

Dedication

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Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* : A Product of Diaspora

— Dr. P.K. Singh

Once an interviewer asked Jhumpa Lahiri, "The Namesake deals with Indian immigrants in the United States as well as their children. What, in your opinion, distinguishes the experiences of the former from the latter?"

Jhumpa Lahiri replied, "In a sense, very little. The question of identity is always a difficult one, especially so for those who are culturally displaced, as immigrants are, or those who grow up in two worlds simultaneously, as is the case for their children. The older I get, the more I am aware that I have somehow inherited a sense of exile from my parents, even though in many ways I am so much more American than they are. In fact, it is still very hard to think of myself as an American. (This is of course complicated by the fact that I was born in London.) I think that for immigrants, the challenges of exile, the loneliness, the constant sense of alienation, the knowledge of and longing for a lost world, are more explicit and distressing than for their children." (bookbrowse.com)

The Namesake is really the story of Ashima's son, but it is fitting that the tale begins in the kitchen: the losses and shifts in Lahiri's novel are as the aromas and flavours of food. Food is one of the chief planes upon which the young Gogol and his sister Sonia work to define themselves against their Bengali heritage. They insist on pizza and coke. Ultimately though, Gogol is drawn back by forces as bewitching as the emotional potency of aromas- his mother's cooking, his father's horrific trauma and, strangely enough, the Russian

author from whom he inherits his name.

When Gogol is fourteen, his father Ashoke gives him a copy of *The Short Stories of Nikolai Gogol*. Ashoke imparts Dostoyevsky's adage that "we all came out of Gogol's overcoat," telling the indifferent adolescent that one day he will understand what this means. However, Nikolai Gogol's harrowing little fable "The Overcoat" is not given much play in Gogol's own imaginative development. For Gogol, who does not bother to read the stories of his namesake, the overcoat remains unworn; an odd-shaped ornament that he has inexplicably accrued along with his unusual name.

The narrative follows Gogol as he journeys through school, college and the early stages of his career in architecture. He makes and forsakes a series of relationships all of which shape or reflect upon his relationship with his past as encapsulated in his name. Gogol becomes Gogol at birth because the letter from his great-grandmother containing the name she has chosen for him, never arrives. Even this has a provocative metaphorical valence. Both he and his parents know that somewhere there is a letter with his real name inscribed upon it, the name that, had the proper naming practice been observed, should be his. But the letter goes astray and the real name hovers as a perpetual mystery on the edge of his consciousness.

The exigencies of American bureaucracy demand that the child be given a name before he is released from hospital. And so, Ashoke pulls a name from the air: the name of the author who saved his life. In Lahiri's novel, names enfold stories and the narrative of Ashoke's rescue by the textual Gogol is a deeply embedded one. Traveling to Jamshedpur in his early twenties, Ashoke was involved in a horrific train crash. At the time of the crash he was reading Gogol's "The Overcoat." Hours after the crash, lying blood-drenched in the twisted

wreckage, Ashoke had raised his hand clutching a single crumpled page of "The Overcoat." This and the white pages of the book lying nearby arrested the attention of the rescue party.

Gogol is never meant to be Gogol's official or 'good' name. It is given as a temporary solution, intended to serve only as a nickname or pet name, until his real name arrives. But Gogol becomes complicit in the burden of this name. On his first day at school, despite his father's advice, that his 'good' or official name is now 'Nikhil,' he opts truculently for Gogol. He very shortly regrets this and throughout his school years conceives of his name as a kind of loathsome mantle: "At times his name, an entity shapeless and weightless, manages nevertheless to distress him physically, like the scratchy tag of a shirt he has been forced permanently to wear." (Lahiri,)

When Gogol leaves his family home to attend Yale, he tries to leave his name behind. Nikhil to his friends and Gogol to his family members, he lives out a new mode of dislocation over the span of his college years. He is disconcerted when his family complies, calling him Nikhil in front of his college friends. Much later, when he meets Moushumi who shared his childhood in the circle of their parents' Bengali friends, he is annoyed that she knows him as Gogol first and Nikhil second.

Despite his multiple long-term relationships with other women he eventually marries Moushumi. An air of narrative hesitancy attends this bringing of the plot full circle. In one sense it reads as an abortive attempt by the author to force closure. In another sense it elucidates the vulnerability of all narrative constructions, including Gogol's own narrativising

impulse.

Gogol's and Moushumi's wedding is not the type of wedding either of them really wants. Despite their usually defiant individuality they agree that it is better to submit to the overbearing wishes of their families, than to put up a fight. Unlike compromises made in previous relationships, the cost of conforming to these expectations is a known quantity. They pay a heavy price for beginning with resignation. Drawn together by their individual plights for self-determination, their aspirations dissolve into a comfortably predictable but secretly resented shape. Moushumi finds that the mantle of marriage does not fit. During and after the breakdown of their marriage the confident and often wry narration of the first part of the novel gives place to a detached and uncertain tone. The narrator becomes uncharacteristically equivocal about what Gogol has gained or lost in this relationship.

The anomaly of the concept of 'namesake' and, by extension, of the person to whom it is applied, is that it is always once removed; held in perpetual relation to an original. The Namesake is an elusive title because the term 'namesake' usually follows a possessive noun or pronoun; 'Gogol's namesake' or your namesake.' Lahiri's is a provocative ellipsis.

Without being anchored to the primary possessive noun, 'namesake' itself becomes the primary noun; at once the subject of the phrase but also, a vacancy. Gogol's plight, like that of many protagonists of the psychological realist novel, is to remedy an internal vacuum. What is unique about Lahiri's formulation is the way a name becomes the site upon which contested aspects of his identity converge.

The novel's preoccupation with names and titles

and the freight they carry, gives it a fable- like quality. It bears faint glimmers of the fantastical thought structures, the feverishly detailed obsessions that pervade Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and, in less virtuosic fashion, Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*. Yet there is less magic and less subterranean complexity. India, in *The Namesake*, is once removed: the fragrance is diluted and the flavours are makeshift approximations.

This gives *The Namesake* a paradoxical capacity to voice the general experience of displacement. It's rather eclectic blend of cultural remnants- Russian, Bengali, American- and its very immediate sensuality, lend palpable force to the typically nebulous experience of heterogeneity. *The Namesake* gives vivid particularity to the sense of being held in perpetual relation to distant original, of wearing a garment of unknown proportions, of having a name, the imaginative legacy of which one can never fully inhabit.

Born in London and living in the U.S. Jhumpa Lahiri is not an expatriate - Indian in the way in which Bharati Mukherjee is. She is separated from India by a generation and yet her first novel *The Namesake* is about Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli and their family. To take the title of Margaret Laurence's well - known essay, one could say that these people hope to get "A place to stand on". From the moment Ashoke decides to move away from India, Lahiri provides the reader with a picture of the life of the expatriate, the diasporic writer writing about diasporic characters. Ashoke and then Ashima learn to live in the land they were not born in as it is Ashoke's accident that makes him decide to walk away " as far as he could from the place in which he was born and in which he had nearly died" (p. 20). The first sight of this land, "Leafless trees with ice-

covered branches. Dog urine and excrement embedded in the snow –banks. Not “a soul on the street” (p.30) is hardly a flattering description of the land they now call their own. The novel portrays realistically the experiences of this family, which is sometimes afflicted with a feeling of cultural alienation : diaspora both literal and metaphorical referring both to physical displacement as well as the shaping of a different sensibility. The absence of the motherland (or being away from it) becomes a constant presence as it always seems to colour the perceptions of the expatriate. Expatriation is a post -colonial fact and whether it is an individual or a group moving to another country, the diaspora continues.

The Indian living in a host country continues to live in a ‘sandwich world’. Refusing to give up his cultural roots, he still hopes for assimilation and acculturation in his new land. He does not sever relationships with his homeland. As Safran observes, “they continue to relate personally or vicariously to the homeland in one way or another, and their ethno-communal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship.”(Safran, 85) Yet, most societies today are multi-cultural societies and the writer living and writing in such a society is affected at multiple levels by both the cultures. Such a writer is constantly in a state of flux. The question of identity and the dynamics of relationships affect the writer. The writer reflects, analyses, criticizes that particular environment and the world around him even when he does not become a part of it, belonging and not belonging. The expatriate writer lacks a shared memory which is often the basis of the writing in one country, one nation. Many writers often disclaim all attempts to be labeled a part of the diaspora – as they

want to become an intrinsic part of the land of residence or adoption, probably because the image of a minority is often suspect. The writer may feel no crisis of identity or alienation or depression or frustration specially if one is a second generation expatriate. Often relations between original inhabitants and the diasporic become complicated.

As a University Professor Ashoke is accepted into the academic community – but at home he continues to be the typical Indian male, fastidious about his clothing and his food :

He is fastidious about his clothing : their first argument had been over a sweater she'd shrunk in the washing machine. As soon as he comes home from the University the first thing he does is hang up his shirt and trousers, donning a pair of draw – string pajamas and pullover if it is cold. On Sundays he spends an hour occupied with his tins of shoe polish and his three pairs of shoes, two black and one brown.
(p. 10)

The Indians live life constantly on two planes – as Indians and as one guest once remarked “as true Americans” (p. 63). As days and years pass by, gradually the realization dawns that “the people they have grown up with will never see this life, of this they are certain. They will never breathe the air of a damp New England morning, see smoke rising from a neighbour's chimney, shiver in a car waiting for the glass to defrost and the engine to warm” (p. 64). The process of acculturation that was very important to writers like Bharati Mukherjee is seen in the adoption of customs in order to adapt to their new surroundings:

They learn to roast turkeys, albeit rubbed with garlic and cumin and cayenne, at

Thanksgiving, to nail a wreath to their door in December, to wrap woolen scarves around snowmen, to colour boiled eggs violet and pink at Easter and hide them around the house. For the sake of Gogol and Sonia they celebrate, with progressively increasing fan fare, the birth of Christ, an event the children look forward to more than the worship of Durga and Saraswati. (p. 64)

Gogol grows up with a name not meant to be his official one but even the Ganguli is something he cannot seem to accept. As the school field trip to the cemetery proves, there will be no one there with a name like his. And hence he feels a special affinity for names which have an odd-ness about them. He rolls up his rubbings from the cemetery and brings them home. Being different from others is the eternal plight of the expatriate and Gogol realizes this very well on this trip:

For reasons he cannot explain or necessarily understand, these ancient Puritan spirits, these very first immigrants to America, these bearers of unthinkable, obsolete names, have spoken to him, so much so that in spite of his mother's disgust he refuses to throw the rubbings away. He rolls them up, takes them upstairs, and puts them in his room... (p. 71).

To the expatriate, a visit to the land of one's birth is a pilgrimage that he looks forward to as well as a journey that he dreads. Yasmine Gooneratne, a Srilankan expatriate in Australia, in her novel *A Change of Skies* describes this annual visit to the homeland. The attitude of the people at home is that "Expats make scenes; expats complain.... Expats make fools of themselves ...". (Gooneratne, 262) As Sonia and Gogol visit India with their parents, the fact of not belonging

strikes them again and again . "They stand out in their bright, expensive sneakers, American haircuts, backpacks slung over one shoulder" (p. 82). Each experience seems to be a new one and strikes them as strange, "In the days that follows, they adjust once again to sleeping under a mosquito net, bathing by pouring tin cups over their heads" (p. 82). The feeling of being homeless strikes the second – generation expatriate in a different way. When Gogol's father tells him that they will be staying in Calcutta (away from the US) for eight months, " He dreads the thought of eight months without friends" (p. 79). Such a long stay seems to Gogol to be as bad as moving there permanently - a possibility that most second – generation expatriates never consider. As they travel around the country, visiting Delhi etc. they have a variety of experiences, some not very comfortable and they fall sick : " it is the air, the rice ,the wind, their relatives casually remark; they were not made to survive in a poor country..." (p. 86).

In portraying only these conditions, Lahiri exposes a neo-colonial stance- the Westerner viewing the East with a jaundiced eye as a land of dirt and filth, and of disease and a lack of hygiene. Ashoke and Ashima fit more easily between the two continents - the two world – because to them home is still the land of their birth. And so Lahiri writes,

Gogol and Sonia know these people, but they do not feel close to them as their parents do. Within minutes, before their eyes Ashoke and Ashima slip into bolder, less complicated versions of themselves, their voices louder, their smile wider, revealing a confidence Gogol and Sonia never see on Pemberton Road. 'I' m scared, Goggles 'Sonia whispers to her brother in English,

seeking his hand and refusing to let go. (pp. 81-82)

In total contrast to this is their return to Pemberton Road which brings a sense of relief to both Gogol and Sonia to whom India has always been the alien land.

On this end, there is no effort involved. They retreat to their three rooms, to their three separate beds, to their thick mattresses and pillows and fitted sheets. After a single trip to the supermarket, the refrigerator and the cupboard fill with familiar labels... Gogol and Sonia sleep for as long as they want, watch television, make themselves peanut butter sandwiches at any time of day. Once again they are free to quarrel, to tease each other, to shout and holler and say shut up..... And so the eight months are put behind them, quickly shed, quickly forgotten, like clothes worn for a special occasion, or for a season that has passed, suddenly cumbersome, irrelevant to their lives. (pp. 87-88).

This novel constantly focuses on the contrasting experiences of the two generations of expatriate - Ashoke and Ashima who do not attempt to or are not inclined towards getting Americanized while Gogol and Sonia constantly face the need to belong. They develop tastes and ideas more in keeping with the society in which they live. They seem to realize that diaspora can lead to transculturation which occurs in 'contact zones or social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination'(Pratt,4). Gogol, troubled by the unusualness of his name, is relieved when he changes his name to Nikhil - he begins to feel he is reborn.

Being and becoming are two interchangeable states for both of them and each experience in this land of their birth re-emphasizes this difference. Imagination and memory often act as the bridges which link the two countries, the two cultures. It is Ashima who faces the greatest difficulty in 'becoming' a part of this culture. And hence, in the end she decides to shuttle between the two worlds – six months in India and six in the US.

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Fact and Fiction in Baburao Bagul's *Sood* (Revange)

— By Dr. M. S. Wankhede

Abstract:

This paper is the output of Baburao Bagul's long-story Sood (Revenge) in Marathi. The story has the combination of fact and fiction in Hindu culture which is based on caste and gender discrimination. Janki is the main character in the story and is the victim of caste and gender violence. Although our constitution has complete safeguard for women in every kind of violence against them, yet the entire constitutional law and the governmental administrative system have been a complete failure in doing social justice to women. The Hindu Social Order considers women as goddesses and worships them with various names. But they are always victimized physically, sexually, and mentally as if they are the slippers in the feet of men. The author has attempted to present the story of Janki fictionally as well as factually. Although women are lower than men, the degree of marginalization differs on the basis of the caste to which they belong – upper caste or lower caste. The protagonist is very revengeful when she passes through the caste and gender discrimination as well as sexual harassment in the society. She struggles hard against all kinds of oppression and proves herself to be a landmark in her struggles against the male dominance, subjugation and sexual harassment. Being a daughter of a Devdasi, Janki was forced not only by men but by her own mother also to enter into the brothel. Through her hard struggle Janki proves herself the voice of Dalit community and women in general.

Keywords: caste discrimination, identity, Devdasi, Murali, oppression

Baburao Bagul, a well-known writer in Marathi especially as a renowned Dalit writer, and recipient of Kusumagraj Pratishthan's Janasthan Puraskar, wrote a long-story *Sood* (Revenge). The story widens the concept of Dalit. It is the story of a young and beautiful girl named Janki alias Jwala (Jwalaprasad). She is a Murali or Devdasi of Khandoba. Devdasi system prevails in South India and in some parts in Maharashtra. This system has a tradition of dedication of girls to a life of sex-work in the name of gods and religion, particularly Hindu religion. In 1988 this system was considered illegal but still it is in force. Basically the girls from the Untouchable families or lower castes are victimized in the name god and religion and are considered as Muralis or Devdasis. "The history of India is incomplete sans the reference to Varna and Caste, which has divided the Hindu society in several castes and sub-castes" (Wankhede, 2018:237). The statement clearly indicates that Devdasi system is religion based. And for that only the lower caste or Untouchable young girls are forced into the profession of prostitution in the name of god and religion. Those who call themselves Hindu always consider caste as barrier. If all are Hindus then why are there multiple castes and sub-castes in the Hindu society. If a person calls and considers himself a Hindu, then why he fails to consider others Hindu that is a big unanswerable question. In this context Dr. Ambedkar says, "He cannot say that between him and the Untouchables, there is a gulf due to religious antagonism which is not possible to bridge" (2003:150).

Baburao Baguls' *Sood* is a realistic story to some extent as well as a fictionalized one. It is not just an individualistic story but a 'type one' as Janki represents a number of Muralis. Being a daughter of Murali and herself a Murali, she has no respect (*abru*) at all. Such a statement is made not only by others but by her

mother also. Janki does not want to opt the life of a Murali or a prostitute. But our culture forces her to accept prostitution. So far a Hindu culture is concerned; it is just a privilege of the rich and the middle class people to victimize young girls for their sexual satisfaction. Even the pundits also utilized Muralis or Devdasis for sexual intercourse. Gangu, a Murali and the mother of Janki forces her to become a prostitute. Rasul 'keeps' her just for the credit of mutton that he gave to Gangu. He then sells her to a prostitute. Her tender body becomes a center of attraction for all people of all ages, all castes and all religions. Sexuality knows no caste, no religion and just one language of sex. After being 'used' by Dagdya, Janya, Rasulya, Isnya, Pandya etc. and even by a sage of Tryambkeshwar, Janki tried to commit suicide twice but her efforts were in vain. Finally she begins to request each and every customer to relieve her of the hell of prostitution but none comes to her help. They are so lustful that they demand more and more physical satisfaction from her. With great efforts she is rescued by a young man from the brothel. She hates her female body; she is full of revenge on society, men and even on her womanhood. She wants to be a 'man'. And so she is in search of a *guru*. She gets her *guru* in the form of Alakhniranjan, a sage, who is quiet innocent, even about sex and differences in the body of male and female. Here the two extremities come together. She gives the *trishul* in her hands, which she has accepted for her protection from 'wolves' in the civilized society. Now she gives up her idea of becoming a man, for she finds her real womanhood. She surrenders herself to her *guru* and enjoys unattainable happiness for the first time in her life. Finally she dies from the attack of wild wolves.

Janki, the central character in the story, intends to bring awareness among the people about the old-age

customs and rituals in the Hindu society and their need to uproot it completely to form a society that is based on universal human values: liberty, equality, fraternity and social justice. "The Buddha preached the gospel of liberty, equality and fraternity far more meaningfully than the French Revolution did" (Gokak, 1994:12). In India, rapes, murders, dowry system, female foeticides and exploitations are regular crimes. The concepts like 'Shining India' or 'Clean India' or even 'Save Girl Child' are simply showy things just on paper and debates without implementation in reality. Moreover, welfare ideology is purposefully neglected in our country. Gender discrimination is there in every caste formed by the Varna System or Manusmriti in Hindu Social Order, just the quantity differs in the upper caste and lower caste. V. K. Gokak asserts, "Unless there is a background of social and cultural unity to this diversity of castes and creeds and even of political parties in the nation, a structural disintegration may confront our society" (1994:11). Untouchables or Dalit women are doubly marginalized and they are not safe at all in the country. Bagul has attempted to present this fact in his story *Sood* in the form of fiction to some extent. He must have been aware of the statement 'to be the Indian first and the Indian last' that really shows nationalism but there are multiple identities inculcated in the hearts and minds of Indians by the laws of *Manusmriti* and *Varna* system. The facts and fiction are there presented by the author in the present story. Janki and her mother Gangu are Dalit women who suffer in such an unequal society in India. Both are traditionally converted into prostitutes. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar says, "The Hindu has never realized the responsibility of justifying his treatment of the Untouchables" (2003:150). In his address to Mahar or Untouchable women Ambedkar addressed, "The Mahar women of

Kamathipura are a shame to the community. Unless you are prepared to change your ways, we shall have nothing to do with you, and we shall have no use for you" (Ambedkar, 2003:150). In case of Janki it is clear that she does not want to be involved in prostitution but the Hindu Social Order forces her to enter into the male satisfying sex work through Murali or Devdasi system. Even her mother also throws her into the sex work. Thus we find that as a daughter of *Murali* and a Dalit woman Janki, the protagonist of the story, becomes a victim of the caste and gender discrimination. In the preface of the story Dr. M. N. Wankhede comments on Janki's tragedy: "Janki is the Heroine of Dalits. Such inhuman injustices will happen against whom? A Dalit woman belongs to anyone. Real Janki is the central character in this long story. Only because of her this long story has become memorable in Dalit literature" (7).

The present story comments on the reality of caste and gender discrimination and politics in India. That is why this story presents facts through fictionalization. Hence we can say that it is a combination of fact and fiction. Literatures available in Indian languages fail to present realism in the Indian society. No genre in Indian literature presents the characters from marginalized society. Only the Dalit literature touched the lives of the marginalized communities in India. "Dalit literature is the post-independence movement aimed at bringing out the creative recommendation of numerous castes, tribes and communities condemned for centuries to voiceless existence" (Wankhede, 2018:23). We have constitutional provisions to protect the human rights of Dalits, Dalit women, other women and other marginalized communities in India but still there is no justice done to them. Romila Thapar, expresses, "Central to the social structure was the inexcusable social intolerance as

expressed in the exclusion and oppression of all non-caste groups, the Adivasis, lower castes and Dalits" (2016:43). Which political party has been governing the independent India does not matter but the governments failed to implement the constitution. On one hand we consider ourselves as secular but we do not understand the real meaning of secularism. We surrender it to religiousness. Every citizen has got freedom to follow any religion in his personal life but it should not be enforced into public life. That is the real meaning of secularism. But we are misinterpreting the word 'secular'. In religiousness we, the Indians, are a complete failure to understand and implement secularism in India. Even we deny equality to women and marginalized communities in India. To deny the rights of women and Dalits of marginalized communities is nothing but the murder of democracy and denial of the constitution. It is really a disgrace to the nation called India. All these issues are nicely handled by the author in this long story, *Sood*.

