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dialog

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DIALOG is an interdisciplinary journal which publishes scholary articles, reviews, essays, and polemical interventions.

CALL for PAPERS

DIALOG provides a forum for interdisciplinary research on diverse aspects of culture, society and literature. For its forthcoming issues it invites scholarly papers, research articles and book reviews. The research papers (about 8000 words) devoted to the following areas would merit our attention most:

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- Indian Writings in English and Translation
- Representations of Gender, Caste and Race
- Cinema as Text
- Theories of Culture
- Emerging Forms of Literature

Published twice a year, the next two issues of **Dialog** would carry miscellaneous papers. on the above areas. The contributors are requested to send their papers latest by November, 2012. The papers could be sent electronically at akshayakumarg@gmail.com or directly to The Editor, **Dialog,** Department of English and Cultural Studies, Chandigarh -160014. A CD of the papers in MS Word format must be sent along with the two hard copies.

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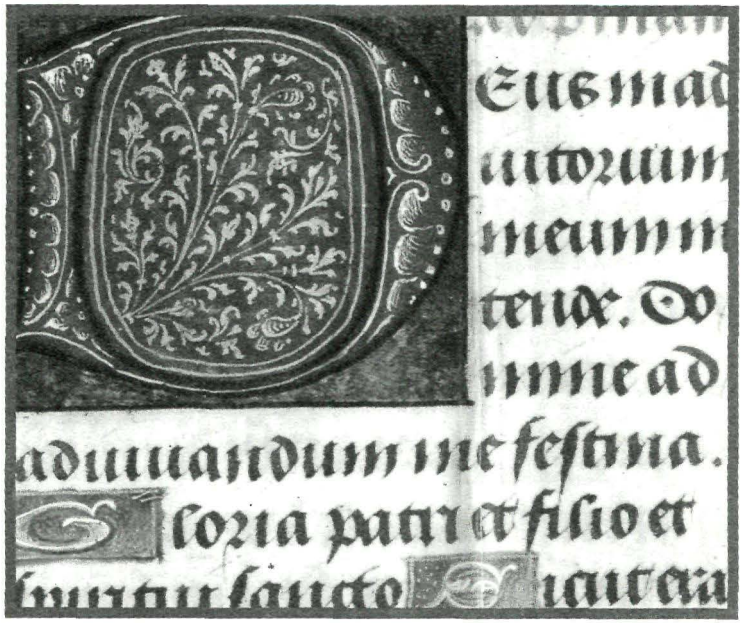

EDITOR : AKSHAYA KUMAR

Editor's Note

This year the Department invited a young Indian English poet Sudeep Sen for a week under the UGC scheme of hiring eminent scholars as Visiting Fellows. The visiting poet stayed with us for a week and organized a number of inter-active sessions with our students and members of faculty. He held a poetry workshop in which more than forty budding poets of the University across the disciplines participated and benefited from his tips on the formal finesse in poetry. The students who participated in the workshop were asked to submit their poems in advance. Their poems were shortlisted, and some of them were discussed in the workshop. He enchanted the audience with his poetry which he read out in two sessions. The highlight of the poetry-reading sessions was that research scholars and teachers of the Department read out some of the poems of Sudeep Sen in Punjabi translation. Geetanjali Bhagat, Monika and Vandana worked very hard to translate the poems and their readings added a special touch to the whole exercise of poetry-reading. One of the poetry-reading sessions was organized in the studios of the Department of Indian Theatre. In this session some of the poets of city were also invited. The visiting poet was engaged in a long conversation during the course of which he explained his poetic credo, cultural background and poetic ancestry. This conversation is reproduced in the form of an interview and is being published in this issue. We hope this conversation would help our research scholars and students in mapping the scope of contemporary Indian English poetry. The present issue of *Dialog* opens with an essay written by Sudeep Sen in which he explains his poetic relationship with Rabindranath Tagore as his intimate other. Besides Sudeep Sen's essay and his interview, the issue consists of 10 papers which deal with literary texts – both, contemporary and traditional, canonical and emergent. There are papers on seminal texts such as Tagore's *Gora*, Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome*, Mira's *padas* and Partition narratives. Other papers undertake close textual analysis of Sem Sheppard's *Sympatico*, Indira's Sinha's *Animal's People*, novels of Emily Bronte and a poem of Dom Moraes through a range of critical perspectives. The papers evince a degree of critical rigour and in a way collectively showcase the diverse directions English Studies as a discipline has branched into. The increasing number of papers on Indian writers in English and other Indian languages point towards the subtle de-colonization of English Studies in India. We intend to bring a special issue on Indian writings very soon.

Akshaya Kumar

Rabindranath Tagore As The Intimate 'Other'

–Sudeep Sen

1.

My emotional and aural response to Rabindranath Tagore's poetry was slow in coming — especially his own English translations of the 1913 Nobel prize-winning *Gitanjali/Song Offerings* — in spite of being buoyed by a glowing introduction by W. B. Yeats, a poet whose pitch-perfect and sometimes sardonic English poetry I quietly admired. Tagore's nectar-dripping 'o'er-floweth-the-cup' nasal-lyrical style, seemed incongruous and anachronistic and uncool (albeit perhaps misplaced), especially growing up in the cosmopolitan 1970s and 80s.

Intellectually however, I was always keenly engaged with Tagore's wider art — in particular his wide-ranging master-skills in the fine arts, theatre, dance-drama, and short fiction. I was specifically attracted to his 'erasures', the wonderful way he made unique artworks out of erasing and inking-out sections and elements from his poems' working-drafts as part of his overall editing and image-making process. It is said that "Tagore — who likely exhibited protanopia (colour blindness), or partial lack of (red-green, in Tagore's case) colour discernment — painted in a style characterised by peculiarities in aesthetics and colouring schemes". His sketches, pen & inks, oils, watercolours, and gouaches of a certain period — and even more significantly, works by Tagore's other relatives such as Girindranath, Gaganendranath and Abanindranath — deeply interested and inspired me.

Of course, Rabindranath's songs and dance-dramas were omnipresent during the yearly Durga Puja cultural programmes and other festivals in my city and elsewhere. Actually, a certain kind of Bengali does not need any excuse or occasion to stage Tagore's works — and I was surrounded by many of them. And surrounded by a lot of Tagore paraphernalia too — beautiful editions of *Rabindra Rachanabali* and *Gitabitan* on my parents' bookshelves, his official sage-like sepia-photograph modestly-framed in wood, his artworks and reproductions on their walls, and stacks and stacks of Rabindra Sangeet EPs, LPs, and audio cassettes by some of the finest exponents of this field. But my prized possession always remains the original 'erasure' tear-sheet from one of his workbooks, framed within double-glass panels on my library wall. My mother, in her younger days, was an active dancer-actress in many Tagore productions. As children, we learnt many of his Bengali verses by heart for recitation competitions.

So growing up in a Bengali family in metropolitan Delhi in the leafy neighbourhood of Chittaranjan Park's *probashi*-Bangla diasporic topography, one could not possibly avoid Tagore. He was everywhere — his music; his poetry; local shops and houses bearing his stamp, symbol, nomenclature and even his name; his sculptures emblazoned in the form of bronze busts; his demi-god-like status; and more. As a child, I had the task of fetching milk from Mother Dairy every evening. And as I walked past the houses in my neighbourhood carrying my large aluminium pail almost grazing the tarmac, sonorous sounds of children practising Rabindra Sangeet and their footsteps learning Tagore's folk-dance were audible. At the time of course I didn't think much of all that beyond the fact that they were part of an everyday ritual. Of those days, I have sometimes provocatively and irreverently said, "Tagore was pouring out of every orifice". This was often not appreciated by hardcore Bengalis who, perhaps missing the irony, sought to misguidedly reprimand me. All this was in my childhood, young adulthood, and possibly a little beyond that. At that age, I suppose as a fashionable act of adolescent rebellion, I perhaps even shunned Tagore. But what is obvious, especially now as a practising poet/literary editor/critic/translator, how much Bengali culture — and by its curious extension, also Tagore — subtly influenced me through the process of cultural osmosis in the received environment in which I was growing up in.

This is not to say that the other languages, literatures, political ideas and philosophies weren't discussed in my home and amongst my grandparents, parents, friends, and their circles. They variously infected and informed me as well — and I am grateful for that. Also, I grew up with three mother-tongues — Bangla, Hindi and English — like many other Indians of my generation who are at least trilingual or more. So my loyalties were not necessarily monolithically fixed to the idea of Bengaliness, albeit a very important and significant strand in my tissue-system.

I was always a devout admirer of Jibanananda Das and Kazi Nazrul Islam's poetry over and above Tagore's; and admitting that was almost sacrilegious. I found their precise tactility, un-Victorian-Augustan phrase-making, use of contemporary idiom, the power of their oral structure, and in general, the best aspects of Modernism, much more appealing at the time. But equally, I also loved and worshipped Milton and Shakespeare, Pushkin and Tolstoy, Ghalib and Faiz, Neruda and Paz, Verlaine-Baudelaire-Rimbaud-Celan. In fact, when I think of the past, the list seems precociously expansive though delightfully centrifugal.

2.

To reiterate, Tagore as a cerebral idea and its efferent discourse was always present in the milieu in which I spent my boyhood days — so

he must have at least partially influenced me, whether or not I consciously acknowledged or rejected it at that time or even later. Furthermore, my five years living and writing in Bangladesh, in the late 1990s to mid-2000s, significantly enhanced my latent appreciation for Rabindranath. There I encountered Tagore as an everyday cultural idea, a living metaphor — unpretentious, earthy, and accessible.

It was such a pleasure to wake up in Dhaka and spend the entire day not having to utter a single word of English or Hindi, and only be immersed in the linguistic cadence and rhythms of Bangla. English as a tongue — except for the limited rarefied upper class — was almost entirely irrelevant and redundant, and thankfully so. In Bangladesh, I found renewed admiration and love for Tagore's music and poetry, largely through hearing his songs sung and his poetry recited by highly-skilled and established singers and actors. Tagore's discourse was aplenty too, as were those of other writers and artists of the two Bengals and beyond.

While in Dhaka, I translated three full-length books of selected poems by three Bangladeshi poets, wrote and choreographed a large-format literary coffee-table book titled *Postcards from Bangladesh*, edited *The British Council Book of Emerging English Poets from Bangladesh*, co-founded/co-edited *Six Seasons Review*, wrote several critical introductions and blurbs for books by local authors, and the Bengali editions of my own books — *Rain/Barsha,* and *A Blank Letter/Ekti Khali Chithi* were also published there.

I closely worked with Bengali poets, writers, academic, singers, artists, actors and lovers of Bengali culture, including of course Tagore's. So my mature engagement with the Bengali language, literature and culture, including my new-found appreciation for Rabindranath was carried back to my home city of Delhi — completing a lovely unexpected arc. This osmotic presence of Tagore as the intimate 'other' — quite unbeknown to me — took root in its translucent *avatar*, widening the tonal registers of my poetic scales. In the slow-churning growth in my own artistic practice from analogue to digital, from vinyl to CD, from mono to stereo to 5.1 and 7.1, I am quite sure upon reflection that Tagore played his subtle part, sonically and textually.

To further illustrate the context of my early upbringing, background, and where Tagore — then and now — fits in my life as a writer and an artist, let me quote part of the introduction from my fledgeling book of poems, *Leaning Against the Lamp-Post*, that was first published as a limited edition in 1983 in New Delhi, and then later in 1996 in the USA

by Triad/University of South Carolina: "The poems in [the] collection *Leaning Against the Lamp-Post*, were all written between 1980 and 1985, while I was still in high school and subsequently an undergraduate in New Delhi. In 1983, relying on my incipient enthusiasm, I summoned up all my courage, typed out about fifty poems from a much larger batch I had written up until then, and with the aid of a modest donation from my grandfather, took it to a local printer. They were cyclostyled through one of those now-extinct, messy, gargantuan machines (photocopying was still quite expensive then) and hand-sewn at a bindery by an old man who until then had only bound thousands of legal manuals and commercial reports with ubiquitous red cloth or leather spines and with the titles stamped in gold. This was however the first time he had bound a collection of poetry, and he did it with genuine interest and with the care of a fine craftsman. He was a poet himself, and wrote and recited in Urdu. He also knew Bengali (my 'official' mother tongue) fluently, having spent his early life in what is now known as Bangladesh. Perhaps it was propitious that my early poems were blessed by the tactile touch of a true poet. It would only be fair to say of my grandfather that his patronage made him my first publisher. And as it turns out, this limited hand-assembled first edition of poems was to be my first 'unofficial' book of verse".

I was always convinced that writing poetry was extremely difficult (even though I thoroughly enjoyed reading it), and was best left to the masters themselves. Then one day in 1980 (I was in Class 10 at the time), daydreaming through a boring lesson in school, I penned, quite unknowingly, in perfect rhyme and metre, my first poem. Then followed those first few years when I wrote sheaves and sheaves of, what sometimes seem embarrassingly "callow", and sometimes naive poems. But then, looking back I feel that there was a sense of innocence, idealism, seriousness, and honesty about them.

I grew up in a liberal and educated family with a lot of poetry and music around me. Art, literature, philosophy, and the world of ideas in particular, had always been a part of my upbringing. I learnt that our forefathers belonged to the aristocracy and could be traced back to the enlightened Raja Raj Ballabh Rai, famous in the margins of Indian history during the times of Sirajudaullah, the Nawab of Bengal in the late eighteenth century. As a child, my mother and grandmother would recite children's verse and sing songs for me. I realise now that much of my interest in form, structure, sound pattern and rhyme scheme comes from hearing aloud the incantatory music of their prayers and songs, which I had obviously internalised over the years.

My parents and grandparents introduced me to the world of poetry. They would recite the great Bengali poets: Rabindranath Tagore, Jibanananda Das, and Kazi Nazrul Islam; also Shakespeare, Milton, the Romantics and the Victorians. I came to learn many of them by heart. In school and college, I explored Hindi and Urdu poetry, discovered the Russians, Latin Americans, as well as Japanese and Chinese verse. Some of my favourite poets included Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Irina Ratushinskaya, Yevgeny Yevtushenko, Octavio Paz, Pablo Neruda, Basho, Li Bai, and many more. My *mesho* [uncle] — through the now out-of-print precious *Penguin Modern European Poets* volumes edited by Al Alvares — opened to me a wondrous window, a hitherto unsighted world of modern European poets: Vasko Popa, Guillaume Apollinaire, Eugenio Montale, Giuseppe Ungaretti, Hans Magnus Enzensberger, Rainer Maria Rilke, Johannes Bobrowski, Horst Bienek, and so many others. Also the Metaphysical Poets and the French Symbolists, in particular Donne, Baudelaire, Mallarme, and Verlaine, fascinated me. Of course, growing up in the seventies, one could not miss Ezra Pound and T S Eliot. The congregation grew and grew, and through quiet osmosis, I was seduced into the world of sound, rhythm, word-patterns, ideas, syllabics, music, and language itself ...."

The direct influence of Tagore on my own work — however oblique and subtle — can be best seen in my two books *Rain* and *Postcards from Bangladesh. Rain* is landscaped in the two Bengals — West Bengal and Bangladesh — contains an evocative series of prose poems structured in three mock-sonnet sections, 'The First Octet', 'The Second Octet' and 'The Only Sestet'. Setting up the tone in the prologue that acts as an *alaap* [introduction], the volume importantly opens with a quote from Tagore:

In the lap of the storm clouds — the rain comes —
Its hair loosened, its sari borders flying!

Postcards from Bangladesh by virtue of its content contains many resonances of Rabindranath — among others, a piece on Tagore's house 'Shilaidaha Kuthibari' in Kushtia on the banks of the River Gorai. Here, he stayed many days at a time composing poetry and songs and writing his novel, *Gora.*

In my multi-media piece, 'Wo|Man: Desire, Divinity, Denouement', that blends poetry, prose, drama, dance and live music, Rabindra Sangeet has been used in the live stage production versions, sung variously by Vidya Rao, Jayati Ghosh and Averee Chaurey, as part of the India International Centre Festival of the Arts, and at The Attic in New Delhi.

More recently, this year I was commisioned to write specific poems, new English poetry in Tagore's own voice for his marvellous *Bhanushinger Padavali* dance-drama stage production. The Kolkata and New Delhi productions were directed by the leading exponent, danseuse Padmashree Bharati Shivaji, Vijayalakshmi, and their repertory dancers of The Centre for Mohiniyattam. Here are the production-specific Tagore poems that I wrote:

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

after Bhanushiger Padavali

ACT ONE

1. Sudder Street, Kolkata

Now back from England —
lonely, and feeling low.

What a time it was, there —
grey and damp

and drenched
like slow-burning grief.

My studies left incomplete—
a Law degree unearned.

What a waste, what a waste —
what would people say?

2. Jyotindranath Tagore & Kamdambini Devi

So what a joy it was
to move in with you both —

under your care, love and grace.
What happiness you gave me —

something you didn't even know
yourselves.

My happiest days were here —
with you both.

But there was sadness as well —
sadness at seeing

notun bouthan pine
for her husband, my brother —

her endless wait for him
to return home from work.

During monsoon days,

dark and clouded —

empty and bereft
at Jyotida's absence,

my *notun bouthan*
plunged in sorrow.

What could I do for her?
How could I appease her?

She, like Radha,
waited endlessly for Krishna —

notun bouthan and Jyotida —
the fair maiden and the dark god,

entwined
in life's happy sadness.

ACT TWO

Oh such beautiful strains of *Bhara Badar*

Bouthan's dirge — melancholic, depressed,
she loved listening to my lyrics,
the ones I wrote, composed, and sung for her.

But the moment she heard dada's footsteps —
her face lit up like a young glow-worm,
her gloom erased by his arrival.

Just like Radha would smile,
asking her *sakhis* to dress her up, adorn her,
anticipating, preparing, to finally meet her lover.

ACT THREE

I still remember *Sajani Sajani*

After very very long, Jyotida is back home.
He waits for *bouthan* to arrive, to join him.
What would he be thinking, wanting, desiring?
Was it about her graceful gait,

her raven-black braided hair,
or her elegant beauty?
Or was it Mohini — the enchantress.
A dream to dance to.

Was it not like Abhisarika Radha
on her way to see her lover.
How happy I feel to see my dada with *bouthan* —
how joyous, and how deeply blessed.

3.

About seven or eight years ago, prompted by the fact that I was introducing my son Aria to the poetries and music of different cultures including Bengali, I realised that the children's verse written by Tagore — as available in limited English translation — appeared stilted, staccato and academic. Also, the quirky-fun-witty aspects of the Tagore poems as those that appear in *Khapcharra/Out of Sync* were not adequately explored in those limited translations. It is first the joyful abandon and immediate emotional connect that has always attracted me to the best of poetry. It is much later after several readings of a poem that I tend to savour the poem's subtle content, context, cadence, and craft. I found the former mostly missing in the available translations of Tagore's children and humorous poetry that I had laid my hands upon until then.

So with the assistance of my *baba* [father], I started translating Rabindranath's wonderfully illustrated volume of nonsense verse, *Khapcharra.* The Visva-Bharati Santiniketan hardback edition which I still possess, with its jute-coloured cover-weave, is priceless. Surprisingly, this book has not yet been fully translated — considering Tagore tends to be among the first Indian writers on the list of publishers' translation series or academics' priorities in the field of Translation Studies (*vis-a-vis* Indian literature of course). Hopefully, my now ailing father and I will be able to complete the translation of this entire book for publication in the near future.

Translating the complex rhythms and clever rhymes of the *Khapcharra* poems have been a particular challenge. In some cases, when I transposed the Bengali rhymes onto English, they tended to hit a flawed tonal register and sounded awkward in modern English diction. When I left out the rhymes altogether, then of course one missed out on the wicked-atonal-musicality and wit, at least to a certain extent. At the end however, I decided to dispense with the end-rhymes but kept the internal rhythms alive and reasonably true. This is because I wanted Tagore's original Bengali poems in my translated versions to read as competent English poems, reflecting the sine-graph of the contemporary English-language idiom. I definitely did not want them to stutter and languish under the cast of a post-Victorian-Augustan shadow and its inherent dated inflections.

Here are four examples that appear in my book of translations titled *Aria* (India: Yeti Books, 2009 / UK: Mulfran Press, 2011). They also appear in *The Essential Tagore*, edited by Fakrul Alam and Radha Chakravarty, published in the USA by Harvard University Press in 2011. The forthcoming Indian edition, published by Visva-Bharati, is slated to

appear in 2012. However, the page numbers mentioned after each poem refer to the recent Harvard edition:

Bird-seller says, "This is a black-coloured chanda."

Bird-seller says, "This is a black-coloured chanda."
Panulal Haldar says, "I'm not blind —
It is definitely a crow -no God's name on his beak."
Bird-seller says, "Words haven't yet blossomed
So how can it utter 'father' 'uncle' in the
invocation?" [*page 743*]

In Kanchrapara

In Kanchrapara
there was a prince
[wrote but] no reply
from the princess.
With all the stamp expenses
will you sell off your kingdom?
Angry, disgusted
he shouts: "Dut-toor"
shoving the postman
onto a bulldog's face. [*page 743*]

Two Ears Pierced

Two ears pierced
by crab's claws.
Groom says: "Move them slowly,
the two ears."

Bride sees in the mirror —
in Japan, in China —
thousands living
in fisher-folks colony.
Nowhere has it happened — in the ears,
such a big mishap. [*page 744*]

In School, Yawns

In school, yawns
Motilal Nandi —
says, lesson doesn't progress
in spite of concentration.
Finally one day on a horse-cart he goes —
tearing page by page, dispersing them in the Ganga.

Word-compounds move
float away like words-conjoined.
To proceed further with lessons —
these are his tactics. [*page 744*]

[NOTE: All four poems were originally taken from the Visva-Bharati 1937 edition of Tagore's nonsense verse, *Khapcharra* (*Out of Sync*). They are all untitled, so I have used the first line of each poem as their symbolic title. 'In School, Yawns' appears on page 4, 'In Kanchrapara' on page 5, 'Two Ears Pierced' on page 10, and, 'Bird-seller says, "This is a black-coloured chanda." ' on page 11.]

These translations that were initially and largely meant for my son Aria and his friends — but to my pleasant surprise and pleasure, they found a much larger appreciative resonance with other fellow poets, writers, translators, lay readers, and even strict Tagore scholars.

Ultimately, unplanned and unintended acts of love and passion such as these come about as a disguised blessing — and that for me is the heart and essence of the joys of poetry, literature, art and music. Rabindranath Tagore, the polymath, sporting a wryly-elegant askance smile, would have done so, hopefully in agreement.

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*****

A Plea for Harmony: Revisiting Tagore's *Gora* in Times of Violence

— Nandini Bhadra

Addressing a delegate of students, academicians and government officials in Surat, celebrating the successful culmination of a year-long "Swarnim Gujarat"[1] project on 21st April, 2011, the Chief Minister of the State, Narendra Modi, reverently paid homage to Baba Saheb Ambedkar, whose birthday the nation recently celebrated, and also recalled the contributions made to Gujarati literature by the Surat-born nineteenth century Gujarati novelist Nandshankar Mehta, whose birth anniversary fell in the same month.

Unfortunately however, Modi forgot to pay tribute to Rabindranath Tagore, the great poet, philosopher and Nobel Laureate whose 150th birth anniversary the nation and its diaspora are celebrating all over the world. Whether the omission was ignorance on the Gujarat Chief Minister's part or a mere slip is beside the point, for had Tagore witnessed the bloodbath and violence post Godhra riots, he could not have rested in peace. For it was in Gujarat, Ahmedabad, that Tagore began his foray into the world of poetry and first composed his own music for his songs. It was again in Ahmedabad that Tagore conceived the plot of one of his finest short stories, *Kshudito Pashan* (The Hungry Stones), and one of the world's best short story writers was born.

The poet W.B. Yeats had once said that literature is born out of quarrel with ourselves; literature in fact is also created in times of upheaval, moments of violence, turbulence and political conflict when the poetic mind responds to all these pressures by creating mournful music. In Tagore's novel, *Gora*, the protagonist's ultimate realization that dawns upon him almost at a moment of epiphany: "Today I am really an Indian. In me there is no longer any opposition between communities, whether Hindu, Muslim or Christian," (436) – is an unattainable goal for politicians and nation makers even a century later. The rampant killing, communal violence and burning of lives, including those of women and children, and destruction of homes following the 'Godhra Kaand' has still not erased from public memory even a decade after its occurrence. That Tagore resisted aggressive nationalism or violence in any form is evident in many of his writings including his novel *The Home and the World*, and many of his essays on Nationalism and Indian civilization.

The novel, in fact, marks the culmination of Tagore's search for an alternative view of modernity, not bound by the Western view of a monolithic modernity, but an all-inclusive world view wherein diverse communities live in peaceful co-existence. Though Rabindranath hailed from a Hindu family of landed gentry who owned estates in what is at present "Bangladesh," there is hardly a trace of the "clash of civilization"[2] evident in any of his works. His worldview was particularly non-sectarian and his writings show the assimilation of different parts of Indian cultural tradition as well as that of the rest of the world. Tagore's family was, by his own confession, the product of a confluence of three cultures – Hindu, Mohammedan and British. His grandfather, Prince Dwarkanath Tagore was well known for his command of Persian and Arabic, and Tagore's own family atmosphere was embedded in Sanskrit and ancient Hindu texts with an understanding of Islamic as well as Persian literature. In his writings about Indian culture and civilization, Tagore emphasizes the fact that for centuries, India has been like a hostess vying to provide "proper accommodation to her numerous guests whose habits and requirements are different from one another..." (Chakravorty199)

Professor Amartya Sen in his celebrated book *The Argumentative Indian* points out how Tagore's writing is an apt representation of the spirit of the heterodoxy and secularism which is typical of Indian history and civilization. He notes: "... The tolerance of religious diversity is implicitly reflected in India's having served as a shared home in the chronology of history – for Hindus, Buddists, Jains, Jews, Christians, Muslims, Parsees, Sikhs, Bahais and others..." (Sen 18-19). Sen further points out how Kautilya's *Arthasastra*, (trans. as *Economics*) composed in the fourth century BC, is basically a secular treatise. Ashoka and Akbar, he contends, were champions of pluralism and Tagore's emphasis on the role of reasoning and deliberation as the foundation of a good society as illustrated in his poem "Where the Mind is Without Fear" is similar to Akbar's championship of 'rahi aql' (path of reason) (32).

In his essay "Hermeneutics of the Subject," Michael Foucault notes: "...the political, ethical, social and philosophical problems of our days is not to try to liberate us both from the state and type of individuation linked to the state. We have to promote new forms of subjectivity." (2001, 336). In his novel *Gora* Tagore creates new forms of subjectivity and the narrative has fluid boundary lines that is open to a multiplicity of discourses. Rabindranath here, interrogates all established paradigms of caste, creed, color and religion and destabilizes the concept of nationalism which was perhaps the most valorized discourse of the nineteenth century.

The novel, in fact, deals with a transitional historical moment in late nineteenth century Bengal when the state had been going through the turbulence of Partition and the atrocities perpetrated by Lord Curzon, who tried to divide the land on the basis of religion. It was indeed the "worst of times" for Bengal as the society of Kolkata was divided into traditional orthodox Hindus and the modernized liberal thinking Brahmos indoctrinated by Raja Rammohan Roy. Ashis Nandy finds in Tagore's *Gora*, an engagement with the political struggles of the time as he focuses on the "two conflicting forms of response to imperialism" (Nandy p.vii). One response, Nandy refers to, was the Hindu Renaissance influenced by the teachings of Raja Rammohan Roy and Western influences and the other was a reaction to this trend trying to reclaim Hindu orthodoxy. The two are personified in the novel as a family belonging to the Brahmo Samaj (a reformed group) and a family of orthodox Hindus, adhering to strict codes of rituals, which determine their social and political codes. (vii)

According to Tagore's biographer, Krishna Kripalani, "Gora is more than a mere novel; it is the epic of India in transition... it is to Bengali fiction what Tolstoy's *War and Peace* is to the Russians." Though Bakhtin in his *Epic and Novel* is of the view that the world of epic is far removed from the discourse of a contemporary about a contemporary addressed to contemporaries – a congealed and half moribund genre, and the novel as an autonomous genre which has replaced the epic for it gives voice to the heteroglossia that reflects human diversity, it is perhaps more advisable to see the novel as an archaic genre threaded into the present; still evolving and reproducing itself across many scales; bearing witness to the input of many environment. Tagore shows us how unmoriband the epic is, 'spilling over into other dimensions of literature and becoming a fraction of prose.' Wai Chee Dimock cites the instance of fractal geometry which may theorize the novel as a linguistic sponge, picking up the poetic genre, steeping it in a different medium, and preserving it only in percentages, as grains and lumps. Dimock's views on James' novels may be true of Tagore's *Gora*. "His novels... highlight not only the permeable borders between antiquity and modernity, and not only the permeable borders between poetry and prose, but also the tangled dimensions of the very large and the very small"(87).

In *Gora*, Tagore moves from an individual's life to a global dimension. Critics have often hailed the novel as a modern epic and have found parallels with it in the *Mahabharata*. *Gora* is truly a novel of epic proportions of contemporary times. Kripalani further asserts that no other book can claim with so much mastery an analysis of the

Bengali intelligentsia of the period with their divided loyalties, their aspirations and inhibitions (Kripalani 225). It is said that the main character of the novel had been suggested to Tagore by Sister Nivedita, an Irish lady who became a disciple of Swami Vivekananda – an advocate of everything Hindu. Once when she was staying as his guest at his Shelidah estate, the sister would insist they sat on the deck of the houseboat in the evening and tell her a story. So Tagore began telling her the story of *Gora* and later wrote it down.

The novel is in fact, an interlock between the familial, the communal and the global. The dominant image is that of a universal motherland replete with paradoxes and contradictions, and throughout the narrative, the search is for a human religion which breaks through all barriers of caste, creed and color. Tagore was a "committed writer" engaged in enunciating a different way of living which would indeed be a potential benefit to his countrymen. The poet denied being a scholar or a philosopher and wrote from what he saw as he says:

> "I wrote from what I saw, what I felt in my heart – my direct experience." (Radice 13)

Thus the India that Tagore depicts is not the falsely romantic India of the Maharajas and tigers, snake charmers and naked sadhus. In the spirit of a true novelist belonging to the realistic tradition, Tagore's depiction of India is of men and women rooted to the soil, India in transition where different classes and types are reacting differently to the impact of the machine age. (Kripalani 171)

All the characters in the narrative are found to be hungry; hungry for love, for food, for companionship and for a place to call home. The society Tagore portrays in the narrative is based on the foundations of love, tolerance and compassion. Suchorita, orphaned in her childhood, is taken under the benign care of Paresh babu who loves her more than his own daughter. Binoy is an orphan who had lost his parents in his childhood, yet finds a home in his friend Gora's abode and a surrogate mother in Anandamoyee who nurtures him and feeds him with great love, care and affection.

Yet the dominant image of Anandamoyee which emerges from the text is of a universal mother who in Binoy's imagination (as we see in the introductory part of the novel) is busy stitching away with different colored threads at the patchwork quilt. The multi-colored threads and the patchwork quilt, which Anandamoyee weaves is foregrounded in the text and becomes a metonym for representing Bharatvarsho with its multitude of people belonging to different caste

and creed, sect and religion. This image of the diverse nature of the Indian identity runs throughout the text, and Gora the protagonist of the novel finally realizes the true universal nature of his Indian identity as he evolves from a staunch supporter of Hinduism to a human being free from the dogmas of caste, creed and nationality - a true transnational identity.

The events of the novel begin around the year 1857 – the year of the Sepoy mutiny when forces of violence were let loose in the outer world. Escaping from the rioters, Gora's mother, an Irish lady gave birth to him in Anandomoyi's home and died later on. His father had already been killed by the violent mutineers. Anandomoyi takes up the new born Irish Christian child and raises him up as her own. Her home thus becomes the site of a third space where the birth of a European child brings endless joy to a mother as Anandamoyi tells Gora in the end of the narrative: "You are more truly my son than a child born from my own body could have been." (*Gora* 432)

In Anandamoyi thus, Tagore records an authentic feminine voice, which is at once a voice of power and gentleness. She makes the transition from a demure housewife, the daughter of a traditional orthodox Brahmin family, to a figure of considerable power and authority – power unimaginable within a patriarchal family structure. Indeed, Tagore did not want to dramatize the circumstances of Gora's birth which in fact heralds the beginning of a new ethnic, secular and transnational understanding; an issue he was to take up later in his much controversial novel *The Home and The World* (*Ghare Baire*) where Tagore critiques the concept of derivative nationalism, deploring the aggressive and phallocentric aspect of patriotism. Nikhil, the titled nobleman, owning vast estates in the country, defines the nation as androgynous, plural and all-embracing, unlike Sandip, the Machiavellian patriot and unscrupulous politician who insists on snatching the nation from the jaws of the enemy by force or guile.

Though Nikhilesh loves his country, he is not ready to worship the country as a divine entity for he will worship God only. Tanika Sarkar in an article entitled "Birth of a Goddess: 'Vande Mataram', *Anandamath*, and Hindu Nationhood" points out now in a remarkable allusion to Bankim's two peasants in *Bangadesher Krishak*, Nikhilesh does not see the resplendent visage of a goddess when he thinks of his country, but sees a low caste peasant, exploited ignorant, anti-heroes...The country, according to him, is no more no less than these starving and deluded people. Patriotism in fact entails social justice for such people, it cannot be waived in the name of any larger national

interest (Sarkar 3968). Yet the character of Nikhil, who is according to Tagore's biographer, Kripalani, compounded of the Maharishi's religious insight, Gandhiji's political idealism and Tagore's own tolerance and humanism, appears to some critics to be too shadowy to be real. (Kripalani 286)

In *Gora* too, Tagore presents a protagonist who is not bound by the geopolitical borders of the nation space; he moves beyond the categories of race, genealogy and nationality which the poet considers to be mere "shadow lines" dividing human beings from each other. The geographical space of Anandamoyi's home in fact represents the twin poles of religious and secular sites where both Hinduism and Christianity co-exist with Anandamoyi herself freed from the bondage of religious beliefs. While Krishnadayal and Gaurmohan are staunch proponents of Hinduism, each practising its rituals with great rigidity and leading almost secluded lives, the marginalized Lachmiya, the maid who had saved Gora from smallpox in his childhood and is later forsaken by Gora, is a Christian.

During Gora's tour across the villages of India, in the fashion of an epic hero, he comes in contact with the villagers and sees the real face of India. He notices the pettiness of village life as well as the co-existence of many religious and social practices. He also finds many Muslim and Hindu families living in perfect amity and harmony and realizes how people were desperately trying to preserve the 'home' and community. This observation of Tagore's fictional protagonist has been corroborated by Professor Partha Chatterjee in his celebrated book, *The Nation and Its Fragments*. Chatterjee notes that there was the co-existence of "many institutions and practices in the everyday lives of the people through which they had evolved ways of living with their differences... beliefs" (Chatterjee 112). Chatterjee also observes how a glance at the history of Bengal amply illustrates the fact that even during the rule of the Pathans in Bengal (particularly during Akbar's reign), the Bengali Renaissance flourished. Religious tolerance and liberal humanism had always been a way of life in Bengal. Bankim Chandra in one of his least remembered essays points out how unlike the English, the Bengalis are many *jatis* living separately from one another namely (viz, the Aryans, non-Aryans, Hindus, Hindu of mixed Aryan and non Aryan origin and the Bengali Musalman 112-113). When Tagore was writing his novel *Gora,* traces of intermixture between the *jatis* could be found in some parts of rural Bengal, though the majority of the jatis remain insulated from each other. In his sojourns across the villages of Bengal the realization dawns upon Gora that India is no

longer an ideal Hindu nation, but a land filled with millions of people where the high and the low, the sacred and the profane co-existed. Coming to a predominantly Muslim village, the only one which did not succumb to the injustice of the British rule, Gora finds in Foru Sardar, the leader of the Muslim village, the grit and determination to voice protest against subjugation. Here he finds only one Hindu family, a barber, who was nurturing a Muslim boy as his own.

For Tagore, the home and the family space was much more than a real-life haven; it was a metaphor for all he believed in; a domain of security, comfort and well being, a place more associative than territorial. He depicts a society which possesses a kinship system based on strong family and community bonds. Rabindranath's idea of 'home' and 'place' comes somewhat close to Edward Said's promising analysis of the notion of home or place: "The readiest account of place might define it as a nation... But this idea of place does not cover the nuances, principally of reassurance, fitness, belonging, association and community, entailed in the phrase 'at home' or 'in place." The poet realizes that with the dramatic rise of instability in the outerworld (for example the lack of proper governance, repression of foreign rule and lack of unity among people in terms of social, political and religious beliefs), the inclination to preserve smaller units like home, family and community becomes very important..

Gora's experience in jail and during his sojourns across the villages is under pinned by Tagore's own observations of rural Bengal when at the age of twenty nine (December 1890) he was assigned the responsibility of managing family properties in East Bengal and oversee the welfare of the tenants. Tagore's biographer Krishna Kripalani notes how the poet, at this time gained an intimate understanding of the lives of common folks, their daily drudgery and constant struggle against the indifference of nature as well as the worse indifference of a rigid social orthodoxy and an alien political rule (Kripalani 137).This close brush with the village folks of rural Bengal was for Tagore also the beginning of a compassionate understanding of the diverse lives of the villages which finds fictional representation in his novel *Gora.*

The events of Ghoshpara proved an epiphanic moment for Gora. He realizes that in the name of religion, the people of Bharatborsho are turning purity into an external object and this is indeed a monstrous act. Gora's dilemma is evident as he notes: "My caste would be saved in the home of those who are persecuting the Muslim people and lost in the home of that person who has given shelter and protection to a Muslim child in the face of social opposition." (*Gora* 484)

For Tagore's protagonist, the incident was an eye-opener as he realized that the true value of life lies in a more humane approach; theory and high idealism has to accommodate the common problems of everyday life which men and women encounter. Tagore here uses the Western genre of the novel to portray contemporary reality, often merging epic features with novelistic techniques. And in the true spirit of epic tradition it is always the greater India or Bharatvarsho which excites Gora's imagination. At a more concrete level, this experience of the sensitive young poet made him alive to the problems of people's lived experiences, which resulted in the establishment of a Welfare fund; a Welfare society to take care of the medical treatment of villagers, as well as the establishment of a University which he named Vishwabharati where Tagore brings the world home.

