ISSN 0971 - 605X

POINTS OF VIEW

VOLUME XIX NUMBER 1 SUMMER 2012

EDITOR

K.K. SHARMA

POINTS OF VIEW
EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor

K.K. Sharma
Former Professor of English
University of Allahabad

Assistant Editors

Deepika Srivastava
Professor, Univ. of Allahabad
Rashmi Gaur
Professor, I.I.T., Roorkee
O.P. Budholia
Professor, Jiwaji Univ., Gwalior
Kuhu Chanana
Associate Professor,
S.S.N.College, Delhi Univ.

Advisory Editors

S. Viswanathan, University of Hyderabad
L.R.N. Ashley, Brooklyn College, New York
O.P. Mathur, B.H.U., Varanasi
Harish Trivedi, University of Delhi
Kapil Kapoor, J.N.U., Delhi
Nilufer Bharucha, University of Bombay
G.S. Balarama Gupta, Gulbarga University
Shyamala A. Narayan, Jamia Millia Univ.,Delhi
Bijay Kumar Das, The University of Burdwan
Basavaraj Naikar, Karnatak Univ., Dharwad
K.G. Srivastava, University of Allahabad
K.B. Razdan, University of Jammu
C.T. Indra, University of Madras

Points of View is a biannual refereed journal, devoted to scholarly and authoritative opinion on broad cultural issues, focusing on the centrality of human concerns as evidenced in literature, art, cinema, etc. It provides a special forum for the perspectives on "New Literatures in English," including translations. Also, it carries detailed and careful notes, and reviews of outstanding new books.

Manuscripts are welcome. They should conform to the latest edition of *MLA Style Manual* in all matters of form. Unused or unsolicited manuscript can be returned, if accompanied by a stamped and addressed envelope.

Annual Subscription Rates are

India	Individuals	Rs.300.00 (by M.O.)	Institutions Rs.500.00 (Collection charges for outstation cheques Rs.50.00)
Overseas	Individuals	£10.00, $15.00	Institutions £12.00, $20.00

(Additional charges for supplying copies by airmail £4.00, $6.00)

All editorial and business correspondence should be addressed to

The Editor
Points of View
KH/127, New Kavi Nagar
Ghaziabad — 201 002 (U.P.), INDIA
Telephone : (0120) 2700365
E-mail: kksh1937@yahoo.in

POINTS OF VIEW

Volume XIX — Number 1 — Summer 2012

CONTENTS

S. Viswanathan	Shakespeare and Drinking	3
M.S. Kushwaha	Three Unconventional Interpretations of Bharata's *Rasa* Theory	12
Leonard R.N. Ashley	W. Somerset Maugham and Holy Men in India	25
Vallari Gaur	The Gender Swindle: Laurence's *A Jest of God*	36
Deepika Srivastava	In Pursuit of Aesthetic Excellence: A Study of Anita Desai's *The Artist of Disappearance*	44
O.P. Mathur	The Literary Festival of 2012 within Salman Rushdie's Cosmic Vision	54
Bijay Kumar Das	Contrapuntal Reading of A.K. Ramanujan's Five Poems	62
Ajay Kumar Shukla	*Tale-Danda* : Caste, Gender and the Question of Marginality	67
Sonali Das	Critiquing Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai as Cosmopolitan Novelists	74
Rashmi Gaur & Urjani Chakravarti	Applying Relevance Theory for Valuing Environment Constructs: A Study of *The Hungry Tide* and *Sea of Poppies*	81

Usha Rani	Quest for Belonging in Rohinton Mistry's *Family Matters*	89
S.A. Hamid	Translating Protest: Two Nazms of Faiz	96
Anupama Chowdhury	Probing into the Psychic Depths of Conscious/ Subconscious/ Unconscious: A Reading of Gita Mehta's *A River Sutra*	103
K.K. Sharma	Jayashankar Prasad's Interpretation of Romanticism (Chhayavad): An Analysis	109
Raihan Raza	The Construction of Meaning in *The Cherry Orchard* by Anton Pavlovich Chekhov	118

BOOK REVIEWS

Patricia Prime	Susheel Kumar Sharma, *The Door Is Half Open*	124
H.C. Gupta	K.K. Sharma, *British Novelists and Leo Tolstoy*	126

Contributors 128

SHAKESPEARE AND DRINKING

S. Viswanathan

Scenes of drinking, drunkenness and drunken song and dance, not to speak of drunken brawls and bravado, are one of the staples of sensation in the theatre, and on the screen, big and small. Not surprising perhaps this, when some early twentieth century anthropological scholars of Greek suggested that the origins of Greek drama lay in the Bacchanalian or Dionysian nites and revels as festivities. Shakespeare takes recourse to drinking scenes in several of his plays, and a study of his conception and execution of these scenes will reveal a great deal as regards his deep, varied and subtle dramatic imagination, and his human psychological, social and political insights. There is a considerable range of ends, purposes and ways for and in which some characters in the plays come to lure and ply others with liquor in the several plays, all this leading to crucial dramatic developments or complications. The episodes invariably serve to propel the course of the drama. Shakespeare brings up such drinking scenes in plays such as *The Taming of the Shrew* (the Induction), the Falstaff scenes in the two *Henry IV* plays, *Twelfth Night* (the Sir Toby scenes), *Hamlet* (off-stage), *Othello, Macbeth* (the Porter scene), *Antony and Cleopatra* (2.6) and *The Tempest* (the Stephano, Trinculo and Caliban scenes).

From the cast and course of these scenes, it is fairly clear that Shakespeare does not assume the attitude of a teetoller, much less a prohibitionist, though the scenes indicate the sheer ugliness, indignity and the more serious evil consequences which boozing can reduce men to. The play-wright's attitude is not that of a moralist either. Rather he takes care to expose the various ulterior motives and purposes which liquor is exploited to serve. Interestingly, there is a whole gamut of social strata, stations and professions among those who take to drinking or are often induced to do so. In the Induction of *The Taming of the Shrew* it is Sly the tinker who has quaffed away, as is his wont, at the ale-house and gets thrown out for non-payment of his accumulated dues. This figure represents the lowest in rank. Prince Henry in *Henry IV*, Pt.1 makes the drink-

ing motley, star among them Sir John Falstaff, his drinking companions, as though deliberately. As Hal reveals in monologue, he has by now learnt 'to drink with the basest-tinker in his own language'. Malvolio invokes the tinker and his proverbial booze as he storms into the night of the raaz-mataaz of drink and revels kept by Sir Toby and company in the Olivia household, in his chastisement of the lot. In *Henry IV* both the parts, a range of classes of people are seen indulging in drink, the prince in token fashion Sir John, aristocrat, Captain Pistol, Bardolph a parasite, not to mention Justice Shallon and his ilk, indulge in drink. In *Twelfth Night* Sir Toby Belch (tell-tale name) in an incorrigible quaffer, though the wit that the playwright endows him with may redeem him. He could afford it as an uncle of sorts to Olivia the lady of the great house which in Shakespeare's times and later entertained a retinue of distant relatives and friends as permanent guests. The country squire Sir Andrew Aguecheek is companion in drink and provider for sir Toby, in addition. In *Hamlet* it is King Claudius and his courtiers who keep their midnight revels celebrating it with cannon-shots, though it is an off-stage occurrence. Hamlet loathes it as in bad taste, 'a custom honoured more in the breach than in the observance' especially in a state of mourning. In *Othello* captain Cassio, responsible for the security of Cyprus, who is tempted by Iago (a seduction which is in many senses a prelude to his seduction of Othello). In *Macbeth* it is the humble porter at the gates of Macbeth's castle who gets drunk, even as Lady Macbeth plies the night guards of Duncan with drink at dinner, which puts them to deep sleep. In *Antony and Cleopatra* it is the triumvir, ruler of the world, who drinks hard. Stephans the sailor is the ace drinker in *The Tempest* with Triculo the tailor, and Caliban the monster of the isle and with the one an old and the other a new-found, newly won companion of his.

We may now go on to note certain implications of these drinking episodes, in general, especially the use and effect of drink and of the contribution these make to the total drama. Sly the tinker lies outside the ale-house in the street overpowered by sleep induced by excessive ale-drinking. (The porter in *Macbeth* calls drink the provoker 'of three things, urination, lechery and sleep'.) The lord

returning from hunting accompanied by his retinue comes across the figure and quickly thinks of and executes an elaborate practical joke on the drunken tinker fast asleep. He is picked up and taken to the lord's palace and treated by his servants with great solicitude and respect and duped into the belief that he is the lord of the house. A troupe of travelling players arrives at that moment and they present a comedy which turns out to be the main play of *The Taming of the Shrew*, with the tinker as the chief spectator. Sly had just then woken up to find himself surrounded by the grandeur of the chamber and the retinue of attendants on him. The effect here is a rather complex one. Shy has a dream as it were in which he is metamorphosed into a lord, and the dream seems all too real to him. In this perspective, the main play looks like a dram within a dream, though the main play for all practical purposes is material and real as an enacted play. It reminds one or a line from Shelley which speaks of a dreamer in his dream having another dream within the dream.

Indeed the idea of drama as dream has been a fruitful motif of several important plays in several languages in different cultures. Shakespeare puts it to use in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in a suggestive manner and uses for it a different purpose in *The Taming of the Shrew*. In plays like *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the Sanskrit play *Swapnavasavadatta* the idea is meant to convey the richness of texture and existential reality of dream, and hence of drama and of life; in *The Tempest* and Calderon's *Life is a Dream*, the idea is used to suggest the emptiness, the unreality and the impermanence of it all in life.

Strangely, the text in the Folio version of *The Taming of the Shrew* forgets at the end all about the induction at the start. The text of the play entitled *The Taming of a Shrew* does have at the end a closure to the Induction, in which Sly comes alive to his original, actual world. While some scholars would treat *A Shrew* as a quarto of *The Shrew,* others regard it as a source play for Shakespeare. The effect of drink on the tinker is treated by Shakespeare as an enjoyable occasion for a comic joke that takes on several meanings.

In the *Henry IV* plays, if Falstaff is an enormous consumer of

sack at the Boar's Head tavern, it is mostly at the expense of Prince Hal who indulges him and mixes familiarly with the motley company there, with deliberation but without hypocrisy. Hal and Falstaff enjoy each other's company and wit till the time the Prince becomes king and has to turn away Falstaff. The drinking by Falstaff and company is meant to be something saturnalian, a kind of festive licence to revel, and is not to be viewed in judgmental fashion. The fun is to be savoured, although enough dark hints are planted and warnings given by the Prince himself to Falstaff. The rejection of Falstaff is anticipated by premonitions which Falstaff would not heed despite his abundant wit. The tavern bill of reckoning recovered from the sleeping Falstaff's pocket by the Prince shows an intolerable deal of sack to a half-penny worth of bread. Falstaff carries his bottle into the Shrewsbury battle-field where he is supposed to lead his soldiers (an apology for them) and to fight the enemy. Ancient Pistol is given to drink and to the mouthing of scraps and echoes of utterances from stage-plays of yesteryears. He creates a scene at night in the tavern under the influence of surplus drink (2 *Henry IV*, 2.4. 117-221), picks a quarrel with the hostess and draws his sword threateningly in spite of Falstaff's commands to him to go downstairs. It all but amounts to a brawl and Falstaff's page intervenes and cajoles Pistol into retiring downstairs.

In a different perspective, the addiction of Falstaff and company to drink may serve as a grotesque but illustrative and critical parallel and parody of the addiction to fighting and to intrigue of the haughty lords like Hotspur and of the court; it is their opium. However, the possibility of this perspective should not come in the way of our enjoyment of the sheer comedy.

The witty Sir Toby in *Twelfth Night* finds in the dull-witted, idle country squire Sir Andrew Aguecheek a drinking companion. Sir Toby wheedles out of him from time to time monary for drinks, feeding his false hope that his love-suit to Countess Olivia will be promoted by Sir Toby. But Sir Toby's endless supply of drinks comes from the butlery of the generous Olivia household. He represents the decadent class of a hanger-on member of the great house. On grounds of consanguinity he freely indulges his taste and lives as

though his whole life were a holiday. It is again a kind of festive licence, reminiscent of the night of the Epiphany, which becomes all but permanent and everlasting with him. His retort to Malvolio when rebuked by him is an assertion of the legitimacy of cakes and ale' or 'ginger'; for it cannot be 'all bread and butter'. Sir Toby meets his comic nemesis when he braves Sebastian mistaking him for Viola-Cesario. He gets his pate broken when he dares him. On his last appearance in the play, he is brought in with a broken pate, and present a total picture of indignity, belching and hiccupping out of excess drink.

A matter of particular interest in relation to drinking scenes in *Hamlet, Othello, Antony and Cleopatra* and *The Tempest* is that Shakespeare in developing these scenes invariably invokes several nationalities and lets the characters express their ideas of the different national proclivities in drinking. Hamlet in his disapproval of Claudius's clamorous declaration through cannon-shot of his and his companions' drinking prowess in their midnight revels, states that this notoriety has disgraced the Danes and has got them 'traduced by other nations'. This has come to be accounted as a national weakness. This is one of the vices of the 'king of vices' in Hamlet's view. A curious instance of double irony is that Hamlet stops short of killing Claudius at his prayer and wishes rather to do so when he is drinking in his midnight revels. And finally when he does kill him at the end, he thrusts the poisoned cup down the king's throat and then stabs him.

In *Measure for Measure,* Shakespeare's calling up of the underworld of Vienna with its bawd-houses in the outskirts provides ample hint of the flow of liquor there. Pompy who figures rather noticeably in the play is tapster in Mistress Overdone's house of ill-repute. Barnardine the 'dissolute prisoner' awaiting his execution is an alcoholic; he drinks to excess and falls into deep sleep and sulks in his cell refusing to stir out when he is to be led to be executed. Paradoxically, drink helps him to get away with it and escape execution. Thus, the close association of liquor with lechery and sleep clearly emerges in the portrayal of the underbelly of Vienna. Macbeth's porter spoke true on the effects of drink.

In *Othello* Iago's Machiavellian plot to bring his Caption Cassio to discredit and to accomplish his devilish purpose of snaring Othello with the dismissed Cassio as a pawn or gambit. Iago induces Cassio to drink and undo himself when the captain is on duty as chief of the night guard. Cassio loses control over himself once he consumes liquor; he loses his 'discretion' the first and last casualty of the effect of drink, as Shakespeare explicitly puts it in *Othello* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. Iago easily makes it appear to the leading gentlemen of the island such as Montano that Cassio is a habitual drinker and badly given to the vice. And Iago sets Roderigo to cross Cassio when he is not himself and to raise a hue and cry which disturbs the peace of the town. That brings Othello on the scene and the general inevitably dismisses the erring captain as he takes Cassio to be. Iago himself only pretends to join in when Cassio the chief of the guard in the war-like island falls victim to Iago; it sets up a chain of reactions with tragic consequences. In *Macbeth*, it is the humble porter who makes his single appearance in the play to deliver his meaningful drunken divagations on drink, to the punctuation of the repeated knocking at the gates, which serve as a reality check on the by now closed world of Macbeth, almost a moment after his murder of Duncan. In *Antony and Cleopatra* a play against the backdrop of the rebels in Egypt of the eponymous figures, it is the triumvirate the world sharers who are at the drinking party aboard Pompey's gallay in order to seal their pact with the sea-hero, Pompey calculatedly does not let himself be touched by the pitch of liquor while Lepidus goes overboard by drinking too much. Pompey's assistant Mona suggests to his master the political stratagem in the drinking party, all the time plying Cassio with cup after cup. As his banter, Iago speaks of the drinkers of the different nations, and gives the palm in this to the English, a reference which would be relished by the London audiences of the play, as half-self-grabulatory and half satirical. Iago encourages Cassio to drink on by singing and gabbling.

> I learnt it (the song) in England where indeed they are more potent in potting; your Dane and your swag-bellied Hollander—drink, ho—are nothing to your English.

Thus discourses Iago as he eggs Cassio on. His apparently favourable remarks on Desdemona and Othello are loaded ones ('black Othello') meant to put ideas into Cassio's head.

The drunken porter scene in *Macbeth* has received a good deal of comment ever since DeQuincy answered Coleridge's criticism of the scene as a superfluity, in his classic essay 'on the Knocking at the Gates in *Macbeth*'. The repeated knocking noise off-stage eloquently marks the breaking in of the realities of the world on the circumscribed world of the Macbeths. Macbeth's hope that he could commit regicide as though with the hand alone without his heart in it or as though he were an actor performing the role, disastrously comes to naught. The porter's drunken discourse on the effect of drink is mixed with his fantasy that he is the porter guarding hell-gate (a half-faint theatre-memory of the Mystery plays). He imagines receiving entrants such as the farmer who hanged himself disappointed in his expectation of plenty, the equivocator and the tailor, proverbial stealer of cloth. It suggests some similitude between hell and Macbeth's castle after his murder of Duncan, king, benefactor, relation and guest. In ways which are subtle the porter's role and utterances build into the structure and movement of the play. The porter's fantasy implicitly and in grotesque fashion parallels the fantasy of Macbeth. However, the characteristic irony of the scene is that the play as a whole cuts both ways and in this sense equivocates with no hard and fast line between hell and heaven, between murderer and tragic hero in terms of imaginative sympathy towards Macbeth, though the moral bearings are absolutely clear in the overall attitude and ultimate dramatic impression.

The drinking scene in *Antony and Cleopatra* (2.7) on board Pompey's gallery of the triumvirs and Pompey and company is at once a political and all too human scene. It is to seal the pact of the great land conquerors and rulers with the hero on the seas Pompey. It is Lepidus, an also-ran triumvir who all too readily accepts the abundance of liquor offered by Pompey. Drink goes to his head and leaves him prostrate. Antony answers his curiosity about the curiosities of Egypt like the pyramid, the crocodile on the Nile etc. in terms that are deliberately tautological and hence convey

little to the gabbler in drink. Lepidus is soon far too gone under the influence of liquor, and has to be physically lifted and carried away by an attendant (so strong that he could hold one third of the world, as Enobarhus remarks). Antony, given to Egyptian revels', deliberately avoids excessive drinking. He warns Lepidus to beware of the quick-sands of liquor, a warning that goes unheeded. Octavius, practical, calculating person that he is, altogether forbears from drinking at all, in spite of pressure on him.

Octavius: It's monstrous labour when I wash my breath
And it grows fouler.
Antony: Be a child o' the time
Octavius: Possess it, I'll make answer. (2.7. 105-108)

As is the pattern in the drinking scenes, the others Antony, Pompey, Enobarbus and company take hands, dance and sing before parting.

In *The Tempest* the bottle is the badge of Stephano the sailor and the two are inseparable. Though he supposes that he is the only survivor of the sea storm to come ashore, he deems it a greater fortune that a butt full of liquor had got washed ashore as though exclusively for him. He has improvised a bottle with tree bark and fills it for himself. He comes across Caliban lying prone frightened by thunder and an oncoming storm. Caliban at first takes Stephano for a spirit sent by Prospero's magic to torment him and prays him not to trouble him. Stephano takes Caliban to be a monster of the isle in a fit of ague and offers him drink. He then discovers Trinauls hiding under Caliban. Caliban is taken in by the offer of liquor.

Caliban: (Aside) These be fine things if they are not spirits,
That's a brave god and bears celestial liquor
I'll kneel to him
Caliban: I'll swear upon that bottle to be thy true subject, for the liquor is not earthly. (2.2. 125-127)

The bottle is the book he swears upon. The whole incident is paradigmatic of colonial rule and the attitude of the colonialist and the colonized widely in evidence in the history of later times. It is intuitive or at least acutely perceptive on Shakespeare's part (the latter if he had come to know about the attitude of the early settlers in plantations in Virginia). Not quite that the natives had not earlier known

any alcoholic drink. But the ones introduced by the colonial master caught their fancy and taste and the colonialist could use this and similar baits as an indirect means of winning the natives over and subjugating and exploiting them and their resources, natural and cultivated. There was also the more obviously wrong type of colonial who would indulge in drink and go native and decadent. Stephano and Trinculo and the acceptance and courting of subjugation by them on Caliban's part (King Stork for King Log) is an uncanny anticipation of the slavish mentality of the colonised. The colonized would delude themselves about their subject status.

The plot to assassinate Prospero is suggested by Caliban and he seeks the initiative of his new gods Stephano and Trinculo in this. It is symptomatic of the way the intervention of the colonialist was eagerly solicited by internal factions in the to-be-subjected country. Thanks to the almost omnipresent and omnipotent powers of Ariel and Prospero's magic, the plot comes to a ridiculous end, and they are taught a bitter lesson, though Prospero extends his general forgiveness to the three of them too. He goes out towards Caliban so far as to say "... this thing of darkness, I acknowledge as mine. And Caliban promises to be 'wise hereafter and sue for grace'.

A somewhat gossipy tradition regarding Shakespeare which was part of the legend-making around him that arose in the later seventeenth century has it that Shakespeare's death some days after the wedding of his second daughter was brought on by a fever which he contracted as a result of overdrinking at the wedding feast. Despite the reservations about drink which are implicit in his depiction of drink episodes he perhaps did not quite despise drink. But given his general outlook of sanity and a certain normality, it is unlikely that he drank hard. Whatever that be, it is evident from the drinking episodes in the plays that the idea of alcohol serves as a stimulus for lines of dramatic development and imaginative depiction. Perhaps it is not for nothing inns and pubs came to be named after him, 'The Shakespeare Inn' being an early example. Many raise a toast to him.

THREE UNCONVENTIONAL INTERPRETATIONS OF BHARATA'S *RASA* THEORY

M.S. Kushwaha

It is not a sign of a candid and scientific mind to throw overboard anything without proper investigation.

— Swami Vivekanand

The conventional and prevailing view of *rasa* is based largely on Abhinavagupta's commentary on Bharata's *rasa-sutra*.[1] This does not mean that there were no deviant views in the past[2], but they were either ignored or brushed aside. This tendency, it appears, still persists. I wonder if the majority of the students of Indian poetics are familiar with R.K. Sen's *Aesthetic Enjoyment*, A.V. Subramanian's *The Indian Theory of Aesthetics: A Reappraisal*, and Râkesagupta's *Psychological Studies in Rasa* – the three unconventional treatises on the *rasa* theory published in modern times. My purpose of writing this paper is just to acquaint them with their views. Even if these views are unacceptable, they deserve to be noticed and critically examined.

I

R.K. Sen's *Aesthetic Enjoyment* is less challenging than the other two works. The author subscribes to the traditional view that *rasa* is a spiritual experience characterized by *ânanda* (bliss). He unambiguously states that the "manifestation of the joyful (*ânanda-rûpta*) nature of the soul (*âtma-caitanya*) is *rasa*-enjoyment" (66)[3]. But he differs from the orthodox view when he asserts that *suddhi* (purification), rather than *sâdhârnîkarana* (universalization), plays a crucial role in transforming *sthâyî-bhâvas* into *rasas*. According to him, the identification of the spectator with what he is witnessing is possible "only when the purification of the soul has already been carried out to some extent" (186). He further adds that "Bliss subsists so long as the soul is pure. But a man with an impure soul is not in a position to enjoy such bliss" (143). Similarly, he likens the *rasa*-enjoyment not to *brahmasvâda* but to the attitude of a *jîvan-mukta* (a self-realized householder): "the attitude of *rasa*-enjoyer and the *jîvan–mukta* are very similar and almost identical" (190).

This view is reinforced when he observes that "*Rasa*-enjoyment is achieved when the most intense *bhoga* (indulgence) goes hand in hand with the severest renunciation" (186).

However, his chief contribution lies in highlighting Bharata's indebtedness to Ayurveda and, in a lesser degree, to *Yoga-sûtra* of Patanjali. In his discussion of *sâttvika bhâvas* (chapter VII) and *vyabhicâri-bhâvas* (chapter VIII), he quotes extensively from Caraka and Susruta[4] to show how deeply Bharata is influenced in his delineation of these *bhâvas* by speculations in Ayurveda. *Sâttvika-bhâvas* are discussed in Ayurveda as "results of the different activities of *vâyu*" (271). Bharata's depiction of them has a close resemblance with Caraka's and Sucruta's. "So extensive has been the range of Bharata's borrowings from Caraka and Susruta that he seems to have consulted these texts before writing out the general characteristics and traits of each of these *sâttvika-bhâvas*" (278). And this is equally true of *vyabhicâra-bhâvas*. "In his discussion of *vyabhicâr[3]bhâvas*, Bharata has freely drawn upon both the *Yoga-sûtra* and *Caraka-Samhitâ*" (294). Five *vyabhicâribhâvas*— *nirveda, dh[ti, smrti, mati* and *vitarka* — are directly influenced by *Yoga-sûtra*. *Srama, âvega, apasmâra, ugratâ, abhighâtaja, trasâ* and *moha* — these seven are discussed by Caraka under *âgantu* division of diseases, while the remaining are treated under the class of *nija* diseases, which consists of *vâtaja, pittaja* and *kaphaja* disorders. Sen's detailed analysis of *Vyabhicâribhâvas* vis-à-vis their treatment by Caraka shows clearly that "Bharata borrows the characteristic details from Caraka's treatment of physical diseases, even when Bharata is writing exclusively on mental moods and sentiments" (315). It also demonstrates "that in more than one instance, Bharata has taken over complete passages from the *Caraka-samhita*" (328).

The analogy of food and drink, so frequently used by *Alamkârikas* from Bharata onwards to describe *rasa* enjoyment, has not been properly understood. It is based on the concept of *âhâra* (food). According to Caraka, each of the five *jnânendriyas* (sense organs) takes in sense impressions as *âhâra*. Thus, "*âhâra* taken in by *jivhâ* [the tongue] on the one hand and *cakcu* [the eye] and

karna [the ear] on the other, alike contribute to the growth and development of *rasa*" (XVIII). In fact, "*Rasa* of the body and the *Rasa* of the mind, being both dependent on *âhâra*, have a natural affinity between them" (XXII). *Vibhâvas*, too, are a form of *âhâra*". What is *vibhâva* in Bharata is *âhâra* in Caraka-Patanjala, and Arammana in Abhidhamma system" (94). And "*Rasa*-evolution is only a processing and a change of original *âhâra* in the form of *vibhâva*, and its gradual sublimation into *manomaya* [mental] stage" (73).

Sen further points out the close correspondence between Bharata's characterization of *rasas* and the description of *rasas* in Ayurveda as given by Caraka. *Sringâra* resembles *Madhura*; *Hâsa*, *Amla*; *Karunâ*, *Lavana*; *Raudra*, *Kamu*; *Vîra*, *Tikta*; and *Bhayânaka*, *Kasâya* (56-63). After a detailed examination, he arrives at the conclusion that "such extensive and wide-spread parallelisms even in details could never have been accidental. It is not a case of parallelism. Bharata seems to have consciously drawn upon the speculations of Indian Ayurveda" (63).

"The *Rasas* in Alamkâra and in Ayurveda evolved out of the same *ahamkâra* (ego) characterised by *abhimâna*" (114). The *jnânendriyas*, like *cakcu* [the eye], *srautra* [the ear] and *jivhâ* [the tongue] and the *karmendriyas*, like *pâda* [feet], *pâni* [hands] and *upastha* [genitalia] are manifestation of this *şâmânya* [general] *ahamkâra* (114). The "*pravritti-pradhâna asmitâ*, the subject matter of investigation in Ayurveda, and the *prakhya-pradhana asmitâ*, the subject matter of analysis in Alamkâra, naturally go together. Both are held together in the *sthiti-pradhâna asmita* or the *deha* [body]" (123).

Sen seems to agree with Abhivavagupta when he says that "There cannot be any aesthetic enjoyment, if *sthâyî-bhâva* be not present already in a latent from in the *sahrdaya*" (264), and that "*Rasa*-enjoyment is impossible for one who is without *vâsanâ*" (84). However, he holds that "Bharata was indebted to Patanjala analysis in this concept of *vâsanâs*, evolving in the form of *sthâyî-bhâvas*" (410). According to him, Bharata looked at *vâsanâ* from the Patanjala-Caraka standpoint of *anusuya* (258-59).

Sen has produced overwhelming evidence to support his contention that "in *Rasa* speculations, concepts which are purely physical and physiological in origin, were transferred to this metaphysical and psychical plane" (8).But some of his statements are simply baffling. For instance, he says:

> While *indriyârtha* in the form of *vibhâva* is *âhâra*, the manifestation of those *vibhâvas* in the physical body takes the form of *vyabhicâribhâva*. But *vyabhicâribhâva* is only the outward expression of what is already present in the mind. This last has been carefully analysed in Bharata under *anubhâva*. (50)

Here Sen interchanges the definitions of *vyabhicâribhâva* and *anubhâva* without giving any reason. And this is not a casual remark. For he himself translates *vyabhicâribhâva* as "physical manifestation" and *anubhâva* as "mental manifestation" (49).

Similar is the case of *sâttvika-bhâvas*. While these are usually associated with *sâttvika-abhinaya*, Sen links them with *rasa*-enjoyment: "*Sâttvika-bhâvas* always go with the enjoyment of *Rasa*" (143). He reiterates the same opinion when he says that "the enjoyment of *Rasa* is always accompanied with the expression of *sâttavika-bhâvas*" (264). He differentiates between *sâttvika bhâvas* and other *bhâvas* (which he calls *anubhâvas*), and seems to equate the former with *sattva guna* or pure *sattva*. He writes: "The *anubhâvas* (being *bhâvas*) are not yet free from the play of three *gunas*, while *sâttvika-bhâva*, being the manifestation of *sattva*, has passed beyond the play of *rajas* and *tamas*" (453).

These re-definitions of *anubhâva*, *vyabhicâribhâva* and *sâttvika-bhâva* in a work of meticulous scholarship, though patently queer, can hardly be dismissed as misapprehension. It is inconceivable that a scholar writing on the *rasa*-theory is ignorant of the meanings of these basic terms which are known to an ordinary student of Sanskrit poetics. The causes of such an interpretation need to be investigated.

