

EDITOR  
Dr. Chhote Lal Khatri  
Associate Professor,  
Department of English  
T.P.S. College, Patna

EXECUTIVE EDITOR  
Dr. Kumar Chandradeep  
P.G. Department of English,  
College of Commerce, Patna  
E-mail : drkdeep@rediffmail.com

EDITORIAL ADVISORS  
Padma Shri Dr. Ravindra Rajhans  
Dr. Shaileshwar Sati Prasad  
Dr. J. P. Singh  
Dr. R. N. Rai  
Dr. Shiv Jatan Thakur  
Dr. Stephen Gill  
Dr. Basavaraj Naikar

OFFICIAL REVIEWERS  
Dr. Ram Bhagwan Singh  
1A/4, New Patliputra Colony,  
Patna- 800013, BIHAR

Dr. Sudhir K. Arora  
Dept. of English Maharaja  
Harishchandra P. G. College  
Moradabad, (U.P.) India.

Dr. Binod Mishra  
Dept. of Humanities  
I.I.T. Patna  
mishra.binod@gmail.com

Dr. K. K. Pattanayak  
Bhagya Residency, Room No.-6,  
Ambica Nagar, Bijipur,  
Berhampur- 3, Ganjam, Odisha

Estd. 1997 ISSN 0972-0901

# CYBER LITERATURE

A BI-ANNUAL JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES

(vol. xxxv, No.-I, June, 2015)

## PEER REVIEWED REFEREED RESEARCH JOURNAL

CYBER PUBLICATION HOUSE

**CHHOTE LAL KHATRI**

"Anandmath"

Harnichak, Anisabad, Patna- 800002

Bihar (India)

Mob. : 09934415964

E-mail : drclkhatr@rediffmail.com

www.englishcyberliterature.net

www.clkhatri.com

## CONTENTS

### CRITICISM

- 1 EDITORIAL  
...../1
- 2 A Tribute to I.H. Rizvi, the Poet of  
Love, Nature and Humanity  
Sudhir K. Arora/3
- 3 Paying Homage to Premanand  
Panda  
Dr. Sandhya Saxena/5
- 4 Joyce's Narratology in Ulysses:  
A Contextual, Critical Approach  
Amarendra Kumar/6
- 5 Indian Novel in English: A Tour  
Sudhir K. Arora/31
- 6 A Spectrum of Themes: S. R.  
Patil's Songs of Soul and Soil  
Dr. Bajrang Korde/39
- 7 Poetic Periwinkle of Mahendra  
Bhatnagar  
Dr.A.K.Choudhary/55
- 8 Soul Loss and Retrieval: The  
Journey of the Shaman in  
Margaret Atwood's Cat's Eye  
A. Vanitha/61
- 9 Marian : A Thousand Splendid  
Suns  
Rituparna Datta Roy /71
10. Dalit Patriarchy: An Analysis of  
Dalit Female Narratives  
Payal Madhia/78

11. An Interview with Movie-  
Maestro, Sagar Sarhadi ?  
Dr. Rajiv Ranjan Dwivedi\*/93

### POETRY

- 1 Heatwave  
Amarendra Kumar/99
- 2 A Longing, Sharp as Knife  
Asha Viswas/101

### BOOK REVIEW

- 1 Shaleen Kumar Singh/102
- 2 Rabi Kumar Jha/103
- 3 Pashupati Jha/104
- 4 T. Sai Chandra Mouli/106
- 5 Khatri, C.L./109
- 6 /111

## EDITORIAL

In the past Nineteen years since the humble beginning of Cyber Literature in 1997 I got the opportunity to befriend several editors and we treaded the dreary path we were meant for as fellow travellers. That was not the day of internet and we used to write letters frequently to one another to be in living contact. The first thing I used to do, having come home from the college, was to go through all the posts both from indek and abroad letters, journals, books etc. Alas the days are gone. In those letters were also the letters of Dr. I. H. Rizvi and Dr. Premanand Panda editors of *Canopy* and *Replce* respectively whose deaths. Set me in reflective mode. They were among the lumararies like Mulk Raj Anand, M. K. Naik, C. D. Narasimhai, Krishna Srinivasa, Janakraman, Niranjana Mohali P. Lal and above all R. C. Prasad who are no more with us but who shaped my literary journey. Today I recall how I. H. Rizvi encouraged me in poetry writing and published my first poem "Rags-Picker" in *Canopy*. He used to give me honest feed back for personal consumption as I receive today from R. K. Singh K. Sharma, R. B. Singh and S. S. Prasad, Dr. Rizvi asked me to review his poetry collections : I reviewed three of his poetry collections in Cyber Literature and on each time I received his letters not just complementing but commenting on the review and in poetry. This aided me in honing my review-writing skill. He was a prolific poet in English and Urdu but he did not get his due at the heads of critics. That's why he was acidic about the so-called mainstream critics response to a large group of practising Indian English poets who certainly deserve greater critical appraisal. He was among the poets who have been fighting against the selective amnesia of academia, and critics.

Premananda Panda was not a poet but a scholar,

editor who stood to the old values and did not compromise with the quality of the contributions to his journal. He published some of my poems, I don't recall the number. But I do recall that he rejected one of my poem and asked me not to hurry up with submission and focus on quality. In the beginning I wrote him a letter, addressed him as 'Dr.', he wrote back that he is a Dr. or Professor. The last issue of *Replica* carries his comment on my poetry in Editorial, a poem "Mask" and the review of my poetry collection *Two-Minute Silence* by Sandhya Saxena. I could not even thank him as got this copy after his death obviously the copy seat to me was lost in transit. When I mailed him "I am waiting for a copy of Replica...." His last mail to me "Don't wait....." seat a shiver down my spine. O I lost my friend. After a day or two Sudhir K. Arora informed me of his death. Certainly both Rizvi Sahab and Panda ji were close to me and I pay my homage to them and pray to God.

## A Tribute to I.H. Rizvi, the Poet of Love, Nature and Humanity

Sudhir K. Arora

Would that the voices of the poets  
Were stronger, mightier, more sublime  
To usher in the morn of hope  
Joy, peace and light so that the world  
Might become like heaven a place  
Which is worth living for one and all

These are the lines from the pen of Iftikhar Husain Rizvi, a bilingual poet (English and Urdu), known as “Saeed Bareillivi” who left for Heaven on April 3 2015 leaving behind 13 poetry collections in English—Falling Petals (1975), Unfading Blooms (1984), Thirsty Pebbles (1986), Wandering Fragrance (1989), Wounded Roses Sing (1993), Snowflakes of Dreams (1996), Gathering Broken Glasses (1997), Clouds in Cages (1999), Fettered Birds (2002), Dripping Wounds (2004), Love Never Dies (2004), Haiku and Other Poems (2005) and The Valley Still Blossoms (2007) and the four collections of Urdu Ghazals—Daman-e-Gul, Ek Boond Sada, Aah-e-Neem Shab and Bhatakti Aarzo. All his poetry collections in English were published from Prakash Book Depot, Bareilly.

Pain, agony and unfulfilled longings are the ingredients that made the poet in Rizvi bleed. But, with his vision and ideals he attempted to embalm the grief-stricken world. His pen moved on the white sheet to remove the pain and turn the atmosphere into hope. He always wished to change this world into heaven where people would live happily and peacefully.

Contemporary scenario, Nature, woman, birds, children, love, philosophy, human values etc. are a

few shades with which his poetry canvas is tinged. It was his soaring imagination that made him a romantic while his didactic nature and wide vision turned him into a classicist and an idealist respectively. He loved Nature and played with her objects—be they trees or mountains or rivers or valleys and the like. He was a lover of humanity and always wished to be called so. What he made the mountain say is also applicable in his own case:

Just think of what I give in return:  
Streams and waterfalls  
brimming with purest water,  
plants and trees of other rarest kind,  
leaves and flowers and fruits  
all sources of life.  
Call me a lover of humanity, please

He was Wordsworthian in his approach towards Nature. For him life was not only in possession, gathering, storing and feeding but it was also in giving what one possessed. Nature always remained the best role model in making a man a truly human being.

Today the poet I.H. Rizvi is no more. But he will remain alive in the hearts of poetry lovers through his poetry which is replete with thematic variety, high imagination, balanced attitude, positive approach, beautiful imagery and fine poetic craftsmanship. His lines that “The great reward of love is love / Nothing but love” will continue to inspire.

I, Sudhir K. Arora with the chief editor C.L. Khatri and the editorial team of Cyber Literature pay my sincere tribute to this messenger of peace and brotherhood. May his soul rest in peace!

□ □

## Paying Homage to Premanand Panda

Dr. Sandhya Saxena

It's not long since there grew an acquaintance with Dr. P. Panda. In April 2013 I joined *Replica* and in the last issue (July - Dec 2014) I was given the honour of being the Review Editor of this esteemed journal. In this short span of working together I found him a man of straightforward nature and a critic dedicated to standards. He was sincerely considerate to originality of articles and gave his bold verdict in the favour of genuine writing. His anxiety for language and literature could be felt in almost all his editorials of *Replica*. His judicious selection of articles and poetry section, his words of encouragement to the budding talents and his elderly reproach to those who aspire to touch the summits overlooking the set norms would be missing if *Replica* continues to travel after his decease, yet discontinuing the journal would be even more agonizing as it would be like putting an end to the dream of a man. During the period of his ill health he was always worried about the continuance of his beloved *Replica*. The intervals of convalescence filled him with enthusiasm for work yet the disquiet of his inner soul was visible in his mails and messages. The last mail that I received from him was about an article for the forthcoming edition with the apprehension that it may be the last issue of the journal. Unfortunately I mailed to him my revised article and book review on 22nd of May, the day when he was hospitalized and moved on to his ultimate voyage to the world of eternity. Though his was not a sudden demise yet it left a vacuum around the friends and lovers of *Replica* which is synonymous with Dr. Panda in our memories. His journey beyond this world has left us deprived of a concerned well wisher, a seasoned critic and a matured companion in the literary circles.

---

Dept. of English, V.R.A.L. Govt. Degree College, Bareilly U.P.S

## Joyce's Narratology in *Ulysses*: A Contextual, Critical Approach

Amarendra Kumar

The novel form is so vast and varied in its scope that sometimes its apparent formlessness comes to be an elusive norm to judge it as an aesthetic whole, in the organic unity and intimacy of its tissues hanging loose like threads in a worn or torn web, knit together or recomposed by the kind of reading desired. A simple classic conception of the form by Dorothy Van Ghent shows its vital function in a lucid light: '... novels have their primary interest in the illumination they cast upon life, not life somewhere else and at another time but immediately here, immediately now...'<sup>1</sup> by being 'coherent' and an 'aesthetic whole'. Further, the critic quotes Lionel Trilling from his essay on 'Manners, Morals and the Novel': 'It can be said that all prose fiction is a variation on the theme of *Don Quixote*.'<sup>2</sup> Evidently, this is a critical conjecture above the ingredients of parody and paradox on which *Don Quixote* (1605-1615) is built as a satire in its hallucinatory texture.

In Cervantes' novel fantasy operates at the physical level that is rocked by the convulsions of a sick, book-fed imagination till its eventual collapse through shattering encounters. But fantasy may also be exploited at the level of technique to subvert fictional conventions by the use of innovative structural and stylistic devices, disruptive and diffusive but still narrative in function in some way to sustain the story and evolve an epic form. In fact without resorting to myth, fantasy and imaginative conjury no novel can transmute the crude material of life's reality into a metaphor in the light of the author's vision, so that an

autobiographical novel is anything but a novel if it is merely an organized pattern of biographical details. James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) is an outstanding work in this genre, and *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegans Wake* (1939) are innovatively designed as novels on a biographical base in different narrative patterns and styles, one a modern epic of exquisite and complex workmanship and the other a fantastic apprehension of the local and personal as the universal, recurrent and perpetually renewable life cycle.

In the middle of the eighteenth century Laurence Sterne's novel *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gent* (1759-1767) places the narrator's consciousness at the centre of the work in a time scheme both temporal and atemporal and shows how the associative chain flows above the contingencies and constraints of the passing time. The narrator hero takes a long time to be born and his father and uncle consume six chapters by their talk while coming down a staircase, presumably needing one chapter for each step taken. In Marcel Proust's seven-part monumental novel *Remembrance of Things Past*, originally published in fifteen volumes in the first two decades of the twentieth century, the timeless time also defies the dictates of clock time with perfect ease, so that a dinner takes one hundred and fifty pages to be depicted, irrespective of the limits imposed by the normal flow of time. Edouard Dujardin, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf conceive time in their fictions as the flow of experience and thought and depict the psychological reality of the living world beneath the surface of existence chiefly by the technique of the stream of consciousness.

Joyce uses 'immense intellectual industry to distort the structure of language'<sup>3</sup> and indulges in a

'[w]ilful sabotage of coherence'<sup>4</sup>, in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. In the latter particularly. But this charge, though partly tenable, needs to be seen in the light of the author's attempt to intensify the enjoyment of the textual difficulties by a rather matching mode of reading, patient and penetrating. With a rebellious will to be daringly different he plays a language game in an experimental vein to mystify common perceptions by omission, ellipsis, indirection, verbal permutations and combinations, and above all by a sort of disintegration of conventional techniques for a new integration of the shaping forces at work in his mind and art. However, his new technique in *Ulysses* is parody-prone for an ironic exposure of the contemporary muddle and malady and makes use of various narrative and dramatic devices and styles as a playful exercise in storytelling by incorporating conventional methods like description, straightforward narration, dramatic dialogue, teasing catechistic procedure, cataloguing, scientific inquiry and exposition.

Simple objective storytelling has been in vogue ever since stories began to be told and written, as the basic natural medium of the art for hypnotic or moving conjuries in words. The novel form uses its methods with a sustained care to build up an integral effect more by telling than implying, to bring out its dramatic and discursive purposes. Despite its universal vision and immense scope Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (1862-69) unfolds a pattern of plot and character in a historical setting that imparts a certain meaningful consistency to its inherent diffusiveness. On an enormous symbolic canvas Gabriel Garcia Marquez's novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) depicts the founding of civilization and its ultimate dissolution in individual



dramas by the inner natural forces of decay, death and annihilation at work in the human and natural world, aided by a maiming, perverse will. The insidious, destructive process is powerfully evoked as it swallows the human endeavour to live, thrive and survive through an indefatigable quest for material means as well as scientific and ultimate knowledge. Of course the finely evolved magic realism doesn't obstruct readerly perception with its fidelity to the conventions of novelwriting-plain narrative style and communicative language medium.

Similarly Jean-Paul Sartre's modern historical novel sequence *Roads to Freedom* (1948...), set in the backdrop of the Second World War, synchronizes the characters' feelings and thoughts and their evasiveness and the apprehensive mind of Europe under the looming threat without disrupting the channels of communication. Later, in *Midnight's Children* (1981) and *The Satanic Verses* (1988) Salman Rushdie magicalizes the story dramas in broad, colourful sweeps of narrative detail with the flavour of a bilingual style or music, rather like and unlike Joyce and Mulk Raj Anand, with an exuberance and gaiety typically his own. *The Satanic Verses* opens with the two protagonists Gibreel Farishta and Saladin Chamcha falling down from a great height after an aircrash, in the icy night air of London and the Thames under an alabasterlike moon. Gibreel sings in an incredible mood of levity and defies the impending doom, while Saladin Chamcha snappily asks him to stop the infernal noise. 'To be born again,' sang Gibreel Farishta tumbling from the heavens, 'first you have to die. Hoji ! Hoji ! To land upon the bosomy earth, first one needs to fly. Tat-Taa ! Takathun ! ...'

Anand conversely breathes local colour and vivid,

vibrant life with his bilingual expressions in a neorealistic vein. Joyce is however bafflingly multilingual in the European context and occasionally bilingual in the Indian, much more in *Finnegans Wake* than in *Ulysses*, with some Hindi and Sanskrit words alluding or referring to myth, scriptures, Buddha and Buddhism. Although he accuses T.S. Eliot of having stolen *The Waste Land* (1922) from his *Ulysses* and is critical of some of his Sanskrit quotations in the long poem, he himself relies on the effectiveness of this transtextual practice on the language level. After his intelligible storytelling in *Dubliners* (1914) and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* he intellectualizes the novel form with daring experiments to the extent of earning a sort of notoriety as a disintegrator of coherence.

Besides the fragmentation of the form and the language Joyce conceives character and situation in an idiosyncratic manner, by a process of unfoldment lacking consistency and firmness, on purpose though. His characters appear to be madeup wholes before presentation in a life drama. According to Vladimir Nabokov, 'Joyce takes a complete and absolute character, God-Known, Joyce-known, then breaks it up into fragments over the space-time of his book. The good reader gathers the pieces and gradually puts them together.'<sup>5</sup> Indeed, Stephen grows or changes less except his torment at his refusal to pray for his dying mother in silent ungodly pride and attains an essentially cerebral individuality with literary and philosophical ideas and witty utterances. But the portrayal of Leopold Bloom and his wife Molly approaches a mark of perfection in character creation by an unravelling of their complex, conflicting impulses, feelings and thoughts, impregnating them with the stirring mystery of a rich, manysided, strong

individuality through their sex obsessions and perversities. On reading *Ulysses* Carl Jung felt intrigued and baffled by Joyce's intuitive, revealing grasp of female psychology, Molly's, as discernible in her long unpunctuated monologue climactically. To him, only "the devil's grandmother knows so much about the real psychology of a woman. I didn't."<sup>6</sup>

In *Finnegans Wake* Joyce probably hits back at Virginia Woolf and Leonard Woolf for their delicate taste that was outraged by his coarse, obsessive, 'biological' phraseology, unabashedly frank and hurtful to them for which *Ulysses* earned their rejection as publishers and owners of the Hogarth Press. His tuneful mockery in neologistic fervour comes in a veiled way in *Finnegans Wake* : 'Dood and I dood. The wolves of Fochlut ! By whydoyoucallme ? Do not flingamejig to the twelves ! (p. 479)' This is of course an interpretative insight into the lines that appear to register his reaction to sensitive Mrs. Woolf's smarting blow. If *Ulysses* provoked her so much, she couldn't even endure flipping through *Finnegans Wake* that offends refined taste with its appalling abandon of sex imagery and insinuations of perverse, incestuous sex as well as recurrent references to urination, defecation and bowels gas release.

*Ulysses* works out its flowing design with a consummate craftsmanship of a dual focus that welds together story, myth and metaphor into a shaping force, fraught with moral implications. Within the frame of the conventional narrative the novel gains a rare fluidity and flexibility to interiorize the story drama in the mind flow of the three protagonists in particular whose gross physical existence glints with meaning more when irradiated by the pulsations of their inner life, their instincts, emotions, intuitions, imagination

and fancy, dreams and adaptation to the harsh realities of life and the world, visions, philosophical, moral and metaphysical ideas. The submerged irony of the parallelism of the fantastic voyage and adventures of Odysseus in Homer's epic and the physical and mental rambles of Stephen Dedalus (named Dedalus to suggest in his case his vision and artistry like that of the mythical maker of a labyrinth and wings in ancient Crete), a Jew advertisement solicitor Leopold Bloom and his singer wife Marion Bloom in Dublin on a single day implies the aching void between the glorious heroic past and the sordid present. Also the lyric intensity and unity of a short story given an epic scope in the image of a limitless stretch of time in the orbit of a cyclic mobility, a psychic reality of multiple dimensions. The eventful day of small or significant epiphanic encounters is Thursday, 16 June 1904, between early morning and predawn time of Friday, perhaps redolent of Joyce's memory of his meeting Nora whom he married later.

Originally planned as a short story, the novel acquires an epic dimension by the intricacies of a complex technique that seeks to capture the drift of the human consciousness in a perpetual quest for self-realization in appalling or fancifully elevating conditions. Stephen is alienated from his father Simon Dedalus and his sisters in a self-imposed exile, in a state of smouldering rebellion against rigid religious norms, ignorance and philistinism. He is a poor, low-paid teacher at Mr. Deasy's school, apt to waste his little money on distractions, still rapt in his scholarly and creative pursuit. On the other hand, Bloom is a man of material quest, a cuckold, unfretfully resigned to his buxom, luscious wife Molly's infidelities. Himself a sex-hunter, he seems to swim in a blurred mist of

illusions, in a subliminal search of a son after his son Rudy's death in infancy.