Like his fictional protagonist Gora or Arjuna in *Chitrangada*, Rabindranath too felt the need for a fuller life as a man among men. Gora, Tagore's fictional hero, leaves the comfort of his home to a tour across the villages and comes into direct contact with the soil of his land and noticed how the majority of his people lived in great misery. This deep concern was in fact the beginning of Tagore's involvement in rural community development projects he thereby undertook. Tagore, like Gora, noted that the spirits of the villagers were crippled by all sorts of social inhibitions and religious superstitions (Kripalani 160).

In his essay entitled 'The Crisis in Civilization' Tagore expresses his grief to be the witness of the "crumbling ruins of a proud civilization lying heaped as garbage out of history". Yet, the eternal optimist that Rabindranath was, he does not commit the "grievous sin" of losing faith in Man or accepting his defeat as final. He further notes: "... I shall look forward to a turning in history after the cataclysm is over... Perhaps the new dawn will come from the East where the sun rises,..." In Tagore's *Gora*, the new dawn does come from the east which is the seat of spiritualism, yet in the poet's inclusive vision, a rejection of the Western world is not a pragmatic solution. An exclusionist view of history is therefore rejected here in favour of a universal world view.

In the beginning of the narrative, Gora, the protagonist of the story is shown to be a strong advocate of Hinduism and practises his religion with great austerity. A natural leader, a true epic hero with powerful oratorical skills – fair and tall, Gora is in fact a highly patriotic person who is eternally optimistic about his dream of an ideal *Bharatvarsho* – a land of great prosperity, idealism and happiness. He however, cannot stand injustice and high society atrocities over the poor. A man of revivalist Hindu ideology, Gora is prejudiced by beliefs in caste and restricts Binoy from eating food served by Lachmiya, the

Christian maid who had saved Gora's life in his childhood. He is also not ready to acknowledge the role of women though he preaches the ideology of worshipping them and cannot accept the fact that women may also be equal part of man's lives. He believes that women should remain subdued like the night. Reluctant to accept women as equal partners of men, Gora resists from expressing his emotions for Suchorita in the several encounters they have in the novel. It may be quite relevant to mention here that unlike his contemporary Mahatma Gandhi, Tagore did not believe in adopting the path of celibacy, rather he admired women and accepted their primary role in the lives of men and nations.

In one of his American Lectures entitled *Personality* Tagore notes: "Woman is endowed with the passive qualities of chastity, modesty, devotion and power of self-sacrifice in greater measure than man is." In other words Tagore suggests that for the world the community and family to function peacefully such qualities are much needed. In several of his writings Tagore acknowledges the power of love and expresses the view that men and women should not repress their desires. One cannot but recall Tagore's dance drama *Chitrangada* published in 1898 which concluded with the following lines using history and myth and the rarefied domain of the elite class of warriors and monarchs of high birth and extraordinary accomplishments. Though Chitrangada initially ensnares Arjun, he expresses his desire to love a woman of substance. So Chitrangada retransforms from an object of desire to a woman worthy of appreciation and finally achieves a subject position, free of ambivalence or confusion. Stepping out of her feminine and beautiful body, Chitrangada introduces herself in the following lines:

I am Chitrangada
I am not a Devi,
Nor am I an ordinary woman
You will worship me and hold me aloft, I am not
that either,
You will neglect me
And hold me as a pet behind you, I am not that too.
If you hold me beside you
In times of stress, if you share with me complex
thoughts, if you (permit me)
To dedicate myself to your committed causes
If you make me a partner in your grief and
happiness
Then will you know who I am.

(*Rachanavali* 5 p. 470)

The ability to participate in the simple joys and sorrows of everyday life is much more appealing to Tagore than any grand passion and heroic ideology. Anandamoyi, Gora's foster mother is a liberated woman far ahead of her times who raises an Irish-British orphan as her own, resisting social pressures and resistance from her own family members. Gora finally discovers that Anadamoyi is the face of his motherland, a fact which Binoy had much earlier acknowledged. But Anandamoyi is a mother who also does not hesitate to embrace an Irish-British child as her own; she forsakes her Hindu identity; she is ostracized by her society; yet for her human religion or religion of love is above everything else. The society she lives in has forsaken her – she is labeled a Christian, yet she spiritedly utters: "Are Christians not human beings? If you are of such upper caste and so close to God, then why does he send Pathans, Moghuls, Christians to crush your heads under their feet?"

A comparison with Bankimchandra's *Anandamath* here becomes necessary. While Bankim conceives of the motherland as a Hindu deity the Santandals worship, a deity who calls out for war, (an instance of Shakto worship directed towards the figure of Kali; Tagore's representation of the motherland is given a secular hue. In the maternal image of Anandamoyi, there are echoes of the goddess Jagatdhatri and Annapurna – goddesses who represent the woman as a universal mother, who nurtures Hindus, Muslims and Christians alike. Discussing Bankimchandra's *Anandamath*, Tanika Sarkar in her article entitled "Birth of a Goddess: 'Vande Mataram', *Anandamath*, and Hindu Nationhood" points out how Nationalist Muslims and Christians found it difficult to chant "Vande Mataram", the hymn which occurs in *Anandamath*, whose faith could not acknowledge a divinity embodied in a Hindu form. Sarkar also points out how Muzaffar Ahmad, a leader of Bengali communism described the novel as "full of communal hatred from beginning to end." (3963).

Bankim's evocation of the armed goddess ready for the kill, portended a history that Muslims could not possibly accept, given the narrative context of *Anandamath*. The novel Sarkar reminds us leaves the reader with no doubt that the enemies of the Mother are Muslims, that the weapons in her hands and the strength in her children are directed against them. (3963)

Coming back to Tagore's *Gora*, we find that he indeed created very powerful characters. Through the characters of Suchorita, Lolita and Anandamoyee, Tagore unearths the 'new woman' who emerged in the liminal space between colonial subjection and an incipient

nationalism. Tagore thus deconstructs traditional feminine discourses of womanhood and in his novel foregrounds a community of women who (as mother, daughter or beloved) through their capacity to suffer and love provide an alternative epistemology that can critique existing models of womanhood advocated by some of his contemporaries.

A reflection on the historiography of the emergence of the novel form in India reveals that when the genre of the novel arrived in India in the last half of the nineteenth century, the paradoxical nature of urban life created tensions unknown before. English education opened up before Indians a whole new world of individualism which clashed with the traditional feudal structure of Indian life. The novelists of this period, themselves product of this dual pull, represented this tension in their fictions. Todorov has rightly pointed out almost in the line of Karl Max about the historic inevitability of the evolution of literary genres: "It is not chance that the epic is possible during one era, the novel during the other." (164) Meenakshi Mukherjee in her path-breaking study of the rise of novel in India points out how the major Indian novels of the nineteenth century show the dilemma of the period between subjective individualism and the traditional hierarchical features of Indian society to which a new compounding factor was the colonial hierarchy. As in late nineteenth century India social intercourse among sexes was not common in the upper classes, and girls were married off before puberty, there was hardly any scope of romantic love depicted in the English novels of the period like Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* or Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*.

In the contemporary Indian context, romantic love could only be illicit involving either a widow or a courtesan. In Bankim Chandra's *Indira*, the heroine is shown to be a strong individualistic woman, but she exercises her individualism and bravery only to reclaim her estranged husband. Though there is a recognizable gap (as has been pointed out by Meenakshi Mukherjee), between the romantic yearning of the girl who was eager to meet her unknown husband and the woman who compromises her individualism to settle down to mundane domesticity, one realizes the unhappiness subdued individualism can give rise to as she says: "Can a rich man's wealth be ever compared to poetry? ... Can the realization of a dream be as delightful as the dream itself?" (*Indira* p. 335)

The realistic novels which emerged in India in the nineteenth century, were not entirely Western imitations. They were an expression of the tension in the Indian society between individualism and a rigid social order. Though we notice elements of the epic in Indian novels of

the nineteenth century, there was a gradual movement away from grand narrative to meta-narrative forms. In the final analysis one would agree with Mukherjee who is of the opinion that the social transformation of the nineteenth century had set in motion certain dialectical forces among English educated class due to which the novel in its realistic form had emerged in India at that moment.

At a time when marriage was a family affair arranged by society, Tagore allows his women characters Lolita and Suchorita individual choice, suggesting the possibility of women's agency in a class specific changing cultural environment. Both Lolita and Suchorita are educated women well versed in the scriptures. It is important to mention here that women at that time were slowly writing and publishing; however women's education was promoted primarily to dispense and promote more diligent and devoted wifely duties. Suchorita could easily reject Kailash, the widowed greedy relative her aunt was planning to get her married to, and Lolita the spirited girl had the courage to confess her love for Binoy. Truly Lolita and Suchorita are true predecessors of Tagore's unique bold and spirited character Mrinal in *Streer Patra* (1970) who emerges from Mejo Bou (wife of the second son) to Mrinal and discovers herself and her identity ["I too will live."] (Rachanavali 648)

Anandamoyi too is a liberated woman, free from social taboos and dogmas. An emblem of universal motherhood, the only solace of her life are Gora and Binoy. At Binoy and Lolita's wedding, when everybody forsook them, it was Anandamoyi and Suchorita who stood by them when neither Hindus nor Brahmos agreed to be with them in their nuptial ceremonies. In the entire gamut of Tagore's women characters, Lolita stands out for her assertiveness and clear headed rationalism. She refuses to let Binoy embrace Brahmo faith and stands against all opposition from external forces.

Paresh babu like the Kabuliwala in Tagore's short story by the same name, is an emblem of universal fatherhood. He had earlier adopted Brahmo faith as he was sick of the narrow parochialism of Hinduism. Yet he finds the Brahmosamaj equally narrow-minded as nobody stands by him when his daughter Lolita gets married to Binoy, a Hindu boy. We also find him religiously reading the epics like Ramayan, Mahabharata and Srimad Bhagwad Gita – in which he finds treasures of wisdom though Hindus claim these texts as exclusively forming the basis of Hinduism. Realizing the religion of liberal humanism as the best religion many critics have located in Paresh babu a replica of Tagore himself.

Others have found in Paresh babu strong resemblance with Tagore's father Maharshi Debendranath Tagore. Tagore writes about his father:

> "(His father)... stood alone when Hinduism suffered (due to conversion to Brahmo faith influenced by X-ianity)... now inspired by new faith, new hope of Brahmo Samaj, he forsook Hinduism and stood all alone..." (*Charitrapuja*).

For Tagore, the home and the family space was much more than a real life haven; it was a metaphor for all he believed in. home in Tagore's narrative is represented as a secure bastion; a site of love, care and affection.

In the narrative the inner world or home is reconstituted from the perspective of the emergent public sphere. A lot of ideas on reform emanate from the domestic space of home. Gora and Binoy have long discussions about religion, politics and certain aspects of emerging political and religious forces. Critics have complained of a profusion of arguments and counter-arguments which are interwoven into the matrix of the text but Professor Amartya Sen reminds us that "prolixity" is not "alien" to the Indian temperament. (Sen 3) The Sanskrit epics *Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata* are much longer than *The Illiad* and *The Odyssey*, "full of dialogues, dilemmas and alternative purposes". Rammohan Roy too loved reasoned arguments as he expressed his opinion about death. "...Just consider how terrible the day of your death will be. Others will go on speaking, and you will not be able to argue back." (qtd in Sen 32-33) In *Gora* too, in the true spirit of epic tradition, reasoned arguments become the raison d'être of the text, as through arguments and counter arguments, all the characters evolve into maturity. Finally, it is through arguments that the elitism of an individualist world view is rejected in favor of a community oriented political vision.

So the vision of the home and the world, the inner and the outer sphere do not remain in bipolar opposition but often penetrate and leak into each other. Tagore here also deconstructs accepted paradigms of femininity. *Gora* like his other novels, particularly *The Home and the World* or *The Wreck (Naukadubi)* advocates the need to break free from rigid categories of gender and explore a more inclusive androgynous identity. Romesh or Nalinaksha in *The Wreck* or Nikhilesh in *Ghare Baire*, Binoy in *Gora* and Amit Ray in *Shesher Kobita* (*The Last Poetry*) are neither aggressive nor emblems of harsh masculinity. Tagore thus problematizes all fixed categories of gender. At a time when thinkers like Bankimchandra and Swami Vivekanada extolled the virtue of "hard

masculinity" urging youths of India to redeem the motherland from foreigners, Tagore seems to say that true freedom lies in accepting our androgynous identity. In *Debi Chowdhurani*, Bankimchandra portrays the emergence of a terrifying powerful feminine principle and in Anandamath, as already pointed out, the Santandal are Vaishnavs who worship a female figure of the motherland as a mother Goddess who cries out for war.

In an essay entitled "The Artist" (The Religion of Man), Tagore notes: "Men's ideal of womanhood and women's ideal of manliness are created by the imagination through a mental grouping of qualities and conducts according to our hopes and desires, and men and women consciously and unconsciously strive towards its attainment." (Chakravarty 259). In the character of Anandamoyi, Tagore represents a nurturing mother who merges with the motherland. Yet motherhood is not the only aspect of femininity which Tagore conceives of; a woman can be a beloved, and shingara (or the theme of love) is expressed in many of his short stories and dance drama like *Chitrangada, Nashtoneer*, (*The Broken Nest*), *Shesher Kobita* (*The Last Poetry*), etc. A woman may also be a loving daughter (Mini in "Kabuliwala", Suchorita and Lolita in *Gora*, Hemnalini in "The Wreck"), a close friend as in *Gora* (Suchorita and Lolita) as well as an individual who can claim respect by her own rights.

Tagore also extolls the love and respect men may share for each other. Binoy and Gora are very close to each other and despite differences, their friendship thrives. In the depiction of women characters, Tagore was particularly influenced by Raja Rammohun Roy well realizing the fact that women constituted half of *Bharatbarsho*. Tagore also acknowledges the role of women in maintaining peace and harmony in the domestic sphere and extolled that the true "dharma" of a wife lies in serving her husband and family. In an essay Tagore wrote in 1902 about *Shakuntala*, a drama by the Sanskrit poet Kalidasa, Tagore is greatly touched by the qualities of forbearance and forgiveness he finds in the play and extols the ideal of *Satidharma* i.e. the religion of self sacrifice, obedience and emotional/sexual devotion of the normative Hindu wife. It is the same representation of the ideal of dharma where Tagore extols in the epic of *Ramayana* which he defines as a tale of domestic matters of an immense scale in which love and respect between father and son, brother and brother and husband and wife are dealt with in epic proportions. (Tagore, *The Ramayana*, 252-257)

The poet compares women with village life which provide people with their elemental needs, with food and joy and the simple poetry of

life. In all Tagore's writings particularly in his post-*swadeshi* phase, he emphasizes the fact that the true history of India lay not in the battles of kings and rise and fall of empires, but in the lived reality of the lives of common people. In an essay on the history of Muslim rule in India, Tagore shows how Hindus were always reluctant to aspire for power and glory or intervene in the lives of other people. The political history of Islam and the more recent history of European conquests in the rest of the world show how it is preferable to lie in peace in a stagnant pool, than hide under our civilized selves ferocious beastliness and unbridled greed. (Chatterjee 112)

Tagore provides insight into the historical events of the period like the Indigo rebellion, peasants' revolt, rise of *Swadeshi* movement, the question of women's education, the relationship between the British rulers and their Indian subjects, Hindu-Muslim relationship etc, but none of the events are subordinated to the compulsions of history. It is finally the evolution of its hero from ignorance to maturity and his ultimate realization of the fluid nature of his identity that the novel charts. In this respect, one can compare Gora with Amit Ray, the protagonist of Tagore's novel *Shesher Kobita* and both the novels are *bildungsroman*. The similarity between Amit Ray and Gora lies in the fact that they arrive at a state of maturity through a tremendous amount of experience. The novel's critique of fixity is finally achieved through twists and turns in the tale. At the end of the novel as the mystery of Gora's birth is revealed, in a rare moment of epiphany, his world becomes decentered "like some extraordinary dream." The very foundation of his world crumbles into dust and his life appears as evanescent, as momentary as the dewdrop on a lotus leaf: "He had no mother, no father, no country, no nationality, no lineage, no God even. Only one thing was left to him, and that was a vast negation." (432-433)

At this juncture Gora is engulfed by infinite nothingness. Paradoxically, through the dynamics of the instability of his positioning, he discovers a new ecology of the self which entails a complete disregard of his ancestors, and his genealogy and liberates him from his oppressive past for he is born anew, as he tells Paresh babu "Today I have become so pure that I can never be afraid of the lowest of castes." (437) He embraces Pareshbabu, the liberal humanist father and asks him to give him the 'mantra' of the Deity who belongs to all – Hindus, Mussulman, Christians and Brahmos alike, who is not merely the God of the Hindus, but the God of India herself. (Gora, 437) Professor Manoranjan Jana points out how Tagore too like Paresh babu and Gora, had traversed a similar path and finally could move beyond all

sectarian religious beliefs. He advocates a 'new' religion or human religion which is all pervasive and can embrace all human beings. (Jana 171)

There has been a lot of speculation among critics and readers as to why Tagore created a protagonist belonging to the Irish Christian faith. A possible reason could be that at this point of his literary career, Tagore was gradually moving away from nationalism, to promote 'world nationalism' which would ultimately transcend all ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic distinctions. As he wrote elsewhere much later, "The whole world is becoming one country... There is only one history of man. All national histories are merely chapters in the larger one." (1917, 99)

At this point, Gora, like Tagore is able to understand the syncretic nature of his Indian identity. This disjuncture with the past is liberating for him as it brings for Gora a new beginning where he comes to understand his liminal self. Belonging nowhere he can paradoxically belong everywhere. One is here reminded of Maxine in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* who consoles her mother that there is no need to lament the loss of family property in China; for they can now belong 'everywhere': "we belong to the Planet now, Mama. Doesn't it make sense to us that if we're no longer attached to one piece of land, we belong to the planet." (Kingston 107)

Gora is thus no longer bound by the geopolitical borders of the nation space; he moves beyond the categories of race, nation and genealogy. Finally he comes up to Anandamoyi and embraces her for she is the image of true India – an all embracing mother who accommodates her children irrespective of their caste, creed, religion and nationality. Anandamoyi thus becomes the symbol of the nation itself, with its widening circumference, crossstitched and gyrating path, as diverse and unique as the multicolored patchwork quilt she weaves.

I would now like to come back to a point I had made in the earlier part of my paper. The Godhra riots and its aftermath continue to haunt the nation even today. Only recently terror bomb attacks in Mumbai killed and injured many members of the Gujarati business community in the Zaveri bazaar area. Terror begets terror and the war against terror continues; innocent lives are lost in the process. It would not be out of place to mention here that Prince Charles, while unveiling a bust of Tagore in Gordon Square in London on 7th July, 2011 to mark the 150th birth anniversary of the poet, read out his message of peace and harmony, in a simple and moving ceremony.

Ironically, the spot where Charles unveiled the bronze sculpture of Tagore was very close to a place where London witnessed a terrible violence on the 7th of July, 2005 when a suicide bomber had blown up a London bus. Rabindranath in his life and works, Charles reminded his audience, imparts to us the message of peace, tolerance and harmony. Living in tumultuous times, Tagore realized that truth and the spirit of man was all that mattered. Like his fictional protagonist Gora, Tagore too realized that the "East and West [will] unite in India – country with country, race with race, knowledge with knowledge, endeavor with endeavor. Then will the History of India come to an end, merged in the History of the world, which will begin." (qtd in Guha 192)

The divisions between races is only man made, Tagore emphasizes. As Wai Chee Dimock reminds us "The blood from anybody... will be bright red at first, and then it will darken coagulating like mud. The body will grow stiff regardless of nationality and the pain overwhelming the body also cannot distinguish race or species. The physicality of each of us is much older than any of these recent divisions. In moments like this, when the baseline of life is extinguished and asserted at one and the same time, when the duration of an individual comes to an end... we know that for all races, all nations, and all species, there is only one world." (Dimock 195)

Global terrorism has become a defining symbol of the 21st century, and as we celebrate the poet's 150th birth anniversary, we must remember that Tagore urges us to be just human.

Notes:

1. *Swarnim Gujarat* was a yearlong celebration of the golden jubilee of Gujarat in 2010 as an independent state which was separated from Maharashtra 50 years back. (in 1960)
2. A phrase made famous by Samuel Huntington in his celebrated article *The Clash of Civilizations.*

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Memoirs of An Irish Bog-Trotter: Exploring Anxieties of Identity in Richard Head's *The English Rogue, Part I*

— Sonia Sahoo

What! more Rogues still? I thought our happy Times
Were freed from such, as from Rebellious Crimes.

The English Rogue Part I, On the Ensuing Subject

In *Archipelagic English: Literature, History, and Politics 1603-1707* (2008) John Kerrigan has argued for a re-mapping of seventeenth-century literary history in terms of the braided geo-cultural legacy of the archipelagic unit comprising England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. In this devolutionary study of Anglophone writing, Kerrigan's thrust is on writers such as the Scottish poet William Drummond of Hawthornden or the Irish Protestant Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery who have been left out of the canon owing to their resistance to conform to the demands of an Anglo-centric paradigm. In a bid to alter scholastic understanding about canonical texts and authors he also engages in re-reading the literary output of major 'English' writers such as Shakespeare, Milton and Marvell in the context of the fraught interactions between ethnic, religious and national groups around the British-Irish archipelago. Though Kerrigan only makes passing mention of Richard Head (Kerrigan 49, 301, 365) my paper attempts to read his writing, from the perspective of the deeply contested issues of Irish national identity and religious-ethnic affiliation that had been exacerbated in the wake of the mid-century Anglo-Irish and English civil wars.

The Irish had a long history of interaction with the English, but in the middle of this revolutionary century their role in defining Englishness became especially acute. Late Tudor and early Jacobean commentaries on the Irish question such as Edmund Spenser's *A View of the Present State of Ireland* (1596) or John Davies' *Discovery of the true causes why Ireland was never entirely subdued* (1612) advocated radical educational and reformative programmes that affirmed the superiority of English culture over the barbarity of the Gaelic Irish while stressing the latter's responsiveness to reform. Spenser sees Ireland as a corrupted place that has the potential to ruin England if it

is not corrected as quickly as possible (Dionne and Mentz 327). Thus Irish children are to be educated

> in grammar and in the principles of sciences ... whereby they will in short time grow up to that civil conversation that both the children will loathe the former rudeness in which they were bred, and also their parents will, even by the ensample of their young children, perceive the foulness of their own brutish behaviour compared to theirs, for learning hath that wonderful power of itself that it can soften and temper the most stern and savage nature. (qtd. in Canny 6)

This generally ameliorative view underwent a sharp change with the Irish uprising in October 1641, attested for instance in John Temple's 1646 treatise *The Irish Rebellion* (Noonan 151). This was the next major crisis to strike England after Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone led the Nine Years War against the English from 1594-1603. Temple, an Irish privy councillor, traced the failure of England's subjugation of Ireland to the perverse irascibility and vicious treachery rooted in Irish ethnic identity. Borrowing from Spenser, Temple derived the barbarity of the Irish from their mongrel ethnicity, descending from the Scythians-nomads famed for their "treachery and usurpation of power in the ancient kingdom of Midia", Gauls-- "precursors of the French"; destroyers of Protestantism, Africans -- "increasingly part of the negative racial nexus being played out in the colonies of North America", and Goths-- "sackers of Rome and destroyers of classical civilisation" (Noonan 161).

Temple's harangue belied the centuries of close contacts bordering on conviviality, between the Irish and English that had bred allegiances transcending religious and ethnic divisions. For instance socio-cultural mingling caused many English settlers in the early seventeenth-century to describe themselves as Irish. Writing in the wake of the charged environment of the Ulster uprising however, Temple is at pains to keep Irish ethnicity and Protestant confession apart. Thus he hardly uses the term 'Irish-Protestant' preferring to identify them by religion alone rather than their ethnicity. Conversely when speaking of English settlers or Englishmen born in Ireland, he does not see the need to identify their creed (Noonan 166).

The mid-century was a vital period of nation-building when Englishmen attempted to discover God's plan for the new Zion. The rhetoric of English nationalism propped up by larger cultural demarcations between Europeans and blacks or closer home between the English and the Irish (Loomba 71), was also to provide a rationale

for England's overseas expansion. The rhetoric of nationhood presupposes uniformity and wholeness that is based upon the political and cultural unity of the nation to which one belongs (Helgerson 22). The civil wars intensified the association between self-conscious English ethnicity and loyalty to Parliament because unlike Charles I who drew much of his support from Wales, Scotland, and Catholic Ireland the New Model Army recruited from the English heartlands.

It is significant that just at this time the huge influx and settlement of Irish immigrants in London gave most Englishmen their first sustained contact with the Irish. The Irish were eventually to comprise the largest foreign community in London till the last quarter of the nineteenth-century. Earlier the Irish had been seasonal migrants who plagued the western port cities rather than find their way to London. But as the two groups mingled on unprecedentedly intimate terms, Irish otherness, interpreted in terms of religion, custom and ethnicity became a touchstone against which to define Englishness-the lack of colour difference intensifying the horror of the Anglo-Irish colonial encounter (Loomba 109). Emerging Irish stereotypes (comic/negative) can be traced back to this phase of powerful demographic and mental changes in England.[1]

During the turbulent years of the English civil war the question of Irish and English identity was increasingly played out in London parishes and its suburbs, as Irish refugees sought poor relief to escape the post-1641 socio-economic ravages. Extant parish records for this period indicate that a more discriminatory approach for relieving Irish paupers fell into place, one that favoured those who could claim affiliation under the label 'English-Irish', thus making sharp distinctions about ethnicity and varieties of Irishness (Noonan 172). Mid-century English policy on Ireland represented by Temple and Lord Lisle- the English Parliament's new lord lieutenant- sought for a homogenisation of Ireland and its inhabitants and the re-establishment of England as the dominant nation within the British Isles.

However the question of a uniform cultural identity and political commitment to England disproved the centuries of colonisation by invading groups that had turned Ireland into a culturally diverse realm polarised along class, ethnic, and confessional lines. Ireland was a site of incompatible, overlapping affiliations, composed of five main groups: the indigenous, Catholic, Gaelic or Old Irish, oppressed and prone to rebellion, secondly the Old English descendants of medieval Anglo-Norman settlers such as the Desmonds and the Kildares, who though Catholic remained loyal to the English crown, thirdly the largely

Protestant New English descendants of Tudor and Stuart planters, fourthly the Scottish Presbyterian colonists who came to Ulster after 1609 (this four-fold distinction ultimately owes to Richard Bellings' *History of the Confederation*, 1673-74), and lastly the Cromwellian settlers who arrived as soldiers and adventurers in the wake of the 1649 conquest and were characterised by a fiery mix of Puritanism and colonial zeal (Rankin 14-15).

Yet in practice the purity of ethnic and cultural borders were often blurred, sometimes through consanguinity, marital and commercial alliances, or shifting political allegiances as in the case of the Old English. These Old English Catholic families, who took Irish names, adopted Gaelic culture, spoke Irish, and intermarried with the natives called firm notions of Englishness and Irish otherness into question. At the other end of the spectrum, those of Protestant descent still insisted on calling themselves English or Scots, even long after the Restoration. Such a chequered history undoubtedly had a profound impact in shaping Anglo-Irish identity that was a complex multicultural amalgam of Irish and English subjectivities.

Efforts towards a collective sense of Irish Protestant community intensified in the aftermath of 1641 which was directly triggered off by the Long Parliament's blatant interference in Irish domestic affairs and ignorance of Irish constitutionalism. Beleaguered Protestant identities were shaped and strengthened through the 1650s and 1660s and even beyond, through acts of remembrance as on 23rd October, which was commemorated as the day when the Protestant massacres were supposed to have started. Yet complex variations in Protestant attitudes during the Interregnum, motivated by self-interest, personal rivalries, political loyalties, religious disagreements, or differences in background, income and upbringing made the question of a unified Protestant identity a vexed one. Thus defying predictability Irish Protestants and Confederate Catholics joined a Stuart alliance engineered by the Duke of Ormonde in 1649.

With the Restoration traditional Stuart promises of clemency and justice to Irish Catholic loyalists strained and destroyed traditional Protestant faithfulness to the English Crown. Royal tolerance which allowed Catholics to go back to their boroughs brought back atavistic fears of yet another Irish rebellion. Conflicting and overlapping loyalties to rulers at Dublin, Whitehall and Westminster contributed to the growing estrangement of the Anglo-Irish experience. This paper then aims to look at one skein of this multicultural Irish identity- namely the English Protestant tradition that Janus-like was able to face both ways:

experiencing gradual alienation from the larger British consciousness through identification with Irish culture and history and simultaneously distinguishing themselves from 'other' Irish communities.

It is in the context of such rethinking about ethnic identity and national affiliation that Richard Head's Anglophone narrative needs to be studied. Moreover an archipelagic reading is especially pertinent in the case of Head, given that he is a representative of early Anglo-Irish writing as well as of the Protestant New English community. Caught in the cleft between English and Irish culture, Head's writing has consistently escaped critical attention because of its tenuous geographical locations and ambiguous ethnic allegiances, notwithstanding the fact that it is precisely such ruptures and discontinuities which make his work interesting.

Head lived a peripatetic life that characterised a later fluid group of authors such as Jonathan Swift who moved effortlessly between Dublin and London. He was born at Carrickfergus in the county of Ulster- itself a complex mix of native Irish, English and Scots settler cultures- in the late 1630s and following the outbreak of the 1641 uprising fled to Bridport, Dorset in England with his mother his clergy-man father having been killed in the rebellion. He got apprenticed to a London book-seller after failing to take his degree from Oxford (his father may have been an Oxonian for records at New Inn Hall in the year 1628 refer to one John Head, B.A.) and apparently fled to Dublin in the 1660s to escape his debtors where he wrote at least one comic play-*Hic et Ubique or the Humours of Dublin* (1663). Though he may have spent the last years of his recklessly bohemian though creative life scribbling for London booksellers at twenty shillings a sheet, Ireland remained the creative centre of Head's writing career (Gillespie 214). Born in Ireland to Protestant English parents, Head's Royalist empathies should ideally have been with the New English yet his works show profound ambivalence as far as his personal associations with the two countries is concerned. Traversing the topographical space between Dublin and London his works reveal a persistent unease about home and belonging, especially manifested through his insecure relations to place.

Head's primary claim to fame today has been for the writing of *The English Rogue, Described in the Life of Meriton Latroon*, an early instance of criminal biography which shows literary influences from both the Continental picaresque- such as *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554), Mateo Aleman's *Guzman de Alfarache* (1599, 1604), Francisco de Quevedo's *El Buscón* (1604) and Scarron's *Roman Comique* (1651-57) -- as well of native English cony-catching literature, beggar-books and

canting dictionaries. Yet Head is quick in refuting any such 'foreign' literary stimuli.

> But some may say, That this is but *actum agere*, a Collection out of *Guzman, Buscon*, or some others that have writ upon this subject... and that I have onely *sqeez'd* their *Juice*, (adding some Ingredients of mine own) and afterwards *distill'd* it in the *Lymbeck* of my own *Head*... I ne'er *extracted* from them one *single drop of Spirit*. As if we could not produce an *English Rogue* of our *own*, without being beholding to other *Nations* for him. (Preface)

The first part authored by Head alone appeared in 1665 and went into five editions by 1667. The later three volumes (1671) and the promise of a fifth one (which never appeared) were the result of collaborative efforts between Head and Francis Kirkman, a London bookseller. It was the earliest work of prose fiction to be translated into a foreign language, the German version published in 1672 and spawned a number of literary adaptations the most well-known being Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1722). As a thinly disguised autobiography, the tricks, seductions, scatological adventures, and final contrition of the rakish hero, resemble similar experiences in the life of the author. This paper posits that the protagonist's and by implication the narrator's multiple role-playing and picaresque journey (in Part I) is a metaphorical quest for a composite identity in the course of which he tries to reconcile the conflicting strands of his hybrid Anglo-Irish inheritance. It's double title concerning a rogue who claims to be English but adopts a fictitious Irish-sounding name, being an early marker of the profound sense of alienation, fragmentariness, and cultural heterogeneity marks the narrative despite its cheerfully ribald veneer and later specious moralising.

> When I read o'er what I have writ, then shame
> O'er spreads my face, because it stabs my Name.
>
> Meriton Latroon (Preface)

As Latroon negotiates the fluid thresholds between home and abroad, self and other, his physical and emotional dislocation mirrors the discordant anxieties of the seventeenth-century Anglo-Irish experience. In keeping with the milieu in which it was written, the text reproduces a number of familiar stereotypes associated with the Irish. The hero, like the author is born by chance in Ireland: "By this time my Mother drew near her time, having conceived me in England, but not conceiving she should thus drop me in an Irish Bog". (Chapter I)

When he is about four he escapes the Irish rebels-'those bloody Butchers' as he calls them-through his ability to speak Irish and by travelling under the protection of an Irish servant who swears that the child is Catholic.

> Four years after my birth, the Rebellion began, so unexpectedly, that we were forced to flee in the night; the light of our flaming Houses, Reckes of Hay, and Stacks of Corn, guided us out of the Town, and our fears soon conveyed us to the Mountains. But the Rebels wandring to and fro, intending either to meet with their friends... or else any English, which they designed as Sacrifices to their implacable malice, or inbred antipathy to that Nation, met with my Mother, attended by two Scullogues, her menial servants, the one carrying me, the other my Brother. The Fates had decreed my Brothers untimely death, and therefore unavoidable, the Faithful Infidel being butchered with him. The surviving servant carried me, declaring, that he was a Roman Catholick, and imploring their mercy with his howling Chram a chrees, and St. Patrick a gra, procured my Mothers, his own, and my safety. (Chapter I)

Throughout the moral deficiencies of Latroon's character, for instance his promiscuity, is blamed on his fortuitous Irishness rather than his English ancestry.

> It is strange the Clymate should have more prevalency over the nature of the Native, then the disposition of the Parent. For though Father and Mother could neither flatter, deceive, revenge, equivocate, &c. yet the son...can (according to the common custom of his Countreymen) dissemble and sooth up his Adversary with expressions extracted from Celestial Manna, taking his advantage thereby to ruine him: Cheat all I dealt withal, though the matter ever so inconsiderable. Lie so naturally, that a miracle may be as soon wrought, as a truth proceed from my mouth. And then for Equivocation, or mental Reservations, they were ever in me innate properties. It was always my disposition rather to die by the hand of a Common Executioner, then want my revenge, though ever so slightly grounded. This is the nature of an Irishman. (Chapter I)

However any simplistic contrast between Irish savagery and English sophistication is merely superficial, not in the least because the essence of Englishness in the text is represented by an unscrupulous rogue (an instance of double marginalisation). The narrative also rethinks the idea of a self-enclosed identity, by

problematising the notion of birth, kinship and inheritance. Any sense of belonging rooted in place is doubtful because place of birth does not rigidly denote nationality, and Latroon advertises himself as an English rogue despite being born in Ireland. Yet "Having been steept for some years in an *Irish Bogg*, that hath added much to his *Rogueships perfection*" (Preface), place does affect character, for his roguery is a result of the environment in which he is born and not a bequest from his parents. Unable to find anchorage in places or people he is the eternal exile whose acute sense of displacement is intensified by the lack of local attachment and lasting relationships which most always end in feelings of boredom or entrapment.

Women are universally susceptible to his charms. Latroon shares affinities with the unscrupulous and predatory Cavalier heroes of Restoration comedies who were bursting onto the London stage at about this time. Like his literary compatriots Horner (in William Wycherley's *The Country Wife,* 1675) and Dorimant (in George Etherege's *The Man of Mode,* 1676) who take pride in cuckolding citizens and seducing their gullible wives, Latroon too fancies himself to be an aristocratic rogue sending pregnant females to the plantations (Benito-Vessels 83).

> In three years that I liv'd as a Master I had nine Illegitimates, which I knew, four whereof were begotten of my Maids, which put me to a vast expence: Two of the Mothers would have forc'd me to have marry'd them, or allow'd them competent maintenance, (for they were subtil cunning baggages) had I not by a wile got them aboard, and never heard of them since. Besides two or three terrible Claps which cost me a considerable sum in their cure. (Chapter XVI)

The amoral libertinism that characterises his endless succession of seductions and affairs which seldom last for a long time, sometimes even for a day or two is vividly evoked in the letter he writes to the woman he met at Gravesend.

> By this you'll hear I'm gone and wonder much
> That I should go, not taking t'other touch:
> Inverted 'tis all one; for hence you know
> When we both met, it was but touch and go.
> I was so fierce at first, I soon was spent:
> Storms and high winds are never permanent...
> Your Gold will fit me for another bout.
> Hence be more wise; your fond belief doth shew,
> That you may lose your hidden treasure too.
>
> (Chapter IX)

As a child he discovers how to torture turkeys and steal from neighbouring gardens.On reaching adolescence he debauches the family maidservant and is immediately packed off to a boarding school. His ennui finds a salutary exit when he is flogged and expelled from school on account of his 'Childish rogueries' and Latroon takes to the road to make his own fortune: "Whilest my Mother was in a serious consultation with her Reason, how she should dispose of me, I gave her the slip, resolving to run the resk of Fortune, and try whether mine own endeavours would supply my necessities". (Chapter II). In the course of his travels he encounters different people belonging to different echelons of society and varied cultures. One of the first groups he encounters is ironically enough a band of gypsies who

> ply'd me oft with Rum-booz, and pleased me so well in giving me a young Rum Mort to dally with, that I was much delighted in their conversation, resolving to list my self one of that ragged Regiment: For pennyless and Friendless I then was, and by that two days slenderness of diet, I judged how great my wants would be, if I took not some course for a livelihood, having not wherewithal to spend, or means to defray my necessary expence. (Chapter III)

In giving an account of life among a society of itinerant beggars and providing an extensive glossary of thieves' slang *The English Rogue* is a late though direct descendant of sixteenth-century cony-catching literature as in John Awdeley's *Fraternity of Vagabonds* (1561) and Thomas Harman's *Caveat for Common Cursitors* (1566). Further Head follows the conventions of the cony-catching genre by spending a considerable amount of time in the dedicatory epistle assuring readers that his aim is both utilitarian and moralistic. The text is advertised as a corrective project meant to 'please as admonish.'

