers to having inherent interest or enjoyment in doing the task, are having the inclination to perform better in learning than their predecessors. That is good for the language indeed. In addition to this George Yule's view (1995) adds that within a society, other differences in speech may come about because of different ethnic backgrounds. In very obvious ways, the speech of recent immigrants, and often of their children, will contain identifying features. In some areas, where there is strong language loyalty to the original language of the group, a large number of features are carried over into the new language. More generally, the speech of American blacks, also called Black English, is a widespread social dialect, often cutting across regional differences. When a group within a society undergoes some form of social isolation, such as the discrimination or segregation experienced historically by American blacks, then social dialect differences become more marked.

By observing conversations one can realize the unassailable length of relation between culture and language. Conversations between managerial people provoke more interest. Alan Barker (1997) affirms that any conversation includes listening. Creative listening though is more than just hearing what someone is saying to us. We must also stop ourselves walking up (or down) our own ladders of inference instead of listening. It is all too easy to start:

- Judging (adding our own meanings, creating assumptions, confirming beliefs)
- Feeling superior
- Comparing
- Rehearsing what we are going to say next
- Thinking about something else
- Trying to listen to something else

One can use listening as an opportunity to use one's own thinking; and to look for clues that could take the conversation in fruitful and unexpected directions. The above set components are the same for uses of the language. But implications and outcome vary due to the culture of the language user. The language is English. But variations are in body language, tone of voice, eye contact, metaphors, analogies, figures of speech and evocative or emotive

words exhibiting the true culture says Chandra Guha (2012).

Fishman (1996,P 628) says that the world of large scale commerce, industry, technology, and banking like the world of certain human sciences and professions, is an international world and it is linguistically dominated by English almost everywhere, regardless of how well established and well protected local cultures, language and identifies may otherwise be. Nobody can deny that English would remain, in the foreseeable future, the dominant language of world communication. But it will have cultural differences. It will be having its instrumental value too. In both policy and lay circles the English language is often described as a gate keeper to the modernization of a state and the acquisition of social and economic prestige for individuals (Penny Cook, 2000; Ferguson, 2006; Philipson, 2010). As the world's foremost additional language today, English is regarded as a form of linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991). Hence this particular paper generously handles the dominant point of global spread of language in addition to the changes it faces due to various cultures of English speaking people.

There is no denying fact that digital technology provides and satisfies the desire to remove or change the boundaries of power of learning. The conventional boundaries or methods were broken down. Even then the societal aspects which are the components of a particular culture exhibit the changes and finer aspects of the language spoken in their society. (Here the case is English). All the social factors are related to variation according to the user of the language. Idiolect, style and register bring furthermore variations are due to cultural differences. If one language goes/faces this much variations, one cannot conclude the exact number of variations that all the languages can meet. Even language, universals if investigated may bring variations. Being the world's leading language today, English corners all the attention. Today it used on all continents. In surprisingly many countries (more than 100, according to statistics) it has important internal function as a 'second language' in addition to one or more indigenous tongues, being used in politics, business, education, technology, the media and so on. It is almost always used as the mediator language by people who need to talk with each other but have different mother tongues. Hence English has become localized and indigenized in a great many different countries. It is not only viewed as a useful international language, as just described, but it fulfills important local functions. In doing so it has developed local forms and characteristics, so that not infrequently people enjoy using it in their preferred way. In many countries local ways of speaking English have become a new home dialect which, like all local dialects, is used to express regional pride, a sense of belonging to a place which finds expression through

local culture, including language forms. Language and culture is inseparable. Somehow other than non-native speakers are all sociolinguistics who constantly analyze how something is said, in addition to what is being stated. (Edgar W. Schneider 2011) ■

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SHORT-STORY

Understanding

Original in Odiya : Gopinath Mohanty

Translation : Chandramoni Narayanswamy

It was almost evening, The rays of the sun about to set were scattered on the blue waters of the Chilika. The chirping of the migratory birds from the hill, the boatman's song wafting from the boat floating in the distance, the sound of the waves of the Chilika all mingled together to create a soft murmur in the still atmosphere. The light cool breeze sent thrills through the body.

Honeymoon Island – a small island in the middle of Chilika; small but beautiful, filled with trees of different species; enchanting with flowers of many hues. The chirping of colorful butterflies and birds created an exciting environment. The Raja of Khallikote fascinated by its natural beauty had constructed two palaces: – King's Mansion and Queen's Mansion. In the Queen's Mansion, the Rani and her companions used to stay and in the King's Mansion, the Raja and his family. The island came to be known as Honeymoon Island during the British time.

We six friends were camping in that island. At a short distance the two dilapidated mansions were staring at us. They had witnessed many unions and partings and their colour had faded. Many parts had collapsed under the weight of memories. Still as dumb witnesses to Time, they were staring at us with inquisitive eyes to know our secret sorrows.

