

# Ruskin's Concept of The Pathetic Fallacy

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For Ruskin, a great artist is not only a prophet but also a sensitive and emotional man. This appears a romantic description of the poet. However, in the third volume of *Modern Painters* he says that “an excited state of feelings makes a man more or less irrational,”<sup>1</sup> at least for the time. His definition of the Pathetic Fallacy is based on this awareness of good or evil effect of feelings on art and poetry. He feels that all violent feelings generate falseness in our impression of external things.

This brings us to the question of subjectivity in art. When Aristotle said that an artist does not imitate blindly, but, gives his own impression of the objective reality, he did not rule out subjectivity in art. Ruskin does not use the terms ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’, for he considers them troublesome words employed by metaphysicians. He is concerned with “the difference between the ordinary, proper and true appearances of things to us; and the extraordinary, or false appearances, when we are under the influence of emotion.” (p. 66)

Ruskin uses the term ‘Pathetic Fallacy’ for this kind of poetic falsehood or distortion. He mentions four classes of men. First, those “who feel nothing and therefore and see truly;” secondly, those “who feel strongly, think weakly and see untruly;” thirdly, those “who feel strongly, think strongly and see truly;” fourthly, those, though strong, yet submit to “influences stronger than they and see, in a sort, untruly because what they see is inconceivably above them.”(p.66) Ruskin regards the third category as the first order of poets, the second category as the second order of poets; and the fourth category as the unusual condition of prophetic inspiration.

This classification is ingenious. Ruskin illustrates this classification with examples. The first example is taken from O. W. Holmes:

The spendthrift crocus, bursting through the mould  
Naked and shivering, with his cup of gold. (p. 62)

These lines may sound exquisite but are nevertheless untrue. Crocus is a plant; it cannot be “spendthrift”, and its yellow is not gold but saffron. And yet we accept this description and enjoy it. This is a fallacy of willful fancy and is not expected to be believed. Here, Ruskin points out, we have

been cheated by fancy.

Ruskin takes instances from Homer and Pope to bring home the difference. Ulysses, addressing the spirit of Elpenor, who was supposed to be dead in the Circean palace asks:

Elpenor? How com'st thou under the shadowy darkness?  
Hast thou come faster on foot than I in my black ship. (p.64)

These lines express the right feelings of amazement. But Pope renders the same incident in a different way:

O say, what angry power Elpenor led  
To glide in shades and wander with the dead?  
How could thy soul, by realness and seas disjoined,  
Outfly the nimble sail and leave the lagging wind? (p.65)

Ruskin does not find any pleasure either in the nimbleness of the soul or in the laziness of the wind, and does not consider it an incident of Pathetic Fallacy because the conceits “are put into the mouth of wrong passion .....agonized curiosity.” (p.65) Ulysses is eager to know the facts, and so his mind could not suggest anything that was not a fact. Therefore according to Ruskin “the delay, in the first three lines, and concert in the last, jar upon us like the most frightful discord in music.” (p.65) These lines do not reflect the true imaginative power.

Here are the lines from Keats' *Hyperion III*  
He wept, and his bright tears  
Went trickling down the golden bow he held.  
Thus with half shut, suffused eyes, he stood;  
While from beneath some cumbrous boughs hard by,  
With solemn step, an awful goddess came  
And there was purport in her looks for him,  
Which he with eager guess began to read.  
Perplexed the while, melodiously he said,  
'How com'st thou over the unfooted sea? (p.65)

In this case the passion is the same agonized curiosity and, therefore, the question is put abruptly, without pausing, just as Pope has done here. Ruskin says that the worst kind of fallacy is one when metaphorical expressions are used, not ignorantly or feeling lessly, but by a skilful master who deliberately uses them in cold blood, just for the sake of mere embellishment. This is illustrated in the following example from Pope's ‘Pastorals’

Where'er you walk, cool gales shall fan the glade;  
Tree, where you sit, shall crowd into a shade

Your praise the birds shall chant in every grove,  
And winds shall waft it to the powers above. (p.73)

This cannot be mistaken for the language of passion. In Ruskin's views "It is simple falsehood, uttered by hypocrisy, definite absurdity rooted in affectation, and coldly asserted in the teeth of nature and fact." (p.74)

In comparison Ruskin quotes the following lines from Wordsworth, in which a lover who has lost his mistress moans:

Oh, move, thou cottage, from behind yon oak,  
Or let the ancient tree uprooted lie,  
That in some other way yon smoke  
May mount into the sky.  
If still behind yon pine - tree's ragged bough,  
Headlong, the waterfall must come,  
Oh, let it, then he dumb-(p.74)

Here the lover wants the cottage to be moved, and a waterfall to be silent. The soul cries out in agony which is extreme. The lover partly knows his wish to be impossible but partly believes it possible. He has a vague impression, that a miracle might be wrought to give him relief in his sore distress. Knowing that God is kind, Ruskin points out, we all have a lurking feeling in our heart that such miracles are possible. It is this temperament, which admits Pathetic Fallacy. Ruskin gives another example.

They rowed her in across the rolling foam.  
The cruel crawling foam, (p.63)

The foam, is actually, neither cruel, nor does it crawl. But here the state of mind which has attributed to it the character of a living creature is one in which "the reason is unhinged by grief" (p.64) Coleridge says in 'Christabel'

The one red leaf, the last of its clan  
That dances as often as dance it can. (p.64)

According to Ruskin Coleridge has a false idea about the leaf, for he fancies a life and will in it which it does not have. He, according to Ruskin, "confuses, its powerlessness with choice, its fading death with merriment, and the wind that shakes it with music." (p.64) However, Ruskin finds some beauty in this 'morbid passage', for the solitary leaf shaking helplessly in the wind seems to derive its merriment from the poet's mood.

Ruskin admits that it is a sign of higher capacity if the emotions are strong enough to vanquish, at least partly, the intellect, and make it believe everything. But he considers it still grander if, along with the strong

emotions, the intellect also is strong enough to assert its rules. A poet like Dante stands white hot under the heat of emotions, but does not melt. Ruskin compares Dante to a rock with a thick layer of moss upon it. It is sensitive to impressions at the surface, but at the same time too massy to be moved. Like an ocean, he absorbs hundreds and thousands of rivers, but retains his serenity. When Dante describes the spirits falling from the bank of Acheron "as dead leaves flutter from a bough," (p.64) Ruskin points out that he uses the most perfect image to convey the impression of their utter lightness, feebleness, passiveness and scattering agony of despair, but he does not lose, even for a moment, his clear perception that the spirits and leaves are two different things.

Another fine example quoted by Ruskin of the poet of the first order is one who, in despair, desires that his body be cast into the sea,

Whose changing mound, and foam that passed away,  
Might mock the eyes that questioned where I lay. (p.68)

There is not a single false impression in it. "Mound" of the sea wave, according to Ruskin, is simple and perfectly true because it is heavy, large, dark and definite. The word "changing" also correctly describes the movement of the wave because the waves change both place and form. The words "foam that passed away" make the flow of the wave more clear. Having put this fact of the ocean before us, Ruskin points out, the poet leaves us to trace for ourselves the opposite fact, "the image of the green mounds that do not change, and the white and written stones that do not pass away; and thence to follow out also the associated images of the calm life with the quiet grave, and the despairing life of the fading foam." (p.69) Even the word "mock", according to him, may stand for "deceive" or "defeat" without attributing any human emotions to the wave.

In a similar manner, Homer comments on the death of Castor and Pollux, whom Helen cannot see in the Grecian host. Homer says: "So she spoke. But then, already, the life giving earth possessed." (p.70) This, according to Ruskin, is the highest poetical truth, because while speaking of the earth in sadness the poet is not carried away to change his thoughts about the earth. Castor and Pullux may be dead and buried in the earth, yet the earth is our mother still, fruitful and life-giving.

Thus, according to Ruskin, the greatness of a poet depends upon two things : acuteness of feeling and the poet's command of it. "A poet is great in proportion to the strength of his passion, and then.....in proportion to his government of it; there being, however, always a point beyond which it would be inhuman and monstrous if he pushed this

government, and, therefore, a point at which all feverish and wild fancy becomes just and true.” (p.72)

Therefore, Pathetic Fallacy is powerful only so far as it is pathetic, and feeble, so far as it is fallacious. Even in the most inspired prophet, it is a sign of the incapacity of his human sight or thought to bear what has been revealed to it. Pathetic Fallacy, Ruskin further points out, is characteristic of the modern mind. A modern artist is always trying to attribute human passions to objects inanimate. Classical and medieval artists were content with expressing the actual qualities of the object. For example, Keats, in ‘Endymion’ uses the words “wayward indolence” for describing the way the foam rolls down a long large wave. Ruskin says that though it is a beautiful expression, yet Homer would never have thought of using these words because he could not have lost sight of the fact that the wave, in spite of what it did, was nothing but salt water which could neither be ‘wayword’ nor ‘indolent’. He would have instead described the wave by other epithets like “over-roofed”, “full-charged”, “monstrous etc.” (p.73)

Ruskin gives the reason why Homer does not attribute human emotions to the sea. The Greek, he says, believed in the presiding deity for every object of nature. So Homer could separate in his mind, the waves and something greater than they, which he called a god. He perceived natural objects in their corporeality. Besides, the Greek lived in the midst of beautiful nature and were quite familiar with her. This familiarity did not breed contempt, but left the scenes of natural beauty unexciting. According to Ruskin, two main points emerge from Homer’s descriptions of nature: first, the landscape is made subservient to human comfort. Every Homeric landscape intended to be beautiful is composed of fountains, meadows & shady groves. It is because the Greek shrank with dread or even hatred from the ruggedness of wild nature. Secondly, the description of nature is characterized by a complete absence of metaphorical expression.

In the Middle Ages, Ruskin points out, the attitude towards nature was different. The medieval mind disagreed with the ancients in certain respects. There was a new respect for the mountains. Secondly, there was a loss of divine presence in nature, leading to fallacious animation in the objects of nature ; thirdly, perpetual companionship with wild nature; and fourthly, there is an evidence of mere sentimental enjoyment of external nature. Thus Dante reserves flat ground for the Inferno while the entire territory of the Purgatory is a mountain, thus implying the purifying influence in the mountains while Homer attached a pleasant idea to the forests for being the source of wealth and place of shelter, and also for being haunted by gods.

To Dante, Ruskin points out, the idea of a forest is repulsive. He says that one of the saddest scenes in the Inferno is in the forest where the trees are haunted by lost souls.

Modern mind, according to Ruskin, rejoices in things which one cannot arrest or comprehend, like breeze and darkness. Secondly, modern mind pays much attention to the real form of clouds, and mists. Thirdly, there is a love of liberty due to which modern artist delights in open fields and woods, and abhors hedges and moats. His love of mountains is not mingled with fear or tempted by a spirit of meditation. This complete absence of solemnity is the result of general profanity of temper, or total absence of faith in the presence of deity in nature. Ruskin says that this is the reason why Wordsworth, in one of his sonnets cries out in agony:

Great God, I had rather be  
A pagan suckled in some creed outworn;  
So might I standing on this pleasant lea,  
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn. (p.109)

The eighteenth century, he points out, almost banished beauty from the face of the earth and the form of man. As a reaction to this trend men started taking delight in the fields and mountains, to gaze at sunsets and sunrises, but also to share with them their joys and griefs , their hopes and fears, their loves and hatreds. This is the origin of what Ruskin calls “Pathetic Fallacy”.

Ruskin’s views on Pathetic Fallacy have generated a good deal of controversy. Rene Wellek considers it surprising that Ruskin should find fault with “anthropomorphism” which is “the basic method of all metaphor.”<sup>2</sup> He does not find any reason why a crocus should not be called “spend thrift” when it is imagined to spend its gold profusely. Similarly, the criticism which Ruskin applies to the description of spirits falling as dead leaves,<sup>3</sup> according to Rene Wellek denies the very nature of metaphor or substitution, which can not be called confusion.

A. H. R Ball, the most sympathetic student of Ruskin’s literary criticism feels that the theory of Pathetic Fallacy contradicts Ruskin’s own imaginative theory, and that “ it is highly coloured by Ruskin’s preferences and dislikes.”<sup>4</sup> Though Ball does not entirely accept Ruskin’s views, yet he recognizes their importance, “both as a warning against disconnected trains of luxuriant and financial images, and for their suggestion of new and illuminating lines of research.”<sup>5</sup>

Harold Bloom's view is more illuminating. According to him Ruskin's theory of Pathetic Fallacy has been misinterpreted. The theory "is a searching Criticism of Romanticism from within, for the sake of saving the Romantic program of humanizing nature from extinction through excessive self indulgence. Ruskin is the first writer within Romantic tradition to have realized the high spiritual price that had to be paid for Wordsworthianism, the human loss that accompanied the abundant recompense celebrated in Tintern Abbey."<sup>6</sup>

Rene Wellek's views are not tenable for the simple reason that he has failed to perceive the difference between a passionate language and the use of a metaphor merely in playful fancy which deprives poetry of what Arnold called "high seriousness". A metaphor is only an ornament which is a poor substitute for real beauty. Similarly, it is not possible to accept Ball's assertion that the theory of Pathetic Fallacy contradicted Ruskin's own imaginative theory. Imagination, according to Ruskin, enables the poet to perceive the very soul of things so that they appear in the light in which they had never appeared before. Pathetic Fallacy, on the other hand, attributes human passions to the objects inanimate, thereby distorting their real nature under the stress of strong emotions.

Although delusion is the very basis of our delight in art and literature, yet there ought to be some limit within which we can allow our reason to be cheated and yet enjoy it. As Eliot would have remarked, clearly, Ruskin's concept of the Pathetic Fallacy is directed towards the poet, not the poetry. It is highly dependent on the personality of the poet, not the quality of the poetry. In Arnoldian terms, thus, Ruskin is guilty of personal estimate-swayed by his own preferences and prejudices, not guided by any objective critical principles. His demand for truth to 'nature', too, is dependent on his own view of 'nature'. For Ruskin, nature is created by God, his own benevolent Christian God, not Wordsworthian nature, which is pagan, nor Johnson's, which is general human nature. His is the 'kind' nature created by God for the good of mankind, and the poet must 'see' it as such. Hence is the quarrel with the Romantics because they are not sufficiently religious to see in God's creation (nature) the purpose that he attributes to it. It may not be 'pathetic', but his own view of nature is fallacious, too, for it is not based on, to quote Arnold, the critical ability to see the object as in itself it really is, the ability to be able to see on both sides of a case, whatever that case be, including the 'nature' of nature.

## REFERANCES

<sup>1</sup> John Ruskin, Modern Painters, 5 Vols, in Literary Criticism of John Ruskin, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1972) All subsequent references to this book are indicated in Parentheses in the text.

<sup>2</sup> Rene Wellek, A History of Modern Criticism, 1880-1950 (London: Jonathon Cape, 1960) 146.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> A.H.R Ball, Introduction, John Ruskin as a Literary Critic (London: Cambridge University Press, 1928) 23.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>6</sup> Harold Bloom, Introduction, The Literary Criticism of John Ruskin (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1972) XXV.

### CALL FOR PAPERS

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# Kulbhushan Kushal's *Rainbow on Rocks: The Poetry of Psychic Concerns*

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Poetry is an aesthetic organization of human experiences, feelings, emotions and thought processes. It does not remain limited to the expression of the seen or the visible material world. It tends to include the invisible, inexperienced, mysterious and fantastic world of human imagination. In its uncorrupted, natural form it is associated with the mystical world of the spirit and human subconscious. This aspect of poetry that relates it to the unknown world beyond experiential reality is not foreign to ordinary human experience. It can be ascertained from our expression of common place experiences in mysterious terms. In our daily life we see a lover compare a girl with a nymph, an angel or people describing places like a graveyard in terms of being haunted by unseen forces like ghosts and evil spirits. These comparisons evoke strange and mysterious associations. It marks the intervention of the ghostly, the supernatural and the fantastic in our understanding of the world. Talking about the two cardinal points about the nature of poetry even S.T. Coleridge has remarked:

“In the one, the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions, as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real. And real in this sense they have been to every human being who, from whatever source of delusion, has at any time believed himself under supernatural agency”, (S.T. Coleridge, 1962 :190)

This way of understanding things and different phenomenon is related to the impressions of different things stored in our unconscious or the subconscious mind. The relevance of these elements lies beyond the limits of reasoning and logic.

The working of human mind, no doubt, is not governed by a specific order of categorization. The thoughts and feelings that happen in the mind are chaotic in the sense that they do not occur in an arranged, ordered or sequential pattern. And the poetry that captures the thought process and feelings and emotions in their natural state corresponds to the working of the subconscious mind. Sometimes a poet ascribes an order to the experiences that he realizes in the form of different images through the

exercise of the faculty of reasoning. The exercise of ascribing an order to the chaotic world of images is, in fact, intended to reach the reader. Geoffrey Durrant, while talking about Wordsworth's poetry and his theory of poetry explains this process in these words: “ this is essentially an intellectual process, by which the mind and powers of feeling are brought to the contemplation of what lies before the eyes”(Durrant, 1969: 25). It may bring the poetic experience close to the understanding of the reader but in the process it tends to mar the excellence and purity of the feelings and emotions realized in their natural form that defies all sorts of ordering. The exercise of the subconscious mind to make the poetic experience comprehensible by imposing an arrangement takes it away from the natural and original experiences. On the other hand, an attempt to adhere to the original poetic experience in its natural state and express it as it happens in the mind involves an extremely complex nature of the poetic creation that turns into almost a replica of the working of mind. Consequently, the poetic utterances tend to be more demanding and difficult for the reader.

The working of the subconscious mind in the poetic process has also been asserted by imagists in their understanding of poetry as thinking in images. The imagists emphasize the role of images and their imaginative construction whereas the formalists treat the arrangement of these images more important. According to the imagists the poetic originality lies in the perception of new images. But the formalists believe that the images and poetic elements exist already and the role of a poet is simply to introduce a new order of their arrangement. The originality and the poetic achievement lie in the organizational skill of the poet rather than in his ability to think and create new images:

“Poets are much more concerned with arranging images than with creating them. Images are given to poets, the ability to remember them is far more important than the ability to create them” (Shklovsky, 1986:53). Both these views, taken in isolation, seem wanting so far as a more relevant and plausible explanation of the poetic process is concerned. First of all the perception of images is essential before they are organized in a pattern to create poetic impact. On the other hand the images, as the formalists have said, tend to lose poetic intensity due to their stereotypical repetition and it results in their becoming automatized. It means that the role of individual perception is significant in the conception of the images and later in their arrangement in a specific order. The common view that emerges from two apparently opposed perspectives is the significance awarded in their systems to the role of

individual perception. The poetic process thus envisaged involves the celebration of intuitive impressions that are perceived in the form of images and then artistically arranged to create the desired poetic effect. Different states of mind impacted by different experiences result in the imposition of different perceptions as a part of the natural phenomenon of mind. Here it is pertinent to note that our looking at different things and happenings is coloured by our individual experience. Sometimes even the residuals of certain experiences and the knowledge acquired through them – for example, the experiences encountered for the first time or the impressions that we have like the ones by listening to demon stories in childhood— last almost throughout our life and our impressions of different things at a later stage make us relate our experiences to these impressions by creating some image. The ability to perceive different experiences in the form of images and to express them artistically through poetic medium has been acclaimed as the special quality of a poet by William Wordsworth also. According to him the quality that makes a poet different from ordinary people is an ability to conjuring up in himself passions which are indeed far from being the same as those produced by real events, ... yet do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events, than anything which , from the motions of their own minds merely , other men are accustomed to feel in themselves; whence , and from practice, he has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels , and especially those thoughts and feelings which , by his own choice, or from the structure of his mind , arise in him without immediate external excitement ( William Wordsworth 1977: 78)

It involves the activation of the private probability zone that earlier has been referred to as willing suspension of disbelief, which may or may not strike a similar note in others in evoking certain experiences.

The poetic process, seen in terms of giving verbal expression to different experiences and impressions involving the use of images, informs the active exercise of human mental faculty. Different poets and thinkers have tried to explain it in their own way. T.S. Eliot, known for his rejection of the romantic theory of poetry for treating poetry as an expression of the poet's personality, also acknowledges the active role that the mind plays in the poetic process. In one of his most seminal statements about the nature of poetry and the poetic process he says:

The poet's mind is in fact a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings , phrases, images , which remain there until all the

particles which can unite to form a new compound are present there (Eliot T. S. 1986: 30)

This process of poetic creations involves a complex phenomenon. And the way this process functions determines the nature of poetic creations. As the working of human mind is extremely complex and complicated the poetic creations marking proximity to this phenomenon naturally tend to be complex.

Kulbhushan Kushal's poetry grounded on the variety and complexity informing contemporary life registers the complex nature of the poetic experience. His attempt to express this aspect of human experience in its natural state develops his poetry as the replica of the mind. His poems, particularly those included in his collection, *Rainbow on Rocks* exhibit this tendency the most . The emphatic expression of psychic concerns in these poems is realized even by the poet himself. In one of his interviews he says:

“My poems broadly mirror psychic concerns that are explorations of different aspects of human consciousness. They profile a psychic quest for integrated meaning of flight of imagination and try to understand the fabric of response and the texture of questions. They also have an assumption that poetry is not for definitive answers but a statement of definitive probing”. (Kushal, 2005: 56).

Instead of expressing certain ideas and experiences, his poems tend to capture the perceptions of the impressions that the mind receives. In the natural functioning of the human mind the impressions of different thoughts, happening, emotions and experiences occur in the form of sudden flashes having no logical or sequential relation. It is the poetic consciousness that endeavours to give some order to these elements. For example, his poem 'Epicenter' in *Rainbow on Rocks* registers this phenomenon of the mind by putting together responses of the different senses through the use of words:

Just a touch of hand  
A wink there  
Twist of the eyebrows  
Unhinged dupatta  
Jingling of bangles (p. 11)

All these images might not have been perceived in the order in which they appear in the poem, it is the active interaction of the poet's imaginative faculty that helps award some order to them to create some meaning. It tends to develop a kind of poetry that is different from the traditional

canonical views about poetry and its understanding. Instead of presenting a fixed meaning or a particular experience, these poems are directed to capture the working of the mind or the depiction of the mental landscape that carries different experiences. In the process of creating poetic structures the poet uses different images that bring out the nature of various states of mind experienced by the poet. Consequently, it results in the production of fresh images that help create new poetic structure. The nature of the images that introduces a touch of the mysterious and the strange draws the attention of the reader and heightens the realization of the poetic experience. All these images have not been used for the sake of experimentation and are intended to enhance the poetic impact through their placement in a novel context. It means that they are not used to give subtle expression to some thoughts like symbols; their function in Kushal's poetry is to provide a form to the subconscious and the different impressions received by the mind.

In their attempt to register functioning of the subconscious mind in the process of poetic creations marks the extension of Kushal's poetic expressions beyond the limits of commonplace experience and the logic that informs everyday life. In an attempt to grasp and represent the natural process of the working of the human subconscious the poet has used different images that carry a feel of the poetic experience. As different experiences are not realized in a systematic order or a logical sequence the images in these poems illustrate this through the way they appear in the poems; defying any sense of logical arrangement. For example in these poems the images like, stones lying close to bigger stones, dancing dolls, rotating like mad, in the poem 'Sanitized Mother' and the image of twittering sparrows holding glowworms fly across heaven, and the image of laughing sharks in the whirlpool of dreams occur with such a force and intensity that their poetic effect no longer seems to rest in their meaning. Their role as poetic expressions is realized in the way they tend to capture the working of human mind and convey different states of mind. In the process it evokes multiple associations through the use of images and evocative expressions instead of giving a fixed meaning. This nature of Kushal's poetry can be understood in terms of the celebration of intuitive impressions of his private world.

The celebration of intuitive impressions in Kushal's poetry marks the strains of romantic poetry of Keats, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelly. The romantic poetry of such writers celebrates their intuitive impressions through the use of strange and fantastic images that adds an element of mystery and makes their poetic utterances mystic and strange. For example,

Keats in his 'Ode to the Grecian Urn' uses different images related to the pictures on the urn to express the host of impressions perceived by him. At the apparent level there are only different pictures that the poet has observed on the Grecian Urn. But it is his imagination that evokes different elements that are symptomatic expressions of his poetic experience. The meanings associated to the different scenes through the active role of imagination are related to the private world of the poet. He imposes these meanings to these elements through his experience and the feelings that these elements generate in his mind. Similarly, Coleridge in Kublakhán has simply tried to concretize a dream through different images and poetic elements. In the process it marks the poetic self's endeavor to give expression to the working of the subconscious mind. Consequently, these poems become more an expression of a state of mind and the way it is activated through different stimuli than the expression of specific meaning. Their poetic achievement lies in activating the probability zone of their private world in a way that extends to the experience of human beings in general. In this context, their poetic expressions touch the sense of the romantic and the fantastic by creating a romance of the distant in familiar terms. An interesting feature of this poetic process is that the exercise of defamiliarization here is directed to familiarize the strange and the fantastic. It makes different readers experience the ecstasy that the poet may have experienced while giving a certain form to his feelings and emotions.