In a way Molly is the centre of the giddy circle, a voluptuous singer, younger in mind than her daughter Milly by her wild fancy and yearning and real hunt, quite an adulteress but still a loving wife. She is true to Bloom at heart above the sins of the flesh and the haunting memory of her first love Lieutenant Mulvey and her flirtations with her concert agent Blazes Boylan. Amidst the tangle of the tense relationships and conflicting quests the vein of 'serious gaiety' or the notion of the 'joking Jesus' animates the panorama where nothing like a central dramatic crisis actually happens. Of course the talks, discussions, visits and encounters on the shifting scene of physical location at Martello Tower, the cemetery, the newspaper office, the brothel, the city outside and Bloom's house on his return with Stephen have the scintillating charm of a lively drama of slow revelations, simple or banal but meaningful as a manifestation of the author's vision in his carefully evolved design. As a tragicomedy of cross purposes the novel takes the shape of a traumatic, titillating tour of the landscape of life in the real world by its unfoldment of the reality of death and the torment and horror bred by it, of the complexity of human nature and conflicts of opinions and even a physical assault, along with fantastic, nightmarish episodes.

T.S. Eliot's comment on the continuous parallelism of contemporaneity and antiquity in the novel clinches the author's impulse and design in his artistic choice of the 'mythical method' instead of the plain, straightforward, progressive narrative technique: 'It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and significance to the immense panorama of

futility and anarchy which is contemporary history.'<sup>7</sup> However, Vladimir Nabokov quietly warns against any painstaking endeavour to establish the analogy and the allegorical import of the mythical method in the novel, belittling its significance by an emphasis on Joyce's omission of the Homeric titles of the chapters after the serial publication of *Ulysses* on a mature judgement.

As a writer Joyce has a European mind, for he derives much inspiration from Zola's naturalism and Mallarme's symbolism and depicts reality with an unerring eye, keenly alive to its form, colour and texture, even if trivial or distasteful, and relies on the evocative music of the words, suggestion and implication in a self-reflective vein. He seizes the 'ineluctable modality of the visible' and of the 'audible' as well and sees beyond the 'signatures' of all things into the timeless and unknown, like Stephen in *Ulysses*, 'walking into eternity along Sandymount strand'. In fact he laid his Dublin scene on a mental map with a vivid memory and a Dublin Directory. Basically, his is an art of intellectual imagination and multilingual response to experience, harnessing new fictional techniques and the devices of music and the cinema. In this respect, his later fictional work comes to be a fantasia of the conscious with their thematic content of fun and fantasy and novelties of technique.

In *Ulysses* Martello Tower in Dublin is an 'omphalos', a centre of life's vigour and joy as well as its poetic, prophetic and creative potentialities, in its seaside setting. Its chief occupant Stephen, a poet, scholar and teacher, lives here with a medical student Buck Mulligan, an epitome of vigour and buoyancy, and an Englishman Haines in sojourn there. Old jolly Mother Grogan's voice is mimicked by Mulligan in a



rumbustious lighter vein- 'When I makes tea I makes tea... And when I makes water I makes water (p.14).' The air of conviviality and witty crosstalk in the opening Tower episode assumes a flippant tone when Buck asks Stephen whether the old lady's tea and water pot figure in 'the Upanishads'. Whereas Stephen is a quiet visionary, gay and eloquent in his company, Buck is apt to burst into song and a recitative frenzy, pouring out poetry, any moment. Stephen's reply to Bloom later about why he left his father and home sets the tonal key of the novel with a luminous touch of ambiguity, light but deeply suggestive- 'to seek misfortune'. His mother's death haunts him with the horror of its painful paroxysm and of his refusal to kneel down in prayer for her out of an inner revolt against Catholicism and its afflictions during his early educational career. In fact he seems to be a thinly disguised projection of the author and is prone to gather dust and dirt, not only by walking and wandering but also by not caring to have a bath for eight months. He may be said to live a life of art and literature with his sensations and ideas, in the light of his poetic eye and receptive ear in his lonely quest. His conscientiousness is synonymous with his quaint phrase 'agenbite of inwit'.

Bloom is also a wanderer, not on a misty horizon but on the palpable plane of a search for distractions, for pleasure. By nature he is kind and gentle and noble, though he has a wrong wife with the right body in seductive bloom and is resigned to his fate as a horned man. To Molly however he is a goading bull. But she endures him and loves him despite her defiling fancies and betrayal of the marital bond. Simon Dedalus, Milly, Lynch, Lenehan, the strange sailor with his boozing and yarns and others make the novel a bristling canvas, each one integral to the comedy of the cyclic Dublin voyage.

In this fantastic prose epic of Greek and Arabian resonances of *Odyssey* and *The Arabian Nights*, messy webs of instincts and passions, walking-wandering and talk-discussion motifs, mind monologues, sudden mysterious events and encounters devise a choppy meandering course of unheroic action with hints of meaning at the core. The first three episodes at the Martello Tower at the beginning come off as a slow exposition of the book's mind in broken bits of talk and eating and walks around the central figure Stephen whose consciousness gives a momentum to the story at the inner level. Subsequently twelve episodes enlarge and thicken the plot of things happening or imagined by a shifting spotlight on the death and burial of Patrick Dignam, a recurrent unifying thread in the novel, on visits, talks and confrontations. Outstanding among the places depicted besides the graveyard are a newspaper office, a brothel, a city street witnessing the viceregal cavalcade and a physical attack, a beach where Bloom flirts with Gerty Mac Dowell and a maternity hospital where he meets Stephen. His homecoming with Stephen and Molly's wild uninhibited flow of erotic memory and yearning and love emotions constitute the organ swell of the music of the minds interwoven with talks, events and fantasies in the book.

The conflicting preoccupations and thought streams of the three major characters don't affect them inwardly to provoke a clash, rather they embody the psychic forces that intertwine in their destinies as partners in a slow, mysterious dance as complementaries to something within them yet incomplete. Stephen's intellectuality, rootlessness and emotional solitude, Bloom's frustrations and libido play and love fancy and Molly's eroticism and love yearnings may resolve the dilemmas of their internal solitudes

into a homecentric relationship if not subjected to perversions and the afflictions of separateness any more. In his romantic escapade Bloom reveals his masculine and feminine traits that bring about a fantastic climax in his authorial conception as a man-woman, big with child, delivering babies on bodily pressure at Bella Cohen's brothel in a lurid, disgusting, surrealist, saturnalian mind drama moulded by the author's imagination.

But his soaring fancy of self-aggrandisement makes him an emperor, popularly hailed and adored. And then the colourful baloon is punctured and he is on the verge of meeting the fate of a condemned man, as a public nuisance to the city, and earns a graceful deliverance through a doctor's intervention as a male mother to the baby to be born. Obviously, Bloom's fancy as it soars and subsides comes as a nightmarish projective beam from the author's mind. Molly's fantasy however springs from her memory, taste and longing on a firmer ground. All this is sharply different from Stephen's eloquent scholarly expositions of the suffusion of Shakespeare's personal life and family history in his dramas. But there is a physical side to his scholarly pursuit in his visit to the brothel and in his obsessive concern with the breach in Shakespeare's conjugal life as he sees it.

This infinitely complicated muddle is a mockery of Ulysses' adventures and Penelope's passionate devotion to him and the filial bond of the legendary father and his brave loving son Telemachus. But the irony is the implied moral drama, a shaft of redeeming light in the gloom. Beneath the complex web of 'cohesive' deviations and the opacity of the innovative strategies lies Joyce's will or design to bring into play the art of writing as a self-conscious shifting agency

of verbal and formal devices for a multifocal exposure of his vision and philosophy, of the innate regenerative possibilities of the human drama presented. Here the plain narrative technique used happily blends with the blur of the minds' streams that flow and interfuse very often as natural thought flashes and present a poetic conjury of synthetic perceptions and associated ideas and images, imparting depth and richness to the texture. Besides, the parodies of various nonfictional forms vary the narrative mode to achieve an ironic and comic impact: of newspaper headlines in Chapter 4 of Part Two, of music in Chapter 8 and mystical and slapstick plays in Chapter 4 and 8 of the same part, respectively. Examination type of questions and answers in a catechistic manner occur in Chapter 2 of Part Three and reinforce the comical impact as they interrupt or distort the narrative flow with an odd recurrence.

Also notable elsewhere are the parodies of literary styles and authors of various periods, of lady magazine writing or journalese affecting elegance. Scientific inquiry and objective description in elaborate and minute details, blown out of proportion in dramatic situations, reflect a conscious enjoyment of the fun of doing it. Riddles and puns all over the book produce a mirthful intellectual appeal as in journalist Lenehan's riddle or pun: "What opera resembles a railway line ?" ... Answer : "The Rose of Castille (rows of cast steel)p.125" . Portmanteau word coinages like 'strandentwining' and 'syphilisation' and wordclusters, short or very long, one of them eliminating the time space between some facial expressions and a head gesture- 'smiledyawnednodded', abound in the novel and are both funny and meaningful. Water as a source of life in its infinite variety, humanity as a whole, the

sea link of global contact and communication, etc. are the implications of the first coinage ('strand...') and a rotten, evil, syphilitic civilization is what the other implies, probably connoting the Irish rage over the tyrannical British rule in the country. This proliferative or expansive verbal device shows the author's ingenuity in manipulating words and their music to force sense into their shapes and sounds for producing striking effects beneath their apparent oddness.

Joyce's novelties of technique are manifold, as noted. But the focal point of his strategies in this novel is his attempt to interiorize the plot-character development process by the depiction of the stream of consciousness and the association of ideas that accompanies it. This is intended to refract his omniscience by its intuitive identity with others' subjective experience and thought behaviour. To him this is a more realistic approach to the inner life that the narrative art should seize and depict. Besides, the Ovidian cross-metamorphoses occurring in the brothel comedy, at the mental level, in vivid form and colour, though, anticipate the process of melting, merging and cross-transference of the identities of the characters in the baffling pantomime of *Finnegans Wake*.

Joyce's astonishing craftsmanship also saves *Ulysses* from being romantically or cloyingly lyrical. He is basically a Homeric poet of the whole truth that incorporates the tragic truth of life. He tends to be comical and even farcical in his wide charity of acceptance of human frailties or fallibility. It may be said that he comicalizes the novel form with an implicit faith in the creative norm of conception of story in terms of the motifs of wandering, search or exploration for an intuitive tapping of the mind to dig out its mineral

wealth. He sharply registers the mind flow in thought, memory, associative imagery, impressions, emotive response, introspection, etc. by the use of matching stylistic devices. In *Ulysses* Stephen has a sea-soaked sensibility or mind that is stirred by Mulligan's evocative phrase from Swinburne 'a great sweet mother' for the sea and his alliterative and onomatopoeic play on it through 'mummer' and 'murmur' as he accuses him of having killed his mother by not praying for her at the time of her death. Then, images and sounds merge in Stephen's mind in memory flashes that turn the sweet sea into a bitter bowl of water, calling forth the bowl in which his mother poured out her rotten liver's green fluid vomiting and groaning. Mulligan's shaving bowl in this situation and the white china bowl with the green bile at her bedside fuse together with the image of the bay and its 'dull green mass' of water in Stephen's heaving inarticulate agony.

Recurrent phrases like 'dogsbody' for poor forlorn Stephen and 'soft-bodied cat' for Bloom and 'white mackintosh' for the author's disembodied presence in his work are unifying threads in the elusive flux of the mind and the diffusive episodes of talk, discussion, riddle games, witty exchanges and unemotive, extensive, scientific and objective descriptions in an interrogative frame. A strange similarity of dreams occurring to Stephen and Bloom about a voluptuous oriental beauty projects the Molly image foreshadowing their mutual involvement in the tragic triangle that rankles in Bloom's mind. The young poet, musiclover and teacher, a son figure to him, could teach his singer wife Italian pronunciation and improve her mind and also supplant gaudy, uncultured Boylan as her lover. He could marry his daughter Milly as well. Conversely, Molly's agony over Bloom's rage of lust comes up in a

powerful poetic line ‘... all the poking and rooting and ploughing he had up in me...’ In her erotic yearning and narcissism she echoes his kinky lovemaking by kissing her bottom in her image of that part as the ‘cheeks of my bottom’.

But the memory of his marriage proposal to her draws forth a fine phrase from her about a woman’s body being a ‘flower’, simple, sensuous, redolent of self-love with a sense of touch. It seems to soften in a redeeming light the oppressive phantom of his animal lust and behaviour in trying to milk her for making tea. Both the Blooms swing between poetry and sheer animality, with Bovarysme as a common factor between them, true to each other at heart in the light and shadow play of Donne’s image of a twincompasslike connectivity, untorn by vagrancy. On the other hand, Stephen wittily conjectures about Shakespeare’s wife Ann Hathaway whose intrigue with his brother Richard Shakespeare he has no means to prove. Shakespeare, a recurrent link in the exchanges of views and expositions, provides a thematic base to the intellectual atmosphere of the story in a creative context, reflecting the intricacies of the tensional love relationship of the Blooms obliquely.

As already noted, Homer enlarges the scope of the novel for the underlying myth to dissolve into a life drama by an ironic inversion. In the parallelism evolved or implied the wandering mysterious sailor, Odyssean and Arabian by thematic association, and the circus clown who desperately and amusingly falls upon Bloom claiming that none but he himself was his missing father reinforce the father-son theme with a poignant irony, corresponding to the Bloom-Stephen relationship. In their funny, embarrassing or sad situations this ironic motif is a muddle on the surface

with an embedded layer of meaning in a maze without an outlet, just promoting a quest as the only way out. Fanciful, symbolic, though funny, a fresh lemon cake sings in a fantastic episode: ‘We’re a capital couple, Bloom and I;/He brightens the earth, I polish the sky (p.404).’ In the newspaper office Bloom’s mild but emphatic suggestion for a business ad to appear in the *Telegraph*, to win Mr. Keyes’ favour, provokes a wild sally of annoyance and agitation from the Editor Myles Crawford: ‘Will you tell him he can kiss my arse ? (p.137).’ Stephen whom Crawford had seen with a good pair of boots on that day was more interesting and pleasing to him as he had seen him last in shoes showing his heels. Bloom’s wistful plea after a pause is greeted by another howl: ‘He can kiss my royal Irish arse... Any time he likes ...’ Bloom a wanderer like Stephen, Molly a daydreamer, and others of the mobile, articulate or fantasizing bunch emanate from the author’s mind like a cinematic beam on the screen forming images, frame by frame, in a montage sequence, in a disorderly or orderly manner. In the novel there is an air of conviviality rung by laughter, louder than the sobs.

Even the Irish political struggle for freedom from the British regime wavers between violent resistance and acquiescence and produces a species of gallows humour in the violent erection of a hanged man’s penis on the gallows, sending forth a gush of sperm on the cobblestones, with elegant, elevated ladies rushing ahead to sop it up. It may of course be seen in a suggestive, symbolic light as well. In another ghastly episode of the execution of an Irish freedom fighter a sudden startling turn shows the wailing ladylove on the scene readily accepting an Oxford graduate’s offer of marriage, reminiscent of Petronius’s tale ‘The Widow



of Ephesus' and Christopher Fry's play *A Phoenix Too Frequent* dramatizing a similar switchover from lament to a frenzy of new love. During a fantastic political debate of conflicting opinions Stephen says'... You die for your country... Let my country die for me... Damn death. Long live life ! (p. 494).' Unmistakably, Stephen epitomizes the loneliness of a genius, and he cuts below the surface of existence for things of a deeper and abiding value.

Defecation and urination, central to Joyce's conception of life, is appallingly pronounced in *Finnegans Wake*, but *Ulysses* also has its whiffs of the Swiftian odour. With an absurd funny accuracy it records the volume, quantity and trajectories of Bloom's and Stephen's urine flow, showing how Bloom's jet differs from that of the younger person on account of his age and its natural effect on the discharge. In fact the Woolfian reactions to this indelicacy or vulgarity stand rather unmollified, though not quite unrelieved in the author's comic vision of life. Obviously, the novel employs absurdity and disproportionate emphasis as technical means to depict reality amusingly, in order to provoke mirth even at the cost of delicacy. On the other hand, all the deliberative 'seances', the elaborate cataloguing of facts and figures, of the topics of discussion, the question-answer formulation of story, and the irritating volume and accuracy of scientific knowledge provided cause a deliberate narrative fragmentation or obstruction. However, the unfictional strategies tap the potential of pause as a perceptual process, obliquely related to the story flow by its illuminating, titillating wealth of information despite its accumulative density and interruptive character. This new strategic approach to storytelling may therefore be designated as a structural and stylistic discovery of the comicality at the core of the novel.

One authorial question- 'What proposal did Bloom, diambulist, father of Milly, somnambulist, make to Stephen, noctambulist? (p.583)' makes a suggestive use of a simple method of interrogation to bring out individual traits with humour or to attribute them to the characters with gaiety. Besides, the absurd accuracy of the scientific delineation of the sleeping postures of Bloom and Molly in bed is notable for its inner layer of mirthful humour: 'Listener (Molly), S.E. by E. Narrator (Bloom), N.W. by W.: on the 53rd parallel of latitude, N., and the 6th meridian of longitude, W.: at an angle of 45 degrees to the terrestrial equator (p.620).' In sharp contrast to it Bloom is depicted in his sleep as 'the manchild in the womb', to be reborn in the life cycle after a refreshing sleep, innocent as an unborn baby or a baby just born, or a baby in his angelic infancy. Now the irony of the babies born to him in the nightmare fantasy at the brothel neither tickles nor bites. Fun or farce is resolved here in the divine, human or primal state of sleep. This quiet dramatic touch has a great narrative value with its connotations of a return to the secure fold of relationships and homely comfort in spite of the taint and gnawing pain of infidelities. With its poignancy, depth and silence it comes as a lovely metaphor of reticence in the discursive form of the novel that is loud in its multiple tones and peals of laughter.

Bloom is back home like a sailor after his voyage or sea adventures, a mind-time traveller in repose, recaptured vividly and resonantly by a verbal and musical shuffle with an explosively funny *Arabian Nights* refrain.

He has travelled.

With ?

Sinbad the Sailor and Tinbad the Tailor and

Jinbad the Jailer and Whinbad the Whaler and Ninbad the Nailer and Finbad the Failer and Binbad the Bailer and Pinbad the Pailer and Minbad the Mailer and Hinbad the Hailer and Rinbad the Railer and Dinbad the Kailer and Vinbad the Quailer and Linbad the Yailer and Xinbad the Phthailer.

When ?

... Darkinbad the Brightdayler.

Where ? (p. 621)

The proliferative, variational word-and-sound game is boisterously funny, though oddly repetitive on an alphabetic base. It treats time as a dark tunnel with light at the end through the coinage 'Brightdayler', a silver lining in itself. But the place is left unlocated because this is all in the sleeper's mind under an authorial focus, a nowhere with the conflicting urges of the couple still unresolved.

*Ulysses* with its entire gamut of modern fictional, unfictional, epic, poetic and musical devices sounds postmodernistic in its accent of self-conscious artistry, refracting the authorial omniscience in manifold ways rather unobtrusively. Although a vivid stamp of intellectuality marks the progress of the work through learned, multilingual allusions and references entailing an explicatory reading, the poetic, associative, impressionistic narrative mode is superbly evocative and unfolds itself at its best through condensation and suggestion and intertextual or transtextual echoes without overt reference. Stephen's mind moulds the visual image of the sea scene early in the first part of the book with nuances and resonances worth noting. 'Inshore and farther out the mirror of water whitened, spurned by lightshod hurrying feet. White breast of the dim sea. The twining stresses two by two. A hand plucking the harpstrings

merging the twining chords. Wavewhite wedded words shimmering on the dim tide (p.11).' By a vibrant focus of eye and mind on the stirred surging sea the poetic verbalization subtly seizes the tonal shades of the tremulous surface woof as it heaves under the breeze and conjures it up as a verbal or musical phrase. The lovely sea view in its finer pulsations smoothly merges into the Greek pagan, literary and mythical contexts of sea, song, harpmusic and handplay on the strings, all twining together in a verbal or phrasal form, waves become words in a rhythmic pattern.

For Joyce's articulate and perceptible mode of thinking in a philosophical mood, the following lines from *Ulysses* are strikingly notable: 'Creation from nothing. What has she in the bag ? A misbirth with a trailing navelcord, hushed in ruddy wool... The cords all link back strandentwining cable of all flesh... Put me onto Edenville. Aleph, alpha: nought, nought, one (p.38).' Stephen thinks as he walks on the Sandymount Strand about nature, life, birth processes, the Biblic Creation, the swarming scene of humanity, the void and nothingness at the core of worldly existence, with the intermingling of the Hebrew, Biblic and Greek contexts in 'Edenville' and 'Aleph, alpha'. The climax seems to come off in a dim apprehension of a divine centre of unity in the zeroic reality of things through a small verbal shuffle at the end, in 'one'. In the mindstream the interminable chain of life and death takes shape as a 'Bag of corpsegas sopping in foul brine', a seascape of creation and dissolution, through an acutely vivid and sharp metaphorical fusion of the senses of sight and smell. The thought resonates reflectively: 'God becomes man becomes fish becomes barnacle goose becomes featherbed mountain. Dead breaths I living breathe, tread dead dust, devour a

urinous offal from all dead (p.49).’ In Joyce’s stream of consciousness technique in the novel, a thought wave is thus a suggestive, half-formed grammatical or ungrammatical syntax, sensory, visionary or philosophical, associatively interknit by rapid shifts from one idea or object to another in an emotive and reflective key. This flowing mind-matter amalgam is essentially poetic in nature and function, relevant to the narrative art by its movement on the plane of the inner reality of life .