II

A.V. Subramanian (*The Indian theory of Aesthetics*) too, like R.K. Sen, offers a physiological interpretation of the *rasa*-theory, but, instead of basing it on Indian Ayurveda, he locates it in modern medical science, specially in neurology. His objections against the traditional theory rest on three counts:

(i) A significant defect of the existing theory seems to have arisen as a result of an overestimation of the power of universalized stimuli from art sources with the power to liberate, for the time being, the consciousness of the dilettante from the clutches of the ego.... (13)

(ii) Another serious weakness in the old theory is the assumption that certain mental states exist permanently in the human personality. (14)

(iii) A third and quite serious defect arises from an imperfect understanding of the nature of *âtmic* bliss. (15)

He accepts only two tenets of the orthodox theory: (i) universalization (*sâdhârnîkarana*) and (ii) "the concept that aesthetic enjoyment becomes possible only if self-centred mercenary, pragmatic thinking is suspended" (87). But he does not agree with Abhinavagupta's interpretation of the concept of universalization, which maintains that it is the permanent mental state, properly universalized, that metamorphoses into *rasa* to be enjoyed by the consciousness. For one thing, "Emotions are not separate, cognizable self-contained entities; emotions have validity in aesthetics only as the mental states of characters which have been clearly pictured by the creative artist in his medium" (44). He further asserts that "Aesthetics is interested in characters in the grip of emotions, not in emotions in the abstract" (45). Secondly, he holds that the proposition that "aesthetic enjoyment is reached by universalised stimuli acting on the consciousness and removing the stain of ego from it" is philosophically untenable (65).

He does not attach any sanctity to the concept of universalization, and severely minimizes its role. According to him, it is based on group psychology:

> The identification set up by art products through the device of universalization is based on a community of instinctive interests and shortcomings and weaknesses. It is essentially a case of birds of a feather flocking together. (75)

And this identification, he further observes, "is very similar to that experienced by a group of tourists visiting Humpi or by the gathering of hundreds of thousands of fans of a pop singer who is the current mass-idol" (75). In such cases, as in the aesthetic experience, "there is identification in one or two respects only" (76). In fact, "universalization is at best partial," and "amounts only to

group egotism, and is quite a way below that state of universalism in our philosophy, the state that can perform the very difficult task of removing our *sâmsâric* shackles" (26). It consists in "vesting exalted characters with a common human foible, a weakness or shortcoming, which will enable most of the readers to consider them as kin to themselves and so to identify themselves with them" (70). In other words, universalisation "is achieved, not through the elevation but actually through the downgrading of the characters" (70).

The identification effected by universalisation is inherently different from "the spiritual identification of the emancipated. "The latter kind is a soul-to-soul liaison that informs a truly unitary outlook on all creation" (75). The bliss (*ânanda*) that a yogin or an emancipated individual experiences is undifferenciated, and "not capable of classification into eight different *rasas*" (71). In fact, the *rasa*-experience is based on *sthâyî-bhâvas*, which are "states of the mind (the mind being part of *antahakarna* is outside the *âtman*)", and thus belong to the realm of the *anâtman* (69). The fact that they are acted upon by the aesthetic stimuli and universalised, can hardly elevate them to the dizzy heights of the *âtmic* experience (69). "... the entire aesthetic experience," says the author, "takes place in the plane of the *anatman*", and "it can never rise to the level of the *âtman*" (77).

He also discounts the prevailing notion that *rasa*-experience is characterized by unalloyed bliss. "It is certainly true", he remarks, "that during an aesthetic experience, the dilletante does not suffer sadness personally. But it is equally true that when he sees a tragic scene, there is a certain impersonal sorrow lining the aesthetic bliss" (73). Also, the consciousness of the spectator is beset by conflicting feelings: anger against the enemies of the character he identifies with, and affection towards the characters which support him or her (71). "This selective attachment and hatred are very much the products of the *anâtman*, and they set up conditions which work actively against consciousness enjoying its own bliss which is a product of *nirâsakti* or detachment" (79). Infact, "as long as these is perception of the world outside, there can be no *âtmic* bliss," which alone is unalloyed (78).

Subramanian makes it quite clear that aesthetic experience is not a spiritual (*âtmic*) experience, nor can the process of universalisation raise it above the mental plane. Aesthetic experience is as much a mental phenomenon as worldly experience. However, he admits that these two experiences are not identical. Aesthetic experience, in spite of being a mental product, is invariably accompanied with joy. To account for this anomaly, he advances the concept of two levels of brain (58) — lower and higher. They are also called old and new brains, respectively. The lower brain is self-centred in nature; it is solely concerned with instinctive drives and egoistic interests. The higher brain, on the other hand, is altruistic in nature; it is marked by unselfish thoughts and nobler feelings. While the lower brain is the seat of various kinds of unpleasant emotions, the higher brain is comparatively calm and placid. "Under this theory the aesthetic stimuli are not at all expected to remove the obstacles placed by the ego, they simply skirt around this trouble-some organ, the obstacle-ridden lower brain" (65). And this is but natural, for the lower brain "is interested only in individuated, local stimuli and not in those that have been universalised" (65). Thus "all that universalisation is expected to accomplish is to render the artistic stimuli unwelcome in the lower brain" (30).

The artistic stimuli are processed by the higher brain which harbours the nobler drives such as pan-humanism, spirit of adventure, urge to probe and innovate, and the love of form, pattern, and harmony. "Whatever the sentiment that is carried in the stimuli, even if it is sad, tragic, the result of their impact is always pleasant as one or more of the drives in the new brain get fulfilled" (107). For, as he points out, "In the body of any living organism, if a drive or need gets fulfilled, there is a joy produced by a center named 'the pleasure center' " (88). The artistic stimuli satisfy, specifically, "the yearning for order, pattern and harmony that operates in the new brain" (102).

Subramanian rejects also the concept of the permanent mental states (*sthâyîbhâvas*). He argues that if "these *bhâvas* are results of *vâsanâs*, they must exist in the system as anger at someone or love for someone, the object of the emotion being an essential and inseparable part of the phenomenon should get impressed in the personalities with the emotion" (45-6). As he further clarifies, "experiences of the past are most certainly recorded along with facts and circumstances and even the figures associated with them, and not as mental states merely" (53). According to him, "what exists permanently is the faculty which generates the emotions" (38). But the emotions it generates "fade after a certain time" (38).

He believes that "the number of mental states is really infinite" (46), and remarks that "we are aware of many mental states each different in a subtle manner from the other, often a number of mental states seem to exist together, confusing the picture (46). He also holds that some of the *rasas*, classified as such by Bharata, cannot be true *rasas*" (46), and cites *adbhutarasa* as the case of a non-*rasa* (46).

III

Unlike R.K. Sen and A.V. Subramanian (who base their interpretations on physiology), Râkesagupta (*Psychological Studies in Rasa*) locates his interpretation in psychology. According to him, Bharata's *rasa*-theory is divisible into two interrelated but independent components: the delineation of emotion in poetry (used in the wider sense of creative literature) and the act of relishing. He treats them separately under two sections – '*Rasa* as Relish' and '*Rasa* as Emotion'.

Râkesagupta demolishes almost all the pillars of the traditional theory of *rasa*, so firmly erected by Abhinavagupta. Though Subramanian has also repudiated some of the orthodox tenets, his approach is not so radical. For instance, he denies the *âtmic* or spiritual status to aesthetic joy and rejects its kinship with *brahmânanda*, but he still accepts the idea of aesthetic joy. Râkesagupta, on the other hand, totally discards the notion of aesthetic pleasure. The points out that "the cause of this misguided belief is not the actual pleasurable experience of the perception of all poetic phenomena by anybody. It is rather the wrong presupposition that we undertake to do only pleasing things" (75-6). As he demonstrates with the example of a road-accident (76-7), "it is in the nature of man to take interest even in the affairs of others and to

feel pain in sympathy if the others are in distress" (77). And there is no difference "between the experiences of reality and its representation" (78). In fact, "it is our interest in a particular phenomenon that attracts as towards it and keeps us clung to it; and we feel that our attachment with it is worthwhile, even though it may afford us pain" (80-81). Râkesagupta holds that the terms "Interest and Relish are almost synonymous with each other with reference to poetry. Interest is comparatively a permanent disposition of the mind and becomes Relish when it is in action, and Relish is nothing but a manifestation of interest" (81).

Sâdhârnîkarana or universalisation is the corner-stone of the conventional theory of *rasa*. It was introduced as *bhâvakatva* by Bhattanâyaka, and later adopted and refined by Abhinavagupta. R.K. Sen does not discuss it, and Subramanian accepts it in a considerably modified form. Râkesagupta, however, finds it totally unacceptable. "While reading *Râmâyana*", he points out, the reader "comes across Sita and her three sisters. All the four belong to the same family, are also brides of the same family and have almost equal graces of character and beauty" (54). But the reader, he comments, "can never afford to confuse one with the other. He must know each by particular name and particular actions and particular individuality, and not in the generalised form as only lovely maidens. He cannot also grow totally indifferent to the era and the country and the society to which a particular character belongs" (54).

Râkesagupta also discounts the notion that emotions are understood by the spectator in an abstract form. He asserts: "As each character is understood by the spectator as a particular individual, so each emotion is understood by him as existing not in idea but in a particular character" (55). He refers to the story of Sakuntala and Ducyanta, and remarks that the spectator "witnesses Sakuntala and Ducyanta making love with each other. Unless he clearly cognises that it is love between Sakuntala and Ducyanga, he shall not at all follow the play which will only be Greek and Latin to him" (55). All in all, the concept of *sâdhârnîkarana*, as Râkesagupta claims, "is a mere fancy and that the office which is assigned to it is never manifested" (55).

It is held that *sâdhârnîkarana* is effected in poetry by the absence of blemishes and the presence of a *alamkâras* and *gunas*, and in drama by four kinds of acting. But Râkesagupta, on the basis of his analysis of the film *Citralekhâ*, observes "that the purpose which is served by the poetic excellences and the dramatic devices is not that of generalisation, it is rather that of particularisation" (57).

He also does not believe that *sâdhârnîkarana* purges the mind of the spectator or the reader of his mundane predilections and that he does not think of anything else during his perception of the literary phenomenon. "There are moments", he states, "when a perceiver is immediately conscious of nothing except of the object of his perception, viz. the literary phenomenon; but there are also moments, it cannot be denied, when the object of his perception evokes in him the memory of his own experiences. This is at least sometimes inevitable because the subject-matter of poetry includes human life in all its aspects" (55). He further adds "that the thoughts and memories which are called by the poetic phenomenon itself subsist almost always without diminishing and sometimes even intensify the poetic interest of the perceiver" (56). And these memories, instead of being hindrances to *rasa*-realization, actively contribute to it. The spectator or, reader, he points out, "cannot feel love or *Ratî* at an amorous scene, or pathos or *Soka* at a pathetic scene unless he is reminded of his own frolics in the former case and of the bereavement of his dearest in the latter" (64).

The prevailing theories of the realization of *rasa* are not only psychologically unsound but also narrow; "they do not tell us how and why we relish even such poetry as does not come under the denotation of *Rasa*" (82).

"Poetic Relish", says Râkesagupta, "is a mental phenomenon and is composed of the feelings which are evolved in the mind of the perceiver as a psychological reaction to his perception of poetry" (83). These feeling are determined by the following factors:

1. The poetical work – its subject-matter, form of expression and style, and the mode of its reception (reading, recitation, stage-representation, film, etc.)
2. Environment: Immediate (relating to reception) and remote

(relating to creation).

3. Relisher (Spectator or reader): His personality (his nature and taste); his mood and fancy; and his understanding.

Combinations and permutations of these determinants give rise to various kinds of poetic relish. Râkesagupta has classified them into six broad categories:

(i) Sympathetic feelings
(ii) Antipathetic feelings
(iii) Recollectional or Reminiscential feelings
(iv) Feelings pertaining to Curiosity
(v) Reflectional feelings or the feelings which set us to think about a problem concerned with some aspects of life
(vi) Critical feelings or feelings pertaining to appreciation or depreciation of a poetical work

In considering the question of poetic relish, Râkesagupta observes, "we shall have to give the differences in individuality and taste of the perceivers of poetry their due importance, because in determining the form of poetic relish their role is very prominent" (100). For, as he further adds, "Each perceiver of poetry has something to demand of it, and the mystery of his relish consists in the gratification of his demand" (100). It is, therefore, "impossible to pass a normative judgement in the field of art and literature, or anywhere else where these is scope for difference of opinion or difference of taste" (29).

Under the second section, 'Rasa as Emotion", Râkesagupta critically examines the various components of *rasa*-structure — *sthâyî* and *sancarî bhâvas, vibhâvas,* and *anubhâvas* — in the light of modern psychology. We shall draw attention only to some of his observations which are of a general character.

Speaking of *bhâvas* he remarks: "*Bhâvas* are the actual states of consciousness brought into existence by *vibhâvas* and manifested by *anubhâvas*" (128). In this respect, they resemble emotions, which are marked by psychic affections and organic changes (119).

"A *Vibhâva*", he assarts, "can never be the true cause of an emotion; for, it if be such, it should always be able to excite its relative emotion by its presence, which it does not" (149). According to him, "an emotion is excited by a particular idea and not by a certain general kind of situation" (149). Nevertheless, *Vibhâvas* "do constitute a part of the cause of an idea, the other part being the nature, disposition, and attitude of the mind in which the idea occurs" (149).

He finds no difference between *sthâyî* and *sancârî bhâvas.* "Both classes of *Bhâvas* are called forth by certain *Vibhâvas*; and when the *Vibhâvas* are withdrawn, the *Bhâvas* also disappear. There is no evidence to suppose that it is in the case of the *Sthâyîbhâvas* and *Sthâyîbhâvas* alone that they exist in the mind in a latent form when not manifested" (161). The term *samskâra* (an impression of a *bhâva* in a person) simply means that "the person is susceptible to that *bhâva* — he is liable to experience it when placed in the proper circumstances" (161). And this applies to all kinds of *bhâvas.* "We can say that a man is suspectible to joy (*Harsa*) with the same propriety with which we say that a man is susceptible to sorrow (*Soka*)" (161). It is equally absurd to assume that *sthâyîbhâvas* subsist longer than *sancârîbhâvas.* "what a rational man", he declares, "can have the audacity to deny that hours, nay days and sometimes even months and years, are spent in anxiety (*Cinta*)" (163).

IV

These three studies question the mainstream (and established) interpretation of Bharata's *rasa*-theory, and offer new perspectives and insights. The parallel illustrations from Caraka (and Susrata) and Bharata adduced by R.K. Sen leave no room for taking them as coincidences. However, his effort to connect his physiological findings with metaphysical speculations of various philosophical systems is a bit strained and confusing. But it can hardly be denied that has brought into focus the hitherto unexplored connection between Ayurveda and Bharata's speculations.

The works of A.V. Subramanian and Râkesagupta, on the other hand, are well-knit and clear-cut. Both the scholars are iconoclastic, and hence there are some obvious resemblances. But Subramanian's repudiation of the traditional theory, unlike Râkesagupta's, is only

partial. Râkesagupta not only rejects the prevailing theory in toto but a also offers a well-developed alternate theory of poetic relish. He disengages the notion of poetic relish from the concept of *rasa*, and transforms it into a universal theory of poetic appreciation.

NOTES

1. For details, see R. Guoli, *The Aesthetic Experience according to Abhinavagupta.* Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1985 (Third Edition).
2. For instance, Râmacandia-Gunaratna (*Nâtyadarpana*) hold that *rasas* are pleasant as well as unpleasant, and Bhoja (*Srngâra-prakâsa*) advances a new theory of *rasa* in which *ahamkâra* plays the central role.
3. Page numbers of the quotations from the works are incorporated in the main body of the text in brackets. Diacritical marks and italics, if missing, have been supplied. This is specially true of the quotations from *Aesthetic Enjoyment.*
4. R.K. Sen discusses the question of the 'Date of Patanjali-Caraka and Bharata' in an Appendix (pp. 475-78), and arrives at the comclusion that Patanjali-Caraka precedes Bharata by "at least three hundred years" (478). It may also be pointed out that Sen identifies Caraka with Patanjali, the author of *Yoga-sutra.*

WORKS CITED

Râkesagupta, *Psychological Studies in Rasa.* Aligarh: Granthayan, 1950, rept. 1997.

Sen, R.K. *Aesthetic Enjoyment.* Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1966.

Subramanian, A.V. *The Indian Theory of Aesthetic — A Reappraisal.* New Delhi: Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, 2005.

As each scholar takes no cognizance of the works of others, they have not been treated here according to chronological order of their publications. Our treatment is based on the degree of their radicalism.

W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM AND HOLY MEN IN INDIA

Leonard R.N. Ashley

It is candidly the opinion of this present critic that the time will come when Maugham will be read when others are forgotten and that simply because Maugham is at once both undated, for those who revere solid literary craftsmanship, and also for those of a sociological frame of mind, because in him one sees the vivid account of the vanished Zeitgeist, the way things were at a certain point in history in a certain culture. Here in this article you will see him, in fiction and in literary essay, reacting as a representative of his culture with the more ancient culture of India.

Our western culture from time to time seems to have taken an interest in certain aspects of Indian culture, whether because of Transcendentalism or Theosophy or even yoga. Youngish readers here will recall the recent fads for Transcendental Meditation and The Beatles going of to India contacts at séances and Vedanta in California, and so on. Maugham appears to have taken an interest in India not so much because the culture resonated with his inner being but more because he came across it in his day and it was one of the sources of unusual experience on which he depended for the materials which properly exploited made him a very popular commercial writer. His earliest collection of stories (1898) was called *Orientations*, and he has a penchant for steering us toward the reality of "the circumstances in which he himself has lived," usually with a wry amusement. No wonder he set stories in Borneo and in India. He may have been far less at home in the ancient civilization of India than among the heathens of the South Seas.

Maugham's Novel Set Partly in India

In *The Razor's Edge* you will find a wealth of telling details. They fine tune, for example, the minor but memorable character of the trumped-up commoner Templeton, for example, to such an extent that although we laugh at him we feel for him, gossipy and sharp-tongued as any character in the satires of Simon Raven. We see him exactly as Clifton Webb played him in the film version. We

rejoice that Templeton goes to his death happy to have received a coveted invitation to a society event, snob that he always was and snob that he remains as he goes to his final reward. Maybe we are as much or more glad of that happy death than we are glad that the hero of the novel succeeds in his journey to find his true self. Maugham could draw Templeton more exactly than he could Darrell once Darrell started to seek spiritual values.

The reader is so involved in the externals of the story of a spiritual search that ethical judgments become rather clouded as does, in fact, India itself, which is seen as it were through a gauzy veil of romance rather than presented realistically. The truth is that in the novel India is at bottom no more realistic than (say) the Shangri-La of James Hilton's *Lost Horizons.* It is an India of romance rather than fact. Maugham himself actually was in India but never on the spiritual quest of his Laurence Darrell. Maugham was there as a tourist and, as always, a writer seeking grist for his mill as well as raw material drawn from real life characters and events.

Readers may not like the way he treats Larry Darrell leaving Isabel. Darrell indeed is not as clearly seen as his Aleister Crowley in *The Magician* of 1908 as Oliver Haddo and in *Of Human Bondage* where the character of J. Conshaw is an amalgam of that "Beast" with a couple of other extraordinary self-creators. With Larry Darrell, Maugham is offering a more puzzling character than, for instance, the real spymaster Sir Gerald Kelly, for whom Maugham worked and whom he put recognizably under various names into *Cakes and Ale, Ashenden,* and *Of Human Bondage.* Maugham fully understood Sir Gerald; he was not the kind of man who could ever fully fathom the soul of a man like Darrell. He may have found something of a religious model in an American called Guy Hague, whom he met briefly at the Maharsi's ashram. The change in Darrell was pretty much like the cures of the psychoanalyst Dr. Audlin in the story "Lord Montdrago". Darrell went from mental war casualty to the need for education in something far from killing, and to peace, bliss.

Larry Darrell has been robbed of youth. Horrible wartime experiences did that. It is disillusion and sadness rather than joie de vivre and adventure that sends him off to seek enlightenment, in

India. Maugham certainly understood that need even if he could not quite catch all the attraction of the Absolute that Larry sought or, indeed, deal entirely happily with the character after which Larry had attained the enlightenment he sought, and had trouble fitting in among those who unlike him were not transformed. Maugham better understood Templeton, another man who had fled crass America. Templeton is distraught about the invitation as he lies on his death bed. Maugham in the novel—he uses his own name for the first time here as narrator—manages to get the coveted invitation delivered to Templeton, which delights him though he knows will not live to attend the party. Templeton dies in peace.

Maugham understood snobs better than swamis. He struggled to grasp certain Indian concepts of the relationship of the self to the world. He worked to create the atmosphere more than the philosophy or the religion. He was, nonetheless, aware that the war years had made religion a popular topic in novels, especially novels with a colorful Catholicism such as in *The Keys of the Kingdom* and *The Sing of Bernadette* and exotic Vedanta in *Time Must Have a Stop.* Hinduism was attractively exotic. For Maugham, who to the end of his days refused to believe in an afterlife, religion was not a prime theme for a novel, but he did admit once that Hindu reincarnation was the most reasonable explanation of why there was suffering in the world, suffering in a life being repayment for evil in an earlier life. The device on his books, a stylized Hand of Fatima, like the swastika on Kipling's works, marked no religious belief. Maugham's faith was in popular literature well written, whatever the subject.

The Indian setting of *The Razor's Edge* is passable but still in Maugham you do not smell and feel India as you do the Far East in Conrad. You do not have a hint at Indian character to the extent that you get it even in Forster's *A Passage to India,* in which Forster ventured so perilously close to revealing his own secrets that ever after he would not publish novels that might tell the public of his innermost self. In *The Razor's Edge* you principally get a rattling good yarn with a high-minded central character, individualized enough to be interesting but also just enough like a great many other young men who survived the massacres of the War and founding the

peacetime values disappointing. The thoughtful after the war wondered what to make of their lives, what to do next. Few sought the Absolute Reality that the Indians believe in, but many persons liked to read about that.

Maugham's aim is to prove what people want and his area of expertise is what people do, not what they are deep within. He is an acute observer, and what a person is thinking is not something you can usually well observe. Maugham builds scenery but his locales are backdrops to outward revelations and the interest is in the outcomes of conscious action. *The Razor's Edge* was an immense departure for him from his ordinary subjects and usual stance, and it is not his best work. For what little Maugham truly learned of Indian spirituality, we must turn not to the novel but to an essay. It is called "The Saint". That reports his reactions to meeting the swami known as the Maharshi or sometimes as Shri Ramada, shri being like "sir" a term of respect. Some maharajahs demanded shri be repeated innumerable times before their names. For this holy man once was enough because it was totally sincere. He did not even have to go about dusted with the white ashes of burned cow dung to attract attention. He was humbled and to many magnificent, a truly big shri.

The Marharshi

The Maharshi was born in what was then a small village some 30 miles from Madura. The year was 1879. The boy's name was Ventkataraman. His immediate family was not particularly religious but his parents did entertain an occasional sannyasin (ascetic). One of them who was unlucky enough to be refused hospitality cursed the family by predicting that in every generation a member of the family would turn ascetic and have to beg for his food. In his generation Ventkataraman took on that role but he did so voluntarily. He was inspired by tales of the saints and at the age of 17 he suddenly became engrossed by the fear of death. What is death? What is life? How are we to lead/tolerate it? He felt a call to go to the holy hill of Arunachala. He went there and lived a life of meditation, barely subsisting in caves. Followers of this holy man brought him sustenance. A poet sang his praises and the holy man became

famous as Ramana, the Bhagavan Maharshi. People traveled long distances to be in his presence.

To this sadhu or holy man the visitors came hoping to receive blessing or even to be given a word of advice, although the swami seldom uttered a word. Maugham on his travels sought out various holy men but was disappointed in what he considered was parroted pronouncements. He was rather more impressed with a British major named Chadwick who had renounced everything to follow a guru in India. At last in 1938 Maugham went to the Maharsi's ashram in Tiruvannamalai which is now in the state of Tamil Nadu. There he encountered a white-bearded man of 70, seated on a dais, clothed only in a loincloth, ill and staunchly refusing medical care. Perhaps you know that in an ashram, people sitting on the floor are served food on top of a palm leaf which is placed on the floor in front of them. "When we have finished a meal," said the Mahashi, "do we keep the leaf-plate?" The holy man was ready to leave his mortal body and without regret. Once Maugham was ushered into his presence there was no exchange. "Silence also is conversation" (*A Writer's Notebook* 267), the holy man finally said. Selina Hastings speaks of this in *The Secret Lives of Somerset Maugham.* The holy man died in 1950. Millions mourned him. It was said that at the moment of his death a bright ball of light rose from the top of his head and flew away. Now 60 years after the Maharsi's passing away many people still flock to his ashram. The guru remains a spiritual force in India.

Maugham and His Hero in India

By the time of that death in mid-twentieth century much of Maugham's experience had been included in *The Razor's Edge.* The book was read by millions and seen by many millions more as a film starring Tyrone Power as Larry Darrell and Gene Tierney as his love Isabel Bradley, who, when he is disillusioned by World War I, he abandons (selfishly? selflessly?) to seek a high purpose in life or a re-definition of individual existence and humanity. Maugham was to make the most of this theme. It is difficult for those whose wars were World War II and later to understand what World War I was like. For Larry Darrell and most of the others who lived through

Hell and returned from the thick of the fray it was forever worse than the equivalent of our slasher movies, because they had actually participated in the carnage. Larry Darrell returning from the war and living in the depression that followed only naturally sought to find spiritual answers. He turned not to business-as-usual postwar America and Britain but to the age-old spiritual practices of India. This provided Maugham's subject and his challenge in *The Razor's Edge.* Handling that was especially hard work, but to Maugham all writing was hard work. In an interview in New York in 1948 Maugham told Garson Kanin:

> When I was gathering...my materials preparatory to writing THE RAZOR'S EDGE, I went to India. There I became familiar with various sorts of yogis and their work. One of the...told me that after he had sat meditating for an hour or two, he was so tired he had to lie...down and rest. Often he had to put himself to sleep in order to recover. And I thought to myself, 'Well, by god if he feels that, no wonder the concentration required for writing is...tiring as well. And he doesn't have to go to the trouble of pushing a pen.' (*Remembering Mr. Maugham* 50)

Maugham seems to have done well enough with the alien culture, better than Pearl Buck did with China, for instance, and later events in popular western culture were to keep his matters relevant to a large degree. When the guru Paramahansa Yogananda published his Autobiography of a Yogi in 1946 he sent Maugham an inscribed copy in gratitude for Maugham "spreading the seed of India's teachings". The yogi probably had seen the film rather than read the book. Some Indian experts may think as does K.V. Subrahamon, who has gone now at 77 to the Maharsi's ashram to "leave his body," that Maugham's treatment of Hindu religious thought is pretty good for a foreigner. Of course few of Maugham's western readers when the book came out were in any position to judge. The ragein the west at the time for independence and even self-knowledge, not to say transcendence or mind alteration, which not long after was to mean dangerous drugs, was comparatively soon strong among those whom Timothy Leary came to advise to drop out and drop acid. The literature of the Beats made world-class heroes of Kerouac, Ginsberg, and others, some of whom actually took a crack at going to an ashram—but not those two brilliant self-promoters, of course. In the

US, human be-ins and imported religions were almost as popular as homegrown hallucinogens. In Britain and elsewhere the hippies and the yuppies and others were all the rage. In India, Maugham's works were read and there he was more or less given credence because he was considered at that time more of a cosmopolitan than a defender of the raj. To Indians he was not so much a British imperialist as, resident comfortably in France, something of an exile, and not merely a tax exile but an exile from British ways of thought.

Having attained in India the Absolute, Larry asks neither for power nor fame back in America, and he has found the peace he sought. It is difficult for the rest of us to imagine it. It is extraordinary that we are asked to see Darrell as having ended up a success when he not only un-famous and unmarried and un-rich—one of our American gurus became famous and wealthy preaching "God wants you to be rich"—but even a stranger to Christianity, which our outspoken infidel H. L. Mencken said was "a mob religion, paves heaven with gold and precious stones, i. e. money".

India as the Place for the Soul's Quest

That is the novel, and it is a novel despite the unusual ending with neither marriage nor death of the hero, just "the story of a man who found a faith," and with its ending we readers must be content. Maugham was himself quite content. Maugham, ever an independent thinker, liked *The Razor's Edge* even more than the public did even if he was too shrewd a critic of literature, even his own, to rank it near the top of his productions. He went to Hollywood to work on the screenplay, but his version was not used in the event. The studio had it revised a dozen times.

In the novel Maugham made use of all the relevant knowledge he had and he continued to remember with joy a trip to India and a brush with those seeking spirituality there, though some religious figures he found "unctuous" to a degree, most swamis smarmy. He did praise truly spiritual men later on in *The Razor's Edge* because he considered that he had definitely been in the presence of a great soul back before he sat down and wrote the novel. I believe that he got the idea and the desire to write the novel while in India. The Maharsi impressed him greatly and he also wrote a brief biography

and appreciation of ":The Saint" in his collection of essays called *Points of View* (1958).

At one point in India, Maugham says, "I seemed to hear the noiseless footfall of the infinite," and he did his best to give his Larry something like that experience and to convince readers of *The Razor's Edge* that there is such a thing and that it can be experienced. How do you describe the noise of a silent footfall? How do you map the soul? He also, he says in *A Writer's Notebook* considered the existence of the soul:

> The Hindus call it the Atman, and they think it has existed from eternity and will continue to exist to eternity. It is easier to believe that than that it is created with the conception or birth of the individual. They think that it is of the nature of Absolute Reality, and having emanated from that will at long last return to it. It is a pleasing fancy; no one knows that it is anything more. (344)

At least Maugham in writing about a spiritual quest in India was open to ideas he personally did not share. The fact was that, traveling in India, he simply saw raw material for fiction. He picked it up and had the skill to make something valuable and lasting out of the treasures he found. He wrote a book about it. If you ask why that, remember that he wrote a great deal about a great deal of other things, whatever he happened to see, whatever came along. He managed almost always to interest his readers in what interested him. As for why India and why the spirituality of India, rather than something or somewhere else, think of the response that famous criminal Willie Sutton gave when they asked him why he robbed banks. He replied that that is where the money is.

