

**EDITOR**

**Dr. Chhote Lal Khatri**  
University Professor,  
Department of English  
T.P.S. College, Patna

**EXECUTIVE EDITOR**

**Dr. Kumar Chandradeep**  
University Professor  
P.G. Department of English,  
College of Commerce, Arts &  
Science, Patna  
E-mail: drkcdeep@gmail.com

**Dr. Rajendraprasad Y. Shinde**

Associate Professor of English  
Kisan Veer Mahavidyalaya,  
Wai, Satara- 412803  
rajendraprasadshinde@gmail.com

**Dr. Sudhir K. Arora**

Dept. of English Maharaja  
Harishchandra P. G. College  
Moradabad, (U.P.) India.  
drsudhirkarora@gmail.com

**EDITORIAL ADVISORS**

Dr. Ravindra Rajhans Padma Shri  
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**  
1 A/4, New Patliputra Colony,  
Patna- 800013, BIHAR  
singhrambhagwan@gmail.com

**Dr. Binod Mishra**

Dept. of Humanities  
LIT Rookee - 247667  
mishra. binod@gmail.com

**Dr. K. K. Pattanayak**

Bhagya Residency, Room No.-6,  
Ambica Nagar, Bijipur,  
Berhampur- 3, Ganjam,  
Odisha - 760001

Estd. 1997

ISSN 0972-0901

# CYBER LITERATURE

ABI-ANNUAL JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES



Impact Factor- 5.050  
Indexed in ICI

(vol. xxi (Issue 41), No.-I, June, 2018)

PEER REVIEWED  
REFEREED RESEARCH  
JOURNAL

**CYBER PUBLICATION HOUSE****CHHOTE LAL KHATRI**

"Anandmath"

Harnichak, Anisabad, Patna-800002  
Bihar (India)

Mob. : 09934415964

E-mail : drclkhatri@rediffmail.com

www.cyberliterature.in

www.englishcyber-literature.net  
khatristoriesandpoetry.blogspot.com

**CONTENTS****CRITICISM**

- Editorial ...../1
1. The Kaleidoscopic Vision of D.C. Chambial's Poetry  
— **Prof. Basavaraj Naikar/6**
  2. Gender Discrimination In Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors*  
— **Dr. Sweta Anand/25**
  3. Exploring Centrality of the Family in *Midnight's Children* Through Hinglish  
— **Dr. Subodh Kumar Jha/36**
  4. Arvind Adiga's *The White Tiger*: The Subalten Speaks  
— **Shuchi Smita Dr. S.C Roy/50**
  5. Insightfulness of Dalit-Life in *Untouchable Spring*  
— **Prof. Manish Wankhede/56**
  6. A Postcolonial Perspective of Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*  
— **Nigel Peter O'Brien/66**
  7. Culture & Religion in Malgudi Novels  
— **Dr. Birendra Kumar/74**
  8. Exploration of the Indian Political Reality in V.S. Naipaul's Indian Trilogy  
— **Dr. Sanjay Sharma/79**
  9. A Quest for Feminist Voices in Manas Bakshi's Poetic Journey  
— **Dr. Poonam Dwivedi/87**
  10. Linguistic Legacies and the Politics of English Language  
— **Dr. Shakibur Rehman Khan/105**

**POETRY**

1. Shadows  
— **Amarendra Kumar/114**
2. Selfie  
— **Amarendra Kumar/115**
3. Laughter  
— **Dr. Suresh Chandra Pande/116**
4. Promise, O Little Angels!  
— **Dr. Kumari Rashmi Priyadarshni/117**
5. Love You Too  
— **Dr. Ira Jha/118**
6. Ghazal  
— **Vishal Khullar/119**
7. My breath  
— **S.L.Peeran/120**
8. Existir  
— **Teresinka Pereira/121**

**BOOK REVIEW**

1. Dr Sudhir K Arora/**122**
2. Basavaraj Naikar/**127**
3. Basavaraj Naikar/**131**
4. Sonali Das/**135**
5. Gagana B. Purohit/**138**
6. D. C. Chambial/**141**
7. Agrane Shree/**143**
8. Dr. Paramita Mukherjee Mullick/**145**
9. P.V. Laxmiprasad/**147**
10. T. Vasudeva Reddy/**151**
11. Devaki Nandan Khatri/**155**

**My Experience of Translating Chandrakanta**

I take this opportunity to share with my readers my experiences of translating Devakinandan Khatri's tilismi Hindi novel *Chandrakanta* first published in 1888. Historically it is the third novel in modern Hindi or in Nagari/Devanagari script. However, it is held as the first authentic and epoch making novel in modern Hindi. I in collaboration with Prof Ram Bhagwan Singh translated it into English which is published by Prabhat Prakashan, New Delhi. We realised that Bihar has a rich literature in Hindi and other regional languages- be it Naath Sahitya, Siddha Sahitya, Persian literature like Todermal's Diary or folk literature. But they are least known or read outside Bihar. In the Archives of Bihar Government there are about four crore documents awaiting readers. Since there are few Persian readers and perhaps no translator to translate them into Hindi or English, the rich treasure is in danger of being lost in oblivion. Al Baruni's *Al-Baruni Bharat* was translated into Hindi by Prof Kayammudin Ahmad. The Persian Department in the Patna University is now defunct. There is hardly anyone who can continue with this individual effort in the absence of institutional backup. The scenario of other literatures is also grim in the sense that only a few of them have been translated into English or other foreign or Indian languages. If Devakinandan Khatri's novels *Chandrakanta*, *Chandrakanta Santati*, *Bhutnaath*, *Kajal Ki Kothari*, *Kushum Kumari*, *Gupta Godana*, *Narendra Mohini*, *Virendra Veer*, *Noulakhaa Haar*, *Anuthi Begam* or Phaniswarnath Renu's classic *Maila Aanchal* have not reached national or international readership, it is because of lack of

translation. Either we have not realised the value of translation or we have been more complacent about it. If we examine the situation in a historical perspective, we learn that translation is not an Indian concept but an import from Western Metaphysics during the British rule in India. The translation of the *Bible* in regional languages of India brought in new translation strategy. Etymologically and culturally 'translation' is different from 'Anuvad' (speak after/ retelling), *bhashantar* (linguistic transference), *tarzuma* (reproduction), *roopantar* (change of form), *vivartanam* (change), *mozhimattam* (change of script).

The word 'translate' comes from the Latin 'translatio' where 'trans' means across and 'latus' means carrying; the word thus means the carrying across meaning from one language to the other. Translators are said to be like Adam and Eve evicted from the Garden of Eden and are always in search of perfect paradise that is perfect equivalence. This concept of equivalence and fidelity to the original are the guiding principles for a translator. Hillis Miller rightly sums up "Translation is the wandering existence in a perpetual exile". The best example of anuvad is the retelling of the Ramayana that resulted into three hundred or more Ramayanas. However, in common parlance today 'translation' and 'anuvad' are used as synonyms. India, too, has a long history of translation or its variants. Akbar commissioned translations of Sanskrit works into Persian. The *Mahabharata* was translated into Persian during Akbar's time. His great-grandson Dara Shukoh translated the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad-gita* into Persian.

Sir William Jones, founder of the Asiatic Society, translated *Abhijnanasakuntalam* into English in 1789.

Charles Wilkins, official translator of Persian and Bengali to the Commissioner of Revenue, was the first to translate the *Bhagavad-gita* into English in 1784. Aurobindo was the first great thinker who deliberated on the theory of translation in “On Translating Kalidasa”. It was his enterprise to reorient the concept of anuvad by translating *bhav*, *roop* and *swaroop* in target language. Even Tagore’s translation of *Gitanjali* what is called perjury by Sujeet Mukherjee seems to me an exercise in the tradition of anuvad because of his retelling of the original *Geetanjali* in Bangala. Tagore did a great service to the nation by disseminating Indian knowledge to the world. Similarly, A. K. Ramanujan facilitated the introduction of ancient Indian texts as well as modern regional writers like U.R. Anantha Murthy to the world outside India. The point is they all have realised the great strength of translation in a multicultural- multilingual country like India where translation is an effective means of communication, interconnectivity and cultural integration among people speaking different languages. We need to realise what Prof S K Sareen says that “translation is an index of the contemporary culture of a country –that translation-culture of a country at a given time is an index of its intellect, sociology and politics. Transaction of translation is also an index of the cultural- intellectual status of languages involved.” It is a source of enrichment, education and culture learning as well.

The government and the institutions like Bihar Rashtra Bhasa Parishad, Bihar Hindi Granth Akademi, Bihar Hindi Sahitya Sammelan and other Academies of languages concerned have been instituted with the view of promoting languages of and literatures from Bihar. But perhaps they failed to realise that translation can play a role in realising the same goal. Can we

incorporate this in the vision of these institutions? Or an institution for multi-directional translation activities can be set up. I do acknowledge individual efforts in this field by Ram Chandra Prasad, R C P Sinha, Pavan K Verma, Ram Bhagwan Singh, Prof B N Mishra and others. Despite all limitations of translation, we all agree to the need for translation and that English is the gateway to the world.

With this view in mind we started the process of translating Hindi classics into English in a collaborative mode. *Chandrakanta* is just a beginning. We have planned to translate *Chandrakanta Santati*, *Bhootnath* and Phaniswarnath Renu’s *Maila Anchal*. We are conscious of the problems and limitations involved in its transaction. Our objective in translation of these classics is what A K Ramanujan writes in Translator’s Note to the English translation of U R Anantmurthy’s Kannada novel *Samskar*, “A translator hopes not only to translate a text, but hopes (against all odds) to translate a non-native reader into a native one.”

Translation of different genres of literature has some common problems and genres specific problems as well. Dialectical variation and hybrid linguistic situation in a region like Bihar further adds to the difficulty. A translator is supposed to be mentally prepared for the technical challenges the translation involves. His success and failure lies in how he responds to the challenges and brings his translation nearest to the original in TL. Sometimes you don’t have the equivalent terms in TL. For example ‘Aiyar’, ‘Tilism’, ‘Ramal’ in *Chandrakanta* are best explained by the narrative itself. “Magical dice” for example cannot substitute “Ramal”. So they are retained in TL. A discerning reader will hardly need to turn to glossary though it is added.

Similarly, musical notations, sounds, dialectical terms in *Maila Anchal* are enough to make a translator sweat in winter. (babu-babuan, hakim-hukkam, amala-phaila/ Disti bot) A translation is after all a translation not the original. Translators as well as the readers of translation are conscious of this fact and accept the limitation. It's a fact that *Maila Anchal* can only be written in the idioms of that regional dialect and not in any foreign language. Perhaps this socio-cultural-political demands of a region on the writer that makes the narrative more amenable to the language of the region. I am reminded of Namwar Singh who in a TV interview called the Hindi translation of Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy* more natural and authentic than the original.

There is yet another aspect. If this *Chandrakanta* goes to a Spanish or Japanese writer who does not know Hindi for translation, this English version will be SL for him.

Finally I would reiterate that language is the most powerful tool or weapon in the hands of man and a translator serves both source language and target language and acts like a cultural ambassador and hence must be accepted in both languages.

— C. L. Khatri

★

## The Kaleidoscopic Vision of D.C. Chambial's Poetry

— Prof. Basavaraj Naikar

### Abstract

D. C. Chambial belongs to the modernist school of Indian English poetry. He is alive and alert to the situations of existing life in India. His poetry may be classified into Nature poetry, satirical, philosophical, and contemporary. In his poetry, he moralizes about man's voracity and insensitivity, sees the presence of Divinity in Nature, records religious devotion, describes terrific aspects of Nature, satirises human hypocrisy and opportunism, Mammon-worship to the exclusion of spiritual values, and attacks the negative qualities of modern man like exploitation, cruelty, violence, selfishness, demoniac behaviour, and destruction of Nature for commercial purposes. He makes a dig at man's hunger for power and pelf and also comments on modern man's utilitarian and commercial approach to life and celebrates the greatness of human will. His poetry also projects optimistic and affirmative view of life. Chambial's kaleidoscopic vision embraces different aspects of human life, Nature, and cosmos, religious, mythological, and philosophical poems. Though his poetry looks simple apparently, it yields its deeper meaning when we study it seriously. His poetry responds to the subtle vibrations of human life around him.

**Keywords :** Modernist school of poetry, Utilitarian, kaleidoscopic vision, satirical, religious, mythological, philosophical.

Dr. D.C.Chambial is an important Indian English poet from Himachal Pradesh. He has published nine collections of his poems and two books of criticism on Indian English poetry. He has won many prestigious awards like Michael Madhusudhan Award (1995), Lachian art Letter Award (1987), USA, Dove in Peace Award (2000), Australia and Life Time Achievement Award from the International Poetry Society. Besides being a poet and a critic he is also a translator. He has translated some stories from Hindi into English and from English into Pahari of Himachal Pradesh. A Ph.D. in Indian English Poetry, he retired from HP education service after 38 years of service. All these facts prove that poetry has been the very life-breath of his career. He belongs to the modernist school of Indian English poetry and represents the poetic sensibility nourished from the flora and fauna of Himachal Pradesh rich in its natural wealth and beauty. He is alive and alert to the situations of contemporary life in India. His poetry may be classified into a few categories like 1) Nature poetry, 2) satirical, 3) philosophical, and 4) contemporary and so on. But these categories are not hard and fast compartments as many times they overlap one another.

We may examine a few poems on nature here. In “Will Man Never Learn to Live...”, the poet offers a contrastive picture of birds like a myna and man. A myna descends in the courtyard, pecks at some crumbs, seeds, small insects and when its throat runs dry it flies to a tap nearby and manages to drink the drops of water with great effort and slakes its thirst. The poet asks the basic question if man could live like these birds and be free from greed.

Sixteen times, she does do  
 Until her thirst is slaked  
 And flies away, unlike human beings:  
 Greedily helpless, helplessly greedy

By their nature, care little for those  
 Who fail to get a days  
 Square meal. (P. 74)

In this poem the poet first presents a natural situation of a hungry myna eating the crumbs and slaking its thirst and flying away. Then he moralizes about man’s greed and callousness. Thus, the poet learns and draws a moral lesson by observing Nature closely.

In “An Ant and I”, the poet observes an ant carrying a cargo laboriously and presses the cargo making it toil harder and harder. But the ant eases its grip on the cargo and climbs it up and bites his finger hard. In this event the poet sees a moral:

I sensed the ire and desperation:  
 The anger,  
 The agony;  
 Of those who suffer and live it  
 Day and night.  
 And realized  
 Why they harbour hostility against those,  
 Who make it hard  
 For them to live their life. (P.113)

Obviously, the poet derives a moral lesson from this microscopic event that the exploited people will rebel against their exploiters and take revenge upon them and that their anger is true and justified.

In “On the Bank”, the poet describes his pleasant experience while observing the river water. He says that he looked deep into the placid water of the noiselessly flowing water and saw the sun, the stars and the moon all lying captive in the blue bowl of the heavenly ambrosia, that they sang God’s glory in unison, that the birds and beasts drew beside the bank like the cheerful cows and *gopis*; and that he forgot the passage of time in listening to the mellifluous music. The poet,

like Wordsworth, sees the presence of Divinity in Nature, a fact which testifies to his sublimity of feeling.

The poet, in “Beyond the Yonder Hill”, offers a transcendental vision of life. The poem begins with a question: what is there on the other side of the yonder hill beyond the horizon. Then an answer is suggested by the poet. The people say that there is a vast and abysmal ocean wherein merge together all rivers and streams into a harmonious whole. Likewise there is one light, bright, deathless and life’s crown and transcending the onslaught of Time. In it the poet captures a glimpse of the transcendental unity, beauty, and eternity beyond the hill. The poet’s vision has a strand of mystic experience in it.

“Clouds in Sky” shows man’s need and longing for rain due to the severity of summer heat. The poet describes the changes in Nature as per the passage of time. He says that the wild wind blows furiously after the spring showers. Then there are clouds again in the sky, snow-storm on the mountain, gale in low land and thunders in the sky. The people’s hopes are green with clouds, which are swept away by the wind. The trees and plants quiver with unknown fear about the sleet and hail-storm. Then again there is draught in Nature.

Earth turned black,  
Cries for a drop like *papiha*  
To wet the dried throat  
In this cruel hour of antipathy. (P.26)

In this poem the poet seems to show the contrary aspects of Nature like summer and rainy season and man’s longing for water to slake his thirst.

In “The Sun Sings”, the poet offers a panoramic picture of the cycle of seasons perceivable in Nature. In the summer the burning sun sings the sod and bakes the earth and all the people cry for a soothing breath and rain’s mirth. Then rains come in torrents

like the ravaging Huns to mollify it and the flood of water acts as an ablution. Then comes the autumn wherein the trees like sagacious sages practice meditation and yoga, looking solemn in the frolic play of the Lord God. Then follows winter, wherein

Mountains get ready to put on white robes,  
And slumber until the spring stirs and throbs.  
Spring mellowed with honeyed-breath stirs life:  
A celebration of colours all around; (P.53)

The soft breezes of the spring season kindle the dreams and also love-fever in man and woman and make them adventurous:

Dive in the deep dark seas to collect pearls  
Epiphany in flashes fostered hurls. (P.54)  
Finally, the poet summarizes his experience of the cycle of seasons and makes it explicit as follows:  
Summer comes tickling with its heat and drought;  
Rains wet the earth; autumn dumps spirits low.  
Winter sits deep on senses; chill and snow.  
Spring many a hope in heart with Spring’s glow.  
(P.54)

In “We Frolic and Frisk with the Waves”, the poet describes the joyful life of the boatmen in the Bay of Bengal, Andaman. He shows how these boatmen are grateful to the river and, therefore, worship the waves as their god as it were. There is a tinge of religious devotion in the boatmen. They say that they are born and brought up on the waves of the Bay of Bengal and frolic with the waves and transport the human load. They ferry the tourists from home and abroad to islands like Ross, Jolly, and North Bay. Some passengers are terrified and cry aloud whereas others cry with joy and enjoy the ride. The religious feelings of the boatmen may be seen in their consideration of the water and the passengers as their gods.

We sing of tiring toil in the day,  
We sing of joy of horizon and beyond.  
We sing of sound sleep by the night.  
We sing and send out joy all around. (P.75)

This poem describes not only the beauty of Nature but also celebrates the joy of life felt by the boatmen who transcend the limitations of their poverty and predetermination. Their gusto for life is worthy of imitation for other people, especially the rich ones, who have no joy of life in spite of their riches.

The negative aspect of the fisherman's life is shown in "Strife The Leitmotif", which is marked by perpetual struggle for survival. "Strife, the leitmotif of life / Goes on / In sun and shade, / Dark and light: / Rainbows / Of hopes, dreams / And holistic haul." Their life is spent in mending their nets all through the day. They have to start their onerous job in the early morning and continue it until night just for the sake of earning their daily bread:

In darkness dawn stirs  
Boats and dreams.  
Freely fare in the sea.  
Sweat: stars and eyes.  
Frolic with  
The tossing, rolling waves.  
Sail far; far away  
From the shore  
Into the deeps of the seas  
To see their dreams come true  
Of winsome cake and ale. (P. 87)

In "Tsunami Memorial, Andaman", the poet records the terrific aspect of Nature which expressed itself a few years ago in India. The poet stands in front of the Tsunami Memorial and begins to reflect upon the great tragedy that happened in the past. The entire sea seemed to be sucked by sage Agastya and the beaches were left bare and nude as men. The hill of

water swallowed everything. The tragedy happened within the twinkle of an eye and allowed no time for man to think or take precaution.

Gone in the twinkle of an eye!  
Mansions big and fabulous tall  
All gone, all at once, gone were all  
Into the belly of sadistic sea. (P.76)

The poet stands in front of this memorial monument feels terrified retrospectively to remember this colossal calamity and equates it with Lord Siva's destructive *Tandava Dance*. Then he considers every happening as part of the will of God:

*Om Shivam! Tat tvam asi!*  
Your Will is Great! (P. 77)

The poet remembers with sadness the effect of a tsunami that happened in Dhanushkodi in 1962, in his poem "Dhanushkodi". At a place when life was filled with smiles and giggles was later filled with sobs and tears, when the sea shore was wasted by the whimsical tsunami. Consequently countless people lost their precious lives and the sand spreads far and wide thereby declaring the ruthless ire of Nature. It remains as a sad memory of a horrible event:

Helpless men, women and kids sell their wares;  
Tell tourists the traumatic tale.  
Man takes pride in his achievements rare;  
Nature, in fury, shows him his place. (P.92)

The poet shows how man becomes utterly helpless in the presence of Nature.

Thus, in his poetry on Nature, Chambial deals with different aspects of Nature and derives a moral lesson from them. He writes about the beauty, ugliness and terror of the geographical locations like hills, deserts, birds, radishes and turnips, butterflies, River Falgu and North Bay of Bengal of Andaman etc and

cities like Trivendrum and Dhanuskhodi etc. In depicting Nature, he offers a local flavour of North India, especially the geographical location in and around Himachal Pradesh, which is very fascinating to the South India readers.

The next group of his poems is strongly satirical in tone and directly or indirectly attacks the negative aspects of modern Indian society. For example, "So Goes the World" attacks the hypocrisy and opportunism of most Indians, who 'work with faces to shun the truth'. The hypocrites dislike the virtuous and god-fearing people:

The struggle between honest and clever  
Who throw all human ethics to the winds  
In a wild chase of money and matter  
And break morality's rind that Man binds.

So goes the world with her artless mean naïve  
Siphon blood out of ones, who direly crave. (P. 42)

The poet has, obviously, brought down a sledge hammer on the shameless people, who continue to indulge in their opportunistic and hypocritical pursuit of money and success and hate the good and virtuous people who do not appreciate them.

The poet strongly attacks the modern Indians' stark materialism and Mammon-worship to the exclusion of spiritual ideals. He says how in the European renaissance the people cared for true chivalric love and sang songs of love and craved for a glance from their beloved. But now life has changed as everything has been commercialized and commodified.

Time's changed since then, theme too contorted,  
Love has given in to social concern;  
Men prefer matter; Platonic love spurn.  
Changed values; human behavior distorted.

By fair or foul means, one wants to be rich  
In no time. One seeks all troves of Solomon,  
Connives for this even with demon.  
For money one tramples bodies sans hitch. (P.43)

The poet has rightly commented on the modern man's, (especially Indians') obsessions with money and eagerness to become instantly rich and successful without bothering about deserving it through hard and sincere work.

Alcoholism is an evil habit in men and ruins not only the individual but also the family, dependents and the society. In "A Drunkard on Road", the poet describes the obsession of the drunkards with more and more liquor and their oblivion of the whole world. A drunkard who has lost control over his senses will wobble along the road and fails to alight from a bus, touches a moving car, sustains many injuries and is unable to take help from the people to be rushed to a hospital, but on the contrary craves for more money to buy more liquor.

The money to buy another pouch of hooch  
To drown his pain and bruises and penuries  
In the lake full of mists of forgetfulness  
And the paralysis of his nerves.  
Hooch the best friend of the depraved one;  
Ever ready to sell life for a pouch even. (P.93)

Here the poet has shown the plight of an alcoholic and its adverse consequences on the family and the society. Alcoholism is a social evil which has been ruining countless people in India. Hence many wives and relatives protest against the opening of bars in the cities and villages. But in spite of these protests the governments are not willing to ban the liquor production and introduce prohibition simply because they do not want to lose their huge revenue. Only a minister like Nitish Kumar has the courage to clamp prohibition in his State. It is high time for the entire nation to declare



prohibition for the safety and welfare of the people.

The poet attacks the negative qualities of modern Indians like exploitation, cruelty, violence, selfishness, demoniac behaviour, and destruction of Nature for commercial purposes. He articulates it explicitly as follows:

We're living in a land  
That abounds in  
Wolves, hyenas and jackals;  
Care for none  
Save for their own selves and broods;  
Proficient in pilfering  
The share of the meek hen and lamb  
Their concern confined to their clans. (P.51)

Then the poet continues to list up their negative qualities openly:

We're living at a time  
When morals, ethics and virtues  
Emaciated, scared, crouch in a corner;  
When debauchery, larceny, treachery  
Have become the order of the day  
Shamelessly,  
Love and compassion banished  
Jealousy and hatred rule the roost. (P.51)

Then the poet comments upon how the modern Indians have been destroying Nature for the commercial purposes of developing real estate business etc. They

Have the cruelest axe in hand,  
Go on felling the forest fine  
To satiate insatiable desire to stockpile  
The wealth and things common to all. (P.51)

The poet continues the same kind of satirical attack on Indian society in the next poem, "My Country is Great!" In this poem the poet attacks the double standards of the Indians who teach great morals from the *Bhagavad Gita*, but who practice the values contrary

to these morals. He begins the poem with an ironical note and says:

My country is indisputably great!  
For all the humility and innocence  
Her polity is yet all the more great!

Then he goes on illustrating the greatness of our nation as follows:

Bother about coffers, the poor they hate,  
Resolved to end poverty, they profess,  
My country is indisputably great!

Starving the poor people of life soon or late,  
Prices soaring to sky, they don't assess; ...  
The wealth, they keep away from the state  
To show the sheep, nothing do they possess. (P.69)

Obviously the poet satirizes the lack of compassion in Indians for the poor people; their inability to control the soaring prices in the market; their hypocrisy in hiding their wealth and cheating the Income Tax Department etc.

The poet, in "The Canyons of Time", attacks man's hunger for power and satiation of his ego and the consequent indulgence in war and the attendant tragedy and calamity for the innocent people. He says,

Wars and battles and disputes  
Waged merely to satiate the sullen, surly ego;  
Care not a little how it affects the tender hearts:  
The lives of the common fighting for subsistence.

Men are killed on borders,  
Women become widows,  
Mothers' laps empty, eyes flooded in tears.  
Children without canopy to face the blizzard. (P.133)

The poet has lamented the war-mongering habit of man and shown how the human history and the progressive evolutions and revolutions are all studded

with wars and bloodshed and destruction of cultures.

In “Masters Not Beggars” the poet rightly attacks the heartless higher clerks or bureaucrats, who sit in the air-conditioned chambers and try to exploit the common people of the Indian society. These Government servants sit there only to deceive the public.

pull wool over public eyes  
Fad of our dear honourables  
Who work through *sarkari babus*,  
Care a fig for those who  
Want to keep the wolf  
From the door to keep bones and flesh together,  
Have to befriend sun and showers. (P. 58)

Then, the poet shows how the bureaucratic exploitation of the common man is intensified by the economic crises involving the skyrocketing prices and forcing the people to starve. But as time goes on the cycle of history moves and the people at the lower rungs of society may come up but sacrifice all the higher values of life for material gains.