Molly’s predawn long reverie in bed occurs in an unpunctuated mind monologue in pure native English, simple, rhythmic, rippling, natural and naked in content. Sharply receptive to the surge of memory and feeling, erotic urges and fancies in the most intimate details, this silent soliloquy is a masterpiece of a penetrating portrayal of female psychology. Molly bares her love and sex impulses with a yearning for fulfilment so overpowering that it seems to be an orgy of self-indulgence in which narcissism and nymphomania mingle like a cocktail of intoxicating potions. But her seething senses and fancy flight don’t tear her off her roots : her love for Bloom and domestic care, her birdlike instinct to feather her nest fine, her anxiety about his hunt for pleasure outside, his prodigal waste of money and her natural sense of economy. She seems to have the strength to cut through the messy agitation of mind and body with a true feeling , deep and intense; ‘Id rather die 20 times over than marry another of their sex of course hed never find another woman like me to put up with him the way I do ... (p.628).’ Her reverie trails off into a memory flash in a mood of ardent surrender ‘...his heart going like mad and yes I said yes I will yes. (p.663) .’

Contrarily, Bloom’s Dublin rambles conclude with

a cool calculation about the day’s failures, particularly about his failure ‘to certify the presence or absence of posterior rectal orifice in the case of Hellenic female divinities... (p.614).’ This is an irreverent sally of coarse humour, reflecting the comic spirit of the novel, unmodified by canons or considerations of moral delicacy. Joyce also uses here Sanskrit words for male and female sex organs at play with the same ease, with no inhibition for a pause to tone it down by a softer substitute. At heart Bloom is still a caring, loving husband in his quiet tragic, dramatic choice of Stephen as a lover for Molly for her intellectual elevation and refinement.

All this is perhaps a symbolic portrayal of Joyce’s empirical and searching mind that deeply probes the divine manifestation as a visible and audible phenomenon, engulfed by the overwhelming presence of aberrations and evils. Here the couple embodies the flawed nature of man in the redeeming light of the psychic split between their frailties and perversities and their emotional attachment to each other. To the author it may be a variation on the Biblical theme of Adam’s cognate creation of hell and heaven in the warring forces that constitute the world of his progeny, fallen, falling, rising to seek grace in some form and measure. William Blake’s not-so-serious critical remark on Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* may throw light on this aspect of the creative impulse and work of the novelist; ‘The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels & God, and at liberty when he wrote of Devils & Hell is because he was a true Poet and of the Devil’s party without knowing it.’<sup>8</sup>

In *Ulysses* Joyce forges in his smithy many styles to render the reality of the living world and of the

mind's stream of images and ideas. Like a Concrete poet he also plays upon the spelling and sound of Leopold Bloom's name by a permutational mode of ordering in an anagram :

Leopold Bloom  
Ellpodbomool  
Molldopeloob  
Bollopedoom  
Old Ollebo, M.P. (p.568)

Of course Concrete poetry is as old as George Herbert and William Blake, even older in the pictorial management of physical space for poetic composition, acknowledging the value of extraverbal devices in the outbringing of the meaning to be made. Its later development in typographical, alphabetic designs and crossfertilized forms produces some good and valuable work of visual dimensions with minimal word sets. But here this alphabetic play anticipates Joyce's ultimate form of fragmentation and disintegration of both the language medium and the novel form in *Finnegans Wake*, on a flimsy plotground of a dramatized philosophy of history and ideas, after Vico and Bruno, in permutational episodes of a family history, emblemizing all people and places at all times, in an onomatopoeic, alliterative musical medium.

*Ulysses* has however a story to tell, a narrative, dramatic pace of an unconventional sense of direction, through characters with individual traits, and a structural pattern in an ascending scale of dramatic interest despite the tangible effects of Joyce's literary nonconformity on the work. But between his two colossal works of fiction of the later phase there runs one thread of life philosophy as a connecting link-the possibilities of the present to be explored by the pursuit of elevating ideals, by a regenerative reliance on the

'Adya' or 'Vartman' in the image of the 'Padma' (Lotus) of the Hindu and Buddhist scriptures. 'Padma, brighter and sweeter, this flower that bells, it is our hour or risings. Tickle, tickle. Lotus spray. Till herenext. Adya (*Finnegans Wake*, p.598).' In the darkness of sins and evils creative endeavor or artistic creativity, or hopeful, joyful, purposeful action is a valid norm to live by, to impose order on the chaos of experience and of the world outside.

### Works Cited

1. Ghent, Dorothy Van. *The English Novel : Form and Function*, New York: Harper and Publishers , 1961 (reprint), p. VII.
2. Ibid., p. VIII.
3. Jameson, Storm. *Parthian Words*, London: Collins and Harvill Press, 1970, p. 73.
4. Ibid, p. 45.
5. Nabokov, Vladimir. *Lectures on Literature*, Ed. Fredson Bowers, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980, p. 217.
6. In William York Tindall's *A Reader's Guide to Finnegans Wake* (reprint), New York: Syracuse University Press Edition, 1996, p.323.
7. Rogers, Pat. Ed., *An Outline of English Literature*, Second Edition, Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 386.
8. In Peter Davies' article 'Poet vs. Preacher: Milton's Dichotomy in *Paradise Lost*', *The London Magazine*, London: October - November issue, 2011, p. 4.
9. For textual quotations : *Ulysses* (reprint), Delhi: Jainco Publishers, (date of publication not given). Originally published in 1922.
10. Quotations from *Finnegans Wake* (1939), London: Faber and Faber Ltd., Reprint, 1971.

□ □

---

**Amarendra Kumar, Retired Professor of English, R. N. College, Hazipur is a prolific poet & story writer.**



## Indian Novel in English: A Tour

Sudhir K. Arora

Indian Novel in English is a river that flows rhythmically and thematically. This river passes through many known and unknown places marking some significant landscapes right from Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864) to the present scenario—Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth and Amitav Ghosh via three big signatures—Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao. When it comes to its own, it creates one more stream and makes its feminine water flow. Its feminine water flows while marking fair view that seems to be alluring in the novels of Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande. As it moves on, it attracts the world's attention towards the famous fertile lands which appear in the novels of Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, Aravind Adiga, Chetan Bhagat and Manju Kapoor.

Raj Lakshmi Devi's *The Hindu Wife* (1876), Toru Dutt's *Bianca* (1878), Kali Krishna Lahiri's *Roshinara* (1881), H. Dutt's *Bijoy Chand* (1888), and Khetrupal Chakravarti's *Sarata and Hingana* (1895) are the names of some novels in English which, though not so significant, create historical interest in the reader who, while making a tour, comes to touch them and then enters the Gandhian era—the era that promises freedom and reveals some new rays of hope in future. The reader finds the Gandhian impact on novels written during the period of freedom movement. Gandhi's personality and his ideals influenced a number of novelists during the freedom struggle movement. K.S. Venkatramani's *Kandan, the Patriot: A Novel of New India in the Making* (1932) creates social realism during the Civil Disobedience Movement. It proved to be a medium for awakening social

consciousness among the people. K.A. Abbas *Inqilab* (1955) is also tinged with Gandhian colour.

The novels written in the post-Independence era breathe in new environment which offer them technique, style and language, with which the novelists like Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao gave a new name, locale and identity. These three big novelists used the novel as form to fuse substance—universal in nature which hit the West's prejudiced judgment that India was just a model for proving the image of 'Other.'

Mulk Raj Anand (1905-2004) through *Untouchable* (1935), *Coolie* (1936), *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937), *The Village* (1939), *Across the Blackwaters* (1941), *The Big Heart* (1945), *Seven Summers* (1951), *The Private Life of an Indian Prince* (1953), *Gauri* (1960), *Morning Face* (1968), *Confessions of a Lover* (1976), *The Bubble* (1984) and *Nine Moods of Bharat: Novel of a Pilgrimage* (1998) demonstrates that he is a social realist, reformer, humanist and visionary. He shows empathy for the underdogs and becomes their champion. As a novelist, he fuses experience with imagination in his novels which reveal him as a committed progressive novelist known for his humanism.

R.K. Narayan (1906-2001) becomes the pioneer of regional novel by creating a world of Malgudi in his novels like *Swami and Friends* (1935), *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937), *The Dark Room* (1938), *The English Teacher* (1945), *Mr Sampath* (1949), *The Financial Expert* (1952), *Waiting for Mahatama* (1955), *The Guide* (1958), *The Man Eater of Malgudi* (1962), *The Vender of Sweets* (1967), *The Painter of Signs* (1976), *A Tiger for Malgudi* (1983), *Talkative Man* (1986), *The World of Nagaraj* (1990), and *Grandmother's Tale* (1993). In his novels he shows the comic vision of life through irony and paradox. His art of storytelling is superb and with the passage of time

the story reveals the growth of characters from innocence to wisdom via experience. He makes the best use of psychological realism to hypnotize the reader who remains under his influence with the flow of his comic genius that is simply pure and artistic.

Raja Rao gives a new definition of metaphysics, puranic tradition and Indian philosophy to the Indian novel in English by writing *Kanthapura* (1938), *The Serpent and the Rope* (1962), *Cat and Shakespeare* (1965), *Comrade Kirilov* (1976) and *The Chessmaster and His Moves* (1988) purely in symbolical mode which reveals Indian sensibility in an Indian English idiom, acceptable to all, particularly Indians.

The common threads that bind these big three are the myth of Gandhi, their first hand experience of the Western life and above all their deep-rootedness in Indian culture. The Sahitya Akademi award also connects these big three. R.K. Narayan got the Sahitya Akademi Award for *The Guide* in 1960, Raja Rao for *The Serpent and the Rope* in 1963, and Mulk Raj Anand for *Morning Face* in 1971.

*All About H. Hatter* (1948) is a comic novel which demonstrates G.V. Desani's art of experimentation in the art of narration by creating the device of chain story on the Panchtantra model. He weaves the fabric of this comic novel with the help of the fusion of the Eastern and the Western narrative configurations.

The name of Bhabani Bhattacharaya flashes on the screen for his contribution in creating pathos and bringing the hypocrisy and helplessness of the masses in the hour of their crisis on the floor, particularly in the novels written with social motive like *So Many Hungers* (1947), *He Who Rides a Tiger* (1954), and *Shadow from Ladakh* (1966).

Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956), which

is based on the Partition theme, reveals the realistic and brutal impressions felt out of the partition of India. It reveals Singh's skill in offering the frank realism with breath stopping narration and imaginatively conception.

Manohar Malgonkar has given the historical sense to his novels along with his art of storytelling in the manner of Conrad. His *Distant Drum* (1960) and *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964) demonstrate his experiences of military life and art of narrating the story concerning the life of princes, communal fire out of partition of the country and the mutiny of 1857.

Ruskin Bond is a popular name who entered the domain of fiction with *The Room on the Roof* (1956). Indians feel proud of V.S. Naipaul because his ancestors belonged to India while the reality is that he has presented a dark picture of India. *A House for Mr Biswas* (1961), *In A Free State* (1971) and *A Bend in the River* (1979) are Naipaul's famous novels. Chaman Nahal is a gifted novelist who has presented partition of India in his novel *Azadi* (1975), which reveals his skill in his presentation of history.

Being influenced by the Gita and Gandhi, Arun Joshi has coloured the canvas of his novels like *The Foreigner* (1971), *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* (1971), *The Apprentice* (1974), and *The Last Labyrinth* (1981) with existentialism to the extent that they seem to tell the story of human predicament revealing the inner patterns marked with crisis and alienation in this materialistic world.

Like the big three—Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao, the three big contemporary novelists—Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth and Amitav Ghosh have written the new script of Indian novel in English, which has become rich in symbols, contents, techniques and history. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight Children* (1981) is

a revolution in the domain of Indian Novel as it demonstrates the postmodern techniques equipped with 'chutnification' and a unique treatment of history with the fusion of fantasy and magic realism. The poet in Vikram Seth appears in novel to the extent that his prose appears to be poetic. His *The Golden Gate* (1986) is a novel in verse with 596 sonnets that tell the tale of the Californian life marked with alienation and isolation while releasing the homosexual aroma here and there. His magnum opus novel *A Suitable Boy* (1993) makes him a suitable boy in the domain of Indian Novel in English. In his novels like *The Circle of Reason* (1986), *The Shadow Lines* (1988), *The Hungry Tide* (2005), *Sea of Poppies* (2008) etc., Amitav Ghosh paints the postcolonial realities with the anthropological colours.

B.S. Gidwani has contributed his mite in the area of Indian Novel in English by writing a historical novel *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* (1976). Rohinton Mistry makes the Parsi World his forte and gives voice to their fears and hopes in the novels like *Such A Long Journey* (1991), *A Fine Balance* (1995) and *Family Matters* (2002). Bapsi Sidhwa also does the same in *Ice Candy Man* (1988).

Shiv K. Kumar and Keki N. Daruwalla are the poets who have tried their hands in novels. Shiv K. Kumar's *Bone's Prayer* (1979), *Nude before God* (1983), *A River with Three Banks* (1998), *Infatuation* (2001), *Two Mirrors at the Ashram* (2007) are academic novels marked with intuition and sex. *For Pepper and Christ* (2009) is Daruwalla's first novel. But Shiv K. Kumar and Keki N. Daruwalla are better known as poets than novelists.

Upamanu Chatterjee's *English August: An Indian Story* (1988) and *The Mummeries of the Welfare State* (2000), Allan Sealy's *Trotternama* (1988), Shashi Tharoor's *The Great Indian Novel* (1989), Vikram Chandra's *Red Earth and Pouring Rain* (1995), Kiran Nagarkar's *Cuckold* (1997), Rajkamal Jha's *The Blue*

*Bedsread* (1999), Akhil Sharma's *An Obedient Father* (2000), Amit Chaudhuri's *A New World* (2000) and *The Immortals* (2009), Manil Suri's *The Death of Vishnu* (2001), Neel Mukherjee's *The Lives of Others* (2006), Indra Sinha's *Animal's People* (2007), Ashwin Sanghi's *The Rozabal Line* (2008) and *Chankya's Chant* (2010), Abraham Verghese's *Cutting for Stone* (2009), Jeet Thayil's *Narcopolis* (2012) are some significant novels that have enriched Indian Novel in English.

Recently Amish Tripathi has become popular through his Shiva trilogy that includes *The Immortals of Meluha*, *The Secret of the Nagas* and *The Oath of the Vayuputra*. Chetan Bhagat has become almost a celebrity among the youths through his novels *Five Point Someone* (2004), *One Night @ the Call Center* (2005), *The 3 Mistakes of My Life* (2008), *2 States* (2009), *Revolution 2020* (2011) and *Half Girlfriend* (2014). He is no doubt popular but his language is the language more of young India than that of the mature ones. Aravind Adiga reveals himself as an able craftsman in his treatment of language, symbols and allusions in *The White Tiger* (2008).

With the passage of time the novelists have become more concerned with the inner life than the outer ones. Psychological, political and sociological aspects have given the exposures as life seems to be more and more complex. The good thing that occurred was the emergence of the women novelists on the scene. Kamala Markandaya registered her presence through her novel *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954) which reveals the predicament of Indians who live in village. It reveals the struggle of Rukmani who faces the challenges of her life successfully and becomes larger than life. Attia Hossain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961) presents the crisis of a young woman in an environment when the Independence Movement was in air. Santha Rama Rau's *Remember the House* (1956) and *The*

*Adventuress* (1971) are set in 1947, the year when India got her Independence. *Red Hibiscus* (1962) is a well-known novel of Padmini Sen Gupta. *Ambapali* (1962) is Vimla Raina's historical novel. Ruth P. Jhabvala knows well how to humanize even the ironic situation in life. Her *Heat and Dust* (1975) demonstrates her art of keen observation and the ability to reveal the foibles and eccentricities of her characters. Anita Desai's inner landscapes prove to be something new to the people who find a good use of psychological realism in her novels like *Cry, the Peacock* (1963), *Voices in the City* (1965), *Bye Bye Blackbird* (1971) and *Clear Light of Day* (1980). She is more concerned with the inner life of woman than the physical one. Nayantara Sehgal in her novels like *A Time to be Happy* (1957) *Storm in Chandigarh* (1969) and *Rich Like Us* (1985) paints the political scenario dotted with corruption and chaos due to the loss of human values. Kamala Das writes a new script of pathetic plight of Indian women in her works like *Alphabet of Lust* (1976) and *A Doll for the Child Prostitute* (1977).

Bharati Mukherjee reveals the pangs felt out of an uprooted identity in her novels like *Tiger's Daughter* (1971) *Wife* (1975) and *Jasmine* (1979). Nargis Dalal also opens the layers of the female world in her novels like *Minari* (1967), *The Sisters* (1973), *The Inner Doors* (1975), and *The Girls from Overseas* (1979). Rama Mehta's *Inside the Haveli* (1977) is a tale of struggle against the oppressive, suffocating and conventional environment. In novels like *The Dark Holds No Terror* (1980) and *That Long Silence* (1988), Shashi Deshpande is concerned with woman and all the things which can empower her and liberate her. Shobha De breaks all the chains of patriarchal hegemony and empowers her women with the feeling of empathy in her novels like *Socialite Evenings* (1989), *Sisters* (1992) and *Strange Obsession* (1992).

Prema Nand Kumar's *Atom and the Serpent* (1982), Namita Gokhale's *Paro : Dreams of Passion* (1991), Gita Hariharan's *The Thousands Faces of Night* (1992), Sunetra Gupta's *Memories of Rain* (1992), Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997), Manju Kapoor's *Difficult Daughters* (1998), Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe* (2001), Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* (2003), Boman Desai's *A Woman Madly in Love* (2004), Rupa Bajwa's *The Sari Shop* (2004), Malathi Rao's *Disorderly Women* (2005), Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006), Easher David's *The Book of Rachel* (2006), Chitra Divakaruni's *The Palace of Illusions* (2008) etc., are some novels that have enriched Indian Novel in English. Now women novelists have come into their own by developing a new idiom that suits feminine sensibility which creates awareness towards the changes that occur in the society.

The future of Indian Novel in English is bright and the river will continue to make various lands fertile to the extent that the Indian contemporary landscape will attract the attention of readers all over the world.

□ □

---

**Dr. Sudhir K. Arora, Associate Professor, Dept. of English,  
Maharaja Harischandra P.G. College, Moradabad, U.P.**



## **A Spectrum of Themes: S. R. Patil's *Songs of Soul and Soil***

**Dr. Bajrang Korde**

Dr. Subhash R. Patil, in his collection of poems in English entitled *Songs of Soul and Soil*, handles a number of subjects, themes and objects etc.

Since he is in the field of education, in quite a few poems of his, he shows the reality / plight / condition of academic field of today in India in general and in Maharashtra State in particular. He does it in poems like "CAP (Central Assessment Programme)" (p. 57), "Confession of a Principal ..." (p. 64), "Intellectuals in Education" (pp. 120-121), "My Favourite Teacher" (p. 150), "My Name is Education" (p.154), "My Non Teaching Staff" (pp. 155-156), "Operation Admissions" (pp. 172-173), "Seminars" (p. 186), "Teachers' Room" (pp. 198-99), "Then and Now" (p. 217), "Unemployed" (p. 221), "University Letters" (p. 223.). All of these can be called campus poems.

In his poem "My Name is Education", the poet Patil talks about the importance of education, system of education in the past and the present and its effects on the masses, the society and all the concerned as follows:

My name is Education I am the Boss  
If you avoid me you will be at a loss

Earlier I was on the floor under the tree  
But hey! I was not open to all and free.