Placing a mattress on a carpet and spreading a white sheet on that we six friends Bibhuranjan, Pinaki, Harinarayan, Debapriya, Shantanu and I were sitting on it listlessly, some reclining on fat pillows and dozing. We were under the cover of trees and there was nobody to overhear our talk. But animals and birds must have been watching us from a distance though they would not understand our talk. How could they when our families and relatives could not understand us? We were all about sixty. Our hair was as white as the sheet but

having dyed it black we were trying to recapture the past youth.

We were classmates and hence companions on sorrow and happiness. Some had become friends in school and some in college and because of compatibility the friendship continued unabated. We addressed one another with informal familiarity. Our points of view and thoughts were similar and so was our understanding of life.

After completing education we took jobs and some had already retired. A few were to retire shortly. We had got together to examine and analyse life in the twilight days fast approaching. We had come to Honeymoon Island for introspection and to enjoy life after a long time. The environment of the island was as enchanting as its name. Losing ourselves in the environment we were seated in the lap of nature. Vodka, gin and beer had created waywardness in keeping with the dancing of the waves of Chilika. None of us had tasted these drinks in youth and had regulated food and drink according to necessity and simplicity. But that day we had decided to seek the intoxication of these drinks desiring to bring excitement to the mind, a decision taken after a lot of deliberation to invoke waywardness. Waywardness is the root cause of life. All the friends were now under the influence of liquor, eager to unburden the disappointments buried in the subconscious without hesitation. In the active life of man the heart-rending realities of life are pushed down. He compromises with the trying helplessness called life in the cycle of events. The demon of reality hiding in the subconscious mind does not get a chance to surface. Intoxication alone makes everybody bold and brings out the innermost thoughts.

We had decided to reveal what we had gained in the battle of life, when we were defeated and when we had won. While reading in college some had plucked roses, others sitting under golmohur trees with girl friends for hours had lost themselves in sweet talk and later married other girls. We had got together that day to know all this in detail, determined to realize the truth of life through self-introspection and provide guidance to the next generation.

The evening was advancing, so also the measure of alcohol, Bibhuranjan had started crooning a song. All were watching at him with interest. Suddenly all of us said “Bibhu, you tell us about yourself. You are certainly lucky. For six years you loved the college beauty, got a lucrative job and stayed in a big city. You have one son and a daughter. Both are highly educated and well established. You lack nothing. Your life moves on a clear straight line”.

But Bibhu’s crooning stopped suddenly and his face clouded. He turned pale and pensive. He said in a philosophical tone. “What have I got? Yes, I was happy in college. Besides my parents, there was another who loved me.

You scamps used to torment me. After six years of love I married my beloved, prided myself that I was the happiest man. I had a job to my liking, the beautiful sweetheart was now my wife-what else could one desire at that age? But today I feel like a wandering bird which has lost its nest. Children are settled in life. Between me and my wife there is a great divide. The simple, playful girl of those days is now an enigma. Her philosophy of life is vague. We quarrel for hours over trifles. Our children are not with us to calm down the situation. I am unable to find out the cause or to know who is at fault or who is more to blame. The idyllic days of the past have become faded like old photographs. The excitement of youth is ebbing out. Why this difference then? Someone had said – marriage is an institution whose value can be understood only after it is old. Sounds funny. Caste, religion, God – these are not the measuring rods of love. Humanity alone is religion. Everything else is false. My interest is literature. My wife is interested in materialism. There is no meeting point. I spend time outside in literary discussions and participating in poetry reading sessions, trying to recapture the enjoyment of college life and forget the agony of my domestic life, thinking that self-control in conflict is the sublimity of life”.

“Does any third person or new sweetheart have a role in this alienation?” said light-hearted Pinaki. “Your wife is extrovert, beautiful and sophisticated. You are wrong. As you grow older you become more garrulous. Is this alienation the result of some baseless suspicion?” Bibhu was grave like his natural self. Perhaps the drinks had not affected him. He was trying to control himself. Without revealing the truth about what Pinaki said he sighed and dozed off.

Everybody now looked at Pinaki. He was wayward by nature. He had been the hero of two romantic affairs at Vani Vihar and had spent many hours under the *Krushnachuda* tree in front of the girl’s hostel. We too had been with him and joined in sweet talk but only for a short while. He used to talk to his sweetheart about everything under the sun, was deeply in love and surrendered himself completely to her. That was the colour, enjoyment and excitement of life. But such is the irony of fate that the girls would cast him off every time. Later like a helpless child he had married the girl of his parents’ choice and moved on in life and earned prestige in society. He had everything; two worthy sons, much wealth and honour. But something had gone wrong and could not be set right.