In Maughan's era, India is where, in the opinion of many in the west, old-fashioned spirituality resided, just as, later in, the hippies took a Magic Bus to Lhasa or Katmandu or wherever, not "somewhere over the rainbow," true, but exotic and far away, for a highly unusual experience and a highly unusual.setting. Some have always believed that a change of place can bring a change of heart, the farther afield, the greater the transformation. Why not India ? India is a place where our fashionable western "basic black" is vibrant pink, where people believe in reincarnation and deities with strange shapes and powers, where empires have risen and fallen

and the subcontinent has remained, grown, is teeming, and where almost incredible revolutionary political change was affected not by armed might but by the spirit of the Mahatma Gandhi, the leader who when asked what he thought of western civilization replied that he thought it would be a good idea.

Fact into Fiction

Some of Maugham's stories not only contained the original facts of the case or the plot that came from an anecdote recounted to the author but even, occasionally, the very words that someone had used to give the writer his tale. As for *The Razor's Edge*, the novel concludes with a rather vague treatment of Larry Darrell. This may be a surprise, even an unwelcome surprise, to those who are familiar with the way Maugham usually winds things up. You might read his very short story called "A Friend in Need" and note the effectiveness of the last line, for which the rather contrived situation you have been reading about has all been set up. Why is the protagonist of *The Razor's Edge*, after he returns, one of the illuminati, from India not given a less vague exit? My own theory is that Maugham, who always prided himself on sticking to the principle stated in another of his tales that if you have something to say you should go ahead and say it right out, in this case had no idea at all what achieving Absolute Reality was really like, so he took the out of relying as narrator on his promise to stick to what he personally could reliably and effectively communicate. That, I think, is why the death of Templeton is so theatrically moving and why the state of Darrell at the close of the novel is, as it were, offstage.

Conclusion

Born in 1874, Maugham was over 70 when he wrote, with a title taken from the *Upanishads*, the novel here discussed about a young man in search of himself, *The Razor's Edge*, the tale of a young man whose attractiveness is not in question but whose motives may puzzle. For once Maugham escaped from his habitual sentimentality, sometimes craftily disguised as cynicism, and he concentrated on the visionary vaguely looking at the distant moon rather than at the sixpence at his feet (Maugham's novel about Gaugin of 1919 was called *The Moon and Sixpence*).

The Razor's Edge of 1944 was well received because of Maugham's fame but actually was a radical departure for him. It is one of his many tales of distant places but it is based not on his own travels as much as it is based on other people's travels, and religion. Christopher Isherwood (in the novel called Laurence Darrell)'s visit to India was the sort of thing I mean. Isherwood was much involved in Vedanta and Isherwood wrote *Ramakrishna and His Disciples* and *An Approach to Vedanta*, edited a couple of collections called *Vedanta in the Western World* and *Vedanta in the Modern World*, with Prabhavananda translated Shakanda and Patanjali and the *Upinishads*, and wrote an unexciting novel in which a brother is taking his final vows as a Hindu monk and feels free at last. Isherwood was once regarded by Maugham as the great hope of the English novel in the twentieth century and I am afraid Maugham lost faith in Isherwood as Isherwood's faith in Vedanta increased. That interest of Isherwood was, nonetheless, following a trend of his era in investigating alterations in consciousness, from alcohol to Zen Buddhism. Transcendence as achieved by certain holy men in India is related to all that and it is very possibly far more serious than the current fascination among Hollywood people, even Gentiles, for The Kabbalah.

The Maharsi Venkataraman (in Maugham called Shri Ganesha, a title of respect + the name of a Hindu deity) is in *The Razor's Edge* Darrell's guru and is a little like Isherwood's guru, though actually more impressive. A character in Isherwood's *Prater Violet* asks questions about life that are inherent in *The Razor's Edge*, even if he does not have the answers any more than Maugham does:

> What makes you go on living? Why don't you kill yourself? Why is all this bearable? What makes you bear it?

Read *The Razor's Edge*, even though it does not offer what Maugham in his story "Appearance and Reality" calls "the thrilling sensation of walking a spiritual tight-rope over a metaphysical abyss" and is India as seen by a rank outsider. As you read *The Razor's Edge* again, or for the first time if you previously have not seen it, try to refrain from fact checking the India there spread out before you and try to comprehend the motives of Larry Darrell giving up his

western life and lover and going there. If you are more familiar with India than Maugham the tourist was, you can provide extra imaginative scenery. Do not bother with correcting any facts regarding Indian life and thought. Do not trouble yourself with any of the roman á clef identifications. Read for the story and recognize as you enjoy it that long before modern Indian writers made block-buster appearances in the literature of the western world a best-selling British author chose India as the place a disturbed seeker after truth. To Maugham and to his readers India was where a psychically wounded veteran of the First World War could go to seek from a famous guru, a holy man who actually existed and whose influence is still felt, solace for the soul.

WORKS CITED

Hastings, Selina. *The Secret Lives of Somerset Maugham.* London: John Murray, 2009.

Isherwood, Christopher. *Prater Violet.* New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1987.

Kanin, Garson. *Remembering Mr. Maugham.* New York: Athenaeum, 1969.

Maugham, W. Somerset. *The Razor's Edge.* New York: Doubleday Doran, 1944.

———. *The Saint.* London: Heinemann, 1958.

———. *Then and Now.* London: Heinemann, 1946.

———. *A Writer's Notebook.* New York: Doubleday, 1940.

Nicholls, Beverley. *The Sweet and Twenties.* London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1958.

Shaftel, David. "Somerset Maugham's Swami," *New York Times Book Review.* 25 July 2010, 23.

Stevenson, Lionel. *The English Novel: A Panorama.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960.

Note: A considerable number of works by Maugham and others are noted in passing and do not need to be listed here but can be fully documented online. Here are the writings that are the subject of considerable quotation. For all Maugham's works see the revised 1973 edition of Raymond Toole Scott's *A Bibliography of the Works of Maugham,* updatable online. Much is available in e-book form. The *Complete Stories* were published in 3 volumes by Heinemann (London) in 1951 and *The* [9, including *The Razor's Edge*] *Selected Novels* by Heinemann in 3 volumes in 1952, both also by Doubleday in the US.

THE GENDER SWINDLE: LAURENCE'S *A JEST OF GOD*

Vallari Gaur

Published in 1966, *A Jest of God* is the second novel of Margaret Laurence in the Manawaka series. It won the Governor General's Award for Fiction in English for 1966. *A Jest of God,* also published as *Rachel, Rachel* in the popular Library Edition, USA, in 1966 itself, has also been made into a film. Laurence wrote the novel during 1964-65, while she was staying in the Elm Cottage at the village of Penn in Buckinghamshire, England. She was regarded in a friendly way by the villagers, and this encouraged her to begin writing the novel, as though she were "taking down dictation" (*DOTE* 176).

Initially Rachel seems to bear a little resemblance with Hagar Shipley, the famous protagonist of *The Stone Angel.* Whereas Hagar reviews and attempts to come to terms with her youth, marriage and motherhood towards the end of her life, Rachel is a thirty four year old diffident, uncertain and unmarried woman, whose life follows a set unchanging pattern when the novel opens. She lives with her old widowed mother and her vacillating weakness is as self destructive as Hagar's pride. Rachel attempts to re-align herself with her past so as to interpret her future more cohesively. During this journey of selfhood, Rachel also becomes aware of gendered social norms and their impact on her cognition, relationships and life-choices.

Rachel is an introvert spinster school teacher, who has left her university education incomplete and returned to Manawaka to take care of her mother after the death of her alcoholic undertaker father. She teaches at the primary school to support herself, and leads a life which has been constricted by the gendered norms of respectability and decency. She is afraid of people, of the society she lives in. Simone de Beauvoir has termed public opinion as "the worst of tyrannies" (De Beauvoir 583). A woman's body, unlike that of a man, is not the radiation of subjectivity, as she is indoctrinated into a predefined culture of femininity from her early years. The ingrained sense of dependence on others makes their deprivation acute (De Beauvoir 308). Gender conditioning cajoles women to interiorize their

dependence and be respectful of the social/public opinion. In such situation, women learn not only to accept conventional values and manners, but also accept to be judged accordingly. Living in a cramped small town, Rachel's view is also narrow. Sinclair Ross, whose prairie fiction Laurence read and admired during her teens, has described the exacting small town gods as "Propriety and Parity" (Morley 88). The gods of Rachel's society are also the same.

The social environment in which Rachel lives is a male-oriented society, a patriarchal system in which both sexes are often unconscious of bias and social conditioning. In the character of Hager Shipley, one can perceive some challenges but Rachel's dilemmas are traditional feminine dilemmas – insecurity, passivity, and sexual vulnerability. The social environment has exerted an inhibiting influence on her activities. The binary opposites, basic of the patriarchal structure, ensure that the identity, behavior and preferences of a woman are determined by her biology. Cultural mechanisms "encode the female body with meanings" (Frug 1049). Feminist and Gender criticism has always accepted that men and particularly women, are encouraged to follow certain patterns of life. Sandra Bem has termed it as "institutional preprogramming of the individual's daily experience into the default position, or the historically precut grooves", which differ markedly for women and men (qtd. by McManus.net). The feminine mystique, comments Betty Friedan, suggests that the society wants that women should accept their own nature "which can find fulfillment only in sexual passivity, male domination, and nurturing maternal love" (Friedan 43). Sexual objectification and limiting a woman's contribution to nurturing roles only become a process of the subjectification of women. Laurence has sensitively portrayed these issues in *A Jest of God.*

Rachel has been alienated from any meaningful interpersonal communication with people. A spinster, she has lived in Manitoba all her life, and has led a constricted life, taking care of her mother, teaching her second grade class and sometimes attending church or movie with her friend Calla. The flat she lives in, has been decorated according to her mother's tastes (*JOG* 19). Rachel is also not very comfortable with Calla, even though she is her only friend. The

fundamentalism of Calla's Pentacostal religion keeps Rachel on guard. Rachel also feels that Calla looks and acts strange and that she should have been more like other girls (*JOG* 28). Calla always tries "so valiantly" to help Rachel whenever she is depressed. Rachel tries to respond, but she often misinterprets Calla's affection. When Rachel is devastated after her session in the Tabernacle, Calla consoles her by cuddling her closely. Rachel misinterprets her kiss as a sexual advancement and withdraws in a hurry (*JOG* 38). It hurts both women till they depart towards the end of the narrative (*JOG* 171). Gender conditioning inhibits Rachel from appreciating Calla as she is. These strains of Rachel's thoughts clearly indicate that the deep-rooted indoctrination of a patriarchal society has a corrupting influence on women's psyche and does not allow it to remain objective. Sensitivity to female biological urges, compulsions of familial roles and glorification of traditional feminine image by the societal environment often influence the career and family choices of women. It has been pointed out that girls'/women's career may "not follow the simple upward direction of men's, but may be subject to interruptions and changes in focus for many reasons" (Holahan 37). Rachel has also discarded the possibilities of obtaining a university degree and admits to herself that not finishing the university and coming back to Manawaka have been her mistakes (*JOG* 16). Laurence has portrayed Manawaka as a patriarchal society which frowns at any hint of deviance.

Attention to the issues of gender within textual analysis is often not explicit. Rachel frets continually to find some meaning outside the gendered constrictions, yet her social behavior remains conformist and elucidates her diffidence about openly circumventing the existing stereotypes of gender behavior. Tradition views men as providers who should be able to support his wife. The enclitic tradition encourages women to find socio-economic security through their husbands, instead of striving for it independently. Rachel feels jealous of her sister Stacey on this count. Comparing her banal life with that of Stacey, who lives in Vancouver with four healthy children, Rachel feels a mixture of resentment and envy. Rachel's response to the advances of Lennox Cates is also conditioned by

the conventional norms – the idea of becoming a farmer's wife is repulsive to Rachel as it does not possess any social glamour (*JOG* 32). Patriarchal cultural moorings condition the women's psyche to grant a role of superiority to men, underscoring the gendered male perspective of regarding women as possessions.

The conventional image of femininity suggests that women should be passive, conformist, dependent and cherish matrimony and motherhood. Motherhood is considered to be the physiological destiny of women, her natural 'calling' (Beauvoir 501). Betty Friedan has treated motherhood as a part of the feminine mystique which can unfold in devious treacherous ways (Friedan 193). Patriarchal society promotes a culture in which women find it difficult to identify with anything beyond the home, "unless it can be approached through female experience as a wife or mother or translated into domestic detail" (Friedan 8). Thus the institution of marriage can also become a constricting imprisonment.

Rachel does not have a child of her own. Her mother May Cameron frowns upon children born outside marriage. She is scandalized when she comes to know that Cassey Stewart had children outside marriage. Though Rachel does not share her mother's opinion, she is not assertive enough to oppose it, which by extension also happens to be the dominant social view. Gendered consciousness is thus socially and culturally constructed. The technology of gender is not static; rather it is a sequence of acts that is inevitably occurring within a cultural milieu. Rachel also does not have an agentic choice in this context. Judith Butler has argued in *Bodies that Metter* that the freedom of choice does not exist as far as the creation and perpetuation of gender norms is concerned. Since one lives within a social system, within a given culture; the choice cannot be entirely free. Often therefore, one chooses one's metaphorical clothes to suit the expectations or perhaps the demands of the society, without ever consciously realizing it (qtd. by Salih 50). Rachel transfers her maternal instinct to her Grade Two students and considers them as her own children (*JOG* 17).

A Jest of God vividly depicts the stifling effects of gendered expectations through Rachel, and her relationships with her mother

and Nick. Rachel's mother has cultivated a pattern of gender cognition in Rachel's mind which limits her assertiveness and also her sexuality. Consequentially, Rachel is unable to stand for what she feels to be correct, and is over eager to please. Rachel's mother Mrs. May Cameron never loses temper with Rachel, but uses a preaching voice, which makes Rachel feel guilty whenever she fails to act acceptably. Her circumvolutory attitude weaves a fine web of gendered notions about everything and ensnares Rachel within it. These attitudinal patterns are called as the naturalizing tricks of gender conditioning. Rachel Alsop *et al.* have used this phrase while analyzing the sciolisms practiced to structure identity in terms of gender. They hold that one is initiated early into patterns of conceptualization - ways of seeing and understanding which make it possible for us to become subjects and agents in the world. This learning including the learning of gender, takes place within a social context. The process of initiation into ways of conceiving the world does not end with childhood. It is an ongoing process, fluid and susceptible to change (Alsop *et al.* 35)

Rachel's life is dominated by her mother. May holds the belief that women should be primarily homemakers and must be sexually attractive. Gender can also be contemplated in terms of being a structure. The gender structure has implications at the level of individual analysis in shaping interactional expectations that are at the heart of doing gender, and also at the level of organization of social groups. May Cameron is following the traditional script of femininity by attempting to retain her sexuality in a certain manner. Patriarchal set-up has hardened this need into hostility towards her daughter whose youth is taken as a challenge. Such an attitude forces Rachel to hide facts from her mother and makes her unsure of her sexuality and desires. She prefers to remain silent, even though she wants to share her feelings with others, particularly with Nick, the first man with whom she has been in any way intimate. Rachel desires to be fluent like him. Viewed from the perspective of the gendered nature of language and the marginal position of women within the symbolic order, her silences become significant and generic. Language is a signifying chain stretching behind and

beyond the utterer and speakers are formed by language as much as they form it. A feminist interpretation of the text points to the "masks of truth with which phallocentrism hides its fiction" (Kamuf 299). Language itself is considered to be a gendered production. Lacan calls the centre of the symbolic as Phallus which epitomizes the patriarchal nature of language. Phallic linguistic structure is based on fixed and stable constructions of meanings. Women are removed from it, as their experiences are different. Rachel also finds that she is unable to communicate in the patriarchal nature of language inherited by her. Her world is divided between the private and public realms – in Lacanian terms - between the Symbolic and the Imaginary order. The hierarchy of gender has privileged the Symbolic over the Imaginary. Rachel tries to subvert her inability to communicate by giving vent to the imaginary double of herself in the form of fantasies. Nora Stovel has called Rachel a "divided self". The film version of *A Jest of God*, directed by Paul Newman in 1969, was appropriately titled as *Rachel, Rachel* as there are indeed two Rachels, living in two different worlds and seen through opposite ends of a telescope (Stovel 66).

Strangely, it is Rachel's brief affair with Nick which enables her to move beyond gendered constraints and become a free person. As she moves closer to Nick her attitude towards her mother changes and she becomes more assertive. This experience exhilarates her. Later, she also abandons her gendered dependence on Nick when she gets the impression that he is already married and has a son. She realizes that her isolated state may not be as unusual as she had thought if even confident people like Nick may hide loneliness beneath the exterior they allow others to see. After Nick's refusal to stay longer in Manawaka, she feels that she has somehow finished with facades (*JOG* 125). The dialogue which takes place between Calla and Rachel at the time when Rachel wrongly believes herself to be pregnant enables Rachel to make the momentous decision to bear the child that she believes grows inside her. Rachel is conscious that the society expects her to lead her life according to the prescribed code of conduct. A conflict had raged in her mind, whether to accept the child or reject it. Ultimately she

decides to rebel against the social norms and have a child of her own, "Look – it's my child, mine. And so I will have it" (*JOG* 171). Aware at last that her fondness for James and her envy of Stacey have both manifested her desire to have a child of her own, Rachel allows this longing to overcome her dread of the scandal that would accompany her unmarried motherhood. She accepts her presumed pregnancy, after a struggle, despite the risk of disapproval from her mother, her neighbors and her employer. Then, when Dr Raven informs her that the growth inside her is not a child, after all, but a uterine tumor, Rachel's response is an expression of grief untouched for the moment by any of her usual concern for appearances.

This is the jest of God in Rachel's opinion. It however provides her with a definite perspective on her own needs and desires, i.e., to have a family and children of her own. Like her Biblical namesake, Rachel finds her childlessness a pain almost too sharp to endure. However, once she has accepted her grief and longing by overcoming the gendered taboos, she finds it easier to think coherently, "May be I will marry .... And have my children in time. Or may be not. Most of the chances are against it. But not, I think, quite all" (*JOG* 175).

Rachel needs all her fortitude to confront her mother May with her decision to sell the house and move to the coast. Not without difficulty, she assumes the authority, reversing the roles that she and her mother have played, "*I am the mother now*". Rachel has faced death and disorientation and has accepted life. Thus the novel shows that the gendered norms restrict the possibilities of burgeoning of the inner self. Rachel makes a choice to eschew her gender conditioning. Binaries of heterosexuality subordinate the female body and the feminine gender. Key particular strategies for sexual regulation and expression have been framed by pleasure, fear and guilt, particularly for women. Socially conditioned women become vehicles for propagating the construction of gender, as is evident in the character of May Cameron. Such attitude leads to conflict when any woman wants to deconstruct gender norms. Impact of gendered ideologies can be seen in *A Jest of God* in various relationship and characters – viz. the relationship between May and Rachel, Nick and Rachel and Calla and Rachel. It is also exhibited in the characters of May, Nick and Rachel. May has been portrayed as a woman who is unable to think beyond her gendered ideas, Nick has been portrayed as a product of his circumstances, unable to appreciate the ungendered emotions of a woman, and Rachel has been portrayed as a woman who is sensitive towards what shackles her and possesses a desire to find out herself as a woman. Rachel decides to sell the house and move to the coast. Towards the end of the novel she assumes the authority which is rightfully hers and rejects the gendered shackles. She proves herself capable of freedom. The novel indicates that it is only by rejecting the gendered notions and conditioning that a person can retain the authenticity of one's individuality and create one's identity.

WORKS CITED

Alsop, Rachel, Annette Fitzsimons and Kathleen Lennon. *Theorizing Gender.* Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2002. Print.

De Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex.* Tr. H.M. Parshley. Great Britain: Vintage, 1997.

Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique.* New York: Dell Publishing, 1984. Print.

Frug, Mary Joe. "A Postmodern Feminist Legal Manifesto (An Unfinished Draft)." *Harvard Law Review.* 105.5 (March 1992): 1045-1075. Print.

Holahan, Carole K. "Women's Goal Orientations across the Life Cycle; Findings from the Terman Study of the Gifted." *Women Growing Older: Psychological Perspectives.* Eds. Barbara F. Turner and Lillian E. Troll. USA: Sage, 1994. 35-67. Print.

Kamuf, Peggy. "Writing like a Woman: Women and Language in Literature and Society". *Feminist Literary Criticism.* Ed. Mary Eagleton. 298-99. Print.

Laurence, Margaret. *A Jest of God.* Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc., 1966. Print. Referred to in the text as *JOG*.

———. *Dance on the Earth: A Memoir.* Ed. Jocelyan Laurence. Toronto: McCelland and Stewart, 1989. Print. Referred to in the text on *DOTE*.

McManus, Barbaras F. "Theories about the Construction of Gender Identity". http://www.mic.ul.ie/stephen/vol8/dit-mension.pdf>. February 12, 2009.

Salih, Sara. *Judith Butler.* New York, Routledge, 2002. Print.

Stovel, Nora Foster, "'Sisters Under Their Skins': *A Jest of God* and *The Fire Dwellers*". *New Perspecives on Margaret Laurence: Poetic Narrative, Multiculturalism and Feminism.* Ed. Greta M.K. McCormick Coger. Con necticut: Greenwood Press, 1996. 63-80. Print.

IN PURSUIT OF AESTHETIC EXCELLENCE: A STUDY OF ANITA DESAI'S *THE ARTIST OF DISAPPEARANCE*

Deepika Srivastava

Anita Desai has been writing novels for almost fifty years and came close to winning the Booker Prize thrice. For her immeasurable contribution, she has received numerous awards, including the 1978 National Academy of Letters Award for *Fire on the Mountain.* She was awarded the Guardian Prize for children's fiction for *The Village by the Sea* in 1983 and Literary Lion Award in 1993, and has also been named Helen Cam visiting fellow, Ashby fellow, and honorary fellow of the University of Cambridge. Her fictional world is deals with imperfection and unfulfilment, helplessness, agony and anger, struggle and surrender. She dwells upon the themes of absurdity of human existence, quest for the ultimate meaning in life, decision, detachment, attachment, frustration, despair of modern man, cultural dislocation and death.

During her long literary career, Desai has written fifteen works of fiction. Among them *Cry, the Peacock (1963), Voice in The City* (1965*), Bye-Bye Blackbird* (1971), *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*(1975), *Fire on the Mountain* (1977), *In Custody* (1985), *Fasting, Feasting* (1999) and *Zigzag Way* (2004) are arguably the most significant ones. After a gap of seven years she has released *The Artist of Disappearance,* (2011) a collection of three superb novellas which emphasize the interplay between a main character dealing with universal issues and the secondary character perceiving the world and its values quite differently. The reader experiences a new appreciation of the tiny joys and the enormous sorrows which fill the lives of plain and simple village folks of rural India trying to find beauty, and perhaps the fulfillment of dreams within an overwhelming reality. Ultimately, each main character becomes an artist of disappearance either physically, emotionally or spiritually or a combination of all three. This is the first time that, for expressing her literary intelligence, Desai has preferred a novella form instead of novel or short-stories. On being asked the reason of writing in a novella form during an interviewing with Sophie Slmhirst, Desai says:

> I hadn't written in this form before, and I think the ideas couldn't have been encapsulated in the short-story. To me, a short-story is an episode; Its a brief glimpse into another person, another life but not more than that. And these novellas have some-thing beyond that - they have more experience crowded into them. At the same time I think of them as being very focused, unlike novels, in which you can go off in many different directions and pull the strands together again. (*The Book Interview: Anita Desai*)

Each of these three novelas is firmly rooted in the dynamic world of Indian culture, torn between centuries of tradition and new forces of capitalism. As the title as well as the dominated theme suggests, Desai is particularly interested in the survival of art. All the three novellas, namely *The Museum of Final Journeys, Translator Translated,* and *The Artist of Disappearance,* take place as an interaction between modern and rural communities. The young officer, in the most unusual circumstance, has a chance meeting with the caretaker of the Mukherjee estate while Prema Joshi, a middle aged, simpleton meets the glamorous batchmate, Tara, who opens avenues for her, and finally, the urban TV crew starts its mission of meeting the recluse hermit, Ravi, but does not succeed.

In the three novellas the dominant themes are decay and disappointment, retreat and regret, isolation and search and longing for reviving the roots. Above all is the survival and preservation of art and beauty. In choosing these themes she speaks of the transience of identity and the persistence of beauty. Since the publication of her first novel *Cry the Peacock*, nearly 50 years ago, she has often offered portraits of a certain kind of Anglicized urban bourgeoisie or rural landed gentry struggling for meaning against illusions, and *The Artist of Disappearance*, though barely 156 pages, fits neatly into that distinguished body of work. All three novellas feature different forms of disappearance. In the first, the collector of rare objects, Jiban Mukherjee, as well as the creator of the museum, Smt. Sarita Mukherjee simply disappear; in the second, unnamed writers of regional languages disappear along with their vocal supporter, Prema, and in the last, the reticent Ravi, unacknowledged and unheard, disappears into oblivion. The importance of beauty and the problem of which aspect of the past deserves to be saved for future generations permeate this collection. How aesthetic sensibilities should be

preserved is the leitmotif. As Desai explores these ideas in pensive prose, her concern for rescuing art and culture prevails.

As mentioned earlier, *The Artist of Disappearance* consists of three long stories, stories of this length deserve to be rated independently. The first piece of the collection, *'The Museum of Final Journeys'* is narrated by a bitter, newly appointed young civil servant posted at some 'benighted hinterland' of Bengal. The narrator is a young unmarried officer, therefore a highly eligible bachelor, who is currently on a training stint in a remote outpost. He has taken the posting only to please his careerist father who retired from this very service. He spends his day listening to the tedious disputes of local citizens, getting amply and thoroughly bored:

> Every morning I went to court, a crumbling structure of red brick that stood in a field where cattle grazed and washer men spread their washing, and there I sat at a desk on a slightly raised platform to hear the cases brought before me. These had chiefly to do with disputes over property. (8)

Apart from these, he attends to urgent matters like power and water supplies, road traffic, police, communications, security, trade and industry. In a nutshell, he leads a dreary existence.

So, when the only remaining retainer of the largest estate of the area totters in to see him, with tales of a secret museum belonging to the erstwhile influential Mukherjee family in whose service he has grown old, the narrator is hugely disinterested. Nonetheless, no sooner does he implore to help in preserving a preposterous and incredible collection of oriental curios accumulated by the heir of the family, Jiban Mukherjee, during his sojourns in Burma, Cambodia, the Philippines, China and Japan (and who has now vanished), the sub-divisional officer welcomes the diversion. The old man tells him that as all the valuable artifacts had to be accommodated properly, Jiban's widowed mother, Srimati Sarita Devi, decided to build a museum, though he was reluctant for this venture:

> Only I was perturbed: I did not see the use of such things. They were objects of beauty and interest, but what was the use of collecting them? I could not see, but Srimati Sarita Devi did. She told me, "Bijan, we are creating a great museum. My son's collection is forming a museum that people will hear about all over our land and will come from far to see. (21)

When asked about the genesis of this novella, Desai recounts a

recent trip to Venice:

> The whole idea came to me while walking through the museum of Oriental Art because it was an odd collection, put together by an Italian aristocrat who traveled in the East and sent back all these art objects to his home. I thought what a perfect story it made. And the very first thought I had was that I would situate (the novella) in Venice, but it would have taken a lot of research . . . and I didn't want to do that, so I set in India, remembering an experience I'd had long, long ago as a very young woman, staying with my sister, a civil servant. She used to sometime take me with her through the backwater of Bengal and there used to be these old mansions crumbling away in ruins, standing there in isolation in the fields, so that seemed to be a good fit for the museum I had in mind. (www.publishersweekly.com.)

At the outset, Desai portrays the solitary and isolated life of young bureaucrats, immersed in mundane officialdom having little or no time to indulge in intricacies of art and beauty. The next few pages are dominated with the theme of the preservation of art and beauty, which commences with the caretaker of the museum inviting the young administrator to pay a visit to the museum with the expectation to convince him for assistance. The plea of the old man to restore the crumbling palace, collection of treasures and the museum that contain into themselves the richness of art and beauty of the Far East is similar to the Gothic atmosphere of horror and dread, portraying the deterioration of its world. The old servant had to sell off furniture to create and maintain the museum for the stuffed animals and birds, miniature paintings from Persia and the Mughal Empire and antique weapons of war among other things. The narrator agrees to visit the museum. The abandoned museum turns out to be an overwhelming display of riches, but it is also an indication of some deep-seated anger or even madness. :

> No hand had touched them since they were framed and hung. There were no visitor to admire them, just the old caretaker who seemed more proud than knowledgeable and I could say nothing but 'Ah!' and 'Ahh!' (30)

The narrator observes the stillness and stability of each and every object of the museum:

> A chamber of clocks where no sand seeped through the hourglasses, water had long since evaporated from the clepsydras, bells were stilled, cuckoos silenced, dancing figures paralyzed. Time halted, waiting for a magician to start it again. (34)

Desai's vivid description of the artistic and beautiful elements of the museum reminds us of Keats, the great poet, a passionate lover of beauty in all its forms and manifestations.

During the visit of the amazing museum the bureaucrat finds chamber after chamber full of gorgeously rich rugs, "plum, wine mulberry and pomegranate", that only in close-up show "what the imperial colours concealed". Later rooms contained exquisite miniatures from Persia, Turkey, Afghanistan Morocco and Kashmir, obscured by dusty glasses, silk gowns, fans, scrolls and finally Jiban's last present - a live elephant, hungrily eating, it was the last of the family's wealth. For the old man to maintain this gift was the most difficult task. To keep the pachyderm alive, he urgently needs official benevolence in the form of funds.