> Had I not more respect to my Countries good in general, then any private interest of mine own, I should not have introduc'd my *Friend* upon the common Theatre of the World, to act the part of a *Rogue* in the Publick view of all... Reason suggested to me, the *History of his Life* could not but be as profitable as pleasant, if made *publick*. For herein you may see Vice pourtrayed in her own proper shape, the ugliness whereof (her *Vizard-Mask* being remov'd) cannot but cause in her (*quondam*) Adorers, a *loathing*, in stead of *loving*. (Preface)

He conflates two communities under the rubric of a single narrative -- the rogues and the Irish-who were consistently vilified throughout the early modern period for their mobility, alien tongue and

outlandish customs and provided convenient internal others for English self-definition. The gypsies are commanded by the 'ruffeler' who according to Harman "hath served in the wars, or else he hath been a serving-man, and, weary of well-doing, shaking off all pain, doth choose him this idle life, and wretchedly wanders about the most shires of this realm'" (Kinney 115). Cony-catching literature had a tradition of Irish rogues such as the 'frater' whom Head includes in his list of rogue types; who on Harman's authority was supposed to carry feigned letters-patents apparently issued by the Queen for poor relief- a stark reminder of the mid-century insurrection when scores of Irish vagrants flocked to London. The list also mentions the 'whipjack' or 'fresh-water mariner' who claim that

> their ships were drowned in the Plain of Salisbury. These kind of Caterpillars counterfeit great losses on the sea; these be some Western men, and most be Irishmen. These will run about the country with a counterfeit license, feigning either shipwreck, or spoiled by Pirates, near the coast of Cornwall or Devonshire, and set a-land at some haven town there, having a large and formal writing, as is abovesaid, with the names and seals of such men of worship, at the least four or five, as dwelleth near or next to the place where the[y] feign their landing. (Kinney 128)

Earlier pamphlets like Harman's often took care to indicate which were Irish and sought to link the Irish crisis with the problem of the rogues in general.

That the issue of identity is an important one in the text is also signalled early on by the larger tradition of rogue narratives within which Head was writing. Cultural representations of the early modern rogue made him an enduring icon for mobility (both social and geographical), change and social adaptation. In an ironic overturning of the familiar figure of the Renaissance self-fashioned gentleman, rogues used linguistic dexterity and social agility to question the assumptions which sustained early modern identity. By successful impersonation, rogues blurred the boundaries that separated classes and assumed "a subversive model of social exchange that allows for individual agency in the construction of identity, a process that ...take(s) place...in the course of a conversation between two individuals" (Dionne and Mentz 125). The Renaissance anxiety about vagrants was linked to their geographic and social fluidity at a time when identity was a function of physical and communal place.

In her discussion of early modern vagrancy and homelessness, Linda Woodbridge correlates rootlessness with a profound sense of

estrangement. She mentions psychologists such as Lisa Goodman, Leonard Saxe, and Mary Harvey who argue that "homelessness is itself a risk factor for emotional disorder" (Woodbridge 227). They note that 53 percent of a random sample of homeless people exhibit full-blown cases of post-traumatic stress disorder, suffering from a collapse of affiliative bonds with others, desperate feelings of helplessness, symptoms such as depression, irritability, angry outbursts, sleep disturbance, and the general sense that they "have experienced a malevolent world"' (qtd. in Woodbridge 227). Latroon's endless role-playing as he devices stratagems for cheating and seducing gullible men and women respectively display a lack of fixed identity which is further demonstrated in the travels he undertakes in the latter part of the text.

Rogues and the Irish imperilled fantasies of domination and cultural incorporation that buttressed the imagined English identity through their ability to cross and efface cultural boundaries- the threat being greater for those respectable English who chose to translate (this being a term used by Spenser in *A View of the Present State of Ireland* as a metaphor for changing the Irish into English) themselves into members of these ideologically 'other' communities. Brooke A. Stafford gives an insight into such 'degenerate' communities for instance the Roaring boys and girls of Jacobean London (young people interested in criminal culture who smoked, swaggered, and canted out of fashion sake and were generally prone to noisy and riotous behaviour, portrayed for instance in plays such as Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist* of 1610 and Dekker and Middleton's *The Roaring Girl* of 1611) and the Old English subjects of the Pale, each representing groups of people who voluntarily chose to become a part of 'other' communities (Dionne and Mentz 331). Such subjects reveal the ruptures in the imagined English national identity, in a classic reversal of Homi Bhaba's concept of mimicry with official culture imitating the Other. The first part of the title-*The English Rogue Described*- hints at this prevalent fear of contamination or dangerous proximity[2] between alien cultures, just as the latter half- *in the Life of Meriton Latroon*-further strengthens it. The reflexive mediation between the two halves of the title is an early indicator of how boundary transgression between social classes and geographic territories that characterises vagrant subcultures is precisely the kind of cosmopolitan mediation between borders that the text endorses and advocates through Latroon.

Still afflicted by a chronic sense of estrangement Latroon takes to the road again, his diverse travels around the archipelago and beyond becoming a metaphor of his longing for roots and origins. As a quest

narrative with an erratic itinerary, *The English Rogue* has affinities with the conventional travelogue, a given fact since Head had authored pamphlets such as *The Floating Island* (1673), *The Western Wonder; or O-Brazeel* (1674) and *O-Brazile; or The Inchanted Island* (1675). In *The Western Wonder* the narrator and his crew search for the enchanted island of O-Brazile to the south-west of Ireland, while *O-Brazile* relates the accidental discovery of a mysterious island shrouded in mist, north of Ireland by one Captain John Nisbet and his crew.

Being England's first colonial outpost, Ireland was the staging ground for later imperialism and a crucible of colonial otherness, and the Irish were often likened to New World natives. Writings about the 'wild' Irish usually presented them as bestial and brutish on account of their Catholic confession, dietary preferences-fondness for white meats and cow's milk implying a lack of vigour- and sartorial likings-partiality towards mantles and glibs (hair grown over the forehead) supposed to be part of their Scythian heritage (Noonan 154). Unfamiliar traditions such as gavelkind- 'a system of partible inheritance (as opposed to primogeniture) emanating from the clan rather than the family', boolying which referred to the custom of using primitive shelters when tending to flocks during summer, tanistry where the land reverted to the clan on the death of the father, instead of to the immediate family, made the Irish appear as lewd and wicked to English eyes (Noonan 154). Other strange customs such as fosterage which described the practice of parents putting their children into the households of others to be raised in order to cultivate close ties with those families, gossipred which referred to relationships between families united through religious sponsorship or god parentage (Noonan155) furthered the suggestions of barbarity imputed to the Irish, even meriting comparisons with cannibals during moments of great political distress as in 1641.

Latroon's sustained account of unfamiliar places, people and customs is a metaphorical representation of the New English emigrant experience in Ireland. In the course of his adventures he finds himself amongst the Anthropophagi who not only worship goats, bats, owls and snakes but also

> covet most their friends, whom they imbowel with much greediness, saying, they can no way better express a true affection, than to incorporate their dearest friends and relations into themselves, as in love before, now in body, uniting two in one (in my opinion) a bloody sophistry. It is a very truth, of which I was an eye-witness, they have Shambles of men and womens flesh, joynted and cut into several pieces fit for dressing.

> It is usual for some, either weary of life, or so sick they have no hopes of recovery, to proffer themselves to these inhumane Butchers, who returning them thanks, dissect or cut them out into small parcels, and so are sodden and eaten. (Chapter XLII)

He describes the marital customs of the Nairos (though any etymological link with the Nairs is debatable) in the land of Canavar near the Malabar Coast where the marriage is initially consummated by the 'Bramini' or priests after which the husband started his conjugal life. Yet these priests

> being glutted with such frequent offerings, and therefore will many times sell them to strangers. Such a proffer I had once made me, and with shame I must confess, I did accept it, forgetting those sacred vows I made in Newgate, to live a more pious, strict and sober life...If any one will save them the labour, pain and trouble, by accepting the Hymeneal rites of his Bride. (Chapter XLII)

Coming to the Isle of Zeyloon (possibly Ceylon) which is near 'Cape Comrein' he finds that the

> people are Pagans, not owning a Deity: some though have heard of Christ, and others of Mahomet, but such are rarely to be found. They go naked, not compelled thereunto by want or poverty, but meer heat of the Sun. They are great Idolaters, worshipping things in monstrous shapes. On the top of a high Mountain, they have set conspicuously the Idæa of an horrible Caco-Dæmon, unto which Pilgrims from remote parts do resort. (Chapter XLIV)

This deity whom the pagans call the 'Deumo'

> is enthronized on a brazen Mount: From his head issue four great horns, his eyes of an indifferent proportionable bigness, having somewhat a larger circumference than two sawcers; his nose flat; a mouth like a portcullice, beautified with four tusks, like Elephants teeth; his hands like claws, and his feet not unlike a Monkeys. (Chapter XLIV)

The practice of sati is rationalised as a means of dissuading women from murdering their husbands

> which they were frequently guilty of, by reason of their extream leachery and insatiate venery) so by that means they were reduc'd to that good order, as that they tendered the preservation of their husbands healths and lives equally with their own. (Chapter XLII)

Such episodes reveal the symbolical entanglement of self and other and show how any exploration of Anglo-Irish identity must lie in the journey through otherness. Foreignness is less a political categorization than a psychological relationship between individual and environment. So throughout Latroon's sojourn in England or even when he goes back to Ireland to escape his creditors his lack of attachment is hardly any less. To him both England and Ireland are merely opportunities for profit and adventure, Dublin being a 'Devil's Inn'

> for there is hardly a City in the World that entertains such variety of Devils Imps as that doth. If any knavishly break, murder, rob, or are desirous of Polygamy, they straightway repair thither, making that place, or the Kingdom in general their Azylum or Sanctuary. (Chapter XX)

Narrowly escaping hanging at Tyburn, after many vicissitudes Latroon, is made a slave and sold to a Greek master at Mocaa who sets sail for the East-Indies. He wins freedom through shipwreck in India and visits places as wide-ranging as Surat, Goa, the Malabar and Coromandel Coast, Do-Cerne (Mauritius), Siam (Thailand) and Bantam in Indonesia. His myriad encounters with cultural/ethnic others which unfolds like a catalogue of marvels, corresponds to his syncretic cultural inheritance but is also a crucial locus for locating English strategies of domination, colonization and assimilation. Neat divisions between races and cultures were under constant risk in colonised contexts. Theoretical notions of racial and cultural segregation were challenged, in practice through hybridity.

Through such encounters Head prepares the ground for an inclusive cross-cultural identity which is not static and monolithic but a dynamic multi-layered negotiation and exchange between borders open to miscellaneous inheritances from diverse cultures. Head problematises the narratorial position by having a character who in traversing between English, Irish, and rogue identities simultaneously calls into question constricting notions of identity and reductive concepts about otherness. The text encourages a dialogic reading of identity as constituted out of a multiplicity of positions and differences. Head also probes the tenability of a dual affiliation- despite an English inheritance the Anglo-Irish can belong to both Ireland and England. Thus the notion of a uniform and homogeneous national identity is undermined in favour of a more pluralist vision: being English or Irish is a matter of preference rather than a condition of being born in a particular place.

The question that the text poses in a rather nonchalant manner is how long one can stay culturally pure in Ireland before 'going native?' This inquiry assumed increasing relevance in the context of differences in plantation policy (and especially over the plan to consign some natives implicated in the wars since 1641 to Connacht and Clare) that erupted in the form of pamphlet-wars during the mid-century. Vincent Gookin, the son of an early-seventeenth century English settler in Cork, argued- in *The Author and Case of Transplanting the Irish into Connaught Vindicated from the Unjust Aspersions of Col. Richard Lawrence* (1655) - that Irish natives rendered powerless by defeat, were best dealt with not by banishment but by exposing them to the influence of Protestantism and English civility in a bid towards religious and cultural assimilation with the English settlers. He was writing in response to Richard Lawrence, former master general of Cromwell's horse and military governor of Waterford, who advocated a rigid policy of apartheid -in *The Interest of England in the Irish Transplantation Stated* (1655) - for settling the English on a land that had been cleared of the disruptive and dangerous presence of the natives.

From the early years of the seventeenth-century commercial considerations had made mixed plantations expedient which in turn bred a strong sense of attachment to place thereby causing many English settlers to identify with Irishmen. The events of 1641 however overturned any sense of confidence and smug complacency in favour of fear and suspicion and gave an opportunity to hostile observers like Lawrence to infer that the English settlers "had been polluted by their contacts with the Irish Catholics and could no longer be trusted with any share in the planned new settlement" of land (Barnard 59). English planters now increasingly tried to identify with British Protestants who had been set upon the barbarous Irish, though at the same time displaying awareness of real-life practicalities. For as S.J.Connolly rightly concludes

> Their exchange revealed a predictable contrast between the army radical who saw a conquered Ireland to be reshaped by uncontaminated English settlement, and the second-generation settler, accustomed to the pragmatic compromises of colonial society, and aware also of the dependence of the New English elite on the labour and rents of native workers and tenants. (Connolly 107)

Being a second generation New English settler from 'mixed' Ulster, Head would have been more supportive of Gookin's argument

that recognised the economic implications of ethnic segregation. Within the narrative this consciousness is reflected in Latroon's background which is constituted by crossings. Identity is not a given absolute but entails a complex navigation of porous archipelagic boundaries and border zones where cultures and languages continually overlap and interact. In a country plagued by repeated waves of invasion, space is territorialised to a greater extent in Ireland than elsewhere. Here cultures and ethnic backgrounds cannot be contained but are constantly altered by the presence of the other; and unidirectional processes of cultural transformation are consistently critiqued. This is historically evidenced through those Old English subjects who expose the possibility that Englishing can be an unstable, uncontrollable and a bidirectional process that bares the looseness of the colonial project in Ireland. The liminality of the Anglo-Irish experience ensures that identity is constituted through the process of reading one's face in the image of the other.

The colonial discourse was often ensconced in the language of sexual encounters. Sexuality was the site of the maintenance or erosion of racial difference (Loomba 159). Within such a discourse European others such as the Irish occupied the same symbolic space as women. Both are situated "outside society, dangerous, treacherous, emotional, inconstant, wild, threatening, fickle, sexually aberrant, irrational, near animal, lascivious, disruptive, evil, unpredictable" (qtd. in Loomba 160). In the narrative then Latroon's initial resistance and final culmination to the 'contagious' material if not the sensual charms of an Indian woman makes sense because it becomes the ultimate symbol of the interpenetration and contamination of the English self with the racial and gendered other as well as of the realisation that 'other' identities may in the end be more desirable.

> for though she was black, or rather tawny, yet she was well-featur'd and well-form'd, having long black hair (when she unty'd the tresses) hanging down to her legs. She from the first shewed me as much kindness as could be expected from that lump of Barbarism: and I could discern her inclinations, (in the same manner as a man may from beasts, when they are prone to Generation) but yet it went against my stomach to yield to her motions. However, she continued her love to me, not letting me pay for any thing I call'd for: and when there was no necessity of being aboard, she would in a manner make me lie in her house...Gold and Jewels she had great quantity, with an house richly furnished after the Indian fashion. For this consideration, I perswaded my self to marry her; and with several arguments alleadged, I gained so much conquest

over my self, that I could kiss her without disgorging my self: and by accustoming my self to her company, methought I began to take some delight in it. By degrees, interest so over-power'd me, that I resolv'd to marry her. (Chapter XLIX)

One hardly fails to discern future echoes of a Protestant ascendancy buoyed by industrial success in the language of market processes and commercial expedience that Latroon uses to rationalise over his decision in marrying the Indian woman in the concluding movement of the narrative.

> Interest so blinded my Reason, that I went instantly to my Captain, and gave him information of my proceedings, desiring his consent in the marrying this Indian, alleadging how advantagious it would be to me. He granted my request, upon my earnest importunity; and being dismist from his service, we were married according to the Ceremonies of the Church by an English Priest, she renouncing her Paganism. What money was got by my wifes Trade, I laid out in such Commodities the Country afforded, as Callico's, Pepper, Indico, Green-Ginger, &c. and sold them immediately to the Ships lying in the Harbour, doubling what I laid out: so that in a short time I found my stock to increase beyond expectation. Such satisfaction my Black received from me, that she thought she could not do enough to please me. I was an absolute Monarch in my family; she and her servants willingly condescending to be my vassals: yet though I thus enjoy'd the prerogative of an husband, yet I did not Lord it too much; which won so much upon my wifes affections, and those that were concern'd with her, that assoon as I desired any thing, it was immediately performed, with much alacrity and expedition. (Chapter L)

Notes

1 The London-born playwright and pirate Lording Barry's (1580-1629) *Ram-Alley, or, Merrie Tricks* (1611) has traditionally been considered to be the first Irish play on English stage. For a detailed account of Jacobean plays representing the Irish see Anne Fogarty, 'Literature in English, 1550-1690: from the Elizabethan Settlement to the Battle of the Boyne' in Margaret Kelleher and Philip O'Leary (eds.) *The Cambridge History of Irish Literature*, Vol.I, To 1890.

2. The term proximity is taken in the sense in which Andrew Murphy (as quoted by Brooke A. Stafford in his essay 'Englishing the Rogue, "Translating" the Irish: Fantasies of Incorporation

and Early Modern English National Identity') drawing upon Homi Bhabha's idea of mimicry in which the Other is "a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite" uses it to analyse English-Irish relations since it retains a "sense of that which is 'approximate'- a semblance which is simultaneously similar, yet different."

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Science and Empire in the Works of Amitav Ghosh with special reference to The Calcutta Chromosome

— Sakoon Kaur Chhabra

For a long time science has occupied a space which is apolitical and by extension beyond contention. This assumption springs forth from the understanding that sees the progress of science as an unproblematic continuum of inventions that has brought in its wake material progress and comfort. However, to situate science in a sociological matrix gives us a more nuanced understanding of progress in human societies. And to study the impact of transfer of practices of Western science in the wider context of colonialism reveals the power inherent in the discourse of science. This line of thought has been in currency in the social sciences and especially in history it has inspired a host of scholars to investigate related concerns like politics of Missionary hospitals, the state of pre-colonial science and technology, indigenous reaction to introduction of Western science, the question of modernity in India, the impact of Western science on Indian society, curriculum and indigenous science, etc. Early studies like that of Charles Forman (1941) and George Basalla (1967) (discussed by Arnold, 2000) paved the path for furtherance of the basic contention that science is not ideologically innocent and that science and society are linked in ways we do not conventionally acknowledge. Further, Basalla tried to bring into centrestage, the idea of 'colonial science' - which in itself is a very provocative idea because it conceives of science as a structure that can be built upon a given purpose, which in this case was colonialism. Historians such as David Arnold in *Science, Technology and Medicine in Colonial India* (2000), and in the Indian context, Deepak Kumar in his monumental work *Science and the Raj* (1995), have tried to further the argument that science is not a politically inert category and was used as a *tool of empire* in the heyday of colonialism. Historians such as David Arnold have set themselves against the backdrop of authoritative works of historians such as Joseph Needham (*Science and Civilisation in China:* 1978) and Lynn White (*Medieval Technology and Social Change:* 1962) who have established that as far as science & technology was concerned, non European cultures were not in a state of *tabula rasa* but had thriving scientific traditions of their own and that Europe has had a long standing debt to Asian technology.

Even though postcolonialism as a trend has been very influential in literary studies, scant attention has been paid to the aspect of science abetting colonialism. The issue of science has been very peripheral in the body of Indian Writing in English even though owing to its inception, the afore mentioned larger questions of modernity, progress, rationality etc has been a part of the discourse since its inception. Amitav Ghosh (b 1956) however, has dealt with the issue at many levels- his entire oeuvre, from his apprentice *The Circle of Reason* (1986) to his latest *The River of Smoke* (2011) has betrayed a much nuanced understanding of the subject. In some of these works especially the two works of the Ibis trilogy, he has delved into the prevalent cultures of knowledge in Europe of that time to make sense of the several scientist figures peopling these works. In an earlier work like *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1996), it is the postcolonial angst that makes him assert the existence of a subaltern science, which if viewed in the light of the critique of Western science as a phenomenon, could very well have thrived within the European society. To see Ghosh's critique of western science in postcolonial terms alone (which is a prime concern) would not be sufficient, Ghosh's vision is to see this as a pan-continental phenomenon that questions the very fundamentals of western science. In *The Calcutta Chromosome,* he pointedly criticizes the practices of 'scientific' institutions and personages of what was in the 19th Century referred to as Imperial Science Service. Many critics and blurbs have described it as an edgy work of science fiction, however its true importance lies in its trenchant portrayal of subaltern science as a phenomenon of colonial times. This interface between Western science and indigenous science has been explored to some extent in his *The Hungry Tide* (2004), where a Western educated cetologist, Piyali Roy comes to the Sundarbans to investigate the Indian species of Whale found in the Gangese riverine ecosystem. Here she comes into contact with Fokir, who is an illiterate fisherman but as the narrative progresses, the power equations change and Piyali must seek Fokir's traditional wisdom if her endeavours have to succeed. The setting of the story in the treacherous terrain of the Sundarbans where the boundaries between land and sea are redefined every single day and where man confronts nature in its most raw form, the whole idea of science as taming nature is also explored. On many an occasion, the protagonists when thrown defenceless against the elements, experience the most primeval fears and it is during such encounters that they reassess issues such as progress, civilization and wilderness, reason and faith and just like the *jwar* and *batha* of the waters they rise and fall to redefine these boundaries.

His most recent *River of Smoke* (2011) tracks the import of Western science to India through a network of botanical gardens. With a delineation of some fascinating characters like Paul Lambert and his daughter Paulette, he plumbs into the practice of science in the nineteenth century when the Romantic strain was still a very influential mode of nature study, upon which the modern science bases itself. Ghosh's novel *The Sea of Poppies* (2008), the first in the Ibis trilogy is based on the 19th Century Opium trade and is set in Bhojpuri speaking parts of Bihar -- this hinterland became the new wealth generator for the British after the spice trade became unprofitable. The British set up opium factories that processed the opium crop, cultivation of which was forced upon Indian farmers. Here there is a need to say something about the portrayal of the opium factory. Ghosh read and drew from a detailed account of an opium factory written by a Scotsman who was the head of one such factory and curiously the account was meant to be used as a tourist guide. (Ghosh *Reddy Interview* 63) Ghosh sets this factory as a grand structure and in its impermeability, almost like a fort. The awe inspiring *carcanna* had many levels like concentric circles, the innermost circle preserving the end product in specially designed vaults. It is especially significant that Ghosh should choose the opium factory and the *Ibis* towards this end, because both starkly highlight the exploitative aspect of this transfer of technology. The outer grandeur of the *carcanna* inspires the awe of the people but the inner recesses hide within their folds the exploitative labour of the natives and also the 'advanced vaults' that store the deadly end product which will be administered to them for their own doom. The shadowy presence of the waif thin, dark labourers going about their work in a mechanical fashion is a foil to the severe portly white superintendents lording them over.

Amitav Ghosh is very alive to these issues -- his discontent with modern 'scientific' disciplines can be traced to his early days when as a researcher in Anthropology at the University of Oxford (1979-82), he realized that during his field work at a small village, Lataifa in Egypt, he was unwittingly propagating very imperial notions about race and culture and he felt that the academy was treating 'non western' cultures in a preconceived simplistic manner. Although a broader understanding of Ghosh's skepticism towards disciplines ranging from Anthropology to History, Postcolonialism to Science (he has been an ardent associate of the Subaltern Studies group) in general becomes a backdrop, in this study the discipline of science becomes central in investigating these concerns. Many of Ghosh's novels, in more than an oblique way, bring up issues concerning the power play that builds

around the discipline of science both in the colonial and modern context. The context of Colonialism, given the extreme polarity of economic-political interests, is really an apt setting to understand this and related issues with the required complexity.

The nineteenth century saw the burgeoning of science as a discipline across Europe and it was essentially through the means of technological advancement that the encounter between the coloniser and the colonised happened. It is also through this that the might of the colonisers is displayed. The idea of West as symbolizing scientific temperament and their most apparent successful application of science in inventing production enhancing industrial machines was furthered during colonisation. During this time science as the white man's exclusive preserve and power was highlighted. It also became during this time what KN Panikkar refers to as one of the the 'tools of empire.'(147). During his viceroyalty, Lord Curzon (1899-1905) highlighted some of the ways of 'using' scientific spirit of the times to the "practical as well as polemical needs of high imperialism...science could be a force for far reaching change, an aid to more efficient government , and not the least, in an age of increasingly assertive nationalism, a fresh source of legitimation for the British rule.'"(Arnold 136).

In *The Calcutta Chromosome,* Ghosh sets the story in this charged colonial milieu and depicts a struggle around owning and appropriation of scientific research. The book also hints at the existence of alternate science(s) that could have possibly existed around this time. It is fascinating that the book should move through three centuries to tell the story of the English scientist, Ronald Ross. The book opens in the future where Antar, a New York based Egyptian scientist is exploring the mysterious disappearance of L. Murugan, who had worked at the same organization as he did and had mysteriously disappeared while on a trip to Calcutta. Murugan is a self professed researcher on the life and works of Ronald Ross, a British scientist who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine for discovering the vector for malaria. Murugan, however, is of the opinion that around this time there was a shadowy Indian organization whose members were already in receipt of this information but was making Ross a mouthpiece for passing it along as being a cult of silence they were under vow not to reveal these contents. Ghosh creates a pacy narrative that flits between three centuries to unravel the filigree networks that connected the shadowy Indian characters and the British scientist hogging the limelight. What emerges out of the novel as a fundamental concern is the utter neglect

of what existed in India as science and later, also the racial discrimination that Indian scientists faced in the highly structured 'colonial science' service dominated by the British.

To begin with, Indians were seen as wholly incapable of any original scientific research and later, when few like Prafulla Chandra Ray and others, even upon acquiring a Western style education were denied entry into these services or were treated with contempt and when taken, like Jagadis Chandra Bose were offered one third the pay of his British Colleagues (Arnold 140). It is in this context that one has to look at a text like *The Calcutta Chromosome* wherein the British scientists hold central and important positions in running the laboratories and the Indians are no better than menial workers. At one point the scientist Cunningham says that he employs the workers who offer themselves for these services --"far preferable, in my opinion to being surrounded by *over eager* and *half formed* college students. One is spared the task of imparting much that is useless and unnecessary." (Ghosh 127. Italics mine). Some critics like Tabish Khair have read the going ons of the sect as symptomatic of a larger subaltern reaction to Western science (Khair 149). The fact that they were silence-worshipping gnostics only strengthens the imagery of a silenced subaltern and brings to mind the question that has been repeated *ad-nauseum* about whether or not he/she can speak. However the definition of subaltern can be given a much wider currency here. Apart from the usual Gramscian understanding of it implying lesser in power, in the present case it is marginal in the sense of being an alternate discipline vis-a-vis Western science. *The Calcutta Chromosome* has been instrumental in pointing to the shadows where an Indian reaction to Western science was taking place. It questions the validity of the belief[1] that Ross was the lone crusader, the classic scientist who did his work dispassionately in the finest British tradition and made this discovery for which he was awarded the Nobel. The physical presence of hundreds of British Civil servants and soldiers puts them at risk of several lethal tropical diseases because of which many lives were lost. To invest in a field like tropical medicine was done primarily for their own benefit but had a dual appeal of profit and philanthropy like for so many other arenas. [2]

In an interview with Chambers (*Conversations* 31), Ghosh reveals that reading through Ross' memoirs, he sensed the presence of a shadowy character who was a permanent fixture in the backdrop of Ross' laboratory. This man was identified as Lutchman - a lab boy who did innocuous jobs like maintaining lab equipment and sweeping the premises. However Ghosh says that Ross was naïve enough to admit

at certain places of the bearing he had on the outcome of the research. Ghosh conflates these details, which are true with a fictional subplot of the existence in this time of a cult in Calcutta who was Gnostics, and worshipped silence as deity. Because they could not utter what they knew, they 'used' figures like Ross to transmit this knowledge they were already in possession of. Here he also talks about the wisdom of the common villagers for whom telling an anopheles from the other varieties was a quotidian detail. By juxtaposing the story of malaria research and an actual scientist and his lab boy with the esoteric going ons of this mysterious sect he creates a breath taking pacy narrative that moves between silence and knowledge, science and non-science. He makes a fundamental point of the subaltern contribution to science, the unveiling of which is as treacherous as giving voice to these silences with which the book is replete.

Another facet of Western science that made it powerful was its association with productivity post-Industrial Revolution. Science came to represent this force which led towards the invention of machines and machinery which enhanced the production of goods manifold. The finished products demanded consumers which then became a powerful inducer for the hunt for new markets in the colonies. The grand edifices and structures that were built in the colonies, whether these were the railways or the factories filled the Indians with awe and these were constant reminders of the progress made by the western countries because of science.

It was the advancement in science that propelled this kind of growth for the British and their portrayal of power through structures such as the factory. The science of navigation too had achieved great feats and was instrumental in advancing the political clout of the British. In *The Sea of Poppies,* the schooner *Ibis* is constantly hovering in the backdrop of the narrative. *Ibis,* which was a slave ship, was converted into a ship ferrying indentured labourers. The novel opens with Deeti, the central protagonist having a vision of the ship, whether she is actually seeing it looming on the horizon or it is a hallucination indicating the effect of opium is never made clear. However what is significant is the importance the ship wields as a means of navigation, as a tool of exploration, as a symbol of the British maritime prowess but equally powerfully as a means of exploitation of the lands and people it touches.

In understanding the Western attitude towards Indian science, David Arnold, talks of the existence of an 'oriental' attitude towards Indian science, which has been the dominant opinion. According to

him, this 'school' has believed in the existence of an advanced Indian science in the ancient times followed by its total decay and degeneration during the Mughal era. Some historians have catalogued India's many scientific achievements especially in the field of Astronomy and Medicine, while others enthusiastically declared that the "Asiaticks had climbed the heights of science before the Greeks had learnt their alphabet."(3).These achievements were represented as being clearly 'cutting edge' and India as being way ahead of its European counterparts at this time. Later, they argue, that with the coming of Mughals, this pace slowed down and by the eighteenth century India had become totally lacking in the theory and practice of science. However the contemporary revisionist historiography believes that in the true Orientalist spirit Medieval India was not given credit for several scientific and technological practices flourishing in Indian society at that time. He avers that India at this time, "far from existing in cultural and technological isolation and being averse to all innovation, had over the centuries borrowed extensively from and contributed generously to the scientific and technical knowledge of neighboring regions, from the Middle East and Central Asia to China and Southeast Asia, and in fields as diverse as agriculture, astronomy, architecture, chemistry, medicine, metallurgy, textile production, shipbuilding and armaments." (Arnold 4-5). The revisionist historiography, by talking about the economic and intellectual links that existed between India and cultures other than the West is pointing in the same direction. It is with the dominant Orientalist mindset that we see the immediate 'appropriation' of the ownership of science by the British and the simultaneous negation of anything close to science being practiced in India. As a concession, Indian science was said to belong to a bygone era, however, it had no chance of asserting itself in the 'present' times of scientific decay perpetrated by centuries of Mughal Rule. Within this argument lay the very crux of the justification of British Rule, which was about to use 'modern' science and technology to 'better the lot of the Indians.' In the process of colonization and expansion, the apparent use of science and technology, whether it was in their use of weaponry or navigation skills or for that matter in the setting up of railways and telegraph, added immensely to the aura of power they were there to exude politically. This and the beginning of a Western style education in India gradually eclipsed the 'other sciences' that had existed at this time.

This brings to fore the very forceful Foucauldian notion of 'the struggle between knowledges': there has been a lot of focus on the rise of English Literary Studies in India, this study is an attempt to

understand the questions Ghosh asks through his fiction about the rise of Western science at the cost of Indian traditions of science. Michel Foucault in his essay "Society must be defended" talks about this tendency of the coloniser and goes back as a true 'historian of the systems of ideas' to the time of Enlightenment and consequent colonization. He contends that this time (18th century) was the time of competition amongst knowledges. Just like historians and Cultural Studies practitioners have established the story of introduction of English Literary Studies in India and the very first class of Shakespeare at the Presidency College, Calcutta, similarly with the passage of Macaulay's Bill not only was English made the medium of instruction, but other disciplines and bodies of knowledge as had existed in the Indian system of Education before the advent of the British were totally sidelined. What Macaulay achieved with the introduction of English medium education in India was by no means an isolated event in the history of education reform in India. It was instead a link which becomes very clear when we try to understand the Imperial politics vis a vis knowledge at this time. As mentioned before, Foucault in his essay "Society must be Defended" has picked on this time (when colonial expansion was getting more aggressive) in 18th century, simultaneously there was a political attempt to 'manage' knowledge:

> At this time we saw the development of processes that allowed bigger, more general, or more industrialized knowledges, or knowledges that circulated more easily, to annex, confiscate, and take over smaller, more particular, more local, more artisanal knowledges. There was a sort of immense economico-political struggle around or over these knowledges, their dispersal, or their heterogeneity, an immense struggle over the economic inductions and power effects that were bound up with the exclusive ownership of a knowledge, its dispersal and secret. What has been called the development of technological knowledge in the Eighteenth century has to be thought of in terms of a form of multiplicity, and not in terms of the triumph of light over darkness or of knowledge over ignorance. (179-80).

Foucault, in this work also talks about the effect of rigid disciplining on knowledge. He argues as to how with the setting up of universities and with the writing of Encyclopedias one form of knowledge becomes 'authentic', thereby eliminating others by an act of exclusion. By legitimizing theirs and keeping others outside the fold of what constituted acceptable, they were successful in promoting one kind of knowledge and marginalizing others. He also shows how post

nineteenth century, as a consequence of the establishment of this kind of hierarchy, the 'amateur' scholar ceased to exist. (183)

The phenomenon of the introduction of western science in India specially represented in Indian Writing in English is yet under explored. It opens up a plethora of linked issues like 'Indian science', traditional knowledge schools and modernity as propelled by science, transfer of technology and its impact on Indians etc.

The British, by highlighting their material advancements and power projected it around their affiliation with reason and science. This, too, is an interesting way to understand the discourse around science. And like mentioned before, in texts like *The Sea of Poppies* technological expertise of refining and processing opium in the 'state of the art' *carcanna* evokes awe in the minds of the Indians. Ironically, however, the use of technology much to the awe of the local people is only draining them economically by forcing them to grow opium, by inhaling the fumes that envelope them in a stupour and only producing a finished product that incapacitates them physically and morally.

Ghosh's strength as a novelist is his extraordinary ability to assess historical phenomenon. His unusual rigour for detail is however always put in perspective with a rarified understanding of overarching socio-historical circumstances. His ambitious take on the import of western science into India is by no means a simple project and he shows an unusual commitment in unraveling layers of this complex phenomenon.

Notes:

1. Claire Chambers in her essay talks about the existence in 19th century of the convention of scientist's biography. (*Historicising Scientific Reason 44*). These were written in a eulogizing, 'humanist' vein and the 'hero' was shown as a toiling, sacrificing man who was on earth to fulfill a mission ordained by God for the benefit of humanity at large.

2. Andrew Cunningham and Bridie Andrews take this contention one step further and aver that 'recent historians claim that Western colonists and imperialist adventurers were primarily agents of disease rather than health. They changed the disease ecology of the lands ...by introducing diseases to which the native populations had no resistance ...by introducing large scale monoculture of crops or animals for the European markets.' (2)

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Cultural Periodization and Contemporaneity: Reflexive Modernity Or Elitist Eliotesque Antimodernity

— Sharanpal Singh

Cultural problematics call for cultural periodization to enable its viable analysis and critiquing. Fredric Jameson, relying on Ernest Mendel's tripartite division of the phenomenon of capitalism (videlicet, (i) Market, (ii) Monopoly, and (iii) Late) charted its correspondences in the domain of culture, through his famous essay "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism" (1984), that later culminated in his book-length study with a similar title (in 1991). He entitled his threefold division, individually as the epochs of (i) Realism, (ii) Modernism, and (iii) Postmodernism, respectively. Jameson, the most influential left American theorist of the postmodern, critiques "the return of the rhetoric of modernity", in the present as "the sign of a major ideological regression". He adopts on unusually strident tone in *A Singular Modernity* (2002) branding this phenomenon as "baleful and continuing postmodernization". He explains :

> It must somehow be a postmodern thing, one begins to suspect, this recrudescence of the language of older modernity : for it is certainly not the result of any honest philological and historiographic interest in our recent past. What we have here is rather the reminting of the modern, its repackaging, its production in great quantities for renewed sales in the intellectual marketplace, from the biggest names in sociology to garden-variety discussions in all the social sciences (7).

Thus for Jameson this "recrudescence of the modern" is an indication of our being held captive in the present where socialist narratives stand debunked yielding place wholesale to free-market capitalism. This recycling of modernity effectively demonetizes socialism and its efficacy.

Recently, Jameson in his *Valences of the Dialectic* (2010), while discussing rhetorical gestures of the theoretical models in the present, mentions "circularity" as one of the stances of contemporary theoretics, explaining it as an "antithetical structure" attempting to demonstrate the "complicity of critique with the target of criticism", surely a sign of modernity in the present, gelling with its paradigm of Jamesonian recrudescence, where critique is rendered "impossible". since it is seen

as "reproducing whatever it criticizes". He revisits the recent past, the era of the pre-Derridean, for purposes of repudiation of the "recrudescent". He explains: The structuralist perspective always grasps contradiction in the form of the antinomy : that is to say, a logical impasse in which thought is paralyzed and can move neither forward nor back (*Valences of the Dialectic 43).*

A little later, in the same text, Jameson presents a version of the dialectic that almost resembles archaic Derridean deconstruction itself. He says : "The opposition between truth and falsity... was the vocation of the dialectic (and its unity of opposites) to overcome and to transcend" (64).

It is in *A Singular Modernity* that Jameson describes "the concept of modernity" as "coterminous" with the discipline of sociology. According to him, it owes its "reemergence" to "alternative" modernities providing "anything but ideological cover for neoliberal exploitation" (7). He not only calls in the discipline of sociology as responsible for "tendentious decertification" of socialism in the present, but terms that "most influential ideologue of 'modernity'", namely Anthony Giddens, followed by Niklas Luhmann, "counter-revolutionary" inheritor of "sociological ambitions of his teacher Talcott Persons," branding the two eminent sociologists as "crypto-free-marketeers", who propagated "ideological affirmations of the neoliberal order", terming them as "neutral statements of necessity." Jameson's own analytic description of the phenomenon of postmodernism is scarcely diverting or attracting. It is a far cry from the once ardently propounded call to revolutionary action or the praxis promising salvationist emancipatory potential, nevertheless it is to be preferred, because it looks back to bring to memory, even if now only negatively, how in the recent past modernity held forth the possibility of revolution to usher in global socialism. The construction, in other words, is metapostmodernist. It retains that overarching sense of the historical that postmodernism, according to Jameson, no longer possesses ("Postmodernism" 53-92).