Pinaki was a government officer in high position. Both his sons were also highly placed. But he was not happy. There was no lack of money; there was lack of communication and mutual understanding. The cause was a young man whom his wife had accepted as her brother. He was a regular visitor, the

house was always open to him, nobody would disrespect him as ordered by his wife. The man's visits continued, he would help in all matters but he was like a piece of thorn in the flesh for Pinaki. He and his wife had separate bed rooms and their children had adjusted to the situation. Their relationship was not sad but not pleasant and their social conduct was in opposite directions. Hence he was a lonely man. He sighed and said "I am a loser in the battle of life. I passionately loved two girls but could not marry either. Then got married according to social customs. What next? In the last part of life, our differences keep increasing. I am praying to God that these days may end soon".

Everybody except me was surprised. I knew the zigzag history of their life and that they were moving in different paths.

All looked at Hari then. He was not a lover and did not know what it was to love. While reading at Vani Vihar he had gone to the girls' hostel near the Shiva temple with friends hoping to fall in love like the sage Narada wanting to marry Rukmini at the time of her *Swayamvara*. But where was the girl? Everybody used to respect Hari because he was a good boy and was intelligent. But no girl was in love with him. One day he told us. "Sneha was looking at me again and again. I was coming by bi-cycle; she was coming by a rickshaw".

Sneha was a student of Honours class, one year junior to Hari. Though studying in another department she knew Hari very well. His friends congratulated him and said. "This is the opportunity. Start the contact without delay".

Hari was tempted and was transported to a dream world. From the hostel he telephoned her residence. She received the call. Hearing her voice he was thrilled. But he had not thought of what to say to start the conversation. His smartness failed him. Not knowing what to say he stammered. "Why were you looking at me again and again when I was coming on bi-cycle?"

From the other end was heard "what nonsense" and the phone was immediately disconnected. That put a full-stop to his love.

Finally he got married. It was generally believed that his life was a smooth sail. He worked in a Company, went to different cities on tour accompanied by his wife. He had two daughters, both well placed and he was happy as everybody thought.

Hari smiled and said. "I could not get a sweetheart but after marriage I have not left my beloved, and I am close to her. I always take her with me when I go anywhere. I have tried to attain the fullness of life. I have got contentment

in adjustment”. Pinaki said. “If you are so happy, where is the question of adjustment? When both of you are always close together, what is the meaning of adjustment?”

Everyone burst out laughing. Hari was silenced by us as before. Like his unsuccessful advances in love over phone, he stopped midway. How could he explain to his friends that adjustment alone brings fulfillment in married life. He was not in a position to make them understand the extent of adjustment and its limits. So he remained silent.

Debapriya was a renowned poet. He used to take pride in proclaiming that frustration in love had made him a poet, that though he lost Banita, he got Kavita (poetry) of the same species. In college he gave tuition to improve his financial position. In course of time the teacher-student relationship blossomed into love in the immaturity of adolescence. But within one year it fizzled out. In the girl’s life came another lover and Debapriya was eased out. But he cherished that love and wrote poems extolling her. After completing his education he took a job and got married according to social norms.

His nature was simple and he never got involved in the complexities of life. He was helpful to others. He was in the habit of giving lift to helpless poetesses stranded on the road. In spite of advancing age, he had not lost the waywardness of youth.

Everybody looked at him to know his opinion on love. He was drinking vodka. With a smile he started reading a love poem. Pinaki snatched the paper from his hand and asked him to describe his experience.

Love has many faces. He had searched for it in his sweetheart, then in his wife, later in the women poets, young and old, waiting for a lift on the roads but was always disappointed. But he had never expressed frustration. For more than thirty years he had been searching for Banita, kept her memory alive by writing poems. Whenever he came in contact with women he would be excited but never got any indication of love. The number of anthologies of his poems was increasing but love had remained an illusion. He was stopped at a tri-junction and keeping in touch with the three points, he was engaged only in adding to the collection of poems. How long he would be able to keep the Banita of his past alive in his poetry, that remains to be seen.

Now it was Shantanu’s turn to reveal his love life and married life. He was a doctor. He was fortunate. He fell in love with his classmate and married her with the consent of both their families. But after about fifteen years there was an upheaval in their lives. Their son and daughter had strengthened the bond of marriage but love started dwindling. So he tried to expand the circle

of friends. Suddenly a young man with high expectation appeared on the scene and impressed everybody with his frank and free behaviour. Shantanu's wife was much impressed by him. Probably the crooked proclivity beneath his high ideals created problems in Shantanu's domestic life. Frequent clashes and constant bickering led to a storm. Their relatives were worried. Then the doctor came in contact with a nurse and their intimacy increased. By now his wife had got over her infatuation. But she could not change the course of the river, having breached the embankment. Still they were together, trying to adjust. Their neighbours had no reason to suspect anything. May be love had sprouted again in the lives of the couple.

