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**Publisher
Dr. Susanta Kumar Bardhan
Suri Vidyasagar College
Suri, Birbhum, 731101, W. B.
Contact: +919434945037
Email: susantab_ciefl@rediffmail.com**

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Editorial

In order to keep pace with the fast changing world of English Studies we have decided to launch an e-journal which is expected to be interdisciplinary by nature and to cater to the need of the scholars as well as the students. Our expectation has come to be true with the publication of the inaugural issue of the e-journal *The Contour* which is, as mentioned in its concept note, an international peer-reviewed open access quarterly journal launched with a broad purpose of engaging all those involved in studies and researches in the English language and literature and in creative writing, cultural studies, translation and translation studies in English. We tried to reach a large number of scholars with a request for contributing to the journal. We have received a warm response from them. We have selected the papers poems, short stories in translation and book reviews for the present issue on the recommendation of the reviewers. Several writings sent to us have been rejected by the reviewers. Editorial Board has tried to maintain the standard of an academic journal. The readers and the well-wishers of the journal are requested to give their valuable suggestions for the improvement of its future issues.

It is also declared that the views and observations presented in the writings are solely of the respective authors, not of the editor/editorial board of the journal.

We sincerely express our indebtedness to all involved in this venture. We express a deep sense of gratitude the members of the Editorial Board for consenting to become a part of this academic effort. We also thank the contributors for their helping us materialize our aim. Special thanks should go to Suman Saha who with his expertise in computer has worked strenuously and sincerely for giving the shape to the journal.

14. 7. 2014



Susanta Kumar Bardhan
Editor-in-chief
The Contour

Article

The Politics of Representation: Cultural Appropriation and Ethnicity in Kalyana Rao's Untouchable Spring

Dr. Baisali Hui

Abstract

Dalit identity and its literary representation have long been a contentious field of discussion. The translation of Kalyana Rao's masterpiece Untouchable Spring into English brings to focus many issues such as cultural appropriation and subversion of mainstream assumptions about dalit life and ideology. How primitive art forms were modified and reinvested with lively energy, how education and missionary support opened up opportunities for a better life, how the struggle for one's self respect often led to deeper realization about the nature of human life and relationships—the paper takes into consideration such focal aspects as raised in the novel and further tries to trace the origin and development of this mass discontent that intended to transform the pattern of social hierarchy altogether.

Dalit literature originates in and is nurtured by the cult of rebellion and protest. By definition it associates itself with the underprivileged and the marginal and attempts to retain zealously a separate identitarian distinction. What is interesting to note is the attempt at subverting and appropriating the dominant cultural code from within the normative fold of its rituals, customs, myths and social institutions. Kalyana Rao's *Untouchable Spring* epitomizes this struggle from within and unveils a deep core of mistrust of the mainstream representation (as the writing of the poems by Ruth, the subversion of the creation tale or the onstage dramatic representation of myths/legends/folk songs suggest). The act of (re/over)writing in itself becomes a tool and a medium for the empowerment and visibility of these people. Long repression, repeated and failed attempts at speaking up, an imposed history of shame and humiliation, the unending course of persecution have led to the flourishing of an untouchable spring—of colour and beauty, of song, dance and creativity—that has evolved out of and continues to touch many lives.

Over the last few decades, dalit writing has further evolved in the line of revolt with a direct call for complete alteration of the social order. The politics of identity has attained newer dimensions with the proliferation of published material in writing as well as a wider spread of consciousness among the urban populace about history, memory and representation:

The past three decades particularly have seen a flourishing of popular dalit literature, pamphlets and booklets, which have emerged as a critical resource for deeper insights into dalit politics and identity. Dalits themselves are disentangling received knowledge from the apparatus of control. This literature brings fresh hope, as it is believed that now dalits are in charge of their own images and narratives, witness to and participants in their own experience. They are rescuing dalit culture from degeneration and stereotypes, and bringing in a new dalit aesthetic. They are not the "Other", and are themselves articulating critical questions of choice and difference. (Gupta 1739)

Untouchable Spring is the story of the Telugu-speaking world of Ruth and Reuben—of Boodevi, Yellanna and Subhadra, of Sivaiah-Simon and Sasirekha, of Immanuel, Jessie, Mary Suvarta and Ruby. It is not a life but the course of untouchable lives that the author has attempted to capture, the unrecognized stream of art and culture that mainstream upper-caste social order had sneered at and suppressed. This work of fiction is at the same time autobiographical and representative, ethnic-religious and secular. Introspectively it searches the origin and depth of casteist animosity and extraneously interrogates the reach of such feelings. The questions that continue to be asked receive no answers, the search for escape routes turn futile. And out of this hopeless helplessness, out of the habitual fatigue of being tortured and incriminated over centuries rises the craving for revolt, the need to make one's voice heard.

The plot of the novel weaves a complex interface between the folk culture of the *malas* and *madigas* of Yennela Dinni—a small forgettable village close to Ongole at the turn of the century with its usual caste structure, poverty and ignominy for the poor untouchables—and the leftist uprising at Sreekakulam and Telengana armed struggle. How the peace-loving, hardworking farmhands and agricultural labourers of these so-called lowly castes turned to violence and armed resistance is interrogated with sensitive understanding.

It is interesting to note that the novel begins with a reference to Ruth—a celebrated author of books and a narrator herself. The novel, though narrated from a third person perspective, focuses on the sensibility of Ruth, who in her modern ways attempts to 'weave' the tale of pain, suffering and dispossession hounding the subaltern consciousness of *malas*, *madigas* and the like into creative writing. In a way she carries on the legacy of *Urumula Nrityam* and *Veedhi Bagotam* (types of folk performances) of Naganna and Yellanna through her stories and narratives. But she also tries to locate the eye of the storm of discontent in the wistful sad note of 'Listen Subhadra' folksongs and the romantic address to the revolutionary-hero figure in Ruby's poetry. The female voice seems to gain greater confidence with the passing of time as Sharmila Rege (1998, 2000) and Anupama Rao (2007) point out in their extensive discussion on locating women in the scheme of things. Questions related to eco-feminist perspectives, of patriarchal dominance within and beyond the colonial set-up, the role of dalit women and creative artists vis-à-vis the capitalist-communist interface in a globalised world require sensitive analysis and understanding. In her discussion on Telugu poetry by dalit women Challapalli Swaroopa Rani notes the emergence of the independent 'dalit' creative voice:

The alphabet is now a weapon in the hands of 'untouchables' - a weapon to attack the oppression perpetrated by brahminism for centuries. Dalits denied learning and respect, have now crafted self-respect from their humiliation, strengthening their castes and destroying 'sanatana' values and traditions. People who have been denied a basic humanity and have been outcasts for centuries, have now stormed into literary avenues, roaring. Today 'untouchable' voices rule Telugu literature. (WS 21)

Times have perhaps changed, the note of repetitive oral rhyme has given way to the cultivated measured feet of modern day verse, but the note of pathos underlying it remains unchanged. Reuben has inherited suffering at birth and he hands it down to his son and grandson. But the stage was set a long time back with the child Yellanna unknowingly trespassing into the upper caste arena in order to watch the performance of a late night play from close quarters. Before he could understand what his fault was he was lashed with palm fronds and is mercilessly beaten up. It is then that he learns what it is to run for life, what it is to be blamed, abused and

driven out of one's rightful inheritance just because one is an untouchable—a knowledge that frightens the untouchable's soul and bows his head down in pain and shame:

Who is that terribly distorted one that prepared the scene and the stage for Yellanna? If it is the yerra gollalu, they would not practice untouchability with Yellanna. When he went to see them, when he pushed his way into the crowd that was watching, when that crowd was of upper castes—that Yellanna should not be in that crowd, that if he were there, his back would be lashed with palm fronds, that he would be chased till blood flowed, that he would have to cover his naked waist with the blanket of darkness...Who is that half man who drew the line on Yellanna's forehead and on his life?...

Revenge, anger, tears. Filling Ruth's heart, filling Ruth's thoughts...after all these years...after generations...when so much of sadness turning into a stream is encircling her. (*Untouchable Spring*15-16)

This is the beginning of that long struggle to gain recognition and self-respect. Yellanna found his freedom in the songs he wove, the myths he enacted; the re-telling of old tales became a way of reinvesting them with the hard truths of the 'untouchable lives'. The pain of the landless labourer who grew the crop every year but could not take the harvest home, the yearning of the workers who worked for the landlord day in and day out without wages, the sorrow of the mother who lulled her starving child to sleep every night singing lore, the humiliation of the untouchable youth who could not enter the upper caste *ooru* wearing sandals or a headgear or even holding his head high—all seem to consolidate in the songs, dance, plays and such other cultural activities of these people. The novel asserts that though these art forms were the earliest predecessors of celebrated performing art forms of the present times, this is not recognized; the art of these suffering people, too, has remained 'untouchable' to the mainstream culture critics and the traditionalist upper caste connoisseurs. The Indian society is broken into a thousand pieces not merely because of poverty but because of this caste system which alienates these low caste people from the rest of the human society and projects them as mindless, faceless servants meant for dirty menial work. A talented mala or madiga child continues to be stigmatized by his/her caste and can never gain social ascendancy in a caste-ridden society which terms the rise of the subaltern as anti-religious and even criminal. Christianity provides a way out of this ignominy and neglect. Still, the attempts turn out to be illusory as Martin and Sivam-Simon find out. Even after conversion to another religion, 'untouchables' remain 'untouchables':

The conversion of malas and madigas to Christianity was happening like a movement. Incidents of thousands of people being baptized on a single day too were making news. On the other hand, there also began attacks on Christians. It is better to say attacks on mala and madiga Christians rather than on Christians. There was no news of attacks on choudhary Christians of the Krishna district...There were no instances of attacks on brahmin Christians...All that happened affected only the malas and madigas, the untouchable Christians. (*Untouchable Spring*168)

Martin is killed by the upper caste people for daring to oppose them and Simon carries his corpse to the village. Reuben is born with that blood-memory embedded in the collective unconscious. Thus the cycle continues—from suffering to death to rebirth, from torture to tolerance to revolt.

The novel moves back and forth in time, in the narration of recorded history—interspersing it with the voices one never heard. It is a representation of history from below—a subversive tone arguing for causes never given adequate space, an intellectual enquiry into the ‘other’ perspective of truth. The death of the innumerable Naxalite/communist leaders (many of them were not leaders but mere rebels from the untouchable communities) in police “encounters”, the invasion of the palle of the untouchables in search of arms and ammunitions (which, most of the time, were never found), the authorized interrogation by government agencies (such as the law and police) into the whereabouts of the so-called political extremists (which most often amounts to the beating and rape of poor women, terrorizing of children and inflicting unbearable physical torture on the untouchable men) are depicted realistically in the novel through the representation of police attacks on Avalapadu and the forcible suppression of Telengana Armed Struggle by the state. Viewed from this perspective, British colonialism in India ended not in the freedom of the individual but in the appropriation of power by the upper caste Hindus who with the authority of the state power continued to deceive and exploit the low castes, the untouchables:

In this country, the air one breathes has caste.

The water one drinks has caste.

The field canal that flows and the land that yields harvest has caste.

The school, the temple and the village square have caste.

The food one eats, the house one lives in and the clothes one wears have caste.

The word one speaks has caste.

Literature and culture have caste. (*Untouchable Spring*227)

Thus the presentation of an alternative culture and literature becomes significant. The earlier modes of dance drama, musical folk performances or rhymed oral poetry evolve into the more sophisticated forms of prose and verse with the spread of education brought about by Christian missionaries. Yet the connection with tradition continues unsullied. Ruth and Reuben renovate their ancestral house at Yennela Dinni and try to relive the past through their association with the present discontent among the working and laboring classes. The music that inspired Yellanna still moves Jessie but he hums the tune on his solitary mission towards freedom and equality.

The reconstruction of the accepted, traditional myths too in a way helps in subverting the hold of the dominant ideology on collective imagination. Interpolation and unconventional interpretation of these myths turn the anger on the lop-sided narration where birth determines access to power and authority. One such cycle of myths, as narrated in the novel, postulates the origin of the untouchables in the wrath of the gods, in the transgression of celestial norms and the resultant curse of an ignominious life on earth that would last till eternity. What the tale did not apparently emphasize but what becomes transparent through the use of caustic irony was the eternal truth of exploitation, slavery and injustice. Chennaiah and Jamavanta are welcome to their menial task of looking after the cow Kamadhenu or disposing of the corpse of the dead cow and cooking its meat for the gods but are eternally barred from tasting the milk or the meat. When they attempt to move beyond these limits the curse is pronounced. Interestingly, the malas and madigas as offspring of the mythical Chennaiah and Jamavanta face the same fate down the ages. They were the earliest inhabitants of the land—the *adivasi* or the *girijan* but have lost the right to their own land. They put in all the labour in ploughing and farming – sow the seed, water the field, tend the corn, reap the harvest and even thrash the grain on the granary floor but cannot take the harvest home. They do all the menial work for the upper castes in the village but cannot draw water from the only tank or well of drinking water in the village; they follow all the biddings

of the upper caste communities unquestioningly and are still thrashed and beaten up on the slightest pretext. They provide food to others but die like cattle in flood or famine. Eternal hunger, eternal poverty, illiteracy and subjugation seem to be the fate of these people. The imaginary birds *Yennela pitta* and *Ponnangi pitta* hold the structure of the novel together. They turn out to be symbols for that elusive freedom, openness of mind, love and affection – the search of which has driven these poor people from place to place, from faith to disillusionment. The overall pattern of myth with which the novel begins is rounded off with the letter from *Yennela pitta* (Ruth) to *Ponnangi pitta* (Jessie). The grandmother writing to the beloved grandson, the author of imagined tales writing to the leader of mass struggle, one untouchable writing to another – culminating to the mythic tale of the two birds answering to each other's call in the dead of the night.

Ramanujam, Immanuel and Jessie dreamt the dream of that free and fruitful existence that drove innumerable activists of Sreekakulam Girijan Struggle and the peasant and coolie movements of the seventies together. Satyam, Kailasam, Bhaskar, Ganapati, Panigrahi or Nirmala are representatives of those unsung heroes who gave up their lives fighting for the cause of the poor and the underprivileged. Even then, if the British colonial rulers wanted to trace the origin of folk poetry in India the Brahmin *pundits* intervened as mediators. If the malas and madigas underwent religious conversions to avoid the peril of complete physical and spiritual annihilation the upper caste people punished them with death as the episodes of atrocities on mala or madiga Christian converts at Cheemakurthi or Markapuram show; so does the killing of Martin:

Martins and Sivaiahs believed in Christ to get rid of untouchability. They believed in him to appease their hunger. More than anything else they believed in Christ to save themselves from being hunted by men. Whether Chinnodu became Martin or Sivaiah became Simon, they did so only for this reason.

Strange. John Paul Reddys, Immanuel Sastrys, Joshua Choudharys sprang up. When Yennela Dinni's younger karanam's son-in-law appeared in religious congregations in Nellore, Simon was surprised...Simon was unable to imagine both the crucifier and the crucified under the same roof. (*Untouchable Spring* 166-167)

The novel therefore, is not merely a translation of a Telugu masterpiece into English, but it translates or rather, trans-creates the nuances and crises of dalit identity into a different language, making it available to the wider readership across the other language speaking communities of the nation and beyond. It brings a flicker of bright radiance in the overpowering gloom of the vicious circle of continuing poverty, shame and indignity. It ends on that high note of optimism where Jessie and Ruby continue the struggle of their forefathers. Many will fail, but a few might survive and thrive. The politics of representation that prioritizes mainstream literary writings is emphatically challenged in the novel's representation of the art forms of these people. They embrace performing arts and later literature not as manipulative strategies or devices but as pure expressions of those feelings that the society suppresses. Thus it foreshadows the spread of knowledge, the international mobility and rising self-confidence of the new generation dalits that Vivek Kumar (2004) commends:

The mobility which dalits have attained in different countries has motivated them to assert that they are not inferior to any one. They have argued, "look we have demystified the ideal type image of dalits as dirty, drunkard, devoid of any merit, beast of burden, etc, by developing ourselves without any governmental help". In the same vein, "by attaining the mobility in different realms of foreign society without the help of the protective discrimination we (dalits)

have made a point that nothing is inherently wrong with us. It is only because of lack of democratic social conditions in Indian society that we have lagged behind. If we are provided a democratic social order we can also perform like any other person and will not need any type of reservations". (115)

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Short bio-note on the contributor

Dr Baisali Hui is Assistant Professor of English at the University of Kalyani, West Bengal. She did her doctoral research on Indian Partition writing, and was trained in the study of linguistics and English language teaching at CIEFL, presently known as the English and Foreign Languages University in Hyderabad. She has published about thirty articles in national as well as international journals on both literature and language in English as well as Bengali. She has also been engaged in post-Ph.D. research at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study (IIAS), Shimla, a UGC Inter-University Centre for higher research in the humanities, during the period 2009-2012.