Jameson goes on to pronounce that it was this characteristic that rendered early twentieth-century literary modernism so attractive. Historically, it "corresponded to a situation of incomplete modernization," (*A Singular Modernity* 141), with agrarian life still stressing itself as a viable alternative as against the temporality ordering the urban, and here Jameson alludes to the significance of the imagery of the agrarian and the countryside in Thomas Stearns Eliot's *The Waste Land,* and then he also mentions the charms of a world where social transformation is still envisioned as a possibility. It is for this reason,

according to Jameson that the literary texts of modernism are so aesthetically powerful. This explains the fact that Eliot's rather politically conservative vision appealed to the left. Furthermore, Eliot's poem, undoubtedly his *magnum opus,* ranges over historical time to befittingly reclaim it for the present. Eliot's poem, according to Jameson, "points to a genuine Absolute, that is to say, a vision of total social transformation which includes a return of art to some putative earlier wholeness" (*A Singular Modernity* 164).

Ulrich Beck in his *World at Risk* (2009) while discussing the present day world, terms it as "world risk society" which functions more and more by a "dynamic of nonknowledge where "calculation of probabilities" is beset by the "continual multiplication" of "positive uncertainties" (vii). The denizens of this risk society, Beck says, are living in a "time of reflexive modernity," where the consequences of modernization turn out to be scary, a source of worry, like, e.g., the ecological, the technological, or the nuclear waste with widespread problems of radiation and toxicity (05). Recently, "risk theory" and its relevance to contemporary literature has been discussed by Susan Mizruchi (2009). Ursula K. Heise's studies have also appeared (in 2002, and 2008). Lawrence Buell placed risk theory in the larger context of what he named as "toxic discourse" (2001).

Risk theory attends upon two interrelated theses: it is concerned with the notion of reflexive modernization, and the pervasive concomitant issue of risk. The first one entails revisiting to critique and repudiate Jurgen Habermas's notion of modernization as enlightenment project, and his Theory of Communicative Action. Thus, instead of (i) utopian evolutionism, (ii) communicative rationality, (iii) development of means of production, (iv) structural differentiation, and (v) functional integration, Ulrich Beck sees darker dimensions to such developments, especially in the constitutive role assigned to science and knowledge. He concludes that the consequences of scientific and industrial developments are a set of risks and hazards. Suffice it to say that this is the dystopian outcome of rationalization and scientific progress. Unlike the arguments advanced by modernist thinkers like Max Weber, Michel Foucault and Theodor Adorno, at least according to Beck, these problems can be dealt not through negation, but through the "radicalization of such rationalization" (Beck. *World at Risk* 02). So modernization must become reflexive, or, as Beck prefers to call, we are living in a time of "reflexive modernity". There has been an intense debate about the meaning and usefulness of the term "reflexive modernity", and other versions differ in details from Beck's theorization.

Some of these can be contrasted in Beck, Giddens and Scott Lash *(Reflexive Modernization : Politics, Tradition, and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order)*. For instance, a recent study on the subject by Mark Seltzer stresses on the environmental aspect. According to Seltzer the "reflexivity of reflexive modernity" is "not simply a check on modernity" but also "integral to its scary dynamism and violence" (101).

The first phase of modernity concentrated on the equitable distribution of wealth and goods, but the world as we live in it today, is as Joost Van Loon says, "concerned with the distribution of bads" (Loon 21), like toxic nuclear waste. These "bads" are shipped to the powerless, unimportant nations by those responsible for engendering such waste, or as Naomi Klein calls them, by "the profiteers of contemporary disaster capitalism."

It is literary studies that has to contemplate on the phenomenon of reflexive modernity, and also to think about the relation of literary studies to the discipline from which the concept of reflexive modernity has originated, which is the subject of sociology. Furthermore, how relevant it is to the work of present day litterateurs is also to be deliberated upon. Since literary studies possesses historical orientation, and indulges in imaginative rendering of the complexities of temporality it can handle this task well and effectively. Reflexive modernity gives greater scope to the vagaries of the unknown future to encroach upon the present, which brings in more of the speculative and, consequently, the present is rather stretched thin and derealized, but taking up such objects for study is also the forte of literary studies. Literary works are suffused with aesthetic reflections. They are sensitive to the scenario of reflexive modernity from which these works take birth, and which they imaginatively, both, delineate and disseminate. Sociology has equipped literary studies with an array of theoretical orientations that can be seen reflected in the constructs emanating from cultural history, nevertheless literary scholars are largely sceptical when it comes to using these methodologies for purposes of creative writing in literature. They would rather prefer the insights proffered by a thinker like Pierre Bourdieu, both in mapping the "literary field" and critiquing the "judgement of taste." A comparison of the temporalities of sociology and literature reveals a basal structural difference between the two disciplines. Sociology is directed to the present, while literary studies ambit of time is comprehensive, bending back into the past and looking ahead into the future. For instance, George Herbert Mead, a founding father of sociology in the U.S. anchored his conception of social existence in the present. According to him, experience constantly

surfaces and flows in relation to it. He said that the present "of course implies a past and a future... to these both we deny existence" (Mead.1). Luhmann in his essay "The Future Cannot Begin" begins by locating past and future in the present, terming them as "present pasts" and "present futures" (Luhmann. *Differentiation of Society* 271).

Herminio Martins, while analysing the structural functionalism of Talcott Parsons and its aftermath tellingly deliberated upon "temporalism" and "historism", only to arrive at a familiar, *déjà vu* conclusion. He said:

> ...the demise of functionalism has not brought about a substantial increment in the degree of temporalism and historism in the theoretical constructs of general sociology, even though this appeared as a major goal of critics of functionalism" (Martins, "Time and Theory in Sociology", 246).

This was followed by Erving Goffman's symbolic interactionism, but it evinced little concern in historical consciousness. There is the exception of historical sociology, but mainstream sociology remains oriented towards the present. Literary value in literary studies as distinct from sociology cuts across differing historical periods. Year after year, older and still older literary texts are brought alive in the classrooms. Present day investing in theory is deepened by its coordination with curricula that is largely historical in organisation and chronology. Research in literary studies is, at least in some important aspects, oriented to the past, with analytical excursions into cultural history and relations with the present. The focus is on how the past directs the present, and the present (re)perspectivizing the past. The reader may reminisce over such modernist essayistic analyses as T.S. Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent." An instance of the study of the preoccupations of the present day literary practitioners is Linda Hutcheon's designating the novelistic writings of today as "historiographic metafiction" (Hutcheon. *Poetics of Postmodernism*). Cultural historical facts join with the fictionality of the objects of study, and the past, comprehended on its own terms, functions in the present as an extension of the life of today, into a novel cognitive territory, in the same way as fiction that reveals an alternate reality alongside the factual one that encompasses it. The historical range of literary studies is an important aspect that differentiates it from the discipline of sociology. This mobility in time provides a viable future to the discipline, as also the means to sustain it. The discipline is being critiqued here only on the grounds of the characteristic of fictionality, but it also possesses other strong disciplinary claims, like the other important

dimensions, videlicet rhetoric, poetic, etc. However, Daniel Punday explains that sometimes literature is charged with an inability to distinguish fact from fiction in postmodern culture (Punday. *Five Strands of Fictionality* 15), but in the contemporary scenario this is more than offset by the emergence of theory.

Nevertheless, certain sociological foci would add to the discipline of literature. Literary studies should include a stress on present day literary institutions, as also their functions to (re)invigorate practices of reading and writing, and to incessantly transmit texts of the past to the readers of today. This would also provide more legitimacy to literary studies in the present day public discourse as a discipline that is "real" and relevant (Cohen. *New York Times* C1). Literary sociology would present comprehensive accounts of the reading populace: how and why and in what circumstances people read and do not read literature. It would explore how our interest in literature is made specific in particular media, institution, practices and genres. Such studies have been successfully undertaken by scholars like Gerald Graff (*Professing Literature*) and John Guillory (*Cultural Capital*).

An array of contemporary institutional phenomena awaits detailed sociological study: there has been the rise of other forms of entertainment (apart from literary studies); there are fluctuations in reader's attention spans; literary journals exist on the fringes of the market; less literature and more junk is exhibited for sale to individuals and institutions; new reading techniques like kindle have surfaced; book clubs have mushroomed with little knowledge of what is 'good' reading; and grotesque creative writing programmes have surfaced at all levels (like school, college and so on). Of course, these issues have received some attention (cf. Aubry, English, Felski, Fitzpatrick, Punday, Mc Gurl, Liu, Zaid, and Striphas). Thus, there is need for further sociologization of literary studies. Literary culture in cultural studies used to be more tolerant of the existence of popular culture, alongside. Material conditions and the social meaning of literature in the present need also to be explored. Historically oriented literary studies should yield larger place to contemporary studies and its institutions. Thus different temporalities of sociology and literature need to synchronize, where literary studies will imbibe the twin characteristics of the determining by the social present and the ability to travel through time. The practice of literary studies will be in a mode appropriate to the times of reflexive modernity, with a more reflexive institutionality.

Some time ago (in 2000) Felski said that "Modernity is back with a vengeance" (*Doing Time* 55). According to her the renewed interest in the term emanates from "the rediscovery of its internal difference."

Earlier on the term modernity connoted a project of cultural standardizing, but it turned out, gradually, to be a complicated process. A look at cultural history revealed that the minorities of people that are disenfranchised (like gays, lesbians, and others of the ilk) were the combative participants. They strove to resist the period's worst effects. There was the rediscovery of this difference of the agonized agonistic in the postmodern period. This periodization served as the dividing line between the two periods, and kept the lines of conflict clear. The postmodern has collapsed into the modern, implying that the groups existing on the fringes of the society are complicit in the period's machinations. They are not simply its victims. This complicity is acknowledged by Felski, and her account of modernity is its defense, while she explains the period as "more interesting and less familiar" than we might think it to be (*Doing Time* 57). Locating difference within the modern will render it more appealing to pluralists, who might view it as a "horizon of possibility for the present" (57). According to Felski, both literature and sociology have been showing keen interest in the notion of modernity for a long time. It is modernity that has reemerged as the name for the present. It is also to be admitted that modernity is closer to sociology, because literature has shown more concern with modernism, which is a dialectical negation of the concept of modernity. While analysing nineteenth century romanticism and then naturalism, literary modernism has interrogated Western modernity, on a large scale, as a disaster. It may be seen as the first site of a "reflexive modernity", in the sense of Ulrich Beck's risk theory (*World at Risk*). This reminds us of the traumatic First World War, and that great literary text that was written in its aftermath: T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922). A close reading of the poem reveals its being preoccupied by social upheavals: the surfacing of the polluting people, and their "empty bottles, sandwich papers/Silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, cigarette ends" on the banks of the river Thames, where "the last fingers of leaf/clutch and sink...," heralding threat to fragile ecology ("The Wind/Crosses the brown land...") rather than an ecologue (Eliot. *Selected Poems* 58). Eliot here offers a contrast with the famous passage in the Old Testament, expecting the readers to reminisce, with a view to critique the contemporary:

> Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities : thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be broken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams..." (Isaiah xxxiii,20-1)

This is the social upheaval, exhibiting a culture sans spirituality, pervaded by promiscuity (or as Eliot writes, in the same place, ironically, echoing Edmund Spenser's "Prothalamion" that "The nymphs are departed... [or] By the waters of Leman I sat down and wept..."58).

The idea behind studying such literary texts is that contemplations on modernity by modernism are contemplations on a vague and generalized modernity. Such literature critiqued the times as manifesting an era of threat to those thoughts and things that matter in life. It must be admitted that literary modernism also had some constructive and promising elements. One redeeming feature of the period was its relation to gender : the complexities of gender relations, egalitarianism in the matter of the sexes, and the narrativization of the Other. Another notable instance of modernity was that it served as a backdrop to the lingering presence of residual premodern spiritual and social values. One such instance can be glimpsed in *The Waste Land*, where a profound experience in the present displays its embattled existence in the times of deleterious modernization, whereby Eliot's "typist [is] home at teatime...", followed by the clerk who "makes a welcome of indifference" (59-60). Of course, the entire episode as it occurs is autonomic, functioning involuntarily and robotic in its nature. This is the authentic, premodern dionysiac passion that has been almost crushed out of shape, emotion and vibrant life by deadening modernization. The success of the poet-chronicler lies in the juxtaposition of the contemporaneous and the premodern, stretching back to antiquity. This juxtaposition has been adversarial in nature, to say the least, with the call to antiquity revealing attraction for cultural anthropology, which is a kin of sociology. Thus the "now", the present of literary modernism is tagged with the mythical, with the cultural past of the ancient times. This imbues literary modernism with some authority and authenticity. It is because of this characteristic of juxtapositioning that *The Waste Land* is able to deliver a compelling "Fire Sermon", a multi-meaning ultimate, a virtual apotheosis in "What the Thunder Said." The technique provides modernity a sense of simultaneity in the literary texts. This differs from sociology, since the latter discusses modernity as bureaucratization, differentiation and rationalization. Literature displays sophisticated handling: it traces complex temporalities while creatively analysing the era. It must be mentioned that sociology is responsible for the resurgence of the term modernity, but it is literary modernism that has responded to it through imaginative analyses and reappraisal. Thus, Jameson is right in explaining that the concept of modernity is coterminous with the discipline of sociology, but his account of its reemergence, as discussed earlier, is different from Felski's. He is of the considered opinion that "alternative modernities offer

ideological cover for neoliberal exploitation" (*A Singular Modernity* 07). For Jameson, "recrudescence" is "ideological regression" (07).

However, it must be noted that if a literary scholar offers allegiance to sociology, this demonetizes his affiliation with Marxist thought, but given the "exhaustion of critique" today as discussed by Bruno Latour, literary scholars may be more willing to do this now than ever before. Latour rather insightfully notes that hermeneutics of suspicion has driven humanities and social sciences since the 1960s. This hermeneutics reappears, in the view of Jameson, who opines that reappearance of modernity is a mere apology for postmodern foreclosure of basal social transformation. Concerning institutions and their nature, Michel Foucault has been able to exercise greater influence on modern mind than Jameson. His vivid and precise accounts of the stratagems of power and politics played by institutions have come to form the very core of Western literary and humanistic studies and scholarship. Furthermore, a Foucauldian model study aligns a literary text and its hermeneutics with a cultural history. The historicist paradigm, at most times, has appealed to literature, since it pictures literary studies as full of power and potential. Nevertheless, the attitude of literature towards institutions is, to say the least, adversarial, envisioning them as epitomes of imprisoning and atrophying discipline, where, in Samuel Langhorne Clemens's terminology, civilizational is a synonym of savagedom (cf. Hugh Heclo). The idea is to abandon the version of critique, where the effort is to unravel, or unmask in a deprecatory manner, accompanied by rhetoric and melodrama, with the polemical holding sway; instead the effort should be on constructing, (re) building a literary text or an institution. Thus, a critique of negation should yield place to a critique of (re) construction and maintenance, much against the powers of Kleinian disaster capitalism. Here we can take a cue from Klein's study (*The Shock Doctrine*). She unmasks the sadism of neoliberal economics, only to stress on the recent encouraging examples of reconstruction with the leftovers, after the havoc wreaked by typhoons and tsunamis. She cites instances like the ones from the coastal areas of Thailand, or Sri Lanka or elsewhere. Klein explains:

> These acts of reconstruction and reoccupation are inherently improvisational, making do with whoever is left behind and whatever rusty tools have not been swept away, broken, or stolen. Unlike the fantasy of the Rapture, the apocalyptic erasure that allows the ethereal escape of true believers, local people's renewal movements begin from the premise that there is no escape from the substantial messes that we have created.... [They] do not seek to start from scratch but rather from scrap, from the rubble that is all around (Klein. *The Shock Doctrine* 466).

Undoubtedly, this is the type of critique that is most suited for the present day reflexive modernity of contemporary risk society; also this type can be most suitably adapted to modernity's sundry institutional contexts. This seems to be the most viable way out of/ from the 'messes' that we, in the name of scientific progress, have created wholeheartedly and wholesale. Present day situation is not amenable to the employment of former critique that functioned in the sense of unravelling, and disentangling intricacies, textual or otherwise. Today, the requirement is of a critique that can rebuild or partly resurrect from the contemporary rubble, since, it may be noted that the present day situation is one where damage and destruction have already occurred. Furthermore, such a critique can work as a defense of what is important to us, or what is significant in the present day context. Also every age has to have its own rebuilding and survival theoretics.

Now, we can comprehend the nature of present day reflexive modernity a little more clearly. It is not what Felski explained as the recovering of a novel and more multitudinous modernity. It is also not in the Jamesonian mould, since reflexive modernity is not a mere recrudescence of ideology. Sociology aims at relatively stable social institutions, and this insight can be partially helpful in describing the world of today, but this concept from sociology will have to be combined with a reflexive relation of these social institutions with their past and future, thus being responsive to the calamitous and catastrophic events that have already come to pass, and the potential and possibility of such dire happenings likely to occur in the future, threatening disintegration of the world, one of the possibilities nestling in the lap of future (see Willard Wells, *Apocalypse*; and Jean-Pierre Dupuy, "The Precautionary Principle"). These studies stress, whether we agree or not, a gradual agonizing end to our world. It could have already commenced, considering the present day unsustainable socio-economic structures.

If we recall literature for help in describing the concept of reflexive modernity, we find its apt description and delineation in the elitist Eliotesque antimodernity. It is the overriding sense of worry, to re-instance, in anticipating a "Waste Land" of disasters, like the environmental imbalance, or of nuclear waste toxicity. Much earlier, such a waste land was envisioned in *Le Morte D' Arthur* by Thomas Malory. Such world-view also suggests cultural recycling as an overriding feature of the contemporary world. Surely, this is a precise description of the present instead of the other explanations offered, like the loss of originality, or human innovation caught in a glitch, or a

literature of 'exhaustion'. It is this recycling that is an incessant cultural feature, like the *haute couture* of the sixties returning in the inaugural decade of the present century to the *haute monde*. This re-institutionalisation of the familiar former also partly aims to stabilize a culture that is turning so evanescent, and rapidly (now more than ever) running to newer and still newer pastures, in search of a fresher or a more spontaneous ambience. *The Waste Land*, if we care to remember, indulged in much of a recycling of world literature, which was taken up by the critics both as its high point of literary excellence as also its constraint, since it presented only a collage, a modernistic pastiche of what had already been so eloquently articulated, the point being that it had 'nothing' of its own to 'say'. Of course, repetitive is more comfortable instead of the brand new with which we have to come to terms. Reflexive modernity's literature that is its own creation, and less stained by the earlier is a form of science fiction. Names like Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* (2003) come to mind, although they also provide negativities to risk society.

Thus, the paper aims to catalogue likely connections, as also dissensions between literary studies and sociology. It is important to remember that sociology presents us a concept, namely, of reflexive modernity. This concept can be of considerable significance, since it can be more useful than the contemporary ways of theorizing the phenomenon of modernity in literary studies, as for instance, indulged in, in different ways, by Felski and Jameson. Also, this concept has a prominent precursor in reflexive relations to modernity that we find already present in literary modernism. It is there, for instance, in the *oeuvre* of T.S. Eliot, where it is trained towards the past, but nevertheless, it aids in (re)configuring conception of the future and also the present's relationship to that future, where there is an oscillating movement, away from the vantage of complacent critiquing, to a position of concern for conserving and valuing contemporary institutions, as also an awareness of the limitations and constraints of these institutions. The case of historical literary studies is important, since in its frequent disengaging from the ordinary present it is adequate with its potential to probe the unusual temporality of reflexive modernity, especially the manner in which the phenomenon extends the present into a lengthy historical consequence that incessantly anticipates future disaster and destruction. Historical literary studies is relatively less attuned to contemporary institutional conditions that can be effectively critiqued by sociology. This characteristic is deeply embedded in literary texts that are our objects of study, where we seek to explicate to unravel the tangles of time and temporality. Here, we can reminisce about some of

the formal innovations of literary modernism, like the Conradian or Faulknerian non-linear plots, narratological sequences, or past superimposed on the present. These, after all are "certain way (s) of speaking our temporal understanding of the world" (Brooks. *Reading for the Plot* 07). It renders fiction more realistic, where the present moves towards the concept of the (literary) construction of fictional or alternate realities, to subtend and extend our present. It serves as a gloss on the present, whose explication is our avowed aim and purpose, where the hope rises that the 'now' is explicable. Literary modernity indicates coming catastrophe that may hold the promise of total social transformation, the great (already defunct! idea) revolutionary event, a *degage* theoretics.

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Problematics of Masculinity in Sam Sheppard's *Sympatico*

— Roya Yaghoubi

Sam Shepard Rogers, (1943-) ranks as one of America's celebrated dramatists. He has written nearly 50 plays. Outside of his stage work, he has achieved fame as an actor, writer, and director in the film industry. With a career that now spans nearly 40 years, Sam Shepard has gained critical regard, media attention and an iconic status enjoyed by only a rare few in American theatre. Studying Shepard, the question of indeterminacy and uncertainty arises regarding two issues of cultural and social inscriptions of gender and identity. Through gender study, this paper will questioningly look at the notion of self as it has been constructed in Western culture, focusing on the construction of male identity and gender in Shepard's play *Simpatico.*

Three latest plays Sam Shepard has written after 1990: *States of Shock (1991)*, *Simpatico (1994)*, and *The Late Henry Moss* (2000) involve a shift in the focus in that most emphasis is put on male/male relationship. Shepard's plays dating from 1990 to 2000 continue his examination of the American family, the nature of father-son relationships, and the search for love and personal identity. Shepard's long-held interest in male identity, machismo, aggression, violence, crisis of masculinity, male/male relationship, male/female relationship, and war both political and personal continues in these plays. Shepard's plays from 1990 onwards demonstrate an outlook that distinguishes them from his more well-known works. These plays express "a concern for interconnectedness that is new to his writing, one that militates against individualism and ego assertion" (RoudanP 259). They expose the harmful effects of egotism, of hegemonic masculinity and reveal a longing for affinity. Shepard criticism usually deals with citing "the author's obsession," with characters "who writhe under social constraint and seek liberation through either physical flight or identity transformation" (RoudanP 260). For such characters, signs of community are perceived as restraining and oppressive. In these plays one finds the impulse to shatter, a constant force to break social and familial structures, leading to an experience of the changing self and the world.

***Simpatico:* Introductory Remarks:**

Shepard's one-act play *States of Shock* (1991) was followed with the full-length piece *Simpatico* (1994), a play concerning treachery in

the horse-breeding business. *Simpatico* is said to be Shepard's first major play since *A Lie of the Mind.* In *Simpatico*, "Shepard again dealt with competing, dysfunctional males and the power of the Western ethos. He, however, introduced a new element into his writing seen in the character Simms, who retreats from revenge and models an attitude of acceptance and reconciliation" (Wade 298).

Old rivalries lead to new betrayals in this play. Vinnie and Carter have known each other for years, but their relationship has become less than friendly. Fifteen years before the action begins, as youths in Azusa, Vinnie, Carter and Rosie pull off a racing scam that left Carter with all the advantages: cash, a car, and Vinnie's wife, Rosie. Carter changes a couple of thoroughbreds in order to make a quick big money and, when the racing official, Simms, uncovers the swindle they arrange to have him discredited. They have photos taken of the official in a motel encounter with a young woman and using these photos as documents against him they set him up for blackmail that ends Simms' career and ruins his life. They silence Simms and then Simms goes to another town under an assumed name.

Years later, Vinnie is an alcoholic low-life who still makes a living from blackmail; Carter is now married to Rosie and is a successful respectable horse breeder in Kentucky. Vinnie has incriminating information about him that he uses to get Carter to pay his living expenses. Vinnie Webb is the person who took the photographs and now wants to expose the truth since his ex-wife, Rosie, was the woman in the motel room whom Carter has stolen from him. In addition Vinnie wants to come out of his long exile and pay Carter back for stealing his wife and his Buick. Vinnie, disheveled and a disgraceful loner, is a drunk in Pomona. Carter gets a call from Vinnie one night that he is in jail on a moral charge regarding a woman named Cecilia. Vinnie offers Carter. If Carter comes to California to help him out of this mess, he'll surrender the documents that he's been using against him for years. Carter is tempted and agrees, but when he arrives, it turns out that Vinnie's not in jail. Cecilia has not filed any charges against him and this is just part of a larger scam. Carter is the target of this scam. When Carter arrives, Vinnie steals his wallet and heads for Kentucky with the original blackmail material.

He carries a shoebox full of the incriminating photographs. He is excited to find the mysterious Simms. Simms denies his identity but he confesses that he some time ago heard of a man who had been vilified, pushed out of town and lost his entire family, "As a matter of fact, I did

hear of him. Quite a while back. Out West somewhere. I suppose it could've been California. I think maybe you're right about that. Vilified in the press, as I remember. Slandered. Railroaded outa town... Yes. Wife and kids packed it up on him. I believe that's right. Bankrupt. Lost everything in fact. Bottomed out completely" (64-5). Then Simms statement imply that he has accepted his loss, "loss can be a powerful exilir" (65). When Simms rejects the photos, Vinnie goes to Lexington to give them to Rosie, his ex-wife. She does not recognize Vinnie at the first confrontation and then refuses the photos.

In the meantime, Carter is spending time with Vinnie's girlfriend, Cecilia, a grocery clerk. He tells Cecilia fascinating stories of the Kentucky Derby and eventually persuades her to visit Simms. Carter begs Cecilia to follow Vinnie and get the material back. He believes Simms has bought the negatives and now wants to buy them back. But Simm's ironic manner and his insinuating stories of great thoroughbreds such as Secretariat influences Cecilia and makes her short of breath. Simms tells her he was betrayed by two snakes: "They're snakes, Cecilia. That's exactly what they are. They crawl on their bellies" (115).

Complications of the intricate plot culminates when Vinnie rejoins Carter and he finds him trembling on the floor. Having unintentionally yielded power to Vinnie, Carter is shivering and can't even put on his own pants and believes he is going to die. "Carter now wants to swap lives, just as he once swapped horses. He offers Vinnie his fortune, his estate and Rosie in return for Vinnie's purity of conscience" (Brustein 282). Vinnie ignores him and leaves. This is a theatrical strategy explored by Shepard earlier, most remarkably in *True West*, where two brothers compete for position and exchange roles at the end of the play. "Cecilia returns to pour Carter's money over him on the bed, just as Tilden in *Buried Child* once poured vegetables over his father's sleeping body" (Brustein 283). The play ends with stage direction "*She exits. Phone keeps ringing. CARTER keeps staring at it without moving to answer. He shakes in his blanket as lights dim slowly. Phone rings into the blackness then stops*" (135). The play is "an impressionist portrait of treachery, betrayal and failed redemption" (Brustein 283).

As for the title of the play, the word 'simpatico' is never used in the text, even though the characters are all connected and bound together. When Carter has totally unraveled and lost everything, he says to Vinnie that maybe they could start over again and reminds Vinnie that once they had a real partnership, had a feeling between them and they were like a team. And these remarks remind us of the word simpatico.

Male/Male Relationship

Balanced Male:

In the play *Simpatico*, Simms confronting crisis in his life, chooses to relieve himself from macho posture and become a more balanced individual triumphing over the restrictions of life. He is a corrupt lecherous horse racing official and the target of blackmail. Throughout the course of the play, Simms' character changes into a new figure. He adopts a new name and a new outlook towards life, its main concerns. His story begins to disclose through his exchanges with Vinnie. He does not rely on revenge but he focuses on conserving his new identity. He gives advice to other characters, namely Vinnie, who can take benefit from it. Simms condemns the masculine need for revenge and sees it as a development of the violence that resulted in the loss of his previous life. He accepts blame for his affair with Rosie and understands that revenge will not change the result. His new life has given him a new start. Simms' role implies "transcendence of traditional male gender expectations that Shepard utilizes. Evidence of this includes his refusal of an opportunity for revenge and his adherence to a newly acquired identity. Rather than being consumed by his past, Simms accepts personal responsibility and refuses to involve himself in further violence" (Wilson 25). Simms forms a new identity. Vinnie offers him incriminating evidence from recklessness of Simms' past, but he refuses and confesses that even though he was subjected to blackmail, he was not interested.

In Act One, it is said that Simms has adopted a new self. Carter and Vinnie have blackmailed Simms. Then Carter has helped him form a new career. Carter tells Vinnie that now Simms is using a false name "He's changed his name you know...Calls himself 'Ames' or something. Ryan Ames, I think it is" (31-2). Vinnie asks Simms to clear his name and ruin Carter, but Simms is not interested in Vinnie's offer even though his declarations imply that his failure in professional and personal life wasn't easy. He states, "He must've paid the piper then, This 'party', ... probably paid ten times over. Didn't he? Must've suffered very dearly for his little transgression. Maybe suffered far more than any of his revilers could've imagined. That's the way it usually goes" (58) and he was "vilified in the press, as I remember. Slandered. Railroaded outa town...wife and kids packed it up on him. I believe that's right. Bankrupt. Lost everything. Bottomed out completely...Why should you be sorry? Loss can be a powerful elixir" (65). His declarations imply that Simms has admitted his loss and tried to build a new life. His statements suggest that revenge is not worth losing self-identity. He also accuses Vinnie of doing vengeance and suggests that maybe he ought to correct

himself. At the end of Act II Scene ii, Vinnie attempts to entice Simms about the documents he has in his hold:

> Vinnie: But if I was him—if I was this man and I had this kind of an opportunity—to come out of hiding—to live out in the open again and regain my—my self-esteem—my good standing in the public eye—To move freely. It just seems to me—
>
> Simms: You're not.
>
> Vinnie: What?
>
> Simms: You're *not* this man. (66)

Simms does not blame Carter for his past. He accepts that his documented act with Rosie is something he is responsible for and he is to blame for even though others benefit from it. Simms is satisfied with his current condition, "I'm so completely absorbed in my work that the outside world has disappeared. It's vanished, Mr. Webb. I'm no longer seduced by its moaning and fanfare. I'm busy with the 'Sports of Kings' " (64).

Male/Male Friendship:

In *Simpatico*, Shepard does not elevate male characters to a higher position; on the contrary, he chooses to display them in crisis. This is explicitly stated in the words exchanged between Carter and Vinnie in Act One. Carter asks Vinnie, "Look—You wanted to talk to me, right? You called me. You've got some kind of a major crisis going on. Something that couldn't wait" (6). Vinnie tells Carter, "Crisis is my middle name"(6). And then when Carter tells Vinnie that, "Look, Vinnie, I gave you all kinds of options" (15), Vinnie expresses his dissatisfaction, "The option to disappear, for instance. The option to perpetually change my name and address. The option to live like a ghost...I *am* dead. I *am* locked away." (15-6). Almost near the end of Act One, Vinnie declares that he has changed his name a dozen times and nothing has come out of it. He has moved all over the place. He was in Texas for a while, Arizona. But nothing has come of it. He has just got further and further removed (33). Later in Act II scene iii Carter tells Cecilia about the crisis he is in, "I'm in the midest of a crisis, in case you didn't notice. Suddenly I'm in the midest of a crisis!...Vinnie is a weasel! He's a low-down, treacherous, diabolical little man. The scum of the earth. He's systematically trying to crucify me!" (75), "Things are falling apart! THE SKY IS FALLING! THE SKY IS FALLING!" (76). Carter believes that Vinnie wants him to suffer (81). In Act III Scene iii, Carter tells Vinnie that he is going to change his name and to disappear (131). Shepard concentrates on the troubles of male characters to portray

their inability to act successfully. This is chiefly evident in the way male characters achieve their identity. "They must go on a quest or fall from grace and then pick up the pieces in order to gain a complete awareness. Shepard, if read closely, is a supporter of a male identity which is balanced, meaning that it is a mixture of traditionally male and female components, not a violent one" (Wilson 34).

Shepard represents male characters that stick to the traditional male roles as incomplete and ineffective. Male characters have decent relationships with both genders and abandon violence: "Not all of the male characters from *Simpatico* are independent or self-assured. Vinnie and Carter are like two parts of a whole identity. Shepard creates them as a pair; which will eventually switch roles. Carter is able to survive in the mainstream society, while Vinnie is struggling alone, not passable as a 'regular citizen'" (Wilson 26-7). Vinnie and Carter change roles or switch identities very easily. Vinnie resides in Cucamonga, California, close to a desert. This shows his social and career failure and that he has been removed from society. It is said that he lives on "the edge of nowhere" (19). Carter is forced to support Vinnie financially since he has some photographs and knowledge relating to the blackmail. Vinnie pretends to be a private investigator. Carter believes Vinnie "lies about everything! It's all part of this illness of his. This sickness! He's a professional liar" (49). "He has no mind! He's brainless! (77). On the other hand, Carter himself owns a successful company in Kentucky. He is married to Rosie and has children. It is stated that he has prosperous career. Vinnie and Carter have been from the same class and social background. Now Carter is disconnected from his true self and Vinnie accuses him:

> That must be something new and different for you, huh? Being a member. Must've been difficult at first. Fitting in. Pretending you had something in common. Kissing ass with the gentry...Like your seedy past is long forgot. Might never have really even taken place. Might have actually belonged to another man. A man so remote and dead that you've lost all connection. A man completely sacrificed in honor of your bogus membership in the High Life. (20-21)

At the end of the play there is a role reversal between Carter and Vinnie. Taking Simms' advice, Vinnie forgets the past and begins a new life free from the incriminating proof. Carter attempts to make a deal with him, "I'll make you a deal. ...I'll take your place and you can have mine...You can have it all. Even Rosie" (132). Vinnie rejects them all saying that "I don't want anything you've got. You can stop sending me your bullshit. All your TVs and Jap cars and corny golf shirts. All

your guilt money. You can keep all that. Now if you don't get up off my floor, I'm gonna drag your ass out into the road and leave you there" (132). "Carter, however, reverts to an unsure, drunken stereotypical Shepard male. He appears physically ill; his 'teeth chatter,' he's 'rolling side to side,' he has been drinking Bourbon, and abandoned his cell phone (a symbol of his affluence) (120). Although Vinnie refers to this illness as a 'breakdown,' Carter is convinced he's 'dying' (Wilson 28). Vinnie Abandons Carter. He affirms, "You can die with your tongue hanging out. I don't give a shit" (133). Carter experiences anxiety attack and is the only character in the play "with no home base on-stage. He never knows where to put his coat, where to sit down, or even if he can stay. When he does stop, he feels, as Harris put it, 'caged'. We even see the set diminish as walls disappear from scene to scene. As Ed Harris noted in rehearsal, 'The room is disappearing as Carter is evaporating.'" (Rosen 190). According to Don Shewey, Shepard is

> less interested in love-hating the notion of media stardom and more curious about identity shift as psychic suicide. In fact, you could say he's obsessed with this theme. His latest new play, *Simpatico* (written in 1993), seems rather dull and cryptic on the most literal level. It re-enacts the kind of identity exchange between a successful guy and his lowlife alter-ego that occurs in *True West*, only this time in the milieu of horse racing rather than moviemaking. But there is something mysterious going on underneath the surface. ...At the end of the play, the slippery character Vinnie seems to thrive specifically because he doesn't cling to a set identity, and despite his Rolex and cell phone, Carter seems to be dying. (292)

The play ends with an image of Carter shaking "in his blanket as lights dim slowly with a sense of guilt, betrayal, and isolation. Phone rings into the blackness then stops" (135). Vinnie has taken the position of dominance and control Carter once had and Carter lives in solitude and darkness.

Fatherhood:

Fatherhood is also an important aspect of Shepard's male identity. Although Simms does not play an explicit fatherly role, he was a father in his old life. He advises Vinnie to improve his life and adopt a new identity. He tries to instruct other characters the evils of selling out for vengeance or status. He stresses the importance of doing what one loves. When Vinnie offers photos to him he tells "How many lives do you think a man can live, Mr. Webb? How many lives within this *one*? ... Well, say for instance, you could put the past to death and

start over. Right now. You look like you might be a candidate for that.... No? Vengeance appeals to you more...Yes, Blood. Now why is that? Why is blood more appealing than rebirth (61)"?

Carter is also a father, although his children are never shown to the audience. "This may be Shepard's way of commenting on his inability to be true to his 'roots,' an incapability to be honest about his past of modest means prevents him from evolving into a complete self. Carter is Shepard's more subdued critique of masculinity and male identity" (Wilson 33).

Female/Male Relationship

Female Transcendence over Male:

In *Simpatico*, female characters are portrayed as self-contained but still controlled by the masculine ideal to some extent. While there are specific points in the play where Cecilia and Rosie are used to the benefit of male characters, they are not dominated by men throughout the entire play. Although the appearance of both female characters is described to show that their beauty is exploited to the male's benefit but they are still staged as independent and powerful. Rosie had a sexual intercourse with Simms which was photographed. She took advantage of the blackmail becoming Carter's wife but the act must have led to her suffering and anxiety. She takes pills and feels security in the fact that Carter can never leave her. When Vinnie attempts to grab and kiss her, she declares that Carter is indebted to her for what she has done and that she has the power to have Vinnie killed.

> Rosie: "You touch me—You so much as touch me again and I'll have you killed. This is *my* house. I'm the wife of someone. Someone of tremendous power and influence. He could have you done in from a distance and you wouldn't even know what hit you. ... He *owes* to me. He's deeply in debt to me, all from that one little brainstorm of mine, way back then. That one little night on the edge of Azusa".
>
> Vinnie: Oh, so now you're suddenly gonna take all the credit.
>
> Rosie: Yeah sure. Why not? It was a brilliant little notion. It paid off in spades too, didn't it? I probably shoulda just gone professional.
>
> Vinnie: I took the pictures!
>
> Rosie: You certainly did. But *I* turned the trick. It was me who caused the heads to roll and don't you ever forget it" (102-103).

Even though she compares herself to a prostitute, Rosie is at comfort for she is the wife of a powerful and authoritative man. Her power supersedes Carter's since if she exposes their secret at will, Carter will lose his authoritative position. Her power is explicit in her words. Especially there is an emphasis by the author on words "my", "I", and "owe" (102-3) since he writes them in italicized form.

Concerning the other female character Cecilia, even though Carter also uses her for his own benefit she stays very powerful and behaves with great dignity. He makes Cecilia into believing that Vinnie is at the risk of imprisonment. He gives her a chance to go to the Kentucky Derby and in exchange she has to bribe information out of Simms. She has to tolerate Simms sexual innuendo and is blamed to be a prostitute: "You're not a high-paid chippie then? A Class Act? Something found in the Yellow Pages under 'Executive Escorts'?" (112). After several attempts to buy the negatives from Simms, she finally admits that she is not the right type of person for this work and that her true motivation was to attend the Derby, "I shouldn't have come here at all. I didn't want to be doing this. I've never done anything like this before in my life! ...All I really wanted to do was go to the Kentucky Derby. And Mr. Carter offered me free tickets. ...It was foolish to get suckered in by something like that but—I love the Derby" (114-15). There are evidences which suggest Cecilia rises above her female roles. After she goes back to Cucamonga, she returns the cash to Carter, "Your money's all here. You can count it if you want. I only used a little bit for sandwiches and tea. I'll pay you back, I promise" (135). Unlike Rosie, Cecilia does not exploit Carter for manipulating her. Cecilia also does not surrender to Simms' advances as Rosie did. "Cecilia does not allow herself to be manipulated by males. Unlike Rosie, whose identity is dependent on the male figure, Cecilia tries to rise above that and strikes out on her own" (Wilson 29).