The season changes every half a decade  
The paupers to gain some might;  
But choose to sell souls for few pints and coins.  
A bottle of wine; they pawn their souls  
Another half a decade looking at the stars  
In some hope of bolt from the blue. (P.58)

In “Man for Mammon”, he satirizes man’s obsession with money and exploitation and disfiguration of Nature for his selfish ends. The poet remembers how there was a river, which was so cool and clear and filled with the sonorous songs of birds on its trees, has become an ugly spot now with tar and smelling of only stench. The birds have disappeared from the once beautiful spot. The hill is cut for stone slabs and rubble and the verdurous beauty has disappeared giving place to ugliness and intolerable stench. The poet moralizes

sadly as follows:

Man has meddled not with morals only,  
Dug deep into the bowls of Earth as well;  
Has made vulnerable Earth, life, a hell,  
In his blind quest for Mammon selfishly. (P.45)

Although the poet sees the exploitation of man by man in India, he has a belief in the natural law according to which it will be suppressed and controlled properly. He says that when exploitation and coercion cross the limits, it becomes a must for Nature to restore the natural justice, which is another name for God’s justice. An ideologue emerges from the common people and tries to balm the wounds and stop the bleeding of the sufferers. Those who were left to bemoan and bewail will find some consolation and rise like the slumbering followers of Satan, begin to emit fire to kindle a sort of revolution.

...evolutions result  
From ruins of mansions great and powers high  
The grass soaked in blood stirs from slumber;  
Picks up the reed and sings with wind’s fury  
A new song of sonority and hope. (P.147)

It is said that cleanliness is another name for godliness. India has been notorious for its ugliness aggravated by the ubiquitous presence of scrap, industrial-waste and horrible stench in all the great cities. Man has dug deep into the bowels of the earth for quarrying business and commercial gains without bothering about the aesthetic ideals. That is why our present Prime Minister, Sri Narendra Modi has started his *Svachha Bharata Abhiyan* (Clean India Movement) with real seriousness. The poet’s lament about the stench and ugliness in India is properly answered by the Prime Minister’s agenda.

In “This Lascivious World”, the poet comments on modern man’s utilitarian and commercial approach

to life. He does not hesitate to sell his soul for some material gains in life:

The riches sought in this lusty world,  
Overnight one longs to pluck the brightest star;  
Fears not of selling his soul to Satan  
And build pandemonium on human blood. (P.44)

The poet laments that “All human milk is dried in human heart” and they have killed their conscience unscrupulously.

“The Kindred Souls” commiserates the pitiable condition and bad luck of the rag-pickers in India. The sunrise does not bring any joy in their life but forces them to indulge in the dirty job of picking up the rags from all the dirty corners of the lanes. The poet calls them the kindred souls, shiver in cold, spring up to toil and calm the fire in the belly. With the first ray of the sun they pounce on the garbage hill to fill their sacks. There is no difference between human beings and animals here:

Dogs, stray animals and famished hands  
All work together in search of treasure  
With each scoop the mire of heat and dust lands.  
So the sun travels to West: the leisure

They do not know. Life follows. Their hope stands  
Like morning fog, ready with sacks in hands. (P.46)

The same theme of the plight of the rag-pickers is continued in the next poem, “The Thick of Night.” As the sun sets in the sky the shriveled hands crouch in empty sacks after the expiration of days’ toil. They are lost to the dream’s salubrious packs.

In dream, they come to a big pile  
That rises to the sky; all what they seek  
Voraciously, hurriedly fill the sacks.  
The bags are fall packed with their plodded pick.  
Decide they to have little play and fun.  
Eyes beaming with the bowl rich; no more sick. (P.47).

In all these satirical poems, Chambial attacks the negative qualities of Indians. His satirical views easily coincide with those of Nirad Chaudhri and V. S. Naipaul.

In some poems, Chambial celebrates the greatness of human will and pays tribute to the indomitable courage and will of man, though he is puny in stature as compared to gods and machines. In “The Mountain Man”, he pays a tribute to Dasrath Manjhi’s indomitable courage in cutting a mountain to facilitate the commuting of the villagers. The poet begins with a generalization :

Man’s known by his spirit  
And not by what he possesses.  
When he elects to fight the mountain  
He becomes the true mountain man. (P. 83)

Manjhi hails from Bihar and is known for his indomitable will and fire within him. He could accomplish what the State Government could not. He decided to cut the hill in two and continued his hard and dedicated work for twenty two years. At last the mountain had to yield to his strong will.

The mountain had to stop before  
His nerve of years twenty two.  
His sweat made the river delight,  
In love, flow across hard hill blue. (P. 83)

In another group of poems Chambial’s religious, moral and philosophical reflection on life is articulated in various details. For example in “Our Conduct”, he shows how the human conduct is of the highest importance and has the ability to transform hell into heaven and vice versa. He says that Nature in spring season is so beautiful and, in fact, the entire earth is a gift of God for man and that man should be grateful to God for providing this wonderful earth for his happiness. (Incidentally Basaveswara, the 12<sup>th</sup> century mystic of

Karnataka said that the earth, the crops, and the gentle breeze etc are all the gifts of God to man and that man should have the courtesy to acknowledge it with a sense of gratitude.) Chambial then borrows the Biblical myth to express his moral by saying:

The Earth, created for Adam's chastisement,  
Can be easily transformed into Heaven  
If those living here below the firmament  
Follow His commands in this haven.

No place is so good, or equally so bad;  
Our own conduct only turns it glad or sad. (P.95)

The same theme is continued in the other poem, "Divine Bliss", where he recounts the wonderful beauty of the earth created by God and how it is man's duty to observe it with a sense of gratitude.

Here I recline under a shady tree,  
With my mind on a vacant spree,  
Seek solace at the feet of the Lord,  
Not to let my mind any malice hold. (P. 94)

He wants to regale himself with the beauty of the rainbow, the sweet fragrance of the divine glory and feel the presence of God in everything that is there on the earth:

The breeze that blows, the peace that flows,  
The warmth that tows, the sheen that glows,  
Transport, O Lord, to a land so serene,  
Far removed from harried hours preen.

In such an ambience of cozy bliss,  
Let mundane senses kiss the divine bliss. (P. 94)

These pomes hold mirror to Chambial's religious reverence for the human life on the earth and his optimistic philosophy.

In "His Munificence" the poet delves on the immanence of God in the universe as he feels the

presence of God in the things and objects of Nature like trees, leaves and flowers etc. On looking at a green leaf he feels the presence of God in it. "I went forth / and saw / the Lord of life within / silently sending serene life / for all living things" (P. 136). Then he is overwhelmed by a sense of joy and gratitude:

I wept in happiness  
For His bounty:  
Mercy and love,  
For His beings out  
Through the pores of leaves. (P. 136)

The poet undergoes a sort of mystic experience when he feels as though the divine spirit shining in the leaves of the tree enters his being and enlightens his inner self thereby bringing tears of joy and gratitude in his eyes.

In "Down the Valleys", he highlights the importance of memories which show the true hearts in 'merry-go-rounds of babble reveries.' When man develops a positive attitude to life, he can easily overcome his negative views and enjoy a heavenly equanimity and peace of mind.

Aha! The world of care and concern drowns  
In the halcyon sea of content.  
The Hell of hate and discord disappears  
And reigns the Heavenly glow pearly white.

The poet suggests that one should have the courage to face and live it with real gusto by accepting all the vicissitudes. And anxieties:

Life is such a tale unforeseen, untold;  
One needs spine o brave up the hearts old. (P. 82)

The same optimistic and affirmative view of life is articulated in the next poem, "Live with Winning Thunder." He says that we are born in this mortal world and nourished by our parents, who rocked us in cozy

arms and sang the sweetest lullabies for charms. He says further that we, in our youth, got our prize ordained by fate and that life has been kind to us. Finally, he suggests that this human life in the mortal world is simply a wonder and we, therefore, should enjoy it to the fullest extent, as we may not get another chance to come to this world:

True, 'Life is a nine day's wonder',  
Live it, live with winning thunder! (P. 59)

Chambial has written a few religious and philosophical poems also. For example he has written on *Durgasthami* and frequently refers to the Indian philosophical ideas like karma, *kaivalyam* and astrological influence of planets etc. His poem, "Om" expresses the Indian cosmological concept of the manifestation of the invisible Noumena into the visible phenomena, characterized by the multi-coloured myriad beauty :

The Word exploded  
With Nig Bang.  
The cosmos rolled out  
In the original form. (P. 108)

The poet continues to say that the blazing heat and the molten mass died thereby giving solid shape to things. Consequently, the earth was blessed with rainbow vegetation and myriad shapes and sizes.

Beginning and end-  
Coalesce into each other.  
Call what you like...  
Om or boom. (P. 108)

In "Temple", he highlights the importance of the religious feeling or devotion associated with a temple, though it may be a thatched hut or a cement structure. He describes how he looks at a ridge where once a temple sat and a red flag fluttered on a bamboo pole. Once a so-called mad man entered this temple for a

couple of hours and had an experience of divine tranquility. Though now the thatched hut is replaced by concrete walls, the flag still carries the old memories.

Chambial's kaleidoscopic vision embraces different aspects of human life, Nature, and cosmos and his oeuvre consists of celebratory, satirical, reflexive, religious, mythological, and philosophical poems. Though his poetry looks simple apparently, it yields its deeper meaning when we study it seriously. His poetic heartthrobs sensitively like the strings of a *santur* and responds to the subtle vibrations of human life around him. But sometimes his poetry is marked by some kind of obscurity as in some of his poems the logic of his emotional response is not quite clear. In his obscurity, his poetry is comparable to that of Jyanata Mahapatra. Sometimes he even takes liberty with minor grammatical rules, especially in the non-use of the definite and indefinite articles and prepositions, where their use is desirable. Apart from such peccadilloes, his poetry succeeds in making the reader think deeply and seriously about life, which is the test of a good poet walking the pathway to be a great poet.

#### **Work Cited :**

D. C. Chambial, *Songs of Sonority and Hope*, New Delhi: Authors Press, 2018. (All the page references are to this edition.)



## Gender Discrimination In Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors*

— Dr. Sweta Anand

### Abstract:

The women predetermined as the second sex from time immemorial have faithfully adhered to male hegemonic order. Women are kept under the control of men to bring them out from sufferings. There has been a struggle to emancipate women from male oppression. Many women writers came out to articulate anxieties and consents focusing on the feelings of marginality and expressing their revolt against the masculine world. These women writers took a major concern in literature to highlight the dilemma of women, their increasing problems, physical, financial and emotional exploitations. Among all these writers Shashi Deshpande took an earnest step in exposing the submissive women through her fiction. Deshpande's creative talent and accomplishment have established her credential as a worthy successor and contemporary to the writers. This paper explores the gender discrimination of the protagonist Sarita in Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors*. The novel portrays the struggle of a girl in an Indian family where a male child is preferred to a female child.

**Keywords :** Gender, Protagonist, Oppression, Marginality.

India is regarded traditionally as a male-dominated society where individual rights are subordinated to groups of social role expectations. In

these roles, personality must not dominate the roles assigned in the societal framework. Consequently, in such a setup, a purely social, platonic or intellectual relationship between man and woman becomes nearly impossible. A woman's individual self-has very little recognition and self-effacement is her normal way of life. Indian women novelists, writers and speakers from different vernaculars take a prominent position in dealing with the pathetic plight of the deserted women, who suffer from birth to death. The *Bible* says "Then the Lord God made the man fall into deep sleep, and while he was sleeping, he took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the flesh. He formed a woman out of the rib and brought her to him" (5). In the ancient scriptures, woman is made from man's ribs. It has been understood that woman is born out of man. Then there arises the miserable condition of women. Women are supposed to be an ideal wife, a mother and an excellent home-maker with different roles in the family. As wife and mother, a woman renders her service, sacrifice, submissiveness and tolerance. A woman should always discharge an excessive patience and series of adjustments in her life devotedly and obediently. Her individual self-has very little recognition in the patriarchal society and so self-effacement is her normal way of life. As Mary Ann Fergusson in *Images of Women in Literature* (1973) asserts woman as, "...in every age woman has been seen primarily as mother, wife, mistress and sex object, their roles in relationship to men!"(4-5).

Shashi Deshpande occupies an important place among the contemporary women novelists who boldly express the problems of women and their quest for identity. Her protagonists are modern, educated young women, crushed under the weight of a male-dominated and tradition-bound society. In *The Dark Holds No*

*Terrors* (1980) the protagonist Sarita's sense of reasoning and questioning develops; she feels she is unable to tolerate the preference showed towards her brother. She feels jealous of her brother when he gets all the parental care and attention. Sarita's mother, who believes a girl to be a liability and a boy an asset, instils a sense of insecurity in her daughter's mind. Shashi Deshpande exposes the traditional method of preferring a boy instead of a girl. Even the mother is dejected when she begets a female child. The parents think that the boy will take care when the parents become aged whereas the girl expects dowry and leaves the parents after her marriage. In the same way, Sarita is rejected in every opportunity by her parents. Shashi Deshpande has emerged as an eminent writer possessing deep insight into the female psyche. Deshpande's novels reveal the man-made patriarchal traditions and uneasiness of the modern Indian woman in being part of them. The word which is associated with what we consider to be the concept of an ideal woman is self-denial, sacrifice, patience, devotion and silent suffering.

Shashi Deshpande presents her heroine as an embryonic woman of the present industrial age, who yearns to achieve individuality and the real self-identity without changing the cultural and traditional conventions of the society. Sarita, the central character in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* is humble and modest, very sensitive but lacking in self-confidence. As a middle-class woman, she longs to break away from the rigid traditional norms and adopts to be an antimatriarch who yearns for a new environment where the mother cannot thrust her will on her. She hates her parental home and her quest leads her to discover the hidden strength in the human being which shapes life to a pleasant and possible one. Sarita undergoes trauma, confronts reality and at the end, realizes that the dark

no longer holds any terror to her. She survives in a male-dominated world which offers no easy outs to women. She neither surrenders to nor escapes from the problems but with great strength accepts the challenge of her own. Sarita as a child on the odd occasion speaks to her father and to Dhruva, her brother. Her father used to take Dhruva out for a ride. He used to sit on the small seat specially fixed on the bar of the cycle giving rise to the impression that "daughters are their mother's business" (DHNT, 105). Sarita is always considered a burden to be eased out or a problem to be solved or a responsibility to be dispensed with. The birth of a girl is considered as an ill omen. Sarita's mother does not consider Sarita as her daughter and explains that Sarita was born amidst a heavy rain. Sarita recollects her depression as, but of my birth, my mother had said to me once :

Birthdays were not then the tremendous occasions they are made out to be now; but the excitement of having one, of being the centre of attraction never paralleled. It was always a fascinating thought-'I was born'. But of my birth, my mother had said to me once. . . "It rained heavily the day you were born. It was terrible." And somehow, it seemed to me that it was my birth that was terrible for her, not the rain (DHNT, 169).

The rains are considered to be an auspicious sign. It has been a mythical belief that the rains bring new hope, new life and a new future. Here when the mother utters, it rained heavily and it was 'terrible,' it exhibits her fixed attitude of a girl child to be an ill omen which she is ready to equate it to the rains too. Her mother's aversion to Sarita and preference for her brother, Dhruva is clearly expressed from her actions. This generates a gap between the mother and daughter and

forces Sarita to walk on the path of rebellion. This discrimination is so deeply imprinted in the mind of Sarita and all her future actions get ultimately blemished. Her brother Dhruva's birthdays were celebrated with a puja. Birthdays and other religious rituals related to him are given top priority and celebrated with much pomp while her birthdays are scarcely acknowledged. This inequality of treatment makes her think that her birthday is only a matter of displeasure for the mother. Many such scenes are imprinted in her mind and the Indian view of the girl as a liability and the boy an asset is firmly implanted in the mind of Sarita. Ragini Ramachandra however feels that this aspect of the story does not ring true. Ragini Ramachandra in review of *The Dark Holds No Terrors* in *The Literary Criterion*, (1986) asserts, "the portrayal of Sarita's mother who adored the son and neglected the daughter seems to be a weak point in the story. While one accepts a mother's preferences amongst her children, it seems rather incredible that she should live and die with curses on her lips for her female child, especially in the Indian context the mother's monstrosity seems to serve as a rallying point for the novelist to bring her grand ideas together. Hence the nagging feeling that the book has an axe to grind." (120)

The reasons for such preferences are not difficult to understand. They are inextricably linked to the Indian psyche. It would be too simplistic to say that boys are preferred over girls because of the dowry they bring in at the time of marriage. The reasons are rooted in our tradition-bound society which demands the mandatory presence of the male child is important in rituals. Our patriarchal society also considers only the male offspring as worthy enough to carry on the family line. As Sarabjit Sandhu observes,

The mother is very attached to her son. Her attitude is a typical one, all he is a male child and therefore one who will propagate the family lineage. In another sense also, the male child is considered more important than a girl, because he is qualified to give 'agni' to his dead parents. The soul of dead parents would otherwise wander in firmament. (DHNT, 20)

Sarita finds her mother's preference towards her brother Dhruva and an indifferent attitude towards her as humiliating because they were invalidating her survival as a human being in the family. She also remembers the sense of enthusiasm which pervaded their house on the occasion of his naming ceremony.

THEY HAD NAMED him Dhruva. I can even remember even now, vaguely, faintly; a state of joyous excitement that had been his naming day. The smell of flowers, the black grinding stone that I held in my hands ... these are the only tangible memories that remain. (DHNT, 168)

Mrinal Pande, the noted Hindi writer in her novel *Daughter's Daughter* (1993) explodes a glimpse of the instances in the life of a girl who is regarded inferior because she is a girl. Tinu the narrator of the novel comes to know that boys are preferred to girls after the birth of her baby brother. She gets enough chances to observe the condition of being a daughter's daughter during her visits to her grandmother's house Tinu, as a daughter's daughter her position in her uncle's house is below all others. Anu, her uncle's son is given preference. From the childhood, even the boy understands that he is preferred to girls. Anu says "You sit there. You are daughter's children! We'll sleep here near grandmother" (31). Tinu and her sister find no other way expect to submit to Anu's order. Like Shashi Deshpande Mrinal Pande explores through her novel



gender discrimination that prevails in Indian society.

Mother, the embodiment of love and affection imparts only the darker side towards the girl. Sarita, instead of receiving solace from her mother, always receives tortures and ill-treatment. For any girl, the mother relationship should be pleasant. For Sarita it is cruel. The fear, the panic, and the helplessness are all there in her life and the thought of one's own self-disowning one's own mother is the question. In the novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, the mother-daughter relationship is based on gender-bias and lovelessness. Sarita's mother was the dominating character. Sarita is a girl and she is dark. Her mother dislikes Sarita first for being a girl and next for being dark. In Indian tradition, the dark complexioned girls are valued less at the time of marriage. If a girl is dark the parents should give more dowries. Sarita's mother restricts her not to be exposed in the sun. Sarita had also to put up with constant reminders from her mother that she was dark complexioned and should not step into the sun lest it should worsen her colour. Sarita recollects her conversation with her mother,

Don't go out in the sun. You'll get darker.

Who cares ?

We have to care if you don't .We have to get you married.

I don't want to get married.

Will you live with us all your life?

Why not?

You can't

And Dhruva?

He's different. He's a boy (DHNT, 40).

These words are firmly implanted in Sarita's mind paving way for her rebellious attitude in future. In this connection, as a typical Indian mother Sarita's mother sowed the seeds of illtreatment in her own daughter.

Sarita's mother's strong preference for her brother drives her to a sense of agitation and alienation. The partisan attitude of her parents has an overwhelming effect on Sarita. She becomes rebellious in nature. When her brother dies by drowning in the pond accidentally, she mutely watches the whole scene without rushing to his help. Since then, she is haunted by the thought that she is responsible for his death. Even her mother finds her guilty. She points out, "You killed your brother" (146). Premila Paul asserts, "Dhruva's demise had always been her subconscious desire and there is very thin demarcation between her wish and its fulfillment" (Paul 67).

Further, she thinks that Sarita is their responsibility and they can't ever evade that responsibility. Later, when her mother fails to argue with Sarita, she becomes hysterical and starts accusing her of her brother's death. '...She let him drown'.... 'She killed him'. This allegation hurts the tender heart of Sarita who keeps on saying, I didn't, truly I didn't. It was an accident. I loved him, my little brother. I tried to save him. Truly I tried. But I couldn't. And I ran away. Yes, I ran way, I admit that. But I didn't kill Him (DHNT, 146).

At every given opportunity Sarita's mother snubs her. This sense of rejection by her mother fills the adolescent Sarita's mind with a feeling of hatred towards her mother. Shashi Deshpande clearly highlights the gender discrimination by parents towards their own daughters. Deshpande effectively conveys the patriarchal setup in our society and parent's craving for a male child. Denied parental love made Sarita the victim of her apathy. Sarita rebels against her mother for her education. Sarita goes to Bombay to study Medicine in spite of her mother's opposition. Luckily for her, her father encouraged her. Sarita's mother doesn't

understand the importance of girl's education. She hesitantly utters, "But she's a girl... And don't forget medicine or no medicine, doctor or no doctor, you still have to get her married, spend money on her wedding. Can you do both?" (DHNT, 144).

Next she rebels to marry a man out of her caste. Sarita's confrontation with her mother reaches its peak when she decides to marry Manu. Her choice of a boy from a lower caste is a sign of her rejecting the traditional ways and values her orthodox mother adheres to. She recalls the conversation with her mother when she confronts her with her intention of marrying Manu.

What caste is he?

I don't know

A Brahmin?

Of course not.

Then, cruelly... his father keeps a cycle shop

"Oh, so they are low caste people, are they? (DHNT, 96)

Her mother's disapproval of the match because of Manu belonging to a lower caste, brings back to Sarita's life the obstructions laid by tradition.

The words uttered by Sarita's mother implants disgust and distress in Sarita's mind. By hearing the treacherous words of her mother Sarita becomes enraged. Usha Bande says, 'The little rebel of yore who used to resent her mother's gender-bias mutely becomes overtly defiant...' (Bande 136). After her marriage, Sarita is hurt to hear from a mutual acquaintance that her mother has said, "Let her know more sorrow that she has given me". (DHNT, 197) Sarita thinks at one point that she is 'unhappy and destroyed' in her marital life because her mother has cursed her. The problems between Sarita and Manu start arising when she is recognized as a doctor. The man who considers superior does not allow a woman to become famous. Likewise,

Manu starts discriminating when Sarita excels herself as a doctor. Her economic independence makes Manu feel thoroughly insecure and this casts a shadow on their married life. His ego is hurt by her success, he feels inferior and this sense of inferiority makes him brutal in his behaviour. Though he is normal during the day, he turns a treacherous rapist at night and tries to assert his masculinity through sexual assaults upon Sarita. She is prepared to sacrifice her lucrative profession. Sarita gathers up all her courage and tells Manu, "I want to stop working. I want to give it all up.... My practice, the hospital, everything" (DHNT, 79). Manu disapproves of Sarita's idea of leaving her job. When Manu asks her to go on with her responsibilities, Sarita feels that it is "sheer necessity" that holds them together. The situation of an Indian woman is to satisfy the man, her husband both physically and financially. She thinks that this woman should not be economically superior and at the same time, he needs money to spend.

Shashi Deshpande through her novel portrays her women protagonists as the most oppressed and pathetic embodiment of human suffering. She feels that a woman, not only in India but also in other countries, is not treated at par with a man in any sphere of human activity. She has been oppressed, suppressed and marginalized in matters of sharing the available opportunity for fulfilment of her life. Sarita undergoes great humiliation and neglect as a child and, after marriage, as a wife. Deshpande discusses the blatant gender discrimination shown by parents towards their daughters and their desire to have a male child.

#### **Works Cited :**

*The Holy Bible* (Good News Bible) The Bible Society of India, Bangalore, 1977. 5. Print

Mary Ann, *Images of Women in Literature*, Houghton Mifflin, 1973, 4-5. Print.

Deshpande, Shashi. *The Dark Holds No Terrors*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1990. Print

Ragini Ramachandra, Rev. of *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, *The Literary Criterion*, Vol, XXI, Nos.1&2,1986, .120.Print.

Sandhu, Sarabji K. *The Images of Woman in the novels of ShashiDeshpande* New Delhi: Prestige, 1991, 72. Print.

Pande, Mirnal. *Daughter's Daughter*. New Delhi: Penguin 1993. 31. Print.

Premila, Paul, "The Dark Holds No Terrors: A Women's Search for Refuge" *Indian Women Novelists*. Set I, Vol.5, Ed .R.K. Dhawan,

Bande, Usha. *Mother, Daughter and Daughter's Daughter*. A Study of Shashi Deshpande. Jalandhar: ABS Publications, 1994, 136. Print.



---

Dr. Sweta Anand is working at Dept. of Education, Jharkhand Govt.

## Exploring Centrality of the Family in *Midnight's Children* Through Hinglish

— Dr. Subodh Kumar Jha

### Abstract :

Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* is remarkable for two reasons: the dexterous use of Hinglish and the centrality of the family. One can say that family emerges as a character in the novel. However, while intending to involve the family in his story in a central way, Rushdie did not want it to be a mere tale of different generations as in *The Forsythe Saga*. He, therefore, wrote about families in almost a mock heroic and comic way. For this, he introduced certain surprise elements in his story. First, there is the Bollywood style baby swop. After reading about one hundred and fifty pages the reader is shocked to discover that the family he had been reading about is not the family of the child, whose life history he had been engaged with. He is shocked to discover that it's somebody else's family. The other surprise element introduced by Salman Rushdie is the killing off Saleem's 'family' towards the end of novel. The third surprise element is to bring in Nehru-Gandhi family as characters in the novel. Rushdie exposes how in a planned way the first family of India had set about "self-mythification" (Salman Rushdie:1985). Rushdie's despair and rage become very clear in his characterisation of Mrs. Indira Gandhi as the murderous Widow.

**Keywords** : Hinglish, centrality of family, mock heroic, comic, baby swop, self-mythification, etc

Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* is looked

upon as a wonderful example of postcolonial literature and magical realism. It won both the Booker Prize and the James Tait Black Memorial Prize in 1981 (John Mullan: 26 July, 2008). It was awarded the “Booker of Bookers” Prize and the best all-time prize winners in 1993 and 2008 to celebrate the Booker Prize 25th and 40th anniversary (BBC News: 2008-07-10). In 2003, the novel was listed on the BBC’s survey ‘The Big Read’ (April 2003). It was also added to the list of Great Books of the 20th Century, published by Penguin Books.

A wonderful feature of *Midnight’s Children* is the dexterous use of Hinglish. It wonderfully exploits all the nuances of Hinglish very effectively, making it an effective means of communication. It, thereby, makes Raja Rao’s prophecy – ‘Time alone will justify it’ (‘Preface’ to Kanthapura: p. V) - come true.