Shantaun said. "We are also living in adjustment. We loved and got married. Thank God that we are not separated and are living under the same roof; an ideal couple before others but objects of ridicule before those who know."

Now all of them looked at me. They know I am very romantic. At school my classmates could not tolerate my friendship with girls. There used to be competition and bickering among girls to become intimate with me. I used to derive pleasure out of that and my manly ego used to be inflated. Then I moved up to college. I had a name in college because I was a topper in school. Attracted by my handsome appearance girls used to be friendly with me. Many girls like Reena, Meena, Geeta, Meeta, Sita were my friends and even wanted to marry me. But my mind was unsteady like the waves in the ocean. So I did not marry any of them.

After finishing education I became an Executive in a firm. There was no dearth of money. Many proposals for marriage were received. I rejected all proposals brought by the fathers of my former girl friends and also of new ones. I was already enjoying the pleasures of married life. Even those who marry for love, do not hesitate to have affairs outside marriage. Then why should I bind myself to one woman? I enjoyed the thrill of having new sweethearts. I had sufficient money to spend on them. Time passed. I was alone and so was Snigdha, a professor of physics. She had a sweet relationship with me. Even now she hopes that someday I will accept her. Her presence thrills me even today.

I was drinking whiskey and looking at the moon on the sky. My friends were eager to hear more about me. The surroundings were beautiful but silent.

At night there was no chirping of birds; only the sound of the waves of Chilika. I had wasted my life in excitement but now there was nobody to call my own. Parents were no more. Mother had pleaded and fasted for a daughter-

in-law but I, a cursed sinner, could not understand her concern. Though I am advanced in years, the number of women-friends has not decreased. But there is no sense of belonging. Only Snigdha somehow still excites the mind.

We were soaked with mist. All of us were also dripping wet with the sorrow flowing from within. We had been promising students and had now good standing in society. Family life was in good condition but the same could not be said about personal life. The poet describes love in different forms. Those who write stories cannot shape their own lives successfully.

We had given importance to the physical relationship between man and woman, husband and wife but never considered the mental satisfaction outside it. Caught in the web of domestic problems we could not find the destination or understand the meaning of love. Understanding between husband and wife makes their love life meaningful. In that there is no room for pride, pique, anger and ego. There is only dedication and willing to surrender to each other. In such a situation neither the ego of manhood nor the vanity of womanhood exists. Man and woman are the precious gifts of nature, two sides of the same coin. Only understanding can ensure contentment.

Everybody became alert and firmly resolved to bring the cracked boat of life to the shore and set it right. Children were preoccupied with their own lives. But it was not too late to make our lonely lives colourful and soaked with love. Hari said "Let us start life afresh at sixty and let it be built on understanding- the synonym of love." He suddenly looked at me and said "Friend! Choose one out of your numerous female-friends. Accept Snigdha and get married at sixty. Let the honeymoon be in this very island, not only for you but for all of us. Our wives will stay in Rani mansion and we will stay in Raja mansion. We shall stay for a month and cleanse the sinful past of 30/35 years in the waters of Chilika and start a love filled life in which there will be no pride or ego; only surrender and understanding".

Everybody concurred in this proposal and agreed to revisit the island very soon with the spouses.

The eastern sky had turned red. The beauty of Chilika at dawn was enchanting. The six friends were emerging out of the agony of the past. The world of understanding was beckoning them. All were eager to return to the world of love. The bud of love within them had started opening its petals. They had vowed to start a new life at sixty. The motor launch had come. Soon they would meet their wives from whom they had been alienated but now they would rush to them in understanding. They would enjoy life in the world of laughter and understanding. ■

POEMS

Five poems by :
Adolf P. Shvedchikov

(I)

DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?

Do you want to know
how a woman loves you,
To find a reason
for superabundant tears
And to understand
why dreamland is unattainable?
This knowledge will never help you.
Because you'll find
a thousand reasons
To become irritated
when retreat is impossible,
When all bridges are destroyed,
And you are again alone
with your bad mood.
Remember that neither stubborn-
ness
Nor blind force will not help you.
If you want to fall in love
Unite with a woman
in quivering feelings!

(II)

I ASK YOU TO KEEP SILENCE

I ask you not to talk
With me about anything.
Let our words sleep

When we are in silence.
Be pink like a poppy
And keep silence in the night.
Give me the flame of your heart
And your love silently!

(III)

IT WAS SOMETIME IN MY CHILDHOOD

It was sometime in my childhood
when my heart
Whispered about night and moon
and a burning glance.
A lot of years passed away,
all passions calmed down.
Many treasons left a sad trace
in my soul.
Now when I am grey in my old age
All my tortures are behind.
We paid a heavy tribute
Because we are prisoners of love!

(IV)

DON'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT SEPARATION

Don't say anything about separation,
About blind fate.
Don't tell me sad words
Bearing so much torture!
Yours fondling arms
Still call from sweet dreams.
I am ready to burst into tears
But the faint sounds are dying.