Although women characters are independent and self-reliant, they are still somehow tied to the labels of femininity and to males' desires and definition of femaleness. In Act III, Scene iii, we see how Carter offers Rosie to Vinnie as his property, "You can have it all. Even Rosie" (132). Women are independent and yet do whatever is dictated to them by men. Rosie's meeting with Simms is an example of this double status. Women are treated to be secondary and are objectified but they have their own voice and power. Women are there to promote male identity. It is Rosie who causes Simms' downfall and then the formation of his new personality. While apparently the images seem to show the

superiority of the male characters, in fact, the role of female characters is considerable and it is mainly the women who cause the initiation and intensification of male transformations.

Women have the ability to survive and become accustomed more easily in modern society than men. Proof of this is Cecilia, a cashier at a local grocery store. She is able to function in the society well. Rosie does not have a profession of her own but has a position of power which gives her economic safekeeping. She has already fled Vinnie, who could not provide for her and married Carter. She does not look to be satisfied in her marriage but she has arranged her life so that Carter is compelled to support her. Both women have their residences and can manage their expenses. This is different from men's situation that experience downfall in their professions and cannot hold stable jobs. "Some of the women's success may be attributed to their adoption of some masculine characters" (Wilson 31).

Masculine violence and machismo are condemned in this play. The male character, Simms, commits an act of violence against Rosie. Although there is no direct physical abuse in the play but flashbacks refer to his violence having sexual encounter with Rosie one night. Contrary to this is the relationship between Cecilia and Simms. It starts as sexual conversation but ends in an honest relationship between them. "Simms moves from an abusive male to one of the only men who is able to see a woman as an equal" (Wilson 32).

Masculinity is depicted as in crisis. Male characters confront some obstacles that they must overcome for the formation of their identity. Simms is a male character who is created with a full identity. He does not use violence in some way and he does not consider women as inferior creatures. In his new life he does not act according to the expectations of masculinity. His sexual banter with Cecilia is only a means for him to find out her motives. While in the beginning he accuses Cecilia as a prostitute sent by Carter, it is a simple question with regard to the blackmail of the past. The final conversation between these two indicates that Simms is not looking for a sexual relationship but a companionship. This proves his realization of an equal status for both sexes.

Simpatico represents positive images of women portraying female characters' strength and independence. Women are needed to promote males' change in personality.

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A Stylistic Analysis of Dom Moraes' "Intentions"

—Jimmy Sharma

Intentions

1. Good ear to the pillow,
2. You intend not to hear,
3. But hear echoed voices,
4. Sources not ascertainable.
5. Hands pressed to your eyes,
6. You intend not to see,
7. But through a degree of pain
8. Lost faces are seen.
9. Memories fill your nostrils,
10. You intend not to smell,
11. But smell rivers on stones, leather,
12. Winter and women.
13. Your fingers are tired,
14. You intend not to touch
15. But you touch the clear air
16. Where the images are.
17. Some things best forgotten,
18. You intend not to dream,
19. But dream of snow, nomads,
20. Sons left in high passes.
21. Words like snails on the paper,
22. You intend not to write.
23. Your typewriter's tired,
24. Thinking too much of death.

(Dom Moraes, *Serendip* (1990), line numbers added)

Introduction

Dom Moraes' "Intentions" is a poem of isolation, disillusionment, failure, about the gap between expectations and reality, the ironies of love, contrasting and opposite ideas which are juxtaposed to underline nostalgia and sense of loss in modern world. The present poem is from *Serendip* for which the poet got Sahitya Akademi Award in 1994. Compared to the other poems of *Serendip,* "Intentions" seems to have received very little attention, probably because of its superficial simplicity.

The present study provides an integrative, bottom-up stylistic analysis of the poem. The analysis is done in three main steps corresponding to the three main "stylistic levels" of a text: the "micro" level of the poem as form, the "intermediate" level of the poem as discourse, and the "macro" level of the poem as a communicative event(Finch, 1998, p.208).

At the level of the poem as form, the study investigates the over all structure of the poem and the grammatical structure of the sentences therein from a rather traditional, pre-functional point of view. The different meanings of the major lexical items, the semantics of negation, the instances of association and linkages, the use of refrain in the poem are also explored. These aspects inevitably lead to the higher and broader level of the poem as discourse.

The discursive aspects investigated in the study are based on images and isotopies of language and love; lexical sets, cohesive devices, pronoun reference, refrain, and the use of conjunction and adjectives.

At the broader level, the study addresses the communicative situation of the poem. This is where the biographical context and generic and other text-external aspects of the poem are explored.

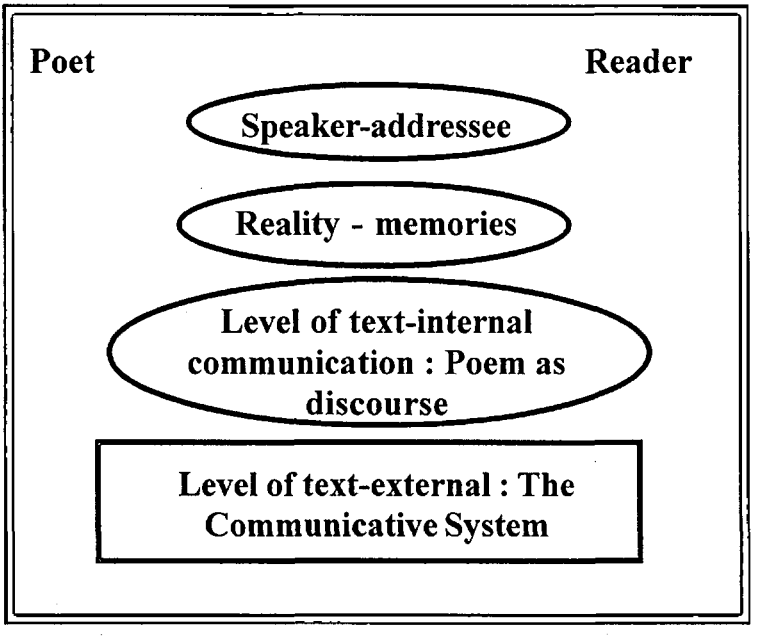

Figure1. Text Levels/Circles in "Intentions"

The three level analysis procedure introduced above is based on the assumption that the poem is made of three circles, considerably modified from Jahn(2001). The three circles are- the speaker-addressee circle, the circle of reality and memories and finally the poet-reader circle.

The poem as form: Structure, syntax and semantics

The poem consists of six stanzas and twenty-four lines. The poem is trochaic with 1st, 4th and 5th stanzas in trimeter and 2nd, 3rd and 6th stanzas in tetrameter. A sense of continuity is maintained through the recurrence of consonant sounds like /t/ (to, but, tired, intend, touch, best, forgotten, write, tired) /s/ (voices, sources, ascertainable, eyes, see, lost, faces, smell, stones, some, snow, sons, snails) /w/ (winter and women) and /y/ (you and your). The poem appears to be confessional at the first reading but actually there is a distance, a reserve, a mask between poet and reader, as if there were an emotional shell around the speaker.

The speaker refers to the main sense organs in the poem to stress the conflict in the addressee's mind that has reached the summit of contradiction of not doing as per the norms stated but ends up doing the things which his mind refuses and heart urges. He, at the outset, of the poem suggests the intention of the addressee who does not want to hear the unwanted voices but on the contrary hears 'echoed voices' whose 'sources [are] not ascertainable.' Further, he moves to the other sensory organs- eyes which are closed to avoid the sight but the visions of loss, separation and despair create 'a degree of pain' through which 'Lost faces are seen.' It is futile to close one's eyes in order to avoid reality. Reality has to be faced and it calls for courage to do so. The speaker urges other sensory organs- nostrils and refers to the opposite purpose, that is, 'not to smell' and remarks that the memories have filled the inner self of the addressee with feelings of love and violence and disgust from war, consciousness of death and destruction. The continuity and permanence of activities, incidents and experiences are implied through the image of river.

The fourth stanza points to the tiredness of fingers and the desire not to touch. Another vital sense of touch is mentioned here to emphasise the importance of closeness, togetherness and union in one's life. In the fifth stanza, the speaker hints at the addressee's intention to forget 'Some things' and plans 'not to dream' but images of snow, wanderers, sons keep on haunting his mind. All this leaves

him helpless. The speaker concludes in the sixth stanza with an uncertainty. The addressee has decided not to write about his dream, memories, plans, aims and objectives. He feels words are like snails on the paper which move very slowly. As snail is too fast in his retreat; he also wants to keep his words back because he himself is weary of thinking too much of loss and death.

This conceptual discussion is incomplete without analysis of form of the poem and its devices. Refrain, contrast, preposition, adjectives and verbs lead to cohesion in the poem. The repeated use of the line 'You intend not to...' makes link in all the stanzas and emphasizes the contrast and contradiction in the mind of the addressee. He is helpless who can not control his heart and mind. Verbs like hear, see, smell, touch, dream and write are invoked by the speaker to bring the idea of facing reality home to the addressee who is trying to avoid confrontation and conflict. Contrast of ideas, opinions and beliefs are juxtaposed through out the poem through the semantics of negation 'not+to+infinitive' and first two lines of each stanza are contrastive to the third and fourth line of each stanza. What the addressee intends not to hear, see, smell, touch, dream and write; on the contrary he hears, sees, smells, touches, dreams and writes. It is here that the streak of optimism is pointed towards the end of the poem. The addressee is perhaps the poet himself and he starts acknowledging his abilities, capacity to love, cherish life as it comes and courage to overcome loss and separation in love.

The use of preposition also mentions the belongingness and possessiveness of the addressee. It also refers to his motive of approaching his real self though he is trying to avoid superficially by shutting his eyes and closing his ears but he fails to do so as memories haunt him and he regularly sees visions and ends up writing those memories, visions and encounters. The prepositional phrases like 'of pain', 'on the paper', 'dream of snow' show the obsessiveness of the addressee with absence, departure, dislocation and loss. Sensory verbs are very vital to emphasize the above mentioned devices and explore the gist of the poem. 'Hear', 'see', 'smell', 'touch', 'dream' are repeated twice in stanzas to highlight the contrast and the contradictory intentions of the addressee.

The conjunction 'but' is repeated five times in the poem to show the conflict as stated above. The use of adjectives is also very crucial to the understanding of the poem. There are seven adjectives used in the poem. One adjective in the last stanza, which qualifies non human object ('typewriter's tired') is predicative whereas the rest of six

adjectives which have to do with human interaction and relation, are attributive. Attributive adjectives are more likely to be interpreted as inherent; predicative adjectives as non-inherent (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973 p. 120-125). The qualities and attributes associated with human beings are represented as more transient than those associated with natural objects and phenomena.

The identity of participants is suppressed in the poem. This is a distancing device which may be called 'defocalisation.' Its goal is to minimize the speaker's involvement and to avoid any direct confrontation with the hearer/s.(Haverkate, 1992. p. 516). Infact, there appears to be a boundary between the speaker-in-the-poem and the addressee because of the comments and remarks that the speaker keeps on remarking without letting the addressee has his say. A more traditional stylistic effect of non-specificity is "to expand the speaker coordinate of the device center to the extent that its boundaries become indeterminate."(516-17)

The poem as discourse

One strategy for the analysis of thematic coherence in a text is the use of the concept of 'isotopy'. An isotopy refers to "a level of meaning which is established by the recurrence in a text of semes belonging to the same semantic field, and which contributes to our interpretation of the theme" (Wales, 1989, p.265) "Intentions" is in many ways a poem about the conflicting purposes, aims and plans to achieve, communicate and unite. The clash and argument within arises to do or not to do. The question is of translating emotions and communicating togetherness. What remains is only an "emblem" in the last stanza of writing and communicating. An emblem is a (semio) linguistic signifier or set of signifiers. It substitutes reality. The centrality of language isotopy is focused through the difficult predicament of the addressee who is unable to find the answer to the doubt and uncertainty in his heart. He is shuttling here and there and is troubled to be silent and more anxious to speak out his wounded heart.

The second isotopy has to do with love. Intentions to hear one's beloved's voices, see her face, smell the intimacy and cosiness of their bond, touch the clarity of their relationship, dream of union and oneness and communicating their love. But the absence of above mentioned intentions suggests the inner void of the addressee's mind who is struggling inward to find the answer to the problem of his mind which is obsessed with too much of thinking and introspection. He realizes towards the end of the poem that he has to get rid of thinking to approach and attain his earlier self.

The Communicative Situation

One important consideration at the level of the communicative situation is the genre to which the text belongs. "Intentions" is a reflective poem in which the poet reflects deeply over a situation and gives his comments accordingly. The central tense in the poem is present, although there are references to the past. Subjective emotions of alienation, conflict, nostalgia and loss dominate the text. The emotions are not groundless; they have causes in reality-memories confrontation and the absence of true self to face reality and understand the situation without any prejudices.

Even though speakers and authors should be treated as "distinct textual roles", they may, of course share certain characteristics; indeed biographical and other text-external evidence may add considerable substance and meaning to a poem." (Jahn, 2001)

The following is a very brief biography of the poet:

Dominic Frank Moraes was the first youngest Indian to bag the Hathornden Prize for his *Beginning*(1957). *Serendip* (1990) was written twenty five years after the publication of his much renowned collection *John Nobody*(1965). He got two slighter collections published *Beldam &Others*(1967) and *Absences* (1983). Makarand comments, "Serendip contains three sequences of poems...[they] are quieter, limpid, essential, even terse.." (cf. http://www.makarand.com/acad/Dom.htm)

Bruce King comments on the style of Dom Moraes' poetry by comparing him with other poets:

As a poet Moraes began as a dreamy romantic heir of the British verse tradition. He was more likely to echo Spenser, the Cavalier poets, Keats, or early Yeats in contrast either to the Movement poets, the remaining modernists, or the Imagists. By the mid-sixties he was influenced by Auden, but he never was an experimenter, avant gardist or influenced by American verse..." (cf.http://www.new. openspaceindia.org/index.php?option= com_ content&view=article&id =156&Itemid=107

Some of the poems in *Serendip* allude to the harsh godless world only made significant by activity while the love poems refer to his strained relationship with his third wife Leela Naidu. In this poem also, the speaker compares winter season with women. The coldness and indifferent nature of women is suggested in this line. The memories of loneliness, solitude and seclusion in love life have become the lot of

the poet. The poem is about agony of alienation, quest for the inner self and the irony of senseless actions which occur because of lack of communication and the death of faith between people.

Concluding Remarks

One basic value of the present study is to accumulate the understanding resulting from the more micro to the more macro, from the very narrow level of the poem as form to the relatively broader level of the poem as discourse and finally to the most comprehensive level of the communicative context of the poem. Thus, the lexical items, with their different denotations and connotations, and the basic grammatical categories and structures unite to produce two main isotopies of the poem- language and love. It is also those items, structures and categories that establish the cohesive chains in the poem. The conceptual level of the poem emphasizes the conflict present in the modern human beings of trying to be aloof by shutting their eyes and ears from reality. Many other aspects are explored at the level of the poem as discourse, probably because this is the densest level. It bridges the gap between the poem as form and the poem as a communicative event. An attitude of objectification and detachment dominates the text. The findings of the analysis of the levels of form and discourse in the poem confirm many of the features of the communicative situation where it was written.

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Re-engendering Mira in Contemporary Contexts

— Preeti Jain

Mirabai emerges a ready rallying point of 'our' discourse of indigenous feminism. The historical Mira thus always runs the risk of her mythologization. The best way to appropriate the dissent is to museumify it, or mystify it as object of admiration/veneration or simply gaze. My paper re-covers the medieval Mira through a critical reading of three different texts on Mirabai written in modern times. The exercise is interdisciplinary and the endeavour is to restore Mira as a human being; as a woman with desires and also as a poet of the people. Contemporary writers move towards a more nuanced, multi-stranded understanding of society and a greater recognition of heterogeneity of women lives and lived experience. Mirabai is seen reinvented by several writers such Parita Mukta, Kumkum Sangari and Gurcharan Das but with a renewed sense of urgency. With each turn in history, Mirabai, the saint poetess of medieval India takes a new appearance. During the colonial period, she becomes one of the chosen icons of the non-violent nationalist imagination and enters the nationalist consciousness; and in the postcolonial phase she emerges as a symbol of the marginalised when viewed from a more human and non-religious perspective. Mira is resurrected and re-invented as she undergoes strategic cultural transformation that quite significantly impinges on, and not just echoes the changing contours of culture in our times. Multiple identities of Mira – Mira as the real historical figure and a Rajput princess, Mira as a figure of legends and myths, and Mira as a woman poet interest as much as intrigue us all. While most of the historians prefer to locate her as a saint poet, for the non historians it is the image of a recalcitrant Mira that matters. In this paper I shall talk on how Mirabai, the woman who was excluded from empirical writing of history is reinvented by post-Independent Indian writers who dwell upon all possibilities.

As nationalist fervour relents and poetic imagination seeks human explanation of events, icons that are rarefied beyond reason such as the myth of Mira is re-staged with a humanist perspective. As against the common perception of the saint poetess, Gurcharan Das, a modern Indian playwright in his one act play *Mira,* creatively re-imagines the persona of this mystical figure. Unlike many writers of Mira's history, Gurcharan Das tries to reason out the failure of Mira's marriage in terms of the usual middle class post-marital animosity between a

non-working feminine housewife and a workaholic husband. The spiritual aspect of Mira's personality constituting her love and bhakti for Krishna has been until now the primary concern for several writers. But Das in his play harps more on her human side, her wild passion and deep love for the lord considering it to be very human emotions. The playwright seems to highlight how any human being under such circumstances and experiences would undergo a similar transformation as Mira has gone through. Her strength lies in the fact that she made her inner reality a principal one, negating all that was antagonistic to it. For her the move was a drastic one; being a Rajput princess she gave up the security of the palace and of being a married woman in favour of her choice for singing and dancing in the company of other devotees. Losing all interest in the role of a wife (it is believed that) she even abandoned her husband thereby challenging discourses and confining herself to a particular position in her faith experience. Until now, for Mirabai her exclusion from the patriarchal society took hagiographic formations rather than understanding the suppression she received. Instead of putting Mira as a sufferer at the hands of Rajput community she was rather seen as a figure of devotion only, immersed in Krishna bhakti. Values that inspired the writing on the status of woman such as Mirabai had been more spiritual than material. Das thus retrieves the woman from Mira, the saint. Remarkably enough it is Mira who speaks of her sexuality in the face of espionage. She is thus brought out by the playwright from her submissive feminine role.

Legends about Mira has been transmitted inter-generationally through folktales and kept alive in popular memory through word of mouth. But what is lost in this tale telling is her subaltern historiography and her unconscious defiance of the same. With a re-thinking on the persona of Mirabai we locate how she possessed an urge to seek out the company of quite a different family; different from the one that society and people has assigned her – a family composed of those who sang the praises of the lord. This kept her constantly at loggerheads with her family. Mira is seen refuting the discourses of patriarchy, caste and class as she sings:

> Your highness,
> Now you can't close me with walls.
> The wise are now dear to me, lost
> is womanly shame, I've left
> my mother's house
> and the taste of dance is on my tongue.
> The lord held a glass
> in front of my heart and I'll dance.

Take the wedding necklace, you can break
the golden braclet
I don't want a fort or a palace
and my hair is loose says Mira. (Futehally 2)

In a society fiercely concerned with feudal patriarchal power, Mira posited only humility. Her faith as manifested in her devotional songs breaks down barriers, widens, frees and emerges her from that excluded set up.

Various elements in Mira's choice of living made her a figure of opprobrium to the Rajputs, for which they required her extinction. Her public stand in associating with the *bhajniks* of all ranks, her rejection of a life of seclusion, and her resolute adherence to her religious beliefs was antithetical to the decorum demanded of Rajput family. Perhaps her worst transgression was her insistence on mingling with other devotees, who were not only men and strangers but often from lower castes. By doing this she was striking a radical blow on nearly everything that constituted the conventions of Rajput aristocracy: their privilege and exclusiveness, caste and social hierarchy and the subjugation of their women. As women formed an important safeguard in the upholding of Rajput dharma, the ruling family of Mewar found it necessary to defend its honour by persecuting the widowed Mira. Mira was one of a kind phenomenon made possible by the ideals of bravery long cultivated in Rajput tradition. She is depicted to have developed into a revolutionary not by attacking the social order and official religion but by ignoring them, because she was not a conscious revolutionary rather was shrouded in the mystic communion with her lord. Rajasthan of Mira's youth was dominated by the Hindu Rajputs who maintained their tradition of marital valour and family honour. Her later rejection of her earthly marriage, honour of family and bonds of kinship came as a rejection of the whole social order within which she was enmeshed.

A significant facet traced out of her life is her feminist ideology based on the thesis of liberation and personal will. She resisted the norms of Indian womanhood by rejecting the institution of family, marriage and motherhood. Her desire for renunciation was shocking in its opposition to the patriarchal religion because for them the only way for women to gain transcendence was through husband worship and service. Mira indelibly carved out a path for the personal liberties of women. Her challenge to the Rana, as ruler, head of clan and husband meant that she did not cede allegiance to any of the structure of political and patriarchal power. Defying social criticism she further denounced

the norms of widowhood and refused to accept sati immolation, consequently depicting her opposition to the institution of widowhood as well. Thus we locate how Mira had the courage to challenge the two centres of power of her time – royalty and religion.

Parita Mukta sets out to trace multiple meanings within the woman saint's life and its impact upon social milieu finding ultimately the 'people's Mira'. Further looking at the emergence and the manner in which the various communities coalesced around Mira, the writer observes that in the villages and the towns in Rajasthan "the strongest force of Mira bhakti lies within the dalit communities, within the weavers and leather workers and the sweepers" (73). And it was her affiliation with the socially marginalised groups in society that made the Rajput family dislike her all the more. However the same reason also brought Mira closer towards the larger section of lower classes. She faced slander and ostracism but still demonstrated her truth over this tide of repressive norms, and thus her history is sung by the very people who derive strength from her life and living. Mukta further reports that since Mira challenged the Rajput authority, in culture of Rajasthan she is not only seen as a figure who is excoriated but also deemed as a term of abuse levelled at a woman as a charge of promiscuity. And it is only recently that Rajput women have allowed her memory to surface among them and that they have been able to do this by Rajputising Mira, by interpreting her actions and deeds in a way which conforms to notions of heroism and valour prevalent in Rajput community.

Making a ground level research Parita Mukta looks at the singing of Mira-*bhajans* in Rajasthan communities that faces a similar degree of oppression. Fear of losing benefaction of the Sisodiya ruler, they deny any familiarity or loyalty to Mira bhajans. And because of this, her *bhajans* evolved outside the Rajput rule, amidst the dalit quarters and peasant dwellings. What the author finds is that despite the efforts of upper-caste Rajputs to obliterate Mira from historical memory, her songs and legends are still alive. But this is seen mostly among lower caste devotees as they could relate with her a common experience of subjugation. Reading against the grain she looks at the domestication of the figure of Mira, uncovering a highly politicised feminist Mira; a people's Mira who struggled against patriarchy. Thus focussing on Mira's social history, the author attempts to return her to recognisable communities. She places her history within the history of a collective cultural revolt and within the milieu of a collective struggle for social emancipation, thus relieving her from the isolation imposed upon her by a number of writers.

Furthermore, Kumkum Sangari's study of Mira songs reveals a sensuous yearning for her lord and her renunciation of worldly desires. According to her, it is the female voice – with its material basis in patriarchal subjugation – which provides the emotional force of self abasement and willed servitude (50-51).

Mira's songs indicate poignancy and express a particular social relationship signifying a humble yet powerful subalterneity. The female in her song is seen centrally a desiring subject that asserts the identity of the individual soul and yearns to realise this through a spiritual consummation. The attitude that she adopts towards Krishna is in the very idiom of a traditional Indian wife; an attitude that she refuses to adopt towards her worldly husband. Sangari points out that in rejecting the powerful group, Mira "rejects the public and historical memory of the state' in favour of a 'personal narrative of love and salvation'"(126).

Further some magico-religious notion that Mira was unaffected by drinking the cup of poison is considered by some postmodern critics as highly compressed reference to her politically dominant marital family and the civil war waged by Mira against them. Hegemonizing the individual role played by woman in society and turning it into dominant ideology becomes a shortcoming in the process of accounting for a consistent and reliable understanding of them. Thus, contemporary thinking is increasingly marked by reinventing the past to bring about its relevance in present contexts. Herein, literature is also seen as an effective tool of social investigation where fiction not only represents social reality but also performs a necessary functional part of social control and paradoxically an important element in social change.

Mira's being was scarred by thousand injuries with the trials at Chittor and the mockery of dominant society. The persecution of Mira continued day and night and she was ridiculed for mixing freely with the mendicants. The Ranas casted a long shadow over her life and ultimately blighted her earthly existence. Mira had to suffer a lot of persecution, sadly from her own family members who sometimes even branded her as a licentious woman under the misconception that Girdhara was her lover who secretly visited her. So, we see how her myth is an embodiment of the understanding of a people, an understanding often intuitive and dependent on the miraculous and the divine. Thus the prevalent myth needs to be re-questioned and is in fact increasingly being deconstructed to retrieve their lost bearings and identities. Interpretations and reconstructions like *Mira* provide a sense of continuity and impart a sense of tradition to the past. It helps to construct new epistemological and social frameworks deconstruct

patriarchal structures through individual questionings. With his well presented play, Gurcharan Das too goes on exploring the diverse, cultural, social meanings attached to her persona and looking at her transformation as a more genuine possibility and reality, rather than a myth.

In reassessing Mira's legendary life story we locate that there is an attempt to enslave her mind and body by putting a restraint on the beginnings of her self discovery. She was resisted by her family members themselves who rebuked her for straying from aristocratic norms and customs. However, Mira boldly questions the rationalist criteria by which knowledge and power have been hegemonized within the existing norms of patriarchal society and follow her hearts' desire. Reviewing our observation, the portrait of historical Mira emerges very different from the traditional one. As a rebel, Mira defied archetypal discourses of the times, yet she is seen as the most obedient and harmless figure of devotion.

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Sufi Aesthetics and Partition Narratives

— Pooja Garg

The attempt in this paper is to unfold the distinct architectonics of Partition fiction which are formed on the basis of local, provincial and regional paradigms. Of the many local paradigms that possibly go into the making of Partition fiction, Sufism is one major cultural presence. The Sufi aesthetics localized and grounded in the socio-cultural discourse, helped in authenticating the rupture caused by Partition. Sufism was a people-centric movement that sought to facilitate the dialogue of the devotee and the divine in human terms. The poetics of Sufism are rooted in romance, but its spiritual undercurrent cannot be glossed over. Sufi romances are prayers too. The outcome of the blend of poetics of Sufism and fiction would be neither fiction nor romance. This ensemble created a new genre which is often called Partition fiction.

The violence in Partition stories is dramatized and stage showed. In order to make their writings compelling, the writers have evolved a narrative strategy to delineate the gory spectacle of devastation, bloodshed and murder following the division of India. In order to give it a communal look, writers have employed the language of violence and more often than not they are involved in a blame game. The stories veer around stereotypical communal paradigms. They have employed stock images to represent this violence. There is barely any narrative that doesn't have an element of violence. Alok Bhalla opines that, "each story is an instance of violence in an unending series, savagery is capricious; anyone can become a beast and each one can be destroyed" (Bhalla: xxxi). They have employed stock images to represent this violence. These writers have tried to give a communal character to this violence. This grotesque and bizarre display of anger, hatred, and revenge was not aimed at any community in particular. After reading these narratives it seems that loot and arson were another motivation behind this mayhem. In an oral account retrieved by Urvashi Butalia, Maya Rani, a sweeper, while recounting those times tells her that she along with her friends would loot utensils and other household items from the houses that had been either deserted by their owners or the owners had become victims. She says:

> I also looted many razais, quilts some already made and some which I made with the material we found. There were eleven of us girls; we all made our dowries with the stuff we collected ... (Butalia 135).

As the violence, in these narratives was played up in a rather high pitch that is why a love story cutting across religions or friendship was portrayed in the same breath. For every story of violence and enmity, there is a story of friendship and love, and it is as important to recall those as it is to look at stories of violence (Butalia). This makes the task of tracing the Sufi sub-text in such stories easier. The Partition narratives face a predicament, as they get stuck in a binary frame i.e. violence in the public domain and love in the private domain, hatred in public realm and cooperation in private realm. These narratives display the two extremes of Indian socio-cultural arena. On the one hand there is the nerve wrecking violence and on the other there are instances of sacrifices of a spiritual order, by people belonging to different religions and communities.

My endeavour here is to foreground the violent dynamics of Partition in the mystical and devotional dynamics of Sufism. To say that Partition literature is all about violence and displacement is no great critical discovery but to underline the latent message of cultural compositeness, which Partition fiction willingly projects, is going against the grain. There should hardly be any taker of this proposition that Partition at the bottom is an enterprise of cultural unity and communal coexistence of people across communities. In this paper I attempt to highlight the Sufi inter-text of Partition fiction at length. The principles, poetry and narratives of Sufi saints are regularly invoked in the Partition literature, with almost an inevitable creative urge. As though without it the violence depicted in the fiction would lose its goriness. Amrita Pritam in her immortal ode to the Sufi poet Waris Shah, *aj aakhan waris shah nu* (To Waris Shah I say) links the love story of *Heer/Ranjha* to the absurd violence that followed Partition. The Partition violence becomes unjustifiable against the accentuated backdrop of Sufi unity. Sufism does not figure in Partition literature as a mere backdrop; it is an all-informing impulse. It is in the foreground as it actively participates in the process of cultural construction and reconstruction. Therefore Sufism is a necessary structural input to the utterly chaotic Partition experience. A cataclysmic breakdown of social values is invariably set against the composite Sufi world.

To locate Indian fiction in the merely existential and the historical is to measure its potential halfway. For its ultimate stage is in metaphysics. Indian reality including that of Partition with all its immediate historicity cannot be diverted from its foregrounding in metaphysics Vedic or Sufi. In the Partition fiction written by various authors there is a clear accent on the shared living of people across communal allegiances and alliances. The writers have tried to create

the world of love, affection and brotherhood. We get to see Muslim, Sikh and Hindu characters living together and intermingling with each other, irrespective of their distinct religious identifies. A common idea that runs through the Partition stories is the portrayal of friendship between a Hindu and a Muslim character. Thus depicting the harmonious inter community relations existing in the pre-Partition India. The endeavour here is to focus on the short stories written in vernaculars.

Sufism played a very important role in the formation of a secular India. In India, it found an exceptionally congenial ground for its growth and spread, because Sufism, as a moral and spiritual way of life, and as a doctrine with universal appeal, found a responsive chord in the Indian mind, for the Indian mind from its earliest phases of its history, had a strong tendency towards mysticism. (Rasool 149)

Both Sufism and Bhakti movement started in medieval India preached the unity of mankind, equality of all human beings, condemnation of caste distinctions and communal discriminations. Both these movements played a significant role in creating an atmosphere of mutual trust and understanding and in establishing a deep communication with the masses. More than private salvation, these movements aimed to transform the social order. They helped to evolve a people's culture with all the necessary concomitants in the realms of religion, literature, economic urges and socio-political demands (Hameed 193). The Sufi saints of India stood above all constricted and narrow divisions of society and endeavored to find a unity in the diverse fundamentals that make up its whole. For centuries Indians have accepted Sufi shrines as a symbol of communal harmony. Thus, Sufism with its effect is considered a part of the Indian culture, a part of its ancient legacy and a fundamental element of its literary life. The verses of Sufi poets were readily accepted by the people for the simple reason that they were imbued with a personal touch and were far from mere religious preaching. The Sufi saints like their Bhakti counterparts in a subtle way touched the lives of common people. With their wisdom and experience they shed light on the moral and ethical problems of the day. Their wisdom and teachings, couched as it was in everyday idiom, left an ineffaceable imprint over the artistic and literary output in the region.

Partition stories written by writers like Ismat Chugatai, Gulzar, Ashfaq Ahmed, Surendra Prakash, Asif Aslam Farrukki, Kamleswar, Manik Bandyopadhayay, K. A. Abbas, Maheep Singh, Shaikh Ayyaz lay a clear accent on the shared living of people across communal

allegiances and alliances. In nearly all the stories Sufism forms the subtext of the narrative. The writers have integrated Sufi precepts and philosophy, with the cultural ethos (Arya 213) of India in their fiction. These writers in their narratives have adopted an unassuming, pervasive and all embracing approach much beyond the religious and insular traditions. The rupture induced by Partition assumes high-pitch in the light of people's conviction in the essential unity of India. It is this harmonious and cohesive vision of pre-Partition India that has its foregrounding in Sufism. Since there is a basic sense of synthesis, the entire Partition experience becomes extremely traumatic. The pain of Partition is felt most acutely by those who have experienced connections and whose vision is holistic (Kumar 19). Partition fiction sounds all the more traumatic and cataclysmic as it is constantly realized against the nagging backdrop of Sufi synthesis. The violence is played against the gospel of communal amity, innate to the Sufi discourse. More than just displacement in spatial terms, Partition becomes a trope of rupture along temporal lines. Partition violence becomes utterly unbearable against the accentuated backdrop of the unity espoused by Sufism.

In the context of rather syncretic history of the country any sense of rupture was least thinkable. The idea of a united India with its multi-lingual, multi-religious population, an India as a geographical space stabilized through centuries, was considered by the poets and artists as something permanent and eternal, and bifurcated India was simply unthinkable. Unity of India was an ideal that the writers did not merely construct in their narratives; but had a firm belief in it. It was a matter of conviction for them. The genesis of this ideal could effortlessly be traced back to the preaching of Sufism that taught people to move beyond religion. The main tenet of Sufism is to live for social harmony with equal respect for all religions. Sufis, therefore, lay stress on the unity of inner teachings of all religions rather than on their outer form. They aim to grow beyond religion, to understand the real meaning of the religion and to realize the Truth by one's own experience.

Therefore in a way the Partition meant undermining the history. History had created its own metaphysics that laid the foundation of brotherhood amongst the Indians but the division created a trauma from which there was no easy healing. The Partition of India was a division from above whereas the synthesis was a movement from below. Partition was a political move but Sufism was a people's movement. The Partition nostalgia has a latent theme of that legacy of brotherhood. It is because of the inner truth of Sufism, a belief system and discipline, free from the confines of time and place, that people from diverse cultural backgrounds and all walks of life have followed it for centuries and are,

yet, seeking a common pathway to an eternal and transcendent truth. Sufism possibly facilitated the secularization of the human imagination. It led to the transformation from sacred to the secular, thus configuring new aesthetics. The highly hierarchized relationship of the devotee and the divine attains an intensely human character as that of an equitable relationship between the lover and the beloved. The emotion of love is thus central to Sufi aesthetics. Sufi narratives like Jayesi's *Padmavat* lay emphasis on love and separation. *Padmavat* has some highly romantic sequences and experiences which are inherent in Hindu and Muslim cultures (Gafurova 288). Jayesi's aesthetics are governed by the Sufi thought, that god discerns himself in the form of external beauty. The separation of the human soul from God causes agony. In Jayesi's, as well as Kabir's poetry, we find that separation and love are the predominant sentiments (288). Similar impulses of love and separation run through the Partition narratives. The motifs of harmony and cultural cohesiveness, are often invoked to put in perspective the violence caused by the Partition to the very psyche of the people who had internalized Sufi ideals of composite culture for ages.

In the works of the Sufi poets "Divine love was expressed only through the analogy of the most intense and the most romantic love that existed between a man and a woman. The Sufi poets employed an extremely enigmatic and esoteric style in their poems in describing the secrets of their mystical love" (Arya 208-109). Thus they humanized the relationship of the divine and the devotee.

The Partition of India did not result in a mere geographical displacement; it was a displacement and disillusionment, from this legacy that had preached unity. "The survivors of Partition clearly perceive Partition as an end of a certain kind of innocence, the innocence of a shared culture and the sense of togetherness that had evolved over centuries between Hindus and Muslims. It offers a vision of a gradual developing of composite culture in India through a sharing of rituals, languages as well as essential world views. The unprecedented violence, between the two communities during the Partition riots came as a shock". (Paul Kumar 41)

In the story "The Shepherd" written by Ashfaq Ahmed the Sufi ideals are deeply embedded in the socio-cultural environment of the protagonist, Dauji's life in a different manner. Though towards the end of the story the outer chaos dissembles the lives of the characters yet a substantial amount of significance is given to the values and ethics so endeared to by the people. It is through the blissful memories of his teacher that we get a perception of a union that surpasses all the barriers

of religion, caste and status. Religious affinities are pushed to the background and are superseded by intellectual and spiritual ones, as Dauji and his aqa forge a bond that reiterates the glorious tradition of the guru/shishya (Ansari 294). This relationship between Dauji and his teachers is symbolic of the *pir murshid* relationship in the Sufi orders where the teacher is held in great reverence and admiration by the disciples. Dauji has great respect for his teacher because he has enlightened his life by imparting him knowledge and thus elevating him from the dark alleys of ignorance to the 'level of scholastic endeavor and piety'. (296)

Therefore, Dauji a Hindu by birth embodies the elements of Muslim Culture. He recites the Kalma and reads the Koran. His teachers are Muslims who love him dearly. We see that Dauji is a Sufi in faith and practice. He believes that God is not concerned with one's religion but with love. Spirituality doesn't mean adhering to any particular religion. The essentially 'tolerant, eclectic and polytheistic' society is encapsuled, as it were, in the psyche of Dauji whose knowledge of Islamic religion, history and culture makes him conversant with Muslim culture, even though he is a conscientious Hindu. (Paul Kumar, "On Narrativising" 229). Throughout the story he exhibits trust in a universal faith through his liberal teachings and unparalleled tolerance. In the end his faith comes in a direct conflict with the outer world, thus making the situation poignant. The last lines describe Dauji as an angel with flowing hair; a slight semblance to Baba Farid, the celebrated Sufi saint and poet is drawn by the writer, thus adding a mystical dimension to the story. The views of Dauji are corroborated by the lines from the great Persian poet Rumi's poem 'One Song':

> What is praised is one, so the praise is one too,
> many jugs being poured
> Into a huge basin. All religions, all this singing,
> one song.
> The differences are just illusion and vanity.
> Sunlight looks slightly different
> On this wall than it does on that wall and a lot
> different on this other one, but
> It is still one light. We have borrowed these
> clothes, these time - and - space personalities,
> From a light, and when we praise, we pour them
> back in (Rumi 47).