Will the young administrator, overloaded with official duties, rescue this strange museum or will he be unconcerned with its decline? As he considers what to do, the story suddenly jumps forward, midsentence, to the civil servant looking back many years later, with detachment, without indicating as to what happened to the fate of the precious museum. The story ends in a mystery.

The next novella, *'Translator Translated'*, is more complicated and modern though it opens with a similarly embittered writer as the central character. *Translator Translated* is an example of another of Desai's preferred themes: literary and academic politics, which was also the subject of *In Custody,* a 1984 novel, later made into a Merchant Ivory film. *In Custody* is Desai's ironic story about literary traditions and academic illusions. The central characters of the novel are Nur, an Urdu poet and Deven, a professor of Hindi, the later realizes that his beloved poet is not the magical genius he has imagined. Prema Joshi, the central character of the novella, is a prematurely aged instructor of English literature at a girls' college who considers herself as, "A tired woman going home from work with nothing to look forward to, nothing to smile about. Why ever did I imagine I was different and could live different from them ?". (90) Prema, having roots in Orissa, in Eastern India, is a woman of humble origins who gets university education, and then serves as an English literature teacher valuing the language of her childhood, Oriya. Though

Desai is a celebrated writer of English she does not belittle the significance of regional languages of various parts of India. Asked about writing in English, Desai says, "Most of the books that were around us were English books . . . so that was always the literary language to me but," she adds, "I was very frustrated at not being able to write in more than one language. My (written) Hindi simply was not good enough". (www.Publishers.com). Prema searches for her roots by relearning her childhood language and visiting the remote region where it is still spoken. Prema happens to meet her old classmate Tara, the brightest and the most popular student of the school, who owns a feminist publishing house now. During a brief conversation, Tara confides an idea moving in her mind to Prema:

> I am thinking of starting a new division of my publishing house. We've published texts in English, you see, but I want to branch into translations now, and publish writers well known in their own regions but unknown outside which is such a shame. (47)

Tara's idea of translating the works of regional writers into English sets Prema off on a new project: translating the published works of an Oriya writer, Suverna Devi, into English. The Oriyas are unassuming people slowly being assimilated into English-speaking life, and books by their writers are symbols of strength and values of their culture. Prema, a lonely woman with few friends, throws herself passionately into her work.

Ignoring all criticism, Prema endeavours to reinvent herself as a translator, editor and even author, her energies are consumed by her efforts to catch up with a contemporary who has always seemed so far beyond her. Desai quietly, relentlessly exposes the longing of an unpretentious woman at the fag end of life, trying to renew it by readdressing a perceived early injustice. Happiness for Prema is not just seeing her name on a published book, "Prema Joshi, translator", it is also visiting Tara, whom she greatly admires, in her office to chat about future projects as equals. By this project of translation, she finds a way to pursue her long-cherished passion, which has been close to her mind and heart:

> She realized that all she had needed was this opportunity, this invitation held out to her - by Tara, of all people - to discover her true vocation. It was surely the right one since it had given her their new-found ease, and speed

delight. (64)

The assignment, casually offered by a busy high profiled professional, nevertheless transforms Prema's drab life. She quickly moves from writing a dutiful translation to fantasying about her vastly expanded role. She says:

> Selecting, recognizing, acknowledging. I was only the conduit, the medium between that language and this- but I was the one doing the selecting, the discriminating, and I was the only one who could; the writer herself could not. (60)

Prema who nurtures a deep adoration for the novelist, concludes with satisfaction that the act of translation has brought the two women closer "as if we were sisters". But it is characteristic of these melancholic, minor-key novellas that such contentment is short-lived. In excitement over her perceived collaboration, Prema breaks the translator's trust by taking too many liberties with the established author's work. Prema starts editing Suverna Devi radically as she translates, increasing the emotional crescendo, changing "red" to "crimson" and "anger" to "rage". The outcome is an odd, darkly comic parable of cultural imperialism. The author's family fumes and complains while the publisher drops Prema from her life suddenly. Facing criticism, she returns in defeat to her previously held post at the insignificant college, her real passion crushed totally. Here she resembles Deven, the hero of *In Custody,* who also proves to be a fiasco in a venture of taking an interview of the Urdu poet, Nur. He, like Prema, devotes his time and might to this task and works hard but ultimately achieves nothing but a cipher.

The focus in '*Translator Translated*' is the hierarchy that separates the writer and the translator, with the latter clearly being in an inferior position and frustrated by it, and the consequence the translator faces on violating that prescribed order. Desai also uses the novella for satiric purpose perhaps to extract vengeance on some literary nationalist in India; at one point Prema and her publisher attended a conference where they are hectored by "a pudgy man in a sweat stained shirt"(76) who imperiously demands to know, "what made you decide to translate these stories into a colonial language that was responsible for destroying the original language?"(77).

Perhaps the reason was to spread works of regional languages among the wider range of public even among English readers, which would rescue these writers and their works from anonymity. At her finest, Desai is a matchless anatomist of people like Prema — the individuals who desire, achieve but unfortunately fail to triumph. Prema feels estranged and isolated because she is pressurized by the growing consumerism, where financial benefits and fame are all in all. In such a materialistic, industrial society, the degeneration of traditional arts and the degradation of artists are inevitable as in the end Prema disappears in disillusionment and disappointment.

The final novella, which gives the title to the book, *The Artist of Disappearance,* is marked by even more surprising shifts in focus, as Desai pushes on the constraints of the novella. As in the first two, the readers find again an inaccessible work of art in an enchanted bower in the mountains created and nurtured by a hermit. Set in scenic Mussoorie, a resort in the Himalayan foothills, the story unfolds nostalgically as it happens to be the place where Desai was born in 1937 to a Bengali businessman and a German expatriate. The main character is Ravi, a wild creature from the mountains, similar to Kipling's Mowgli, the adopted son of an affluent couple with high profile pretensions that have been rudely batted down, who returns to his foster parents' stately and aristocratic hilltop mansion after a sojourn in Bombay achieving nothing but isolation. The theme of alienation, so spontaneous to Desai, that she employs it in almost all of her novels, is recurrent and pervasive, without assuming sociological or even philosophical undercurrents.

Desai endeavours to touch upon Ravi's childhood displaying how brilliantly she intuits the cause of self-isolation in early age. A dismal and disturbing situation arises when the child gets aware of his parents' open hostility and indifferent attitude towards him. Several of Desai's protagonists have insensitive parents incapable of raising their wards to grow into mature, balanced adults. Ravi feels suffocated in his parents' company. For him:

> To be released from school meant only being released into the house where the parents now preside . . . . The house, in their presence, had a set of rigid rules. The bell rang at intervals, punctually (punctuality being one

cardinal mark of their Westernized way) table manners had to be observed meticulously, . . . , and great length of time went by at the table as soup was followed by an entree which was followed by a pudding which was followed by a savoury, some with enticing names - 'angels on horseback'! - which they never lived up to. (108)

Like Nanda Kaul in Desai's *Fire on the Mountain*, Ravi also grows up in a hill station. Being alienated from the family he eventually eschews the professional life his parents have planned for him. Instead he chooses bewitching solitude among natural environs of the secluded hill-resort of the Himalayas — a place under the looming threat of capitalist development. He sets off in search of peace in nature's lap and its beauty. He has learned to find solace in nature, "to be silent, aware, observe and perceive". Even after the parental mansion burns down, he prefers to live in its ruins to pursue his hobby of creating a private garden in a hidden glade. His solipsistic existence is shattered when a film crew arrives, keen to make a documentary about the environmental degradation taking about in a modernizing, industrializing India.

His arduous mission in creating complex patterns of plants and pigeon coloured stones in a glade hidden behind a rock symbolizing the essence of beauty is revealed. The director (another failed artist) on accidentally stumbling upon Ravi's glade instinctively grasps that it "contained the essence (of the Himalaya) . . . as one glittering bee . . . might contain an entire season" (155); and decides to film that; yet his first thought is to interview its creator. Ravi responds by fleeing further into ambiguity to remain incognito. That is when the crew decides that the glade, without the artist, "is dead, a dead loss": only a potential celebrity's creation could make headlines. As the crew gives up on locating the disappeared artist, there are a series of shattering echoes of mining explosions, and members reveal their venality by a jubilant cry: "That is what we need for a finish" (156)!

A welcome glint of hope emerges in *'The Artist of Disappearance'* when Ravi finds a new means of expression after his magnum opus is tarnished by the T.V. crew. He begins to create tiny rock gardens in matchboxes, each one a glittering little universe. The best part is they would remain unsoiled in his company as no one

would get a glimpse of the tiny marvels. This small triumph is an exception; usually reveries are rudely interrupted by cacophonous failures. At least Ravi tries to find and succeeds in another source of art, nature and beauty, to derive solace. However, this juxtaposition of the artistic and the industrial seems surprisingly unusual, coming from a writer of Desai's subtle sensitivity.

The three novellas concentrating on artistic beauty are having characters that collect and neglect art, bureaucrats who fail to support it, critics and publishers who cluster round the edges, their restless jostling, defiling and erasing its outlines. Summing up, Desai in her final novella stresses upon the secret part of human beings that can create no matter how wretched circumstances be, a precious gift that sails through the roaring, vacuous now of the 21st century India.

Thus Desai brings her brilliant commentary on contemporary art to its logical conclusion. Under capitalism, aesthetic cravings are built up, relished, then destroyed, though "every one of us . . . has had a moment when a window opened, when we caught a glimpse of the open, sunlit world beyond"(90) Only a few are not swayed, like Suverna Devi and Ravi — Desai's last true artists —, still content in obscurity, envisaging a tiny oeuvre in a matchbox.

WORKS CITED

Bande, Usha. "Childhood in Anita Desai's Novels: A Psychological Interpretation." *Indian Women Novelists*: Set. 1, Vol. 11. Ed. R.K. Dhawan. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1991.

Belliappa, Meena. *Anita Desai: A Study of Her Fiction*. Calcutta: Writers Workshop, 1971.

Desai, Anita. *The Artist of Disappearance*. Noida: Random House, 2011.

Prasad, Amar Nath. *Indian Novelists in English: Critical Perspective*. New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2000.

Silverberg, Robert. *Sailing to Byzantium*. New York: I Books, inc., 2000. *The Book Interview: Anita Desai* by Sophie Elmhirst, http://www.newstatesman.com/books/2011/08/india-english-writing-colonial.

www.umn.edu.com.

www.nreinternet.com.

www.writers.com.anita-desai/search.html.

www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/authors/profiles/article/49609-anita-desai-telling-stories.html.

THE LITERARY FESTIVAL OF 2012 WITHIN SALMAN RUSHDIE'S COSMIC VISION

O.P. Mathur

The heading of the essay may appear to be somewhat incongruous, consisting of a reference to a real event coupled with an abstract idea. But both are deeply interconnected, as we shall see. The Jaipur Literary Festival, an important international event, held in 2007 with great success was attended by Salman Rushdie and many other important writers and critics. But in 2012, the same festival, though well attended like that of 2007, was darkened by the treatment meted out to Salman Rushdie who was not allowed to attend and address the gathering but also not allowed to speak on the DVD tele-screen because those who objected declared that they did not want even to his face on the screen. Unlike 2007, which too was an election year, Rushdie was treated so boorishly in 2012, because some politicians had apparently decided to make his *Satanic Verses* an old book, first partially banned in India and followed by the Islamic countries and Ayatollah Khamenei of Iran declared a Fatwa on his life, withdrawn after a few years. Then Rushdie was free to travel wherever he liked, including India where he was born in 1947 in Bombay. He, therefore, loved the country so much that he based on it his novel *Midnight's Children*[1], an instant Booker Award Winner.

That old controversy long dead, about *Satanic Verses* was dug out and made a pretext for the large Muslim community which generally voted *an masse* in elections and so was treated as a 'Vote Bank' by politicians. In this case one can only guess that the party in power wanted to win the election which was going to be held in India's largest state, though it was not so in 2003 when these elections were held properly, because the party in power in the state was of a different complexion and the Festival of 2007 passed off peacefully with Salman Rushdie attending it. But in 2012 he was not allowed to speak even though DVD tele-link, because a vocally active group declared that they did not want even to see Rushdie's face on the screen at the threat of creating violence among the audience.

But after the dust had settled, the Home Minister came out with a statement that "nobody in the government prevented the author from attending the Jaipur Literary Festival and it was the organizers who cancelled the programme." He added that in fact the Rajasthan police had said, "go ahead and have a video-link", further innocently asking why the proposed link was cancelled[2]. He was surprisingly unaware of the fact that the Rajasthan Police had reported the damage of large scale violence in case of DVD link. In fact Ram Pal Singh, owner of the venue had also said about a week before the Home Minister made his innocent query, as if the Police can say one thing and the government another. The Press had reported as early as 25 January that "the police had entered the venue to 'disrupt proceedings' and cause violence. We had no other way but to save the people here, our children and everyone". The owner of the venue also said that they had decided not to allow this tele-link to go ahead on the advice of the Rajasthan Police who are monitoring the situation"[3]. What else could the organizer of the conference do but to cancel it and inform the Assistant Commissioner of Police Virendra Jha who only heard them but gave not the least assurance that in spite of the protestors, the police would maintain law and order, which is its primary duty.

Salman Rushdie himself, after making his private inquiries declared that "Rajasthan Police invented the plot to keep away Rushdie. I've investigated, and believe that I was indeed lied so. I am outraged and very angry."[4] He was more explicit of his feelings in an interview with NDTV:

> And now I find an India in which religious extremists can prevent free expression of ideas at a literary festival, in which the politicians are let's say in bed with these groups... for narrow electoral reasons, in which the police forces are unable to secure venues against demonstrators when they know the demonstration is on its way.[5]

The 'Vote Bank' politics of the Rushdue episode discussed above seems to be quickly acquiring a new shape. The so-called 'All India Minority Forum' which made the Kolkata police to arm-twist the organizers of the launching of the ceremony on February 1, 2012 of even an unread book *Ninbasan*, by Taslima Nasrin, the well known writer of *Lajja,* a realistic account of the Hindu-Muslim

riots in East Bengal (now Bangladesh), living in India as an exile and publishing other books. The 'Minority Forum' also disturbed the small-scale launching of the book by the publishers at their own stall. The irony of it, as pointed out by the author herself, was that the book was successfully released in Dhaka, in a Muslim majority state but not in Kolkata in India, a Muslim minority country. This irony is pregnant with the possible future possibilities which, in spite of a few liberal Muslims, may lead to the growth of the monster of Minorityism leading to the fragmentation of Indian society and what other consequences, you never can tell. From Rushdie to Nasrin so soon. What next, and when, if at all – it is a million dollar question. The next Literary Festival is likely to be held in 2017 which again will be an election year and the Literary Festival may in anticipation of what might happen, may be shifted to some other safer place in India or elsewhere, considerably bringing down India's international status.

But the Rushdie 'out' of the Literary Festival, but in a broader academic world Rushdie is 'in', for the 'scapegoat' was not only always in the minds of those at the Festival but also beyond it, and his *Satanic Verses*, like other banned books, is probably 'privately' read by many more people either by procuring its pilfered copies or at least on the computer. Rushdie's work has really won a wider readership and a deeper sympathy as a lover of pluralistic India in his works like *Midnight Children, Shame*[6] and *Shalimar the Clown*[7] as also in his non-fictional work *Imaginary Homelands*[8]. In *Shame* he shows Pakistan, the 'tainted twin' of Indian, as an object of derisive laughter and condemnation, while in *Shalimar the Clown*, he punctures the image of an amultivalent terrorist as one with personal concerns along with terrorism. In *Imaginary Homelands* he portrays Muqaddam (after 'Muqaddar', i.e. Fate) as an ideal future for India, being "such a super-citizen that he was almost too good to be true. Muqaddas is absolutely dedicated to the unity of India. Is he a product of wishful thinking or a prophecy? Only time can tell.

In *Midnight's Children* there are a number of characters representing the plurality of the nation submerging all castes, creeds and regions. Starting with two Kashmiri Indians, one of whom sacrifices

his life while opposing the Pakistani army so as to keep the state united. The most noble of them is Amina (named after 'Aman' or peace) who is prepared to sacrifice her life, along with that of her unborn child, to protect Lifafa Das, a Hindu peepshowman who symbolizes in his name 'Lifafa' (envelope) the togetherness of different faiths, castes and regions. In his profession he displays on one moving screen in a box the variety of Indian life and land.

Rushdie himself clearly calls India a "collective dream", a term which he makes more explicitly by saying, "My India has always been based on ideas of multiplicity, pluralism, hybridity..." "a land that is greater than the sum of its contradictions" and that "we wear the dust of history on our foreheads and the mud of the future on our feet." It is to be noticed that by using the pronoun 'we' he regards himself as one of the Indians even by openly declaring, "India is in my blood. That's where I am from. I don't have the option to reject it.

The remarkable interface between the author and the narrator-protagonist of *Midnight Children* starting with Saleem's "map-face and the country's geography (pp. 144-45), passing on to his nativity with a Hindu mother, seduced by an Englishman (p. 109), with the possible exchange with a Christian infant by the Christian nurse and brought up in a Muslim family is a symbol of the national flag with the green quietly becoming noticeable, for it underlies and brings up the others. But there are 1001 others, born around the same fateful hour and always thought of as members of a conference, with Saleem as their leader, seen to represent the plurality of a nation submerging creeds and castes which is the real 'meaning' of new-born nation.

The historical time in the novel moves on through the other fateful midnight of the Emergency[9] represented in Aadam Aziz, the son of Saleem in reality, but suggestively of Shiva (the son of Saleem and also a Hindu god) and Parvati (in 'mythological reality'). He is another 'Ganesh'[10], with large ears but refusing to speak (because of the mythological elephant trunk with the message 'hear everything but speak nothing'.

Bristling with a knowledge of Hindu mythology, vaster and eeper than that of many Hindus themselves and also later strengthened

by the advancing steps of science, Rushdie makes his *Midnight's Children* not only a symbol of the plurality of India, but in it he also suggests, after the ancient Indian scriptures, the multiety of the whole creation – Time as Brahma's time, consisting of one day (i.e. ten times 'Mahayugas', each consisting of many phases of 'Kaliyugas'. This huge vastness of time is now being also suggested by scientific researchers, one of which, as reported in the press, foretells that as a result of a tremendous collision the American continent will be permanently joined with the Asian, making one vast continent of 'Amesia', not in our life-time but only 200 million years from now, just a wink of an eyelid in Brahma's 'Mahayuga'. Scientific researches in space also have gone very far. They see no end of space, containing many solar systems peopled with living beings, different from, and possibly better than, those on our earth.

Placed against the vast backdrop of Time, in the calendar of Brahma our Kaliyuga

> began on Friday, February 18th, B.C., and will last a more 4,32,000 years. Already feeling somewhat dwarfed, I should add nevertheless that the size of Darkness is only the fourth phase of the present Mahayuga cycle, which is, in total, ten times as long, and when you consider that it takes a thousand Moha yuga to make just one day of Brahma, you'll see what I mean about proportion. (*Midnight Children*, p. 233).

The process of creativity goes on and on[12] even as far as life is concerned, leaving aside those remote planets, even in our own India on this earth, Rushdie has visualized 1001 children born at or around only one fateful midnight. How many millions of potential human lives can be contained in one jar of spermatozoa? We may be talking of billions of men and women, each with a potentiality of reproduction. The Hindu scriptures also seem to connect the concepts of Time and Space, as Einstein's theory of Relativity does. Rushdie also seems to suggest that the two concepts, instead of being different from each other, are surprisingly interconnected reaching what has been called 'Planck limit beyond which strings of particles or quarks cannot go, and which at present is said to be source of everything'[11], and hence can possibly be called the 'God particle'.

Coming back to life on our own earth, Rushdie has in *Midnight Children* imagined 1001 children born at or around the historical midnight of 15th August 1947. In addition to the population on our earth, the other planets in the universe also possibly consist of innumerably human-like beings capable of reproduction. Even the children of that fateful midnight, if existing in an indefinite number indicated by the figure 1001, may be living in their own worlds like ours which Rushdie has portrayed in his own works. All this is in addition to the population of India, in fact of the whole earth, may be roughly estimated as being possibly much more than the number of spermatozoa contained in a big jar. He says that "there are 40 million lives of which I have selected this line."[12].

This multiety of mankind placed against all the other similar living beings in the universe can be more than equalled by that Time as referred to by Rushdie, roughly following the Indian scriptures as 'Kaliyuga' and 'Mahayuga'. In this mind-boggling Indian concept of time as prophesied by geologists, in the uninterrupted process of creativity (probably including destruction), sending "again and again all this multitude of beings".[13]

It is neither possible nor necessary to give the calculations of the length of 'everlasting' day of Brahma in Hindu scriptures which perhaps seem to connect Space and Time, as Einstein's theory of Relativity does. Salman Rushdie points out the reaches of human mind in both the spheres of science and mythology seem to suggest that both in their different ways arrive at the concepts of time and space, far from being opposed to each other, are surprisingly interconnected. D. Riemschneider rightly observes that Rushdie

> shows how close he is to the Indian philosophical tradition by using moral and philosophical issues as well as different modes of perception of the world, by rejecting the belief of man's ability to write and think objectively about history, he demonstrates that reality can only be grasped through myth or literature.[14]

The thirtyfirst jar of Rushdie's 'chutnification' which he in *Midnight Children* leaves empty is a resounding symbol of the innumerably possibilities of suggestions of various types. In addition to countable lives there are Eternity and Infinity where mythology of the past and scientific researches of the future seem to coalesce as we have seen.

It was necessary to point to the vastness of time and space so well embodied in Salman Rushdie's vision which not only unites mankind but also the whole universe existing in both space and time so as to dwarf into petty specks the objectives, utterances and happenings at the Jaipur Literary Festival of 2012, for which *Midnight Children* alone written by the renowned novelist Salman Rushdie, deeply humiliated by the governing powers overseeing the Festival, is a fitting chastisement, only if the politicians can read and understand it.

Perhaps the educational authorities would be well advised to recommend *Midnight's Children* (suitably abbreviated and translated into major Indian schools) for aspiring politicians, along with an anthology containing teachings from major religious books of India giving exhortations for human brotherhood, compassion, peace, freedom and unity as a compulsory text-book for all Indian scholars. All this would be a fitting consummation of the Rushdie episode in the Literary Festival.

REFERENCES

[1]Salman Rushdie. *Midnight Children*. New York: Avon Books, 1980. All references to this book are from this edition and have been absorbed in the text of the essay.

[2]*The Times of India* (later referred to in this essay as 'T.O.I.') 2-2-12, p. 7.

[3]'T.O.I.', 25-1-12, p. 7.

[4]*Ibid.*

[5]'T.O.I.', 26-1-12, p. 9.

[6]Salman Rushdie. *Shame*. New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 1983.

[7]Salman Rushdie. *Shalimar the Clown*. London: Jonathan Cape, 2005.

[8]Salman Rushdie. *Imaginary Homelands*. London: Granta Books, 1981. Published in India in association with Penguin Books, 1981.

[9]The presentation of the Emergency has been discussed in greater detail in O.P. Mathur's *Indira Gandhi and the Emergency as Viewed in the Indian Novel*, New Delhi, Sarup and Sons, 2003.

[10]*Midnight Children,* p. 264.

[11]'Cosmic Uplink' in *The Economic Times*, 14-2-2012, p. 10.

According to the Internet, "Any detection instrument must also abide by the Planck limit. So even if it were possible for light to propagate Maxlimit no real instrument would possibly detect it" ('Limits to the Universe', www... newton.

dep. one. gov/ askasal/phyoo/ phy 00199. ptn.).

[12]Quoted by V.V. Subba Rao. 'Salman Rushdie's *Midnight Children*: A Study'. Note no. 3. *The Indian Journal of English Studies*, IAES, Vol. XXXII, 1993-94, p. 93.

[13]*The Bhagwadgita* (ed. S. Radhakrishnan). New Delhi: Harper Collins, 1973, Ch. IX, Verses 8 and 10.

[14]Quoted by Joseph Swain in his 'Salman Rushdie's *Midnight Children* as an Indian Novel' in Vinay Kirpal (ed.), *the New Indian Novel in English*, New Delhi, Allied, 1990, p. 260.

Note: I would like to mention that at a few places in this essay, where very necessary, I have used some material, specially from the essay "Salman Rushdie's *Midnight Children* and the Bedrock of Indianness", though not much, from my own book (of which I hold the copyright) *Post 1947 Indian English Novel: Major Concerns* (published by Sarup Book Publishers, 4740/23, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi in 2010).

CONTRAPUNTAL READING OF A.K. RAMANUJAN'S FIVE POEMS

Bijay Kumar Das

Reading of postcolonial literature has fallen into rough weather because of the development of plethora of theories in the closing decades of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first century. Postcolonialism is torn between colonialism and neo-colonialism represented by political and economic imperialism respectively. The empire writes back and the empire strikes back brought the dichotomy between Orientalism and Occidentalism into the open. If the former colonizers think that the colonized are marginals and hark on the point of centre/periphery binaries, the writers from the former colonies reject it by writing alternative histories and highlighting their indigenous culture through literature. African writers, Australian writers, Indian writers, Newzealand writers and West Indies writers assert their national identity through their writings. Since a number of leading writers from these countries now like in UK or USA, they seek to maintain a balance between the past and the present. Chinua Achebe, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, Michel Ondaatje, Derek Walcott, Salman Rushdie, A.K.Ramanujan and a host of other writers belong to this category.

A.K.Ramanujan, who lived and taught in Chicago for a long time does not indulge in West bashing. On the contrary he re-discovered Indian literary tradition by living in the West. In course of his interviews he makes his stand clear. Speaking to A.L.Becker, Ramanujan clarifies:

> English has distorted our traditions, but it has also made us look at our traditions. It's not enough to say that it is all colonialism and has done nothing but distort. This whole question of colonial distortion has been formulated in English. It requires a dialogue with English. English has been the 'other' through which we have returned to ourselves. English has become a part of us. To say we want to return to a pre-English state is chimerical. The anti-colonial discourse is all done in English. Nobody's writing this is Kannada. In India, there is a wonderful group of new historians called the Subalterns who are looking at all the distortion of the colonial intellectual practices. But all their work is done in English. Isn't the English in which they are writing distorting what they are writing about? English has made us self-critical and made us critical of English itself (*Uncollected Poems and Prose* 79).

In course of the same interview to Becker and Taylor, Ramanujan asserts that he has done a lot of work on India after he left the country. That is why he does not call himself an expatriate.

> I don't even call myself an expatriate, because I've done a lot of work on India since coming to this country. I've done it more comfortably here than I could even have done it in India. For instance, in the Chicago Regenstein Library, there are books in Kannada and Tamil which probably only I will read. It's a great library that is more or less only for a couple of people like me. When I went to Delhi – I was working on some classical Tamil poems – I had to go for miles to fine a classical Tamil book.
>
> And the other interesting thing is that once can be an internal alien in India, as one goes from one province to another. I have not lived in my own language region since my 20th year. If you go a hundred miles away, you are in a language that you cannot read or speak (*Uncollected Poems and Prose* 52-53)

A bilingual poet and a trilingual translator with rich learning like T.S.Eliot, Ramanujan assimilates his knowledge with his creative writing. He writes with Kannada, Tamil and English in his bones. What is more is that he enriches his poetry with anecdotes from Indian myths and folklore. In an interview to K.Ayyappa Paniker he stated:

> I am constantly preoccupied with Indian folktales, Indian customs, all kinds of things. An they are, as I was saying, my repertoire, all my experiences, in the Kannada language or Tamil, and all the rest of it (*Indian Literature* 175-176)

Ramanujan's collections of poems include *Striders* (1966), *Relations* (1971), *Selected Poems* (1976), *Second Sight* (1986), *The Black Hen* (1995), *The Collected Poems of A.K.Ramanujans* (1995) and *Uncollected Poems and Prose* (2001). His poems have variety in, theme and style. There can be various approaches to his poetry. Let us make a contrapuntal reading of his five poems. "A River", "The Black Hen", "On the Death of a Poem", "No Fifth Man" and "Children, Dreams, Theorems", which bear the similar themes of art of writing poems.

Edward Said used the term, 'contrapunctal reading' in his well known book, *Culture and Imperialism* with reference to some of the English texts written about colonialism and imperialism. He writes:

:As we look back at the cultural archive, we begin to reread it not univocally but contrapunctally, with a simultaneous awareness both of metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which the dominating discourse acts (59).

The term 'contrapunctal reading' has its origin in music. It "suggests a responsive reading that provides a counterpoint to the text" (Aschroft et al 55). Providing an alternative reading to the text, contrapunctal reading highlights points and counter points in the text. I have chosen the above mentioned five well known poems for contrapunctal reading on the basis of similarity of themes. Let us begin with, "A River".

"A River" is written in the ironic mode. Ramanujan takes a dig at the practicing poets who merely imitate and quote old generation poets. A poet has to move with the contemporary world for his survival. The surface meaning of the poem is apparently simple. The river in question is Vaikai which flows near Madurai (Chennai), 'City of temples of poets'. The river dries up in summer but when it floods it attracts the attention of the poets cutting a cross generation. Like Wordsworth they only see the beautiful aspect of Nature (here, it is river) but tend to overlook the havoc caused by the flood.

At the deep level, contrapuntal reading of the poem suggests the counter point. Ramanujan relapses into ironic mode to drive home two important points : one, new poets have become imitative and derivative of old poets in singing the praise of river in spate, and two, the damage done to human beings as well as animals has been overlooked. When the flood carried away, 'a couple of cows/named Gopi and Brinda/and one pregnant woman/excepting identical twins', 'the poets sang only of floods' (*The Collected Poems* 39). The implied criticism of the poets for their inability to see into reality makes the poem contemporary.