In Kushal's poetry the use of images to capture the intuitive impressions creates a fantastic world of romance that defies the universality of the natural, rational and the logical. These images tend to form mysterious designs beyond the limits of meaning and systematic arrangement. It results in the poetry of impressions and experiences that are mystical in nature. For example, the following lines create a strange atmosphere different from commonplace experiences:

There are mountains deep  
 In the sea where  
 Sirens dance  
 On the beat of whirlpool s  
 Clad in stars  
 Putting their celestial hands  
 On the back of  
 Fading face of the moon  
 Moving forward  
 For a wild kiss (23-24)

The poetic intensity of these lines is realized in the interactive role of the natural and the supernatural presented through beautiful images informing a sense of romantic probability. This aspect of his poetry corresponds to the nature of his understanding that treats poetry as a form of art involving multiple possibilities. A poet for him is not involved in the expression of some meaning rather the art of poetry is similar to the art of a sculptor and that of a magician. Therefore, poetry for him is more a matter of experience than a matter of conveying meanings or specific world views. One may realize poetry in multiple ways:

Poetry is  
 A trick of a magician  
 Sculpted in words  
 Poetry is a collage of colors  
 Singing symphonies (95)  
 And ultimately poetry becomes “A journey, beyond meanings”.

The poetry in the form of a journey beyond meanings is not to be treated as completely devoid of any meaning or touch with reality. It rather means that poetry is not singularly an attempt to express a specific meaning. Otherwise it lacks any relevance for human world of experience. So the point here is more directed to convey the multiple aspects of poetry realized by different people. In this context it is important to note that mind does not think in void or vacuum. It gets impacted by different experiences and the realization they bring in various forms like residuals of knowledge. Even the subconscious impressions inform of a touch of the experiences of the conscious mind in the outside world. The impressions that the mind perceives may not be governed and directed by the ordered world of reality, they certainly involve them in the process of creation of some meaning to make these impressions communicable. In Kushal’s poetry we find this process functioning in the form of an interaction between the world of innocence and experience. In ‘Raw Deals’ it is the perception of the mind that creates an innocent world of childhood experiences. The first encounter of the innocent mind of a child evokes strange associations while observing ‘streaks in the blue sky’. These streaks appear serpentine due to the intervention of the knowledge of the movement of snakes that finds resemblance in these streaks. On the other hand the images of fish caught in rainbow net create an image to correspond to the plight of the people swayed by hope but ultimately find themselves caught in precarious situations. The different images in the poem ‘Dark Rainbow’ though tend

to form isolated units can be ultimately seem to express the experiences of the people who witnessed the Partition of India after its independence. Here the poetic achievement of such expressions lies in the subtle way they are related to the real life experience:

The grandfather fiddling  
 With his hookah  
 Recalls with a wistful smile  
 The slaughter of a damsel  
 And the melting of sliver  
 Kept in folded velvet  
 Before he was declared an alien  
 In his own land (p. 13)

The images of different things and experiences presented here involve a touch of reality and the impressions that the encounter with reality has left on the subconscious mind.

Kushal’s attempt to capture the functioning of the subconscious mind in his poetry forms a part of his conscious belief in the specific nature of poetic process. It seems to involve his faith that even the world of reality being ordered, systematic and arranged is a myth. The order is rather imposed from outside. Similarly, the thoughts, feelings and emotions happen in the mind in a wayward fashion. These ideas find an appropriate poetic expression in “Mysterious Designs”. The poet here not only states that

Mind is a weaver  
 Weaving fantastic textures  
 Mysterious designs  
 Melting colors  
 Haunting figures (35)

but also creates the structure of this poem in the fashion outlined in these lines. The poem is in the form of micro-narratives including different scenes that appear in the mind. In the poem we find the images of a dying girl in deserts, caravans with pitchers on their heads, black cobra rocketing its hood, and a princess of the streets singing. The last stanza of the poem gives an expression to his conscious thoughts about the limitations of modern technologies. As a whole the poem successfully captures the functioning of the mind and gives expression to the poet’s belief that juxtaposes the poetic process with that of the mind and the poetry thus created presents a replica of human subconscious. It takes his poetry beyond the realm of the ordered world of reality and experience. And the poet seems to yearn to realize this aspect of poetry when he says:

Poetry is echo  
 Of restless spirits  
 Trapped in tunnels  
 Poetry is  
 Design of bridges  
 Yet to be made  
 Poetry is  
 A quest  
 For springs of creation (94)

The nature of Kushal's poetry forms a challenge to the established way of understanding different things and experiences. To award particular meaning to things experiences becomes a stereotypical way of perceiving the world as ordered and fixed in a transcendental scheme. But the way Kushal's poems tend to destabilize this orientation introduces multiple possibilities. It is related to the different ways we perceive the things in their decontextualized form. As discussed earlier, it is not something strange to ordinary human experience where we often relate things to strange aspects even when we describe them. The same process seems to be at work in the poem 'Fragrance of a Tree' :

A tree is not a tree  
 It is a mudra of a dance  
 A celebration of energy  
 A celestial fairy in extreme ecstasy  
 Showering flowers and fruits (81)

The different forms that the tree has been described to evolve depend on the way one's mind perceives the tree. But the different meanings or forms associated with the tree are ultimately related to the knowledge that the perceiving mind has which may be in a different context and variegated for different human beings. The element of imagination is ultimately related to human experience in one form or the other that strikes a common note in different readers to appreciate the poetic experience. It makes poetic experience mystical and strange and at the same time keeps it related to this world of ordinary experiences.

The aspects of Kushal's poetry that mark its concentration on capturing the functioning of the subconscious mind tend to take it away from the categorization of poetry traditionally exercised to facilitate its understanding . The non-categorization of Kushal's poetry in traditionally

accepted norms is at the one hand related to the view that mind does not think in neat categories. Its functioning is wayward, irrational, and to a large extent illogical. Therefore, poetry being an expression of mental impressions defies being categorized. Its categorization instead of being natural is construction of the rational and the logical attempt of the conscious mind. The understanding of poetry in terms of a sequential pattern organized on some transcendental design is false and artificial. Another factor that does not allow placing of Kushal's poetry in a specific category is its tendency to evolve the process outlined in the poetic process that does not follow norms set to understand life and reality. The understanding of poetry in terms of love poetry, war poetry, etc. seems irrelevant for an appreciation of Kushal's poetry. His poetry can not be strictly limited to any specific aspect of the experiential reality. In its attempt to track multiple impressions in their pluralistic implications Kushal's poetry tends to evolve a different kind of poetic experience. The poet himself seems to be aware of this nature of his poetry as he says in his poem 'Read Not My Poems':

Read not my poems  
 Their metaphors are not  
 Aligned to the meanings  
 Read not my poems  
 Their textures are  
 Not yet needled fine  
 Their patched breasts  
 Refracting rainbows  
 May be punctured  
 In hot summers (91)

As his poetry is not related to specified categories the poet here, like T.S. Eliot , seems to evolve a different framework in which an understanding of his poetry may be based. It can be ascertained from the way his poems seem to develop in accordance with the views that expound multivalent nature of poetry expressed in his poem Poetry:

A poetic adumbration of the views that govern the poet's creative process can be observed in some of his poems in Rainbow on Rocks. These poems include different elements like pictorial images, micro- narrative units, and objects of nature in metaphoric form, experiences and ideas that appear in patches informing sudden flashes in the mind. The structure of these poems informs a certain irrationality that forms the rationality of the working of human mind. As different impressions occur on the mental landscape they get reflected in these poems. An important aspect of this

phenomenon is that the things happening in mind may appear or occur in an illogical manner but they are not altogether illogical. Even in the psychoanalytical approach these occurrences are studied in their origin in the unconscious desires or experiences that are further related to some earlier encounter with reality in one form or the other. In his poem, 'Grammar of Peace' there are different images of historical figures like Alexander and the kings like Ozymandias that finds a reference in Keats's poem. In the same way the prosaic statements that speak of the occurrence of certain ideas like 'tomorrow is a tyrant; whimsicality is the essence of time. Similarly, in Maya, mythical figures seem to shroud the poetic memory. The people like Nakul, Drupad and the incidents associated with them find a reference and a sudden shift, as it happens in the mind brings the realization:

Our imperfect masteries  
Our fragmented visions  
Our dwarfy reach  
And our romantic leaps  
Are all symptomatic  
Of a disease coaxing us  
Not to rest (47)

All these elements though apparently unrelated are used to create a replica of mind that receives host of impressions without putting them in neat categories. As they keep on happening in their natural way the poet here seems to register them as they occur. The same process is at work in his poem Mysterious Designs, Girls and Demons' 'Barren Successes' 'Manthan'. In the process Kushal's poetry becomes more important in what it does and what it is rather than what it says.

The study of Kushal's poetry informing a significant aspect of his poetic process related to the mental landscape active in the creative process marks its different nature. The poet's expression of this aspect of poetic process through creative endeavor tends to make him a poet with certain philosophical views about poetic process. It certainly adds a new perspective to the understanding of poetry in general and Kushal's poetry in particular.

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## Signification of Desire in Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting*

Narinder Sharma

Anita Desai in her eleventh novel, i.e., *Fasting Feasting* depicts a gender-imbalanced social order and highlights the family structure and the role it plays in perpetuating a patriarchal society having an automatized desire-oriented mechanism. For this, she takes us direct into the heart and intimate life of two families-one Indian and other American-and presents us a meaningful contrast between them and the two ways of life, which they 'represent'. She probes into the very deeper recesses of her 'differentially constructed' characters, and makes us know what they think and feel. The internal workings of the minds are laid before us through the depiction of their actions, which constitute the base of the 'signifying chain' of the narrative. In Foucault's parlance, the 'power discourse' of the novel builds a picture of signification of the 'self' and 'other' dichotomy which comes into existence due to the uncontrollable play of 'lack' and 'desire'. Maurice Merleau-Ponty opines:

...in so far as the 'other' resides in the world, is visible there, and forms a part of 'my' field, he is never an Ego in the sense in which I am one for myself. In order to think of him as a genuine I, I ought to think of myself as a mere object for him, which I am prevented from doing by the knowledge which 'I' have of myself. (1)

The play of 'lack' and 'desire' derives its base from the self-sustainable functioning of 'power-resistance' show, which is the main characteristic of the symbolic order of this logocentric world.

A study of Anita Desai's *Fasting Feasting*- published in 1999-reveals that she is a writer with a keen insight into the social, psychological, and moral problems of India and Indians. Her graphically realistic novels reflect her concern for the countrymen and from this stems her social vision and humanistic creed. Nowhere does Desai sentimentalize or plead for her characters. On the contrary, she dramatizes the psychological and existential concerns of life while social, moral, cultural, religious and ethical aspects serve as the shaping background with reference to rapidly changing values. The characters in Desai's fiction are confronted with nature, society and themselves and a constant turmoil is shown in their lives as she has the talent of describing her

characters from within. There is a complete disharmony between the character's 'desires' and stark reality. The over-riding 'desires' and passions of the characters, become the main reason of the psychic tension in her fiction. The master artist shows a struggle of opposing forces in her fiction. In Jungian sense, each individual is shown to be engaged in the task of unifying these opposing forces. The characters, who fail to reconcile such opposites, turn into a stunted personality.

In this novel, the split grows from an individual to the families. The issue that Anita Desai addresses becomes essentially of 'self' and the 'other'. Central to the conception of the human, in Lacan, is the notion that the unconscious, which governs all the factors of human existence, and it is structured like a language. And here he follows the ideas laid out by Sausure, but modifies them a bit. Whereas Sausure talked about the relations between signifier and signified, which form a sign, and insisted that the structure of language is the negative relation among signs, Lacan focuses on relations between signifiers alone. The elements in the unconscious of these characters, i.e., desires, wishes, images etc. all form signifiers and these signifiers form a 'signifying chain'. One signifier has meaning only because it is not some other signifier. There is no anchor, nothing that ultimately gives meaning or stability to the whole system. Likewise, Anita Desai's fiction is based on a continuous interplay of direct opposites, never trying to stabilize the meaning. Here, the characters provide a 'chain of signifiers' constantly in play. The two families show a continuous circulating 'chain of signification' through the dynamics of 'lack' and 'desire', which do not create a 'center' in terms of a 'self-actualized' personality. The characters are shown to be struggling in the process of fixing the 'chain of signifiers' so that a stable meaning of 'I' becomes possible. In the symbolic realm-of 'desire'-they are suffering from a tragic 'lack' and 'absence'. The concept of 'self' relies on one's misidentification with the image of the 'other'. The characters in the novel 'project' images of the 'other' and thus experience the psychic turmoil.

Uma, the protagonist of the novel, has got 'desires' in her heart to get educated, to be a loved child of her parents, to be a good and recognized artist and to be a successful married woman. Unfortunately she is a failure at every step of her life. Her passions are succumbed by her parents. They don't allow her air to fulfill those 'desires'. She presents a real picture of a 'marginalized' Indian girl who is oppressed by the patriarchal order. The novelist describes the psychic conflict going on in Uma's mind quite delicately. Desai exhibits her skill as a great artist in unfolding the labyrinths

of the 'inner self' of her characters. And women being her central characters, she portrays vivid facets of their strife and strains, suppressions and reactions, illusions and distortions as an inevitable outcome of their social milieu. She successfully presents the disintegrated and fragmented 'self' of her female characters.

In the novel, Desai once again displays her art with consistent and proficient depiction of psychodrama of her characters and situations. The novel is neatly divided in two sections. In the first part of the novel, Desai focuses on the Indian family and gives a detailed account of Uma's life starting from her adolescence up to her withering youth, the upheavals she has to go through her life. She is forced to leave her studies mid-way due to domestic pressures and is given strict instructions by her domineering 'Mama' to look after her baby brother 'Arun'. Indian obsession with a son and a female's suppressed 'self' is here highlighted by the novelist. Hence a very intricate and delicate web of family conflict is presented. Part two follows her brother Arun, who goes to America in pursuit of higher studies. The whole narrative hinges on the two families. The first is the Indian family and second is the Patton family. The provincial Indian family of part one is 'contrasted' with the suburban American family of part two. The filial focus is obvious as Desai is a close observer of what she has called the web of (family) relationships, sticky and sweat, clinging and trapping.

The narrative opens in the setting of a typical Indian middle class family with 'Mama Papa' presiding over the family chores. The father watches over his domain like a typical patriarch; a figure of 'prowess', stature and authority. The 'Mama Papa' are strictly Indian orthodox parents who discriminate between their daughters and their son, holding the latter with utmost care. The narrative describes Arun as may be "cold in America" while Uma's physical attributes depict 'lack' and 'absence' of something in itself:

... her grey hair frazzled, her myopic eyes glaring behind her spectacles, muttering under her breath. (2)

The metaphor of 'swing' in the beginning of the narrative, introduces the constant movement between the binary opposites of absence/presence, lack/fulfillment, hope/ despair upon which the whole 'power discourse' of the novel is constructed. The 'self' and 'other' conflict starts in the very beginning of the novel. The 'other' is a structural position in the symbolic order. It is the place that every character of the novel is trying to get to, to merge with, and to get rid of the separation between 'self and

'other' But, the 'other' cannot be merged with as nothing can be in the center with the 'other'. So, the position of the 'other' creates and sustains a never-ending 'lack', which Lacan calls 'desire'.

'Mama Papa' do not believe in the education of the girls. They think that the ultimate career for girls is marriage. Therefore, they keep Uma mostly busy with the trivialities of the home life, which harms her educational prospects. The 'actions' of the parents reflect the working of phallus in the symbolic order. The patriarchal trap starts 'deleting' the identity of the 'other' which can be best understood using Foucault's analysis of 'cultural construction'. The beginning of the novel shows conditioned and culturally constructed father-mother figures and a girl caught up in the dynamics of 'cultural construction'. Uma, being gentle and submissive suffers. Here it is noteworthy that the novelist does not give the names of the parents of Uma. It is definitely a deliberate attempt to make us clear the universal thinking of an Indian couple with regard to their attitude towards their children. That is why they are referred to as 'Mama Papa'. Aruna, on the other hand is comparatively successful in comparison with the life of Uma because she is physically attractive and aggressive in her attitude towards life. The parents concentrate all their attention on their son Arun. As typical narrow-minded parents, Mama Papa have their children to make them follow their notion of strict rules of discipline and proper manners. Mama is a scolder who scolds children for every error and Papa is a scowler who looks angrily at everything he dislikes. Comments Desai: "Papa's chosen role was scowling, Mama's scolding". (p.8). Papa is "like the satrap of some small provinciality" (p.7) and presides over small family rituals as "he gazes over them with the sphinx-like expression of the blind". (p.23). Michael Foucault's concept of 'Gaze' coincides with Papa's 'seeing' at the metaphorical level. This implies-speaking connotatively-the cultural code of male-dominancy, oppression and patriarchal order. Ironically speaking, it refers to the 'symbolic blindness' of the father when he can't 'see' the plight of the 'other', i.e., her daughter and in a way reflects his tyrant attitude. They had assumed these roles, clearly to 'dominate' and keep the family, i.e., the 'other' under control. They have produced a 'fear' of themselves in the children, particularly in their daughter Uma who continues to obey and suffer. Her physical fits highlight her psychic sickness. They 'repress' Uma and hence her 'desires' get buried. Uma 'resists' her servitude, but cannot express it. Russell Meares opines:

A response such as mockery, contempt, or simple lack of interest devalues the intimate emotions, and the child

is hurt in a way that feels like damage to his physical self. When the child lives in a situation where the exposure of the innermost feelings is dangerous, he learns to hide these emotions. He develops a pathology of privacy. Moreover, he learns that the social environment is made up of enemies. Although he lives among them, he is an isolate. There is no one who connects him with that which is tender in him. (3)

The novel throws a luminous light on the Indian attitude of having a son in a family. A son is desirable and a son is born and Papa's elation knows no bounds. He leaps out of his chair and screaming with joy "A boy! a boy!" [p.17] Uma and Aruna are 'awe-struck' by this emotional reaction. Arun, being a son is the extension of their 'selves'. So they are in love with their own being as they consider him as their 'selfobject'. On the other hand, parents consider Uma the 'other' that is the reason they project their 'desires' in Uma.

The birth of Arun proves disastrous for Uma only. Unfortunately she is unable to be promoted to the higher class, Mama finds it a good opportunity to discontinue Uma's going to school and keeps her at home to look after the 'precious son', who is not to be trusted with the servants. Thereafter, Mama almost 'reduces' Uma to the condition of a domestic servant, without understanding her plight and her 'desires'. Uma is desirous to get education that is why she makes a desperate effort to visit mother Agnes and pleads with her to promote her to the next class so that she may continue attending the school, which she loves so much. In addition to this Mama has already declared, 'But we are not sending you to Mother Agnes or to school again', (p.18) without understanding her daughter's state of mind and 'desires'. Mama remarks, "you will be happier at home. You can help me look after Arun". (p.20). Uma feels sad, panicked and miserable. She is, thereafter, left with her memories of the school. Hence her 'desire' of education fails to be fulfilled. Karen Horney argues:

...when parent's behavior toward a child is indifferent, disparaging and erratic, the child feels helpless and insecure. Horney calls it "basic anxiety". Accompanying basic anxiety is a feeling of deep resentment toward the parents, or "basic hostility". This hostility cannot be expressed directly, because the child needs and fears the parents and strongly wants their love. So, the hostility is repressed, leading to increased feelings of unworthiness and anxiety. (4)

Amidst the trivial household work, such as looking after the growing Arun, preparing lemonade for Papa, Uma finds herself caught up in the conflict of 'basic anxiety' and 'basic hostility'. She has only a few rare moments when she can free 'herself'. She finds such moments of delight only when Mama Papa are away attending some social function where they always go together. On such occasions, she takes out her private collection of beautiful objects, Christmas cards, bangles and embroidered handkerchiefs. She enjoys the feeling, which she gets through embracing these things, which carry metaphorical importance to soothe her 'ruptured desire system'. But she always puts them back hurriedly if she hears someone coming. The domineering parents have virtually suppressed all impulses, desires and emotions in Uma. Uma wants to move forward to 'others' and she is always anxious to please 'others' in order to gain affection and approval. But, she has nobody to look forward to for her personal joy. Uma is really a perfect example of a 'repressed' figure. Pathos marks the circumstances of Uma who is already a deficit personality in the Maslowian sense of the term by being myopic and inept. Jasbir Jain writes:

Uma has a love for life, which is expressed in several ways – her impulses rebellions and escapades; her over charged enthusiasm for studies, the enjoyment of a tonga ride, and the abandon with which she jumps off a boat. (5)

Uma projects her unconscious 'desires' in the hermetic figures of Mira-Masi and her cousin Ramu. She feels strongly attracted to them. In Freudian terms, Mira-Masi can be seen as an embodiment of the superego. She tries to seek herself in them. It is with Mira-Masi that Uma has a mind-expanding experience of going to the river where she almost drowns. It depicts her submission in the repressed unconscious. Her coordination with Mira-Masi in an Ashram and reluctance to come back to her parental home suggests her escape from her dull routine life. On the other hand is Ramu Bhai, who is seeker of fun and a happy-go-lucky kind of a person 'traveling all over' (p.47). Speaking in Freudian terms, Ramu represents id. Uma's shrunken, suppressed 'self' becomes alive and tingled on his visit, and he comes like a sudden gust of fresh air in a sick room. He shakes the whole house and family with his air of self-confidence and a note of cheerfulness in his voice. Ramu tries to fulfill the 'desires' of Uma by taking her out to dinner but Uma does not go forward. She 'submits' herself by coming back to her parents in the safe confines of her home. Uma's 'ego' loses its struggle to reconcile the divergent demands of the 'id', the 'superego', and reality comes in the form of anxiety, a state of psychic distress. Anxiety

arises in Uma when her 'ego' realizes that expression of an 'id' impulse will lead to some kind of harm. Her ego therefore inhibits the harmful action, and the resulting inner struggle is felt in anxiety. Her anxiety, in turn, serves as an alarm signal that tells her ego that something must be done to resolve the conflict and then she chooses 'repression' as her defense mechanism. So, there remains a 'lack' and 'absence' in Uma's personality as she 'desires' something else and does something else. Uma 'represses' her desires when she complies with her parents' refusal to let her work for Dr. Dutta who personifies the independent and educated woman. The 'lack' in Uma could have been fulfilled partially if she were given the permission of working with Dr. Dutta. Through all these 'repressed' wishes of Uma, she develops into an alien. All this gives an insight into the understanding of her psyche and suggests her shattered and injured emotional 'self'. She fails to share a healthy emotional link with anybody. Her frustration is the outcome of her oppressions and incapacity to give an outburst to her oppressions, which lead to her alienation. She looks forward to her cousin Ramu and Mira-Masi that suggests her escape from the presence of an oppressive social life. Her 'super-ego' is so much injured that she is not at ease when she goes to the temple with Mira-Masi and even here the frightful image of the parents-'the enemies abandon' - lurks in her mind.

Uma is 'considered' to be an unfortunate girl after two unsuccessful attempts to marry her off. She is tagged ill fated as she has costed two dowries. Her deficit personality suffers further deprivation and damage,

Uma's face was losing its childish openness of expression and taking a look of continual care. (p.88)

Uma senses an abrupt change in other's attitude toward her. She soon becomes conscious of the shattering family ties and feels the strained and suffocating atmosphere of her family:

She missed his (Arun's) teasing and she is missing Arun's sympathy and solidarity too. The tightly knit fabric of family that had seemed so stifling and confining now revealed holes and gaps that ...were frightening. (p.86).

Aruna is a foil to Uma. She lives life on her own terms and conditions. She successfully achieves her desirous aims and 'rebels' by cultivating her, feminine guiles and 'power of attraction'. (p.79). She is able to develop a 'determined self-assertion', 'a kind of steely determination', and 'a dogged ambition'. She finds herself a compatible husband and moves to a fantastic and dream-like life in Bombay. Aruna proves to be better placed character as she is able to unify the opposing forces of existence to some extent.

She takes time to decide everything in her life. She doesn't let her parents do their own will as they do to dispose off Uma. Aruna constitutes a contrast as "...no one had to teach her how to make samosas or help her to dress for an occasion. Instinctively, she knew". (p.85). Uma fails to unify the play of opposing forces in her life. Darkness in Uma's life is symbolic of her alienated 'self', her sense of loss that she can't get what she desires. All these reasons are the result of Uma's emotional estrangement with everybody in her family. Moreover she is unable to express her resentment and agitation, humiliation and neglect, which she suffers in the hands of her so called well-wishers. Desai chooses the familial fabric to present the themes of depth psychology; of the 'self' and the 'other'; desire and fulfillment. And the technique she opts is counter-point. The symbolic realm reflects the characters on conceptual pedestal of 'desire', 'repression', and 'lack'. In the Lacanian view, the language these characters use is marked by irony, metaphor, metonymy and other devices, and these never let the fixing of the 'chain of signifiers'. The issue is never resolved as every character suffers from an undying 'lack', which in turn leads to 'illusionary desire'. True to her expectations, Aruna is whisked away to a life that is fantastic, which is like a 'dream', "...such words, such use of them did seem to raise Aruna to another level- distant and airy..." (p.103). But the 'distant' and 'airy' take her away from her own 'self', placing her with a 'lack' of balance in her life. Aruna has a vision of perfect world and is constantly uncovering flaws which she has to correct. This eventually lands her in an uncomfortable household. 'Seeing' Aruna vexed to the point of tears over trivial matters, Uma reflects:

...was this the realm of ease and comfort for which Aruna had always pined and that some might say she had attained? Certainly it brought her no pleasure; there was always a kind of discontent between her eyebrows and an agitation that made her eyelids flutter, disturbing Uma noticed it. (p.109).

