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CONTENTS

CRITICISM

- 1 EDITORIAL
Three Hundred Ramayanas/1
- 2 Prof. M. K. Naik : A Tribute
Dr. Mallikarjun Patil /4
- 3 Lu and Badali : Nature Poetry of
Rajasthan
Dr. Basavaraj Naikar /6
- 4 Basavaraj Naikar's The Rani of
Kittur: The Precursor of Rani
Laxmibai of Jhansi
Dr. R T Bedre /15
- 5 Saru, an image of socially
Independent Woman : A study of
Shashi Deshpande's The Dark
Holds No Terror
T. Jeyas /23
- 6 Nationalism in Bhabani
Bhattacharya's So Many
Hungers
K. Nathiya
and Dr. K. Balachandran /29
- 7 Gender Discrimination in Anita
Desai's Fasting, Feasting
Dr. Md. Jawed Akhtar /36
- 8 Shobha De's Snapshots : A
Feminist Perspective
Talluri Mathew Bhaskar /45
10. Unfructified search of love in the
short stories of Sherwood
Anderson
Dr. Amit Kumar Sinha /56

POETRY

- 1 Wonderful Love
Jasvinder Singh /67
- 2 Alas ! Woman !
S. L. Peeran /68
- 3 Soldier's Song
Prof. Ram Bhagwan Singh /69
- 4 Two Minute Silence
C. L. Khatri /72

BOOK REVIEW

- 1 M. K. Pandey /73
- 2 Dr. Nandini Sahu /76
- 3 C.L.Khatri /80
- 4 P. Gopichand &
P. Nagasuseela /83
- 5 Ratan Bhattacharjee /85
- 6 Ram Krishna Singh /87
- 7 Amarendra Kumar /89
- 8 Ramesh K. Srivastava /92
- 9 Dr. K. Balachandran /95
10. Dr. Ram Bhagwan Singh and
Dr. Anil Kr. Sinha /97

EDITORIAL

Three Hundred Ramayanas

A. K. Ramanujan's posthumous publication *Three Hundred Ramayanas* has been drawn into controversy when the Dept. of History, Delhi University prescribed this slim book of essays for Degree course. Some Hindu outfit made strong protest against its inclusion and publication. Its publisher, Oxford University Press succumbed to the pressure and decided not to publish any further edition; and Delhi University abruptly dropped it from the syllabus. This is not a solitary instance of attack on freedom of expression of writers/ artists and their works. We all know about Fatwa on Salman Rushdie, Taslima Nasreen, recent attack on Charlie Abedo in France or vandalism against Tamil writer Perumal Murugan who announced the death of the writer. However, Ramanujan's book was published by Vani Prakashan in Hindi translation. Both translator Dhaval Jayaswal and editor Apoorvanand, I hope, would not have faced any threat from the so-called aggrieved party. I look for someone to muster courage enough to publish Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*.

It triggers a debate if there should be a limit to the freedom of expression for the writers and artists or everything meant for public consumption should go uncensored. Should there be any rider as a work of art should not offend a religious group or any community? If yes who will decide if it actually offends a group or not? What would be objective parameters to decide this? Should there be a censor board or a tribunal to hear such cases? In a democratic country a peaceful protest cannot be banned. But there is no room for vandalism.

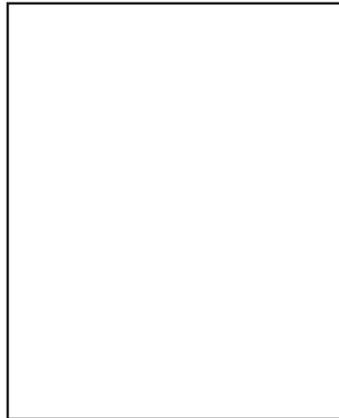
Coming back to Ramanujan's *Three Hundred Ramayanas*. I wish to say that I am a devout Hindu and

have read this from cover to cover and I don't feel any dent of offence on my mind or heart. Rather I feel that the title may mislead someone. What Ramanujan is talking about is not three hundred versions of Valmiki's *Ramayana*. In fact he refutes this perception. There may be thousands of narratives with characters like Rama, Ravana, Sita and others. But they are not necessarily based on Valmiki's *Ramayana*, though some are. Ramanujan has done a comparative study of such works like Tamil *Ramayana*, Thai *Ramayana* or Kamban's *Ramayana* and many others- with similar names of characters but with different perception, different characters and narrative structure. Their names are not invariably *Ramayana*, most of them appeared with different names. He has drawn heavily on different *Ramayanas* and research works done on them. He adds to it the list of his sources. The story of Rama in Santali folk tradition is different from Valmiki's Rama. *Ramayana* existed even before Valmiki's *Ramayana*. So even stories vary from one to another. While referring to Santali's "Ramayana" he keeps deliberate restraint; anyone could have made it a sensational story by just allowing the story of Sita to unfold a little more. What the writer intends to probe is how myriad versions, or counter versions of a story percolate in different cultures, languages and religious traditions in forms as different as translation, transcreation or transplantation or a sort of parody. Such parallels can be drawn among several mythical and folk narratives popular in different countries. He brings to light the real strength of *Ramayana* that it is so fertile, amenable and adaptable that any number of ingenious or new narrative, play or poetry can be drawn from it. It is this feature that makes "Ramayana" time immemorial "Ram tumhara nam kavya hai koi kavi banjay Sahay sambhave hai". Any writer would love such controversy even sponsor it. I would say with tongue in cheek.

I would like to draw your attention to my third poetry collection *Two-Minute Silence* published recently from Authors Press, New Delhi and I must say thanks to Mr. Sudarshan Kcherry (the publisher) for bringing it out elegantly within a short time. It has been received well by the academia, readers and reviewers. Its title poem "Two-Minute Silence" is included in the syllabus of Degree III in Shivaji University, Kolhapur. I express my gratitude to the Chairman and the members of the Board of Studies for giving space to the new voices.

To my pleasant surprise Dept. of English, Maharaja Harishchandra P. G. College, Moradabad organized one day seminar on "Two-Minute Silence" with active participation of other Departments like Hindi, Urdu and Philosophy and the title poem was translated into Hindi and Urdu. The Principal, teachers and my dear students, I wish to convey my thanks to you all. Wish you a pleasant read ! I dedicate this issue to Prof. M. K. Naik who has been a source of inspiration to me all through the publication of this journal.

–C. L. Khatri



Prof. M. K. Naik
(1926–6th Nov. 2014)

Prof. M. K. Naik : A Tribute

Dr. Mallikarjun Patil

Prof. M. K. Naik, one of the biggest promoters of Indian English literature, is no more. He passed away at his residence in Pune on 6th Nov 2014. Born in Karad (MS) in 1926, Prof. Naik had his early education in Kolhapur and Pune. His family claimed kinship with the saint Purandharadas. He lost his father when he was too young, and was brought up by P. H. Naik, Deputy Collector. Joining Bombay Education Service in 1948, M. K. Naik served for a brief spell in Rajaram College, Kolhapur, Elphinston College, Bomay and Gujarat College, Ahmedabad. Having resigned, he joined the Karnataka Education Service, esp Karnatak University Service in 1957. The department of English started functioning in 1957 with only one reader i.e. Dr M. K. Naik. Prof. Armondo Menezes joined the Dept later as Professor and Head and the two along with Prof. T.R. Rajashekhariah founded the English department. He became Professor and Head in 1966 and headed the Dept till his retirement in 1986. During the tenure of his headship, nearly two decades, the Dept expanded, and the syllabus was thoroughly revised so as to include new branches of learning like the English Language Teaching, Linguistics, Stylistics, Phonetics, Indian English Literature, American Literature, Comparative Literature, retaining also the Anglo-Saxon and Old and Middle English which were the vestiges of the old syllabus. After his retirement in 1986, he worked as University Grants Commission Research Professor (i.e., Emeritus Professor) from 1988 to 1991.

The awards and distinctions won by Prof Naik include National Fellowship of the UGC (1978-79), National Lectureship of the UGC (1984-85), Senior Commonwealth Fellowship, Canada (1985), British Council Visitorship, Cambridge (1985), and London

(1990), Presidentship of the All India English Teachers' Conference, New Delhi 1982.

Prof. Naik did his Ph.D. on Somerset Maughan under the guidance of Dr. V.K Gokak. He was the first Ph.D holder from Karnatak University. He was an ideal teacher, and a good researcher. Being doyen of Indian English literature he edited the Perspective Series on Indian English literature -- Poetry, Fiction, Drama and Prose, thereby brought a large number of critical minds together, which another doyen, C.D.Narasimhaiah was doing in Mysore by organizing national and international seminars. Prof Naik wrote monographs on Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan, besides writing *A History of Indian Writing in English* in two volumes, which being brought out by Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi. It has run into several editions so far.

Prof Naik gave numerous radio talks and published them too. *Treading on Air* is his collection of radio talks, being also a creative writer, Prof Naik wrote limericks. His books of light verse include *Indian Clerihews*, *Indian Limericks* and *More Indian Clerihews*. *Beowulf and All That: An Unorthodox History of English Literature* was dictated to a writer as he had almost lost his vision, and he became a blind Milton himself. He wrote a campus novel called *The Corridors of Knowledge*, creating enough controversies. His Marathi translations include Emily Dickinson, and T.S. Eliot. His most recent and last book was *A Passage to England*.

Prof Naik had lost his wife three years ago. He has left behind his only son settled in Australia, besides a large number of admiring and adoring student fraternity.

□ □

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Lu and Badali : Nature Poetry of Rajasthan

Dr. Basavaraj Naikar

Dr. I.K.Sharma's English translation of Chandra Singh Badali's Rajasthani poetry entitled *Lu and Badali* is a significant contribution and valuable addition to the realm of Indian Literature in English Translation. This is especially so in the conspicuous and tragic absence of Rajasthani literature in English translation. Any mention of Rajasthan evokes in our mind an image of a vast desert with interminable sand-dunes dotted with the caravan of camels in the glare of hot sun. But this common image and impression will be removed from our mind when we go through the delightful poetry of Chandra Singh Badali (1912-1992).

Born at Birkali, a hamlet in the erstwhile princely State of Bikaner in 1912, Chandra Singh was educated in the native State, as he was not allowed by the education Minister of the State to go to study at the Banaras Hindu University of Varanasi. Although initially he was deeply interested in politics, the quirks of his fate weaned him away from politics to Nature thereby making him the Wordsworth of Rajasthan. When he was in full swing of literary practice, he produced two important works *Badali* (1941) and *Lu* (1951), which earned him instant fame and recognition. The first book *Badali* won him the prestigious Ratnakar Puraskar of the Kashi Nagri Pracharini Sabha and also the Baldevdas Medal. Both the books earned great accolades from well-known critics. For example, Suniti Kumar Chatterjee says about *Lu*, "Now comes his second book of poetry with an awful and formidable message of Lu, a specialty of

Marudesh. Lu and clouds are complementary as if they were Shiva and Shakti, the symbol of life and death..." (p.xiii). Both the books depict two important seasons of Nature common to Rajasthan and happen to be apparently contradictory, but essentially complementary. It is a phenomenon that shows the geographical fact as well as the philosophical truth. Because of our intellectual habit (due to our knowledge of English Literature) we tend to compare any poet with a love for Nature to Wordsworth. But Wordsworth had only a partial acquaintance with Nature, which was only European and not global including the tropical regions. His limitation is rightly noticed and pointed out by Aldous Huxley, who had a broader, global vision. He writes that, "it's pity that he (Wordsworth) never travelled beyond the boundaries of Europe. A voyage through the tropical world would have cured him of his too easy and comfortable pantheism" (p.xviii). Obviously there is a great difference between the observation of blatantly green land and beautiful landscape and that of arid and desert-like land and the latter is certainly more difficult and challenging than the former.

The season of hot wind (Lu) and that of rainy cloud (Badali) are part of the yearly cycle of seasons in Rajasthan as anywhere else. The latter follows the former in accordance with the law of Nature. These two seasons have been personified as human characters for poetic articulation by Chandra Singh. As I. K. Sharma, the translator of the poems rightly opines, "Their importance lies... chiefly in giving us two un-ageing characters, each one heavenly and human at the same time" (xviii). There are quite a few poets in India who have written abundantly on Nature, like Kalidasa, Kuvempu and Bendre. Shelley's "Ode to

the West Wind" immediately comes to our mind when we read about Lu. Shakespeare also refers in some of his plays to the southerly wind which was quite destructive and associated with contagious diseases.

The poet begins the poem with a welcome note to the hot wind popularly called Lu. The one hundred and four stanzas go on describing the negative effect of the hot wind on the landscape of Rajasthan. The poet requests the hot wind to spare the tender, newborn leaves and vines from his scorching influence. Then he recounts how buds, flowers, and blooms have been undone by the hot wind and consequently have lost their secret wines and wild scents. He points out the heartless and destructive nature of the hot wind by referring to a variety of natural things like wild flowers and mango tree, which lose their luster and wilt down. The poet highlights the remorseless and indiscriminate burning of the beauty of the land and snapping of the thread of life. The effect of the hot wind is simply infernal, as is shown in the following stanza:

Red-hot is the sky above,
The earth a steaming pan,
All around it is the same ire:
Life is trapped in a pit of fire (No.19).

The hot wind plays a variety of destructive roles like singeing, sucking and burning all that is pleasing and lush. The trees like Sangaria and Kair and the animals like deer lose their colour and shapes. It is a common practice for people in Rajasthan to keep tagras or improvised water-containers in the desert where a stray deer may come to drink water. But the hot wind sucks all the water in the container and consequently the stray deer get their horns stuck in the empty

manger and begin to die:

Their horns are sunk in empty tagras,
Their hooves look to the sky.
Lu has robbed them of their life,
They know: they are doomed to die (No.35).

This is the tragic effect of the hot wind on the poor animals suffering from intolerable thirst. The poet, therefore, requests the hot wind to show motherly affection to the fawns and spare their lives. The poet offers more details of the tragic effect of the hot wind. He says that the cows, buffaloes and even camels suffer from thirst and lie faint, listless and dead. The hot wind has dried up the milk in the udders of the buffaloes. It enters even the well-shut cattle-shed and sucks away the water of pools, ponds and lakes. The hot wind adds to the other geographical evils of Rajasthan:

The little water we have is saline,
Our land is not fertile,
Our dwellings are broken, stark,
Fling us not, o Lu, in fiery doom (No.59).

The poet goes on to depict the geographical horrors further. He points out that the cattle go thirsty; that the sunken ponds grieve in silence and their buds charts of cracks; that the hot wind sprays the sand on rocks like a foe that inflicts wound first and then sprinkles salt over its. The poet shows how the maidens go to far-off places with their pitchers for collecting water but return home with very little water which they have to use as stingily as ghee. He points out three types of water in Rajasthan – sweet for human beings, saline for body-wash and brine for cattle. The hot wind is such a sadist that it even comes in the way of lovers meeting; and that it doesn't allow the

traveler to roam about freely. Even the sand-dunes alert the traveler not to go ahead and fall dead, but to remain alive at home. The moonbeams playing among the virgin dunes of sand are roasted by the hot wind during the day time. The hot wind thus gets busy in its dance of destruction thereby converting the land of Rajasthan into a veritable hell on the earth. But, like all things in life, the destruction by the hot wind has come to an end at last. The hot wind itself will create a cloud in the sky and compensate for its destruction by the rejuvenating rain. This hope following the despair is articulated beautifully as follows:

Why do you lose cheer, o Lu,
Since clouds are seen in the sky?
What you have burnt will now sprout,
What sprout will swell in fruit (No.98).

Thus the hot wind paves the way for the rainy season, which is welcomed warmly by the people of Rajasthan.

The second part of the Collection namely Badali, consisting of one hundred thirty stanzas depicts the subsequent life of the people, who have been waiting for the rejuvenating rainy season. Hence the poet welcomes the rainy clouds:

May you bring us rains, Badali!
Ashad has already arrived.
Fields, bushes, shrubs all dry –
Each one starving for life (P.27.).