(V)
SPRING COMES AGAIN

Spring comes again.
Are you ready to do
an unusual job-
To furrow your heart
up to death!
Where you'll find
An extraordinary strength
of *Hercules*
To forge a strong chain,
To give an abundant harvest
every year?
Did you calculate your strength,
O poet, to create a powerful word
Which will shine like the sun!

Two poems by: P.Raja

(I)
WISDOM FROM
THE DESERT

(after reading Paulo Coelho's
The Alchemist)

Look! This desert is
Never the same.
Yet the same dunes.
Lovely shapes...
More lovely designs.
Who does not love change?

Look! How fast
These sand dunes lend
To every change?
Is there bliss

In every change?
There should be.

From whom shall
We have this wisdom?
From the slavish
Sand dunes?
Or their tireless master –
The wind?

■

(II)
RELATIONSHIP

A tiny crack
In an unbroken eggshell...

Neither the shell
Nor the embryo
Would ever be upset.

I never knew, my love,
That you would take it
To heart and burn inside,
And in that process
Burn me alive.

Every pistol has bullets to shoot.
Every bullet has a target to find.
A malicious bullet
From a disappointed pistol
Targeted you and
You killed me.

Where can you ever find me,
When you have made
A yawning canyon of
A tiny crack?

■

Two poems by: Pratap Ku. Dash

(I)

The Rock

Grayish black, impregnable
and rugged;
Placed on the top of the hill
with all its primitive look.
Always threatening to roll down
but never roll;
Strangely balanced on the ground!
A piece of solitary architecture;
Like a saint petrified
meditating over centuries—
For the salvation of the humanity,
But the task remains still
unaccomplished;
Still the stillness advocates
stuffed bravery.
Open for the little rest
of the flying birds;
A meeting place for monsoon cloud;
A greeting garnet for the trekkers’
thud.
The sun rises on it;
the moon dilates on it.
Deeper than darkness—
a mysterious light
Of the history of obstinacy and faith.
This rock witnesses the generations
of fall and rise;
The sole witness of foolish
and wise—
A formless fear for the panic-
stricken;
And promise for not being shaken.

■

(II)

Road Closed

The vehicle runs—
all in smoothness; full of speed;
fully tuned to the way
And to the commitment of reaching;
Make its passengers of destiny reach
in time.
Everybody is anxious to reach.
To get the nourishment of time
and place;
Of mind and body;
of action and reaction;
of sleep and waking;
Already crossed the rugged subway
and a series of crossroads;
Past the hamlet;
the long stretched greeneries;
ups and downs;
Hills and valleys; hot and cold;
light and darkness; rain and sun;
The dripping dews smiling past;
flowers blossom and wither;
The herd of cattle scattered
at the sound
As if echoing life is full of sound
and fury.
Never mind—
going is the go of the world.
Always expediting the fuel of spirit
and sense;
Alas! ‘Something’ hinders—
bit confused
The pace is held up
as if flying birds caught in the gum
spread in the snare
Or as if the safari racing and racing

and then in captive
By some mysterious hands—
may be an unseen poacher!
Or river in spate is embanked
beyond the bay.
No way ahead!
Irony of the iron bars of freedom
A pressing buzz all around—
Nobody dares
Because the gloomy light
of the twilight reads:
'Road Closed'.
■

A True Dove

Ram Bahadur Yadav

Love, the synonym of God,
Blossoms once in each heart.
And lessons value of sacrifice
To those who become its part.

It is the foundation of the
Peaceful life of each man.
Without its existence in
The heart, man's life is vain.

The love leads one to learn
How to search one's Master.
In the hunt of 'He' a lover is
Ever ready for one's disaster.

As Love is God
God is Love,
So be ever ready for
Its bait, being a true dove.
■

A Momentous Verdict

Gyanendra Kumar Dhall

The night wind whispers
into my ears
Your soliloquy it overhears
When no one is near
And, which you hesitate to admit
before me
Due to lots of fear.

Then I turn my piercing look
very high
With tears in my eye
To peep into your heart
That resembles an accepting sky.

I appeal to the stars
To stand by my side
To confess the truth
You consciously hide.

Finally, the moon appears
Like a grey haired barrister
The statements of the stars
he considers
And passes the momentous verdict
That, your love for me
Is of a different nature.

It's like the sea tides
Recedes into oblivion
during daylight
But, becomes violent
During moonlit nights.
■

Oh! What will you do
after listening to
my woe...?

Original in Hindi : Sanjivani Subhedar
Translation : Rajashree Deshmukh

Oh! What will you do after listening
to my woe?
You seem keen to hear my tale.

That tune is strange,
rhythm shattered,
Words are hushed;
the song is devoid of music.
Will you understand
the dismal notes and throes?
Oh! What will you do after listening
to my woe?