But that time I had cost, price and value  
Now I have become cheap in this milieu

Now I am happy going door to door  
Hence, you need not sit on the floor

Wonder! Now I am in the AC rooms

Friends! In each room a PC blooms

I am the cause of all the developments  
So I am followed by all the governments

I'll finish caste, sect and creed  
Because I am a modern breed. (p.154)

The field of education, like most other fields, is not an exception to absurdities, contradictions, loopholes, oddities, hypocrisies, weirdness, ludicrousness, irony, mockery, travesty etc. Some people in the field of education grab prominent posts, but after they get these posts, they don't properly shoulder the responsibilities that come with occupying such positions. A number of these lacunae in some of the decision-makers on the campuses of educational institutions are very finely and humorously brought out by the poet in his poem "Confession of a Principal ..." wherein he writes:

I rarely go and administer college  
As I am averse to any knowledge

I bow to the Chairman n kick the staff  
Hey! In this way my workload is half

I frankly reveal I'm not an academic  
Because, I am a pucca biblio-phobic

I never engage any teaching period  
Instead, I prefer to play bad billiard

Ho! I never let down my Ego  
As I drive a second hand Figo

I should try for the high post of VC  
Say lady members of the local bhici\*

Money matters in my head always lurk  
Really, I should have been a ZP clerk!

How I did my PhD I don't know  
But I am Principal mynyan bho! # (p. 64)

(\*bhici: a local and private financial club. # mynyan bho: by mother {a swearing in Ahirani dialect of Marathi language spoken in rural areas of North Maharashtra, India}).

Dr. S. R. Patil has epical structure in his mind. In this regard, he has made, it seems, a combination of epic style of English poets and Maharashtrian style of people like Saint Dnyaneshwar. As English epic poets like John Milton invoked the Muse in the beginning of their epics, similarly, Prin. Patil also opens his collection of poems with "Invocation", (p. I) and his invocation is realistic; it does not pray and invoke the abstract Muse like epic poets did, but it prays, praises and invokes Prin. Patil's parents who are his real inspiration. He writes:

Dear father and mother! You are my Muse  
While making a poem your name I use  
O, parents! I learnt songs simply from you  
So I inherited from you a poetic view  
Father's favourite farm, mother's loving arm  
The farm and arm, both were warm  
O, parents! Grace and bless me even now  
I shall sing a song of your black cow  
O, parents! For ages I should be born of you  
In each birth I shall make poems new. (p. I)

Patil also writes "Prologue" (pp. XVII-XVIII) to his poems through which he tells us in brief as to which subjects he will handle in his poems which we are about to read. And poet Patil closes his collection with "Epilogue" (pp. 254-255). The "Epilogue" of poet Patil is similar to Saint Dnyaneshwar's "psaayadana" through which Saint Dnyaneshwar prays the Almighty to shower blessings, bliss and light on all the creatures (including human beings) on this planet. So, this collection of poems is a combination of English (foreign)

and Maharashtrian (native) literary forms and traditions.

This shows that Prin. Patil is neither completely an Anglophile nor is he completely a nativist. But he is a very commendable combination of both these 'isms' and he strikes a golden mean which is, I think, beneficial for the literary environment. The element of nativism can be seen in "Part-II" of his poems. Under this section, he writes poems in English, but he uses native (ie Indian and Maharashtrian styles). In this section, he has used the styles of "Abhang, Bharud, Gaulan, Gazal, Kalgitura, Lavani, Phatka, Powada, and Qawali" (pp. 239-253).

All the above-mentioned Maharashtrian styles of folk poetic compositions are, no doubt, popular in and characteristic of the state. However, of all these, three of the most famous ones are: 1. Abhang, 2. Lavani, and 3. Powada. Abhang is a couplet in Marathi composed in praise of God or on a social issue. Generally, its tone is religious, spiritual or metaphysical. Contrary to Abhang is Lavani which is a folk song that sings of romantic, sometimes even erotic, notions in the human beings. This kind of song was sung mostly as one item (along with other items) in a well-known Maharashtrian folk performance namely tamasha. But, of late, there are exclusive performances of lavani which include singing and dancing to the tune of musical instruments. And Powada is a ballad-like folk song which celebrates bravery, victories and fighting spirit of the past and the present heroes.

Notable parts of an Abhang which poet Patil composes are:

A sincere teacher A cow-like creature  
Always works hard Never goes wayward  
Makes good citizens Reaches horizons  
Says Subya\* seriously Be a teacher piously [1]

Mean mind wild villain Any hour should be slain  
This life is not reliable It is purely perishable  
Sad sould searches sorrow Yersterday, today, morrow  
Says Subya silently Live this life gently [2] (p. 239)

(\*Subya - for Subhash, the name of the poet of this collection of poems. The name of the poet is mentioned this way along the lines of a style of mentioning the name of the composer of an Abhang, a style which is found in Maharashtrian saint poet Tukaram's Abhangs wherein - referring to his name - - we find him using "Says Tuka" in the concluding line of his Abhangs. "Says Tuka" is also the title of English translations by Dilip Chitre of Tukaram's selected Abhangs).

Poet Patil gives us a taste of his lavani composition as below:

Come dear come embrace me  
For a long time I waiting thee  
Dancing day-night aches my knee  
Bells tied to ankles, so can not flee  
Come dear come embrace me ...

You're my sun I'm your nun  
I am defeated you have won  
I'm tired now, so cannot run  
Shall serve you meal n rum  
Come dear come crazily come,  
Come dear come crazily come ...

Oh! I laid my life at your foot  
With my tears wetted your boot  
But your attitude does never suit  
Come dear come lump sum come  
Come dear come carefully come  
Come dear come embrace me ... (p. 248)

A poetic composition namely powada is aimed at instilling courage, adventurous spirit in the readers /

listeners, reminding the audience of sacrificial feats of heroes, prompting people to right action and treading on the path of righteousness and truthfulness without caring for the consequences as is done by the heroes whose bravery the powada sings and salutes. Here is an example of how the poet handles this type of verse composition:

First I salute mother Bhawaniji  
Then salute Chhatrapati Shivraji  
Then salute beloved my Indiaji  
Humble bard sings ballad of braves ji ... ji  
ballad of braves ji ... ji

Soldiers sacrifice beyond the yard  
Farmers' job is sweating n hard  
Commoners crushed like a shard  
Leaders play only in their ward ji ... ji  
only in their ward ji ... ji

The common man is the real backbone  
But neither selfish nor anywhere shone  
Being a sincere n sacrificing dies alone  
Leaders shed crocodile tears, a mean clone ji ... ji  
a mean clone ji ... ji

For many ages, where he was, is there  
Neither can die nor can go anywhere  
A burden of billion plus does he bear  
Mind well! One day the system he'll tear ji ... ji  
he'll tear ji ... ji (p. 251)

To the best of my knowledge, this kind of poetic experiment in English by an Indian has been done probably for the first time. Such an attempt can also work as one more step taken in the direction of Indianization of English. And for this Prin. Patil should be highly appreciated and congratulated. Moreover, he has written his poems in metre which needs a lot of literary courage, acumen and skill.

In his personal life, Patil is a Kabirpanthi (ie a follower of Indian secular Saint Kabir's philosophy) which means he is secular, scientific in temperament and doesn't allow superstitions in Hinduism to inhabit his mind. On the contrary, he rejects superstitions by attacking and exposing them. In his poems such as "At Post -Footpath" (p. 35), "Bhogu Bhagat" (pp. 41-42), "Crows" (p.70), "Death" (pp.75-76), "Dindi" (p.83-85), "God without Weapons" (p. 101), "Heaven and Hell" (p. 105), "Kabir" (p. 123), "The Vision of the Son of Sun and Soil" (p.215), he is seen to be rejecting superstitious notions. In his poem "Bhogu Bhagat" \$, poet Patil's opposition to and dislike of superstitions is clearly evident as follows:

In my youth time I used to babble n boast  
 Parents thought I possessed by a ghost  
 Father planned exhausting of the ghost  
 Father n the villagers believed this most  
 On a dark night a Bhagat came  
 He exhausts ghost was his good fame  
 Bhagat's acolyte beat the drum bravely  
 Bhogu Bhagat was dancing ferociously  
 An acolyte singing, a Bhagat stomping  
 Bhagat shouting n the children fearing  
 Invoking names of the dead, he thundered  
 Calling a Bhagat my father had blundered  
 A friend stuck a needle in Bhagat's buttock  
 The Bhagat shouted as if a beaten bullock  
 I was unafraid, calm and quiet  
 Bhagat declared - I was alright  
 As usual I started to babble n boast  
 For any ghost I am a very bad host. (pp. 41-42)

[ \$ Bhogu is a proper name whereas Bhagat means

a devotee of gods and goddesses like Khandoba, Jyotiba, Mariaai, Tuljabhavani etc in rural Maharashtra, India].

Poet Patil's poem "Bhogu Bhagat" is likely to remind the readers of Nissim Ezekiel's poem "Night of the Scorpion".

Like most of those who come from rural background, Patil has a very deep understanding and knowledge of and sensitivity and sympathy towards rural life which includes farming, the nature, various manifestations of nature, living in harmony with nature, serenity, innocence etc. This rural sensibility of Patil is reflected in his poems like "A Beautiful Farm" (p. 02). In fact, his collection of poems opens with the above-mentioned poem on farm and it is very appropriate because farm is the foundation / the base of our lives in general and of mofussil (rural) area people in particular and, it is said, that around 70% of Indian population lives in rural areas. Some of the other poems which reflect poet Patil's rural / rustic sensibility are: "A Farmer Song" (pp. 07-08), "A Fine Family" (p. 09), "An Ancient Tryst" (p. 31), "Babu Burly" (p. 36), "Balu and Balee" (pp. 38-39), "Brave Birds" (p. 52), "Brave Boys" (p. 53), "Clouds Came" (p. 61), "Environment" (p. 92), "Farmers" (p. 95) and a few others.

Rural life is solely dependent on rains; rains are a lifeline of rural folk. Life in rural areas comes to a total halt if there are no rains and hence rain is almost a god (rain god) for the rural folk. While recording the central place of rain in the lives of rustic people, in his poem, "Clouds Came" poet Patil says:

Came, came, came clouds came  
 Oh! Without rains without aim  
 Dried land  
 Tied hand



Thirst grand  
Hair stand  
Came, came, came clouds came (p. 61)

As per the Indian philosophy earth / soil is one of the five elements which has made organic life possible on this planet and hence the earth and various parts / manifestations of the earth such as flora and fauna, rocks and rivers, oceans and deserts etc should be preserved and nurtured if human life in particular and life in general on the earth are to remain alive for ages to come. It is something similar that poet Patil states in his poem "My Black Soil":

Each day either a tree is murdered  
Life force giving forest massacred  
But, no one cares and dares to conserve  
The Himalayan heritage should preserve

.....

In the wrath of Nature humans boil  
That time, I pray to "my black soil" (p. 147).

Those who toil in the farms and produce food for everybody are the real sons of the sun and soil which are selfless elements. In one of his poems entitled "The Vision of the Son of Sun and Soil" poet Patil talks about the thoughts and conditions of the farmer:

I work in my field days and nights  
Hye! I am wild, think the urbanites  
No! You are wrong, I am very mild  
Aye, farming isn't the play of a child

I work and exert over the year  
Strong body n mind, so no fear  
I need not pranayam n meditation  
Get all exercises in my cultivation

I'm not interested in salvation  
Rather I would like starvation

After salvation where the Jivas stay?  
Here on my farm I gaily sing n sway  
To produce ample food is my real religion  
All should be happy n healthy is my vision  
I get the energy from the Sun above  
Get the warmth from the soil below (p. 215).

We read and praise descriptions of nature and idyllic life as portrayed by distant / foreign poets like William Wordsworth and Robert Frost. No doubt, we should do that since the quality of nature poetry of these foreign poets is quite commendable. But, at the same time, we should also cultivate our mind in such a way that we read and appreciate what is good in our country in general and in literary world of our nation in particular. It is not that India is "an area of darkness", as V. S. Naipaul calls it, in all fields and at all times. That is, the attitude of denigrating natives (Indians) and their products (including literary products) all the time and holding in high esteem the foreigners and their products (including literary products) all the time should change as early as possible. So, as a part of developing our mindset for appreciating what is good in cultural / literary field of our country, among other things, we should read and, wherever it deserves, we should also appreciate and thereby encourage upcoming literary talents from various parts of our country like Prin. Patil.

Like any sensitive human being, poet Patil has a deep concern, respect and sympathy towards women. Hence, he portrays women honourably and projects them favourably through his poems. Some of his poems about women are: "A Proud Woman" (p. 20), "A Working Woman" (p. 26), "Mothers" (p. 141) and "Woman" (p. 229).

In his poem "A Proud Woman", poet Patil draws a real-life sketch of present-day educated woman and

her capacity to overcome calamities thrust upon her by the very person who, in fact, is supposed to ward off all troubles in her life and protect her, ie her husband. Poet Patil narrates the story of this adventurous lady as below:

A brave bride, a drunkard husband  
He left her lonely without any fund  
Science graduate thinking moderate  
Simple living knowledge up to date  
Parents consoled n promised help  
But she preferred to go by herself  
Unfortunately she was pregnant  
Direly difficult to bear the brunt  
She delivered a delicate chubby child  
Raised n nurtured with manners mild  
Started to serve as a trained teacher  
Dreaming of her son – right n richer  
In troubled times she did not falter  
Neither did she shatter nor did tatter  
She taught daily ugly orphans  
Cleaned them as her own sons  
Her son educated, appointed as a jailor  
The drunkard in the jail as the prisoner. (p. 20)

The poem is, no doubt, evident of a woman's bravery in leading her life on the strength of her own courageous spirit. The poem is applicable not only to educated women, but also to uneducated ones. In all, it is a portrayal of a woman's power of endurance and her innate ability to tide over storms created in her life by crooked and evil-minded people. However, the last line of the poem may be a fact or could be a fantasy also. Or, it exhibits the poet's desire for poetic justice. All the same, the rest of the poem is very realistic

both in nature and in content.

These days, we find some youth indulging in anti-national activities. But poet Patil upholds and wishes to teach love towards motherland and patriotism. Two of his notable poems in this regard are : "Go Son Go..." (p. 100) and "Mother India" (pp. 139-140). In "Mother India", poet Patil talks of various facets of our country as well as of unity in diversity which is acknowledged by the world as one of the special characteristics of India. Some of the portions of the poem which stand testimony to these assertions are:

I solemnly salute you, Mother India!  
But, yet I don't bear any xenophobia  
Once you released the golden smoke  
But the gold was sold by some bloke  
I cannot believe forefathers were brave  
You were looted by who lived in a cave  
Roaring Rajputs and Maratha might  
Soaring Shikhs n Brahmin foresight  
Grieving Gurjars n grueling Gurkhas  
Oh! Beautiful faces in black burkhas  
Outstanding Orissans n brilliant Bengalis  
O! Zealot Jats n good-hearted Gadhwalis  
Highlander Himachalis n craftsmen Kashmiris  
Mild, mirthful Mayalalese n blooming Biharis  
Daring Dravidians n gleeful Goans  
Why some brothers sing sorry tones?  
Buddhist brotherhood n mobile Muslims  
Christian crying n braving own themes  
Yuppie Yadavs making a hilarious history  
The Seven Sisters have been, yet a mystery  
The Arabian Sea n Bengal bay stand guards

The Himalayas n Hindi ocean in your yards

Young sons are promising n incredible  
But Super sons in power aren't reliable

..... (pp. 139-140)

One of the notable features of Prin. Patil's poetry is his respect towards great souls as well as interesting -- sometimes serious, sometimes humorous -- and praiseworthy character sketches. Such portrayals by poet Patil are: "A Tribute to Mahatma Gandhi" (p. 25), "Babu Burly" (p. 36), "Balu and Balee" (p. 37), "Bhila Bhoom" (pp. 43-44), "Bhrugu Bhatt" (pp. 45-46), "Digu Shet" (p. 82), "Kabir" (p. 123), "Karl Marx" (pp. 124-125), "Mallya and Tillya" (p. 133), "Malu Mangli" (p. 134), "Paula and Pauli Patil" (p. 177).

Saint Kabir from India is rated as one of the earliest secular and liberal saints. Because of his forthrightness and foresight, he is respected by people across many faiths. Adherents of Kabir's philosophy are called Kabirpanthis. As has been stated earlier, poet Patil is himself a Kabirpanthi and has written a poem on Kabir. But he has written poem on Kabir not merely because he is himself a Kabirpanthi, but because Kabir immensely deserves to be highlighted for his great and commendable teachings and deeds. Talking about life, works and philosophy of Kabir, poet Patil, in his poem "Kabir", writes:

Unknown parents, unknown lineage he was born  
The orthodox attacked him but he was never torn

Provoked by pundits and mullas, he was staid  
He's avatar\*, the commoners and followers said

He neither visited mosque nor any temple  
"God dwells in you" was his idea simple (p. 123)

[\*avatar: incarnation]

Poet Patil has written a poem on Karl Marx of the

same title which immediately succeeds the poem on Kabir. Interestingly, poet Patil, at times, also connects Kabir with Marx :

A miraculous n revolutionary man Marx  
Canvassed communism with more marks

Kabir is prior to canvass communism  
The same you spread sans spiritualism

.....

Had communism coupled with Kabir  
Each country would have been Amir\*\* (pp. 124-125)

[\*\*Amir: rich, prosperous, wealthy etc]

Through his poems, poet Patil spreads modern and progressive principles which are, in fact, very necessary for our country's progress and for creating an environment of harmony in the world. Some of the poems which show Dr. Patil's secularism are: "A Lovely Girl" (p. 15) through which he gives the message of inter-caste marriages and "Mohmed Mia" (p. 138) through which he asks us to be secular, tolerant and cooperative towards faiths other than the one we hail from. In this regard, his poem entitled "Mohmed Mia" (p. 138) is worth quoting. Some of the qotable portions of the poem are:

Mohmed Mia carries Kuran pure n pious  
Visits Mandir n Masjid without any bias

Children cheerily find his fatherly feet  
Farmers fire salaam with a farming kit

.....

Pt. Mangal Murty n Mohmed Mia friends  
Sincerely start several social, moral trends. (p. 138)

Poet Patil also attempts to incorporate an element of humour in his poetic creations. One prominent poem in his collection which is quite humorous is "Dajiba's

Death” (p. 71). Some of the very interesting parts of the poem are:

Dajiba, wiry n wily, very mischievous  
His walk and talk, everything unctuous  
Earned n spent sufficient, never anxious

His wife died and had not any children  
Being alone, neither at loss nor in gain  
'Fathering no children', a formula plain

Suffering old age dear Dajiba died  
The villagers gathered, none cried  
They searched his money if he hid

The first time, he got a soap n scent  
His body started shyly to faint  
For such things he never had spent

The pal bearers bent down to lift the bier  
Oh! Dajiba sat up n smiled as a legal liar  
Dear ones deflated as if a punctured tyre!! (p. 71)

By writing this collection of poems, poet Patil has done a wonderful job because a person like poet Patil who comes from Indian rural background and writes verse in English and that too in metre is in itself a very commendable act; in fact, an act of great literary courage. This is one very significant feature of poet Patil's present collection of poems because, as we all know, ours is an age of writing poems in blank verse. But poet Patil has written the whole of his 255-page collection of poems in metre. So, in my opinion, poet Patil deserves to be immensely appreciated for that literary / poetic courage.

This paper has made a modest attempt to explore and discuss some of the above-stated themes and techniques used by Prin. Patil in this work of his. But, the author of this paper is also aware that there may be some more themes in this work which the author

of this paper has not been able to explore and touch upon. In short, in the opinion of the author of this paper, this collection of poems is rich with numerous unexplored themes which the future readers and scholars can explore and explain in more detail.

Patil has shown that he has good talent for poetic, rhythmic and literary creations. The present book is his maiden collection of poems. And, the author of this paper is sure that some more of Patil's literary creations would see the light of the day in times to come.

#### **Work Cited:**

S. R. Patil. *Songs of Soul and Soil*. Mhasadi, Tal. Sakri, Dist. Dhule (Maharashtra State, India): Mrs. Savitri Subhash Patil & Late R. D. Deore Arts & Science College, 2013. ISBN-978-93-5126-273-2. (All the quotations in the body of this paper are from this edition.)

#### **References:**

1. M. K. Naik : *Dimensions of Indian English Literature*, New Delhi, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1984.
2. K. R. S. Iyengar : *Indian Writing in English*, New Delhi, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1994.
3. M. K. Naik : *Aspects of Indian Writing in English*, Delhi, Macmillan India Ltd., 1999.
4. Mithilesh K. Pande : *Recent Indian Literature in English: A Critical Perspective*, New Delhi, Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1999.