The narrative unfolds the use of 'irony' through the character of Uma. In the beginning of the narrative, Uma is referred to as a girl with 'myopic' eyesight. But speaking metaphorically, this is only Uma who can actually 'see' in the whole novel. And the characters who have genuine eyesight fail to 'see' the reality. Anamika, "simply lovely as a flower is lovely, soft, petal-skinned, bumblebee-eyed, pink lipped... with a good nature like a radiance about her" (p.67) Uma's cousin sister, on the other hand is a model of perfection both physically and intellectually. She exudes 'beauty and grace and distinction'. (p.70). She conforms to the wishes of her

parents and does not join the fellowship at Oxford university, hence 'represses' her desires. Her fate is most pathetic as she becomes the victim of a degrading and soulless patriarchal family system. She becomes a hopeless victim of all the female characters trapped in the hands of greedy husband and in-laws. Ironically, it is her scholarship shown around with pride that wins for her a husband who is equally qualified and has won medals and certificates. She being a girl is not to be sent abroad for study and Anamika "could never bring herself to contradict her parents or cause them grief." (p.69). The brilliant and beautiful 'desire' in Anamika is simply obliterated by the institution of marriage, relegated to the kitchen to toil for the family, never permitted even to attend family gatherings, beaten, ill-treated and ultimately burnt to ashes. Furthermore, no one feels desirous of looking into her death deeply to get the culprits punished, "What Anamika's family said was that it was fate, god had willed it and it was Anamika's destiny". (p.151). This underlines the parental apathy and 'indifference' to the tragic end of their daughter. They behave as passive fatalists who accept the killing of their daughter as something that was to be.

The second part of the novel is set in America and follows the fortunes of Uma's brother Arun, who is brought up with 'proper attention' and is spending his summer vacation with the Patton family. But Arun proves to be a disappointment in ways. The 'subjects' who are brought up 'properly' reveal that convention does not hold in them and there is a lack of the 'center' and psychic balance. He suffers from an endless procession of ills consisting of mumps, measles, chickenpox, bronchitis, malaria, flu, asthma, nose-bleeds and more things. He is able to fulfill his father's dream of 'best education' by winning a place at East Coast College in the United States and in this context the following lines become noteworthy:

If there was one thing Papa insisted on in the realm of home and family, then it was education for his son: the best, the most, the highest. (p.118).

But at the most, Arun represents lack of communication and warmth of life:

She (Uma) watched and searched for an expression, of relief, of joy, doubt, fear, anything at all. But there was none. All the years of scholarly toil had worn down any distinguishing features Arun's face might once have had. They had felt the essentials: a nose, eyes, mouth, ears.... There was nothing else-not the hint of a smile, frown, laugh and anything. (p.12).

The over-concern on the part of parents in Arun makes him a handicapped 'subject' who suffers from a tragic 'lack'. In the US, he has every intention of remaining aloof, alone and anonymous. It is as if he has been strangled by the familial bonds, by the concern, affection and attention showered upon him. Thus everything everywhere seems to stem out from lack and desire; sometimes of the 'other' and sometimes of the 'self'. Arun experiences the frightening feelings when he has to live with Patton family during his summer vacations and even at this time, his Papa takes this decision for him. He imagines Patton family as

...laying its hands upon him, pushing him down into a chair at the desk, showing a textbook under his nose.... spooning food into him, telling him; Arun this, Arun that.... (p.175).

This family is a fine representation of the quality and nature of the American world and life and it is communicated to us through the impressions of Arun. It is a metaphoric and metonymic extension of the Indian family; both turn out carnivorous patriarchs, sentimental mothers, choked daughters and drifting sons. What we learn through a variety of these impressions is the materialistic nature of life in America. The Patton family is a typical representation of an American middle-class consumerist family. We see a similarity between both the families i.e. American and the Indian. The two families are contrasted in the words of Anita Desai:

The Indian family is still extremely close knit; there's far greater individualism in America, both have their ideal family, but the American family has a coldness at its heart because no one really believes in it any more. In India the family is more a hearth or a fire: it keeps you warm, but it consumes you too. (6)

The American houses and apartments are variously painted and cluttered with objects expediently used and suddenly abandoned. There are rubber paddling pools left outdoors by children, "... moulded plastic bicycles, steel bicycles, go-carts and skateboards". (p.160). All these material objects point to a quality of life in which there is only a thick line between 'desire' and 'satisfaction'.

Individual human lives are enclosed and isolated. There are so many objects and so few people. There are a few, undefined human shapes huddled upon a couch or sprawled on the floor before a television. There is a trace of the unnatural and of being confined about this kind of life:

And there is the multicoloured life of the screen, jiggling and jumping with a mechanical animation that has no natural equivalent. The windows are shut, he (Arun) cannot hear a sound. (p.160).

Arun's eyes also catch sight of mailboxes along the road, which are stuffed with mail order catalogues and newspapers. He observes speeding cars and all these, to his mind; suggest an attempt of communication and a frantic effort to achieve mobility and escape. In this 'abyss of uncertainty', values and beliefs seem to lose the sense of coherence. Anthony Giddens remarks aptly:

...the project of 'self' becomes translated into one of the possession of desired goods and the pursuit of artificiality framed styles of life. (7)

The Pattons can be seen like a cartoon family. We have Mr. and Mrs. Patton in this middle-class American family. Mrs. Patton is a compulsive 'buyer' and Mr. Patton a self-possessed patriarch. The father lives in a world of steak, hamburger, ribs and chops, grilled and fried and roasted. His expressions remind Arun of his "...his father's very expression, walking off, denying any opposition, any challenge to authority..." (p.186). Mrs. Patton is caught up in the characteristic posture of a person who hoards and stores as if to fill some kind of emotional vacuum. She keeps on buying and storing things as if she 'lacks' something:

Mrs. Patton is there. She is unpacking several large brown paper grocery bags, placing cartons and containers on the counter, slowly and thoughtfully putting away each item after several minutes of holding it and considering it. (p.161).

Lack in her case, comes out in her extra efforts to make Arun at home, to the extent of turning herself vegetarian for his sake:

She smiles a bright plastic copy of a mother-smile that Arun remembers from another world and another time, a smile that is tight at the corners with pressure, the pressure to perform a role, to make him eat, make him grow, make him worth all the trouble and effort and expense... (p.194-95).

They have two children Rod and Melanie. Rod is a loutish health freak, whose only interests are fitness, games, exercise and jogging and he offers a stark contrast to Arun. If Arun is the "ego" then Rod is the "id".

There was no way that a small, underdeveloped and asthmatic boy (Arun) from the Gangetic plains, nourished on curried vegetables and stewed lentils, could compete with or even keep up with this gladiatorial species of power (Rod).[p.191].

The bulimic daughter Melanie, who offers a contrast to Uma, is as 'decentered' as any other character in the novel. Both of them seem to be self-torturing and convulsive having their own 'obsessions'. It can be assumed that the Patton family is trying to fill up a 'lack' in them with food. The house conveys an atmosphere of resentment and separation too. Thus, one sees the 'absence' of parental balance in both families. One comes across no 'individuated being'. Each exists as a separate, alienated identity, lacking an essential order in life.

Arun is a sensitive soul and faces the harsh realities of American life. He thinks that he has made his escape with his flight to US, but realizes his inability to extricate himself from the web of 'lack' and 'desire'. He feels repelled by the desolation of the area around him and is also provoked with the feeling of disgust, when he has to line with an obsessed non-vegetarian family. Mrs. Patton on her own proves to be a sympathetic and sensitive lady. She is a typical representation of a universal mother figure always caring, loving and nourishing. Arun relates to her as a surrogate mother.

The American society repels Arun. Living in America, away from home, away from his loving and tender Mama Papa, away from his native land, i.e., India to whom he is familiar, where he has grown up, Arun experiences a total 'lack' of freedom, a total absence of relations of needs, requests, ties, responsibilities, commitments, rights and demands which he has relished in his own family. America represents to Arun the Modern World where one feels alienated without any tradition, family or relations. Here in America, as we read, Arun

...had at last experienced the total freedom of anonymity, the total absence of relatives, of demands, needs, requests, ties, responsibilities, commitments. He was Arun. He had no part, no family and no country. (p.172)

All his desires and emotions get 'repressed' in the Patton family. He feels an air of obsession, unrestrained absolute isolation and tastes the 'reality' of being an alienated 'self'. The title, i.e., Fasting Feasting represents the two different and opposed cultures of India and America.

Mrs. Patton's family presents a real picture of a disintegrated and

shattered family life. Melanie is a whimsical character. She prefers to eat nuts and candies instead of eating food prepared by her mother. She uses bitter words to her mother in the presence of Arun. She bursts:

Why don't you ask me what I want? Why cannot you make me what I want? Everything you cook is .....poison! (p.207)

Melanie definitely 'lacks' something, which she asks for again and again. Mother, Mrs. Patton, comes face to face with the ruthless reality of her daughter's utmost aversion towards her when she takes Arun and Melanie to the nearby river for swimming. She comes to know about the severe sickness of her daughter who has been lying in the ground, damp and discoloured, kicking and struggling, vomiting and groaning. Her plight reveals her 'inner self' and her emotional estrangement with her own people. Desai puts it like this:

This is not plastic mock-up, no cartoon representation such as he has been seeing all summer; this is a real pain and a real hunger. But what hunger does a person so sated feel? (p.224)

Melanie is definitely a desperate, discontent and hungry soul shattered by the dynamics of 'desire'. Desire is uniquely human. We desire what we lack, for something that is missing. It is the frustrated demand of a person, which gives birth to the desire. In the view of Philip Hill, Deleuze and Guattari regard man as a 'desiring- machine' (11). We are 'prohibited beings'. We can't fulfill our desires. On the other hand, we have a cultural set-up, i.e., language, culture; symbolic order which confines us. Foucault calls this 'cultural construction'. We are not allowed to transgress our limits, which are defined by the prevalent discourse of society. So we have culture, which restricts us. All the major and minor characters/signifiers are found to be caught in the flux of familial-cum-personal anxieties finding no escape throughout the narrative. Paradoxically, it is Uma, 'the disgrace of the family', an abject failure, manages to survive through an inner struggle of own 'desires'. She presents the quintessential binary opposition of hope and despair, lack and fulfillment, and absence and presence. Hearing Mira-Masi's stories of Lord Krishna, the poet-saint Mira and Raja Harkrishchandra,

Uma, with her ears and even her fingertips tingling, felt that here was someone who could pierce through the dreary outer world to an inner world, tantalizing in its color and romance. If only it could replace this, Uma thought hungrily. (p.40).

When she visits the holy river, she feels an unconscious urge to rush into the water. "It had not occurred to her that she needed to know how to swim. She had been certain the river would sustain her". (p.43). In addition to this:

...when she had plunged into the dark water and let it close quickly and tightly over her, the flow of the river, the current, drew her along, clasping her and dragging her with it. It was not fear she felt, or danger or rather, these were only what edged something much darker, wilder, more thrilling, a kind of exultation—it was exactly what she had always wanted, she realized. (p.111).

The river 'imagery' presents Uma's yearning for the knowledge of the 'self' and the 'other' and an urge to fill the gaps of 'desires'. It is an urge for 'psychic economy', 'individuation' and the 'collective unconscious'. She remembers "The subterranean feeling" stirred within her by the words intoned during prayers in the convent school where she studied:

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.  
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures,  
He leadeth me beside the still waters.  
He restoreth my soul ..... (p.20).

Unlike Melaine, who in spite of all the freedom that she enjoys falls victim to neglect and misunderstanding, Uma is able to transcend her disabilities and constraints and the same is clear as Desai writes, "the murky water catches the blaze of the sun and flashes fire". (p.156). In Uma, one sees growth between the conscious and unconscious, the introvert and the extrovert, the Apollonian and the Dionysian. Uma, though she presents 'lack' and 'desire', is engaged in a psychic struggle of her own with the hope of cultivating the duality of all the seemingly conflicting opposites of life. Her redeeming ability is her ability to 'see', i.e., perceives the truth of their condition. Symbolically, she has a visionary sight even though she is myopic in eyesight. She is the one who reveals the capacity of exploring her own 'self'. In the Jungian perspective, it is important to labour towards 'individuation' and cultivating a stable 'self'.

The distinction between the sexes is significant in Lacanian world-view and this is where the Jungian thought meets with the Lacanian concept of the 'symbolic other'. According to Lacan, in taking up a position in the symbolic order, one enters in a gender-marked doorway; much like what Jung discusses as in the Anima/Animus archetype. Neither of the two sexes

has the phallus, which is the 'center'. One's position in the symbolic order, like the position of all other signifying elements (signifiers), is fixed by the phallus. Unlike the unconscious, the chains of signifiers in the symbolic realm don't circulate and slide endlessly because the phallus limits the play. From the archetypal perspective, Desai's fiction can be studied on the plane where the collective unconscious combines the individual with the universal. The idea of 'lack' is developed in relation to the idea of dialectic, which is common both in Eastern and Western tradition.

Fasting Feasting presents a universal interacting duality common to both mind and nature and to the Anima and the Animus. The title of Desai's novel is significant in indicating that all creation is composed two energies, which should be held in 'harmony' and 'interaction'. 'Fasting' suggests paucity of food and 'feasting' suggests fullest availability and enjoyment of food. These two words stand for certain characteristics, which distinguish the two life styles and set them apart. Fasting refers to the life style of the Indian family and suggests 'denial of opportunity', 'deprivation' and 'suppression' of natural impulses, which has a disastrous effect on the life of the members of the family. 'Feasting' represents plenty of food and license of 'unrestrained' consumption, which too has damaging effects on the members of the Patton family. However, the title of the novel takes on a new meaning towards the end. Mrs. Patton and Melanie undergo a change, which may be viewed as a result of fasting or a 'self-restraint'. Melanie develops a dislike of food and, when sent to an institute for cure, changes her food habits. Mrs. Patton no longer takes interest in the kitchen and thinks of some kind of healthy discipline in the form of yoga, sun-bathing and traditional medicines. Each character in the novel, especially Uma, depicts the vast capacity of the archetypal 'self'. But the goal, which Carl Rogers calls the goal of 'self-individuation' is attainable only if we start treating the 'other' as our own 'self' by converting what Martin Buber calls "I-It" relationship into "I-Thou" relationship. Anita Desai in this novel very beautifully and successfully delineates with the narrative pattern and brings to focus these concerns related to the complexities of 'authentic human existence' by foregrounding the dynamics of 'lack' and 'desire'. Jasbir Jain argues by saying that the inevitable question to ask is why Desai does rework these lives:

And why does she project these lives in alternative worlds-it is to examine the possibilities of fulfillment and happiness which still lie untapped or it is to make a statement that no matter whichever path one chooses, lives will always remain incomplete and unfulfilled? (8)

Through its significations systems revolving around metaphor, metonymy and irony, the text weaves an intricate narrative pattern which envisions that entrapment or 'lack' of freedom of one kind or another is an inescapable fact of life. The whole narrative is engaging and illuminating as its rhythmic movement lay bare the bitter 'truths' caused by the dynamics of 'lack' and 'desire' showing an undying quest of an individual to become all that one truly is-to fulfill one's capabilities and to achieve one's total potential.

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# Beyond Illusions: An Existentialistic Appraisal of V. S. Naipaul's *Magic Seeds*

*Surekha*

Published in 2004, V.S Naipaul's *Magic Seeds* is not an existentialistic treatise like Sartre's *Nausea* or Camus's *The Outsider*. But its main structural tenets like freedom and choice, metaphysical despair and human uniqueness exude an existentialistic flavour. For a better understanding of *Magic Seeds* in an existentialistic context, it is worthwhile to draw the broad parameters of existentialism. There are, no doubt, serious difficulties involved in this process. The concept of existentialism has been reduced to "the level of a fad" (Macquarrie, 1986: 13). According to Sartre, "the word is now so loosely applied to so anything at all," (Sartre; 1947; 58), "almost any self respecting existentialist", observes Roger L Shinn, "refuses to call himself an existentialist." To say, "I am an existential", is to say I am one of that classification of people known as existentialists whereas the existentialist wants to say, 'I am myself—and I don't like your effort to fit into your classification" (Shinn, 1968: 13). No wonder, many philosophers like Heidegger and Jaspers reject the all inclusive label of existentialism.

Accepting the fact of the elusiveness of the concept of existentialism and the reality of the diversity of opinion among the main exponents of the existential model, we find that existentialism is nonetheless unified by a central concern with the ultimate challenge of human existence. Woven around the quest for authentic values and the negation of societal conformism, the existentialists generally stress the evolution of the existential insights of a person. Broadly speaking, there are three schools of thought among them. There are atheistic strand, theistic strand and the interpersonal strand among them. The existentialists like Nietzsche and Sartre are atheists and confer the burden of existentialistic choices and responsibilities on human beings. Where as Nietzsche is obsessed with his advent of superman, (Nietzsche, 1909) Sartre is basically concerned with the question of authentic freedom and choice. Sartre endows the burden of freedom and responsibility on man. We are condemned to be free. We live in a Godless world. We are responsible for ourselves and for others. We must accept our human conditions of mortal existence. We must choose and through our choices we are to discover ourselves and take full responsibility for our lives. "To say that we invent values means nothing else but this: life has no meaning a priori. Before you come alive,

life is nothing: it's up to you to give it a meaning and value is nothing else but the meaning you choose" (Sartre: 58).

Whereas atheistic existentialists like Nietzsche and Sartre proclaim the death of God, the theological existentialists like Kierkegaard and Paul Tillich seek a resolution of existential dilemmas in the affirmation of God. The only alternative that Tillich sees to this despair of atheistic existentialism is the transcendence of theism in "absolute faith." In order to accept ourselves, Tillich explains in *The Courage to Be*, one needs to be accepted by the Power of Being itself: "Man's being, ontic as well as spiritual, is not only given to him but also demanded of him. He is responsible for it; literally he is required to answer, if he is asked, what he has made of himself" (Tillich, 1953: 51). Furthermore, whereas atheistic existentialists find the affirmation of human destiny in fusion of self with God, the atheists attribute to the solitary individual the burden of existential freedom and choice, the existentialists of dialogue like Marcel, Camus and Buber discern in intersubjectivity a resolution of existential guilt and fortitude.

The intersubjective relation must be acknowledged freely. Since man does not exist through himself but through the Thou, his freedom is the trial in which he makes the decisive option whether to open himself to the Thou or to choose himself from it. "The mutual recognition of the common destiny and the communication of men between themselves", says Camus, are always valid.... The mutual understanding and communication discovered by rebellion can survive only in the free exchange of conversation." (Camus, 1956: 283).

The existentialist of dialogue, in other words, attaches a lot of importance to mutual interpersonal relations. In inter human relationships, the partners stand in an interaction in which each becomes more deeply himself as he moves more fully to respond to the other. According to the Maurice Friedman, "Here is an existentialism which does not invent values, as Sartre, nor create them through the will to power, as Nietzsche, yet discovers them in the concrete situation of life rather than in the 'celestial nought'" (Friedman, 1964: 284). The world in other words needs genuine dialogue.

Now the question arises, to which form of existentialism does Naipaul's *Magic Seeds* belong? Can we categorize it in a theistic mode or in an atheistic mode? Or can we note its overwhelming orientation to existential dialogue in which intersubjectivity is more important than the existential anguish of a solitary person? To place it any in these modes would be a reductive effort. This rich novel cannot be pigeonholed in any single category. What we can say at the outset of the detailed analysis of

the novel is that it is suffused with the existential temper. “This temper can best be described as a reaction against the static, the abstract, the purely rational, the merely irrational,” summarizes Maurice Friedman in The World of Existentialism: A Critical Reader, “in favor of the dynamic and the concrete, personal involvement and ‘engagement,’ action, choice and commitment, the distinction between authentic and inauthentic existence and the actual situation of the existential subject as the starting point of thought” (Friedman, *The Worlds of Existentialism*, 1964: 3-4).

Interestingly the existential situation of the protagonist of the novel, Willie Chandran is fraught with existential despair. He has realized the vacuity of his symbolic and protective matrimonial life lasting eighteen years. What seemed to him the journey of mutual cooperation and understanding at the commencement of his marriage now suffuses him with the feelings of abject surrender before the other. Analeptically, he evaluates his matrimony only to find in it an authentic existential choice. In it, he lost his existential freedom and became just a protégé of his wife. Explicating his motives for his plunge into marriage and his severance of his matrimonial ties, he confided in Ramachandra: “because you must understand I was poor, literally without money, and when I met my wife in London, at the end of my useless college course, I had no idea at all what I might do where I might go. After fifteen or sixteen years in Africa I began to change. I began to feel that I had thrown away my life, that what I had thought of as my luck was no such thing. Her house, her land, her friends, nothing that was my own, I began to feel that because of my insecurity—the insecurity I had been born into, like you – I had yielded too often to accidents, and that these accidents had taken me further and further away from myself” (Naipaul, 2004: 115).

In analogous relationship with Willie Chandran, his wife too rued her existential choice of marrying him. “She said it wasn’t really her life... her life was as much a series of accidents as I thought mine was.” (115) Caught in an existential impasse, both of them forsook the bonds of matrimony to face their real selves. Significantly, Willie, in reflective discursive syntagms, also regrets reading the books which alienated him from his own culture. Had he read the autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi, his life would have taken a different and authentic direction. In that case, he would have realized his existential potential in a much more meaningful manner. Nostalgically, he thought, “I wish this healing book had come my way twenty-five years ago. I might have become another man. I would have aimed at another life. I wouldn’t have lived that shabby life in Africa among strangers. I would have felt that I wasn’t alone in the world, that a great man had been there before me, Instead, I was reading Hemingway,

who was very far away from me, who had nothing to offer me, and doing my bogus stories. What darkness, what self-deception, what waste.” (19) Such feelings of existential guilt often haunt him in the narrative discourse.

Willie’s reflective outbursts insistently remind us of Antoine Roquentin, the famous existential hero of Sartre’s Nausea who often finds his existence superfluous (Sartre, 1978:193). His previous life is also without justification. It cannot take any authentic meaning through immersing oneself in historical research or through identifying oneself with the narcissistic burghers whose portraits adorn the walls of the main room in the city hall. Roquentin denounces all their self styled heroes who have led inauthentic lives. They compromised their existential freedom for egotistic conformism. Pointedly, he also negates his own achievements. Perhaps if he could write a novel, he might give a meaning to his existence. Analogously, Willie rejects the vision of material prosperity for an existential confrontation of his outer self with inner self in the recesses of India: “He felt that every thing he had thought had worked out in those five months was true. They issued out of a new serenity. Everything he had felt before, all the seemingly real longings that had taken him to Africa, were false. He felt no shame now; he could acknowledge everything; he saw that everything that had happened to him was a preparation for what was now to come.” (23)

What resolves the existential dilemmas of Willie Chandran at this stage is the power discourse of his sister Sarojini who provides a new existential direction to him: “Sometimes in a storm beautiful old trees are uprooted. You don’t know what to do.... You have to find other ways of dealing with your loss. I was in that empty, unhappy mood when I heard of him before. He proclaimed a new revolution.... He proclaimed the death of the Lin Piao line. Instead, he announced the Mass Line. Revolution was to be no place in this movement for middle class masqueraders. And—would you believe it?—out of the ruins of that earlier, false revolution he has already set going a true revolution.” (14-15)

Interpellating Willie Chandran in the revolutionary ideology of Kandapalli, Sarojini urges her brother to seek the new existential identity in the revolution ushered by Kandapalli. What happened in the past was a series of existential misrecognitions. Now is the time to take genuine decisions for self and for the downtrodden of his motherland. Little does she know at this stage that this is another misrecognition. Only proleptically would she lament her foisting of wrong choices on Willie and others. Though she was motivated by good intentions, the result for self and others

were horrible. To Willie she writes in contrite self confession: “It is awful to say, but I believe I have sent many people to their doom in many countries. I know now that in the last few years the intelligence people of various countries followed us wherever we went. People trusted us because of what we had done, and we let no body down. But then in these last few years the people we persuaded to let us make films about them were later picked up one by one. I can give you a list of the countries. It wasn’t always like that, and Wolf had nothing to do with it. He is as much of a dupe as the rest of us.” (159)

No wonder both Sarojini and her brother Willie feel self-deluded at this turn of events. What they have not envisaged in their blind trust in the ideology of Kandapalli and his revolution is the symbolic reality of the authorities. Cherishing a narcissistic vision of their own selves and longing for its confirmation through their personas of revolutionaries, they ultimately find themselves cheated. Symbiotic choices turn out to be fake and fill them with existential guilt and despair (Macquarrie: 202-203). Whereas Sarojini who goaded her brother to evolve his self through the revolution finds flaw in her power knowledge ideology, Willie finds the whole ideological structure sustained on the texts of Lenin and Mao dubious. “This study, half pious, half mendacious, with people saying what they felt they had to say about the peasantry and the proletariat and the revolution, was sterile to Willie, always a waste of education and mind, and soon in spite of the favoured treatment and even respect it secured in the jail, it became unbearable” (163).