The path ahead was dark
and steep,
how do I help myself?
My dream castle crashed
to smithereens,
The ties are all snapped.
Ask me no further,
you don't know my plight,
Oh! What will you do after listening
to my woe?

The flame of life is flickering,
by the blows of Time,
Mission failed, tasks undone,
Despair overcast the evening sky.
Tears rush ahead to tell my tale,
Oh! What will you do after listening
to my woe?

Will you shed tears after listening
to my sad tunes?
Or will you infuse hope
in my wavering heart
by your balm?
Will you chase away the clouds
or you too are here to mock,
Oh! What will you do after listening
to my woe?

I have learnt a lot from the pinch
and pain of life,
A blessed child of spring,
how will you know the pangs
of winter?
Now I will utter not a word,
no matter what you feel,
Oh! What will you do after listening
to my woe?



The Storm

Original in Marathi : Sanjivani Subhedar
Translation : Rajashree Deshmukh

A sudden storm breaks out
in a quiet, green seaside,
My mind starts wandering
along with the unruly wind.
The green grass shivers with fright,
Ripples are seen in the silent water,
Despair rules
where once peace reigned,
All rapture and joy is gone!
In no time the forest sets ablaze,
Tiny birds run helter skelter,
Hidden in the corners and crevices,

They burst out in fear!
The rich green apparel of the land,
Playful music of the spring,
In a moment the treasure is stolen,
Beauty-all undone!!
Once where nature danced-
rich and proud,
Now moans the withered grass,
Storm chased the Calm away,
Planting despair in its place!!
This cruel trick of fate
pricks me deep,
With tearful eyes I close
the petals of my lips!!

■

The Night Is Over

Waishali Deshmukh

The night is over.
No shadows obscure.
The strain I bore
Subsided!
Birds in the sky
Merrily fly.
Mind is high
Farther!
Peace in the air
Everywhere.
Music in the core
Restored!
The sky is bright
With divine light.
I'll share the might
Definitely!

■

Appetite

Gobinda Sahoo

Among bald hills
Ceased udders, dry dales
Bleeding ploughshare
And sweating shaft
Deserted flora and fauna
Searching for the ray of life
To proceed though faint
Barks 'n rags for clothing
Leafy sheds for shelter
And stones to postpone hunger
Is but the way of life.
In headlines for some days
A stunt for some to ladder
In archery-
To bridge the ebony
with apple skinned
A handful of blessing
For a mouthful food
A hug indifferent
The act of fraternity.
Before a congregation
Among flashes many
To garnish the next day's news
With spice savage
"You believe it-
So far
It has deferred our appetite"
And to the shock of everyone
"Or
Have a taste
To experiment yours."

■

The Blood-Pool

Vandana Sahai

It groped
in the darkness of the womb
where it lay
in the pool of blood
defined;
by the umbilical cord
Every day
it was growing a bit
until the parents discovered
it actually was “She”
Suddenly the frequency
and richness of food
deteriorated
She wanted to do her parents proud;
even more than a son
but the title of being worthy
was clearly lacking
She tried to convince her parents;
all in vain
since she was a girl-child
and was not welcomed
to the world outside
with open arms
Now, eerie silence prevailed-
In the same pool of blood;
not wanting to be born
since she was considered
merely a “Beti”,
not even
a living creature.

■

The Unevenness of History

Original in Odia : Aparna Mohanty

Translation : Jayanta Mahapatra

And
along with this
I refuse with all humility
the alluring invitation
to live on
in the golden page
of History.

For
to be in History’s page
means involvement
in envy, reproof, coercion, rape,
Conspiracy and intrigue,
and with murder,
to go along too
with the subterfuge of truth,
to say farewell to beauty
and make a pact with evil.

To stay in the pages of History
is to surrender
to the many base practices
born out of high ambition,
that is why perhaps
no one has written
the History of flowers.

And so the tender leaf
smiling at the breeze after a storm
or the moon and the water lily
kissing each other
deep in the lucent water
never care for the attractions
of History.

Who has been able to tether
the fall of the rain
or the flight of the bird to History?
Even though very rarely
an immortal tale of love.
Having ridiculed History,
is spread and carried from person
to person
long after the lovers
have vanished from public memory.

History is written
by self appointed charlatans
in exaggerated words
from the heart's untimely death
in piled up blood.

If somewhere,
a fresh, blissful mind
is wandering around,
let it ramble on,
for what use it to decorate
the enchanting museum of History
with the early death
of a short-lived butterfly.



Democracy

Laxmidhar Mishra

It's zero the clock strikes,
sweeps silence
from the Himalayas to Kumarika
from the Arabian Sea
to the Bay of Bengal.
The whole land
stands stunned and numb,
the zero beckons

an eagle - hawk in the camouflage
of a dove of Liberty and Democracy,
that migrates from the British Isles
to my land, my native land.