Teaching Grammar Creatively Initiating Communicative Activities in the Class Room

Prashant Mishra

Language learning has been regarded as a creative activity and not a mechanical process involving memorization through repetition. Since learners encounter different socio-cultural situations in their lives, they cannot always use the same memorized sentences in all the communicative situations. It has been established through various researches carried out during the last century that cramming and mechanical drills amount to limited learning and do not make students proficient in the use of language. In order to maintain intelligibility, comprehensibility and the correct use of language, grammar is taught to the students who learn English as a second and a foreign language. However, only learning of grammatical rules does not guarantee the proficiency in the use of language. There are many learners who are very well versed in grammar rules but when it comes to the actual use of language in real life situations, they fail miserably. Traditional Grammar was prescriptive in nature and completely ignored the creativity of language use. Structural Linguistics endeavoured to evolve mechanical discovery procedures to apply them on the language corpus in order to yield description of language. It, by using analytical tools of study and ignoring the semantic aspect of language, undermines the creativity of language. Transformational Grammar by using intuitive knowledge of the native speakers as a data aims at discovering universal properties in human languages and to evolve a theory about the same. However it confined itself to the linguistic competence of the native speakers and ignored the language use in socio-cultural situations. Sociolinguistics and Functional Grammars discovered this leak in Transformational Generative Grammar and extended the study of grammar to incorporate the use of language in different socio-cultural situations. However, various schools of grammar and pedagogy failed to relate teaching of grammar to creativity involved in language use and as a result failed miserably in extending grammatical competence to communicative competence of the speakers. Hence an effort has been made in the present paper to teach grammar creatively through substituting, embedding, extending, supplementing, parallelism, abridging and complementing activities in order to extend learning of rules to their creative uses in various communicative situations.

Development of Creativity in a Grammar Class-Room:

A teacher can initiate discussions, debates, language activities and language tasks in a class room by stimulating student's imaginative, inventive and creative faculties to ensure his participation in the language learning process. All the learners are equipped with some schemata and background knowledge which can be creatively used by a teacher in a class room. Similarly so many events, incidents take place around the students which also provide enough material to a teacher to be used in a class room creatively. Similarly the physical setting and environment in the class room also sometimes provide ample material to be creatively used for grammar teaching. While making students aware of grammar rules, a teacher can simultaneously initiate language activities in a class room to integrate teaching of rules with their creative uses. The next part of the paper, therefore, demonstrates teaching of grammar creatively through

initiating various types of activities in the class room in order to ensure the participation of the students in the communication process.

Parallelism:

Grammar can be taught creatively by motivating students to replace the examples used by a teacher by similar type of examples using different messages and lexical sets. While teaching phrases, clauses and sentence patterns, a teacher should help students to create parallel examples. When students will come out with parallel sentence patterns by using different messages comprising of different lexical items, they with regular practice of this sort will in due course of time gain insight in creating new and different parallel sentences in different communicative situations.

For example, while teaching basic sentence pattern “Subject +Verb + Complement”, a teacher can involve students in the communication activity and elicit parallel sentences from them from the interaction that takes place in the class room.

Teacher: Do you know Dr. Manmohan Singh/ Prakash Singh Badal/ M.S. Dhoni?

Students: Dr. Manmohan Singh/ Prakash Singh Badal/ M.S. Dhoni is the P.M./ C.M./ Captain of India/ Punjab/Indian Cricket team.

Teacher: Who is the Principal of your college?

Students: Dr. Neelam Kamara is the principal of our college.

Then a teacher should proceed further to the next pattern “Subject +Verb + Object” and try to integrate the earlier pattern with the next higher one in the hierarchy.

Teacher: What does Dr. Kamara do?

Students: She looks after the administration of the college.

Teacher: Do you know Amitabh Bacchan?

Student: He is a famous film star.

Teacher: What is he doing these days?

Student: He is hosting KBC.

A teacher can also ask students about the activities /games/ hobbies/ jobs they do at their homes and elicit responses from the students to provide them further practice.

Teacher: What do you do in the Morning?

Student No. 1: Sir, I play footfall.

Student No.2: Sir, I read newspaper.

Student No. 3: Sir, I study English.

Teacher: What is your father?

Student No. 4: Sir, he is a teacher(Subject+Verb+Complement).

Teacher: What does he teach?

Student No. 4: Sir, he teaches English(Subject+Verb+Object).

Complementing Activities:

Complementing activities refer to the completion of the meanings of nouns which function as subjects in a sentence. A teacher can write some Nouns used as subjects in a sentence and then ask students to provide some information about the nouns in order to complete their meanings in a sentence. For example, a teacher writes some names of persons, places and things already familiar to the students on the blackboard and ask them to complete their meanings by providing some information about them.

Amritsar is

D.A.V. Girls College is

Sardar Bhagat Singh was

Milkha Singhji is

A teacher may also call upon some names among the students of the class and ask other students to complete their meanings by furnishing some information they know about their occupations, character, personalities, interests, hobbies etc.

Substitution Activities Using Describing Words:

Substitution activities refer to the replacement of one language item by another language item. Grammar can be taught creatively in a class room by asking students to substitute one language item by another language item. A sentence or an utterance consists of many qualifying, modifying and describing words. These describing words and phrases which are generally adjectives, adverbials or some adjuncts in a sentence provide us information about the agents, themes and actions performed in a sentence. A pedagogue can create effective meaningful interaction in a class room by using class room resources and asking information about the persons, places and things which function as agents or constitute the theme of sentence or the actions mentioned that constitute the predicate of sentence.

A teacher can write some describing words like dark, fair, lazy, tall, long, grand, small, short, intelligent, beautiful, lovely, broken, old, tired etc, on the blackboard and ask students to use the words from the list to describe some persons, places and things familiar to them. He can initiate discussion in a classroom by involving students in a communicative activity to describe some head words using their background knowledge and the clues provided to them. This activity can be further extended by inviting students to add more names to the list and describe their qualities and traits. Simultaneously a teacher can also write some adverbials describing actions and activities performed by the agents. These adverbs and adverbial phrases may refer to the manner, place, reason and time of actions.

Teacher: Do you have a library in your college?

Student No. 1: Yes Sir.

Teacher: What do you think about its building?

Student No. 1: Sir, it has a big building.

Student No.2: Sir, it has a grand building.

Student No. 3: Sir, it has a palatial building.

Teacher: What about the collection of the books?

Student No.1: Sir, it has a rich collection of books.

Student No. 2: It has many interesting books.

Teacher: Who looks after the library?

Student: Mr. Maninder Singh looks after our library.

Teacher: What type of a person is he? (Teacher can ask students to use words describing his looks/ behaviour/ working/ personality etc.)

Students: He is a young/handsome/funny/intelligent/romantic/old/serious/hardworking/ cooperative/punctual person.

Teacher: How often do you visit library?

Student No.1: Sir, I visit the library daily.

Student No. 2. Sir, I visit the library frequently.

Student No. 3. Sir, I often visit the library.

Student No. 4. Sir, I seldom visit the library.

Student No. 5. I regularly visit the library.

Embedding Activities:

Embedding is a grammatical activity that involves putting one linguistic unit into another linguistic unit. Generally embedding is used to put one phrase into another phrase or one clause into another clause. In language some words need to be described in order to make the message more comprehensible and clear. The embedded clause is used to perform the function of describing the head 'Noun' of the main clause. Generally a noun phrase, or a noun clause in apposition to or an adjective clause is used to describe head Noun of a main clause. The teacher can ask students to supply some information about the head 'Noun' with which they are familiar. The head noun should be known to the students so that they will not face any problem in supplying information about it. Through initiating discussion in the class room and eliciting responses from the students about the head 'Noun', a teacher can involve students to participate creatively in grammar activities. A teacher should first exemplify embedding activity himself and then brings students to participate in the same activities creatively thorough discussion in the class room.

I met Professor Mohinder Sangita today. She is Head of the Department of English. She is a very good organizer. Professor Mohinder Sangita, Head of the Department of English is a very good organizer.

Similarly a teacher can ask students to supply some information about some very well personalities or some known places or things.

Teacher: Do you know Saina Nehwal?

Student: Sir, She is a badminton player.

Teacher: What is her recent achievement?

Student: Sir, she won the gold in the Common Wealth games.

Saina Nehwal who is a badminton player won the gold in the Common Wealth Games 2010.

Similarly students can also be provided practice in the embedding activities by asking them to form gerundial and participial clauses by shortening and combining two separate simple sentences into a complex sentence.

Someone climbs the mountain. It is a difficult task.

Climbing mountain is a difficult task.

Someone swim across a flooded river. It is a difficult task.

Swimming across a flooded river is a difficult task.

Someone comes to Amritsar. It is a tiresome journey.

Coming to Amritsar is a tiresome journey.

Someone visits Darbar Sahibji. It is a heavenly experience.

Visiting Darbar Sahibji is a heavenly experience.

Teacher: What do you do at night?

Student No.1: Sir, I read novels at night.

Teacher: Do you enjoy it?

Teacher: Do you enjoy reading novels at night?

Teacher: What do you do in the evening?

Student No. 2: Sir, I play football in the evening.

Teacher: Is it your hobby?

Student: Yes, Sir.

Teacher: Playing football in the evening is his hobby.

Reduction Activities:

Reduction activities involve shortening of sentences into clauses, phrases and words. They are closely related to embedding activities. Students can be taught embedding and abridging simultaneously. They should be demonstrated with examples to reduce sentences into clauses or phrases and then to embed them into a main clause. Further the embedded adjectival clause can be reduced by deleting the subordinator and the finite verb from them. Students can be asked by a teacher to abridge the full adjectival clauses into reduced ones.

Students can be further involved in reduction activities by asking them to reduce long sentences to make headlines of newspapers, to prepare telegraphic messages and to write some advertisements. Writing advertisements can be a very interesting and creative activity given to the students in a class room. Students can be asked to write advertisements for some well known brands using particular sentence constructions.

Type 1. Drink Pepsy and become young.

Buy Maruti and enjoy heavenly ride.

Use fair and lovely and look fresh.

Type 2. Nokia connecting people.

Coke refreshing people.

T.C.S. creating new horizons.

Nescafe relaxing people.

Lux beautifying people.

Type 3. Canon delights you.

Soni entertains you.

AjtaK informs you.

Keo Karpin repairs loss.

Limka rejuvenates you.

Extending Activities:

After providing practice to the students in learning short and simple sentences through parallelism and complementing and substituting activities, students grammar and language skills can be further extended to long and complex and compound sentences. Extending and enlarging a short text into a long one will be both an interesting and a creative activity. A teacher can elicit some information from the students about the various head words used in a sentence. He can, then use this information in exploding a text by putting this information in the place of pre-modifier, post-modifier and adjuncts.

Example: The man visited the Taj.

In order to engage student in expanding a short text, the teacher may ask students to provide some information about the head noun 'Man', 'Taj' and the verb 'visited'. The teacher may ask students to provide some information about the looks, height and personality of the 'man'. He can put this information in the place of pre-modifier 'a tall and handsome young man'. He can further ask students to furnish some information about the whereabouts of the man.

Teacher: Where does the man come from?

Student: The man comes from Amritsar.

The teacher puts this information in the place of post-modifier as follows:

The tall and handsome young man who comes from Amritsar visited the Taj.

In order to further expand the sentence, the teacher may ask students to provide some information about the Taj.

Teacher: What do you know about Taj?

Student No. 1: The Taj is one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

Student No. 2: The Taj is situated on the banks of the Yamuna.

Student No. 3: The Taj is included in the World's heritage list.

The teacher puts this information in the place of post-modifier after Taj and further expands the sentence:

The tall and handsome Youngman who comes from Amritsar visited the Taj, one of the seven wonders of the world and included in the world's heritage list.

Pair Work and Group Work Activities

Being a single person, a teacher cannot interact with each and every student of the class. In order to ensure the participation of all the students of a class, a teacher can divide a class into small groups of four or six students. Dividing a class into small groups will help the students to leave their seats and shed away their traditional role that restricts them to interact with only their teacher. Once the students leave their seats and join a group they will be engaged in interactions with each other. This will instill confidence in students to interact with other people outside their classroom. One important advantage of group work activity will be that a teacher will be able to inculcate the habit of conversing in English among his students which generally they avoid due to shyness and fear. Once students start participating in conversation exchanges in a group, they will overcome the inhibition and will continue to interact with each other in English. One of the benefits of group work is that it not only triggers the students to initiate communication in English but also if a student or a member of a group has any problem in expressing himself, the leader of the group may help him or he may ask the other member of the group to help the member in need. For extending teaching of rules to fluency development, a teacher should first acquaint the students with the basics of a particular grammatical item that he is going to take up in his class. After acquainting the learners with the rules of a grammar item, a teacher should provide practice to use the item through different examples. Now a teacher can divide a class into different groups and provide some activities and tasks to the groups to facilitate the group members to interact with each other through the frequent use of that grammar item. In this way students will not only be able to learn a particular grammar item, but through the frequent use of the grammar item through interaction between them, their fluency will not only be clicked but also improved and the learning of that grammar item will also be consolidated.

Conclusion:

Thus, by providing exposure to learners through replacement, complementation, reduction, embedding, parallelism and extending activities, their participation in the learning process can be ensured and maximized. The communicative activities based on the socio-cultural and experiential knowledge pertaining to the students' home life and general knowledge will integrate the content with their learning and simplify the learning of English by facilitating the participation of the students in the learning process and in due course of time will also remove their inhibition to converse in English. According to Professor N. Krishnaswamy, "Learners know what to say in the mother tongue in a given situation; they do it everyday. ... In order to do similar things in English, what they need is words in English, an

understanding of how the words in English are put together to form larger units, and meaningful practice in contexts in which English is required to be used in India(Krishnaswamy 1995: 33). Use of the illustrated activities will involve the participation of the learners to create content on their own and to integrate the content with the required grammatical structures to create messages as per the requirements of the communicative situations. These activities will also trigger the creative faculty of the students to work independently in English.

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Baul, Tagore and Humanism

Joydeep Mukherjee and Susanta Kumar Bardhan

Abstract

The study attempts to deal with the age old folksong tradition called Baul in relation to its humanistic aspects and its impact on Tagore. An attempt has been made to study the source and history of Baul already existing in several books mentioned in the Bibliography for the purpose of giving an idea about the richness and philosophical foundation of this folksong. The present paper mainly focuses on the humanism lying undercurrent in this song tradition which has not even been ignored by the great soul of Tagore.

[Key words: Baul, humanism, folksong, religion, Fakir, etc.]

“Music is closely connected with human life from the very beginning of its creation. Every nation or society made music their means to progress and prosperity in social, political, cultural, religious, and spiritual spheres of life”—Swami Prajnananda.

The quotation oozes out the essence of music, a subtle form of living soul which is also the sole of living. Music as an art form manifests the magnanimity of the Divine. It is not at all the form of creation but inspiration. It is an aesthetic representation of the artist and his art. Music which has been hailed as the highest form by most of the aestheticians plays the basic instinct of man and claims to be the first playmate of mankind since childhood. Thus from the very dawn of civilization it has been giving rise to the process of individuality and development of man of all ages.

Further, music, if we look at the pages of history, is found to be the root of all nations all over the world. Though the language is different, thematically and tonally it is equally acceptable and appealing revealing Wordsworthian view about the universality of “music in my heart, I bore” (*The Solitary Reaper*). It is a product of creative faculty of human society. The unified single expression of tone and speech, so pure and peaceful, contains a unique healing power that purges the soul off the impurities, soothes the disturbed and anxious soul, help it live in the aesthetically sound world of peace. The main driving force of such power of music lies in its deep (un)seen connection as well as concern with humanism as its aim is to put forward and inject the broad humanistic attitude to life and the universe among the people for the betterment of society and culture.