What this reflective discursive segment foregrounds is the evolution of Willie’s authentic self. Whereas the other jailed revolutionaries gloat in the dominant power knowledge ideology of the great ideologues and seek a justification for their fragmented selves in it, Willie gradually awakens to the existential reality of revolution and its impact on the peasants. Instead of emancipating them, the freedom fighters were subjugating them all the time. The revolution and their participation in it was an act of bad faith. Seeking his sister’s confirmation about his new found epistemological vision, he confesses his existential guilt: “That war was not yours or mine and it had nothing to do with the village people we said we were fighting for. We talked about their oppression, but we were exploiting them all the time. Our ideas and words were more important their lives and their ambitions for themselves.” (167)

Juxtaposed with the protagonist of the novel, Willie Chandran, who often suffers from the feeling of existential guilt and often questions his

existential choices, most of the revolutionaries bask in “bad faith,” So rooted are they in their image of gestalt, constituted through the borrowed ideas of others, they refuse to respond to the voices of reason. In a meaningful encounter between Einstein and a senior leader of the revolutionary movement, this confrontation between symbolic discourse and imaginary discourse takes place (Sarop, 1992: 101-112).<sup>13</sup> Whereas the former, forced by the repeated failures of the movement in respective zones, urges the leader to acknowledge the real situation, the latter admonishes the votaries of oppositional discourse through his symbiotic dependence on inauthentic power knowledge discourse. In rage the leader of council seeks to stifle the voices of the interrogative others: “who are these people who will want to question me? Have they read the books I have read? Can they read those books? Can they begin to understand Marx and Lenin? I am not Kandapalli. These people will do as I say. They will stand when I tell them to stand, and sit when I tell them to sit.” (142)

Needless to say, authoritative discourse of this demagogue is a betrayal of existential trust. In this egoistic desire to impose his self on the vulnerable others, he denies the existential reality of the other persons. Instead of reciprocating to others in a responsive manner, he seeks to convert genuine dialogic relations into reflective relations. What should be “I-Thou” relationship becomes in the hands of the leader the “I-IT” relationship. The “I-Thou” philosophy is concerned with the difference between mere existence and authentic existence. It deals with being merely a human being and being more fully human, between remaining fragmented and bringing the disharmonious parts of oneself into a harmonious whole. Above all, it is concerned with partial and fuller relationship with others. In contrast, “I-It” relationship is exploitative and authoritative. In it, the individuality of the other person is not recognized and he is reduced to a mere object of the confirmation of one’s ideological discourse. To be rooted in “I-It” relationship is a mark of an inauthentic mode of existence and alienation from the existential reality of the other person (Buber, 1958:3-6).

We should strive toward “I-Thou” relationship. No doubt, the persevering in an unbroken “I-Thou” relationship is impossible. But one may move in the direction of greater wholeness through greater awareness and fuller response in each new situation. As Maurice Friedman comments, “I-Thou and the I-It should alternate in such a way that ever more of the world of it is brought into the world of Thou. In this sense the, I-Thou is the basic relationship for Buber, for through it one becomes truly human. But its authentication would not be possible were it not for the civilized structure and ordering of the world of it. Without the world of it man cannot

live, says Buber, but if he lives in this world alone, he is not a man”(Friedman:291).

Unfortunately most of the revolutionaries have resorted to “I-It” relationships to lead their fragmented lives. As they cannot bear the existential reality of their lives, they seek the protective orbit of illusions time and again. This is what Sartre calls “bad faith.” We can cite the examples of various revolutionaries who seemingly took bold decisions to emancipate the subjugated classes from the tyranny of oppressive feudal society. We must analyze their basic orientations before passing a judgment on the authenticity or fakeness of their decisions. Take the case of symbolically named Ramachandra whose subjectivity was constituted paradoxically by both revolutionary ideologues like Lenin, Marx, Trotsky, Mao and Mills and Boons. Interpellated in the “I-It” reality of romantic discourse, he sought to impose himself on the girls without any concomitant response. The result was sexual rage. With romantic options blocked due to his small size, he embraced the ideology of the revolutionaries who advocated asceticism and annihilation of those who violated this code.

What Ramachandra failed to appreciate was the concrete reality of his situation. “Willie noticed how unwilling Ramachandra was in any account of his sexual unhappiness to acknowledge his small size. He talked of everything else: his background, his clothes, his language, the village culture; but he left out what was obvious and most important.” (114) This definitely amounts to the surrender of his autonomous self before the tantalizing dominant discourse of the revolution. In other words, it signifies rootedness in narcissistic symbiotic illusions, which is another variant of “I-It” relations.

Psychically akin to Ramachandra is one of the leaders of the revolutionaries. Did the leader join the revolution out of any genuine commitment for the cause of political and economic freedom which it promised to bring for the oppressed classes? Why did he leave the comfortable life of the city? All these questions are raised by the protagonist of the novel in revelatory components of the novel. The riddle is resolved by the leader himself. He sought the power of the revolutionaries not to evolve his responsible social self but to repair his wounded self: “His wife despises him, and has been cuckolding him for years. This is how he intends to revenge himself.” (56)

The illusion of narcissistic vindication and not the promotion of any biophilic cause has motivated not only Ramachandra but most of them to join the revolution. This is what we discern in the pathetic saga of another

symbolically character named Einstein. Named after the legendary Einstein, this small time revolutionary is a poor apology for the great scientist. Having shown great promise in school and acclaimed at that time as a young prodigy, he failed to realize his academic dreams in later life. In a stage of existential anguish and despair and instead of accepting the reality of his situation in the world, he started cherishing the gratifying illusions of “destroying the world.” (80) Needless to say, this immersion of self in annihilating fantasies of the world is a denial of both the existential reality of the self and the objectivity reality of the other.

Naipaul raises interesting questions regarding the subjectivities of those who seek to actualize their potentialities in the subversive acts of revolution. The potential recruits “were imprisoned in their village and dreaming of breaking out: dreaming of the town and modern dress and modern amusements, dreaming of a world where time would have more meaning, dreaming perhaps also, the more spirited among them of upheaval and power.” (123) What this analytical fragment highlights is the working of the inner recesses of these revolutionaries. They lack authentic commitment. For them, revolution is not on “I-Thou” experience. Instead, they want to be glorified “its” through an abject surrender of their weak selves in the narcissistic and the destructive bluster of revolution.

In fact, the whole saga of revolution, constituting the main textual discourse of Magic Seeds, is in essentials, a negation of genuine dialogue, which comprises an authentic exchange of ideas among the revolutionaries. We may illustrate their dialogic interaction among themselves by differentiating the three types of dialogue in the light of Martin Buber’s observations in Between Man and Man. Buber thus distinguishes among three types of dialogue. First is genuine dialogue. It may be spoken or silent but it establishes a mutual living relationship between the speaker and recipients. This responds to the existential reality of the self and the other. In exchanges of genuine dialogue, one is not afraid of acknowledging one’s mistakes. Nor is one shy of transmitting his vision to others. This free exchange of ideas is visible not in the demagoguery of the revolutionaries who frequently resort to “technical dialogue” which is prompted solely by the need of objective understanding or monologue disguised as dialogue but in those letters where both Sarojini and her brother candidly acknowledge their misrecognitions of their existential situation.

This negation of genuine dialogue is a cultural signifier of alienation both from self and others. The more we resort to symbiotic solution the more we move away from the existential reality of self and others. Instead

of confirming the existence of the other in free and harmonious exchange of ideas, we impose our ideas on them. The result is disguised as dialogue, which is sheer social manipulation and ideological imposition. One such discursive syntagm, which ironically advocates new tactics to further revolutionary cause, outrightly smacks of authoritarianism and lack of understanding of revolutionary goals. As the dominant narrator points out, “The New tactics that should have been discussed at that meeting came directly from the council as commands. Liberated areas were henceforth to be isolated and severely policed; people in these areas were to know only what the movement wanted them to know. There were to be no telephones, no newspapers from outside, no films, no electricity.” (142-143) The stress is not only on the subjection of the revolutionaries, who are fighting this war of freedom, through authoritative commands, but also on denial of any mode of communication with the outside world. This is what Buber calls, “technical dialogue.” It is communication which makes no pretence of relating to the other as a Thou. It betrays relatively little concern for the truth that is communicated. It pays no heed to the existential uniqueness of the other person. Its thrust is on propaganda, social coercion and ideological manipulation.

What is the main purpose of this revolutionary discourse? It is not to promote genuine dialogue but to ward off the threat of existential reality of the despairing selves of the revolutionaries. Monologue disguised as dialogue is increasingly emptied of meaningful ideas. As Buber points out: “A debate in which the thoughts are not expressed in the way in which they existed in the mind but in the speaking are so pointed that they may strike home in the sharpest way, and moreover without men that are spoken to being regarded in any ways present as persons; a conversation characterized by the need neither to communicate something, nor to influence someone, but solely by desire to have one’s own self-reliance confirmed marking the impression that is made or if it has become unsteady to have it strengthened” (Buber, 1965: 29-30).

As revolution loses its momentum and the police gains ascendancy, the revolutionary ideologues resort more and more to “I-It” forms of discourse. They frantically seek to not only silence the disquieting voices of people like Willie Chandran but also to further interpellate them through their morale boosting spurious but seemingly committed dialogues. This negation of the existential reality of the other person in the name of knowledge discourse is often resorted to in the text. Failures are sort to be glossed over through the new variants of authoritative demagoguery. There was to be a renewed emphasis on the old idea of liquidating the class enemy.

Since the feudal people had long ago run away and there was strictly speaking no class enemy left in these villages, the people to be liquidated were the better off. The revolutionary madman Willie and Keso had met had spoken of the philosophy of murder as his revolutionary gift to the poor, the cause for which week after week he walked from village to village. Something like this philosophy was brought to play again, and presented as doctrine.” (143)

Genuine and authentic dialogue is replaced by the discourse of annihilation and disciplinary gaze: “Murders of class enemies—which now meant only peasants with a little too much land—were required now to balance the success of the people. Discipline in the squads was to be tightened up; squad members were to report on one another.” (143) Existential emancipation here is displaced with ever increasing surveillance on everybody. We are reminded here of Foucault’s paradigm of Panopticon in the subjugation of human beings. “In Foucault’s terms,” explicate Dreyfus and Rainbow, “the Panopticon brings together knowledge power, the control of the body, and the control of space into an integrated technology of discipline” (Dreyfus, 1982: 189).

Whereas most of the revolutionaries accept this denial of freedom and submerge their selves in the dominant though dubious revolutionary discourse, Willie Chandran often questions this symbolic surrender. In one of his letters to Sarojini, he expresses his existential despair. His vision of liberating the downtrodden had almost vanished. His trust in the revolution was misplaced. The predominant sense of alienation from self and from others suffuses him with an overwhelming sense of existential despair: “Dear Sarojini, I don’t have to tell you that I came into this thing with the purest of hearts and the wish to do what with your teachings and the promptings of my own mind had begun to seem to me to be right. But now I must tell you I feel I am lost. I don’t know what cause I am serving, and why I am doing what I do....I see only that I have put myself in other people’s hands. I did that once before, you will remember, when I went to Africa. I intended never to do it again, but I find now that I have.” (66)

At another place in the novel, Willie’s sense of existential anxiety and the encounter with nothingness is focalized by the narrator: “It was a strange time for Willie, a step down into yet another kind of life: patternless labour, without reward or goal, without solitude or companionship, without news of the of the outside world, with no prospect of letters from Sarojini, with nothing to anchor himself to.” (108) Alienated from self and others, he foregrounds his despair in the following words: “I’ve forgotten myself.

Now I'm truly lost. In every way, I don't know what lies ahead or behind. My only cause now is to survive, to get out of this." (125)

This existential anxiety and encounter with nothingness, observes James C. Coleman, "is unique to human beings: we are the only creatures who live with the constant awareness of the possibility of nonbeing. At each moment, we make our way along the sharp edge of possible annihilation; never can we escape the fact that death will come sometime, somewhere"(Coleman, 11981;171). This existential awareness paves the way for existential insights. It enables us to have a full grasp of what it means to be. It adds an important dimension to our existential dilemmas and generates existential anxiety about our mode of living. On such important moments, we ponder over the questions of life and living and mediate whether we leading authentic or inauthentic lives. "We can overcome our existential anxiety and deny victory to nothingness," suggests Coleman, "by living a life that counts for something, that should not be lost. If we are perishable, we can at least perish resisting—living in such a way that nothingness will be unjust fate" (Coleman: 72). Significantly, that is just what Willie Chandran does. Finding himself in a mess in the forest, he does not surrender to the forces of existential nothingness and despair which at times seem too overpowering for him to resist.

Willie's final vision of his spatiotemporal journey across the world is pregnant with profound insights into his existential situation. It creates a phantasmagoria view of the places he has covered during his existential sojourn: "Africa, with the conical gray stone hills and Africans walking on the red paths beside the asphalt road. The burnt out concrete houses, smoke-stained around the windows. The forest and the men in olive uniforms with caps with the red satin star, and the endless marching... The strange jail where, as on a slave ship the prisoners lay side by side on the floor in two rows separated by a central aisle.... All night it seemed to him as well that he had found something good to write to Sarojini about. This thing eluded him." (294). At this stage, we are reminded of Sartre's famous play *No Exit*, which highlights the immurement of human beings in the claustrophobic world.

Needless to say, existentialism can provide no ultimate fixed foundation for human values. We cannot evolve an ideal existentialist ethics. We cannot fix values. All variants of idealism are found wanting. Whether we choose the alluring way of diasporas or humanistic ideal of freedom, the Hindu ideal of self- renunciation as advocated by Willie's father or Marxist of the proletarian revolution, we soon discern the shortcomings of these symbiotic

surrenders. That amounts to the reduction of the dynamic insights of existentialism into essentialism. No wonder, Willie intuitively it on the closing page of the novel: It is wrong to have an ideal view of the world. That's where the mischief starts. That's where everything starts unraveling. But I can't write to Sarojini about that." (294)

Thus, Willie, in the end, has the shattering awareness of being totally free and responsible for his actions, totally responsible for giving meaning and value to his world and without any assistance from God or any other foundation of truth and values. Overwhelmed with existential anguish, he assumes complete responsibility to define his situation. Whereas in the past, he reposed faith in Occidentalism and later in emancipatory revolution, fought for the liberation of the downtrodden in parts of India, now in his new ideological terrain, he confronts his existential anguish and freedom alone. In his decision not to convey his newly acquired meaning to his sister in a letter, as he used to do in past, he has affirmed his existential freedom. Symbiotically severing his ties with all kinds of isms, he makes a responsible choice not only for himself but for others also. What he has learnt in the course of his traumatic and at times ecstatic experiences is the lesson of the uniqueness of his own awareness. Whether a person lives in London or Berlin, in Africa or in India, one should not be immured in illusions. One should evolve oneself without the rosy glasses of idealism. One should lead an authentic life and respond to concrete situations in a responsive manner. What makes the protagonist's insights all the more illuminating is their transmission to us in an authentic manner by V.S Naipaul in *Magic Seeds*. Persist in illusions or lead a liberated life is indeed the message of the book.

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## Women in Hemingway's War Novels

*Geetika Sandhu*

Although *The Sun Also Rises* was published before *A Farewell To Arms*, it is the protagonist of the latter who represents the stage next to Nick's in the development of the Hemingway hero: While the latter deals with the hero's participation in the First World War, the former depicts his life in the post-war period. In fact, but for an accident the novel about the First World War would have appeared years before *The Sun Also Rises*. According to Carlos Baker, "the valise in which it [the manuscript of the novel about the war] was being carried to Hemingway by his young wife was stolen by a petty thief in the Gare de Lyon in Paris one afternoon late in 1922."<sup>1</sup> But Baker is not quite correct when he says, "Dismayed and disheartened by his loss, Hemingway did not try again to tell the Italian story until 1928..."<sup>2</sup> "Dismayed and disheartened" Hemingway must have been at such a loss, and he certainly did not write his novel about the war until – 1928, but he did tell part of that "story" in some of the sketches and stories published before *A Farewell To Arms*: the sixth inter-chapter of *In Our Time*, "In Another country," "Now I Lay Me," and "A Very Short Story." The protagonist in all of these shorter pieces, except for the nameless ones of "A Very Short Story" and "In Another Country," is Nick Adams, and the experiences they embody bear close resemblance to Frederic Henry's experiences in *A Farewell To Arms*.

*A Farewell to Arms* is a classic work in American fiction about World War–I. War is dominating factor in this novel. Samuel Shaw writes: "As a war novel, that is its depiction of man in battle, *A Farewell To Arms* belongs with the supreme example of the genre."<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to observe that Hemingway's editor, Maxwell Perkins himself had reservations about *A Farewell to Arms* as a war novel. Owen Wister on the other hand, saw the novel a love story. Robert Lewis calls it a "wildly romantic" novel where "an improbable hero and heroine live in adolescent dream life."<sup>4</sup> It established Hemingway as a major literary figure. According to Wirt Williams *A Farewell To Arms* served in a way, "as the great alibi for a generation."<sup>5</sup> Hemingway also called it "his Romeo and Juliet."<sup>6</sup> The novel may be regarded as romantic on the whole.

Ernest Hemingway wrote *A Farewell to Arms* in 1929 after his first successful novel *The Sun Also Rises*. It is an autobiographical novel. Hemingway based *A Farewell To Arms* on his personal experience as a

Red Cross ambulance driver in Italy in 1918. Hemingway's approach of womanhood reflects some light about his thinking towards women. Leslie Fielder goes on to say that Hemingway's women are just "bitches", had Catherine lived, she could only have turned into a bitch.

Hemingway delineated many women characters in this novel such as Catherine Barkley, Helen Ferguson, Mrs. Walker, Miss Gage, Miss Van Campen and Mrs. Meyers. All these women characters have different characteristics. Besides these women characters there are some male characters like Frederick Henry, Rinaldi and Priest. Hemingway's portrait of Catherine Barkley is superb example of realistic and convincing fiction. Her role is of a nurse. In war time everything is dark and there is no room for female identity. Women are used for sexual purposes. There is no hope of joy. Women alone bring a ray of hope when there is all-round tension, boredom and tedium.

The World War and love affair are two poles of the novel *A Farewell To Arms*. Both become more and more chaotic as they spin out of control. Catherine's treatment by critics varies. Thornton Wilder says that "she is the true hero of the book."<sup>7</sup> Carlos Baker attempts a defense of Hemingway's treatment of her.<sup>8</sup> The relation between Henry and Catherine Barkley began very simply. She is a girl of romantic type. She is an ideal picture of love Catherine has feminine charm and is a symbol of sincerity and love. She is not domineering and always submissive. She is fair and beautiful, which is understandable. But she is at the same time elusive and other worldly, for too resilient and far too moral to offer scope to an artist for precise formulations and definitions. Catherine is a character pointed at the "super consciousness" of Eastern art, for she certainly is innocence incarnate in this imperfect and incomplete world. Hemingway's delineation of women characters is obviously different from his contemporaries.

Frederic Henry an American Lieutenant is the hero of the novel. Young sees the Hemingway's protagonist as a sick man, wounded physically and psychologically. Leo Gurko has written a full length essay on the subject. For him, Hemingway's novels are essentially portraits of the hero as the "individual man".<sup>9</sup> Frederic Henry is a typical Hemingway hero who is sleepless, wounded and sensitive. But he is uncommitted man. He joined war because it was glamorous, because he craved action and adventure. The question why he joined the Italian Army remains unanswered. His action is really motiveless. Catherine has different activities about war. She has great intimacy with wounded soldiers. In wounded soldiers she sees the image of her dead fiance. She is miserable and depressed at the death of

her fiance and worried for, she cannot marry while he was alive. She expresses her feeling about her betrothed before Henry.

War in this novel plays a great role. Every character, Frederick Henry, Catherine Barkley, Helen Ferguson, Rinaldi, Priest, Major almost have grown tired by war. The environment of war is full of anxiety, craziness and blankness. Though the soldiers hate this war, yet they cannot stop it. All find war like hell. Henry does not like war. When the French-mortar explosion nearly kills Henry, he is admitted to hospital and is attended by Miss Walker and another nurse Miss Gage. All these women are friendly and cooperative but Miss Van Campen did not like Henry because the hospital was a big responsibility for her. Miss Gage behaves with Henry as one does with member of the family.

All the female characters are linked to the main story they perform their role to the point. Miss Ferguson is also an important woman character, a friend of Catherine. She is a Scottish nurse. The outstanding feature of her character seem to be her love and attachment to Catherine Barkley. In Hemingway's words, she is a fine girl. He knows nothing about her acceptance that she had a brother in Mesopotamia and she was very good to Catherine Barkley. She apprehends that either the lovers will quarrel or one of them will be snatched away by death. She gives warning to Henry.

Watch out, you don't get her into trouble  
you get her in trouble and I'll kill you. (AFTA, 80)

She is upset at the thought of Catherine's pregnancy. It shows her deep love and affection and devotion to Catherine. She also requests Henry not to do night duty for Catherine, as she is getting very tired. When Henry went to the front, she became greatly devoted to Catherine and she curses Henry calling him: "You dirty sneaking American Italian" (AFTA, 80). She indignantly utters, "You've gotten this girl into you've no cheerful sight to me" (AFTA, 80). She calls him a snake with an Italian uniform. Her role in the novel is that of a true friend and companion of Catherine Barkley. It was because of her deep love for Catherine that she rebukes Henry and treats him rudely. When Henry came out from the hotel, he met Mrs. Meyers and her husband. She is a minor character. She was a big-busted woman in black satin. By her behaviour it seems that she was friendly to Henry. She gave a gift to Henry. At night Henry meets Catherine. They talk about love and marriage. Catherine does not believe in the ritual of marriage. She is not concerned about marriage. She considers marriage a mere formality which can be easily dispersed with during the war time.

Catherine does not believe in the ritual of marriage as she thinks that even without the formal ceremonies, she is married to Henry. When she becomes pregnant, she does not desire to be married. As a matter of fact, she hides the fact of her pregnancy from him lest the knowledge should disturb his peace of mind. Here Hemingway wants to show that the women have different qualities. They do not want to upset any person. Catherine does the same thing. This is clear through this conversation.

She seemed upset and taut.  
'What is the matter, Catherine?'  
'Nothing, Nothing is, the matter'  
'Yes, there is....'  
'I know there is, tell me darling  
you can tell me.'  
'I don't want to I'm afraid.'  
'I'll make you unhappy or worry you.'  
'No it won't'  
'You're sure? It does not worry me  
but I'm afraid to worry you.'  
'I'm going to have a baby, darling.  
It is almost three months a long.  
You are not worried, are you?  
Please, please don't. You must not worry. (AFTA, 101)

It shows that Catherine does not believe in rituals. She wants to ensure that Henry is happy. She does not want to give him any trouble. Henry then goes to the front without thinking how she would be during his absence. This shows that the male characters in Hemingway's fiction are not responsible persons. Henry's thinking is different from that of Catherine's. Not for instance, Henry's thoughts when he goes to Milan where he hoped to meet Catherine Barkley: "I was not made to think, I was made to eat. My God, Yes Eat and drink and sleep with Catherine" (AFTA, 101). Henry who considered love to be a game gets transformed after meeting Catherine. When Catherine becomes pregnant and is admitted to hospital for delivery, her condition deteriorates. The nurse tells him that she has had heamorage. He senses Catherine's death but he is not ready to accept it, "the dirty trick."

In spite of the best effort of the doctor and Henry's prayer, Catherine could not be saved. The writer describes Henry's condition when Catherine was admitted in the hospital and was about to die. He was here like a motherless hungry child who could not do anything except crying. But

Catherine faced all this with courage. She could say:

'Don't worry, darling', Catherine said.  
'I'm not a bit afraid. It is just a dirty trick.' (AFTA, 235)

At the time of death she is not nervous. She shows courage. There are many occasions in the novel where her strong individuality, independent thinking, are revealed, clearly highlighting the solidity, and sturdy concreteness of her personality. Catherine has a strong sense of personal honour. She has an independent, distinct and thinking personality that she retains up to the end.

Although Catherine's death is a deep personal loss to Frederic, which brings an obsessive preoccupation with death, it does not have, as Malcom Cowley suggests, any symbolic significance for the future Hemingway hero. "There is....a symbolic reason," says the critic, "for Catherine's death at this moment. When Frederic Henry made his farewell to arms, he became incapable of living in any sort of community, even a community of two: that is incapable of lasting sexual love. Catherine has to die because the hero must henceforth live alone."<sup>10</sup> When Cowley remarks that the hero will have to live alone after the death of Catherine, he obviously means the Hemingway hero in the works that follow *A Farewell To Arms*, for this novel ends with Catherine's death.

The novel *For Whom The Bell Tolls* was published on October 21, 1940. It deals with the system of values related to war. Joseph Warren Beach remarks that "in *For Whom The Bell Tolls*, Hemingway did indeed have something to say, something positive and tonic which he had never said before certainly not with the explicitness and power of the present statement."<sup>11</sup> In this novel Hemingway delineates female characters in a more vivid way. His thinking, his approach and his knowledge reveals his understanding of the American society through these women characters. Every society has its own traits. The novel is clearly related to the American. As we know that novel deals with moral value and it is a novel about Civil War and the torture of the Fascist.

For variety and depth of characterization *For Whom The Bell Tolls* is much greater than *The Sun Also Rises* and *The Fifth Column*. The members of Pablo's band, Pilar, Pablo, Anselmo, Augustin, Rafael, Fernando, Andres and Maria are delineated in such a way that they come alive and get sharply registered in our memory. There are two main women characters in this novel, Maria and Pilar, the Gypsy woman. They represent the American society.

Pilar is an important female character. She plays a great role in the novel. She teaches Jordan how to live and work for the fulfillment of life. Impressive in body, possessing a comprehensive mind, she has a remarkable hold on life. She is “earthy, instinctive and sensible” and has loved often and well. Her strange mesmeric hold over each aspect of daily life, the talk, the order, the ritual of food and drinking, and especially the bombast and cursing is very vividly portrayed by Hemingway. She is rough peasant woman, and like a true peasant her beauty and charms lie not in her looks but in the vigor of her body and in the compassion of her understanding even though on surface she sounds rough and vulgar. Pilar’s concern for Pablo is so genuine that Robert Jordan is moved by her artlessness.

Maria in the novel resembles Catherine in her devotion, submission and love. She is affirmative, a womanly woman. The portrait of Maria is feminine, a symbol of loyalty, devotion and true love. There is no frustration or emptiness in her. She brings a sense of joy and fulfillment in Jordan’s life and denotes Hemingway’s final attitude towards love.