Murali or Devdasi is the personal property of any man from any community or of pundits in the temples. The author narrates reality about the religious system in India that victimizes Dalits and women. Janki, a young and beautiful girl, a Murali, a daughter of Devdasi called Gangu has been constantly victimized. Once Janki was returning from the floor mill carrying a box of floor on her head, a crew of hooligans chases her, abuses and attacks her and violates her chastity. Although she is beautiful but she is not from a decent lineage as she is a *Murali's* daughter. This tells us that it is because of her caste and low status in Hindu society that Janki has been victimized and constantly raped. Even her mother, Gangu forces her to enter into the profession of prostitution. And that profession of prostitute has its origin in *Devdashi* and *Murali* traditions

enforced in the society by Hindu religion. All the Muralis and Devdasis are nothing but 'sex objects' and they are not human beings at all in the eyes of casteist Hindus. They are simply bodies to be utilized by males from any caste: upper caste or lower caste. Bagul has handled all these issues artistically in this story. This story is the part and parcel of Dalit literature that has the source in real life experiences.

Only to pay back the credit amount of buying mutton from Rasul, a butcher, Janki is handed over to him as her husband. Her mother-in-law, her father-in-law and her husband too forced her to become the prostitute to be a source of earning. On every step of life Janki is a victim of caste and gender discrimination. The gang of hooligans violently raped her. Her mother also forced her to enter into the profession of prostitution. Her mother's lover, Dagadu raped her with the inhumanity of her own mother. All these incidents narrated by the author show that it is the disgrace to humanity. Janki bears all inhuman brutal forms of oppressions and exploitations in her life. Then she decides to rebel against the male hegemony, caste dominance and gender discriminations. Then she makes up her mind to kill herself and goes to a river side to commit a suicide. On the river, a sage wants to rape her. When she anticipates his plan of rape on her, she fights with him and kills him. Then she conceals her identity as a woman and she becomes a sanniyashi, a man and names herself as Jwalaprasad. Then she comes in contact with Alakhniranjan, a sage whom she understands and surrenders herself to him throwing away the *trishul* in her hand and enjoys herself with him. She outshines Vidyacharan in her journey with the Swami to Himalaya. The text presents the mockery of the Hindu Social Order.

To conclude, the present long-story by Baburao

Bagul presents certain facts in the Hindu society and some issues have been fictionalized by him. So far the writer's concern is with Dalit literature, he has attempted to represent the marginalized communities in India in his writings, and so, *Sood* is no exception to it. So far Dalit literature is a new stream of Indian literature that came into force in the 20th century and has left its impact on literary fields in India.

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The Unbroken Bond between a Father and a Son in *Cormac McCarthy's The Road*

— Mr. Hitesh Karan
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Abstract:

Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* is based on a post-apocalyptic wasteland. McCarthy tells the chronicles of a nameless father and his young son walk through burnt up America, heading slowly to the coast. Nothing budes on the desolate terrains only the ash in the winds. They have nothing but a pistol with two bullets to defend themselves against the men who hunts on the road, the clothes they have put on, a cart of scavenged food, and each other. Cities and forests, lakes and rivers everything is consumed by the fire, and from the ashes and soot everything is gray, the water of the river has been turned black. They have nothing left in this savaged world, just each other. A father who would do anything to protect his son from the darkness that lies in this world. Here McCarthy is describing a dark world with no redemption but there is hope in the form of a son to his father. A hope is what it takes for the father to keep going in a desolate world. Hope is what the world needs to survive or cherish. Hope is what we need, when we are surrounded by darkness and in need to see the light. The Boy is the light for the Man in a dark world; a world full of savagery; a world full of death.

Keywords: Hope, Love, Apocalypse, Father-son bond.

Relevance of the Study

Most of our technological advancements are the result of man centered approach. Today we live in the

world where family and familial relations are disintegrating and technology is becoming invasive menacingly. It becomes imperative to study such novels that attempt to bring to the centre the core relations. The present study is an attempt to analyze the paternal love in the novel *The Road*. This bond plays a vital part in the novel and forces the resolutions made during the journey that father take along with his son in the apocalyptic world. It is pertinent to study this in the twentyfirst century when human race is experiencing complete emptiness and hopelessness. Could there be hope for a future? is the question that lingers throughout the narrative. The relevance of the research lies in studying the novel from these aspects.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of the present paper is to explore if there is any hope for future in the post-apocalyptic world. The fictionist convinces the reader that conviction facilitates one to go on, to keep struggling. The novel may superficially, seem as all in all dark and hopeless but deeper understanding leads the reader strengthen the will and comfort the soul. The novel ends with hope. An attempt is made to identify the ways in which the father copes up with the apocalyptic conditions of the devastated world. He succeeds in keeping the faith, virtues and hope in his son strong and intact.

Methodology

The focus of this research paper is on the analysis of the primary sources in the light of the relevant criticism on the novels. The emphasis will be made on the critical and analytical interpretations. The paper is divided into three parts. The first part deals with the historical background of the novel. The second part deals

with the influence of the consumerist technocratic Western culture on the modern society. This is done through delving into the nature and actions of the characters of the novels. The third and the final part sums up the paper.

Introduction

Cormac McCarthy instigates his novel by revealing a concerning father and his young son in a desolate world. The most powerful nation in the world America has become nothing more than a wasteland. McCarthy never specifies the places in the novel but he leaves hints of real life setting of America which he tells us by describing the coast or the buildings or even the roads the Man took. McCarthy calculatedly avoids certain details which causes the event to resonate with the reader. The only detail McCarthy gives about the actual event that destroyed the world,

“The clocks stopped at 1:17. A long shear of light and then a series of low concussions. . . A dull rose glow in the windowglass” (McCarthy. 54).

Though McCarthy does not explain the cause of the devastation that has taken place in the world, but a number of scientists agree to that what the author describes in *The Road* can only happen due to a ‘nuclear fallout or nuclear winter’. Most of McCarthy’s critics agree that “the physical landscape, with its thick blanket of ash; the father’s mystery illness; and the changes in the weather patterns of the southern United States all suggest that the world is gripped by something similar to a nuclear winter” (Grindley : 2008 : 11-13).

The setting, McCarthy is establishing, is very important because it describes the current situation of our world. Our planet is on the verge of waging a war anytime. Nations governing by dupe who don’t have

compassion, who don't understand the words sympathy or kindness. The world shown in *The Road* can actually be the world paved by these fools. Nuclear power is in their hands and they won't hesitate before using it. *At these times* we need hope that the world will be saved by love and compassion and not by hatred. That compassion we can find in the relationship between a nameless father and his son.

"When he woke in the woods in the dark and the cold of the night he'd reach out to touch the child sleeping beside him" (McCarthy. 1).

When there is nothing existing in the world still a ray of hope stands for a father that his son will become his redemption. Even so, a father depends on a son, as much as a son depends on the father. They are surviving a barren, silent and godless world. "Looking for anything of colour. Any movement. Any trace of standing smoke" (McCarthy. 3). The Man does not recognize this land. There is no green. Nature was destroyed by the hands of living ones long ago. The Man had lived in that world and he still tries to remember it from time to time. He has all this recollection come to him which keeps him in check rather than going insane. The Man knows that the child is his warrant. "He said: If he is not the word of God, God never spoke" (McCarthy. 3).

"He would a deck of cards. . . He tried to remember the rules of childhood games. . . He was sure he had them mostly wrong and he made up new games and gave them made up names. . .

Sometimes the child would ask him questions about the world that for him was not even a memory.

He thought hard how to answer. There is no past" (McCarthy. 55)

One of the strangest things we can find in the setting of this novel is that not much has been given in it, to remind the people about the time of pre-apocalyptic world. The Man couldn't make up anymore. He can't make up the scenery of the past which the Boy could understand. The Boy has no memories of the past; the world was already burning when he came into existence. So, the Boy could not form an image of the world that his father lived in. That's why the boy kept on asking but the Man didn't want to lie anymore; he didn't want to make false hope to the Boy of a world that he will never see. At that time man realizes something:

"He understood for the first time that to the boy, he was himself an alien. A being from a planet that no longer existed" (McCarthy. 163)

He truly became an alien to the Boy because he had become a part of that world which no longer exists. A green, blue planet becomes a gray one right in front of his eyes. A family thinks of leaving something to their children after they are gone like a house, a car, a family, a planet. All these things have been taken from the Boy.

The Road depicts reliability of a father and the boy on each other for survival. The father's only reason to keep on living is his son. He cannot leave his son to die in the world, and he cannot take his son's life along with his own. The boy is a beacon of hope for the man. As dreadful as the humanity has become, the boy stays inherently noble, and that kindness, goodness and honesty inspires the father. A foremost theme throughout *The Road* is the idea that the man and his son are "carrying the fire". This fire represents the hope that they hold which allows them to continue on

their journey. The hours of darkness that they must doze without a fire are marked by dejection, but whenever a fire is present there is a much more sanguine mood.

He watched the boy continuously, without exhausting. The Primary or the only motive of his life was to make sure his boy survive in this desolated badland. The Boy was the hope, the boy was the responsibility, and the boy was the testament of his existence. There are cannibalistic beings exist in the world who would eat their own offspring's just to fill their belly. And the Man had to make sure that his boy remains safe in a savaged world. In a world full of mindless beings they have to remain astute from the dangers on the road.

The Man's wife and Boy's mother in McCarthy's *The Road* emerges in the course of man's reminiscence and imagining. While the man responds to the demur and devastation of humanity with a persistent perseverance, the woman eventually gives in to despair. She assumes that it is inescapable that she will be raped, killed, and eaten, so she decides to elude that fate by committing suicide. The man begs her to reconsider, but he has no rational argument against hers. The woman leaves them without saying farewell to the boy and kills herself with a piece of obsidian. Contrasted with this austere death are the man's reminiscences of their blissful marriage and life together before the apocalypse.

"The Woman: No, I'm speaking the truth. Sooner or later they will catch us and they will kill us. They will rape me. They'll rape him. They are going to rape us and kill us and eat us and you won't face it.

We used to talk about death, she said. We don't anymore. Why is that?

The Man: I don't know.

The Woman: It's because it's here. There's nothing left to talk about" (McCarthy. 58)

The Boy's mother states confidently the habits of the "blood cults" roaming the roads. They rape, steal, and murder without discretion. Not to mention the fact that they're cannibals. The world has become predictably violent; meaning that The Woman is able to say with absolute certainty what these "blood cults" will do if given the chance. The Man doesn't argue with her. Unable to passively wait for the scenario that she foresees as irrevocable: "Sooner or later they will catch us and they will kill us.... she decides to choose death – to take "a new lover" who can give her what her husband is unable to provide: final peace in "eternal nothingness" (McCarthy. 57).

The father and son are therefore left to themselves, and it is clear that they survive only thanks to one another, sustaining each other in hope, when hopelessness prevails, and in the determination to go on, when there is clearly nothing to go on towards. Despite these continuous, often deeply dramatic, attempts to provide one another with a modicum of confidence and comfort, both the man and the boy have their moments of great doubt and profound despair – instances of weakness that they usually try to conceal from one another.

McCarthy failed to develop The Woman in the novel is a strong character, but perhaps McCarthy did create her as the most pragmatic. She understands the horrors of the universe that she lives in and in that universe she has brought her son. Her suicides maybe

derived from the horrors that exist in the world, but that could also be interpreted as her accepting the abortive circumstances that she has found herself in.

The Boy is the light at the end of the tunnel that allows the man to continue moving and to hope for a better future. When the father is dying, the boy appears surrounded by light as the light is coming out of him. He eventually becomes the light of redemption for all the deeds done by the man in his life.

“There was light all about the boy as he brought water...and when he moved the light moved with him... He lay watching the boy at the fire. He wanted to be able to see. Look around you, he said. There is no prophet in the earth's long chronicle who's not honored here today. Whatever form you spoke of you were right” (McCarthy. 271).

At the end of the novel when father is dying, he can see the light of his son is even more evident. This portion includes quite a few symbols. Here the boy maybe represented as a Jesus because he is bringing water to a dying man aka, his father. At that time The father sees redemption because he sees Boy as a ray of hope; even on that point he accept religion in a positive light, something we don't see in him throughout the novel. The two of them had been “carrying the fire” together, yet the father is soon portrayed as a “fading light” (McCarthy. 299). At the same time, we can see the boy is shown physically holding a burning candle in the novel for the first time and at the time of dying the father passes that burning fire to his son. It can be metaphorically said that the light which lighting the world through the father will now light through the son.

Conclusion:

As most critics note, the focus in *The Road* differs from what is underscored in McCarthy's earlier novels. McCarthy showed us a world full of darkness and death. Death walks in the form of savage and predacious beings. In this novel it is rather a yearning to survive and not the impulse to destroy, the wish to help and share and not the drive to acquire and seize, steadfast and loving devotion rather than blind and mindless hatred.

The relationship between father and son, which in McCarthy's *The Road* may be said to come as close to the Biblical paradigm as a human bond possibly can. This time it is the mother who abandons the family – a few years after the enigmatic global catastrophe, she decides to commit suicide with “a flake of obsidian” (McCarthy.58). The father and the son are therefore left to themselves, and it is clear that they survive, thanks to one another, sustaining each other in hope, when hopelessness prevails, and in the determination to go on, when there is clearly nothing to go onwards. They are telling us about benevolence of life. Whatever the situation will be whatever the odds are. They didn't leave each other. The bond remains unbroken in a broken world.

Here the Boy is a hope for an unnamed father. Like all children are hopes for their parents. Parents depend on their kids that they will carry the family name, they will enhance the reputation of the family, and they will keep living. The Man and the Boy do not expect that from each other. The world dies and nothing is left standing. The Boy gives Man the same hope we all need. Hope keeps humanity alive. The central theme of the novel is love between father and son, this love compels them to fight for their lives. The same love

strengthens the conviction in life. The father succeeds in transferring the same to the boy. The boy has altruistic attitude towards humanity and life when the novel closes.

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The Rise of the Phoenix: Exploring the Exploited Feminine self : An Analysis of Toni Morrison's *Sula*

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Abstract :

The antithetical character of the African woman is the subject matter of Tomi Morrison's novel *Sula*. the novelist asserts that it is the woman who sustains the world for better or worse represented by Nel and *Sula*. Here a gynocritical view is represented by exploring the prevailing condition of women and the effects of slavery in a gender-biased set up. Naturally the conventional values are rejected much to the detriment of the society. The two characters Nel and *Sula* thoroughly exhibit this confrontation between traditional values and modern day challenges in respect of the African woman.

Keywords : Gynocritical, stereotypical, impropriety, upbringing, cherish.

"Hellfire don't need lightning and its already burning in you..." [*Sula*]

The stereotypical image of black women is shattered in the hands of Toni Morrison's *Sula*. The above given quote claims the bildungsroman of the woman character '*Sula*'. This paper demonstrates the various oppressions experienced by the protagonist and the process of their exploitation of 'oneself' with strength, wisdom and rebellion amidst their haunted past and troubled present. A Gynocritic view is represented in analysing Morrison's narrative *Sula* which confronts cultural issues of gender, class and race.

Morrison's bold representation of breaking the stereotypical black image is well portrayed in *Sula* rejecting the conventional values of society. This paper brings out the stark realism of a new dimension in the arena of feminine 'SELF- EXPLORATION' and 'SELF - CONSTRUCTION' process. The portrayal of Afro-American culture, the condition of women and humiliating effects of slavery are explored in the gender biased society. Issues of family identity and possession are explored in a slavery apparent world. Women were deprived of every right to develop their own self while anyone who tries to assert individuality was rejected by the society.

The Rise of the phoenix is evident in Morrison's female characters who are fiercely independent and subvert the traditionally assigned roles of a dutiful wife, mother and daughter. In this regard *Sula* claims "Whatever's burning in me is mine!"

Toni Morrison's novel *Sula*, is filled with rich and realistic characters; it traces the lives of two black women from childhood to maturity. The characters are complex and impressive to the readers. Nel represents good and Sula represents evil. It is a conflict between the desire to rebel and the urge to conform. Sula breaks through all the traditional and social conventions. She does not want to follow the rules. She has seen the different phases of life. None can see a daring heroine like her. She governs her own life; for her, society has no value, it is a null. Sula is a break-through heroine. She is selfish; she has no ambition and does not project herself or her action into future.

Baskar A. Shukla comments:

In many ways, Sula goes as far as Morrison's *Beloved* in describing the extent in which one

woman's rejection of everything available social script generates tangible, even fatal, public tension. Despite any real or perceived limitations imposed by her family, her community, or the era in which she is depicted, Sula does not put any limits upon herself. Still, her "Quitesential blackness" isolates her from a community that enacts an utterly antithetical aesthetic. Sula becomes instructive to readers precisely she is deemed destructive the other characters in the novel. (Shukla, 23)

Morrison creates African-American worlds in *Sula*. In *Sula*, the novelist clearly says it is the women who sustain the world for better or worse. Shocking and violent nature of black women is traced in *Sula* two young girls watch a little boy drown; a mother kills her son; a daughter watches her mother burn, a woman sleeps with the husband of her best friend. How does one feel about these happenings in reality?

Sula and Nel, two Black women who live in the Bottom, are the protagonists of the novel. Though they are best friends, they are very different. Unconventional, "Wild", and complex, Sula is often a disturbing character who sometimes seems to be driven by negative qualities. Nel, on the other hand, is a more conventional character, possessing many attributes that makes her seem better, nicer, or more respectable than Sula. Both women are searching for themselves and meaning in life during the course of the novel.

Nel's mother Helen was a daughter of a prostitute therefore, Helene was raised by her grandmother Cecile. Cecile, who sheltered Helen from improprieties and raised her with a strict guidance. Helen has shielded Nel from the evils of the world in much the way her grandmother Cecile shielded her. Nel meets a

young girl named Sula. She is known as "different" in the Bottom - Independent and driven by her own desires. Her mother Hannah, is also different and called a "loose" woman by the community, for, she is attracted to men. Helen initially disapproves, for, Sula's mother, Hanna has a wild reputation in town. Sula appears to be quiet and Helen allows the friendship between Nel and Sula to grow.

Sula and Nel are very different in personality and upbringing; in spite of their differences, they become friends even though Helen does not at first approve of it. The family history of Sula is much the same way Nel's family was. Strong-willed Eva burns her drug addict son Plum to save him from misery, she is also a survivor. Sula is also shaped by these weak males and the strong women in her life.

As Sula and Nel pass one of the men named Ajax calls, "Pig meat". It is obviously by their behaviour that Sula and Nel have become soul mates. Although basically different, the two girls compliment each other and understand one another instantly and intimately. Each believes she had dreamed of the other before they ever met.

When some white boys harass Nel after school hours, Sula decides to scare them away. She takes out a knife and cuts the tip of a finger off to show them how tough she is and the frightened boys ran away. Nel appreciated her friend and feels safe in her company.

The death of the child, Chicken Little moves the bond between Sula and Nel from a tight one of adolescence to an unforgettable one for eternity. It is a tragic start to womanhood for both Sula and Nel. Soon after this, Hannah catches fire in her dress while

cooking. Eva realised that Sula watching her mother burning in porch and does nothing. After a year, Nel marries Jude Greene since it is the proper social thing to do. Nel is giving up her identity. As Toni Morrison claims: "living totally by the law and surrendering completely to it without questioning anything sometimes makes it impossible to know anything about yourself" (Robert Stepto 14). Nel was a different person around Sula; she was less proper and more independent, a face that threatened Helen. A fact that pleases Helen is that Jude will take Nel away from the mildly rebellious life with Sula. Toni Morrison comments: "Nel is a law-abiding woman. Nel knows and believes in all the laws of the community. She believes in its values. Sula does not. She does not believe in any of those laws and breaks them all. Or ignores them" (Stepto 14).

Sula, however is not pleased by the change in circumstances. As soon as the wedding celebration is over, she leaves Medallion without saying a word to Nel, by marrying Jude. Nel is doing what society expects of her, becoming the picture of respectability; she will settle down, serve her husband, and have children. Additionally she loses her closest friend Sula who is upset by the marriage.