"The Black Hen" is an oblique poem marked by allusions to John Keats and W.B.Yeats. Poetry like love comes either spontaneously or making an effort for it. If Keats lays emphasis on the spontaneity of poems coming as naturally as leaves to trees in Spring season, Yeats reiterates on the efforts of making a poem 'sitch by stich'. This poem reminds us of Ted Hughes's "Thought-

Fox' in which Hugues makes use of an animal imagery in the form of a fox, a cunning animal, elusive in its movements to show how 'the page is printed' in the end. If Huges imagines the fox, a creative force entering into the loneliness that generates the poem, Ramanujan takes the black hen and her eye movement as the driving creative force for the birth of a poem. Poetry, for Ramanujan "comes sometimes / as the black hen/ with the round eye / on the embroidery / stich by stich / droppd and found again" (*The Collected Poems* 195). Finally, the poem like 'the black hen stares / with its round red eye' and poet gets started.

Like Eliot and Ezra Pound, Ramanujan works meticulously on images in his poetry. As an imagist poet, Ramanujan organizes images one by one into harmony in his poetry. "On the Death of a Poem" images are likened to a jury to pronounce the judgement. As the 'conscience stricken jury' pronounces his judgement, so the images finally yield to a poem. But if the imagery is not worked out properly it would lead to the Death of a Poem. The readers will perceive it.

"No Fifth Man" is based on a Sanskrit parable in which five Brahmins went 'abroad to learn all the sixty four arts'. When they came back and met 'the woods outside / their town' they tried to show their learning. If one could assemble the dead parts of a tiger by assembling the skeleton, another supplies the inner parts – liver, lungs, arteries – the third, makes it look like a tiger by giving it a skin.

The fourth brahman who 'knew how to breathe life into it' was warned by the fifth man not to do so. Disregarding his warning when the fourth brahman 'chanted a mantra/gave the tigress life', she pounced on him and other three brahmans and 'killed them all'. Only the fifth brahman who 'climbed up a tree in a hurry' was saved. At the surface level the poem underlines the importance of commonsense in life but at the deep level the poem has a significant meaning. If poetry is 'thought-fox' for Ted Hughes, it is a 'tigress' for Ramanujan. A poem engulfs the poet, and takes away his breath. When the poet is possessed by a poem, he does not write it, the poem gets written. It bears resemblances to Nissim Ezekiel's

'Poet, Lover, Bird Watcher' where the poet, the lover and the bird watcher, all three gain by waiting.

In "Children, Dreams, Theorems", Ramanujan brings out the resemblances among 'Children', 'Dreams' and 'Theorems'. All these three get lost if not held close to the heart of the poet. If children need caressing and dreams live in memory, theorems are kept alive by working on them. Poems need constant working on them through revision. Ramanujan writes:

> poems like my father's midnight
> theorems get lost if you do not
> talk to them ... (*Uncollected Poems and Prose* 12)

Poems need revision. The more you work on them the more polished they become. This brings to our mind Paul Valrey theory, 'A poem is never complete, it is abandoned'. Ramanujan believes in working on a poem. Ramanujan seems to say that poems are not born but made and that explains his method of writing poetry. For him image is the idea. 'Identical twins' in "A River" are distinguished not by 'moles on their bodies' but 'with different coloured diapers'. In "The Black Hen", the black hen 'stares with its read round eye' suggesting violence which leads to creation. Ramanujan excels in depicting visual images and his poetry moves between visual images and realistic perceptions of the contemporary world, giving rise to points and counter points. Hence, contrapuntal reading unfolds new meanings in Ramanujan's poetry.

WORKS CITED

Afterwords : "Ayyappa Paniker in Conversation with A.K.Ramanujan." *Indian Literature.* 53:6 (2009): 171-187. Print.

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts.* London: Routledge, 2000 rpt. 2004. Print.

Becker, A.L. and Keith Taylor. "Interview Two" (interviewed A.K. Ramanujan). *Uncollected Poems and Prose.* Ed. Molly Daniels – Ramanujan and Keith Harrison. New Delhi: OUP, 2001: 52-79. Print.

Ramanujan, A.K. *The Collected Poems of A.K. Ramanujan.* New Delhi: OUP, 1995 rpt. 1998. Print.

———. *Uncollected Poems and Prose.* Ed. Molly Daniels – Ramanujan and Keith Harrison. New Delhi: OUP, 2001 rpt. 2005. Print.

Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism.* London: Vintage, 1994. Print.

TALE-DANDA: CASTE, GENDER AND THE QUESTION OF MARGINALITY

Ajay Kumar Shukla

Girish Karnad is a playwright, poet, actor, director, critic, translator, and cultural administrator, all rolled into one. His plays are composed in his adopted language i.e., Kannada (his mother tongue was Konkani) and then translated them into English – a language of his adulthood. Conflicting ideologies, political freedom of India, and modernity versus indigenous traditions supplied the specific backdrop to his plays. During his formative years, Karnad went through diverse influences that went a long way into shaping his dramatic taste and genius. The earliest influence was that of the Natak Company that was in vogue in Sirsi. The Yakshagana plays which he used to see with the servants also appealed to him by their buffoonery and horse play. But the greater influence came from the realistic drama of Henrik Ibsen and that of G.B.Shaw. The influence of Kannada drama was also deep on him. He was exposed to a literary scene where there was a direct clash between western and native tradition. It was India of the 1950s and 1960s that surfaced two streams of thought in all walks of life – adoption of new modernistic techniques, a legacy of the colonial rule, and adherence to the rich cultural past of the country. Karnad has acknowledged this fact in his Introduction to *Three Plays*:

> My generation was the first to come of the age after India became independent of British rule. It therefore had to face a situation in which tensions implicit until they had come out in the open and demanded to be resolved without apologia or self justification: tension between the cultural past of the country and its colonial past, between the attractions of western modes of thought and our own traditions, and finally between the various visions of the future that opened up, once the common cause of political freedom was achieved. This is the historical context that gave rise to my plays and those of my contemporaries. (*Three Plays: Nagamandala, Hayavardana, Tughlaq* 10)

Karnad resorts to historical and mythological sources to tackle contemporary themes. His plays have effectively demonstrated how Indian English drama could revitalize itself by employing indigenous subjects, characters, language and folk and Natak company conventions, and decolonize Indian English Drama.

Tale-Danda is one of the best plays of Karnad. It derives its story from the life of a Kannada Saint Basavanna who resisted ideologically against the prevailing evils of caste hierarchy. History and its urgent relevance to the present have always fascinated Karnad and *Tale-Danda* illustrates this fact. Explosive situations after the official endorsement of Mandal Commission Report and Mandir issue in 1989 motivated Karnad to work on subaltern issue. He does not offer any solution to the problem; but raises the subaltern issue for discussion and common consensus. Basava (also known as Basavanna or Basaveshra), a philosopher and social reformer of the Middle Ages, fought against the inhuman practice of caste system which discriminated people on the basis of their birth and certain rituals in Hinduism.

In this play Karnad raised the post colonial issue of caste, gender and marginality. "Tale-Danda", Karnad acknowledged in an interview, "is necessarily an attack on caste. It is a question of 'why', why is it that some of our problems seem perennial" (Quoted in *The Criterion* 9). The play is structured in 3 Acts and 16 Scenes. The first Act revolves round Basavanna, the accusations that he faces and the effect of these accusations. The second Act examines the repercussions erupting out of the marital proposal of Madhuvavarsha's daughter (Brahmin) with Haralayya's (Cobbler) son. The majority strictly adhered to the vedic culture which authorizes the use of endogamous code of the marriage. The restriction of this code hardly allows the space for exogamy. Any kind of merger in the marriages with lower caste people has been looked down upon and the result of this merger, if any, has been described in the system as degradation. The third Act moves towards the climax when Soyideva seizes power from his father Bijjala and imprisons him. Act III becomes operative and expositional for causative violence. The violence seemingly happens due to shaking the age old customs of society and due to the unbridled human ambitions. This act evocatively brings forth convex motifs of coup de theatre and coup d' etate of the dramatic art and the human behavior therein. Bijjala is killed by Jagdeva in an act of peevish rebellion. Karnad does not idealize any character in the play nor does he portray them

in a cynical manner.

The drama of Tale-Danda becomes categorical in the sense that it reveals the realistic, social, cultural, religious, political and administrative potentials for its thematic contents. Karnad selects the saintly life of Basavanna and his hagiographic and reformative teachings of Sharana cult, on the one hand and the political and administrative reforms of a non kshatriya king , Bijjala on the other. The opening scene – AD 1168, The Brahmin quarter of the city of Kalyan, Sambashiva Shastri's house, he is bed-ridden. Next to him sit his wife, Amba and her friend Bhagirathi and Savitri, their daughter-in-law .Jagdeva, a staunch follower of Basavanna is expected to reach his house to see his sick father. He is followed by another Sharana, Mellibomma, a tanner. The curse of untouchability is administered when Mellibomma hesitates to enter Jagdeva's house; he says to Jagdeva, "Don't be silly. I shouldn't have even stepped into this Brahmin Street. And you want me to come into your house" (Karnad, *Collected plays*, Volume Two 8). The conversation between Jagdeva and Mellibomma continues and in the meantime Bhagirathi, a Brahmin woman speaks sarcastically to Jagdeva, "Why, Jagdeva , your poor father is killing himself there crying out for you and you hold court here" (9).Ignoring Jagdeva ,she speaks to Mellibomma, "This is a Brahmin household. Do you mind standing a little aside so the women of the house can move about freely? What are we to do if you plant yourself on the doorstep like a feudal chieftain?" (9). Jagdeva's mother Amba interrupts and requests Mellibomma to come inside, "I'll have the house purified later" (10).The doors of neighbouring houses fill up with women, children and old men watching as if some thing bizarre were happening in Shastri's house. Later on in Scene 10 when Marayppa enters the Pooja room, Damodar, Queen's priest says, Mariappa,you low-born cur, don't you know you are not to step into the sanctum? You dare pollute the royal pooja room? Come out instantly or else" (84). It signifies the contemptuous behavior and to keep at a distance attitude of the upper caste people. These upper caste people do not let the lower caste people come to their side because of being untouchables. Basavanna says, "There's famine raging in Andhra. These poor souls have

trecked for weeks in search of food and shelter. But our people won't let them stray this side of the river because of their low caste" (42). The infection of the disease causing microorganism of caste is not limited to the upper caste only, but it entails the deeper recesses of human psyche enmasse in Indian tradition and culture. Look at the following statement:"you know my profession is tanning. In terms of 'caste', that's low even lower than you" (44). Here, Kakkaya regards himself in hierarchy than Haralayya, because the former is skinner and latter is cobbler.

To eradicate this evil lock stock and barrel Karnad presents before us a congregation of thousands of Sharanas who are the disciples of Basavanna who to Jagdeva it seems "is no ordinary man, I tell you. I'm sure he's the incarnation of the divine bull Nandi". Bijjala, the king of Kalachurya, though kshatriya after his marriage with Rambhavati is always aware of his lowly birth. Bijjala is a barber by caste, "Rough hewn", "blunt" (18). It is a real curse, a scar which can never heal up. He says: "One's caste is like the skin on one's body, you can peel it off top to toe, but when the new skin forms, there you are again: a barber - a shepherd – a scavenger" (21)! It is not the slough that a snake can discard but it is the very skin itself.Bijjala thus confesses the low born genealogy of his ancestors. He also reveals the psycho-cultural traits of his tribe when he acknowledges the characteristics first as "robber barons" and then as the rulers of the country. Why does Bijjala give honour and respect to Basavanna, he explains,"In all my 62 years , the only people who have looked me in the eye without a reference to my lowly birth lurking deep in their eyes are the Sharanas: Basavanna and his men. They treat me as a human being" (21). These people worship lord Shiva, especially the worship of Shiva-Linga. As a king he follows the principles of lingayat movement which basically stands for eradicating the ever-spreading disease of casteism. He praises Basavanna for earning the prestigious post in his administration because of his sincerity and honesty; he is the person who genuinely thinks to uproot the age old shackles of the "caste structure and to wipe it off the face of the earth. Annihilate the varna system" (21).Basavanna in Scene V says to Haralyya, "some day this entire

edifice of caste, creed, this poison house of varnashrama, will come tumbling down. Every person will see himself only as a human being. As a bhakta. As a sharana. That is inevitable" (46). Basavanna, due to the "relentless devotion" (22) and "the incessant craving for the lord's grace" (22) gradually declared by sharanas as "Lord Shiva". In scene IV of the play the crowd shouts "Basava is Shiva! Shiva is Basava!" (33).The throngs burst with the delirium of Bhakti.While Basavanna's appeal and secular teachings encourage more and more people to embrace the faith of the sharana, there grows an increasing fear among the members of the upper castes. The growing resentment surfaces when Kalawati, a Brahmin's daughter, is given in marriage to Shalivanta, a cobbler's son. Lalita, Kalawati's mother was already apprehensive of impending danger.She says,"Rivers of blood will flow if the marriage takes place, she said, human limbs will rot in the streets". (49)Even Haralayya was also overwhelmed: "I was not even allowed to dream of upper-caste girls. Now this one falls right into my son's lap" (50)!

The enraged Brahmins are held in check by King Bijjala- himself the descendant of a barber:

> I was on my way home from the court when who should confront me but a horde of howling Brahmins. It is true that normally a Brahmin does not wail or beat his breast while mourning. But let me tell you, when he sets his mind to it, no other caste can match him in the art! (54)

That is why Bijjala went to Basavanna to stop Sharana who thought that this is right time "to escape from the coils of caste. We have been snarled up in them too long" (53-54). Bijjala was knowing its consequences and therefore he says to Basavanna, "The wedding pandal will turn into a slaughter house. The streets of Kalyan will reek of human entrails" (55).He further states,If you and those Brahmins are bent on self destruction,go ahead.I wish you luck.I shall take my army away and entertain myself with a little warfare.When you are done,I shall return home to count your corpses (57).Even Basavanna doubts the success of marriage – i.e., hypergamous (Pratilom).But Basavanna replies: "Are the birds to be penalized because snakes resent their ability to fly" (55).The world is awe-struck at the wedding of Shali and Kalawati.It was a conflict

between deep-rooted orthodoxy and new and innovative ideas.This "cursed wedding" (56) as Bijjala says took place and the king's ambitious son, Soyideva , takes advantage of the explosive situation. He incarcerates the king, his father and usurps the throne.

Soyideva punishes the two men – the parents of Kalawati and Shalivanta – who have violated the caste norms by promoting inter-caste marriage. Nowadays we read at least one story in the newspaper where "honour killing" becomes the main cause of murder.The play has the contemporary relevance very much. In scene 12, Gundanna describes their killing

> plucked out their with iron rods- bound them hand and foot and had them dragged through the streets- tied to elephants' legs- Ayyo! How can I tell you? – torn limbs along the lanes, torn entrails, flesh, bones- they died screaming! (90)

Jagdeva, one of Basavanna's Brahmin disciples, is enraged and decides to avenge the hideous punishment meted out to the two sharanas. With a few of his friends, he storms the royal palace. But Soyideva is away. Forgetting Basavanna's preaching of non-violence, Jagdeva kills the imprisoned and helpless king Bijjala and commits suicide. Basavanna realizes that the movement that he has nurtured has gone berserk. He dies a broken hearted man. The sharanas are ruthlessly crushed and Soyideva rules in a land where the caste system regains its sway and things become as they were before Basavanna had appeared on the scene. The movement of sharanas remains an oasis of reform and protest in a desert of orthodoxy.

Now coming to the issue of gender we find that women of all strata in the play are made to suffer the trauma from men's actions. Sapped and sopped by the callous disregard of patriarchy their condition clearly indicates the difficulties their gender encountered in the historical past. We have the presence of nearly eight women characters in this play. Most of the women are intelligent and sensitive. Rambhavati, Bijjala's wife is a gentle and affectionate wife and mother. She shares with her husband his concern with the matters related to the court. But she is not well treated by her husband. Queen tells her son Soyideva, "Do as you wish, just don't upset

your father, that's all. He turns his bad temper on me and I've just had enough" (15). Bijjala's contempt for his wife and son – "this rat has to crawl out of your womb" (20). For every mischief and mistake which Soyideva does, he blames Rambha. He calls his son "blood-sodden rag" (17) "the accursed fruit of our family" (17) "nincompoop" (18). When he fiddles with the treasury locks in his absence he tells Rambha:"Rambha! Rambha! All this is your doing. You, with your pampering and swaddling, you have turned him a royal eunuch" (17). Again, he says, "I was on the watch against the worms outside-while rearing a snake inside the house" (69). The same is with Soyideva's wife and Lalita. The most tortured and victimized woman in the play is Savitri, Jagdeva's wife. He does not treat her as a human-being. He has left all his responsibilities concerning his ailing mother to her and is free to pursue his goal. It is the courtesan Indrani who is shown as an assertive woman to some extent. But that is because culturally her position does not oblige her to be bound to domesticity. Gangambika, Basavanna's wife is a woman with some difference as being the saint's wife she enjoys a better position than the other women.

M.K. Naik has criticized the play because "It fails to offer solution to the problem." Karnad who extends the tradition of Henrik Ibsen and G.B. Shaw ,obviously leaves it to the audience to decide; yet he gives remedial suggestions through Basavanna's speeches. He is rightly called, "the cultural administrator". He has great concern for the caste or gendered subalterns in his plays and he has brought them from margin to centre through his plays. His plays are the medium where through he raises socio-political and cultural problems prevalent in Indian society and calls upon us to discuss and evolve a common consensus rather than provide a readymade answer to the problem.

WORKS CITED

The Criterion. Volume II, No. 1. April 2011.

Karnad, Girish. *Collected Plays*, Volume Two. New Delhi: OUP, 2005.
All references given in the text of the paper are from this edition.

———. *Three Plays: Nagamandala, Hayavadana, Tughlaq*. New Delhi: OUP, 1994.

CRITIQUING ARUNDHATI ROY AND KIRAN DESAI AS COSMOPOLITAN NOVELISTS

Sonali Das

The closing decades of the twentieth century marked the beginning of globalization. The world has become 'a global village' because of electronic communication, internet, cell phone and television. No one remained untouched. The global market invaded the local market all over the world and the local people got an opportunity to send their product to the global market. Globalisation did two things: first, it contested the claims of 'nationalism' and them paved the way for cosmopolitan outlook.

Globalisation is seen an antidote to nationalism. Roland Robertson's definition of globalization as 'the compression of the world and the intensification of a consciousness of the world as a whole' (8), gives rise to cosmopolitan outlook and cosmopolitan theory. Berthold Schoene in his introduction to *The Cosmopolitan Novel* refers to some critics to explain cosmopolitanism in the following words :

> Only recently have there been any notable efforts to theorise cosmopolitical models of agency and resistance, such as Ulrich Bech's promotion of a 'methodological cosmopolitanism'. In *The Cosmopolitan Vision* Beck calls on communities to unlearn their nationalist modes of self-identification and start contributing to global culture instead, always equipped with, as Beck specifies, '[their] own language and cultural symbols' (2006: 21). Conceiving of responsible world citizenship as based on the paradox that 'there are no others ... [there are] *many* cultural others' (Tomlinson 1999: 194), contemporary cosmopolitanism promotes a departure from tradi ional internationalist perspectives while stressing the significance of local cultures for the development of any meaningful and viable world-communal future (1).

If 'We are all being "globalized"' (Bauman 1), we also seek to bring the 'local' to contest the 'global' as a kind of resistance. Thus globalization paves the way for glocalisation. According to Walter Mignolo, globalisation includes, 'a set of designs to manage the world while cosmopolitanism is a set of projects toward planetary conviviality (157). Berthold Schoene defines 'the contemporary' by making references to two big events of the world: '9/11' of 1989 and '9/11' of 2001. He writes :

> While it is possible to record a long history for both globalization (as a process involving the whole of humanity) and cosmopolitanism (as a corresponding body of political ideas), I am primarily interested in their creative, literary-cultural phenomenology as particular manifestations of the contemporary. For the purposes of my study the origins of 'the contemporary' are tracked down to two 9/11 events: the fall of the Berlin wall on 9 November 1989 and the World Trade Center attacks on 11 September 2001 ... (6).

We should do well to understand clearly what is meant by terms like 'globalisation' and 'cosmopolitanism' in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. Globalisation is often called Americanization, heralding the beginning of neocolonization. All of us are affected by globalization, which underlines economic imperialism and a kind of import and export of culture. Globalisation creates a kind of cosmopolitan outlook in the former colonies. Schoene explains 'globalisation' and 'cosmopolitan' in clear-cut terms:

> Globalisation has levelled the planet in more than one sense through homogenization, deracination and compartmentalisa- tion. Our lives are lived quite literally at different levels: an elevated sphere travelled by the privileged is upheld by innumerable lower levels whose apparent solidity depends on their inhabitants' social immobility and hopeless economic entrapment. Whereas the privileged have a clear view of the whole world but can easily avert their gaze, the disenfranchised are doomed to watch as 'distant events and powers penetrate [their] local experience' (Tomlinson 9), frequently at random and without much prior warning. Cosmopolitan representation must convey this synchronicity of the incongruous, multifarious and seemingly disconnected at the same time as it does its best to capture the streaming flow of a newly emergent contemporaneity (14).

Globalisation marks the emergence of one single culture in the world, replacing the diversity of cultural system. Cosmopolitan culture, on the other hand, retains the diversity of cultural system while highlighting one's own culture. Cosmopolitan novel lays emphasis on contemporary living across the world. As Schoene observes, 'Central to the cosmopolitan novel is its representation of worldwide human living and global community' (17). Keeping this in mind, let us evaluate Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai as cosmopolitan novelists.

The Third World elite within the ex-colonies create a cosmo-

politan society that divides people of the land on the basis of wealth and social status. Arundhati Roy writes about the caste ridden nation in *The God of Small Things*. In the caste ridden nation, 'the people of India have been loaded onto two convoys of tracks' (a huge big one and a tiny little one) that have set off resolutely in opposite directions. The tiny convoy is on its way to a glittering destination somewhere near the top of the world. The other convoy just melts into the darkness and disappears' (Roy 2-3). If Roy writes about the Subalterns, Kiran Desai writes about the economic migrant in *The Inheritance of Loss*. The dichotomy between the private and the public, the small and the large, governs the plot of *The God of Small Things*.

The God of Small Things can be read as a cosmopolitan novel, 'imagining the world rather than a postcolonial novel focused strictly on (re-) imagining the nation' (Schoene 130). This view is supported by Bishnupriya Ghosh whose enquiry is based on 'the capacities of the literary imagination to fashion new forms of collective life and agency' (19). 'The cosmopolitan protagonist – be it Rahel in Roy's novel, Sai in Desai's - appears as a disempowered 'player' and slightly detached observer uprooted by personal circumstances and/ or propelled by remote-controlled aspiration, yet always unmistakably marked by their origin (Schoene 130). Julie Mullaney, on the otherhand, argues that, "notwithstanding the attention to the Small, the personal and the local specifities of place, Roy's novel can be read also as national allegory' (26).

Arundhati Roy dives deep into history and weaves incidents and situations on which she makes the theme of the novel. As a creative writer she takes poetic licence and expresses freely her thought breaking the rules of syntax. The following paragraph can be cited as an example:

> Little events, ordinary things, smashed and reconstituted. Imbued with new meaning. Suddenly they become the bleached bones of a story.
>
> Still, to say that it all began when Sophie Mol came to Ayemenem is only one way of looking at it.
>
> Equally, it could be argued that it actually began thousands of years ago. Long before the Marxists came. Before the British took Malabar, before the Dutch Ascendency, before Vasco da Gama arrived, before the Zamorin's conquest of Calicut. Before three purple-robed Syrian Bishops murdered by the Portuguese were found floating in the sea, with coiled sea serpents riding on their chests and oysters knotted in their tangled bears. It could be argued that it began long before Christianity arrived in a boat and seeped into Kerala like tea from a teabag.
>
> That it really began in the days when the Love Laws were made. The laws that lay down who should be loved, and how.
>
> And how much (*The God of Small Things* 32-33).

Arundhati Roy recalls the genesis of *The God of Small Things* is one of his interviews :

> Writing *The God of Small Things* was fictional way of making sense of the world I lived in, and the novel was the technical key with which I did it (*Frontline* 8 August 1997: 106).

Social exclusion is a mode of realization of characters in both *The God of Small Things* and *The Inheritance of Loss*. One of the aims of life is to pursue one's desire defying morality and social bondage. Ammu's love for Velutha, the socially excluded Paravan turns out to be their ruin. A woman can't be forced to love any man bowing down before the laws of the society. And ironically socially is man-made – not divine ordained. In "Rewriting English: Cultural Politics of gender and class" Batsleer et al wrote emphasize the individual women to pursue her desire disregarding the society.

> Love is where the heart is. Home is where the heart is. Home is where women are, and where the world, power and work are absent. Making the boundaries between public and private spheres is a key part of the process of securing female subordination. But in romance this female, domestic space, this very powerlessness and dependence are promoted to the fore ground as a form of power and value and self-fulfilment (95).

This is what Arundhati Roy does through Ammu's character and achieves success inspite of violation of traditional social code.Here we are reminded of Emagoldman's observation on love made in the unpublished pamphlet in 1931 in the following words :

> Love, the strongest and deepest element in all life, the harbinger of hope, of joy, of ecstasy; love, the defier of all laws, all conventions, love, the freest, the most powerful moulder of human destiny – how can such an all-compelling force be synonymous with that poor little State and Church-begotten weed, marriage? (qtd in Batsleer et al. 173).

In *The Inheritance of Loss* Kiran Desai works on the theme of social exclusion on the basis of class. Socially excluded people are

economically, politically, and culturally backward. Being excluded from the main stream of the society, they too try to exclude others. Sometimes highly placed people are also socially excluded becauseof their intellectual arrogance and social status. Mr Patel's social exclusion issues out of his colonial education. Desai sums it aptly in the following words :

> On board the *Strathnaver* on his way back, the judge sipped beef tea and read *How to Speak Hindustani*, since he had been posted to a part of India where he did not speak the language (119).

The postcolonial idioms like 'other', 'subaltern' apply to Biju who drifts from one place into another in search of livelihood. 'Here in America, where every nationality confirmed its stereotype – Biju felt he was entering a warm amniotic bath' says the narrator. Biju is the 'other'. If we take into consideration the excluded categories in the world we will find three types : the savage other, the Black other and the oriental other. The Red Indians and aboriginal Australians were 'the savage other', the Black Africans were 'the Black other' (African-Americans belong to this category) and 'the Oriental other' were the Asians. Hence, Biju being the oriental other cannot assimilate himself into the American society.

Globalisation and contemporary politics are at the back of *The Inheritance of Loss*. The novel is foregrounded in the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) in the hilly northern parts of West Bengal in the nineteen eighties. Darjeeling was leased to the East India Company in 1835 after it was returned to Sikkimese after Anglo-Nepal War in 1814-15. It was re-organized in 1866 and became part of West Bengal. Nepalis remained unassimilated into West Bengal because of their Nepali origin and Sikkim connection. The population of Darjeeling Gorkha tribes comprise Nepalis, Lepchas and Bhutias, wanted a homeland under the leadership of Subhas Ghising (GNLF Movement) and again they agitated in 2007 under the leadership of Bimal Gurung with a new movement Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (JGMM). Like *The God of Small Things*, which makes references to E.M.S. Namboodiripad's Communist Government in Kerala, *The Inheritance of Loss* bears echoes of GNLF and JGMM movements and the discontentment of the Gorkha population for

being treated as 'other' by the Bengalis. Both the novels are governed by 'political correctness'. This term 'PC' that stands for 'Political Correctness', is derived from the context of early twentieth century communism (Ayers 163). If "the PC Wars constituted a struggle about American identity" and 'in relation to literature, that identity had been secured by the creation of a canon of American literature' (Ayers 164), the same thing applies to Indian English literature. The two novels *The God of Small Things* and *The Inheritance of Loss* seek to establish political correctness in doing away with the injustice meted out to the subalterns and the excluded sanctions of the society and therefore, appeal to the readers both at home and abroad. No wonder, both the books won Man Booker Prize for their authors in 1997 and 2006 respectively.

Both Roy and Desai allow their characters to move both the worlds – the East and the West. Ammu's family can boast of a host of US and UK-returned graduates. Kiran Desai's Jemubhai Patel and Biju travelled between the two worlds. Letting the characters travel to the West and bring then back, is part of the postcolonial writing which terminates in the neo-colonial writing. Authenticity of political events of the day which have become history now, is evident in the following lines :

> When Biju was away, Indira Gandhi had been assassinated by the Sikhs in the name of their homeland, Rajiv Gandhi had taken over (269).

Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai are cosmopolitcan novelists like many Third World Writers. Their characters have developd cosmopolitcan outlook surpassing the limits of 'nationalism' but at the same time they have brought both the centripetal and centrifugal forces together by assimilating the culture of both the east and west in their fiction. No, wonder they became globally visible.

WORKS CITED

Ayers, David. *Literary Theory: A Reintroduction.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2008. Print.

Batsleer, Janet et al. *Rewriting English: Cultural Politics of Gender and Class.* London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1965. Print.

Bauman, Zygmunt. *Globalization: The Human Consequences.* Cambridge: Polity, 1998. Print.

Beck, Ulrich. *The Cosmopolitan Vision.* Tr. C. Cronin. Cambridge: Polity, 2006. Print.

Desai, Kiran. *The Inheritance of Loss.* New Delhi: Penguin Books, India, 2006. Print.

Ghosh, Bishnupriya. *When Borne Across: Literary Cosmoplitics in the Contemporary Indian Novel.* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004. Print.

Mignolo, Walter. "The Many Faces of Cosmopolis: Border Thinking and Critical Cosmopolitanism". *Cosmopolitanism.* Eds. A.Carol Breckenridge et al. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2002. Print.

Mullancy, Julia. *Arundhati Roy's 'The God of Small Things': A Reader's Guide.* New York: Continuum, 2005. Print.

Robertson, Richard. *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture.* London: Sage, 1992. Print.