The people want to dance together and roam over virgin dunes and amid low-lying fields. The poet requests the Badali not to waste her life among hills and gorges, but to come down to play amid the sand-dunes that pine to embrace her. The poet personifies

the cloudlets and attributes human feelings and emotions to her. He describes her dressing habit and her intention to please her lover, the sun:

Badali happily dons her royal robes,
Now changes, now goes for a new one,
She does so again and again, yet unsure,
Which one will suit the lover's taste? (No.18)

The poet requests the cloudlet not to roam about (as taught by her co-wife) but to give the tidings of her sweetheart and give a happy time to Murdhara. When the clouds gather in huge columns they look like the giant Himalaya and "merry peacocks then weave a dance/On terraces, lost in a trance" (No.37). Likewise the birds like papihada, titodi and peacocks begin to sing their sweet songs. The flash of lightning in the dark clouds looks beautiful "as of a thin line of gold/had run on a touchstone" (No.48). The poet compares the lightning to a happy married woman:

Lightning! You, a happy married woman,
Are ever with the clouds,
But, tease not the women
Whose lovers are not by (No.50).

After a lot of waiting, people are happy to welcome the month of Sawan, when the sky is filled with the roar of thunder and human hearts are filled with joy. The young girls tie the strong rope to the nearby trees and begin to play the game of swing and feel the ecstatic joy. The Teejaniyas sing Raga Malhar and invite the downpour of water. Once the raincloud falls down from the blue, it falls in the net of her lover, like a maid from a well. Continuous rain fills the drains, tanks, pools, ponds and makes the houses leak:

Houses leak profusely
So are the eyes of women,

Lighting fluctuates across the sky,
So are hearts of men (No.65).

The summer rain hits hard
Rapes the plastered walls,
As though a painter had filled a canvas
Deftly with vibrant forms (No.72).

The rain of Sawan brings joy and awakes the feeling of love in the hearts of men and women. Maidens sing moomal songs, infants in the cradles leap up in delight; green parrots flit about in the trees; toads and frogs croak; and children play for joy and see the rainbow in the sky; the clouds in the sky look like a train of royal swans or elephants; like a train of Sedan-chairs. Clouds seem to play with and tantalize one another.

After this joyous period, the people of Rajasthan are troubled again by the Westerly wind, but are again regaled by the north wind. There seems to be a golden city amid the clouds greeting the sunrays. The poet requests the Badali not to send hail stones and ruin the crops, but to go back home and come again in summer to save them from heat.

On the whole, *Lu* and *Badali* belongs to the genre of Nature poetry. Kalidasa was one of the earliest Nature poets of India, who wrote in Sanskrit. In Karnataka, Bendre and Kuvempu have written excellent Nature poetry. Chandra Singh Badali seems to have continued the great tradition of Nature poetry in Rajasthani language. Nature in its terrific aspect (Hot Wind) and benevolent aspect (Cloudlet) assumes enormous importance for the people of Rajasthan, which is known for its desert-like landscape, where day-to-day life becomes a challenge to the people born there. Chandra Singh shows the cyclicity of seasons

by depicting two contradictory aspects of Nature by personifying them poetically.

Dr. I. K. Sharma (1932--) himself a well-known Indian English poet with a substantial body of poetry to his credit, has offered a memorable rebirth to Chandra Singh by translating his Lu and Badali from Rajasthani into English thereby releasing a local text into the global market and enriching the world literature in English translation. It has been an ideal combination in an Indian English poet translating an Indian (Rajasthani in this case) poet and making him available to the researcher and the connoisseur of poetry. One poet paying homage to another poet through the service of translation is a great ideal for others to follow. I. K. Sharma's English is characterized by lucidity of style, musicality and excellent readability. The reader never feels that he is reading a translation. Even those, (like me) who do not know Rajasthani, can enjoy the poetic beauty, which creates the geographical atmosphere of Rajasthan. Dr. I.K. Sharma follows the technique of domestication to a great extent and that of foreignization to a limited extent (a la Lawrence Venuti). He employs the four-lined stanza form and writes in a sweet and lucid style thereby attracting the attention of the sensitive reader. The short stanzas of four lines each are easy to read, grasp and remember. Dr. Sharma uses the Standard English language, which is marked by ease, felicity and melodious fluency, which is understood by all the English-speaking readers. He has been quite successful in his employment of the technique of domestication here. Yet he has used the technique of foreignization also quite sparingly to create the local colour of Rajasthan by using the Rajasthani words like Lu, Badali, chaitra, Baisakh, Swan, peenju, sangarika,

kair, tagra, Khedja, charas, Akha Teej, Murdhar, jalkag, kanaiya, kalayan, papihada, titodi, teejaniya, moomal, gagas, mamolya, saraluk, sankchud and moongiya etc. Such words create the specificity of Rajasthani geography and culture, which are not known to the speakers of English language and hence remain foreign to them. Dr. Sharma used the technique of foreignization in his translation deliberately and patriotically to induct the local Rajasthani culture into the international culture of English letters and to impregnate the global culture with the local culture thereby enriching it with the gems of exotic beauty. Kudos to Dr. I.K.Sharma! May his tribe increase!

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**Basavaraj Naikar's *The Rani of Kittur:*
The precursor of *Rani Laxmibai*
of *Jhansi***

Dr. R T Bedre

The treasure of India is full of facts and fiction in the form of myths, legends and history. It has invited attention of literary talents for their search for themes. Their familiarity with collective ancient and modern Indian psyche has encouraged poets, novelists and playwrights equally in all modern Indian languages including English. This phenomenon in Indian literature has helped introduce the regional historical heroes and heroic women. Professor Basavaraj Naikar's historical play is one such fine attempt. Indian history in the wake of the British arrival revolves around some select few national figures like Mangal Pande, Tatya Tope and obviously Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi, all these martyrs who bravely fought the historically inspiring War of 1857.

The resistance to the expansion of the British had started long before the War of 1857. The in-famous Doctrine of Lapse had angered a good number of local Princely States in India that culminated or climaxed in the revolt of 1857. Dr Naikar's play, *The Rani of Kittur*: a historical play highlights such a heroic tale of Rani Chennamma, the queen of Kittur from south India. Dr Naikar very candidly writes in the preface to the play:

Long before Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi could come on the scene of history, Rani Chennamma fought the authorities of the East India Company; especially the Political Agent, J M Thackeray, for the autonomy and freedom of her kingdom in 1824 and killed him. In the second war with the enemies, she was defeated by the latter due to the treachery and betrayal by the officers of her own court,

imprisoned in the fort of Bailahongala where she breathed her last, reminiscing the past glory and grandeur of her kingdom (vi).

Very consciously Professor Basavaraj Naikar tries to transcend the heroic tale of Rani Chennamma beyond the frontiers of Karnataka where she is a source of inspiration and pride. He appeals for her due place in the history of India. As he notes in the preface:

The very name of Rani Chennamma inspires the people of Karnataka and whips up the feeling of patriotism, self-respect, responsibility and heroism in them. She is the finest example of female heroism in India and easily comparable to other heroic women and Ranis of India. The Kannada film named after her was a grand success and deserves to be produced in Hindi for a wider circle of spectators. ... I hope that some adventurous drama director will bring it on the stage and inspire the spectators, and that some voluntary translator will render it into the various languages of India (especially Hindi) and of the west (vi-vii).

Professor Naikar admits to have been inspired by Gurucharan Das' historical play, *Larins Sahib* to write this play on Rani Chennamma. His objective is quite explicit- to carry the heroic tale of Rani Chennamma beyond Karnataka to accord her a prominent place in the history of British India, what she strongly deserves. It seems that at the back of his mind, Professor Naikar must have a desire to hold Rani Chennamma in comparison with Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi who is the only known female heroic figure for the North Indian readers. Chennamma fought single handedly against the East India Company for the sovereignty of her state, like Tipu Sultan of Mysore- both deprived of their rightful place as the Indian history is enslaved by the English and Hindu historians.

In the play, *Rani of Kittur*, Professor Naikar

chronicles two generations of the Kittur kingdom- Raja Mallasarja and Sivalingarudrasarja along with brother Sivabasavasarja. Obviously the narrative and actions in the play move around its eponymous character, Rani Chennamma. The play opens with the entry of Chennamma as the newlywed second bride of Raja Mallasarja and her welcome in the palace of Kittur. Unlike a domestic woman, Rani Chennamma wins the heart of Raja's senior queen Rani Rudramma and promises her not to compete in the rat race for throne for her children.

The sudden death of Raja Mallasarja due to the torture of Bajirao Peshwa brings in a crisis in the state of Kittur. Here too quite patiently Rani Chennamma enthrones young Sivalingarudrasarja as the king of Kittur and also makes her own son Sivabasavasarja, elder to the new king to take an oath to be loyal to the new king to avoid the civil war for the throne. Prince Sivabasavasarja takes an oath:

SIVABASAVASARJA: I, Prince Sivabasavasarja, swear in the name of our family god, Lord Gurusiddha that I shall not long for any kind of power or privileges. I shall be the bodyguard of my younger brother Raja Sivalingarudrasarja. I am ever ready to lay down my life whenever there is danger to our kingdom (33).

In the battle of the British against the Peshwas fighting on the side of the former, the prince Sivabasavasarja meets heroic death. But instead of losing her courage in the memory of her dead son, Rani Chennamma supports the wife of her dead son, Janakibai. It shows her courage suitable to the royal women. She consoles her daughter in law:

CHENNAMMA: --- Although I have lost my son, I am proud to note that he lived up to the ideal of Bhairava Kankana that he wore on his right wrist. He laid down his life for the sake of his kingdom.

That gives me a sense of satisfaction. My dear Janaki, don't grieve over the death of your husband, on the contrary, feel proud of him, because it is not an ordinary death, but a heroic and honorable death.

My dear Janaki, though you have lost your husband, you have not lost everybody. We are all alive here to take care of you. Such events are quite common in the royal households. We have to get used to them. My son has kept our kingdom alive by his death (42).

The young king Sivalingarudrasarja is carried away by the pro-British courtiers like Venakatarao and Mallappasetty to pay allegiance to the East India Company. He enters into an insulting treaty with the Company. The well said proverb- won the war but lost in the treaty - is repeated here. Rani Chennamma expected that as the repayment of the military help Kittur had rendered to the British, the latter would grant Kittur autonomy if not freedom. She shouts:

CHENNAMMA: What's this? It means that we have not won our freedom at all. We have only changed our masters. Can we not live independently? Why should we give up Khanapur to the British people? I would not have agreed to such terms and conditions if I had attended such a meeting (45).

It shows her spark of freedom and deadly opposition to an allegiance to the Company. Her understanding of politics is better than that of the king. At times, she guides and whips the king Sivalingarudrasarja for his wrong decision to change the old loyal Gurusiddhappa, the Diwan of the State.

The king's encounter with J M Thackeray leads him to prolonged illness causing his death. After the sad demise of the king of tuberculosis, during the discussion on adoption for the heir of the kingdom, when the courtier Mallappasetty proposes to seek

permission of the Company Sarkar through the Collector of Dharwad, Thackeray, Rani Chennamma roars like an angry tigress, “Who is that fellow called Thackeray? Why should we seek his permission for this, which is an internal affair of the kingdom?” she does not accept the thought of allowing interference of the Company in the royal matter, “That is simply impossible. The people of Kittur will never accept the authority of the British people. We are free to manage our kingdom the way we like”. She reminds the people of Kittur of their power and self-respect, “Let them taste the power of Kittur once. Would they have won the fort of Khanapur from the Peshwas, if we had not extended our help and cooperation to them? (62-63)

Like a worthy ruler and administrator, Rani does not mince words to take to task the infidel courtiers, “Hold your tongue, Mallappasetty. Do you know with whom you are talking? Know your limits before talking with me” (63). Diwan Gurusiddhappa shows the result of Rani’s inspiring speech. He bravely confronts the collector Thackeray when the latter informs him that the adoption is illegal as it has not the approval of the Company.

THACKERAY: Diwan sir, your adoption of the boy Sawai Mallasarja is illegal and therefore, not approved by our higher authorities. I shall refer the matter to the Commissioner Chaplin. Until I get his reply, I have to maintain law and order in Kittur, which belongs to the East India Company now.

GURUSIDDHAPPA: --- Who cares for whether you accept it or not? The citizens of the Kittur have already approved of that.

THACKERAY: Mr. Gurusiddhappa, don’t babble like a child. As there is not legal heir for Kittur, the kingdom belongs to the East India Company according to the Doctrine of Lapse introduced long

back. If you argue further everybody here will be under detention (71-72).

When Thackeray dismisses Gurusiddhappa from the post of Diwan and appoints Venkatarao and Mallappasetty as the joint managers of Kittur, Rani loses her temper and shouts at the top of her voice: “What right has that fellow to dismiss our servants? It is none of his business. Gurusiddhappa, you continue to be in your position as the Diwan as long as I am here” (75). Her anger knows no bounds when she comes to know that Thackeray has posted his own guards near the State treasury and palace gates. She orders to break the treasury and celebrate the Dasara festival as ceremoniously as ever before. She ignites the people of Kittur to wage war against the Company. She fills them with confidence like a true leader with words like—“The entire credit goes to all the loyal officers of our kingdom. The kingdom is ours. We are the masters of our territory. They do not know that people of Kittur love freedom more than their life. Their wealth is not their money, gold or ornaments or land but it is their self-respect. Patriotism, love of this sacred land and love of freedom flows in their veins. Each one of us is equal to tens of their soldiers. Kittur will fight to the last of man on its soil. They would die rather be the slaves of the British” (85).

One also notes her spirit for unity among the Indian states. At times, she is ready to forgive the Peshwa for his wrongdoing in the past to unite against the Company.

In the first war with the Company, the Rani wins the first round. She shows generosity and sympathy towards the captive women and children of the Company officers and takes care that everyone of them is safe. Thackeray has to acknowledge it. He even shows his gratitude toward her. Instead of granting

autonomy to Kittur he intimates her to surrender her state or to face severe problems. The Rani is irritated at his ingratitude and bluntly refuses to accept eleven villages as inams. In the second round of war too, the Rani comes with flying colours. She kills Thackeray and imprisons two company officers, Stevenson and Elliot as hostages but treats them well. But like those of Mornington in Girish Karnad's *Dreams of Tipu Sultan*, the diplomacy of Commissioner Chaplin and Governor Elphinstone are too much for her. They cleverly manage the release of the Company officers engaging the Rani in the fruitless talks of autonomy. The timely bunk of Raja of Kolhapur and the betrayal by her own people like Venkatarao, Mallappasetty, Kannur Virasangappa, Hurakadli Mallappa Sivabasappa, who adulterate the gunpowder in the gunpowder magazine to render the canon dysfunctional, ensure her defeat in the war.

Finally, the fort of Kittur falls after the treachery and the state of Kittur is annexed according to the Doctrine of Lapse and is merged into the Company. Rani Chennamma very bravely faces the situation saying, "No, no! Let us not run away from here like cowards! I shall stay here along with you and brave the danger. My life is not more important than yours" (140)

In this way, Rani Chennamma sets a fine example of how a woman of strong will power can fight against the strong enemy unto the last even when she knew her defeat was certain. She faces every calamity of her life and state bravely and becomes a source of inspiration for the generation of the freedom fighters to come. While reading the play, one is reminded of Girish Karnad's play the *Dreams of Tipu Sultan* on the same line of fighting against the British and against all odds of betrayal. Professor Basavaraj Naikar has

successfully proven to the readers of history and drama that Rani Laxmibai was the Rani Chennamma of Jhansi. He strives to prove Rani Chennamma to quote Sudhanva Deshpande says of Girish Karnad's *Tipu Sultan* "as (...) a courageous warrior who, a century or so earlier, would have been a great ruler, a century or so later, he would have led the Indian anti-colonial struggle"(Deshpande, 21).

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Saru, an image of socially Independent Woman : A Study of Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terror*

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Explored and expressed myriad number of times, it bears repeating that women's writing holds due significance as it gives them enough space to bring out their problems in their own language, produce their own textual meaning, create their own world, and mark their own identity. That is the reason pioneering feminists like Elaine Showalter were hugely concerned with the woman as a writer or in other words 'gynocritics'. These gynocritics endeavour to assert their individuality – the lost individuality- through problematizing the existing patterns.