*Midnight’s Children* begins with the story of the Sinai family, particularly with events leading up to India’s Independence and Partition. In fact, the centrality of the family is an important feature of *Midnight’s Children*. One can say that family emerges as a character in the novel. In an interview given four years after the publication of *Midnight’s Children*, Rushdie made a very significant observation. He said that “because family is so central to life in India”(Justice 1: May 1985), it was impossible to write an epic novel on a monumental scale and not place the family “near the centre” (Justice 1: May 1985). He also noted that one could write a novel about Western society and not give the family a central place, and it wouldn’t seem strange. But in an Indian novel this was almost a necessity. However, while intending to involve the family in his story in a central way, Rushdie did not want it to be a mere tale of different generations as in *The Forsythe Saga*. He, therefore, wrote about families in almost a mock heroic and comic way. For this, he introduced

certain surprise elements in his story.

First, there is the Bollywood style baby swop. After reading about one hundred and fifty pages the reader is shocked to discover that the family he had been reading about is not the family of the child, whose life history he had been engaged with. He is shocked to discover that it’s somebody else’s family.

The other surprise element introduced by Salman Rushdie is the killing off Saleem’s ‘family’ towards the end of novel. It is important to note that every member of the family dies in the bomb that falls on their house in Pakistan.

The third surprise element is to bring in Nehru-Gandhi family as characters in the novel. This is, undoubtedly, a very daring act in itself, because they were very much around and in power. In an introduction to Tariq Ali’s *An Indian Dynasty: The Story of the Nehru – Gandhi Family* (1985), Rushdie describes how in a planned way the first family of India had set about “self-mythification” (Salman Rushdie:1985). Rushdie’s despair and rage become very clear in his characterisation of Mrs. Indira Gandhi as the murderous widow.

The widow’s actual presence in the story is brief, but it is nonetheless of great significance. Throughout the novel, Saleem’s personal life constantly reflects India’s political turmoil. However, with the arrival of Indira Gandhi and the State of Emergency, Rushdie fuses the two narratives with a single crisis. The reforms of the emergency, which included a widespread campaign of forced sterilization, were widely seen as massive abuses of government power and human rights. The nation of India is metaphorically thrown into perpetual darkness just as Saleem’s wife, Parvati-the-witch, is killed and the magicians’ ghetto destroyed.

By making Indira Gandhi's campaign responsible for the destruction of the fictional midnight's children, Rushdie holds her accountable for destroying the promise and hope of a new future for India.

... *the magical children of midnight, were hated feared destroyed by the widow, who was not only Prime Minister of India but also aspired to be Devi, the mother goddess in her most terrible aspect, possessor of shakti of the gods, a multi-limbed divinity with a centre-parting and schizophrenic hair ... and that was how I learned my meaning in the crumbling palace of the bruised-breasted women.* (MC: 612) (emphasis added)

The use of the Hindi words such as 'Devi' in 'aspired to be Devi' and 'shakti' in 'possessor of shakti of the gods' along with the compounding of words such as 'multi-limbed divinity', 'centre-parting' and 'bruised-breasted' very effectively evoke an image which at once reminds us of the famous painting of Salvador Dali titled *Premonition of the Civil War* painted in 1936. The character of the Widow is identified with that of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. However to associate the character directly with an individual is not justified, as in the larger context we come to understand that the character is an embodiment of the political vices pervading the system. The beast holding the woman figure by her breasts draws an obvious parallel with the character of Widow and the woman enduring nerve rending cruelty is obviously a figurative parallel of the midnight children subjected to political atrocities that is the aftermath of the abuse of political power. The comparison between the painting and the character of Widow also confirms the parallel between the Civil War of Spain and the Emergency of India. (Trivedi & Soni: August 2013)

The characterisation of Mrs. Gandhi is the most scathing of all characters in *Midnight's Children*.

Rushdie's novel is in part, an examination of the "betrayal" of India by the independent Indian government beginning with Nehru.

The Nehru-Gandhi family as a character in *Midnight's Children* acquires a special meaning. By creating Saleem, Rushdie places the artist in opposition to all historians including politicians who re-write history to suit their own ambitions. The writer has to speak up and protest and Rushdie's protest rang out loud throughout the world.

As a critical historian of India, Saleem upholds three principles. First, he acknowledges the importance of the traditions of democratic and representative forms of government. Second, he acknowledges the teeming millions of the Indian populace that are forgotten in most histories of India which tend to focus on the great figures of history. Third, he believes in the power of the writer's imagination that helps him construct suppressed "realities" and "truths". He calls this "the chutnification of history", the power to produce counter-histories, to protest against the powerful governments of the day. To protest is a writer's duty as he said in his lecture "Inside the Whale".

One can say that the characterisation of the family in *Midnight's Children* goes beyond domestic space into the space of manipulative history and politics. As far as Saleem's family is concerned, each member has been wonderfully delineated. Aadam Aziz's mother's true self is revealed in her conversation with her son:

... 'See, my son,' Aadam's mother is saying as he begins to examine her, 'what a mother will not do for her child. Look how I suffer. You are a doctor . . . feel these rashes, these blotchy bits, understand that my head aches morning noon and night.' (*Midnight's Children*: 16) (Emphasis added)

One can hardly fail to notice the use of transliteration of Hindi phrase into English in ‘my head aches morning noon and night.’ Also the Hindi syntax: ‘what a mother will not do for her child.’ This is not a negative English sentence but an attempt to translate Hindi emphatic sentence – ‘Ek maan apne bachche ke liye kya nahi kar sakti’. His mother’s character and her wisdom is wonderfully revealed in her conversation with her son:

*His mother lay on her bed, spread-eagled on her stomach. ‘Come, come and press me,’ she said, ‘my doctor son whose fingers can soothe his old mother’s muscles. Press, press, my child with his expression of a constipated goose.’ He kneaded her shoulders. She grunted, twitched, relaxed. ‘lower now,’ she said, ‘now higher. To the right. Good. My brilliant son who cannot see what that Ghani landowner is doing. So clever, my child, but he doesn’t guess why that girl is forever ill with her piffing disorders. Listen, my boy: see the nose on your face for once: that Ghani thinks you are a good catch for her. Foreign-educated and all. I have worked in shops and been undressed by the eyes of stranger so that you should marry that Naseem! Of course, I am right; otherwise why would he look twice at our family?’ Aziz pressed his mother. ‘O God, stop now, no need to kill me because I tell you the truth!’ (Midnight’s Children: 26-27) (Underlined by me)*

The mother’s invitation for ‘pressing of muscles’ is just a pretext to initiate conversation with the son. The ‘pressing’ sets the environment for intimate chatting. Aadam Aziz’s mother very well understands Ghani’s motives – why is the landowner so interested in Aziz and why does he send for him so often for his ailing daughter? She also understands her son’s simplistic nature as does Tai, the boatman. They both know that Aadam won’t be able to understand that he

is being snared. The passage clearly underlines family values as well as mother’s love for her son and her realisation of her son’s limitations as well. Aadam Aziz’s mother is certainly not as educated as her son in terms of certification, but she is certainly well educated in understanding life, more particularly, the ‘way of the world’: ‘otherwise why would he look twice at our family?’

We have a peep into another family through the characterisation of Ghani. Aadam Aziz’s father-in-law Ghani’s true character is revealed in the conversation when he allows Doctor Aziz to touch his daughter’s breast:

*Now, for the first time, Ghani said, ‘a limp in the right chest. Is it worrying, Doctor? Look, look well.’ And there, framed in the hole, was a perfectly-formed and lyrically lovely . . . ‘I must touch it,’ Aziz said, fighting with his voice. Ghani slapped him on the back. ‘Touch, touch!’ he cried, ‘the hands of the healer! The curing touch, eh, Doctor?’ (Midnight’s Children: 26-27) (Underlined by me)*

It is his manipulative nature that prevents Ghani from objecting to Aadam’s touch to his daughter’s chest; he rather encourages Aadam to do so. Hinglish expressions such as ‘Look, look well’, ‘Touch, touch!’, ‘The curing touch, eh, Doctor?’ very effectively bring before the reader Ghani’s true motive. So does the following extract:

*Doctor Azizi’s fall was complete. And Naseem burst out, ‘But Doctor, my God, what a nose!’ Ghani, angrily, ‘Daughter, mind your . . .’ But patient and doctor were laughing together, and Aziz was saying, ‘Yes, yes, it is a remarkable specimen. They tell me there are dynasties waiting in . . .’ and he bit his tongue because he had been about to add, ‘. . . like snot.’*

*And Ghani, who had stood blindly beside the sheet for three long years, smiling and smiling*

and smiling, began once again to smile his secret smile, which was mirrored in the lips of the wrestlers. (MC: 28-29) (Emphasis added)

The phrase 'smiling and smiling and smiling' with its Hinglish rhythm very well expresses the eventual success of the scheming landowner and that is why he smiles with 'his secret smile'. Obviously, Ghani's plan succeeds and Doctor Aziz asks for Naseem's hands. And with this, the 'tamasha' comes to an end:

*'Dear boy!' Ghani, clapping Adam on the back. 'Of course you must marry her. With an A-1 fine dowry! No expense spared! It will be the wedding of the year, oh most certainly, yes!'*

*'I cannot leave you behind when I go,' Aziz said to Naseem. Ghani said, 'Enough of this tamasha! No more need for this sheet tomfoolery! Drop it down, you women, these are young lovers now!' (MC: P. 32) (Emphasis added)*

The fact that all through this process, Ghani has been scheming is very well underlined by the expression 'No more need for this sheet tomfoolery!' It is not difficult to realise that the relation between Aziz- Naseem was chiefly the result of Ghani's manoeuvring, not the natural attraction between the two. It was out and out alluring an eligible bachelor with dowry and youthful beauty. Naturally, soon after their marriage, the incompatibility between the two comes to the fore :

*. . . To see Naseem weeping into a pillow. She has been weeping ever since he asked her, on their second night, to move a little. 'Move where?' she asked. 'Move how?' He became awkward and said, 'Only move, I mean, like a woman ...' She shrieked in horror. 'My God, what have I married? I know you Europe-returned men. You find terrible women and then you try to make us girls be like them! Listen, Doctor Sahib, husband or no husband, I am not any ... bad word woman.' This was a battle*

*my grandfather never won, and it set the tone for their marriage, which rapidly developed into a place of frequent and devastating warfare, under whose depredations the young girl behind the sheet and the gauche young Doctor turned rapidly into different, stranger beings . . . 'What now, wife?' Aziz asks. Naseem buries her face in the pillow. 'What else?' she says in muffled tones. 'You, or what? You want me to walk naked in front of strange men.' (He has told her to come out of purdah.)*

*He says, 'Your shirt covers you from neck to wrist to knee. Your loose pajamas hide you down to and including your ankles. What we have left are your feet and face. Wife, are your face and feet obscene?' but she wails, 'They will see more than that! They will see my deep-deep shame?' (MC: 38) (Emphasis added)*

The different attitudes to 'sex' is the result of the difference in their upbringing. And this difference sets the tone of their conjugal life. The incompatibility between the two is very pronounced. This incompatibility resurfaces again when Naseem finds her husband stained in red (Aadam has just attended to the victims):

*Finally, he returns to his hotel room, his clothes soaked in red stains, and Naseem commences a panic. 'Let me help, let me help, allah what a man I've married, who goes into gullies to fight with goondas! She is all over him with water on wads of cotton wool. 'I don't know why can't you be a respectable doctor like ordinary people are just cure important illness and all? O God you've got blood everywhere! Sit, sit now, let me wash you at least! (MC: 38) (Emphasis added)*

Naseem's irreverence to her husband finds expression in the Hinglish expressions such as 'allah what a man I've married, who goes into gullies to fight with goondas!' or 'why can't you be a respectable doctor'. However, deep down she also has pity for him and this

is expressed through ‘*Let me help, let me help*’ or ‘*Sit, sit now, let me wash you at least*’. Hinglish here very well emerges as the mark of identity.

By common concurrence Hinglish (Scott Baldauf : November 23, 2004 ) is a hybrid of English and South Asian languages. One can say that it is a code-switching variety of these languages whereby they are freely interchanged within a sentence or between sentences (BBC News Magazine: 8 Nov 2006). This has been called variously as “Chutnefied English” (Rushdie’s coinage) ‘ketchupisation’ of Hindi (The Hindu: July 4, 2011). Harish Trivedi, in his Foreword to *Chutnefying English: The Phenomenon of Hinglish*, asks if Hinglish is English in Hindi or Hindi in English, and raises the pertinent point that chutney is a spice, not the main course.

Whether it is the chutenification of English or ‘ketchupisation’ of Hindi, such experimentation with the language is gaining in importance and popularity. It, in fact, has become trendy. And literature being the mirror of the society can no longer escape its influence. In fact, it has proved a blessing in disguise, as it has helped the Indian writers resolve the problem of language in their works to a great extent. Hinglish has been one of the major causes behind the success of *Midnight’s Children* by Salman Rushdie. So is magic realism, as stated in the introductory paragraph.

The technique of magical realism finds liberal expression throughout the novel and is crucial to constructing the parallel to the country’s history. Nicholas Stewart in his essay, “Magic realism in relation to the post-colonial and *Midnight’s Children*,” argues that the “ narrative framework of *Midnight’s Children* consists of a tale – comprising his life story – which Saleem Sinai recounts orally to his wife-to-be Padma. This self-referential narrative (within a single paragraph Saleem refers to himself in the first person: ‘And I,

wishing upon myself the curse of Nadir Khan.’ and the third: ‘I tell you,’ Saleem cried, ‘it is true. ...’) recalls indigenous Indian culture, particularly the similarly orally recounted *Arabian Nights*. The events in Rushdie’s text also parallel the magical nature of the narratives recounted in *Arabian Nights*; one needs just to consider the attempt to electrocute Saleem at the latrine (*Midnight’s Children*: P. 353) , or his journey in the ‘basket of invisibility’ (MC: p. 383). He also notes that, “the narrative comprises and compresses Indian cultural history.’ Once upon a time,’ Saleem muses, ‘there were Radha and Krishna, and Rama and Sita, and Laila and Majnun; also (because we are not unaffected by the West) Romeo and Juliet, and Spencer Tracy and Katherine Hepburn” (MC: p. 259). Stewart (citing Hutcheon) suggests that *Midnight’s Children* chronologically entwines characters from both India and the West, “with post-colonial Indian history to examine both the effect of these indigenous and non-indigenous cultures on the Indian mind and in the light of Indian independence.” (This is reported by Salman Rushdie himself in his introduction to the 25th Anniversary special edition).

Needless to say that the success of *Midnight’s Children* in the literary world heralded a new era for Hinglish, establishing it a very potent medium of communication in Indo-Anglian literature. The Indo-English writers no longer work under the stress of using an alien language to express native feelings and emotions. (Raja Rao. ‘Preface’to *Kanthapura*: p. V) Rushdie’s strength in characterisation in *Midnight’s Children* lies in his ability to incorporate in the fabric of the novel millions of common people and diverse groups that make up India’s population. He does this by recording many voices and perspectives that are almost never mentioned in most narratives, and history books.



As Saleem says, “To understand just one life, you have to swallow the whole world.”

Rushdie avoids the typical historical and fictional approach of placing the primary emphasis on the “great” figures. For example, one would expect to find Mahatma Gandhi figuring prominently in a novel about the making of modern India – the way it happens in *Kanthapura*, but in *Midnight’s Children*, the Mahatma hardly appears. Instead, Saleem records the daily activities of different “common” people and reproduces their wonderful language and unique qualities.

This is an important contribution because for the first time an attempt has been made in Indian fiction to bring a large number of socially marginalised people to the centre. In creating common people as memorable characters in his novel, Rushdie has set off a new trend in Indian fiction writing. Whether one believes that Rushdie ‘labelled a generation and liberated a literature’ with Shashi Tharoor or dismisses the novel as ‘one great, big confused bluff’, Rushdie’s influence on the novels followed both in terms of narrative technique as well as characterisation. Rushdie himself draws upon the methods of oral narratives to create characters. All his characters from Saleem to Tai are allegorised or are symbols. They are modelled more after characters in oral narratives than on those in western fiction and have a peculiarity to their characterisation that defies the simplistic distinction between *Flat* and *Round* characters offered by western fictional literary criticism.

#### **Works Cited :**

- “BBC - The Big Read”. (2012). BBC. April 2003, Retrieved 26 October 2012 “<http://en.wikipedia.org>” retrieved on on 25 June 2013 at 06:25

- Baldauf, Scott. (2004). ‘A Hindi-English jumble, spoken by 350 million’, *The Christian Science Monitor*, November 23, 2004
- Batty, Nancy E.. (July 1987). “Rushdie’s Art of Suspense” in *Midnight’s Children*, *Ariel* 18:3.
- BBC News. (2008-07-10). Midnight’s Children wins the Best of the Booker . also Rushdie wins Best of Booker prize”. “<http://en.wikipedia.org>” retrieved on on 25 June 2013 at 06:25
- Coughlan, Sean. (2006). *It’s Hinglish, innit?*, BBC News Magazine, 8 Nov 2006. Retrieved on 3 Jun 2012. <http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb>
- Mukherjee, Arun P.. (1990) “Characterisation in Saleem Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* in Viney Kirpal’s edited *The New Indian Novel in English*, New Delhi: Allied Publishers.
- Mullan, John. (2008). “Salman Rushdie on the Writing of *Midnight’s Children*”. *Guardian*. 26 July, 2008
- “Interview with Salman Rushdie”. (1985). *Justice* 1 (May 1985): 15
- Rahul Kansal quoted in Vijay Nambisan, “Chutney meri, ketchup teri”, *The Hindu* (July 4, 2011).
- Rao, Raja. (1971). ‘Preface’. *Kanthapura* : Orient Paperbacks, Delhi
- Rushdie, Salman. Introduction to Tarique Ali’s *An Indian Dynasty: The Story of the Nehru–Gandhi Family*. 1985. P. Xiii.
- Rushdie, Salman. (2006). Introduction to the 25th Anniversary special edition, Vintage books, dated 25 December 2005 ISBN 978-0-09-957851-2

- Rushdie, Salman. (2013). *Midnight's Children*. London: Vintage Books
- Stewart, Nicholas. Magic realism as postcolonialist device in *Midnight's Children* "<http://en.wikipedia.org> retrieved on on 25 June 2013 at 06:25
- Trivedi, Harish. Foreword to *Chutnefying English: The Phenomenon of Hinglish*,
- Trivedi, Rajesh & Namrata Soni (August 2013) "Art as Technique in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*". Research Scholar, an International refereed e-journal of literary explorations, www. Research scholar.co.in, Vol. I Issue III.




---

Dr. Subodh Kumar Jha, Associate Professor,  
Department of English, S.N. Sinha College, Jehanabad  
(M.U., Bodh Gaya)

## **Arvind Adiga's *The White Tiger* : The Subalten Speaks**

— **Shuchi Smita**  
**Dr. S.C Roy**

*The White Tiger*, a debut novel by Arvind Adiga, is a sociological saga of contemporary India which describes a story about the transformation of a driver namely Balram Halwai in Delhi, a Youngman of the village, Laxmangarh in the district of Gaya, Bihar into an entrepreneur in Bangalore. The narrative is different in the sense the protagonist does not transform himself on account of his suffering, rather he exploits the basic drawbacks of prevailing law and order in the nation.

Born in Madras in 1974, Arvind Adiga, the winner of the Man Booker Prize 2008, has received his education in different parts of the world-Columbia and Oxford Universities and started his career as a journalist in *The Financial Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*. He has also reaped the harvest of success to get his mind-boggling articles published in international magazines and newspapers including *Times*, *The financial Times* and *The Sunday Times*. He lives in Mumbai. His first novel is *The Whiter Tiger*. As USA Today remarks: "Arvind Adiga's *The White Tiger* is one of the most powerful books. I've read in decades. No hyperbole. This debut novel from an Indian Journalist living in Mumbai hit me like a kick to the head. This is an amazing and angry novel about injustice and power."

In his novel, *The White Tiger*, the novelist throws light on the Indian reality and highlights the widening gap between the rich and the poor, the rural and the urban and the brutal reality of an economic system in

India. He has also focused on the need of India's poor, the unhappy division of social classes into haves and have notes that excites among the world's deprived and describes the story of two countries in one : 'an India of Light, and an India of *Darkness*'. (*The White Tiger*, p. 14).

Balram Halwai, the oppressed, suppressed and tormented man, lives in the village, Lakmangarh where the villagers, families and friends are the subject of exploitation, torture and fomentation by the landlords of the village. The poor worship 'Hanuman' because 'he is shining example of how to serve your master with absolute fidelity, love and devotion' (19)

The Hero is very ambitious and tries to improve his position. So he goes to Delhi where he starts his life as a driver of one of the landlords' westernized sons, Ashok. There he perceives that a gap between two castes, the men with big bellies and the men with small bellies those who eat and those who are eaten. His life is an example of 'the story of how a half baked fellow is produced' (11)

Even he calls the life story 'The Autobiography of a Half baked Indian.'(10) He revolts against the feudal village. He is a poverty — stricken servant who belongs to the subaltern of Indian society. In the words of Marx: 'the society is divided into two groups — Bourgeois and Proletariats'.

In the novel *The White Tiger*, Balram Halwai belongs to a poor village family. As the White Tiger is a rare creature in the forest. So is the village boy who reads and writes in a village school. The thread that binds the novel is in the forms of letters which the protagonist writes to the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, whose state visit to India is impending. It is a series of letters which are written over the period of seven nights. Through these letters the hero describes the whole

story of his life from rags to riches. He tries to inform the statesman of the true condition of the globally shining India. He is a smart lad that is recognized by a school inspector who praises him as a White Tiger. Even the school inspector promises to arrange a scholarship and proper schooling for that boy but his family takes him out of school and puts him to work at a tea-shop, smashing coals and wiping tables as part of the conditions of a loan. His family had taken from the landlord of the village to meet the expenses of his cousin's wedding. After that he selects the work of a driver. As he drives his master Ashok to shopping malls and call centers, Balram becomes increasingly aware of immense wealth and opportunity all round him. His real education to penetrate the restricted domain for subaltern began when he starts to acquaint himself with metropolitan city and its life-style. Through these experiences Balram learns much about the world. In his attempt to educate himself to destroy the bourgeois ideology he has to tolerate a lot of humiliation and exploitation that he is the subject of Pinky Madam :

*You're so filthy! Look at you, look at your teeth, and look at your clothes! There is red paan over your teeth, and there are red spots on your shirt. It is disgusting! Get out! - clean up the mess you've made in the kitchen and get out. (146)*

A vision of the city changes his life forever. He wishes to be a part of Modern India. Soon he comes to know that the way to the top is the most expedient means, and becomes engaged in committing the odd crime of murder. He persuades himself that it is what successful must do. His story discloses a shocking disregard for the sanctity of human life. He says:

*...In the old days there were one thousand castes and destinies in*

*India. These days, there are just two castes: Men*

*with Big Bellies, and*

*Men with Small Bellies. And only two destinies: eat  
— or get eaten up. (64)*

The novelist expresses the contrast between the rich and the poor in the following lines:

...the history of the world is the history of a ten-thousand-year war of brains between the rich and the poor. Each side is eternally trying to hoodwink the other side: and it has been this way since the start of time. The poor win a few battles..."(254)

The dreams of the rich and that of the poor never overlap because the poor dream to eat enough of nutritious food and look like the rich, on the other hand, the rich go on dieting losing weight to look like the poor. This is the Irony of this world. In cities, the people from the darkness construct the giant building for the rich to live in and themselves live in the tarpaulin sheets and partitions into lanes by lines of sewage.

The story unfolds the way Balram proclaims about his freedom from a caged life of misery through crime and cunningness. It is a reflection of contemporary India calling attention to social justice in the wake of economic prosperity. It indicates about the emerging new India which is pivoted on the great division between the haves and have-nots with moral complications. Everyone thinks, he should do what was written on his forehead but a fire in him turns and moves him away from the established path of poverty and slavery. It is a fact that India is a land of chicken coops. *The White Tiger* is about the chicken coop and a certain chicken that turns into a *White Tiger*. Balram is caged like the chickens in the coops. He being a *White Tiger* has to break-out of the case of freedom.

*Go to Old Delhi, behind the Jama Masjid, . . . .with  
a coating of dark blood. The roosters in the coop*

*smell the blood from above. . . .Yet they do not rebel.  
They do not try to get out of the coop. The very same  
thing is done with human beings in this country.  
(173-174)*

Balram decides to be a big bellied man. When he makes a plan cautiously how to murder Ashok and snatch his huge money bag, he gets out of his rooster coop and a plunger into the entrepreneur's world.

All the social, political and economical disparities feed the mind of Balram to do revolt, resistance and Vengeance. His father's plan for his son inspires him to survive in the world and improve his subaltern condition. Balram Halwai says about his father, Vikram Halwai:

*Rickshaw-puller he may have been — a human  
beast of burden — but my father was a man with a  
plan. I was his plan. (27)*

His father who has been living like a donkey, wishes that at least one of sons should live like a man. Further he says:

*My Whole life, I have been treated like a donkey.  
All I want is that one son of mine - at least one —  
should live like a man.(30)*

Finally Balram storages of wealth and becomes like a landlord, a position which is ideologically and socially restricted for him. He gains his higher position through manipulation, murder and acquisition of wealth. He wants to open a school. So that children may get good education. He wants that these children should become White Tigers of tomorrow. To bring a change in the present society it needs many more White Tigers. In the end of the story Balram Halwai has his own business in Bangalore. He has a Taxi fleet. He has secured the financial condition in which budding entrepreneurs may progress and prosper in the global world.

In conclusion we may say that man himself is the builder of his own fate like the white tiger. A man can reach at the top of elevation only by the means of strong determination and continuous industry. Without strong determination and continuous industry he can't do nothing.