The novel *For Whom The Bell Tolls* covers the incidents of the seventy hours in the valley in Gandawania. A close scrutiny of the text reveals that it is largely through Jordan and the variant individual responses made by the members of the guerrilla band towards the war that the novelist conveys the basic attitude towards life. Robert Jordan, the hero of the novel has been assigned the task of blowing off a bridge in the hills. Robert Jordan on his arrival in the cave where the guerrillas are staying, behind the fascist lines, finds that they are disorganised and are not very keen to fight because they have found a home and the blowing of the bridge will necessitate a more and threaten their security which they have found in the hills. The bridge lies at the centre of the novel. Jordan thinks of it as the point on which the future of human race can turn. The blowing of the bridge is considered to be highly dangerous. The novel is not a simple adventure story of blowing up the bridge. We must go deeper into it to discover the underlying themes. In this attempt, there are three important characters to support Robert Jordan. Pilar, the gypsy woman, and Anselmo think that whatever the price they must blow off the bridge. The physical appearance of Maria tells something about her nature. She is a girl who can be categorized as a romantic type. Robert Jordan takes more interest in her. In a flattering voice he says to the girl:

‘You have a very beautiful face’,  
he said to Maria. (FWTBT, 25)

He gives more importance to woman. With the arrival of Maria in his life, he begins seeing what it is worth and begins recovering his own, original self. He tells something about Maria. “Without the woman there is no organization nor any discipline here and with the woman it can be very good.” (FWTBT, 25)

Though physically impaired she retains her sanity so that the American young man Robert Jordan may come and make love to her. It was Pilar who sends Maria to sleep with Robert Jordan in his bag. She does an act of daring which as a matter of fact would be extremely unusual in a Spanish girl. She becomes for Robert Jordan a symbol of Spain and this concrete symbol is far better than the abstractions that had confused Robert Jordan before Pilar fulfils Maria’s ambition to protect her. She does the work of a mother. She had been sorry at what the girl had gone through at the hands of the Fascists, and like a watch-dog she had for sometime protected her from the men of her own group. When Jordan arrives on the scene, she offers her to him as a beloved. Maria’s father the Mayor of the village and an honourable man, was shot because he was a Republican. Maria’s mother was not a Republican but she was shot because of the politics of her husband. Maria recalls how her head was shaved and she was raped by the Falangist.

The novel is about the suffering of a girl. The writer has delineated everything clearly. One of the Fascist struck Maria with the braids that had been hers and then put the two of them in her mouth and tied them tight around her neck. Knotting them in the back to make a gag and the two holding her laughed. When Maria was leaving the Barber’s shop, she saw her best friend Gracia brought in the shop, perhaps to be given the same treatment. Here the writer shows the mental condition of Maria, when she is raped and its effect on her psyche. It was a great psychological effect on her mind. She was not in her proper mind to distinguish between them and her friend Gracia. She was kept as a prisoner in a Valladolid and when she was being moved by train to some other place, she escaped. Maria stands for normalcy midst of a terrible abnormality. She has been subjected to all sorts of outrages by the Fascists. The rape is an act of supreme brutality, only the true tenderness of Jordan, as Pilar well knows could heal the psychological scars the Fascists have left. The cutting of Maria’s hair is a symbol of her loss of normal womanhood or a girlhood, just as its growing out indicates her gradual return to balance and health. Carlos Baker rightly says of *For Whom The Bell Tolls* that “it is a study of betrayal of the Spanish people – both by what lay within them and what had been thrust up on them and it is presented with that special combination of sympathetic involvement and headed detachment which is the mark of

genuine artist.”<sup>12</sup>By encouraging Jordan and Maria to develop their beautiful relationship under the very shadow of death, Pilar makes them stand on the side of the affirmation of life. She can see the unfolding of time. She has read Jordan’s hand, finds as she does that there is not much time left, for him she makes things easier. For both of them, almost thrusts Maria into his sleeping bag and provides as much time for the lovers to be together as the conditions permit.

This affair of Maria is highly romantic. It is startlingly effective instance of the poetic formula of shining love projected against the shadow of death. It raises more delicate critical questions of the role of love as a positive feeling in the face of negative feeling of hatred and destruction. However, true or untrue plausible or improvable it may be from the historical point of view, this episode is highly symbolic in relation to the political theme and to what we may call the writers metaphysical emotions. This beautiful crop-headed Spanish girl serves to concentrate in a single figure, the rule of brute force and sadistical cruelty which we have come to associate with Fascist ideology and the Fascist temper.

From this brief analysis, it can be concluded that the role of women characters in Hemingway’s fiction is not marginal. Hemingway has successfully delineated women characters through his experience and tries his best to trace their centrality in human affairs. One might argue, of course, that the normal male-female situation in Hemingway is some thing like what took place in the Garden of Eden just after Eve’s eating of the fruit of the forbidden tree. All these eves are as pleurably delicate as the Adams are sexually vigorous.

Although Jordan loves Maria deeply, he does not let his love interfere with his work. She has a place in his life only as long as he is not engaged in his work as a soldier. As the hero holds a balance between blind faith and crushing awareness represented respectively by Anselmo and Pablo, so does he hold a balance between love and war. Both in war as well as in love, his role is that of a sensitive and responsible person; his response to both is a mature one, and he does not lose his normative perspective in favour of either. For instance, when on their way back from El Sordo’s, Jordan and Maria make love and talk about how each feels towards the other. But when Maria tries to compel him to join her day-dreaming, he at once switches over to thinking about his work: “He was walking beside her but his mind was thinking of the problem of the bridge now and it was all clear and hard and sharp as when a camera lens is brought into focus”(FWTBT, 161).

As observed in these two novels, Hemingway portrays not types but he depicts a large variety of women who are highly individualized. They also do represent different occupations, shaped as much by their individual responses as by the circumstances or conditions in which they have to work. These women of Hemingway, despite their individuality, do however evoke the social milieu of their types; as much they emerge as typical of contemporary reality as they show their marked individuality. Hemingway here shows, as much as he does in other aspects of his fiction, that he is neither a symbolist nor a myth-maker, but a realist like great writers such as Shakespeare and Tolstoy.

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## ***DESIRE UNDER THE ELMS FROM THE ANGLE OF ILLUSION AND REALITY***

*Sandeep Kumar Sharma*

Eugene O'Neill, had the rarest honour of pioneering the modern American drama and achieving world-wide recognition by winning four Pulitzer Prizes : in 1920 for Beyond the Horizon, in 1921 for Anna Christie, in 1928 for Strange Interlude and in 1931 for Mourning Becomes Electra. And this honour was followed by the coveted Nobel Prize for Literature in 1936. More than any other dramatist, O'Neill introduced the dramatic realism pioneered by Anton Chekov, Henrik Ibsen and August Strindberg into American drama, and was the first to use truly vernacular in his speeches. O'Neill can be counted among those rare playwrights who leave their footprints on the sands of time by virtue of their essentially humanistic vision, enshrined in intensely dramatic and life like creations.

O'Neill's plays involve characters who inhabit the fringes of society where they struggle to maintain their hopes and aspirations but ultimately slide into disillusionment and despair. His career as a playwright consisted of three periods. His early realist plays utilize his own experiences, especially as a seaman. In the 1920s, he rejected realism in an effort to capture on the stage the forces behind human life. His expressionistic plays during this period were influenced by the ideas of philosopher. Nietzsche, psychologists Freud and Carl Jung and Swedish playwright August Strindberg. During his final period O'Neill returned to realism. These later works which most critics consider his best depend on his life experiences for their story lines and themes. Through his experimental and emotionally probing dramas, he addressed the difficulties of human society with a deep psychological complexity. "The stature of Eugene O'Neill casts a long shadow on the American theatre. Whether it stretches on contracts in the critical estimates of a particular period or critic, this much is certain; the height and breadth of the American Theatre is measured by it."<sup>1</sup>

O'Neill is not merely an American in experience and imagination; the frontiers of his genius touch the horizons of the world. Though his contribution to world drama is significant, his contribution to American drama is colossal. Prior to his arrival on the theatrical scene, American drama was suffering from anemia and lack of intellectual substance. But O'Neill gave it the core and shook the Americans out of their drunken stupor. Joseph

Wood Krutch, who focuses on O'Neill's dramaturgy, is of the opinion that "by common consent, Eugene O'Neill is acknowledged to be the most distinguished of the group which created serious American drama"<sup>2</sup>. R. S. Singh remarks that O'Neill chose to write about the soul stifling daily struggle and the real problems engulfing the American people as he "was not contented with the melodramatic tradition of America."<sup>3</sup>. O'Neill Universalized the problems of American people by relating them to the psychology of Freud and Jung. His writings are accounts of the collapse of the individual world where characters disintegrate, under tremendous social and psychological pressures. He revolutionized the American theatre and mirrored "the turmoil of a whole generation."<sup>4</sup>. "O'Neill saw the inner struggle of man laid before, as no American dramatist had ever dared to show it."<sup>5</sup>. He himself experienced the trauma of raw life and dramatized it in his plays from a first hand knowledge. He chose stark and realistic depiction of life instead of romantic drama. In his plays delineation of romantic love, is a tool to bring serious and profound anguish of human relationship as "Love is another source of disappointment, sufferings and deaths in the tragic world of O'Neill. Doubts and misgivings disturb love relationship and bring untold miseries and hardships in their wake."<sup>6</sup>.

Though various critics have analysed the works of O'Neill from different angles, my focus will remain on the analysis of illusion and reality which is the key to the very survival of the institution of the society, family and even of life. To me, this is the most significant thematic content of this play. This drama deals with different factors like incompatibility in characters, altruism versus materialism, mercantile attitude etc. which determine illusion and reality as a whole. The inhibitions imposed by society, morality, race and religion prove disastrous. Man is a helpless victim of the social norms and his own complex mental make up. The protagonists do struggle heroically against these hostile forces though they are defeated and crushed by these forces at the end. But this is what happens in every great tragedy.

Desire under the Elms was written in 1923 and first staged at the Greenwich Village Theatre in Province town, on November 11, 1924. It is an intense personal tragedy of all the major characters of the play. The play is a tremendous advance over O'Neill's previously full length works for surpassing the power of either. Beyond the Horizon or Anna Christie, to both of which it is linked by its naturalistic style. It combines all the elements most typical of O'Neill at his creative best : the crude, elemental passions of people who harbour the seeds of their own destruction, the

brilliant psychological insight into the love hate relationship of father and son, son and mother, husband and wife, brother and brother, the cosmic loneliness of man; the hardness of God; and the final acceptance of an inescapable and inscrutable fate. Before analysing the play from the perspective of illusion and reality, let us briefly overview what various critics have to say about Desire under the Elms. Travis Bogard proclaims the play to be “the first important tragedy to be written in America”<sup>7</sup>. D.K. Lal posits that the drama “embodies the conflict between the puritanical values and the Freudian attitude to sex”<sup>8</sup>. On the other hand B.S. Goyal claims it to be “a play of great beauty and sheer elemental vigour”<sup>9</sup>. Timu Tiusanen thinks that “thematically Desire Under the Elms goes on with the pagan, Nietzschean affirmation of life”<sup>10</sup>. James A. Robinson proclaims that the play “served to point up man’s alienation and domination by irrational passions”<sup>11</sup>. John Gassner recognises Desire Under the Elms as O’Neill’s finest and the most consistently wrought play”<sup>12</sup>.

Desire under the Elms is set on a farm in New England. In this play O’Neill says that we do not want to face the reality of life because we always live in the web of illusions. In case we depend on illusions, we are bound to be destroyed. Illusions cannot give us permanent solace. So the question is how to live. Either we conquer somebody or be conquered by somebody, either we humiliate others or we are humiliated by others. We have to accept the person as he or she is. The playwright says that we live in the web of illusions but ultimately we have to face the naked reality of life. But there is another reality that we all need illusions, we all love illusion and we all depend on illusions. The play is full of illusions. Actually we cannot change human nature. We have to admit what we are. It is again our illusion that we can have a better world or we can attain something. Even in the old age, we commit the same mistake. Time and again we find that these illusions are destructive but even then we close our eyes as we dare not confront reality. The ultimate reality of life is that we cannot have a different world. We have to accept this world with all its raw realities. Man cannot achieve longevity and ultimately he has to go, he has to die one day. We all weave illusions, we weave fantasies and ultimately our dreams are shattered by reality.

We think that we are contented and time and again we are crying. We depend on others nonetheless we are alone. We cherish illusions and time and again we realise that we live in the world of false images. But we keep on liking illusions, we keep on depending on illusions and we keep on creating illusions. Basically we think that we make the world a better place

to live in but again it is an illusion. Moreover, we never learn from the past, we are just interested in cherishing illusions, O’Neill gives this message in Desire under the Elms that our illusions are disrupted again and again but even then we run after illusions. We should understand that no God will help us, no society will help us, we just live in the web of illusions.

In Desire under the Elms there is another illusion that we can give meaning to life. We think that we can conquer the world but the reality is different. Adopt any mode, illusions will be shattered surely because illusions cannot be realised. Dreams are dreams and they cannot be converted into reality. Most of the time we deceive ourselves but we do not want to accept this reality that we are just human beings and human beings cannot change human nature. So again it is an illusion. Suppose a person is powerful but in reality power depends on the recognition or acceptance by others. Human beings do not want to confront the naked reality of the world. Actually illusions are to be destroyed or the world may destroy the illusions. We say that we can understand the other person, but it is again an illusion. We think that we will learn with the passage of time but we never learn in our life time. When we say that now we will face the reality of life all alone, again it is our illusion because after some time we depend on others. Ultimately we have to destroy the illusions and we have to face the reality for our survival. We should humbly accept that all of us are sinners. We feel guilty in every work because we are simple human beings. Basically we are humans and we desire something and desire is a sin.

In Desire under the Elms all the major characters live in a world of illusions and they do not want to face reality. They try to get solace and bliss in the world of dreams and illusions. Every character in the play desires one thing or the other. As the play opens, we are introduced to the three sons of Ephraim Cabot, the owner of the Cabot farm and farmhouse. The two elder sons Simeon and Peter are fed up with their life on the stony farm. In reality the sons do not love their father because they have an impression that their father has extracted nothing but work from them and has made them work hard like slaves on his farm. They feel as if they were chained to the farm and trapped. They are stones on top of stones in Ephraim Cabot’s rocky farm and Simeon and Peter have been caged in the stony walls. Hard labour has been extracted from them and they want to extricate themselves from the inhuman conditions in which they are kept by their father. Thus due to the dictatorial and despotic attitude of their father towards them, Simeon and Peter finding themselves in a quandary, want to escape from the earth in which their blood and sweat are soaked. Their wish is exposed

in the first scene while Simeon and Peter are talking to each other about migrating to California and Peter says that it will be hard for him to give up everything that has earned here by his sweat. At this point Simeon says, “Mebbe... he’ll die soon.... Mebbe... fur all we knows... he’s dead now” (205). So in reality they want to get rid of their father as they have no love, affection and filial feelings towards their father and that is why they want to migrate to California, the land of gold.

The dramatist says that it is very difficult to face the stern reality of life. It is late in the night, just before day dawn. Eben returns home cursing and chuckling bitterly. He wakes up his step brothers who are in bed at that time and tells them that he has some important news for them. The fact is that their father, old Cabot has married again. This time he has married a young woman of thirty five, who, it is said, is quite beautiful. The news of Cabot’s marriage comes as shock to the two big brothers. They feel that all the property and the farm will now go to the newly wedded bride, and it is the high time to move to California, the land of their dreams where they can find some gold but it is again an illusion of the two brothers. But for the journey, money is needed. Eben suggests that they should sell their share of the farm to him and in return he would give them three hundred pounds to each of them which they could use as fare for their journey to their dream land. The two brothers are tempted by the offer. So Simeon and Peter cherish their illusion that they will earn much in California. They pack their luggage, sign the necessary documents, and are glad to have the money which they would need during their journey. to California. When old Cabot comes home with Abbie Putnam, his two elder sons, in a kind of mawkish, leering defiance, taunt him and leave for California. The dialogues are charged with insult and disrespect. Simeon says: “ We’ re free, old man... free O’ yew an’ the hull damned farm !... We ‘ re free as injuns ! Lucky we do not skulp ye !” Then Peter says: “ An burn yer barn an’ Kill the stock !” and Simeon further adds : “An’ rape yer new woman” (223).

So, it is the high time for the two brothers to exit. They want to run away because the new mother has come. They understand this reality that the farm belongs to the mother and they will not get anything. So the roads are blocked and they have to go to California. On the other hand Eben has his own illusions as he thinks that the farm belongs to him. He is possessively attached to the farm and he is unable to compromise that the farm belongs to the mother. Eben says, “ it’s Maw’s farm agen ! It’s my farm ! Them’s my cows! I’ll milk my durn fingers off fur cows O’ mine !” (217). The powerful scene between the father and the sons is

followed by the equally powerful scene between Abbie and Eben. The two come across each other in the Kitchen. As they stand face to face, each is fascinated by the personality of the other. Her eyes take him in penetratingly with a Calculating appraisal of his strength as against her. But the reality is that under this her desire is dimly awakened by his youth and good looks.

In reality, Eben and Abbie are attracted to each other, though they refuse to acknowledge this even to themselves, and pretend to hate each other. They quarrel, each taunting the other. But in the end she tells Eben the reality that she married an old man like Cabot only for his property, and further that the home, the farm, the kitchen, all now belongs to her. The stage is now set for an incestuous affair. Abbie wants to show her the power of woman but in reality she wants to show the power of sexuality to Eben. She plays the role of a temptress very well. In reality, she wants the property, stability, home, companionship and security. The playwright wants to say that we all have lacks. We do not want to depend on ourselves. Moreover human beings are not contented and satisfied. Cabot has got three sons but in reality he is alone. So this is the raw reality of life that we are all together, yet we are alone.

Now the question is what we want from our life. We seek figures on whom we can depend. In reality we always depend on somebody. That is also an incest. Literal incest is that she is his step mother. Thus the image of mother is fore grounded. In reality we need a mother/mother figure. We want dependence and we want mother images. Land, farm, property are mother figures because they give us security. We think that we are safe but in reality we depend on mothers for our growth. We depend, we long for the mother figures because we want comforts, we want illusions. We all psychically depend on mothers/mother figures because basically we are insecure and unsafe. We want permanent solutions but in reality permanent solutions are not available. Psychic displacement is inevitable and substitution is bound to take place. We have to live alone, that is the tragic destiny of man and the raw reality of life.

In Desire under the Elms the characters do not want to face the reality, they are just interested in cherishing illusions. Cabot has his own illusions as he has a passionate longing for a son and heir : “A son is me - my blood - Mine ought t’ git mine. An’ then it’s still mine - even though I be six foot under. D’ye see” (234)? Abbie now realises that she would get the farm only if she has a son and so cunningly suggests, “May be the lord gives us a son” (234). The very possibility thrills old Cabot and he

says that if they had a son, he would not feel so lonely in his old age. So it is again an illusion of Cabot. Thus Cabot is a typical character who wants to live in a world of dreams and illusions.

Cabot and Abbie talk of the need of a son. Abbie desires a son for herself while old Cabot wants it for the farm. So these two characters remain in the web of illusions. With the union of Abbie and Eben, a baby boy is born to Abbie, though it is considered son of Cabot. The father has given the party because the father has given birth to the son but in reality the son has given birth to the son. We always live in the world of illusions. They have celebrated the birth of the son but in reality the son belongs to the son. The whole scene is full of sarcastic humour. They have consumed liquor and now they want to dance to celebrate this festive occasion. Cabot is very proud at the birth of a son. According to the law of the father, nobody wants to accept his age. Cabot is the voice of patriarchy, voice of strength, voice of vigour and voice of illusions. In reality, we do not accept our age. We remain narcissist all our life. We remain in the world of dreams and we cherish illusions. That is why we long to be in the web of illusions. Cabot is proud because even at the age of seventy six, he can give birth to a son. But it is again the illusion of Cabot. Thus he is the voice of masculist ideology.

In Desire under the Elms, the dramatist opines that it is very difficult to face the raw reality of life because reality is always bitter. Cabot tells Eben that now that he has a son born to him, he, Eben, would never get the farm. Cabot further says that he had promised Abbie to give anything she wanted, if only she would beget a son for him, and she had promised to do so. Now she had kept her promise, and she would have a farm, and Eben would inherit only the dust of the road. Eben is unable to face this reality and mad with grief and rage at being thus befooled and tricked by the cunning and treacherous Abbie. He calls her a cunning whore. He says that he would never touch her again the would go to California, earn gold there, and then return to claim the farm which lawfully belongs to him. Thus even in such a difficult situation, Eben remains in a web of illusions. When Abbie tells him the reality that he is his son, too he angrily remarks, "I wish he never was born! I wish he'd die this minit..." (257). She tries to reassure him of her love and humbly says that she would do anything to prove her love to him and she never meant to steal his farm. To prove her sincerity and purity of love for Eben, Abbie kills the child by smothering him. Eben infuriated at the killing of his child, goes to the Sheriff and asks him to arrest Abbie for infanticide. But on his way back home he realises the reality that he is equally responsible for the death of the child. Thus the mother and the son in a form

of true lovers face the consequences together. She tries to reassure him of her love and humbly says that she would do anything to prove her love to him and she never meant to steal his farm. To prove her sincerity and purity of love for Eben, Abbie kills the child by smothering him. Eben infuriated at the killing of his child, goes to the Sheriff and asks him to arrest Abbie for infanticide. But on his way back home he realises the reality that he is equally responsible for the death of the child. Thus the mother and the son in a form of true lovers face the consequences together. Eben confesses his part in the crime and so the two are arrested together. Before they are taken away they kiss and embrace each other. As they come out they look at the rising sun and exclaim that it is "Purty" (269). The officer also agrees with them and says "Wished I owned it" (269).

Thus in Desire under the Elms, the protagonists cherish illusion and when they confront reality, they pay a very heavy price. The two brothers want to earn money in California but it is their illusion. Eben wants the baby to be alive and he has decided to go to California and one day he will come back with a lot of money. So this is another fantasy. The reality of life is that we are to face our fate alone. We enjoy alone and we suffer alone. Abbie thinks that she would be able to keep Eben because she has killed the child, so this is another illusion. Again it is Abbie's fantasy to kill her husband so that she can keep Eben forever. In reality nobody can save the other person. No saviour is permanent because we are human beings. Illusions are always shattered because nothing is permanent. Everything is on the move. She gave birth to a son so that they may live together but she killed the son because she wants to live with Eben. So her illusions are again shattered. Adopt any mode, illusions will be shattered surely because illusions cannot be realised.

In Desire Under the Elms the dramatist says that dreams are dreams and they cannot be changed into reality. Time once lost can never be regained. The reality is that we cannot possess anybody because possession means destruction. We live in a web of illusions. Cabot has been asleep throughout his life and in the end he is awake. He looks at the son and the son is dead. He is worried about his son, again the law of the father is also an illusion. Patriarchy appears to rule the world but reality is different. Most of the time we deceive ourselves. We are deceived by the figures outside us and we are deceived by ourselves. Basically we are human beings and human beings cannot change human nature. Suppose a person is powerful but in reality power depends on the recognition or acceptance by others. We have to face the naked reality of the world. Illusions are to

be destroyed or the world may destroy the illusions. Within the orbit of the play, God is also an illusion.

Basically the problem lies in human nature. We are simple human beings. We think that we will learn with the passage of time but in reality we never learn in our life time. Human beings live through illusions and human beings live in illusions. When we say that now we will face the reality of life all alone but it is again an illusion because after some time we depend on others. The feeling of the sinner is very important. We suffer from existential guilt because what we want to attain, we cannot. We should humbly accept ourselves because all of us are sinners. In Adam's Sin, we sinned all. We feel guilty in every work because we are simple human beings. We have to accept this reality that we are all alone. Ultimately Eben has another illusion to go to the West, earn money and come back. Actually fantasy gives us solace for some time. Dreams are dreams and time and again dreams are shattered.

Thus the message of Desire under the Elms is that awareness is very necessary for human beings. We have to persist with illusions. God is the greatest illusion but we are human beings and we cannot live without this illusion i.e. God. We cannot understand the ways of God. One moment Eben says that he will leave illusions but in the very next step, he is in the grip of illusions by deciding to go to California. Life is life and death is death, this is the stern reality. We should understand that we are ordinary human beings. So awareness is very essential. We have to live with illusions but awareness is very important. Dreams give meaning to life. In reality, we can never come out from the web of dreams and illusions.

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# Decoding Narrativity In Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*

Payal Gupta

Ken Kesey's first novel *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* was published in 1962. It was an immediate success as it dealt with the ideas that were widely discussed at that time when United States was committed to opposing communism and totalitarian regime around the world. However Ken Kesey's approach, directing criticism at American institutions themselves, is revolutionary in a way. It found immense appeal at that time as well as it found greater expression in all times to come in future.

It has been regarded as a masterpiece indisputably both by the critics and the readers. *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* is a modern morality play. It has a saviour, McMurphy, who must be sacrificed before his gospel can be spread. It has a disciple, Chief Bromden, who is inspired by McMurphy to escape and spread that gospel. And it has a story in which good triumphs over evil and the forces of darkness at least temporarily, are subdued and put to rout (Whesson, 1967: 64). All structuralists talk of an underlying universal narrative structure present in all narratives. Viewed from thematic angle, the novel can be seen as power-struggle between the patients, especially McMurphy, and hospital authorities, especially Nurse Ratched. The patients in the mental ward are cowed and repressed by the emasculating Nurse Ratched, who represents the oppressive force of modern society—the Combine in Bromden's words. McMurphy tries to lead them to rebel against her authority by asserting their individuality and sexuality. At the deeper level or universal level, it presents the power-struggle between individual and the repressive forces of society.