Such a powerful folksong is *Baul* which is one of the Bengali traditional philosophical songs concentrating on the spiritual and philosophical uplift of the man. In the present study we will attempt to focus on how this thematically, creatively and aesthetically rich song tradition rests on and strongly advocates *humanism* in the broad sense of the term which is the crying need of the day. Before coming to our focal point of argument along with concrete illustrations from the Baul songs, a discussion on the genesis of Baul will be attempted first in order to drive home the point and on the impact of Bauls in building the poetic self Rabindranath Tagore, one of the greatest humanists-cum-artists ever produced in the world.

The origin of Baul is interesting for it wells out of a different unconventional context. The ‘folksong’ is a German compound referring to the songs of low class mainly peasant. This concept undergoes a radical change through ages. Folk, as defined in the Dictionary of Anthropology by Charles Wirck, is- “a group of

associated people, a primitive kind of post-tribal social organization-the lower classes or common people of an area". Invariably folklore, the humble story of complex issue about the common folk, is the basis for 'folk songs'. There are various forms of folk music of Bengal. Usually there are two groups-- functional, sung during festival and non-functional, especially for the purpose of recreation. But in Bengal there are of three types namely- Devotional (Shakta and Vaishnavite) folk songs, Baul songs and Fakiri folk songs.

The word 'Baul' is debatable for its derivative meanings. According to many critics specialized in Bangla folk literature, the word stems from Sanskrit word "*vatua*" meaning an 'enlightened person or seeker of truth'. Some think that it is derived from '*vyakula*' which means 'restless'. Again few argue that '*bao*' which means 'to blow', is its etymological word since this form of folk song is usually orally transmitted from one place to another, from one generation to another through wind. However, the literal meaning of Baul is 'mad'. They are indifferent (*Udas*) by nature, showing minimum attention to their domestic life. The poet sings – '*udasbaulmon*'. The Bauls are a group of wandering music minstrel. They mainly belong to Vaishnavite Hindus and Sufi Muslims. Set patterned dress and gesture make them distinctive. Sahoja Chandidas is considered to be 'Guru' of Baul. Birchandra Pravu, son of Shriman Nityananda Pravu was its propagator. This is historical document prevalent for a long time. There are separate rituals and rules in Vedic Hindu religion. Though complex, contemporary history reflects a realistic representation of the society, its inhabitants and the distinctive style of their worship. Vagabat Geeta denotes that everyone can worship according to his own wish. Only wistful wish to the Almighty can abolish the foolish and selfish thinking of man and embellish with divinity. Again if we go five hundred years back we only find the statues of Vishnu. If we probe further, we witness that a large portion of Vaishnavite bhakta regards Krishna as their supreme. Hence the poets of Charyagiti are the founders of Baul. This is their emphatic declaration that Pandits theorize all but their hearts remained unexplained. Baul of Bangla still considers Joydev Goswami as their Guru. They constitute an integral part of Bengali culture upholding the idea of sacrifice for the universal brotherhood and love leading to spiritual realization of real essence of human existence, Baul thought has been enriched by the elements of Tantra, Sufi Islaam and Vaishnabism. They are evidently in constant search of **Moner Manush** who is the God in the heart. This version is captured by Tagore – "*Ami kothai pabo tare / Amar moner manus je re*" (*Where do I get Him, the Man of my heart*).

Bauls are profoundly inspired by the famous quotation of Chandidas: "*Sokhi sinan karobi nir na chuobi, bhabini bhobero deha*". They live in society with a strict sense of separation. One can incriminate them for their light heartedness, casualty and indifference for their domestic domain. Invisible Bramha is their only playmate. Deep attachment with life cannot alienate them from life. To hanker after the light of life enlightens their life. Hence piercing philosophy can be perceived in each point of their song. Like Dotara, there are two strings of selves- one is outer self and the other is inner self, one is domestic self and the other is detached self. Family cannot forge a chain for him but he fathoms the unfathomable being in family. His mind and thinking is tinged with the notation of Tyag (sacrifice). It at once gives birth to a "Sohoj Manus", with the occult power of resistance. He then easily placates his restless soul which always pays a lingering look for gross material profit. This is the normal nature of a Baul and a rare genius be contented with his own. Bauls are those 'Wriddho Purush' who are always free in their feeling enjoying the spirit of eternal emancipation while entangled in the chain of life.

This form of songs spread in Rarh Bangla of West Bengal and some parts of Bangladesh, always conveys the features of the soil. The mingled expression of water, soil and man gets a meaningful manifestation through

these songs. Thus, Baul is closely related to the semantic aspect of its birth-and-growth place and an enriched emblem of its age old culture. Every part of soil has its own symbolic as well as emotional significance that sublimates the spiritual thinking of man. Likewise, the reddish soil of Rarh Bangla of West Bengal not only shows the outward novelty but also has incorporated its relish as its soul. Symbolically, the reddish colour of the soil stands for a different soul that remains indifferent to the “petty case of paltry things” of our daily communication. This is the colour that represents one’s earnest endeavour for yeoman’s work and thus naturally smells a note of sacrifice. Our minds, emancipated from personal chain of love and loss, get reverberated with the song of a Baul. This is the sudden revelation of our heart, where head gets the least attention. It is the prime time for man to feel his soul as his own. Hence Baul for this impending impression at heart without getting affected by the tinge of artificiality keeps its indelible footprint everywhere.

Even the world poet Rabindranath Tagore, could not resist himself from getting influenced by it not only due to the organic unification or fusion of thought, feeling and tone in it but also due to the very loaded philosophy, spiritualism and humanism as easily traced in every Baul song. Tagore in his essay ‘Baul Gan’ (Baul Song) written in 1927 has clearly stated:

Those who have read my writings know that in many of them I have conveyed my deep love for and attachment with Baul songs. When I was at Silaidaha, I had frequently met Baul groups and discussed with them. I have borrowed Baul *sur* (tune) for many of songs and in many of my songs a combination of Baul *sur* and other *ragas* have been knowingly or unknowingly. From this it can be realized that Baul *sur* and speech have easily merged together in my mind. (translation is writers’)

It was none but Rabindranath Tagore who realized at the heart of hearts the very worth of such innocence-born folksongs of not so called educated Baul folk the truth lying within these. He perceives the immensity of their creativity though culturally neglected. In his Hibbert lectures at Oxford University in 1930, later came to be known as *The Religion of Man*, he clearly hints at his persistent sincere choice for and there by inclinators towards Bauls:

I have mentioned with my personal experience with some songs which I had often heard from wandering village singers, belonging to a particular sect of Bengal, called Bauls, who have no images, temples, scriptures or ceremonials, who declare in their songs the divinity of Man, and express for him an intense feeling of love. Coming from men who are unsophisticated, having a simple life in obscurity, it gives us a clue to the inner meaning of all religions. For it suggests that these religions are never about a God of cosmic force, but rather about the God of human personality [*The Religion of Man*, III, 89].

There was no practical interest by any scholar or musicologist on the folk songs of Bengal. He is the first to initiate ethnomusicological study in Bengal. He realized the importance of Bauls because they had a general propensity towards the philosophy of life. He took the challenge to introduce a language that can subdue the *Bhadralok* (educated and cultured man). His first exposure to the Bauls deepened at Silaidaha, where he came across Gagan Harkara. He was, as we find from his unambiguous statement made in his essay ‘Baul Gan’ quoted above, too impressed by the telling height of the song and love to resist himself to compose some songs following the tradition. He even felt the urgency to translate them into English for wider and global readership. He avers that we, the common mass, lack the penetrating eye to denote such profuse notations. The eyes of circumspection widen their world view considering the common to be very uncommon. But Bauls

chronicles such feelings through songs. In a way song is the only medium for the revelation heart-felt philosophy. It is the consequence of profound realization. If we minutely feel the appeal of the song, we cannot help being touched by its philosophical points. The rich colourful dress embodies the colours of life. The patch work with the help of small pieces of cloths knitted non-artistically points out that they stitch both sad and bad, fear and tear, and *joie de vivre* in songs. This reminds Rabindranath Tagore's - "*Gane gane gethe berai / Praner kanna hasi*" (*It was my part at this feast to play upon my instruments, and I have done all I could*) "*The Song Offerings*" No - 16. Ektara, one stringed instrument, stands for their unflinching attachment with God and love as the only medium to feel Him. Again Dotara, another musical instrument, philosophically proves two selves- outer self, symbolizing indifference and inner self, suggesting deliverance. They sing with "full throated ease" that unfolds their unaffected feelings of life of "past or present or to come". They philosophically predict the human predicament.

Notice that criticism is always not denotative but connotative. He is not the silent listener or passive actor in his stream of consciousness, but also an avid reader to highlight the blotted space of mind. This at once creates a sense of right and wrong and good and bad. Basically Bauls carry on the first step of primary education. Bauls can interact with his inept soul. In a way Baul is the conglomeration of three traits of life movement of body (dance), tenderness of soul (song) and rhythm of life (play). They stitch in their songs each and every incident irrespective of joy, jubilation, defeat, delight, trouble and tear of life and the song evidently emerges to a new elegance. Bauls treating the subject matter, very much common in an uncommon way, can sentimentalize the unsentimental instinct of man. Hence one traces the breathing of moral teaching at every moment of life.

Bauls are not so called educated. But they cannot be measured by any degree. As the tunes of Bauls are traditional, common people do not have to bother about its tune. Lyrics are mostly simple and not difficult to memorize or remember. They are least concerned about the grammatical and musicological characters regarding metre, pitch, lexicography, etc. As they are at the core of nature and nurtured accordingly, such composition are full of simplicity and liveliness. They trap the nuances of local and probe into the profound aesthetic merit of literature. Thus the songs relate to the living moments of life and by the way make life more spontaneous and so lively. Tagore rightly and reflectively argues:

They have special sectarian idioms and associations that give emotional satisfaction to those who are accustomed to their hypnotic influences Some of them may have their aesthetic value to me and others philosophical significance over cumbered by exuberant distraction of legendary myths. But what struck me in this simple song was religious expression that was in their grossly concrete, full of crude details, nor metaphysical its rarified transcendentalism [*The Religion of Man*, III, 129].

It is genuinely '*raraavis*', they enjoy their lives and thus revive the wry up, dried up sensations and provide the space for redemption from the "weariness, the fever and the fret" of the mortal world. They can engulf the wide gulf between words and work. Rabindranath Tagore says- '*Korme o kothai atimyata koreche orjon*'. Tagore stares at those who can keep up an unflinching attachment with their words and actions. They can surpass their surroundings with ease. Love is the theme of their life and song. In one of the songs of Lalon Fokir says-

Jakhan orup smoron o hoi/ Thake na loklojja karo voi
O prem j kore se jane/ Amar moner manusero sone.

They love to love and love to be loved. Like Swamiji this is the part of their belief that man is Shiva. According to their belief love is quintessential. The songs are interlinked by the recurrent themes of love for man and God. Love is the only element for worship. Tagore quotes ‘*Jare boli prem, tare boli puja*’. They also firmly believe in love connecting a wide network among all. They are in favour of forming caste, creed and classless society. They are after Universal Brotherhood and for this love is the only flower to concoct a unified chain. Their earnest cry is – “*Milon hobe koto dine/ amar moner manusero sone*”. The song immediately reverberates one of Tagore’s own- “*Amar praner manus ache prane/ Tai heri tai sokol khane*”. What is Moner Manus to Lalon, is *Jeevandevata* to Tagore. Like Lalon Fokir Tagore felt to elevate the soul above materialism, to establish a perfect communion between men, love is pairless and peerless. Each lyric of Bauls is a symbol of love and pure devotion towards the eternal one. Tagore is one with them that man is a part of this inscrutable, Immanent God. God expresses himself through various forms of Nature. Nature is the source of joy and the expression of God’s love and affection for mankind. Thus, the best form of worship is obviously love and the process of ultimate realization is parallel to enjoy the beauties of Nature. Likewise Bauls are engrossed with the thoughts of Radha and Krishna and consequently flooded by love and joy. God, for Tagore, is eternal, all pervasive, immanent, inevitable, omnipotent and omnipresent spirit. The poet here takes God to be the ultimate singer. Mankind is like a flute through which He sings His eternal songs:

I know not how thou singest, my
 Master! I ever listen in silent amazement. [*Song Offerings No-03*]

Now let us cite some more Baul songs which explicitly and movingly propagate the broad humanistic values needed to be inculcated by the humanity at large for the peaceful living in this earthly existence. In answer to the question relating to the time to be needed for meeting the Moner Manus, Lalon sings in simple but philosophical language:

Man re sudhao man-manuser ghar thikana
 Kardame phutechhe padma, kardamero kit a ache jana
 Boner baire ache dnaraie chandanbriksha
 Nijer subas se jane na, pay sudi antariksha

[You ask you mind the address of the man of mind. Lotus has grown on the mud but does the mud know that. Chandan tree standing by the side of the forest is not aware of its own sweet incense/scent but the sky gets it.]
 —translated by the present writers.

The above quote suggests that Baul basically emphasizes on the importance of human mind which is the reservoir of ideas identified with God or expected Self and only the mind can lead a man to salvation by inspiring or motivating him to do self-sacrifice. For learning this Baul relies on the observation of the phenomena happening in Nature or surroundings. Similarly, Baul tries to promote selfless man-to-man relationship as found in the following quote:

Manusete manus achhe
 Manus-i manus hoy
 Manus-i jay manuser kachhe
 Manus hoite

[Within man MAN (humanity) resides. MAN makes man dance. A man goes to another man to become human.]— translated by the present writers.

The societal human relationship among the people is, as the Baul feels, the foundational need for the growth of humanity in men which can bring paradise on earth. The same idea is strewn in so many Baul songs endowed with emotion, sensibility, vitality and above all love for all including humanity at large. Their basic thrust on and concern for understanding the riddle behind the human existence along with others on earth have led them to a better realisational level which remains far beyond the understanding of the so called educated scholars. Though their realisational level appears to be too high, their language is, as mentioned above, simple, lucid and close to our heart. Therefore, they can easily trace the colourful, potential growing innocent heart lying hidden in the flesh and blood body of man (e.g., the song beginning with: manus manus bole sabe manus dhara manus pabe). That is why they have been able to come out of the narrow boundary of caste system prevalent in our society.

The present discussion within the limited space has attempted to explore the idea of broad humanism as the main motivating force of Baul song. The true cause of the popularity of this Bangla folk tradition lies hidden in this progressive idea coupled with simplicity, lucidity, and sweetness in tune. Though Chandan Kundu (2006) observes the decline of its popularity as against Kirtan (another Bangla folk song based on story of Lord Krishna and Radha), Baul's popularity and appeal among the common man and educated ones still remain intact and moreover, in recent time it has gained a wide space in the foreign world.

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A Quest for True and Selfless Love: In the Perspective of Kamala Das' My Grandmother's House

Arindam Mukherjee

Abstract

The general critical opinion regarding the poetry of Kamala Das is that she is obsessed with love and rather than finding salvation in art, her poetry speaks of continuing disappointments in love. As a confessional poet, she writes about sexual frustration and desire, of the suffocation of an arranged loveless marriage, of the futility of lust and of the loneliness and neurosis that stalks women especially. But it is also true that so far as universal and unconditional love is concerned, it always springs from appreciating goodness. Such type of love expects nothing, expresses everything, bears and holds even the worst of anything. All these ingredients of selfless love are present in Kamala Das' My Grandmother's House, a poem which beautifully captures the nostalgic desire of the poetess for her ancestral home, Nalapat House, at Malabar in Kerala, and reflects a vivid description of her childhood days when her grandmother was everything for her.