Women novelists in India have favourably responded to the changed psychological realities of Indian life. Falling in line with them is Shashi Deshpande who is one of the very serious women novelists in Indian writing in English. She depicts different aspects of women's life – especially of the middle class women who are the exemplary representations of women in India for it is they who constitute the major part.

When Deshpande started writing, women had a greater responsibility to shoulder than their predecessors and also they had to strike the right chord between tradition and modernity. As Indira Gandhi points out:

Our future depends greatly on whether the Indian woman has the wisdom and discrimination to distinguish between what to respect and what to reject, whether she is able to achieve a harmonious synthesis between the best of our tradition and the

most desirable of the modern. (Gandhi, 62 - 65)

Deshpande's women are the products of the period, when women in Indian society were witnessing a painful period of transition. All her female protagonists are not types, but powerful individuals who are caught in the conflicts of what customary and stereotypical images demanded from them and the reality.

Her novel *The Dark Holds No Terror* depicts the journey of a modern woman who carries herself forward towards financial independence, emotional balance and social recognition. It is the story of the gradual changes in the life of the Indian girl who lives during the mid-decades of the twentieth century. The women then, had no separate identity for themselves. The distinction is apparent even in the custom of naming them. The sexual politics, as constituted by men, has it that men are always the privileged donors of names and women are its receivers: a father's name or a husband's name becomes hers.

The feminist criticism generally brings to the fore how feminist writers have projected their female protagonist characters with matrophobia – hating one's mother. A woman, hating her mother is a metaphor of hating herself. Saru starts hating her mother, her values and tradition. She cannot tolerate the inequality shown between her brother and herself. This prejudice sows the seed of hatred towards her mother. Saru's mother also would have been a victim of same partial prejudice. Hence, her strict rigidity towards her daughter is a gratifying feeling for her. It is women who usually do not accept the autonomous nature of their gender and Saru's mother is an example of it. Getting enraged whenever she is shown that she is inferior to her brother, Saru always tries to break away from the cocoon built by her mother. She

recalls one of her conversations with her mother, who imposes severe restrictions,

Don't go out in the sun- you'll get darker
Who cares?
Who has to care if you don't? We have to get you married
I don't want to get married
Will you be with us all your life?
Why not?
You can't
And Dhruva?
He's different. He's a boy.

It is evident that parents do not look at their children with the same eyes. Even in childhood a girl and a boy are taught that they are different. In the choice of colours, toys, and in manners they are treated, distinction is made between girls and boys that project certain prejudices and preconceived notions on the child's mind. There was always a puja when Saru's brother had his birthday but nothing on her birthdays. After his death, her birthdays were not even remembered, leave alone being celebrated. It was only on her fifteenth birthday that she got a gold ear ring from her mother as a birthday present.

Education is fundamentally instrumental in bringing a meaningful change in the middle class life style. That is why Saru is willing to change and break away the shackles that fetter her. She is obstinate that she will pursue her studies in medicine and the main obstacle she faces in pursuing her dream is her mother. Her mother tries to persuade her husband not to send her to study medicine, but in vain. For parents, the daughters are commodities to be sold in marriage market whereas the sons are their saviours. Saru's mother echoes the point of view of a typical Indian parent:

Well, plenty of girls go in medicine now. Yes,

but they're girls whose fathers have lots of money. You don't belong to that class. And don't forget, medicine or no medicine, doctor or no doctor, you still have to get her married, spend money on her wedding. Can you do both? Make yourself a pauper, and will she look after you in your old age? Medicine! Five, Six, seven....God knows how many years...Let her go for a B.SC... you can get her married in two years and our responsibility will be over. (DHNT 144)

The transition comes to a whole circle when the young naughty girl Saru, who proclaimed that she would never get married, becomes a young woman and chooses the same marriage to get away from her parents, her home and the tradition that she detests. According to her, Manu is the one who will provide meaning to her life and existence; he comes as a nourishing agent in her life that is short of love and security. The revelation comes later that she has been under an illusory image of Manu. The shelter she sought thinking it as paradise also turned out to be a cage for her. The very power politics from which she wanted to escape was haunting her. As Saru becomes a well known doctor, she becomes socially and economically his superior. The ageless practice of binary opposition of male being superior and female being inferior gets distorted here and Manu simply cannot accept it. In Saru's own words, "he had been the young man and I his bride. Then I was the lady doctor and he was my husband" Man should lead the woman. If the contradictory happens, the system is shaken. Manu who becomes jobless is reduced to a secondary position, as he perceives it. He cannot tolerate people greeting her and ignoring him as greetings and namastes 'were all for' Saru, 'only for me, there was nothing for him' (DHNT 42). A journalist asks him, "How does it feel when your wife earns not only for the butter but for the bread as well" (DHNT 35). It is the beginning of his inferiority complex. He

becomes a different spouse altogether. He teases and abuses her at night times, other times behaving normally. In order to show his power and masculinity, he employs the same weapon of sexually assaulting her. Saru feels that she has been 'raped' by her husband and it is not an expression of love but a slaughter on her dignity and esteem.

Saru bears with the agony quietly, expecting for the things to improve. The emotional quotient of women is such that they go to any extent to please their male counterparts. Saru asks herself without a solution, 'what do you want me to do? How can I please you?'

She goes to her home when she knows about her mother's death. Even then she is not a welcome species. Her father turns his back and avoids her. She feels that if it had been an arranged marriage, her parents would have supported her tremendously. As the famous novelist Chinua Achebe puts it out in his short story, "Marriage is a Private Affair" 'they (parents) are most unhappy if the engagement is not arranged by them'.(Achebe, 19 - 26) Saru's father's indifference indicates his disappointment with her and her marriage. He could not imagine a girl to have taken her own decision in marriage. Finally, she wants to stay back at her home away from her husband, at least for a short time. She struggles to overcome the hurdles of her life including the accepted patriarchal norms. She receives Manu's letters but opens none of them. Later, she hears the news of his arrival to bring her back. But she feels that she has attained the inner strength to face what may come and so she asks her father not to open the door when he comes, believing that after being tired of knocking, he would depart. It is symbolical that she departs from the clutches of chauvinism which has held her as a puppet in its grip. Once she decides to free herself, she feels relieved

and experiences a sense of comfort and security for the first time in her life.

Shashi Deshpande shows Saru as a woman who attains social independence though all odds were against her. Her strength is revealed in the due course of time and she gets the maturity to see through things. She is in every way a microcosmic representation of Indian women.

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Nationalism in Bhabani Bhattacharya's *So Many Hungers !*

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Bhabani Bhattacharya is a realist. His novel *So Many Hungers !* was published a couple of months after India's attainment of independence. There are indeed so many hungers- hunger for food, hunger for affection, hunger for love, hunger for lust, hunger for money, hunger for name and fame, hunger for sacrifice and hunger for the general welfare of all.

The Gandhian era marked a quantum leap for the nationalist movement in the country. Gandhiji's experiments with truth and non-violence as means to attain independence for the country, besides influencing the thoughts of intellectuals worldwide, aroused, as never before, freedom consciousness among the people of different social strata down to the masses at the grassroots level, in the country. This phenomenon served as a fertile area for the writers of the day to select themes pertaining to the changing patterns of nationalistic upsurge in the land, gravitating from British imperialism to Independence, pure and simple.

Among the select band of novelists who have chosen for their fiction the themes based on the aspects of patriotism thrown up in the struggle for India's independence, Bhabani Bhattacharya is one. His novel *So Many Hungers* is acclaimed as ... "not only the last political novel about the freedom struggle of this period but also one of the best of this category." (Sarma 227) Its deals with India's struggle for freedom in the early nineteenforties.

It records vividly the Bengal famine of 1943 and

Quit India Movement of 1942 and has, as its theme, man's hunger for food and political freedom. It is an authentic record of the mass uprising and acts of sabotage in the wake of Quit India Movement. This novel is unique in the sense that it does not merely depict the freedom movement in the country, as most other contemporary novels have done, but has reached out to the root cause responsible for such movement. M.Tarinayya sounds realistic when he says: "To those without a sense of the history of India, particularly the history of the freedom movement, and some knowledge of the profound philosophy of woman as power (Shakti), Bhabani Bhattacharya's *So Many Hungers !* may mean very little." (Tarinayya 117)

Accordingly, the circumstance leading to the Quit India movement, which forms the sense of action for the novel, is helpful in comprehending the nationalistic concerns of the novel. When the Second World War broke out, the British Government sought India's cooperation. For this, the Indian National Congress set the declaration of independence for India as a precondition. But when the British appeared to be outmatched for the superior armed might of Germany, the Congress climbed down and demanded the establishment of provisional National Government at the centre. On the turning down of this proposal by the British Government, the Congress launched the Civil Disobedience Movement in October, 1940.

Finding the British Government still unrelenting, the Congress demanded an immediate end to the British rule and adopted the 'Quit India' resolution in August, 1942. The Viceroy of India banned the Congress and initiated drastic repressive measures. Mahatma Gandhi and other prominent leaders were arrested. This triggered a mass revolt and recourse to violence. About the situation in Calcutta, Bhabani

Bhattacharya writes, “For ten days the city was in the grip of revolt. A sudden thunderstorm on a dark, deadly gulf of Time? For at that moment the Jap stood firm on the doorstep of Bengal, poised for attack. The national movement could no longer wait and watch the peril and mark time.” (*So Many Hungers!* 65)

The novel depicts how Gandhiji’s message of truth and non-violence and fearlessness as the weaponry for securing independence to the country has inspired characters like Devesh Babu and his grandson, Rahoul, and instilled in them patriotic zeal and a spirit of sacrifice for the cause of country’s freedom. Devesh, the 70-year old retired teacher in Bengal’s countryside village of Baruni, is an embodiment of Gandhian principles of love, truth and non-violence, which makes the villagers call him ‘Debata’. He undergoes imprisonment several times for participation in the freedom movement. He echoes Gandhiji’s view when he says that his fight is not with the people of England but with their ruthless rulers who hold Indians in subjugation for their narrow interest. He exhorts the villagers, “...do not betray the flag. Do not betray yourselves. We stand or fall with our inmost faith ‘ahimsa’...Be strong. Be true. Be deathless. Bandemataram!.” (101)

After Devash Babu’s arrest in the Quit India Movement, his family members, uprooted from the village due to the Bengal famine, trek to Calcutta in search of living. There they undergo untold suffering and privation. Freedom fighter’s use hunger as a spiritual weapon to fight injustice and they demonstrate ‘Satyagraha’ by restoring to ‘hunger-strike’. Devash Babu undertakes a fast unto death while in prison. Rahoul, grandson of Devesh babu, a young scientist, initially not interested in the freedom movement, once happens to see through his laboratory

window the police kicking and abusing freedom fighters in a procession and trampling underfoot the national flag. Enraged, he challenges the police only to find himself in the prison. There he declares, “We must stand ready to carry out Gandhi’s command, Do or die.” (67)

Gandhiji’s arrest, Nehru’s brave statement at his trial in Gorakhpur prison, Devesh’s influence and his own arrest all these have had the effect of his being sucked into the vortex of the freedom movement. He feels the voice of India echo in his blood throb and he becomes an irrepressible patriot: “Rahoul was no hero-worshipper. His ideas had been shaped on the anvil of reason, and emotion had no visible place in the process. Yet that one personage who India knew to be her man of destiny stirred his depths.” (41)

After his release from prison, Rahoul addresses a welfare society meeting and holds the British responsible for the famine. He demands the British to clear out of the country: “...Quit India’ cried the two million dead of Bengal...’Quit’ cried all India. You have done us some good along with much evil. For the good you have done you have been paid in full. The accounts have been settled. Now for God’s sake, Quit!.” (212-213)

Kajoli, ‘Dadu’s granddaughter’ (Devesh) happens to be all set to take prostitution just to save the family from hunger. On knowing about the hunger strike, her grandfather has undertaken, she changes her mind and escapes from the clutches of the pimp about to sell her. She thinks that she would rather sell newspapers and make her meager yet dignified living. Like her spiritual brother Rahoul (Devesh’s grandson) she places the interests of her country above her own. The words, “Kajoli, you have made your pranam to the flag, you are a fighter” (269), keep ringing in her ears.

Rahoul's wife who has been opposing his involvement in the freedom struggle is also by now completely transformed. She tells her husband before he is taken away by the police. "I too shall go your way soon...I am not silly thing I used to be, you know that." (213) Rahoul is surprised at the undaunted spirit of the freedom fighters in prison. He senses a secret and excited triumph in their voice.

Listening Rahoul began to lose his sadness,... he saw the horizon of the east illuminated by a new dawn. Freedom could not drop from the skies, nor be asked from, lands beyond the seas, but there, in the vast swamp of suffering and struggle, would it break into bloom, growing out of the seeds of the spirit...strange intense look of conquest kindled in his face as he gave his voice to the united voices: The more they tighten the chains, the more the chains loosen! (214-15).

The novel *So Many Hungers!* thus depicts a phase of the Indian national movement when people, in towns and villages fought for complete independence of the country. Gobinda Prasad Sarma has rightly commended on the special feature of the novel when he says: "Instead of merely depicting...the national movements superficially, this novel goes deeper unlike others of its kind and reveals the agony of slavery of the whole nation." (Sarma 232)

Even after independence, themes of national importance continue to dominate the literary scene because the nationalistic movement which had influenced the life of whole generation has now to be viewed from fresh perspective, from the vantage position of freedom. That is why the novels of post-independence period generally strike a different chord. Commending on such a change, K.R.Chandrasekharan rightly observes:

Those produced immediately after the country

became free reveal a new consciousness of Indianness and the Indian heritage as contrasted with Western traditions and culture. When the excitement of the struggle and exaltation of the achievement have died down, writers begin to look at the problems of the country with greater realism and detachment... (Chandrasekharan 36).

If the awakening and struggle for independence form the first two stages of the development of nationalism, the third stage is said to be that of consolidation. "...this third phase of nationalism takes different forms like claiming additional territory, settling disputes over territory, efforts towards maintaining and tightening the homogeneity or integration of the nation, and striving for the economic and cultural development..." (Sarma 237)

Dr. Srinivasa Iyengar states, "*So Many Hungers!* is no doubt an impeachment of man's inhumanity to man, but it is also a dramatic study of a set of human beings caught in a unique and tragic predicament." (419) According to him, true nationalism, encompass the entire gamut of ever-evolving interest of a country its security from forces within or without, preservation of the means to ensure peace, happiness, prosperity, safety, security and progress of its people and a true nationalist is one who helps to strengthen such interests and eschews, in thoughts, word and deed, any more that is even remotely likely to weaken those interests.

Events of the early post-independence period such as the partition of the country with its disastrous aftermath, the merger of the princely states with the Indian union and the development of the nation serve as ideal materials for the writers to dwell upon to sustain patriotic fervour in the people. Bhabani Bhattacharya, a true nationalist with a deep concern for the welfare of the society, continues to be interested

in the themes of vital national significance.

To Bhattacharya, literature is a bridge between peoples. It promotes better understanding and better relationships with people. Bhattacharya has all praise for English literature which serves as a solid bridge between peoples and nations. As a corollary to it, Bhattacharya considers English language as the most potent medium and more over it is an international language.

It is quite interesting to see that Bhattacharya's approach to many world problems is reasonable because being no extremist, he always advocates the policy of reconciliation and re-adjustment in this complex world especially when various ideologies are preached and practised.

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Gender Discrimination in Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting*

Dr. Md. Jawed Akhtar

Anita Desai is one of the leading voices to have given graphic description of the woman's inner world, her sensibility, her sulking frustration and the storm raging inside her mind. The central theme of her novels is the existential predicament of woman as an individual. She has written novel after novel about the miserable condition of women suffering under their insensitive and inconsiderate husbands. Her novels are known for the exploration of the inner recesses of the mind of a woman. If we examine her characters we will find that Desai's focus is on disintegration in the inner and the outer lives of her women characters.