Ten years passed. Sula and Nel have changed dramatically. Sula has gone to college and seen the world; she returns to Bottom dressed like a movie star. By contrast, Nel is a good respectable wife and mother. The two very different characters find friendship in one another. Nel's opinion of Sula is a contrast to the opinion of Eva and the towns people. Barbara Christian remarks : "Sula wants everything or nothing and therefore flies in the face of compromising traditions that keep this community intact" (*Christians* 27). Who judges Sula to

be an evil omen? Toni Morrison's view: "friendship between women is not a suitable topic for a book. Hamlet can have a friend, and Achilles can have one, but women don't, because the world knows that women don't choose each other's acquaintanceship. They choose men first, then women as second choice" (McKay 428). One day Nel discovered Jude and Sula together; she is shocked, her respectable traditional world vanishes quickly. Jude is filled with shame and leaves Nel. Nel is left with no husband and no friend. Stating this Yung-Hsing Wu points out :

When she confronts Sula for having slept with Jude, Nel must face the possibility that her judgment is entirely incommensurate with Sula's view of what she has done... here Nel thinks that Sula lacks sense because she lacks the knowledge of what constitutes proper behavior. Attributing this inadequacy to Sula, Nel can believe that *Sula* is also morally lacking.... Sula neither states her behavior is right (her sleeping with Jude, her leaving the community), nor does she defend herself against Nel's accusations of the wrongness of her action. She does not give, as Nel puts it a "sensible answer" because she does not answer to Nel's claims.(Wu 790)

Everyone in Medallion is horrified over Sula's behaviour and cannot believe that she has betrayed her best friend. They are also shocked that she has put Eva, her own grandmother, in nursing home. The whole community calls Sula a bitch and judges her to be evil; Sula's entry has made a good effect on town. Women begin to hate Sula for sleeping with their husbands, they begin to cherish their husbands more. When Sula treats Eva cruelly they begin to care for their elderly in their family. Sula took that sexual power to extremes. It becomes one of her ways to sacrifice her inner self.

Making love becomes one of her areas for self expressions.

Sula is the most determined, carefree woman. Her attraction to Ajax originates from her need to have someone more free-willing and independent. Ajax senses her increasing devotion to him and desires for a permanent commitment. Fearing of such things, he makes up his mind to end the relationship. Sula is hurt and lonely after Ajax leaves, for, she was deeply attached to him. Sula feels destroyed:

When I was a little girl the head of my paper dolls came off, and it was a long time before I discovered that my own head would fall off if I bent my neck. I used to walk around holding it very stiff because I thought a strong wind or a heavy push would snap my neck. Nel was the one who told me the truth. But she was wrong. I did not hold my head stiff enough when I met him and so I lost it just like dolls. (*Sula* 136)

Sula's thoughts and view of the world are presented rather than simply observed her through other people. Her strength is evident. She is a complicated character and the world has a lot of sympathy for her.

After three years, Nel who caught Sula with her husband, hearing that Sula is sick makes up her mind to visit her old friend Sula. Sula tries to talk between the pain of her sickness, with nothing to lose. The women speak directly and honestly. When the conversation begins both the women know that this is their last chance to explain themselves to each other. In their confrontation Sula and Nel continue to compliment each other. Nel is proud of her conformity; Sula is proud of her defiance.

When, Sula says she is proud of how she has lived, being her own independent person, Nel declares Sula to be a victim of loneliness. Sula calls it independence which she has earned and which she is proud of. Each represents what the other is not. Sula points out that at least it is loneliness of her own choosing, not somebody else's she is referring to the fact that Nel has been left by Jude. Nel asks Sula why she betrayed her with Jude. Sula casually answers that Jude filled a space. Nel is shocked to discover that Sula did not even love Jude. Nel suddenly realizes that Sula feels very unloved. She also knows that even Sula does not understand why she's lived her life the way she has. Both women know who they are but neither is satisfied.

The friendship between Nel and Sula comes to an end. Nel says her last goodbyes and departs. Thus, Denise Henize comments Nel and Sula as "both the women are alone at the end, Nel in life and Sula in death - contemplating the futility of their search for wholeness in monogamy and domesticity"(82). When she evaluates herself she thinks that she never really meant anything. When Sula dies, she feels her heart stops thinking. About Nel Sula felt - let her be damned to others even the death did not hurt her. The lonely life she lived, is also hers. After Sula's death the old order of negativity returns; the town people resume their previous unhealthy behaviour. Mc Dowell writes about the novel *Sula* :

The novel's fragmentary, episodic, elliptical quality helps to thwart textual unity, to prevent a totalized interpretation. An early reviewer described the text as a series of scenes and glimpses, each " written ... from scratch". Since none of them has anything much to do

with the ones that preceded them, "we can never piece the glimpses into a coherent picture". Whatever coherence and meaning resides in the narrative, the reader must struggle to create. (Mc Dowell 86)

Conclusion :

It can be concluded that one can see how Sula becomes cold towards the society rules. She even descends herself in the deathbed when Nel questions her. She can be termed to be the breakthrough. Sula is a heroine who wants to live her life. We are assessing value by how "moral" the character is. Seemingly the negative character causes positive reactions in people. Her life is not a story of success but she lived her life to the fullest which the other women in the Bottom not dare to. She is destroyed but she achieves. The risk of individualism which she took says the Rise of phoenix is evident in her - the tale of *Sula*.

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Patriarchal Mindset in Marquez's *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*

— Bibha Kumari Jha

Abstract :

In this novel Marquez has presented and analysed the issue of patriarchy through the main female characters. The protagonist Angela Vicario is a rebel whose anti conventionality causes social aberration. Other rebel characters like Maria Alajandrina and Victoria Guzman are specimen of socially immoral and come as a contrast to Clotilde Armenta. This paper is meant to explore the female characters from the perspective of feminism. The stereotypes of both positive and negative characters are arrayed for literary representation. The patriarchal out look objectifies the female sex which has been methodically exposed and analysed through feminism here.

Keywords : sexist, feminist, virgin, haunt, bitch, angel.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez is one of Latin America's most celebrated writers; he is a master of 'magic realism'- the practice of representing possible events as if they were commonplace. He begins his career as a journalist and later he devoted himself to fiction writing, becoming celebrated for his craft as well as his rhetorical exuberance and fecund imagination. And especially after 1982 when he was awarded Nobel Prize for literature, his novels have been main concern for the critics. His famous novel, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* has stereotypically represented the female characters in its process of investigation of a murder of a twenty-one year old Santiago Nasar that occurred twenty-seven years ago at an anonymous Columbian town. The female

characters- Angela Vicario, Maria Alajandrina Cervantes, Victoria Guzman, Divina Flor, Placida Linero and Clotilde Armenta are conventionally depicted as the victim of patriarchal mindset. Angela is the cause of the murder of Santiago Nasar, a rich and handsome friend who lived in the Caribbean town. She has secretly kept an immoral relation against the social norms and values and lost her virginity before her marriage. One day very wealthy and foppish, Bayardo San Roman who has supernatural talent and indeterminate history arrives in the village. The disorder of love applies to his interests in her, which is sudden, tremendous and absolute. Though she doesn't love him at all, finally she marries him.

Most of the female characters in the novel are of bad images. The central female character, Angela Vicario is represented as an immoral woman whose immorality causes social violence. She has lost her virginity before her marriage which is a must for marriage in her culture. Her bridegroom returns her back to her parents at the very night of her marriage when he discovers her indiscretion. She is of emotional and mysterious image too. She expresses her love for Bayardo San Roman, her ex-husband by writing more than two thousand letters including the feverish ones though he discarded her in the past. Similarly, Maria Alajandrina is depicted as a brothel runner and a sex worker. Victoria Guzman has the image of charming sex object and of a servant. She works in the house of Placida Linero who is a conservative woman, has earned reputation in interpreting dreams. And Clotilde Armenta is a shopkeeper who sells alcohol. Thus, female characters are stereotypically represented in the novel through patriarchal ideology.

Chronicle of a Death Foretold wonderfully exposes

stereotypical image of female in the society in which social and cultural practice of taking female as petty and bad creature is given a textual form by the writer. The social norms and values seek women to remain pure or virgin before their marriage. Any woman becomes victim of punishment if she is found impure. Angela is sent back even after her marriage when she is found guilty. She is the cause of the murder of Santiago Nasar. While reconstructing the murder mystery of Santiago Nasar, the unknown narrator- who may be the writer himself- misrepresents the female characters. This local chronicle, however, is the real representative of the history of Columbia from which Marquez tries to foster its mythological concern: As the real history of Columbia followed by interminable civil wars, dictators, brief resurgences of democratic rule, mass massacre and rural violence, etc. In this sense the novel begins by invoking a violent death in the future and then retreating to consider an earlier, extraordinary event.

This research aims to explore female characters' stereotypical representation from the perspective of feminism. This method as theoretical tool was propounded by Mary Wollstonecraft. Feminism pertains to derogatory and unreal representation of women. It resists the depiction of women in male literature- as angles, goddesses, whores, sex object, obedient wives, and mother figures for a certain male purpose to undermine the female. Anne Cranny- Francis, Wendy Warning, Palm Stavropoulos and John Kirkby jointly define stereotype as:

A stereotype is a political practice that divides the world into like and unlike, self and other. It is radically reductive way of representing whole communities of people by identifying them with a few

characteristics. Different stereotypes applied to particular social group or community may attribute to them conflicting characteristics. This apparent contradiction reveals the fact that stereotypes are (a) generated by those outside the group and are (b) part of political strategy for managing that group a community. While marginalized groups received negative stereotypes; powerful groups are endowed with positive stereotypes. (141- 42)

Patriarchal stereotype divides the communities of human beings into the male and female with certain imposed identities. It attaches the identity of the 'Self' to male and the identity of 'Other' to female. The identity of self includes the positive stereotypes such as perfect, moral, rational, and strong; and other includes the vice-versa. In this regard, female gets negative stereotypes. And the same stereotypes are practiced in the literary representation by the patriarchal writers. Such a representation of women is related to feminism. Feminism is a movement and a belief in principle that women are undermined by patriarchy one way or the other. It advocates for the same rights and opportunities as the male have. It is concerned with various images and ideas regarding the female's issues. In spite of diversity and complexity, it is often taken as a single entity and concerned with domination of patriarchy, female's subordination and inequality. Though the feminist movement got impetus in the late 1960s for the social, cultural and legal freedom and autonomy in every aspect of life, two centuries' struggle lies behind it for the recognition of female's cultural roles and achievements. Some feminists- Mary Wollstonecraft, John Stuart Mill and Margaret Fuller are the precursors of feminist movement who have focused on the rights of the female.

The primary aim of the feminist movement is to free female from the oppressive restraints, especially the cultural restraint of society which fixes and restricts the female identity within a narrow boundary. The main strain of feminist movement however refuses the cultural definition of female within the male canon. The very methodology has explored the cultural definition of female that Marquez's novel, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* has imposed.

Compared to other writings of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Salman Rushdie analyzes, "Marquez is consciously trying to foster myth of Garciland [...] by involving a violent death and [...] by his use of certain types of stock characters: the old soldier, the loose woman, the matriarch, the compromised priest, the anguished doctor" (302). Rushdie opines that Marquez uses typical characters as he tries to emphasize myth of Garciland. Marquez has used characters like the old soldier, the loose woman and the like for his purpose. Particularly, he has treated women with his male gaze.

Marquez treats Angela as an emotional woman when he concerns about her desire to return to her ex-husband and the feverish letter she wrote to him. Sanna Dahir, regarding her emotionality, states:

Santiago's continues to cast its gloomy shadows on the lives of those involved in it. After she is returned to her parents, Angela leads an oppressive existence, trying to cope up with her mother's efforts not to die in life. Ironically, what makes the years more bearable is her untimely passion for Bayardo, whom she writes, without respite, impassioned letters "for over half a lifetime." His complete silence has aroused her obsessive drive to vent out unfulfilled desires. After getting no response for a twenty-hundred

letter, "she was no longer conscious of what she wrote nor to whom she was really writing" she remains emotionally branded by the trauma of her wedding night and fixated on the man who doesn't like her-despite the financial independence she achieves out of her sewing and embroidery. (3)

Such representation of women is the primary focus of this research. To preserve the patriarchal ideology of male superiority, Marquez casts an evil eye over women. He depicts them as passionate. Despite this fact, the horror of the murder still haunts even at the end of the novel. We find that the primary concern in the traditional mystery fiction is that the guilty can be identified and their crimes satisfyingly punished. But Marquez pursues inverted paths in his exploration of fact finding and moves towards indeterminacy. Patriarchal mindset takes woman as an object of their imagination. This imaginative conception of patriarchy always causes the representation of women to be stereotypical, misogynistic and ambivalent one. Male writers consciously and sometimes unconsciously reflect their imaginative thought regarding representation of women into their text. Gabriel Garcia Marquez too, in his renowned text, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* has represented women stereotypically, ambivalently and in a misogynistic way. He has cast his male gaze which causes the very misrepresentation. His patriarchal gaze upon female has objectified female characters – Angela Vicario, Maria Alajandrina Cervantes, Victoria Guzman, Divina Flor, Placida Linero and Clotilde Armenta. Such a representation of these characters can be methodically exposed and analyzed through feminism.

Feminism is a movement generally of women for

women, and by women. In other words it is struggle of women for womanhood. In spite of diversity, feminism refers to any theory which is concerned with the relationship between the sexes and advocates the similar legal, social, political, economic rights for the women in proportion to men. They attack the social structure built upon the patriarchal foundation it has made dominant. Patriarchal ideology has strongly developed the culture which has brought the masculine traits and has been emphasizing male interests and objectives. Women's roles and status have been compromised to their detriment by patriarchal traditions. It has seen women simply as passive victims rather than co-makers of history and the agents of change in the future. As a result, women have been considered as the objects rather than human beings who have been forced to occupy a secondary position in the world in terms of men.

But, the feminist have refused to accept the cult of masculine virility and superiority that reduces women to sex object, second sex and a submissive other. As Judith Fetterly states:

Feminist criticism is a political act whose aim is not simply to interpret the world but to change it by changing the consciousness of those who read and find their relationship to what they read... [The first act of feminist critic is] to become a resisting rather than an assenting reader and, by the male mind that has been implanted in us. (VIII)

Fetterly claims that feminist criticism aims to change the consciousness of the reader along with its interpretation of the patriarchy world and women's experiences in it. It encourages women to resist patriarchal norms which govern the female. They are

not supposed to be conformist readers rather the resisting ones. Feminism includes and argues on different issues regarding women oppression, biological differences, socioeconomic inequality etc. This research explores how Gabriel Garcia Marquez has represented the female characters in his novel, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. Feminist reading of the novel exposes that almost all the female characters- Angela Vicario, Maria Alajandrina Cervantes, Victoria Guzman, Divina Flor, Placida Linero and Clotilde Armenta, are bearing the stereotypical, ambivalent and misogynistic representation imposed by Marquez. He portrays them with his misogynistic male attitudes.

Lois Tyson, one of the twentieth century feminist writers forwards similar view regarding the patriarchal stereotype of women. To clarify her view, she brings the references from three fairy tales- "Snow white and seven Dwarfs", "Sleeping Beauty" and "Cinderella". The characterizations of women in these tales show the patriarchal stereotype of women. Women are expected to follow the gender roles provided by patriarchy. The failure of following patriarchal gender role leads them to the category of "bad girls". On the contrary, obedience and honesty to operate the role provide them the identity of "good girls". Those women who are gentle, submissive, virgin, angelic are stereotyped as good girls. And those women who are violent, aggressive, worldly and monstrous are categorized as "bad girls". She writes:

In all three tales, the main female characters are stereotyped as either "good girls" (gentle, submissive, virginal, angelic) or "bad girls" (violent, aggressive, worldly, monstrous). These characterizations imply that if a woman does not accept her patriarchal gender role, then the only role left to her is that of a monster. In

all three tales, the "bad girls"- the wicked fairy in "Sleeping Beauty", and the wicked step mother and the stepsisters in "Cinderella"- are also vain, petty, and jealous, infuriated because they are not as beautiful as the main character or, in the case of the wicked fairy, because she wasn't invited the royal celebration. (89)

The stereotypical projection of all female characters in three tales- the wicked queen, the wicked fairy and stepmother and stepsisters shows that women are of evil image in patriarchy. It also adds that when women are evil, their concerns too, are trivial without any significance. It is nothing but a sexist ideology which constantly forces women to follow the patriarchal gender title for them.

Tyson forwards her argument exploring the patriarchal identities of women. She opines that patriarchal ideology categories women into two identities of "good girls" and "bad girls". These two roles are synonymous to the roles of "Madonna" and "whore" or "angel" and "bitch". These roles define women in relation to men not in their actuality and reality. They are defined with the element what they lack and how they are different from tale. She states: As we of course they are different from male in some cases of physicality but not bear the patriarchal definition as such. Gender role of "Madona" and "whore" or "angel" and "bitch" is a stereotype for patriarchal domination. She writes:

As we saw above, patriarchal ideology suggests that there are only two identities a woman can have. If she accepts her traditional gender role and obeys the patriarchal rules, she's a good girl; if she doesn't, she is a "bad girl". These two roles also referred to as to as "Madona" and "whore" or "angel" and "bitch"- view women

only in terms of how they relate to the patriarchal order. (89)

Angela Vicario has bore the same definition in the novel. She has violated the social and cultural norms and respect of being virgin before marriage. She's lost her virginity before her marriage. So, she is taken as a "bad girl". She is an evil spirit and whore for her society's norms and ideology. Even after marriage she has to accept her return to her parents for the same.

Tyson makes a significant concern on involvement of women in sexual activity. She points out the Victorian social ideology and makes it relevant to the present. Victorian ideology placed those women in a pedestal who showed their reluctance in sexual activity, except for the purpose of legal procreation. The society believed that sexual activity was unnatural and disgusting for women. The then patriarchal ideology thought sex frightening for women. She asserts:

... to remain on her Victorian pedestal, the "good girl" had to remain uninterested in sexual activity, except for the purpose of legitimate procreation, because it was believed unnatural to women to have sexual desire. In fact "good" women were expected to find sex frightening of disgusting. (90)

The very Victorian patriarchal ideology is existing even at present. Good women are expected to remain uninteresting in sexual activity except for legal child birth. If they show interest in sexual activity for sexual pleasure and entertainment, they are taken as "bad" women. In the novel, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, Angela falls in this category – "bad" women as she secretly kept illicit sexual relation for pleasure. She showed her interest in sexual activity despite social restriction.

Feminist perspective shows that Angela Vicario,

the central female character of the novel has an immoral and emotional image. She has lost her virginity before her marriage which is against the norms of her society and culture. Moreover, she writes feverish letters to her ex-husband who discarded her at her very night of her marriage when he discovered her fault and immorality. Maria Alajandrina Cervantes, another female character of the novel is depicted a brothel runner and a sex worker. She has to serve them with her body. Ibrahim used her in her adolescence and made her his servant when her charm was faded. Now, she serves his wife, placida Linero and his son, Santiago Nasar. Her daughter, Divina Flor, too, is a servant and expected sexual playmate for Santiago Nasar. She also serves at the same house. Santiago Nasar abuses her sexually whenever he finds her alone. Placida Linero is depicted as a superstitious and irrational woman who believes in dream and interprets them linking with human omen. And Coltilde Armenta has an image of a shopkeeper who sells alcohol and wine. She is also a cowardly woman. In this sense all these female characters are of derogatory images.

The derogatory images of female characters have been explored through the feminist reading of the novel. Feminism is a literary movement of women against patriarchal mechanism. It blames patriarchy for the sole and whole problem they face, including their images in patriarchy. It views that andocentric cultures have constructed persistently negative images of women. It argues that social and sexual relation between men and women are not in nice power arrangements. It is grounded in misogyny which has resulted in worldwide oppression of women. Socialization of both sexes promotes sexual politics which in turn obtains consent of patriarchal politics. It creates prejudice of male

superiority and female inferiority.

Feminism reflects the prejudices of gender, race, class, sexuality, ability in terms of female. It seeks to abolish the patriarchy that primarily oppresses woman in different aspects of woman's life. The gendered identification is always debatable in patriarchal society, where the identification of men with activity and decision, on the one hand, and women with objectification and passivity on the other. This issue of gender identification in Latin American culture is clearly presented in the novel.

Chronicle of a Death Foretold, explores the Latin American culture of a Caribbean town in Columbia. The town is totally guided and controlled by the patriarchal culture. In this culture males are dominant, superior and powerful whereas females are appendage. Santiago Nasar seduced Divina Flor as it was his right. His father Ibrahim Nasar had seduced Divina's mother Victoria Guzman in the fullness of her adolescence as he was male. Bayardo San Roamn returns Angela Vicario as he has patriarchal right to do so. And Angela as well as her family and society accept the injustice upon her as patriarchy has set similar social norms and attitudes. Male characters in the novel treat the female as a commodity. They have control over women. Women are possessed by them just as property. To treat women as property is the attitude of patriarchal cult. Maria Alajandrina Cervantes and *the Mulatto* girls are nothing more than a commodity for males like Santiago Nasar and the narrator. The narrator and Santiago Nasar used them for utilitarian purposes.

In the nutshell, Marquez with his patriarchal culture and stereotypes- defines, explains, analyzes, describes, and directs- the female characters- as

patriarchy defines nearly everything else. He perceives women from the masculine perspective and these perspectives are given the nature of socialization that figures the image of women in patriarchy. He treats women characters with ambivalence, misogyny and subordination.

Thus Marquez as a misogynist has stereotypically represented women characters in his renowned novel, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. Despite his intellectual knowledge and genius he couldn't liberate himself from the patriarchal ideology rooted in him. He has given high emphasis on gender stereotype as he focuses on Angela's virginity- virginity a must for marriage; appearance of women- they are expected to be beautiful and tender; and commodification of women like that of Maria Alajandrina Cervantes.

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The Theme of Alienation in Anita Desai's *Cry, the Peacock**

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Abstract :

Anita Desai occupies a special place among Indian women novelists writing in English. Her novels deal with the problems of alienation, estrangement, immigration, marital disharmony, etc. Nowadays, modern man suffers due to alienation in the society. Man has progressed in various fields. Though there is technological progress, modern man suffers from loneliness. Men or women don't know why they exist. They are searching for their own identity. Women suffer in all stages of life. When they are children, they long for the affection of their parents. After marriage, they long for the affection of their husband/wife. In common, women alienate from themselves, their family as well as society. Anita Desai portrays the alienation of middle class women beautifully.