□ □

---

Professor, Department of English, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune- 411007 (Maharashtra State), India, E-mail : korde@unipune.ac.in



## Poetic Periwinkle of Mahendra Bhatnagar

Dr.A.K.Choudhary

Mahendra Bhatnagar, a bilingual poet of Hindi and English, is a well-known Indian poet who has been shining with a number of poetry collections to his credit across the country. His poems that deal effectively with nature, love, terrorism, poor, suffering, exploitation, discrimination, and frustration inspire the poetry lovers for the poetic perfection in life. The prime purpose of this paper is to explore his poetic aspects in detail. Karthikeyan and Baskaran comment about his poetic contributions:

"To the poet, the present generation people cannot be termed as human and the ruthless behavior of human beings does not entitle him/ her to call as human. He makes his intentions very clear by saying that he is waiting for an age where a human will simply be called human. There is no separate identify is needed for humans in the name of country, relation, caste, sub-caste, language, dialect, colour, race etc, as everyone of us belong to one category "Humans". He wants to form a world society where human beings are addressed and treated as Human beings. According to the poet, these factors are holding the human beings apart and they never permit human beings to come together. In a mood to discard the prophets who have descended on earth so far, he yearns for a new seraph, prophet, archangel to incarnate and establish a human religion." (2012:131)

Life is a crown of thorns rather than a bed of roses because life has to inhale poison for sake of poetic potion. Mahendra Bhatnagar sings:

"You have to drink more poison,  
Then only is the living successful,  
Today it is the time, surely, for

Your test!" (Life As It Is 2012: 182)

Human life is the greatest battle field for the light of the divine sight in this immoral age led by the duffers. It is not the goal of life to groan, on the contrary life is to fire the germs of humanity, lit the candle for the celestial light and turn a new phase of humanity in our history. The prime purpose of the pious life is to love mute animals, birds and the forest-creepers in the same way Thomas Gray dedicates 'Elegy' in memory of the deprived voices of the society. In his poem 'Duty' he murmurs:

"To love  
People,  
Mute animals, birds, sea-creatures,  
The forest creepers  
The trees,  
Is what a man must do!"  
(2012:63)

Love is an ointment for the smooth running of life because he addresses us to sing the song of love that is priceless in life. The poet sings:

"Sing  
The songs of love  
Love, that is a great boon,  
Love, that is priceless,  
Love, that smells like life's  
sweet scented shrubs!"  
(2012:132)

His love is like a red, red rose that exhales fragrance so long life is in tact. The essence of love can be inhaled only by those who possess pure heart and sensitive soul. Love is the spiritual wealth of the human beings in this world. Bhatnagar is highly optimistic while he muses in favour of the impartial, always away from the jaundiced eyes. He is optimistic

that every person , like the sun , shine for ever from their orbit and never lose life's fragrance . As a result Bhatnagar versifies this stanza in his poem 'Aspirationt : Sun' :

"May every person blaze  
like the sun  
be a flame  
impartial and unblemished !"  
( 2012: 55)

Bhatnagar's poetic passage has been beautifully appreciated by a number of Indian poets and critics.Dr.B.K.Dubey is one of his verse-suitors who comments about his aspects of nature:

" Nature poems from Bhatnagar deal with the beauties prevalent in Nature, the colour, dream and fragrance of flowers, the sweetness bestowed upon. To be a Nature poet into be a lover of Nature and the poet perceives the intrinsic relationship between the two. With the change in time and season, the moods and sentiments go changing and this is not all. Even the feelings and emotions of man take a turn. The spring season, the flowers bloom, the sweet cooing and twittering of song- birds and sparrows take him away from the dim and bustle of life, the sick and hurry. The poet comes to mark, feels within and relays to all through the manuscript. What the senses perceive, the poet scripts in to register his presence. Kachanar is one such which really takes the imagination and fancy of ours through its finely sweep :

For the first time  
at my door  
so bloomed Kachanar  
overwhelmed with joy  
every branch overloaded!  
( ' Kachanar' )

Mahendra Bhatnagar first writes in Hindi, then

he translates into English which is no less than like writing in English. To sidetrack his poetry is to dampen the spirit of translation studies and transcription. In one poem after another, included in Nature Poems, he has presented them afresh to be put into an English garb of expression.Had he not contributed, we would have definitely missed an exponent of the Hindi poetry. Today we talk of ecocriticism and ecology-laced nature poems and keeping it in our view, his poems open our eyes as well as the horizon of new studies which we ought to have stressed upon earlier. The poet sees the world around, catches up with scenes and sights to flash upon the stuffs of his poetic selection. The beauty of the six season, namely spring, summer, rainy, light winter, winter and autumn, take the canvas away from the poet and he feels lifted away. The season in beauty, dream, reflection and situational reality twitch him for an expression. Most of the poems which he has put in for our scrutiny and perusal touch has dreamy side of presentation and the writer of these lyrics seems to be an escapist. A lover of Nature, a mystic, he dwells after, goes about floating and dreaming, searching beauty whenever it can be perceived.

In his poem, flowers talk to, winds by, brooks sing, hills magnify the nature and scope of his poetry, as he continues to take us with his sound sense, rhythm, gauge and measurement. One such poem is 'Charming Flowers' wherein he speaks of the beautifulness, dreamy fragrance and the spray of scent so nicely, so sweetly that we forget it to believe that we are reading a poem rather than a flowery plant of some garden or courtyard. The intensity of emotion and feeling, the verve of passion and the beautifulness of expression are some of the poetic feature of the poet and he been carrying them forward so elegantly, so graciously. If one seeks to derive something one

must get a lesson from the wide, varied and multi-hued world of Nature. Mahendra has just felt about and has given words and touches to the artistic aspect. His poem Gouraiya, translate into English would mean Sparrow , but here the context is one of joy, bliss, nestling and chirping. ' Cloud and Moon', ' Moon Light and 'Poonam' are like in theme and expression.”(2012:55-57)

Strife of life is better than ever. The chequered career of life makes a man more mature, more sensitive and more conscious than those who have not inhaled the essence of the chequered career. Experience is another name of perfection. Life must go onwards for the better future in the womb of time. Life must be spiritual, magnetic and sublime. It must be fragrant for all those crossing the way of life. Dedication, determination, and devotion are the chief tools of life upon which failure or success depends in the coming days. Life is a crown of thorns rather than a bed of roses. To embrace the challenge of life is the main thing for a man of game person. Life is to blossom, not to extinguish. The path of life is divine and superfine for the spiritual sanctity. Sunil Sharma comments about his poetic contributions:

“He is a poet of all times-simply because he talks of things that affect one – thirds of humankind and such poets that mirror macro issues can never fade with the ebbing tides. These talented prolific liberal poets are like the seated colossal Zeus status of Pheidias that faces that future calmly, his ivory turned back on the past, while forever rooted in the present moment : suggesting a relevance, an unbroken temporal/ spatial continuum that art always is for the viewers of both to-day and tomorrow, and of the lapsed past. At 85, he continues to be positive, hopeful, fertile and critical in his critiques of the changing social order of his country.

He believes things will change one day- in favor of the downtrodden and the marginalized of this earth. The eternal optimist in him is right-the recent political developments in Egypt and Tunisia and Yemen are pointers to this eternal fact that ultimately it is the people power that counts and serious poetry articulates these democratic aspirations so well.”(2012:153)

His poetic approach, divine notion, captivating thought and sensational social painting has made him a leading literary luminary of Indian English literature. Bhatnagar’s poetic order works wonder for the gander on a land of Menander where his mind- blowing thought, lucid expression, visionary ideology, stirring imagination and painterly painting have made him a poet in a thousand amidst the earthly monarchy prevailing across the continent.

#### **Work Cited**

Sabharwal, R.K Bhushan, *Concerns and Creation: A Critical Study of Mahendra Bhatnagar*, 2012, Delhi, Indian Publishers and Distributors.

Bhatnagar, Mahendra , *Life As It Is*, 2012, Delhi, Indian Publishers and Distributors.

□ □

---

**Dr. Arbind Kumar Choudhary, Poet, Critic, Editor : Kohnoor is Head of Dept. of English, Rangachahi College, Majuli, Assam- 785104, Email : kohnoor@rediffmail.com**

## **Soul Loss and Retrieval: The Journey of the Shaman in Margaret Atwood's *Cat's Eye***

**A. Vanitha**

From times of yore shamans have travelled into the territory of the spirits, tracking lost souls, healing the sick, deciphering dreams, and providing directions to human activities. In the "civilized" scheme of things, the ancient spiritual and psychological knowledge possessed and respected by our ancestors tends to have no bearing on contemporary way of living. The tribals of Siberia, Lapland, parts of Asia, Africa, Australia and the aborigines of North and South America believe that on the grounds of soul loss lie most of the illnesses of humankind – physical, psychological and spiritual. Sandra Ingerman in her book *Soul Retrieval: Mending the Fragmented Self* states that the traumas of the present-day living such as the consequences of incest, loss of a loved one, miscarriage or childhood abuse, can be exorcized by applying shamanistic methods of treating soul loss. Mircea Eliade, author of *Shamanism : Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, describes a shaman as a person who makes a journey in an altered state of consciousness outside time and space. The word shaman, which comes from the Tungus tribe in Siberia, refers equally to women and men. Through journeys, a shaman retrieves aid and information to help a patient, family, friends and community (5). He networks with the world of the spirits and helps souls cross over to the other world.

Human physiology maintains that the left brain supports the logical and rational part of people and so it is valued. In contrast, the intuitive faculty facilitated by its counterpart is often ignored. As our consciousness expands, we come to know that reality is not as logical as we think it to be. One crosses the

threshold of the world of the shaman, if he/she perceives reality in an extraordinary way and "see" more than what is promised by the human eye. This non-ordinary reality is a world parallel to ours as there is an amalgamation of conflicting but complementary modes of existence.

The works of writers such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Salman Rushdie, Tony Morrison and Isabel Allende reveal a perceptive world – the magic realist world which is also the world of the shaman - where there is an interweaving of ordinary reality and the marvelous. "The propensity of magical realist texts to admit a plurality of worlds," write critics Lois Zamora and Wendy Faris, "means that they often situate themselves on liminal territory between or among those worlds — in phenomenal and spiritual regions where transformation, metamorphosis, dissolution are common, where magic is a branch of naturalism" (6). This is the shaman's zone of non-ordinary reality where the rules of the world of ordinary reality are suspended. In this shaman's visionary world, time and space are fluid, frogs fly, plants talk, fairies abound and ghosts are present.

Magic realism was first introduced into artistic discourse as *magischer Realismus* by Franz Roh, a German art critic in 1925. He attributed this term to the contemporary fantastic Post-Expressionist painting. In the Preface to his book *Nach- Expressionismus, Magischer Realismus*, he stated: "With the word 'magic', as opposed to 'mystic', I wished to indicate that the mystery does not descend to the represented world, but rather hides and palpitates behind it" (6). The Venezuelan writer, Arturo Uslar-Pietri used the term to describe the work of specific Latin American writers who wrote in a brilliant mode, interfused with myths, legends and folklore and the acceptance of magic in



the everyday world. According to Isabel Allende, "It is the capacity to see and to write about all the dimensions of reality" (54). In a 1969 interview, Nobel Prize-winning author Gabriel García Márquez said, of his own magical realist writings, "My most important problem was to destroy the line of demarcation that separates what seems real from what seems fantastic. Because in the world that I was trying to evoke, that barrier didn't exist." This faculty for boundary skipping between worlds, inevitably leads to boundary dissolution. Magic realism can be employed in the study of postcolonial discourse as an approach that deals with opposing consciousness and conflicting world views – one that of the colonizer which normalizes the mundane and that of the aborigines or the colonized which exalts the bizarre and the non-ordinary reality. Space in magic realist writing cannot be measured but experienced because it is "conceptual" (215), to borrow the term from Rawdon Wilson, the boundaries of which overlay each other. This boundary dissolution is the cord that links space in magic realism with the transitory zone of shamanism.

Canada, as a country confronting colonial and postcolonial experience, émigré and isolation, marginalization and multiculturalism, stirs up an immense scope of concern in the mental framework of the postcolonial writers for the similitude of experience brazened out by other third world countries. Since the Canadian early settlers claim that they themselves are natives of Canada, for the natives as well as the settlers, the issue of identity persists to be a governing discourse in Canadian literature. Marginality turns out to be, as it were, a crucial attribute of Canadianness, a theme that surfaces and resurfaces in Margaret Atwood's fiction. In the course of the far-reaching, magic realist mode in her selective novels, she invents ground-breaking ways of delving

into the deepest alcoves of human sensitivity and by and large, female sensitivity. Canada, as a colony in an empire does not exist as a secluded sizeable social structure and ethnicity. Accordingly, Canada hopes for a single massive nation as it has always been bending to the pull of specific provinces. Dr. Jameela Begum fittingly states:

The geographical spatiality and disparateness engenders a body of writing that imbibes the fragmentary, the particular, the regional, the marginal the ethnic and the parodic. ... Writing becomes a dialectic process of displacement of value systems- social, cultural and personal- and reading an experience in creation where intentions and meanings constantly slip out of reach. (1994: ix)

This kind of writing technique makes it possible to portray a picture of life lived on the hinges without any finality, fixedness for any happening, event or perception. Everything is sensed to be in a flux. This is the way life is built for the native Canadians and in fact this is the philosophy of life which Margaret Atwood asserts through her novels.

This paper attempts to track the shamanistic journey undertaken by the protagonist to retrieve the fragmented part of her self in Atwood's *Cat's Eye* (1988). A cursory survey of Margaret Atwood's oeuvre shows that her feminist vision, as Neeru Tandon and Ansul Chandra state in their Preface to *Margaret Atwood : A Jewel in Canadian Writing*, " is neither male-centred nor female-centred but offers a fresh perspective on women's problems" (ix). *Cat's Eye* speaks of Elaine Risley, a mid-aged artist's return to Toronto, the place of her childhood, for a Retrospective show of her paintings. Having been marginalized as "woman-as-artist/artist-as-woman" (160) and having undergone the trauma of victimization in her childhood days,

Elaine's evolution into a complete woman, after experiencing fragmentation of her soul and its retrieval through her shamanistic descent into the world of her past, calls attention to the restorative and remedial outcomes of such a journey.

This paper suggests how the protagonist and the narrator, Elaine, has lost her vital essence, continues to live a fragmented life and makes a conscious decision to travel to the space in her past where she had lost the vital part of her self. *Cat's Eye* deals with the painful issue of childhood harassment of Elaine by her friend Cordelia and the ineradicable scars that it caused on the later phases of her life. The narrator recalls the various experiences she encountered in her childhood and the strong influences that went hand-in-hand in the construction of her divided self. The novel largely underscores the importance of one's past life and its remembrances and the need to come to terms with her inadequacy in order to live a wholesome, unified life.

Elaine recalls the earlier years of her childhood which were spent on the road as her father who was an entomologist was tracking infestations across Northern Canada. It was an enthralling experience for Elaine and her brother exploring the flora and fauna in the wayside woods and when the family settled in Toronto, it was difficult for Elaine to cope up with its totally different set up. It was a forlorn, repulsive atmosphere where she was always encircled by the trio - Cordelia and her two friends - ignoring her and taunting and mocking her conduct and appearance. Once they went to the extent of burying her alive yet she didn't want to sever her relationship with Cordelia. She had been losing her vital essence or soul in fragments day-by-day that she became physically and spiritually fragile.

The ego-smashing experiences undergone by Elaine made her a neurotic, the outcome of which was her frequent loss of memory and her nail biting, skin peeling, hair chewing, teeth grinding and willed fainting practices. These speak for Elaine's fragmented soul. Though Elaine portrays her friend Cordelia as the quintessence of evil, her actions were the deeds of a distressed child discarded by her father, who chose to draw other's attention by mimicking adult behaviour in order to cope up. Her victimization of Elaine is a manifestation of her own suffering. Cordelia is her 'other' - she is her twin self who ridicules her timorousness and lack of nerve. Elaine made the remark thus on seeing the portrait of Cordelia she had drawn and hanged on the wall of her living room: "Cordelia is afraid of me, in this picture. I am afraid of Cordelia. I am not afraid of seeing Cordelia. Because in some way we changed places, and I've forgotten when" (304).

The torture inflicted by her friends upon Elaine reached the pinnacle when she was left in the ravine in the icy chillness of the night, the ravine which according to Cordelia has a stream of dissolved dead people. There she has a vision of Virgin Mary upon the bridge holding a globe-like cat's eye. She also heard her asking her to go home and that everything will be alright.

I know who it is that I've seen. It's the Virgin Mary, there can be no doubt. Even when I was praying I wasn't sure she was real, but now I know she is. Who else could walk on air like that, who else would have a glowing art?... She didn't want me freezing in the snow. She is still with me, invisible, wrapping me in warmth and painlessness, she has heard me after all. (255)

This is Elaine's unintentional maiden descent into the underworld - the world of the shaman - where she had been helped by a guiding spirit to get her back her fragmented self. From then on, she experienced a bizarre sense of relief and she was no more scared of the forces that had been harassing her so far. Here, the shaman who was instrumental in her descent to this world of non-ordinary reality was Cordelia, her "other" self. Sandra Ingerman says:

In the shamanistic worldview, vital parts of the self do not go into an undifferentiated no-man's land when they leave the self. Soul parts may be trapped in a fearful place in non-ordinary reality,.....In any case, an important part of healing is retrieving the lost soul parts from these non-ordinary worlds and returning them to the body of the patient".(21)

In shamanistic terms, this return of the soul to the body is called homecoming which can be correlated with the words of Virgin Mary whose vision Elaine saw in the ravine.

Elaine's deep passion for painting impelled her to join in an art college where she developed an affair with her art teacher, Joseph Hrbik whom later she found to be manipulative as he said to his women students, "You are an unfinished woman, but here you will be finished...we will see what we can make of you" (273). After her separation from Joseph, she fell in love with Jon, a student of art, and married him. He was none the better than Joseph as he mortified Elaine's resourcefulness and individuality by objecting to Elaine being an artist.

As she refused to adhere to the role of a stereotyped wife or mother, there was a tussle which ended up in her suicide attempt. A departure ensued

and Elaine went to Vancouver with her daughter Sarah. There she met Ben, a travel agent, who was considerate and supportive, with whose company Elaine felt free at ease. From then on, she started painting a series of images reflecting her past - Cordelia in *Half a Face*, victimization of women in *Falling Women*, her mother in *Pressure Cooker*, her brother who was killed by plane hijackers in *One Wing*, Virgin Mary in *Unified Field Theory*, etc., She also painted a self-portrait of her, entitled *Cat's Eye*. She displayed these along with many other pieces of reflective paintings in the *Retrograde Exhibition* which soon became an overnight rage. Elaine feels that she is empowered and emboldened by her art.

Elaine's encounter with Cordelia in an asylum and her refusal to help the latter out from her confines made her feel free and weightless that she had got rid of her childhood fiend. But inwardly Elaine knows that she was not free as if she had left a part of her soul with her. As Elaine was haunted by the memories of Cordelia, she expected her to visit her exhibition so that she could give back to her the part of herself: "We are like the twins in old fables, each of whom has been given half a key" (554). She was filled with a feeling of inadequacy even though the exhibition had been a great success. Cordelia was the fragmented part of her soul which she was afraid she would lose forever. She looks into the cat's eye, the possession of which she holds very dear and says that "... (I) see my life entire" (537).

Atwood is familiar with the rich and complex forms of shamanism found among Amerindian tribes in Canada. Themes such as the journey into death by descent to the spirit world, the return of the dead and magical vision recur in her writings. One of the most

fascinating of Atwood's frequent imagery is the mirror - a vital object in shamanistic practice. Shamans fix their eyes on them to enter into a trance. They also are in need of a power animal to help them through their journey. The cat's eye is Elaine's power animal which guides her through her shamanistic journey to discover her lost soul. She makes her way through the bridge over the ravine enroute her Toronto school. She looked down into the ravine and located the exact place where she fell into the water and had a vision of the Virgin. Now she finds no one, yet she feels that the Virgin is residing within her. As she turns to go back, she finds Cordelia looking at her with mixed emotions of shame, loneliness, fear, awkwardness, guilt and weakness which had been hitherto haunting Elaine. Now, they are Cordelia's forever. She says to Cordelia, "It's alright...you can go home" and "Cordelia is no longer there" (564).

The cat's eye vision and her shamanistic quest guided Elaine to recover her dismembered soul and to have a sure footing of her survival as an artist in a hostile world. There is not much of a hazard involved in summoning the dead on one's own will to one's own space because the space and the situation are not dictated by the dead but by the invoker. So, as in the tradition of many regions across the world where the power of the shamans to go down the valley of the dead to bring back the dear departed, lost/fragmented soul and procure the aid of the spirits to defeat the foes or fight the evil is held high, Elaine too takes on a journey to the ravine of the dead to restore her lost soul. Thus, Elaine confronts her demons elevating herself as a rescuer and liberator as she is empowered by the very words spoken to her in the revelation that redeemed her life years before.