Now, the question arises how Ken Kesey has carved this ages-old saga of struggle between good and evil into an enduring narrative fiction which, in turn, became a masterpiece. The method a writer adopts in developing and exploring the subject matter and then giving it a shape of narrative fiction is the narrative technique, he resorts to. In simple words, a writer uses a technique to communicate his experience or to unfold the narrative. Mark Schorer has remarked, "Technique is the means by which the writer's experience, which is his subject matter, compels him to attend it; technique is the only means he has of discovering, exploring, developing his subject, of conveying its meaning and finally of evaluating it (Schorer, 1967: 16).

Story consists of events placed in a sequence to delineate a process of change, the transformation of one event into another (Cohan, 1988: 53). For the purpose of analysis, a story can be segmented into events. The story of *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* is organized through events which function as kernels or satellites. Steven Cohan and Linda M. Shires state that kernel events "advance or outline a sequence of transformations" while satellite events "amplify or fill in the outline of a sequence by maintaining, retarding or prolonging the kernel events they accompany or surround" (Cohan : 54). The former are the primary events and form the real hinge points of a narrative so they cannot be removed without destroying the structure of the story. Following is the list of the main kernel events of this novel.

## Part –I

1. Big nurse entering the ward and ill treading aides in her wards.
2. Admission of McMurphy to the hospital.
3. Group therapy session and McMurphy making a bet that he can make Ratched lose her temper within a week.
4. McMurphy and other patients stage a protest by sitting in front of blank television.

## Part-II

5. Next staff meeting Ratched comparing McMurphy with Max Taber and claiming that McMurphy will eventually surrender.
6. McMurphy's encounter with lifeguard who tells him that Nurse Ratched decides when to let a patient leave the hospital.
7. McMurphy withdraws; Cheswick commits suicide which signals to the former that he has unwittingly taken on the role of a survivor.

## Part –III

8. McMurphy reasserts himself by smashing the glass window in the Nurse's station.
9. McMurphy promises Bromden to return him his former strength.
10. The fishing trip and visit to McMurphy's childhood house.

## Part-IV

11. Nurse Ratched insinuates patients by publicizing the financial gain of McMurphy.
12. McMurphy and Bromden's fight with the aides to defend George.
13. Electro-shock therapy treatment of both McMurphy and Bromden.
14. Ward's Party and Billy's suicide.
15. McMurphy's violent attack on Nurse Ratched, the former is in turn, given a lobotomy.

16. Bromden murders McMurphy and makes him a symbol of resistance.

The list of these kernel events, however, can be reduced or enlarged depending upon the aesthetic, thematic and narrative requirements of the critic. Contrasted with these kernels, the satellites are the fillers or catalyzers which slow down the movement of story and delay the kernel activity of the sequence to generate suspense and interest in the story. For instance, admission of McMurphy to the hospital is an important kernel event in the novel. But Ken Kesey has devoted many pages to describe the aura of McMurphy's personality and various reactions he generates among the patients and the staff. Bromden, the narrator is reminded of his father on seeing him. "He talks a little the way papa used to, voice loud and full of hell, but he doesn't look like papa; papa was a full-blood Columbia Indian....He's broad as papa was tall...he's hard in a different kind of way from papa." (Kesey, 1962: 16). Thus transgressive reflections act as fillers and they are immensely important from thematic angle.

Furthermore, a story syntagm combine events to stress their sequential relatedness in one of three ways. Events of a sequence are enchainned (distributed in sequence) embedded (integrated in sequence), or joined (distributed and integrated). (Cohan : 57). Events are enchainned when the outcome of one event leads to the another event. For instance, in the concluding chapter of the novel, Billy's death provokes McMurphy and he retaliates by attacking Nurse Ratched violently. Nurse Ratched takes revenge by getting him lobotomized and turning him into a vegetable. Bromden, in turn mercifully kills him and makes him a martyr. "If, on the other hand, story syntagm inserts one event into the time of another event so that the two occur simultaneously, the inserted event is structurally embedded" (Cohan: 57). Such embedding of event can be discerned in chief Bromden's reminiscences about his past which he shares with McMurphy when the latter offers the former a juicy fruit in part-III of the novel. Bromden begins to attain greater self-knowledge through McMurphy's influence, he recalls the racist government agents coming to his house. Bromden was home alone. He tried to speak to officials but they acted as if he was not there. This experience sowed the seeds of withdrawal into himself. He further tells McMurphy that his mother was a very big woman and she turned a big chief into a small, weak alcoholic. The chief blames everything bad on the repressive society represented by "Combine" that was capable of seizing his family's land and destroying his father. The chief feels that "Combine" has made him shrunk in size.

This embedding of event is very crucial to the story as at one level, this event strengthens the friendship between McMurphy and Bromden and the former offers to make the chief big again with his special body building course. This "Big" Chief would only redeem McMurphy's sacrifice by mercifully killing him when Nurse Ratched turns him into a docile robot machine. Furthermore, we get to know the root cause of Bromden's sense of inadequacy and invisibility.

In fact, this concept of embedded event can be traced from the genre of embedded narratives. Stories are not always presented "straight". Often writers make use of "frame narratives" (also called "primary narratives"), which contain within them "embedded narratives" (also called "secondary narratives") (Barry, 2004: 235). For instance, the main narrative in Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* is the struggle between McMurphy and the hospital authorities. Though Bromden says that he is telling the story about "the hospital, and her, and the guys-and about McMurphy," he is also telling the story of his journey towards sanity. The story of Bromden's past how his mother and government belittled his father and him has been embedded into the primary narrative. Embedding or "story-with-in-the-story" is used to give a kind of re-inforcement to the thematic of the tale. Billy's story as well as Harding's story has been further embedded into the frame narrative to highlight that women have power over men and what this power can do if it is allowed to develop out of proportion.

Narrative time seldom follows the linear story order. "Any departures in the order of presentation in the text from the order in which events evidently occurred in the story are termed by Genette anachronies" (Toolan, 1985: 49050). They "divide into flashbacks and flash forwards or what Genette calls analepses and prolepses. An analepses is an achronological movement back in time, so that a chronologically earlier incident is related later in the text; a prolepsis an achronological movement forward in time, so that a future event is related textually 'before its time,' before the presentation of chronologically intermediate events" (Toolan :50). For instance during staff meeting when the doctors are debating whether or not to send McMurphy to the disturbed ward. Nurse Ratched remarks, "He is simply a man and no more, and is subject to all fears and all the cowardice and all the timidity that any other man is subject to.... If we keep him on the ward I am certain his brashness will subside, his self-made rebellion will dwindle to nothing...that our red-headed hero will cut himself down." (136). This segment is proleptic as it foreshadows the future McMurphy would meet later in the novel. McMurphy would be turned

into a vegetable due to lobotomy. Further, the electroshock therapy table is shaped like a cross with straps across the wrists and over the head. This machine destroyed the lives of various patients like Ellis, Ruckly and Maxwell Taber. It definitely serves as public example of what happens to those who rebel against the authorities. This machine also foreshadows that McMurphy will eventually be crucified. Ellis makes the reference explicit: he is actually nailed to the wall.

According to Gerard Genette, the four basic forms of narrative movement are ellipsis, pause, scene and summary. These constitute four different ways of varying duration (Hawthorn, 2003:96). The maximum speed is ellipsis (omission), where zero textual space corresponds to some story duration (Kenan, 1986: 53). When McMurphy attacks Nurse Ratched in the last chapter, he has been taken away by hospital authorities to be dealt with severely. When the staff brings McMurphy back to the ward after a couple of weeks, he is turned into a vegetable. A lobotomy has been performed on McMurphy to crush his resistance. There is an explicit ellipsis. What all tortures and miseries McMurphy has to undergo between the time of his disappearance and reappearance, there is no concrete mention and it is left up to the reader to guess and infer.

In summary, the pace is accelerated through a textual “condensation” or “compression” of a given story–period into a relatively short statement of its main features (Kenan : 53 ). Again in the same chapter, Nurse Ratched takes medical leave and returns after one week. What happens in the ward in Nurse Ratched’s absence has been narrated in few lines by the chief. In scene, story-duration and text-duration are conventionally considered identical. The scene in Part–IV where McMurphy and Bromden fight with the aides to defend George belongs to this mode of narration. According to Marjorie Boulton, in *‘The Anatomy of the Novel’*, “Stories do not tell themselves, whoever is telling a story has to be somewhere in relation to the story, in order to tell it. The relation in which the narrator stands to the story is quite significant” (Boulton, 1975: 29). Authors have developed many different ways to present a story and even a single work can exhibit a diversity of methods. First-person and third-person narration are the most widely used modes by authors. Ken Kesey has very efficiently made use of first-person narration to project his story.

Chief Bromden, nicknamed “Chief Broom” is the narrator of the story as he is the one who narrates. He is an intradiegetic-homodiegetic narrator as he participates as a character in the story which he narrates himself. He has made use of ulterior narration as the events have been narrated only

after they happened. Chief Bromden narrates the story after he has escaped from the hospital. Chief Bromden’s role in the story is minor but significant. In the beginning of novel, he acts like a witness narrator for most of the time. Gradually he starts taking action when he regains his sanity due to the efforts of McMurphy. At the end of the novel, he takes the most significant action by killing McMurphy and making him a symbol of resistance instead of a lingering cautionary tale for future patients on Ratched’s ward.

Chief Bromden is an overt narrator. In the first three pages of the novel, it seems as if we are overhearing somebody’s private thoughts. But Bromden asserts himself as not only the narrator but the author of the story in the concluding paragraph of the first chapter, “I been silent so large now it’s gonna roar out of me like floodwaters and you think the guy telling this is ranting and raving my God; you think this is too horrible to have really happened, this is too awful to be the truth! But please it’s still hard for me to have a clear mind thinking on it. But it’s the truth even if it didn’t happen.”(13) We learn here that he has an important story to tell, even though it is going to be difficult. The ugly and violent images he has already shown us, he warns us, are just a taste of what is to come. The last line of the quote alerts the reader to keep an open mind. His hallucinations should not be overlooked as they provide the metaphorical insight into the insidious reality of the hospital as well as society in general.

Moreover, Bromden is a perceptive narrator. Although he is supposedly insane, but his way of seeing things is not at all obtuse. He has a very observant eye and he described his world very uniquely. Though what he describes sounds unrealistic and impossible at first glance, but gradually it turns out to be true metaphorically and give the reader a better understanding of the context, “even if it didn’t actually happen”. When Nurse Ratched becomes very heated, Bromden described her as “swelling up, swells tills her back’s splitting out of the white uniform.” (11) A person cannot swell and rip out of her clothes in a matter of seconds and this example shows how exaggerated and animate Bromden narrates. But at the same time this description gives the reader a very clear picture of how mad and enraged Nurse Ratched can get.

Bromden is a reliable narrator as he is privy to the secret staff information that is kept from other patients. His lack of dialogue created the impression that chief was “deaf and dumb” to the other patients and workers on the ward. “Just a bi-big deaf Indian” is how the stuttering Billy Bibbit describes Bromden to the sane Randal McMurphy. Nurse Ratched

would often say confidential things around because she too believed in his deafness. Little do they know, the quite and discreet patient listens in on the surrounding conversations as he sweeps the corridors. The chief's secret sense of hearing makes him a knowledgeable narrator as he himself says "I had to keep on acting deaf if I wanted to hear it all." (178) Kesey's choice of Bromden as the narrator is very significant for the reader is quickly caught up in the world of insanity that is being displayed in the book. Not surprisingly, Bromden often makes the patients seem saner than the staff, who acts in repressive ways. If the story were told through a sane character, such as Randal McMurphy, the distinction between reality and illusion would have been more lucid.

The story is presented in the text through the mediation of some "prism", "perspective", "angle of vision", verbalized by the narrator though not necessarily his ( Kenan, : 71). Rimmon-Kenan has called this mediation "focalization" following Gerard Genette. Narratives are not only focalized by someone but also on someone or something. Focalization has both a subject and an object. The subject (the "focalizer") is the agent whose perception orients the presentation, whereas the object (the "focalized") is what the focalizer perceives( Kenan : 74).

In Key Kesey's *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*, Chief Bromden is both the narrator and the focalizer of the story. But there is a difference between Bromden, the narrator and Bromden, the focalizer. Bromden, the focalizer is a paranoid, bullied and surrounded much of the time by a hallucinated fog that represents both his medicated state and his desire to hide from reality. He is six feet seven inches tall, but he believes he "used to be big but no more". The combine has crushed his power. He is supposed to be given 200 shock treatments. But McMurphy made him identify himself again and dragged him out of the fog. Chief's first action was going to bed without taking the red capsule. This can be regarded as his first attempt to flee from the fog, to resist Big Nurse's control. Then he voted for the change in schedule to watch the World Series. It's first time he reasserted himself as a functioning person. He took one more step out of the fog this time. Slowly he sees things differently. By the end of the novel, the chief has recovered the personal strength to euthanize McMurphy, escape from the hospital and record his account of the event. Thus Bromden, the focalizer passes through many stages in the novel to attain his sanity. Bromden, the focalizer is the changing Bromden or struggling Bromden, while Bromden, the narrator, is a sane and sensible man who has successfully fled from the hospital after killing McMurphy.

External focalization denotes a focalization that is limited to what, were the story true, the observer could actually have observed "from the outside," in other words, it involves no account of characters' thoughts, feelings, and emotions unless these are revealed in external behaviour or admitted to by the characters ( Hawthorn : 259) . For instance, when the chief tells the reader about Nurse Ratched's anger "She's swelling up, swell till her back's splitting out the white uniform...she looks around her with a swivel of her huge head...she blows up bigger and bigger, big as a tractor." (11) The anger has been brought forth through the outward manifestations of the focalized, Nurse Ratched by the external focalizer, Bromden.

Whereas in internal focalization, "the narrative is focused through the consciousness of a character" (Hawthorn: 259). The internal focalization takes place inside the represented events. For instance, Bromden watches the inner change that has come inside him. "For the first time in years I was seeing people with none of that black outline they used to have, and one night I was even able to see out the windows." Two paragraphs later, "I slid from between the sheets and walked barefoot across the cold tile between the beds. I felt the tile with my feet and wondered how many times, how many thousand times had I run a mop over this same tile floor and never felt it at all." (141) This segment is internally focalized by the narrator-focalizer. He is telling about his growth from a deep stupor to budding vigilance. It reveals his unspoken thoughts and feelings. He himself is the focalized here.

Mieke Bal says, "Perception depends upon so many factors that striving for objectivity is pointless. To mention only a few factors : one's position with respect to the perceived object, the fall of the light, the distance, previous knowledge, psychological attitude towards the object; all this and more affects the picture one forms and passes on to others"( Bal,1985 : 100 ). The cognitive, the emotive and the ideological orientations of the focalizer towards the focalized are the main determining factors of the focalization. Bromden's descriptions of all women characters are obviously coloured by the perception that he has of his domineering and repressive mother. In the hospital, the Chief sees Nurse Ratched as the center of the white and female repressive society. Chief calls her "Big Nurse" which sounds like big Brother the name used in George Orwell's novel *1984* to refer to an oppressive and all knowing authority. She enters the ward with "a gust of cold." We are told her fingers are like "polished steel- tip of each finger, the same colour as her lips. Funny orange. Like the tip of a soldering iron." In her woven hand bag, she doesn't carry "compacts or lipsticks or women stuff, she's got that bag full of a thousand parts that

she aims to use in her duties today-wheels and gears, cogs polished to a hard glitter, tiny pills that gleam like porcelain, needles, forceps”(10) and the tools she uses--psychological intimidation, divide-and-conquer techniques and physical abuse are every bit as powerful and insidious as the hidden machinery she uses. Bromden describes her in mechanical and in-human terms. All this is how Bromden perceives the Big Nurse as a machine operator in this huge factory. Everything about Nurse Ratched is depicted as being despicable, including her appearance her methodology and her power by the narrator. The narrator-focalizer causes the reader to empathize with the patients and criticize Nurse Ratched and the rest of repressive “Combine.” Everything is coloured by the Chief-narrator to the patients’ benefits. Even Bromden’s paranoia and McMurphy’s bull-headedness do not stand in the way of their being sympathetic characters.

This novel has been criticized for its misogynistic undertones by many critics. If any alert reader scrutinizes the language used by Ken Kesey, gender-bias and sexism in language can easily be traced out. Paul Simpson while discussing sexism in language describes androcentrism—“a male centered word-view wherein male activities are evaluated positively and female activities negatively” (Simpson, 1993 : 161) .He further described an “androcentric rule” formulated by Coates which states roughly that “man’s linguistic behaviour fits the view of what is admirable or desirable, whilst women will be blamed for whatever is considered negative or reprehensible” (Simpson : 161) .It is important to notice that misogyny of Kesey’s novel stems from the derogatory language used for female characters and negative portrayal of them.

In Kesey’s world, prostitutes are shown to be nourishing and rejuvenating while mothers have hampering effects on their children. The way the narrator describes Nurse Ratched “that smiling flour-faced old mother there with the too-red lipstick and too-big boobs.” Other patients on the ward call her “Mother Ratched,” “ball-cutter,” “bitch” and “wolf.” Even her name reminds of a mechanical tool as it sounds like “ratched.” The nurse’s name has its sound similar to word “wretched.” This gender-bias in language cannot be discussed at length at this juncture. The whole text is impregnated with many instances from the beginning to the end. Following speech by Harding is an ultimate example of the sexism in language used by Ken Kesey who says, “the doctor doesn’t hold the power of hiring and firing. That power goes to the supervisor, and the supervisor is a woman, a deaf old friend of Miss Ratched’s; they were Army nurses together in the thirties. We are victims of a matriarchy here, my friend” (59) Once power and gender are set into this relation, the plot then develops

around the efforts of its hero, Randle Patrick McMurphy, to liberate the men from oppressive female control through a long series of profoundly misogynistic acts. (Melly, 2000: 69<sup>25</sup> In a nutshell, males and females roles are comically reversed. If men have traditionally oppressed women, now the women oppress the men. In the asylum, the weak, the ineffectual men are controlled by strong, domineering women, rendering the sexual roles themselves comic. This comic role- reversal emphasizes the underlying principle of ironic contrast and the reason for the novel’s universal appeal: that in the contemporary world, madness is sanity and sanity is madness. It is the inmates who are sane, yet they must admit themselves into a mental asylum in order to learn that.

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## Hymn to Independence: Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* & Khwaja Ahmad Abbas *Inquilab*

Manisha Gahelot

The great movements— social, political or moral are sure to be mirrored in the literature of the nation. It would be futile to believe that the freedom movement, which caught the imagination of entire nation, should fail to inspire Indo- Anglican writers. Contemporary novels are the mirror of the age, but a very special kind of mirror, a mirror that reflects not merely the external features of the age but also its inner face, its nervous system, coursing of its blood and the unconscious promptings and conflicts, which sway it. Among the significant works inspired by this struggle are the novels like, *Inquilab*, by Khwaja Ahmed Abbas, *Waiting for the Mahatma*, by R.K.Narayan, *Kanthapura*, by Raja Rao, *Mother Land* by C.N.Zutshi etc. Nationalism, Patriotism and a desire to change the very society heralded the beginning of a new era in Indian history. It was an era of national struggle fought at social and political levels under the inspiration of many Indian leaders, especially Mahatma Gandhi. Dorothy Spencer in her *Indian Fiction in English* rightly mentions

Almost all the Indo-Anglican novels have one or more of the following nuclear ideas, predominant in them: Evil of partition; the cult of “Quit India”; and the Gandhian myth. Political events and issues of over a hundred year period are reflected in various ways, both direct and indirect in literature.

Krishna Kriplani in his book *Modern Indian Literature* has beautifully summed up the impact of Gandhiji on Indo- Anglican fiction. He mentions Gandhiji impact on Indian writers was direct and widespread. Apart from its political repercussions, it was both moral and intellectual and at once inhibitive and liberating. Gandhi stripped urban life and elegance of their pretensions and emphasized that religion without compassion and culture without conscience were worthless. He transfigured the image of India and turned national idealism from its futile adulation of the past to face the reality of India, as she was poor, starving and helpless, but with an untapped potential of unlimited possibilities. Gandhiji thus turned Indian writers from romanticism to realism; the high-flown literary style was gone,

His own employment of a simple and direct style, compact and incisive, shorn of all superfluities, both in English and his mother tongue Gujarati, was a very healthy corrective to the natural tendency to flamboyance in Indian writing (p-79).

This trend of Patriotism in Indo-Anglican fiction has produced some of the finest novels in India.

### I

*Kanthapura* by Raja Rao is the story of a typical village in the province of Kara in Mysore. The story has no particular hero or heroine. The villagers play their part in the story; we can say that the main character in the novel is *Kanthapura* itself with its presiding Goddesses Kenchamma, with its Himavathy River, with its superstitions, smallpox and regular malaria.

Moorthy, Bhatta, the up-and-doing Brahmin who collects more and more money, and Lingayya, Ramayya, Sudayya, Chandrayya, Kamamma, Patel Range Gowda, postmaster Suryanarayan and a host of other characters play their part in this novel. Moorthy is the Gandhi man of the village. He advises people about Swaraja, Khaddar etc. The Harikatha of Jaya-Ramachar is also about Swarjya and Gandhi movement. Then Badekhan a Mohammedan comes to the village but the villagers ignore him. So Badekhan goes to the Skeffington Coffee Estate and lives in a hut on that plantation. The Congress movement gradually gathers strength and the villages take to spinning the charkha. Moorthy takes up the work of the uplift of the Mahars, the untouchables, and this brings on his head the wrath of the orthodox. The Swami excommunicates Moorthy but he does not care for the swami. Then the life of the Madrasi labourers on the Skeffington Coffee Estate is described in all its pathetic tragedy.

Moorthy comes back to *Kanthapura* and the whole village starts the Don't touch the government campaign. The movement spreads. The police come and arrest Moorthy at last but the crowd gathered there and *Kanthapura* witnesses its first lathi charge there. The result is that the congress movement grows all the stronger for repression. The orthodox are sprinned and Moorthy is the hero of the day. When moorthy is sentenced to three months imprisonment the whole afternoon no man left his verandha, and “ not a mosquito moved in all *Kanthapura*.”

Time passes on and Moorthy comes back. The freedom struggle continues and then the Mahatma is arrested resulting in a wave of protest over the length and breadth of India. Don't touch the government and the non—tax-payment campaigns are start in an absolutely non- violent way. There is a wave of repression by the police but lathi charges or even firing could not crush the spirit of liberty. Women too are arrested and are put miles away from where they had to walk back. There is satyagraha in

front of the toddy booth where the coffee plantation labourers used to come to drink toddy.

There is a severe lathi charge and the result is that even the coffee plantation labourers join the villagers. The police used to force the prisoners to salute the government flag but the prisoners would find from somewhere the national flag and salute it. The villagers of Kanthapura decide not to pay to the revenue authorities. The police starts freely using their lathis and so women ultimately had to run for safety. Then the police start selling out the fields of those who did not pay the taxes, to the businessmen of Bombay. On the Bebbur Mound the satyagraha procession is carried out. The police inspector tries hard to stop the procession but the procession continues. There are shouts of Vandemataram and Inqilab- Zindabad and blows of lathi; then somebody waved the national flag in his hand and the police rushes at him but the man rushes out through barricades of Skeffington Estate, and the procession moves on. Then came the soldiers with guns. It is a fight for the national flag. A few shots are fired but the crowd moves on and coffee coolies join together shouting “*Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai.*” The soldiers then open fire. Many are wounded; again the soldiers fired; they attacked women also. Then there is a long silence. But the crowd has not yet dispersed. Someone hoisted the national flag from the Bebbur Mound. The soldiers attacked with bayonets. There is also a hand-to-hand fight. Ratna kept crying that there should be no violence in the name of Mahatma. Then the fight ended. Moorthy was in prison and the spirit of the people of Kanthapura was not broken but these villagers could not go back and settle down in Kanthapura because the police had confiscated their lands and sold them to the men from Bombay.

This simple story of Kanthapura which becomes by the alchemic touch of Raja Rao not merely a Gandhipurana but is an historically authentic saga of the Indian Nationalism, invested with the solemn dignity and religiosity of a piece of ancient mythology. This is a story of satyagraha movement lathicharge, and ruined homes. The author loads the novel with significance. The heroic sacrifice of the people is not in vain. The author has portrayed a true to life a picture that stirs national consciousness.

The story describes the satyagraha movement in *Kanthapura*. Lathi charges have been vividly described and characters have been developed in a life like manner. He has depicted Kanthapura with its superstitions, its jealousy, its caste system, its sincerity, simple heartedness and nationalism. It is an epic of noble sacrifice and fortitude for a noble cause. Although the story aims at praising the congress movement, this propaganda motive

does not lessen the artistic blending of harmony, grace and vivid portrayals in the novel.