Keywords : identity crisis, alienation, isolation, existence, attachment, conflict, detachment, destruction.

This paper concentrates on the theme of alienation with reference to the Anita Desai's novel, *Cry, the Peacock*. This novel brings out the theme of

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alienation between husband and wife relationship by depicting the two main characters, Maya and Gautama. Gautama fails to show his affection for Maya. This leads her too aggravated and disappointed and ends in alienation. She is unable to adjust to the circumstances. Maya faces loneliness, companionlessness and emotionally starved. Maya is known for subjectivity and attachment, whereas Gautama for objectivity and detachment. This novel presents a predicament of Maya and her alienation from her total environment, husband, mother - in - law, sister - in - law, her incapability to accept the authority of the society and finally her tragic end.

This paper is a humble attempt to reveal the theme of alienation of the protagonist, Maya with her husband Gautama in Anita Desai's *Cry, the Peacock*. Desai's novels are characterized by estrangement and realism. Desai is a predominant figure in the twentieth century Indo-Anglian Fiction Writing in English. Most of her novels depict the protagonists' alienation from the society. Alienation is one of the major problems that exist in the modern world. Alienation occurs due to many reasons such as the generation gap, loss of identity, isolation, loss of reliability, detachment, solitude, aloofness, etc. As Edmund Fuller says, "man suffers not only from war, persecution, famine and ruin, but from inner problem... a conviction of isolation, randomness, meaninglessness in his way of existence" (Quoted by Pathak *The Fiction of Anita Desai* 18). Her first novel *Cry, the Peacock* (1963) is an emotional isolation fiction in Indian writing in English. In this novel she reveals the theme of husband-wife alienation. The novel emphasizes three distinctive parts such as growth, development and climax. The protagonist Maya is a nervous, sensitive woman, who alienates herself

from everyone around her; she is affected psychologically due to her husband Gautama's attitude towards her. Desai explains through the character Maya, how one can lose his identity in the modern technical world.

Desai is a mind-blowing female novelist distinct from the rest of her generation's other female novelists. She influences the readers by her style, technique and universal truth. She has deep knowledge in understanding male-female relationship. As Swain says, "Desai's imagery which is chiefly anticipatory, pre-figurative or demonstrative in nature is always considerably functional. Lusciously lyrical, her image patterns are singularized by interrelatedness and continuity" (*Swain*, 164).

In all her novels, she is not giving a solution. She herself reveals this in one of her interviews that she does not like to give solution and whatever she thinks in her mind which she makes it in her writing at that time. She is such a gifted writer as one cannot assess. One can find repetition with variation in all her novels as Zola observes:

What you call repetition occurs in all my books. This is a literary device that I began by using with some timidity, but have since pushed perhaps to the excess. In my view it gives more body to a work, and strengthens its unity. The device is somewhat akin to the motifs in Wagner and if you will ask some musical friend of yours to explain his use of these you will understand pretty well my use of the device in literature (Quoted by Wandrekar Kalpana *Indian Women Novelists* p.47).

Desai gives voice to the millions of married women who suffer from alienation in the society. This

alienation is a social disease which kills women in every minute somewhere in the world. The character of Desai's women is phenomenal. They are afflicted by searching their own identity and predicaments. She probes solitude, self-exploration, agony, anger, restlessness, estrangement, entanglement, struggle and surrender through her fictional character Maya. She is good enough to handle devices such as images, symbols and other poetic devices. She is deeply influenced by Virginia Woolf, D.H. Lawrence and George Eliot. She prefers the style pattern of Hopkins' word 'Inscape' instead of plot to appear to be more artificial which she would like to avoid. She has accomplished an identity crisis that acts as the central issue of the novel, when husband and wife disputes arise in the family life.

Maya's sensitive nature makes her not to adjust to the joint family of her in-laws. Her husband Gautama grants her no hope, neither a companionship, protection nor freedom. If one possesses a negative mindset, it would cause depression, which leads one to destruction. This is true in Maya's case. She feels lonely away from her husband, mother-in-law, sister-in-law and society. This change happens to her after her pet dog Toto's death, which reminds the prediction of albino astrologer since her childhood days. Her husband's attitude towards the pet dog makes her remind albino astrologer's prediction. In that prediction, the astrologer says that after their four years of married life, either she or her husband Gautama will die. Either of the partners will die in the fourth year of their wedlock.

Gautama is a practical, rational man. He fails to understand his wife's alienation. Even when Maya's pet dog Toto dies, he calls the municipality to remove the corpse of the dog. He never feels for the dog's death.

In addition to that he calls Maya the monkey. For the childless sensitive woman Maya, Toto's company alone is her child substitute. She has longings for a child. But Gautama's brutal quality for the dog affects her mind and becomes insane. Being an egoist, Maya is not ready to accept reality. She always ignores the situation when she has to face hardships.

Owing to the demise of her pet dog Toto, Maya is restless in the month of April. When the novel begins, Maya begs the gardener to bury Toto's corpse. The gardener replies to Maya, "Often in the course of that day he said to her patiently, 'The sweeper will do it'. He has gone to visit his brother, but when he returns, he will do it" (*Cry The Peacock* 7).

Maya is waiting for her husband Gautama's arrival in order to do proper burial. Her pet dog is lying at one end of the lawn under a sheet. Gautama comes very late in the evening. He calls the public works department to take away Toto's dead body and burn it. As a practical man Gautama says, "When the truck had left, he came to her, wiping his fingers on a handkerchief, much used and soiled during the day, yet still in neat folds. 'It is all over', he said. "Come and drink your tea, and stop crying. You mustn't cry" (*CTP* 8).

Maya asks him what he had done. Gautama replies, "I sent it away to be cremated, he said, 'It is all over. Come, Won't you pour out my tea?" (*CTP* 8). After seeing the teapot, biscuit tin and the sliced lemon she is upset. Gautama convinces Maya to have a tea. At that time some client has come to visit him. Immediately Gautama forgets her and attends the court case. This makes Maya to cry to an extreme.

Maya feels uneasy and it makes her cry. Maya

mourns not only for her pet dog Toto, but also for something experienced with hopelessness. She thinks of Gautama's nature - white dog has been once loved by them. Gautama fails to understand his wife's alienation and says, "It is all over" as the meditator sits under the sal tree. Here Desai brings Indianism by mentioning Shorea Robusta tree which she finds in India. Gautama is not bothering about the Maya's concern. He gives her an opal ring and fails to find his wife's mood fluctuating. Maya gets a shock after her husband's jolting behaviour. Desai delineates Maya's loneliness as:

Telling me to go to sleep while he worked at his papers, he did not give another thought to me, to either the soft, willing body or the lonely, wanting mind that waited near his bed. Aid now, seeing one bereaved, seeing tears on my face and my pet gone. 'You need a cup of tea' he said. Yes, I cried, Yes, it is his hardness — no, no, not hardness, but the distance he coldly keeps from me. His coldness, his coldness, and incessant talk of cups of tea and philosophy in order not to hear me talk and talking, reveal myself. It is that — my loneliness in this house.
(CTP 14)

Maya feels that her husband Gautama alienates her. She thinks that everyone around her leaves her alone as the scarlet blouse on the liquid mirror, the black frame of the door fly like an abandoned flag. She feels that she is alone. She considers her childhood experience as sweet exhausting. Gautama's attitude towards Maya makes her to connect the present with her past memories. Gautama tells Maya that she has married him who is almost equal to her father's age, older than her due to her family condition and her father fixation or obsession. On account of the run

away of Maya's mother from her father, her exaggerated father forces her to marry Gautama, who is a middle-aged lawyer, a friend of her father. After her marriage with Gautama, she recalls albino astrologer's prediction which turns up insane. Since childhood, she has lost her mother, so her father shows his care and affection which makes her long for affection. She believes that she'll get fatherly affection from her husband Gautama. But Gautama fails to show his love to her. This makes her depressed towards the later part of her life.

Maya's attachment towards her father develops into an Electra complex. She expects the father substitute in the form of marriage through her husband Gautama. But her husband's behaviour deteriorates her. Thus she remembers her childhood memories with her father often. She is very upset with the death of her pet dog Toto. For a childless woman, the pet dog serves up as a child substitute. In addition to this, Gautama's reaction towards her pet's death worries her a lot. She is bothering that Gautama fails to understand her feelings. Desai's subject is loneliness and she is harsh and frank on Indian society. As Ramesh Saroji says:

I am aware that I try to impose order on the chaos, especially of Indian life. One does retreat from the noise and clamour into solitude. But India is always on the verge of toppling into violence, which gives it an immense tension. Just as if I wrote about powerful woman who were in control it wouldn't be truthful. If I wrote about a calm and benevolent place, I wouldn't be telling the truth. (*Saraji*, p.55)

When Gautama sees Maya on her bed in the dark room with tears, he takes her for a walk in order to remove her pet dog Toto's sorrow. They have a conversation about the dead dog. Gautama talks about

detachment. For him, birth and death give a meaningless life to a meaningless end; Maya also means meaningless life. Gautama says about the Bhagavad Gita's preaching and detachment. Gautama's carelessness seeks Maya to go back to her childhood memories with her father.

One day Gautama asks Maya to choose a place for vacation. Gautama has never gone away for the summer after his marriage with Maya. When Maya suggests the place Darjeeling, Gautama in a stiff voice says that her father could take her wherever she wants to go. Desai expresses Maya's anguish: "No, I said, and sat up in bed pushing the pillows aside. No. You know what I really wish to do, Gautama? I should like to go south to Travancore, Cochin, Mysore, Malabar, all those places" (CTP 40). She adds to watch the Kathakali dances for which Gautama asks her to wait till a Kathakali troupe comes to give a performance in Delhi in winter as it will be less expensive.

With Gautama's family, they do not speak the word love and loss of affection. They discuss parliament, cases of bribery, corruption, revolutions, etc. They don't discuss the above mentioned topics to Maya. They think that she is not fit for it. They treat her like a doll which is taken to shopping and marriages. Though she is in Gautama's family, she feels alone. Here she alienates not only from her husband, but also from her mother-in-law, sister-in-law, Nila, etc. Women's alienation affects the family as Ann Foreman comments:

Man exists in the social world... For the woman, however, her place is within the home... the effect of alienation on the lives and consciousness of women takes on even more oppressive form. Men seek relief from their alienation through their relations with women;

for women there is no relief. For these intimate relations are the very ones that are the essential structures of her oppression (*Foreman*, p. 104).

Maya wants to be free from isolation, meets two of her friends Leila and Pom. She hears the tragic story of Leila. She has been leading her life with her sick, bedridden husband. Maya's another friend Pom complains about her married life in a joint family. Pom wants to separate from her mother-in-law. But her husband refuses in order to save money.

After returning home Maya explains the tragic stories of her friends to her husband Gautama. He does not show any grievances over that matter. He advises her not to get upset for her friends' lives. She longs for her husband's love. She feels alone and no one allows her to speak as Sunaina Singh notices, "A young wife left alone the whole day, ignored in the evening and worse, not even allowed to speak, to open herself, and reveal her agony of alienation and isolation : all this leaves Maya agitated, disturbed" (*Quoted by Swain Studies*, p.107).

A party is taking place in the front lawn. Maya is left alone. She feels that there is no connection between them. She recalls the sentences which she read long time ago from the Bhagavat Gita as follows: "He is fit to attain immortality whose serene and not affected by these sensations, but is the same in pleasure and pain. He whose mind is not agitated in calamities and who has no longing for pleasures free from attachment, fear and anger, he indeed is said to be of steady wisdom" (*CTP* 93).

When Maya sits alone, he tries to convince her by speaking philosophy about non-attachment. While Maya tries to pull him towards her, he speaks of non-

attachment. As Gautama speaks of detachment, "From attachment arises longing and from longing anger is born. From anger arises delusion; from delusion, loss of memory is caused. From loss of memory the discriminative faculty is ruined and from the ruin of discrimination, he perishes" (*CTP* 95).

When Maya talks about her pet dog Toto's memory, Gautama asks her who that Toto is. This answer makes her alienate from him. S.P. Swain says of Maya's craze for love and affection, "Without strong ties with her husband, she feels lost and isolated : What has driven Maya towards insanity? The reason could easily be seen as the impending death, but the real reason is perhaps the unfulfilled desire and the perpetual longing for Gautama's love and affection" (*Swain*, p. 98).

After she has received a letter from her brother Arjuna, she remembers albino fortune teller's prediction that either Maya or her life partner will die in the fourth year of their married life. When Gautama asks about that letter, Maya hides albino astrologer's prediction in order to gain Gautama's love. Here Maya believes in superstitious things which give her trouble in the end of the novel. Freud says about superstitious belief as:

It can be recognized most clearly in neurotics suffering from obsessional thinking... that superstition derives from suppressed hostile and cruel impulses. Superstition is in large part the expectation of trouble; and a person who had harboured frequent evil wishes against others, but has been brought up to be good and has therefore repressed such wishes into the unconscious, will especially ready to expect punishment for his unconscious wickedness in the form of trouble threatening him from without. (Quoted by Rajeshwar, p. 20)

Being alone Maya is depressed. In the evening, Gautama invites Maya for a walk to the lawn. She prefers to go to the roof of the terrace. With excitement Maya goes up to the terrace. When Gautama talks about the court case to Maya, he hides between her and the moon. Maya with anger pushes him down from the roof resulting in his tragic death. She becomes insane. Due to isolation, Maya becomes mad and kills her own husband. She goes to that extreme of killing her own husband. Then she commits suicide. From Maya's character one should learn that one should mingle with all. Pandey rightly comments:

What she thinks of stars is true to her own life too. Both she and Gautama are alienated from each other and that space of alienation consists death—death of either of the two. She kills Gautama in order to bridge the gap. This reminds us of Edward Albee's play *The Zoo Story* (1958) where Jerry, the protagonist, in order to establish contact or bridge the gap of communication, kills himself. The difference is that by killing himself Jerry succeeds in his aim while Maya, in the present novel, does not. (Pandey, p. 137)

CONCLUSION : Desai's theme reflects the trend in the modern society. Because of tremendous development in technology, man loses his identity. He or she is not communicating with people; instead they have spent time in mobile phones, social media, etc. Man lives his life with technology than with human beings. A problem exists in the man-woman relationship due to lack of communication. In this novel *Cry, the Peacock*, if Gautama had spent time with Maya, there would not be misunderstanding. Earning money is an important task in today's world. At the same time expressing love is also unavoidable to maintain the man-woman

relationship. Though the novel has a negative note that is destruction, one has to learn a positive note from it. Desai tries to show us why it happened. One should take a positive note and people should take care of their loved ones at the needed time.

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Diasporic Women Writers with Special Reference to Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices*

— Ms. Sunita Kumari

Abstract :

In today's literary world Diasporic literature is also gaining popularity. It has acquired a great significance in recent years, not only in India but all over the world. The new trend of diaspora writers deals with the theme such as alienation, displacement, existential rootlessness, nostalgia, quest for identity and recreation of identity. The amalgamation or assimilation and disintegration of cultures are present in diasporic writings. The recent diasporic women writers like Bharati Mukherjee, Anita Desai, Ruth Prawer Jhabwala, Jhumpa Lahiri, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Anita Rau Badami, Sunetra Gupta, Shauna Singh Baldwin, Meera Syal etc deal with the theme of recreation of identity on foreign land and women empowerment. Immigrant women writers want liberation from stereotypical identity so they are recreating their identity through literary works.

Keywords : Nostalgia, dislocation, rebel, phoenix, motif.

To begin with, Bharati Mukherjee was born in 1940 in India and moved to Britain at the age of eight with her family. She studied in England and USA. She married to Clark Blaise, a Canadian in 1963. She moved to Canada with her husband but later returned to the USA where she taught at different Universities. She embraced the openness of American culture and its respect for one's individuality with enthusiasm. She has stated emphatically that she would like to be treated

as an American writer and not as a hyphenated or ethnic one. She is happily assimilated in American culture and environment. Her personal experience is the main source of her writings. She is also concerned with migration, dislocation, recreation of identity, relocation and feeling of alienation.

Her first novel *The Tiger's Daughter* (1971) explains the story of Tara who gets married to an American and returns to India but finally she is unable to connect with her motherland. She fails to recreate her identity in USA and struggle to adjust. She feels like an alien in her own city Calcutta. At last she returns to the USA the land of her adoption. Her second novel *Darkness* (1985) presents the experiences of Indian immigrants in the USA. Her third novel *The Middleman and other stories* (1988) narrates the story of immigrants from various countries. *The Holder of the World* (1993) focuses on the 17th century colonial America, the Mughal India. Bharati Mukherjee creates a vivid and complex tale of dislocation and transformation that takes place in assimilation of two cultures. *Leave it to one* (1997) is the story of a female child abandoned by a mother from California. The girl child who becomes a young woman goes in search of her roots and true parentage. The revenge story is interwoven with the question of identity presented through twin motifs of Kali and Electra. Bharati Mukherjee explores the hyphenated individual's dilemma in the multi-ethnic USA. In her novel *Desirable Daughters* (2002) the concerns are again female identity and re-rooting of the self. Her most famous novel *Jasmine* (1990) is the story of a rebellious girl Jyoti who rebels against the stereotypical society. She goes to the USA where she becomes Jasmine, a personification of America. She writes about the immigrants who overcome the trauma of displacement and alienation

through adaption, adjustment, assimilation and acculturation. Jasmine recreates her identity after transformation of many past identities. In this way, the migratory experiences have enriched expatriate literary writings.

Anita Desai born in 1937, is an Indian novelist and professor of Humanities at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She received a Sahitya Akademi Award in 1978 for her novel *Fire on the Mountain* and she won the British Guardian Prize for the work *Village by the Sea*.

Her novel *Fasting Feasting's* (1999) intricate family relation plays out in two countries, India and the United States. The core characters comprise a family living in a small town in India, where provincial customs and attitudes dictate the future of all children: girls are to be married and boys are to become as much educated as possible. The story focuses on main characters Uma and Arun, the boy and the baby of the family. Uma spends her life in subservience to her older demanding parents, while massive effort and energy is expended to ensure Arun's education and placement in a university in Massachusetts. Arun gets married. Therefore, we can compare and contrast between the Indian and the American culture.

Anita Desai's *Bye Bye Blackbird* (1985) deals with the migrations of the Indians to England and disillusionment they often experience there. Dev comes to England to pursue his studies but he finds it very difficult to adjust with the alien surroundings. He is unable to bear the silence and emptiness of London. He feels trapped and racially conscious in England. However, he asserts that he was there to interpret India to them. Adit is a romantic admirer of England in

the beginning but later he is drawn back to India the country which he called dirty and lazy. Sarah is an English girl married to Adit also faces identity crisis. She is romantically in love with India but when her husband expressed the desire that their child should be born in India, she felt shocked and surprised. She felt the sense of being uprooted. She accompanies her husband to India bidding goodbye to England. Anita Desai is also concerned with larger diasporic issues like inner alienation and uprootedness rather than more geographical displacement.

Ruth Pravar Jhabwala is also a prominent diaspora writer, who was born in 1927 in Germany. In 1939, her family migrated to England as refugees. The condition of displacement continued in her adult life. She married an Indian Parsi architect and moved to New Delhi. After 24 years of struggle in India, she migrated to New York, USA. Her most famous novel *Heat and Dust* (1970) won the prestigious Booker Prize. The novel discusses India and its effects on the immigrant. Her works include *To Whom She Will* (1955), *The Nature of Passion* (1956), *Esmond in India* (1957), *The Householder* (1960), *Three Continents* (1987) etc. She loves India so she criticizes those who run for western materialism. She believes that one needs to have roots in one's culture in order to absorb the good in another. She has described the theme of East-West encounter and explored the theme of expatriation in India.

Jhumpa Lahiri is an Indian-American author well known for short stories and novels. She was born in 1967. Her collection of short-stories *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999) won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction. In 2014, Lahiri was awarded the National Humanities Medal. She is currently a professor of creative writing at

Princeton University. New Jersey, USA. As a child of immigrant parents, Lahiri has undergone the experience of living two lives, one in India and other in the USA. *The Interpreter of Maladies* is a story about a young couple caught too early in the tangles of marriage and parenthood. In *The Third and Final Continent* Lahiri describes diasporic experience by suggesting that cultural and national assimilation is the only solution for survival in an alien world.

Kiran Desai was born in 1971. Her novel *The Inheritance of Loss* won the Man Booker Prize in 2006. She is the daughter of Anita Desai. She left India at 14 and then lived in England for a year then moved to the United States. Her first novel, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* (1998) about a young man in provincial India who abandons an easy post office job and begins living in a guava tree, where he makes oracular pronouncements to locals. Unaware that he knows of their lives from having read their mail, they hail him as a prophet. *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* drew wide critical praise and received Betty Trask Prize from the British Society of Authors in 1998. Her novel *The Inheritance of Loss* is the story of an illegal immigrant who struggles to survive in the USA. *The Inheritance of Loss* is a description of globalization, terrorism, crisis of identity and immigrant's experience.

Anjana Appachana moved to the USA with her husband. She teaches at Arizona State University and writes novels and short stories. Her two major works include *Incantation and other stories* and *Listening Now*, a novel. She explores the silence of women who are forced by patriarchal structure to maintain forced silence. She focuses on urban middle class women who are caught between traditions and modernity.