## Works Cited

- Allende, Isabel. "The Shaman and the Infidel". Interview. *New Perspectives Quarterly* 8.1 (1991): 54-58. Print.
- Atwood, Margaret. *Cat's Eye*. Toronto: Seal Books, 1988. Print.
- Begum, Jameela. Ed.. Introduction. *Canadian Literature : Perspectives*. Madras: Macmillan India, 1994. Print.
- Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism : Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964. Print.
- Ingerman, Sandra. *Soul Retrieval Mending the Fragmented Self*. New York: Harper Colins, 1991. Print.
- Tandon, Neeru and Anshul Chandra. *Cat's Eye. Margaret Atwood A Jewel in Canadian Writing*. New Delhi: Atlantic publishers, 2009. Print.
- Uslar Pietri, Arturo. *Letras hombres de Venezuela*. Cited in *Magical Realism Theory, History, Community*. Lois Parkinson zamora and Wendy. B. Faris Eds. London: Duke University Press, 1995. Print.
- Zamora, Lois Parkinson and Wendy. B. Faris. *Magical Realism Theory, History, Community*. London: Duke University Press, 1995. Print.

□ □

---

Assistant professor, PG & Research Department of English,  
Vellalar College for Women, Erode, Tamilnadu



## **Mariam : A Thousand Splendid Suns**

**Rituparna Datta Roy**

Afganistan. The very name of the country creates images of terror and horror unleashed by the Talibans. A country where humanity is butchered at every step; a country where people, when they venture out of their homes, are never sure whether they will see their family members again. A country where people sitting at home are killed by a powerful bomb dropping from the sky, literally. This terror-stricken country, where life of the hoi-polloi is a desperate struggle against brutality, fear and starvation, is the backdrop of Khaled Hussini's unforgettable novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*.

Before the reader has read even 20 pages, it becomes amply clear to him that Hosseini has unadulterated love for his strife-torn motherland, without which such an incredibly beautiful story can not be written. The story starts in 1964, when Mariam, the protagonist, is just 5 years old. An illegitimate child, abandoned by her rich father, Jalil, Mariam lives with her mother, Nana, in the outskirts of the city of Heart. Nana was a servant in Jalil's household, but after having conceived, she was thrown out of the house by Jalil's 3 wives. Since Nana did not go back to her father in Guldaman village, Jalil built her a kolba (a small hut) to live in. He comes once every week on Thursdays to visit them, and sends enough provisions for them to live comfortably. Though Nana is naturally bitter about him, baby Mariam finds her father attractive and loving. She longs to be legitimately accepted in his household, by his family members.

As Mariam grows up, her longing for her legitimate position grows stronger. When she is 15 years old (1974) she dares to walk all the way to her father's

house in Heart. She does reach there, but alas! The door of the big mansion never opens to her. While the gatekeeper shoos her away, Mariam suddenly catches a glimpse of her father at one of the windows. The shock that in spite of seeing her, her father does not call her in, shatters her. After spending the night on the street, literally, next morning Mariam returns home, only to find that her mother has committed suicide by hanging herself from the branch of a tree, believing that the sole solace of her life, her daughter, has abandoned her.

Jalil comes to play the role of a father. "You can stay with me, Mariam jo... I've asked them (his 3 wives) already to clean a room for you" (Bk 1, Ch 6, Pg 36). Mariam has nowhere else to go, so she has to agree. And she has to agree, when, barely after 2 weeks, she is married off to Rashid, a wealthy, widower, childless businessman from Kabul, around 20 years her senior.

The marriage is performed with full religious rites and rituals, and Jalil and his 3 wives heave a collective sigh of relief when Mariam leaves with her husband for Kabul, without even getting a chance to say goodbye to her neighbours.

Now begins the second phase of Mariam's life, which she finds to be more unpleasant than the first. Rashid is a coarse, vulgar and cruel man, who uses and abuses her of his own sweet will. All she is expected to do is to bear his wills and whims. Her faintest, even imagined 'disobedience', and Rashid's heavy hand is sure to land flatly on her cheeks and hair. The tortures increase manyfold after she has a miscarriage and is declared unfit to be a mother by the doctors. Rashid, who has been pining for a son and even decided a name for him ('Zalmai'), can barely stand the shock. Mariam has nothing to do but tolerate--- "...after four years of marriage, Mariam saw

clearly how much a woman can tolerate...his[Rashid's] shifting moods, his volatile temperament, punches, slaps, kicks..."( Bk 1, Ch 15, Pg 89).

It is 1978 . Mariam is 19 years old and Laila is born to Fariba, Mariam's neighbor .Mariam, totally engrossed in her own martial life of crudity and cruelty, never paid Laila any heed till she is forced to --- 14 years later (1992), when Rashid wants to MARRY Laila.

The author deftly portrays the political history of his country as the backdrop of his narrative. 20th century Afganistan has been a perpetually war-torn country. Even after the withdrawal of alien forces( Soviet tanks moved out of Afganistan in 1980) , there is no peace and prosperity under Nazibullah's rule. But life goes on . Laila, a 9 year old child (1987) has a close friendship with 14 year old Tariq, her neighbour's son. They are blissfully oblivious of their country's political turmoil. They hear " ...the story of their country, one invader after another--- Macedonians, Sassonians, Arabs, Mongols...and now the Russians.... Battered, and nothing pretty to look at, but still standing"(Bk 2, Ch 21, Pg 132) from Laila's university-professor father, Babi, but it is more a story and less a reality for them.

But this idyllic innocence of childhood is shattered only after 5 years .In 1992, when Laila is 14 years old, when "Najibullah surrendered at last and was given sanctuary in the UN compound (Bk 2, Ch 23, Pg 144). "Kabul's day of reckoning had come at last. The found Mujahideen, armed to the teeth but now lacking a common enemy, had found the enemy in each other. And ...rockets began to rain down on Kabul..."( Bk 2, Ch 23, Pg 155).It is one such rocket that blast Laila's house, killing her parents instantly and leaving her critically injured, with permanent loss

of hearing in her left ear.

Rashid brings the devastated girl home. He has seen Laila and Tariq growing up together, and has more than an inkling about their relationship. He knows that Tariq has left for Peshawar, Pakistan, with his parents. In order to crush Laila completely, he stages an elaborate show--- a man named Abdul Sharif turns up from nowhere and informs Laila that Tariq has died in a refugee camp in Peshawar. Laila, who is now 2 months pregnant with Tariq's baby and has neither family support nor any means to verify the truth, is left with no other option but to marry Rashid.

For the first time in her life, Mariam objected to Rashid's decision. In all these 18 years of marriage, she has never once voiced her own opinion on anything. Now she says, "I don't want this", "numb with contempt and unhappiness" (Bk 3, Ch 29, Pg 152), though she knows well enough that Rashid will not listen to her. Rashid will have his own logic. He will not shelter Laila for ever, he is" not the Red Cross" (ibid.). Neither can he throw the orphan out on the streets, literally— "...the roads out there are unforgiving... the widows sleeping on the streets would kill for this chance" [ of another marriage which is equivalent to shelter and protection] (ibid.).He believes that he is "...giving you( Mariam) help around the house and her (Laila) a sanctuary... The way I see it, I deserve a medal" (ibid.).

Rashid is now more than 50 years old, but as physically strong and as emotionally cruel as ever. Laila, like Mariam, has to clench her teeth to cohabit this man. Laila gives birth to her daughter, Tariq's daughter, Aziza. Since it is a girl Rashid does not even pretend to like her . He is genuinely happy when after a few years, Laila gives birth to a son , Rashid's son , Zalmai. By now Mariam and Laila have forged a bond.

They are like sisters, the children having accepted them both with equal innocent love, only make the bond stronger. Life goes on, with ups and downs, domestic upheavals commensurate with political extremism enforced by the Talibans (came to power in 1996), till one day the charade of domesticity crumbles down with the return of Tariq.

It is 9 years that now that Laila is married to Rashid. Like Mariam, she is also beaten and abused regularly. Once she tried to escape, taking Aziza and Mariam along too, but got caught at the bus stop by the police and sent back home. The excruciating torture that followed was neither surprising nor unexpected. That experience clipped her desire for freedom for ever. Or so she thought. With the arrival of Tariq, her life turns upside down once again.

It is 2001. Tariq suddenly arrives one morning when Rashid is not at home. Laila cannot believe her eyes at first, then she runs into Tariq's arms. Mariam hurriedly takes Zalmai upstairs and stays with him. Downstairs, the erstwhile lovers have endless tales to tell. Tariq informs that he has spent 7 years in Pakistani jail for illegally entering that country. His parents have died in a refugee camp. After his release from jail, Tariq has been working as a waiter in a hotel in Muree, a small town in Pakistan. At the first opportunity, he has come back to Kabul to look for Laila. While Laila hears his story, Mariam silently wonders "how much had Rashid paid Abdul Sharif—if that was even his name—to come and crush Laila with the story of Tariq's death?" (Bk 3, Ch 43, Pg 293). Laila apologises to Tariq for having "deserted" him, believing in Rashid's carefully orchestrated lies. Tariq fully understands the situation that Laila found herself in. Zalmai reports to Rashid that evening—"Mammy has a new friend—a man." (Bk 3, Ch 44, Pg 298). It does

not take Rashid intelligence to surmise who this "friend" is. Insane with jealousy, enraged at his trick being exposed, he sends Zalmai out of room and begins to whip Laila mercilessly. When Mariam tries to stop him, she is vehemently beaten too. Not satisfied with mere beating, Rashid begins to strangulate Laila to death. Seeing her death imminent, Mariam runs to Rashid's tool shed, picks up his shovel, and slams it on his head with all her might.

For the first time in her life, Mariam hits back. She nurses back the unconscious Laila, lets her calm down a bit, and then, the two of them wrap Rashid's body in a blanket and bury it in the garden because "Zalmai must not be allowed to see this", as Mariam firmly and calmly declares (Bk 3, Ch 45, Pg 301).

Morning arrives, and Mariam forces Laila to flee to Pakistan with Tariq, taking Zalmai and Aziza along. Laila is thunderstruck when Mariam steadily refuses to flee along with them. Her logic is disarmingly simple--- she has committed the crime, and she, ONLY she, should be punished for it. If she too flees, life for others will be living hell. The Talibans will condemn the innocent Tariq and the victim Laila also. All Laila's endeavours fall upon deaf ears. When Laila finally leaves, she turns back and sees Mariam waving her hands at them. "Laila never saw Mariam again." (Bk 3, Ch 46, Pg 318). Mariam is promptly arrested by the police and is shot to death within a fortnight. At last the sun rises in Laila's life---She marries Tariq and settles in a life of quiet domesticity in Murree, Pakistan. After a few months she comes back in Afghanistan - in Herat, Mariam's birthplace, in her home, to pay a silent tribute of tears.

It is April 2003. The Talibans are defeated, Afghanistan is ruled by democratically elected president—Hamid Karzai. Along with political stability,

domestic bliss also awaits Laila, who is expecting her 3rd baby. Tariq has selected the name Mohammad, Zalmai favours Clark, Aziza is campaigning hard for Aman, Laila likes Omar.”But the game involves only male names. Because, if it is a girl, Laila has already named her (Bk 4, Ch 51, Pg 367).

*A Thousand Splendid Suns* is a splendid book , which keeps the reader spellbound in its lucid effortless narrative of Afganistan’s political and social life. Unforgettable is the character of Mariam, who, from a meek, unwanted, illegitimate daughter, changes into the “murderer” of her husband after being a docile, abused and ill-used wife for more than 25 years. With her supreme sacrifice, she not only saves Laila’s life, she also changes the course of life of Tariq . She gives Aziza her real father back. The transformation of an apparently passive character who rudders the lives of others is astounding. It is through the portrayal of Mariam that the reader realizes the justification of the author’s dedication of the book “To the women of Afganistan” . What the 17th century poet wrote about Kabul –“One could not count the moons that shimmer on her roofs, Or the thousand suns that hide behind her walls” (Bk 2, Ch 26, Pg 172) can indeed be a metaphor for the calm and resilient women of Afganistan. Such unsung heroic women make the world a better place.

#### **Work Cited**

Hosseini, Khaled : *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Bloomsbury Publications, 2007.

(Subsequent references are from the same book, chapter and page number are given in paranthesis.)

□ □

---

Dept of English, Kanya Maha Vidyalaya, Jalandhar, Punjab

## **Dalit Patriarchy: An Analysis of Dalit Female Narratives**

**Payal Madhia**

Dalit feminism as a genre has been included very recently in the mainstream Indian literature which was marked by the absence of Dalit Literature. The depiction of caste and gender based discrimination is represented in Dalit literature. This paper aims at analyzing autobiographies by Dalit women and discussing issues related to caste and gender subordination. The autobiography Dohra Abhishap explains the plight of Dalit women focusing on the dual subordination of women by men on personal level and by upper castes on social level. This paper will chart out the personal instances that liberate women and work as a stepping stone towards their enlightenment and representation in the society. The paper focuses mainly on Baby Kamble’s *Prison We Broke*, Sumitra Bhavé’s *Pan on Fire* and Kaushalya Basantrai’s *Dohra Abhishap*.

Baby Kamble’s autobiography *Jina Amucha* originally written in Marathi narrates the tale of Dalit patriarchy, the plight of women and horrific conditions and day to day challenges that the community and especially women have to undergo in the class biased society. Kamble in her interview asserts that it is not her personal life that she intends to narrate in her autobiography. She transcends the boundaries of personal narrative and instead showcases the social conditions of the community. Kamble says that she finds it difficult to think of herself outside her community and exposes the real conditions of the Mahars of Maharashtra, dwelling in Maharwada. Kamble begins by talking about the month of ‘Ashadh’ which is the most treasured month for Mahars. This



month involves cleaning of the houses, polishing of the walls, bathing of the entire family along with washing of the rags. Kamble explains the elaborate ritual of cleaning and bathing that begins early in the morning and goes on till late afternoon. The woman of the house literally pushes the boys and girls to take a bath. Harsh reality of poverty and lack of hygienic conditions in Mahar community is discussed at length in the autobiography.

*The Prison We Broke* is a feminist critique of patriarchy, the text narrates how the Dalit women are the 'other' for Dalit men, in the same manner in which Dalits are the 'other' to the Brahmins. How caste and patriarchy coincide and hence support in sustaining further violence and injustice to women. Kamble asserts that the poverty stricken conditions of the family are so bad that they do not use any soap for cleaning themselves, instead what the women do is to buy dried coconut and shilkakai worth one paisa. The snot filled noses of the kids is a common sight, it keeps flowing uncontrolled from their nose. Mostly the eldest son is the first one to be pushed into the ritual of bathing, He is given a rough and continuous scrubbing with a stone, so that not only the rough skin but the other layer of the skin comes out as well and it starts bleeding, but since the ritual of bathing comes after a long time, it exposes the fixation with the idea of cleanliness, which they avail only once a year. The boy is scrubbed and if he screams or withdraws, he is bashed with the same stone by his mother. Since there is no soap or shampoo the mother uses the piece of dry coconut and after chewing it in her mouth, she mixes it with the saliva and then uses it to clean the tangled long hair of the boy. Examples like these in the text clearly depict how Mahars compromise with the hygiene standards in their life. It is only in the special month that they get to bathe

and that too without soap. It is saliva which is used for cleansing. Hot water used for the bath is so hot that it is capable of killing the lice in the hair. The details depict the superstitious and irrational outlook of Mahars. Since they are not educated, their unawareness makes them perform rituals which are both unusual and inhumane.

The economic conditions play a crucial role and have been described at length in the autobiography. The women, the mother-in-law of the family has only one sari which is a long piece of cloth, usually very thick pieces of rags and different clothes stitched together, Since the daughter-in-law is the only member who cannot deny the orders of the mother-in-law she is given the responsibility to wash the long sari for her mother-in-law. Her sari is made ready by the very young daughter- in- law while she prepares for her bath. Women have been subordinated by men so Mother-in-laws subjugate their daughter-in-laws, in order to vent out their anger.

Kamble while mentioning the exploitative set up of the society explains how women become enemies of their own gender. The mother-in-laws are the perpetrators of maximum domestic violence. In order to secure their own position of superiority they the poor daughter-in-law thrashed by her son. Since the mother-in-law during her days was tortured by her mother-in-law, she plays the same trick with her daughter-in-law. The bitterness and violence take violent form by chopping off the nose of the daughter-in-law. Later she is thrown out of the house of her in-laws on grounds of bad moral character.

Kamble devotes a large section of her autobiography on how Dalits even after being oppressed for centuries by other castes still cling to Hindu rituals, although they have no money to carry forward the over

expensive rituals. The obsession of Dalit women with 'haldi', 'kumkum' is an example which establishes the fact that Dalits try their best to preserve whatever bit of Hindu culture they can. Irrespective of the fact that Hindu culture itself has discarded the Dalits completely and Brahmins have used Dalits in order to maintain their own superiority. Kamble states that it was by worshipping the Hindu gods that Dalits found some solace and aspired better future for them. Kamble lashes out at Hinduism stating that it perpetuates religion which is not meant for humans but animals. "What a beastly thing Hinduism is! Let me tell you, it's not prosperity and wealth that you enjoy – it is the very life blood of the Mahars!" (56)

Kamble narrates the rituals of Maharwada that went onto four weeks, the superstitions and the elaborate ceremonies that Dalits enjoy. This further emphasizes the undying faith and the orthodoxy of the down trodden. The ritual of offering your eldest son as 'vaghya' or 'potraja' was considered very prestigious for the family. Especially fathers took great pride in looking at the son dressed in feminine attire with his forehead smeared with 'haldi' and 'kumkum'. Fathers praise boy's singing and dancing ability, stating that the boy looks good as a 'nachaya'. Another instance that Kamble refers to at length is the instance of women being possessed with goddesses at prayer meetings with loud music and lots of people approach her to worship her and fulfil the demands of the goddess so that she blesses the entire household and does not curse them otherwise.

Kamble describes the condition of ignorance of the Mahars by narrating an instance where she states that there was really no difference between animals and the Mahars, they just survived to fulfil their appetite, which even animals did. The taste, the

quality of food such things did not bother them. If it was food then they considered themselves lucky and relished that. An instance is given where people mix mud instead of the jaggery and still relish it, realizing only that the food was not sweet enough. Kamble lashes out at the Brahmins and other castes that are responsible for spoiling the ability of reasoning of Dalits and reducing them to a condition, both physical and mental, which is worse than animals.

The vivid description about the condition of women during the course of child birth really shakes our souls. Lack of any experienced doctor and hygienic conditions pose a dangerous threat to the lives of the young girls married at an early age and middle aged women. Since there are no doctors, therefore women for delivery rely on ignorant midwives, who trust their hands and therefore keep inserting their hands into the poor women's vagina, in order to figure out the position of the unborn child. This continuous thrust results in the swelling of the vagina and hence obstructing the path for the child. The life of the delivering mother depends only on her luck. Her mother is requested to rush to the temple of lakhamai and pray for her child. The girl after enduring the pain of the delivery has to bear the pain of the swollen and wounded vagina.

The sight of poverty is further heightened when the girl is lucky to have some rags in the household in order to control the immense bleeding. Such conditions pose a real threat to the lives of the women and even of the young ones. This painful condition of the Mahars stresses the lack of basic hygiene conditions for humans and therefore poses a major threat to the life expectancy of young delivering women and infants. We do not get to hear such tales of poverty and misery, in a Brahmin household, which is usually overloaded

with money and food. Brahmins are bestowed with food and clothing by people from other castes as a means of salvation which is completely out of question when it comes to a Dalit household. What is a norm in a Dalit household is that they only perform menial jobs in the society and survive on the leftover given by the upper castes. Life of Dalits is a tale of hunger, poverty and sheer helplessness. "The labour of the entire family is paid for in the form of Bhakris (pieces of bread), which the yesker (a Mahar, bonded laborer whose work was to collect food from upper caste Hindus households in the evening) had to go and collect from house to house every evening" (74-75)

The suffering of young mothers does not end here. Mahar women are rarely lucky to find food in their household. Sometimes even after delivering the baby they have to quench their appetite by tying cloth to their stomach, because there is nothing in the house to eat.

Kamble mentions a practice under which parents are forced to feed their children cactus pods, removing the thorns and eating the fleshy part. The plant satisfies the hunger for a fortnight but next day cactus seeds become slabs of cement, one is unable to attend nature's call, no matter how hard one tries but it refuses to be pushed out. Poor Mahar families eat such deadly cactus pods themselves and offer them to their children, such is the picture of real poverty which cannot go unnoticed.