Nature of Quest in Post-Independence Indian English Poetry: A General Assessment

In a broad manner, Post-Independence Indian English Poetry is undoubtedly characterised by a quest for love and an unrelenting effort to reassert its native values and traditions. Poetry in this generation tries hard to set its roots and develop its own artistic credo. It is a well-known fact that the seed of Indian writing in English was sown during the period of the British rule in India. But now the seed has blossomed into an ever-green tree, fragrant flowers and ripe fruits. The fruits are being 'tasted' not only by the native people, but they are also being 'chewed and digested' by the foreigners as well. After Independence, when a respectable national identity has been achieved, Indian Poetry in English began to make its newness felt. Poetry became inward-looking in the hands of the poets like Jayanta Mahapatra, A.K. Ramanujan, R. Parthasarathy, Arun Kolatkar, Kamala Das and others who changed their perspective from the rhetoric of the nation to the rhetoric of the self. They adhered to a shift—the shift from the macrocosm of the country to the microcosm of the self. After Independence, the poets began to leave behind the revivalist tone of Indian nationalism invoking legend and myth and celebrating the motherland. They also left behind the tradition of picturesque imagery, of leaf and flower, forest, tree, deer and python. On the other hand, their poetry is about the self, about the individual rather than about the community. However, some of them have sought in their history, or in their mother tongues, or even in their families, a source of renewal. From the late 1960's, a vigorous campaign was conducted through anthologies by poets, in which an anti-romantic canon was consolidated, chiefly by Saleem Peeradina (*Contemporary Indian Poetry English: An Assessment and Selection*, 1972), R. Parthasarathy (*Ten Twentieth-Century Indian Poets*, 1976) and Keki N. Daruwalla (*Two Decades of Indian Poetry: 1960-80*, 1980).

About Kamala Das in brief

Kamala Das, also known by her one-time pen name Madhavikutty, is one of the most significant contemporary Indian poets writing in English who has received wide acclaim and many awards for her poetic achievements, some of them being the P.E.N. Asian poetry prize, Kerala Sahitya Academy Award for fiction, Asian World Prize for literature, Kendra Sahitya Academy Award, etc. Kamala Das has attempted to touch

and feel life in a meaningful way, and in the words of K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, she is “aggressively individualistic.” The ideas, which she has expressed in her poems and in her autobiography, *My Story*, appear to be similar. In her autobiography, she says, “I wanted to empty myself of all the secrets” (Das, Kamala, 1988: Preface). She doesn’t like to hide anything and would like to disclose all the secrets.

Kamala Das was born on March 31, 1934 into a conservative Hindu Nair (Nallappattu) household possessing royal ancestry. Her mother, Balamani Amma, was a well-known poet and writer in Malayalam. Kamala spent several years in Calcutta, where she went to Catholic Schools. She was married fairly early, before she finished her college, and so she happens to be perhaps the only leading Indian English poet without a degree to her name. She had embraced Islam in 1999 at the age of 65 and assumed the name Kamala Suraiya. She also took active participation in politics in India and had launched a national political party, called the Lok Seva Party. The foremost aim of the party is to focus wholly on humanitarian work as well as provide refuge to orphaned mothers and promote secularism. In 1984, Das had also contested the general elections to enter the parliament, but lost.

Kamala Das’s first collection of poems *Summer in Calcutta* (1965) upset the phallogocentric discourse of Indian English Poetry and changed its history. The other collections of poems *The Descendants* (1967) and *The Old Playhouse and Other Poems* (1973) have equally vociferous feministic stance. Her poetry is replete with images which cover the entire spectrum of emotions from desire to passion, frustration to dejection and scorn to despair. Like an average Indian girl, Kamala Das accepted the inevitable married life, its responsibilities and the male atrocities, but not without lodging a forceful complaint against the hollow marital relationship. She was in search of ideal love relationship based on mutual trust and emotional communication.

Themes in the Poetry of Kamala Das

Kamala Das is indeed an iconoclast who has asserted her identity on the firmament of Indian English Poetry by her honest and candid poetic lines that breaks the hypocritical veneer of man-woman relationship in traditional Indian society. Her poetry is indeed a celebration of the universal experience of the self, love-despair, anguish, failure and disgust against the traditional mode of gender manifestation apprehended through a feminine Indian awareness. Her poems have a self-affirming way of life for the female protagonist as an intelligent, self-aware, confident and integrated personality with the aptitude and ability to live life on her own terms.

Kamala Das appeals, in poem after poem, for a love beyond the body, or what she calls “ the skin’s lazy hungers’”. The husband’s/ lover’s arms reaching out to embrace are described as ‘carnivorous plants.’ While a lot of her poetry is about love and sexuality, her treatment of these themes is unconventional and goes against traditional modes. Thus her poetry is filled not with the images of beauty but with the images of dead yellow skin, the slack mouth of an old man, or the body as burden she has to carry. Thus she writes in *A Request*:-

When I die
Do not throw the meat and bones away
But pile them up
And
Let them tell
By their smell

What life was worth
On this earth
What love was worth
In the end.

Reason behind quest for true love in Kamala Das' poetry

The poetry of Kamala Das has a unique place in the Indian English Poetry because in her poetry one comes across the resonant themes of oppression and violence in an unmistakable manner, and to overcome the traumas of suffering and violence, she started devoting her time to writing work. She did not experience a happy union with her husband and by virtue of her husband's male egotism, she experiences a constant frustration and fissure. Since she is a frail woman, she fails to subdue her husband and this fact makes her married life really tiresome. She felt that she was losing her identity as an individual for she was degenerating into a puppet expected to perform in tune with her husband's demand:-

“ You called me wife,
I was taught to break saccharine into your tea and
To offer at the right moment the vitamins. Cowering
Beneath your monstrous ego I ate the magic loaf and
Became a dwarf. I lost my will and reason, to all your
Questions I mumbled incoherent replies. The summer
Begins to fall. (*The Old Playhouse and Other Poems*).

It is for this reason that she desires to flee from her husband—

“ I shall someday leave, leave the cocoon
You built around me with morning tea...
I shall someday take wings, fly around...” (*Summer in Calcutta*).

In this context, the observation of A.N. Dwivedi is worth quoting—“ It should, however, be remembered that Kamala Das wrote her poetry against a more conservative and tabooed society... She has, therefore, more to say about the pathos of a woman emerging from a passive role to the point of discovering and asserting her individual liberty and identity.”

In an essay entitled “ *Obscenity and Literature*”, Kamala Das writes—“ In one of the Sanskrit plays written on palm leaves by an unknown writer, I came upon a fascinating passage. Radha abandoned for some years and lovelorn, entreats a traveller to go to Mathura and give message to Krishna. When asked to describe her lover she says with tears in her eyes—‘ I do not remember his colour or his height or even his face, all I remember is the bliss I felt when he was inside me, like a seed inside the earth...’ So love is the only pastime that involves the soul.” The passage is sufficiently vivid in bringing home to the readers the poet's attitude and craving to true love throughout her life. Now, this quest for true and selfless love is beautifully explored in the poem “*My Grandmother's House*” which maintains a sharp retreat of the poet to her childhood days in the Nalapat House where her grandmother lived. The poem also reminds the readers about Charles Lamb's nostalgic recollection of his childhood days along with his great grandmother Mrs. Field, as reflected in the essay “*Dream Children: A Reverie*”.

My Grandmother's House

*There is a house now far away where once
I received love..... That woman died,
The house withdrew into silence, snakes moved
Among books, I was then too young
To read, and my blood turned cold like the moon
How often I think of going
There, to peer through blind eyes of window or
Just listen to the frozen air,
Or in wild despair, pick an armful of
Darkness to bring it here to lie
Behind my bedroom door like a brooding
Dog... You cannot believe, darling,
Can you, that I lived in such a house and
Was proud, and loved... I who have lost
My way and beg now at strangers' doors to
Receive love, at least in small change?*

Introduction

“ Love is a behaviour.” A relationship thrives when the lover and the loved are committed to behaving lovingly through continual, unconditional giving—not only saying, “ I love you”, but showing it.”

--Dr. Jill Murray

It is a well-known truth that generally most of the grandchildren are pampered and petted by their grandparents, and it is for this reason that the grandchildren are more attached to their grandparents' selfless and unconditional love. Further, it is also true that grandparents are more matured than the parents in handling their grandchildren. It is in this context that Kamala Das' *My Grandmother's House* draws the attention of the readers because the poem beautifully records the eternal and unconditional bond of attachment between the grandmother and the child Kamala. The poem is also enchanting for its nostalgic appeal from the beginning to the end.

My Grandmother's House:- as a quest for true love

Published in 1965 in *Summer in Calcutta*, the poem, consisting of sixteen lines, is a sustained description of the sense of security of a grandmother's house at Malabar in Kerala where the self of the poetess attains some sort of integrity. Here the poetess, though somewhat lonely, is free to dream her own fantasies, her desires to be connected to a more interesting world. The memory of love which she received from her grandmother is associated with the image of her ancestral home, where she had passed some of her happiest days in her life, and where her old grandmother had showered her love and affection to her. As the poetess now lives in another city, a long distance away from her grandmother's house, the memories of her ancestral house make her sad. So the poem springs from the poetess's own disillusionment with her expectation of unconditional love from the one she loves, and the image of the ancestral home stands for the strong support she received from her grandmother.

According to Kamala Das, the grandmother's house is singular in the sense that it was filled with the all-pervading presence of her grandmother. But after the death of the grandmother, the house had become an isolated and remote entity, echoed by the phrase 'far away.' When the grandmother died, even the house seemed to share her grief, which is poignantly expressed in the phrase "the House withdrew." The poetess asserts that with the death of her grandmother, silence began to sink into the house. Her blood became cold like the 'moon' because there was none to love her the way she wanted. Kamala Das, at that juncture, was small enough to read books. But she was emotional enough to understand the true meaning of love. After the death of her grandmother, the worms on the books seemed like snakes, in keeping with the eeriness of the situation. Kamala Das also asserts that the deserted house looked like a desert, with reptiles crawling over here and there. She now longs to 'peer' at the house that was once her own. She has to peer through the 'blind eyes' of the windows as the windows are now permanently closed. The air is frozen now, as contrasted to the situation when the grandmother was alive. Although the poetess pleads with us to 'listen' to the 'frozen' air, it is just a case of impossibility. Neither is the air a visual medium, nor can air cause any displacement because it is 'frozen.' In wild despair, she longs to bring in "an armful of darkness." Here, the word 'darkness' has a positive connotation of a protective shadow. It also reflects the comfort inside the room. This "armful of darkness" is the essence of her nostalgia. With this piece of darkness, she can lie down for hours like a brooding dog behind the door, lost in contemplation. The speaker claims that in her quest for love, she has now become wayward. Ironically, she addresses her husband as "darling", and talks of the lack of love in her life in the same breath and tone. As she is now suffering with the intensity of grief, her pursuit of love has driven her to the doors of strangers to receive love at least in the form of 'a tip.' She hankers for love like a beggar going from one door to another asking for love in small change. But she does not get it even in small change or coins. Previously, she was 'proud' as she did not have to compromise on her self-respect. But now she has to move in the maze of male monopolistic chauvinism, and beg for love in the form of change. But her love-hunger remains unsatisfied, and there is a big void, a blank within her, she seeks to fill up with love but of no avail. So, the entire texture of the poem makes it clear that Kamala Das' grandmother was indeed an embodiment of unconditional love.

As one goes through the text in an intense manner, one cannot miss the dominant tone of despair and suffering or what Keats calls 'the fever and fret' of the poetess's own personal life. Kamala Das has also provided the detailed information regarding her experiences in her autobiography, *My Story*, in which she writes—"After the sudden death of my grand-uncle and that of my dear grandmother the old Nalapat House was locked up and its servants disbanded. The windows were shut, gently as the eyes of the dead are shut. My parents took my great grandmother to the house called Sarvodaya where she occupied noiselessly the eastern bedroom on the ground floor, shaded by the tall mango trees through the leaves of which was visible the old beloved house. The rats ran across its darkened halls and the white ants are raised on its outer walls..." (Das, Kamala, 1988).

The reason behind the intensity of love which the speaker feels for her late grandmother lies in the dichotomy between past and present. If the past was idyllic to the speaker, the present is characterised by lack of love and hypocrisy. As the 'grandmother' represents the time gone by, a time marked by love and innocence, the speaker fails to reconcile herself with the present time, and above all, comes to the realisation that she has lost her way for ever. In other words, the sense of belonging seems to have been replaced by a sense of being an outsider. That the speaker's perception has undergone a radical change can also be justified from the lexical point of view. While in the beginning of the poem the use of the word "house" has a sense of cordial

reception, the use of the word “door” towards the end of the poem represents a barrier to gain an entry into the house. In such a scenario, when there is a clear conflict between past and present, the speaker’s quest for true love and her nostalgic appreciation of the past seems to be really touching and endearing.

Conclusion

Thus, the poem, *My Grandmother’s House*, indeed takes the form of a confession comparing the poetess’s present broken state with that of being unconditionally loved by her grandmother. Further, the essence of beauty in the poem lies in the fact that the poem contains the feeling which we all have in our mind. As we are busy in our routine-based life, we don’t have time to think about our childhood days. But as soon as we go through the poem, we are transcended back to our childhood memories in a flash, and our soul begins to cry out—“Oh, What days it were...!”

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An Intensive Study of Profound Feeling: Graceful Dust

Soutik Sen

Poetry is perhaps the most difficult, mysterious enchanting and uncertain expression of human feelings and emotions that can encapsulate an entire universe in its brief periphery. Naturally it is really a Herculean task to critically appraise a book of poem. A book of poem is like a closed envelop, which if opened, can unravel the vast firmament of human realization. Once Joy Goswami, the famous contemporary Bengali poet confessed in an interview that what is happening in my life, around me, in this world, even outside this world and beyond this world is a part of my autobiography and my creation. This endless horizon can only be reflected in a small pocket mirror of poetry; it is like feeling *the essence of eternity in an hour*. Only a great poet can realise and make us realize ‘the still sad music of humanity.’ The anthology ‘Graceful Dust’ by the poet Dinabandhu Ghosh spontaneously presents agony, ‘overwhelming pains’ ecstatic joys, ‘deadly feelings’ of our day to day life and this is the presentation of thinking soul besmeared with ‘pleasure of philosophy.’

The poet feels-
I suffer in body
The mind grows up
When I suffer

His feelings obviously elevate our mind to realise the universal truth inherent here. Physical sufferings leads a creative mind to enlightenment. An agonised creative mind murmurs ‘the sweetest song that tell us of our saddest thoughts.’ This is how intimate feelings combined with true experience create a mature amalgamation and association of sensibilities. The poem ‘when I suffer’ penetrates our heart and leaves an indelible imprint on our brain as it is, at the same time, sensitive and cerebral. In the midst of constant flux and impermanence, the poet tries to understand ‘a central force’ which creates and expresses ‘Life birth and death’. The poem ‘Dream like shows that the material world is almost like a dream which will ultimately come to an end with stern realisation-

Nothing has permanent value
(Dream like)

A mute ‘Nora’ rises and voices her true spirit of emancipation in the poem ‘Renunciation’ where the poet with subtle suggestions creates a poetic discourse of the confessions of a new woman’.

She has renounced all
Saree and serenity
Bracelets and beauty
Vermilion and verity.

Feels unburdened and free
In the new atmosphere of barrenness
Without shackles she walks on.
(Renunciation)

A new woman asserts her freedom overcoming the social shackles that restrain her individuality.

The sick hurry and divided aims of modern complex life make us oblivious of our own identity, faith declines gradually. Lost in the illusion of happy life, we unknowingly distance ourselves from truth which is ‘essential reality’. The poet reveals-

Truth lies far away us
We grobe in darkness for essential reality

Truth remains unattainable forever ‘ like the enigma of potry’. It can be felt but can never be experienced.

Labour, meditate, pray
It grows more distant

This poem includes a brilliant and silent synthesis of ‘truth’ ‘essential reality’ and ‘the enigma of poetry’ which are compressed into a complete whole in our mind. In this way a good poem extends the boundary of our experience enriches our realisation and widens our vision.

The essence of spirituality lies in realising ‘ the truth , reality and existence ‘- the poet shares his bitter experience and his enigmatic vision with his readers through the poem ‘Adoring God’. The poetry of earth never dies , so also the invisible bond between the creation and the reality or crisis of existence.

‘The Exterior , ‘Melted’, ‘Beauty Tender’, ‘ A Terrible Weakness’ , ‘ Woman Pretty’ – all these poems portray the poet’s intimate and diverse experience of love, relationship in our day to day existence. The ecstasy of love is sobered by rude and real blows of life, the charm of beauty is limited and adjusted by the necessity of life. These poems are deeply associated with the realisation of a man who has been trudging the weary ways of life with keen introspective eyes and a passionate vibrating heart.