Sunetra Gupta spent her childhood in Ethiopia, Zambia and Liberia. Later She studied biology at the Princeton University and settled in London. Her first novel *Memories of Rain* (1992) won her Sahitya Akademi Award in 1996. Her works are characterized by stream of consciousness style focusing on the interior lives of her characters. Her other works are *The Glassblower's Breath* (1993), *Moonlight into Marzipan* (1995) and *A Sin of Colour*. Sunetra's interest lies in the inner worlds of her characters. Her writing interpolates cultures, histories and human understanding. Her fiction shifts the central preoccupation of diasporic writings from crisis of identity to the mapping of a process of experience and feeling.

Meera Syal was born and brought up in a Punjabi immigrant family in England. She has written various creative scripts for film, TV etc. Her play is *One of Us* and her novels are *Anita and Me* (1996) and *Life is not All Ha Ha Hee Hee* (2001). *Bhaji on the Beach* is a screen play that portrays the confrontation between two generations of South Asian women. She satirizes older generation of women who are caught in time warp and are unable to accept new changes like individual self expression and sexual openness. Syal's forte is comic through which she expresses her belief that there is a possibility for a positive change. *Anita and Me* is an autobiographical work set in an English mining village, Meena a ten year old non-white girl, faces racial discrimination and develops a deep crisis of identity. *Life is not All Ha Ha and Hee Hee* deals with female friendship of South Asian immigrants.

Anita Rau Badami is a novelist moved to Canada in 1991. Her novel *Tamarind Men* (1996) is an autobiographical novel. It presents different perspectives

of the mother Saroja in India and that of the daughter Kamini in Canada. It portrays the cultural affiliation versus individual desire. Her other novel *The Hero's Walk* represents the South Asian Diaspora.

Shauna Singh Baldwin is also a Diaspora Indo-Canadian writer. She was born in Canada married to an Irish American, David Baldwin. Her novel *What the Body Remembers* is a partition novel. She portrays the pain, desires to recreate identity, sadness and tragedy in her novel. Since the terrorist attack on the world trade centre and Pentagon, Sikhs and Muslims have suffered the racist backlash. As a writer of Indian diaspora, she says:

Each of us given the ability to create or destroy – I opt to create. She believes firmly that writing has a therapeutic value in strife torn world. (Response to question from Tehelka. Internet)

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an Indian American author, poet and professor of creative writing at the University of Houston. She is well known for short story writing, children's fiction and novels. Her short story collection *Arranged Marriage* won an American Book Award in 1995. She has written more than fifteen books and her fiction has been translated into 29 languages including Dutch, Hebrew, Indonesian, Bengali, Turkish and Japanese. Her major novels include *The Mistress of Spices*, *Sister of My Heart*, *Queen of Dreams*, *One Amazing Thing*, *Palace of Illusions*, *Oleander Girl*, *Vine of Desire* and *Before we visit the Goddess*.

Like other diasporic women writers Divakaruni focusses on self-perceptions and self-identification in her writing. Her each novel reflects the diasporic South Asian women's battle with cultural assimilation and

identity recreation. Divakaruni also deals with the theme of identity seeking through her characters. Her novels deal sensitively quest for identity with psychological conflicts. Her most famous novel *The Mistress of Spices* portrays the process of self-perception with identity recreation of the main character Tilo. *The Mistress of Spices* (1997) is set in Oakland, California. The protagonist Tilo changes her identity based on her diasporic transformation. Diasporic, etymologically derived from the Greek term "diasperien" where 'dia' means 'across' and 'sperian' means 'to sow or scatter seeds', diaspora suggests a displacement from the homeland, circumstances or environmental location of origin and transfer in one or more nation states, territories or foreign countries. Diaspora refers to displaced communities which have been dislocated from their homeland through migration or immigration or exile. A diaspora is the movement, migration, or scattering of people away from their root. Diasporic people migrate to other places in search of better job, better education, of course for better lifestyle. As an immigrant Tilo shifts to different places and recreates a new identity every time. She develops multiple identities that manifest her experiences in a new life. She assimilates herself to American culture throughout the course of the Text. Tilo was born with magical power in the village of Andaman Nicobar Island, India. In the first chapter of *The Mistress of Spices* she construes her identity as 'she is the Mistress of Spices'. Tilo's gift is her ability to elicit specific powers inherent in spices and use them to cure the maladies of those around her. She explains:

But the spices are my love. I know their origins, and what their colours signify, and their smells. I can call each by the true name it was given at the first,

when earth split like skin and offered it up to the sky. Their heat runs in my blood. From Amchur to Zafran, they bow to my command. At a whisper they yield up to me their hidden properties their magic powers. (Divakaruni: 03).

In this way Tilo express, her identity of self. Identity is the construal of one's self. Name is also signifier of one's identity. Tilo describes her childhood name as Nayan Tara, Star of the Eye, her parents called her by this name. Her fame spreads from neighbouring towns and beyond, from the cities that lay on the other side of the mountains, people travelled so she could change their luck with a touch of her hand. The travelling bauls sang her praises, goldsmiths impressed her likeness on medallions that were worn by thousands for luck, and merchant sailors carried tales of her powers across the harnessed seas to every land. That is the way the pirates know about her magical power. Pirates storm into her home, murder her whole family and kidnapped Tilo, taking her on board their ship as a prisoner. Eventually, Tilo overthrows the pirate captain to become the pirate:

queen, leading (her) pirates to fame and glory, so that bards sang their fearless exploits. (Divakaruni: 19).

Pirates give her a new name Bhagyavati, Bringer of luck, for so she was to be for them. Tilo overthrows chief of Pirates to become queen of Pirates. She creates her identity as a queen and she empowers herself after struggle from old identity. Nevertheless Tilo abandons this exalted position when mystical sea serpents tell her about the existence of an island upon which she and other women like her, can develop their supernatural talents to use them for a greater good.

This isolated island is a heaven for these women, who call themselves the 'Mistress of Spices' and are under the care of the First Mother, the eldest and wisest teacher of all the women. The women are trained in the art of listening and controlling the spices, and are then sent forth into the greater world to welfare of humanity. After Tilo learns all that she can, she is sent to Oakland, California, to a tiny Indian spice shop where she must begin her duties of healing the masses. Thus, she adapts herself in a new culture of America. Before Tilo is sent to Oakland, The First Mother gives her a knife as a gift, the purpose of which Tilo believes:

knife to cut my mooring from the past,
the future; to keep me always rocking at sea.
(Divakaruni: 51)

Tilo migrated to America by means of 'Shampati's Fire', a giant bonfire into which she steps and disappears. The symbolism of fire is obvious in its action; the destruction of present physical form, and a reduction to ashes that are then scattered to the far corners of the globe. Divakaruni is again foreshadowing the process of Tilo's identity recreation, use the fire as a metaphor for the recreation of the self and presenting identity as erratic rather than permanent. The actual word 'Shampati' is a reference to the bird of myth and memory who dived into conflagration and rose new from ash or what can be considered an Eastern version of the phoenix. Tilo's journey to America is a rebirth, reinvention, it is a literal recreation of the self identity. In America, Tilo interacts with all genders, identifying with both her male and female customers and friends. She experiences the sadness and anger of the young and confused adolescent Indian boy who is tormented at school while at the same time sympathizing with

the pain of the newly wed Indian bride who suffers from the terror of domestic violence. Tilo's gift is her ability to read into the lives of all those who enter her store, seeing all of the problems they endure as they assimilate, feeling their daily sufferings and understanding even their most private thoughts and wishes.

Tilo's journey of recreation of identity starts when she migrates from Andaman Island to California, America. Tilo's changes her cultural identity when she starts her shop in America, she begins to see herself as an American. She found herself more empowered and starts to learn about American culture. She breaks the shackles of stereotypical woman and moves forward to be an American. Divakaruni through *The Mistress of Spices* shows an interesting panorama of human strength to adopt when she moves through the uncertainty of living in a foreign land like America. Stuart Hall says that:

Identity should not be thought of as an accomplished fact, but should be seen as a production which is never complete. Cultural identity is a matter of becoming as well as of being. Cultural identities have history and it goes through constant transformation. The concept of self is fluid throughout an individual's lifetime, where a person's experiences create who they are. (Hall, 222)

The Mistress of Spices not only involves the struggle against the ordinary difficulties of the normal process which is experienced by every young woman but also challenges the problem related to sexual, racial, national and cultural identity.

There are other remarkable women characters

like Geeta, Mrs. Ahuja or Lalita and Hameeda in *The Mistress of Spices*. These immigrant women are living in America. *The Mistress of Spices* exposes immigrant women's struggle and recreation of identity. Lalita, Ahuja's wife is the first female immigrant introduced with us after Tilo. Mrs. Ahuja's husband was a watchman. She was married with him because he was earning in dollars. Lalita never loved him. No one asks Lalita whether she likes him or not. This is very similar as aunt Pratima of the story *Silver Pavements*, *Golden Roofs* and Sumita, the protagonist of the story *Clothes*. Lalita thought of running away, but where could she go? This is the question in her mind. She knew what happened to girls that left home. They ended up on the streets, or as kept women for men far worse than her husband. She describes her feelings:

Atleast with him I had honour – her lips
twist a little at the word - 'because' I was a wife.
(Divakaruni, 102)

Like other Indian women Lalita's situation was the same. She was living in America but she could not share her feelings to her husband. She feels crisis of her identity in America. Ahuja's family has not good financial condition. So Lalita wants to do some work to support her family but her husband gets angry and he doesn't allow her to go outside for any work. This shows Mr. Ahuja's male dominant nature of Indian society. Lalita comes for help from Tilo. Tilo gives her fennel, a spice and advises her to take it after every meal to freshen the breath and aid digestion. It gives mental strength for what must be done. Tilo consoles Lalita:

You deserve happiness. You deserve
dignity. I will pray for that. (Divakaruni, 106)

Lalita feels comfortable and recreates her identity

as an ideal wife. The other character Hameeda recreates her identity in America after she quits India. She migrated to America after her husband had given her divorce for not being able to produce a male child. It was gender based discrimination which Hameeda didn't like. She gives birth to a girl child named Latifa, she considers herself unlucky in India. Hameeda lives with her brother Shamsur in America and finds liberation from stereotypical attitude of her husband. In America her life was easy because there was no one who raises unnecessary questions about her identity as single woman with a daughter. Tilo as a mistress of spices sees the inner lives of the Indian immigrant women. Divakaruni encapsulates many aspects of immigrant's experience in America. In this process the novelist reveals the ways in which new comers from the third world are being absorbed by the same time transforming the American society.

Geeta's story also highlights identity crisis after migration and recreation of identity in America. Geeta is second generation Indian immigrant woman, a young educated girl living in America with her parents and grandfather. Geeta is born in America and knows nothing about India and Indian culture. Her parents wants to marry her with an Indian. However, Geeta refuses to marry a man from India and desires to marry a foreigner. Geeta tells her parents that the boy she is willing to marry is not American but he is Mexican. Her mother says:

I never thought you'd do this to us, is this how you repay us for giving you so much freedom even though all our relatives warned us not to.
(Divakaruni, 90)

For first generation Indian immigrants, marriage has to be arranged by the elders and love marriage is

equal to sin. Thus they can't accept that liberated American culture.

Divakaruni deals with the first and second generation of Indian immigrant women's experience; Divakaruni herself has focused it in an interview in this way:

Having explored so many stories of women coming over here if wanted to explore another side of the diasporic experience, what happens to the next generation? That is very timely questions, because with the Indian community is the states getting older the experience of the second generation is becoming more important. (Interview with Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Bloomsbury Review, Retrieved on 21st June 2011, Internet)

Tilo, the mistress of spices gives appropriate spices to the people and helps them to overcome their troubles. The creation of identity of Lalita as a bold lady and of Geeta has recreated her identity as an intelligent girl who thought rationally about cross-culture affairs.

Tilo has a lot of self tolerance, hard work and obstacles. She is mentally very strong to bear every problem of her life and other's life. She thinks, observes and helps her customers by magical spices. The Old Mother warns Tilo not to exploit the power of spices for their own benefit ever. Tilo tries to tame her curious self, at time she finds it difficult not to break a rule. When she meets Raven for the first time, she dares to dream, to desire a life away from the spices and the store, so she runs. She entertains the idea of a personal gain the more she notices the loss of her powers. Instead of healing her customers, the spices begin to play wicked game to punish Tilo for daring to love

someone else, other than them. Tilo begins to fear that the spices will abandon her. She loves to help people and has no idea how to leave without such an incredible gift or if the spices will allow her to live her life. In case, she dares to leave them for Raven. She is torn between her love towards the spices and an American man, who nudges her to take a step towards cross-cultural love affair, but it's not easy for Tilo to choose as her decision has power to affect the lives of individual she cares about. Tilo recreates her identity in America in spite of all the shortcomings and adversities that she goes through. In the words of Daphne Grace:

Both Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and Salman Rushdie are authors concerned with migration and trans-national concepts of ethnic identity in the Diaspora and with trans-cultural experiences of exile and belonging, alienation, and the hope of reconciliation. (Daphne Grace, 117)

Tilo experiences exile and belonging, she is alienated in America and at the end of the story she tries for reconciliation with an American man. Tilo changes her name five times. Like Bharati Mukherjee's Jyoti-Jasmine-Jane; from Nayan Tara to Bhagyavati to Sarpakanya to Tilottama and finally to Maya, the most appropriate name, it means illusion, enchantment and the power that keeps this imperfect world going day after day, a name that spans India and America. She has recreated her identity in the end of the novel as a positive outlook in accepting new identity and paves a space for communication between two different cultures. This inter-racial relation can be seen as an implement to fight against racism and discrimination in America.

Metka Zupancic in an interview with Chitra

Banerjee Divakaruni (The power of story telling) explains:

Divakaruni is influenced by Maxine Hong Kingston. She has much taken by her text *The Woman Warrior*. The theme of recreating identity, immigration, family stories, changing role of women, racial conflict and myth all resonated with her. She wanted to apply them to her background and the stories she had grown up with, as well as the stories she came across, living in America. She was also influenced by Bharati Mukherjee especially her relationships in books such as *The Middleman* and other stories. Novels such as *Jasmine* and *Desirable daughters* which explore the changing identities of immigrant women, though in the context of a more violent world, intrigued her. All of these would become important themes in her interest in the lives of the second generation the children of Indian ancestry who are born in America. (academic.oup.com)

Conclusion

In *The Mistress of Spices* the process of recreation of identity as Nayan – Tara to Bhagyavati to Sarpakanya to Tilottama and Maya is figuratively centered in the death of one's own self and recreation of a new self. It is a motif, a symbolism of cyclical patterns of birth, death and rebirth in this context of post – colonial immigrant women's life. Tilo's mobility from one self to another is operated by the necessities of her existence. She shows the power to assimilate different circumstances to make her existence. Through *The Mistress of Spices*, Divakaruni wants to convey the message that recreation of identity, shifting identities, adaptability and finally assimilation are keys to the survival for immigrants. Tilo successfully recreates her identity till

her destiny like the novel *Jasmine; Leave it to Me, Fasting Feasting* and *The Namesake*. Like these novels in America, Tilo encounters several difficulties but courageously overcomes from them. She constantly changes herself during her life journey which starts from Andaman Island (India) as Nayan Tara (Star-seer) to Bhagyavati (Bringer of Luck) to Tilottama (Life Giver) and after all Maya. Throughout the novel she strives to fit herself in the American society and finally becomes able to settle there, adapt the American way of life and recreate her identity.

The state of exile, a sense of loss, the pain of separation and disorientation makes the novel oriented towards a recreation of identity in an alien land through the main character Tilo. As she experiences the displacement and dislocation in her life she tends to more adopt the foreign culture suppressing the past for a different present. Though she shuttles between past and present, she tries to restrain the past to recreate her identity coherent and establish 'self' more assertively. To sum up, recreation of identity means recreation of universe of women.

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Baldwin Oct, 2004

(shaunasinghbaldwin.com)



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Neuroticism in *The Crucible*

— Dr Sujata Huidrom

Abstract :

The *Crucible* is a drama based on Salem witch trials of 1692. It relies on court records and historical personages. Several innocent people are victims of witch hunting under the dominance of the church. Many innocent people are accused of witchcraft. They are forced to confess themselves for the crime not committed by them, only then they are allowed to live. If they don't confess, they are hanged. Some people confess for their lives, others don't confess and are led to the gallows. The play also deals with neuroticism which leads to certain personality disorders. Abigail Williams clearly illustrates the point.

Keywords : Mistrust, adultery, witchcraft, average, lechery.

Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* takes us back to the America of the 17th Century when there was widespread fear of witchcraft. The play is an allegorical retelling of the McCarthy era that occurred in the United States after World War II. *The Crucible* is a drama about the Salem witch trials of 1692 and it was based on court records and historical personages. Several innocent people were tortured and put to death under the dominance of the church. The play makes use of history to draw a contemporary situation. The hero of the play, John Proctor, is falsely accused of witchcraft. And he is given a chance to save his life by signing a "confession" but he chooses to be sentenced to death. *The Crucible* was written in response to Senator McCarthy and the House Un-American Activities committee's crusade against supposed communist

sympathizers. Miller rejected the idea of a play about Salem. The whole theme and time seemed too far removed from contemporary life. But, as the suspicion and fear about communist invasions increased, Miller's personal feeling of connection to the Salem of 1692 became stronger and stronger. The more he researched and read Miller found similarity in the two periods of the House Un-American Activities committee's crusade and the Salem witch trials of 1692 .Miller finally decided that a play would have to be done. (Glassman, 60)

Miller needed research in order to depict the time and the place accurately. Therefore, he went to the Salem Courthouse in 1952. He began to search for the information which would be the core of the drama. There, he got the public records of the 1692 trials. The hysteria swept the town of Salem in 1692. Nineteen adults and two dogs were hanged in relation to the issue of witchcraft and a man was pressed to death. The testimony of a number of girls and young women ranging in age from nine to twenty showed the evidence of supernatural influence. It was supported by a number of physical symptoms like fainting or hysterical fits. Suspicion spread rapidly because those accused of witchcraft can save their lives either by confession or by identifying other witches. The witch-hunt ended when a group of church leaders in Boston declared that the evidence of witness was insufficient to justify the death penalty. Before the court had been discredited, however, more than one hundred and fifty persons had been accused and confined to prison to await trial. (Carson, 63)

In *The Crucible*, Miller has divided the characters into two types i.e. 'good guys' and 'bad guys'. John Proctor, Giles Corry and Rebecca Nurse stand for decency and common sense. Parris, Hawthorne and

Danforth represent the three wicked characters. In the play, John Proctor, Abigail Williams, Rebecca Nurse, Thomas Putman and Ann Putman, Giles Corry, Rev. Parris and Rev. Hale are shown as the important characters of the village. John Proctor is a farmer. He is in his middle thirties and is respected and feared in his community. He is against the imposition of the authority yet he is also one of the sinners of the community. Some of the characters are drawn as the bad people. Among them, all evil is centred on Abigail. Proctor involved lechery with Abigail, who is the embodiment of evil. Proctor repents of his act of adultery and he pleads that she should give up as their intimacy is long past. But Abigail refuses to believe him, and she further longs for him.

Abigail Williams is an orphan who once worked in the home of John Proctor and Elizabeth Proctor. She had an affair with John but when Elizabeth came to know about their relationship she released her service and put her out on the highroad. When Betty Parris, the daughter of Reverend Parris, falls mysteriously ill rumours of witchcraft spread throughout the town that she has been engaging in forbidden dancing and cavorting in the woods with a group of young friends. Abigail is the ring-leader of wrong doers. She tries to take the opportunity of getting rid of Elizabeth as she takes centre stage in witchcraft. She even drinks blood in Tituba's forest ceremony in the belief that she will curse Elizabeth Proctor because she keeps longing for Proctor. He considers that their relationship is over. When the minister accuses Abigail Williams and the young girls of witchcraft they make accusation against various harmless townspeople whom they do not like. When Abigail accuses Elizabeth, John humbles himself before the court. He reveals his past lechery in the

hope that Abigail's exposure as a whore will defend her from the accusation. The court calls Elizabeth from her cell for confirmation of John's claim as John is willing to sacrifice himself for his wife. Likewise, Elizabeth herself is willing to sacrifice herself for her husband's good name. Elizabeth is unaware of her husband to be a lecher.

In act one, Tituba, Abigail and Betty become hysterical. To protect themselves from their accusation, they accuse other women. The act begins with Reverend Parris's prayer over his daughter, Betty. She lies unconscious in her bed. As the play progresses and from the conversation between Parris and his niece, Abigail Williams, it is found that several girls including Betty and Abigail are engaged in occult activities in a forest. It is led by Tituba, his servant. Parris catches them red handed and he startles the girls when he jumps from a bush. Betty faints and has not recovered. Abigail has drunk chicken blood to kill Elizabeth Proctor. She even threatens the girls that she will kill anyone who reveals a word about what has happened. Therefore, the people do not know exactly what they are doing but the rumour of witchcraft is spread. John Proctor had an affair with his maid, Abigail Williams. But, he wants to forget it. Proctor enters the room where Betty Parris lies fainted. Abigail is also still in the room and tries to seduce him. It does not work and their previous relation is revealed. Even though Proctor wants to forget the affair, Abigail still has feelings for him. To look upon Betty and to research the incident, Reverend John Hales is summoned from Beverly. He is an expert in occult phenomena. When Abigail is questioned she accuses Tituba of being a witch. Afraid of being hanged, Tituba confesses faith in god and named Goody Good and Goody Osborne of practicing witchcraft. Meanwhile,

Betty has woken up. She and Abigail say that they have been bewitched and confess that they have faith in god. They also name several people whom they have seen with the devil.