Feminism is a socio-political movement for the freedom of women in a male dominated society. A feminist is one who advocates for the cause of women. In India feminism is not only as old as Sita but can also be seen in Sati, wife of Lord Shiva. She not only set side her husband's wish and advice against participating in Yajna organized by her father but also avenged her husband and her own insult by jumping into the Yajna. A number of examples can be seen in Hindu mythology where women asserted their supremacy, for instance Sita without whom 'Ashwamedha' Yajna was incomplete or Draupadi whose pride and honour was one of the main reasons for the battle of Mahabharat or Mata Gujri whose single verdict made Guru Gobind Singh sacrifice his four sons.

Anita Desai has given a new direction to novel

writing in modern India. To some, it is her psychoanalytic method; to others it is the use of poetic prose, and yet to a few others it is the artistic way of projecting life. A close scrutiny of her works shows another dimension that she added to her fiction-the importance given to neglected women in Indian society. Anita Desai, by the powerful searchlight of her observation, focuses on the dark side of her characters personality and searches out womanliness in them to prove that they are beings not devoid of feelings but in search of love and life.

Her novel *Fasting, Feasting* deals with the story of the two very different worlds-an extremely orthodox and domineering Indian family and an unusually idiosyncratic family in Massachusetts. Uma, the protagonist of the first part of the book represents the attitude of the author. Through this woman character, Anita Desai wants to expose the hypocrisy, and male chauvinism in a particular conservative family. She shows how Uma bears the brunt of many insults and abuses flung by her own parents. Though she is the most neglected child of the family, yet she is needed at every time. In the very opening of the book the author connotatively presents the 'swinging sofa'. The opening passage is so rich in both matter and manner that it is enough to suggest the ensuing events and the discriminating attitude of the parents to their daughters. It opens: "On the veranda overlooking the garden, the drive and the gate, they sit together on the creaking sofa-swing, suspended from its iron frame, dangling their legs so that the slippers on their feet hang loose. Before them, a low round table is covered with a faded cloth, embroidered in the centre with flowers. Behind them, a pedestal fan blows warm air at the backs of their heads and necks." (Desai, 3)

If the passage is practically analyzed, we find that there are certain words and phrases which are highly suggestive and are so beautifully placed that they point to the story as a whole. Sitting on the sofa swing and dangling their legs back and forth, the parents are imagined as selfish and luxuriant characters doing nothing but giving only orders to the protagonist, Uma. The cacophonous sound prevails on the whole passage and clearly suggests the intention of the sitting parents. The adjective 'creaking' before sofa-swing', heightens the effects of the dominating parents whose hearts seem to mutter and grumble without any reason. Most probably, the reason of their frustration and step-motherly treatment can be sought in the psychology of the parents - such parents who are more interested to boy child than a girl child. The phrase, 'faded cloth' again explicitly shows the faded and darkened attitude of the orthodox male society. The term 'pedestal fan' seems to show the ill-fated, frustrated Uma who went on working without any rest, blowing warm air to the family.

The family, in which Uma is brought up, is highly conservative, traditional and bragging. Everything is in the direct control of the Mama and Papa. Mama keeps ordering the cook through Uma from her swing throne. The parents don't do anything of the house except visiting to the coffee house and attending the clubs. Both their daughters are very submissive and so they seldom rebel against the step-motherly conduct of the parents. Mama once recalls her past days when she was a child in her parent's house. She remembers: "In my days girls in the family were not given sweets, nuts, good things to eat. If something special had been bought in the market, like sweets or nuts, it was given to the boys in the family." (p. 6)

Anita Desai advocates for the equal rights of women. Then only the chariot of the family can move smoothly. Her attitude is very close to Anees Jung's: "In this complex pantheon of diversities, the Indian woman remains the point of unity, unveiling through each single experience a collective consciousness prized by a society that is locked in mortal combat with the power and weakness of age and time. She remains the still centre, like the centre in a potter's wheel, circling to create new forms, unfolding the continuity of a racial life, which in turn has encircled and helped her acquire a quality of concentration." (Jung, 26)

Well, a cyclonic wave comes to sweep off the remaining affection, when Uma's mother becomes pregnant for the third time. She gives birth to a son. The birth of a son as against a daughter in a conservative family in India is generally a matter of great enthusiasm and enjoyment. The author observes: "Arriving home, however, he (Papa) sprang out of the car, raced into the house and shouted the news to whoever was there to hear." (p. 17) When she came home, weak, exhausted and short-tempered, she tried to teach Uma the correct way of folding nappies, of preparing watered milk, of rocking the screaming infant to sleep. As she goes out to do her homework, all of a sudden comes a call of Mama to leave all the homework. She snapped her and asked her to do at first the works related to the infant. To crown the effect, Uma was prevented from going to school and told mercilessly to stay at home to help with Arun. Mama used to say: "You know you failed your exams again. You're not being moved up. What is the use of going back to school? Stay at home and look after your baby brother." (p. 21)

What a great irony! Arun, the baby brother of Uma, was sent to America for higher education; but Uma is prevented from taking education of even the matriculation. It reminds us of Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* in which Chacko, the brother of Ammu, is sent to Oxford for higher education. But, on the other hand, Ammu is deprived of getting even the school education up to matriculation. Why? Because according to Pappachi, College education is for the women in society who find nothing but a step-motherly treatment in a male dominated family.

Uma undergoes two traumatic experiences related to matrimony. Her sister is married to a rich man. Though Uma was married to Harish, a man of fatherly age, but he didn't behave like husband. It was revealed when Uma wrote letters to her parents telling that Harish was away in Meerut on work and had not returned. Papa, later on, learnt the fact that they had been duped. Actually, Harish was married already. He had a wife and four children in Meerut where he ran an ailing pharmaceutical factory to save, for which he had needed another dowry. Perhaps this is why he married Uma. In course of time, her marriage was somehow cancelled.

The novel presents a fine contrast. The title of the book is itself oxymoronic. There are some characters who are feasting with merriment and joy. But the book has also some characters whose lives are meant for fasting only and that too both physically and spiritually. The daughters, Uma and Aruna long for parental affection, but they are seldom given proper affection and care.

On the other hand, Mama and Papa are feasting and enjoying the zenith of peace and happiness. Aruna

feasts on Mama and Papa and also on Uma. But as time rolls on, he wants to enjoy freedom. In the second part of the book, Melanie, a little child, is devoid of parental care and sympathy. She is so much neglected that she develops an aberrant and un-understanding attitude to everyone of the house. In a fit of anger she bursts: "I won't eat anything you cook. You can give it to the cook. Give it to him! She points dramatically to Aruna. I am not going to eat any of that poison. Everything you cook is - poison! She howls, and blunders out of the room, leaving her mother white with amazement." (p. 207) As a matter of fact, a child's mind is very soft and sensitive. It must be tackled with love and care. It is a psychological truth that the mind of a child is so sensitive that when his innocence comes in contact with experience, it begins to bleed and consequently he is haunted by these nightmarish experiences all through his life. And this is what we see in the life of the little Melanie.

It is to be noted that Anita Desai is one of the great champions of woman's cause and her identity crisis in a male dominated societal framework. She also favours the quest of the 'free' woman of the world particularly in the Asian diaspora. She strongly stresses the need for woman's activity in every field of life. She holds the view: "Privacy and silence are unnatural conditions to Indian women, intensely social as they are. Without silence and privacy, no two consecutive and comprehensible lines to independent work and intellectual exercise by women. Why do we not have an Indian Mrs. Carlyle or a Scishonagan or a lady Murasaki? There was a literary tradition at all that women writers could follow even if only as camp followers." (Desai, "Indian Women Writers" 58)

The story of Anamika in this book is equally significant to study the gender discrimination in the indifferent, and harsh male-dominated atmosphere. She is simply lovely "as a flower is lovely, soft, petal-skinned, bumblebee-eyed, pink-lipped, always on the verge of bubbling dove-like laughter, loving smiles, and with a good nature like radiance about her. Wherever she was, there was peace, contentment, well being" (p. 67). She was not only pretty and good but an outstanding student as well. She did so brilliantly in her final exams that she won a scholarship to Oxford - a place where only the most favoured and privileged could ever hope to go. But unfortunately her parents are so conservative and possessive that they didn't allow the girl to go to Oxford to study. The letter of acceptance from Oxford was locked by the parents in a steel cupboard in their flat and whenever visitors came, they showed the paper of acceptance to them with pride. It shows their backwardness, hypocrisy and ostentation. The parents wanted to give the hands of their daughter to only that man who had qualification equal to hers.

But the powerful fate was not in favour of Anamika. She was married to a man, much older than her, grim-faced and conscious of his own superiority to everyone else: "Those very degrees and medals had made him insufferably proud and kept everyone at a distance." (p. 69). On the marriage day, no bridegroom jokes were played at the wedding, no little gifts were given to him. In fact, he didn't like all these things. He barely seemed to notice Anamika even at the wedding day.

All the scholarship, distinction, beauty and good behavior of Anamika were of no worth at the house of

her husband. There she was treated worse than animals; she was beaten regularly by her mother-in-law as if it was her routine life to beat her. To crown the effect, while she was beaten black and blue, her husband stood by and approved. He did not object to this inhuman treatment meted out to the lonesome, isolated woman. Anamika spent her entire time in the kitchen doing all sorts of kitchen work. She had to cook for the whole family. The family was so enormous that meals were eaten in shifts – “first the men, then the children, finally the women.” (p. 70) She has to eat the remains in the pots before scouring them. If the pots were not thoroughly rubbed and cleaned, her mother-in-law threw them on the ground and made her do them again. She was also forced to massage the lady’s feet, a practice even today present in the remote illiterate village surroundings. Moreover she never went out of the house except to the temple with other women. This piteous plight of Anamika amazed Aruna and she wondered ‘what Anamika did with all the fine clothes and jewellery she had been given at her wedding.’ (p. 71)

Thus, Anita Desai, a great observer of men and manners aptly shows the constant urge of woman’s freedom in *Fasting, Feasting*. She seems to give a good retort to the dictum prevalent in society that the woman should be judged and perceived as object and not as subject. Woman is not a mere tradition-tossed toy in the hands of conservative society. She is not a spineless, wooden creature subjected to male authority. Anita Desai’s treatment of feminism is different in the sense that her protagonists are generally not rebellious in nature, rather they suffer and suffer only to learn how to encounter with the harsh realities of life. Like the tragic heroes of William

Shakespeare, her female characters learn by suffering. It is suffering which purifies the ‘dross of desire’ in the characters. K.R.S. Iyengar is of the opinion that in Anita Desai “the inner climate, the climate of sensibility that clears or rumbles like thunder or suddenly blazes forth like lightning is more compelling than the outer weather, the physical geography or the visible action.” (Iyengar, 464) Moreover, her feminist outlook is not vague, partial and monotonous but is always suffused with poetic exuberances and moral imagination. However, C.L. Khatri questions the authenticity of Anita Desai’s knowledge of Indian life in his provocative paper “Anita Desai’s *Fasting, Feasting* Authenticity in Peril”.

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Shobha De's *Snapshots*: A Feminist Perspective

Talluri Mathew Bhaskar

Shobha De is Indian best selling woman novelist. Her novels deal with glamorous women from the elite class. Romance fiction is given prominent place in the fiction of Shobha De, Jacki Collins etc. They concentrate on the lives of women celebrities accepting the new pattern of their life style in their novels. The love story pulps are sprinkled with sexual innuendoes and lengthy descriptions of beautiful women and their erotic adventures. Shobha De has written more than seventeen books so far out of which seven are novels. Her *Snapshots* (1996) brings out a very realistic picture of the urban women and their unorthodox life style. The novel reveals the life of the six school friends Swati, Aparna, Reema, Rashmi, Surekha and Noor. Shobha is the first woman writer to portray the urban Indian women. Her women are glamorous, modern, pragmatic, self-assertive and affluent. Neeraj Kumar opines:

Shobha De has tried her best to expose the moral breakdown of modern society in which a hapless and forsaken woman longs for fulfilment and wants to fly in the sky unfettered. So her women go through the upheavals of life on physical and emotional levels to finally achieve some measure of freedom from social bondage. Her novels deal with men and women belonging to the upper-class or middle-class—their obsessions, disappointments and insecurities. She wants equal opportunities for women. (Neeraj 182)

Infidelity, incest, rape, lies and even death and the evil that lurks beneath the apparently placid everyday lives of these six women Reema, Swati, Aparna, Surekha, Rashmi and Noor form the substance

of the novel appropriately called *Snapshots*. They represent different kinds of urban women in India. The novel begins with Aparna's succumbing to Prem. In fact Aparna is not in love with Prem but she needs him. The novelist says:

Aparna had grown up with shame. Shame about her body. Shame about her adolescent looks. Shame about her background. Shame about practically every aspect of her life. It was the environment she was raised in. Guilt was its defining feature. She couldn't recall a time when she wasn't made to feel accurately conscious of every small pleasure—emotional or physical. And here she was with an employee, a married one at that, enjoying what was popularly known as 'dirty weekend'. (p.6)

Aparna is a divorcee, undeterred, she reaches the top rung of the corporate ladder, and nothing can undermine her confidence and wholeness. In her social and professional sphere, her conduct is anti-patriarchal and anti-colonial. She feels sorry for her husband, Rohit. Aparna rejects marriage. To her the word 'husband' is an awful one:

She hated herself for continuing to think of him in those terms . . . husband, husband, husband. Awful word. (p.24)

Rohit is portrayed as a dominating and selfish character in the novel. Aparna does not like to be treated and humiliated like a maid servant. She feels disturbed because of her powerless position in her life with Rohit. She hates the dominant nature of Rohit. She struggles for the equal powers and rights. De uses her pen caustically in order to advocate the women's place by defining strange human relationships, where sex acts like a catalyst to reach the competent heights of her personal career. De's women realise that female empowerment is a product of financial independence. Man's insistence on economic control emerges from his knowledge of the best was to keep women

paralyzed. De has granted financial freedom to her female protagonists in *Snapshots*. Each female character desires for power, and enjoys power and battles to control power. Power-conscious, ambitious females are the product of postcolonial culture. They realise that their power is rooted in their sexuality. The traditional women are model of physical exploitation but De's women in this novel, are the masters of their destiny. The social status of women has been changing with each decade leaving scope for their freedom and individuality on the one and a good deal of social conflict and ideological struggle on the other. These changes have left a great influence on marital relations and morality of modern women in the society.

Most of De's women violate the norms prevalent in the institution of marriage as they consider it a way to subjugation. They hold the view that liberation from the shackles of marriage is a means of emancipation for themselves. Aparna's attitude results in the divorce with her husband, Rohit. She remains undisturbed even after the divorce. She leads an independent life without any support of a man as 'A corporate woman, an Indian corporate woman. A business woman'. (p.180)

In colonial literature women's desire for economic self-sufficiency is either ostracized socially or ignored completely. But Shobha De's women realise that female empowerment is a product of financial independence, and are very often career minded personalities. Swati's friends in response to her invitation assemble at a lunch in Reema's home with their snapshots, albums, old photographs and new photographs.

Swati names her serial "Sisters of the Sub-continent". Swati receives an attractive offer from Hong

Kong to produce a serial on a subject which deals with women—Indian women. Swati sends flowers to Reema's house to record their voices secretly. They start sharing their memories, experiences, dark secrets—some happy others bitter sweet and some downright poisonous, come to surface.

De's women have diverse marital status. Rashmi is an unwed mother saddled with the responsibility of a bastard son. Swati and Aparna are divorcees. Swati led a life of her own with her former husband in London. She lives the life of a liberated woman. Noor is still a maid and is doomed to die unmarried at the end of the novel. The married life of Reema and Surekha expose the hypocrisy and duplicity of modern women. Reema's lover, Raju is an example of those people in the society who treats girls like sex-dolls. Reema and Surekha look for rich people as their husbands. Reema's mother encourages her to marry Ravi, son of a prosperous business man. She says:

'Just imagine, you'll be the first girl from your batch—everybody will be jealous of you. And think of the boy you're getting! He isn't just any old fellow. Ravi is rich. He is also kafi good-looking. Nice family—small. No jhanjat. No in-law problem. Good house. Car with driver, ... These people are broad-minded. They won't stop you'... (pp.70-71)

During her school days Reema was attracted to Raju, an uneducated dropout. It is not true love but only infatuation or attraction. Raju is the son of a catering manager of a club. Reema started bunking the classes to spend time with Raju. She crosses all the limits prescribed by the society. She becomes pregnant. When Swati asks Raju to marry Reema, he rejects and blames her:

Raju had laughed heartlessly and said. 'Forget it. I didn't force her to do anything. She wanted so.