The latter part of Kamble's text narrates how Ambedkar illuminates the Mahars, how he added life to the lifeless status of the downtrodden. It was Ambedkar asserts Kamble, who gave the untouchables a human form instead of the god, the creator of humans who turned a blind eye towards the suffering of the Mahars. Kamble questions why is it that Brahmins

still preserve and propagate their religious texts like Ramayana and Mahabharata? Whereas it has been just thirty years since Baba passed away but we have already wiped away his teachings.

Baba Sahab brought about a revolution for the Depressed Classes. Maharwada was elated to see acquaintances and were influenced among the lot, like many other folks of the community see a Mahar man's acceptance into the upper caste society. Baby Kamble and Dr. Ambedkar professed with the intent of promoting the spread of education amongst the Depressed Classes by opening hostels, opening libraries and by improving the economic conditions of such down trodden castes by setting up industrial and agricultural schools. He was against the unquestionable acceptance of the caste system which emphasized on suppressing the suppressed, a practice which is both, morally and legally wrong. Babasaheb's main concern was that the untouchables should cease to be agricultural labourers and escape from their landlessness. They should either get industrial or white collar jobs or they should get land for cultivation. He criticized the Indian village system where the lives of the untouchables were dictated by the dominant touchable community. Ambedkar stated, "I hold that these village republics have been the ruination of India. What is a village but a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow mindedness and communalism?"<sup>5</sup> In Baby Kamble's *The Prisons We Broke*, there are innumerable references which showcases that the action of a single individual or a group of Dalits if they stand against or question the traditionally accepted notions of morality and social behaviour; the Caste Hindus not only get offended but take it as a grave violation of its ethics and also punish the offenders severely. And the punishment can go to any extend, be it naked parading of Dalits in the village or just

setting fire to the household of poor Dalits and thus rendering them homeless. Hence, both the authority and the rule book stay only with the upper caste. Furthermore, any challenge to the caste hegemony is looked after by the caste makers.

It is worth noticing how the notions of two great leaders, Dr. Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi, differed on the debatable issue of caste. Gandhi, a baniya by caste, imagined a utopian life for the Indians. The *Prisons we Broke* portrays a very anti-Gandhian picture of the entire Dalit Movement. We learn that during her school days, Baby and her friends, used to torment and insult other upper caste girls at the slightest possible chance. This was a method to let the other "upper" caste people know that Mahars can no longer be suppressed and grounded. Uncounted instances can be picked up which clearly portray the retaliation and the process of retribution. For instance, Baby and her mates deliberately "polluted" the drinking water of the school, and they intentionally entered the temples of the upper caste people. Baby Kamble describes the insults each caste group threw at each other's leaders (Ambedkar and Gandhi) very effectively through songs. To quote a Mahar's song:

"Our Ambedkar looks like a sahib. You know why your Gandhi is toothless? Because our Ambedkar kicked him in his teeth! Ha ha...That's why your Gandhi has no teeth! And you know why Gandhi has no hair? Because our Ambedkar shaved it off! That's the kind of man our Ambedkar is!" (110)

Maharwada is known for domestic violence where husbands beat up their wives and it is even more tragic if the girl is eight to nine years old newly married. Kamble explains the situation of Dalit women being beaten up by their male counter parts by quoting one of her personal experiences.

"Once we went to Mumbai to attend a meeting, we travelled in a general compartment that was very crowded and some young men happened to stare at me. My husband immediately suspected me and hit me so hard that my nose started bleeding profusely...The same evening we returned and he was so angry that he kept hitting me in the train" (155)

It is not just about Dalit women being tortured by their husbands but also the senior females in the family. The mother-in-law poisons the mind of her son, in order to secure her position in the house. The irrational husband would beat the wife to death and throw her out of her house. The situation of the girl is made even more tragic when girl's father and her brother refuse to take her inside their house since she has left her husband's house. Therefore, Mahar woman's life is reduced to nothing more than a pawn in the game that gets kicked from one place of her in-laws just to be thrashed and kicked again at her mother's house. It is patriarchy and caste together that make her survival so difficult and suffocating.

Another very interesting book is *Pan on Fire* by Sumitra Bhawe. She has enlisted eight Dalit women testimonies. The Dalit feminist movement, she stresses should begin with embracing 'shame' in order to put 'honor' of shameful caste into question. The most important aspect of the book is the idea of getting over shame is to talk about what has always been a taboo, be it sex or menstruation but above all how women feel about their lives and experiences. Certain sections in the book ridicule the practice of polygamy by men, stressing the fact if 'purity of vagina' is stressed it should also demand 'purity of penis'. In the book eight different Dalit women are portrayed as strong women who endure the sufferings of caste and patriarchy. But still rise above the hardships of their life and are



able to make their families rise above and stay together. The book is in a form of collective interviews, more like informal 'chat sessions' where women and young girls open about their personal life and their future aspirations.

The book is one of its kinds addressing the life of Dalit women under different circumstances and how they deal or prepare themselves to deal with their present situation. Extremely important observations like the importance of women help groups come across. Women share, exchange and console each other which gives them confidence and support, whereas men lack such support groups, says Rukmini in the book. The book discusses fire in the literal sense of the term, in the sense that it openly talks about issues that were never discussed till date. Women are taught to stay repressed and not talk openly about their feelings. Rukmani mentions in the book "whatever you say, a woman life is pretty bad, you were asking me why they wear all these ornaments and kumkum. But if a woman does not people say look at that witch or if the sari slips from one's head they say here is a prostitute. Women are clearly looked upon as objects, who glorify the cultural traditions of the caste Hindus. Those who don't follow the customs are termed as sluts. Men in a patriarchal society have conveniently dumped to onus of tradition, entirely on the shoulders of women. Have we ever seen men wearing a 'mangalsutra' or vermilion denoting that they are married? Certainly not!.

Here issues like menstruation and the treatment young girls and women get when they are menstruating are discussed at length. They are ordered to 'stay away' and not mingle with others during their period due to the superstitious idea of 'impurity', instead of explaining it to the young ones about onset of puberty and hormonal changes, people start

discussing their marriage and their getting mature, which is extremely unfair.

Women are slowly progressing, they understand and acknowledge the value of education and are staunch followers of Dr. Ambedkar and his teachings. Therefore, they contribute to whatever little they could at both personal and social level.

One of the testimonies is by Chhaya, a Mahar girl who is just eighteen years old, stays with her grandmother and her maternal-uncle, who is a patriarch and Chhaya feels very uncomfortable when he asserts his authority. This girl exhibits an example of a free spirit who wants to take her own decisions in life, decisions related to marriage or career. She does not wish to get married at an early age instead she wants to continue school. She wishes to be independent by working on her own but somewhere the orthodox set up of the family and rumours about her being involved with guys really make her depressed. Chhaya has her own inhibitions about marriage. The domestic violence that she has witnessed and the taboo of inter caste marriages. Chhaya has to stand the suspicious nature of her family. Her autobiography ends with a bright hope for her future, she is shown to be working and the biggest achievement is that she takes a loan and renovates her house, which makes her grandmother very happy. She succeeds in implementing her belief of not getting married early but instead being independent is what counts more and adds meaning to a woman's life.

Dalit women are often considered 'thrice Dalits' as they are exploited by the forces of caste, class and gender. Kaushalya Basantri's *Dohra Abhishap* narrates the tale of Mahar women in Maharashtra. Various factors that subdue women are addressed here by Basantri, she narrates her autobiography by charting

the condition of women which she witnessed around her, Although her parents who worked as mill workers worked very hard all their life just to make sure that their children are educated and well placed in life. In spite of having such an assertive and independent mother, Basantri even as a child witnessed her mother cursing herself for bearing so many daughters and no son. The fixation with the idea of male child is quite prevalent in our society, a male heir to the family, somebody who will carry on the family name and virtue forward. Wondering why can't women take family name forward? Also, our fixation with the male child comes from our religion and the shastras that have been ruling our minds. The very fact that the funeral pyre can be lighted only by the son and not a daughter I feel somewhere it plays a crucial role. Religious sentiments reign supreme in Hindu religion. On top of that Dalits in order to look for someone to be the breadwinner emphasize the value of a son.

Basantrai talks about an important aspect of widow remarriage, and brings in important aspects of gender bias in the concept of remarriage. Young widows were allowed to remarry but the marriage ceremony was different for both divorced females and widows. A stark difference between the rituals which even pricks the readers more is that after the second marriage of a widow she was sent away only at night and not during the day contrary to the newly wedded bride. Also, after second marriage widows were not allowed to participate in auspicious ceremonies like wedding or any ceremony related to god. Widowers or divorced males on the contrary were allowed to marry again with pomp and show, there were no such restrictions for them. The rituals of our society are the very basis of discrimination of gender, make a woman feel small and downcast. Another prevalent practice which Basantrai mentions is that second marriage was

common amongst men, even when the first wife was present in the house. In case of objection from the first wife for second marriage for her husband she was given good thrashing by the husband and kept quiet, her stance never really mattered in the family.

The idea of educating women has been given due importance in Basantrai's narrative but women have to struggle more than men to continue their studies and have a good career. Even Basantrai's parents thought of halting the education of their daughter considering that they will not be able to find suitable educated match for her. Education runs parallel with the idea of keeping matrimony at the centre, Education for men is considered normative whereas highly educated wife of a man is still considered as an aberration. Basantrai showcases very common picture of abusive language and social boycott that a woman has to go through if she chooses to marry at a later age. Marriage is considered as the only viable option for women in our society.

Basantrai internalized the essential educational superiority of males and married the most educated known Dalit, she became a victim of sexist ideology. All her hopes are shattered when she discovers that Devendra Kumar is a self centered and a cold human being. The kind of treatment that Basantrai gets from his end is extremely painful, Devendra leaves her when she is about to deliver their baby. She had to be accompanied by the maid to the hospital and even when Devendra come to visit her in the hospital, he comes to show off his status and post of an officer by shifting Basantrai to the private ward. His conscience does not even remind him to inquire about the health of his wife. He decides to leave for another tour by giving calculated amount of mere thirty rupees for the hospital. Basantrai couldn't continue to stay with her

husband in the later years of her life and therefore, stays with her younger son.

Basantraï exposes a very relevant aspect in her life when she narrates her struggle to acquire a tap for her family inside the house, as the atmosphere near the tap and the conversations followed by it were turning abusive and ugly day by day. She along with her dad had to bear the cultural bias of the employees and an officer but on top of that she was also a victim of sexual harassment. Such examples reflect vulnerable condition of women and explore the hypocrisy of men at the official level. Even the workers and other women from lower strata are taken for granted by men and hence ill treated.

Basantraï in the later period of her life keeps her occupied with the upliftment and betterment of women by organizing mahila sangs, but even after her constant requests, the husbands of the women of the sang; would not allow their wives to be a part of such a propaganda. Basantraï like her own mother followed the teachings of Dr. Ambedkar and promoted the idea of uniting and educating women.

The autobiographies discussed in this paper portray the lives of Mahar community focusing on the marginalization of women in the society both at the social and personal level. Women narrators are mainly believers of Dr Ambedkar and follow his ideology of gaining education and that is the only tool through which the down trodden can represent themselves in a caste based society and break the shackles of slavery. The above narrative ends on a promising note where women have struggled to acquire knowledge and are involved with larger development of Dalits and women in particular. But even in the conclusion of

their autobiographies they are happy and involved but they share unhappy state in their personal lives. All these women at some or the other point have been a victim of severe male domination. They accepted their husbands as they are, they thrash them up, distrust them and even accuse them of their moral character, but there is nothing much that these women can do about it. Basantraï chooses not to stay with her husband, Baby Kamble herself accepts in her interview that her husband used to distrust her and beat her up. Hence, we see a streak of unhappiness towards the not so co-operative male partners. It is only on the social front that these women became a part of progressive and supportive women communities. This comparative aloofness of women from the community is primarily due to ideological and structural nature of the society, which is patriarchal.

#### **Work Cited**

- Baisantri, Kaushalya. *Dohra Abhishap*. New Delhi: Parmeshwari Prakshan, 1999. Print.
- Kamble, Baby. *The Prisons We Broke*. Trans. Maya, Pandit. New Delhi: Orient Black Swan Private Limited, 2009. Print.
- Bhave, Sumitra. *Pan on Fire*. Trans. Gauri Deshpande. New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, 1988. Print.
- Kumar, Raj. *Dalit Personal Narratives*. New Delhi: Orient Black Swan Private Limited, 2010. Print.
- Rege. Sumitra. "Real Feminism and Dalit Women: Scripts of Denial and Accusation". *Economic and Political Weekly* Vol.35, No.6 (Feb 5-11, 2000), pp 492-495. Web. 3rd July 2014.

□ □

---

**Payal Madhia, Asst. Professor of English (Ad.hoc) Miranda House, University of Delhi, New Delhi**

## An Interview with Movie-Maestro, Sagar Sarhadi ?

Dr. Rajiv Ranjan Dwivedi\*



Sagar Sarhadi is a famous scriptwriter and director of Indian Hindi cinema. He is popularly known for his screenplays in remarkable Indian films like *Bazaar*, *Silsila*, *Kabhi Kabhi*, *Chandni*, *Noorie*, *Deewana* and *Kaho Na Pyaar Hai*. He has also authored a number of books like a short story collection, *Jeev Janaawar* and the Urdu plays *Bhagat Singh ki Waapsi*, *Khyaal ki Dastak*, *Raj Darbar* and *Tanhai*.

Sagar Sarhadi was invited for a retrospective of Farooq Shaikh's films, *Dekh Lo Aaj Hum Ko Jee Bhar Ke* organised by Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, Delhi from 22-24 January 2014. In a personal interview during his stay in the said event, he shares his views on Hindi Cinema: Then and Now.

Rajiv Ranjan Dwivedi(RRD): Good morning sir. It's indeed a pleasure and privilege of mine to interact with you.

Sagar Sarhadi(SS): Good morning to you also. Thank you for your noble thought.

RRD: Sir, I am eager to go down the memory lane of your tremendous cinematic experiences in Bollywood as a director and as a scriptwriter in particular. How and when did you actually get fond of films?

SS: Two reasons made my way through the film-life. Firstly, somewhere deep in my sub consciousness lay the love for life. I felt romance closer to life. And, secondly, the utter poverty forced on us by partition led me somehow through the film world. I am essentially a playwright. I had to take to cinema out of need and a fascination for life and world.

RR: What changes do you notice in the film industry today?

SS: Much has changed in Hindi cinema. In fact, the whole of our country is gradually deteriorating in terms of customs and language. People are running after materialistic gains. The film industry has also been an accomplice in value- degradation. I have written against these things with my nourishment of Marxist philosophy and psychology.

RR: Many good films today stand failure due to its paucity of masala elements and most C-grade movies are a commercial hit. What is your opinion about this situation?

SS: It's a myth that good films don't run. It's just ironic that the greatness of a film is determined by its commercial success. It's a greatly regrettable tendency. But creative writers do not want dirty money.

RR: Sir, did you ever transform your personal life into movies?

SS: No, it did not happen in films. Subjects that were close to my life were not essentially from my singularly personal life as such. Problems that were



closer to my life, that could affect me deeply, were the subject of my films.

RR: Hindi cinema has come of age today. How do you look at the commercial films proving to be the means of social reforms?

SS: I don't consider it justifiable that Hindi cinema has come of age today. Sensibility of time is understood by artists. When we miss the awareness and self-criticism, we are left with spineless creativity. If you don't give space to your mind, you wouldn't create anything worthwhile. Any such statement proving correct today is but an accident, not a truth.

RR: Today's film industry has probably replaced kawwali with item song. How does this change of taste affect art and lovers of art?

SS: There is no format comparable with kawwali in Hindi cinema. An item song stripped off rhythm, message and spirituality cannot replace a holistic creation of kawwali. Item songs today tend to distort the subtleties of art and aesthetics decrying the values of tradition. That's why there is no memory of them to be cherished.

RR: According to you, what is more challenging: Direction or acting?

SS: Both are equally demanding. Both have their own challenges. To seek a comparative status is rather undesirable.

RR: You have excelled both as a scriptwriter and as a director. Which experience did you find more thrilling?

SS: Again, to create an altogether separate domain is difficult. Screenplay is the first part of direction. As a director one must visualise the scene. Cinematically speaking they could be separate, yet they are very much attached together.

RR: Partition has left its victims with tremendous traumatic experiences. What is your experience of partition? Are you left a victim or beneficiary of partition? I mean what is the role of partition in your career?

SS: This is actually a painful question and it evokes a series of tough memory that went a long way in making me Sagar Sarhadi. During partition, we lived like a refugee in tents. Once a man named Hakim Khan attacked our house but ran away as he saw the excise officer, from Dera Ismail Khan who had coincidentally visited us that night. *Iss tarah hum log maut ke munh se nikle.* (This is how we got out of death's mouth) Upset as we were, we decided to leave for India. We had no intention of leaving but were forced out of our motherland and came to India as refugees in 1947. Starting my career as writing and directing one-act stage plays during college, I made my debut screenplay with Basu Bhattacharya's Anubhav which won a presidential award paying me Rs.3000 for the film. So in a way, one can attribute my professional identity associated with script writing and direction to the plight of partition which eventually brought me to Mumbai. But the same Bollywood of Mumbai, in its contemporary style of film making has forced me almost out of its realm. I feel now in my eighty eight years of long life that I have faced partition twice. First we were forced out of our motherland and now we have been distanced away from the film industry.

RR: So, how do you look at contemporary Indian cinema? How is Bollywood responding to the social concerns of movie making?

SS: The changing contours of Hindi cinema are discouraging and I am quite distressed with it. Cinema in India has lost its integrity when compared with the

works of Satyajit Ray, Shyam Benegal, BimalRoy, to name a few. The movies today depend so much on technology and fantasy that they are far from being meaningful. The presence of profound poetry, sensible lyrics, soulful music and sensitive dialogues are already denied to Bollywood movies today. The commercial drive has superseded the social motif of movie-making. Film industry in India today is but a nasty rigmarole of dirty dialogues, harsh cacophonic music and utterly missing a serious story besides pushing up religiously the unfailing nudity of a woman's body.

RR: What potential causes do you consider responsible for the decadence in contemporary Indian cinema?

SS: The main reason for degradation is materialistic hunt. The so called actors today hardly bother about the plot of the movie. Their sole concern is to earn crores of rupees for a single film, which leave them away from the tough feeling of poverty. Capitalistic pursuits of movie-makers at the cost of poetry, language, literature and culture are solely responsible for the failure of communicating any serious message across the society. If the films are star-centric rather than story driven, if stardom, capitalism, commercialisation and commodification determine the choice of cinema, the fulfilment and nourishment of socio-cultural values would be sheer a utopian idea.

RR: As a director what has disturbed you most compelling you to make a movie?

SS: Social evils should be disturbing enough for any movie-makers in film industry. One should be able to see the lurking malaise in the society and bring it up through the movies. Most often a news report catches the attention and fructifies into a mature story

intended to sensitize the audience. Bazaar, for instance, on which rests much of my popularity, and which was also commercially a super hit, is triggered by a disturbing news report about the marrying off for instance, daughters to Arab for money. I think, problems today are worse than ever before to compel cinematic representations of the same. It's only a question of taste for the subject of cinema.

RR: Are you deliberating on any film in future?

SS: Yes, I am planning to make the sequel of Bazaar as Bazaar II which would again be based on the ugly practice of prostitution in the name of Nikah which is still more rampant today.

RR: Sir, may I ask a personal question, the last one, with your kind permission, please?

SS: Puchho na yaar. Apna personal kuchh nahi hai.(Just ask what you feel to. There is nothing personal about me.)

RR: Thank you, sir. Why didn't you marry?

SS: To tell you the truth, initially economic crisis hindered the passage of marriage. And now, if you ask me, I see it absolutely pointless. Wilhem Reich, a German psychologist, opines that the maximum life of a marriage is four years. Then I thought -jab shadi chalti hi nahi hai yaar, to mai karu kyun?.Filmen to fir bhi shadi se jyada chal jaati hain.(When marriage can't endure, why should I think for it? Films do have more life than marriage!)Waise ek baat bata dun mai apko. Maine ishk bees se jyada ladkiyonse ki hai! (But, let me tell you one thing- I have had love with more than twenty girls!)

□ □

---

**Dr.Rajiv Ranjan Dwivedi is an assistant professor in English in University School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, Delhi.**

## POETRY

### Heatwave

Heatwave sweep in the snows  
cool roll and airshower bath  
height to height in breathless tow

What is human melts and drips  
from tip to toe  
body blaze to put out  
but how-now ?