When the poet says everything in his poem, he deprives the reader. The reader fails to find out anything new on his own in his poem. After all reading a poem is like an adventure for a reader; a true reader is almost on a quest of the holy grail. The impact of reading a good poetry for a true reader is like bearing the chalice silently and in a surreptitious manner through the hostile surrendings, storing it in the treasure house of memory and enjoying it as the ‘ bliss of solitude.’ That quest is thwarted and painfully spoiled when he finds a definite clue to the poem. A good poem should be like a labyrinth which beckons the readers to find his own way out. This labyrinth should not be cenfused with the sense of obscurity. It is the subtle suggestion , symbols, image which evoke a willing suspension of disbelief. Let us examine the poem ‘ A Difficult Sum’ carefully—

Every step is the prelude to another step
Every day brings about the other
Things beget things, Cause creates cause
Action and effect; effect and aftermath
Are coherently inter-related

Life is a difficult sum
It should be carefully summed up

At the end of the poem, the poet himself has justified the title, explaining the significance hidden in the preceeding five lines. One thing, however is wonderful that the use of words ‘sum’ and ‘summed up’ has assumed a witty dimension. But the poet has abruptly summed up the poem, dousing the curiosity of the readers. Eliot once remarked ‘ A good poetry communicates before it is understood’. Here the poem is well understood but it will not leave any lasting impression on the mind of the readers on account of the poet’s forced intrusion and conclusion. He should leave it open-ended so that the readers can enjoy the wide polyphonic possibilities hidden in the poem.

The poet perhaps felt it necessary to accommodate all these poems in this anthology- but this has made the book a bit clumsy and congested . Two poems though short, have been printed in each page. This does not

provide enough space to individual poem. A single poem on the bosom of a white page really looks decent and intensifies the silence which surrounds the poem. The arrangement of the poems , proper use and distribution of space in printing each poem along with a preface and dates of composition by the poem sometimes enable the reader to explore the chronological progression of poetic thoughts. Illustration in the cover reveals the glaring inner eye of the poet looking at us with a penetrating vision.

There can't be any final interpretation of a book of poem. Once we open a book of poem, different poems appeal to different minds in numerous ways. No critic can describe explore or ascertain these diverse ways which are unique , ever changing obscure and wonderful. The poet is painfully aware of the technological boom where gadgets replaces books, machines dominate human emotion.

Robot and rhinoceros
Poetry is lost, passion develops
Books are despised
(The World Eccentric)

Perhaps poetry can emerge as a potential force of resistance against the technological onslaught and cultural void. In this eccentric world , poetry is the antidote that can heal fatal disease of life; in this 'age of anxiety' poetry can give us relief. Poet Dinabandhu Ghose deserves accolades for giving us this anthology which will be constant companion of true lovers of poetry.

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Vijay Tendulkar's *Kamala*: A Pathetic Picture of Women in Indian Society

Shovan Dhibar

Abstract

Since the Vedic Age women remain under the shadow of men, the dictator of the then society. With almost same ability and talent they were subdued with the ways of rituals, manners and religious workings. They are learnt and understood that they are nothing but the shadow of men whose only divine works are to beget child, take a better care of their husbands, show great respect towards the elders and maintain various household works. In Tendulkar's Kamala, we can see that the scenario has not been changed. They are still 'used' by men and rather treated as commodity. 'Personality' is a mocking word which knows its meaning in the dictionary only. They don't have it. But sometimes it peeps up through various experiences though for a moment only and vanishes again. This paper aims at to seek the lack of scope and opportunity of women for the growth of their personality in male dominated Indian society, to understand the nature of gender inequality by examining women's social roles from a feministic viewpoint and try to find out any probable way out of it. And the most important of all the theme of protest as presented by the playwright.

Keywords: Feminism, Dalit, Gender Issue, Patriarchy, Power Structure.

Introduction

Vijay Tendulkar(1928-2008) is one of the greatest playwrights of India along with Badal Sarkar, Mahesh Dattani and Girish Karnad who began his journey as a playwright and finalised being a chairman of Sangeet Natak Academy. In between he wrote 27 full length plays, 24 one-act plays, 16 plays for children, 2 novels and 5 anthologies of short of stories. As a prolific writer he also contributed to essays, political writings, journalism, screen and television writings, translation, social commentaries and novels. He is best known for his plays *Silence! The Court is in Session!* (1967), *The Vultures* (1971), *Ghashiram Kotwal* (1972), *Sakharam Binder* (1972), *Kamala* (1981) and *Kanyadan* (1983). They have created a storm and intellectual argument in the society.

The play *Kamala* (1981) is based on a real life incident. A contemporary correspondent of the Indian Express named Aswin Sarin bought a girl from a rural flesh market and exposed her at the press conference. In the play the incident is the same where Jaising Jadav is the journalist and Kamala is that girl. Tendulkar uses the play as to expose the characteristic sufferings of the Indian middle class women who have made to suffer by the cruel, selfish, cleaver and hypocritical male. Through him we are acquainted with the nature of gender inequality in society. It is obviously a problem play where the problem is in two-folds; one directed towards the buying and selling of tribal women in the post-War India and the other is hinted at the direct question: What is the position of women in Indian society in relation to her husband and home?....The play does not deal with rights of women; rather it sticks to the point of gradual loosening of the women psyche in the patriarchal India.

The Play

It is a two-act play. **Act one** opens with a morning scene. Jaisingh's wife Sarita's uncle Kakasaheb is seen busy in the phone. Actually it is the noble duty of Sarita to receive the phone calls and note down the details of the caller as 'he' would be angry if the details would not be found later. Jaisingh Jadav is a journalist and he has to stay outside to collect outstanding news. Sarita has been anxiously waiting for his return. It is a boring life in Delhi. She has a maid named Kamalabai for her constant companion. The phone rings again. This time it is Surinder who informs that Jaisingh is coming by the next hour. Sarita is little bit puzzled by this news. She rushes towards the kitchen calling the maid to accompany her. Kakasaheb is very much eager to meet him as it is rare for him to come to Delhi. He is now worried about the threats coming through phone calls as Jaisingh has been exposing the secrets of some important people as news. At this point "the doorbell rings four or five times in an uneven pattern". Sarita opens the door and Jaisingh enters with "a village woman draped in a dirty white shari". Soon he asks about the phone calls and Sarita obediently hands him the note book. Kakababu's first speech is, "You're being threatened with murder." Jaisingh has been habituated with this kind of phone calls and so smiles slightly. Sarita enters with a cup of tea. The husband in a casual authoritative tone asks her to "put it down." While sipping the tea he is busy with some Jaspalji in phone. From this conversation we are informed of a "Mission" which has been partially completed. In the press conference in the evening it would be a success. Kakasaheb is watching all these and scents a new trouble. He tells him about the new danger but Jaisingh ignores it like flying a fly. Kakasaheb was himself a journalist by profession, so a kind of eagerness is still there in him. Seeing the unknown girl he asks the vital question, "...what are you planning to do about this girl?" He is annoyed at this question. That girl Kamala enters and like a slave answers all the questions asked to her submissively, politely, with a shy and dropping her head down all the time. Kakasaheb again asks, "Who's this woman?" Jaisingh this time is "little embarrassed" and informs a little of having her "Here and there... over in Bihar." He has to escort her to some other place. Sarita leaves the room for arranging water in the bathroom. Jaisingh follows her. Kamalabai and Kamala are alone in the room. Kamalabai thinks herself superior to her and she now asks her questions with a kind of dignity in her tone. From this interrogation the most important information has come out that Kamala has been bought by "He...the gentleman." Readers as well as Kamalabai get surprised by the news.

The movement of the play takes a new turn. Women are commodity. They can be sold in the open market. Jaisingh intends to reveal the system of selling women till with a true journalistic attitude. Jaysingh is taking care of her because she will be the front page news from his paper after the press conference. He better understands his business. Very politely he tells her, "You won't have to do any work ...Just eat and relax." With this kind of attitude he thinks, he is doing a great favour to her. And so when Kamala wants to do something in return as gratitude Jaisingh shows his wife that how "These downtrodden people are happy at the slightest excuse." Sarita thinks that "She's an innocent, the poor thing." The real shock comes when Jaisingh informs, "I have bought her in the Luhardaga Bazar in Bihar...For two hundred and fifty rupees." This slaps directly on the face of society, on the very existence of women in lower middle class society. He continues, "They sell human beings at the bazaar at Luhardaga beyond Ranchi. Human beings! They have an open auction for women for all sorts of ages. People come from long distances to make their bids." Overwhelmed with this news Sarita grudgingly asks him why he went there. Jaisingh's good intention is exposed: "To prove that such auctions are taking place...in this country...at this very moment." Lots of people do not know that this kind of practice is going. The police know everything but do not admit it. Now it is the duty of the reporters to stir the society with sensational news like this. So he buys her as evidence. He is rather proud of himself that he is "the first journalist to reach it." It must be remained as secret till the evening press conference. He is very cautious; he warns his wife not to disclose this to anyone; he suggests Kamalabai to

ask the name and then open the door when a knock is heard. Even when he finds his closest friend Jatin to the door he totally hides the matter from him. In his mind he wants him to leave the house as early as possible. So when after his leaving, Sarita tells, “Lunch was ready—he could have eaten before he left”, he bursts out in anger “Are you a fool?” He warns Sarita not to bathe her, not to dress her; he wants her in the conference in her original dress. After a while Sarita informs that Kamala is not feeling well and is sleeping. Jaisingh’s bitter heartiness, inhumanity and hypocrisy are revealed. He curtly tells her, “Wake her up? ... I want to talk to her.” Sarita stands where she is for a moment. This annoys him and in a dominating manly voice rebukes, “What did I just say? Can’t you hear?”

Alas! She has nothing but to obey her husband’s command. A very minute picture of the relation between a husband and a wife is presented with a graphic detail. The husband’s word is the rule in the domestic affairs. Sarita goes inside and brings Kamala with her. Jaisingh addresses her, “Come here, Kamala...Sit down” like a master to his dog. When Kamala slightly objects to be present in the conference with her torn and sullen dress he asserts, “You will have to come, Kamala.” A glimpse of very little self respect and self reliance is seen as she says, “I’m your servant, master. But I won’t come today. I’ll come tomorrow or day after. As soon as I’m well.” At this point Jaisingh emotionally blackmails her, “Kamala, you won’t obey me.” Kamala dissolves, “How can that be? You are kamala’s master.” Very cunningly he takes the situation in his favour saying, “I order you to come with me today.” She submits herself to his will. Sarita interrupts when decency matters to that woman. Jaisingh wants, “She will come to the Press Conference in the same clothes she’s wearing now.” Sarita declares with a sort of strength in her voice, “She’s a woman, after all. And her sari is torn.” He denies and his will is the law of the house—the picture of almost all the houses in our society. Sarita leaves and Kakasaheb enters. A formal talk of his paper business is going on. From his paternal affection he asks Jaisingh about his unnecessary taking of risks, “...why are taking such desperate risks?” Jaisingh eagerly answers, “There’s a commitment behind it, there’s a social purpose.” He also adds that there would be someone to take the leading role to stop vices in society, to protect against the evils. So why not is it himself? It is his inner consciousness which compels people like him to do that. Sarita enters and the argument ends.

Kamalabai is seen coming with news of “That creature.” She is also the victim of society who does not even know her own actual position. She remains happy being a maid. She cannot think of a better situation than which she is in. She is rather proud of her present state. With utter astonishment she continues, “She asks me, were you bought or were you hired? ...She asks me, how much did they hire you for? What works do you have to do? Me, she’s asking me. I said, what’s it got to do with you? Do you know what she said? Servants shouldn’t raise their head and answer back. They should be grateful for their daily bread....” Every word of Kamala hurt and pinch deep into the nest of so called civilized society. It actually slaps on the face. Women beware of women. Kamalabai cannot bear Kamala anymore. She prays for her departure. Kamala is a touchstone. She discloses the true position of Kamalabai by her language. Sarita manages to hush Kamalabai by taking her away. When again she enters Jaisingh informs that he wants to put Kamala in “a women’s home.” Sarita is little bit surprised. A note of sympathy towards Kamala is slowly growing in her from right now. She is anxious of how her condition will be in the “home”. Jaisingh has a set notion of happiness which is inherited from the society, “...She’ll find the home a luxury after serving the way she used to. Two square meals a day and no work to do. A proper roof over her head. She’ll be more than happy.” He is machine in the machine age. No emotion, no sympathy, no humanity at all. He is rather proud of what he has done with her. He sees only the outward luxury, the mere skin of happiness only. But where will be the peace of mind? Sarita

gradually understands the situation in which Kamala is in; she implores her husband for the last time not to take her away. But again a masculine tone dictates, “Chalo, Kamala” (Come, Kamala).

Act two opens like the atmosphere which remains calm after a thunderous storm. It is night. The conference is over. Jaising comes back with Kamala and Jain. Jain’s comment, “You rascal, I salute you” ensures that the conference has been a great success. Kakasaheb, Jain and Jaisingh gossip about the “tamashas” and Sarita, the wife, is ordained with the duty of serving tea and other drinks and food from time to time. The details of the conference are being discussed. And from it comes out how the reporters sack Kamala with all sorts of questions whatever shameless they may be. Kamala has actually been treated as animals shown in cages in a zoo where people go, buy tickets, watch them and having fun. Questions rained down upon Kamala. She was exhausted. She was made a laughing stock. Sarita does not like that. From her growing consciousness she asks her husband, “So while they were asking her those terrible questions, and making fun of her—you just sat and watched, did you?” She cannot believe her husband to watch her effortless. It makes a hard impact on her mind. From now on she can explore the unknown zones of her husband. She cannot believe him being so heartless. Kakassaheb blames Jaisingh for buying a poor and illiterate woman. He points out the guilty side of him. It enrages Jaisingh. A new argument begins. Kakasaheb becomes sullen and wants to go out of the house soon. Before it goes too far, it is Sarita who interrupts and controls the situation. Both take apologies from each other and ending up with bidding good nights. All these things make Sarita a little bit annoyed with her husband that forces her to reject her husband’s proposal of going to bed together and have that pleasure after so long a time. Jaisingh implores her again and again and the wife denies all the time. Jaisingh says, “Don’t I have the right to have my wife when I feel like it? Don’t I? I’m hungry for that too—I’ve been hungry for six days. Is it a crime to ask for it? Answer me?” But the wife does not bother to answer and choose to leave the place. His hunger is to be suppressed that comes out with a violent force of attack, “The Bitch!” It shows the utter patriarchy is on the wake.

A happy married life needs a fifty-fifty share in everything to mould the relation into a stronger one. It is rather a friendship. But what Jaisingh does shows everything but friendship. After spending years with her he still needs more time to comprehend her psyche. He comes after a long gap and wants to do that; that is enough. No respect for her will, no understanding; not even a little self-control—what he has actually, the utmost respect and care for his job. At this point the play takes a crescent turn. Sarita’s self is developing. From now on she is introspective. Her individuality has started its journey. Leaving her husband in a sudden shock, she comes to Kamala. And the next important phase of the play begins. This conversation between those two girls ensures the destiny of the play. Kamala asks some questions and Sarita answers. Kamala is infatuated with Saheb (Jaisingh). She praises that house as a royal palace. The irony comes next when Sarita informs that she and Jaisingh have no children. Kamala can only utter, “God’s ways are strange, such a big house...and...” This unfinished sentence reveals the sorrow of the couple. They are rich but unhappy; they have luxury but don’t have enough time to know each other. Then with a little bit hesitation Kamala asks her, “How much did he buy for you?” Sarita is amazed and speechless. She cannot understand. Kamala repeats her question. This time Sarita in playful manner informs, “For Seven hundred.” That is almost three times bigger amount than which Kamala was bought. The latter becomes surprised and thinks it a crime of not giving a child to the generous man in return. Jaisingh paid more for Sarita (by taking dowry) so it her duty to return him more. The more money involves, the more responsibility descends.