**Work Cited :**

Adiga, Aravind. *The White Tiger* (India : HarperCollins Publisher, 2009)



---

Suchi Smita, Research Scholar, T.M.B. University, Bhagalpur (Bihar)

Dr. S.C Roy, Professor of English, Nathnagar, Bhagalpur Marwari College, Bhagalpur (Bihar)

## **Insightfulness of Dalit-Life in *Untouchable Spring***

— Prof Manish Wankhede

**Abstract :**

*To-day we are living in an age of development. Science, technology and various technological innovations have brought remarkable changes in the life of all the world-citizens. But no change has taken its place in the culture of Indians. Moreover, no considerable change occurred in the lives of Dalits in India, may it be socially, economically, politically or culturally, as they are still considered as untouchables. 'Untouchable Spring' is a novel penned down in Telugu as 'Antarani Vasantam' by G. Kalyana Rao, a Dalit, who converted to Christianity. Although it is a novel yet it has direct relations to the pitiable life of untouchables in India. In other words it may be considered a historical document as it presents the actual life experiences of Dalits in the independent India. The author of the novel has tried to give way to his revolutionary ideology related to his own experiences as a Dalit and a Dalit-Christian. He presented the insightfulness of Dalit-life as a Dalit and life-experiences of his community that has been humiliated for ages under the caste-hierarchy in Hindu culture. Dalit Literary Movement is an outcome of the exploitation of the Untouchable by the Touchable. Through this literary movement, Dalit-writers have been awakening their community about their self-respect, identity as human-beings, equality and social justice. The focus of this paper is to present the insightfulness of the deprived sections called Dalits in the Hindu Society.*

**Keywords :** Dalit, untouchable, self-respect, identity, equality, social justice

*Untouchable Spring* is a novel originally written in Telugu as *Antarani Vasantam* by G. Kalyana Rao, a Dalit converted to Christianity and translated into English by Alladi Uma and M. Sridhar. Although the present text is a novel, yet it has thrown light on the lived-experiences of Dalits/ untouchables in India. So the present text may also be viewed as biography of untouchable communities in India. Historically it is proved that Aryans came to India from South Europe and North Asia around 1500 BCE and they defeated the Dravidians, the origins of Bharat-varsh or the original creators of Indian Civilization. Romila Thapar says, “The earlier people were labeled as Dravidian because of its being another ancient language with a distinct geographical location and substantial numbers of speakers” (2016:27). When Harappan civilization declined, Aryans established their culture in India and it was based on the Varna and caste system. So Romila Thapar further explains, “Dravidian became the counterpart to the Aryan” (2016:27). Brahmins created the Varna and caste system to establish their complete dominance over the original inhabitants of India. The Varna system created Four Varna called as Chaturvarna: Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. They also created one more group called as Untouchable. All the untouchable communities are considered as Dalits, who have been treated inhumanly for ages. In the opinion of Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, a great social reformer, untouchables are outcastes in India and they are constantly victimized by the upper castes or the Hindus. The upper castes especially Brahmins have been constantly treating untouchables inhumanly and atrociously certain sections in India called Dalits. Only because of Brahmanical system untouchables are forced to live in abject poverty. Therefore, they are completely deprived of their human rights even in independent India.

G. Kalyana Rao, in this text, narrated his experiences as a Dalit and a converted Christian. Untouchables have been downgraded in the Brahmanical social system for ages. They were bonded labours as they had to work as manual scavengers, removers of human waste and dead animals, leather workers, street sweepers and cobblers, etc. Not only that, they had to bear extreme sufferings in social, cultural and religious matters, too. In addition, the doors of education were completely closed for them, so they had to suffer a lot economically and they were deprived of political power since ages. Even today, in the independent India, Dalits have been suffering tremendously in spite of the reservations provided to them by our constitution. Dalits have been struggling a lot for their survival and they have been made victims of social injustice. When they try to raise their voice for equality, dignity and identity, they are always victimized. All these issues, which are not simply fictional but related to the life experiences of untouchable communities, have been narrated by the author in this novel. The novel narrates the entire history of Dalits as a tale of humiliation and violence against them physically and mentally. Dalit writers all over India expressed their revolt in the form of literary genres against subjugation of the marginalized communities in India and hegemony of caste Hindus. Dalit writers felt the need for voicing their concern by adopting various literary genres. Through their writings all the Dalit writers presented the sufferings, hunger, pain, agony and human rights of the deprived communities called untouchables. Their intention represented in their writings is to get self-respect, their identity as human beings, equality and social justice for all untouchable communities. “Kalyana Rao has claimed that he has ‘written out his life’ in this book

and that many of those who have read it found their lives in it” (276). It is quite indicative that it is the historical documentation of Dalit life in the autobiographical form, though it is a novel. It is really a testimony of a Dalit based on the author’s experiences as a Dalit and a Dalit Christian.

In the present text, the writer has tried to present that Dalits are born artists. In spite of their innate talents as artists, Dalits are discriminated against on the basis of their birth and they are treated as low caste or untouchables by the upper caste people under the Brahmanical social system. The text brings to the notice of the readers that Dalits are singers, musicians, composers as well as lyricists but they have to die of hunger; they, particularly women artists, have to forget their children crying out for milk; they have to forget the pain of the bent back while performing on the stage. The author mentions that in spite of the qualitative performance of the Dalit artists, Atchireddy and Karanam could not call the ‘pedda mala’ and ‘pedda madiga’ on the stage because they belong to the untouchable communities. Yellanna, a folklorist and a stage performer could not get natural justice. There is purity and integrity, frankness and naturalness in folk art of the untouchables. But these artists have not been duly recognized and encouraged even after over 70 years of Independence. Therefore the author mourns that caste is more important than art and literature in this caste-based-discrimination country. *Untouchable Spring* is really a memory text of Kalyan Rao that depicts the social and cultural life of several generations of Dalits that have been suffering for ages. All the untouchable communities in India have been getting the intolerable treatment by the Brahmanical upper castes.

The agonies of untouchables over centuries have been unbearable. The upper caste Hindus in this country

have been treating untouchables inhumanly and slavishly. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar differentiates between the status of slaves and untouchables. According to him.

The law of slavery permitted emancipation. Once a slave, always a slave was not the fate of the slave. In untouchability there is no escape. Once an Untouchable, always an Untouchable. The other difference is that untouchability is an indirect and therefore the worst form of slavery” (1989:15).

It is quite clear that the slaves can change their masters; they can change their fate; they have liberty to overcome their slavery but the untouchables in the Hindu Fold have to remain untouchables forever. Kalyana Rao presented in the novel a very nice character named Urumula Naganna whose eyes, voice and dance performances were remarkable. Subhadra from Yennela Dinni is another character in the novel that represents the Dalit women folk. She is well known for her valour and strength. Once, the malas and madigas were attempting to fetch drinkable water for satisfying their thirst in the midnight, Atchireddy’s henchmen attacked them with sticks. Then Subhadra picked up the spade and challenged the upper caste men. That is quite indicative of her strength. Many Dalits including Narigadu, Mataih, Yellanna, Immanuel, Jesse fought for the human rights, food, water, and social justice for untouchables. Malas or madigas had to live in Yennela Dinni as bonded labours.

In *Untouchable Spring*, the author has tried to present how the people of certain communities based on caste factor have been denied access to the basic needs of life. In spite of social injustice imposed upon them by the upper castes, Dalits effortlessly cultivated their own culture in art forms of music, composition of songs, formation of theatres and dance practices. But

the upper caste people denied the knowledge of various art forms of Dalits. Religion is always misunderstood under the guise of culture. In fact religion and culture have no connection at all. V. K. Gokak says, "Religion should not be confused with culture. A man of religion is not necessarily a man of culture. To be a religious man means to be a subscriber to a body of dogmas" (1994:30). It is quite clear that religion is related to the beliefs and culture is nothing but the way of life. As per the Buddha's Dhamma i. e. the way of life is ultimately related to our thinking. So rightly preached by the Buddha, "What we think, we become". The author of *Untouchable Spring* succeeded in narrating memories of many generations of Dalits to confirm the experiences of their sufferings. He further proclaims that the socio-economic and cultural problems in Indian society are created, cultivated and pampered by the self declared upper caste people for fulfilling their selfish desires at the cost of others in the name of religion, god and caste hierarchy. It is only the Dalit literature that challenged the dogmas by describing the lives of the untouchables and the marginalized communities in order to make the people realize the social evils of caste system in the country.

When we go through the text *Untouchable Spring* we get the very unique idea about it. Although it is a fiction yet it includes many historical events related to the life of untouchables and all those communities are victimized by the upper caste Hindus inhumanly. Thus it presents the facts about the life stories of all the marginalized communities in caste-based Hindu society. The original story of the Malas and Madigas are really ridiculous. One incident about these communities has been narrated in the text that indicates that the gods curse these people as they are lower castes. How gods make such discrimination on

the caste base? Jambavanta and Chennaiah, the two lower caste characters didn't divide the meat of the Kamadhenu into two. They also did not put a tainted piece of meat into the cooking. It was considered as a big crime committed by them so they were punished by gods. The gods first of all got the idea of eating the meat of Kamadhenu. Then what is the punishment for gods and who would punish them? Such miraculous things are part and parcel of Hindu society. That is nothing but the blind beliefs in the name of gods and religion. Like Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Kalyana Rao also criticizes Manu for writing Manusmriti that narrates the discriminations on the basis of caste and gender. Manu is the creator of the rules of the caste system. Malas and Madigas have political consciousness of the caste-feudal land relations and Narigadu and Mataiah are the real heroes of this consciousness. For that Narigadu and Mataiah were butchered as they dared to raise their voice against the landlords. The author clearly explains that such inhuman activities are part and parcel of Hindu society as the upper caste people want to have their strong hold over the lower castes making the latter as slaves or bonded labours.

Several generations of Dalits sacrificed their lives for the betterment of their future but they failed to overcome the caste slavery even in the democratic India the position of Dalits has not been changed. Still today, after implementation of the Indian constitution, the status of the Dalits all over India has not been changed. The notion of the upper caste people towards the Dalits or untouchables has not been changed. So, many Dalit communities in south decided to have solution to caste hierarchy was nothing but conversion to Christianity from Hinduism. When they converted to Christianity, soon they came to realize that caste hierarchy is prevalent in Christianity too. According to the author



Dalits have to fight against the caste hierarchy. For that he suggests that the Dalits must be ready for the armed struggle. But armed struggle can never be a solution to the caste hierarchy. It might create chaos in India. In this novel, the author also tried to do justice to women. He does not consider men from Dalit communities as great heroes, but provides equal status to Dalit women. In his opinion Boodevi, Subhadra and Mary Suvarta are as brave as the men characters in the novel. Without support of these women characters their men could have never succeeded to achieve greatness. Kalyana Rao can be considered one of the most radical Dalit writers. He has written about the struggle of the Dalits in the novel *Untouchable Spring*. His intention was to narrate the facts of the Dalits who suffered a lot because of the atrocities of the upper caste people and their narrow minded nature. The author narrated unbearable experiences of the Dalit communities in his own region. His novel is the part and parcel of Dalit Literature that narrates the facts of the life of Dalits in this country. In this connection Sharankumar Limbale says,

...the life lived in huts and cottages situated outside the boundary of the village has become the subject of literature. It has become necessary to transform the imaginary beauty because it is not possible to investigate the creation of Dalit literature and its commitment to revolt and rejection within the framework of traditional aesthetics. (Limbale: 2007 : 115)

The purpose of the Dalit Literature is to present the life of Dalits who have been victimized for several generations. Through the translations of Dalit Literature into English the facts about various marginalized communities in India have come to the notice of the world readers. *Untouchable Spring* is a good

example of the Dalit community that struggled hard for their emancipation from the clutches of the inhumanity rendered by the upper caste people on them.

To conclude, the present novel is to be considered as an autobiography of the author as well as the biography of the marginalized communities referred as untouchables. In the novel, the author has presented the truths about the lived-experiences of Dalits or untouchables who have been discriminated in a democratic country like India on the basis of the caste system. The author clearly states that the Dalits are not allowed to speak out; their art and literature are not included in the literary canon; they are not treated as human beings; they don't have liberty; they don't have equality; they don't get social justice; still they have to die of hunger; they are not allowed to get education. As the Dalit literature is a kind of revolt against the Hindus it is ignored by the upper caste people and they do not accept it as literature. The author constantly condemns such a rubbish mentality of the caste Hindus and he also appeals to the historians to reconsider the history of Dalit and their literature too, so that they would get social justice.

#### **Works Cited :**

- Ambedkar, Dr. B. R. (1989). *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches*. Bombay: Education Department, Government of Maharashtra.
- Gokak, V. K. (1994). *India and World Culture*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi.
- Limbale, Sharankumar. (2007). *Towards an Aesthetic of Dalit Literature: History, Controversies and Considerations*. Translated by Alok Mukherjee. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan.

- Rao, G. Kalyana. (2010). *Untouchable Spring*. Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan.
- Thapar, Romila, (etl.) (2016). *On Nationalism*. New Delhi: Aleph Book Company.
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aryan\\_race](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aryan_race) accessed on 13th May 2018.
- <https://www.ancient.eu/Aryan/> accessed on 13th May 2018.




---

Dr. M. S. Wankhede, Associate Professor, Dept. of English, Dhanwante National College, Nagpur, Maharashtra-440 012

## A Postcolonial Perspective of Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*

— Nigel Peter O'Brien

### Abstract :

Amitav Ghosh, belongs to the nation that was once conquered and ruled by Imperial Britain, is one of the most widely known Indian writers. He is a serious novelist and anthropologist writing from a postcolonial consciousness. As a writer he has been immensely influenced by the political and social background of the country. During his childhood he heard many stories and events from his parents which made an indelible impression on his mind. His father worked in the British colonial army in India and his stories were of war and his fellow Indians who fought loyally beside the British. His mother grew up in Calcutta and her memories were of Mahatma Gandhi, nonviolence and disobedience and the terrors that accompanied partition in 1947. These images left a lasting impression on Ghosh's mind. His novel, *The Glass Palace* portrays the anti-colonial struggle waged by Indians and Burmese against the back drop of the long history of imperialism in South and Southeast Asia. The novel is primarily concerned with nationalism, colonial rule, and self-consciousness on the part of Burmese and Indians.

**Keywords :** Cultural Identity, Dislocation, Destitute, Heritage, Imperialism, Nationalism, etc.

The writers of India in the 1980s focused on Indian writing in English revealing the dialects of

imperialism in its journey from the periphery to the centre and echoes a deep core of neo-colonialism based on power politics. Novel has been used as a means of cultural representation by the stalwarts like Salman Rushdie, Khuswant Singh, Shashi Tharoor, Amitav Ghosh and the like. These writers aimed at enhancing an Indian cultural identity, and projecting Indian cultural and historical heritage to enable an assertion of the Indian self.

Amitav Ghosh shows a keen interest in the reconstruction of the past. Many of his narratives turn towards historical subjects, bringing out the past in the proper perspective, a kind of global perspective. In Ghosh's writings history and anthropology blend together perfectly. He does not shy away from commenting on politics, wars, economy, and other worldly affairs. He, as a writer, has been immensely influenced by the political and social background of the country. His first novel, *The Circle of Reason*, was the New York Times notable book of the year 1987 and was also awarded France's Prix Médicis in 1990. His next novel was *The Shadow Lines* which won two prestigious Indian prizes the same year, the Sahitya Akademi Award and the Ananda Puraskar in 1990. *The Calcutta Chromosome* won the Arthur C. Clarke award for 1997 and *The Glass Palace* won the International e-Book Award at the Frankfurt book fair in 2001. He was the winner of the 1999 Pushcart prize, a leading literary award for an essay "The March of the Novel through History: The Testimony of my Grandfather's Bookcase" that was published in the Kenyon Review. In January 2005 *The Hungry Tide* was awarded the Crossword Book Prize, a major Indian award. His novel, *Sea of Poppies* (2008) was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize, 2008 and was awarded the Crossword Book Prize and the India Plaza Golden Quill Award.

The novel *The Glass Palace* is set primarily in Burma and India and catalogues the evolving history of those regions before and during the fraught years of the Second World War and India's independence struggle. It is a saga of three generations of two closely linked families in Burma, India and Malaya from 1885 to 1956. The characters in the novel spill so easily over national and family boundaries through friendship and marriage, due to limiting of freedom caused by imperial partitions, that it becomes difficult to pinpoint a character's affiliation of whether Indian or Burmese or Chinese or Malay. The novel is so richly and compassionately rendered you come to feel you are somehow part of its vast extended family whose story finds its humble origins in two orphans standing innocently on the threshold of the 20th century. It is merely a revisionary rewriting of a portion of the history of the British Empire from the perspective of the colonized subaltern.

The story of *The Glass Palace* is based on two human groups: one stemming from the Burmese Royal family from Mandalay and the other individual, an orphan called Raj Kumar. The story starts with Raj Kumar, an orphan looking for a job and landing up in Mandalay. The novel opens with the Anglo-Burmese war of 1865. Two senior ministers of Burma, Kinwun Mingyi and Taingda Mingyi are greedy and too eager to keep the Royal family under guard as they expected rich rewards from the English for handing over the royal couple King Thebaw and Queen Supayalat, along with their family. As the royal family prepares to surrender to the looters, the Burmese public who earlier stood in fear now quickly moves into the palace. The British soldiers who were supposed to shift the king's precious jewels and ornaments from the palace to the ship that was waiting to take the royal family into exile, also

embezzle these things revealing the crude and brutal greed that drives people at various levels.

Deceitful greed is shown to be the animating force cutting across the financial status, racial differences, caste, creed individuals, groups and nations in the opening remarkable plundering scene. This scene transcends its literal significance to become a metaphor for the raw and naked greed of the colonizer and sets the tone of the novel. Without labouring a symbolic point, in retrospect the author is able to imbue the title with images of loss as well as hope. This is how most of the novel works. There are so many issues, so many events and so many people involved that the author rarely ever pauses to create special effects or heavily underline an idea.

The novel reveals how tactfully the British conquered countries and whole population exiling kings like the unceremonious removal of the king Thebaw and the pregnant queen from Mandalay to distant Ratnagiri in the west coast of India (the reverse movement of Bahadur Shah Zafar's deportation to Rangoon a generation ago, after killing the two princes right in front of the public) was an astute move by the conquering British, successful in humiliating the royal couple completely, also erasing them from public memory at home. Forgotten and abandoned, the king and queen led a life of increasing shabbiness and obscurity in an unfamiliar territory while their country got depleted of its valuable natural resources—teak, ivory, petroleum.

The hardship that the royal couple underwent in an unfamiliar territory is evident from a scene in the novel where Queen Supayalat looked to be from a wealthy family but she too had run out of food. She was trying to bargain with a group of people who were sitting

by a fire. Suddenly she began to undress and when she'd stripped off her sari they saw she had others on underneath, beautiful, rich silks, worth hundreds of rupees. She offered up one of these, hoping to exchange it for a handful of food. But no one had any use for it; they asked instead for kindling and wood. They saw her arguing vainly with them – and then perhaps recognizing finally the worthlessness of her treasured possession, she rolled her sari into a ball and put in on the fire; the silk burnt with a crackling sound, sending out leaping flames.

In the opening scene of rampage, the novelist for the first time mentions how the British soldiers were marching past with their shouldered rifles looked at the Burmese crowds who realized that the British army consisted not of British but Indians mostly. This makes the Burmese crowd turn its hostility towards the Indians and an eleven year old boy, Rajkumar becomes an easy prey to their wrath. The Chinese Saya John had to rescue Rajkumar when he was beaten mercilessly by the crowd. Saya John throws more light on the Indian soldiers as he had come across several wounded Indian soldiers while working as an orderly in a hospital in Singapore. It was the money that drew these young Indians in their twenties to this profession. Yet they earned nothing more than a dockyard coolie. He is certain that “Chinese peasants would never allow themselves to be used to fight other people's war with so little profit for themselves.” (TGP. 29) Ghose explores the plight of British Indian Army fighting against the Japanese in Malaysia during the Second World War. Some students and the congress leader ask Arjun, “From whom are you defending us? From ourselves? From other Indians? It's your masters from whom the country needs to be defended.” (TGP. 288) These remarks reveal the writer's indictment against the

position of a colonized subject.

A person is remembered not as Burmese, Indian, Chinese, Malay or American - but merely as Uma, Dolly, Saya John, Alison, Dinu, Neel or Daw Thin Thin Aye. That Dinu is also called Tun Pe and Neel's other name is Sein Win further destabilizes nation-based identities. Yet, paradoxically, nationalism is a major concern in this novel. Two of the most crucial debates in are predicated upon this. These debates are not ancillary to the narrative; one cannot skip them in order to get on with the story. In the novel meaning lies not in individual utterances, but in their dialogical negotiations, the emphasis being on the plurality of viewpoints. The problem for these individuals is to come out of the shell of British influence and set through the hypocrisy of their master's intentions towards the colonized people.

Rajkumar's life-story is a story of the struggle for survival in the colonial turmoil. As a colonized subject from Bengal, he becomes a colonizer in Burma transporting indentured labourers from South India to other parts of the colonial world. He has even sexually exploited a woman worker on his plantations. Rajkumar, the destitute orphan, so rich from trading in teak, that another "king" is born. Rajkumar travels from Burma to Ratnagiri, marries Dolly and bears her triumphantly back to the land of her birth. Exile and return are thus at once a tragedy and a romance. His post colonial consciousness represents a conflict. Rajkumar, Saya John and Matthew are engaged in the task of colonizing land and people for the sake of wealth.

Ghosh writes about families and nations to highlight of sense of dislocation. He asks questions of national identity-cultural and political in right contexts. Brinda Bose comments that *The Glass Palace* signals a

dislocation in our understanding of the myth of our so-called community (Bose 30). The human interest is predominant in this novel, under the spell of colonialism. The social chaos in Burma during the colonial days is one of its threads. Different strands of history of king Thebaw, Dolly and Rajkumar are woven in this sage of family matters. Life, death, success and failure come in cycles and Ghosh uses the conceit of a pair of binoculars early in the book to sensitize the reader to this perspective. Thebaw, the Burmese king, watches over the Ratnagiri harbour with his binoculars, "predicting" the return of sailing vessels, and warning the townspeople of impending disasters. What makes the tragedy of human life bearable is a graceful acceptance of the inevitability of pain and suffering. Ghosh describes the aspirations, defeats and disappointments of the dislocated people in India, Burma, China, Malaysia and America such as king Thebaw, Queen Supayalat, Saya John, Rajkumar, Dolly, Uma, Alison, Dinu, Neal, Arjun, Hardayal Krishan Singh, Jaya and Ilango. This novel is about many places, war and displacement, exile and rootlessness, depicting human helplessness. All that a human being can do is to try to adjust, compromise, live and about everything else form relationships. This forming of new bonds, mixing of races and castes is something that does not stop.

The novel presents Amitav Ghosh's concern with nationalism. Ghosh presents multiple points of view of the dispersed people of different nationalities and makes a plea for internationalism. He intends to show how the context of imperialism has changed in globalization. It catalogs the evolving history of those regions before and during the fraught years of the Second World War and India's independence struggle.

Ghosh believes that empires imprison their rulers as well as their subjects. In his hands, the novel becomes a cultural instrument for hopes of social betterment.

**Works Cited :**

Bose, Brinda, 2003. Ed. Amitav Ghosh: *Critical Perspectives*. Delhi : Pencraft.

Ghosh, Amitav. 2000 *The Glass Palace*. Delhi: Ravi Dayal Publishers.

Kapadia, Novy. 1999. *The Novels of Amitav Ghosh*. Ed. R.K. Dhawan, New Delhi: Prestige.

Mukherjee, Meenakshi, "A review of Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*," *The Hindu*, October 1, 2000.



---

Nigel Peter O'Brien, Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology, Bhubaneswar

## Culture & Religion in Malgudi Novels

— Dr. Birendra Kumar

**Abstract :**

The most dominant form of conflict in the fictional world of Narayan is one between tradition and modernity. This is a recurrent feature and there is a continuous nibbling of the traditional values and modes of life by the forces of new civilisation. But in this conflict, it is the old tradition that gains an edge over modernity. The modern simply touches the outer fringe of the society and does not, however, penetrate the inner most circles. The Malgudi milieu stands in perpetual danger of numerous contradictions caused by old beliefs, superstitions and age-old culture on the one hand and glamour and attraction of the modern life-style and civilisation.

Religion in Malgudians who are in majority of the cases, Hindus, is deep rooted. Indians believe that marriages are made in heaven and solemnised on earth and the meeting between a bride and bridegroom takes place more by decree of fate than by coincidence or planning. Courtship is wholly uncalled for in a tradition-ridden Hindu set up and matching of horoscopes is an essential precondition for the solemnisation of a Hindu marriage. The boy and the girl are allowed to meet only after marriage and not before it.

The Malgudi culture is based on religion which sometimes borders on orthodoxy even to the extent of eccentricity.

Narayan's novels right from '*Swami and Friends*' to '*A Tiger for Malgudi*' present a traditional society. It experiences tangible changes because of the incursions

of modernity. There is everywhere, a perceptible clash, an ever-going conflict between the old and the new, the ancient and the modern spirit and the orthodox and the liberal approach to social problems. Malgudi makes an advance against the background of a changing Indian society. This advance affects the place geographically, socially and culturally. Experience replaces innocence and Malgudi gets well set to embrace the modern spirit. The swift changes affect the orthodox Indian society with all its age old beliefs and superstitions. The incongruities and contradictions proceed from collision of old conventions with the modern spirit. In this connection Graham Greene aptly observes :

*“The life of Malgudi never ruffled by politics proceeds in exactly the same way as it has done for centuries, in the juxta position of the age old convention and the modern character provides much of the comedy.”*

The Malgudi existence is bi-polar-one resting on age old beliefs and values and the other on westernised way of living and economic progress. The grand mothers, uncles and aunts with their rigid religious beliefs and caste restrictions stand diametrically opposed to a set of young generation. The coming in of modern civilisation into an orthodox South Indian town manifests itself in many forms:-

*“Into this small South Indian town with its orthodox Indian values, the modern civilisation comes in all manifestations raising a flutter here and there, disturbing the quiet waters of Malgudi life.”*

Malgudi, during the 1930's is a small town with an officers club, two schools, a Municipal Board and a Town Hall. Its changes, are quick and rapid enough to envelope it in a thin veil of modernity. Nallappa's mango

grove and Mempi forests are there only to signify the existence of traditional resorts for sportive fun and frolics but new extensions, cricket clubs and various other features of modern civilisation add new dimension and hue to the milieu. Malgudi's ties with ancient traditions are strong but not so lasting as to counter the compulsions of outward changes. The geographical changes are perceivably apparent. The appearance of a railway station adds to the tourist attraction of the place. The Englandia Insurance Company, Truth Printing Works, The Regal Hair cutting Saloon, Anand Bhavan, the Central Cooperative Land Mortgage Bank, the Sunrise Studio, Lawley Extension and many other Institutions bring Malgudi's existence closer to modernity.

If in 'Swami and Friends', there is an exciting car ride to the club, Ramani in 'The Dark Room' has his own chevrolet in which he takes out Shanta Bai for the pleasure drives to the Saryu:

*“Even in 'Swami and Friends' we hear of motors cars and Swami has an exciting car ride to the club in his father's friend's car. In The Dark Room, the hero (Ramani) has his own chevrolet with its hoarse hooting and it comes in handy when he takes out his mistress, Shanta, for moon lit drives to the banks of the Saryu.”<sup>3</sup>*

As it opens up its doors to the external world, the western civilisation clandestinely creeps in. This 'marked approval' never comes to the fore but the old and the new exist together in an incongruous relationship with each other against a background which is essentially traditional.