She asked me to. She was the one who put my hand under her dress. She was the one who lay down first. She forced me to. She was hot, she would have even done it with a goat. And who knows who was responsible. Maybe it was me. But maybe it wasn't. Marriage? Are you crazy? I'm not even eighteen. We'll get arrested.' (p.99)

It throws light on teenagers who long for sex without thinking of its consequences. When Raju rejects to marry Reema, she got it aborted by Swati's aunt Dr. Rai. Reema continues her study. Later on Raju ends his life and his death remains a mystery.

Nobody quite knew what happened, but Raju's body—a bloody, mangled mass, had been discovered near a sewage dump. The official version was that he'd killed himself.' So, one more mysterious death had got buried in government files. (p. 101)

Reema marries Ravi, the son of a prosperous business man. However, her married life with Ravi is not happy. She finds that her husband is not interested in participating in sex and satisfying her. Hence she turns to Ranadheer, her husband's brother to gratify her sexual desires. Though it is immoral for a woman to have sex with her brother-in-law, it is not unnatural to the cosmopolitan women in India. Swati comments on it:

'There's nothing unnatural about it. Come on, you can tell us. I believe it's the done thing in Delhi society to sleep with your husband's brother. Wow, Reema, maybe you'll start a similar trend in Bombay.' (p.104)

It exposes the shallowness of morality in aristocratic families of urban world.

The novelist has touched upon the different facets of an urban woman's life and her plight but no issue has received the same kind of full-throated expression

as the question of matrimony and sex. In De's fictional world, successful working women are no utopian dreamers. They live their lives as they please and take care of their mental health. The married life of Surekha is also not happy. Surekha in her middle-class environment makes a lesbian relationship with an old school friend. She hates to have sex with her husband. Dolly, a Parsee girl is Surekha's friend. Dolly helps Surekha's family a lot. Surekha marries a prosperous man Harsha at the age of nineteen. She is always watched by her mother-in-law. Surekha is not pleased with the marital life with her husband. Sex with her husband is meaningless for her. She says:

What is there? It doesn't cost me anything. I open my legs mechanically and stare at the clock on the wall across the bed. It's all over in about six to eight minutes.' (p.158)

Surprisingly Dolly was not jealous of her friend Surekha. Dolly loves Surekha very much.

"Over the years, their relationship had evolved into an intense, mutually-dependent camaraderie. Surekha's family didn't suspect their relationship since it was beyond their imagination to do so. Besides, Dolly had made herself virtually indispensable to their lives". (159)

In fact, when Swati humiliates Dolly publicly during their school days, it is only Surekha who consoles Dolly. Dolly swallows insecticide, when Surekha's marriage is decided. Dolly earns money and owns a flat next to Surekha's building. Noor reveals to her friends the secrets between Dolly and Surekha. Surekha has more satisfying relationship with Dolly. Surekha is responsible for the failure of all Dolly's marriage proposals. She stops Dolly from joining the job of German Bank in Singapore. When she is criticised by her friends, Surekha says softly:

'It isn't what you people are thinking. Nobody will understand our relationship. It is ... it is ... spiritual. We must have had some connection in our last lives.' (p.155)

Surekha feels lucky to have such a friend. Rashmi is a bold, ambitious woman who enters the film industry. She is an unwed-mother. Her family life, a consequence of male power has been deeply affected. In this novel, she is the only one, who despite her rebellion remains a victim. Shobha De very rarely allows her female protagonists to become powerless creatures. Rashmi is a model and a small stage-actress. She hates household duties and responsibilities. She holds the opinion that the domestic work such as clearing up, washing and cooking to be a source of oppression. She performs her motherly duties half-heartedly. She ignores Pip's order for doing the domestic work. She also earns money and contributes her share in the family. Parminder—Pips in short had plenty of money but he never gives her money to run the home. She takes up the odd assignments like audio visuals, commercials and other jobs, anything that paid her the much needed money. Her attitude leads to break-up of her marriage. She adopts singlehood and rejects the patriarchal institution of marriage and family. When Pips reveals his intention not to help her even in any situation, Rashmi breaks down and weeps uncontrollably. She accuses him:

This isn't fair. You're a selfish beast. A brute. You used me.' The accusations had continued for half an hour, while Pips had wandered around her small flat, adjusting picture frames and straightening objects. Rashmi had rushed into her room and locked herself in. Two hours later when she re-emerged, Pips was gone. He'd scribbled a note on the telephone-pad: 'Hotels don't get pregnant. And

they provide clean sheets.' That was it. (p.47)

Rashmi's story reveals the lives of the women behind the glittering silver screen, how they are exploited, misused and ill-treated by the directors and producers of the Bollywood. Rashmi gives birth to a son who is also named after Pips. The novelist brings out the humanism and the psychology of the bastard-children through Pips junior. Her son Pips asks his mother, Rashmi:

'Why can't you be like other mummies?' He'd demand and Rashmi would be tempted to reply: 'Because I am not like other mummies. And you are not like other kids. You, my dear chap, are a bastard. Yes, a real-life bastard. Of course you do have a father. All bastards do. But he is not my husband. He is someone else's husband. And father. Now do you understand why your mummy can't be like other mummies?' (p.34)

Noor is born in an aristocrat family. Her mother, Begum is a beautiful woman. The narrator says about Noor' mother:

The begum was a distant, cold woman, entirely shut off from her family and, perhaps, the world. She lived in a private sealed off environment, talking to her pet parrots, getting massaged endlessly with freshly-ground almond oil and listening to soul-stirring ghazals. The children saw her only if she was ready to meet them. (pp.51-52)

Noor's father is Nawab. Her parents were blessed with two children, Noor and Nawaz. Nani is the old maid from Hyderabad. She rears them since their birth. Nawab, Noor's father estranged his wife, Begum. Noor meets with an accident and lives in coma for two years during her college days. When she opens her eyes, she sees her mother weeping in the arms of a man she has never seen before. Later there develops an incestuous relationship between Noor and Nawaz.

They start love-making ignoring the reality that they are brother and sister of the same parents.

De dazzles the readers with her frank and candid tales of human relationships, particularly man-woman relationship and old and new value patterns. The changing moral values of people reaching new heights in riches and civilization is given an unrestrained depiction in her novels. In her writing on sex, De is not restrained by social sanctions. De evinces a daredevil courage in writing freely about sex, the new woman and society. Nani, the old servant maid informs Begum of the illicit relationship of brother and sister. But Begum's reaction is cold:

'I'm sure it isn't anything like that. They are children after all. This is a part of growing up. Just curiosity and innocence. They must have been playing some game. Nothing more.' (p.120)

Nani wonders at the cool response of her mistress. After many years Noor realises that her's is an immoral and sinful act. At the end of the novel, Noor commits suicide.

Swati is another new woman. She is the only daughter of mixed parentage. Her father is Keralite and her mother is a half-Assamese and half-Bengali. Swati married a British man called Mr. Bridges. He is a football team captain. Mr. Bridges considers that his wife Swati is a sex maniac. She elopes with Rohit, Aparna's husband. Swati has sex with her friend, Noor's brother, Nawaz. They continued it and Nawaz presented her some gifts stolen from the house. Aparna ridicules Swati. Swati's answer reflects the deceptive and dominating nature of ambitious modern woman who plays various tricks to achieve her selfish ends. Swati says:

I told you before—I don't steal husbands.
Boyfriends, yes. Not husbands. Ask him if you don't

believe me. Go on, call and find out if you have the guts. Call now. I'll speak to him.' (p.126)

Swati's plea is that she has rightfully taken Aparna's husband away because Rohit has no true love and affection for his wife Aparna. She says:

'He was such a swine, baby. I don't know what you ever saw in him. A selfish swine. You should thank me for saving you.... He didn't love you—ever. He felt sorry for you. And he used you. (pp.184-185)

Swati imparts a psychological colour to the meeting. She feels that their revelations of hidden secrets have cathartic and therapeutic effect.

Noor tries to bring to light Swati's foul designs. Swati abuses her, kicks her and blames her that she is mad and tries to escape. The bugs planted secretly in the house were discovered. There ensued a fight between Swati and Rashmi. Rashmi snatches the bag of tapes from Swati. Swati uses her dagger-like nails to cut Rashmi's arms and legs. Rashmi was taken to the hospital. All of them realised that they had fallen victims to the foul designs of Swati. Their meeting turns out to be nightmarish. Swati's intention was not to malign her friends but to present a glamorous image of herself as a wanton actress and achieve fame by dazzling the viewers, with a newly emerging, glittering world of women. Swati, at the end of the novel regrets for turning their meeting into a nightmare:

Swati leaned tiredly against the door. 'I'm leaving. I'm leaving. Hell! This wasn't worth the trouble. I don't know what I was looking for but if it makes you feel any better let me tell you I didn't find it. It was a colossal waste of time. Energy. Money. Everything. Besides...she explained. (p.224)

De projects the image of the highly self-confident, self-reliant and fearless modern women. The value system and morality undergo a radical change with

these ladies; consequently the hierarchy of males is threatened and it is no longer in a position to exercise its power over the female world. This is the new morality which constantly emerges and becomes visible in Shobha De's image of the new woman.

They suffer an embarrassment in the spheres of social, cultural and economic life, but they prove capable of struggling, realising and compromising their existence at the end of the novel. In the name of liberation, they indulge in promiscuity and unconventional sexual behaviour. The idea of women's emancipation results in suffering, frustration and unhappy marital relationships in case of these women. Though they enjoy licentious life themselves, none of them leads a life of happiness and satisfaction. It is because of their lack of clear vision about life and not having any respect for the institution of marriage and moral values. Shobha De through this novel, throws her light on the recent trends in the society and expresses her concern for the problems faced by contemporary women of the urban rich-class.

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Unfructified search for love in the short stories of Sherwood Anderson

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The central theme of Sherwood Anderson's fiction is man's yearning for love. His characters are shown as wasting behind the wall. In Anderson's fiction the wall is a recurrent symbol of barrier to communion and fulfilment. Thus yearning for love and the inability to communicate love are interlinked themes. Frustration is the logical outcome of such a situation. Several factors combine to create the wasteland atmosphere in which men and women lead their lives of quiet desperation. *Winesburg, Ohio* is Sherwood Anderson's *Waste Land* in prose. It may be read as a Fable of American estrangement, its theme the loss of love. The major characters are alienated from the sources of basic sustenance from the nature in which they live but to which they can have no active relationship, from the community which at least by the claim of the American mythos once bound men together in fraternity but is now merely on institution external to their lives; and most catastrophic of all, from each other.

Sherwood Anderson explored life in America through the people he knew intimately—the ordinary inhabitants of an ordinary American town. Emma Anderson, Sherwood Anderson's mother has been recreated in many tales as the woman who wastes away behind the wall, unseen and uncared for by others. Her life is singularly devoid of love. She leads a loveless life throughout her life. In his most moving portrayals of her in "Mother" and in "Death" in *Winesburg, Ohio*, she is shown as wasting away

spiritually as well as physically in a life which is barren of intimate and significant human relationships. A woman is broken by hard and sterile environment. She is almost passive and endures everything stoically.

Most of the tales convey the feeling of loss of love, isolation, loneliness and defeat through grotesque characters. Those grotesques who are the most sensitive and articulate find their desires and aspirations thwarted by a repressive conventionalism offering little opportunity for fruitful human relationships. Included in this group are Wing Biddlebaum (Hands) Elizabeth Willard (Mother) and 'Death' 'Dr. Parcival (The philosopher) and Kate Swift (The Teacher). These are socially defeated who have been beaten by the unresponsiveness and insensitivity of others. These people find their instinctive need for love met by callousness and indifference, and they become outcasts in Winesburg.

Love in its various forms has failed or died in Anderson's world. Even where love exists, it remains unexpressed, unreceived and unfulfilled. Where there is love, there is no loneliness. But somehow the yearning for love is thwarted by misunderstanding, indifference or sheer awkwardness. All normal human ties of marriage, family and community have waned. To many of them love is a mirage, marriage a lie and community an alien or hostile entity. Perhaps no other American writer before Anderson has dwelt upon the theme of sex so extensively and with such frankness.

Biddlebaum is a kind of defeated, strangely perverted priest of love : "The nervous, expressive fingers, flashing in and out of the light, might well have been mistaken for the fingers of the devout going

swiftly through decade and decade of his rosary." (Anderson, 17) His defeat and perversion are the results of extreme loneliness. The final scene is anti climatic for nothing happens to Biddlebaum. Nothing in his life can be climatic any more. His life is characterized by disillusionment futility and defeat and both the anti climatic structure and the muted tone of reminiscence support the vision of an inner life quietly but desperately submerged and of a static, imprisoned external life : "Although he still hungered for the presence of the boy, who was the medium through which he expressed his love of man, the hunger became a part of his loneliness and waiting." (16)

Elizabeth Willard, the mother of George Willard presents a more poignant and desperate picture of loneliness. Unlike Dr. Parcival and Dr. Reefy she is conscious of her alienation from everything that gives meaning, purpose and joy to a human being, Dr. Parcival and Dr. Reefy have acquiesced in their loneliness whereas Elizabeth puts up a terrible fight against it. In her courtship days she had known many lovers but no love : "In all the babble of words that fell from the lips of men with whom she adventured she was trying to find what would be for her the true word. (273-274) Even as a young girl, she had become aware of Winesburg's stifling presence in her life. They judged without understanding for "like all the women in the world, she wanted a real lover" (273) Her marriage with the conventional Tom Willard was a marriage of opposites. Marriage did not bring love and companionship to Elizabeth. She thought "some hidden wonder" in life, some joy and fulfilment that Tom Willard, with his conventional platitudes concerning business, success and money could not offer. Elizabeth

wasted away in her father's shabby hotel looking after the traveling men.

Listlessly she went about the disorderly old hotel looking at the faded wall paper and the ragged carpets and when she was able to be about, doing the work of a chambermaid among beds soiled by the slumbers of fat travelling men. Elizabeth's father had given her 800 dollars against some eventuality when she could use the amount as an emergency exit. The money hidden behind a plaster in the wall could not be used and it becomes the symbol of the door that could not be opened. George is Elizabeth's alter ego. She sought fulfilment through him. She wanted to save him from the crippling influence of Winesburg, from becoming a prototype of his father. But the atmosphere of "Mother" and "Death", the tales of Elizabeth's loneliness, her ineffectual striving and death are filled with despair and silent brooding.

There is little talk and no communication. Elizabeth is never able to communicate her love to her son. "The form of the mother frustrate, lonely, at last desperate," writes Waldo Frank, "pervades the variations that make the rest of the book. At last the story closes in the mother's death, in the loss for ever of the sum which Elizabeth Willard had kept for twenty years to give her son.

Denial and death of love is the theme of many of these tales. Love is an antidote to loneliness and the absence of love, one of its potent causes. The climate of Winesburg is hostile to love. Often the yearning for love is frustrated or it is confused with crude sexuality. All her life Elizabeth Willard hungered for love, for a real lover, and died without experiencing "The hidden

wonder" of life that only love could have given. The theme of unfulfilled or unexpressed love runs through many of the tales and novels of Sherwood Anderson. Later on Anderson would identify the theme with the baneful effect of puritanism which, according to the American social thinkers of the early twentieth Century, inhibited the natural human urge of giving and receiving love and with man's absorption in machines and things external to himself which virtually castrated him.