Roy, Arundhati. *The God of Small Things.* New Delhi: IndiaInk, 1997. Print.

Schoene, Berthold. *The Cosmopolitan Novel.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010. Print.

Tomlinson, John. *Globalization and Culture.* Cambridge: Polity, 1999. Print.

APPLYING RELEVANCE THEORY FOR VALUING ENVIRONMENT CONSTRUCTS: A STUDY OF *THE HUNGRY TIDE* AND *SEA OF POPPIES*

Rashmi Gaur &
Urjani Chakravarti

This paper will attempt to make a comparative analysis of *The Hungry Tide* and *Sea of Poppies,* two novels by the famous contemporary novelist Amitav Ghosh; from the perspective of the 'environment constructs' acting as creative devices during the formation of a literary discourse applying the framework of Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson,2002). It also proposes to compare some of the 'environment constructs' that contribute towards building a literary text as a communication tool. Ghosh dramatises historical events in both *The Hungry Tide* and *Sea of Poppies.* The first novel takes up a contemporary setting and flashbacks; whereas the second discusses two major economic themes of the 19th century Asia, i.e. the cultivation of opium as a cash crop in Bengal and Bihar for the Chinese market, and the transport of Indian indentured workers to the British plantations on islands such as Mauritius, Fiji and Trinidad. Considering environmental variations, *The Hungry Tide's* scope is more limited than that of *Sea of Poppies*, as it depicts a small and highly specific area of India, *The Sunderbans. Sea of Poppies* takes into account the wider world through characters hailing from India and abroad. Analyzing the environmental descriptions given by the author in terms of language, the paper opens up possibilities of addressing environmental issues through interdisciplinary dialog.

According to Cheryll Glotfelty, "Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment...takes an earth-centred approach to literary studies" (Glotfelty, 3, quoted in Reza Yavarian.Web). In 1991, Bate, British professor in Liverpool University, gave a definition of ecocriticism (439-440) which included two aspects. First, it referred to the influence of literature or culture on nature, that is to say, human attitudes toward nature influenced by literature or culture leads to the change of nature or ecological degradation. Secondly, it does not "take the natural world as its

core subject," but look at mankind as "the most problematic denizen". Ecocriticism has now become a global cultural phenomenon (Slaymaker 1100). Greg Garrard in his seminal work on ecocriticism, *Ecocriticism: the New Critical Idiom,* gave the ecocritical concepts including: pollution; wilderness; apocalypse; dwelling; animal; earth. The present paper will concentrate on Garrard's defining factors of pollution, wilderness, apocalypse, dwelling, animal and earth and describe 'environment constructs' as portrayed in *The Hungry Tide* and *Sea of Poppies* which can be argued to be conditioned by the natural environment.

Sperber and Wilson's 'relevance' is used as a theoretical term to refer to the cognitive usefulness of a part of information in a context, or for an individual in any communication event. Their theory further makes claims about cognition in general, and about communication in particular. Communication, they argue, raises and exploits definite expectations of relevance. They further state that Inferential Communication is not just a matter intending to affect the thoughts of an audience; it is a matter of getting them to recognize that one has this intention. Relevance Theory's term for Inferential Communication is Ostensive-Inferential Communication (Sperber and Wilson, 2002:255), which comprises two layers of intentions. The formulation can be expressed as: Ostensive-Inferential Communication = The Informative Intention (the intention to inform an audience about something) and The Communicative Intention (the intention to inform the audience of one's informative intention).

Relevance theorists claim that the above intentions are fulfilled by the use of Ostensive Stimulus which is designed to attract the hearer/reader's attention towards the communicator's/author's meaning. The hearer/reader by receiving the linguistically encoded sentence meaning from the communicator/author; following a path of least effort, enhances it at the explicit level and complements it at the implicit level until the resulting interpretation meets his expectation of relevance. In other words ostensive stimulus helps the hearer/ reader to presume that the communicator's intentions are worth processing. This is the basis for its Communicative Principle of Relevance (Sperber and Wilson :256): Every ostensive stimulus

conveys a presumption of its own optimal relevance. The notion of optimal relevance is based on the universal cognitive tendency of picking out the most relevant stimulus in the environment and processing it so as to maximize its relevance. An ostensive stimulus is optimally relevant to an audience if and only if (Sperber and Wilson 257): (a) it is relevant enough to be worth the audience's processing effort; (b) it is the most relevant one compatible with the communicator's abilities and preferences.

Thus, the Communicative Principle of Relevance and the definition of optimal relevance propose a convenient method for understanding and constructing the communicator's/author's meaning for the hearer/reader.

We now analyze our work combining the above assumptions of Relevance Theory. If we take clause a) from the definition of optimal relevance, the reader of the book is entitled to expect the ostensive stimulus to be at least relevant enough to be worth processing. Further this could happen only when the stimulus given by the author is the most relevant of all the other inputs available in the text at the time. From clause b) we find the author's need to be understood determines the use of stimuli according to his preferences and capabilities, for instance use of colloquialism. Thus the notion of ostensive stimulus and optimal relevance is the base of our work and it is assumed that the model created with the assumptions of Relevance Theory gives a logical base to Relevance-theoretic analysis of fictional texts like *The Hungry Tide* and *Sea of Poppies*.

The methodology which will be adopted will be the application of a model developed by using the framework of Relevance Theory. The RT model is given below:

Ostensive Inferential Communication (OIC) => Environmental Communication (environment constructs including pollution, wilderness, apocalypse, dwelling, animals and earth) = OR & OS

Where, OR = Optimal Relevance

OS = Ostensive Stimulus

According to assumptions of the Relevance Theory, environmental communication can take place only when the author attempts

to gain optimal relevance by giving ostensive stimulus to the reader and the reader takes the stimulus which gives maximal effect with minimum processing effort otherwise there is failure of communication. Therefore, the author and the reader follow the Model of RT for making effective environmental communication between the text and the reader.

RELEVANCE THEORY AND METHOD OF INTERPRETATION

In the following section, we use relevance theoretic analysis based upon the theory of Sperber and Wilson to illustrate how Ghosh uses the language and recurrent images in his novel to construct the meanings of the character's lives in the places represented. Let us now examine some of the examples from the text which will substantiate our contention.

1) The author in order to explain his usage of the metaphors *The Hungry Tide and Sea of Poppies* to the reader gives a detailed description of the locale which acts as the ostensive stimulus for the reader to process his intention. The title of the book *The Hungry Tide and Sea of Poppies* are metaphors (one of the types of creative device created by Ghosh). For *The Hungry Tide* he discusses with the 'environment construct', 'the wilderness of the mangroves' and how difficult it is to survive.

Where,

Ostensive Stimulus (from the text) =

'A mangrove forest is a universe into itself... Mangrove leaves are tough and leathery, the branches gnarled and the foliage often impassably dense. Visibility is short and the air still and fetid. At no moment can human beings have any doubt of the terrain's utter hostility to their presence, of its cunning and resourcefulness, of its determination to destroy or expel them. Every year dozens of people perish in the embrace of that dense foliage, killed by tigers, snakes and crocodiles.' (THT 8)

In a similar manner the situation of 'Canning' is described which further sharpens and vividly conveys the picture of the struggle of human beings against wilderness and nature before civilization began.

Ostensive Stimulus (from the text) =

'On stepping off the plank, there was a long-drawn out moment when each passenger sank slowly into the mud, like a spoon disappearing into a very thick *daal*; only when they were in up to their hips did their descent end and their forward movement begin. With their legs hidden from sight, all that was visible of their struggles was the twisting of their upper bodies.'(THT 24-25)

Ostensive Stimulus (from the text) =

The vision of tall-masted ship, at sail on the ocean, came to Deeti on an otherwise ordinary day….' (SOP 3), 'Beti- I saw a jahaj-a ship' (SOP 8)

Ostensive Stimulus (from the text) =

Back then, a few clumps of poppy were enough to provide for a household's needs, leaving a little over, to be sold: no one was inclined to plant more because of all the work it took to grow poppies...Such punishment was bearable when you had a patch or two of poppies...but what sane person would want to multiply these labours when there was better, more useful crops to grow, like wheat, dal, vegetables? But those toothsome winter crops were steadily shrinking in acreage: now the factory's appetite for opium seemed never to be sated" (SOP 29).

Ostensive Stimulus =

'To add to the migrants' growing unease, the landscape changed: the flat, fertile, populous plains yielded to swamps and marshes; the river turned brackish, so that its water could no longer be drunk; every day the water rose and fell, covering and uncovering vast banks of mud; the shores were blanketed in dense, tangled greenery, of a kind that was neither shrub nor tree, but seemed to grow out of the river's bed, on roots that were like stilts: of a night, they would hear tigers roaring in the forest, and feel the pulwar shudder, as crocodiles lashed it with their tails' (SOP 246). So we say that this example from the text fulfills all the conditions of the RT thus conveying the author's meaning to the reader.

2) If we take the Use of Bangla Colloquialism as another type of creative device used by Ghosh then it can be explained in the following way using the RT.

2.1) In order to vividly portray Kusum's character in the novel

Ghosh furnishes the clue for optimal relevance by using an 'environment construct' like a *storm, a jhor* and emphasize his meaning with the Bangla expression of *tej*.

O.S (Ostensive Stimulus) = '...What I remember is her *tej*,' Kanai said. 'Even at that age she was very spirited.' Moyna nodded. I've heard people say she was like a storm, a *jhor* (THT 137)O.S (Ostensive Stimulus) = '...You're going on a whim, a *kheyal*. You don't have any pressing reason to go' (THT 262).

Another example where a similar creative device is used is the point where Ghosh in order to give a historical description of the mangrove forest uses the local phrase *kada ar bada* to make the point clear.

Where,

O.S (Ostensive Stimulus) = '...There were no people, no embankments, no fields. Just *kada ar bada*, mud and mangrove. At high tide most of the land vanished under water. And everywhere you looked there were predators - tigers, crocodiles, sharks, leopards.' (THT 54)

2.2) In case of words which do not have any equivalent in English the author incorporates the Bangla word according to his capabilities and preferences and this could be viewed as another creative device used by Ghosh.

Where,

O.S(Ostensive Stimulus) = ' The islands are the trailing threads of India's fabric, the ragged fringe of her sari, the *âchol* that follows her, half wetted by the sea...'(THT 7).

O.S (Ostensive Stimulus) = '...When the waters fell the settlers hacked at the forest with their *daas*, and when the tides rose they waited out the flood on stilt-mounted platforms. (THT, 2004: 54)

O.S (Ostensive Stimulus) = 'Think of what it was like: think of tigers, crocodiles and snakes that lived in the creeks and *nalas* that covered the islands.' (THT 54)

O.S (Ostensive Stimulus) = '... yet, to the world at large this archipelago is known as "the Sunderban", which means, "the beautiful forest". There are some, who believe the word to be derived from the name of common species of mangrove-*sundari* tree, *Heriteria minor*. But the word's origin is no easier to account for than is its present prevalence, for in record books of the Mughal emperors this region is named not in reference to a tree but to a tide-*bhati*. And to the inhabitants of the islands this land is known as *bhatir desh*-the tide country-except that bhati is not just the "tide" but one particular, ebb-tide, the *bhata*. This is a land half-submerged at high tide: it is only in *falling* that the water gives birth to the forest. To look upon this strange parturition, midwived by the moon, is to know why the name "tide country" is not just right but necessary' (THT 8).

Ostensive Stimulus =

'He was puzzling over this when he noticed a sapling, growing in the shade of the green-tiled pavilion: he recognized it as a chalta tree, which produced fragrant white flowers and a fruit that had an unusual, sour flavour, vaguely reminiscent of unripe apples' (SOP 102).

Ostensive Stimulus =

'...the Sudder Opium Factory was indisputably large and well guarded...On the contrary, a miasma of lethargy seemed always to hang over the factory's surroundings. The monkeys that lived around it, for instance: Deeti pointed a few of these out to Kabutri as the ox-cart trundled towards the walls. Unlike others of their kind they never chattered or fought or stole from passers-by; when they came down from the trees it was to lap at the open sewers that drained the factory's effluents; after having sated their cravings, they would climb back into the branches to resume their stupefied scrutiny of the Ganga and its currents.(SOP 91)

As regards Relevance Theory, there are undoubtedly elements here that show Ghosh's enthusiasm for nature. The above examples evince both the physical and metaphysical dimension of nature as well as the issues related to it. Arguing for a narrow definition of environmental constructs in literary texts, our proposal for the main criteria of such texts like *The Hungry Tide and Sea of Poppies* would be as follows: the text is based on immediate and long term, systematically apt observation of environment in Sundarbans and the coast of Kolkata in the nineteenth century as experienced by the author; the first person narrator in the text coincides with the actual observer i.e. the author in natural environment; and the aim of the

text is to direct the reader towards aesthetic appreciation of nature and to bring the issues related to it to his/her notice.

These criteria according to Relevance Theory concern the condition, mode and function of a literary text as communication tool for nature consciousness writing, or environmental fiction, to use the longer but perhaps more clear term. In conclusion, the function of nature descriptions during writing a literary text also relates the work to the culture it is dwelling upon more thoroughly and brings out the total image properly to the reader and sharing the knowledge of one's homeland's natural conditions and phenomena promotes and produces a common ground of knowledge and values for the diversity of people inhabiting a certain area to the reader. Thus, the act of directing the reader toward aesthetic appreciation of nature and environment issues through literary representation of environment constructs reiterates development of the readers' identifying with the problem and creating awareness.

WORKS CITED

Bate, Jonathan. *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition.* London and New York: Routledge, 1991. Print.

Galitz, Kathryn Calley. "Romanticism". In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History.* New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/roma/hd_roma.htm (October 2004)

Garrard, Greg. *Ecocriticism: the New Critical Idiom.* India: Routledge, 2007. Print.

Ghosh, Amitav. *The Hungry Tide.* London: Harper Collins. 2004. Print. (In the text referred to as THT)

———. *Sea of Poppies.* London: Penguin, 2008. Print. (In the text referred to as SOP)

Slaymaker, William. "On Ecocriticism (A Letter)". *PMLA* 114.5, 1999: 1100-1. September 20, 2010<http://www.asle.org/site/resources/ecocriticallibrary/intro/forum/slaymaker/>. Web.

Sperber, Dan. and Deidre Wilson. *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* (2nd Edition). Oxford: Blackwell, 1995. Print.

Sperber, Dan and Deidre Wilson. "Relevance Theory". 2002. August 2, 2009 <cogprints.org/2317/0/relevance_theory.htm>. Web.

Yavarian, Reza."Ecocritical Reading of Hemingway's 'Hills like White Elephants'." September 20, 2010<faculty.ksu.edu.sa/aljarf/Documents/../ Reza % 20 Yavarian.pdfs>.Web.

QUEST FOR BELONGING IN ROHINTON MISTRY'S *FAMILY MATTERS*

Usha Rani

Rohinton Mistry occupies a distinct place among the Indian English writers. His works are primarily concerned with the questions related to the nature of belonging, importance of relationship in life, relevance of family support, the nature of happiness and unhappiness and the role of transcultural values in a globalised world. He also deals with the peculiar nature of relationship of the individuals to a community as his novels are about the Parsi community. The dilemma of the Parsi community provides a basic structure to his fiction, and the novelist creatively uses this dilemma to explore the dark recesses of human mind in order to see how transcultural spaces and strong ethnic enclosures determine the nature of 'belonging' in the case of a diasporic community. The publication of *Family Matters* in 2002 is a fine illustration of Mistry's quest for belonging. This novel deals with the necessity of human relationship and the importance of family and its emotional value for lessening the burden of loneliness and transcending the obstructions put up by physical disability in old age. The paper is an attempt to show that *Family Matters* illustrates the necessity of belonging to a family structure and how this structure provides emotional and moral support to the ageing parents. What is important in the case of Mistry is that he deals with the dwindling nature of this sense of belonging in the contemporary world.

"Family" becomes the immediate context in which the sensibility of Mistry operates. Kanaganayakam has rightly observed that "the concern with the family is hardly new in Mistry's writing and this novel is a further reiteration that this is where his strength lies" (33). A sense of belonging, of stability and of security is necessary for one's happiness. And the genuine happiness, as Simon Blackburn puts it, "... requires engagement with the world. It requires reasoning and activity, and engagement with others, and notably it requires real love and friendship" (85). Mistry is interested in "what makes a human being" (interview with Stacey Gibson 22).

Family Matters (2002) is set in Bombay of 1990s. The plot of the novel centers on a seventy-nine year old retired Parsi academician, Nariman Vakeel. The plot moves on two planes – past and present. The former consists of Nariman's reflections pertaining to to his relations with his parents, his girlfriend Lucy – a Catholic Christian —, and his relations with his wife Yasmin – a Parsi widow with two children. The present shows his relations with his step children (Coomy and Jal Contractor) with whom he shares a seven room apartment "Chateau Felicity" and his relationship with his daughter Roxana (out of wedlock of Nariman and Yasmin) who lives happily with her husband, Yezad Chenoy, and two sons named Murad and Jehangir. The Chenoy family lives at "Pleasant Villa" presented by Nariman to Roxana on her wedding.

The novel opens with Nariman Vakeel who is suffering from Parkinson's disease. Because of his physical condition he is time and again advised to "stay home" (Mistry 3) by his step children. The interaction between them gives a hint of children's concern for the father. One day, i.e., on the eve of his seventy-ninth birthday Nariman returns home "with abrasions on his elbow and forearm, and a limp" (7) as he had fallen while crossing the road. This fall results in scolding from Coomy: "... you don't act responsibly. No appreciation for Jal and me, or the things we do for you" (8). It is here that old resentments and unhappy memories are brought forth to unravel the unhappy relationships in the family. In retaliation to Coomy's word, Nariman replies:

> In my youth, my parents controlled me and destroyed those years. Thanks to them, I married your mother and wrecked my middle years. Now you want to torment my old age. I won't allow it. (8)

On hearing the words, Coomy gets infuriated and blames Nariman for ruining "Mamma's life and mine and Jal's. I will not tolerate a word against her" (8). What is clear from the above altercation is how aged parents are seen as a burden nowadays. Here we can notice "the long-lasting jealousies and resentment about favouritism" (Morey 128) in the relationships of Coomy and Nariman. Both of them pass through the pangs of sense of 'not belonging'.

Nariman had married Yasmin Contractor after the death of her

husband Palonji Contractor not out of love rather "it was an arranged marriage". Yasmin had "taken the step for security, for her son and daughter" (10). One year after marriage Roxana was born and had come like a "little miracle". Coomy and Jal have a warm relations with their half-sister Roxana, and they feel themselves belonging to the little miracle. But Nariman thinks that Jal and Coomy's love for Roxana has flown away after she is given a flat as a gift in her wedding. Here we can observe that money matters do matter in family matters and it also influences the nature of 'belonging'.

At this point in the text we come to know about Nariman's marriage with Yasmin in a flashback. It was about thirty-six years back that Nariman had yielded to his parents' insistent demand to end his liaison with the Goan woman called Lucy. In this way he became the husband of Yasmin and he formally adopted her children Jal and Coomy who kept the surname of their biological father. We observe in Nariman the true fatherly feeling for Coomy and Jal, and hence, a desire to belong to them.

The next flashback, when Nariman is hospitalised at Parsi General Hospital, is concerned with the time when Lucy had given up her studies and she was thrown out of her parents' house because of her relationship with Nariman and she was living at the YMCA hostel. In spite of all efforts Nariman would not ignore her and his gestures would upset Yasmin and the children, especially Coomy. This episode had brought a rift between husband and wife and also alienated the father from daughter. This alienation, resulting in a sense of 'not belonging', has grown out of Nariman's non-desirous relations with Lucy.

The next flashback foreshadows the tragedy that is to blight the life of Nariman and his children. Lucy, who had been working as a domestic help, slowly started losing her mental balance. Time and again she went to terrace and climbed down on to the outside ledge and threatened to jump. So Nariman had to go up to pacify her to return much to his wife Yasmin's annoyance. One day Yasmin followed him to terrace, confronted the disturbed Lucy and before Nariman could save either of them, both the ladies fell down to death. Here we can see the interplay of duty (familial responsibili-

ties) and free will (sympathetic attitude towards Lucy) resulting in the chaotic atmosphere of "Chateau Felicity".

In juxtaposition of the past with the present we can smell that Coomy's bitter relationship and unforgiving attitude towards her father is because she holds Nariman responsible for her mother's death. When we come back to the present time we see the family getting together to celebrate Nariman's seventy-ninth birthday. Soon after the get-together Nariman falls down and is seriously injured. On the advice of Dr. Fitter, Nariman is hospitalised at the Parsi General Hospital where he is diagnosed as suffering from a fracture to the left ankle. After a two-day stay at hospital Nariman is discharged. In a rather unbelievable manner, Roxana is not told about the accident. When at "Chateau Felicity" Coomy finds herself unable to handle the situation, the old man is dumped at Roxana's residence unceremoniously and without any warning. One can observe that Coomy behaves badly towards Nariman (though she cares for him) and leaves him onto the Chenoys. She feels guilty about what she has done as does Nariman about his infatuation for Lucy. Mistry shows that human relationship is a very fragile subject in day-to-day life and it has become more so because of globalization and its potential allies are mutual trust, understanding and cooperation. A healthy relationship has to be backed by these factors.

Yezad and Roxana with their sons exemplify second type of relationship living happily in their "Pleasant Villa". In their family we can observe Roxana's motherly worry at the slightest sign of the inevitable childhood coughs and stomach disturbances. Very warm relationship among the family members is established. But Roxana's relationship with Yezad's sisters is not so harmonious as she tells her sons, "Daddy's three sisters didn't like me" (40). Anyhow, the happy atmosphere gets disturbed with the arrival of Nariman, the old man. As Nariman arrives at their small home, Roxana and her family make adjustments accordingly. When Yezad comes, Roxana tells about Jal and Coomy's behaviour with their Pappa in leaving at Chenoy's place for three weeks without any prior intimation. However, Nariman defends Contractors by saying, "they couldn't cope" ... "how can you force people? Can caring and concern bemade

compulsory? Either it resides in the heart or nowhere" (104).

Anyhow, the Chenoys try to cope up with the situation, but their financial budget gets disturbed. However, both the boys and their father try to manage the financial burden in their own ways and Roxana takes care of domestic things. Murad, in an honest way, saves bus-fare by walking to school but Yezad and Jehangir behave in an unscrupulous manner. Yezad spends the saved money in betting at 'Matka pie' to get more profits. Jehangir, as a homework monitor, takes bribe from some rich fellow students by making their unsatisfactory homework acceptable. Both father and son perform their duties while exhibiting their free will. Their intentions are sincere for the welfare of the family, but their actions are self-deceptive. Nariman feels more comfortable at "Pleasant Villa" in spite of the hardships and his son-in-law's (at times) justified grumpiness. He enjoys his grandsons' company and tells them stories to inculcate moral values in them and to enable them to remember their origin. These story-telling sessions act as catalyst in developing warm relationships.

In "Chateau Felicity", Coomy makes a foul play by damaging the ceiling-plaster so as to avoid Nariman's return after three weeks "without fighting or ruining family relationships" (166). She also turns down Roxana's appeal to get a part of their father's savings to make the financial balance. Here Jal accuses her sister, Coomy, of not caring for family and "nursing your bitterness instead of nursing Pappa" (166). Coomy gets shattered by thinking "no one gave a thought to her feelings" (167).

The Chenoys pass through a financial crisis and it is at this time that Yezad comes to know about his employer Mr. Kapur's intention to contest the election. But Mr. Kapur drops the idea of contesting election and says, "... family comes first, Yezad, you understand that. Family service before public service, my wife reminded me" (263). This way Yezad's dreams get shattered and he makes a game plan to extract money from Mr. Kapur by telling a lie that Shiv-Sainiks have demanded a huge amount of money if in the signboard "Bombay" is not replaced by "Mumbai". But as ill luck would have it, the real Shiv Sena goons finally come and Mr. Kapur

is killed in the encounter. Mr. Kapur's death coincides with that of Coomy, who dies alongwith Edul Munshi (the inapt craftsman) under the falling plaster in Nariman's room.

Mrs. Kapur shuts down the store after Mr. Kapur's death and Yezad is left unemployed. Feeling the pangs of guilt for his employer's murder, Yezad takes a rescue in religion and turns into a religious man. After Coomy's death on Jal's proposal Chenoys sell their flat and shift to "Chateau Felicity". The Chenoys follows him and shifts to the apartment after selling their flat. After one year Nariman dies. Through Jehangir, in the epilogue after five years, we come across the bitter relationship between Yezad and Murad. In the epilogue smooth human relationship outside the fold of family are shown by delineating the relationship between Nariman and Daisy Ichhaporia, the violinist residing in Chenoy's neighbourhood, who plays melodious tunes to lull Nariman to sleep or to put aside his depression. Similarly, Vilas Rane, an ordinary salesman in a bookshop, displays his belonging to the entire humanity and plays a vital role in keeping human relationships intact. Rane's vocational job of interpreting and writing letters for the illiterate is an attempt to pave the way for these people to insert themselves into the world through words. He opines: "It gives me so many ready-made families. I share their lives, like an uncle or grandfather who knows everything about everyone. Isn't that a wonderful reward?" (122). Through the delineation of these two characters Mistry stresses that caring and sharing are the necessary elements that make one feel that he/she belongs to others.

The crux of the matter is that it is the family life which provides meaning to the concept of belonging to home. If the family life of an individual is happy, he/she is able to enjoy the leisure/pleasures of home which includes happy relationship with other individuals within the family. Moreover, it goes without saying that happy family life compensates for other deficiencies in life. *Family Matters* emphasises the need of 'belonging' not only in the case of elderly and sick people but also in the case of young people who have still to learn the art of living.

In one sense, Mistry's handling of human relationships, which

determines the very structure of 'belonging', can be seen as a strategic device to highlight the enigma of cosmopolitanism "where races and religions live side by side and cheek by jowl in peace and harmony" (138). Mistry's views of 'belonging' and human relationships find an echo in his view of Bombay. Bombay, in the words of Vikram Kapoor, "endures because it gives and receives. Within this warp and weft is woven the texture of it social fabric, the spirit of tolerance, acceptance, generosity. Anywhere else in the world, in those so-called civilized places like England and America, such terrible conditions would lead to revolution" (136). If relationships are broken one feels what Mistry calls "a vague pang of abandonment" (3). What Mistry gives us in *Family Matters* is an eclectic and highly sophisticated understanding of different types of relationships which make a sense and demonstrate an insistent concern with the possibility of belonging and living. A sense of mistrust may thwart the very purpose of human relationship, thus, affecting the nature of 'belonging'.

To sum up, *Family Matters* is steeped in human values highlighting the necessity of belonging, mutual understanding, generosity, tolerance which are the natural ingredients of healthy human relationships. True, Mistry's novel is a telling comment on the nature of 'belonging'. Seen from this angle, the novel is about the dignity of human relationships which adds grace and illumination to the thematic design of the novel.

WORKS CITED

Blackburn, Simon. *Being Good: A Short Introduction to Ethics.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Kanaganayakam, Chelva. "Finding a Balance in Rohinton Mistry's Fiction". *Rohinton Mistry: An Anthology of Recent Criticism.* Eds. Anjali Gera Roy, Meena T. Pillai. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2007. 29-39.

Mistry, Rohinton. *Family Matters.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002.

———. Interview with Stacey Gibson. *University of Toronto Magazine.* Summer 2002. 20-25.

Morey, Peter. *Rohinton Mistry: Contemporary World Writers.* Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004.

TRANSLATING PROTEST: TWO NAZMS OF FAIZ

S.A. Hamid

Translation, like life, is an illusion, but to strive is human nature. The translator, like Sisyphus, is the absurd hero; he pushes the rock with all his energy towards the top of the mountain, knowing very well that it will roll down when he is close to the top every time: "The struggle itself towards the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy" (Albert Camus 111). It is the same with translating Faiz. Translation, which earlier was held to be a transaction between two languages and was considered to be a problem of Linguistics, has come to be regarded as a negotiation between two cultures, those of the Source Language and the Target Language, language being a product of culture (Harish Trivedi, "Translating Culture vs. Cultural Translation" 191).

Although, unlike the ghazal, the nazm is not alien to the English literary tradition, being somewhat close to the lyric, yet its translation is nevertheless a daunting task. This is mainly because of the cultural backdrop of Urdu, which evolved in India as a result of the confluence of the three languages, Arabic, Persian and Turkish, with Hindi accompanied by a meeting of the two cultures, Indian/ Hindu and Persian/Muslim. In translating from Urdu to English, a composite Indian culture is confronted with a largely monolithic Western culture and this cultural space has to be negotiated by the translator. An important feature of Urdu poetry is its freedom from the burden and confines of gender. 'Wo' may refer to male or female, lover or God and, in poets like Faiz, the Revolution.

Another significant aspect of Urdu poetry is its oral tradition embodied in the Mushaira in which the audience, which includes semi-literates, participates in a unique cultural experience, proving T.S.Eliot's dictum, "Genuine poetry can communicate before it is understood". Often, when a popular composition of a poet is sung by some famous singer, the rapport is tremendous. One such event was in Lahore in 1985, when the celebrated singer Iqbal Bano, wearing a saree as an expression of defiance to General Zia-ul-Haq, sang "*Hum Dekhenge*", the popular nazm of Faiz. The response of the 50,000 strong crowd was ecstatic and the air reverberated with claps

and shouts of encore. There was a deafening roar when she sang "*Sab taj uchale jayenge/Sab takht giraye jayenge*". The personal had become the voice of the people. Such was the magic of Faiz.

Protest is not only an integral part of Literature, but also the mark of a vibrant mind and a healthy society. From times immemorial, the tension between the individual and society has found its expression in literature. It is first the poet who translates his protest into poetry. This involves the use of certain recurrent phrases, metaphors and symbols. In the popular song "It's all over now, Baby Blue", written and sung by Bob Dylan, the tone of challenge and defiance is evident (Bob Dylan, 289). The social change he is talking about in this last stanza of the song is expressed in a warning tone of the impending doom for the exploiters who should get ready to run for their lives as the oppressed are now "standing in the clothes" that they once wore. In other poems, the tone is not one of challenge, but of helplessness and pain, and the poet uses religious symbolism as Edith Sitwell does in "Still Falls the Rain" (1-4).