Rumi in his numerous poems discusses the oneness of all religions. In his verses one can see love and respect for all faiths. He knows that all faiths teach the same ideals of unity of god, love for all

living beings, tolerance and humility. Sufis, therefore, lay stress on the unity of the inner wisdom of all religions rather than on their outer form. Sufism does not figure in Partition literature as a mere backdrop; it is an all informing impulse.

In order to get some respite from the madness and brutality stalking the present, some of the writers even try to restructure the past, seeped in the Indian ethos of a harmonious pluralist society. By doing so, they also question the validity of the violence unleashed on the eve of independence. In his story "Dreams Images", Surendera Prakash, makes use of memory and dreams to recreate the happy and peaceful past. "Dream Images" is the recollection of a composite community life. The basis of the story is the "mutually interactive Hindu - Muslim culture" (Asaduddin 122). This story depicts the lost world that flourished on communal sharing and interconnectedness. Though the narrator feels sad to have left behind his Muslim friends in Pakistan, yet he is also sure and confident of an existing bond between them. He tries to relive his past by recreating it in his dreams. He goes to Pakistan and to all the places connected to his past. The visit to the Sufi saint Baba Kasaudi Shah's shrine give us a peek into the pluralist culture of India. M. Asaduddin expounds thus on the intercommunity life portrayed in "Dream Images":

> The chanting by devotees of expressions such as 'Ali da mast qalandar' in the Sufi shrine and the kulfi vendors' sing-song cry, 'Qulfi khoye-malai di', piste badam di, kiode gulab di, khatir janab di ....' To sell their wares, illuminate aspects of the shared socio-cultural life, and the tenor of that life at a particular historical moment. (Asaduddin 127)

In 'Dream Images' the writer has depicted, a world of harmonious coexistence and inter-dependence. Most of the writers in their narratives develop an ambivalent relationship between the past and the present. In "Dream Images" the author deftly fuses reality and fictional material to evoke a slice of his past from his memory; to salvage, as it were, whatever he can of the culture before it is irretrievably lost (Bhalla 126). In a way these memories of the idyllic past act as an anchor for the characters, who have to undergo the pain and agony of losing their loved ones and their homes. The archives of memory are used not only to explore the life of greed and violence, but also as a source for a life of communal togetherness again (Bhalla xlviii).

It is through this reckoning of the past that these Partition narratives underscore the dormant message of cultural compositeness that Partition fiction willingly projects. For the writers, this assimilative

strength was one of the primary features of Indian civilization and the cause of its resilience (Asaduddin, "Fiction as History" 315).

Sufi tropes like love for god are very important for the construction of the event. Partition literature is grounded in Sufi romances like Manjhan's *Madhumalati*, Qutb Ali Qutban's *Mrigavati* and Mulla Daud's *Chandayan*. For Sufi poets like Manjhan, love is much more than feelings human beings sometimes have for one another; it is a cosmic force which pre-exists creation, and which permeates creation (Behl and Weightman xviii). In these Sufi narratives great emphasis is placed on love and separation and the similar impulses can be seen in the Partition narratives. In fact it is the very setting of these love stories against the backdrop of Partition violence and bloodshed that brings out the poignancy of love. Love for the Sufi poets is believed to be the moving energy of the world which made them strive after their original perfection ... (Arya 208).

The traditional romantic stories from the Indian subcontinent like Sassi/Punnu; Sohni/Mahiwal, Hir/Ranjha as well as the famous Persian stories of Majnun and Leila have the leitmotif of separated lovers who find a deeper spiritual longing and fulfillment through their intense yearning for one another. "The Sufi poets however may have altered these popular anecdotes according to their objective experiences and descriptions. By using the local dialect, these poets were in all probability trying to provide a discourse on mystical love which could permeate the minds of the local people" (Arya 209). The love that is described in these tales is a love and appreciation for the beauty of God's creation. The love legends of these lovers also provide "the archetypal frame for the modeling of local romances" (Shackle 61).

In a similar way, in the Partition stories, love, forms a nucleus. Many of these stories are woven around the premise of two lovers separated by the division of the nation, thus undergoing agony in order to reunite in the next world: very true to the Sufi tradition of undergoing suffering in order to attain closeness to god. The pain they experience in order to unite is akin to the longing of a saint to be one with God. Rumi has also expressed similar emotions in his poetry:

> The most living moment comes when
> Those who love each other meet each
> Other's eyes and in what flows
> Between them then. (Rumi 189)

In the words of William. C Chittick "Ibn Arabi and Rumi constantly remind their readers that love for any creature can only be love for God.

Only ignorance veils people from perceiving what they love" (Chittick 67).

In Kamleshwar's "How many Pakistans" the two lovers meet in king Bhartrihari's fort. The literary classic named, *Bhartriharinama* that Bano's father, master sahib, is writing becomes in this story, the locus of a cross-cultural amalgamation – as it is Bhartrihari's fort, which becomes the physical location that brings the two lovers, a Hindu and a Muslim, together, and as a reworked cultural signifier in Master Sahib's colloquial Urdu rendering of it. (Khanna 109 - 110)

Thus Partition violence becomes absolutely unbearable against this accentuated backdrop of harmony advocated by Sufism. "How many Pakistans" can be studied at two levels, one as an ordinary love story and second as a story that spreads the message of Sufi love, reverence, tolerance and piety. The lovers in the story transgress all religious and cultural hierarchies. The protagonist Mangal, who has been extirpated by Partition, tries to visualize all the glories of the past in "How many Pakistans". The memories of the past are the only source of solace in his now disjointed life. He recollects the aroma of the *Mehndi* (Henna) flowers, which used to bloom in his hometown Chinar. He remembers the days before the division of the country when the beauty and fragrance of these flowers rendered happiness and tranquility to the people. There was no acrimony in the atmosphere and the narrator had a good relationship with his beloved, Bano. In an underplayed tone Kamleshwar sets his story in the Sufi backdrop. The religious identities of the lovers are transgressed, contravened by their love for each other in sync with the essence of Sufi thought, i.e., love and love itself is the quintessence of human life. That is why the "Sufis commonly express the quest for god in the language of love, the most intense and profound of human experiences" (Chittick 37).

Great Sufi poets like Bulle Shah held that it is the heart of the people that houses God. He believed that God is not to be found confined behind the walls of any religious place but in the heart of a simple man, who loves his fellow beings. He was more interested in the common people than in their cast and creed. For him maintaining order and concord in the society was far more vital than the narrow confines of any one particular religion. One of his verses goes thus:

Masjid Dha Day, Mandir Dha Day
Dha Day Jo Kujh Disda
Par Kissay Da Dil Na Dhawee(n)
Rub Dilaa(n) Wich Wasda.

According to this verse one may raze the religious places of worship or whatever is perceptible to the eye but should never break any human heart; as it is the seat of God. Sufi poets in their verses express the relation of love between human soul and God through analogies with human love. Without love nothing can be accomplished. It is love that purifies the lovers and brings them nearer to God. The great poet Rumi has composed numerous poems on love and "on the interplay between separation and union, hope and fear, sobriety and drunkenness, annihilation and subsistence, pain and joy. This is the dialectic of love. No love is possible without the ups and downs inherent to the created realm" (Chittick 70).

In the Partition fiction incidents of selfless love have been depicted by the writers. They have portrayed lovers who undergo suffering for the sake of their beloveds. Here is love of the highest order. This sacrificing nature adds sublimity to the love and elevates the lovers to mystical heights. Thus, the ethereal and out worldly feeling of love delineated in many of the Partition narratives brings them extremely close to the ideals and precepts of Sufism.

Love is a tree with
Branches reaching into eternity
And roots set deep in eternity. (Rumi 173)

The Sufi verses have been interlaced in the narratives in more than one way. The Sufi love legends have always formed an integral part of India's cultural ethos. In Manto's "The Dog of Tetwal" soldiers on both the sides of the border allude to the songs composed by famous Sufi poet Waris Shah. The penchant on both sides for these songs lends a sense of commonality to the soldiers (Ravikant and Saint 96).

In Mohan Rakesh's story, "Malbe ka Malik," in the background to the current ruins is, the earlier feelings of Hindu-Muslim brotherhood and shared community life within that *mohalla* (Kumar, "On Narrativising Partiton" 234). The Partition nostalgia has a latent theme of that legacy of brotherhood, which had its roots in the Sufi doctrines of love, tolerance and unity. Alok Bhalla affirms that "prior to the Partition, hardly anyone would have asserted that their identities as Hindus and Muslims had been formed in contempt of each other. Indeed, if seriously questioned about the traditions within which they located themselves, they would have constructed, with the help of similar recollections, a life-world which was communally shared" (Bhalla 87).

The blithesome memory of the past dignifies the rather austere present. Memory acts as a site of reconstruction. Ismat Chugtai's in

story "Roots" presents images of this shared structure of the pre-Partition Indian society. "Roots" is a story about two very close friends one a Muslim and the other a Hindu. Starting from the grandfathers, the friendship flowed to the grandsons. For years, they had lived together in the bonds of intimacy and affection. With the progression of the story a silent tension creeps in due to the violence taking place in the outer world. With the shared life as the backdrop, this distancing of both the families in the present, brings out the pathos in the story. Had it not been for the warm relations shared by these families with different faiths, the void thus created, wouldn't have stirred the consciousness of the reader.

Ismat Chugtai makes it clear through her story that in the pre-colonial India, people had enjoyed a very lovable existence. There was amity among the people of various religions. For centuries people had lived together in perfect harmony. The two families in the story "Roots" present the images of the socio-cultural life of the pre-Partition India, with its intrinsic harmony.

Since each creation of god is his own reflection, the school of Sufism perceives the beauty inside the seemingly ugly, and to open arms even to the most evil one. This unbounded tolerance is expressed in the most beautiful way, by the famous Sufi philosopher and poet Rumi in these words, "Come, come, whoever you are. Worshiper, Wanderer, Lover of Leaving; ours is not a caravan of despair. Though you have broken your vows a thousand times ... Come, come again, Come". Many of the stories stand witness to this infinite human tolerance at a time when madness was being unleashed. In a stark contrast to the violent outbursts of their fellow countrymen, there were some who became the messengers of God by helping and steering the suffering people. In stories like Ashfaq Ahmed's "The Shepherd", Khwaja Ahmed Abbas' "The Death of Sheikh Burhanuddin", we encounter characters who forgive and forget the violence done to them. These people instead of wreaking vengeance choose to restore their lives. The life, as it is said in any form is the most precious gift of God and it is our responsibility as human beings to protect and nourish it. Characters in these stories choose life above all the evils of this world. Their zest for life undermines there past traumatic experience as they try to put in order the things in the society by creating a world of harmony and sanity. For many of these characters it is not easy to forget their losses but still they try to resettle in the new environment. This forgiving attitude can duly be attributed to the Sufi legacy of the Indian subcontinent. Forgiveness has always been considered a divine virtue and the people in these stories, by forgiving attain a spiritual

stature. This kind of an attitude towards the perpetrators of violence and aggression, is every bit an outcome of the bearings of the devotional and mystical dynamics of Sufism.

These narratives portray that the Sufi spirit is not essentially tangible but is manifest in its infinite aspects and processes in the Partition fiction. Sufism not only had an influence over the collective unconscious but was all pervasive in the thoughts and emotions of the people. In the Partition literature Sufism acts as a centripetal force. The relationship between Partition discourse and Sufi discourse might be that of disagreement, dissonance, disapproval, denial; yet it is inevitable. The history of atrocities is not forgotten, but neither is the memory of a life of connectedness (Bhalla xlviii). Had it not been for the deep-seated Sufi aesthetics, the Partition violence would have turned into another political violence. The Partition violence became all the more profound for the reason that it took place in the background of an assimilated discourse.

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Women Characters in Indra Sinha's *Animal's People*

— Navleen Multani

> We are flames not flowers. With our brooms, we will beat the Kampani, we will sweep them out from Khaufpur. Out of India we will sweep them. Out of all existence.
>
> (*Animal's People* 311)

These are the words of the women protesting actively against the government and Kampani in Khaufpur. They ignore the shouts and beatings of the cops and take on these perpetrators of injustice who are also responsible for their poverty, hunger and cursed existence. This protest embodies a non-violent resistance of Animal's people or the Khaufpuris who have been denied justice and proper compensation for over twenty years by the American corporation called Kampani. The state and the police are also responsible for the misery of the Khaufpuris.

Khaufpur, the terror-town, is poisoned by the release of methyl isocyanate "that night"[1] from a U.S. based Union Carbide Corporation called the Kampani in the novel *Animal's People* written by Indra Sinha. It is the Bhopal gas tragedy on the midnight 2/3 December 1984 that resonates through the pages of *Animal's People.* This narrative is a subtle critique of the modern day justice system by Indra Sinha. Sinha left advertising in 1995 to become a full-time writer. The novel was shortlisted for the 2007 Man Booker Prize for Fiction as well as for international IMPAC Dublin Literary Award 2009. It won the 2008 Commonwealth Writers Prize.

Sinha narrativises the harrowing experiences of the figures of alterity (the Khaufpuris) who have been grappling with the aftermath of the leakage–toxic wells, malformed babies, breathing problems, hormonal abnormalities and blindness for over twenty years. Animal, not yet twenty, is the protagonist of the novel. As his new born spine absorbs deadly gases on the night of the leakage, Animal's twisted spine reduces him to a *jaanvar.* Animal walks on four feet and is doubly bent–with deformity and bitterness. He leads a miserable life with his dog Jara and a crazy old nun, Ma Franci. Just like Animal, Ma Franci is also a victim of the leakage. She is a nun from France who works in the orphanage in Jyotinagar where Animal stays. She loses all comprehension of Hindi and English after "that night". Though she is driven to insanity, Franci takes care of Animal and considers him to be her son.

1. "that night" : the night of the chemical leakage (*People* 1).

Animal forages for food in the garbage and roams around the streets eating the left-overs at the eateries. This "Banjara" fights poverty, starvation and humiliation (*People* 18). At the same time he also yearns for dignity. It is only when Nisha comes across Animal that his gift of gab and cleverness find recognition. Thus Animal gets shelter at Chicken claw (house of Nisha's father) as well as employment with Zafar. Zafar is a social worker who resists the inhumanities and injustices of the Kampani and government in a non-violent manner. He mobilizes the Khaufpuris to action to enable them to constitute a democratic order. He entrusts Animal with the responsible job of spying the plans of the "government, munsipal" (27). Both Nisha and Zafar consider Animal to be "especially abled" and not disabled as he is considered to be by others. It is because of Nisha's help that the malformed *jaanvar* becomes Zafar's "Jamispond, jeera-jeera-seven" who provides him timely assistance and information (194).

Though physically weak Animal exhibits enormous strength to grapple with the odds. He shatters all hierarchies of the superior and the inferior with his quickness to learn a new language and the use of new technology. This quickness and cleverness enable Animal to render meritorious services for the victims in despair. He spies on the government officials, provides correct and timely information to Zafar so that Zafar in turn empowers the movement of the "nothing" (Khaufpuris) to turn the tables against the dominant order which denies compensation and justice to the poison victims. It is with his verbal quibble, non-violent demonstrations and fast unto death that Zafar wins some compensation for the victims. Both Animal and Zafar oppose the corporate inhumanities with their non-violent *tactics*[2] and successfully make an impact on the public, Kampani as well as the government. But what is most remarkable about the narrative is the way Sinha provides an equal treatment to the women characters. He gives agency to the women characters to alleviate the suffering of the victims, win some compensation and poetic justice for the ailing and suffering Khaufpuris.

If it is Nisha who whole-heartedly assists Zafar in the social welfare programmes for the victims, Doctor Elli Barber and Ma Franci do not remain behind. Nisha, an insider, is an active participant in the struggle of the Khaufpuris for justice. She postpones her plans to marry Zafar because winning justice for the poison victims is her priority. Contrary to this Elli, an outsider comes from America to help the poison victims. Actually it is the dangerous job of Elli's father at a steel mill

2. *tactics*: the art of the weak that helps in reorganizing the dominant order (Certeau, *Practice* 37).

and her mother's madness (caused by the smell of steel) that make her fall out with God and develop sympathetic attitude towards the poor. Elli's circumstances drive her to believe that God makes human beings suffer. She is determined to become powerful enough to heal the broken minds and bodies. So she becomes a doctor and helps the sick and the powerless. Elli divorces her husband Frank because he is the Kampani's lawyer who works for their gains. She leaves America, comes to India and opens in Khaufpur a free clinic to provide medical aid to the victims.

Though Elli offers new hope to the poison victims, people boycott her clinic as they suspect her to be Kampani's person. She also confronts the arrogant and indifferent attitude of the government as well as the health department for eighteen months. But all these impediments cannot dissuade Elli from providing both physical and mental relief to the poison victims. With the use of *spatial practices*[3] like speech/narration and her everyday practice-medical profession, Elli wins the favour of not only the victims but also the judges, medical authorities and the government. She is courageous enough to call the Kampani heartless in the court and expose the failures of the government in providing relief to the victims before the poison relief minister, Zahreel Khan. Elli thus lays bare the lies and deceptions of the state. She joins the Khaufpuris on their picnic where she narrates her story and ultimately wins their confidence. Elli also seeks Animal's help to convince people that they should visit her clinic as she could cure them of their maladies with her treatment. Elli not only volunteers to treat the victims but also educates them about good hygiene (*People* 105-108). She is so moved by the grief and suffering of the poison victims that Elli provides every kind of help to them. She is not ashamed to be an American. She transcends all barriers of nation/class to serve humanity.

Elli's efforts act as a soothing balm on the wounds and woes of the victims. She makes Zafar aware of the physiological details to be kept in mind while he fasts unto death. She also suggests him ways to weaken the *strategies*[4] of the lawyers, Kampani and the government who are about to reach a settlement that would further delay justice to the victims. At this juncture Elli shows great courage. She enters the CM's garden where negotiation between the lawyers of the Kampani and the government is about to take place. She tries to convince her

3. *spatial practices*: Everyday practices like speaking, writing, travelling, reading which help to resist the suppression of the panoptic administration and shape space for the marginalized (*Practice* 96-98).

4. *strategies:* the calculation or manipulation of power relationships hat provide the powerful group an autonomous place (*Practice* 35)

divorced husband about the reality of the bad effects of the chemical leakage that the Khaufpuris are suffering from. She exhorts him to stop the deal or at least delay it so that the people are not denied justice (*People* 322-23). When Elli finds that her words have not been given much attention, she takes full control of the situation. She disguises herself in a *burqua* (veil) and enters the hotel where the deal is being settled. She empties a bottle of stink bomb juice into the air conditioner to scare the politicians and lawyers of the Kampani during the meeting. Because no policemen could dare twitch aside the veil of any respectable Hindu or Muslim woman, Elli – the mystery woman in *burqua,* would never be intercepted. Elli's use of the stink bomb gives an evil burning sensation to the lawyers and the politicians and leaves them coughing badly. Elli thus demonstrates to the perpetrators of injustice that the stink bomb is nothing when compared to the terror caused by the Kampani. With this move Elli also puts an end to all the moves of the Kampani and the government to delay justice.

Just like Elli, Ma Franci is also an outsider who disregards all barriers of caste/class/gender/nation to serve the suffering and oppressed Khaufpuris. She suffers from bouts of madness after "that night" but is reluctant to leave the orphanage in Jyotinagar. When father Père Bernard comes to take this ailing nun back to France, Ma Franci disguises herself in a *burqua* and makes way to Aliya's house so that she could stay back in Khaufpur to serve the suffering (*People* 143). She defies the orders of the superior because she knows that Khaufpur has felt the fist of god which begins the "Apokaelis" (37). She believes that Khaufpur is her home and her work is in the "kingdom of the poor" (40). Though she loses all knowledge of Hindi or English language never poses a problem for Ma Franci. She vehemently believes that God would unleash fury on the evil doers (like inspector Faltu and the CM) just as He did in the 9/11 attack. She does not fear the Kampani, government, police or even the *Qayamat*[5]. She considers *Qayamat* to be God's desire to resurrect the order (*People* 329). It is with her stories and dreams that Ma makes people believe that the injustices are about to end. Thus she lets the hope for a change for a better world grow stronger in the minds of the Khaufpuris. Ma Franci takes care of both the Muslims and the Hindus. Even her insanity cannot stop her from extending help to the poor and the afflicted. Thus Ma Franci, very successfully and peacefully, carries out her role in the struggle against the inhumanities of the corporate world and unjust order. Inevitably this old crazy French nun provides great momentum to the movement of justice in Khaufpur.

5. *Qayamat* : end of all things (*People* 329).

Many other women like Pyarè Bai, Devika, Huriya Bi also participate actively in the struggle against the corporate inhumanities. In order to win compensation and justice for the victims these women are willing to fast-unto-death like Zafar. Their involvement in the protests, demonstrations and fasts seems to suggest that the weak and oppressed could free themselves of all restrains and oppression if they will be free (*Verso* 20). Because it is not the "power" that corrupts but the "fear of losing power" which makes the powerful heap injustices upon the weak, the oppressed need to resist such wrongs and unjust systems (288). We see that this fictional work dwells upon a *wrong*[6] and a *disagreement*[7] which reveals the injustices, lies and deceptions of the dominant discourses. It attempts to break the consensual logic that promotes gender inequalities and injustices in the dominant discourses. Every character of the novel, especially the women characters, exhibits the indominitable human spirit [that Albert Camus glorifies in *The Rebel*]. It is this fervour which is a pre-requisite to resist the tyrannical forces and topple absolute power to democratize the unjust order. Through this literary work Sinha allows the women to participate in a non-violent resistance against corporate injustices through which they try win some relative freedom for themselves as well as justice for the community of sufferers. Such a characterization evokes a change in perception and makes the artist, Sinha, contribute towards the reconstruction of the unjust order (*Rebel* 253; *Sisyphus* 104-06, 180-81).

Sinha, thus endeavours to promote those modes of *subjectification*[8] that would give an equal space to women who, otherwise, remain silent and also invisible in the dominant discourses. The articulation of the problematics of injustice and inequality in the *Animal's People* reflects both a political and an aesthetical resistance which celebrates universal values, allows women to participate in the decision making processes and initiates a process of change and transformation that attempts to provide a dignified and equal space to the excluded women.

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6. *wrong:* a noise or confrontation that reveals gaps and interrupts the order to bring reforms (*Disagreement* 11-13).

7. *disagreement* : demonstrations and strikes manifest disagreement and concentrate on equality of all beings. It detects the signs of untruth in the dominant ideology (*Disagreement* 82).

8. *subjectification:* reincorporation of the subjects that challenges the existing sense perception (*Disagreement* 90, *Aesthetics* 39).

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Formation to Dissolution: Kristevan Psycho-Subject of Emily Bronte

— Sabouri, Hossein

> The thetic phase marks a threshold between two heterogeneous realms: the semiotic and the symbolic. The second includes part of the first and their scission is thereafter marked by the break between signifier and signified. (Kristeva, 1986, p. 102)

Kristevan subject's physical formation culminates in its primary separation from and psychic development in relation to the maternal. "This primary separation (birth), which founds and prefigures symbolic separation, is prior even to the maternal authority that separates the infant's body into drives and satisfies actions" (Oliver, 1993, p. 57). The child who is born into a limitless container experiences the semiotic chora, unable to define its identity borders but surrounded by energies and drives which tend to be destructive if they are not controlled. However, "the mother's body...becomes the ordering principle of the semiotic chora, which is on the path of destruction, aggressivity and death" (Kristeva, 1986, p. 95). The process of negativity or rejection- as Oliver (1993) puts it- starts at material level in the semiotic phase and continues well up to the thetic break and in the symbolic. This type of rejection is based on both lack and excess, not simply on repetition since there is renewal after each rejection until the moment it leads to abjection and the thetic break. In the chora, the subject is created and negated. This process continues later in the challenge between the symbolic and the semiotic that should never be won by neither party in order to save the heterogeneity that is the result of their existence and interaction.

The child experiences a wealth of drives in this semiotic space. It knows no desire since all its needs are satisfied even before they become needs. Immediate satisfaction without any prior demands brings about a sense of jouissance in the bountiful wealth of its symbiosis with the mother. Theirs is the world of union, of rhythm and of music. Nonetheless, the child has to surrender to the authority of the Father figure that enters the symbiotic space and forms the third element since "[f]or Kristeva, an archaic oedipal triangle is set up within the maternal body" (Oliver, 1993, p. 86). This triangle consists of the abject mother, the child and the loving Father which will ultimately change to the father of law after helping provide enough love for the child to get

away from the mother by abjecting her:

> ...the symbolic light that a third party, eventually the Father, can contribute helps the future subject, the more so if it happens to be endowed with a robust supply of drive energy, in pursuing a reluctant struggle against what, having been the mother, will turn into an abject. (Kristeva, 1982, p. 13)

"This is a move from the mother's body to the mother's desire through the mother's love" (Oliver, 1993, p. 70). Abjecting the maternal figure is the hardest phase in the developmental process. The child cannot fulfill it easily. Yet, it is of utmost importance for its move from the semiotic toward the symbolic; the child has to know its position. It has to acquire a life to live on. It has to have a symbolic identity. Even before the mirror stage, the child begins to set boundaries by abjecting whatever is other to itself.

> But from that moment on, while I recognize my image as sign and change in order to signify, another economy is instituted. The sign represses the chora and its eternal return. Desire alone will henceforth be witness to that 'primal' pulsation. (Kristeva, 1982, p. 14)

This process of self acquiring and self preservation in fact makes it willing to abandon the mother. Yet once it gets out of this stage, which is an important one in its becoming and forming a self, the child can never get rid of its looming presence. Abject is an always present fact from which one can never feel free; "It [abjection] is a violent, clumsy breaking away, with the constant risk of falling back under the sway of a power as securing as it is stifling" (Kristeva, 1982, p. 13). The loss of maternal in favor of the symbolic position has the greatest impact on one's life. Since mother is the child's greatest and real love, it is to be always coveted. There will of course be replacements for this love in the world of symbolic. 'Transference love', as Kristeva calls it, enables us to live on. It will provide the opportunity through which the subject will be able to proceed until so many losses ultimately drag him down to the stage of dissolution.

The early experiences of loss happen while the child has not yet completed its differentiation. The ever increasing gap between the need and its gratification will ultimately bring about the first instances of desire. The child will have to use additional strategies to call its mother. Intervention of the Father "provides a medium, language, through which the child can maintain some contact with the estranged mother." (Oliver, 1993, p. 21). The child will understand that "language can be used to

demand things...but even as she satisfies these needs, she [the child] cannot satisfy the primordial desire" (MacAfee, 2004, p. 34). Therefore, it becomes the everlasting subject of desire; the one always trying to fill the gap. It will own a "psychic space [that] changes over time, and particularly in relation to the subject's encounter with an *other* which is what love entails" (Letche, 2003, p. 186).

Devoid of its plentiful bonds and heading toward the symbolic, the child enters the world of signs through the thetic break. Nonetheless, its touch on the semiotic aspect is never done away with because according to Kristeva, semiotic and symbolic can and should exist together so that the person's utterance can have affect as well as signification though it never materializes the real. However, it should be noted that the return to a full semiotic state is desirable but never achievable. It can mean the deterioration of the speaking subject in process who, by rejecting the symbolic, rejects the very possibility of its own being.

Having passed through the thetic phase, the child is transformed into a subject that has attained a tenuous I in the symbolic. It is the very same identity it grasps firmly to live on. Since it has already experienced a loss, this subject will try to substitute for it. It will turn to a subject in a synthetic process, a system open to evolution with factors affecting the psychic space. The subjects live in the symbolic as a community in which they possess rules and regulations. Taking Catherine Earnshaw of the *Wuthering Heights* as the infant experiencing the process of psychological formation, separation and later as the subject in process involves the task of tracing her life from the beginning of her appearance in the story. Yet to bring up any discussion related to Catherine will necessarily involve Heathcliff as her never separating half. Therefore, the primary questions coming to one's mind can be those of their relationship concerning the nature of their love, its early formation, its unearthly and abnormal quality, the necessity of their separation and its ultimate consequences.

Nelly's narration begins some days prior to the appearance of Heathcliff and his active participation in the family business. The first picture the reader gets of the family is thus one prior to his advent. In this portrait, one can get acquainted with the present community as it primarily is. "The Earnshaws and the Lintons whatever their differences in style are at least compatible in class terms" (Stevenson, 1988, p. 76). Both families are landowners. One can see a feudal relationship in both families. The hierarchal system is apparent and easily functioning. Both families are directed under the authority of the Father figure. In other

words, "the division of power in the family mirrors the way in which power in a patriarchal society is constructed along the lines of sexual difference" (Esgalhado, 2002, p. 787).

At the time, Catherine is introduced as a six-year-old girl who eagerly chooses a whip when she is asked about the souvenir she prefers to obtain upon her father's return from a short trip; "...and then he [father] asked Miss Cathy; she was hardly six years old, but she could ride any horse in the stable, and she chose a whip" (Bronte, 1847, p. 77). Psychologically speaking, Catherine has passed the first phases of psychic development, experienced her loss in a different way from her brother Hindley, and is now living as an *other* in the symbolic. Her position as an *other* makes her a stranger to the world she wants to take an active role in. Hers would be at most a destiny not so different from her mother's that ultimately dies in silence. She is in the same company with so many girls who are dragging the maternal corpse with them. By asking for a whip, however, she shows her early instinctual demand and potential to be a rebel against the world that has ordained a female, inferior and at times non-existing role for her. "Cathy wants to develop the rougher, more physical and active emotional side of her nature, and indeed has already begun to do so" (Gose, 1966, p. 4). By so doing, she abandons the destined gender role for a decided one at a time she is too young to understand the particularities of the difference. Heathcliff's appearance is thus a kind of trigger for her readymade mould to overflow its banks.

Not long after this description, Catherine is introduced to a boy from nowhere. Nelly's description clears the attitude the family has toward the little boy:

> We crowded round, and, over Miss Cathy's head I had a peep at a dirty, ragged, black-haired child; big enough both to walk and talk - indeed, its face looked older than Catherine's – yet, when it was set on its feet, it only stared round, and repeated over and over again some gibberish that nobody could understand. (Bronte, 1847, p. 77)

The first reactions toward this little stranger are naturally adverse. Indeed, Heathcliff will always hold a problematic relationship to other occupants of the two major estates. "Heathcliff, Earnshaw says, is simultaneously from God and the devil, from heaven and hell, from, by implication, everywhere and nowhere" (Stevenson, 1988, p. 67). He is usually avoided either as a result of the fear he brings about or for the negative feeling he causes. He is to be introduced and kept as a foreigner:

> Heathcliff's "introduction" to the family, here [in the scene of his introduction], is an expulsion from it: when he is in, he is out, and when he is incorporated he is also excluded. Heathcliff's unstable or wuthering position in the family structure in fact dramatizes the forces that constitute that structure. (Vine, 1994, p. 343)

Heathcliff's origin, or better to say lack of origin, causes his introduction to and existence in the family to be troublesome. From the beginning, he displaces things or people. He acts out as a temporary vessel, a container that can take every role along with its characteristics. The first instance of such displacements is his replacing the souvenirs the children of the Earnshaw family are longing for. Next is his being granted the name of an already dead son of the family; "Heathcliff". "Hardly a major character eludes the violence of this displacement" (Jacobs, 1979, p. 54). Nevertheless, this process of naming is troublesome, bothering and at the same time ironic since "Heathcliff [who is] never granted the family name, [is] named rather for that which does not exist, a dead child" (Jacobs, 1979, p. 51). From the outset, everybody treats him as someone who has overthrown the order; an *other* whose presence disturbs the community. In short, he is a threat to the order of the patriarchal society of the two estates representing the social world.

Heathcliff's entrance as a stranger to the firm held unity can also be discussed as an attack of the semiotic force on the symbolic. Prior to his appearance, the two families experience a wealth of symbolic force, both displaying the dominance of proper patriarchal order. Mother figures are subordinated and are only mentioned in case need arises like in childbirth or in death. In the first case, they are fulfilling a socially ordained duty in producing another subject and in the second, the novel records their elimination from the pages of the book of existence in not more than two or three sentences. Heathcliff changes things. Vine (1994) believes Heathcliff is the only one to constantly shake the boundaries. He comes from nowhere and fills different roles by displacing others. However, he is successful in none of these roles. Along with getting each role, he also gets its negative attitudes, for example, he is against the capitalist nature of the Grange but later, he turns to one such figure. In short, his contradictory relation to the Heights reveals its contradictory existence.

Ultimately, Catherine manages to found a grand relationship with this new object of attention. Heathcliff, a stranger once, becomes Catherine's world while yet himself affected by her. Although the boy is superior to her in terms of gender, Heathcliff has the same and sometimes even fewer advantages. The boy appears to be at the same

time familiar and stranger. He will be a mirror reflecting Catherine's situation in the symbolic in that they are both outsiders. "Such outsiders cannot fully participate within the symbolic unless they learn to speak according to its rules" (Grimwood, 2008). Though Heathcliff and Catherine meet when she has already been formed as a subject operating in the symbolic world, their relationship would be so much different. Heathcliff's introduction makes a sort of change for Catherine. She, who has the potential of transgressing the accepted order, joins Heathcliff in being a revolutionary. Their union not only brings about the opportunity of fulfilling their rebellious desires, but also forms a sort of strong and passionate love relationship that echoes the realm of semiotic and its abundance of drives.

Stevenson(1988) believes some like Eagleton tend to see their relationship as natural (different from cultural and its accepted rules) since they cannot find any social and sociably acceptable aspects in it. They believe Catherine has been removed from the social to the natural upon accepting Heathcliff. This commentary does not seem untrue. The nature of Catherine- Heathcliff relationship is neither easy to explore nor to define. It is not to be easily swallowed or accepted in terms of the symbolic. On psychological level, however, there seems to be an explanation;

> It may seem odd to think of the relationship between Catherine and Heathcliff, which occupies a central position in the novel, as a displaced version of the semiotic relationship between mother and child. But there is much in the novel to support this view. (Wion, 1992, p. 317-8)

The appearance and existence of Heathcliff in the novel can be indicative of the existence of the semiotic symbiosis for a newborn that is Catherine. Their unnatural relationship which is a sort of love nobody can understand is the natural bond existing in the mother/child symbiosis. This type of bond exists prior to abjection and move to the world of symbolic and the spectacle. Joined in this semiotic symbiosis, both fall into a process of negativity that is the continuous renovation of the psychic space. Therefore, they both enter the space "[Kristeva] calls chora [that is] a process of negativity, where the subject is [continuously] generated and negated through the dialectics of change and stasis" (Vickroy, 1990, p. 10). It helps them reduce the repression of the symbolic to its minimum.

In her symbiotic relationship to Heathcliff, Catherine knows no boundaries. She is as absorbed in Heathcliff as Heathcliff in her. This is the fact that makes it possible for her to later exclaim that she is but

Heathcliff in her famous passage on love and identification. This is the reason that later makes Stevenson (1988) announce that the true origin of Heathcliff is within the very soul of Catherine; "We can say something about the origin of Heathcliff's identity: more than any place else, his self seems to originate in Catherine....From this perspective, what Heathcliff and Catherine have in common is, quite simply, Catherine herself" (p. 72-3). This sense of unity, of being two bodies and one soul, of rejoicing in the presence of each other makes it possible for both parties to take full pleasure and gain absolute jouissance only imagined in the pre-subject state of the child's psychic development. This relationship causes both to experience the amplitude, the sense of rhythm and a language free connection. As Nelly narrates, there were even times when they communicated not through words but through their looks. Such a method of connection, which exists solely in the maternal phase makes one enjoy abundance as the result of non-existence of any need since all the needs are gratified even before they are needs.

Regarding their sexuality and the love between them, it is plentiful but illegal. This sort of love cannot be tolerated in the symbolic. The reader never gets a clear shot of their sexual relationship till the last moment. Catherine avoids writing about it since the nature of their sexual relationship escapes sublimated representation. It can be interpreted as the displaced form of maternal sexuality at the time and hence a feature emphasizing Kristevan reflection in the novel. If represented, it is symbolized and hence lost in real terms. On the other hand, its representation gives way to hardest restrictions on the side of the symbolic that considers such a love, maternal, as abject. In Powers of Horror, Kristeva (1982) talks of abjection as a necessary process in the psychic development through which one can get to the stable however illusive identity in the symbolic;

> ...what is abject, on the contrary, the jettisoned object, is radically excluded and draws me toward the place where meaning collapses. A certain "ego" that merged with its master, a superego has flatly driven it away. It lies outside, beyond the set, and does not seem to agree to the latter's rules of the game. And yet, from its place of banishment, the abject does not cease challenging its master. (p. 2)

Prior to the advent and formation of the language, there is no need to distinguish between the subject and the other. Recognition of the other which starts as soon as abjection provides a tenuous I and hence draws a wall around the subject causes a series of such recognitions. Once something is abject, the subject avoids it in order

to maintain its position in the symbolic into which it has already entered. The subject in process, hence, is able to keep its boundaries.

If the maternal separation happens properly, the moment of the break from the semiotic to the symbolic to access language, known as thetic, will be completed. From then on, language will be the medium for expression of love and need. Such a full separation would fix the subject's position;

> ...the subject must be firmly posited by castration so that drive attacks against the thetic will not give way to fantasy or to psychosis but will instead lead to a 'second-degree thetic', a resumption of the functioning characteristic of the semiotic chora within the signifying device of language. (Kristeva, 1986, p. 103)

If the separation does not happen or happens improperly, without the cooperation of the third party known as the loving Father, one will have two possible solutions; to get stuck in the semiotic or to enter the symbolic improperly. If this kind of incomplete entrance takes place, the maintenance of the life of the symbolic I will be more risky. According to Kristeva, after one's departure from the plentiful semiotic chora, the abject will always haunt the subject who has, through abjection, grasped a status in order to live on. Through its opposition, the abject "settles me [the subject] within the fragile texture of a desire for meaning" (Kristeva, 1982, p. 1-2). Yet, from its place of banishment, the abject does not cease challenging its master but "beseeches a discharge, a convulsion, a crying out" (Kristeva, 1982, p. 2). Therefore, if the unstable foundation of such a loose hold on the symbolic is still threatened by an improper entrance, the tenuous I will still have more to be fearful of. Heathcliff is the representative of this abject side of existence that should be repulsed by the subject Catherine.

Thoremählen (1997) believes that childhood is the only time Catherine and Heathcliff enjoy total alliance. But even then, there are some instances in which Catherine is seen as someone who wants to control. These are the earlier but never spoken moments of her rejection of Heathcliff's authority on her as the maternal figure. This type of rejection is the same as the process of rejection and repetition in the chora that is called negativity. Furthermore, Catherine's pieces of writing indicate her wish to impose meaning. This can also be an instance of her early aspiring toward grand position and power. These all happen within her psyche and are only distinguishable as early signs of her attempts to develop her separate identity through unconscious processes.