R.K. Narayan said to Ved Mehta in an interview. Narayan has his roots both in religion and in family. Coming as he does of a traditional Hindu Brahmin family, he has to his credit all the religious traits

attributed to him in his writings. His characters too are Hindus, leading ones of them being Brahmins. They represent Hindu view of religion as it is found in south India today. Some of the minor characters are either Christians or Mohammadans. Professor Brown in 'Swami and Friends' and 'The Bachelor of Arts', Mr. Ebenezar, the scripture master in 'Swami and Friends' Mathieson in 'Waiting for the Mahatma' and Grace in 'The Vendor of Sweets' are christian characters while Aziz- the peon of Albert Mission College and Gaffur, the taxi driver of Malgudi are muslims. They belong to a class of minor characters who hardly deserve attention. Malgudi, the typical South Indian town is mostly inhabited by Hindus, Christians or Anglo-Indians or even Muslims form microscopic segments of population which is pre-eminently Hindu dominated. The area is free from communal bias or any sort of antagonism religious or other wise. Conversion to Christianity is the root cause of evil in the locality. Constant indoctrination in schools leads the students to infer that Hindu religion is irrational and devoid of scientific temper and that of all the religions in the world, Christianity is the best.

The missionary preachers incite the listeners to embrace Christianity for receiving God's benedictions by hurling abuses on Hindu religion and its ideologies and in turn receive grass, mud and water.

The conflict surfaces with Hindu boys suffering in Christian schools and Christian missionaries meeting the same treatment in streets. This leads to religious animosities between the two sects- the Hindus and Christians who had lived together in close harmony until the war of words started by the latter over the former gripped them. The Christians too fail to digest criticism of their faith. Swaminathan calls to question the godliness of Christ only for His non-vegetarianism.

Raman's aunt in 'The Painter of Signs' gets prepared to leave for Varanasi as she comes to know of his intention of marrying Daisy whose very name smacks of christianity. This unfolds the conflicting trends in Malgudi that Hindus and christians may live together but with no willingness to merge with each other socially or culturally.

**Works Cited :**

- Biswal, Jayant, K. "A Critical Study of the Novels of R.K. Narayan, Nirmal Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi 1987)
- Greene, Graham Int. to *The Financial Expert* (Mysore : Indian Thought Publications 1976)

★

---

Dr. Birendra Kumar, Assistant Professor, H.O.D. Dept. Of English, B.S.College , Lohardaga (Ranchi University, Ranchi) JHARKHAND



## Exploration of the Indian Political Reality in V.S. Naipaul's Indian Trilogy

— Dr. Sanjay Sharma

### Abstract :

Naipaul finds tremendous joy in being a writer. His writing is always purposeful. He endeavoured throughout his life to find meaning and worth of it. He has achieved success which cannot be underestimated. His life continuously searches for revelation in itself. His identity is that of a writer who makes his best efforts to make his genius an oeuvre. However partial the success may have been, the joy has been unlimited. When he visited India he was struck by its vastness and simplicity. Trinidad was just like Goa in size. In somewhat bitter taste he criticized India even for its vastness and simplicity. On these occasions he may appear prejudiced against India. However harsh his criticism of India may be his Indian Trilogy provides rare insights into the Indian scenes.

**Keywords :** Political reality, Travelogue, Culture, Diasporic angle, Universalism.

Naipaul is an exceptionally great observer of the political reality. In his travelogues he combines reportage with sport and adventure. At the same time he presents an appreciation of life based on his passing impressions. His travelogues create in the reader an intense curiosity about the past. He studies the societies with their varied political system and structures. He finds that the governments play varied roles which affect the concerned society considerably. His visits to the Third World countries have yielded

documents of rare political value. In his travelogues he shows sympathy for the weak and concern for men, manners and the general growth of a society. Mallikarjun Patil observes:

His travelogues depict the life he has seen in different parts of the world. The vivid accounts he narrates in the books also display Naipaul's knowledge of men and manners, culture and civilized or uncivilized way of life he has beheld. (Travel 145)

Naipaul's greatness lies in his observation of the political reality from his own diasporic angle. He does not possess the imperialist bias. He examines various developments and the growth of political systems in them as a neutral observer. In India he finds politics influenced considerably by the foreign impact. He finds Pakistan as a politically underdeveloped country. In the Islamic countries he finds religion as a greater force than politics. His non-fiction constitutes a corpus which replaces the Western critique of the Third World politics. About the true worth of his travelogues Manjit Inder Singh comments:

In literature, arts and cinema, the process of a redefinition of historically and politically inscribed experience is the most significant today. Not surprisingly the British and Western European accents of universalism, continuity and religious emancipation are replaced by new and divergent strains that mark the reversal to the native, local folk and regional cultural representations. (Naipaul 130)

In his Indian trilogy Naipaul explores the Indian scene after independence. He is shocked to find that India is still full of darkness and its independence has not made the desired change. In fact, the British rule in India was of several advantages which could not be maintained or improved upon after the Indian

independence. In place of developing their own political ideology the Indians mimic the Britishers absurdly. Yashoda Bhat remarks :

...What he had desired to see and expected to see was an India revitalized, rejuvenated, but simultaneously preserving the ancient culture. His visits to Trinidad and India- both countries now living with a postcolonial scenario, had certain things in common. Naipaul finds that Indians like the West Indies people mimic the British. (Introduction 114)

The Indian caste system originated as a division of work but during the foreign rule it took a bad shape. It became rigid. It became a sign of pride and arrogance. It divided the society and weakened it. Even after independence its rigidity continued. In Trinidad things were better and the caste division was not so glaring. It has been the failure of the governments after independence which could not make any successful attempt to eradicate this evil. In the following lines Naipaul compares India and the Indian community living in Trinidad, and finds the latter better :

In India it implied a brutal division of labour; and at its centre, as I had ever realized, lay the degradation of the latrine- cleaner. In India caste was unpleasant, I never wished to know what a man's caste was. (Darkness 29)

Naipaul is shocked by the Indian poverty. There is an old tradition of glorifying poverty in India. Even after independence this evil could not be eliminated. Naipaul criticizes Gandhi for making poverty look holy. India's poverty is so deep rooted that it is known all over the world as a typical Indian feature. Naipaul is critical of Premchand for sentimentalizing poverty. It is a major failure of post-independence Indian governments that they have not succeeded in making poverty less apparent :

India is the poorest country in the world. Therefore, to see its poverty is to make an observation of no value a thousand newcomers to the country before you have seen and said as you. And not only newcomers. (41)

His visits to India left him completely disillusioned. He found India a nation full of darkness. India was far away from the light of civilization. He viewed the Indian poverty, illiteracy, ugly social and political realities and the overall backwardness with contempt. The Indian civilization according to him is a 'wounded' civilization. India is caught between two worlds, one dead the other not yet born. His disillusionment is constantly present in his works. His disillusionment continued with him all through his career. The following words collected from the Internet are notable :

Though a regular visitor to India since the 1960s, he has arguably analysed India from an arms-length distance, in some cases initially with considerable distaste and later with grudging affection, and of late perhaps even with ungrudging affection. (Wikipedia)

Naipaul has been living in different worlds and these worlds have been reflected in his works. His experiences in these worlds form the basis of his works. He had a shocking experience in India which left him disillusioned. The idea of India handed down to him by his ancestors collided with his own shocking experiences. This clash was both shocking and disillusioning. Naipaul was left, confused and he had to begin writing from nowhere. Namrata Rathore Mahanta remarks in this connection :

When faced with the real India, he felt the India within him falling apart and the writer had to come to terms with it. The unity of his world was lost forever and the writing had to begin

from an impossible place: place of an un-healing wound.... (Trilogy 26)

In India, Naipaul found that the politicians had no vision. They followed the British way blindly. They took pride in being the rulers and did nothing substantial for the public in the changed conditions. It marred much of the charm of independence. In fact, the Indian independence remained a political phenomenon and it was not reflected in the life of the common people. This mimicry led to a kind of political stagnation. Naipaul was shocked to find that India was still very much like a British colony :

Now the Indian Government does the same. The British dug trenches. So they dig trenches in Delhi, but only symbolically, here and there, and dangerously in public parks, below trees. The trenches answer the insatiable Indian need for open air latrines. (Darkness 81)

During his first visit to India, Naipaul stayed as a paying guest in Delhi. He found that this whole city was crowded and busy. He noticed that everywhere there was the impact of the colonizers. There was no sign of new thought or vision. It seemed as if progress meant only crowding of people and a hectic way of life. Naipaul felt that the old city had lost its original shape and was now only a city which looked like any British town. In this crowd, scope for free thinking and free action was completely lost :

It was in Delhi, the city of symbols, first of the British Raj and now of the independent Indian republic; a jungle of black-and white notice boards mushrooming out of feverish administrative activity, the Indian council for this and Academy for that, the Ministry for this and the Department for that.... (85)

The working of the Indian bureaucracy is marked by cold sloth. The red-tapism of the Indian Offices is horrible, shocking and inhumane. In this respect they

have taken no lesson from the Britishers who worked with a rare promptness. The common man has to suffer a great deal at the hands of the callous bureaucrats. The shocking thing is that in this delay no document or file is lost or forgotten. The reason behind this delay is nothing but callousness. A common Indian finds himself in a worse condition after independence as he has to suffer much for petty things :

The Indian bureaucracy has its silences and delays, but it never loses or forgets any document; and it was with pure geniality that I was hustled, as the writer of an unsolicited letter of praise, into the picture-hung office of Mr. Madan, the director. (124)

Naipaul found the Indian governments having no sense of responsibility. Everywhere there was chaos and mismanagement. These governments had failed miserably in the task of inculcating in the public a sense of duty and responsibility. On his pilgrimage to the holy cave of Amarnath he found that there was no proper arrangement for the pilgrims. The journey was horrible. There was dust and mud. Nobody was there to help the pilgrims. Nowhere in the West such a scene could have been seen :

Dust overcame the dampness below wet rock; dust powdered the hard snow in gullies. Over one such gully a skull-capped Kashmiri had made himself the harassed master. He had a spade and feverishly dug up snow, which he offered, for a few coins, to pilgrims. (171)

In India Naipaul found a horrible sense of complacency and despair. He found that these had become part of the Indian philosophy. This despair was seen in the actions of the government as well as in those of the common Indians. It led to passivity which made India retrograde. There was no marked progress in any field. The British rulers had given India all the basic things but the native rulers could not improve

upon them. In several cases they could not even maintain them. Naipaul had fantastic ideas about India but when he came face to face with the Indian realities, fantasy was replaced by disillusionment.

It was only in India that I was able to see this as part of the Indian ability to retreat, the ability genuinely not to see what was obvious: with others a foundation of neurosis, but with Indians only part of a greater philosophy of despair, lending to passivity, detachment, acceptance. (200)

After independence there came a horrible sense of complacency in India. In the joy of the victory the future was forgotten. The politicians paid no attention to developing a new political system to replace the old one. There was no new ideology to direct the nation. Even the merits of the old system were forgotten. Naipaul found India in almost the same miserable condition in which his ancestors had left a century ago. Pankaj Mishra remarks that Naipaul came to India with the hope of finding his roots but what he found was misery and shocking complacency :

But the India Naipaul travelled to, in the last days of Nehru, was a country made complacent and sanctimonious by the victories of the freedom movement; and while expecting to find a vibrant postcolonial country with many human possibilities, Naipaul came across wretchedness of the sort his ancestors had escaped from almost a century ago. (Writer XI)

Naipaul found the Indian civilization decaying. The political decay was only a part of it. The politicians had no values and they were interested only in furthering their own selfish ends. They kept aloof from the public forming their elite group. The lack of vision was reflected in the working of the government. Naipaul found that there was no hope of progress in India. Without an ideology and a definite plan a nation can

make no progress. Satish K. Harit observes in his article “V.S. Naipaul and Indian Psyche” :

Naipaul does not see any hope of change or progress of India. Crisis of India is neither political nor economical. He considers them as only aspects of the larger crisis, which is that of a decaying civilization where only further swift decay can accelerate the process of regeneration. (82)

#### **Works Cited :**

- Bhat, Yashoda. *V.S. Naipaul : An Introduction*. New Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corporation, 2000. Print.
- Harit, Satish K. “V.S. Naipaul and Indian Psyche.” *V.S. Naipaul- Critical Essays*, Vol.II (2002): 76-84, Print.
- Mahanta, Namrata Rathore. *V.S. Naipaul: The Indian Trilogy*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2004. Print.
- Mishra, Pankaj, ed. *V.S. Naipaul: The Writer and the World- Essays*. London: Picador, 2002. Print.
- Naipaul, V.S. *An Area of Darkness*. London: Picador, 1964. Print.
- Naipaul, V.S. *An Area of Darkness*. London: Picador, 1964. Print.
- Patil, Mallikarjun. “Naipaul, V.S.: The Travel-Writer”. *V.S. Naipaul-Critical Essays*, Vol.II (2002): 143-156. Print.
- Singh, Manjit Inder. *V.S. Naipaul*. New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2002. Print..

Wikipedia



---

Dr. Sanjay Sharma, Assistant Professor, Department of English, P.S.M. P.G. College, Kannauj

## A Quest for Feminist Voices in Manas Bakshi's Poetic Journey

— Dr. Poonam Dwivedi

### Abstract :

*Manas Bakshi is a major in the realm of Indo-English Poetry today with twelve books published so far from publishers of repute. His poetic oeuvre is enriched with sense and sensibility, idealism and realism that touch our hearts. And aspects of life he explores are many. This paper aims at dwelling on some of them and romance may be a radiant and brilliant shade of human life which emits from the fair-sex, but sometimes it is in its another conjoint aspect of gory darkness, a sensitive man simmers in the embers of betrayal, simmers in pessimist-ecstasy and reflects within and mirrors the inner-self to become a poet of parlance. A tumultuous and stupendous journey within identifying the individuality with divinity, thus, images the horizon in word paintings, of course, having the literary tools of symbolism and mystic metaphor as are replete in the outpoured undertones of Manas Bakshi's poetry.*

**Keywords:** Love, Betrayal, Sufferings, Pathos, Womanhood and Dynamism.

Dr. Manas Bakshi is one of such brilliant poets as proved true to the philosophical and universal utterance of Socrates which Bakshi himself has quoted in his interview published in the *Contemporary Vibes*. When Dr. PV Laxmiprasad asked about the 'romance with English literature' the question was avoided intentionally by him and he said- 'it wasn't romance but literary pursuit with an amount of devotion.' And then talking about the anthology of poems, *From Adam to Myself*, which is rich in ironic punches dominated by

subtle feelings of modern day sensitive treatment, the interviewer asked the question of his methodology of 'improvisation' in poetry. The reply was bold and categorical- 'In response, I would like to quote Socrates here "By all means marry, if you get a good wife you will become happy—and if you get a bad one, you will become a philosopher." The later one, true in my life, is quite responsible for the philosophical bend of my life, as also for my intuitive and analytical aptitude.'

With Dr. Manas Bakshi's first anthology of poem published in 1988 namely 'Long Awaited' the poet has not looked back in outpouring the poetic ideas, thematic, emotional, intellectual, nocturnal, contemporary and patriotic etc. but the quest in this article has been confined to the womanhood, feminist views, female fortification, feminist firewall, female gratification, eve's tentacles and tantrums in different perspectives. In that quest, several poetic outpourings have been interpreted and symbolism has been decoded to some extent for further research on the mystic poet of pathos, gothic artistry and deep understanding of the transitory world with always a shadowed sword of death.

Bernard M. Jackson believes that Manas Bakshi has a blend 'Of Dreams and Death' and on that poem, the internationally acclaimed critic comments- "But it is in love poetry that Bakshi truly excels, for though he laments his parting from a loved-one in an earlier part of his life, his poems are written with a maturity of hindsight which never gives way to undue sentimentality." (Jackson, 20)

In the first and foremost anthology of poems, *Long Awaited* dedicated to 'Bandana Sen', the poet has fired his imagination and written a fictional poem about the couple of his dreams. The couple is sitting beside each other and the surroundings are romantic. This romanticism may be imaginary but it is deeply ingrained

in the imagination of the poet but the realism enters the dream world of the poet to evaporate the whole canvass on which the painting has been made by the poet in his dream. The artistic presentation of romanticism has achieved its finesse as the poem takes the turn at the ending which is diagonally opposed to the beginning. Futility and hollowness of romanticism sets the tone of poems to come as melancholy and sadness has been synchronized in the poems as if there is paucity of love and affection.

“Secrets of life are sometimes  
Very open in what she ascribes...  
Observed in the evening  
A couple, sitting together,  
Winking at each other, close whisper  
And the cerulean surroundings.”  
(On Her Painting-p.25)

The poem ends in a dream –  
“Next evening  
I went to the exhibition:  
That pain was already sold.  
But the characters still haunt me  
More in reality  
Than in dream.” (On Her Painting-p.26)

Dr. Manas Bakshi has been impressed by Mother Teresa and has written a beautiful poem on her personality and works eulogizing the dedication and motherly golden touch. But *In the Age of Living Death* has referential imagery of ‘Mother’ and the poet has tried to build a soothing and cozy carpet of motherly love and affection on which the child may rest, play and forget about the sordid world of strife. The divinity has been envisaged and added by the poet to the mother’s love in the midst of moment of doom and painful experience. The usage of ‘moment of doom’ and ‘stranger’s knife’ seem to be in contrast to the soft and smoothness of

motherly touch of the warmth of breast. Emphasis may come with the element of contrast in this poem which has been dedicated to a woman imagined in the guise of ‘Mother’ by the poet.

“The wet grass of sympathy  
Couldn’t soothe her breast  
The mother of a lost son  
Who knew the world  
With the force called divine  
And shared with all the rest  
A rootless pain  
When the moment of doom  
Was at the tip of a stranger’s knife.” (Mother- p. 61)

Bernard M. Jackson, while reviewing the anthology of Manas Bakshi has truly found that *The Welkin Blue Yet In Agony* is full of agony and unrest of soul. He finds the beauty of the word ‘heart-benumbed’ and says: “There are within his poems several mentions of betrayal, and of times so sweet to the memory, times which had once seemed so timeless and idyllic that their subsequent loss has brought painful realization to the reshaping of life itself..”

“The heart-benumbed can’t get back  
The tulip of a sweet, enchanting past.”  
(Poets International, June 2000 issue, p. 22)

Actualities and stark sordid realism of the world and its topical poems have indelible imprint on the mind of the poet, he stays away from the love affairs in general and shirks indulgence in affection especially of the female species. The realization has dawned on the poet as is witnessed in *The Welkin is Blue yet in Agony* published in 1995, which was dedicated to Dunia Lal Bakshi and Arati Bakshi. The poet is aware of the eternal fragrance of love but to keep it fresh and to preserve the same is an awesome and arduous task. Two sentiments have been chosen to illustrate the twin

realization of the poet in respect of a woman's love:

"Fruits of love  
Retaining fragrance of flower  
Are all that secures eternity" (Realization. p. 32)

In contrast the saleable love's darkness has been demonstrated in the back drop of 'neon lighted lane' and that too in the night, but the poet misses the bus as it symbolizes the detest or failure or non-grasp of the market place love being showered with a smile. The aspect of feminine fire simmering in the darkness of lanes and enticing has been pictorially painted by the poet with colours of undertones.

"Last night  
I walked along  
This neon-lighted lane  
When a woman  
Dilly-dallying  
Giving me a smile  
Enticing  
Before I could grasp its meaning  
The bus stopped  
To take me off." (Realization. p.52)

The poetry of Dr. Manas Bakshi reveals three perspectives of love in conjunctively written troika of Love-1, Love-2 and Love-3 as compiled in the anthology of poems *Of Dreams and Death* published in 2000, which has been dedicated to 'Srobona Munshi'. 'Love-1' has overwhelming and overshadowing vast structural canopy of air, fire and love's glow. The comparison of elements of nature takes the love to higher reaches of the spectrum and leaves the world of realism and factualism high and dry. The paramount and surmount significance of love seems to be supreme and supramental to the poet.

"Air  
Has its force  
Water has its flow

Fire  
Has its flame  
Love—  
Surmounts all in its glow." (22)

Suddenly the poet realizes the worldly love of give and take, physical relationship of flesh and blood, sensual and sexual significance of relations including the 'eroticism' contained and enveloped in the wholesome love of the world. But the fallen imagination of the poet from the zenith of 'Love-1' to the erotic love of flesh and blood in 'Love-2' may be borne out of contrasting tools used by the poet often and on to emphasize the imagery. Because in 'Love-3', the poet concludes the thesis of love by saying- 'that's the art/art of retaining/what, /in love/is gained.' The secret of love is ordained to be retained and not disclosed in public. Now, we cannot expect the revelation of love affairs and female tentacles and tantrums, emotionally charged poems from the poet as these have to be discovered, subtracted and exhumed as I have tried to read between the lines and undertones of the stanzas.

Love- 2  
"not just flesh and blood—  
The familiar sight  
Of an erotic hunt" (23)

Love- 3  
"Let there be  
Something secret,  
That's the art  
Art of retaining  
What,  
In love,  
Is gained." (24)

Srinivasa Rangaswamy has made a successful attempt in unfolding the mind of Dr. Manas Bakshi, who has tried to trace the origin of man and woman in *From Adam to Myself*. The prolific critic has hit the exact

point in poetic referral stanza to prove his point “From the days of Adam to our own days, the poet finds, things have not changed much in the world. The war against injustice is not yet over; ‘nor has Draupadi’s shame/ any cover today,’ while Bhishma-like cult figures remain helpless onlookers”—(Kurukshetra Contours, 7)

Although the poet has written three consecutive poems entitled ‘A Lonely Lady-1’ which is full of ‘midday melancholy’ and another ‘A Lonely Lady-2’ which is composed to see the ‘repugnant eyes searching someone in a furrowed mind’ and the third poem entitled again ‘A Lonely Lady-3’ has a figure which is described as ‘she beneath a lonely tree.’

The loneliness is abound in the poem, nevertheless the solitary lady is listening to the ‘muses’ of a bird sitting on the tree. The undertone of the poem is deep and it can be fathomed by referring to the mythological episode of Adam and Eve. The tree is there, apple is replaced with bird and Adam is missing and eve is lonely. Dr. Bakshi is the master of the symbolism and contrast to blast the stereotype stories of the past to be presented in new words. The poet weaves his own version of the legend in perspective of modernity contemporary world of realism and betrayal.

“Now  
Bird in the tree—  
Muses the lonely lady.”(26)

Dr. Manas Bakshi’s *Not Because I Live Today* published in 2005 has been dedicated to ‘Jiban Kumar Roy’, and it contains directly addressed poem to a female persona of poet’s relish. The occasion to write the poem is also significant but here also the poet envisages two shades of the feminism. The first is to enjoy the liberty by celebrating ‘Woman’s Day’ in a traditional manner avowing to the age old customs and mannerism of the female finesse. The second shade is

the crude and nude dancing of the feudal era in the name of the modernity and changing the whole cultural ethos of the womanhood. The difference between the two shades is visible in the lines of the verse ‘To You, On The Eve of Women’s Day’ which begins with applause and ends with disgust.

“Wind blowing in a different way  
Marked the advent  
Of another season,  
And you  
Fond of an acclaimed, feminist look  
Suddenly turned different  
Changing the colour of your romantic attribute,  
As does the chameleon,  
Without assigning  
A tenable reason—  
Perhaps to see in yourself  
That age-old feudal attitude  
Dancing nude.” (29)

The second poem chosen from the anthology is ‘An Ode to My Grandma’ which has also mentioned the name of the grandma (For ‘Sibu Rani Chowdhury’). The nostalgia galore in the poem and poet’s eternal question of a child to any grandma is repeated here in the first few lines. The artistry of the poem surfaces in the last lines as the poet reaches the peak of his ability to express in poetics ‘With the tendrils of uncertain future/ Breaks as waves.’ The metaphorical presentation and usage of words is marvellous, and especially as expressed ‘In poetic and artistic search/For just an image?’(35)

“Grandma- no more alive.  
Had she been  
A simple question  
I would have asked:  
“What this life means  
To a colourful past



Cradled by her dream of unforeseen days  
When the present  
A conglomerate of time and space  
With the tendrils of an uncertain future  
Breaks as waves  
In poetic and artistic search  
For just an image?" (35)

Dr. N. P. Singh, a renowned poet and critic has been very vocal to note the metaphorical excellence of the poet and he writes on *Not Because I Live Today*: "night is an all-pervasive, expanding metaphor that connotes all that is warped, disjointed and moribund in post-Millennium world of agony and despair. It also underlines the hell in which the man of our time finds himself trapped. Night is invariably so dense and ponderous that morning becomes simply a faint, feeble hope. Such is the bitter-sweet reality that is evoked by Manas Bakshi, in his latest anthology *Not Because I Live Today*." (Singh, 14)

*Man of the Seventh Hour* highlights "Seven" symphonies of life when a man tastes 'Victory' and marches to fulfil more and more 'Desires' which converts into a reckless 'Greed' and the greed and accumulation gives birth to 'Fear' and the feeling of insecurity gives way to 'Rage' and an enraged person suffers a dilemma of 'Conflict' which ultimately befalls a person after the sufferings of downfall and 'Decadence.' The psycho-analysis in the poetry is a milestone ever written by a poet which has been widely appreciated by the renowned critics published in varied journals.

"*Man of the Seventh Hour*, a seventh collection by the poet, is entirely devoted to changes in human behaviour through evolutionary process- an exemplary poetical narration of behavioral change of man after winning 'Victory.' C. L. Khatri views Bakshi's concern "at deeper level of time, searching and soul searching,

though the process is propelled by the painful and dreamy physical life."

To have more insight into the poetic creation of seven stages and mindfulness of the poet, Dr. Srinivas Rangaswami sums up: "It's a continuing story of evolution, convulsion, revolution, dissolution unfolding mystery of a life cycle- a strange continuity in all that is inalterable, superficial, universal, supramental gyrating in Man's entity."

Likewise, Dr. P.V. Laxmiprasad has quoted Dr. Rita Nath Keshari while reviewing *Man of the Seventh Hour*, observes: "As desire propels him to various directions primitive man learns to overcome his longings and insecurities; nevertheless- he gradually fall a prey to his desires in the second hour of existence" and so on....again Patricia Prime has been quoted "Yet, Bakshi's questions are often followed by statements and this creates dramatic tension, making their authority more assailable, more accountable."

Dr. S.L. Peeran has this to say- "Fear grips human mind as a snake coiling a tree. It is the fear which has led to man's downfall again and again. The poet experiences the feeling of fear in all aspects of human life."

Dr. P.V. Laxmi Prasad writes about the sensitive subject in the hand of woman and feminine aspect in poet's verses. He quotes a stanza given below to apprise the readers about the posturing of woman and her coming in after having a conflicting mind :

"A power wielder in Man brings his downfall and this thirst for more power builds up conflicts within. A Sex-hungry world spells dooms for conflict of moral values in the world. The conflict of moral values in clash with the conflict of immoral society is finely brought out."