I shall now attempt to translate the nazm of Faiz, "*Hum Dekhenge*". First the nazm:

Hum Dekhenge
Lazim hai ke hum bhi dekhenge
Wo din ke jiska vaada hai
Jo loh-e-azal pe likha hai
Hum dekhenge.

Jab zulm-o-sitam ke koh-e-garan
Rui ki tarah ud jaayenge
Hum mehkoomon ke paon taley
Ye dharti dhad dhad dhadkegi
Aur ahl-e-hakam ke sar oopar
Jab bijli kad kad kadkegi
Hum dekhenge.

Jab arz-e-khuda ke kaabe se
Sab but uthwaye jayenge
Hum ahl-e-safa mardood-e-haram
Masnad pe bithaye jayenge
Sab taj uchaale jayenge
Sab takht giraye jayenge

Hum dekhenge.

Bas naam rahega Allah ka
Jo ghayab bhi hai hazir bhi
Jo naazir bhi hai manzar bhi
Uthega analhaq ka naara
Jo main bhi hoon aur tum bhi ho
Aur raaj karegi khalq-e-khuda
Jo main bhi hoon aur tum bhi ho
Hum dekhenge
Laazim hai ke hum bhi dekhenge
Hum dekhenge.

Now my translation:

We shall witness
It is certain we shall also witness
That promised day
Written on the tablet of eternity
We shall witness.

When the impregnable mountains of tyranny
Will disperse in the air like cotton flakes
Under the feet of the subjugated
This earth shall pulsate like hammer-beats
And on the heads of the despots
Lightning shall crack
We shall witness.

When from the Kaaba of the proclaimed God
All idols will be removed
We the pure, till then outcasts
Shall be seated on high
All crowns will be tossed up
All thrones toppled
We shall witness.

Only the Word shall remain
Who is hidden as well as present
Who is spectator as well as spectacle
And shouts of "I am the Truth" shall rise
Which is both you and me
And then will rule God's Creation
Which is both you and me

We shall witness
It is certain we shall also witness
We shall witness.

In this poem, Faiz has used Islamic symbolism, juxtaposing it in the contemporary political context and this poses a challenge to the translator. It is difficult for the Western readers to give the same psycho-emotional response to this poem as they would to a poem like "Still Falls the Rain" or "Paradise Lost" in which Christian symbolism has been used. Faiz, though a Communist, was born and brought up as a Muslim and he, therefore, uses Islamic symbolism in his poetry which finds a deeper psycho-emotional response from the Muslims and the Urdu-speaking population because of the cultural backdrop of Urdu. He starts with the Promised Day, when the Promised Messiah will come to bring about the renaissance of Islam, but in the very next stanza, it becomes clear that the Promised Day Faiz is referring to is the success of the Revolution. He then uses onomatopoeia like '*dhad dhad*' and '*kad kad*' for which I could find the closest phrases, 'pulsate like hammer-beats' and 'lightning shall crack', which, however, are approximations and cannot convey the rhythmic effect of the original. In the next stanza, he uses the Islamic symbolism of the removal of the idols from the Kaaba by the Holy Prophet of Islam after the Conquest of Mecca. The phrase, '*arz-e-khuda ke Kaabe*' poses a problem and I feel that it can best be translated as 'the Kaaba of the proclaimed God' in the context of the poem, the proclaimed God and idols being the despot and his deputies. The metonyms '*taj*' and '*takht*' have their equivalents in English, but without the alliteration of the original.

It is the last stanza which is most problematic; it begins with a return to the state before Genesis, when there was only God. I,therefore, use 'Word' instead of 'God' as it is more appropriate in English, keeping in view its cultural backdrop. But after listing some qualities of the Almighty, he alludes to '*Analhaq*', 'I am the Truth', of the sufi Mansoor Al-Hallaj, who was executed on charges of heresy in 922 A.D. as the Orthodoxy understood this phrase to mean that he was claiming himself to be God, since '*Al-Haq*' or 'The Truth' is one of the 99 names of Allah in Islam. The phrase is close to the

Sanskrit, 'Aham Brahmasmi", the idea that God is found within one's Self, but quite alien to the Church, and therefore elicits a deeper response from the readers in the East than those of the West. True, Faiz seems to protest as much against established religion as against social injustice. The return to the 'Word' can be taken to be a return to the Commune of the pre-feudal society, or as an extension, the godless commune after the success of the Revolution.

I now attempt to translate another nazm of Faiz, "*Mujhse pehli si mohabbat*", which is a landmark in Urdu poetry, marking a break from the tradition of the all-important beloved. As Agha Shahid Ali observes that in this poem "Faiz breaks from Urdu's traditional way of looking at the Beloved. Not only does he refuse to despair but, in a radical departure from convention, asks the Beloved — even while acknowledging her immense importance — to accept his social commitment as more important than their love."(Preface, 3). First, the poem:

Mujhse pehli si mohabbat mere mehboob na maang
Maine samjha tha ke tu hai to darakhshan hai hayat
Tera gham hai to gham-e-daher ka jhagda kya hai
Teri surat se hai aalam mein baharon ko sabaat
Teri aankhon ke siwa duniya mein rakha kya hai
Tu jo mil jaaye to taqdeer nigun ho jaaye
Yun na tha, maine faqat chaha tha yun ho jaaye
Aur bhi dukh hain zamaane mein mohabbat ke siwa
Rahatein aur bhi hain wasl ki rahat ke siwa

Anginat sadiyon ke tareek bahimana tilism
Resham-o-atlas-o-kamkhab mein bunwaaye hue
Ja baja bikte hue kucha-o-baazar mein jism
Khaak mein lithde hue khoon mein nehlaey hue
Jism nikle hue amraaz ke tannuron se
Peep behti hui galte hue nasuron se
Laut jaati hai udhar ko bhi nazar kya kijiye
Ab bhi dilkash hai tera husn magar kya kijiye
Aur bhi dukh hain zamaane mein mohabbat ke siwa
Rahatein aur bhi hain wasl ki rahat ke siwa
Mujhse pehli si mohabbat mere mehboob na maang

Now, my translation:

Don't ask me to love you, my love, like before.

I had believed that your presence made life resplendent
Pining for you eclipsed the sorrows of the world
Your face gave permanence to spring
What was there in life but your eyes
To possess you would give my fate fulfillment
It was not so, I had only wished it to be so.
There are sorrows in this world other than love
Pleasures other than love-making.

The dark, barbaric magic of countless centuries
Woven on silk, satin and brocade
Bodies being sold in markets and lanes
Bathed in blood, covered with dust
Bodies baked in disease
Pus dropping from rotting ulcers
My eyes turn towards them, what to do?
Your beauty still attracts, but what to do?
There are sorrows in this world other than love
Pleasures other than love-making.
Don't ask me to love you, my love, like before.

If we look at the translations of this nazm by Agha Shahid Ali(5) and Sarvat Rahman(29-30), Ali has left out two lines(14,15)of the poem and has spent 24 lines to translate the remaining 18 lines, making it sound more like a paraphrase. Rahman has stuck to the 20 lines of the original but has used a rhyme scheme different from that of the original poem, which only succeeds in making it sound artificial. I have not used any kind of rhyme scheme in the poem. It was difficult to find the appropriate English equivalent of the Urdu word '*wasl*' in line 9. Ali has used the single word 'love' to cover both 'mohabbat' and '*wasl*' while Rahman has used "lovers' mingling" for '*wasl*'. I have used the more modern 'love-making' instead of 'union' or "lovers' meeting", and 'pleasures' in place of 'comforts' (Ali) and 'joys'(Rahman), as 'pleasure' goes well with 'love-making'. I have only pointed out a few major differences between the three translations without any intention of proving that mine is better than the other two. The rhythm and music of the original cannot, of course, be captured in translation but I have tried my best to push the rock as close to the top of the mountain as I possibly could.

In this paper, I have made an attempt to analyze how Faiz has

translated his protest against social injustice and tyranny into his poetry through the use of literary devices that have been intricately woven together on 'silk, satin and brocade', and the problems that a translator encounters while translating his poetry of protest in a language rooted in an alien culture. However, in the poetry of social and political protest, which speaks out against tyranny or social injustice and inequality, the imagery largely used in it is often associated with a particular political ideology which may be familiar to people across cultures. It is, for instance, not very difficult to find the appropriate English equivalents of phrases like, "*Sab taj uchale jayenge/Sab takht giraye jayenge*" or, "*Jism nikle hue amraaz ke tannuron se/Peep behti hui galte hue nasuron se*". The problem areas are the culture-specific words or symbols like the religious symbols used in "*Hum Dekhenge*". It is, perhaps, comparatively easier to translate a nazm of protest having corresponding examples in the English literary tradition than an innocuous sounding philosophical couplet of a ghazal of Ghalib, in which both the form and philosophy are alien to the English literary tradition.

Faiz lived at a time when social protest was not only fashionable, but in many poets it also rose straight from the heart. Authentic voices like Sahir Ludhianvi and Faiz Ahmad Faiz did not let their poetry of protest fall into the rut of political propaganda, but gave us poems that strike us with their depth of feeling and genuine emotion. This is one reason why the poetry of Faiz continues to strike a chord in the hearts of people, perhaps reminding them of the passion they have lost.

WORKS CITED

Ali, Agha Shahid. *The Rebel's Silhouette.* New Delhi: OUP, 1991. Print.

Camus, Albert. *The Myth of Sisyphus.* Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975. Print.

Dylan, Bob. *Bob Dylan: Writings and Drawings.* London: Panther Books, Granada Publishing Ltd , 1984. Print.

Rahman, Sarvat. *100 Poems by Faiz Ahmad Faiz.* New Delhi: Abhinav Publications & Hind Pocket Books, 2009. Print.

Trivedi, Harish. "Translating Culture vs. Cultural Translation" in *Translation and Culture: Indian Perspectives*, ed. GJV Prasad. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2010.

PROBING INTO THE PSYCHIC DEPTHS OF CONSCIOUS/ SUBCONSCIOUS/ UNCONSCIOUS: A READING OF GITA MEHTA'S *A RIVER SUTRA*

Anupama Chowdhury

Gita Mehta is an Indian writer born in a renowned Oriya family of freedom fighters. Her books have been on the bestseller lists in Europe, the US and India. The subject of both her fiction and non-fiction is focused on India: its culture and history, and the Western perception of it. As an Indian writer who has also lived in England and the US, Mehta was ideally placed to observe the spectacle of European and American pilgrims interacting with their hosts. *A River Sutra* is a serious probe not only in mythology but also in the psychic depths of the conscious/ subconscious/ unconscious.

In *A River Sutra* Mehta presents seemingly unconnected stories, stories about Hindu and Jain ascetics, courtesans and minstrels, Muslim clerics and music teachers, tribal folk beliefs and the anthropologists who study them. What bind these stories together are two things: the Narmada River and a "sutra" which literally means a thread or a string. In the case of this novel, the "sutra" is the theme of love that runs through all the stories, threading them loosely together. Each story revolves round the single issue of survival. Almost all the characters come to the bank of Narmada to attain peace and renunciation.

The central character is an I.A.S Officer, who, after retirement, chooses to be the manager of a Guest House on the banks of the Narmada River in the Vindhya range. Since at this spot, there are the pilgrimage centres of Hindus, Jains, Buddhists and Muslims, he constantly comes across many such pilgrims. Mehta gives very little information about this narrator. The reader never knows his name, much less the secrets of his heart. It is through this nameless man that the reader learns the stories of uncommon pain and joy that the narrator has collected during his tenure as the manager of this government rest house on the banks of the Narmada River.

In all the stories depicted in *A River Sutra*, people are motivated by desires, fears, and conflicts of which they are unaware.

They are unconscious of the forces which are stored in our memory, and are repressed. This part, the unconscious section or sub-system of the mind, lies below the level of consciousness, and it organizes their current experiences and emotions. The unconscious is dynamic, and is always at work, controlling them from the very depths of their being. There are many defences by which they keep the unconscious under check. "Transference" and "Projection" are two of these defences. There is also what is called "Regression", a short return to the past which is relived. Most of the stories can best be interpreted through Freud's interpretation of the conscious, unconscious and subconscious and the theory of the Collective Unconscious developed by Jung. According to Freud the impulse to avoid all "unpleasure" governs all psychic activity and is a primary process that seeks immediate gratification. This could be through, sometimes, even hallucination, but the end result is always disillusionment and unpleasure.

Another important notion in Freud is the idea of "repression", which is the storehouse of all unfulfilled desires of traumatic past events and experiences that are forced out of the conscious-preconscious into the realm of the unconscious. This storehouse of traces has a strong influence on all human actions. That part of the psyche which retains and transmits the common psychological inheritance of mankind is the collective unconscious. The contents of the collective unconscious are called "archetypes" which means they are original (i.e., primal), inherited patterns, or forms of thought and experience. We humans automatically inherit the outlines of these archetypes, fill them in with colours and details of our individual experiences, attach meaning to them, and project them into the outer world. When an archetype appears in a dream in its negative or most primitive guise, it can disrupt our sleep in terrifying nightmares. Each person has an unconscious, part of it very personal indeed, and part of it is the same for all human beings. This part is the collective unconscious where the archetypes are stored. Jung's idea of archetypes exists and remains in some kind of human awareness through generations, independent of time and place. Each person has an unconscious, part of it very personal indeed, and part

of it is the same for all human beings. The personal unconscious contains such material as actual personal memories and experiences that have been forgotten or repressed, and the rest belongs to the collective unconscious. Myths do have lots of similarities, no matter what culture or time they come from, and these similarities can easily be described in a manner approaching that of archetypes. Myths are born out of the collective unconscious, therefore made of archetypes. The village deity referred to in Chapter One is an example of such an archetype:

> Indeed, the Vano village deity is a stone image of a half woman with the full breasts of a fertility symbol but the torso of a coiled snake, because the tribals believe they once ruled a great snake kingdom until they were defeated by the Gods of the Aryans. (6)

The collective unconscious finds a vent in the celebrations of tribal rituals. The Narmada River, itself, is steeped in mythology. Mehta contemplates the river thus:

> It is said that Shiva, Creator and Destroyer of worlds, was in an ascetic trance so strenuous that rivulets of perspiration began flowing from his body down the hills. The stream took on the form of a woman... Her inventive variations so amused Shiva that he named her Narmada, the Delightful one, blessing her with words: 'You shall, be forever holy, forever inexhaustible.' (8-9)

Shankaracharya's poem on the river is a sublime hymn to Siva's daughter. She is Siva's kripa (Grace), Surasa (Cleanser), Rewa (Dancing deer). She is Delight and at the same time is also the evoker of Narma (lust). She is twice born, first of penance and then of love. If she evokes desire she also soothes. The serpent of desire inflamed by her is also tamed on her banks. Myth is thus the central informing power that gives archetypal significance to the ritual of self discovery.

Analysis of the stories helps us to contextualize psychoanalytic criticism in these narratives. In "The Executive's Story", the protagonist, Nitin Bose, while staying in a tea estate falls in love with a tribal woman. He spends the first few months in almost a trance, so engrossed was he with her charms. She would tell him of tribal beliefs and sing tribal songs abounding in folklores and myths. One such myth follows the archetypal pattern:

> She told me tales of a great serpent kingdom lying inches beneath the soil.

> She spoke to me of charms that gave men the strength of elephants in rut and of magic performed during the eclipse of the moon when a man's soul could be captured inside the two halves of a coconut. (126-127)

After a few months Bose leaves her and comes back to Calcutta. Afraid of society's regulations he cannot confess his immoral act to anybody else, so he confesses it in his diary. Thus he buried his immoral act in his mind and the effect of his suppression resulted in his utter madness. Unable to tolerate his guilt, he breaks down. The unfulfilled desires of traumatic past events and experiences are forced out of the conscious into the realm of the unconscious. An example from the text will suffice:

> Unable to tolerate my guilt, one night I opened the door leading into the garden. I could still hear her singing but there was no one there. Then I heard her call, "Nitin. Nitin Bose."... Nothing touched me but I felt as if a pump had been forcibly placed over my lips and nose. I gasped for air, unable to breathe. Over the noise of my own suffocation I heard laughter, then the striking of a match. (133)

He comes to the Narmada to be exorcised from the spirit by offering worship to a tribal God on its bank: "If your Sahib wants to recover his mind he must worship the goddess at any shrine that overlooks the Narmada river. Only that river has been given the power to cure him" (97). Thus, a tormented soul, Bose, ultimately takes refuge on the banks of the Narmada.

But why did Bose suffer so much? The tribals have their own answers. It is not a woman who has taken possession of Bose's soul. Instead the Goddess who had to be propitiated is "desire":

> The goddess is just the principle of life. She is every illusion that is inspiring love. That is why she is greater than all the gods combined. Call her what you will, but she is what a mother is feeling for a child. A man for a woman... But desire is the origin of life. For thousands of years over tribals have worshipped it as the goddess. You have heard the pilgrims praying, " 'Save us from the serpent's venom.' Well, Sir, the meaning of the prayer is as follows. The serpent in question is desire." (142-143)

Let us take another example. In "The Courtesan's story", there is a reference to an archetype: "Honeybees are said to circle the Immortal's head, Sahib. The bandits believe if they are strung by one of the honeybees, they cannot be killed in a police shootout." (156)

While the two stories cited above are steeped in myths and

archetypes and show the working of the Freudian subconscious through dreams, nightmares and madness, the other stories in *A River Sutra* depict the workings of the psyche in a different way. In "The Monk's Story", the monk, Ashok, is the first of many people to tell the narrator his story. He is probably only thirty year old, and yet he is already tired of a world that offered him anything he wanted: extreme wealth, a loving family, and the opportunity to better other people's lives through charity. The monk has willingly decided to become a monk in a religion where, as other monks tell him, he will suffer almost constant pain. The narrator cannot understand Ashok's adherence to a religious order where the highest level of enlighten-ment will probably come from starving oneself to death. The old Muslim mullah Tariq Mia finally explains that the Jain's story was about the human heart and its secrets. As Tariq Mia seeks to en-lighten the narrator about the true meaning of the monk's story, he offers him another story, one of a teacher's love for his student. This story, like the monk's, is meant to show the secrets of the human heart. A music teacher, Master Mohan fell in love with the sound of a blind pupil's perfect voice. Imrat's music represented a haven to Master Mohan whose own life had been filled with disap-pointment. Braving the wrath of his family, he adopts the boy and helps him to express his talent. He selflessly helps to further the boy's career. His greedy wife is outraged by her husband's actions. Out of revenge and greed she arranges for the boy to sing for a wealthy patron. Wary of the man's motives and seeking to protect the boy, Master Mohan refuses the rich man's request for a private concert. Tragically, as Imrat sings the devotional songs in front of the wealthy man, the latter slits his throat. Devastated, Master Mohan makes his pilgrimage to the Muslim saint Amir Rumi's tomb, where Imrat had dreamed of singing. Instead of going back to his wife and children, Master Mohan throws himself in front of a train. If the rich man killed the boy so that no one would hear his voice again, Master Mohan kills himself because he cannot imagine life without the boy. Hearing Master Mohan's tale, Tariq Mia can only assume that the "great sahib" killed the boy so that he could share his voice with no one else. But the human mind is very complicated and the working

of the unconscious is difficult to predict. In each story that the nameless narrator hears, he learns more about what his friend Tariq Mia calls the "secrets of the human heart".

In "The Minstrel's Story", an ascetic, Nagababa, rescues a little girl from prostitution. He brings her to the banks of river Narmada where he spends a life of rigorous penance and austerity. He names her Uma and she learns the art of simple. She learns devotional songs and Nagababa makes her sing in different temples. She grows up to be a woman of exceptional talent. But Nagababa leaves her and she lives the life of a minstrel, singing the devotional songs. After many years Nagababa comes back and by a strange coincidence meets her. But he is now no longer the naked ascetic: "....His body was emaciated, except for the belly falling over his crossed legs in such a manner it was impossible for me to see whether he was completely naked or wearing a loincloth" (234) but Professor Shankar, an archaeologist. But why did Nagababa leave the life of an ascetic after so many years of austerity? The story provides no answer and we can only guess the workings of his mind.

The varieties of love that touch the heart are as endless as the stories of the river Narmada. This reminds us of Rama Nair's apt observation:

> The protagonist at the end of the novel is no longer detached and complacent about his choice of "Vanaprasthi". The river sutras unsettle his subconscious, and unconsciously and ironically, that is his 'epiphanic moment'. In interpreting and systematizing the meanings available to provide a coherent vision of life, the protagonist is compelled to question those values that he had taken for granted. It is here that *A River Sutra* comes a full circle. (190)

The stories are open ended and can have multiple interpretations. *A River Sutra* thus becomes an embodiment of the art and craft of Indian storytelling, seamlessly weaving separate stories together in a wider framework producing forceful narratives.

WORKS CITED

Mehta, Gita. *A River Sutra*. New Delhi: Penguin,1993. Print.

Nair, Rama. "The Myth of Redemption in Gita Mehta's *A River Sutra*." In *Fiction of the Nineties*. Ed. Veena Noble Das and R. K. Dhawan. New Delhi: Prestige, 1998. Print.

JAYASHANKAR PRASAD'S INTERPRETATION OF ROMANTICISM (CHHAYAVAD): AN ANALYSIS

K.K. Sharma

It is impossible to define and interpret comprehensively and definitively the much discussed literary term known as 'Romanticism' which has been defined differently by different critics and exponents of it, and hence the infinite variety of its interpretations.[1] The present paper is intended to bring to light one of the Indian views of it — a view which, though embedded in the ancient Sanskrit scholars' and poets' cogitations on art and poetry, is characterized by originality and freshness of approach. What I propose to do is to analyse and assess the concept of Romanticism (Chhayavad) as enunciated by Jayashankar Prasad, the greatest and most original theorist and practitioner of it in Hindi literature — indeed, the very "architect of the Romantic movement in Hindi", to quote the words of the distinguished Hindi critic Shanti Swarup Gupta ("The Contemporary Literary Scene," *Jayashankar Prasad: His Mind and Art*, ed. Dr Nagendra 10). He had perused the celebrated Western thinkers like Plato and others as is evident from his critical essays, but, surprisingly enough, we have no evidence of his familiarity with the nineteenth-century English poets of the Romantic revival. While Sumitranandan Pant, his renowned contemporary Romantic (Chhayavadi) poet, admits the influence of Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats — the great champions of Romanticism in English literature — on him, we do not find a single reference to any of the British Romantic poets in Prasad's writings. His cogitations on Romanticism (Chhayavad), which are contained in his brilliant, invaluable essay, "Yatharthavad and Chhayavad" ("Realism and Romanticism"), are undoubtedly original, based on the ancient Indian literary tradition and his own fairly long and rich experience as poet upto the mature age of forty-three. Here I should point out the glaring difference between Prasad and Wordsworth — the leader of the literary movement known as 'Romantic Revival': while the English Romantic poet propounded the manifesto of the poetry of Romantic Revival at an early stage of his poetic career with the publication

of his landmark work titled *The Lyrical Ballads* which included his first masterpiece named "Tintern Abbey", Prasad formulated his poetic creed known as Chhayavad (Romanticism) in 1932 after the publications of his monumental, mature poetic works such as *Jharana, Aansu, Lahar* and a part of his epoch-making epic *Kamayani*, of course unpublished till then). Obviously, the Hindi poet-critic was fully mature at the age of forty-three when he enunciated his idea of Romanticism in contrast to the young Wordsworth of twenty-eight years of age at the time of the publication of his famous, revolutionary preface to *The Lyrical Ballads* in 1798. Thus, an attempt to examine his views on the subject, I am sure, will be illuminating and rewarding to all of us as no one, interested in literature, can afford to ignore a fresh exposition of this significant, universal literary phenomenon called 'Romanticism'.

Prasad initiates the discussion on Romanticism in modern Hindi poetry with the assertion that when poetry, instead of the simple description of some event related to the Puranic age and mythology or the physical beauty of a woman of any place, native or foreign, began to express the deeply felt personal experience founded on intense awareness (*vedanā*), it was given the name of Romantic (Chhayavadi) poetry. As opposed to the prevalent *rītikalīn* poetry of the preceding age — viz. the poetry of Keshavdas, Bihari, Dev, Matiram, Padmakar, Guval, Sunder and others — in which there was a predominance of the description of the external life, the new kind of poetry focused on the unique mode of expressing the variegated, new types of emotions which were embedded in inwardness. The minute, subtle and powerful feelings also created an aura of strangeness around the descriptions of the external concrete objects/ forms. The then prevalent *rītikalīn* metric forms and diction failed to express adequately the innermost, profound poetic emotions and ideas. Hence, as Prasad opines, the need for a new poetic style, sentence structure and diction/ word-order to accomplish the task before his contemporaries — the task of projecting the intended interior landscape. The collocation (*shabda vinyasa*) took a new form with such a glow as it created a sort of restlessness to give effective expression to the subtle, finer shades of profound emotions and ideas. In support of his assertion, he cites the following two lines of the celebrated Sanskrit poet Bhavabhuti:

> vyatishjati padārthānāṁtaṁ kopi hetuh I
> na khalu bahirūpādhīn prītayah saṁshryate II
> (There is an internal element which binds/unites things together.
> Feelings do not need external assistance in any way)

Thus, with the advent of new Romanticism in Hindi literature, the poetic activity moved from the external world to the inner springs of life. As a result, the new mode of expression, used by the poet to communicate the new kind of sensibility, could not be easily and fully comprehended at first in Hindi world, and the term 'Chhayavad' was employed as an expression of "denunciation and ridicule" (Ramesh Chandra Shah, *Jaishankar Prasad* 22) for the new poetry which was declared to be just a shadow of reality. But Prasad points out that this misconception soon evaporated as words, when used differently, have the power to create new independent meanings. And even the words put near the particular word, which is employed in a sense different from the conventional one, contribute to the new connotative meaning of that especially used word. Prasad, thus, accentuates the fact that the use of words in a special way plays a big, significant role in the making of a language. Indeed, the communication of the sense of a word depends on its usage, and in linguistics synonyms and antonyms bear witness to it. It is due to the extraordinary importance of this power of word-meaning that in literature the unique meaning of the connotative usage of word became well-accepted and was admired. Apropos of this, Prasad cites the celebrated exponent of the *Dhvani* theory of Sanskrit poetics (Dhvanikāra), Anandavardhan: "pratīyamāna punranyadeva vastvastvaista vānaisau mahakavīnāma" ("The great poet's word communicates a unique meaning, a meaning other than the commonly known one").

Prasad rightly emphasizes that this unique form of poetic expression possesses its own independent beauty. He quotes the following statement of an ancient Sanskrit scholar in support of his view:

> muktafaleshucháyāyāsatralatvamivāmtarā
> pratibhāti yadamgeshu tallavanyamihochyate I
> (That which is the image of liquidity inside a pearl is the element which is

called beauty in the limbs of the body)

In other words, as there is a shade of liquidity inside a pearl, so there is a liquid glow in the human body and this is called beauty. Prasad points out that in Sanskrit literature this beauty is described as shade (chhāyā) and poetic charm (vaicaceati). No wonder the eminent Sanskri critic Kuntak writes in *Vakroktijīvita*:

pratibhā prathamodabhedsamaye yatra vakratā
shabdābhidheyayoritah sfuratīva vibhāvyate I
(As the creative imagination begins to work, a certain brilliance issues from within in regard to both word and meaning).

The natural, unique brilliance of the harmony between word and meaning inevitably produces poetic charm, imaginative beauty and exquisite shade. A masterly, skilful poet is easily able to create such a dazzling poetic charm and effect. In this striking mode of skilful poetic expression, the uniqueness of word and meaning is exquisitely present, and it is often different from the well-accepted, common usage. According to Kuntak, such a striking poetic expression is different from the simple ordering of words in relation to their meanings often found in other branches of knowledge (in Kuntak's words, "shastrādiprasidhshabdārthopnibandhavyatireki"). This unique poetic charm (ramyachhāyāntarsparshī vakratā) may be present in the single word as well as in the total composition. In Kuntak's opinion, this dazzling , resplendent imaginative beauty of language unmistakably embodies poetic charm. Prasad cites the two lines of the distinguished Sanskrit critic, Kuntak, in this connection:

parasprasya shobhaye bahavah patitāh kvacaita I
prakarā janayantyetām chitracharyamanoharāma II
(When the varied units in the language-structure of a poem are cohered and combined so as to add to the beauty of one another, they create many-faceted artistic charm).