This period ends by Catherine's first stay in the Grange that can be interpreted as the time of the formation of the maternal triangle. It has been mentioned that the third element, the loving Father enters the mother/child symbiosis in order to help the child abject the mother and move to the symbolic by forming an identity. This happens in symbolic levels for Catherine. The motive for her separation is symbolically shown by Edgar. His appearance in the life of Catherine has the same consequences as the appearance of the loving Father. Catherine, who is drowned in the semiotic, knows no boundaries. For her, Heathcliff is life and love. With him, she experiences the state of progressive negativity. However, "the mother [Heathcliff] is a threat to the symbolic order in two immediate ways. Her jouissance threatens to make her a subject rather than the *other* against which man becomes a subject" (Oliver, 1993, p. 50). The time Catherine meets the Lintons is the outset of self recognition and differentiation for her which is still supported by another aspect of Kristevan argument.

While commenting on women's aspiring for power, Kristeva (1986) talks of "the bound feet of Chinese women, crushed in a way that is infinitely less decisive, but more painful and more certain" (p. 143). After her explanation of the story of Adam and Eve and the serpent, Kristeva talks of the promised punishment in case any of the two commits the unforgivable sin of transgression once more. The notion of bound feet, she later discusses, concerns only the female and their transgression. It can be hence concluded that according to her, these commonly practiced bound feet in China, are derived from the notion of limiting women's aspiration. Women who possess the place of the *other* in the symbolic should not and will not be permitted to do or even think of such a transgression. Catherine encounters the same destiny. Joined to Heathcliff, she enjoys great freedom out of the house and in the moors. She is happy, and unbound. No decisive force is controlling or restricting her until she comes to peep at the Lintons. This is the time that she experiences Kristevan notion of the bound feet. While still behind the window, laughing and making faces, Catherine and Heathcliff are noticed by the Lintons. They escape but she is caught by a dog of the family which is let free in case they are robbers;

> I [Heathcliff] had Cathy by the hand, and was urging her on, when all at once she fell down. "Run, Heathcliff, run!" she whispered. "They have let the bull-dog loose, and he holds me!" The devil had seized her ankle, Nelly; I heard his abominable snorting. (Bronte, 1847, p. 90)

The dog catches her by heel symbolically to stand for the bound heel. It limits and confines her since she has been transgressing. During

the period of her stay at the Lintons', she gains the first traces of her separate identity. That night is the moment of Catherine and Heathcliff's great separation. Heathcliff is to leave because nobody calls him in. No one sees him as Catherine's companion. This is of course because he is not considered a real entity, a member of the community. He is the same stranger that threatens the sense of 'we' in the symbolic; a harsh, disagreeable creature that disrupts.

Weeks later, Catherine returns while she has almost completed half of her journey toward the symbolic. She returns from the Grange transformed into a young lady. She has been exposed to the attractions of luxury, refinement, and flattery that are indicatives of the world of spectacle as part of the symbolic. She has indeed stayed for quite a long time in a house that carries the signs and symptoms of the symbolic. She runs for Heathcliff but it is soon to be known that Heathcliff's Catherine has been lost. Their union can never be firm again since the world of symbolic and spectacle has been shown to Catherine. Catherine has been transformed into a subject that desires. In this manner, she establishes the early points of difference;

> Catherine and Heathcliff... can assert that their likeness has a meaning only within a system of differences. In a sense, the gap between them and Edgar establishes what they are; there is literally no language to their love until they visit the Grange and view the "has not" that the Lintons represent for them. (Stevenson, 1988, p. 63)

The differences Stevenson notices above can be due to the fact that the Lintons are representatives of the Fatherly world contrary to Heathcliff that is the force of the semiotic. The two are as different from each other as the two phases. Heathcliff acts out like a maternal space providing jouissance for Catherine. As the representative of the abject mother, he is something desirable and at the same time most repellent; the basis of existence that should necessarily be rejected. This abject mother "is a double figure embodying at once the unspeakable experience of maternal fusion and the bridge to speech, culture and separation" (Smith, 1998, p. 23). Edgar, on the other hand, is to provide Catherine with the world of symbolic. It is clear to Catherine that:

> Should she dare to enjoy immediate gratification [with Heathcliff], then Catherine would cut herself off from economic power. To acquire that power, however, she must forgo her desire for Heathcliff. An extraordinary act of sublimation or displacement of desire is therefore the precondition for entering into relationships at the Grange. (Armstrong, 1990, p. 368-9)

Kristevan ideology supports the fact that the child should be able to refuse the maternal and join the paternal in thetic phase to move from the destructive motherly love toward the safe Fatherly love during the process of sublimation. Through this process, the child moves from the culturally banned sexuality to a form of accepted love relationship within the boundaries of the accepted.

Language which is a great help in character identification and the subject formation can transfer some of the needs, but not until after they are formed as needs and hence the subject's yearning toward the objects of desires. Furthermore, "part of the need cannot be articulated in the demand" (Letche and Margaroni, 2004, p. 28). This process of differentiation happens differently for the boy and the girl. The boy identifies with the father and hence later in life, quenches his thirst for the mother figure through substituting her with another woman. His love is hence sublimated and his sexuality remains within the bounds of the symbolic. For the baby girl, however, entrance to the symbolic is never fully complete. "A woman's identification with her mother complicates her psychosexual maturation and extenuates the conflict of ambivalence Freud describes as central to the melancholic constitution" (Craig, n. d., p. 18). There are two choices for a girl; either to remain outside the boundary of the symbolic through never getting rid of the mother and excommunicate herself "since a full- scale refusal of the symbolic is impossible" (Butler, 1989, p. 110) or to be the means of transference by identification with the father figure and form a defense against the mother by devotion to symbolic order. No matter what way she chooses, she is but an other. She can never split her mother since it means her own splitting. Mother just needs to be abject.

The same thing is true in case of her sexuality. She does not have the right for satisfaction as permitted to the man. Her homosexuality, yearning toward the mother and trying to substitute for her love, is a threat to the community and hence is forbidden. "In case of mother's separation from the girl child, the result is melancholy for both, for the separation is never fully completed" (Butler, 1989, p. 109). This makes the girl child occupy a melancholic position in the symbolic;

> The ecstatic and the melancholic, two great female archetypes of Christianity, exemplify two ways in which a woman may participate in this symbolic Christian order (Kristeva, 1986, p. 147).

Catherine is successful in establishing her thetic phase as a melancholic through the use of language. In the scene where she compares Heathcliff and Edgar, Catherine never fails to distinguish Heathcliff as superior to Edgar whom she believes is but someone

toward whom she has "no more business to marry ... than ... to be in heaven" (Bronte, 1847, p. 121) which she has earlier declared as an improper place for her. However, it is through language that she symbolizes her love and need for Heathcliff. Through this process, she is able to remove both Heathcliff and love to symbolic states and hence deprive both of their true and natural significations. Language acquisition/use makes it possible for her to further her distance from symbolical outcasts like Heathcliff. Nonetheless, her early loss brings up the sense of melancholy. After Heathcliff's disappearance, Catherine becomes ill for months. Three years later, she consents to marry Linton. They settle in the Thrush Grange which is the suitable place of the symbolic.

The life for Catherine changes a great deal. Lost love that is the love of Heathcliff- the maternal figure- is accompanied by her inability to transfer the love to someone else in the symbolic. Her powerful love yearns toward a substitute. Yet, Edgar, as the loving Father and the new loving object is not sufficient. She cannot fill the gap. Evan language is not powerful enough in her -a melancholic- to express her needs. The world, hence, becomes a loveless world that proves to be inadequate. All that she has once submitted to becomes a vague for her. Her calm appearance as the wife of Linton turns to be meaningless and non-signifying. She is not behaving as she used to. She suffers a certain melancholy since the maternal ghost does not release her. Nelly narrates that at times she had her fissures, but in other cases, she is reduced to a respectable lady whose presence in the house satisfied Master Linton:

> Catherine had seasons of gloom and silence, now and then: they were respected with sympathizing silence by her husband, who ascribed them to an alteration in her constitution, produced by her perilous illness, as she was never subject to depression of spirits before. The return of sunshine was welcomed by answering sunshine from him. (Bronte, 1847, p. 131-2)

As long as Catherine occupies this state, there are no problems. Her melancholy is accepted and tolerated. Problem arises when she tries to change things. This is the time she revisits Heathcliff. Heathcliff's return renovates the life of Catherine. Her happy sense of jouissance and gratification knows no bounds. She is vigilant toward no one and nothing. It seems as if she could never understand the impossibility of existence of the symbolic and semiotic together and as equal forces. She even fails to notice or rather disregards Edgar's humiliation and hostility toward her guest whom she embraces so

eagerly; "she [Catherine] sprang forward, took both his [Heathcliff's] hands, and led him to Linton; and then she seized Linton's reluctant fingers and crushed them into his" (Bronte, 1847, p. 135). For Edgar, Heathcliff is nothing except 'the gipsy' or 'the ploughboy'. He can never figure out Catherine's relationship to Heathcliff.

By Heathcliff's return, however, Catherine loses her assumed symbolic identity and falls from a certain melancholic/symbolic tranquility she was steeped in to a tumult from which there is no release. Cathy's marriage to Linton meant acquiring of a position in the symbolic where she could survive. However, this bond was never strong. She has been at the same time a lover of Heathcliff and a submitter to Linton. "Catherine has evinced this "double character without exactly intending to deceive anyone" (Thoremählen, 1997, p. 186). The abject Heathcliff has always been behind the subject Catherine spreading its looming presence all over. The situation is even worse for Catherine since the girl has to always carry the corpse of the maternal with her. Her existence in the symbolic is always shaky. Hence, a small mistake buries her in a bottomless well for ever:

> If a woman cannot be a part of a temporal symbolic order except by identifying with the father, it is clear that as soon as she shows any sign of that which, in herself, escapes such identification and acts differently, resembling the dream or the maternal body, she evolves into this "truth" in question. (Kristeva, 1986, p. 154)

Heathcliff's return and the source of his abundant wealth are as mysterious as his first appearance in the family. He still holds the same position of a stranger and hence, is a threat to the 'we' of the occupants of the Grange which shelters Catherine Linton now. This time, however, he can usurp the role of an oppressor by displacing Hindley and later Edgar Linton. He can have this option through having access to the most precious extant entity of the world of spectacle, namely capital. The process of falling into abyss of melancholia has happened for Heathcliff as well. For Heathcliff, the process of mourning and melancholia lasts long. After his abandonment by Catherine, Heathcliff is divided between his life as Catherine and his desire for real union. To get his aim, he acts so indiscriminately as to destroy his love at the end since Catherine's return to the state of love they once experienced is but identification and fusion with the abject. His return is concomitant with the commencement of series of revengeful actions to take hold of whatever reminds him of his inability in acquiring and keeping his beloved Catherine. At this point of the narrative, one can easily distinguish the possible conclusion of the narrative inclined toward

Catherine's appreciation and preference of Heathcliff in comparison to Edgar;

> He had grown a tall, athletic, well-formed man, beside whom, my master [Linton] seemed quite slender and youth-like.... His countenance... looked intelligent, and retained no marks of former degradation. (Bronte, 1847, p. 135)

It seems as if from the beginning the fate of the encounter has been decided. Heathcliff turns out to be the stronger and is later to be proved as the most powerful both on emotional and on economical matters. Heathcliff is further defined by what he is not when he comes back. He is wearing the clothes that define him other than what he used to be to others. This fact is clearly shown in the attitude of people who used to know him. He has come to claim his object of desire that is Catherine. Now he thinks he has the right because he has abandoned the degraded position Catherine once attributed to him. The outcome of such a return and identification with Heathcliff- the maternal- whose love is the "dangerous, threatening, abjection-tainted love" (Grimwood, 2008) is equal to the return to the haunting semiotic and toward the same abject that is waiting to embrace the subject once more. The result of such a love would be but the dissolution and dissipation since the pre-oedipal love is confronted again. This would mean a yearning toward death; an exemplification of the death drive itself. Hence, as explained by Catherine "[i]n her speech talking to Nelly about her own death, Cathy might also be referring to her death drive, to her desire to attain a kind of fullness outside of the range of discursive signification" (De Rosa, 1998, p. 32).

This experience shatters all the process she has gone through and all the steps she has taken. The love received through the loving Father- Edgar- during the process of primary identification has not been strong enough to bind her to the symbolic through a definite identification with the Father figure.

> During her marriage to Linton, she only temporarily suppresse[s] her love both for Heathcliff and for the unmediated nature with which she associates him, and his return brings a resumption of precisely the same mental strife between her two loves that she experienced before and just after he went away. (Homans, 1992, p. 353)

Heathcliff enters once more when she is most welcoming and desirous for him. Catherine is prepared to be with him. However, she fails again. As a result of finding himself amid the people he regards but

as usurpers of his right to live, Heathcliff is divided to an extraordinary lover and a usurper. Catherine does not want the divided Heathcliff. She displaces him with an imaginary one that once existed. In her act of declaring Heathcliff's difference from Heathcliff she used to know, Catherine makes her friend a symbolic entity. She fills the gap using the imaginary. The last scene of their enactment of love and the free expression of sexuality is the only scene in the novel that provides a clear cut shot of the kind of their attachment. This embrace lasts for a while. While clinging to him, Catherine reduces Heathcliff to a sign; "That is not *my* Heathcliff. I shall love mine yet; and take him with me - he's in my soul" (Bronte, 1847, p. 196). It is a picture of what is not to be represented. Therefore, immediately after the show, the one important connective figure of all other elements of the novel gives way to eternal dissipation hence affirming the impossibility of 'speaking the unspeakable' and exhibiting the forbidden.

> For a woman, the call of the mother is not only a call from beyond time, or beyond the socio-political battle. With family and history at an impasse, this call troubles the word: it generates hallucinations, voices, "madness". After the superego, the ego founders and sinks. (Kristeva, 1986, p. 156-7)

Catherine's separation from the symbolic, therefore, weakens her identity assumed and leads her toward dissipation. After so many struggles toward an identity, Catherine ultimately surrenders. She has primarily tried to enter the boundary of those who are others for her; the occupants of the symbolic. Yet, she fails to distinguish between them and herself. She fails to recognize the fact that the situation is quite different; that she herself is the other. The world of spectacle she has stepped in is the territory of the other powerful sex that dominates. She can never materialize her semiotic, emotional demands in it. This is the time she returns backward; the time"[w]hen the subject [Catherine], weary of fruitless attempts to identify with something on the outside, finds the impossible within; when it finds that the impossible constitutes its very being, that is none other than the abject" (Kristeva, 1982. P. 5).

At this very moment, the subject gives way to the powerful attacks and dominance of semiotic on the symbolic which is, for a woman, the same as a dead-end since too much involvement in semiotic leads to psychosis. This is the time the other cannot be separated from the self. The other is situated within the self. It is not in its place that is the place of the other. Rather, it is in the place of the subject. It is within the very subject. The abject as "a space which marks off the limit of the subject" (Grimwood, 2008) is abolished. This culminates in a kind of

inability to separate the self from the other that is a symptom of psychosis. The abject that is; "There, abject and abjection are my safeguards." (Kristeva, 1982, p. 15).

Catherine's desperate assertion of identity based on the other gives way to unity with the abject. The shield against the fear of death and the annihilation of personal identity or consciousness is hence removed. Furthermore, Catherine encounters a double contradictory situation shortly before she dies.

> 'To get rid of me, answer my question,' persevered Mr. Linton. 'You must answer it; and that violence does not alarm me. I have found that you can be as stoical as anyone, when you please. Will you give up Heathcliff hereafter, or will you give up me? It is impossible for you to be *my* friend and *his* at the same time; and I absolutely *require* to know which you choose.' (Bronte, 1847, p. 156)

Three nights prior to her death, she is sentenced to choose between the two lovers or rather between her two loves of the maternal and the paternal. "Catherine does not survive the realization that she cannot have both Heathcliff and Edgar" (Thoremählen, 1997, p. 191). The anxiety of the choice becomes the origin of the impossibility of sustaining life for her. Edgar, who has earlier proclaimed the ban against Heathcliff and talked about the choice she has, tries to hold her in the symbolic and in life by begging her to read which is a symbolic act. On the other hand, Heathcliff wants her dearly and avoids her simultaneously in his sadistic attempt not to dissipate with her;

> On the scene when Catherine is talking of her way of being loved through tortures by both Heathcliff and Linton, she seems to be speaking the truth. Heathcliff, in his sadism, is pushing Catherine away, both sadistically separating himself from the terror of dissolving into her, and also assuring her the masochistic jouissance of becoming one with him. (De Rosa, 1998, p. 31-2)

This time, Catherine has become the abject Heathcliff has to defy to keep himself from dissipation. She remains the abject until the time the moment of union happens years later in a rainy night that unites the two lovers once more and this time probably forever. Heathcliff's loss of Catherine in death is the loss of all worldly attraction while emphasizing his maternal role as possessing the destructive love. It cannot be borne by him. His melancholic features are compared to that of Edgar who can bear up the mourning process in "a melancholy sweeter than common joy" (Bronte, 1847, p. 219), fill the gap especially by the baby Catherine, and therefore go on with firm grasps on the

symbolic. In addition, Heathcliff feels humiliated by this loss. As he later indicates everything around him is an indicative of the fact that he has lost Catherine. Miller (1963) also believes that:

> Everything in the world is the sign indicating Catherine, but also indicating, by its existence, his [Heathcliff's] failure to poses her and the fact that she is dead. Each sign is both an avenue to the desired unity with her and also her barrier in the way of it (p. 388).

The rage of the loss he has to bear by Catherine's death makes Heathcliff revengeful toward everybody and everything. He feels greatly wronged. Hence, by gathering whatever belonged to Catherine, Heathcliff tries to make up for her loss. This process continues until the time he understands the real companionship, gets the real Catherine and joins her in death.

In her essay, Homans (1992) indicates that the first Cathy's story is about girl's refusal to enter something very like the Lacanian symbolic order (p. 344). This conclusion is in part true. Catherine does enter the symbolic by marrying Edgar yet she fails to hold firmly to it; she forgets that there is a great difference between her and Heathcliff in that they are different. Catherine wants to have the same role of a revolutionary along with Heathcliff. Yet for Kristeva, the possibility of revolt varies greatly for male and female. Unlike the male figure that can renew and renovate his life and psychic space through temporary revolts that should ultimately fail, the female has to grasp to the symbolic since her existence depends on it; "A woman has nothing to laugh about when the symbolic order collapses." (Kristeva, 1986, p. 150).

This is the symbolic that provides an identity, however fake and trembling for the woman to live on. Catherine dissolves in consequence of loosening her quivering grasp on the symbolic which though offered her not much, gave her an identity to live on even if as an always other occupant. Yet the world of spectacle was devoid of what she was after; to flourish in and to let Heathcliff free from under the constraints imposed. She challenged the symbolic and failed since "[f]or the woman as soon as the father is not calling the tune and language is being torn apart by rhythm, no mother can serve as an axis for the sacred or for farce" (Kristeva, 1986, p.158).

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Akshaya Kumar in Conversation with Sudeep Sen

Here is a transcript of the conversation that Prof Akshaya Kumar had with the Indian English poet Sudeep Sen who was invited to the Department of English and Cultural Studies as Visiting Fellow in March 2012. As part of a series of interactions with the poet, this conversation took place in public on 9 March 2012 at 3.00 p.m. in the English Auditorium, Panjab University, Chandigarh.

Akshaya: Good afternoon friends. This is a different session. We would try to make it as informal yet very academic in the sense that we are here with a different mandate. We have already had a taste of Sudeep's poetry on 7th March, 2012. In fact, he has mesmerized the audiences and it would be very difficult for us to bring our students back to ground zero. My tryst with or my encounter with Sudeep's poetry began about four years ago. Normally, the canon of Indian English Poetry stops at Kolatkar and if you stretch it most, it goes up to Agha Shahid Ali. As we read and teach poetry in English, one question bothers us always: has Indian English poetry come to a standstill or is it just a matter of our own ignorance? There is a horde of young new poets, but they remain inaccessible or obscure. They never come to the limelight due to media politics and the exceptional space that we accord to fiction. The message that we have or the impression that we gather is that Indian English writing means, practically, Indian English fiction. So it was my desire, my personal journey, to find out new poets, to see what kind of trajectories they traverse, and to see whether this poetry is in any way equal to or more profound than fiction. Unfortunately, most of the Indian English poetry of the contemporary poets is published abroad and the poems are not available except on the Internet. The Internet has made our task somewhat easy but again what we get is some kind of random sampling of the poems of the new poets. We, on our own level, try to procure books. One of the books of Sudeep Sen, I just happen to lay my hands on was *Distracted Geographies and the Archipelago of Intent.* And I was simply taken aback. First, it is madness unleashed and then there is a marvelous control. The way he harnesses the sudden explosion of emotions is remarkable. What is art? Art is not just unleashing of emotions; the challenge of art lies in controlling them, harnessing them, dovetailing them into a form that makes sense to us. As the poem begins, it bursts at seams; it tends to go haywire intentionally, sometimes unconsciously, sometimes due to some kind of an intense poetic torrent of emotion. But Sudeep sustains the intensity. *Distracted Geographies* is an extended book of poetry which runs into 206 pages and 206 is an important term because there are 206

bones in the human body. There is an intricate pattern in the poem, in the entire text and the level of intensity, once attained, is never relented. Let me read two small poems of Sudeep to bring home the point. Of course, Sudeep is any day a better reader. He opens a rather passive situation; rather looks upon it almost as a theatre of possibilities and then once the theatre is in full energy, he reaches to a climax which is, a climax of, should I say, post-violence. The violence gives way to some kind of semblance of mind. One thing which I must also add here is that Sudeep Sen is a poet of exploration; he is not a poet who arrives. He deliberately keeps his destination in a state of postponement. And therefore, the journey remains perpetually in a state of tension. There is no easy pattern you can slot him into. There is no easy academic category you can frame him into, because each time he defies, each time he settles. But then, this is always a working resolution. His poetry does not lapse into a metaphysical finale. And to me, personally speaking, this is where poetry becomes different from a spiritual discourse. There is that solemnity, there is that overreach, there is that moment of transcendence, yet it stops short of being a sermon, an abstract and a metaphysical discourse. So, ultimately, it remains a zone of metaphors. And there is no desire or a deliberate intention to withhold, to postpone and to even deliberately negate any sense of finality. This is remarkable because poetry has to remain poetry, ultimately. We have seen modern Indian English poetry. There is a trap, in so called, canonical Indian English Poetry. It tends to be cerebral; the poetry is more in a form of intellectual syllogism. There is a shift here in the poetry of Sudeep Sen. He brings poetry back to me; poetry back to us. I would call it, if I were to invoke some traditional label, some kind of a controlled romanticism. For that let me read this poem this is "Banyan". Apparently, it is not a very new metaphor and yet Banyan is always on our creative horizon. Banyan is a presence. Banyan is something that reminds us of tradition and also of the expanse of the sky. But what I am saying is that he invests so much into an object and then there is this whole drama that he enacts within a poem. This is what Ramanujan also metaphorically connotes as "capillary tubes"; they unwind, and they go in different directions. So let me read this poem, "Banyan":

As winter secrets
        melt
with the purple
        sun,
what is revealed
        is electric —

notes tune
        unknown scales,
syntax alters
        tongues,
terracotta melts
        white,
banyan ribbons
        into armatures
as branch-roots
        twist, meeting
soil in a circle.
        Circuits
glazed
        under cloth
carry
        alphabets
for a calligrapher's
        nib
italicised
        in invisible ink,
letters never
        posted,
cartographer's
        map, uncharted —
as phrases fold
        so do veils.

I am not reducing him (Sudeep Sen) into a poetic design. It is very difficult because each poem has its own distinct narrative design. But this is something that emerges at least when I read his poetry. That the object is stationary, it is inert apparently, but then it branches out and creates some kind of a landscape of emotions. Then there is another poem which, of course, is anthologized in a latter-day collection. I think it is one of your recent poems written in response to a painting by Cezanne, *Jacket on a Chair*. This is an example, where, an object, which is an object of painting too, under the poetic gaze, attains so much of vibrancy and animation.

You carelessly tossed
        the jacket on a chair.
The assembly of cloth
        collapsed in slow motion

into a heap of cotton—
        cotton freshly picked
from the fields—
        like flesh
without a spine.
        The chair's wooden
frame provided a brief
        skeleton,
but it wasn't enough
        to renew the coat's
shape, the body's
        prior strength,
or the muscle
        to hold its own.
When one peels off
        one's outer skin,
it is difficult
        to hide
the true nature of
        blood.
Wood, wool, stitches,
        and joints—
an epitaph
        of a cardplayer's
shuffle,
        and the history
of my dark faith.

Now after these introductory remarks, Sudeep, I would like you to talk. What is more important to you? Is it a poem as a unit or a book as an architectural design? I notice that in your collections — which are not just collections, but full-length narratives — you tend to coalesce so many metaphors into one narrative. For instance, there is a very complex geometry at work in *Distracted Geographies*. There is this map of a Latin American country Chile, and another of spine and rib-cage, and you also talk about, twelve months of a year, two twelve hour cycle in a day. How do you combine all these disparate frames into one sustained larger narrative?

Sudeep: First of all I think the introduction is rather too generous. I do not know whether I deserve it. I am happy that you can find so many layers in the text because part of the magic of writing is also unraveling layers which are unseen to the everyday eye. And if you take a simple

root vegetable like onion, the magic of it is the translucency if its skin, so you can see the skin which is below the first skin and until you peel it you can't actually smell it and then you peel the other one; the smell becomes staggeringly large the more you peel. And you keep peeling an onion and it never stops, until it ends. So if you take onion as one poem, that has its own design and a collection of various objects like this will form a larger design. Now it depends on the book I am writing, I mean, sometimes, I am not setting out to write a book with such complex design. Sometimes, when I am writing, I can see patterns emerging as I am writing or as I am revising. Actually, the first level of writing is very-very spontaneous. It is literally what Wordsworth says, "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" and then the other one is "recollection in tranquility". It's really a combination of the two. You can't possibly stop one from the other. It is very-very important to give space to both the things because if you're only going to be writing poetry with a pre-designed structure, then it can get very staccato or cerebral in a way that it's not attractive and then the other danger is also a problematic thing which we see in modern poetry all the time. It is pure gush and it is only emotions—untutored emotions. Emotion of course, is valid but unless it's shaped to a particular design, just after a point it becomes meaningless because everybody is vomiting sadness and happiness and feet falling into love so on and so forth because these are very universal emotions. But once you make it into an object of art then anybody even if they are not in that state can actually enjoy the emotions what it is, that is why a great painting or a piece of music has so much resonance even if we haven't actually experienced that particular instance. So that's to do with one poem and larger constructs are actually to me very interesting because I was a science student to start with. My fascination was fiber optics, Physics and Architecture and English literature was something that I just enjoyed on the side. In fact I sat for the IITs and IIMs and the School of Planning and Architecture and got in and then I had to do it. I didn't have a choice otherwise I would have been thrown out of the house with a 'danda' behind me because I was living with my parents and was dependent on their generosity when it came to money. So at that time it was safe to kind of do what they tell you to do but then having done it, you introduce a parallel argument saying "you want me to be a happy person or a successful person?" And at that point, of course, they also gave in. It is not so much my parents actually, but the wider framework of my relatives who had a lot to say: they were part of many of our decisions making in our family. Good or bad, I am not sure but they certainly were very close to us, anyway. So to me, I much rather enjoy something which may or may not be lucrative in people's eye but something that

I am so passionate about that I can live through it. Then it becomes easy, so when I did English literature in college it was one of the wildest blasts I've had. You know, two novels in the first year, my goodness! You read two novels in two weeks and the rest of it was just play and then the second year it was another few novels. So it was very easy because it was pure holiday as far as I was concerned and that's really what I was looking for, pure holiday through university and because it was such pure holiday I had pure delight and I was drunk on words, had so many other avenues to explore words through theatre, through music, through dance - classical dance - and so on. But had I done Physics, I would've been just lopped into formulas for the next step which is doing well in exams. Here I was just enjoying myself. Anyways coming back to design, the examination was in some sense only a thing that I had to do but if you enjoy it, you tend to do it okay because it is just sort of something that you have to do. So, ultimately as a poet - you are talking about design - you have to take a lot of risks at various levels; at a personal level, at a spiritual level and at an intellectual level because it's not the easiest of the genres to follow except that it is the easiest of the genres if you feel passionately about it. It's something that you choose. It is like an infection, you know it's like a bug. Once poetry bug gets you, you're completely trapped and there is no way out of it. Well, my interest in science and in architecture also has a lot of influence, I mean, that is why there are other aspects and concepts that came into my poetry, where I am working with X-Y axis, the Z axis, volume, sound, smell as in Chemistry because you know when you do experiments in the laboratory, the way the fumes and the chemicals mix, I mean, that's poetry to me and the whole architecture of formulas is actually also poetry to me. And because I think science and art are not divorced. Unfortunately, that's the way they (subjects) are taught that they are two separate parts of our life but actually they are very much the same thing if it is taught in a way that is enjoyable and it is taught in a humanistic way. So, mathematics, architecture and science come in, that's why you see these very specific, specialized designs and also my interest in films and photography come in a lot, so I think a lot in terms of frame. Framing of the poem in a particular way is important and what you leave out, the whole idea of a white space is equally important than what you write. What you leave out is perhaps more important than what you put in. So, so many different things influence, you know these designs are aspects of the poem both at the micro level; a poem unit and at the macro level, which is the larger book.

Akshaya: When one reads *Mount Vesuvius in Eight Frames*, the feeling that comes is that it has to be in one go. You just can't write it on a

poem to poem basis and also a text like *Rain* because that entire text is composed as one sonnet. To me it so appears that it has to be a design first and a poem later, at least, I can say this with regard to these two collections.

Sudeep : Well, the irony is that actually I was saying this to the teachers earlier that often, I am not writing the poems, someone else is writing it out for me. Sometimes, I look back and say, "Oh my god, I've written it, how that happened". It comes from somewhere else ultimately and I don't want to say it's spiritual or God is writing it for me. It's not as banal as that but it is untrue either that energies like that don't affect you. It is because of that, that you're a particular kind of person and because you're a particular kind of person that you write poetry. Therefore, you're a man and if you're a man then you relate it to these cosmic architectures in a way that others are not. So, design, sometimes it's playful: I construct a design and then I want to write around it. But more often than not, actually the design starts becoming apparent when I am on draft three, draft four because I can see shapes and stress points and fractures emerging in a way that it makes a pattern as I am revising it. So then I follow. You have to let your instinct also play a part because if you drink a glass of water, the glass drops and its cracks, the shards and the shattered glass, the patterning of the glass, the glass makes every time is going to be different every time you drop the glass. So even if you have a design, it's not going to work but once the glass breaks then the water has an instinct, its own instinct to transverse a path through all these cracks. It chooses to go right or left. If it's a slope, then that determines where the water is going to go. If the colour of the surface is such that it is muddy, then it is going to pick up brown tints. If it fell on a clout which basically bleeds, it is going to pick up that colour. So, actually what tends to happen is, we as poets are very strange people who have this sort of a third antenna, invisible antenna, which keeps picking up all the things people are not interested in. So it's like an overheard phrase, a whisper meant for other people's ears which you hear, a thing that goes unnoticed to other people's eye which I would notice. If I am, say, looking at you, I might be very fascinated by the glint in the buckle of someone's shoe rather than the 'pashmina' shawl someone is wearing. Though the whole idea for that person is to keep warm, yet it is an object of beauty to so many people. Somehow, my ideas don't go to such things; it's the oddest thing that catches my attention. It may be one white strand of hair in someone's head which is more attractive to me than the thick blackness of the rest of the tuft. So, what can I say? It's pure madness. One of the things you also have to do as a poet is to keep the child alive in you. Because the

moment you grow up, that's the death of poetry or at least too consciously grown up. Of course, you have to grow up and by that I also mean, you have to be vulnerable.Only if you feel deeply sad, you can write, only if you feel deeply happy, you can write. If you are in a 'penumbric' zone of grey then life is very easy, of course, you can write then as well but then it's a very different kind of writing. I mean, I write prose when I am in that stage and that's fine, that has its uses. But with poetry, you really have to be on the edge and without the edge that fabulous spark just doesn't happen. And it's so easy to be drunk; words are such beautiful things that you can be perennially drunk. Drunk on phrases and every time you string phrases and words together, it is a different garland you are making. So it's never the same anyway.

Akshaya: I was reading somewhere that *Mount Vesuvius* was initially of three hundred pages and then you edited it to about three hundred lines or even less than that. It can't be as easy or as unplanned. It can't be as whimsical... Let it also be a moment of confession.

Sudeep: The moment you say it is confession, it is whimsical, but it's not. It's not whimsical; of course, there is lot of order in the chaos. There is lot of thought within, behind the architecture because you can't edit if you are not thinking about why you're leaving out certain things, you're making conscious decision as to why you're leaving out and what you choose to retain. Again *Mount Vesuvius in Eight Frames* was a response to two or three different things. One, it was actually a series of eight etchings which I saw and which have two couples, initially together and this couple's position remains the same except for the background and scene shifted and changed and the last frame is basically the couple in still the same space but only their skeletons are entwined around each other and they are in a museum case. So they have gone through an entire journey of birth, love, passion to death but they're still entwined around each other and they're back to mother Earth; the backdrop, of course, being Vesuvius. That is what happened in Pompeii and many other places where the lava actually swept through various things and those became like fossils. There were also other things that were going on. The four sides of the frame were four sides' volcanic tremors that occurred before Vesuvius. The four sides are actually two people reflected on either side, so there's this couple from the Yin side and the couple from the Yang side. The four sides are also the four cardinal points on earth—North, South, East and West. So there's lot of geometry and thought which goes behind it. But the reason it's four is because the pictures were really in the form of four. So you want to be truthful to your source of inspiration and then there is fabulous fun stuff you can do. It is also about enjoying yourself.

When you're writing poetry, it's not that you're writing on a flat gradient. Your life is on a speed breaker most of the time. We might come on the road very flat, after the monsoon you'll have holes again. I mean most of the time we don't have a flat road and one would be lucky to have a smooth ride all along. So how to negotiate spaces actually gives rise to design and that's what I try to harness. So whimsical is not far away from it. But if it wasn't whimsical enough, then I wouldn't be finding these odd patterns.

Akshaya: Coming to the issue of poem as an autonomous unit, you're using different kinds of forms; there is sonnet, you are using rhymed couplets also. You have also tried *ghazal* and ottava rima. It is very rare to really contain 'madness' within the regular forms to this extent. Are you using these forms primarily to control the flow of emotions or is it an act of craftsmanship?

Sudeep: I think it's a combination of both really. It has to be both. Control is very important in anything. I mean just pure madness is very boring. But madness with kind of unpredictable design and edges actually makes it interesting. If a person just comes through and is raving mad, we'll want to throw him out. But if the person is mad and is being creatively so exciting then you can say- 'keep doing what you're doing'. So when you're talking about form to me, it's part of the rigour of writing. It's the discipline of writing because so much bad name has been given to modern poetry. You can write a long line, chop it up into five parts and arrange it in a column and it is called poetry and nine out of ten times it's pretty unreadable or certainly it is not a poem. I mean flukes happen. Sometimes it can be okay and it can be a good poem but nine out of ten times, I think it falls flat on its face. It is like writing poetry is no different from practicing classical music. There are certain *ragas*, there are movements, there are sections, there are the *alaaps*, and there is the whole progression. But the wonderful thing about working within forms, especially traditional Indian forms is that there is so much room to innovate. You can stretch a note; you can cut a note short but there's an architecture within which you have to learn. Without learning your grammar you can't write a sentence. Without learning your strict forms, how can you write in free form? You need to know the forms to break the form; you know what you're going against. So as a tool, as your writing, certainly initially, I think it's fairly good exercise to go through it. Sometimes, it is boring you know because in a poetry class, a teacher would say write a sonnet, then you say, "My God! Is sonnet relevant in the 20th century? How can I relate a sonnet in my life?" It's not so much the case actually. What you need to tell yourself is, let me use a contemporary situation and take up a challenge to write

a sonnet and see whether it succeeds because even the Haikus I write are not the Haikus, the Japanese poets wrote in that time. They are very-very modern Haikus, talking about very contemporary things as we speak, whether it is an erasure Tagore made or a scene in Goa or anything. So what also is useful with design and form is, say I read a poem and I completely disagree with what he/ she is saying in the poem, so I don't like the poem. But then, I again read the poem and see, it's really well crafted. It's well written and you have to agree at that level, that as a piece of art it is a very-very valid artifact because lots of people just respond to art on a very-very superficial level. Okay, I don't like the piece, so therefore, I don't like the piece. That is just too sad. So, therefore, form in every way is useful and then I also work a lot with lots of musicians and dancers and I realize how useful then it is because they want a structure. I don't write for them but I realize also because they are working in a very-very interesting and strict structural patterns.

Akshaya: In this conversation as well as in your other interviews, you tend to compare your poetry with classical music. Should it mean that you are trying to restore or to bring back some classicism into art or are we relapsing back into the days of the Arnoldean 'touchstones'? By classicism, I mean not just the rigorous formal protocols, but also a degree of seriousness. Are you in way, trying to forge some kind of a secular scripture?

Sudeep: Consciously, I didn't start out thinking I was doing that but I think I am very interested in it and I am in some sense doing it because I think seriousness needs to be restored to poetry. Otherwise it becomes very frivolous. I mean, I am not saying frivolity is bad. I don't have any hierarchies when it comes to judging art. I love art and I love high art at the same time. I love bad bollywood songs just as much as I like *diya jalao* or any classical piece of music. It is so much to do with mood you are in but when it comes to poetry and engaging in poetry in a serious sort of way it has to be within a serious construct, otherwise what's the point. Then I write for myself and just tear it up and throw it away or if it's simply say, common example would be a love poem, if you write a love poem and if it only means something to you and to a little extent something to the person its written for. Your audience is incredibly limited you know. So, if that's only you want to achieve, that is fine, but if you want to write a love poem and then to make sense, then you have to almost set back almost out of it and write it in a way that has elements of not just seriousness, a funny poem can also be serious. It's the seriousness of intention which is important and it's the seriousness of execution that's important. So, it's a combination of both Arnold as well as...

Akshaya: ...and Andy Warhol.

Sudeep: Andy Warhol is bit too chaotic for me, but I can see why people are attracted to it because after a point, there are only so many 'soup cans'. But, it is a space that we need to, not revere, but feel that the passion sits in a space that you come out feeling affected in a way and that kind of deep affection as opposed to being affected is only possible if you engage with it to a certain extent with seriousness.