“Against  
The back drop of Volatile Woman  
And night butterfly,  
Semi-naked  
For being sex-hungry.” (CV- 4:16, p.43)

Although Jasvinder Singh has also been quoted by Dr. PV Laxmi Prasad and the general observations on the anthology are like ‘equality and fraternity’ but the man and woman relationship comes forth after scanning a stanza as discussed below:

“The poet picturises the stages of human life and the poet has made a good number of avid observations about varying aspects of life involving individual fancies, desires, social needs, desires inner and outer compulsions, which also needs checks and balances and behavioral serenity and all is needed to live in peace and harmony in allegiance with universal equality and fraternity.”

“Man  
Woman  
Universe.  
From primitive  
To modern  
From void to vibrancy  
From subjugation  
To emancipation  
From beginning  
To end  
A process  
Of compelling reality.” (7)

The dynamism of relationship between man and woman from the primitive era to modern times, void to vibrancy and subjugation to emancipation has ‘compulsion’ of time. It is a process in the different environs and societies, hence, woman’s liberty is also a process in the mind of the poet and dynamism in social order and behaviour is universal truth. Bernard

M. Jackson sums up the entire journey from the raw and primitive beauty to its consummation in the squandered world in his own unparalleled words - “In this masterly collection, Bakshi openly reveals a ravaged world that has already entered its 7<sup>th</sup> and final phase (or Hour) : it is a decadent world largely occasioned by the thoughtlessness, greed and wilful destruction brought by man. And in effect, each one of us is wholly responsible for this ruination of our Mother Earth has been entirely caused by the sins of humanity.”

“And the sequel  
Primitive beauty  
Lost in  
Today’s global consumerism.”  
(PoetInternational, July 2006 issue, p. 57)

Dr. Manas Bakshi in *The Midnight Star* gives feminine touch to ‘To My Valentine.’ It is rare for the poet to mention the love affairs publicly as the poet believes the ‘secrets of love to be kept in the heart of hearts.’ Although the poem is addressed to his valentine, but ‘You did not care to remember’- occurs four times to begin the stanzas. Lamentations studded poem points to the ‘whimpering of arrogance’- ‘your eyes full of ego’- ‘that silent eclipse!’ (12) etc. which reveals the feeling of disgust and exhaustion from which the poet’s love suffers. The hurt mind of the poet then writes on feminism as a whole :

“She was an open room  
Agog with cost-free fresh air  
Day-delight and night-nectar  
As if inviting someone” (She. p.24)

In *Maudlin Musings* the feminine aspect of the poet has been beautifully dealt with by Patricia Prime “Here, an unknown, unspecified woman is, at first overcome with emotion (although we are not told why

this should be) but, gradually, she comes to see that she still has many more years to come and must come to terms with her emotions, whether they be grief or some other feelings. The reader will find all of these elements in this collection.” (C.V.,10 : 39)

With her unparalleled knack of understanding the hidden nuances of the poesy, Patricia Prime makes successful attempt to uncover the ‘whiteness of the snow’ and ‘meaning of ‘flying dove.’ It is very interesting to decode the mysticism of Manas Bakshi’s feminine structural curves and contours. She says in her review:

“In this poem, we have the whiteness of the snow and the flying dove, but the mountain is personified, so that it can speak to the snowfall and announce its intention not to change, despite time and change. The poems can also suggest secondary meaning and connotation in the written words.”

“At the beginning, she allowed  
Emotional waves to cradle her.  
At the end, breaking waves echoed:  
The destination was yet far.” (87)

Besides the personification of Nature’s objects, the poet has to be applauded for his approach to decipher the man-woman intimate relationship which has undergone a sea-change after the turn of the century. Now 21<sup>st</sup> century love is in offing and hence the poet has preferred to race with time. So I have chosen his contemporary poem ‘Love in this 21<sup>st</sup> Century’ for its deep meaning labyrinthed in the layers of words. A transitory and short-lived love-making as is in currency displayed metaphorically to be washed away with each and every wave of the sea just like a scratch on the sandbank of the sea- a childlike play having no seriousness of mature love of everlasting and eternal tenure. Who is to be betrayed and exploited in such a love-making - the emotion freaks! Just to have moments

of delight the lovers exploit each other sensually and sexually. The faith of permanent emotional relationship is absolutely absent in the poet’s diction and dictionary.

“A scratch on the sandbank  
By emotionally moved  
And sensually exploited  
Moments of delight.” (38)

To quote Anil K. Sharma, Editor of the *Contemporary Vibes, Between Flower and Flame* marks the “Journey (which) depicts the dynamics of Dr. Manas Bakshi’s poetry; the sojourns and watersheds emit fragrance with which the reader is enchanted in his/her romanticism, spiritualism and material pursuits for conducting the smooth sailing in life.”

‘Between Flower and Flame’ shuttles the bird which sustains human life for which, according to the poet :

“Between flower and flame  
Is forbearance” (CV, 7:27. p.50)

Mr. Sharma chose to write further in his review of the book that “The two poems on ‘Impressions’ abound in the keen observation of life especially the impressions become flamboyant when touch ‘Some Women’ — ‘When Woman Betrays’- ‘When Man Betrays’ – ‘To Lovers Who Compete’- ‘Before Marriage and After Marriage’- with exclamation ‘What do they exchange- pollen of love?’ Finally, the poet touches the ultimate of sexuality- ‘Kalighat Bridge at 6 p.m.’

Dr. D.C. Chambial, a renowned poet, editor and critic has devoted a few lines to the “Sex workers the subject of the poem ‘Kalighat Bridge at 6 p.m.’ (45). These have been juxtaposed to ‘fallen flowers’ and keep themselves up to date ‘To extort a look’ from their clients by being ‘in popular synthetic sari/cheap powder, lip-gloss and tiara.’ The poem evinces the plight of these

worker, who have to sell their flesh to earn their bread. How disgraceful for a civilized society!" (*Indian Book Chronicle* July, 2012, p.10)

Further, Dr. D.C. Chambial has elaborated the competition among the 'lovers' thus, has reviewed the poetics of Manas Bakshi right from its genesis- "Love has often been the subject of poets since they began writing and is of the basic human instincts. The two lovers in 'To Lovers Who Compete' (49) are envious of each other. The poet beautifully but passionately warns the reader about passion of love, to avoid it, and calls it 'The charcoal of obstinate passion.' And consequently, one of the lovers, who succeeds in getting her (feminine love) 'will just face the ember/Hiding the flame/Of other's lunacy or disdain.' 'Mirrored Motifs' is a beautiful poem that originates in a spectacle of beauty; beauty engenders passion, which seeks fulfillment in an ambience free from societal barriers."

I also concur with his views that 'Some Women' is important to be discussed to gauge the intensity of feminism which is deep rooted in the works of the poet and seldom expressed and revealed. Here the poet seems to be vociferous and indulges in derision and different treatment as dished out to womanhood. The hypocrisy of love stands exposed in the stanzas :

"Some women sleep with their husbands  
Coquettish as their eyes, faces they paint;  
Make love with others, sometimes they like.  
Expecting, perhaps, a different treatment." (19)

Dr. Manas Bakshi does not stop here and he further goes to write a poem on the betrayal of male and female species, thus, the futility of loving and longing languishes in meanness at its lowest ebb. The metaphorical presentation and picturisation is apt and classy to depict rolling of clouds in one another but without rains.

"To roll into  
Yet another cloud  
That only strains  
But never rains." (When A Woman Betrays, p.33)

The poet may not be writing much about feminism but surely has the knack of outpouring his views on the 'extra-marital' affairs. 'To Lovers Who Compete' it is evidently clear that triangular love and emotions are cumbersome and couched in wilderness. The love's labour lost cannot be fathomed as the oceanic waves cannot be controlled. The poet says :

"In love- triangular or extra-marital  
Emotion- not enough  
To see through the eyes  
More bewildering than ever;" (49)

The critics have wisely and diligently concluded the two phases of poet's life and its reflections as human life finds portrayal in two sketches in 'Before Marriage, After Marriage' (77). Life before marriage is full of dreams about the would-be-love but after marriage, when reality takes shape, it becomes 'burdensome' and the dreamy soul, a lover, flaps its wings 'in the frigidity/ Of the woman shrinking within.'

Rob Harle, another international poet critic writes- "Bakshi often uses wonderful, subtle metaphors in his word paintings, and frequently there is layered meaning, as a brilliant example, Poem 66 (p.24) of *Mauldin Musings*-

"Love and lust  
Weaved in wedlock  
As straws and twigs"  
In the making of a nest." (www.boloji.com)

There is an element of dynamism, journey, sojourns, milestones, watersheds and victory to rage, greed and other vices in man and woman relationship, but the poet has a fragrance of love which may have

been lost in the air, flown with water, burnt in fire of realism but still 'Love—Surmounts all in its glow.' (22), Dr. Manas Bakshi started with dream painting of a couple, worked poetically for the emancipation of woman from subjugation, longs for the Valentine to remember, lamentations are galore in the poetry and futility of love reaches its climax in love's labour lost, but still the poet's quest to have true love of Adam as synchronized in 'From Adam to Myself' may be a lovely lady imagined in midday melancholy with 'repugnant eyes searching someone in a furrowed mind' under a lonely tree.

#### Works Cited :

1. Laxmiprasad, PV. *Contemporary Vibes* Oct- Dec. 2011.pp10-11. Print.
2. Jackson, Bernard M. *Poets International*, December 2000 issue. p.20. Print.
3. Bakshi, Manas. *Long Awaited*. Calcutta: Firma KLM Private Limited, 1998. Print.
4. ... *In the Age of Living Death*. Calcutta: Rupa & Co., 1990. Print.
5. ... *The Welkin is Blue yet in Agony*. Calcutta: Firma KLM Private Limited, 1995. Print.
6. ... *Of Dreams and Death*. Calcutta: Firma KLM Private Limited, 2000. Print.
7. ... *From Adam to Myself*. Calcutta: Firma KLM Private Limited, 2003. Print.
8. ... *Not Because I Live Today*. Kolkata: Script, 2005. Print.
9. ... *Man of the Seventh Hour*. Kolkata: Script, 2006. Print.
10. ... *The Midnight Star*. Kolkata: Cambridge India, 2009. Print.
11. ... *Flower And Flame*. Kolkata: Script, 2011. Print.
12. ... *Maudlin Musings*. Kolkata: Sparrow Publication, 2015. Print.
13. Jackson, Bernard M. *Poets International*, June 2000 issue. P. 22. Print.
14. Singh, N.P. *Indian Book Chronicle*, November 2006 issue, p.14. Print.
15. Laxmiprasad, PV. *Contemporary Vibes*, 4: 16, pp. 41-43. Print.
16. Jackson, Bernard M. *Poets International*, July 2006 issue, p.57. Print.
17. Sharma, Anil K. editor *Contemporary Vibes*, 7:27, p.50. Print.
18. Chambial, D.C. *Indian Book Chronicle*, July, 2012, p.10. Print.
19. Talukdar, Sumit. *Indian Book Chronicle*, March-April 2004 issue, p.9. Print.
20. Rob Harle. [www.boloji.com](http://www.boloji.com).
21. Patricia Prime, *Contemporary Vibes*, 10:39, p.42. Print.

★ ★

---

Dr. Poonam Dwivedi, Assistant Professor, Department of English, BB Panjab University Constituent College, Balachaur-144 521,  
Email : poonam.dwivedi83@gmail.com

# Linguistic Legacies and the Politics of English Language

— Dr. Shakibur Rehman Khan

## Abstract:

*The paper titled “Linguistic Legacies and the politics of English Language” seeks to establish and probe the postcolonial positioning of English as a language. It also probes the process of resistance while being opened to its reception without hostility in terms of responses to stage a protest and evolving a formula of acceptance.*

**Keywords:** Resistance, Protest, Assimilation, Anger, Liberation.

English language as we know has been used and exploited mostly in the context of colonization and the colonies like India, West Indies, Kenya and the African continent are examples where the English language was used for political purposes. The English rulers left after whatever damage they could do in terms of economic and cultural losses but English as the language of the colonizer continued in use and flourished by creeping into the psyche of the colonized. Long after the colonial powers called quits their representation continued in the form of a language with its dynamic impact and cultural heritage as language is culture and it cannot be seen in isolation.

Countries like India and West Indies in particular were and are under its influence even today because the colonized, despite a hateful reaction to it, could not dismiss the aftermath of the linguistic blitzkrieg to the extent that cultural roots were demolished and the

identity on the linguistic basis replaced a language whose echo not only reminds of its wretched past but the present too seems to be as much hypnotized by the impact of the same language. If we probe the factors that turned English language into a political charisma was its political use. Trade, Commerce, businesses, communications, and channels of dialogue all were related to the use of a language that broke geography and impelled the colonies to embrace it as the child of a visiting father. Even we look back in anger; we do not have much of a resistance to the rising influence of a language having made emotional inroads into the beaten psyche of a colony. African continent in particular was so badly hammered that it fell on its feet and finally reconciled to the language of the conqueror as the language of the conquered. Best of the writers in English were produced by India and the African continent. The early harbingers who chose to write in English from India were the trio of Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan. These three obliquely did not seem to find any other option to write in the language of the conqueror as a kind of response to the political challenges and simultaneously it came about as a resistance to the colonial abuses. The first generation of Indian writers in English were mostly apolitical but the subdued undercurrents of protest were embedded in its roots. Gradually English language turned into the language of the mass from being the language of the elite and thus the English speaking class with all its sophistication was construed elitist in nature regardless of its caste affiliation. The rapid expansion of English used both as protest and resistance tools had few positives too. It created a class of writers and readers who were nationalists to the core yet were not oblivious or averse to the application of English for two reasons.

1. English as the language of the conqueror.
2. English as the troubled legacy of a troubled land.

In the context of India as a colony it seems that it would not have flourished to the extent of claiming freedom from the brutal, ballistic and invincible powers which had left the nation diced up into the ruins of mental subjugation reflected even today with the English speaking class which seems to hold a psychological edge over others in terms of cultural sophistication. The rising nationalist sentiment in pre-colonial India received much impetus from a very constructive use of English language in Newspapers, Tabloids, Pamphlets, Letters, personal communications all were the order of the day and finally English struck deep inalienable roots in the dust of the land and it was realized then only that one of the best ways to hit back is to hit politically and in the language they came with. It had a fewer negatives when evaluated against the backdrop of a fighting India short on resources and high on zeal. The African continent, Nigeria in particular was quick to adapt the language of the aggressor to develop a combative narrative to weed out the alien occupants tampering with local colour and culture. We can see a few examples very glaring as far as English language is concerned.

There are a cluster of non-native English writers such as Kazaro Ishiguro (*The Remains of the Day*) Ben Okri (*The Famished Day*) Salman Rushdie (*Children's Midnight Tales*) Chinua Achebe (*Things Fall Apart*) Joseph Conrad (*Heart of Darkness*) to quote a few. These writers were of diverse background and English wasn't their native language but all these wrote in the language to press home serious political messages to the powers that be, they challenged them as much in a language best understood by the colonizers. The point therefore is the indispensable status of English as a language

and the countries of the third world in particular have been no woozy fuzzy stuff as they mean business while writing in English. Conrad explained why he wrote in English :

The truth of the matter is that my faculty to write in English is as natural as any other aptitude with which I might have been born. I have a strange and overpowering feeling that it had always been an inherent part of me. English was for me neither a matter of choice nor adoption. The merest idea of choice had never entered my head. And as to adoption well, yes, there was adoption; but it was I who was adopted by the genius of the language, which directly I came out of the stammering stage made me its own...All I can claim after all those years of devoted practice, with the accumulated anguish of its doubts, imperfections, and falterings in my heart, is the right to be believed when I say that if I had not written in English, I would not have written at all. (Pousada :1994, 75)

*“when I say that if I had not written in English, I would not have written at all”* sums up brilliantly that linguistic skills are not acquired for political reasons alone as Conrad who ran from pillar to post, rose from the depths of homelessness, from the misery of an orphan, from the discarded child of the times he lived in, from the abandoned urchin, from the roofless vagabond to the ultimate glory of a writer. He spoke French, used Polish for native communications and chose to write in English, a polyglot par excellence but it's not an isolated case of a non native writer taking to English language as Lingua Franca but there are many, one of which is Chinua Achebe. In 1975 Chinua Achebe gave a speech entitled “The African Writer and the English Language”. He answered the above challenge with these words,

“Is it right that a man should abandon

his mother tongue for someone else's? It looks like a dreadful betrayal and produces a guilty feeling. But for me there is no other choice. I have been given the language and I intend to use it." (Thiong'o, p.285)

African writer Gabriel Okara also addresses the issue of writing African literature in English. He wrote,

*"Some may regard this way of writing in English as a desecration of the language. This is of course not true. Living languages grow like living things, and English is far from a dead language.... Why shouldn't there be a Nigerian or West African English which we can use to express our own ideas, thinking and philosophy in our own way?" (Thiong'o, p.287)*

Again, Achebe agrees,

*"I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit new African surroundings." (Thiong'o, p.286)*

These are a few examples of writers who are non natives, hate foreign language, dislike disowning mother tongues, abhor the use of alien language but if the need be so, adoption, switch over, intelligent use of the language even the politics of language is agreeable if it helps serve the motherland. Thus English as the language of resistance is very handy and its acceptance even if collides with the interest of the motherland is not something to be unduly concerned about. Chinua Achebe is one writer from Nigeria who wrote extensively in English and did so with as much élan as a native writer would have. Chinua Achebe's long and fabulous engagement with English is a great example of embracing foes without losing love for the mother tongue. He indeed wrote in English and by writing in

English he lashed out against the British imperial forces for ridiculing the African culture, for extolling the nudity of African women, for turning Africa into a happy hunting ground for the cynical imagination of the West and finally turned West as the insane mind preoccupied with the adventures of East and Africa.

Joseph Conrad was taken to task by Chinua Achebe when Conrad glorified the jungles of Africa as the exotic destination imbued with sensations of pleasure. Achebe billed Conrad as "a bloody racist". Such was his zeal. His love for the land and such was the empowerment of an imagination hugely adamant in defending every single virtue of the land he was a constituent of. Consider this difference in opinion between the two African writers.

In "The Politics and Politicians of Language in African Literature" (1989) Chinua Achebe of Nigeria defends his practice as an African writer of writing in a European tongue, English.

*The title is a take-off on a book by Ngugi wa Thiong'o, "Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature" (1986). Ngugiwa gave up writing in English. He said that to be truly free of Africa's old European masters one must write in an African language, that Europe forced its languages on Africa to control it, that Senghor and Achebe, by writing in European languages, are handmaidens of imperialism.*

*Ngugiwa tells of his boyhood in Kenya, of how he was taught in his native Kikuyu language at school when suddenly in 1952 the British authorities forced schools to teach in English instead. Proof that Europe forced its languages on Africa.*

*Achebe says it was not quite that simple, that Ngugiwa is not being completely honest, that he is using language to play politics.*



The truth is the British, both as rulers and Christian missionaries, generally taught Africans in their own languages. They had little interest in teaching English in Africa. The demand for European languages came mainly from the Africans themselves.

The arguments between the two great writers over the use of English language itself is a testimony to the fact that the politics of language initiated by the imperial forces was both an act of intelligence and a misjudgement on the part of the colonizers that the same language will be converted into a tool of resistance, a point Chinua Achebe drove home comfortably, a point the writers from India pressed home equally comfortably. Thus the whole argument that if English traversed across the geography was largely because of the imperialist temptations and more importantly the desire of the ruled to resist imperial advances in language of the imperials.

West Indies which is a conglomerate of a few islands was unified by English alone with a distinct accent as extension of the indigenous desire to blend the local and alien colours. West Indies was the first country to face indentured labour and the first nation to be exposed to the horrors of a language that they did not know but over a period of time they produced a host of writers whose forefathers came from a different geography reconciled to the language of the oppressor. V.S. Naipaul is a case in point.

The literature of the Caribbean is an ideal meeting point, the place where the assorted cultures of two boundless continents and the ghosts of four colonial empires come together. Crossroads for an unspecifiable number of ethnic identities, religions, rites and ideologies, which, though singly they may trace their origins back to the Old World, to Africa or to

Asia, are all involved in the same continuous process of creolization. It is also the meeting place of two opposed notions of time and history: one linear and sequential, in which the past is conceived of as a cause determining the present; the other, for want of a better word, circular, in which the mind of man is viewed as inhabited by forces and patterns which perpetuate simultaneously the imprint of memory and the blueprint of his future fate.

The literature of West Indies known as Caribbean literature is a classic example of cultural, linguistic and political blending of narratives which are about a fight back, assimilation, resistance and liberation. The Caribbean accent is typical in the sense that they aren't extending the great tradition of a particular accent rather they have evolved their own which suggests the flexibility in the language of the conqueror and the conquered. Creolization is the term used to denote the impact of local culture on the alien language. They are not dragged into it but the process of evolution is so supple, open ended that a variety of influences creep within the rubric of the local language and leave its distinct identity even after its assimilation into a different pot.

Thus assortment of language and culture, language of the oppressor as the language of resistance, a fight back, a wise act of understanding with arsenal underneath, the arsenal of combating the aggressor while being opened to its impact which has paid off politically in cases of India, Nigeria and the Caribbean.

The paper has attempted to review the postcolonial positioning of English language across the globe and how it has been disabused by the colonies and used effectively for the pursuance of their political goals. Colonizers have turned neo colonizers but the

**Shadows**

language they had imposed once upon them is now a matter of choice for the colonized and thus its impact is accepted without being influenced by its great charm of thaumaturgy. We saw in the first part of the paper as how English had elicited some emotional responses as infringement on the culture of the land and then the quick understanding that the language cannot coerce or impede the progress of the local culture if it is thwarted by the same language as resistance to culminate into liberation as the finality of the result. It happened to India, to the African continent and to the West Indies.

**Works Cited :**

1. *Alicia Pousada, THE MULTILINGUALISM OF JOSEPH CONRAD English Department, College of Humanities, University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras*  
[Published in a slightly longer version with footnotes in: *English Studies*, 75 (4), July 1994, 335-349.]
2. Heather Sofield, *Postcolonial Identity and the Position of English in African Literature*, English 119, Brown University, 1999
3. Chinua Achebe: *The Politics and Politicians of Language in African Literature* Monday December 5th 2011 by abagond.
4. Luigi Sampietro. *The Specificity of Caribbean Literature*
5. Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*.
6. Said Edward, *Culture and Imperialism*,




---

Dr. Shakibur Rehman Khan, Assistant Professor of English, College of Commerce, Arts & Science, Prince Sattam Bin, Abdulaziz University, KSA.

Still or drifting shadows  
 look older than light  
 more than ageless  
 with a dim, dark aura  
 of immortality  
 in pensive poise or flitting  
 no hunt meant, done  
 on a random prowl of pilgrimage

Travelling beam's headlight  
 turned in upon itself  
 by the kinky split of day and night...  
 Pours white milk powder  
 germfree vegetable vibes  
 for postal flap and beat of wings  
 in pigeonholes  
 Beginning and end coalesce  
 in digital, laptop transit

Furnace melting pot turns out  
 shadows to moderate the blaze  
 of light and heat  
 that marks the quantum leap  
 of the sun to life

Shadows cast tree and man  
 when they are cast off worn and torn  
 Man who runs back and forth  
 to catch his own shadow  
 overshoots the runway  
 off to nowhere

Light like selfie shots strikes  
a match - flashbulb spurt  
of a blinding flame  
in the boom and rumble  
of a drum beat

Shadows survive a silent bell  
that refuses to ring

— Amarendra Kumar

**Selfie**

Sky a dance floor  
to fall from-  
head over heels in love  
into the frying pan  
for a fish fry.

Savour and smell  
a fishy contour of a smoke whiff  
lingers... fades.

Dreaming about the journey's end  
you may drink into a deer's eyes  
and shoot a tiger  
on the deer trail  
drinking deeper.

— Amarendra Kumar  
Nakhas, Hajipur, Bihar.

Laughter a wonder among wonders  
Savants laugh at the world  
Egoists laugh scarcely  
For they could never  
Be obliged easily  
Zealots and jealousy  
Laugh at others.

Writers and saints  
Laugh at themselves  
Octogenarians laugh  
Using laughter as anti-dote  
Let us come together  
To laugh in chorus .

Comedy fosters laughter  
Laughs to let others laugh  
Artist portray cartoon  
To looks like a buffoon  
Donned in fanciful apparels  
A lame enacting skillfully.

Laughter is guilelessness  
Openness as open space  
An innate skill to peep out  
A way to open the window  
Shut inwardly to oneself  
A secret too hard to imitate.

Laughter is an inner wave  
An inward humming  
An emotion of joy  
Being zesty elevates  
Bursts of laughter  
Fill up new enthusiasm.  
Seeing angst of dispassion  
Laughter breeds compassion  
Pangs of spite

Habitually bite  
The inner life psyche  
As embodied seems dicey  
Thus runs a sob-filled streak  
Overfed with grief and yowl's freak  
Plaintive laughter befits a requiem  
A boisterous laugh  
Loud and embroidered  
Becomes a roar.

What moves room on roof  
Children's playful laugh  
As rose petal's sough  
Breaking artificial barriers  
Outer coverings  
All to rear innocence .  
To reinvigorate the dopamine  
In all organisms of human kind .

— **Dr. Suresh Chandra Pande**  
Haldwani, Nainital (UK)  
drsureshpande@rediffmail.com

### **Promise, O Little Angels!**

\*  
O thou new buds of our nation!  
Thou have to bloom like fragrant flowers.  
O thou little diamonds of God's creation!  
Thou have to glitter like sparkling stars.

\*  
Tomorrow is waiting for thee eagerly,  
For thy new energy and new power.  
Thou are the future of this Earth.  
Precious is thine each minute, each hour.  
\*

We teachers find in thine innocent faces,  
The pious glimpse of Great Almighty.  
When we teach thee and train thy efforts,  
We feel ourselves in heaven, near eternity.

\*  
In thy smile, lies our soul's solace  
Listen, O ye fate of the human race!  
Thou are the time's heritage in our hands.  
We are alive to see thy glory, thy grace.

\*  
We use to find mistakes in thee,  
Only to correct thy faults and errors.  
We want to see thee on the right path,  
Take us always as thy mirrors!

\*  
If thou wish to touch the Sun, the Sky,  
Come on; use us as ladders; and fly!  
Know thy responsibilities, thy duty!  
Work is worship, in progress lies beauty.

\*  
So proceed, keep on proceeding on thy way!  
Succeed; keep on succeeding, night and day!  
Leave useless worries, bid goodbye to dismay!  
Promise, o little angels, to be always cheerful and gay!

— **Dr. Kumari Rashmi Priydarshni**  
Assistant Professor  
Department of English  
Gautam Buddha Mahila College, Gaya

### **Love You Too**

I don't have abs, I have flabs.  
Flabs full of breeding stretch marks.  
The lose skin could not turn firm as it used to be;  
The tone too faded from pink to dull lifeless hue.