Prasad points out that sometimes the beautiful use of pronouns and other figures of speech for the purpose of giving effective poetic expression to the deeply felt inner response to the highly sensitive objects is the cause of the unique Romantic style of poetry. He explains it with the help of the expression, "Those eyes say something". In this example "Those eyes" imparts the expression a Romantic charm. To explain his point further and more clearly, he

cites the following four lines from a Sanskrit poem:

nidranimīlitādrashyo madmamtharāyā
napyarthavamti na cha yāni nirarthakāni I
adyāpi me varatanormadhuraani tasayā-
stanyaksaraani hridaye kimapi dhvanamti II

Prasad states that the propounder of the *Dhvani* theory (Doctrine of Suggestion), Ānandavardhana, however, considers it as beauty residing in suggestiveness. He quotes two lines from Ānandavardhana's *Dhvaniyāloka*:

yastyalaksyakramo vyamgyo dhvanivarnapadadisau I
vākye samghatnayanam ca saprabamdhaepi dīpyate II

This suggestiveness glows in literary composition, sentences, feet, letters and sylables. "Those" in the above-quoted expression "Those eyes" causes a strange restlessness because of its peculiar expression. In support of his assertion, Prasad cites Ānandavardhana:

mukhyā mahākavi giramalamkrati bhratāmapi I
pratīyamānacaceaayaisabhusaa lajjaeva yosaitām II

Prasad holds that this apparent, purported shade of inner beauty (pratīyāman chhāyā) in the writings of great poets is like the captivating bashfulness of a young lady. What makes a pretty young woman really beautiful is her innate, natural shyness, and not the ornaments which she uses for outer decoration; it is not mere coyness or veiled modesty, but bashfulness which inescapably accompanies the natural feminine charm of a young maiden, and this constitutes the aura of beauty all around her. The same is true of genuine good poetry. Prasad accentuates that in Sanskrit literature this inner beauty is achieved through a number of ways. Thus, the eminent Sanskrit literary theorist, Abhinava Gupta writes at one place: "parām durlabhām ceayām ātmarūptām yāmti I" (This unique, extraordinary poetic charm emanates from the inner self). It is undeniable that this rare poetic charm (durlabh chhāyā) was of immense importance in the golden era of Sanskrit poetry. It necessitated new experiments in the use of language, but its primary purpose was to communicate the uniqueness of the inner meaning of the felt experience. The examples of such expressions are in plenty in Sanskrit literature. The ancient Indian poets had successfully endeavoured to seek close resemblance and correspondence be-

tween similes. Also, they had experienced the eternal tranquility and quietness of nature. Apropos of this, Prasad cites the following two lines:

> saucaisaītala caṁdrikaplutā saicaranihsabdamanoharā daisah I
> prasamasaya manobhavasaya vā hradi tasayāpyatha hetutāṁ yayuh II
> (All sides are drenched/ bathed in clear and cool moonlight, and are rendered truly beautiful by ceaseless tranquility. They have deeply moved the heart of peace or the God of love).

Prasad asserts that in such poetic expressions the liquid, soft and smooth charm (chhāyā) is innately characterized by a rare strangeness. They undoubtedly fall in the category of figures of speech, but are certainly more than that. The figures of speech, which are based on such brilliant poetic expressions, are perhaps the ones about which Anandavardhana states: "telaṁkārāh paraṁ ceayaṁ yāṁti dhvanyāmngatām gatāh" (Auxiliars of *dhvani* [suggestion] these figures of speech measure greater heights).

Naturally, Prasad infers that Romanticism (Chhayavad) had established itself unequivocally in ancient Indian literature. Still, strangely enough, when such experiments were first made in Hindi poetry, some people, including the most influential scholarly critics like Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi[2] and Ram Chandra Shukla,[3] were startled and rather shocked; but notwithstanding the initial opposition, they had to accept this new mode of poetic expression, which was, as a matter of fact, the revival of the ancient poetic tradition after a long period. Needless to say, these felt, impassioned outpourings were necessary for the Hindi poetic world of the early twentieth century. The new form of poetic expression was actually not simple, indirect mode of expression, paranomasia (vakrokti). The main reason of the emergence of this new style of poetic expression known as Romanticism (Chhayavad) was that poetry took a new turn, a new tendency from the external/outward to the internal/inward. When the compulsive, intense awareness becomes absolutely inalienable from the consciousness and the innermost being, then the felt inner experience finds a natural expression in all profundity and minuteness. Prasad opines that such a Romanticism (Chhayavad) cannot be a curse to any literature or language. As a

matter of fact, language, along with its cultural improvements and reforms automatically moves forward towards this higher plane in order to welcome and encourage the creation of the highest possible literature.

In the beginning, the Hindi Romanticism (Chhayavad) followed unmistakably the old Indian literary tradition. Some people would see some sort of obscurity in the Romantic mode of poetry because of "the transgression of the popular usage" (atikrānta-prasadhvyavahārasarani), to quote the words of Kuntak. Prasad feels that it is possible that a poet is not able to forge complete harmony between his felt experience and his mode of expression, between matter and manner, and this might result in the disorganization or disintegration (vishraṁkhaltā) of expression, in the inaptness of his vocabulary or choice of words, being fashioned by the intellect and not touched by the heart. But certainly on principle such a type of Romanticism (Chhayavad) is not justifiable. In fact, Romanticism is not marked by obscurity, nor is it shadowy or divorced from reality. Also, it, as Prasad rightly avers, is not, in its essence, mysticism either. True, it is a commonplace of philosophical thought that nature is the shadow or reflection of the Universal Being, but it is wrong and misleading to propound the theory that Romanticism (Chhayavad) is created out of the poetic use of nature. No doubt, in modern poetry nature is quite commonly used as a background and also as a medium of self-expression and felt experiences, but it is erroneous to believe that all poetry, closely associated with nature, is Romantic (Chhayavadi).

In the concluding paragraph of his perceptive essay on this subject, Prasad holds that the Romantic glow in a work of art, according to the Indian view, depends, more than anything else, on the perfect fusion of felt asethetic experience and the way of expression. To sum up, suggestion (vyanjanâ), indication (lakshnikṭa), allusiveness, functional symbolism couched in beauty, and metaphoric brilliance together with effective expression of felt, personal experience — these, in Prasad's view, are the basic, patent characteristics of Indian concept of Romanticism (Chhayavad). In a word, like the liquid, inner glow of the pearl which we call beauty, only the

spontaneous, impassioned outpouring of deep feelings flowing from the inner being of the writer constitutes the exquisite Romantic mode of expression (kāmtimayi chhāyā), i.e. Romanticism (Jayashankar Prasad, *Kāvya aura Kalā tathā Anya Nibandha* 88).

One thing very interesting should be pointed out here. Hindi Romantic poetry of the early twentieth century with Prasad as its leader, along with Sumitranandan Pant and Nirala, presents a close parallel with the English Romantic poetry of the early nineteenth century initiated by Wordsworth and Coleridge: just as the former was a revolt and reaction against the *rītikalīn* poetic tradition of the preceding period (as practised by Keshavdas, Bihari and others), so the English Romantic poetry was a revolt and reaction against the pseudo/neo-classical poetry of the School of Dryden and Pope which flourished for more than a century from the second half of the seventeenth century down to the advent of Wordsworth and Coleridge with *The Lyrical Ballads* in 1798. Then, as the English Romantic poetry of the early nineteenth century was a revival of a dominant tendency of the age of Renaissance, so the Hindi Romantic poetry of the early twentieth century was not something absolutely new and strange but was, in a way, a revival of some of the salient trends of the classical Sanskrit literature as Prasad demonstrates with the help of instances from the old Sanskrit poetic tradition propounded by such great writers as Bhavbhuti, Anandavardhan, Kuntak and others. O.P. Govil aptly affirms in this connection: "Prasad's affirmation that the new poetry followed the best in the tradition of Sanskrit poetry and poetics shows that he was a revivalist and a traditionalist in the sense in which T.S. Eliot uses the term 'tradition'" ("Prasad's Poetic Creed," *Tears: Jayashankar Prasad's 'Aansoo'* 68). Both the Romantic movements, English and Hindi, referred to above, were the consequences of the sharp, radical reaction to the stereotypical, stale, and artificial poetic contents, metre and diction (gaudy and insane phraseology) of the respective preceding ages (in English the neo-classical age of Dryden and Pope, and in Hindi the *rītikal* centred around Keshavdas, Bihari and others). Thus, the early twentieth-century Hindi Romanticism (Chhayavad), as Nanddulare Vajpaye rightly asserts, "was a historical necessity as well as a philosophical rising (darshanikā abhyuthāna), and Prasad was of the definite opinion that philosophically this Romantic awakening was in the ancient Indian tradition of mysticism which India had forgotten for ages" ("Introduction," *Kāvya aura Kalā tathā Anya Nibandha* 16).

NOTES

1. The complexity and multiplicity of the literary term 'Romanticism' is evident from the fact that the celebrated critic F.L. Lucas makes a mention of 11,396 definitions of it in his famous book entitled *The Decline and Fall of the Romantic Ideal.*
2. Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, the renowned editor of the famous Hindi research journal titled *Saraswatī*, almost outright rejects Chhayavad as it is obscure and unclear: "I do not understand what people mean by Chhayavad. Perhaps they mean that in Chhayavadi (Hindi Romantic) poetry the shade of the meaning (bhava) falls somewhere else, away from the main subject" (Quoted in Dwarika Prasad Saxena, *Hindi ke Ādhunika Pratinidhi Kavi* 117-18).
3. Ram Chandra Shukla, one of the most eminent Professor-critics in Hindi, regards the Chhayavadi (Hindi Romantic) poetry as a typical poetic style of presenting the subject as suggestive shade and considers it as being written in the tradition of European phatasmata (anything illusory, a simple creation of fancy) as followed by the Bengali poetry of that period (*Hindi Sāhitya kā Itihāsa* [*History of Hindi Literature*] 668).

WORKS CITED

Govil, O.P. *Tears* (*Jaya Shankar Prasad's 'Aansoo'*, Translated into English Rhyming Verse). Aligarh: Shakun Publications, 1986.

Gupta, Shanti Swarup. "The Contemporary Literary Scene," *Jayashankar Prasad: His Mind and Art.* Ed. Dr Nagendra. Delhi: Prabhat Prakashan, 1989.

Prasad, Jayashankar. *Kavya aura Kala tatha Anya Nibandha.* New Delhi: Diamond Pocket Book (Pvt. Ltd.), 1988.

Saxena, Dwarika Prasad. *Hindi ke Adhunika Pratinidhi Kavi.* Agra: Vinod Pustak Mandir, 2006.

Shah, Ramesh Chandra. *Jaishankar Prasad.* New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1994.

Shukla, Ram Chandra. *Hindi Sahitya ka Itihāsa* [*History of Hindi Literature*]. Kashii: Kashi Nagari Pracharini Sabha, 1979.

Vajpaye, Nanddulare. "Introduction," *Kavya aura Kalā tathā Anya Nibandha.* New Delhi: Diamond Pocket Book (Pvt. Ltd.), 1988.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING IN *THE CHERRY ORCHARD* BY ANTON PAVLOVICH CHEKHOV

Raihan Raza

In the introduction to the *Selected Works* of Anton Chekov, Volume One, Maxim Gorky says that Chekhov is a "great and subtle artist" (19). Nowhere is this greatness and subtlety revealed better than in the play *The Cherry Orchard*. Though it is largely language which provides the clue to the meaning of his plays, but this meaning is also a ". . . product and manifestation . . . of particular social conditions, class-structures and power relationships that alter in the course of history" (Abrams 241).

Chekhov's play *The Cherry Orchard* portrays Russian society in a state of flux and marks the end of Feudalism and the rise of capitalism. It mirrors the sense of loss of Lyubov Ranevskaya and her aristocratic family. Right at the outset it is revealed that she is one who is left with no source of livelihood and has accrued great debts in order to sustain herself and her dependents. Though she is still the proud owner of the Cherry Orchard, and her ancestral home to which many a fond memory is attached but along with this she also associates the memory of her dead husband and son. Although she knows that within a few month's this orchard and the rest of the property will be auctioned if she does not succeed in clearing her debts before that, but she does not do much about it. The only way out of this dilemma is the one suggested by Lopakhin the son of a former serf who says:

> Your estate is only fifteen miles from town, the railway runs close by it, and if you agree to cut up the cherry orchard and the land along the river into building lots and lease them out for summer cottage, you'll get at least twenty-five thousand roubles a year out of it. (Chekhov 168)

But Gayev and Ranevskaya both find the idea unacceptable and Gayev retorts that their orchard is mentioned in the Encyclopaedia.

Lyubov Ranevskaya is a complex character, kind and compassionate, with a boundless capacity to bestow love as well as wealth on others. Though she is herself in dire straights, and desperately needs money for her own needs we see that she lends

money to Pishchik and even gives away a gold rouble to a wayfarer who begs her for some kopeks. She is a classic example of one who lives beyond her means. She emerges as an emotional person who has made impulsive and foolish decisions which are largely responsible for her problems. She acknowledges that her lover is "like a millstone tied round" (Chekhov 195) her neck, but she finally returns to him because he is ailing and she will care for him and nurse him. In the world of the play it is Ranevskaya's past which keeps her tied to the cherry orchard and a break with this past is essential if she has to move on. She made the wrong decision by marrying a man who was so fond of drinking that he lived the life of a drunkard and died prematurely because of it. Then, instead of learning her lesson from this, she falls in love with another man who is worse than her late husband. Thus the grim situation that Ranevskaya finds herself in is the consequence of her own deeds of omission and commission. This inability to make the right decision emerges as the hall-mark of Ranevskaya and her brother Gayev. Ranevskaya's nostalgia for a bygone era also prevents her from putting Lopakhin's plan, intended to bail her out of her economic problems, to good use.

Though the cherry orchard is a presence throughout the play and the entire action revolves around it, but its sale is part of reported action and bears testimony to Chekhov's technique of indirect action which adds to the subtlety of the play. Chekhov also makes deft use of the sound of breaking string to communicate meaning in *The Cherry Orchard*. This is a symbolic sound and no one in the play is sure about its source. The sound of breaking string helps to interpret the theme and marks a break with the past, be it the liberation of the serfs as is testified by Feers or when the cherry orchard along with Ranevskaya's estate stands on the verge of being sold or yet again when Feers the old ex serf who chose to continue living the life of a serf even after the liberation of the serfs lies down to rest at the end of the play and dies. Thus the old order becomes a part of history and the new order is born. Since at the verge of every momentous change this sound of breaking string is heard, it not only helps and prepares the reader/audience to accept

this change highlighting its inevitability but also "awakens dormant or suppressed experiences" of the reader/audience, so that the reader/audience relives has own similar "suppressed experiences" of loss and suffering and simultaneously sensitizing him to the feelings of others, awakening in him sympathy and even empathy. In *The Cherry Orchard* one sympathizes with Ranevskaya and her family as well as Lopakhin. Chekhov deftly creates an environment where in Ranevskaya's loss appears to be our own loss but is inevitable. On the other hand Lopakhin's gain too is perceived as part of our aspirations and our vision of the world as a level playing field where all are considered equal and have equal opportunities. Hence the old world order represented by the nobility must be destroyed and replaced by a new world order. Lopakhin represents this new order. He functions as a good contrast to Ranevskaya. Though he is hardworking which Ranevskaya is certainly not, he is out and out a materialist. He does not falter when opportunity knocks at his door and he not only purchases the orchard forgetting his gratitude to Ranevskaya but is insensitive enough to encourage the musical party to continue when he returns though Ranevskaya is heartbroken due to the sale of the cherry orchard. With the destruction of the cherry orchard where his forefathers had worked as serfs, he also wishes to obliterate the memory of their pain and humiliation and indeed of serfdom itself (Chekhov 201-202). But the play proposes that the belief that the abolition of serfdom, the granting of freedom and equality will necessarily bring about economic prosperity and the social and educational upliftment of the suppressed classes is an illusion. The success of Lopakhin with his flair for business cannot be quoted as a rule.

Chekhov uses irony to communicate meaning in the play. There is a complete reversal of roles when Lopakhin, the son of a former serf evicts the progeny of the nobility of yester years from their ancestral property. But tactfully, Chekhov hides the conflict so that it does not erupt in the form of dialogue or action. The dance party organized on the day on which the fate of their property is to be decided is inappropriate as well as ironic. He first suggests how to save her estate; but when she does not manage to retain it, he buys it himself exhibiting disregard for her feelings. It can be argued reading between the lines that he had an eye on it himself for quite some time realizing that it was a going to be auctioned. In this way there is an inherent ambiguity in the portrayal of the character of Lopakhin by Chekhov.

Ambiguity as a device is used by Chekhov to communicate meaning in *The Cherry Orchard.* He intentionally creates ambiguity by calling it a comedy when what the play communicates powerfully is a sense of loss. Its chief character Ranevskaya is kind and compassionate but blunders from one loss to another. Her brother Gayev who is a wastrel adds to this sense of loss. All this is quite pathetic and tragic and not in the least comic. The success of Lopakhin the son of a serf is one of the brighter aspects of the play, but this too is not comic. The surface or overt meaning given to the text of *The Cherry Orchard* by its author calling it a comedy is an attempt to "mask" (Abrams 242) the real meaning and status of the play. By saying that the attitude of Ranevskaya and her family towards the sale of the cherry orchard and the rest of their estate is comic Chekhov probably hopes to emerge as one who has an objective attitude towards the land owning class and is critical of their sloth and inaction. In the Russia of the period in which this play was written and produced ". . . a western-minded wealthy bourgeoisie and a growing working class, both products of the industrial development of the country — were slowly coming into play. Concurrently, the intellectual and political life of the nation began to show signs of awakening, and new, if long-distance, optimism was born" (Bakshy 1). At the time when *The Cherry Orchard* was written and staged, ordinary people were part of the theatre going public and hence Chekov balances the pathos of Ranevskaya's loss with Lopakhin's gain in the name of progress and development. Denying Chekhov's claim that *The Cherry Orchard* is a comedy however does not mean that it lacks the comic element totally. Incidents such as Trofimov falling down the staircase after his conversation with Ranevskaya which has unsettled him or Varya intending to beat Yapikhodov but ending up hitting Lopakhin who enters suddenly are minor happenings, which serve to lighten the overall mood

of the audience but certainly do not define the nature of the play.

The entire action of the play is deftly controlled through the central symbol of the play the cherry orchard which means different things to different people. To Ranevskaya the orchard is a symbol of the pride of her family and reminds her of her youth, her childhood, her innocence and her mother. Trofimov is reminded of slavery of cruelty and of suffering associated with serfdom and hence he views it from the political and moral angle. Lopakhin's approach towards the cherry orchard is largely utilitarian but at a crucial juncture he reveals that it is a symbol of serfdom, of suppression, oppression and humiliation for him and the fact that he has purchased it ensures that it will be destroyed so that the generations that spring from him may live in comfort, prosperity and dignity. Chekhov the author does not agree or disagree with any of the meanings or interpretations given to the central symbol of the play. Hence *The Cherry Orchard* can be read as a play that accepts the plurality of meaning as apposed to a single meaning that is fixed and universal. But the fact remains that Chekhov himself labelled it a comedy. This could have been necessity governed by the forces of consumption and was market driven as pointed out earlier. Chekhov may have also intentionally created ambiguity in order to generate controversy leading to a heightening of interest in the play. Nevertheless, whatever the aim of Chekhov may have been *The Cherry Orchard* effectively challenges the author and his authority by resisting being classified as a comedy. It is due to its multiplicity of meanings that *The Cherry Orchard* is a profound work of art that strikes a sympathetic chord in diverse minds and times. The language of the play brilliantly expresses lyrical emotions with a simplicity which is the hallmark of an accomplished writer whose forte is communication. Though "Chekov inherited and worked in the main tradition of nineteenth-century realism" (Williams 139) but in plays like *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Three Sisters* the ". . . sense of a general failure" (Williams 143) can be perceived which intensifies, leading to a sense of futility which became the hallmark of many a play written by Ionesco, Beckett, O Neil and Kaiser. We realize that we are not very far from the theatre of the absurd when in the last

speech of the play Feers who has been locked in, forgotten, mumbles: ". . . Life has gone by as if I'd never lived. (Lying down.) I'll lie down a bit. There's no strength left in you, none at all. Ah, you . . . good-for-nothing! (He lies motionless)" (Chekhov 213).

To end, "Chekhov approached the drama this way: trusting that by expressing his vision honestly, the proper form would evolve of itself. Technically, of course, such an approach created tremendous problems. For the drama, by its very nature, demands compactness and emotional climaxes, and Chekhov had to learn how to recreate life on the stage in a natural, yet ordered and interesting manner. Chekhov's solution for this dilemma, one of the great technical achievements of the modern stage, was to achieve a synthesis between theatricality and reality, guiding events which seem to – have no visible means of propulsion and developing a from which seems to be no form at all" (Brustein 141). Chekhov's attitude in all his plays, including *The Cherry Orchard,* is non-judgemental and objective both towards the reality that he reveals as well as the characters that he creates. Hence his plays serve as a good contrast to those of dramatists such as Ibsen and Strindberg who have a subjective attitude towards the "slice of life" (Chandra 10) that they deal with.

WORKS CITED

Abrams, M.H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms.* New Delhi: Thomson Business International India Pvt. Ltd., 2006.

Bakshy, Alexander (trans). *Seven Plays of Maxim Gorky.* New Haven; Yale University Press, 1946.

Brustein, Robert. *The Theatre of Revolt.* London: Methuen & co. Ltd., 1965.

Chandra, Lakshmi. *Interpretation of Literature: Interpreting Drama.* Hyderabad: Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, 1995.

Chekhov, Anton. *The Cherry Orchard. Selected Works, Volume Two Plays.* Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973.

Gorky, Maxim. "Anton Chekhov." Introduction. *Anton Chekhov: Selected Works, Volume One Stories.* Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973.

Williams, Raymond. *Modern Tragedy.* London: Chatto and Windus, 1966.

BOOK REVIEWS

SUSHEEL KUMAR SHARMA, *THE DOOR IS HALF OPEN*

(New Delhi: Adhyayan Publishers and Distributors, 2012), pp. 141, Rs. 150.00

Patricia Prime

Susheel Kumar Sharma's *The Door is Half Open* offers high-spirited, lively encounters with life and language as well as frequent memories of relationships both past and present. He is engaged, passionately in life, his family, and a whole range of individual feelings made shiningly particular in his finely worked lines, such as the energetic opening of the lengthy first poem "Ganga Mata – A Prayer":

O Ganges!
The dweller in Lord Brahma's *kamandala*
The abider in Lord Vishnu's feet
The reside in Lord Shiva's locks
The sojourner in the Himalayas
The daughter of Sage Jahnu
The co-wife of Bhagiratha's race
The atoner of Sagar's progeny
The mother of brave Bhishma
Ganga Maiya!
Homage to thee. Accept my obeisance
O Punyakiriti! (p. 1)

In the amusing "Tiny Tot," Sharma writes about a small child:

A toddler in a mother's lap
Pissing on an uncle
Or watering a shop's counter –
It's a joy to be young. (p. 29)

High tension, often ebullient and melancholy at once, pervades many of these poems. in the poem "Meditation," for example, the subject Is the poet listening to his own silence.

Several of the poems in *The Door is Half Open* remember Sharma's lost uncle, and take a somber turn, remembering his loss and searching for a way forward. The apparent autobiography of these poems is moving, and the *freshness* of his perception can also be seen in "Grief":

It is useless to
Wipe the tears of a poet.
He is lonely for ever. (p. 21)

The confessional passages of the book are complimented well by the experiments with poems about crazy terrorists and people who would harm us, as we see in "A Racist Attack". Another fine poem that works towards hard-won accommodation with loss and grief is the haunting "Meditation". Relations are all important to the poet, and he is adept at writing love poems as we see in "O Beloved". The sights, sounds and smells of his city are conjured; the places he knows so well are evoked and recreated. Sharma is well aware of the role of myth and the years of history in India, and he has many instances of his relationship to the process of using these as a background to his poems.

As I think these poems show Sharma has a way of making us see things anew. Often he does this by way of humour. Indeed, Sharma's writing is often relaxed, yet never lax; sometimes pithy, sometimes more expansive, yet not inflated or wordy. Sharma's language may seem severe, at first glance, but the subtle shifting of words and lines is evident in many of his poems. Several of the poems seem occasional – sometimes quite personal, sometimes ruminative, even Wordsworthian in their meditations of what the things of this world might have to teach us. Yet Sharma is more than an earnest Romantic. He loves big ideas of all sorts, and his poems display a capacious curiosity about everything. His observations are measured, acute and witty.

The book is completed with a 16 page Glossary and Afterwords that make up 33 pages. Viewed in a certain light, Sharma's Glossary is almost like long lines of poetry. In alphabetical order, he gives the reader explications of Indian words and phrases. The Glossary makes the poetry authentic. With the Glossary, the poetry becomes both more accessible and more meaningful to the reader. The Afterwords by Ann Rogers (UK), Barbara Wühr (France), Gavriel Navarro (Japan), H C Gupta (India), Kenneth Lumpkin (Canada), and Robert de Vos (South Africa) are articulate synopses in which each author narrates a stream of analysis about Sharma's work. They are quite diverse, and exhibit a pleasing variety of thoughts.

K.K. SHARMA, *BRITISH NOVELISTS AND LEO TOLSTOY*

(New Delhi: Sarup Book Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 2011), pp. i61, Rs. 600.00

H.C. Gupta

K.K. Sharma is now well-established as a very solemn scolar and the book under review, which is characterised with a researcher's probe and a scholar's finesse, further bears testimony to it. As is his usual practice, he does not gorge on browses of literary products, but eats up and digests the whole before making his observations and comments. The introductory note on the blurb aptly says; "The volume begins with a compact introduction to the making of Tolstoy the writer. The six chapters analyse (and I would add apprase) six great novelist-critics' variegated critical observations on and assessments of Tolstoy's inimitable creative genius and his different forms of writings." With an insightful probe and uprightness of a judge, K.K. sharma is straightforward in his eulogies and denunciations. The essence of the contents of the chapters is beyond words because Sharma has taken exceptional pains in digging out and collecting facts and figures of six British novelist-critics' observations and judgements. Dynamically, he has challenged them and syllogistically given his own appraisals convincingly. Indeed, he is precise, pointed and incisive in his critical comments.

Each essay neatly begins with the essence of the whole piece and then there is an introductory part, followed by an interesting enlightening discussion part which ends with a conclusion. I quote in full the first para of Chapter VIII titled "Summing-up" to show Sharma's critical strategy: "In the preceding chapters an attempt has been made to examine the impact and impressions, positive and negative, created by Leo Tolstoy on his contemporary major British novelists such as Henry James, Somerset Maugham, E.M. Forster, Virginia Woolf, D.H. Lawrence and Joyce Cary. A born genius, nourished and nurtured to blossom fully by his dedication to intellectual and moral pursuits as well as by the positive facets

of his ambience, he left his idelible stamp on the intellectuals and artists of his time the world over. The present chapter is devoted to the inferences emerging from the discussions contained in the foregoing chapters." And the last para begins: "To end it may be inferred...." And this is how each of the six essays, discussing the critical approaches of the six eminent British novelists (mentioned above) to Tolstoy, begins and ends.

It is ineresting and illuminating to notice how Sharma has presented meticulously and impartially the very crux of the variegated responses of the six modern English novelist-critics. He demonstrates how Henry James downright denounces Leo Tolstoy the novelist on account of his unconcern for form and thus creating "large loose baggy monsters", while, on the contrary, Somerset Maugham, E.M. Forster and Virginia Woolf admire him wholeheartedly — the first of these calls him "A born writer" and the author of the greatest novel of the world, the second declares that "No English novelist is as great as Tolstoy and begins and ends his critical masterpiece entitled *Aspects of the Novel* highlighting the greatness of the inimitable Russian and his *War and Peace,* and Virginia Woolf describes him as "genius in the raw". Differing from his iluustrious contemporaries, referred to above, Lawrence attitude towards Tolstoy is marked by both denunciation and adulation; His is a case of "extremes of literary criticism", as K.K. Sharma rightly points out, for Lawrence calls him "old liar" on the one hand, and "the greatest writer of all time" on the other". Joyce-Cary, the youngest of the novelist-critics considered in this book, extols Tolstoy time and again, but "does not delve deep into the Russian's creative genius" and I fully agree with this assertion of K.K. Sharma.

The beauty of the book has been marred by a few proof-reading nods, e.g. 'Well's fears' (p.37), 'Conard's (p.97), 'gritic' (p.129), 'disparasing' (p.130), etc. But on the whole, this latest book by K.K. Sharma, like his previous sixteen critical studies, is a significant addition to scholarship. He has maintained a perfect balance in his critical approach, and is neither a fanatical fan nor a hanging judge; he is equally susceptible and sensitive to beauties and blemishes.

CONTRIBUTORS

S. Viswanathan is former Professor of English, University of Hyderabad.
M.S. Kushwaha is former Professor and Head, Department of English and Modern European Languages, Lucknow University, Lucknow.
Leonard R.N. Ashley is Professor *Emeritus* at Brooklyn College, New York.
Vallari Gaur has successfully completed her doctoral research from Gurukul Kangri University, Haridwar.
Deepika Srivastava is Professor, Department of English, University of Allahabad.
O.P. Mathur is former Professor of English, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi.
Bijay Kumar Das is Professor and Head, Department of English, The University of Burdwan.
Ajay Kumar Shukla is Associate Professor of English, D.D.U. Gorakhpur University, Gorakhpur.
Sonali Das is Senior Lecturer in English, Synergy Institute of Technology, Bhubaneswar.
Rashmi Gaur is Professor of English, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee.
Urjani Chakravarti is Research Scholar, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee.
Usha Rani is Research Scholar, Department of English, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra.
S,A. Hamid is Professor of English, Almora Campus of Kumaun University, Nainital (Uttarakhand).
Anupama Chowdhury is Assistant Professor, MUC Women's College, Burdwan (West Bengal).
K.K. Sharma is former Professor of English, University of Allahabad.
Raihan Raza is Associate Professor of English, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh.
Patricia Prime is a renowned poet & critic of New Zealand.
H.C. Gupta is former Professor of English, Jiwaji University, Gwalior.

POINTS OF VIEW

Declaration under Section 5 of the Press & Registration of Books Act, 1867

1.	Place of Publication	Ghaziabad
2.	Periodicity of Publication	Biannual
3.	Printer's Name Nationality Address	K.K. Sharma Indian KH/127, New Kavi Nagar Ghaziabad--201 002
4.	Publisher's Name Nationality Address	K.K. Sharma Indian KH/127, New Kavi Nagar Ghaziabad--201 002
5.	Editor's Name Nationality Address	K.K Sharma Indian KH/127, New Kavi Nagar Ghaziabad--201 002
6.	Owner's Name	K.K. Sharma KH/127, New Kavi Nagar Ghaziabad--201 002

I, K.K. Sharma, hereby declare that the particulars, given above, are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

K.K. Sharma

Printed by Prof. K.K. Sharma at Mehra Offset Press, 1979, Ganj Meer Khan, Daryaganj, Delhi — 110 002