Akshaya: How do you reconcile, say for instance, the two poems, the opening poems of *Prayer Flag* with, say a poem like "The Box Office Hit" or the poem you have written on cricket. My question is: Which one is the greater artistic challenge — to write a serious poem on a serious situation or to write a funny poem with a serious intent?

Sudeep: I think both of them are very difficult, you know. When I was writing the cricket poem, I was writing it largely for fun but again the cricket poem is constructed in a way that I was incredibly inspired by the way Azharuddin leg glances. I mean, he was a pure artist when he did those beautiful flicks off his pads. So I said, if can I replicate that into my poems. The other one was Jonty Rhodes diving across the grass, just as if he was a skate boarder. That came into my cricket. Of course, we are stupidly mad about cricket anyway growing up in India. But just writing a poem on cricket would not be interesting enough but getting elements of what it is all about, becomes a bit more interesting. "The Box Office Hit" is about basically a Hindi film, a Bollywood hit and why should I have to be holier than thou, saying that, I have to write about only extremely serious topics to make the poem serious. That itself is a serious topic, the whole poem revolves around the idea that this man or these set of people who would buy ticket and didn't want an art film out there, they did not want their everyday life to be depicted for three hours. They want fantasy, pure fantasy. Now you have to bring those two ends of scale together in some sort of cohesion and that's also a challenge and then the poem "Prayer Flag" is a very different poem in tonality. It is more incantatory, uses music in its basic sense a lot more. It is a longer poem, so it uses a longer form. So, I need different forms of techniques, so on and so forth. I do not think any of them is higher or lower: I like *papri chat* just as much as I like *biryani* just as I like *caviar*. So, it is completely a question of my mood . So it is not that chiffon or *chamak–chamak* are any less than very fine raw silk and *taant*.

Akshaya: Well, this word 'incantatory' is very important. Can a poem settle at something less than that and yet retain its poetic virtue.

Sudeep: What do you think?

Akshaya: My take would be that, *Prayer Flag* is a collection of poems with an element of spiritual seduction in them. But then, I feel that when I read a poem like "The Box Office Hit", there is this worldliness about that poem and it gives me a moment of respite as well as an opportunity of poetic enjoyment.But let us leave that debate aside. See as I said, it is really difficult to settle at a precise design of your poems.

Sudeep: I know I am a real basket case when it comes to academics because you know every book of mine is so different that they just do not know what to do with it. But I am not writing for the academics, so it is your job to figure it out.

Akshaya: But there is, what I have discovered, that tremendous amount of management of time, what I call the 'temporal movement within a poem'. One frame which I have already discussed here is that in one set of poems, you open the emotion and then take it towards some kind of a semblance of a sense and then in another set of poems, the movement is exactly the reverse. In such poems, the object is static and then it unfolds itself. This kind of a movement is visible in other levels too, but we will talk about that later.

Sudeep: I basically agree with you. Akshaya is special person in a sense that not many people I meet, delve into poetry in such a serious and deep way. I have only met him for three days now; I did not know him before I came here. But he knew my work; it is such a delight and it was not at superficial or banal level as I like your poetry and you write really well. I mean, these are the issues which one has to contend with and if someone actually gets it, it is such a thrill. So, poetry at one level: reading poetry is very easy, because there are so many fun things that go on in a poem, which fiction does not offer you. Fiction largely is very-very flat single dimensional space. You imagine a lot of things that are happening because it's a story, it's presented to you in a way which is palatable but poetry leaves a lot of things unsaid. You, as a reader or a listener, have to do a lot of work, sometimes to make a sense out of it and once you make sense out of it; like yesterday at the workshop, I gave students a task and it was the same thing but everybody wrote a poem and everybody's approach was completely different to the same set of rules. So that's what happens with poetry. Novel: there's not too many interpretations you can come to except that each person's psychological makeup (there you) can have the variation. But the story is a story. The plot, the historical facts are the same. With the poem, you can enter the poem from the bottom, from the side, from the top. It's like a mobile sculpture. You can walk around the piece and enter it in any way possible and still come to a sense or you

can just see it as a traditional piece and go from top to bottom. So that's the beauty of this particular medium or genre.

Akshaya: Again a hypothetical question. Is it possible to write poetry in a linear time frame because you are using this movement, with some deft openings? After the initial take off, the time splinters, melts. Can we imagine a poem written in a linear time frame?

Sudeep: All the time I read poetry which is mostly linear, so flat and badly written. So yes, most poems one comes across are linear, flat and uni-dimensional. So, it can be written, it's a practice which is extremely popular and prolific. But, of course, the other non-linear thing is what I do. There are movements of linearity that gets patched together and you have to turn corners and dive off a cliff and then bounce off another kind of landscape so on and then it becomes a kind of a mosaic or a montage of things. But if it is just linear then I wouldn't want to visit it more than once.

Akshaya: Let me rephrase my question. One is that emotions can be enhanced through a vertical leap; you may miss certain steps and take a temporal leap or you may take a far more circuitous route. Other could be that, you can even horizontally add on to emotions. For instance, as I read your poetry, there is this thing that you begin... again this is so to say, essentialism of a kind which I am indulging in now, that you begin from a situation which is rather bland, rather passive, rather transparent and then you begin to read so many things into that, you say, "emptiness is a function of crowdedness". It reminds you of a density of a crowd or it becomes symptomatic of what the crowd could have been. Also, there's a poem "Ancient Mariner", perhaps something of this kind, where you talk about the still water that acts like a mirror and then it begins to reflect the diversity of life and its splinters into rough edges. Therefore, I would say, if you are carving a design, could it be that you move from a very horizontal frame and then you take on and add different time frames.

Sudeep: Well, there are two or three different aspects to the answer to this question. First, when I am hearing you, maybe I am realizing what I am doing. I think I am influenced a lot by classical Indian music, both instrumental and vocals. It starts very passively with an *alaap*, it's the mood setting space and then you get into a very different sort of space and there is this high point and frenzy and there is the resolution. So, that's one model, which I suspect I am using. The other thing, rather than horizontal or linear I would use the word 'aggregation'; I am aggregating things as I am going along so that its building up, brick by brick and then making another set of sculpture. And the third is the

canvas of aggregation, which is, I start with a block of clay and chip away at it and edit out things, like what Tagore did with his manuscripts. He would start scratching out lines and then those scratches became shapes and become erasures and it became an art form in fact. So, that's another way of doing things, where you start with the whole and you end up with an essential after throwing away what you think. So, it depends upon the poems and it depends upon the phase I was writing in. I am probably influenced by various things and these are very-very different approaches and all of it is valid.

Akshaya: There are at least ten poems or more than ten poems I've read, it could be more than that. When you talk about the process of birth, it is about poems like "Mermaid Purses", "August 9, 1964" and a lot many other poems, where you talk about the arduous process of birth and also there are equal number of poems where you talk about death also and then these two things, two aspects of life meet in a loop, as it happens in *Mount Vesuvius*. So, do you see a process of death also in the poems? Death is too sudden but the process of birth is something in which you invest a lot.

Sudeep: You mean while I am constructing a poem or poetic movements as a general?

Akshaya: Poetic movements as a general.

Sudeep: Certain kinds of movements of course are birth and then slowly die, so therefore, it is called a movement, whether, it is the Symbolist movement or the Metaphysical phase or postmodernist or those who have been mapped out academically, but actually, what is really essential is every movement we are living and dying at the same time. The moment we utter a word and its left our mouth, the word is dead as far as I am concerned. It takes a few sonic vibrations to reach you and then somewhere else and then even that, the sound and the volume will taper off and die. But then that, the point at which that sonic vibration, say hits a surface like water, it births another thing which births ripple; one ripple and then more circularity and so on and so forth. So you can't escape the birth-life metaphor at all. A sheer birth, I mean, birth of something and the death of something is a very fractional thing. I mean, in any case, nobody dies overnight. Even after we die, the body takes, I think quite a few hours to be fully dead. So we have this very definite notion that birth happens at an instance and death happens at an instance, only the person collapsed is dead but lot of his body is still alive. Only very recently my father died, few months back, and it was quite an experience because being the elder son in a family within

the Hindu community has particular rituals that I had to do, only I could do it. Now, I could believe in it or not believe in it. I largely also did some of it because my mother wanted me to do it and she deserved that her wishes regarding last rites be honoured. But, in fact, I had never been so intimate with my father's body. There is a ritual where we have to take pure ghee and embalm his entire body with ghee and he is dead, I mean, physically dead while I am doing that and it is a very-very strange eerie situation. But even when I am doing that, there are points, I have put my hands on, certain parts of his body where I can feel he is not totally dead. Body is still warm and there are aspects that are living. So, if you take birth and death not as ultimate destination or an end point but simply two dots in a large continuum of things then the whole vision changes because I think, actually believe in the verticality, horizontality and the circularity of the movement which is how cosmos works. You have a centre of gravity and all these things are spinning around. Nothing terminates as such and if it terminates, it creates birth of another thing; at every level, at micro level of the planet, and then you have meteors, the meteors strike something else that strikes and gives birth to something else. So if you think of a larger picture then the whole idea of birth and death becomes very live, vivid and fascinating space and which is the space I come from.

Akshaya: Let us change the gears. Indian English poetry is often accused of being neutral or apolitical and whereas, if you come to poetry written in languages, there we have progressive poetry in Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi. There's no such progressive poetry so clinically defined in English. How would you take this kind of evasion, poetic evasion or is it evasion or subtlety of art?

Sudeep: For me it's a subtlety of art actually, it is not an evasion. Lot of my poems are deeply political, but my way of dealing with politics is, I want the poem to live on beyond the locality or time frame of the actual politics of what I am talking about, so that, in fact, it lives on beyond that and if it has to live beyond that, then you will have to universalize aspects of that approach so that even though, say, I wrote a poem about Mandal Commission, when someone immolated himself on the street. So, if you simply write about that as an event that's a poem which will have lot of resonance in the memory span of the people who know about that subject and to a certain extent even if it is read completely out of context. People do not know what they have read was for an instance and then you have to make sure that poem is written in a way that makes sense even if you do not know the context. I disagree with you that English poetry does not have this progressive movement. It has just not been mapped. In Hindi and Urdu tradition,

Punjabi tradition and in Bengali tradition it has been mapped exactly by the critics. In English poetry it is there but someone needs to talk through a critical artifact, structure and then map it out. For instance, say in South Africa, pre-Apartheid times, kinds of poetry that were written were sloganistic and very passionate. You would go up on stage and chant the poetry out and the crowds would respond. I have since written and re-read many of the same poems on the page and they fall flat because as a device to stir up emotion and the audience it worked as an oral piece. But they are not poems, for instance, that will work on the page purely because that particular poem or poet probably did not take time to make it in to a poem, something that will live long. And then, also, why should he or she, because probably it was written for a particular instance. So it is valid as far as that is concerned. But when I write poems, which have very strong political undercurrents, I try and expand it to the point that at least it should get longer than that actual time frame.

Akshaya: Let me read a poem "Durban" which is a part of *South African Woodcut*, where Sudeep talks about the politics of Apartheid but rather in an understated manner. This is the way ideology or the politics operates in poetry of Sudeep Sen. I think that is a good example, "Durban", for instance:

Couched in the warm lap of the sea, Durban
stays nestled in the gentle unadulations,
opening herself to the world, only at the mouth
of the bay carved out
in shape of leaping dolphin,
her tail pointing only a few hours away
from the mountains of Drakensberg.
The city rises and falls as easily as the waves.
Never allowing one the same perspective,
But here, one is sure of two things,
the perennial sunshine
and the separateness of the races that do not mix

Towards the end, you bring in the politics of apartheid. What do you say throughout your *Berlin* poem? Are you using the same understated way of talking about the end of ideology or something of this kind?

Sudeep Sen: "Berlin" is like that, just a longer poem, so the uses are slightly different including the modalities of negotiating the space while I was traveling, through the journey of the poem itself. Part of it is very much landscaped in the way that poem in fact started in the post-Wall or at least, when the border controls were removed. I was driving and crossing the border and all these checkpoints were like ghost spaces.

You can see the Nazi person with the gun pointing down but only the stand of the gun is there, the person is not there. I can imagine the helmet. You could see all the chaos where they were going to check the passport. The grey building exists but nobody is in it. In fact after a point what they did was they made a passport around it because people had to, kind of they were speed breakers, and it is like any toll gate. So the whole idea behind it is that you make these huge political structures for either keeping out certain kind of thing or keeping protected certain kinds of things for personal gain. In this case, the personal gain is the state's gain or Germany's gain or certain kind of political ideology's gain. So, I use the whole politics of it: the metaphor of journey and how human beings cleverly bypass routes, whether we go through it, whether we go through invisibly with these big brothers invisibly looking at it because the camera is still there. It is just that the physicality of someone actually not seeing the passport is there. So you are being recorded, but in a much more dangerous way perhaps and then you have the easy way out and you take the bypass. But really, have you bypassed their idea of non- Apartheid? -- of course not. You still need some kind of paper work at the end of it because you don't know you enjoy the same liberty as say a white German does. So it is very-very subtle and the whole subtlety of course has to be sort of reflected in the poem. Otherwise, I can say, I stopped and there's no person checking my passport and be rather boring and banal.

Akshaya: You say that the progressive movement or the progressive school within Indian English has not been mapped. Would you be comfortable if you are placed within that frame?

Sudeep: I am comfortable in any sense because I am comfortable within my own skin and if you are comfortable within your own skin, I can swim in any waters. I don't really have a choice when people place me because it's their perception and their reading of what I do. They then box me into a certain zone and that is fine and that is fine if I read, dispassionately, your critique. If I am in that group and if its backed up textually and intellectually argued, interestingly, I buy it and I will buy the argument but it's simply an argument which is intellectually exciting for me because its well-argued. If I am placed in another box and the same thing is done, I am equally happy. What in fact it means is I am not then writing single dimensionally. My work is not single dimensional fortunately. One feels relieved that it's not and that's the other problem which a lot of academics find very difficult; to sort of box me and for me I just think I have just started to learn how to write after all these years. I mean, this is the time I have started enjoying it because I don't think of verse forms. I don't think consciously of all these designs I am

doing because I have done it long enough for me to in some ways also do it fairly naturally. So, it's beautiful to dance and hopefully when I am seventy or seventy-five I might help people to slot me. But if people start slotting me now it is almost the death of my creativity.

Akshaya: I can see some special fascination for Neruda and Brodsky and lot many poets, even Urdu poets like Kaifi Azmi. So concede bit of ground to an academic also. Do poets ever concede grounds to their audiences to this extent?

Sudeep: Well, you as an audience need to tell me because I can see people in this auditorium within the space of two days have come three times. So they are either being forced to come or they have come from the fact that they have been convinced by what I do or like what I do. I hope it's the last. And even if you have to write papers, go ahead and do it but it is also, I must say, rather an arduous task to sit through six hours of poetry. First day was two hours. Another session was two and half hours, today its two hours and I can see people smiling still. ... it takes ultimately liking from the heart and head for people to be in this space because three to five is a wonderful time to take a nap or watch some highlights of cricket. Why would you want to be in this dreary hall listening to two men profoundly talking about poetry? Clearly there is an interest, so the answer lies there I think.

Akshaya: I referred to Neruda and other poets but I see that in your poetry, poetic quotes are sprayed all across. You tend to depend a great deal on the poetry of others, is it just a matter of influence or are you looking for some kind of a grammar there?

Sudeep: I think when I fall in love, which I do very easily; I do get influenced a lot. So I have gone through various phases of falling in love with Neruda and I would eat and love and chew everything he writes. Similarly, Octavio Paz and Rilke, Faiz and I mean lot of it can be oral because when I was growing up, the Bengali poetry was actually recited in our house, as was Hindi poetry, which I heard. A lot of my early influence was hearing my grandmother and mother chanting their prayers. So it was a very oral space. That's why for me poetry is not something I am scared of. Poetry is something I get seduced into because of the oral nature of poetry and the musicality of it. When it comes to other poets, I just think when I read a poem written by anybody who has done a fantastic job, I just feel jealous and feel as if why couldn't I have done it first. So that way, you are constantly growing. So whether or not they influenced me, I don't know. If they influenced me in a good way I am happy or if not at least I am a richer person because I have read more and am open to reading more as there

are such diverse styles of poetry and poetries that have been written and that it will be a shame if we don't specially when if you are writing a poetry, as well. If I expect other people to read my poetry, I as a poet should be reading other people's poetry too. Unfortunately, many poets don't read others' poetry. Many academics only read their own paper and not other people's paper apart from the exceptional ones. But you know these tombs that come out, they are often in the library and I pick them out and there is not a single rubber stamp with due date on it. So that possibly tells you what's happening to those books but if it is read and if there is actually a healthy discourse amongst people then the whole thing becomes a living art. Poetry in that sense, fortunately still is, when you go to a festival. I was at a festival recently representing India in Nicaragua. There were hundred and twenty or one hundred and thirty poets from fifty odd countries and for a whole week, the staff at Grenada was only celebrating poetry. The streets were full of poetry. The hotel room when I went in there was a little paper wrap with a ribbon where you get the toiletries. On the top of that there was a little paper unfolded and on it was a Wordworth's sonnet and when I asked my other colleagues, did you get any sonnet? They said, no, we got a line from another poem, a Spanish poem. So they make so much effort, details of how beautifully they welcome you. The entire week was poetry. They read poetry to ten thousand people in piazza and it's democratic because you were reading in your language and it was translated into Spanish, of course, because that's the local language there and everybody can understand it. An actor or an actress is reading a poem after you read yours and everybody understands. People are selling *jalebis* and *samosas*, the equivalent in that part of the world. It's a free event, so it is very-very democratic and on the street vast masses of people turn up. So when you travel outside and see the way poetry is then you realize that it is a very living art. The moment you reduce it down to an academic syllabus that's where it's a dying art. But the joy is how poetry is taught. Poetry really has to be felt while it is being taught; then the teaching happens automatically.

Akshaya: How would you trace your poetic ancestry in terms of what you call as your "distilling tribe", a tribe that distills your poetic imagination? This is one question that we often ask when it comes to Indian English poetry as there is always this question of belongingness, of its rooted-ness.

Sudeep: No, if I have to be cornered, which you are trying to do at the moment. You are trying to pigeon-hole me for the last one and half hours which is an exercise. If I have to be cornered and pigeon-holed then I can say that I am a Bengali poet who writes in English. So my

rooted-ness comes from a very-very cultured Bengali space, from extremely well read parents and grandparents, who are very conventional looking. If you meet them, they are very modest looking people but when you actually start talking to them, they are incredibly liberal as people because their minds are very liberal. So that's the space I came from. I happen to also write in a language which is a mother tongue. If you were having this discourse in Bangla, then we would be speaking in Bangla but it is not relevant at the moment because only English is India's common language amongst the certain kind of educated class, which is I suppose or Hindi because these are two natural language we can communicate in. So the ancestry really is that. In that particular house I stole from my grandfather's bookshelves works as varied as Sri Aurobindo to Rilke to Milton. So there also reading was very-very vast. So it is no way you can actually tie down art and knowledge into one root. You know it will be a sad thing if we can actually locate ourselves so fantastically that I am this and only this; you will be so unipolar. At least let us be bipolar, even if it means taking medication to make a life bit more realistically. But the fact is when we talk in academia in terms of critics talking about rootedness, we are talking about a very narrow kind of rootedness and the narrow kind of rootedness is basically: Is English an authentic language? Or are you writing in foreign tongue? I mean at one level in 2012 it's so superficially banal and uninteresting because why worry about that. Let us actually get to the text. Is the text the person producing interesting and exciting. If it is, it is worthy of discussion. Let us forget if the English person actually introduced English. For me English was introduced by Indians to me, though white people were involved.

Akshaya: I ask this question because I could see that, of course there are lot may geographical terrains that you cover, but there is this uncanny presence of Dhaka. There is this space of Dhaka, its rains and its monsoons and all that. Are you reflecting on the politics of the Partition also?

Sudeep: No, I can be stylish and say yes. But the truth of course is actually I lived in Bangladesh for five years and I was living in Dhaka. So in fact, that five year period just happens to be when I look back at it as a very fecund time. I wrote quite a lot of books. I did a big sort of coffee table literary book. I did books on photography. I translated three major Bengali poets into English. I edited anthologies. I taught. So these are very lively and vibrant times. So perhaps, that's what you are saying. It's not Dhaka is in a place so much but it also actually is in a way a wonderful experience because in Delhi I was speaking three languages and when I was in Bangladesh I realized how unimportant

English is and how unimportant Hindi is. You wake up in the morning and its only Bangla. Entire day is conducted in Bangla and you felt all of this so unimportant because one language in itself is an entire world and it is so rich and I actually got to grips with Bangla in a different kind of way. I came closer to it. So, there's nothing to do with politics of partition because historically speaking, my parents and grandparents had homes in either side of Bengal because it was India then. We come from two separate cities, which are now divided by an artificial border. So it was nothing to do with partition.

Akshaya: Sudeep has translated a lot of poetry. The kind of things you say about writing poetry, would you say the same for translating poetry as well?

Sudeep: Translating poetry is a very-very difficult space altogether. You don't even have to be a poet to translate a poem. It is useful if you are a poet and translating the poem because you have the grammar and voyeur with which you actually get into a poem and you consider subtitles more easily and you are more comfortable with it. Translating poetry for me is a parallel pleasure, you know, I have to first fall in love with a poem to be inspired. The reason I largely do it is because I want to share it with other people who perhaps don't know English, or know that language and I want to share it in English, whichever way it works, so that's the primary focus. The other reason I have translated is when the editor of a magazine asks me if I can translate these poems, often my answer to that is; I am happy to attempt it but let me see whether I am the right person or not. Sometimes I may not feel for it and then I don't want to do a poem a disservice. So, whatever I have translated at some level, I have been moved in some way or the other. It doesn't have to be only positive, something I admire in the poem, there is a particular form they are using which is strong, or the politics of it which interests me. But translating poetry is a very-very different space for me than writing poetry.

Akshaya: Poets like Ramanujan, Kolatkar, Dilip Chitre for example, tend to put the act of translation at par with the act of writing a poem. You also describe translation as "parallel pleasure". In fact, Kolatkar says that I translate and this translation becomes for me a kind of filter to pass through for my creative urge, but there is another interesting idea that I have seen in your books of translation. You use this expression time and again, "translating with the poet". This is something exceptional. I have never seen that. People translate and then they put their name but practically, in every poem you have this towards the end "translating with the poet". Now, what is this?

Sudeep: Often I think it is a language I know well and then I don't need anybody else's help. For Bengali and Hindi, it's alright.

Akshaya: But it's even in the case of Bengali poems.

Sudeep: That is because when I was translating, I will give you some examples; when I was translating Tagore, I was sitting with my dad, so he had his own input and I had my own version. So in fact, we were collaboratively doing it. I was probably doing the harder work, because dad being dad just preferred to have his cup of tea and spot some wisdom but then that was essential to the process of translation for me. Therefore, I want to give him credit because without his inputs it would have been a poorer poem. That's one kind of translation within a language zone, I know, but that's unusual. In this case, my father was involved in it. There are other poems you have seen wherever I have translated with so and so, there are the languages which I don't know and this is the magic of it all. I have translated from Hebrew, Italian, French, German, and Korean. These are translations I have done sitting with poets whose English is very good but they are not good enough to write an original poetry in English but as academics, and conversant as people, their English is completely flawless so what then happens is, and this again happens, when you are sitting and chatting, you are sharing poetry, so wouldn't it be nice for this poem to have an English *avatar*? So there you sit together and the poet gives me a prose version of the poem, hundred percent of the content is given to me. Then I see the original poem in their language. I see the visual verse structure, so I know how the poem is mapped on the page visually, whether it's in couplets or tersest or in quarto, how long the lines are, the line-length and so on. Then I ask the poet to read out the original language, so then what I have in front of me is the aural idea of the poem, and then I tell them to translate the poem into English, I tell them to give me the two versions of the translation. One is a prose translation, which gives me the content of the poem and the other is the grammatical translation line by line, because you know, language zones in different languages have different structures so the verb has to follow. In some language, it is to be later, so often when you are translating line by line it is ungrammatical what it gives me, is I know which words in English are in that line, so I want to make sure in English I want to at least retain eighty to hundred percent of those words. It may not be possible. Then comes the third difficult thing, I ask the poet to read the poem and I actually grid map the syllabics. I count how many syllables and what the stresses are. I map the entire thing out on English script to see what it sounds like. Now having those three charts or pieces of information in front of me I translate it myself and then of course, I read it back to

the poet concerned because their English is good enough to pick it up but not enough to do it, you see; because their English is not good enough to do this mapping. So it's a lot of work, I mean, if you really invest a lot of time you can get go. People say poems can't be translated. I would say ninety five percent you can get a success rate out of it and five percent, 'let it be mysterious" and ninety percent of my poetry knowledge is through translation. I only know what the language is to read in, so we are talking of Pablo Neruda and Octavia Paz. It's all through English language as far as I am concerned and the translations are superb. So had it not been for that I think I would have been a poorer person.

Akshaya: Since you know both languages, Bengali as well as English, and Hindi, of course, is also one of your three mothertongues, but you haven't translated your own poems. This is what even Kolatkar does. Kolatakar says "my pencil is sharpened at both ends. With one end I write in Marathi and with other end I write in English". So, why is it,that you say that these poems are quintessentially English poems and they can't be translated back into Bengali?

Sudeep: See, my pencil is also sharpened at both ends but one end is passion and the other is intellect, as opposed to Kolatkar, where he has two different languages residing on two different polarities and mine is not like that because if I have written the poem out first in English something as naturally as an impulse within one must have told me to write it in English; I didn't set out to write in English. The second thing is I wouldn't want to translate a poem into Bangla, specially languages I know well. I mean these are easy paths and I don't think I'll do as good a translation because the passion for me for that particular thing initially came through a different sieve. So then, it's much better if a Bengali poet translates it because they will be much more attuned to the poem in that language than I would be because I am already too invested in that piece. I don't have enough of an objective distance for me to do it justice. I can edit it. So therefore, what I do is especially with Hindi and Bengali poetry, I work very-very closely with the translators; we sit together and do it. So I know every little thing because I know the words, what they are doing. Some-times if it's a really good Hindi poet, they often come up with a better word than I wrote, so I have to give them the credit. I may use a synonym because they write in Hindi and poetry in certain kind of Hindi, their choice of words for the thing would be more poetic perhaps so I want the poem to be a real poem in that sense. So, therefore I would never do my translation though I can do some of them. But then, why write in English, I mean the whole thing of Kolatkar, though it is a very noble thing to do, I much rather translate

other people's work at the same time. And people like Dilip Chitre and Kolatkar, I mean, these are the people I knew very well and I was the editor of the magazine *New Quest* that comes out of Poona, so I engaged with him (Dilip Chitre) very-very closely and to tell you very honestly, I have great regards for them but their English is still weaker. Let us say their Marathi is at hundred percent but their English is at ninety-five percent. It's not at the same level. So there's always a dominant punch. Even when I read Dilip Chitre's English poems, I see a lot of Marathi linguistic echoes in his English poems, that's because that is the dominating space and I have talked to him about it and then he says, "Yes". They are not truly bilingual.They are truly bilingual of course, when they speak in prose and when they are writing essays, but poetry is a very special space and you need to have everything pitch perfect at the same level. And I don't know anybody who can be equally adept at more than two or three languages. Some people are of course, but then they are geniuses and even Ramanujan never translated his poems. He wrote in English and then he did translation work but they were two separate ideas.

Akshaya: No, there are some Kannada poems which are in English also but they are not translation. But you can compare the two poems.

Sudeep: You can compare the two, but he hasn't done himself, for precisely, I think the same reason; similar reasons at last.

Akshaya: You have translated Urdu and Hindi poets also. Which poems you pick up, zero in on? Do you first pick up poets or poems and then are there are any special preferences?

Sudeep: I tend to say, I work very unscientifically when I am working as a translator. I first tend to pick up poems because it's the poem that has affected me and then if I like the poem, I will read more poems by that same poet and then I will read more poems and once I start doing that I have obviously started liking that poet and I want to do something. That's one way. The other way is more commissioned. For instance, there's a book which has been published by Ritu Menon's publishing house, now called *Women's Unlimited*. It's a book called *Interior Decoration*. It is contemporary poetry of India from fifty four languages. So, she wrote to me saying if I could translate Samanda Kanth Hussain's poems into English. So I said, let me read her poem and if I feel in sync with the poem I'll do it. So, in fact I purely did those poems I was asked to. I didn't really know her work. So that was an accident but a happy accident. Whereas, Anamika's poems, a Hindi poet, she and I are actually translating each other's work for the last seven years. So my anthology of selected poems in Hindi, when it comes out, is all translated

by her and I am translating quite a lot of her Hindi poems into English and again her English is perfect, just as she thinks my Hindi is good enough for us to converse. But we don't write in each other's language because it's a different space. So that's how it really works. Sometimes it's purely accidental, sometimes I like the poem and sometimes it's purely work, which has been given to me.

Akshaya: Since you've translated Agyeya, Anamika and Manglesh Dabral, do you have an opinion about the contemporary scene of Hindi poetry?

Sudeep: I do have an opinion. I think again like English, it is extremely varied and also 'generationally' and stylistically it is very different. But my opinion is not so much to do with the actual quality of the poetry, which I think is outstanding. Hindi poetry has always enjoyed a very high level of craftsmanship and as has Bengali poetry. These are the only two languages I have followed poetry in other than English. It is the politics of poetry in these languages where I think sometimes brings poets down. And I have talked to Anamika. For instance, I have had a chance to speak to her about it and she says she has got two things going against me; I am a woman in a largely man's world when most of the Hindi poets tend to be men. I don't know why. There are few, fewer, I am not saying there aren't but there are fewer woman Hindi Poets at the same level as the successful male poets. So that's one thing. Second thing is that they are not allowed in to that certain kind of intellectual discourse space. They don't want women to be in that and that's a very strange thing. The third thing is that this whole idea of young and old. They feel that you're to be at least sixty plus to be a valid writer. So if you're in your twenties and thirties there's no chance of entering that space. Forty-fifty, you may have a chance because you have done well and these people have to accept you and they have to pick up a young writer, say *Chalo is ko bhi le letay hain,* you will have a chance. So it's a real kind of a tight male dominated clique club which controls the politics of poetry and that I think is harmful and that's in many languages and including English by the way. You see the only reason the politics of English poetry in India some of these people can't control it anymore, it is purely because many of my generation, just half a generation before me and after me do not have to rely on patronage. They can actually send poems to a fantastic magazine and if the poem is good enough it will get in without the reference letter from say the Daruwallas or the Mahapatras of the world. But to be published in Indian literature you need a recommendation from these people.Its' ridiculous. So, the politics still remains here. It is just that

fortunately people who are writing in here in English have freedom of not to go through these channels. So therefore, I am not a member of Sahitya Akademi because it does nothing, except that they co-opt you later on. Every time they send a delegation out, it is the same people and their friends and their peons going. Can you imagine it is our taxpayer's money? So, we know what's happening. That is the part of the world which is best left out of poetry.

Akshaya: Sudeep, you edited many books of poetry and you have been a guest editor of leading journals of literature. So, there is no one role that Sudeep does, he is editor, translator and pre-eminently a poet. I think this, I mean editorship, is again not your primary interest. Your primary reputation is that of a poet only. When you edit a book, this is a question which is oft asked: How do you choose poets? Let me add to it. How much of empirical research does it go or does it involve in short listing the poets or the poems? Normally, I have seen when R Parthasarthy's *Ten Indian Poets* came and later on Arvind Krishna Mehrotra's *Sixteen Poets*, they appeared to be the collection of chosen few. It looks like, ten people sit in a Bombay club and then they decide and come out with anthologies. And this is with regard to Jeet Thayil's collection as well. It looks like an extension of the same club. And one reason that Indian English anthologies have not become pan-Indian is this operation of what I would term as 'club-culture'. You being an editor, do you actually invite the poems from every corner? What is the modus operandi?

Sudeep: You really have said it honestly. That is the sad situation how anthologies are done. Lot of it is patting each other's back, doing other people favors, sitting in a club over a drink and deciding what the list is going to be; sadly but that is the truth. So, when I edit a book, for me, the primary interest of mine is the poem itself. I will give you two or three examples. I edit a magazine and I also edit magazines for others. When we read submissions, the editorial assistant would take the five poems or ten poems that comes through the post; give it a number and then take out the top sheet because we always tell the poets not to put their names on the poem and even if they put, then the assistant whites them out. We actually fight over F1, M16 and G1 because we do not know who we are fighting for. It is purely the text that needs to win. And often when we look back, and tally the names and the numbers, there are some very important poets whose poems are left out because they were not just up to the par whereas, if you had known these people, probably you would have been swayed; if we were to look at their names. So, for me, it is only the poem that matters. I am doing an anthology, for instance, *Harper Collins Book of English Poetry by*

Indians, which is a big six hundred page book which is due out in June this year, I am told. You know that is a very different kind of exercise because this is research which I have done over many years. I have been in the field for so many years. I have pretty much known every book of poetry which has been published by an Indian poet. I mean if it is at least a significant output from small presses and because you are in a loop people kind of tell you, have you seen such and such coming out and this has come out in a small magazine. So, you are fairly up to speed even in the grass-root level about what is happening. Again, I have a lot of enemies in the forthcoming books because people I just do not get along with they are in the book because I just feel it's about poetry and not about personality at all. So, hopefully this book is going to be quite different from the earlier ones. And the third thing of course, is that the notion of Indianness has changed and we should acknowledge the plurality, and the diversity of the whole enterprise because say, Agah Sahid Ali, for instance, he himself because of a mask and a stance, said, he is a triple exiled poet; he is a Kashmiri poet first, American poet second and the English poet or the Urdu poet third. But he never wanted to be an Indian poet. But as a reader, I think he is a massively Indian poet. So, because of his own personal politics — 'do I leave him out or not?' — that is a judgment-call I make as a poet. Sometimes there are the other things. For the Harpers anthology I was working within a certain parameter which was post-Independence, actually, post-Republic Indian English poetry. So poets born after 1950 onwards were included. So it's really contemporary. So a person like Agha Sahid Ali missed out the ambit because he was 1949 or whatever. That's too bad, as you stick to the rules. Vikram Seth, just about creeps in fortunately for the publisher because they were saying you have to have him as he is going to sell the book. There are these names which sell books. So I said, let him be in the book provided the poems pass the test. If these are the poems which sit well in an anthology as far as I am concerned, in my schemata of things it will be there; that is how I will do it. So it is a fairly democratic way of doing it. To me, the poetry needs to win. People are not important.

Akshaya: But there are certain other obligations and it may not work with you. But you were talking about Sahitya Akademi being state funded, or being the institution of the state. How do you really ensure that there is representation of educated minorities, gender and castes because these are obligations perhaps of state institutions may be not of an individual? So, do these considerations also cross your mind?

Sudeep: These considerations definitely cross my mind. How can they not? But with private publishers, Harper Collins is a private publisher

ultimately. It is not state funded. I can fight with editors because if I am going to put my name at the end of the introduction and say that it is my selection then I have to feel strongly for every poem that is in the book. Now if it's a Dalit, whose poem may be very passionate, very meaningful but it is not really adequately well written, it has to go. Even if there are two men and hundred women and if that's what I get in the final list, that is what it is going to be. If I start taking external parameters as to be democratic about poetry, so have five women, five *Langras*, five *Kaalas*, and five Chinese people then it would be some sort of *Khichari* (hodgepodge). It would not be a tightly edited book. It may be socially a very good thing you have done but my job as an editor for putting a volume of poetry is not a social thing. It is to present the best available written poems that are available in that time. It could be by anybody. It does not work with me whether a women or an alien has written. If the poem is brilliantly written, it should be in there.

Akshaya: This is probably the last question unless the audience has some questions. Of course that part I have not covered, where you interact with other art forms. You have been a film maker and a documentary producer, and you also used lot of photographs and paintings. Final question would be, are you not really travelling in different directions? How do you cope with so much things – editorship, which is another kind of job, translation is a different kind of space and your engagements with different art forms -- classical music to Bharatanatayam to films and all that? How do you compartmentalize yourself within so many spaces?

Sudeep: Actually, it's very easy for me because I am very impulsive. As I was saying earlier as a metaphor, I fall in love very easily. If it is a piece of music, I follow that for a while, until my soul and my artistic endeavors are satisfied. I do not think it is a partition at all. Each one is feeding the other one in a very different way. My critical writing feeds my creative writings in a way that, it is invaluable because there is a rigor aspect that comes in. Unnaturally, I have been interested in photography and dance for a long time, so it is an extension of my interest because so much of poetry also comes out of interaction with these art forms. And it's really a job because once you have written a poem for instance the book *Rain*, is now going to be produced for stage and for film by the centre of Mohiniattam in New Delhi and the leading dancer, Bharati Shivaji and her daughter Vijaya Lakshmi; they are going to be conceptualizing the whole book for the stage along with the Swedish-American film maker McQuail, who is a very famous composer, who composes not only very big classical artists but including, people like Madonna and Britney Spears and so on. So, he is

going to do the sound scripts. So, it is very exciting space because my role in that book has been done in a way that I am really pleased that it is stirring interest in other people just by reading the book and they want to enter the space. The good thing of course is I am able to do work with these people because we will be working together in these spaces. To me, it's just an extension, editing, working with film and photography because just think of human eye and mind, we don't look at one thing at the same time. The vision is very-very panoramic. It's only a question of what would we choose to focus on that given moment. And if, I just stuck to poetry, how boring my life would be. I have too many interests; sports, music, bad junk food, cricket and travelling. So if I start not doing all these just because I have to be holier than thou and just focus on one, then I will be the looser. I am a normal human being, mortal, my feet are planted on mother earth and therefore I can probably write poetry. Otherwise if I tell myself that "I am a great poet", then I am finished and that is why, a lot of Indians in the list of poets that you are talking about are so conscious of themselves that they almost feel that they have to be a poet than write a poem. For me, it is not like that. It is an art form that I enjoy and I want to be normal and friendly with everybody.

Akshaya: Well, friends, we had a wonderful session. What we teach in classrooms is driven by a different impulse but poets and academicians shall have different perspectives on the art and process of poetry. Sometimes they concur; sometimes they don't in the sense that there are convergences and divergences. But here, there was more or less a convergence that poets are writing in a world which is not an insular world. They know the currents and as teachers and academicians, we are also alert to human emotions and interests. One question which I did not ask if you were given a chance to have a *jugalbandi* with a contemporary poet who would you prefer most? I do not know who he would be, but I can say that we had an interesting *jugalbandi*. Thank you very much.

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