"Alice Hindman's" ('Adventure') is a story of gradual desiccation of love and hope. She is one of the loneliest individuals in Winesburg. Loneliness so alters her constitution that after sometime she becomes an object among objects. Her lover, Ned Currie goes to the city, writes a couple of letters and then lapses into silence. Ned Currie does not return to Winesburg to marry Alice. He is lost to her but Alice is never reconciled to the fact. She keeps on waiting till waiting becomes a habit with her. At 29 Alice began to lose her hold on herself as "Deep within her there was something that would not be cheated by phantasies and that demanded some definite answer from life." (132) Alice's life has become an eventless extension of days. Her refrain voices the agony of all lonely people. "Why doesn't something happen ? Why left, here alone, she muttered." (132) When the last flicker of hope dies she begins to adopt eccentric ways, entertain wild thoughts.

Thus with the deepening of her loneliness she begins to disintegrate. She starts saving money in order to be able to join Ned Currie in the city. After sometime she forgets why she has been saving it becomes an end in itself.

She cannot turn to other men for love and assurance of life once Alice and a middle aged clerk had gravitated to each other but after taking a halting step towards the man who could have assuaged her loneliness, she stopped. Actually she did not want to come close to the goods clerk. She wanted him for an altogether different reason and so the moment of promise slipped away. "It is not him that I want" she told herself. I want to avoid being so much alone. If I am not careful I will grow unaccustomed to being with people." (131)

Finally, there is the climatic scene, the epiphany when Alice strips her clothes and runs naked through the streets of Winesburg. "She wanted to leap and run, to cry out, to find some other lonely human and embrace him" (133).

On the brick side walk before the house a man stumbled home ward. Alice started to run. A wild desperate mood took possession of her. "What do I care who it is. He is alone, and I will go him". She thought, and then without stopping to consider the possible result of her madness, called softly. "What", she cried, "Don't go away. Who ever you are, you must wait." (133)

Back home, Alice reflects on her hysteric conduct and realizes that there is no way out of her loneliness. "What is the matter with me ? I do something dreadful if I am not careful, she thought and turning her face to the wall, began trying to force herself to face bravely the fact that many people must live and die alone, even in Winesburg.(134)

All that Louise Bentley gets in response to her need for love is the animal lust of a man who shows

little regard for her feelings. Louise is no less lonely in marriage than Alice who could not marry the man she loved. She remains lonely and cold in the arms of her husband. Marriage has intensified rather than assuaged her loneliness. What is worse, it has filled her with disgust for sex relationship.

All during the first year Louise tried to make her husband understand the vague and intangible hunger that had led to the writing of the note and that was still unsatisfied. Again and again she crept into his arms and tried to talk of it, but always, without success. Filled with his own notions of love between men and women he did not listen but began to kiss her upon lips. That confused her so that in the end she did not want to be kissed. She did not know what she wanted.

This suggests that love, courtship, marriage, sex and family relationship are all in a chaotic state in Winesburg. Both Louise and her husband try to reach each other, but they approach from different premises. Instances are a legion and these multiply in Anderson's later writings, showing how absence of healthy sex relationship or denial or repression of the sexual urge causes loneliness. Kate Swift "The Teacher" and the Rev. Curtis Hartman ("The Strength of God") Burst into George Willard's office in quick succession. Both of them come to George in driving rain; both appear to be in a state of violent agitation.

Among the best of his stories are the tales which are similar to the stories of Alice Hindman. Kate Swift and Louise Bentley in Winesburg tales which portray young women who are defeated by the coarseness, the insensitivity or the moral cowardice of men and

by the hypocrisy behind conventional puritan moral codes.

The thematic key to these stories lies in the titles: "unused," "Unlighted Lamps," and "Seeds". They present a picture of waste, of human sensitivity never developed, of physical and spiritual potential untapped or of a sensitive nature crushed. The Pathetic May Edgely of "Unused" is the victim of Bidwell's dual standard of morality which allows the stolid Jerome Hadley to boast with impunity of his conquest of her to degrade her in the eyes of the local gossips. Her death by drowning is an almost merciful release from life in which her longing for sympathetic companionship has brought only a mounting nightmare of terror because of the brutality of men and the sexual hypocrisy of women.

The great reservoir of love in Mary Cochran and her father in "Unlighted Lamps" is untouched, for the father fails to the end of his life to say the few simple words that could have saved them both from loneliness. Similarly, Rosalind Westcott of "Out of Nowhere into Nothing, Else Leander in "The New Englander," and the unnamed women in "Seeds" are trapped within themselves and unable to satisfy the demands of their inner, imaginative lives for communication with others. The sex impulse, which could be the initial step toward breaking the barrier of loneliness that surrounds them, is reduced to an obstacle by Puritan taboos and by the animal use these taboos set in motion.

The point in these stories is that inner life is a jumble of often conflicting impulses of love and hate, revulsion and attraction, beauty and ugliness. And inner life has been choked by "Old thoughts and beliefs

seeds planted by dead men," by efforts to control it or understand it. What the women needed was to be loved to belong and quietly and patiently loved.... the disease she has is..... universal, we all want to be loved and the world has no plan for creating lovers."(107)

It is by no means coincidental that, at about the same time he called Burrow's Attention to "Seeds." Anderson wrote to Brooks that he had "been reading the Education of Henry Adams" and felt "tremendously its importance as a piece of American writing."(108)

The education of Henry Adams offered Anderson a rationale for the cultural and psychological reformation necessary to cure the "Universal disease." Under the influence of Adams, Anderson found Chartres cathedral a symbol of the power of sex as a civilizing force and a monument to the creative and unifying effects of a religion grounded in recognition of the mystery, fecundity and beauty of the dark blood. Adams saw the popular influence of the Virgin Mary in the twelfth century as being basically sexual and in her power he saw the fructifying effects of sex upon art. The art of the Middle Ages found in the Louvre and the hundreds of cathedrals built in the name of Mary were cultural testaments to the centrality of sex in human creativity. It followed that the absence of great art and literature the symbols of a great culture in America were the result of Puritanism in the chapter "The Dynamo and the Virgin, Adams and lamented."

Anderson felt important enough to quote in A Story Teller's Story's is implicit in the themes of "Many Marriages" and of "Dark Laughter". In "Many Marriages", John Webster transforms his puritanically virgin daughter into a virgin cleansed of the notion as Adams

puts it, "that sex was sin." She is ready to accept the "gift of life." In "Dark Laughter" the hero slowly achieves understanding and acceptance of the blood as the central creative force in life. It was Adams, therefore, rather than D.H. Lawrence, who had the greatest influence upon Anderson's attitudes. Despite Irving Howe's very persuasive argument that Anderson moved into "the Lawrencian orbit,"(110) Lawrence was for Anderson no more than a greatly admired fellow novelist who shared his general views on the importance of sex.

"*Many Marriages*" is shaped from beginning to end by the proposition that by lifting the lid of moral repression from the inner life one may release the manifold impulses of the sub-conscious and enjoy a multitude of beautiful relationship and "many marriages." A small town businessman nearing forty, John Webster suddenly falls in love with his secretary and decides to leave his family and his business and to live with her in another city. Though there has been no love in his family since his marriage, he feels obliged to explain his decision to his daughter Jane and to try to save her from the kind of sterile, purposeless life he has renounced. Resolving to "bring life" to her by teaching her of "this other, this inner" life of love and of the finer feelings which demand sensual expression, he brings both Jane and his wife to his bedroom, and standing naked before them delivers a night long lecture that is interlarded with soul searching interior monologues containing reminiscences about his marriage and explanations for its failure, reflections about the social and historical causes behind the plight of modern men and assertions about the necessity of freeing the sexual impulses in order to liberate the

inner life. He observes: "If one kept the lid off the well of thinking within oneself, let the well empty itself, let the mind consciously think any thoughts that come to it, accepted all thinking all imaginings as one accepted the flesh of people, animals, birds, trees, plants, one might live a hundred or a thousand lives in one life."(111) At the end of the long night, Webster leaves: his wife poisons herself and Jane, now awakened like Mary Cochran in "The Door of the Trap," is ostensibly free to receive all the impulses of life.

Anderson's criticism is directed against the values of a culture that turns man into a dummy and scarecrow by denying him the freedom to love and to live as an individual.

Anderson also recreates moments of fulfilment when love brings about a moment of transformation. In *Winesburg* life attains meaning in flashes of understanding and intimacy. In the moving tale of yearning and love, "Sophistication" George Willard and Helen White seem to find "the thing that makes the mature life of men and women in the modern world possible"(298). It is a moment of mutual comprehension approaching love which, of course, does not last. In this way Sherwood Anderson's fiction is about the search for love and not about its attainment.

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Wonderful Love

Love is wonderful
 for those who get it.
 We search it around
 in the world.
 We look for it in our stars.
 Many chances are lost
 to get true love.
 Few chances arise
 to fulfil desire for love.
 Some get it easily...
 effortlessly too.
 Very often love is seen
 On glowing faces
 In glaring eyes
 Blushing grimaces
 Also reflect love.
 Still, why it is elusive
 Complex, enigmatic,
 And much sought after
 As a bliss of life
 A treasure of joy
 Love that is wonderful phenomenon

Jasvinder Singh, New Delhi

□ □

Alas ! Woman !

Cuddled lovingly in mother's arm
 Wistfully playing with sisters
 In the care of grand mother
 Aunts, cousins and 'ayahs', galore.
 Nursed affectionately, kisses aplenty
 Taught alphabets, numbers, words
 Manners, culture and of God, the Holy
 Oh Mother, sisters, aunts, grannies
 Thou were my cradle of love.
 Shying away in school from girl mates
 Not casting eyes on sprouting beauties
 Nor prying into their deep secrets,
 In their world of woes and miseries.
 The soothing lullabies, the 'bhajans',
 Love songs of Latha, Asha and Suraiya
 The exquisite beauty of actresses
 Bridal dresses, silks, jewellery and bangles.
 Tasteful gourmets, 'biryanies', 'jullabies'
 The art, dance, music and fun
 Beauty in their eyes, eyebrow, plait
 All created versions of marvellous nobility.
 Reality dawned one day on my unexposed
 Young mind, ever protected like, ,Siddharth.
 On exposed to truth, I felt repulsed
 The face of widowhood covered within a sea of tor-
 ment.
 Shockwaves shattered me on watching woman
 In 'pardah', they hide their shame, misery

Despondencies grip their mute lives
Vultures around to peel their bodies

Like bullocks, bitches, goats, heifers,
Beaten, sloughed, robbed and ravished
Degraded, weather beaten and distraught
Oh woman! Thou, a mother, now ploughed.

Men are devil incarnates though,
To fill fire in the belly of women
Cow dungs, broomsticks, sickles in their hands
Iron shackles in legs and cudgels around their neck.

Oh Adam! You blame her for your sin!
Degrade her to hell, eat her flesh
Swim in her blood, make fire of her bones
Bury a baby girl and hang a pretty house wife!

S. L. Peeran, Bangalore

□ □

Soldier's Song

Hear me, hear my mother,
Friends, lend me your ear.

I live and die, I breathe and sigh,
I hold the fort, defend and escort,
For you my mother, I miss my mother,
For you my beloved, I lose my beloved;

To guard your borders my country dear,
I lay down my life to bring you cheer.

The siren sounds, planes give rounds;
The tanks move, the bombers zoom;

The leader commands, action demands;
Guns bang and boom, bang and boom;

Hear me, hear my mother
Friends, lend me your ear.

Before my eyes, my friend dies;
Oh, my room-mate, meets his fate;
Where is JCO, warning a while ago;
Amid bang and cries my Captain lies;

To win the field my mother,
To add to your glory, dear.

The shot and shell, the pain and hell;
The blood and tear, ruins and fear;
Win the field, the enemy yield;
A gain to land, the victory's grand;

I sing in sighs, my mother,
To hail the victory, dear.

Lo; comes the prize, a sad surprise;
Amid the groans, losses and moans;
Over a cup of tea, forgets men like me;
With pheasants & wines, the leader signs;

Hear me, hear my mother
Friends, lend me your ear.

The war stops, he sings & hops;
Papers proclaims, his ideal & fame;
I feel a fool, his toy & tool;
Who kills for fun, cares for none;

I fight for you my mother,
Who cares for me, my mother,
Hear me, hear my mother
Friends, lend me your ear.

Prof. Ram Bhagwan Singh

OBITUARY

Yashawant Hari Shinde

We express our deep felt sorrow at the demise of Yashawant Hari Shinde, father of Dr R Y Shinde, Editor of CLOJ. He breathed his last at the door of Hanuman ji's temple in Pune on 13th Dec 2015 at the age of 76. His last rites were performed on the banks of river Krishna (Karad) on whose laps he was brought up. He was a committed school teacher who spent his life inculcating love for Hindi language and culture among the students. He was greatly inspired by Dr Rajendra Prasad, the first President of India and named his son (R Y Shinde) after him. He was a great devotee of many deities and observed renunciation. May his soul rest in peace!

□ □

Akhileshwar Thakur (02-08-1965—22-10-2014)

We express our heart-felt condolences at the sudden and premature death of our loving friend Akhileshwar Thakur, Associate Professor of English, T N B College, Bhagalpur, (Bihar). He died of cancer as it was detected late. We pray God to grant peace to the departed soul in heaven and strength to the bereaved ones to bear the loss.

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Prof Hazara Singh (30 Nov. 1922—22 Oct. 2014)

We express our heart-felt condolences at the demise of Prof Hazara Singh, a veteran freedom fighter and prolific poet. We pray God to grant peace to the departed soul in heaven and strength to the bereaved ones to bear the loss. I pay my tribute to them with this poem :

TWO- MINUTE SILENCE

Sisters and brothers of India
Let's observe two- minute silence
On the uprooted microphone
On the broken chair in the parliament
On the torn pages of the constitution.

Mothers and Fathers of India
Let's observe two-minute silence
On your death, on the death
Of your fear and deference
To your vows and values.

Ladies and gentlemen of India
Let's observe two-minute silence
On the death of dhoti and puggadi
Oxen and coolies replaced by wheels
Chopped up hands and lame legs.

Friends, stand with me
To observe two-minute silence
On this great grand culture
On this glorious century
On its great promises.

Let's observe two-minute silence
On the shrinking space, shrinking sun
Stinking water of the sacred rivers
Sleeping birds, falling leaves
Watermelon being sliced for quarreling cousins.

Someone whispered in my ear
Can't we do with one minute...?

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BOOK REVIEW

***Centring the Margins: Six Recent Indian Women Poets* by M. K. Pandey (New Delhi: Gaur Publishers & Distributors, 2008), pp. 149, Rs. 500.**

In the present book under review entitled *Centring the Margins: Six Recent Indian Women Poets*, Mithilesh K. Pandey has made a genuine effort to scrutinise the appropriation of the much debated term 'feminism' in respect of six recent Indian women poets hailing from major religious communities. Among the poets examined, Mamta Kalia and Sujata Bhatt belong to Hinduism, Kamala Das {now Suraiya Begum} and Imtiaz Dharker hail from Islam and Eunice de Souza and Melanie Silgado profess Christian faith.

The book is divided into seven chapters including conclusion. In the opening chapter entitled 'Introduction', the author focuses on the theoretical aspects of feminism. The feminist literary criticism of today is the direct product of the women's movement of the 1960's and questions meta narratives dealing with patriarchy, the institution of marriage, the concept of husband and male domination in a tradition bound society. The author underscores the fact that the confrontation between tradition and modernity and the women's struggle for emancipation are the main preoccupations of these poets.

The chapter that follows entitled "Kamala Das", studies Kamala Das as a feminist poet on the basis of her four major collections of poems entitled *Summer in Calcutta* (1965), *The Descendants* (1967), *The Old Playhouse and Other Poems* (1973) and *Only the Soul Knows How to Sing* (1996). Using poetic devices such as irony, symbolism, imagery and self-conscious narrators, she makes brilliant use of subversive

techniques in order to explore the relationship between man and woman, the dark side of human behaviour and power as it pertains to gender and politics. As a post-colonial writer, Kamala Das in most of her poetic volumes, uses language as a subversive weapon to create female space for themselves. The volumes project her feminist perception that views politics at every level. In fact, she criticizes social myths of femininity, male and female fantasies about women, women's social and economic exploitation as well as women's relation with men.