## II

*Inqilab* by Khwaja Ahmad Abbas vividly portrays dozens of momentous incidents that have engulfed in history. It is a novel of the Indian Revolution which started with the Khilafat movement and which ultimately brought independence to India. This political novel chronicles our struggle for freedom. The story begins in 1933. It describes a typical, muslim upper middle class home in Delhi. Anwar the hero is a young boy grows listening to the stories of politics from father and his friends. The turning point comes when Anwar witnesses Jallianwala bagh incidence,

It was a nightmarish experience for Anwar as he lay on the ground and watched the blood drama. The rifle kept barking, the bullet came flying in an uninterrupted stream, men and women and children fell everywhere, there were screams and moans and groans... (p-40)

The death of the sikh jamadar dying with his hands raised in salute puts a dramatic finish to that tragedy. Years passed by and Anwar became more and more nationalist minded. Then came the Khilafat movement and Anwar's father Akbar Ali was arrested. Time passed by and we are shown how Anwar sees the split between Hindus and Muslims growing wider. Then Anwar meets Mahatma Gandhi at the house of Dr. Ansari. Noticing Anwar's trousers and sherwani, Mahatma Gandhi was pleased and started talking of the importance of every one using hand-spun and hand woven cloth- a subject on which he could talk for hours together. But what Anwar, had come to talk about was the riots. Anwar has come to talk about the riots, but he didn't know how to begin. He wanted to tell the Mahatma how the relations were damaged, how friendships were spoiled, He kept wondering if only he could explain this to Mahatma but the words failed his voice choked, he felt helpless and miserable. He burst into tears.

Anwar joined the Aligarh University and there he fell in love with the daughter of Prof. Saleem. Her name was Salmah. Prof. Saleem hoped to his son-in-law an I.C.S. Officer. But Anwar was too nationalish minded to become an officer of the British government. In Delhi, his father believed in the Muslim League as Anwar believed in the Congress. Anwar was sick and so when he got slightly better. Dr. Ansari brought for him the light work of working as an interpreter for an American Journalist, Robert Bills. Both of them covered the memorable Dandi March. In Bombay Anwar saw lathi charge and saved a Gujrathi girl. Anwar had heard and read about

lathi charges but to him they have been a mechanical objective phenomena-evil but impersonal but what he saw now with his own eyes he could no longer regard as impersonal.

*Inqilab* is the story of the great revolution that ultimately brought independence to India. It contains several soul-stirring characters young in mind and spirit who poured their bubbling youth to twist a break the heavy chains of imperialisms. It represents a magnificent cross-section of the entire Indian nation during its most critical period.

One also meets the great departed leaders like Lokmanya Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi, Bhagat Singh, Motilal Nehru, Subhash Bose and many others that are living today. Each one of these leaders is represented in his own ideological setting ultimately indicating how the course of the National movement was influenced by each one of them at different times. The fight of Independence spread over generations together, had its own landmarks. The Jallianwala bagh incident, the no-tax campaign in Gujrat, the dandi march, the civil disobedience movement, the mammoth processions, the innumerable lathi charges and heroic sufferings are all so vividly portrayed the *Inqilab* becomes a living monument to the great fight for Independence.

In a lucid and picturesque style and with an unusual warmth and sympathy, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas proceeds with the narrative from which emerge more than a dozen of powerful and unforgettable characters. *Inqilab* finally turns out to be a powerful novel so realistic that several of the elder readers may perhaps find a reflection of their own aspirations of those glorious days portrayed in these pages. The story is well told although the author's aim is to link up the memorable pages of the struggle of Indian Independence round the figure of an imaginary nationalist Muslim youth. Even the story element of love and fortunes of Anwar is powerful enough to keep the reader spell-bound. The style is simple and lucid. The English the interspersed Urdu words internationally used by the author for the sake of local colour, is smooth and polished. It is a powerful and gripping novel of epic dimensions.

In this novel we see Abbas at his best. As this novel is more or less a historical chronicle, a host of characters have an entry in their own right. We cannot expect, therefore the well-sketched characters. But even then Anwar and Ratan and Raaz are, to us atleast, real men from real life. The description is realistic and picturesque. The scene of jallianwala Bag is a masterpiece of descriptive art. Abbas thus, justifies the words, 'The actual novel is made with the documents, related from life, or heightened; just as

history is made with written documents. The historians are the narrators of the past, the novelists of the present'.

As for plot the entire fight for freedom is the plot, a kaleidoscopic panorama of fast moving events each one episodic in nature and yet properly adjusted and composed in the general pattern of the freedom movement. *Inqilab* was started in May 1942 and was completed in May 1949. It was written partially before Independence was achieved. *Kanthapura* is a novel of rural life, describing the glorious struggle of a village the fight of the people of the village. *Inqilab*, is a historical, political novel describing the entire struggle for Independence through the eyes of a muslim young me which makes history come alive. These two novels do not sing simply of the victory of Independence, they sing of the victories, small and great, achieved on the social front by the soldiers of civil- disobedience, named and unnamed. Thus, even when the political horizon, showed no silver lining the joy of achievement was there on the plane of social reform. It is, therefore, that these novels are full of a spirit of hope and joy. And thus, these stories, which tell of the saddest thought, have become our sweetest songs.

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## Anita Desai and the *Bhagvad Gita*

Gauri Shankar Jha

In an interview to Jasbir Jain Anita Desai admits that she has been influenced by the Bhagwad Gita and her early work carries its impact; however she also admits that later on she discarded it in her other works. The present paper is intended to trace the elements of Gita in her work and the implications there on.

As we know Anita Desai is chiefly interested in delineating the psychic life of an individual whereas her contemporary women writers such as Nayantara Sahgal, Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Praver Jhabvala etc. are engaged in other social and political issues. And Bhagwad Gita has been the most abiding influence for the writers of India and that of abroad. In Anita Desai's two early novels *Cry the Peacock* (1963) and *Voices in the City* (1965), (there is a distinct impression of Gita, particularly its two prominent aspects, that of, Karma yoga and the principle of detachment.

In *Cry the Peacock* 'the tragic story of Maya is simply that of misunderstanding or ignorance. The conjugal life of Maya and Gautam is a tormented one; they are poles apart on all accounts. Maya lives in her fairy tale world and Gautam in his down-to-earth pragmatic world. Even the death of her pet dog disturbs her a lot. To Gautam death is insignificant. He is led by the principles of Gita where life and death are almost routine works; these should not disturb anyone. Maya is as simple and innocent as Olenka of Chekhov's 'The Darling'; even trivial things matter to her. She is overpowered by the love and attachment for Gautam. On the other hand Gautam preaches detachment based on the Bhagwad Gita. Maya's intense love for Gautam does not matter to him. Gautam is of the view that attachment is the root cause of all evils; as per the Bhagwad Gita, attachment breeds longing and longing anger, anger delusion, and delusion in turn results in loss of memory, loss of memory leads to ruin of discriminating faculty which further leads one to eventual death; precisely attachment is fatal. For Maya everything is in life and Attachment to it, in the novel she says—

I don't care to detach myself into any other world than this. It isn't boring for me. Never boring I have so much to look at to touch and feel, and be happy about. (116-117) I am dying and I am in love with Living (98)

Like other characters of Anita Desai, Maya is love-starved and aware of the impending death. There is another negative element responsible for

nemesis, that is, astrologer's prediction like that of prophecy of the witches to Macbeth; all this leads to the neurotic state of mind. Her obsession is almost like madness and unusual self-questioning: "Or is it madness. Am I gone insane?" (98) This anxiety of insecurity and the urge for protection drive Maya to insanity and death; the healing power of love and sympathy is absent and it is her that she decides,

"It is with relief I called back to the gods who mocked in the dark wings." (190)

In the novel Gautam gazes the entire world as per the Bhagwad Gita which is completely contrary to the emotional framework of Maya the tussle between the two is but natural. It seems that Anita Desai has chosen the name s deliberately. Gautam the first name of Buddha and Maya, the name for illusion in Vedanta philosophy and the implication is quite distinct. Maya discovered Gautam's total indifferent attitude towards her physical charms and a sort of artificiality in her conjugal life, because for Gautam there was 'no value in anything less than ideas and theories, born of human and, preferably, male brains' (99). Maya's vision is polluted and Gautam detects it, "life is a fairy tale to you still. What have you learnt of the realities? The realities of common human existence not love and romance but living and dying and working, all that constitutes the life for the ordinary men.... If one must have a real, solid, personal world, why not create one within oneself, to detach oneself into when the world around one grows either too boring or too hectic...." (115-117).

This sort of idea is directly borrowed from the Gita which asks for inner consciousness (atman) that witnesses the actions of the 'ego' that deals with the physical world of illusion (Maya); this atman is independent of the mundane realities and help the individual to detach himself from the world of Maya, this detachment ensures peace and stability which is the end of philosophical aspirations. Gautam talks of detachment, but he himself is far away, deep in the physical world, working for 'fame, name, money, his personal ego makes it difficult for him to reach the inner consciousness or atman; he does not achieve the stability of mind because there is no reconciliation between atman and ego, his personal ego predominates and so he invites suffering. Maya's self is without a centre that could have sustained her; she has a weak ego and so she is uncomfortable in the world of harsh reality. Gautam's death is the end of intellect oriented viewpoint that is overpowered by the continuous assaults of illusion – it happens in the combat between the world of illusion and the world of knowledge. here dance of Shiva symbolizes all, the end of

obsession and the beginning of new life; the dance of Shiva connotes destruction as well as creation, implying the unending, cyclic progress of life, here destruction means freedom from the world of illusion and so Maya, freed from her world of illusion in her death – a permanent liberation of a restless soul. Maya succumbs to her fragile world of imagination and illusion; she cannot approach life; she cannot find meaning in life; the psychological tumult is due to her restricted vision of the world. Jasbir Jain holds that ‘Maya is pure instinct without the necessary accompaniment of wisdom and Gautam is, for Maya, the meditator beneath the tree; Maya is lost in emotion and Gautam dreads passions.

‘Voices in the City’, is another novel of Anita Desai that acquaints us with the influence of The Bhagwad Gita marking an influence of The Bhagwad Gita. In the novel Manisha plays the role of Maya and her suicide is an attempt to live.

After marriage she finds herself in a joint family, a puppet of rituals among so many heads imprisoned in a cage, imprisoned in one’s own self. She is in search of some support that even her husband does not provide and she prefers loneliness. Her predicament grows out of necessity not out of choice. For both, Manisha and Nirode, love is meaningless and attachment is loss of self and useless. Manisha interprets the Bhagwad Gita, ‘Cast away involvement ... cast it away and be totally empty, totally alone’. (133); this is a misinterpretation for she is trapped in her own self. Although she tries to negotiate but she is caught in an irreconcilable situation, there is no harmony between her action and her thought. She does not acquire detachment or non-involvement rather it is aloofness and alienation that torment her. The ethics of the Bhagwad Gita could not educate her properly. Nirode takes it the other way ‘my interior has melted into the exterior’ (256); he can see in his mother, a mother of all humanity: the goddess Kali and everything; this is the only way of coming out of the self imposed solitude. The entire novel is a display of mental aberrations and psychic disorders, such as, “Nirode’s wounded self, Manisha’s agonized self and Anita’s insecure self” to a great extent the interpretation of the Bhagwad Gita in their own way, helps in their march towards doom.

Truly speaking, Anita Desai is somehow a Western existentialist experimenter and her character is prone to self consciousness, as a result, asserts his self, is isolated from the community and is kicked out of the main stream, in most cases by self. It is a circumstantial exile or the misunderstanding of the self or something related to his maladjustment derived from the Bhagwad Gita that allures these

characters. But they cannot execute these ideals, they live in their world and want to be of it, plan to denounce it but are badly engrossed in it and are driven to doom. Her characters fail to realize that ego differentiation is illusory and *atman* is Brahman; it also suggests Desai’s inclination towards Hindu tradition. Yet she feels that community is a constricting and hostile phenomenon and for self – fulfillment escape is necessary; this escape is the cause of dynamic tension, solitude is the cause of dynamic tension, solitude and destruction.

Besides, *Cry the Peacock* and *Voices in the City* we have Desai’s *Fire on the Mountain* that vindicates her attitude. In this novel, we find emotional trauma of Nanda, Raka and Ila who are eccentric for different reasons; Nanda withdraws from the society, Raka retreats and Ila is rejected by the society; they are logical representatives and agents of their unwelcome nemesis or Karma seeking contentment through withdrawal, intellectual conviction based on tradition based on traditional precept. The emotional tension remains unresolved; the Bhagwad Gita is misinterpreted, the principle of detachment is mistaken; Nanda is constantly distracted by the worldly affairs and she becomes ‘intense, willful and vengeful. As Anita Desai herself comments Nanda does not want immortality, she wants detachment in order to protect her illusion, her utterance, “I want no more! I want nothing! Can I not be left with nothing?” (19) reveals that finally she will be left with nothing; it is her solitary wrestling with her own self in privacy only; she has lost her socio cultural support and in the long run abandons her self consciousness too, that disturbs the harmony of life. Desai’s characters want absolute freedom and absolute freedom leading to self destruction. Adhering to traditional ideals Nanda defines herself but fails to cope with the inevitable failure, the mythic and metaphysical ambiguity remain beyond comprehension.

However, in all these three novels of Anita Desai we find the implications of detachment as expounded in the Bhagwad Gita revealing that only theorizing of these principles without realizing their real message drives one to doom. Gautam talks of ‘detachment on every count’ (17); he talks of getting to the spirit of Gita as a key to the understanding of life and death; at the same time he also talks of money and fame as fundamental, that is contrary to the basics of life; he cannot understand the man – woman relationship and the essence of a married life. Gautam’s alienation from Maya is rooted in the philosophy of detachment and adverse to his duty as husband and a householder. Gita does not insist on the renunciation of one’s obligation towards family and society, rather it sticks to one’s duty. Gautam fails to satisfy his wife emotionally and he quotes from the Gita, “He

who, controlling the senses of the mind, follows without attachment the path of action with his organs of action, he is esteemed ... work, or life, whichever you please of that order is what I mean by vocation. ' (116). He withdraws, avoids physical relationship with his wife which is the foundation of psycho-social moral theory of conjugal life; the Gita includes it in Purushartha. But Gautam violates his duty and betrays the procreative process; he is not a balanced personality. He negates life and causes Maya's neurosis. The miscomprehension of the philosophy of detachment makes Maya negative and Gautam impotent; her verbose intellectual jugglery is meaningless. He strives for the ideal of non-attachment and non-involvement to acquire inner calm and self realization but he fails to synthesize his life pattern with his philosophical ideals.

Consequently, Anaskti Yoga becomes self-delusion, Maya is astonished at this other worldly attitude and suffers. The same thing happens to Manish and Nanda. Only corruptive gratification is denounced by the Bhagwad Gita; people like Gautam are fond of escapism. The tragic end of all these novels is just the misinterpretation of the philosophy of the Bhagwad Gita. It is a sheer depiction of the Gita's 'ought' and Anita's 'is'. The Gita's detachment calls for dissolution of the self while in action; Usha Bande quotes :

Horney points out that resignation is worth emulating. It leads to peace and wisdom. On the other hand, a neurotic's striving for resignation signifies a peace born out of 'the absence of conflict'. Abraham Maslow terms it meta motivation'. The Hindu psychology envisages freedom from the ego involvement to the optimum degree possible' (63)

Obviously, protagonists of the three novels, that is, Maya, Manisha and Nanda, all fall to go to the bottom of the philosophy of the Bhagwad Gita, inviting their tragic end.

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## Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*: A Foucauldian Reading

Anand Bajaj

*The God of Small Things*, a highly stylized novel, was first published in 1997. It got rave reviews and won the prestigious Booker Prize the same year. Ever since, it has been read, re-read and commented upon by critics and scholars. They have explicated it from various perspectives, yet surprisingly the Foucauldian perspective is conspicuous in them by its absence. It is surprising because *The God of Small Things* is a text which is eminently amenable to a Foucauldian reading.

It is a fictional construct about human beings who are subjected to the discourses of the truth, power and ethics. It is a story of characters who refuse to remain tied to their identities and exhibit the strength to transgress the limits set up by society. It is a novel about the repressive and ideological manifestations of the disciplinary power and the resistance to it at the micro-individual level. In short, *The God of Small Things* is a text which displays the characters caught in the web of power-relations which over-determine their lives from the macro-structural level and influence their actions through their own micro-level resistances and interpersonal relationships.

Foucault believes that concrete human beings gain their subjectivity through three axes of subjectification: truth, power and ethics (Simons, 2005: 185). It implies that human beings get constituted as subjects. As subjects they show a certain duality. They are subjugated to the signifying discourses of truth and power-relations which are socially determined. But at the same time they are subjects (having the powers of a doer as the subject of a sentence) free to offer resistance to repressive discursive practices and to choose ethics as the guiding principles of their lives (Foucault, 1982: 212). But the discourse should not be understood in the narrow sense of just a way of speaking or writing but as "the whole 'mental set' and ideology which encloses the thinking of all members of a given society. It is not singular and monolithic—there is always a multiplicity of discourses – so that the operation of power structures is as significant a factor in (say) the family as in layers of government" (Barry, 1995: 176).

Foucault insists on the specificity of the power-structures and the discourses operating in different societies. He says that each society "has

its regimes of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those charged with saying what counts as true"(Foucault,1980: 131).

As *The God of Small Things* portrays a fictional universe situated in mid 20<sup>th</sup> century traditional Indian space, the specificity of its "regimes of truth" is not difficult to pin-point. It was a space saturated with the discourses of patriarchy and casteism. Although Kerala, the locale of the fictional action, was ruled by the Communist Party in late 1960s, yet it had not been able to make any dent in the patriarchal and casteist consciousness of the people. Socio-economically and culturally, the society was divided into layers of well-to-do upper-caste Hindus and Syrian Christians on the one hand, and layers of poor lower-caste people on the other, with the untouchables forming outer fringe of this structure. Among the upper and lower castes, the women were the excluded section and they were generally maltreated. The untouchables formed a class unto themselves and they were without any rights whatsoever. Of course, after independence, the condition of the untouchables had started improving a little yet for all practical purposes, they were the outcastes of the society.

No doubt, their condition was worse a couple of generations ago. Mammachi tells Estha and Rahel that she could remember a time, in her girlhood, "when Paravans were expected to crawl backwards with a broom, sweeping away their footprints so that Brahmins or Syrian Christians would not defile themselves by accidentally stepping into a Paravan's footprint. In Mammachi's time, Paravans, like other untouchables, were not allowed to walk on public roads, not allowed to cover their upper bodies, not allowed to carry umbrellas. They had to put their hands over their mouths when they spoke, to divert their polluted breath away from those whom they addressed"(Roy, 1997: 73-74).

Compared to his father Vellya Paapen and brother Kuttappen, Velutha's condition is remarkably better. He is an educated, trained mechanic and a worthy carpenter – a master craftsman who was even employed in "Paradise Pickles and Preserves" along with other touchable workers. "Mammachi (with impenetrable Touchable logic) often said that if only he hadn't been a Paravan, he might have become an engineer"(75). Of course, other workers resented his presence, yet they relented on the condition that he should be given less salary. Velutha did not mind it because as

Mammachi thought he should have been "grateful that he was allowed on the factory premises at all, and allowed to touch things that Touchables touched. She said that it was a big step for a Paravan"(77).

Velutha represents the forces of change, yet the society sets limits to such change. The traditional and conservative social set up accepts quantitative changes but is not ready for qualitative ones. And that sets up the scene for the tragedy that follows. Velutha transgresses the socio-cultural limits imposed on him by the casteist discourse and has to pay for it with what he has – his body, his life.

The women form a subservient class in the patriarchal discourse. They are at the mercy of the men-folk. Pappachi often beats Mammachi with a brass vase. He sends his son Chacko to England for higher studies but thinks it a wastage of money to send Ammu to a college even in a nearby town. Baby Kochamma believes that "a married daughter had no position in her parents' home. As for a divorced daughter... she had no position anywhere at all. And as a divorced daughter from a love-marriage, well, words could not describe Baby Kochamma's outrage. As for a divorced daughter from an intercommunity love marriage – Baby Kochamma chose to remain quiveringly silent on the subject" (45-46). The woman as a daughter has no claims to her father's property. Chacko told Rahel and Estha "that Ammu had no Locusts Stand I" (57). He clearly told Ammu, "What's yours is mine and what's mine is also mine" (57).

Thus casteism and patriarchy are the major discursive practices which form the backdrop of the tragic drama unfolded in *The God of Small Things*. If the Ideological State Apparatuses of the Church and the political party in power join hands and enlist the services of Repressive State Apparatus(Althusser, 1984: 17) of police to support casteistic and patriarchal discourse, the macro-structure of the master-discourse becomes really repressive. Such a master-discourse can be ruthless, coercive and violent as not only Ammu and Velutha but even Estha and Rahel find to their horror.

The most important characteristic of the discourses of truth is that they hide the essential nature of all relations which are suffused with the operations of power. Foucault maintains that power is "never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its point of application" (Foucault, Power)

Knowledge: 98). If all human beings articulate power, it clearly implies that they undergo power as at the same time they wield power even if it is partial, limited, conformist or oppositional to resist the power of others. The discourse of truth and the exercise of power are always intertwined. It is so because there “can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association” ( Power\Knowledge: 93). Similarly, there cannot be the discourses of truth if power is not exercised. Discourse of truth does not mean that the discourse is objectively true, genuine or authentic. It simply means that it is considered true by the society which cannot penetrate the superficial ideological layer of “common sense” view of life. The real ideological nature of the discourse of truth remains concealed to the common masses.

Foucault thus explores the discursive practices of power-relations, the exclusions of discourse like madness, chance and discontinuity, the panopticism and pastoralism of power-knowledge complex in all its manifestations at all levels of interpersonal relationships. Madan Sarup points out that Foucault “believes that literary text allows ‘otherness’ to speak. In philosophy and law this otherness is silent, where as in madness it is not listened to. Foucault values the literature of transgression – it attempts to subvert the constraints of all other forms of discourse by its difference”(Sarup, 1998: 65).

*The God of Small Things* is a text of subversion. It presents “things it would be impossible to tell to anyone else” – the “madness” of biological urges, the incestuous embrace, and the hideous violence of the master discourse from the point of view of the victims, the marginalized—untouchables, women and children. It shows the “unreason” of the discourse of truth to subvert the logic of master discourse.

Human sexuality is the domain in which the individual’s biological urges and the society’s needs of human reproduction converge. Sexuality must, then, be the site of exercise of the power-knowledge discourse, though, of course, the bourgeois discourse of truth would conceal the true nature of its control by according privacy, sanctity and discretion”(Smart,1985: 97) to sexuality. *The God of Small Things* is a story of how human sexuality is controlled by what it calls “the love laws” (33) and what the transgression of these laws entails in terms of the repression let loose on transgressors, either physically or emotionally. Referring to the tragedy inscribed in the text, the omniscient narrator says that it “really began in the days when the love laws were made. The laws that lay down who should be loved, and how much” (33).

The discourse of truth of the “love laws” is based on the principles of rigorous inclusion and exclusion. Within the context of the specific Indian conservative sexual discourse it implies that (a) an upper-caste man can have sexual relations with woman/women of lower castes but (b) a lower-caste man cannot have similar relations with a woman of an upper caste and (c) love of siblings has to be “pure”, free from any taint of sexuality. The narrative shows two major transgressions. The first one is by Ammu and Velutha who flout the law about the sexual union of a low-caste, an untouchable, man and an upper-caste woman. Their desires are aptly described as a form of “madness” in more senses than one. They are “mad” in their libidinous desire of each other but they are ‘mad’ also because they do not realize the consequences of their actions in terms of retribution from the patriarchy, casteism, political party and the police combine – the guardians of the public morality. The retribution is swift and severe. Velutha is tortured to death and Ammu is disowned and thrown out of Ayemenem house to fend for herself, deprived not only of shelter but also of her twin children.

The second transgression is the incestuous relationship of Rahel and Estha which may be treated as a consequence of the first transgression. The seven year old twins, Rahel and Estha were subjected to such emotional stress that their personalities were distorted for ever. Estha was made to stand a false testimony against his beloved Velutha to “save Ammu” which coupled with sexual abuse at Abhilash Talkies, metaphorically robbed him of his childhood as well as the speech. His voice was muted. He became totally quiet. Rahel, who identified herself fully with her twin brother, was emptied of all emotions. They are rightly described as Quietness and Emptiness. Neither could develop meaningful relationships. They just drifted through life. Rahel went to study in a school of architecture in Delhi, even got married to an American McCaslin, went to Boston, but failed to lead a normal life. She was divorced and came back to Ayemenem to meet her brother when he was re-returned by his father.

In Foucauldian terms, the incestuous relationship of Estha and Rahel is a form of resistance to the normalizing hegemonic discourse of “love-laws”. It is a commentary on the “unreason” of the discourse of truth which had exacted “a Small Price” – “Two lives. Two children’s childhoods. And a history lesson for future offenders” (366). Actually, the price was much more. Not only childhoods had been robbed, but the entire lives of Estha and Rahel had been destabilized and the twins were ultimately “forced” into an incestuous embrace. The critics have been engaged with the

question of incest in the book. Urabashi Barat says that participation “in forbidden relationships is undeniably an assertion of selfhood, but it is also undeniably an expression of love and interpersonal communication...” (Barat: 97) Sumanyu Satpathy prefers to call it a contradiction “that the novel fails to resolve,” (Satpathy: 142) but Amina Amin feels that the issue has been “left for the readers to decide” (Amin: 111).

A careful perusal of the relevant passage will help us understand a few nuances involved in the issue :

But what was there to say?

Only that there were tears. Only that Quietness and Emptiness fitted together like stacked spoons. Only that there was a snuffling in the hollows at the base of a lovely throat. Only that a hard honey-coloured shoulder had a semi-circle of teeth marks on it. Only that they held each other close long after it was over. Only that what they shared that night was not happiness, but hideous grief. Only that once again they broke the love laws. That lay down who should he loved. And how. And how much. (328).