With a little bit hesitation Kamala discloses her heart in a very serious tone, “Memsahab, ... The master bought you; he bought me, too. He spent a lot of money on the two of us. A man has to labour like an ox to do

it. So, memsahib, both of us must stay here together like sisters.... The master will have children. ...Fifteen days of the month, you sleep with the master; the other fifteen, I'll sleep with him. Agreed?" Sarita is too much moved by this speech and only utters in a benumbed voice, "Agreed." The night is thus over and the agreement remains the same. A new vista has been opened up to Sarita. She can scan the hypocrisy lies behind the very marriage system. The plain thing is that a woman is bought in the marriage. That is all. Kamala again works as a touchstone. She helps to wake up the personality lying dormant in Sarita. It is morning now; both in nature and in Sarita's life. Both Kakasaheb and Jaisingh are sitting with their newspapers searching for the news of Jaisingh's Kamala. Kakasaheb finds, "Almost all the papers seem to have carried the news." Greetings come through the phone calls. Jaisingh is really happy. Sarita enters with tea. Jaisingh leaves the room and just throws the words, "I'll be upstairs. Send me some tea." And what she does? She just calls Kamalabai and tells, "Take this tea upstairs to Saheb." Her own individuality has grown. But she has not lost her sympathetic mind and weeps on the news of leaving of Kakasaheb. She implores, "Stay for today at least." The old uncle cannot argue and stay. Jaisingh comes back from upstairs. He is busy enough. He tells the maid to prepare Kamala. The old man asks, "Where are you taking Kamala?" He curtly answers, "To the Women's Home." The phone rings. Kakasaheb takes it. It is from Neeti Bagh Police Station. They want Jaisingh for some urgent business. Sarita is afraid. Jaisingh just says, "It's the effect of the yesterday's Press Conference." Sarita cannot understand. He again says, "My buying Kamala in an auction is a criminal offence." The phone rings again and this time Sarita speaks with the inspector. Kamala comes wearing one of Sarita's saris. Jaisingh bursts out in laughter and praises, "How atrocious." Kakasaheb also thinks her nice in that dress. Jaisingh knows his duty and tells, "Come, Kamala. Bring your luggage. Hurry." The new-found pleasure is dashed. In feeble tones she asks, "Won't we be coming back?" Sarita is furious and blames her husband, "You're deceiving her." The personality has worked. She says with a kind of determination in her tone, "I'm telling you this very seriously. Kamala is going to stay here...like Kamalabai does." Jaisingh is not habituated with this kind of protest from her. It surprises him and says, "Have you gone mad or something?" He then orders Kamalabai to bring her clothes. She does so and "Kamala goes to the door as if she is being dragged there". Jaisingh is gone saying, "Bye, I'll be back tonight." Kamalabai breathes a sigh of relief, "Good thing she's gone. She was a bad sort."

Sarita now better understands her position. There is no value of her wish. The male voice dominates all the time and that is the law. Kakasaheb brings light to the hypocrisy saying, "...Kamala is just a pawn in his game of chess." When Jaisingh returns in the evening expecting her wife to be ready for the party, Kamalabai informs, "She's lying down upstairs....She's not come out of her room at all." After sometime she comes down. She does not answer to Jaisingh; only asks about Kamala. "She's in the Women's Home" that is the reply. Now the most important conversation follows----

JAISINGH.Don't you want to come to the party?

SARITA. No.

JAISINGH. You don't want to come? Why?

SARITA. That's my will.

JAISINGH [Rather surprised]. Your will?

SARITA. Aren't I allowed to have a will of my own?

JAISINGH [Sarcastically]. Never noticed any signs of it before. If you didn't want to come, you could at least have told me earlier. Then I wouldn't have accepted for both of us.

SARITA. Did you ask me?

JAISINGH. Of course! I left a message with Kamalabai.

SARITA. That isn't called asking.

JAISINGH. You could have phoned me back.

SARITA. You could have waited till I came on the phone.

JAISINGH. I was busy.

SARITA. I didn't feel like phoning you.

JAISINGH. What's special about your feelings today?

Oh! What a conversation! A silkworm is coming out of its cocoon. Like Nora in Ibsen's famous play *A Doll's House*, Sarita is conscious of her own will, her new-found personality. Jaisingh is amazed at this and leaves alone for the party. Kakasaheb enters and Sarita bursts out, "I'm planning for something.....A press conference.....I am going to present a man who in the year 1982 still keeps a slave, right here at Delhi. Jaisingh Jadv. I'm going to say; this man's a great advocate of freedom. And he brings home a slave and exploits her. He doesn't consider a slave a human being—just a useful object. One you can use and throw away. ...he bought the slave Kamala and use of her. The other slave he got free—not just free—the slave's father shelled out the money—a big sum. Ask him what he did with it." Kakasaheb is now alarmed and asks eagerly, "What on earth happened between you two?" She replies, "Marriage" and adds that she was asleep; she was unconscious even when she awoke physically. It is Kamala who wakes her up with a shock. Because of her she sees things clearly. She feels that the man she thought her partner is actually the master of a slave. She has no rights at all in this house because she is a slave. Then in a more pathetic tone she utters, "Slaves don't have rights, do they, Kakasaheb? They must only slave away. Dance to their master's whim. Laugh, when he says, laugh. Cry, when he says, cry. When he says pick up the phone, they must pick it up. When he says, come to a party, they must go. When he says, lie on the bed—they [She twisted in pain]." Kakasaheb consoles her by saying he himself gave her aunt a lot of trouble. It may be unpleasant, but it is true. "That's why he's a man. And that's why there is manhood in the world."

The volcanic eruptions continue, "Why aren't women ever the masters? Why can't a woman at least ask to live her life the same way as a man? Why must only a man have the right to be a man? Does he have extra sense? A woman can do everything a man can." Kamala's touch has made her gold now. She is completely free from biasness of the custom of society which says, "Don't question; don't raise your voice; just perform what is said. Kakasaheb has not expected those questions. He is rather wonder-struck and cannot answer. At this crucial point of the play a knock is heard and Jain comes with a "terrible news" of Jaisingh's dismissal from his job. The letter will come on the next day. He makes a phone call to Jaisingh at the party. He returns and asks, "What's the matter? Why did you call me?" He cannot believe what Jain has said. He wants to call the editor but he is out of Delhi. He is getting more and more agitated. At this time of crisis what can Sarita do? She has to lock all her consciousness in mind again and in a motherly sympathetic tone consoles her partner, "All right. But sit down, at least. Eat just a little bit." Actually she is a very nice and good girl like others of her sex. And this goodness hinders their right with the man.

Conclusion

A sensational play ends in a sensational manner. Tendulkar's craftsmanship is on the height. His creation of the character Sarita is great. She is the real Kamala in that sense. The moral hypocrisy is exposed by showing the treatment of women as commodity. The hidden violence and unbearable mental torture against women has been presented with a fine craftsmanship. The picture is so vivid and realistic that anyone can easily involve

himself or herself while reading the play. Women of all regions in the world can identify herself with Kamala and Sarita. Thus the play achieves a universal support which becomes the voice of protest against the hypocrisies in the Indian social mindset. Sarita becomes silent at the end of the play. Once again she silences her awakened individuality in the cocoon of love, sympathy, responsibility, duty, humanity and toleration. But it does not show that this silence will remain forever as when Kakasaheb asks, “You mean, you still feel like that?” Sarita concludes, “I’ll go on feeling it. But at present I’m going to lock all that up in a corner of my mind and forget about it. But a day will come, Kakasaheb, when I will stop being a slave. I’ll no longer be an object to be used and thrown away. I’ll do what I wish, and no one will rule over me. That day has to come. And I’ll pay whatever price I have to pay for it.”

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Role of Media in 21st Century: A Brief Study

Arup Roy

A capacity to communicate the richness of thought and feeling is uniquely human. This capacity was refined and facilitated in the 20th century by the media of radio and television, which will be even more important in the information society. Free and independent media are essential to democratic principles and practices. Broadcasting open to pluralism of opinion and cultural diversity offers the widest public access to the knowledge, education and information required by an active citizenry.

---Arne Wessberg, President, European Broadcasting Union,
(WEMF, Geneva 9 December 2003), Broadcasters' Declaration.

Famous thinker and educationist John Dewey once said with assertion, “*The media's job is to interest the public in the public interest*”. This may be the point of departure of this writing in the view that it depicts very simply the primary purpose expected from the media to serve. However, in our article, we are interested to see the history of evolution of media since nineteenth, 20th to the beginning of 21st century. Then our task is to understand the role of media in the present day world situation and to draw a balance sheet of the power it plays in a gigantically increasing manner.

History of evolution in brief

It is true that in the broad sense very expression of humanity is a media of communication like artistic performance, novels etc, however, for us, the focus of the term ‘media’ will remain confined in the popular sense of the word.

The media as a medium for communicating social events like natural disaster, accidents, important information from the states, activities in cultural, political, economical etc affairs have been evolved in 20th Century. In this, the role of printed media and later the part played by Radio Broadcasting system is historically significant. However, the history of birth of media goes back to the history of democracy through the bourgeoisie revolution, particularly in Europe. It is first time in history, in the phase of capitalism, to serve the interest of radical bourgeoisie, to progress the radical ideology against feudalism the media evolved as a weapon and started to play great role in socio-political scenario. In this, the interest of bourgeoisie was in resonance with great mass of toiling people in the ascendant phase of capitalism. Vigorous technological development, thanks to the inner dynamics of the system, has added to the media of communication. Throughout the 20th century, all classes and strata have explored all possibilities of utilizing any of the mediums to convey their own interest and demands. Through this process, there develops an independent system of broadcasting and communicating irrespective of the medium of the state or this or that political/economical groups or parties. These agencies as a commercial system keeping concern of ‘profit’ develop highly centralized organs to make/cook news an unavoidable commodity. Journalism becomes a faculty of studies; definite syllabus and course modules have been developed throughout the world; being a journalist becomes a service under certain capitalist boss. A huge network with millions of workers active 24x7 hrs to collect, to make, to innovate, to propagate has been very much common now. The basic perspective still remains the propagation of democratically justified things as follows from the “broadcasters’ Declaration” presented in the UN on 9th September 2003.

Role in the 21st Century

In order to understand the role of media today, we have to consider the various aspects of purposes it serves. In fact, what purposes does it not serve? Say internet, this is the latest media which can help explore everything we need, whether to buy or to sell, to know and to let know, to think and to make people think, to organize opinions and to be organized around an opinion, to research and to help research work and what not? In the same coin, we can say the various aspects of newspaper; TV channels mobiles etc all of which is serving a purpose in every moment as a global medium of organizing things. Thus we need to focus only on few points related to the fundamental purposes it serves without going into the immediate or apparent role. The capacity which is emanated from the role is to be judged on the basis of what ideological impacts it diffuses throughout the world through the vast network.

The fundamental role of 'media' is just not to communicate but to do it for different purposes which are linked, in the final analyses, with the social objectives. Media has to communicate or share information which society thinks necessary, be it politics or culture art, literature or language. At the same time the information it spreads also determines what the people will think today. So there is a dialectical interlink between this two aspects. Never before in history, has communication-highway been so vast and so indispensable for the world human community. It collects, edits makes it useful and distributes to the people. In so doing it actually enters into every aspect of social life in every corner of the world. We may put it in brief as follows:

1. The role in organizing mass opinion: Media, if thinks necessary it can spread an ideology, and consistently make propaganda in favour of this or that opinion. This in fact, helps both positively and negatively to the society. Whereas in case of election it plays a role to determine which Party will win over the electoral circus or in case of social injustice it can poke it nose to organize opinion of greater part of the mass so as to pressurize the state and fuel movement for this or that reason. On imperialist level it can bring in fore the inner nature of conflict between this and that fraction of imperialist powers or it can help hide the position of another power. Normally it stands in favour of democratic views, although how much democratic they are depends on who suffers from this democratic propaganda.
2. It globalizes the human community in making communication of knowledge, information-culture faster. Hence on the one hand as a result of the dynamics of the production system the globe becomes narrower in each passing day and on the other hand each national part becomes stricter to maintain its identity as a different part. Media thus brings forth the inner contradiction of the present system. However, it helps people what is there in other part. If we see so called war against terrorism, it was not so simple to propagandize by the countries if media is not there to represent their views. Today, thanks to the media, we can know any thing happening in the world then and there; we can also get analyses of it, which gives us scope to take individual position on a particular case.
3. In case of natural disaster or atmospheric problems media plays a positive role to communicate things in proper time.
4. We see enormous role of media to diffuse information of any kind of scientific discoveries, innovations to the world in no time.

5. Media gives common people to put forward their views; thus we are not just bound by the expertise of some experts; we can also communicate directly through media.
6. The cultural diversity of a nation or region is but easy to know without visiting the place. However, media has the scope to manipulate things in their desired way and this it also affects the way to have true knowledge on this. Media often presents something in a manner which may be more profitable. Hence it distorts the reality in its own way. Fortunately, this is also proved by the media itself.
7. It helps state in a crucial moment so that it can overcome certain crises; it has a role to manage crises of a state. In this, state has a control over the media and media also has a control over the state.
8. In education, media is playing a very positive role for us. It gives information for us about what are the new development in educational sphere, it displays courses, syllabus, gives guide to choose a suitable one for study. Also for getting service, it also helps us in many ways.
9. In case of sports and games media plays an obvious role.
10. One of the most important aspects of media must be taken into account, that is, the role of media in the evolution of LANGUAGE. Media with its own internal push compels the world to develop a newer and newer way of world communication. The language of people normally remains in the dynamics of spontaneous change; however, the media revolution has accelerated the process and thus trying to bring, even unknowingly, the human community in the world of a unity of language. It is not too far when there would be a bigger movement throughout the globe for coming out of the narrow orthodox concept and bondage of a language which would appear to be an impediment in communicating among masses.

In a word, media is the expression of present history and dynamics of world human society as far as the physical infrastructure is concerned. However, we may come to a balance sheet to conclude the essay as follows:

Media in 21st Century: unavoidable information monster and indispensable weapon for society:

Never before has the world offered such a wide diversity of media options. And never before has there been such a great risk of communication becoming so globally concentrated.

The globalization of communication creates both opportunities and threats at the same time. It creates new options for the individual to be informed, educated and entertained. It creates possibilities for cultures to be intertwined as well as to be enriched through a constructive cross-fertilization. However, if the sole control over this communication roadway remains in the hands of handful big economic power, then we must risk of having a divided world of content producers and consumers, later being a passive part of the system without having any authority to put forward their control and orientation in proper. And that translates into a loss of cultural identity and the creation of excluded groups in countries with smaller or weaker economies, not to mention a leveling down and running down of intellectual life as a whole.

Another important aspect is that in the dark deep forest of media, an individual gets at a loss. We can only know, but cannot centralize things. In each passing day media monsters is grabbing our power of independent thought by replacing of their own. Today media gives one no time to stop, but to follow; One who only

follows cannot grow independently and think from a wider perspective, because for media that is wider which it thinks to be wider.

On the one hand it has the aspiration to get hold of all human activities on the other hand being a product of commodity based social formation and a commodity itself it cannot surpass the law of commodity that is profit and loss. It cannot actually represent the position of future, it can only describe the past and present and tries its best to benefit the human being with the existing decaying system. Thus it does not represent “progressive side” of social dynamics whatever its declaration be in pen and paper.

Media cannot prevent the decaying force of economic structure and the chaos enhanced from it, rather it just becomes a part and parcel of the same decadence.

But still, we cannot avoid it. We cannot just abuse it. It has been one of the expressions of social dynamics today. Its apparent utility cannot be denied. And at the end we may argue following José Roberto Marinho, Representative of WSIS for Latin America and Caribbean that:

a free media must provide each citizen with both a mirror and a window. In other words, like a mirror, it must ensure that each one has the right to recognize him- or herself in what is seen, heard and read. This engenders a feeling of belonging to society. At the same time, like a window, it must broaden horizons, allowing each and everyone to live new experiences and see beyond his or her own particular world.”

May be, this is an optimism or it may come true in future. Let’s hope for the better, if not the best.

On Author of the article:

Arup Roy is an assistant teacher in Physics in a high school at Suri, Birbhum West Bengal, India. He is involved in studying folk culture. He composes his songs and is a performing artist. He is available at esraj79@gmail.com

Creative Writing

The Circle of Enemy

Subrata Nag

With a sweet smile the doctor asked, “Would you like to hear a story ? The story of a person who came to my chamber with a similar problem like you?”