It bewitches the populace
with its glare of Democracy
that sparkles the ethos
the government of, for, by
the populace - rich or poor,
high or low.

Oh the Dove!

Where're the bewitchings of yours?

Are you captivated
in the hands of mammoths of power
and opulence,

or, have they shattered you?

More than half a century
has passed away with your haunts
upon my land, my country.

But, the rich are richer
and the poor - poorer, poorest.

Have you flown to my country
to shade the haves

and let the have-nots

burn with sizzling fire of paucity
and hunger?

Sows your curved beak sure

the seeds that grow into

gigantic trees whose branches cap

my country with fruits,

lovely and sweet,

that entice the mammons

of power, wealth and intellect,

necrotise them with

Cancerous corruptions, violence, sex,

c o m m u n a l i s m , t e r r o r i s m ,

hooliganism,

craves of making out laws

for self and power, washing all vices.
Oh Saviour, save my country
from the fatal hunts
of the eagle hawk that camouflages
as a Dove of Democracy and Liberty,
leads my country to the hell
of torments of Satanic Mammons
wealth sucking and politickings.



Love - the most expensive Jewel

A. Nikitha Patil

Everything I did lose in line
Only felt was the life of mine
I never asked, but I got
Everything of which I've never
thought.
Happy was I with all I had
I never had time to be sad
Happy was I when I lost a few
Nothing could I hear,
not even a roar
Happy was I when I lost
every thing
Look at me as I bounce
all-round and sing.
Sad was I to know I lost every thing
I was completely left with nothing
Even my own smile betrayed me
To speak was a scarcity of he
or she
After a long journey of hue and cry
I thought that
the only thing left was to die
All of a sudden a hand held mine

Just to ask "Are You Fine?"
His fingers came forward
to wipe my tears
An essence of strength
to vanish my fears
I never asked
but I got everything
of which I've never thought.
In him there was nothing to abhor
He sees my needs
as an unavoidable chore
With him life was just a bed of roses
There was nothing
that we did not possess.
We were always there
for each other
Anything else we never cared
to bother
We were the richest,
though we had no riches
Because we had with us
Love, the most precious
and expensive Jewel.



Sin

Original in Odiya : Rajib Pani
Translation : Pareswar Biswal

How to define sin?
Who sits on judgement
between sin and saintliness?

Sin needs the night;
not the moon-lit one,
but the dark night
the ill-fated girl
was born on.

They say sin springs
not from heaven
but from hell,
the hell that often
gives birth to a beautiful morn.

Sin saturates the bed
in a well-furnished guest house
as the king, clad in white,
steps in;
and as an agonized
scream pierces
through the quiet air,
the door-keeper
stands in attention
to watch, and to hear.

Sin sings paeans
to the glory of saintliness
and shows the sinner
the way to his destination
while it teaches
all of us
the art to tread
the crooked lines of life
and to live on and on...



NELSON MANDELA

(a tribute to the World Leader)

M. A. Nare

Nelson Mandela
the dark son of South Africa wept
before his bronze statue was unveiled
In front of The Houses of British
Parliament.
Twenty seven years spent

in the Dark Cell
Fighting against the tyranny
of the white man's Colonial rule,
made his soul a precious-stone
And his heart
a pure lump of gold.
The magnanimity of the British
people
The full moon emerging
from a dark cloud,
Shines like a halo around his head.
Trafalgar Square lost
a great opportunity
To receive this living saint,
a true Gandhian,
Bearing his torch
in the New Millennium.
No doubt,
Trafalgar has another Nelson
Standing on a mast-high column:
The Hero of the Battle of Waterloo.

Nelson Mandela's statue stands
on a low plinth, with arms wide open
As if to receive us to share
his views
On a Better and a happier World.

Will new generations
from the terror-stricken World,
learn a few lessons
from the great Apostle of Peace?



New-Found Wisdom

Sourav Upadhyaya

My countrypeople
took my books away
and gave me a gun
Examples of patriotism cited
and was told
it would fetch me bun
Good aspects
which rich man's son strive for
went gradually afar
And thus
I sought shelter in war,
not knowing what else i could seek
with my gun.

I remained a poor soldier
all my life,
rich only in inglorious strife.
That cunning man accumulated
all wealth
with his new-found wisdom.
I only gave him security
all my life long
to save his kingdom,
While I failed to see
my own one's fate
sealed with strife.

Today I lay in sorrow.
Patriotism shattered
and truth dawns on me.
But what difference does it make....
you can well see
An indispensable citizen has turned
into an unwanted silly old illiterate.
That little lad now directs
my new generation to war
while fear alone support me.

■

LUST

Ramendra Kumar

I have explored
Every silken crevice,
Every voluptuous pore,
Of your ravenous body.