Chapter III entitled "Mamta Kalia" discovers the achievement of Mamta Kalia as a poet particularly her feminist outlook which provides new directions to women's discourses. The first part analyses her most popular collection of poems entitled *A Tribute to Papa and Other Poems* (1970) in order to show Kalia's revolt against the traditional concept of women and the second part brings out the crucial differences between husband and wife relationship and various strategies employed by Kalia to alter the situation of women in the male-dominated society.

In chapter IV, Eunice de Souza has been examined from the feminist angle. It concentrates on de Souza's quest for self and her determination to seek out new answers to old patterns with reference to the *Selected and New Poems* (1994) and *Women in Dutch Painting* (1988). Another significant poet Imtiaz Dharker has been analysed in the fifth chapter. In her poetic volumes *Purdah* (1989) and *I Speak for the Devil*, she has exposed the nuances of two religions, the Islam and the Hinduism. It is the constant shift of emphasis from exclusiveness to inclusiveness that makes her poems remarkable. It explores the problems of women in the patriarchal set up which deny their autonomy and self-dependence in conjugal life. Dharker's poetic

strategies have been revealed in her poems where she rejects the male coded conventions and longs for a social change by inspiring particularly Muslim women to come up to the level of men.

Chapter VI deals with the various aspects of feminism in the context of two poets Sujata Bhatt and Melanie Silgado. The author has competently explored their poetic strategies as evidenced in their volumes of poems to deconstruct the past and reconstruct a more meaningful present. The first part concentrates on Sujata Bhatt and second part analyses the poems of Melanie Silgado in order to demonstrate their poetic priorities to expose the andocentric canons historically accepted as standards. The author highlights the issue of gender discrimination and shows how these poets criticize the double standards of society which although emphasizes participation of women in the public life, at its heart it prefers to preserve the structures of female subordination. Even at her home she is not allowed to avail the same freedom as her male counterpart does.

The last chapter entitled "Conclusion" is very important in the sense that it deserves an insightful inferences in respect of these poets by comparing and contrasting their poetic ideologies. Dr. Pandey rightly points out that these women poets though born and brought up in different milieu unequivocally voice woman's subordination and marginalization in society.

The volume provides an incisive critical analysis of the oeuvre' of these poets from the feminist angle. Employing critical jargons to the minimum, the book is undoubtedly a significant contribution to Indian English poetry.

Suresh Chandra Dwivedi, Allahabad

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Dr. Nandini Sahu. *SITA (A Poem)* (Gurgaon: The Poetry Society of India, 2014) Paperback Rs.220 ISBN: 978-93-83888-19-1)

Nandini Sahu's *Sita (A Poem)* reverberates with the sensibility of Indian women celebrating mythology and history. The poet is adamant in her assertion to subvert the so-called age-old belief of a woman's identity, her integrity, dignity and credibility that are being judged from patriarchal parameters. In this long narrative poem she constantly strives to achieve the force in her unconventional approach to mythology on the purely humanistic ground. She strives to add to the understanding of man-woman relationship and gender discourse. Of course the poet is successful in positing the narrative instigating the other major aspects of modern life like the ecofeminist and non-violence ideology of the women. As she writes :

...through poetry, I celebrate womanhood;
the living and loving spirit of Sita in
me asserts herself in my heroic verse, through my
story of kinship, affection, loyalty, sacrifice and the
social codes. (Canto I, p.4)

Though Sita's character has always fascinated the readers in the form of artistic and critical outpouring in the cultural scenario as the character of Draupadi, but the way the poet identifies Sita with the identity of every woman is really commendable. Her nobility ingrained in each expression, her chastity instilled in the self-assertion, her purity in the proximity with mother earth and nature, but in her silence she speaks volume as illustratively explored in this poem by the poet who unhesitatingly attacks the stereotypes in the subtle grandeur of her triplets.

Many Ramayanas have conveyed my
loyalty, my docile character, I am Illustrated
as a one dimensional character.(Canto XXV, p.120)

The relevance of Sita as a noble woman can never
be underestimated in the present context which the
poet beautifully highlights in these lines :

Some say that Sita cannot be a contemporary
role-model. It's time to disrupt that
customary expelling image, and critique me as an
individual.(Canto XXV, p.121)

In a self conscious narrative Sita presented an
all embracing woman who inspires many women for
noble virtues :

My story is the story of the aboriginal and the shared
glitches of love - possessiveness, parsimoniousness and
loyalty
on the one hand, and dedication, truth, honesty on the
other. (Canto XXV, p.121)

Besides self-conscious narrative the poet tries to
lay bare the factuality of the stereotypical approach in
Sita in all the versions of the *Ramayana*. Her knowledge
of the great epic in many renditions ranging from
classics to folktales and the oral renderings in the
local Bhagabat Tungis have not only unleashed her
imagination but also to a great extent strengthened
her understanding of the Indian mythology from various
points of view. A folklorist she is also well-versed in
classics and folktales and the changing trend of the
Indian narrative. It would be hyperbolic to say she is
deep rooted in the Indian culture without referring to
these lines that marked the acme of her art in its
simplicity and felicity.

It is, rather the love and chastisement, which

have time and again pushed me to square one.
In my epic-recital, the essential apprehension
is to fathom Rama, my humane husband ,my lord
the rest add up to the elements of the
invisible wench of prudence and to the
dynamics of free-will. Yes, I am Sita ,
the willingly exiled woman.

This no archaism with a reckoning.(Canto II ,p.7)

The question about the rights and representation
of woman in society as well as in literature has been
raised but the way the issue is foregrounded in this
narrative poem successfully dissipates the historical
construction on the image and position of woman
implicitly or explicitly. The poet explores the all-
pervasive influence of the *Ramayana* on Indian psyche
by examining the sources in the narrative detours.
Especially in the context of Indian society that puts
every woman on test to prove her fidelity on the basis
of the *Ramayana* in which Rama, the Maryada
Purushottam designed for Sita, to satisfy the so-called
ideal society.

The main thrust of the narrative is to place the
woman at the centre of discourse. At times she feels
liberated from the social impositions, yet she reiterates
the whole condition of the womanhood. She makes
her position clear in this poem in unearthing the
existential dilemmas that surrounds a woman life. Be
it in the form of her role in the family, or in the form
of her contribution towards society in its harmonious
development, she seeks to unleash the paradigm in
the reverse manner.

Your rejection of Sita is comprehensively judged by the
world

as unacceptable, but my rejection of Rama is believed as an illustration of highest dignity of a just woman.

This is my poem, lucid, unembellished, ironical
Engaging my personal notion of the lives of women. (Canto XXV, p.129)

And in the following stanza she gives a clarion call to all the women. She believes this poem would boost the spirit of women following the role model of Sita.

Women! Don't be intrigued by the questions patriarchal.
Comprehend and accomplish the kinetic dichotomies of life; I offer you my reciprocated sisterhood universal.
(Canto XXV, p.121)

Sahu's poetic approach reveals a radical feminist discourse. In revisiting Indian mythology she unfolds the underlying nuances that entangle Indian woman in a domestic environment despite of her innumerable virtues. The poem is inter-textual as the poet successfully inter-mingles the essence of the classics as well as folktales. This poem offers a comprehensive view to understand women's life and their depiction in the literary discourses as well. With many such insightful explications this narrative poem offers a delightful as well as enlightened reading. The cover design by Anil Tato is suggestive of the narrative situation the poet tries to create.

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Humanities, IGNOU, New Delhi.

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***Two-Minute Silence* by C.L.Khatri, 2014, Authors Press, New Delhi. pp 81, Rs. 195**



Two-Minute Silence is a poetry collection by C.L.Khatri. He is a bilingual poet writing in English and Hindi. His two other poetry collections in English are *Kargil* (2000) and *Ripples in the Lake* (2006). As a prolific writer he has produced more than three dozen papers and twenty four books of criticism. As a poet, his sense of imagery in his poems is insightful.

Two-Minute Silence is one such collection. Here he talks about his mother, the nostalgia of past days and the present conditions of the society. His style of writing is simple and in clear diction. The poems are written in free verse. He dedicates this book to his mother, who is always in his memories. His "Homage to Maa" is a sensitive poem, telling the readers about the last few moments of the poet's mother, and then he takes a path down to the memories of his mother. The use of symbols and imagery in the poetry of C.L.Khatri is commendable.

Some of his poems are gripping though writing in free verse is not a strong suit for everyone, he is able to capture a little of everything that happens in the society. His poems like "Government Schools", "Election", "National Consciousness" etc. portray such images.

Election
Everything is fair in love and war
Election is both love and war
Love with power, war for power.

He has also written fifty five Haiku, which is a traditional Japanese three line poem; often focusing on images from nature, haiku emphasizes simplicity, intensity, and directness of expression. Directness of expression is seen very prominently in Khatri's haiku, though as a reader of English poetry one may find his haiku a little bland. Nevertheless, his effort for writing poetry which is both sensible and simple evokes the senses of the common reader towards the follies and frivolities of the society.

Haiku 9

Beware of dogs
dogs revolt holding placard
beware of men.

Haiku 44

Beneath trees in park
pairs are perched pecking their lips
I laugh at my angst

Another of his poem is "Conversation" which talks primarily about the lower class and the upper class. Here the poet differs between Brawn and Brain; one being the lower class and the other upper working class. Here he clearly tells that class distinction is in a person's mind, it is the mind of a person that makes one higher.

What makes one lower?
Brawn.
What makes one higher?
Brain.

One poem which talks about the forgotten childhood days is "Reversal Syndrome". This poem clearly portrays the image of modern working man who

has forgotten all the little pleasures of childhood and has now plunged himself in work. The little moments which made him laugh are now invalid.

The poem titled "Two-Minute Silence", justifies the title of the book. The poem is an attack, a mockery to the present state of the country. The poet wants to observe two-minute silence for every vow and virtue which has now been degraded, for the farmers who once used oxen is now replaced by wheels and machines. Their hands are now chopped; they don't know how to use a machine. Observe two minute silence on the great culture, the present century and its promises which can never be fulfilled. The poem ends on a rather astonishing note when someone whispers in the poet's ear, "Can't we do with one minute...?"

The title is suitable as all his poems reflect his portrayal of the society and the pleasant past days of childhood. Looking at the poems from the viewpoint of a reader who is a lover of poetry, C.L.Khatri's creation may not appear as a perfect blend of rhyme and rhythm; yet his efforts for producing a simple and clear poetry attracts the common man.

(The book can be purchased online through flipkart.com or amazon.in or from [Authorspress.](http://Authorspress.com))

- **Hitisha Goel,**
Sesearch, Scholar, Lucknow University

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***The Rainbow Hues* P. Gopichand & P. Nagasuseela, Aadi Publication, Jaipur (2014) pp 339, Price Rs. 650.**

The Rainbow Hues jointly edited by P. Gopichand and P. Nagasuseela is an assortment of 169 poems composed by the new generation of poets. These compositions are free in respect of subject matter and form. The only common factor seems to be the moralising tone and tenor in some poems. Sick of sad realism the poetic vision longs for normative affirmation. To Frank Jouseen if one can't achieve happiness he should forget his failures. Thus he says 'the way to happiness/is forgetting, I guess/what you wanted to have/but one way or/another couldn't.' (p.17) Mr. Mittun Dey joins the chorus saying 'Learn to trust yourself/ Never lose faith in others/Let's face everything/ Never look back/Let's make every hour memorable' ? (p 146) Dr. Neelam Saxena Chandra finds poverty, corruption, brutality and injustice everywhere. She invokes Durga Maa to redress the sufferings of the people. So,

Durga Maa, I summon you
Change your garb, modify your frame
Build up that anger and wrath
And come once again on this earth
To kill all 'Asuras' for ever. (p. 58)

Dr. Poonam Sahay is optimistic in the teeth of all obstacles- 'Tossed like a raft over tumultuous sea/ Heaving and writhing over waves/of despair, misfortune and misery/of endless uncertainty and doubt/My hope travels forth determinedly(219).

Nature as man's companion and sympathiser finds expression in "Nature Speaks my Sorrow" by Mohinour Taufik who says, 'The darkness speaks/Of my hidden sorrow/The cold weather/Of my frozen soul/The rain

torrents of/My unshed tears/The winds/Whispering my/Endless fears/The thunder speaks/Of my frustration/The fallen leaves of my/Wasted years/The roaring seas/Of my silent screams/When no one feels/Nature reveals/All my hidden sorrow.

Ms Roma Das identifies herself with the agony of a child of an unwed mother in the poem Child of Unwed Mother. Bereft of father's affection the child feels 'his life is like a shroud.' Dr. Ankur Gupta recounts the misery of woman in a patriarchal set up. In her words 'Woe is thy (woman's) other name.' (101) She urges the woman to 'break the chains, break the shackles of age-old subordination and suppression. Rahim Suleman Malvat in Male DNA is fiercely critical of aborting the female foetus and preferring male baby from female womb.' (98) Ms Sreeja Nair speaks ironically of condoning the rape committed by a juvenile. Whatever the excuse, the so-called minor accused knows 'A penis can do more than pee.

A penis can plunder
And what is left undone
With an iron rod can be done
A child, a juvenile. (271)

She condemns the move to set him free.

The book also contains poems of affirmation and pleasant aspects of life. Ms Holena Jennifer has glorified the mother. In her poem Embodiment of Love the child acknowledges mother's love, care and protection. The child stands nowhere without her. Poems like Dr Jaydeep Sarangi's "Baby Growing in a Poet", Dr. Kedarnath Sharma's "Tongue Twisters", "Elizabeth Kurian", Mona's "English Ghazal", Dr. Nandini Sahu's "Memory", Dr. C. L. Khatri's "Two-Minute Silence" and "Fire", Prof. P. Nagasuseela's

Poetry et.al. stand out for poetic exuberance and artistic craftsmanship. The book has much more to cater to the interests of poetry lovers. However, in the crying crush of too many compositions the focus is seen defused and dispersed.

- Ram Bhagwan Singh

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The Ballad of the Bleeding Bubbles : A Fabulous Bouquet of Love Poems- Ratan Bhattacharjee
Ciberwit.net, HIG 45 Kaushambi Kunj, Kalindipuram,
Allahabad-211011 (2013), pp. 78, Price Rs. 200.

Ratan Bhattacharjee's new book is titled *The Ballad of the Bleeding Bubbles : A Fabulous Bouquet of Love Poems*. I find the very title is seductively intriguing the effect of which is compounded by use of pictures like a demure damsel at the gate. Every poem is preceded by a picture as much lovely as meaningful. As the book proclaims it is a collection of love poems which again sends whispers of beauty, softness, intimacy and desire. This love is chased by reality and contingency which mauls and leaves it bleeding.

The book has two sections- "Melodies of Love" and "Maladies of Love". The Melodies of Love poems celebrate love of all descriptions, casual, carnal, spiritual and universal. There is free love and loving communication between men and women of the world. The implicit message is to love and live together, sharing in joys and sorrows. The remarkable thing is that each poem 'contains a story of love with an undercurrent of pathos'. Thus, in the very first poem "Legend Says" while he cites three positive points the fourth negates. It is also as much notable that many of the poems are addressed to somebody, that 'you' and 'I'. To me the beauty of the poems lies in its chocolatee

flavour, sweet, soft, sober, melodious and enduring, a kind of palpable poems emitting lingering aroma. In "When we Met" the lover totally identifies himself with his beloved feeling 'you are within me and myself within yours' (p. 28) Like alchemy one causes the metamorphosis, the total make-over of their souls. 'Do the lovers ever melt ?' The true lovers are always with one another. Therefore,

The day I felt I really loved you
You entered my within
Since then we've had no need to meet
We never met. (p. 29)

The second part *Maladies of Love* begins with a quote from Bertrand Russell which means that wiser people are full of doubts. This is a cue for the lovers to be conscious of the other side of love. Sometimes there is disappointment followed by loneliness. The lover thinks, 'why love cannot bring the two loving souls near.' (46) He becomes sad and accuses 'life is so dull, a walking shadow that struts and frets' (47) The poet is conscious of certain social aberrations and discriminations; particularly the caste system pinches him. When somebody 'laughed out saying, you belong to scheduled caste' and 'you call us aborigines to rule peacefully in your kingdom'. (pp. 58-59) So, he is sorry for the marginalised state of women in our society. The poet laments,

Our legends are so unkind
We are born to bear other's burden
Our hungry wives cook food for others. (59)

The book presents melodies of love, longing and meeting of two souls. What the poet calls *maladies of love* they, too, to my mind are the melodies of love, celebration of the other half of love perfecting it with

keen perception and ripe wisdom. On the surface the maladies are a reminder of what Wordsworth calls 'the sad music of humanity' but the maladies have lost the usual rigour and trauma at the hands of the poet. The poet maintains that love is a flattery of beauty and I declare that the maladies of love are as much loving as the melodies of love for their beauty of simplicity, ease and sensuous appeal. No doubt, it is a fabulous bouquet of love poems for loving readers.