Himangshu stared for a while and nodded. “OK”, started the doctor, “The fact is that Satadal, a boy of class nine, expressed his desire to be a traffic police being asked to write an essay on ‘Your Aim in life’ in the Annual Bengali Exam. The Bengali teacher Kshitish Sir asked him, “Strange Satadal? Everyone wants to be an engineer or doctor --- but you want to be a traffic police? why?”

The dreamy boy answered, “Sir, just imagine the power! The huge vehicles _ rushing at full speed! Just raise your right hand --- everything is bound to stop. None can move without my permission --- all have to wait like a statue. Thousands of vehicles will be standstill at the hint of a single hand!”

“Most of our dreams fade out fruitlessly. But Satadal’s dream has turned to a reality. Ultimately he was able to wear the white uniform of the Kolkata Traffic Police. When his right hand casually ruled over the endless wave of vehicles at Hazra More, he thought himself the Almighty.”

The doctor stopped; took a sip of water. Himangshu whispered, “Then?”

“Then? then everything turned odd. One day Satadal noticed that a car didn’t stop though he had raised his hand. It flew away leaving behind a cloud of black smoke. Satadal, too surprised, forgot even to note the number of the fleeing car. The next day --- what a surprise! Another car didn’t stop! The following day --- another! At first Satadal got amazed; then tensed and at last scared. Is it the end of the endless control? He suspected that all the vehicles were unitedly making a conspiracy against him. They are violating the rule just to tease him, ignore him. The more he thought, the more irritated was he. Impatient Satadal ordered every car to stop.

“Then?”

“Then - red and green signals have been posted there. They became the new Gods. One fine morning Satadal found himself an adjunct.

Stopped the doctor; with his trademark smile asked, “well, how did you enjoy the story of Satadal?”

In a choked voice Himangshu asked, “Satadal became an insane then?”

“Oh, no! Certainly not!” Nodded the doctor, “After a few counselling he is quite O.K.--- leading a normal life”.

“And his job?”

“Traffic Police? No problem; though replaced elsewhere.”

“But my case?”

“It’s easier -- what’s your problem? Nothing. Your calculator or T.V. remote are not functioning properly. According to your version they are not obeying you. Is n’t?”

“Yes, doctor,” nods Himangshu.

“So what? Nothing fishy in it.”

“Nothing?”

“Absolutely nothing, Don’t be anxious unnecessarily. You are perfectly alright.”

“Is it a case of hallucination?”

“No cination simply,” The doctor rebuked, “Just take rest and be fresh. Don’t touch your calculator or T.V. remote for a few days. If you can arrange, enjoy a short trip for a couple of days.”

Himangshu offered the fees; hesitated a little and finally ventured to ask, “Some of my close friends and relatives are thinking that it is a psychological problem. May I protest?”

“Obviously, confidently announce that everything is normal. After all calculator or remote is nothing but a machine -- may be out of order at any time at any hand. Well, Mr. Bose -- if you face any further trouble, just a ring --- O.K. good bye.”

Walked out Himangshu from the chamber. His lungs heaved a sigh of relief. The gloomy afternoon light is fading leaving the last reddish patch on the roads of the metropolis. Finally a psychiatrist! can it be imagined! Fever - cold - loose motion - stomach upset- nothing like that. Could he imagine it till last Thursday night? Himangshu was busy with income tax calculation -- got a sudden jolt as he pressed the button of the calculator. Twelve hundred fifty five into ninety three and the multiplication is sixteen hundred forty five only! Did he press a wrong button? Carefully Himangshu pressed the button again -- strange! the result is same! May be out of function! He took an easy one -- forty into ten -- the calculator answered eighty! five into four -- Himangshu bit his lips -- ‘Come on’ -- must be twenty now -- Oh. God! the screen flashed - twenty two! Damn it! Putting the tax papers aside Himangshu switched on the T.V. to see the news; pressed the button of the remote to get channel seventeen -- what! It’s twenty! a disgusting serial is there: Himangshu aimed twenty five --- Manchester United Vs. Liverpool Premier League football match -- the button was pressed -- appeared thirty two -- a programme on physical exercise! Simply horrible! Next time no double figure -- channel eight was chosen; a channel scheduled for reality show -- button pressed; Himangshu cried out ‘eight’ -- flashed number six presenting a smiling doctor in ‘good health’.

“What’s the matter? Won’t you come for dinner?” Called Aruna from diving.

“Aruna, please come. Quick.”

“Why! It’s too late! Already five past ten,” Aruna entered and then and there Himangshu handed over the remote to her, “ Press the buttons I ask; O.K.? Press seventeen, next twelve- three - five, thirty six, forty two” -- surprised Aruna pressed the buttons one by one and all of them obediently appeared like faithful dogs.

“Any problem? Is it out of control?”

Himangshu didn’t respond but thrust the calculator into Aruna’s hand; hissed out, “ Multiply ten and twelve -- what’s on the screen? Hundred and twenty! well, thirty and nine - what? Two hundred seventy! Now two hundred thirteen and five hundred thirty one --- multiply, quick - how much?”

A sudden shivering sensation stirred Himangshu. It is only the twelfth of September but too chilly unusually. An ordinary remote or calculator! the soft, tender trifling buttons! How could they gather so much rebellious power? And especially against Himangshu?

After a bit hesitation Himangshu at last exposed the problem to his colleague Bibhas. Bibhas listened carefully --- didn’t laugh wildly, not a chuckle even. He asked softly, “ The remote and the calculator aren’t obeying you?”

“No brother -- since last Thursday. Really Bibhas -- I’m very much worried.”

“It happens; it happens often.”

“Is it?” Curious Himangshu asked, “ Did you have similar experience?”

“Not exactly with calculator or remote; but”

Bibhas lighted a gold flake, threw a ring of smoke, “Sometimes, you know, the steering of my car doesn’t obey me. I want to drive left but the steering turns to opposite direction; and when I prefer the right, it chooses left. One day I wanted to drive straight while the car ran diagonally, very often I can’t reach my scheduled destination.”

Subimal, school-life friend, is now a renowned face in the music world. When Himangshu informed him everything, he remained silent for a while and then answered, “yes, it happens.”

“Does your calculator

“ I don’t use calculator, but when I play the harmonium, the rids sometimes revolt. If I press ‘saa’, sounds ‘dha’ or ‘maa’ for ‘gaa’. It happens -- not a new thing.”

Only neighbour Subirbabu said with a flippant smile, “ I don’t bother about those thins like remote, car or calculator. But I am fade up with my land phone. Simply disgusting! Every time when I ring any number, it ultimately results a wrong one.”

“ Do you know why?”

“ It’s a tough philosophical question. I think they want to get freedom and don’t enjoy the human control any more.

Pouring tea at the breakfast table Aruna complained, “ your daughter never listens to me. I am just fade up.”

“ What’s again?” Himangshu took the butter-toast.

“Your loving daughter is adamant. She wants to be a model.”

Himangshu smiled, “ Not a new news. Yesterday she had appealed to me and I rejected. The chapter is closed.

“You know nothing. She had already completed her shooting for a new company.”

“What!” some tea splashed on the table. “I forbade her! still she had done it! How dare

“Who is responsible? Only you --- she has been spoilt due to your indulgence.”

Himangshu grumbled, “ Let her come; I’ll just slap her”.

“Well -- now your son!”

“ Is he also a future model?”

“No; he has joined a company.”

“Service?”

“Yes.”

“Then who will complete the M.B.A.? The fool should realize the he would get huge salary if he joins after completing the M.B.A”

“ I don’t know the detail; but he is adamant too.”

“They don’t need even to inform me! Do they care me even?” mutters Himangshu -- is his advice really needless to them! First, the calculator, then the remote and now his own issues! Does everybody want to cross the limit? How can he protect them? Satadal could not resist them -- admitted his defeat. Bibhas, Subimal surrendered already. But Himangshu won’t follow them. Resist the freedom loving circle of enemy; at any cost he must resist them.

In the Saturday afternoon well -dressed Aruna declared, “ I’m going for a shopping with Nita boudi. Open the door when the maid servant comes.”

Ageing is a peculiar chemistry. It does n't react with every face. Aruna is still looking charming at her mid forties. Himangshu stared at her and suddenly pleaded, " Don't go. Aruna."

"Where? To shopping?"

"Yes; don't go please."

"O, don't be crazy. They're waiting for me."

"You too! won't you listen to me?"

"Don't take rubbish. Don't be angry please."

"I for bid you."

"I'll return soon."

Himangshu sent an intense wave of will force to the fading Aruna -- "Come back Aruna, come back -- you must return. At least you can't violate my control. Just come back."

Aruna didn't return.

The blue maruti took start after a soft roar, leaving blackish smoke. Himangshu jumped up when he had clearly seen it through she window. No more delay; he should n't delay any more. The circle of enemy is gradually becoming more and more powerful. Due to over self-confidence Himangshu has already lost a lot of possession and power. He must inform everything to Satadal over phone. Where is the number? He had collected if from the doctor. Yes - here it is! He tried to push the buttons of his own cellphone but horrified to realize that his fingers -- his own fingers are diverting -- trying to get out of his control. Himangshu pressed his right fingers with his left palm. The war is inevitable.

The calling bell rang out -- must be the maid servant. Himangshu hesitated to move. Which leg should be put first? which leg is still obedient to him? Which one has been captured by the enemy?

The calling rang again againringing on and on

HOME ALONE

Soutik Sen

He is back, killing himself
As he does everyday
With smile, suitcase, spectacles

In the drawing room, bubbles fly
Like glowworms, moments evaporate
The coffee mug dozes undisturbed.

Mobile vibrates, mind goes blank
The face Wounds revised
Only to be mistaken on the mirror

Who is his opponent
Always walking beside him
Silent and invisible.

He has returned home
His own solitary cell
To his darkness
Dear and unknown - - -

The Night

Soutik Sen

And when Night Comes I'll go
To places fit for woe,
Walking along the darken'd valley
With silent melancholy.
William Blake

The mirror feels flattered
The face hides the mask
The mask reveals the wounds
The wounds herald the night.

The dark cloak peregrinates
The drawing room
The rectangular face of LCD
Looks like a lonely goddess

The billboard flashes the bright damsels
Fair and lovely creams make them
Faerie Queens, dew drops
dazzle in their eye-lashes.

Dwarfs walk down the lanes
Their faces aglow with smile
Marks of old pimples
about the landscape of their faces

They knock at the door of silence
Nightmare enwraps my town
They open the windows of oblivion
Like a corpse My town sleeps.

In the Night coffin.

The Land of Snakes

Joyanta Dangar

Green snakes entwining green gourd creepers
Are known for their notorious needle nib,
And lotus cobras in a lotus pond for their poison.

On many a night came a snake with hunger and
Sucked her moonlit nipples like a baby...
So goes the rumour still today in that village.

Monsoon snakes, bundled like a woollen ball,
Dropping from the rain clouds and unfolding like the
Peel of a brass gong announcing the closure of a school.

Or the speckled snake pretending dead among
A herd of sleek starlings meditating its post-mortem...
Nature's finest tragicomedy ever seen.

Gone...gone are all such snakes these days...
Scorched, haunted, hunted and burnt...
Perhaps all the snakes have entered into our hearts.

To Dearth

Suman Saha

Are you back? Do you shore up to the monsoon?
Then, you might hear of the last churning in the chignon
Of some story unknown; some bounces of expectation.
Sometimes, matted floor turns such dreamy instagram
With the sun beams of shadowy sensation.

Monsoon never talks to me.

You may know, the calls of everyday just the trade,
Full of filth; can earn the one, the false faith.
Every moment like the grains of sand dissolves
Into the black-hole of spoof. My question meets death.

You may know, cosmic-vacuum now fills psychics—
As if some vile Vikings assail her all presentment,
Consigning the blur to the time's elderliness,
To the liquidity of emotion, or to some jejune event.

Is relation a groan?— Monsoon neither reacts to me
Nor answers why the flocks of darkness draw dejection
All the time. Silence scalds the self— airs ever-inexistence
Of literal proof. Let fill the bill then with pulses' excavation.

The expectation, expiation and their compound
Pour poison into the relativity. Pains ply the pretext—
“Are you back? Do you shore up to the monsoon?”
My question meets death.

Monsoon never talks to me.

Translation

Jardar Koutoⁱ

Ramkrishna Mandalⁱⁱ

After the completion of *Puja* (Here *Puja* refers to Durgapuja—Four- Day-Worship of the goddess Durga in the Late Autumn season), Hemlata was leaving the home of her first son Purnendu for that of her second and last son Ardhendu. She used to stay for two months each with her two sons by rotation. She now turned into a share-out mother. Getting accompanied by her granddaughter-in-law Ratna, she was going to Ardhendu's home. Ratna loved this old grandmother-in-law. She used to bicker pleasurably with this old woman. At the same time, Ratna used to secretly buy grandmother-in-law several things or food items as desired by her. The old woman always cherished desire to have so many things and Ratna loved to supply those secretly.

Hemlata told—Ratan, ask the rickshaw puller to stop the rickshaw. I need to have *jarda* (a kind of tobacco used with betel leaf as a kind of spice). That is Dhalu's panmashla shop.

She lovingly called Ratna as Ratan. That calling made Ratna feel happy. Ratna told—Hand me over your *kouto* (a small cylindrical pot with a lid). Instantly, she (Hemlata) cautiously untied the pinch of selvage and brought out the *jarda kouto* made of *chandi* (pure silver) given by her husband.

Ratna told—Grandmother, let me see your token of love. Taking the *kouto* in her hand Ratna was gazing at every side of it minutely. Before this time Ratna had seen this so many times. But that kind of asking for that *kouto* in order to see with sincerity always brightened her face with happiness and joy. Ratna wanted to see that appearance. She asked the old woman—Well, did the grandfather-in-law get your name encrusted on this *Kouto*?

There was a spark of laughter in the toothless mouth. She told—Y-e-s, *didi* (older/younger sister). Otherwise, who will do this? Your husband?

--Grandmother-in-law, what do you say? That very young guy has not yet learned to give me proper gift of love. You were really a woman with a high profiled beauty. Tell me how you could grab that from grandfather-in-law.

--Listen, I take too much *jarda*. Every morning and evening I repeatedly placed my demand before him (my husband)-- Fetch *jarda*, Fetch *jarda*.

One day he placed an order to a goldsmith to have *kouto* with flowers on the body and my name on the lid encrusted. Getting that done, he gave it to me and said—Take this. Remember this particular day. Then it instantly came to my mind—O' that very day was our marriage day, *didi*.

Ratna started laughing with the *hee-hee* sound and embraced the old woman. She told—the love of both of yours had the strength in the real sense, grandmother-in-law. That is why, he could take a young sixteen year

old beautiful girl from her home and marry her. He did not even fear police. He did not care anybody. Really, he had the courage worthy of appreciation.

Ratna had heard these words innumerable times from this old woman. Old words got renewed. The light of joy spread over the face of the old woman who said—Listen, your grandfather-in-law was enamoured by this sharp nose of mine. And he had to pay for that, sister. I made him tour along with me in different places. Today some place and tomorrow another one. While telling this old woman sighed—along with words sadness befell—Today the elephant (referring to herself) has fallen in mud. Daughters-in-law have laced my nose with a thread made of jute. This one pulls me once and that one, once. Now I am none but a share-out mother.

Ratna kept the old woman embraced and pressing her she said—Grandmother-in-law, do not think. I am always with you. You will get whatever you need. Only one condition is there. You will have to tell me stories.

Hemlata said with elation—Hundred times.

2

Youngest daughter-in-law Ilora told—Stop your mother taking *jarda*. She has asthmas and in addition, she repeatedly belches with *heo heo* sound. On the other side, see what an amount of *jarda* she takes. The *kouto* was gifted by him (father-in-law)—too much excessiveness. One day I will throw out that *kouto*.

Ardhendu said—Old woman. Do not say so. If she listens to this, she will get hurt.

--Let her get hurt. You have learned to have indulgence. All bogus.

Truly, Ilora got irritated and threw out the *kouto* one day. That day Ardhendu forgot to bring *jarda* from the market and for that the old woman was angrily talking to herself. Coming to the bed of her mother-in-law Ilora took the *kouto* kept by the side of the bed and hurled that out. That fell into the nest of a crow hanging from a branch of a mango tree.