Act two begins eight days after the incident at Parris's house. During these days Deputy Governor Danforth comes to Salem to see the court-proceedings. He is a selfish judge. To him, public opinion and his acute adherence to the law are most important. Act two provides the court scene in which the accused persons are put into trial. Characters like Elizabeth Proctor, Marry Warren, Giles Corey, Herrick and Cheever are seen in the trial. This act also shows that there is tension between Elizabeth and Proctor. Elizabeth knows about Proctor's adultery with Abigail and therefore, it creates estrangement between Proctor and Elizabeth. Because of his sin, Proctor tries to please her but the barrier between them cannot be removed. She still has not forgiven him for the affair. She becomes upset when Proctor says that he was alone with Abigail for a moment. She cannot forgive him for his sin.

Marry declares that she has to go everyday because of her duties of the court. She gives Elizabeth a doll which she made in court and reports them that thirty-nine people are arrested. Elizabeth has also been accused for witchcraft. Elizabeth tells Proctor that Abigail will accuse her because she wants to take her place.

Reverend Hale visits Proctor's house and tells them that Elizabeth has been named in court. He questions them being suspicious of indulging in witchcraft. Giles Corey and Francis Nurse enter to seek advice as their wives have been arrested. Cheever and Herrick arrive with a warrant being Elizabeth's arrest.

Cheever finds the doll with a needle inside it, which Marry made for Elizabeth. Elizabeth is accused by Abigail of stabbing her with a needle through a doll. Marry confesses that she made the doll in court and stores the needle inside the doll. She further says that Abigail had seen this as she sat next to her but still, they take Elizabeth into custody. When Proctor asks Marry to testify in court against Abigail, Marry replies that she is afraid of Abigail.

Francis Nurse, John Proctor and Giles Corey present their case with the girls in court. Proctor presents his case with Marry Warren stating that she never sees any spirit. Abigail tries to prove Marry Warren to be lying. She along with other girls pretends to be bewitched by Marry Warren. Proctor becomes furious and grabs Abigail's hair and tells everyone that she is a whore. He also confesses his sin that he had an affair with Abigail. He proves himself to be a lecher. Elizabeth is now brought inside the court to be questioned whether Proctor's confession is true or not. Elizabeth has no idea that John has already confessed his adultery. So, in order to save her husband's good name, she lies to the court that John never had an affair with Abigail. The girls pretend to be bewitched by Proctor. Danforth is afraid to reveal the truth and instead he tries to keep the reputation of the court. So, Proctor is arrested and is chained to a jail wall. Hale tries to convince the prisoners to confess the witchcraft so that they could live. The authorities send Elizabeth to convince Proctor to confess. So, when Elizabeth and Proctor are alone, she forgives him. She also reveals that Giles Corey is pressed to death because he rejects to confess the witchcraft. Proctor finally agrees to confess his life and signs the confession. Even though he confesses that he is a witch he does not name others.

When Proctor finds that Danforth is going to nail the signed confession to the Church, he tears the signed confession.

The play deals with the theme of loneliness. John Proctor is one of Miller's protagonists who are estranged from their families or societies. The protagonists of Miller's early plays struggle to achieve a goal and fight to the last. They face death in order to get rightful place in the society. Such is the case with Proctor. His sin with Abigail is known to Elizabeth and therefore, he is estranged from his wife. Their relationship is not good. Miller has also drawn neurotic characters like Parris and the Putnams. The neurotic person blames other when something is going wrong. Parris and the Putnams try to blame others for their own limitation and shortcomings. Miller focuses on sexual betrayal as one of the factors of neuroticism. Miller gives emphasis on neuroticism due to the inhibition of expression of sexual desire.

The neurotic person attempts to put the blame on others. He thinks that if he fails in his work or if he is guilty then he thinks that it is not he who is guilty but he blames others. Ann Putman blames witchcraft for the death of her children, Parris blames the Devil for his own unpopularity, Abigail blames Tituba for persuading her to drink the blood which she took as a charm against Elizabeth Proctor's life, and finally Tituba blames the Devil for her participation in the ritual. (Carson, 68-69). Led by Abigail, the girls perform naked witch-dances in moonlight. They indulge in the rebellious pleasure of breaking the restrictive forms of proper behaviour. They practise dark rituals in the forest in the belief that they can avenge their enemies. Therefore, they exhibit neuroticism in their behaviour. Because of sexual jealousy and unfulfilled desire Abigail

becomes neurotic. Therefore, her evil nature gets the better of her.

The witch-hunting represents the web of social evil. Led by Abigail, the girls even practise dark rituals to avenge their enemies. Abigail's neurotic behaviour makes her attack Elizabeth through witchcraft. Therefore, Abigail and the girls who practise witchcraft create problem in the society and become dangerous to the society. Conflict between public authority and the individual is one of the major themes of *The Crucible*. Many innocent people are accused of witchcraft. They are forced to confess themselves for their accused crime, and then they are allowed to live. If they don't, then they are hanged. Some of them confess for their lives. Some of them who don't confess are pressed to death. John Proctor, who indulged in lechery, has a sense of guilt. He wants to confess his sin to save his wife. But, the hysteria of witch-hunt has covered his guilt and John Proctor is proved to be practising witchcraft. Proctor and some of the accused are against the authority for the blind judgement. Therefore, it leads to raise a conflict between the public authority and the individual. Proctor cannot be proved to be innocent because of his adultery. And therefore, he is going to be punished for his guilt in some form.

Proctor is the product of his society in which guilt is prevalent. Miller has chosen Proctor to reflect the guilt of the society. One person or other may have indulged in any crime in such a society even if it may be adultery or other. Proctor is the victim of his sin. He carries the burden of his guilt in some other way. Proctor has the sense of guilt because he thinks himself as a sinner for having slept with Abigail Williams. So, he carries a burden of guilt before he is charged with having consorted with the devil. He is finally faced with the

choice of death or confession. His guilt as an adulterer becomes confused with his innocence as a witch. Therefore, one sin against society comes to look like another. (Corrigan, 135)

The play also reveals the Puritan madness in the play. Some officials commit wrong in the name of public welfare. They become villainous and punish the innocent people. They accuse the innocent people to show their mastery. Some officials, like Danforth, Reverend Hale, and Judge Hathorne committed the gravest wrongs in the name of the public welfare. (Ferres, 38) Reverend Hale is a scholarly expert on devilry. Even though he is more sincere than the Putnams, he mercilessly attacks on whimpering Betty. Reverend Hale asks:

Does someone afflict you, Child? It need not be a woman, mind you, or a man. Perhaps some bird invisible to others comes to you — perhaps a pig, a mouse, or any beast at all. Is there some figure bids you fly? (Miller, 255)

The social issue of practising witchcraft arises from the private issue of John Proctor. The private issue of Abigail and John Proctor remains buried. Abigail's practising of witchcraft to avenge Proctor's wife becomes a public issue. Abigail is a neurotic person and the issue becomes a psychological problem. The issue of witchcraft arises from the private issue of Abigail, John, and Elizabeth Proctor. The witch hunting represents the web of social evil which the protagonist is called upon to challenge and which ultimately leads to destruction. The central conflict in the play is between the individual and the forces of society. Sickness and disease, mistrust, pretence are introduced in the very opening scene. The atmosphere of evil is projected in the scene. The seed of John proctor's destruction lies

hidden in his character. He has committed a sin in weak moments of passion. He commits adultery with Abigail Williams who is an embodiment of evil. Proctor's private sin has to be exposed in the larger social evil. The social evil is also represented by Abigail Williams as well as by socio-religious forces. The socio-religious forces are embodied in Deputy Governor, Danforth, Judge Hawthorne and Reverend Parris. These embodiments are strictly against the individuals who are accused of witchcraft. Such individuals are alienated by the society. They even try to destroy them. The individual, like Proctor, chooses to die rather than to confess the crime of practising witchcraft. Such an individual can be interpreted as alienated individual. Proctor's private act of sin leads to social justice. It raises the conflict between the individual and the authority. Proctor has to prove the official testimony of Abigail about his guilty relationship. He has to prove himself innocent from the charge of Witchcraft. But this investigation leads to his confession of adultery, so, both issues involve Proctor's guilt. As the witchcraft trial intensifies, Proctor has to expose Abigail Williams as a whore, but in doing so he will have to expose himself as well. Proctor has to make the choice whether to confess himself a witch and be spared or insist on his innocence and be hanged. (Schlueter, 69)

Miller's hero, John Proctor, is a man of extraordinary moral courage who is willing to die in order to preserve his dignity. He is contrasted to those who readily compromise and parallel with Rebecca Nurses who refuses to do so. On the day of his execution he not only confesses the crime of practising witchcraft, but signs a document of confession as well but he does not reveal names. Finally, he tears off the signed confession. Proctor is a man who chooses to die rather

than betray his friends and neighbours. He is a man who will not permit the confession to be posted in public. He rather agrees to die to preserve the honour of his name. The present paper highlights neurotic anxiety in the play. It also highlights sexual betrayal as one of the factors of neuroticism.

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Hungers and Exploitation in Bhattacharya's *So Many Hungers*

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Abstract :

So Many Hungers was written just after Independence in 1947. The story is based on the twin themes of Bengal famine of 1943 and the Quit India Movement of 1942. It deals with the misery of the people and their exploitation by the grain dealers, the black marketers and profiteers. The freedom movement runs side by side and the protagonist Devata like a true Gandhian undertakes a fast unto death. Another leading character Kajoli, a victim of famine and hunger is raped by a sex-starved soldier and is finally sent to a brothel. The novel shows how cruel capitalists create artificial food scarcity by hoarding rice. Here hunger has two meanings—hunger for food and hunger for sex.

Keywords : satire, ethnicity, corruption, scarcity, hunger.

Bhabani Bhattacharya is a champion of social change and human betterment. In his novels he tries to delineate the problems of contemporary Indian society and portrays the realities of life in the country. He has clearly depicted the impact of changing time on all the categories of the society. Basically his novels deal with the theme of hunger, poverty, exploitation, misery, disease, modernity, tradition and the issue is not only related to modern civilization but to others also.

When the whole nation was fighting against the tyranny of the British rule that had destroyed the Indian economy, the writers of the country too joined hands with them. The situation led to the development of

protest literature. Bhattacharya believes that novel must have a social purpose. In the field of fiction, Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan, Bhabani Bhattacharya and Kamala Markandaya give full vent to their smouldering resentment against the economic and social evil in fictional terms. Bhattacharya's works give powerful voice to the problem of hunger, starvation, human degradation and the social evil of casteism with sympathy for the victims and resentment against the victimizers.

Bhabani Bhattacharya's first novel, *So Many Hungers*, is one of the finest pieces of creative writing. It is an authentic record of the Bengal famine of 1943 and the Quit India Movement of 1942. The twin hungers for food and freedom are the central theme of the novel. It also flings satire on the cruel capitalists who create artificial food scarcity by hoarding rice. It has two meanings - hunger for food and hunger for sex. Bhattacharya shows how the common people are starving to death for want of food and how, on the other hand, sex-starved soldiers rape the destitute rustic girl, Kajoli.

So Many Hungers! is acclaimed as "...not only the last political novel about the freedom struggle of this period but also one of the best of this category" (Gobinda Prasad Sarma 227). The novel is unique in the sense that it does not merely depict the freedom movement in the country, as most other contemporary novels have done, but has reached out to the root cause responsible for such movement. M.Tarinayya sounds realistic when he says:

To those without a sense of the history of India, particularly the history of the freedom movement, and some knowledge of the profound philosophy of woman as power (shakthi), Bhabani

Bhattacharya's *So Many Hungers* may mean very little (Tarinayya 117).

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

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

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

If the awakening and struggle for independence form the first two stages of the development of nationalism, the third stage is said to be that of consolidation :

...this third phase of nationalism takes different forms like claiming additional territory, settling

disputes over territory, efforts towards maintaining and tightening the homogeneity or integration of the nation, and striving for the economic and culture development... (Sarma 237).

Rahoul realizes that freedom is not a dew dropping from heaven all itself, nor is it something to be obtained from far-off lands. It is to be achieved by persistent struggle and is to grow out of man's spirit. This realization about freedom dawns upon him suddenly on hearing Tagore's song, and he feels stimulated and exulted.

Bhabani Bhattacharya in one of his interviews admits that *So Many Hungers* is an offspring of his emotionally disturbed self in the hunger- stricken society :

Then the great famine swept down upon Bengal. The emotional stirrings I felt (more than two million men, women and children died of slow starvation amid a man-made scarcity) were a sheer compulsion to creativity. The result was the novel *So Many Hungers!* (*Contemporary Novelists in the English Language* 71).

Society is not at all bad. There are good elements in it who do not hesitate to come to the rescue of the famished and the desperate. The soldier who commits rape upon Kajoli and the military doctor who takes utmost care of her are symbols of the societal self. They are gifted with the fundamental human values. The soldier has ethical conscience. He feels deeply for his wrong-doing and repents for it. Kajoli's mother believes that

She and her son would surely find a roof for their heads. They would work hard and earn their keep, for they were no beggars, she and her

son-the people had great kindness in their hearts, like the young khaki-clad military doctor. There would be food. One would go to school (SMH 152).

So Many Hungers opens with a rich family's rejoicing over the birth of a baby girl in the family and ends with the same father's getting into a prison house in the wake of his seditious action while doing humanitarian works in 1940's India. Dr. Marlene Fisher rightly point out :

When she asserts that *So Many Hungers!* The Bengal famine is more than just a background. In fact, the major part of the novel comprises a series of snapshots of the gruesome picture of men, women, children, all famished and pauperized questing ceaselessly for food, some or any kind of food that may keep their bodies and soul together (98).

Ann Duffy rightly states, "The lives of almost all women, regardless of class, caste and age, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability or disability have been distorted by violence and the expectation of violence" (152). In Bhabani Bhattacharya's *So Many Hungers!* the poor people preserve the sense of moral values even in the face of hunger. Devata says to Rahoul: "I have scores of daughters and sons in Baruni. I am proud of my people. They are not bright and knowing and civilized: like you city-breds; but they are good people. Centuries of hardship and strain have not destroyed their faith in human values" (SMH 24).

Kajoli, Onu, and their mother show faith in moral values even at the height of their difficulties. Mother gives away her Mangala who, besides being a cow, happens to be a trusted member of that family. Kajoli's mother for instance does not sell the cow, Mangala, since she regards her as a mother symbol who has

provided nourishment to her family. On meeting a desperate, starving young woman with no milk in her breast for her dying baby, she consoles her forlorn heart by providing her all possible hope and inspiration.

She advises her to go to Calcutta where she can eke out a living for herself and her family : "Why, girl, you can go to Calcutta city; you never thought of that!" – "You will be looked after. You will find work, big wages! Nothing to worry about – nothing" (*SMH* 123). Onu is ready to part with half of his figs for Robi's sister. Kajoli is ready to take to prostitution for the sake of her mother, and the mother is also ready to die so that Kajoli suffers no difficulty on her count.

Another heart-rending scene is that of the fisherman's wife trying to bury alive her hungry baby. "No more hurt in the belly, my sweet one, my godling. You will sleep" (*SMH* 167). Kajoli's mother, though she has her own cares and responsibilities, offers her rice and even Mangala, the cow which is as beloved as any member of her family. Then there is the picture of a mother lying dead on the railway platform.

The scene of the flight put up by Onu and another destitute boy against a dog - all equally hungry- just for the remnants of jam in a tin discovered in a rubbish heap gives another instance of the indescribable degeneration that hunger brings about in man. But, even here man's innate springs of compassion are not allowed to dry up. The bigger boy offers Onu the tin of jam saying: "Lick this side; the other side is for my mouth. Lick" (*SMH* 235). This, truly, is no less than an act of self-sacrifice.

The novel also portrays many hardships of the common men during the war. The agents of the

imperialist government sold grains. Samarendra Basu and Sir Abalabandhu worked like businessmen during the war. Mothers were unable to bear death by starvation of their children and they burned them alive. In this way, one can find that there was nothing but only horror everywhere. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar rightly has the view:

So Many Hungers! is no doubt an impeachment of man's inhumanity of man, but it is also a dramatic study of a set of a human being caught in a unique and tragic predicament. The story has been effectively told and the tragic pathos of the real mass starvation described in the guise of fiction, moves the reader deeply. The novel describes factual and vivid account of the most seeking disasters in history (Iyengar 114).

Samarendra Basu is very busy buying and selling shares and amassing wealth. His buying of shares on rubber, iron, cotton, jute and many more items keep him busy. He buys and sells and worries only of his future. Business means business, a bogey of profits and losses. In the long run, Samarendra finds more losses than profits. A chance meeting of a beggar who asks him for rice refusing his arms of money through valuable, convinces him suddenly of the values of food grains for the uprooted people of India in the context of war devastation.

Basu and Sir Abalabandhu buy all the extra rice of the farmers. Of course, for destroying the boats and buying the rice, they pay the poor farmers and fisherfolk handsomely saying them the Japanese would pay them nothing otherwise. They do it all with the extra currency cheaply printed by the government for keeping the country under a heavy threat. So in the run thousands of people starved and died.

It was a man-made famine that took a toll of two million innocent men, women and children. The story centers round the Basu family, a peasant family, the girl Kajoli. Samarendra Basu thinks of organizing a business concern, Bengal Rice Limited, and the unscrupulous. Sir Lakshminath helps the company extends its branches to every far off corner of the province. It is this man's genius that has so well spread the vice of corruption, and hoarded food grains. The fountain of human kindness seems to have almost dried up, only vultures ruled the human habitats. That is why S.C.Harrex, the Australian writer says :

This novel is a harrowing account of a famine in Bengal. (unfortunately ever - relevant) and a passionate indictment of the human culpability involved, particularly of the grasping parasites (mostly-upper-class) who exploits the famine to make blackmarket fortunes. The story is told from the point of view of the starving peasants who migrated to Calcutta when they died in the streets and its calculated to shock the reader (47 - 48).

The story of Kajoli's family in Baruni also exemplifies Bhattacharya's practice of blending the traditional and the modern elements of life. Both Devata and Kishore are outsiders belonging to the city of Calcutta.

Even while in prison, he feels worried about these people who were "truly his own, nearer to him than his blood kin" (*SMH* 99). A girl of common clay, Kajoli is not highly educated or sophisticated but there exists a great affinity between her and the old man. Bengal was really passing through a very critical moment in her history. The novel presents, in the following lines, an awful picture of Bengal's tragedy :

The empty stomach was due to no blight of nature, no failure of crops Rahoul knew. It was man made scarcity, for the harvest had been fair... But there was no rationing. Forty thousand country boats were only destroyed. Many villages evacuated. The uprooted people pauperized. Inflated currency added the finishing touch (*SMH* 105).

The novel is full of horrible scenes of poverty, starvation and exploitation of the peasants, and of moral degradation of the rich landlords and the capitalists, and of indifference of the government officials. Bengal's economy was completely shattered. The peasants, who had lived in villages for generations, were uprooted and migrated to Calcutta in the hope of getting jobs and food. The sights of suffering destitutes were shocking indeed. The vast starving masses were marching cityward- "hundreds of thousands hunger marching city-ward. Dehydrated sticks of humanity" (*SMH* 135).

The theme of hunger awakens all people to go forward against social injustice. Most of the pregnant women began to die of hunger before they could give birth to their children. People begged and animals died due to starvation in Bengal. Kajoli and her mother had only two sarees. Bhattacharya has presented their situation in this conversation realistically: "Father?cried. Kajoli, her voice leaping with eagerness: "He is not in jail-house then? "she was trembling on the edge of joy and fearing disillusion. The mother nodded her head, and her voice was toneless" (*SMH* 81).

Rahoul saw Kajoli who looked pale and dejected. This scene deeply affected him. In this situation, the authority was apathetic. Indian masses suffered from social indignation and economic misery. Kajoli, instead

of going towards the brothel house, goes in a different direction: "This way", said Kajoli, and her feet hurried. 'Which way?'. The woman scowled. 'Hindustan', said the girl briefly" (SMH 191). Bhattacharya had with him actual paper clippings on the war period and famine of Bengal, while writing this novel. Dr. Chandrasekharan rightly sums up :

So Many Hungers! is a severe indictment both of the foreign government for its apathy and neglect and of unprincipled Indians who exploit the situation for their own benefit and who are no better than the vultures and jackals 'waiting for the flesh that dies' and sometimes not even waiting till it dies. The novelist's righteous indignation, his sincerity and his comparison are in evidence all through the novel. It undoubtedly represents an artistic success (SMH 32).

Thus the novel ends with Kajoli shown as selling newspaper and Rahoul choosing to go to jail after he addressed the students and spoke about famine "as the fulfilment of alien rule" (SMH 202). The narrator reports :

With bitter smouldering rage he had been speaking to the like students, a widening circle...The anger was warm in his voice, and he had paused till his speech was cool again. "Quit"! Cried all Indian. You have done us some good along with much evil. For the good you've done you have been paid in full. The accounts have been settled. Now, for God's sake, quit! (SMH 202).

He has come a long way from his secure but compromising position to the honest Gandhian way. In his newly developed capacity not to fear suffering and loneliness he is a true Gandhian. He has after all been

able to identify himself with the poor people: "What happened to him as an individual did not matter. It only mattered what happened to his people" (SMH 204).