- Ram Bhagwan Singh

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I am no Jesus and Other Selected Poems, Tanka and Haiku- Ram Krishna Singh. EDITURA STUDIS, SOS, Romania, 2014, \$ 9

Prof. R. K. Singh's new book *I am no Jesus* contains the cream of his experiences in life, the wealth of wisdom and totality of perception. The poems touch upon various issues, physical and spiritual, temporal and transcendental, personal and impersonal. Thus, we see New Year, Shadow, Merkaba, Dying sun, Avalanche, Allergies, None Talk, It doesn't rain, Poetic Disturbance, Nude Delight, Gleam of Light, Return to Wholeness, Who cares, Valley of self, I am no Jesus et.al.

In spite of variety of subjects the poems deal with the poet's core concern seems to be his thoughts and ruminations the poet wants to share with his readers. Rather than comments on the affairs of the world his thoughts are his felt experiences told without prejudice. On a clouded midnight amid heavy downpour he suffers from cold and throat congestion, lies restless in bed, has all the negative vibes. Sometimes the clouds are empty but lightning threats like bully politicians. In 'It doesn't rain' he is forced to keep

postponing his journey. That shows the diffident old man who suddenly becomes conscious and says 'Death hides in the body.' But then he remembers Buddha who says the body is precious, a vehicle for awakening, treat it with care.

Taking stock of his long life the poet says in 'Merkaba' 'my birth was a heavenly event'. Despite all his good intentions and efforts he could not get along. He laments 'here I am suffering third rate villains that erects walls to stop the chariots from Merkaba'. In a way he has fallen from the thorns of life as,

I don't know the god
or goddess or the mantra
to chant when fear overtakes
my being makes me suffer
plateaus of nightmares
paralysing spirit to live
and be promised fulfilment.
(Valley of self)

His fear is lurking like a shadow ever present and is difficult to erase. Self pitying he says, 'The dates on calendar question all my undone acts and memories haunt or fade in nightly nakedness. The poet is sorry not for himself alone; he laments the overall loss around him. Thus,

Flowers don't bloom in tribute to
builder's apathy
the trees are dying
they too know they'll be felled
the concrete rises
calamity too will rise
none talk the ruins they bring.

In the title poem 'I am no Jesus' the poet personalises the general disappointment and suffering.

Using simple and precise words and phrases the poet has hammered out the effect of a pilgrim's pains and his undaunted mission to quote,

I am no Jesus
but I can feel the pains
of crucifixion
as a common man
suffer all what he suffered
play the same refrains
at times cry and pray
hope for better day ahead
despite lack of love
diminishing strength
failures, ennui and blame
for sins I didn't author
I am no Jesus
but I can smell the poison
and smoke in the air
feel for human kind
like him carry the cross
and relive my dreams.

That epitomises the thematic content of the new collection. The mood is sober and sombre, ladden with thoughts.

- Ram Bhagwan Singh

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***Tense Pattern : Poems*, Amarendra Kumar, Novelty & Company, Patna (2014), pp. 146, Price Rs. 150**

Prof. Amarendra Kumar is known as a poet of intellectual class. He writes what is called adult poetry consisting in thin ideas and thoughts dealt out in distant phrases. Not surprising then the average reader is weaned away unfulfilled and distracted.

The new book *Tense Pattern : Poems* has 85 poems preceded by a Foreword by the poet himself who intends that his poems "may be seen patterning tensions bred by the explosive and implosive showers of atoms from the fissional existential flux, mostly an encounter with experience, too shattering, tempestuous and volcanic to leave the mind or memory untraumatized." Naturally the title tense pattern suggests that the poems are tense and taut. No doubt, the title is forbidding which only means that the reader should choose to plunge himself in intellectual exercise to pick up intellectual issues. However, the tension thins down and we have some familiar subjects versified in common speech so as to "keep the reader hooked on the arable plane of comprehension."

Thus there are some descriptive poems like Winter Rain, Gold Bite, Dahlias, Victoria Memorial, Happy New Year etc. "Winter Rain" presents a simple and familiar picture with Raahar and Sarso pulse plants "lashed at the fag end cold spell/shrink and bend low "with yellow flowers fluttering in the breeze. A vivid picture of nature as "Bright sunshine now/and then soothes, sings too/white cloud patches still/scattered.(309) In "Dahlias" while the poet finds "Golden dahlias bloom full, large luxuriant bulge/of pale lustrous petals" in bloom he also notices "Eye smells a dahlia/as the bright featherball drops/dead, shrunken dry, half burnt"(42) which completes the picture. In "Encounter" there is the marigold as,

No shy marigolds,
they flaunt a flamboyance,
a laugh so vivid
as to resonate in the glassy nerve
a shower spray. (48)

The image of the marigolds laughing and the

laughter resonating in a shower has the taste of milk and honey. Again, the melody of cuckoo "revives and rejuvenates the dead cells" once one hears it. The scene of drought pinches the poet so much that he curses the sun,

Sun cracks jokes
with the land
deep, dry wry
drought fish fry
even without a drop
of rain oil.

The sun as a cruel master cracking jokes with the earth is startlingly fresh and conveys the point. The image of the earth as fried fish without rain oil is even more striking which adds to the poetic grandeur. About tears he writes "tears like stars/tell a story/wet with light. (86) In "Sunrise" the poet calls the sun "a burning bush/in the roofless sky" that "fluffs up its fiery coat/of feathers". (119) Such catchy images abound lightening the weight of the poem's substance.

There are poems addressed to persons dear to him. The poet is all sympathy for Sarabjit, the Indian spy languishing in Pakistani prison in horrible conditions. He writes,

Hammer blows on head and heart
in a dark smelly cell so long,
in the thick airproof damp dungeon
with no room for dream and desire
or self-pity. (52)

Similarly, he pays compliments to the scholarship and greatness of head and heart of Professor Damodar Thakur in the poem "Memory Image". He calls him "a matchless master, deity of the literary dias." To quote,

Living feel of a radiant
fragrant, eloquent crystal flow-
perceptions, conceptions,
fine discriminations,
from an oceanic spring. (83)

The poet is conscious of the Bloody Craft, the bloody massacre operations of terrorists who appear all on a sudden from "overlapping shadows/of everywhere and nowhere", "creatures of the abyss/in blind savage fury/swim in the bloodpool." (93) The septuagenarian poet acknowledges his love and longing for his wife in the poem old wife. He declares,

I love life
my old caring wife
ill, not ailing.

So far so much for the average reader, the poems for academic appreciation and decipherment remain. The book demands multiple readings for manifold discoveries.

- Ram Bhagwan Singh

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Ramesh K. Srivastava : *Read Write and Teach : Essays on Learning to Live Together*, Authors press. Q-21 Hauz Khas Enclave, New Delhi-16 pp. 237, Rs. 700, \$ 28.

Prof. Srivastava is a well known academic, scholar critic and fiction writer in English. The present book seems to me a product of the churning out the sea of teaching learning experiences he has. It comes out as a handbook for all stakeholders of the higher education in India, particularly for faculty members, students and administrators. It is remarkable for two things : innovative and practical ideas born of his long

experience of higher education in India and the U.S.A. and a pervading sense of humour. Scholars wear the tag of being drab and serious. Those who have got the opportunity to listen to him would immediately strike a chord with his writings and speeches. He has a penchant for talking serious things in lighter vein. See how he parodies Lincoln's definition of democracy : "In India, democracy is the government far the people, off the people and buy the people". In his last essay "Why USA cannot be more like India" for example he takes a dig at Indian's concept of freedom by referring to the USA. "Though the USA boasts of various freedoms, the people there have no simple freedom even to spit tobacco or gutka anywhere, as is done in India... They know of no pleasure of eating ripe bananas and then of hurling the peels as missiles which could land on bald pates or hairy nests or even on the road allowing people to slip and fall down headlong over them."

Humour is not just to satirize the social incongruities or vices but is abundantly used as a mode of class-room teaching, as a means to make teaching more interesting and memorable. Essays like "Wit and Humour in University Teaching", "Teaching of English can be Fun Too", "Wit and Humour : Indian Life and Indian English Fiction", "Humour as a strategy of communication", and "Those Witty and Humorous Road Signs" are of this sort and offer a lesson as well as handy instances to enliven the drab and monotonous teaching. The author's first essay "Creative Reading, Creative Writing and Creative Teaching" which was his Presidential Address at the 54th All India English Teachers' Conference at Amravati amply shows his creative approach to life and his vocation for reforming reading, writing and teaching process.

His essays are full of brilliant ideas with reformative zeal. He defines 'University' in terms of 'universe' to show the universality of education and its temple; and places it before our own structure of the universities which were born with a region and religion bias. The gap becomes obvious and it dilutes the basic concept of education. He wonders "Can a Hindu become the Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University and a Muslim of B.H.U. ?" He advocates for the universal character of the university rather than what it is 'a tethered goat' that can't go beyond the limits of the rope. By this he is pointing to the historical blunders that our political dispensers had committed be it the creation of states, Regiments or the universities. Prof. Srivastava makes several big holes in the otherwise shining India shawl of the system. His essays like "Need for cross breeding in Indian Universities", "Evaluation of University Teachers" are full of practical suggestions on matters like appointment, promotion, Vice-Chancellor's appointment and the role there of. He calls Indian universities degree distributing agencies with little quality and advises the university to discourage its students to join the same university as teachers. He goes in for cross cultural fertilization in 'Vishavidyalayaiva Kutumbakam'. He opines that university with local character should best be called 'locality' rather than university. He laments the loss of free thinking and free expression.

This compendium of 35 essays is largely a critique of campus with insight, vision and incision under the spell of the US academic world. However, a few essays are on different themes like "Come Back Later" "These Funny Advertisements !" "Travellers Gather Many Wise

and Unwise companions." I feel the essays could have been methodically arranged in two different heads rather than randomly put together.

In any case it is a worth reading book in simple language breft of scholastic cliches.

C. L. Khatri

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Dr. K. Balachandran. *English Literature : An Overview*, Arise Publishers & Distributors, 4648/1, 21 Ansari Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi- 110002

The book under review is an anthology of 19 research papers on British literature covering genres like poetry (8 papers), fiction (2 papers) autobiography (1 paper) and drama (8 papers) edited by Prof. K. Balachandran, an eminent academic, scholar and critic. At the outset the book convinces us that it is not just research papers for publication sake but they are compiled with a view to cattering to the needs of the students and faculty members as the syllabi of the universities comprize largely British literature. So the book has naturally got greater USP.

The book is all the more relevant as it comprises papers mostly on common classics like the *Ancient Mariner* of S.T. Coleridge, Keats' *Lamia*, T.S. Eliot *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, and *Portrait of a Lady*, Christopher Fry's *The Boy with a Cart*, Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* and Synge's *Riders to the Sea* besides some synoptic papers on well known writers like Ruskin, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Wilfred Owen, Philip Larkin, Ted Hughes, Galsworthy and Samuel Beckett.

The book begins with a comprehensive analysis of

Ruskin's theory of Imagination in a comparative framework that distinguishes his view on imagination and fancy from Romantic poets. Dr. Krishna Singh rightly maintains that "In Ruskin, Romantic aesthetics achieves a moment of genuine lucidity" and encompasses the heterogeneity of human consciousness and nature.

John Peter Joseph in his analysis of "The Ancient Mariner" traces the different sources from where Coleridge might have got the idea of this poem and evaluates it as a call for universal love and harmony in a symbolic garb. He drives home his point of view with copious quotations from the text and references to his critics.

A. R. Uma approaches Coleridge and Wordsworth from eco-critical perspective. Drawing parallel between nature and women, lunar cycle and menstrual cycle. She shows the eco-centric philosophy of the poets that need to be heard today. Dr. S. K. Suresh's theoretic discourse on spatial and temporal structure of narrative in relation to J. M. Coetzee's *Foe* is a highly scholarly paper that provides readers a critical framework for studying other novels as well. "The Absurdity of Ideas and Theories with special preference of to *Hamlet*" by Dr. M. S. Ramesh is an ingenious and creative approach to a work of art asserting the autonomy of a creative process in which a writer hardly goes by any critical theory or a reader for that matter rarely consults a creatial theory before reading a text. K. Balachandran's critique of J.M. Synge's *Riders to the Sea* is a comprehensive study of the play with the context of Irish Theatre and discusses the different aspects of the play in a classroom manner.

It is beyond the scope of the review to comment on each paper. But a perusal of the book reveals some

common features like most of the papers are well researched, fraught with critical and textual references and are comparative textual studies. They were well documented. However, a uniform model of Reference and fair representation of British Fiction should have been preferred. Nonetheless they serve the basic function of criticism : to elucidate the work of art and help the readers understand it in a better way. It is also remarkable for immaculate editing and beautiful production.

Dr. Kumar Chandradeep

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Dr. Ram Bhagwan Singh and Dr. Anil Kr. Sinha
'Udyogi' Bharat Choro Andolan Ke Amar Shahid,
Janaki Prakashan, Patna, PP. 163. Rs. 300/-.

We often talk of Memorial of Seven Martyrs of Bihar situated at Patna but how many of us know their names. Paying obeisance or tribute to the martyrs has been reduced to ritual. Prof. Singh, though not a historian, has shown a penchant for bringing local history to the mainstream and giving proper space to the unsung heroes of Indian freedom movement be it his *Agast Kranti Ke Amar Shahid* or *Swatantrata Senani Lohardagga Ke*. The present book is an endeavour in the same direction to bring to light the life and struggle of three of the seven martyrs- Rajendra Singh, Ramanand Singh and Ram Govind Singh. The other martyrs include Umakant Prasad Singh, Satish Prasad Jha, Jagpati Kumar and Devipad Chaudhury. They all were students of 11th except Devipad Chaudhury who was in 9th class. Such was the fire of nationalism in the young generation. Most of them were newly wed and still they preferred to sacrifice their life for the nation. One can easily understand how difficult it

would have been to recollect and discover the details of their life in the absence of proper documentation on them. The authors declare their continued effort to write about the other four martyrs. The authors have relied on both historical documents and personal interactions with the relatives and elderly villagers of Ramanand Singh of Ram Mohan Roy Seminary, Patna, Rajendra Singh (Vil. Sonepur) of Patna High School and Ram Govind Singh, (Dashratha, Patna) of Punpun High School. Their life sketch is written in an elaborate backdrop of the quit India Movement. The inclusion of four verses of which two are authors' own composition *Sirdhanjali* and *Arati*, the poetic language in some pieces and the memoir based on Late Asha Kunwar Devi's (the wife of Ram Govind Singh) recollection of the event of martyrdom of her husband add to the charm and authenticity of the book. Government reports on the firing are included at the end; and it shows author's painstaking research in this subject. It is undoubtedly a valuable addition to the history of freedom movement in Bihar.

I am tempted to quote the last two lines of *Sirdhanjali* :

देश का ऋण चुकाया तुमने देखा चांद सितारो ने ।
तेरा ऋण चुकाऊँ कैसे शब्दों के उपहारों से ॥

C. L. Khatri

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