Ratna observed everything from her room. Coming to the old woman she said—Do not be angry. I will search for that. But that should not come to the notice of my mother-in-law.

Normally, the younger daughter-in-law Ilora used to burn in anger whenever she encountered her old mother-in-law. She thrashed every movement of the old woman with her heated words. Throwing out the *kouto* she could force her mother-in-law to stop taking *jarda*.

3

At a winter night Hemlata's heat got motionless. She did not give opportunity to call in a doctor. In the morning the neighbours started making uproar--Nantu's (Ratna's husband) grandmother has walked away at night and only the body has been left. For the cremation of that Nantu informed the cremation association in the morning.

Before the dead body was carried out of the home, Ilora had beckoned her husband and whispered—Ogo (an address), my husband, please go to the goldsmith's shop and buy a *kouto* made of *chandi* and then buy a *kouto*

of *Sundari Jarda* (*jarda* named after a brand company name). I have heard that if something expected to have during life time of a person remains unfulfilled, the departed soul of that person returns to this living world time and again. His or her best loved thing should be offered to his or her dead body. Towards the end of her life I did not allow her to take *jarda*. I threw out the *kouto*.

From the market Ardhendu brought a *kouto* and *jarda* along with other items for funeral ceremony.

The pall had been decorated. Now the dead body of Hemlata would be put on that. Ilora took the *kouto* from Ardhendu's hand. In order to put that in the hand of Hemlata she lifted the quilt up and got astonished to an utmost degree. Something was seen glittering within the fist of the old woman. One friend of Nantu opened up the fist. With her enlarged astonishing eyes, Ilora saw that very *Kouto* of *Chandi* in the fist of her mother-in-law. On the lid of that the name was seen glittering—Hemalata.

ⁱ The short story *Jardar Kouto* (a cylindrical pot with a lid for keeping a kind of tobacco called *jarda* used with betel leaf as a kind of spice) was published in the anthology *Sabuj Machh* (Green Fish) in 2000.

ⁱⁱ Ramkrishna Mandal is Retired Reader in Bengali, Suri Vidyasagar College, Birbhum. He did his Ph. D from Visva-bharati, Shaniniketan, India. He has established himself as a literary figure in the Bangla. He has published several volumes of short stories, literary critical essays and humorous stories. He edits *Abakash: Sahitya Patra*, a literary journal in Bangla.

Translated by Dr. Susanta Kumar Bardhan

Book Review

The Economics of Killing:How the West Fuels War and Poverty in the Developing World (2012)

Debayan Deb Barman

Vijay Mehta's new book *The Economics of Killing:How the West Fuels War and Poverty in the Developing World* (2012), published by Pluto Press, is a timely intervention of an alternative vision of a world that could be more humane and meaningful based on the foundations of peace and sustainable development. A decade down the twenty-first century, the cycle of violence does not have an apparent end post-9/11. Violence in the guise of terrorism and counter-terrorism and in the excuse of national security is creating an unholy nexus of the international/ western weapons' industry and their clients.

Mehta reads through the negotiations of the military-industrial complex of the US and Europe to decipher how this complex economic network pervades states and governments, monarchies and dictatorships, and does what is detrimental to developmental initiatives the world over by siphoning public wealth for its own sustenance, thus being a parasitic system that is also deadly and destructive.

Mehta locates the dependency of the US economy on the military-industrial complex and traces the irony of the US security concerns regarding China whose clandestine military ambitions forces US to strictly regulate arms and related businesses with this Eastern rival. This adversely affects the US economy; however Mehta accepts that having boundless military business collaboration with China would be impossible. Mehta's suggestion in this context is important for the future well being of the world along lines of peace and development. For this, a restructuring of the US economy to move it away from its dependency on the military-industrial complex is imperative.

Mehta defines the military-industrial complex of the US and how it controls the trade and commerce of the superpower state. It is insightful for drawing attention to the "balance of power" theory, which logically defends arms race and arms sale based on the idea that war is the way to peace. It is a matter of concern that militarism is equated and eulogized as nationalism in the media and in popular psyche. Mehta illustrates the complex politics of power that the West has been playing in the Middle East. Though there has been the prospect of rise of democracy after the Arab Spring of 2011, internal power disturbances, power vacuum and the West not so innocent diplomatic/military negotiations leave scope for apprehension.

Categorized under Peace Studies, the book has its focal point in the study of peaceful alternatives. Mehta reaches there after taking us through the negative effects that a tradition of warfare and violence has on civilian life across borders. Refugee crisis, internal displacement, rural-urban fissures, minority repressions are off shoots of direct conflicts. And the inevitable result of excessive military expenditure and engagement is directly detrimental to health, environment and human development.

Mehta gives us the disturbing picture of what lays ahead, after the dangers of terrorism, insurgencies, and "unconventional warfare" has been exposed. The rise of terrorist groups like the Al-Qaeda, Taliban are essentially monsters produced by the Frankenstein, USA.

Mehta focuses on China, the rising star of the east, and the power equations formed in South Asia. Mehta underlines that China's economic/industrial development is dependent on the efficiency of its military-industrial complex in negotiating with its neighbors.

Mehta tries to locate the alternative and solution to the problems and drawbacks of economies being slave to military-industrial complex. The US adventures over the years have been operated and regulated by the military-industrial complex, but evidence of phenomenal success is weak. Power equations have changed in the post-colonial world. China is on the rise, and is trying to bypass US embargo on military technology through spying and hacking. Europe is already a shadow of the past after losing its colonies, being itself weak in natural resources. China is using its industrial development to reduce poverty, not depending on Western aid. Mehta crucially thinks that smaller countries need to form cohesive units to free themselves from US/European pressures. There is also need for reforming the UN for making it a more balanced and representative body. The message is that the military-industrial complex must be replaced for meaningful development, along with excessive dependence of petroleum energy. The mantra for a fair and peaceful world lies in disarmament, development and democratization. Whether our world, after its world wars, nuclear bombings, cold wars, terrorism, civil wars, the unabashed markers of barbarity and inhumanity, will be able to move instead to a peaceful future or not, is the question before us. Much will depend on the strategies and policies of the superpowers USA and China, as much as reformation of the UN and the dismantling of the military body NATO. The book categorically points out the wrongs have been going on and what the remedies are if the world has to strive towards a dawn of peace and sustainable development and not be pulled into a vortex of violence and be doomed. Lastly, the considerable length of the Appendix, listing global peace organizations engaged in concrete peace activity boost our hopes.

International Competitiveness & Knowledge –based Industries in India
Edited by –Nagesh Kumar and K.J. Joseph, Oxford University Press, New
Delhi, Pages 349, Price: Rs 675.

– Reviewed by Labanya Pal, Research Scholar, Dept of Economics, University of Kalyani

The focus of this book is on understanding the firm level determinants of international competitiveness, the factors impinging on the export competitiveness of Indian knowledge-based industries and hence to draw lessons for policy.

The first section presents an overview of the current status of exports from India in various sectors. After a review of the relevant literature it discusses the current trends and patterns that are seen in exports from India. Exports are disaggregated and studied as exports in high, medium and low technology industries with some in-between categories to provide a more meaningful understanding of the knowledge dimension.

This is followed up with an econometric aggregate firm level analysis covering a sample of nearly 4,500 Indian companies across a wide spectrum of industries, different size classes, ownership patterns. A more detailed qualitative analysis was conducted to understand the determinants of international competitiveness for knowledge based industries and certain policy prescriptions follow from this.

The second section of the book follows this up with a similar overview and aggregate firm level analyses of a few selected sectors which include electronics, pharmaceuticals, especially chemicals, automotive and non-electrical machinery. This section is expected to complement and supplement the findings of the overview presented in the first section.

Pharmaceutical sector

The data and analyses are good and rigorous. However, one of the consequences of the aggregation into sectors is that the specific domestic and global contexts within which Indian firms are competing tends to get blurred. Separation into smaller sectors or even into more specific industries would have helped though such separation is not without its share of problems if an econometric approach is used. One way to redress this balance is through some case studies of individual companies operating in specific industries within the larger sectors. Some company level analyses are there in the book but these do not completely bridge the gap between sector, the industry and the firm.

In the case of the pharmaceutical sector, for example, it can be argued that the major turning point came about when Indian companies could use the paragraph four filings under the Waxman-Hatch Act to enter the U.S. market. This required not only technology and R&D knowledge which were available because of domestic competition but also the business and legal domain knowledge that Indian pharmaceutical companies had to access and acquire. The strong domestic highly competitive pharmaceutical industry combined with the easing of the U.S. regulatory regime provided a toehold for Indian companies to enter the lucrative U.S. market. It is also quite obvious when we look at individual companies operating in the global pharmaceutical industry that the population of companies inhabiting the generics space is quite different from the population

of companies inhabiting the new drug discovery space. Indian pharmaceutical companies are ostensibly trying to do both at the same time. Will they be successful? What can we do to make them successful? Are the determinants for success the same in both categories? In the case of the automotive forging components industry, in which Bharat Forge is a global leader, the path to global presence is different and maybe even riskier.

Determinants

Detailed case studies carried out by J. Ramachandran at the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore on companies like Dr. Reddy's, Ranbaxy and Bharat Forge bring in some specific industry and company level contexts that are important in understanding the determinants of what it takes for a global player to emerge out of India. In the strategy literature this is termed overcoming "liabilities of origin". An understanding of what companies did to get over this hump is crucial for understanding "international competitiveness" of Indian based knowledge industries.

The book implicitly equates knowledge with technology and R&D. The assumption seems to be that if the knowledge base of production, technology and R&D associated with a sector is strong then the basis for exports and international competitiveness is strong and a company can be successful. In a globalising world knowledge on the marketing and business domains of different global markets could be equally if not more important. To be fair to the authors they have captured whatever they can in an econometric analysis through the variables they have used. However, without a company level detailed understanding of these factors our understanding would still be limited.

The debate about whether policy formulation should be top down or bottom up has been with us and will continue to be with us for a long time. There are merits and demerits in both points of view. If they can be combined together then we would in principle have a stronger analytical base for policy making. These comments however should not detract from the value of the book. It is the first attempt of its kind in the Indian context and in that sense it is a pioneering effort. It will add significant value to the domains of technology, R&D and knowledge management.

On the road less travelled

Indranil Mondal

Title of the book: First Person

Author: Rituparno Ghosh

Editor: Nila Bandyopadhyay

Publisher: Dey's Publishing, Kolkata

ISBN: 978-81-295-1925-2 (Volume-I) & 978-81-295-1926-9 (Volume-II)

Year of Publication: September, 2013

Price: Rs. 600.00 (Volumes-I and II)

Rituparno Ghosh's film career spans over two decades. In this short time span he made ad-films, documentaries, telefilms, teleserials, feature films, besides hosting talk shows, editing magazines and writing articles. His writings in the editorial columns in Robbar (supplementary with Sambad Pratidin) are named First Person. A complete collection of these articles that appeared between the period 24th December, 2006 to 2nd June, 2013 (author died on 30th May, 2013), have been compiled by Nila Bandyopadhyay in two volumes of the book entitled 'First Person' with a black and white cover page. Each issue of the editorial column had a particular theme. Rituparno however took liberty to write according to his flow of thoughts and did not strictly adhere to the chosen theme of a particular edition. Perhaps because of this, the editor did not document the specific theme under which the individual articles were originally written. Bandyopadhyay classified the articles on the basis of commonality of themes without any footnotes, endnotes, glossary of personalities or places, etc. This is an editorial flaw and in view of this, Bandyopadhyay would be better referred to as a compiler and not an editor of the book. This flaw is perhaps a reflection of a hurried attempt for publication and marketing of the precious book in the immediate aftermath of the sad and untimely demise of Rituparno. This has deprived the readers of precious information related to the article which could have given the readers and researchers a niche to critically appreciate the author's works. However, the foreword by Anindo Chattopadhyay (then colleague of Rituparno and now editor of Robbar) is commendable and substantially adds to the quality of this compilation. Readers can follow Chattopadhyay to find Rituparno through his works.

The Volume-I is titled elomelo desh-kal (unsorted time-space), bismito anwesan (look for afar), mone elo (just get nearer), antarmahal (views of the inner chamber), charitogantha (selected memories), and elegy. The title of volume-II is chayachhobi (light, camera and action), katha o kobita (dialogues and poetry), pothik (traveller), utsab (festival), prosango robbar (related to robbar) and bichitrita (etc.). Words in the brackets are translated by reviewer himself for our comprehension. The basis of these divisions is not clear, especially in case of bismito annesan and mone elo.

Both the volumes of the book have large number of spelling and printing errors despite foolproof accuracy in the original published articles. The page containing the publication information records the name of the writer as 'Rituparna Ghosh' instead of Rituparno Ghosh which is officially used by the author.

The editor however deserves Kudos for the design of the cover page containing Rituparno's own luminous handwriting against a black background. It thoughtfully adheres to the finer nuances of Rituparno's aesthetic sense as expressed in his film [Dosar](#) in black and white. In an interview Rituparno had said that the finer nuances of human relations, which are more often than not overlapping and intricately interlinked, can be best expressed through the grey shades associated with black and white. The intricacies are too knotty and critical to be expressed through hues of different colours. Taslima Nasreen remarked in the review of [Dosar](#) that a genuine artist can meaningfully express himself through black and white hues alone but an ordinary artist will not be able to gracefully give shape to a meaningful painting even if all hues of colour are made available to him/ her.

This book is an addition to Bengali literature appearing as an extension of literary content of Rituparno's films. His association with literature predates his cinematic compositions, most of which is either original or adopted from Rabindranath Tagore, Agatha Christie, O. Henry, Joy Goswami, Tarashankar Bandyopadhyay, Sharadindu Bandyopadhyay, Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay, Utpal Dutta, Suchitra Bhattacharya. Some of his works also appear as newer interpretations and re-interpretations of the works of literary stalwarts. This literary ingredient in his screenplays and cinemas bears the imprint of his originality.

All his works bear a clear reflection of his thorough and thought provoking knowledge base of Indian philosophy, ethos, language and literature specially Mahabharata and Tagore. His movies and screenplays proceed through a lyrical narration although his critics complain of over-dialogues. This however does not detach his films from the world of poetry. For instance, Raincoat reminds us of the Vaisnava Padabali, Antarmahal reminds us about the poems of Ted Hughes. Visuals of [Chokher Bali](#) bear resemblance to Rembrandt. Rituparno once remarked that Abanindranath Tagore speaks through paintings. In the same breath, we can say that Rituparno's films are like rapid-readers. This, in fact, goes well with the Bengali tradition to identify films as boi (Book) or Chhobi (picture).

Rituparno predominantly portrays human relationships; it may be socially defined or undefined. He has dexterously handled the intricate issues and finer nuisances of human relations within gloomy circumstances. His aesthetic sense of cinematic expression overcomes all the sub-current of the mundane intricacies of human life. His dialogues reflect a tug-of-war between two human beings.

Because of Rituparno's unique style of writing prose and exceptional grip and command on language and literature, Joy Goswami once suggested him to publish his articles appearing in the column First Person in the form of a book. Rituparno however expressed his aversion, lest people misconstrue him as an author or a writer because of this celebrity status.

As a sensitive person he was very reactive to contemporary politics. He was against any kind of discrimination, exploitation and hypocrisy in the society. The Nandigram and Singur episodes compelled him to react as a human being in support of humanism and not as a politician. Harsha Dutta has written in Boier Desh that Rituparno was not fully impartial in these circumstances. I think Dutta did not thoroughly go through the contents of elomelo desh-kal.

Several reviews of 'First Person' have regarded it as an autobiography of Rituparno. However, Rituparno expressed a different viewpoint during his lifetime. He lived a life in his own terms and conditions. His artistic way of living made it the journey of a lonely traveller. The eternal traveller on the road less travelled. His editorials of Robbar were more than a formal editorial column and its contents expressed the collective viewpoints on contemporary and other issues of one and all. It is therefore meant as an autobiography of all sensitive readers in an out of the ordinary way and each one of them they can easily imagine themselves the 'first person'.

Note: I am sincerely acknowledging Manjari Bhattacharji to provide me the opportunity to share my thoughts with her and for her able response to edit this review.