The suppleness of limbs is all gone,  
Now my cracked heels appear itchy to your feet  
And make you shrink to the far corner of the bed.  
My exhausted eyes can't emit lustrous beams  
Incapable of casting a spell, the drooping lids seem to  
scream.  
The glazy lively locks which glided through your fingers  
so often;  
Have turned out to be lifeless stiff bun.  
The hostile grey fighters unwilling to surrender to  
chemical dyes,  
Rob me of my once tempting charm.  
Your gazes coax me.  
Your indifference chokes me.  
But  
This saggy flabby pale lump of flesh  
When stands in front of mirror,  
I see a woman of strength.  
A woman who has Fought, Lived, Loved  
Pleased, Cried, Bred, Smiled  
Won and Lost; and yet Alive.  
I touch the reflection and a smile flutters on my lips,  
I declare with passionate urge; 'I love you gal'.  
My most loyal partner inside the mirror,  
Unfailingly echo 'Love You Too'.

— **Dr. Ira Jha**  
irajha26@yahoo.com

## Ghazal

Between her and me  
retained a space  
For some more meetings  
retained the sequence

Who ponders over death  
who had so much time  
On life's very core  
retained the notion

How to rate the sage  
how to name her  
Filled who all wounds  
but retained void

On hedges of the heart  
didn't write the name  
We for your dream  
not retained position

What may I complain  
O' God for your kindness  
Though I lost the vigour  
yet retained courage

One that strange a person  
as she guards the heart  
Got closed the windows  
open retained the door

— **Vishal Khullar**  
381-C, Rajguru Nagar, Ludhiana-141012  
vishalkhullar80@rediffmail.com

## My breath

My every breath is charged  
My love for You, my Lord  
Shall never fail.  
My life and existence  
Is for Thee alone.

O Love! Thou shall  
 Not forsake me.  
 My being is on fire.  
 The glitter of the world  
 Nor the lasting beauty  
 Shall distract me  
 From your remembrance.  
 I repeat Your Name thousand times.  
 O my Lord, my Love.  
 Your single glance  
 Shall turn my stony heart  
 Into glittering gold.  
 Let your Midas touch remain for ever.

— **S.L.Peeran**, Bengaluru

### **EXISTIR**

I don't want to think.  
 I like to leave life  
 to flow  
 without conscience  
 of the air I breeze.  
 I want to be a poem  
 not written nor dreamed  
 or to be the eyes  
 that see me without  
 feeling this nausea  
 diluted in verse.  
 Then you will tell me  
 why you made me  
 to exist!

— **Teresinka Pereira**  
 tpereira@buckeye-express.com

***Cultural and Philosophical Reflections in Indian Poetry in English (in five volumes- Footprints, Rs. 1300/ Pathfinders, Rs. 800/ Signatures, Rs. 995/ Milestones, Rs. 1200/ and Journey, Rs. 1700/)* by Dr Sudhir K. Arora, Autorspress, New Delhi, 2016, Pp. 1379, Rs. 5000/, \$ 250/ (complete set).**

The book under review in five volumes is so far the most comprehensive, meticulous and objective critical reevaluation of the early Indian English poets and evaluation of the other poets from post-independence to contemporary phase. In his critical approach Dr Arora is uncompromisingly objective, unsparingly bold and free from prejudice. He is able to avoid 'historical' and 'personal' fallacies that Matthew Arnold warns a critic of. This is a litmus test for a critic that he passes. He has tried his best to be fair and honest to every poet he studies in a historical perspective.

The first volume "Footprints" takes up a very relevant but hotly debated issue that is the condemnation of early poets like Aurobindo, Sarojini Naidu, Toru Dutt, Tagore and others by modern poets like Nissim Ezekiel, P. Lal, Parthasarthy and others. How he handles it without aligning himself with any of the groups is worth noting in critical discourse and a specimen of healthy and balanced criticism. He counters the views of the modern poets with the evidences and contradictions shown in their own poetry and with the critical support from their predecessors like V K Gokak and their contemporaries and successors like Buddhadev Bose, Eunice de Souza, Makarand Paranjape, and some others. He is bold enough to say,

“Parthasarathy committed a serious literary offence by not acknowledging nineteenth and early twentieth century poetry as a part of the continuation of Indian Poetry in English.” (11) Not only this he takes up the bases on which they denounced the early poetry and negates the charges with textual support from the early poetry. With full proof from the early poetry he explodes the myth they created that the early poets were indifferent to social, political reality of the time. Again his approach of putting forward his voice of dissent shows his critical maturity and acumen. Let us see how he takes up Daruwalla’s oft quoted remark and register his note of dissent. Daruwalla says, “The best thing about Indian poetry in English is that there are no ‘, no school’, no poetic congeries, no Gurus and no disciples.” Dr Sudhir Arora’s response, “He is right in his own way to some extent though a cursory glance over the scenario speaks a different story. There are many poets who wrote under the influence of Tagore and Aurobindo. Today the poets take Nissim Ezekiel and Ramanujan as their models. Women poets attempt to fuse Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu and Kamala Das, and prepare the gravy displaying the conservative as well as the revolutionary outlooks.” I would like to add that P Lal, Nissim Ezekiel had been and Jayanta Mahapatra has been the leading figures of their respective poetic congeries and held as Gurus by many. He talks of classification and canonization of Indian English poetry, also. He accepts Paranjape’s model of classification - ‘Colonialism’, ‘Nationalism’, ‘Modernism’, and ‘Post-Modernism’. In poetic canon he revalidates Niranjana Mohanty’s model and stresses on its therapeutic values. The volume is highly informative and provides sumptuous critical reading on more than 60 of the early poets.

The volume II is an extension of Volume I in the

sense that it further explores and reevaluates comprehensively five poets out of 35 poets discussed at length in the 1st volume. The author here fixes his priority on the best canonical poets from the early period. They are Derozio, Toru Dutt, Sri Aurobindo and Rabindranath Tagore. The author affirms that these “five pathfinders did their best in introducing India to the West” and set the new trends for the poets to come. On these five poets it is a critical discourse in continuity. No wonder it has repetitions of passages from Volume I as reference points to carry the discourse forward. Their importance lies in reestablishing the strength of cultural, philosophical and spiritual heritage of India in both the West and the East to dismantle the colonial myth of western superiority and to bring in fresh energy and confidence among the depressed Indian intelligentsia in particular and society at large.

Volume III “Signatures” is focussed on the emergence of a new trend—realistic, earthly, physical, ironical and more contemporaneous. It was labelled as ‘Modern’ or modernist. The poets included in it are Nissim Ezekiel, A K Ramanujan and Arun Kolatkar. He is all praise for A K Ramanujan whom he calls the symbol of symbiosis and quotes from his interview that is a million dollar idea for us:

You don’t just write with a language, you write with all you have. When I write in Kannada, I’d like all my English, Tamil, etc to be at the back of it; and when I write in English I hope my Tamil and my Kannada, like my linguistics and anthropology, what I know of America and India, are at the back of it.”

About Ezekiel who was the first to raise voice against the early poets and worked with missionary zeal to launch a new movement in Indian poetry in English he talks at length and calls him a poet of the

common man. Here one misses the names like P Lal and Dom Mores who were among the founders of modern poetry and formulated “Poetry Manifesto.” I wonder at the choice of Kolatkar who was not a part of that movement and a late entrant. Rather he set a trend different from Ramanujan and Ezekiel.

Volume IV “Milestones” offers an extensive and painstaking research on the poetry of Shiv K Kumar, Keki N Daruwalla, Jayanta Mahapatra and R Parthasarathy. Shiv K Kumar is a master craftsman with innovative imagery and poetic idiom. Dr Sudhir Arora elaborately deals with each and every aspect of Shiv K Kumar’s poetry- myriad themes, images, figures of speech, forms, etc. and does well to dispel the notion that Kumar despises women in his poetry. Of course his women are mostly conventional and conformist. Daruwalla’s popular image of ‘sketching a landscape with words’ and of a bitter critique of life around are perceptively assessed with elaboration and sumptuous quotations from his texts. He also reveals the poet’s perception of symbols as ‘dead words’. As for Jayanta Mahapatra, he is the most versatile, celebrated and living legend of Indian poetry in English today. The author has added an exclusive and threadbare analysis of his short poem ‘Hunger’ to the evaluation of his poetry in general in chapter six. Besides this it also includes two short chapters on his two poetry books “Relationship” for which he got Sahitya Akademi Award and “Land” his latter collection. It covers not only Oriya myth making poetic enterprise of Mahapatra but a holistic approach to his poetry. R Parthasarthy is given the minimum space just eighteen pages and the chapter abruptly starts with his second and perhaps his last poetry collection *Rough Passage* leaving out his first one *The First Step* which is no more available in public domain.

The fifth and last volume “Journey” underlines the continuity of the river of Indian Poetry in English in the contemporary poetry and probes into the trends and issues dominating the poetry today. It is by no means an extensive and all inclusive critical survey of the contemporary poetry but the representative voices have been picked up for intensive study. It includes poets like Niranjana Mohanty, Hoshang Merchant, R C Shukla and Gopikrishnan Kottoor. However, one feels that the author could have been more inclusive and should have avoided the repetition of poets like Aurobindo, Tagore, Ezekiel, Ramanujan, Shiv K Kumar, Mahapatra, Parthasarathy. However, a brief chapter on “Indian Culture” is very illuminating. In fact every poet can be approached from cultural perspective.

Another value addition to this book is so far the most exhaustive Bibliography covering poetry collections of more than 750 poets from 1827 to 2015. They are arranged poet-wise and year-wise. I hope the rich feast of bibliography will evoke the interest of poetry lovers. I highly recommend this book as a critical companion to Indian poetry in English which is a must for all critics, researchers, teachers who are working on this subject or teaching Indian poetry in English and also for poetry lovers in general. It is also useful for those interested in culture studies. The author Dr Sudhir K Arora deserves kudos for this magnum opus and at the same time the publisher Sri Sudarshan Kcherry who himself is a poet -philosopher deserves accolade for elegantly bringing out this work of immortal value.

— Dr. C L Khatri

\*\*\*



**Basavaraj Naikar, *Nirad Chaudhuri as a Critic of Modern Culture*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2018. Print. ISBN:978-8126925780. Price: INR 895/-. Pages: 328.**

---

Nirad Chandra Chaudhuri (popularly known as Nirad Chaudhuri sans his middle name) was an “extraordinary” genius who was an idolized ivory tower in the east and the west concurrently as he carried forward the legacies of both the Indian and the British writers. His creative zeal is a fine amalgamation of Nehru, Radhakrishnan, Khushwant Singh and few others from India and Carlyle, Huxley, Swift, etc. from England. However, he differs from these writers in style, approach, form and contents. Naikar asserts, “his prose is neither exhortative like that of Vivekananda, nor romantic like that of Nehru nor incantatory like that of Radhakrishnan, but is realistic, analytical, satirical and scholarly at the same time” (1). Chaudhuri’s creative *oeuvre* contains nearly two dozen fictional and non-fictional books written in English and Bangla.

Chaudhuri invited the attention of his critics from time to time because he has been proactive throughout his literary career. If one looks at the secondary sources available on Chaudhuri’s works, only a few critics have taken pains to work on his entirety of literary creations. After 2000, there is a wide chasm on Chaudhuri criticism but Basavaraj Naikar, a retired professor of English from Karnataka University, has recently brought out a compendium entitled *Nirad Chaudhuri: As a Critic of Modern Culture* published this year to fill that chasm. However, there emerged a volume entitled *The Thought of Nirad C. Chaudhuri* (Cambridge UP 2015) by Ian Almond of Georgetown University, Qatar. But, the scope of the latter one is very limited to the Indian scholars. Hence,

it is quintessential to review Naikar’s critique on Chaudhuri’s intact corpus of literary works.

The volume, divided into sixteen chapters, offers a linear critique on Chaudhuri’s works. Naikar’s ‘Introduction’ to this volume deals with the life and works of Chaudhuri, on one hand, and concisely contextualizes his literary taxonomy on the other. After the introduction, a series of chapters are unfolded. The next chapter entitled “*Autobiography of an Unknown Indian as Descriptive Ethnology*” disentangles the conundrums of an unknown “author” whose ‘autobiography’, written by Chaudhuri, presents “a picture of the growth of consciousness of the man including the inevitable crisis and conciliation of conscience” (11) and also offers “an ethnological picture of a culture” (29).

The following chapter on *A Passage to England*, Chaudhuri’s *magnum opus*, delineates an “analytical picture of the English character” (46) while the fourth chapter on *The Continent of Circe* incisively examines how the author outlines the book as an ‘essay.’ To quote Naikar “the essay that Chaudhuri writes is not of the length of two pages to twenty-five pages of close print. Naturally, Chaudhuri’s ‘essay’ resembles Hobbes’ *Essay on the Human Understanding* in its length. He justifiably calls it an essay on the peoples of India” (48). Both of the aforementioned chapters based on *A Passage to England* and *The Continent of Circe* explicate the dichotomies of “the English Character” and “the Peoples of India” respectively.

The other ensuing chapters on *To Live or Not to Live* and *The Intellectual in India* overtly study the narrative structure of the aforementioned non-fictions while the next chapter on Chaudhuri’s *Scholar Extraordinary*, which is ‘an epical biography of Max Muller,’ according

to Naikar, seriously critiques the ‘biography’ and outlines its palimpsest significance in Indian academia. He further asserts that, “[i]t is a happy coincidence that one serious scholar has written on another serious scholar...” (99). In the same modus, Naikar posits an undeviating reading of *Clive of India*, a political biography of Lord Clive, in the chapter nine.

The chapters eight and ten on *Culture in the Vanity Bag* and *Hinduism: A Religion to Live By* respectively offer a discursive analysis of Indian culture and Hindu religion. The former meticulously examines, according to the critic, the sartorial significance and its “connection between the Indian clothing and the Indian history” (110) while the latter one offers both historical as well as panoramic view of the Hindu religion. According to Chaudhuri, marks Naikar, “Hinduism is a human phenomenon of immense magnitude and bewildering diversity” (170). Thus, Naikar has established that every Indian reader should read these books by Chaudhuri in today’s political scenario as the present Indian society is demarcated by politicians on the name of being pro-Hindu and anti-Hindu.

In the next chapter on *Thy Hand, Great Anarch!*, the author strives to establish a structural transmutation between biography and autobiography. However, *Thy Hand, Great Anarch!* may be said to be “an extension of *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*” (172). Additionally, the author (Naikar) has also argued, in this chapter, that, “*Thy Hand* has a big biographical chunk devoted to the life and career of Tagore” (180). He concludes that *Thy Hand* is one of the “great cultural records of India with epic proportions” (188).

In the analogous manner, the last few chapters on these texts—*Three Horsemen of the New Apocalypse*; *From the Archives of a Centenarian*; *Why I Mourn for England*;

*The East is East and the West is West*—are pedantically and critically surveyed. In the penultimate chapter ‘Chaudhuri’s Prose Style’ followed by ‘Conclusion’ Naikar intelligently equates Chaudhuri’s significance as a prose writer in the modern times and tenaciously places him in the galaxy of great writers of the east and the west. Naikar concludes, “Like Goldsmith’s school teacher his (Chaudhuri’s) small head contains a large wealth of ideas and notions which are inspiring and proactive at the same time” (326).

Thus, the volume is a fine critical feast on Nirad Chaudhuri’s fictional and non-fictional corpus which may be useful not only for young researchers but also for teachers and academicians. Naikar must be appreciated for bringing out this volume well on time.

— **Dr. Ajay K. Chaubey**

Assistant Professor of English  
National Institute of Technology  
Srinagar-Garhwal, Uttarakhand 346174

\*\*\*

***The Queen of Kittur, By Basavaraj Naikar, Bloomington, Indiana, USA: Partridge Publishers, 2018. ISBN: 978-1-482886207. Pp. 410. Rs. 600.***

---

This is a great historical novel dealing with the biography of Rani Chennamma from her birth to death. After the death of her husband, Raja Mallasarja, she became the powerful ruler of the Kingdom of Kittur and rebelled against the East India Company that wanted to conquer entire India. The first part of the novel describes her bravery and patriotism when she fought against J.M.Thackeray, the Collector of Dharwad and killed him. In the second part, though it is not divided into two parts, she fought against Mr. Chaplin, who left Bombay for Belgaum on 17<sup>th</sup> Nov 1824, with a firm decision to annex Kittur Kingdom after defeating Rani Chennamma.

Rani Chennamma had five great and admirable qualities of head and heart. Her nobility is shown when she gave ten thousand rupees to Saidansab to reconstruct a mosque. Her magnanimity is shown when she treated the Christian prisoners of war, saying, "These innocent women and children are like our own sisters and children" (P.146). She showed her political sagacity when she said, "We are free to manage our own kingdom the way we like. Our treaty with Munro says that" (P.91). Her humanity can be seen when she released two British captives, Mr. Elliot and Mr. Stevenson, whom she never ill-treated as enemies. She showed her equanimity of mind when she was kept as a prisoner in her own palace and also in the Bailhongal jail afterwards.

The greatest quality of Chennamma was that she was a great patriot and heroic in her struggle, which is shown in her speeches. She said to the warriors of

Kittur, "The Kittur kingdom is yours and you are the kingdom. Is there anything more honourable than a heroic death on the battlefield?" (P.232), "Our choice is only between freedom and heroic death on the battlefield" (P.246), "Please remember that I am not a coward, though born a woman... whatever happens to you will happen to me" (P.263). Then she is depicted as the greatest war heroine whose name will shine like a star among the great queens of India. Mr. Eden, the Acting Political Agent, after the demise of Thackeray, admired Chennamma's bravery, in spite of her being the enemy of the Company Government (P.203). Even Thackeray himself had admitted saying, "This Rani seems to be a thorough gentle lady" (P.147). On 5<sup>th</sup> December 1824, Mr. Chaplin, who was ecstatic about his victory over the Rani of Kittur, frankly confessed, "Rani Saheb, though we have fought against you, we have great respect for you. You have done your duty as a true patriot" (P.273).

Though she had a big army of 3000 horsemen, 2000 camels and about a hundred elephants, 36 cannons and 56 guns, she was defeated in the war. There were three obvious reasons for her defeat and downfall. First of all, she could not get any help and support from the Raja of Kolhapur. Secondly she was betrayed by her own selfish and treacherous man, Sivabasappa, who had adulterated the gunpowder with cow dung and grains of millet, which made the guns defunct at the most crucial time. Thirdly the Company army, which surrounded Kittur Fort from three directions, was several times bigger and better equipped with modern weapons of war.

The revengeful and ambitious Chaplin ordered the captains and his soldiers to give capital punishment to the prominent rebels and warriors of Kittur like Sardar Gurusiddhappa and others. He ordered for the

demolishing of the main portion of the palace and the fort of Kittur so that the name of Kittur kingdom should be obliterated from the minds of people. The glory and grandeur of the kingdom was crushed down. It seemed that the sun was setting eternally on the Kittur kingdom (P.261). But it is an undisputed fact that Rani Chennamma sowed the seeds of 'Patriotism and Freedom', which sprouted afterwards.

It is a highly absorbing historical novel, in which the author has neither distorted the facts, nor exaggerated them. Neither has he suppressed the truth, nor has he sacrificed it for the sake of convenience. In every historical novel there must be a proportionate fusion of facts and fiction. The author is not allowed to take liberties with the recorded events. At the most he can reconstruct the past and interpret it by filling the gaps logically and artistically. As there is no scope for the free play of imagination, he can create minor or functional characters to bring out the truth of history. It is a work of art, not rewriting the history. The author's artistic part will be in the blending of the realistic with the fantastic. The exact dates, months and years of hectic political activities, wars and deaths, manners and morals of the kings, queens and common people must make us think, feel and see the past before our mind's eye. The letters written by the British Political Agents and others confirm the authenticity of the novel. Generally what the historians sum up in three pages Dr. Basavaraj Naikar has described vividly in three hundred pages. Nothing is tedious or monotonous in the novel. As it is not divided into chapters, the novel has swift continuity and flow till it reaches the final disaster. Several Virasaiva technical terms, Kannada and Sanskrit words like *vibhuti*, *istalinga*, *dasoha*, *tirtha*, *prasada*, *puja*, etc., create the local colour and atmosphere successfully. The language is racy and

effective. Somehow, some misprints have crept in, but they could be avoided in the future reprints of the novel. Indians depend heavily and rely on British historians, who were partial in the writing of history, but here Dr. Basavaraj Naikar has viewed and re-written from the Indian point of view showing the greatness of Rani Chennamma, who is praised even by the British Captains and Commanders of the East India Company. Much of what he has recorded may not be original, but the presentation of facts is new. In spite of our best efforts to know the truth much of history remains a mystery. As a creative writer Naikar has injected life into the moth-eaten records and has infused blood and life into all the characters, both major and minor. He can easily transport the readers to the concerned time of history.

The portrait of Rani Chennamma on the galloping horseback, with a sword in one hand and a shield in the other, on the cover page, can inspire the people and arouse patriotism even in the dull souls, even today.

By writing this novel the author has immortalized Rani Chennamma, the Queen of Kittur, and in turn, he is immortalized by the novel. It is not merely a great achievement, but a solid contribution to Indian English Literature. No other Indian novelist can ever dare write such another.

The novel deserves to be prescribed as a textbook at the graduate level, in all the Universities of Karnataka State.

— **Dr. R.S.Chulki**

Visiting Professor of English  
Bijapur 586 103 (Karnataka)

\*\*\*

***National Identity and Cultural Representation in the Novels of Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai* by Sonali Das, Cambridge Scholar Publishing, UK, 2018, Pp. 135. Rs. NA**

---

The book under review is a consummate research work on Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* and Kiran Desai's *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* and *The Inheritance of Loss* in a theoretical framework of nation, national identity and culture hotly debated in the postcolonial discourse. It explores how globalisation that is a postcolonial development has binary opposite impacts. On the one hand it is bragged to foster development and integration of peoples and nations in a global village, on the other hand the marginalised sections of the society as depicted in the said novels are continued to be discriminated against and the chasm between the haves and the have-nots are further widening. The author also probes into the question of identity- national, cultural and individual taking into account the wide ranging references on the subjects.

The book comprises five chapters. The first two chapters: "Narrating a Nation and Defining National Identity", "Reconfiguring Cultural Studies and Postcolonialism" are in-depth discourse on key concepts that provide a philosophical foregrounding to the critical evaluation of the proposed novels. The following two chapters examine the two novelists separately in the given theoretical concept of Postcolonialism followed by a neatly summed up conclusion bringing out her own findings of the research. She adds an exhaustive Bibliography. As such it is a very methodically executed and well documented work.

Sonali Das tries to set at rest the controversy

over political and cultural identity of Nation or as Aderson calls it 'an imagined community' by accepting both and asserting that the concept of India as a nation is very old and regards it a necessity for upholding patriotism. She also refers to the role of Indian English novels particularly Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*, Rushdie's *Midnight Children*, Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* and some others in creation of a recognisable Indian voice.

The author draws on the common key concepts in both postcolonialism and cultural studies like, diaspora, immigration, hybridity, marginality, subaltern, identity, nation-state, hegemony, subaltern, etc citing examples from various contemporary writers and also traces the development of these two disciplines at international level. She refers to various interpretations of culture ranging from classical Indian concept to the western outlook and writes about melting pot of culture and nationalism in the postmodern age. Many of the key terms are concisely explained for the benefit of the readers to understand the study of the given novels in proper perspective. She makes a pertinent observation that the two theories 'evolved in the 1950s' and 'grew through the subsequent decades' and converged in the 1980s onward under the 'impact of globalisation'.

The important thing in her approach to Arundhati Roy's novel is the reconfiguring Nehru's idea of India and culture as a critical tool to re-examining *The God of Small Things* in that background. But at the same time she tries to see how the key terms like 'subaltern', 'hybridity', colonialism, sexuality, feminism, nation, culture, intertextuality and the like operate in the novel. As she writes, "Identity, politics and culture all go together to make a literary representation of nationality in the context of the novel." On several occasions she keeps herself at bay of the raging controversies by simply quoting the contradictory

opinions of the critics as in the case of her representation of EMS Namboodiripad, Communist movement and outright denunciation of the novel by C D Narasimhaiah.

At times one feels that it needs a little more delineation for example she jumps from one concept to another in this passage: “The culture of land has been depicted in TGST. Homo K Bhabha’s notion of ‘hybridity’ finds favour with Arundhati Roy. Apart from being a creative writer, Roy is also known for her activist writings,..”

Dr Das while exploring sexual love and politics and ‘national identity’ in the novels of Kiran Desai shows how culture shapes our behaviour, politics, literature, international outlook and integrates diverse linguistic, social and ethnic groups. In the context of Kiran Desai who like many other writers are settled in the US diaspora is a very relevant concept that keeps them haunting in every study or discourse. Desai’s novel *The Inheritance of Loss* presents a different case of diaspora making Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) movement for a separate state a case of study linking it with the postcolonial concept of culture, geopolitical identity and sub-nationality.

Needless to say the author has made a painstaking research of the subject having studied or browsed all possible references on the subjects and crammed the divergent critical views on the texts and theories so much so that her own critical space seems shrunk. The international publisher, who is poised to make inroad in Indian book market has elegantly brought out the book with glossy, glittering cover design. Kudos to Sonali Das who has the legacy of scholarship and the publisher.

— Dr C L Khatri

\*\*\*

**Gagana B. Purohit, *Tracing Roots of Indigenous Poetry in English : The Post Colonial Connection*. Jaipur: Aadi Publications, 2018. Rs. 1350 ISBN 978-81-935393-4-7**

---

Gagana B. Purohit’s *Tracing Roots of Indigenous Poetry in English: The Post Colonial Connection* probes into the roots of indigenous poetry in English, particularly the poetry of five poets—Jayanta Mahapatra, Bibhu Padhi, Niranjana Mohanty, Nandini Sahu and C.L. Khatri while considering their postcolonial connection. The major portion of the book is devoted to the four Orissan poets. The author has included C.L. Khatri, a poet from Bihar. C.L. Khatri is a poet of abiding significance but his inclusion among the Orissan poets seems to be very surprising.

Four Orissan poets are connected to one another in one way or the other. Jayanta Mahapatra is the centre—the magnetic figure round whom the other four poets feel attracted. Bibhu Padhi is associated with Mahapatra because of the Orissan landscapes and his Orissan roots. Niranjana Mohanty also belongs to Orissa. When he was alive, he was a great admirer and the single largest contributor of critical articles on the poetry of Jayanta Mahapatra. Nandini Sahu, though she lives in Delhi has her roots in Orissa and the thing that connects her to the Orissan idiom is her disciple association with Niranjana Mohanty. C.L. Khatri has no direct connection to this group except that he is an indigenous poet who has regional roots which make him strong enough to spread the fragrance at the universal level.