Swirling dizzy highwindfall  
fragrant powder puffs swish  
blow and flow in the pores  
crossover from a later myth  
leaping windgod breaks the ice  
frozen mass and icerivers break loose  
on cloud nine  
buoyant undertow

Tense sequence in myth plantation  
of course....  
But when did Parvati grow out  
of a peak in cool moonlight  
or stars' shadow hanging low ?

Snowwhite waterlamps glow  
In the wide deep lake  
whiter, brighter  
when she ties the nuptial knot  
with a huge hairy higher peak  
in the romantic, erotic vein

Shuffle and surge  
of wedding and funeral rites  
in heaven and its earthen bubbly foam  
Icecool open mating stonebed

scooped a tunnel  
in every blaze

icebreath cooling agency above  
grows cool and cancels  
the long operating footflight service  
from a dwindling will to invest  
in celestial power generation  
in severe faith crisis  
or devotional finance crunch

Drastic cuts following  
debar low budgetary grades  
from access even by land  
and air routes

Old reverse Joycean polisher  
of the sky pays the price  
for a fancy frog jump and croak

Out of the heatwave sweatbath tub  
of the tormented body  
had shot a waterjet  
by word of mouth  
'Even a mine blowup of self  
handy to reach the cool top  
for an ice dancel !

Family chorus hounds him  
about how to do the ice dance  
barefoot with sticky pitch  
on a just metallated road  
a black sunflame tongue underfoot  
for him to suck both fire and ice  
in the divine reel.

- Amarendra Kumar, Hajipur, Bihar

□ □

## A Longing, Sharp as Knife

I walk through the rooms  
Nothing is lost, not even the sounds,  
I rummage through the many cupboards  
Where dream and memory live together.

As open the door, another dream sprouts  
An old, gentle but sad face  
That still waits for a fistful of light  
Through the darkened road.

The dream stops at the edge of a thought-  
A paradigm for a few question marks.  
Realizing that I am encroaching  
On somebody else's dream, I shut the door.

Slowly the house turns into an allegory of words  
Without a future, without a past  
Syllables and not a trace of you.  
I wish the ghosts could sleep forever in peace.

- **Asha Viswas**, Varanasi

## BOOK REVIEW

***Form & Aspects of the Novel*. Shaleen Kumar Singh, Prakash Book Depot, Bareilly, pp. 80 Price ₹ 40**

Here is a student's guide to novel, a beginner's primer as it were. It is very much like 'The Novel at a Glance'. As such, it is short, simple and easily comprehensible. The remarkable thing is that from the definition of the novel to the various forms of the novel and its aspects have been dealt with in a small measure. Added to it the author has provided images and graphs from Wikipedia, Google books library, A vax home etc. They make the content more intelligible and visibly understandable.

The book has 18 parts dealing with different forms of the novel. The first two parts deal with the definition and elements of the novel. The third part is focused on the short story. The other 13 parts each deal with the Picaresque novel, Historical novel, Gothic novel, Epistolary novel, Regional novel, Dystopia, Detective novel, campus fiction, Science fiction, space fiction, Metafiction, Chick literature, and junk fiction. The last two parts deal with plot construction and characterization. The author has taken care to present the matter in a simple language and straightforward, unambiguous style. To add to it, the author has given examples of each type of the novel. The images and charts have an added charm for the beginners.

Granted that the present book is not a comprehensive study of the art of the novel and its various aspects and techniques and style, in its present form it is a helpful, handy book for the students. It is good addition on Guides series cheaply priced at 40. I hope, it will surely find favour with students.

- **Ram Bhagwan Singh**

□ □



**J. M. Coetzee, *Disgrace*, Rabi Kumar Jha (A Critical Study) Prakash Book Depot. Bareilly, Price 60.**

The present book is a critical study of *Disgrace*, written by J. M. Coetzee. It is the magnum opus of the novelist and a world famous novel which won the Nobel Prize for literature in 2003 and Man Booker Prize in 1999. The book examines the changed race relations between the whites and the natives of South Africa after independence. The focus is on the emerging democracy and the design of the majority to crush the pride and prestige of the erstwhile white rulers.

David Lurie had to resign because of illegitimate sexual affair with one of his students Melaine. He went away to live with his daughter Lucy at Salem. David Lurie's Dutch wife had a farmland which was looked after by Petrus, the native black African. Then one day when Petrus was absent Lucy was raped by three black men in the presence of her father. It was a disgrace to Lucy and more shocking as nobody was ready to speak against it. Moreover, David Lurie's car was stolen, Lucy's house was robbed but the local police did nothing. Lucy was psychologically broken and emotionally alienated. When Petrus came back, he arranged a party and celebrated Lucy's disgrace. It was clear that Petrus was the Kingpin of all this incident. Petrus had an evil design to build a new social engineering and subordinate the whites in vengeance. Finally Lucy had to compromise with her fate. She had to marry her rapist. Her father wanted her to leave the place but Lucy knew the reality that she had no other way but to reconcile to the changed social and political set up.

The novel is a comment on the new democratic set up in South Africa where the majority blacks are trying to avenge the tyranny and oppression they had suffered at their white rulers. Now, they are turning

the table on them. They want to crush them and their race by raping their women and producing mixed issues. Such democracy can bring sociological change only by force. It is condemnable.

R. K. Jha's critical study is a short and simple guide for students. Though not a comprehensive and scholarly analysis it is useful in its own right.

- Ram Bhagwan Singh

□ □

***Awaiting Eden Again*, Pashupati Jha, Authorspress, Q-2A Houz Khas Enclave, New Delhi (2015), pp. 91, Price 195.**

On reading *Awaiting Eden Again* I have a feeling of nostalgia for the foregone values. Prof. Pashupati Jha by all means belongs to the old school whose vision of a second Eden will never say die. Hoping against hope he enjoys celebrating a romantic universe of humanity sans inhumanity.

The book has both the real face and the desired spectacle with the poet's positive faith in the reconstruction of all things barring none. This is perhaps because pain ultimately, ends in painlessness. In the poet's estimation the despair has reached the dead end to issue forth whispers of hope and resurrection. The poet seems to endorse Matthew Arnold who held that poetry could replace religion. Prof. Jha also believes that poetry can sensitise, moralize and spiritualise humanity. Thus, his poetry" is not a luxury for him. It is not meant for displaying literature in the designer decor of Ac rooms/suffocating Muse to untimely death/It is meant for the old ancestors/edging out from their graves/eager and intent to listen to the ancient elemental music/once again. (12) The poet laments that the good ones die unknown, uncommended while the cunning prosper

and earn popularity. "The Way of the World" presents a sad picture of humanity, particularly the women. To quote, 'A virgin dragged out from her defenceless hut/ and ravished then with relish/she utters her agony in subdued sobs/like the mythical nightingale/fearing the clout of the ravishers.'(17) Again, in "Brave New World" he says.

Sita would burn again  
Draupadi would be stripped  
naked to skin  
no krishna this time  
Ennuchs would not rescue  
You in this age, woman !  
From borine you have to become brute  
You yourself have to turn Kali  
With skulls and sharp sword in your hand. (p. 68)

Then there is the piteous cry of a female foetus who begs for protection and affection as she is the bones and blood of her parents. She is unhappy that her dad forced her mom to deliver and abandon her in the garbage box in the deserted street, in the dead of night where she will be wailing unheard in the darkness of the night, sobbing in the tears of mothers. (74) The scene shocks and shames a conscientious person and urges him to stop such an inhuman and criminal nuisance. But the poet finds himself a loner. In *Fake* he says, "I am a lover in this rat race/leaving my own furrow behind (38). He knows full well that they want success at any cost/ by any means, even if/it means selling both body and soul. (38) Naturally in *Purging Fire* the poet asks a question,

In man going up in the material world  
only to go down in the filth  
of unchecked ambition and arrogance ?  
...obese ego and the animal body is now  
everything....

Emaciated soul is detested like a disease  
the stone age is descending again  
Nothing seems safe now from the lust  
for gold and the lechery of flesh. (37)

The poet's Tennysonian faith 'o, yet we trust....'  
nurses his hope for another Eden for the fallen sons.  
This time.

The book begins with pleasure and ends in  
wisdom.

- Ram Bhagwan Singh

□ □

***Celebrating Literary Diversity*, T. Sai Chandra Mouli  
Aadi Publications, Dhamanistreet, Chaura Rasta,  
Jaipur- 302003 (2015), pp. 237, Price 1250/-**

As the very title suggests the present book is an assortment of articles on different genres of literature like poetry, fiction, drama and dyadic conversation. Again, the essays are on books from India, England, America, Nigeria and Pakistan. Literary diversity is further suggested by the discriminate choice of themes and aspects of the works under discussion.

Rohit Phutela in his paper on Derek Walcott's poetry has focussed on the poet's aching experiences of colonial exploitation and his self-conscious identity. To quote,

Underdeveloped, you brand me, inferior,  
that's the way you have forced me to see myself.  
I detest that image ! What's more, it's a lie !  
But now I know you, you old cancer,  
and I know myself as well.

- Caliban from the *Tempest*

Walcott's poetry is, no doubt, the embodiment of Negritude and Afrocentricity. War hysteria is the

subject matter of Susheel Kumar's poetry well expatiated by Sebastian sdb. Apart from homicide he has take into account eco-disaster as a result of oil spill, psychological disaster causing war hysteria in little children, emotional disaster among one and all including soldiers wielding guns. The only saving grace is people's faith in Jesus as the ultimate harbinger of peace. In *Gulliver's Travels* Parul Popat has explained the deeper meanings behind the text against the backdrop of the political situations. D.T. Angadi has analysed the theme of love in Manju Kapur's. *Difficult Daughters* and shown the concept of marriage in a state of constant flux in modern times. The story presents cases of three generations of women moving from obedience to adjustment and finally self determination. The essay Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds no Terror* by Avinuo Kire is a psychoanalytic study of the heroine and the author's mellowed concept of feminism. Vishwas Joshi in the paper on Gita Mehta has exposed the bogus spiritual Indian gurus who have commodified Indian spirituality and victimized the foreign spiritual seekers.

The book has 22 essays on a variety of subjects. Sensuality in *The God of Small Things* is the subject of Pradeep Kumar's paper who has deftly discovered the sensuous content in the novel as an essential component of human behaviour. As part of Dalit literature Kalyan Rao's *Untouchable Spring* is focussed on the accursed life of the untouchables in the Telugu world. The novelist has woven a tale of pain, suffering and dispossession hounding the subaltern consciousness of the malas, madigas and the like. However, "the alphabet is now a weapon in the hands of untouchables- a weapon to attack the oppression perpetrated by brahminism for centuries. The Pakistani novelist Mohsin Hamid's *Moth Smoke* has been analysed and appreciated by Chotan Trivedi. The novel throws

light on the flourishing drug culture among the youth in Pakistan. It is so rampant that even adolescents are being addicted to hash, charas, heroin and marijuana. Drinking is as much common as is adultery and corruption in public life. T. Jeevan Kumar has taken note of political resonances in Harold Pinter's *Celebration*. The play anatomizes the empty lives of the people of modern times with some political reverberations. It is a satire on the moral consciousness of the super-rich, crude materialism of a group of posh divers. Santosh Kumar Sonker has examined caste conspiracy in Girish Karnad's *Tale Danda*. The non-Dalit writers may be sympathetic to the Dalits; they may be their well-wisher, but their experiences about Dalits are not their self experiences. As such, their writing may not be much realistic and authentic as that of the Dalit writers themselves. Chhote Lal Khatri has in his paper focused on stage, street and terrace theatre movement in Bihar, something which is not known outside the state. Theatrical performances like Vidapad, Domkach, Jat-Jatin, Bidesia make a strong case for survival in the post-colonial world.

There are also essays on Gujarati fiction, sexist communication in advertisements and an interview with Prof. Sivarama Krishnan, a great poet from Kerala. In the elaborate interview he has expressed his views on poetry in the past and present. His message for the budding poets is - know your time, know your past and feel your present.

The book will be highly appreciated by readers and critics of English literature.

- Ram Bhagwan Singh

□ □

**Khatri, C.L. *Two-Minute Silence*. New Delhi: Authorspress, 2014. ISBN: 9788172739201**

*Two-Minute Silence* is the third volume of poetry by Dr. C. L. Khatri, an emerging Indian English poet who has already published two volumes, entitled *Kargil* and *Ripples in the Lake*. The poems in this volume exhibit remarkable development in the evolution of Khatri's poetic art. He has covered almost all aspects of socio-political reality in most of the poems like 'Peaceful Soul', 'Rebirth', 'Government School', 'The Falgu', 'Mother', 'Reversal Syndrome', 'Vijay Dashmi', 'Buffalo Ride', 'National Consciousness' and the title poem 'Two Minute Silence'. He has deftly used inbuilt satire and irony in his poems. In 'River', the unholy alliance between the politicians and sand mafia has plundered natural wealth from rivers. The poet observes that the alliance partners are "rhinoceros lazily lying" in the mud and saying "Ram nam satya hai." to those who attempt to disturb them.

'Buffalo Ride' is a grim satire on the political scenario in Bihar during the government of RJD under the stewardship of Lalu Yadav. Buffalo schools were introduced to educate the children of the poor segment of society but this project miserably failed. In scathing satire the poet writes "He traded dreams and demons/ sitting on the citadel / busy in balancing." Election is also a political satire in which politicians are the snakes stealing the show. 'Two-Minute Silence', one of Khatri's famous poems is a bitter comment on the degeneration of parliamentary democracy in India. Parliamentarians uproot microphones, break chairs in the parliament and tear pages of constitution. Lost in deep despondency, the poet exhorts his countrymen to observe two-minute silence on the death of democracy and magnificent Indian culture.

Friends , stand with me  
To observe two-minute silence  
On this great grand culture  
On this glorious century  
On its great promises. (67)

'River', 'The Falgu', 'Flower of Opium', 'Naina Hills', 'Tsunami' and 'Bull's Reaction' deal with nature and environmental pollution. Rivers have been polluted and they are on the verge of dying. The poet bewails the loss of nature's abundant wealth which nourishes life in the world. "Weary ways" of man have changed rivers into ponds of thick mud. The Falgu is a sacred river "without water" In bitter mood, the poet writes that the Falgu is a river without banks or banks without a river. According to religious custom, pindaan in the Falgu "offers salvation to the dead / Privy Purse to the priestly players / The heathen harvest of faith." The Ganga in 'Paeon to Patliputra' crawls on her knees in north / sinking in the sand / mixing memory and desire.

Khatri belongs to Bihar. Hence the social religious and political background of Bihar, infested with Naxal problems and caste wars, finds special place in his poems. A poet or a writer is deeply influenced by the ethos and environment of the place where he is born and nurtured. 'Government School' is a satire on the bankruptcy of education in Government schools of Bihar. Cockroaches are found in mid-day meals. Children parroting alphabets and tables and playing pitto is a common sight in dilapidated schools in Bihar. In agony, the poet cries that they are "Fucking Future." Poverty is rampant in Bihar and Orissa. Haunted by chronic poverty weeping mothers sell their sons. Sex is no crime. So Kuntis caste away their babies in the river and "Many Karans lose the light of the day." Vijay Dashmi, Holi and other festivals also find place in his poetry.



'Homage is Maa' is the most moving poem of Khatri who enters the memory lanes which take him into the past which he passed with his mother while learning cultural values and virtues from her. He calls her a goddess and feels her within him. He feels that she is alive and breathes through him.

A deity in the sanctum  
She lives in me, breathes through me.  
Who cares if I win or lose the race I am not in?

Khatri's poetic craftsmanship deserves some commendations. His images are sharp and suggestive as "the spike of porcupine", "Monkey's mind", "denizens with their robotic robes", "swollen belly of buxom earth." The use figures of speech like simile and metaphor is appreciable. Here is the instance of the use of similes:

I thought  
the river is not deep like darkness  
not very wide like weariness  
not very meandering like coils of snake  
I will walk across it

Khatri uses precise, clear and lucid language. Hindi words like hunkar, Tandav, Somrasa, Ram Nama Satya Hai, Chula, Sattu, Prasad, Laddoo, Tilak etc. abound in his poetry. What strikes me most in his poetry is the Indianization of English and noticeable expression of Indian sensibility and ethos.

**Prof. Satish Kumar**, Former Dean, Faculty of Arts, M.J.P. Rohilkhand University, Bareilly.

□ □

**D C Chambial: Hour of Antipathy, Maranda, Poetcrit Publications, 2014, Pp. 81.**

D C Chambial, editor: *Poetcrit*, needs no introduction in the world of Indian English Poetry. *Hour of Antipathy* is the ninth feather in his poetic crown

and in this course he has evolved himself as a leading poetic voice of suffering humanity and Nature today. Two prominent feeders for a creative writer are his / her journey down the memory lane and the contemporary angst, ills and odds or bliss of life. D C Chambial, a sensitive poet of Wordsworthian meadow is drawn to both these sources and is able to churn out gems of poetry with natural ease, linguistic felicity, supple sensibility and conscious craftsmanship. His poetry often has an alluring effect on me that takes hold of my critical faculty and makes me approach it as a bee approaches a sweet fragrant flower. I disclaim to be a judge. I just love to relish the *rasanubhuti* of different emotions in poetry.

*Hour of Antipathy* is a bouquet of 57 poems of different hues and fragrance. Though the dominant voice is of loss and despair, the music of suffering, the depiction of the other dimension of life lends his poems a microcosmic view of life he lived and witnessed and it also intensifies the emotion through a pattern of contrast. For example "That Old Hill" where binary opposition of past and present, threat of landslide and the beauty of Nature is so smoothly worked out with the mystic feeling of smoke rising from the chasm of the sky that it enthralls the reader with the 'salubrious hill side' and a vision for future.

The gorge still exists  
under the canopy of thick vegetation:  
Herbs shrubs and trees,  
Young again.

Past: a history."(11)

Imbued in it is Chambial's vision of life: "If winter comes can spring be far behind." He is no where pessimistic or escapist; he believes in the innate values of life and cyclic motion of time:

Sun and shower  
in chase since  
Eternity.(Chase,17)

Momentary escape in the realm of imagination brings in Romantic feel to rejuvenate life and to escape the 'eerie things' in the real world.

In a trance, I live the earth and begin  
To levitate above the berth.

His dynamic response to the beauties of the world and life in several poems like "Wingless" "Beauties of this world", "The Bliss" reaffirms his faith in Devine design and like a devotee he attributes ups and downs in life to God's 'LILA' that Ramkrishna Paramhans frequently referred to. However, the quest for real self, the real happiness continues in him unabated as in the poem "OM" and at times he turns prescriptive as in "Radishes and Turnips" where he advocates the values of soft skill in a symbolic language:

The soil is tough  
Find hard to penetrate  
And gain girth  
They need soil soft

Soft is what one needs:  
Soft sentiments, soft moments,

.....  
To avoid hurts and bruises, (15)

Movement from happiness to misery, songs to sobs, light to darkness with probing spirit is the recurrent feature in this volume for example "Smoky Sounds", "Clouds in Sky", "Where is Gone the Song", "Butterflies in the Wizened Skies"- "The morning sheen/seeped into/the dark of night" (25) and the poem concludes with:

"Himalayas and Indian Ocean:  
Vast stretch of rugged tears and blood. (26)

But like an investigator he probes into it to "know the roots of blood," and to dispel the "cruel hour of antipathy" we are living in. For remedy he often turns to Nature, hills, valley, flowers, forest or sea and songs. We sing of tiring toil in the day,

We sing of joy of horizon and beyond. Without fuss  
We sing of sound sleep by the night  
We sing and spray happiness all around us. (67)

A rich tapestry of imagery-evocative and suggestive is another distinguishing feature of his poetry. "Butterflies in Wizened Skies" is one of the best poems for its rich tapestry of imagery:

She- a desert  
without hope  
waterless, grey, scorched, ashen,  
hanging by the evening sun  
on the mountain top  
looking into the wizened sky  
counting the lost stars.(26)

Yet another remarkable feature of this collection is his deft handling of different verse forms: Sonnets: (Petrarchan, Shakespearean, experimental) Villanelle, rhymed verse, free verse, etc. In some poems he achieves a symphony of sound, sense and sensibility with striking images and symbols as in "Life Drags in Eddies";

Tickle from black-holes  
the questions callous  
shrivel in shades of course.  
Ooze from cracks of baked earth  
the blood-blent tears-  
songs of lost hope of course. (70)

Or in "Heaven on this Earth" he achieves this symphony as if effortlessly with deceptive simplicity:

Sheen Sun silently  
Sinking into silent sea  
Of dark dungeon. (730)

It was a pleasant read for me and I hope every reader would definitely relate himself/ herself to some of the poems and relish the creation. I wonder why it is not priced.

**C.L.Khatri**

□ □