With
My eyes,
My lips,
My teeth,
My tongue;
Unleashing
Within you,
Myriad moments
Of ecstasy.

The red embers
Of my searing ache
Have scorched you,
Making you
Writhe
For more.

Every encore
Of our mingling,
A pristine beginning.
Can anything
Be more sublime
Than pure lust?

■

Book Review

The Rage in Albion

by Cecelia Peters svcecelia@hotmail.com

Publisher : Author House, UK Ltd, authorhouse.co.uk

Reviewer : Samarendra Mohapatra, smohapatra579@gmail.com

Cecelia captures well the pathos and humiliation of *The Rage* growing up in a world of betrayals and turmoil. Before the *Rage in Albion* was published Cecelia was already famous with the publication of her first poetry book *The Muse* which signals a poetess in the making. It was a pleasure reading new book at one go as the pages fly by. The poem is a combination of beauty and poignancy. It is a discovery in a trajectory path of rise and fall of human values and modernity. She is a sole traveler, a traveler apart in a literary romp afresh, tracing the thinning line of time and action.

A voice for voiceless which she finds from nowhere. Rarely a “homeless Man under the Bridge” could arouse such an inspiration to make him one of the most widely read poem of recent times. She tries to find the unwritten pages of life of a man who almost delivered a judgment on the masked masses of Britain. Cecelia’s memories are horribly selfish which gives us an extraordinary glimpse of her poetic soul. The flyover at Great West Road is now a symbol of Modern ‘Tinetern Abbey’ where one can see the vividly contrasted images and the agony of mankind which forced Cecelia to stop and stare and intone the world to feel the Rage inside you.

Can You call *Madiba*? is another masterpiece by the poetess where she pours out her heart to the father of South Africa Nelson Mandela. You never stop until you finish reading the whole as if the world has already written his obituary and cunningly decided not to invite such souls again to this earth. The Public Prisoner Mandela as she proudly calls her is a living symbol of slavery and discrimination who remained only a “friend” now.

“The woman who cried” exemplifies the womanhood in post modern times. She is here searching her “self” which is sadly broken into pieces. Man has a new definition for her in 21st Century. which she finds hard to come to terms to it. She is crying for everything from “preparing tea” to basking in the ‘sun’ as her space is occupied by some man. It is a fact that her space is permanently occupied by a “man” who refuses to move. She is able to transcend her feministic view point by creating a wholesome portrait of womanhood as a societal role model, a rare competence than limiting it to an issue of man-woman relationship.

While interviewing her she explained to me that ‘Wrap Me In The Cotton of the Night’ it is based on a longing for a true love and the feeling of giving up everything for that special someone and being enwrapped in their

love, as in cotton of the night, the dusk, twilight hours when the clouds are fading but look beautiful as cotton, in the night...oh, you've got me going now."

In 'The Mountain' anything is possible and all are equal and of course, "beauty is prevalent" She candidly proclaims. She went to mountains because she wished to reflect, to live deliberately, and to front only the essential facts of life and if she could learn what it had to teach to humanity today. She has rightly summed up "in the Poem ' You have WORDS in your bones, in your lungs and in your jawOozing out from your every pore." Is what Cecelia is while writing from heart. As Thoreau maintained that "it was more important to live than to make a living."

As Wavell says her poetry keeps one in perpetual state of dreaming, leaving the deeper springs of feeling and the higher faculties of perception unemployed. This elusiveness is revealed in a series of disconnected impressions, revealed mainly through artistic unity and ambitious poetic beauty. 'I have written many poems, Reflecting history and other lies, Telling of Broken Dreams Telling of conflicts Detailing "Broken" lives And this one is for Abigail.

From this one is for Abigail 'Child A' - Summer of Love 2011, she quotes a 10 year old girls "broken heart" where She says "She has lived so many lives....The pain of being."

The daughter of a teacher Cecelia Peters she created her own business, 'Bardess of Langley', from her home village of Langley, in Berkshire, England , running poetry workshops and readings in schools and other institutions of learning, where standards of culture, taste, and intelligence are of the highest. A lifelong contributor to journals, magazines and newspapers her work is stark and uncompromising and regularly featured on the Internet, where she has a Face book Page, Cecelia's Poetry Page, encouraging fellow authors and friends to contribute their own rhymes and works.

As might be expected of one of her background and artistic gifts it is in the Part Three "The Guide" we see poetic, rhythmic and musical qualities at its best. She uses words with a keen sense of their rhythmic and musical potentialities: her style is richly figurative. It is divided into six parts The Encounter, Philemon, The Shore, The Woods, and The Lost Children, These profoundly crafted rhythmic lines will endure and resonate forever in the souls who read it. Rarely does a reader encounter such sheer beauty of timeless and compelling imagery in her debut book to stand apart as foremost publication in English literature. To continue..... ■

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