The life for Basu is also not a happy one. Samarendra Basu, though a very wealthy man loses his son in war, while his first son Rahoul is arrested on a flimsy ground. Exactly at the time Rahoul is taken away to a jail, the mother, his paternal aunt commits suicide by drowning herself in a river. Both the families - one rich and the other poor will not have any consolation from each other. This intensifies the tragedy-line of the story.

Bhattacharya's themes revolve round day-to-day life incidents and matters. The characters presented by Bhattacharya are cross-sections of the rural and urban setting. He has a keen eye for situations and characters. He takes up varied aspects and themes. The novel has depicted certain dramatic changes which deal with the life of an individual who belongs to an oppressed and depressed section of the society. According to Marlene fisher, Bhattacharya's novel "deals with the efforts of human beings to forge and to fulfil workable and communal ideals and perforces, with the struggle to reconcile individual social goals" (288). The novel successfully documents the importance of tradition as well as modern values through the behavioral pattern of various characters.

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Socio-Cultural Conflicts in AravindAdiga's *The White Tiger*

— Richa Rani

Abstract :

AravindAdiga's rise to fame as creator of *The White Tiger* resembles that of the *SlumdogMillionaire*. It is the debut novel by Indian author. The novel presents the twilight of two Indias. It paints a vivid and disturbing picture of life in the strikingly different cultures that comprise Urban India and Rural India. The novel provides a darkly humorous perspective of India's class struggle in a globalized world. The country is growing to be a great economic power, yet a vast number of its habitants have little to show for prosperity. The novel explores with wit and insight the realities of two Indias, reveals what happens when the inhabitants of one collide with those of other. *The White Tiger* takes place at a time in which increased technology has led to world globalization and India is no exception. The recognition of the increasing competition resulting from globalization contributes to corruption. A White Tiger symbolises power in East Asian cultures. The symbol of freedom and individuality shows how one got out of the "Darkness" and found his way into the "Light". The book also shows a modern day, capitalist Indian society with free market and free business. It also shows how it can create economic division. In India there are not social classes, there are social castes. The novel portrays India's society as very negative towards the lower social caste.

Keywords : slumdog millionaire, economic power, riveting, colossal underclass, capitalism.

Socio-Cultural conflict in The White Tiger

AravindAdiga won the prestigious Man Booker Prize in 2008 for *The White Tiger*. Adiga's book presents the voice of the colossal underclass, without sentimentality and portrays them as mirthless, humourless weaklings. *The White Tiger* depicts the different faces of urban and rural corruption and brings to light various cultural stigmas associated with caste and religion, and is able to pinpoint multiple other societal malaises. *The White Tiger* is a furious and brutally effective counterblast to smug 'India is shining' rhetoric. AravindAdiga himself puts it:

India just teems with untold stories, and no one who is alive to the poetry, the anger and the intelligence of Indian society, will ever run out of stories to write (Adiga,32).

The novel may be seen as a fascinating portrayal of the divisions between the world of rich and the poor of New India. It is not a depressing novel but can be appreciated as novel of reawakening, realization and reconstruction of the loss of the rich and eternal cultural heritage of india. The sarcastic vein in which the book is wholly presented is remarkably brilliant as it unravels the typical human foibles and corruptions, aspirations and survival instincts as well as the total sham that our political system has all along been. It depicts the current post- modern, post-industrial Indian socio-political milieu.

The novel may safely be summed up as a typical 'magic realism' fiction in the tradition of Marquez and Rushdie. Nevertheless, in terms of clear-cut genre, *The White Tiger* defies a cage, that is, a set pattern of fiction and seems to waver between a Morality play and Fable, between fiction and non-fiction, between waking dream

and sleeping reality.

Due to his journalistic experience with the "Time" that allowed Adiga to make frequent visits to India and make reports of the paper which prompted him to transform this knowledge and experience about India into a tale – a tale of two Indias. It is a powerful critique of the political culture, social milieu and entrepreneurial success of India in a globalized world of the twenty-first century. Simultaneously India has been contrasted with the emerging second world power China. It is to Adiga's credit that he has created two India's in one: "an India of light; and an India of Darkness". The central character is BalramHalwai. Balram's journey from the darkness of village life to the light and entrepreneurial success is amoral together, brutally irreverent and completely unforgettable. Adiga presents an indomitable central character. Throughout the novel what sets him apart from his family, fellow servants and even employer is that he never gives up his fight and ambition to reach high. In a country inebriated by its new found economic prowess, Balram is a successful entrepreneur; a self-made man who rises in the back of India's much vaunted technological industry. In a country proudly shedding a history of poverty and underdevelopment, he represents, as he himself says, tomorrow.

One of the main themes of *The White Tiger* is India's recent rise as a modern global economy, as exemplified by Balram's own rise to success. What Adiga does well is to evoke the smells, sensations and tastes of a noisy and restless India which is thriving, growing and multiplying. In the boom Indian economy, high aspirations are becoming possible, even for the son of a rickshaw puller. However, Balram also represents the drawbacks of a rapidly developing country which aspires to western wealth, and yet whose institutions are still



governed by the communist-style greed and corruption. As much as Balram's tale is endemic of social evolution and class progression, he also represents the drawbacks of India's drive towards modernity, amongst which are the corrosion of religious, familial and moral values.

The White Tiger is a very incisive book which revolves around two Indias- an affluent India, and an India that is beset with common problems that plague underdeveloped and developing countries. Balram is a typical voice of underclass metaphorically described as "Rooster Coop" (73). Struggling to set free from age - old slavery and exploitation. His anger, indulgence in criminal acts, prostitution, and means fair or foul endorse deep- rooted frustration and its reaction against the "haves". Bloody revolution, use of barrel and gun, emergence of the socialists in India claim that the voice of the underclass cannot be ignored for long. Thus, Adiga presents a mixed image of India. Though the novel centres on Munna Halwai, son of a rickshaw puller, destined to make sweets, becomes Ashok Sharma, North Indian entrepreneur settled in Bangalore- other issues, i.e. political, social, cultural, economic are also incorporated throughout the novel.

The novel is in the form of a series of letters written to the Chinese Premier by a former car driver from Laxmangarh, Bihar. Why the Chinese Premier? "Because" the narrator Balram Halwai, based in the city of Bangalore acknowledges, "the future of the world lies with the yellow man and the brown man now that our erstwhile master, the white skinned man has wasted himself through buggery, mobile phone usage and drug abuse" (5-6). India of Light with access to education, health care, transportation facilities, electricity, running water, hope, justice, emerging entrepreneurial power in the world surpassing China;

India's rapid advancement in the field of science and technology, space, real estate, yoga and meditation, hotel and tourism industry, expansion of cities and mall culture; the voice of the underclass is strongly articulated.

You Chinese are far ahead of us in every respect, except that you don't have entrepreneursThousands of them, Especially in the field of technology. And these entrepreneurs- we entrepreneurs have set up all these outsourcing companies that virtually run America now (4).

The narrator explains the reason for entrepreneurial success; My country is the kind where it pays to play it both ways: the Indian entrepreneur has to be strait and crooked, mocking and believing, sly and sincere, at the same time (8-9).

The secrets of success in a modern globalised world has been summed up in the last section of the novel. Murder, manipulations, malpractices, opportunism, bribery, absconding police and judicial proceedings all are justified for success:

A school where you won't be allowed to corrupt anyone's head with prayers and stories about God and Gandhi- nothing but the facts of life for these kids, A school full of White Tigers (319).

The novel can also be analysed as a socialist manifesto trying to dismantle the discrimination between the "Big Bellies" and the " Small Bellies"(64) and evolve an egalitarian society.

The large canvas of the novel discusses the Dark picture of India, Some critics have raised suspicion over his undue emphasis on this dismal portrayal. Adiga has reacted:

At a time when India is going through great changes and with China, is likely to inherit the world from the West, it is important that writers like me try to highlight the brutal injustice of society.....the great divide(Sunday Times of India,22).

Ever widening gap between the rich and poor, rural and urban, and the brutal reality of an economic system that allows a small minority to prosper at the expense of the silent majority; political culture of India, voting behaviour, social milieu, caste and culture conflict, superstition, social taboos, exploitation of underclass, zamindari practice, emergence of Naxalism, unemployment especially in rural India, prostitution, master-servant relationship, nexus between the politicians, criminals and the police, mockery of education system, hollowness of Government's welfare schemes, poor medical services, harmful impact of scientific, technological and industrial development, mark off the novel.

The final impression of the novel is that it justifies every kind of trick in the book to succeed in life. BalramHalwai, the protagonist and his rise from Munna to Ashok Sharma verifies this proposition. Adiga's exposures to the the dark areas of India can be taken positively to cure the sick image of it. If we focus on these areas and work sincerely, undoubtedly a new India will emerge.

The world of darkness which characterize Laxmangarh, Gaya, Delhi, Dhanbad and Bangalore also abounds with social taboos, rigid class distinction superstitions and caste and class conflict. Man is known and recognised by his caste. The old driver of stork, the landlord, asks Balram: "What caste are you?" (56). Similar question is asked by stork: "Halwai....What caste

is that, top or bottom?"(62). While playing cricket, Roshan, The grandson of Stork called himself Azharuddin, the Captain of India. Stork reacts quickly, "Call yourself Gavaskar. Azharuddin is a Muslim"(70).

In the novel the oppressive social structure of the village with its feudal hegemony is also dealt with. The lack of basic amenities in the rural area, the heart rending death of Balram's father by tuberculosis due to the absence of trained professionals in an indictment of the moral corruption that has come to dominate those who have a duty towards the underprivileged.

Gurgaon is vividly described as a brutal concrete jungle whose salient feature is the crude exhibitionism of wealth. The emergence of this new social ethos, whose roots lie in vulgar materialism, wreaks psychological conflict on the people who are excluded from the riches of the globalized economy.

Balram has a Macbeth like conscience. When he pierced Ashok's neck, he believed that was the way the Muslims kill their chicken. This entrepreneur Balram, who now runs a taxi service in Bangalore from the stolen money of his employer, is one more example presenting the new landscape of globalized India. It aims to act as a mirror to other half of the India which we, the so called inhabitants of shining India, do not want to expose, discuss or take with us.

Writing about one's own nation is no novelty in literature. Writers across the globe have written about their nations and through their narration they create an image and carve a niche for their country. It can be deduced that the narrative gives birth to a nation. The strategy of representing a country and community through literature can be used in both ways either to glorify the nation as found in patriotic literature or it

can be used to misrepresent a country and its people as it can be found in the treatment of natives in colonial literature. The image becomes more authentic if it is created by an insider or a native. The image of India in *The White Tiger* is authentic as Adiga himself is an Indian.

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BOOK REVIEW

Faithfully, I Wait

Jaydeep Sarangi, Cyberwit.net

HIG 45, Kaushambi Kunj, Kalindipuram, Allahabad
(2017), pp. 84, Price 200.

Jaydeep Sarangi is a reputed poet in Indian English literature. He has published a number of poetry collections and won accolade at home and abroad. He has been anthologized in several national and international poetry collections. Poetry to Sarangi is an organ to awaken the consciousness of the people to the degeneration of human values.

The present book titled *Faithfully, I Wait* epitomizes the poet's optimism for transformation of things at large. The book posits that these are poems on rain, thunder and lightning at Jhargram and beyond. That explicitly reinforces the poet's deep rootedness to Jhargram, his native place. The diagram of an hour glass with clouds in the upper chamber dropping water below and thereby providing succour to the flowers illustrates the poet's design. He seems to align the centrifugal forces to the centre. Hence, his unflinching faith in nativity and primal values without apparently pontifying. However, Sarangi claims that poets are 'Peace Army', 'Poets are humanists'.

'Poets shake hands with green grammar of the land.
Poets are like Shiva's poison - green neck
Gather green, emit music.' (10)

Many of the poems in this anthology illustrate the poet's love for 'my forest land, my people in the red soil...And every house is wet by love.' Naturally

I return to each small city
Where people are happy

Ethnic culture is their home
Where my mother sleeps. Eyes closed...
For others to plant trees of brotherhood,
Of peace of the peninsula, home of hearts. (17)

He is sure enough that poets are the conscience of humanity. To him 'Poetry is that movement in me/A freeleap/Something like crossing the bars/of so many segments./Rivers run in the poet/with baggage of history/myth of the land/with a manifesto with smart cadence and free flow,/a poet unlocks hearts.' (25)

In 'Food for Poetry' the poet explains the nature of poetry which comes out of his sensitivity and concern for humanity. Sarangi unequivocally finds a purpose for poetry. Thus, he declares,

The poet and the poems
are moistened by the feelings
negotiated with anxiety
that run within the deep veins
of words and idioms,
part of an exchange. (48)

And more,

I've a lump of experiences,
serve as coolies of new thoughts.
I carry sweets of Kolkata in my words
all go as a package with taste of Bengal. (52)

The poet is deeply conscious of global warming. He is sorry to say that our 'green army is warming up.' Thus, 'one tree is one new arrival of fresh living on the fields of the dead. A tree is green hope for dying rivers and drying minds.' Sarangi endorses the words of John Keats, "the poetry of earth is never dead." A poet is of the earth and for the earth. The poet celebrates the bounty of nature when he says,

Mountains rise up to heaven
as mountains of fraternity and love,

We love its peaks, white in peace,
Each heart sings. A song of time and tide. (72)

Sarang's anthology presents a bouquet of positive poetry, positive energy and positive thinking. In a dull, drab and lacklustre world, here is a twig of hope, a self determined campaign to usher in a world of love and peace and happiness by igniting the nobler instincts. The poet seems confident in his assertion in the poem 'Living Green'.

We hold life on our palm
We can play with it.
We can pell it.
We can smell it. Taste it.

With this conviction he assures,

Crows will sing songs of the land
riding heroes of the forest
Near the banks of Teesta.
People Will whisper
Stones. Anecdotes
Of love and languishment. (66)

The poems in this anthology will appeal to the reader with their loving feelings and affectionately stroking thoughts.

— Ram Bhagwan Singh

Soothing Serenades : Straight from the Heart
Bhaskaranand Jha Bhaskar
Authors Press, New Delhi (2016)
pp. 113, Price 250.

Soothing Serenades: Straight from theHeart is a collection of 62 love poems and a complete section of views, previews and reviews of his earlier anthologies needlessly appended. Love needs no escort and love

poems themselves have magnetic mesmerism.

The book begins with a Foreword by Prof. Amarnath Jha of L. N. Mithila University. Prof. Jha has written a brief but definitive account of the text and tenor of the poems right from pointing to the title which sounds like Shelley's 'The Indian Serenade'; its alliteration and then the sweet lyrical quality and captivating amorous topics. The Foreword refers to the platonic, spiritual, mythical, fantastic as well as realistic and moralistic poems. Prof. Jha has also noted the formal beauty of the poems especially with regard to its employment of sensuous images for example, salacious beauty, lascivious eyes, cosy igloo of thought, chocolate of romance, revealing ripples, mutual cocoon and sultry soul etc.

This Foreword is followed by another Foreword by Prof. R. K. Bhushan Sabharwal who has also analysed the poems, their beauty of the matter and their manner of presentation. He is particular about the poet's voyeuristic love as expressed in

Amorous streams
Of her aromatic beauty
Surging up on her cute countenance.

The second Foreword is followed by Introduction by Prof. Arun Kumar Jha of L. N. M. U. Darbhanga who welcomes the anthology at a time "when the clamour about the death of poetry gets louder each passing day" as keeping the flame of poetry burning.

The poems in this volume deal with different aspects of love right from physical to metaphysical. To begin with writing of voyeuristic love he presents the beauty and sensuousness in most concrete terms. The choice of words and images is both amorous and voluptuous. He writes 'In roving eyes of the craving heart/My voyeuristic love sips her beauty.' (86) Writing

of happy moments of togetherness the poet describes the boundless joy and happiness of a newly married couple in the 'cosiest mutual cocoon' enjoying 'foamy and floated love' of happy togetherness. The poet further writes of the 'thrills and spills' of sensuous love and 'sizzling embrace' in the delta of romantic times.'

Bhaskar just as well writes about the romance in nature. In 'A Romantic Eve' he describes the beautiful evening cooled after a light shower and soft breeze. The hot crust of the earth's bosom lies soothed, so do the hearts of love birds exchanging wooing words, their meanings they alone know. Appreciating platonic love the poet wants to delve deep into the soul of his beloved through her heart. He writes,

I long to swim into your heart,
Through your eyes
So deep and bewitching
For beholding
The beauty of your soul
Purely purged
Of all the gross desires....
Under the magical spell
Of your soulful, eternal presence.

Talking of terrestrial presence the poet turns to phone chats with 'a stranger in a wonderland, an unseen persona', 'yet really visible with her chirpy twitters in a distant land.' And more, 'she rests as a muse amusing in wafts of aroma'.... And her debonair demeanour/Explores a new vista/Of platonic relationship/Unfolding an eternal dimension :/ Metaphysical rendezvous with souls. (85)

Having scanned the different moods and minds of love the poet draws a composite picture of love practical, common, healthy, steady, sensible and blessed. To quote,

Love is a sweet invisible relation
Between two hearts
Either unified by society's hands
Or separated physically
At two different places.
But mingled together at heart and soul. (32)

BhaskaranandJhaBhaskar's book is, no doubt, a treasure-trove of love, presents a rainbow of love in loving words and freshly chosen metaphors and phrases. I enjoyed reading it.

— **Ram Bhagwan Singh**

Thousand Haiku Pearls
T. V Reddy
Authors Press, New Delhi (2016)
pp. 132, Price 295.

The present book is a collection of one thousand and eight haiku pearls by Prof. T. V. Reddy. In fact, the book blends together his earlier two poetry collections *Gliding Ripples* and *Pensive Memories* each containing 135 haiku pieces alongwith the new creations. In the Preface Prof. Reddy has explained that he has made some improvements on the established Japanese mode of haiku writing. He says, "I have departed to some extent from the rigid pattern though I have followed the basic structure of three lines of 5-7-5 syllabic structure." Happily enough by introducing rhyme scheme he has breathed life and melody into his own creations. The poet has also spelt out there being an element of meaningful satire on the incongruities of real life available in our midst.

Prof. T. V. Reddy is a retired professor, a great scholar, full and ripe poet tanned under the heat of

experience and wisdom. His poetry is a natural spill over of his compulsive emotions and thoughts. Feeling one with him I can identify myself holding the same age line with his reflections on life today. A life-long teacher, now a poet, teacher and thinker writes knowing it full well that he might be 'beating his wings in vain'. Matthew Arnold's design to make poetry synonymous with religion was a utopian dream. Our Reddy, I hope, has no such illusionary ambition.

However, I have read many of his haiku pearls from this book and felt delighted and spiritually pampered. The poet's range of experience is all inclusive—society, education, poetry, religion etal. As he feels disillusioned with the state of things his tone is critical and satirical. Without pontifying he just points out the incongruities prevailing in social, political and administrative fields. He feels sorry at the state of affairs in education and writes,

Modern education
With all the focus on market values
tolls the knell of moral values. (871)

And more, Education in ruins
It is measured by power and paper
Captive to coins. (91)

Which is a stark reality. The poet is so much disappointed that he calls our universities 'political slums'.

Regarding politics, he seems to endorse Locke's view that politics is the last refuge of the scoundrel. Here Reddy says, "Legendary heroes, our icons/are dislodged by fake leaders on lawns/wolves in lamb's hide". He knows leaders make election 'jumlas', an eye wash. In the words of the poet,

miles and miles of promises/
perfumed by wilder shallow smiles

for a few days in five years. (103)

Our physicians are no better for their mercenary motive. While the society regards them as gods on earth, today most of them are money-minded. As regards justice without making bones he says.

Reality sleeps, / Justice yawns and snores
the widow weeps.

Poor farmers are committing suicide while the leader is talking of applying latest techniques. The poet laments, farmers are "Neck deep in debt/small farmer's tube is in threat — Fish out of water" (773) Again,

With High-tech talk the leader flies,
poor farmer's suicides miss his eyes;
he is blind and deaf as rock. (8)

In a world of overall degeneration the poet feels sorry to see the weed of destructive evil in the garden of thoughts, ethics in flames. People have become licentious. At the woman fruit seller's stall men young and old ogle at her boobs. Why not? Though there is acute famine; there is no water, bore wells fail, not a drop; huge crowd at liquor shop. (347)

In this waste land there is something to console, sustain and delight us. Prof. Reddy feels, "Even in the scorching heat, a good friend follows thy heart beat—a rain drop in summer." He recognises the power of love and writes. "Watch love and its shade/ever charming as a rainbow – a rose that doesn't fade." (741) As a friend and guide the poet advises the reader,

Nature is our mother and guide;
Let us not be ungrateful wretches
by exploiting her with pride. (644)

As regards religion he quotes and endorses the Vedic mantra ' dharmorakshtirakhshita'. In the words of the poet,

Protect dharma,
it protects you, says the Lord,
the eternal bard. (485)

In short, the poet wants to resuscitate values in the moribund society by showing the seamy side of things around us. Prof Reddy's haikus are both entertaining and thought-provoking.

— **Ram Bhagwan Singh**

Scattered Leaves
Urdu short stories in Translation
Syed Sarwar Hussain, Becomesakespeare.com
(2018), pp. 174, Price 394.

Scattered Leaves is a book of Urdu short stories in translation by Syed Sarwar Hussain. The value of translation in modern times cannot be overestimated. Dissemination of knowledge, literature, language and culture goes hand in hand with modern life. Islands are only geographical markers; no man lives in isolation. He is joined with the multitude by language, culture, religion, race and ideology. Of all the determiners of synthesizing people language is the richest. And there English happens to be the luckiest with proliferation and impact. It is capable of broadcasting any text through its tongue or script to the broadest mass on earth.