One more thing that makes these poets associated with one another is that they are all academicians. All the poets have their uniqueness and also differ from one another. The author becomes

favourable towards Jayanta Mahapatra in whom he finds the “perfect balance and accuracy (because of his job of physicist) which seems to be missing in the other four poets, who, at times seem to be carried away by the flight of imagination of literary connoisseurs.” The author thinks that “writing poetry is a process of self assertion and self revelation” and this is the process which these poets share in common.

The book seems to be advocating the Orissan poets’ contribution to the field of Indian Poetry in English. The inclusion of C.L. Khatri becomes an accidental choice. The inclusion of the poets from Southern, Western and Northern parts of India would have not only enriched the book but made it also a true representative of the indigenous poetry.

The author attempts to trace out the postcolonial connection while peeing into the indigenous roots. He himself states that the main thrust of the work is “the postcolonial emphasis on roots and nativity, place and landscape and above all, the nation and creation of Indian Idiom.” But the postcolonial clarity is missing and while demonstrating his scholarship, he becomes somewhat ambiguous.

The author praises Mahapatra for his “unconditional allegiance to his motherland that keeps him always ahead of others of his tribe.” He tags Bibhu Padhi’s poetry as “Sentimental Historicism” (a term that he takes from Nila Shah and Pramod Kumar) and attempts to search for roots, tradition and culture in his poetry which is penned in sentimental mood. Fifty three pages are devoted to Padhi’s poetry in which he finds the treatment of familiar roots and home.

The author finds Mohanty “a versatile genius” and “a master to use the creative space for the benefit of the common man.” He uses excerpts from the poems of Mohanty and within a span of thirty nine pages, he

traces out the Jangannath culture and his love for the roots—the roots that turn him from regional to universal. He devotes forty three pages to the poetry of Nandini Sahu who seems to be fighting “against the male hegemony to establish her identity with an intention to gain access to a new found freedom of an educated woman.” Seeing solace from her roots, she advocates feminism and pronounces it clearly.

The author devotes twenty pages to Khatri whose poetry, he finds, is “in possession of indigenous culture and history, duly disturbed and distorted by the colonial intervention.” Khatri has a kind of “certain indigenous conscience” and with it he assimilates “an Indianness possessively into his poetry.” The author has an inclination towards the writers of Odisha and finds that for them “writing is kind of ‘meditation’ which follows the ways of devotion and perseverance to sustain in this globalized world.” What’s about the poet Khatri, a poet from Bihar. Is poetry not a meditation to him?

Overall, the book digs out the regional ground to reveal the roots but its ambiguous language fails to communicate the reader who has to make repeated readings to make out the meanings of the ideas therein. The natural flow of ideas is missing though the author has attempted to give a feel of the poetry of the mentioned poets with the use of excerpts. It is a good book for researchers and also for those who are interested in Orissan culture, roots and landscapes as the author himself admits that “the works of the five poets form the corpus of the study for tracing indigenous roots for self representation and identification.” Certainly the book is “a go-ahead with the readers of postcolonial poetry.” It will offer the readers a mental feast that possesses the ingredients to make them hungry and curious enough to go for further reading.

**Reviewed by Sudhir K Arora**  
drsudhirkarora@gmail.com

***Songs of Sonority and Hope***

**D. C. Chambial, Authorspress, New Delhi-110016,  
(2018), pp. 152, Price 295**

---

*Songs of Sonority and Hope* is a collection of poems written from 2010-2017. Dr. D. C. Chambial is a reputed poet in Indian English Literature. He has won Michael Madhusudan Award, Lachian Art Letter Award, Dove in Peace Award and Life Time Achievement Award. He has nine books of poetry and two books of criticism to his credit.

The present book has 108 poems arranged in two sections. The first section – Under Hour of Antipathy contains 57 poems. Dr Chambial claims that his poetry is an amalgam of dream and memory. No doubt, his anthology begins with his reminiscence of a temple, an old hill, the devotees all very pleasant things under Hour of Antipathy though. In fact, these are poems unpleasant, unpleasant as they register unpleasant human affair causing internecine battle inflicting mutual damage to both body and soul. Thus, the poet writes.

We're living in a land/that abounds in  
Wolves, hyenas, and jackals....  
We're living at a time/when morals, ethics and virtues  
emaciated, scared, crouch in a corner;

This antipathy spars with sonority and hope. The poet laments that song of life is dead; it is lost in the maelstrom of modernity, the air is muffled in fridges, in steel lockers. Naturally the poet dreams of the old temple which is no more, the new infrastructure is shouting brilliant, the god of gold is silent, his powers confiscated.

This being the predominant idea, it recurs in several other poems. In "Man for Man" the poet regrets

that man is mad after money he is no better than a wild beast of prey with ethics in smithereens. His 'animal within seeks to enjoy/animal without'. (65) He says to the extent, 'Man has grown fangs to bite man/Love is lost in human heart,/sits like a vulture on carcass.' (67)

In such a situation the poet remarks ironically in 'My country is great !' His words are,

My country is indisputably great !  
Bother about coffers, the poor they hate  
Rolling in mire of fraud  
The wealth, they keep away from the State  
Men may live or men may die of their fate  
My country is indisputably great. (69)

The fact is, rosy promises can't sustain life, but equally true is the fact that the people are condemned to hope and hope and hope. 'Hope forces one to survive' (68)

In "River of Happiness" some of the poems show the positive or rather normative outlook of the poet. Thus, he writes,

The Earth, created for Adam's chastisement,  
Can be easily transformed into Heaven  
If those living here below the firmament  
Follow his commands in this haven. (95)

The poet himself reclining under a shady tree seeks solace at the feet of the Lord with his mind sans malice. I wish this 'ambience of cosy bliss' (94) could be infectious. Again, the poet's saintly mind rationalises saying life and death complement each other like day and night, earth and sky etc. So, 'Let's welcome both/ With stoic stance of a seer !' (110) Similarly, the poet avers, 'Between pain and laughter/lingers life silently'. (118) The poet's outlook on woman is fair and square, natural, rational, calling it feministic would be unjust.



The poem 'What a Justice' is nothing but the truth.

*Songs of Sonority* surveys social, moral and ethical scenes from the seat of a moralist, a teacher. His approach is similar to Matthew Arnold's who holds that poetry can civilise, sensitise and moralise humanity.

— **Ram Bhagwan Singh**  
singhrambhagwan@gmail.com

\*\*\*

### ***The Merry Spring***

**Agranee Shree**

**Janaki Prakashan, Patna (2017), pp. 48, Price 200**

**Youngest Poet in English from Bihar**

---

Among those whom poetry comes as naturally as leaves to a tree, here is an adolescent child of class eight courting the Muse unnoticed, untrained, almost spontaneously. Agranee Shree (2004-) writes because she loves writing poems on subjects of her choice from physical to metaphysical. Her subjects range from the merry spring to mom, to beggars, friendship, silence, happiness, time eternal and visitor from heaven et. al.

*The Merry Spring* is Agranee Shree's maiden venture in writing English poetry. Her first poem is 'Mom, I love you' which affirms her rooted love for her mother. She declares her love being more than the clouds loving the sky, sunflowers loving the sun, the shore loving the sea; her love is an everlasting spring. She claims that 'Vision from heaven' is her first poem which is a marvel of her thoughtful composition, a child thinking of one's soul as a divine content, rather God Himself. She asserts that God lives within one's soul and one needn't look for Him to heaven. Such a thought speaks

of Agranee's mature thinking and Agranee, a prodigy.

Agranee's philosophical thinking occurs in Time Eternal in which she maintains that while nothing under the sun is immortal, only time is. To quote,

Time was never born,  
Time will never die,  
It will never go if you want,  
It will never come if you cry. (p.5)

The poet loves nature as she writes 'I feel spring is smiling to me' (13). The trees also have utilitarian value. Hence, 'Ever worthy Trees' (41). Agranee has a sympathetic heart, she feels for beggars at the temple. She also sympathises with the innocent mosquitoes who are killed mercilessly just for a drop of blood extracted from a healthy body. Her plea is that as mosquitoes bite us, we may bite them in retaliation, but killing them is unjust. Her advice is to seek happiness in small, ordinary things of life. Her poems on abstract themes like silence, friendship, winter afternoon, God etc speak of her taller than life image, a precocious consciousness.

The beauty of the book is enhanced by the sketches and paintings illustrating the theme. They are so eye-catching.

The nature poems have Wordsworth's simplicity and humanistic concern. The poems have, by and large, a rhyming pattern that adds to the musical charm of the book.

*The Merry Spring* is perhaps the first book of poetry in English by the youngest girl from Bihar. I congratulate her and wish her all success in life.

— **Prof. (Dr.) Kumar Chandradeep**

\*\*\*

## ***Paradigm***

**Dr. Paramita Mukherjee Mullick**

**Kafla International Chandigarh-160047 (2017),**

**pp. 79, Price 120**

---

Paramita Mukherjee Mullick, a scientist enjoys writing poetry to spread happiness and joy everywhere. *Paradigm* is her second collection containing 60 poems. They are divided into five sections—Earth, Water Fire, Air and Sky representing the five vital constituents of life. This is, no doubt, a scientist's approach rather than an aesthete's. However, the thematic division is not water tight though mostly pertaining to the named section.

Under Earth there are poems like 'My urn is full', 'My Southern Window', 'The Ivy Covered House', 'The Window', 'The China Rose', 'The Bud', 'The Sun bathed Earth' etc. There are also poems like 'sweet revenge', 'positive mind', 'gen next'. Similarly, in the Water section we have such poems as, waves, swimming, the white waves, white lies etc.

The important thing about Mullick's poetry is her sense of fullness as she claims that her urn is full. She eschews jealousy as it would make her poor. The scene from her southern window is another source of happiness. Likewise the mewling of the kitten, the smell of the sizzling onions, the sound of shower, father's chanting of Gayatri mantra makes her happy.

In the section called Water the poet feels enchanted to see the blue, peaceful sea but fails to see why there are turbulent waves. Perhaps the sea feels disturbed, always tense and restless. The poet also maintains that we are born winners and should never lose heart. Fire has a balm, sprays and creams for pain which shows the poet's sense of optimism and fortitude

in crisis. Mullick calls the gun totting terrorists cowards as they can destroy buildings, monuments and human bodies but not their soul nor their love for others. In Air the poet talks of mental bondage, friendship, peace and the mystery of a woman. In 'Overshadow' it says.

When the evil and the bad show their naked fang,  
Then the good brings back beauty with a bang. (p.51)

The Sky section poems sum up the significance of life and death. Previously the poet dreaded death but now she is complacent and regards death as the harbinger of peace.

On the whole, *Paradigm* contains the poet's optimistic approach to life born of her self experiences. She is perspicuous enough to single out the mysterious self, the hidden woman in her who constitutes harmony in life. In Valentine she declares, 'you came into my life and I discovered myself in you' (71) That's definitely the paradigm of a happy and harmonious life. The poems' simplicity and loving thoughts leave an after-image.

— **Ram Bhagwan Singh**

singhrambhagwan@gmail.com

\*\*\*

### ***Exploring New Horizons***

**Myriad Dimensions in the Poetry of Manas Bakshi**  
**Authors Press, New Delhi-110016, pp. 329, Price 1200**  
**Edited by Dr. P. V. Laxmiprasad**

---

Dr. Banas Bakshi is an established poet in English with a dozen poetry collections to his credit. Apart from poetry he has published books like *From Feudalism to Capitalism* and *Land Reforms in Left Regime*. A man of many parts Dr. Bakshi remains a poet first and foremost, still enjoying poetic sunshine.

It is now fit and proper to peep into Bakshi's poetic pyramid what the editor P. V. Laxmi Prasad calls myriad dimensions of the poetry of Manas Bakshi. The editor has taken pains to compile papers from distinguished poets and critics on different facets of Bakshi's poetic corpus. It is an honour to the poet and a credit to the editor who has focussed on practically all aspects of Bakshi's poetry. The essays are both thematic and studies in individual books. The attempt seems to be a thorough overhaul of the poet's mind and art, his ideas and their artistic delivery.

To begin with, the book has Dr. D. C. Chambial's article 'The Dynamics of Manas Bakshi's Metaphysics'. Himself a noted poet Dr. Chambial has focussed on the basics of Bakshi's writing in which he views mind as 'sensitive bird', body as 'disfigured cage', life as 'midnight wandering' and love as a 'moment of nearness' in the unborn language of warmth. He has quoted the different modes of suffering as 'Victims of misfortune / someone cries / Overtly / Someone groans covertly / Pain is the same / Ways of expression different. (Maudlin Musings)

T.V. Reddy's approach to *Maudlin Musings* is a dialectical study of love and life. The poet has drawn multiple shades of love and woman. In verse 146 Bakshi

writes,

Woman  
Tolerant as the earth  
Romantic as a nymph  
Can also bring  
The hell-hound ruins.

Naveena Amaran has dwelt upon stylisation in Manas Bakshi's *Between Flower and Flame*. Bakshi's use of collocations, epithets and imagery distinguish him from others giving his poetry freshness and reverberations. A specimen which unveils the pleasure to all human senses, a treat to eyes, nose and ears,

Houses in the rain  
jutting out signs of decadence  
Cars in the rain  
Dazzling against an unknown groin  
Parks in the rain  
Love speaks again  
Smelling her efflorescent breast  
Where tired eyes rest. (In the sound of Rain)

Analysing social consciousness in Manas Bakshi's poetry Shaleen Kumar Singh tries to encapsulate the contemporary trend of the time through the metaphor of a tree. To quote, 'A hovering tree/ This 21<sup>st</sup> century/ shares the travails of hell/ And the bliss of heaven.' And more, 'the swirling waves of communal fury/May wash among the sand bag barrage/Of secular sermons/ Under a cosmopolitan firmament.'

Sheeba S. Nair's article on the *Welkin's Blue yet in Agony* presents the poet's tragic and ironic note on life muffled and muddled with its problems. There is an essay by Arti Chandel on symbolism in Bakshi's *Between Flower and Flame* who finds it a mosaic of thirty six poem-paintings suggesting deep and long thirst of human soul. "Words come to us as pictures and images, lined, dotted, turning emotion into solitary whispers:

In 'Impression II' the poet writes 'A sensuous flower/ Has started crying/ For renunciation/ On a barren woman's breast.' Here the sensuous flower is the lover's heart and the barren woman's breast is the heartless beloved's heart.

P. C. K. Prem in the "Quizzing and Elevating Poetic Journey" talks about the philosophical words of the poet that carry no philosophy in fact; they just pour out the poet's feelings and impression of the barren busy world today. The poet's disillusionment with life appears quizzical as nothing is single dimensional and apparent. To quote,

It is time to think of the journey afresh  
From nowhere to somewhere  
And finally,  
From somewhere to nowhere  
Following the footprint  
Of the fleeting but endless time. (Dance of Satan)

Anantha Lakshmi Hemalata has quite perceptively analysed the expression of the unknown, unseen fear in the poetry of Manas Bakshi. In 'Dreaming of an Unseen War' the poet writes about psychic fear of man often hidden during the day but the same comes to the fore in the dream or at leisure. 'The sense of betrayal and the fear of having betrayed the trust of somebody close to our heart are always there. In Revelation the poet has the presentiment of evil times ahead. The usual perennial human fear 'is on the beginning and not the end as the poet has' seen the summer in the blind forest.' Thus Bakshi summarises,

The nowhere man's quintessential pain  
Left defenseless  
By our eye-wash affluence. (A Psychic Stance)

Anju S. Nair has discussed the poet's ruminations about life in an age ruled by technology but threatened

by the attendant factors. 'Peace, the only panacea for mankind is caught in a maelstrom of tumult and bustle'. In the modern world of insecurity and loneliness man often tries to revert to the primitive stage.

Analysing the poetic art of Manas Bakshi Lily Arul Sharmila finds that nihilism, existentialism and absurdity are the essentials of Bakshi's poetic base. His poetic world is located in psychic contradictions oozing feelings of depression, guilt, desire, lust and inertia. It is remarkable that the words in his poetry serve as concepts and symbols. Sharmila has rightly remarked that Bakshi's poetry is an image of what one sees, feels, thinks and senses at a particular moment. He uses symbols from the surroundings of his life to relate the inner space to feelings.

In Aesthetics of Nuanced Resistance C.A. Assif finds Bakshi's poetry as a criticism of life in which man has drastically changed the ecological order and caused environmental degradation. To quote, 'The whispering trees speak/ An unknown language/ Of metamorphosis.' The poet writes ironically of 'Gold plated Independence' in which we have no freedom. The imagery of earth worms crawling out after the rain denotes the degenerative tendencies in the so called liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation process.'

V.V.B. Rama Rao has examined Manas Bakshi as a humanist. Regretting pollution he says, 'Soil-air-water/ Pollution beyond measure/ Urbanisation engulfing/ The mellow pastures/ Of human relations.'

Among other critics Shujaat Hussain has dealt with soul and conscience in Bakshi's poetry. Candy D. Cunna with confessional voice, Palakurthy Dinakar with the theme of love etc. In all, the book contains 29 critical studies, some of which are devoted to a particular collection of Bakshi's poetry. As a whole, the book is a

thorough and complete appraisal of the poetic corpus of Manas Bakshi. The editor has taken pains to explore all shades of his poetry in a single volume, though a single review will just be a slice of it. I appreciate the book and recommend it to poetry enthusiasts to have it for a definitive study of Manas Bakshi's poetry.

— **Ram Bhagwan Singh**  
singhrambhagwan@gmail.com

\*\*\*

***The Pulse of Life : Essential Readings***

**T. Vasudeva Reddy**

**Modern History Press, Ann Arbor, M148105 (2017),  
pp. 236, Price \$ 29.95**

---

*The Pulse of Life : Essential Readings* is an anthology of Prof. T. V. Reddy's poetry culled from his eleven volumes published during the past 35 years. It is a shining mosaic of variegated shades of the poet's mood and his core concern as a poet. His poetry encompasses a wide range of subjects from urban and rural life, the modern man's existential predicament and the luxury of self-delusion. Life is such an assortment of hopes and despair, love and disappointment, faith and deceit, painful pleasure and liberating pain. The poet in just a co-sharer and shares his sentiments and thoughts with the reader.

Prof. T.V. Reddy is an established poet in Indian English Literature comparable with the greatest ones, more appreciated abroad than at home. This is perhaps because he holds the balance between tradition and modernity, rhymed poetry and free verse, romantic

poetry and realistic poetry. His versatility also appears in handling the form, in the use of imagery and practicing haiku.

The present book contains 326 poems selected from Prof. Reddy's earlier creations and some new unpublished poems coupled with Haikus. Analysing a poem is much like plucking the wings of a butterfly. I would like the reader to enjoy a poem typical of Prof. Reddy, the poem *The Balmy Smile*.

A drop of rain  
frays the furious sun;  
A ray of the sun  
Caresses the frozen snow;  
A spark of fire  
Wakes up the slumbering coal;  
The guffaw of breeze  
Soothes the sultry land;  
Flowery fragrance  
lulls the stench to sleep;  
The smile of a child  
Laces the clouds of gloom.

Such is the beauty of the poet's imagination and sensitivity. Nature to him is a father figure whose rain drops fight the furious sun all the same its rays affectionately caress the frozen snow. the same father wakes up the slumbering coal and joins the guffaws of the wind. It is also a child whose smile fronts the clouds of gloom. No doubt, the images are refreshingly now, warmly welcome.

The poems in this anthology cover almost the whole range of human experience, the basic emotions, elements of nature, technological bliss and bane and corruption in office. Sitting at the vantage point the poet assesses both the rural and the urban scenario with a human touch. A poet is not a thermometer, he feels the pulse with his own feelings of concern and

sympathy. In *When Grief Rains* the poet sounds practically hopeless and helpless but has a dim desire to overcome the suffering. Thus, when misery storms my being/and grief rains incessantly/I wish to drench myself/and enter the pores of the earth.' (7) He again sounds pessimistic or say realistic when he writes 'All glories lead only to dust'(8).

In *the Broken Rhythms* the note is obviously positive while describing the mutilated figure of god in a temple. The poet feels assured to say 'divinity throbs the stone'. Similarly a human being's rhythm in life is shattered by pain, failure, disappointment and deceit. In *Pensive Former* the poet regrets 'All the village is quite as the graveyard' (16) On the other hand there is the Swami sporting imported watch gets down from Cadillac amid a bevy of choicest beauties. Millionaires come and touch his feet, a perfect piece of a hypocrite far away from godliness. So is the head in an office, luring a tender typist on a promise of promotion. The poet has all the sympathy for the rural woman who 'stand like expiring candles..... bending like famished cattle ... weaving desires in the plaits of their cobra.... long hair/they carry pots of sweat/covering staring breasts' (25) Reddy calls a bridegroom 'as mute as an adorned idol' while the bride in Kanchi silk sari looks like a bedecked doll in a show case. And more,

The columns of her heaving bosom  
draw the ECG of her uncertain fate.  
...Hopes fill her mind like a summer showers  
soon fears settle like monsoon clouds. (The Indian Bride)

The poet's corn reaper is totally different from Wordsworth's solitary reaper. Here the reaper is sweating from her care-worn brow, rather than singing she is thinking of her wailing child at home and of the volley of blows on her back given last night by her

drunken lord. (30) For India's leaders the poet has no love lost; he is brutally realistic when he writes

the greater the degree of hypocrisy  
the stronger the asset to be a leader  
A wolf in ass's hide reigns  
A hoarder in hermit's guise.  
strides with a load of lies.

The book has power on the Ganga, tsunami, sabri, maya, bicycle, sparrows, mortuary of books, mosquitoes, selfish world, Niagara Falls, Mahabalipuram, organized violence, search for peace, the inner call, beauty parlour, hunger, empowered woman, Buddha, quest for peace and waiting for an Avatar, so on and so forth. There is a long poem addressed to his wife – To my other half in which the husband has expressed his love for his wife and his bereavement from her death. He laments, 'your exit for me is a sudden deluge, a mortal blow to our conjugal bliss. His heart overflows with gushing grief. He is totally broken and feels his life is a dead leaf.

What strikes me most is the poet's use of imagery for example, new doctors are 'new hatched doctors', 'who wear airs pruning their plumage like young Chanticleers', a poet is 'a love bird' after the exit of his spouse', the corn reaper is 'sitting like a flower under the foot,' words' alchemic power, brassy voice, cobra like blind Samson etc. etc.

In fine, *The Pulse of Life* is a poet's stethoscope which feels every heart beat of every human being. A book to read, relish and preserve.

— **Ram Bhagwan Singh**  
singhrambhagwan@gmail.com

\*\*\*

**Chandarakanta**

**Devaki Nandan Khatri**

**Translated by Prof. (Retd.) Ram Bhagwan Singh**

**& Prof. Chhote Lal Khatri**

**Prabhat Prakashan 4/M, Asaf Ali Road, New Delhi  
(2018), pp. 320, Price 295**

---

Translation of a creative masterpiece from one language to another, both in its literal and ideational form has always been a part of the streaming process of linguistic and cultural evolution. Viewing it as a form of creative genre in itself, Shelley talks of the 'Vanity of translation' where the soul and sound, the vision and the vibration and the colour and the odour have to be transferred from one soil to another.

Translating a creative work from one language to another, for him is just similar to transplanting a flower from one soil to another. 'It were as wise to cast a violet into a crucible that you might discover the formal principle of its colour and odour, as seek to transfuse from one language to another the creation of a poet. The plant must spring from its own seed or it will bear no flower.'

Even John Millington Synge underpins this problem of nuance and musical variation in case of translation of one poetic work from one language to another. 'A translation is no translation unless it will give you the music of a poem along with the words of it.'

Yes, impossible to disagree with the reality of the chaos in the universe of the art of translation but difficult to accept the negative pessimism. As an answer to its pessimistic defeatist approach here we have on our hand *Chandrakanta* of Devaki Nandan Khatri translated into English by Prof. Ram Bhagwan Singh and Prof. Chhote Lal Khatri. The translation is

remarkable for its richness of linguistic diversity, the translators' depth of understanding and dealing with the conversational idioms, slangs and sarcasms of Hindi, Urdu and Persian words. The beauty of the English translation lies in rendering what Shelley calls the odour and the colour of the original words in the creative text. To give an example.

काहे को देते हो जान । मेरी बात सुन दे कान ।  
यह सब खेल ठगी को मान । लाश देखकर लो पहचान ।  
उठो देखो-भालो । खोजो खोज निकालो ।

translated as,

Why do you lay your life ? Listen to me attentively  
Take all this for imposture  
Learn the fact by observing the body carefully  
Rise, make prudent inquiry  
Find out who played this aiyari.

The translation of *Chandrakanta* seeks to revive the popularity of the Hindi classic that withstood the taste and time of 130 years. As a bulwark of Hindi fiction it initiated the people into reading fiction so much so that even the non-Hindi speakers learnt Hindi to read *Chandrakanta*. But why? The taste for magic and fantasy is indomitable and insatiable even in an age of science. No wonder, *Harry Potter* sells and sells in millions. Two centuries ago those were the days of the *Arabian Nights* and *Alice in the Wonderland*. Babu Devaki Nandan Khatri catered innocuous reading material to the public to stimulate reading habit without being extravagant on sensuousness and crossing the cultural lines. His aiyars play tricks, fight battles, cheat people, kill the rogue, but an aiyar does not kill another aiyar; girls and women are as beautiful as brave and intelligent.

In the post-colonial world there is, in a way, renaissance of the erstwhile colonial nation's cultural, social and literary restoration. *Chandrakanta* being our

fictional milestone, we have reason enough to recreate its glory and proliferate its essence. The English version will expand its readership beyond the Hindi belt and give it a pan-Indian recognition. The element of magic, fantasy, romance, espionage, conspiracy and confrontation in the book give it an aura of magic realism so much prized today. This magic realism will sustain the novel despite literary fluctuation of taste.

No doubt, the story of *Chandrakanta* is based on the love of prince Virendra Singh and princess Chandrakanta obstructed by a villain Krur Singh. Then there is rivalry among kings leading to battles. The special thing about *Chandrakanta* is the creation of 'aiyar' and 'tilism' altogether new. That is Babu Devaki Nandan Khatri's new product, an invention of sort. Aiyars are miles ahead of Shakespeare's Caliban. They can thoroughly transmogrify themselves in appearance, voice, language, habits and manners, acts, everything. So is 'tilism', a secret and mysterious mine of wealth in a series of caves with magical locks and safeguards that reads like Ali Baba's caves a hundred times improved and enriched. There are caves leading to other caves with gardens, rivers, palaces maintained by invisible agents. A whole weird world of magic and mystery creating suspense after suspense. However, the main story of love, separation and reunion is just probable.

*Chandrakanta* in its new avatar is as much readable as before. I congratulate the duo translators for revitalising a monumental literary work.

\*\*\*

---

Prof (Retd) J P Singh, former Vice Chancellor, L N Mithila University, Darbhanga Bihar.