It is not accidental that seven consecutive sentences in the passage begin with “only”. Estha and Rahel are depersonalized as Quietness and Emptiness. The omniscient narratorial voice refers to “tears” and informs us that what they shared was “hideous grief”. Clearly the author places the incestuous relationship in the light of extenuating circumstances — social as well as psychological — so that the readers do not find the episode shocking, disgusting, immoral and outrageous. Arundhati Roy is certainly not preaching incest as an alternative to the “normal” sexual laws of the discourse of truth. She makes the second transgression functional to expose the violent power exercised upon Velutha and Ammu by the master discourse of patriarchy and casteism.

Clare O’Farrell points out that in his early writings Foucault “adopts the classic view of power as repressive” (Farrell, 2005: 98). In the specific context of the conservative Indian discourse of patriarchal and casteist practices which judges the morality of an action on the basis of its conformity to the age-old “love-laws”, the power to punish in such circumstances, is considered absolutely natural and necessary. Velutha is tortured to death in the most savage manner. “They [Estha and Rahel] heard of thud of wood on flesh. Boot on bone. On teeth. The muffled grunt when a stomach is kicked in. The muted crunch of skull on cement. The gurgle of blood on a man’s breath when his lung is torn by the jagged end of a broken rib” (308). He is grievously injured by the policemen who beat him impelled by “feelings that were primal yet paradoxically wholly impersonal.

Feelings of contempt born of inchoate fear – uncivilization’s fear of nature, men’s fear of women, power’s fear of powerlessness” (308).

If the power-structure of police tortures Velutha physically the power-structure of family tortures Ammu emotionally. She is first locked up in her room, isolated from her twins, to break up her resistance, to cow her down, to discipline her. And then she is thrown out of her house to fend for herself in the “open space” of the outside world. Suffering from asthma, deprived of her children, ill-equipped to work and without shelter, she struggles on. The “open space”, paradoxically, turns into a prison. A prisoner of the guilt-complex, she dies an untimely death in a grimy room of Bharat Lodge in Alleppey.

Foucault in his later writings developed the concept of disciplinary power. It “produces individuals as both its objects and agents” (Boyne, 1990: 110). It aims to keep people under surveillance, to control their conduct and behaviour, and to optimize the usefulness of their bodies — to make them docile. Foucault says : “A body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved” (Foucault, 1975: 136). *The God of Small Things* shows how power-knowledge discourse seeks to turn Rahel and Estha into “docile bodies”. The Wisdom Exercise Notebooks reveal how the twins were given drills in spelling- corrections and compositions to make them learn English. Similarly Baby Kochamma forces them to speak in English at home so that they will not cut a sorry figure in front of Margaret and Sophie Mol. She even tries to teach them the nuances of good behaviour in public, especially when they have to go to Kochin to welcome Margaret and Sophie.

Foucault also refers to the pastoral aspect of functioning of power. The modern society has become a “singularly confessing society”.... One confesses in public and in private, to one’s parents, one’s educators, one’s doctor, to those one loves; one admits to oneself, in pleasure and in pain, things it would be impossible to tell to anyone else, the things people write books about .... One confesses – or is forced to confess” (Foucault, 1976: 59). The disciplinary power operates through surveillance, confession and punishment. Rahel was first blacklisted in Nazareth Convent when she was caught outside her Housemistress’s garden gate decorating a knob of fresh cowdung with small flowers. Six months later she was punished with expulsion, after repeated complaints from senior girls. She was accused of hiding behind doors and deliberately colliding with her seniors. She was questioned by the Principal about her behaviour. She was first cajoled, then caned and starved. She eventually confessed that she had done it to find

out whether breasts hurt. “In that Christian institution, breasts were not acknowledged. They weren’t supposed to exist, and if they didn’t could they hurt?” (16). She was expelled a second time for smoking. She was expelled again for setting fire to her Housemistress’s false hairbun, which, under duress, Rahel confessed to having stolen.

The disciplinary power is best exercised through panopticism. Bentham used the cognate term “Panopticon” for a prison “in which all of the prisoners had individual cells in a ring-like building, and could thus be observed from a tower placed at the hub of this ring.... The whole point of this arrangement was that the prisoners should know that they were being observed – or crucially, that they might be being observed. This constant possibility is always present in the prisoner’s mind, and thus the force of discipline is no longer just ‘outside’, and capable of being avoided or hidden from, but ‘inside’, in the prisoners’ own mind” (Waugh, 2006:512). Thus the prisoners internalize the constraints of power and get “caught up in a power situation of which they themselves are the bearers” (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*: 201).

Probably the best example in *The God of Small Things* of the effects of panopticism is the conduct of Vellya Paapen. He has so thoroughly internalized the discourse of casteism that he is terrified to see Velutha’s sexual rendezvous with Ammu. He, himself, rushes to the Ayemenem house to reveal the secret. “Vellya Paapen told Mammachi what he had seen. He asked God’s forgiveness for having spawned a monster. He offered to kill his son with his own bare hands. To destroy what he had created” (78). Foucault says that where “there is power, there is resistance,” (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*: 95) but this resistance is very rarely successful in transgressing the limits imposed by subjectifying power relations and at the same time fashioning “new forms of subjectivity” (Simons: 186).

It is not that just Ammu and Velutha undergo power and offer resistance; the other characters are also caught in the relational network of the powers-structures. Mammachi, who is regularly beaten by her husband, defies him to set up “Paradise Pickles and Preserves” and makes it commercially viable. Pappachi, jealous of his wife’s success, sews buttons on his shirt publically to denigrate the working women in general and Mammachi in particular, but she ignores his tantrums. Rahel and Estha, the seven year old kids defy the power of Ammu and Baby Kochamma and refuse to behave in the manner they were tutored to behave. Baby Kochamma offers resistance to the religious

discourse and familial power to turn a Roman Christian in the hope that she would be able to be near father Mulligan probably in the Convent in Madras. In short, Foucault’s observation that all relations are power relations in which resistance is inbuilt is proved valid if we look at the interpersonal relations of the characters in *The God of Small Things*.

Foucault explains how the power relations are non-equal and mobile. As Drefus and Rabinow have pointed out, the functioning “of these political rituals of power is exactly what sets up the nonegalitarian, asymmetrical relations. It is the spread of these technologies and their every day operation, localized spatially and temporally, that Foucault is referring to when he describes them as ‘mobile’” (*Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*: 185).

That the power relations are actually mobile is borne out by the fact that those who wield power in *The God of Small Things* have to yield it to others. If Pappachi’s is powerful and dictates terms to his wife, it is his wife who feels secure after Chacko’s intervention and her own success in running “Paradise Pickles and Preserves.” The shift of power from Pappachi to Mammachi is noticeable as it is he who is seen now as a pathetic, jealous and “silent” old man. If Chacko wields power as the owner of Ayemenem estate and the “Paradise Pickles and Preserves” to get his “men’s needs” fulfilled; it is the same lowly women along with men workers of his factory who lay siege to the factory premises after Velutha’s death and ruin his fortunes. A helpless Chacko closes down the factory and emigrates to Canada.

What the text shows is that the characters are constituted in the discursive practices of patriarchy and casteism. The protagonists Ammu and Velutha try to transgress the prohibiting limits set to their oppositional resistance by the discourses of truth, so they become targets for exclusion and elimination by the power of master discourse. The characters wield power in their interpersonal relationships. There are shifts of power from one character to another but such exercise of power remains limited within the “safe” confines of the master discourse.

Jon Simons points out that “Foucault advocates an ethical relation to oneself, whose corresponding mode of subjectification is an aesthetics of the self, which has recourse neither to knowledge nor to universal rules” (Simons: 196). Rejecting the humanistic discourse Foucault believes that individuals are not bestowed with a “given” self or subjectivity. This subjectivity is created through

interpersonal exercise of power. “But one can relate to oneself as an object of art which one must create (Simons:196). This becomes possible only if we “detach our ethical relations with ourselves from the government of others, from universal moral rules and from scientific (especially psychological) knowledge”(Simons: 197).

Such an aesthetics of existence Foucault may well have drawn “from his understanding of the transgressive potential of becoming gay.... The wider significance of gay friendship is not simply sexual pleasure but the proliferation of new forms of relations between people beyond those currently sanctioned, namely, marriage and the family”(Simons: 198).

The aesthetics of existence implies the constitution of subjectivity in the ethical choice, not in the discourses of power/knowledge and moral laws. Looked at from this perspective, the twin transgressions in *The God of Small Things* are not strictly ethical choices. Ammu and Velutha transgress the love-laws rooted in the master discourse of patriarchy and casteism. Their transgression is dictated by social and biological reasons. To the extent that it shows a defiance of oppressive social discourse, it is an act of resistance. Estha and Rahel also transgress the love-laws rooted in universal morals. Their transgression is dictated by social and psychological reasons. Theirs is also an act of resistance in so far as it defies the conventional authoritative discourse. Though certainly acts of resistance, these transgressions can not be called ethical choices because they are neither conscious attempts at exploring “new forms of relations” nor acts of open defiance. Such furtive attempts of resistance remain inherently incapable of forging new subjectivities and new identities.

In short, Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* provides us an absorbing account of ruthless and repressive power of discourses of truth. It creates a dialectic between the power relations at the macro-structural levels and the characters’ resistance at the micro-individual level. The novel shows how the micro-individual resistance is brutally crushed by the master discourses of truth. But in doing so, it succeeds in showing the limits of discourses of power and truth by displaying the horror of “power’s fear of powerlessness.”

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## Female Strife for Perfection in Girish Karnad's *Hayavadana* and Mohan Rakesh's *Half Way House*

R.T. Bedre & Mrs. Meera M Giram

The contemporary Indian drama is led by four vibrant regional theaters namely the Kannada, Marathi, Bengali and the Hindi theater. Girish Karnad, Vijay Tendulkar, Badal Sircar, and (late) Mohan Rakesh (and presently Habeeb Tanveer) represent these theaters. These four dramatists along with their play writing, ceaseless exchange activities and experiments in terms of plots, themes and techniques have evolved Indian national theater. They have given a meaningful existence to Indian English Drama. They have brought Indian drama from hagiological and Shavian naturalism to contemporary life. Their amalgamation of the orient with the occidental traditions of theater have rendered their plays never-seen-before stagability and earned the title Performable Theater.

Despite their contribution to making Indian English drama a reality, they are quite different in their themes, techniques and approaches to play writing. While Tendulkar (except in *Ghashiram Kotwal*) and Badal Sircar deal with routine problems of the middle class in the language really spoken by them, Karnad and Mohan Rakesh (except Karnad's *Anju Mallige* and Rakesh's *Half Way House*) have been keen to adopt the historical, mythical and folklore setting to discuss perennial issues of human life. Tendulkar (except in *Ghashiram Kotwal*) and Sircar bank more on the Western dramatic modes- the former on Artaud's 'theatre of cruelty', and the latter on Grotowski's Poor Theatre with Richard Schechner's Environmental Theatre and Julian Beck's Living Theatre), Karnad and Mohan Rakesh seem to be at ease with both the Western and indigenous dramatic modes. Karnad is more comfortable with the latter than the former.

Though Karnad's *Tughlaq* (1964) shot him into fame, his second play *Hayavadana* (1971) came as a milestone in his career as a dramatist. Similarly, Mohan Rakesh's fame rests on *Half Way House* (1971) rather than his *One Day in Ashada* and *Swan of the Waves*. Karnad's *Hayavadana* and Rakesh's *Half Way House* (both published in the same year) proved as trend setting plays in Indian drama. Karnad's play is based on Thomas Mann's novella *The Transposed Heads* that in turn, was drawn from an Indian folk tale from *Kathasaritasagar*. Karnad has used some elements of the Karnataka folk theater form Yakshagana when it was being debated whether and how far it was relevant to use folk theater forms in the mainstream drama. He has reworked the German novella and set it in a

folk tale town Dharampura where all kinds of beings appear. The human characters represent three different classes and three merits of life- Devadatta is a learned but delicate Brahmin, Padmini an energetic daughter of a tradesman and Kapila a well-built ironsmith.

Rakesh's *Half Way House* is set in the early seventies when the family institution has begun to lose its earlier structure and values. Rakesh's play has a contemporary middleclass living room as the setting. The characters are ordinary having no names but the common nouns like - The Woman, The Boy, The Elder Girl, The Younger Girl, The First Man, The Second Man, The Third Man and The Fourth Man, though in the course of play, the audience know them as Savitri, Ashok, Binni, Kinni, Mahendranath, Singhania, Jagmohan and Juneja respectively. Rakesh too, makes an experiment by giving the last four roles to a single actor. It helped him, in the words of Rajinder Nath, "to show how conveniently and according to one's convenience the same man can put on different masks according to the situation in which he is placed" (xi).

Despite these basic differences in the plot, setting, characterization and dramatic models, these two plays have one striking similarity- these plays have female characters as their protagonists, aspiring restlessly for the best of all (their conception of perfection) which is an impossibility in the contexts they are located. Padmini, the protagonist of Karnad's *Hayavadana*, is Vatsayana's sixth type of woman. "Her forelocks rival the bees, her face is a white lotus. Her beauty is as the magic lake. Her arms the lotus creepers. Her breasts are golden urns. She is "shikharidarshana pakvabimbadharoshtee-madhyekshama chakithareene prekshna nimnabha, the Shyama Nayika-born of Kalidasa's magic description [...]" (*Hayavadana* 119-20). She is not only beautiful but also is 'fast as lightening- and as sharp' (126). She needs a man of steel to control and hunt her.

Devadatta the learned pundit in Vedas, and who writes the grandest poetry but a man with long dark hair, delicate fair face, falls in love with her and, with his loyal wrestler friend Kapila, manages to marry her. But Padmini, true to her name, rooted in the earth symbolizes an upward progression to the sky. She is not satisfied with Devadatta who is more interested in Bhasa than in her. She feels drawn towards Kapila who has an ethereal shape, broad back, the muscles rippling across it, whose small feminine waist looks helpless. Devadatta becomes aware of her gradual inclination towards Kapila and on their way to Ujjain, he beheads himself before the Goddess Kali, Kapila who reaches there in search of him, finds him in the pool of blood. He too, follows him by cutting his own head

with the same sword. After some time, Padmini also comes there and finds both her husband and lover lying dead. She fears that people will think that Devadatta and Kapila fought for her and killed each other. When she, too picks up the same sword to end her life, the Goddess Kali appears before her and asks her to attach their heads and press the sword on their heads to bring them to life. Quite judiciously Padmini places Devadatta's head on Kapila's body and vice versa to get the best of both- intellect of Devadatta and strong body of Kapila. The man with Devadatta's head and Kapila's body is declared to be her husband. The man with Kapila's head and Devadatta's body reads her mind and rightly puts it, " I knew what you want, Padmini. Devadatta's clever head and Kapila's strong body"(148). Devadatta too observes, " It's natural for a woman to feel attracted to fine figure of a man" (148). Padmini does not keep her desire hidden. She consoles Kapila while leaving him, " But remember I'm going with you body. Let that cheer you up"(152).

But Padmini's satisfaction does not last long. She enjoys the combination of her desired man for a very brief period, and once again, she begins to feel something missing, slipping from her hands and she feels same incompleteness in her life. In fact, she has seen four men, as she confesses, " Kapila! Devadatta! Kapila with Devadatta's body! Devadatta with Kapila's body! Four men in a single life time"(169) yet she feels herself incomplete. She fails to tolerate the mad dance of incompleteness and rushes to Kapila in the forest. Devadatta follows her there and challenges Kapila in duel. Finally, Devadatta and Kapila kill each other. Padmini too, has to perform sati even not knowing whose wife she is and for whom she is performing sati. Throughout the play, she strives to get the best of both men. Her restlessness makes her run after these two men but she meets nothing but failure and disappointment, even in death.

In Mohan Rakesh's *Half Way House*, like that of *Hayavadana*, the protagonist of the play is a woman, Savitri. She is a middle class - middle-aged workingwoman who is trying her best to track her family on the right track. She has always been finding faults with her unemployed husband Mahendranath. She is seeking recommendations of her bosses and influencing upper class well-to-do friends to find some job for her husband and son Ashok. Her son is least interesting in doing any kind of job. She is striving hard to meet the demands of her family on her shoulders. Her elder daughter Binni has had a quarrel with her husband and is living with her mother. Her school going daughter Kinni is pestering her demands without success. In a way, Savitri is giving impression that she, true to her name, like that of the Hindu mythology, is chasing and tolerating visits of men

like Singhanian, Manoj, Shivjeet, Jagmohan and is sacrificing her pleasures for the well being of her family. Quite ironically, she is pursuing opposite and none of her family members appreciates her behaviour. She regularly tours for outings with other men and passes constant insulting remarks at her husband. She has made her husband Mahendranath feel and believe that he is a big failure in his life and has failed to prove himself as a man. These acts of hers invite criticism from her children.

In fact, Savitri, opposite to her name, has never been happy and emotionally loyal to her husband. She betrays the aura her name carries with it and she carries on several unsuccessful extramarital relationships. Right from the beginning she has underestimated him, and forced him accept that he is good for nothing. She has developed a habit of disliking him and roaming after men other than him, finding faults with him. Juneja, a friend of Mahendranath and one of her early escaped friends, rightly makes her listen the truth and realize that she has never accepted Mahendranath as a potent man and has been chasing other men quite restlessly. He tells her quite straightforwardly:

The point is that if any of these men had been a part of your life instead of Mahendranath, you would still have felt that you had married a wrong man. You would still have encountered a Mahendra, a Juneja, a Shivjeet, or a Jagmohan and thought and reacted in the same way (*Half Way House* 74).

Juneja tells her that she has always had a desire to get what she does not have but, like that of Padmini, has miserably failed in her every adventure. Finally, she decides to leave her family permanently and live with her friend (or boy friend) Jagmohan, whom she confides most, but he expresses his inability to sacrifice his own family for her sake. In utter frustration she cries, "All of you... every one of you... all alike! Exactly the same. Different masks, but the face...? The same wretched face... every single one of you"(76). She fails to get Manoj who marries her daughter Binni instead. Her last hope is Jagmohan but that too, turns futile attempt. It happens because she wants many things simultaneously.

Like Padmini in *Hayavadana*, Savitri has been in search of a complete or perfect man, sometimes risking her own family. When she meets failure, either she finds faults with them or they get rid of her. She has been restless in her life, and in search of something different than she has had. But her search remains incomplete and unquenched. Juneja quite objectively describes her malady:

Because the meaning of life to you is how many different things

you can have and enjoy at the same time. One man alone could never have given them to you (like Padmini) so no matter whom you married, you would have always felt as empty and as restlessly as you do today"(74).

Like that of Padmini, Savitri loses everything and everybody-concern of family and company of her friends- Singhanian, Manoj, Shivjeet, Jagmohan and her husband too, whom she ever treated as a wrong man. She replaces bonds of love and concerns by materialistic compulsion; the life becomes an inevitable hell. At least Padmini finds release in her death but that too, is not possible for Savitri. The mythological Savitri brings life of her husband back from the God of Death but Savitri in the play, with her insatiable search for her ideal man, pushes her husband close to death. The only difference is that Padmini is aware of what she is doing while Savitri needs Juneja to tell it to her and yet she does not accept the truth.

Both the plays- *Hayavadana* and *Half Way House* carry an inbuilt sense of incompleteness to support its title and theme and project it through dramatic strategies. The female protagonists in these plays lose everything they have in their attempts of getting what they cannot. They have to watch the mad dance of incompleteness. The playwrights chose different settings to focus on couples with their fragmented desires as modern life its bundle of temptations knocked at their door. In the words of Jasbir Jain, " The fragmentation was portrayed through the multiple love-relationships, all of which ended in a similar sense of incompleteness"(29-30).

The attitudes of the playwrights differ in their treatment. Karnad believes in the multiplicity and artistic ambiguity of the folk tales and does not come to any fixed conclusion leaving them to the readers and audiences whereas Mohan Rakesh is very direct and arrives certain conclusions. While the former deals with universal frame relevant to the particulars, attaining distancing, and offers 'complex seeing of Brecht's Epic Theater, the latter seems to have believed, in the words of Rajinder Nath, " All great works of literature have to be particular first and then by some creative quantum jump transcend and become universal"(x).

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## Poems

### The Unsaid Question

*Rahul Singh Rana*

I was thinking that day  
Why the punishment for truth ?  
Why is it so

The imbalance still remains balanced  
Between the truth and the false pride

I ran to the God to ask a question  
I searched for him day and night  
And in everything that was might

Finally I lost my patience  
And I lost everything  
I still tried hard

Then my soul answered back  
The truth about imbalance  
The deeds of men and  
Thy destiny all played with men

### The Unsaid Promise

She promised to hold my hand  
Throughout my life  
I too believed in what she said  
She forced me to dream it  
And I too believed in what she said

The turn came for the chance  
To bewilder my fancy  
And I too believed in what she said

My life went away in drain  
But I still prayed for her  
In every pain

I had no word to console me  
I had no friends around me  
But I had something  
It brought new hope to me

I had an unknown voice  
Calling out for me  
And that voice called on  
For an unsaid promise

## Cultural Dynamics

N. K. Neb

The intervention of technology concerning human body has added another dimension through the experiments involving cloning of human and animal bodies. Its replica can be observed in the process of computer generated images where what we get now is not a photocopy of the original but multiple copies of the original itself. It has further contested the understanding of the original. The implications of this process have problematized the existence of some ordinary, transcendental, ultimate reality. The reality is now understood to be constructed and contextual and in a way fictional in nature. An understanding based on the exploration of the origin seems to have become almost impossible. As a result of this our orientation regarding the understanding of reality has been deeply impacted by such developments. It marks the presence of certain factors that, though remain invisible, have impacted a decisive shift in life and human behaviour.

The invisible factors that mark a shift in the life around have intruded in contemporary life in a way that their presence can be ascertained through the perceptible change in people's behaviour, their attitude towards life in general and human relationships in particular. Instead of adhering to the moral and ethical values that earlier governed life, these people involve themselves in different activities that mark their disregard for any ideals and exhibit their concern for personal progress and careerist interests in capital governed competitive world. Human relationships have only a functional and use value in their scheme of things. The new reality orientations have led them to believe in the collapse of moral ideals. It has resulted in selfish pursuits replacing a concern for community or society at large. The belief that the ideals that earlier governed life are non-existent, has come as an excuse for these people to indulge in uninhibited, unscrupulous and unethical ways. The things that earlier inspired a sense of shame for one's disregard for morality and responsibility towards others are now accepted, and sometimes glorified, in the name of new found freedom. It has brought immense change in familial relationships and in the nature of social institutions like marriage.

To be continued.....

## PRAGATI EDUCATIONAL COUNCIL

H.O. Jalandhar City.

(Registered at Chandigarh in 1988 under the act XXI 1860)

*Pragati's English Journal* is a house-journal of the Pragati Educational Council. It is published in June and December every year.

Editor : Dr. N. K. Neb

Editorial Advisory Board : Dr. Gurupadesh Singh  
: Dr. Kulbhushan Kushal

*Pragati's English Journal* is published by **Pragati Educational Council** in collaboration with Dayanand Institute of Education Management and Research (D.I.E.M.R.) Panvel, New Mumbai, Maharashtra.

All correspondence pertaining to subscription/publicity should be addressed to the General Secretary Pragati Educational Council at the following address :

**61/75A–Garden Colony, Jalandhar City.**

### Subscription :-

(For individuals)

Per copy (Postage extra) : Rs. 100/- \$5  
Annual : Rs. 200/- \$10

(For institutions)

Per Copy : Rs. 150/- \$12  
Annual : Rs. 300/- \$25

Payments should be made through a bank draft or a money order in favour of Pragati Educational Council, Jalandhar.

Opinions expressed by Contributors are not necessarily those of the editors.

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## PRAGATI ENGLISH JOURNAL

Editor : **Dr. N. K. Neb**

Editorial Advisory Board : Dr. Gurupadesh Singh  
: Dr. Kulbhushan Kushal

*Pragati English Journal* is published by *Pragati Educational Council* in collaboration with *Dayanand Institute of education Management and Research (DIEMR) Panvel, New Mumbai, Maharashtra* in June and December.

Typesetting :  
**Ramkrishan Graphics**  
Jalandhar.

Printed by :  
**Paper Offset Printers**  
Jalandhar.

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## CONTENTS

Ruskin's Concept of The Pathetic Fallacy  
**P. C. Sharma & Chetna Sehrawat** 1-8

Kulbhushan Kushal's *Rainbow on Rocks:*  
The Poetry of Psychic Concerns  
**N. K. Neb** 9-20

Signification of Desire in Anita Desai's  
*Fasting, Feasting*  
**Narinder Sharma** 21-36

Beyond Illusions: An Existentialistic  
Appraisal of V. S. Naipaul's *Magic Seeds*  
**Surekha** 37-49

Women in Hemingway's War Novels  
**Geetika Sandhu** 50-58

*Desire Under the Elms* from the  
Angle of Illusion and Reality  
**Sandeep Kumar Sharma** 59-68

Decoding Narrativity In Ken Kesey's  
*One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*  
**Payal Gupta** 69-78

Hymn to Independence: Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*  
& Khwaja Ahmad Abbas' *Inquilab*  
**Manisha Gahelot** 79-84

Anita Desai and the *Bhagvad Gita*  
**Gauri Shankar Jha** 85-89

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things:*  
A Foucauldian Reading  
**Anand Bajaj** 90-101

Female Strife for Perfection in Girish Karnad's  
*Hayavadana* and Mohan Rakesh's *Half Way House*  
**R.T. Bedre & Mrs. Meera M Giram** 102-106

Poems  
**Rahul Singh Rana** 107-108