These Urdu stories in English translation are designed to cater to the biggest chunk of English reading public. People will read and appreciate the matter and mode of telling those stories. The stories in translation for the most part are a re-cooking food item or having a change for a currency note. No doubt the change happens in its own form and not in the

essentials of the food item nor in the value of the changed currency.

The present book has 16 stories from well known Urdu writers. I read them, relished them, enjoyed them both for the matter and mode of telling those stories. They are proof enough of the beauty and delicacy of Urdu literature. In Foreword the translator has rightly claimed that these stories are an exploration of subjectivity and the exposition of the protagonists' inner consciousness. And more, the redeeming quality of these stories is their exposition of the struggle between man and his universe in the day to day life. Even the sordid reality at the hands of the writer has acquired an aura of glamour and excellence — the simple sherbat in a colourful glass which renders it a magical look.

In the story Epitaph the protagonist is grappling with his own inner consciousness. His problem is exclusively his own, a divided self, vague and uncertain. ShafiMashhadi's story The Disencumbered Soul is a lovely piece, a fine specimen of Urdu fiction symbolising cultural milieu and individual thankfulness. Kamal Ahmed spends all his gratuity money on renovating the graves of his parents rather than repairing his dilapidated grand old haveli. He also registers the haveli in the name of his old Munshi Ghulam Rasool. And more, the protagonist feels a load has been taken off his head. His soul is disencumbered now. Shaukat Hayat's collision presents both open and closed minds. It is not uncommon to find self-centred aristocracy and benevolent pedestrian. In a plane crash a great man is killed. An enormous arrangement is made to condole his death. Women throng in high heels, skin tight clothes leaving a trail of perfume behind. The guests are attuned to TV channels. Nobody talks about other people killed in the same crash. The poor driver carrying the memsahib is rebuked for talking about his personal

problem. While others were indifferent" the hapless driver was crying like a baby along with all the other mourners," (37) whereas Chhote Sahib, memsahib's son's kurta was giving out the fragrance of an imported perfume. He talks about elaborate coverage of the news in several newspapers and on many TV channels. The two pilots of the two planes were also killed though they could save their lives by parachuting from their planes, but they did their level best to avert the crisis though failed. The story shows the common man's uncommon concern for others in contrast to big gun's self-centeredness. The Vulture and the Brothel is curiously remarkable for its magic realism. Abdus Samod is an acclaimed writer in Urdu. He has been writing since 1981. He writes mainly about social conflict, political milieu and human relationship. He also champions the cause of the poor and neglected mass. He was given Urdu SahityaAkademi Award for his novel *Do Gaz Zameen*. Hi story Patchwork deals with the dichotomy of human existence. The story is very interesting though the personality of the protagonist remains mysterious.

Shamoel Ahmed is also one of the most prominent writers in Urdu fiction. The Vanity Table in this volume presents an insight into the psychology of women. Through a very simple and interesting plot he has woven an alluring story of young girls, how their mindset undergoes a transformation from a vanity table looted from a prostitute's house. It also reflects on our dual personality, the public and private self.

There are some more stories by Qamar Jahan, Ali Imam, Musharraf AlamZauki, AbulkalamAzizi and QasimKhursheed. They stand for variety in theme representing different aspects of contemporary life in varying situations, some existential stories with characters grappling with their own self, sometimes

realistically, at times symbolically. Taken together, they present a holistic picture of Indian life today.

The translator Syed Sarwar Hussain deserves kudos first for his selection of stories from Urdu literature. They may or may not represent Urdu fiction today but certainly they present an album of the finesse of Urdu fiction with a mix of realism, magic realism and symbolism. The translation crystallizes the delicateness of Urdu and the metallic vibrancy of English. I have thoroughly enjoyed the stories and their translation.

— **Ram Bhagwan Singh**

When The Time Comes
Santosh Singh Thakur
Novelty & Co., Rajpath, Patna-800 004
pp. 122, Price 195.

When the Times Comes is a collection of thoughts of a physician on life and death. Dr. Santosh Singh Thakur is a well-known physician, thinker and social activist. His purpose, as he claims, in writing this book is to prepare oneself for the ultimate journey of life as they prepare for any other journey. A doctor, in fact, helps us getting over the physical obstacles in life and can show the way to welcome the inevitable.

The book has a Foreword by Padma Shri Dr. Shyam Narayan Arya who shares the views, ideas and beliefs of Dr. Thakur about death and rebirth as well as he presents his own. He says, "One cannot but agree with the author about Destiny even though we all are scientists. He has cited several examples to show that the time and place of death is predetermined." He also endorses the writer's views on Moksha and relates his

experience with a young professor at the IIMS in Delhi at a discourse on Body-Mind connections. "He hypothesized that the soul not only exists, but disappears after death, hereby inferring that a body truly dies only when the soul goes out. On PET scan he had found an area behind the Pineal gland, which glowed abnormally in a living person, but disappeared after his death. Most of the Bramha Kumari scholars hold the view that you can locate the soul through the space between your eyebrows if you concentrate enough, and practise their meditation every day."

The book has chapters like Saving Lives, the Art of Dying, Soul Searching, Dying with Dignity, Destiny, Fear of Death, Denial and Acceptance, the Land of the Dead and Rebirth, Old age, Cancer, Bereavement, The Concept of Moksha and the City of Liberation etc. Being a doctor, the author has intelligently dealt with the subject of saving lives, critical care, terminal diseases, brain death, organ transplant, terminal care and dying with dignity. The author finds it surprising that though people know that death is inevitable, they avoid discussing death. Our saints and fakirs considered this world as their temporary abode, the body as mere clothing which has to be changed once it gets worn out. He has referred to the Bible that regards God, our creator as the real father and His home as our real home. We have come on this earth to perform certain duties and have to return after performing the task or after getting tired or hurt.

Referring to the Hindu shastras which inform us that we have died many times in the past in the last thousands of years in our hundreds of births. Naturally we should have become used to dying. Why fear death now? Therefore, the author advises to learn the art of dying as we learn the art of living. Accepting the end can change one's way of looking at life itself.

We know that doctors simply relieve people of their suffering and miseries, they cannot prevent people from dying when the time comes.

As regards the art of dying his advice is to practise sleeping and waking up in full awareness for which he has suggested some Asanas like Shavasana and Yoga-nidra. In Shavasana one is lying like a dead body whereas in Yoga-nidra the person is wide awake, the physical body goes to sleep. Here consciousness or chetna is wide awake. One can feel pain and pleasure, feel breathing in and out. Not only this, one can stand in a corner and watch his physical body lying on the ground, dead as a corpse.

Everyone has a right to die with dignity and Dr. Thakur talks of euthanasia and mercy killing. In Aruna Shanbaug's case the Supreme Court rejected the idea of mercy killing but recently gave verdict that doctors can withdraw life support if they firmly believe that there is no chance of the patient's survival. Legally speaking, doctors cannot force anyone to undergo surgery, insert stents or pacemakers without consent. Today corporate hospitals are trying to falsely improve their survival statistics as well as their revenue. It is unfortunate that today ICU beds are mostly occupied by patients who should have been in general wards. Terminal patients ought to be nursed by their near and dear ones at home.

Dr. Singh speaks in favour of organ transplant particularly in cases of brain deaths. Such cases in India are casual but now people are realising its value and supporting it. The writer has mentioned the case of Dr. S. L. Mandal, a former professor of plastic surgery of Patna Medical College who in his life time made an announcement to donate his body after death to the students to dissect and learn anatomy. That reminds one of the legendary Dadhichi in Dr. Mandal.

The writer has also talked about serious diseases like cancer, terminal illness, suicidal deaths in the capacity as a physician. As a thinker he ruminates on the concept of Moksha, the Land of the Dead, Destiny and the City of Liberation. Rebirth and Moksha like concepts there are in religion, mythology, cultural gene and preacher's premises. The author believes that good souls must never desert the earth and leave it to scoundrels. They are needed on this planet to keep the balance between good and evil as we need rivers, plants, animals, rocks and even insects to balance the ecology and environment.

And finally his message, "the elderly must try to enjoy every day and every moment of their lives without fretting about death which is inevitable so that they can leave this world peacefully when the time comes."

I thoroughly enjoyed this book as a thoughtful companion. I wish it could be yours, too.

— **Ram Bhagwan Singh**

Representation of history in the Indian / English Drama by Basavaraj Naikar, Authors Press, Delhi, 2015 pp. 490, Price Rs. 1900/-, ISBN 978-81-7273-795-5.

Basavaraj Naikar has made a singular contribution in the field of historical drama by making an in-depth analysis of the famous historical plays like *Siddhartha : Man of Peace, Rodogune, Prince of Edur, Fall of Kalyana, Ramanujar, Tuqlaq, Aurangzeb, Begum Sumroo, Tiger Claw, Dreams of Tipu Sultan, Larins Sahib* and *Line of Mars*. The main thrust of the author here is to bring to light the rich and complex history of India along with stressing the expertise of the dramatists belonging

to both Indian regional languages and Indian English in completing historical research of that era prior to writing the plays of that eminence. According to him history provides the bare facts to the playwright as they are understood from the outside. The playwright has to furnish the feelings, thoughts, emotions, motives etc. of the major characters involved to describe their individuality and thus helping in forming judicious perspective about them and their actions. Inner conflict has to correspond to the outer (social-historical) conflicts and thus resulting in the synthesis for the betterment of the society.

Really no literary critic can assess the strength of any historical drama unless he has been able to evolve certain yardsticks for substantiating their merits and demerits. So the author has seriously taken all issues with regard to the creation of drama. In the introduction, the author has first expatiated upon the evolution of historiography in different cultures and then focused his attention on Indian cyclical concept of history. In the beginning history and myth were not distinguished and the past is made legitimate by invoking tradition and disregarding evidence. Right from the times of the British, who encouraged historical consciousness, history-writing became problematic. And Indians developed their own historiographies like (a) the Imperialist historiography, (b) Marxist – pseudo-scientist-historiography, (c) the Nationalist historiography – also called ‘elite’ historiography, (d) Muslim communalist historiography, (e) Hindu communalist historiography and, (f) Subaltern historiography.

It has been found by the author that historical drama in India has not got that significance as the rich history of India has attained world over. With the result of threadbare analysis of select historical dramas, this book becomes a real contribution in the

enrichment of knowledge and in imbibing worthy ideals from the momentous events of history. Here the author has done a pioneering work. Besides describing the different themes present in these dramas he has also highlighted the significance of historical personages and their impactful actions both good and bad for steering the path of ordinary mortals in the present time.

Harindranath Chattopadhyaya's dramatization of Buddha's life in **Siddhartha : Man of Peace** is an instance of bold experimentation with the dramatic technique. It helps the modern man to learn and realize the extraordinary importance of peace and compassion in the 21st century which is replete with international terrorism, violence and conflicting fundamentalism of different kinds. The author has cited umpteen passages from the drama to commend the aim of the dramatist i.e. to satirize the destructive effect of war on mankind.

As mentioned by the author, Sri Aurobindo's representation of Greek history in its Egyptian phase in **Rodogune** helps the modern reader understand the effacement of ego which can prevent the mother from indulging in maternal politics and doing discrimination between her sons and thereby avoiding the tragedy of fratricide, loss of dear ones and resulting excruciating agony of loneliness. It also helps the modern woman especially the feminist to learn the significance of marital loyalty, chastity and a sense of sacrifice. Similarly, Sri Aurobindo's dramatization of the history of 8th century in **The Prince of Edur** helps the modern reader understand the importance of the clanish purity of blood, the ideal of heroism and chivalry and the fear of miscegenation.

M.M. Kalburgi's **Fall of Kalyana** is the English translation of the original Kannada play, **Kettittu Kalyana** and is an answer to Girish Karnad's **Tale**



Danda. The main conflict here is between Basaveswara and the Vedic religion in social, psychological and spiritual aspects. In this way the play becomes a panorama of 12th century Karnataka history in all its ramifications.

Indira Parthasarthy's play **Ramanujan : The Life and Ideas of Ramanuja** was originally written in Tamil and published in 1999 and translated into English by T. Sriraman. It reveals Ramanuhan's sincere and serious attempt to synthesize the Tamil spirituality with Sanskrit sprituality to transform people from worldliness to spirituality. Girish Karnad's dramatization of the 14th century history of India focusing on the life of the eponymous hero of Tuglaq draws the attention of the modern Indian to the importance of practising the ideal of communal balance and harmony between Hindus and Muslims in the present day society.

The author has been able to point out the collision between religious fanaticism and eclecticism presented in India Parthasarthy's drama **Aurangzeb**. He has been able to point out the realization of Aurangzeb with regard to the fatality of his ideology and fanatic action mentioning a large number of his speeches. His so-called success is really his big fiasco. Manohar Malgokar's representation of the 19th century Maratha history focusing on Mangal Raja in **Line of Mars** highlights the political aspect of the colonial encounter between the native Indian kings and East India company authorities, which is tagged with the psychological problem of the king undergoing crisis of identity of son-hood and father-hood. The play exposes according to the author the myth of the purity of the family line and alerts the modern Indian about the danger of racial contamination of Varna sankara foretold by Lord Krishna in the **Bhagwad Gita**. Lakhna Deb's representation of

the seventeenth century Maratha history focusing on the life of Chhatrapati Shivaji in **Tiger Claw** enables the modern reader to understand the importance of moral and physical heroism, patriotism and Hindu nationalism along with respect for woman as mother, wife and sister. Girish Karnad's **The Dreams of Tipu Sultan** according to the author describes a very small part of his life leaving out his negative sides like his fundamentalism, Islamization, forced conversion of Hindus, treacherous killing of enemies and destruction of 8000 Hindus temples and so on. Partap Sharma's **Begum Sumroo** has been incisively analysed to show not only the partners of the past, but the presentness of the past by foregrounding the motifs like military discipline (of Reinhardt), treachery, intrigue and betrayal (by Mausim Ali and Gulam Kadir) and female heroism and leadership (of Farzana Begum), which may be seen even in the present day politics of India.

Gurucharan Das's representation of the 19th century history of British India focusing on the relationship between Henry Lawrence and Rani Jindan of the Panjab in **Larins Sahib** awakens the spirit of patriotism, loyalty, self respect in the modern reader.

Thus, it is found after reading the entire book that the author has made exhaustive analysis of the chosen historical dramas. He has minutely explored the ideas presented and explained them with the dialogues of the major characters. All these dramatists according to the author confirm our faith in the moral order of the universe and in the metaphysical security besides enhancing our zest for life and help us realize that life is beautiful, meaningful, enjoyable and worth-living in spite of all the occasional vicissitudes. Altogether this book is a big contribution to the study of historical drama. The neglected genre of drama in general and historical drama in particular has been

brought on to the pre-eminent position through this book. The book is a beautiful example of the erudite scholarship of the well known writer. Moreover here the credit goes to him for doing meticulous research on a field which has not been researched properly on a pan-Indian basis. The objective of Professor Naikar is not only to describe the themes of these plays but also to highlight the imminent impact of these ideas on the future generations. The cost of the book appears to be on the higher side.

— **Dr. Harbir Singh Randhawa**

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Published in *Dialogue*, Vol.XIV. No.1. Lucknow. June 2018. Pp.81-84.

Sharma, Anil K. *The Pilgrimage*. Gurugram: The Poetry Society of India, 2017. Pp. 149. Rs. 310/\$ 16.

The Pilgrimage by Anil K. Sharma is his second collection of poems. He is a prolific writer: poet, critic, short story writer, essayist, novelist, translator, and founder editor of *Contemporary Vibes*. In his writings humanism comes to the fore with an imprint of argumentative bent of mind natural with a High Court advocate. The book is in three sections: first section has poems of "passions, compassion and dispassion"; the second has poems on the great souls of India, "who inspired millions and shall continue to do so in future"; and, the third has five reviews of his earlier works by Chambial, Poonam Dwivedi, Sujaat Hussain, Vinod

Khanna, and ManasBakshi.

The very first poem, "The Pilgrimage" (3), that gives title to the book, pleads for conservative stasis and peace for humanity: "Let me remain rocky faced ..." and "Let me remain in my habitat! / Every habitat be at peace!" The main emphasis is on human and world peace; better to say, universal peace. The poet, in "The Hunger: A Bull's Eye!" (16), refers to the starved humanity: "All oceans are less abysmal- / Than the bottomless-bellies", because satisfaction of the "stomach-sensation / The natural pangs of hunger" are bottomless and universal. The poem, "The Milestones" (18), moves forward with the same premise of humanism. While he notices that "The path of 'Humanity' is / Dotted with thousands of milestones ...", yet he wants "to sojourn from / Man to be human-humane / Mankind to breed kind-man!" The hapless state of the poor finds expression in "The Crystallised Tears" (20): "Roads and rivers are the fate lines of the / Sons of the mounds of soil / Spading-sickling-hammering" all their lives – "From sunrise to sunset". In "The Profile of a Man" (26), the poet argues that inhuman beings are "unable to understand / The tenets of peace and co-existence" and "Man's beastly nature" hasn't undergone any change. At times, Man behaves even worse than the wild beasts. Casteism is one slur on Indian society in which "Vows of liberty, equality and fraternity" – the tenets of French Revolution and humanism, "Stand muted – cut to pieces". Caste system is the bane of Indian society that estranges man from man and is the greatest hurdle in the peaceful co-existence. The rich exploit the poor; and "Rulers rock the citadels of power with the bogey of / Racialism, apartheid, terrorism and plunder". "Dissent in Democracy" (36) is considered good for removing the negativities of the society, and the rulers. Dissent, "Like

the tidal waves”, cleanses, threatens, replaces and displaces for the better. The poet is of the firm view that the [positive] criticism should be allowed, because it helps “deconstruct human faults”. Faultless humanity is the epitome of humane-human-culture. While the poet, in “Mundane Yoga”, tells that the power and wealth hungry humanity, “Racing fast to hound and hunt the prey” to satiate its “lapping tongue” that “taste[s] of desires, / Pleasure of the belly-waist fires”, is balanced by “yogic postures” that “abide Nature’s law” and “keep body and mind” balanced, in “The Pyramid of Power” (42), he argues that this pyramid empowers “the ruler to gnaw / To nod the justice to over-awe!” Justice is manipulated to frighten the weak and the poor and the ruler continues to exploit the helpless and hapless masses. He suggests: “Let the enlightened lit up the homes / Of the farmers, labour, wagers, have-nots” and “Let the foundation of millions preside! / Honesty of the millions be honoured. / Not the travesty of majesty and law!” When the poor are happy and none exploited and frightened, only then one can think of humane-humanity, happy and peaceful society living harmoniously.

The second section has poems about the great Indian souls, of past and present, who have had their great impact on the national life of India. The Sages and Seers of Vedas and Puranas besides Valmiki, Kabir, Sri Aurobindo, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatama Gandhi, Dr. Hedgewar, Baba Saheb Ambedkar, Subhash Chandra Bose, Kalidasa, Vishnu Sharma, and Modi. The poet begins with “Asto Ma Sadgamyā ...” (51), the Vedic mantra, and exhorts humanity to “Let there be command within / To move from falsity to realism!” where “Pragmatic truth” does not lie “buried / Deep in earth”. Obliquely, he pleads to shun what is false and propagate truth. In “Swami Vivekananda’s Arise

and Awake ... Call!" (70), the poet satirises the "Rotten ritualism" and upholds "Tolerance and universal acceptance". He advocates human unity at universal level: "Let all persons wending their ways / To the same goal / Unite irrespective of their loyalties", so that humanity ushers "in a world of peace, / Bereft of persecutions!" In "The Mind Game of Mahatma" (73), Sharma while applauding Mahatma Gandhi's non-violence, as a weapon to attain independence from the British Raj, "Of passive resistance" also points out Gandhi's differences with the views of Netaji, Baba Saheb, and Rajaji; because that "Became unacceptable" to Nehru and Gandhi. He concludes the poem with Gandhi's "Legacy's appropriation-misappropriation" and how his name is used for getting votes in elections. The poet also celebrates "Netaji's Declaration of Independence!" (86). He calls Subhash Chandra Bose a "charismatic leader", "an avtar of real politic", and "a Nationalist to the core" who fought to free "his own motherland / From alien land for breaking its shackles of slavery!" The poet applauds Netaji's "ideological freedom for all". However, "Gandhians" – apparently, the congress – "resist", because they have been opposed to his ideal of attaining freedom. He, long before the actual independence, declared independence from the British and established his government in exile in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. In "Vishnu Sharma's Panchtantra" (92), the poet finds that "Sandhi – is the synthesis of all theses" of *mitralabha*, *suhrud*, and *vigrah*. While the poet admires Kalidasa's immortal literature and his characters, he also praises Modi for indigenizing and Indianizing Macaulay's colonial legacy "as Modified".

The present book presents the poet as a staunch advocate of nationalism and humanism. Dr. Dalip Khetrpal also very aptly says: "They promote critical thinking and raise questions on what life is"(x).

The poems appeal more to head than heart: These are descriptive, illative, and argumentative. A review, in a limited space, does not offer much scope for detailed analysis, but I hope, the contemporary critics will take it up for indepth study to examine, illustrate and evaluate his poetry for its humanistic characteristics and uphold him as a true thinker, denouncing negativities of the present times and system, and defender of truth and values in social and national life.

Reviewed by **Dr D C Chambial**
Editor, Poetcrit, Maranda, H.P.

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