



UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

STUDY MATERIALS

M. A. ENGLISH
(PREVIOUS)
(1997 Admission)

PAPER V (Optional II)
INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

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Paper V : (Potional II) Indian Writing in English

Section A: Poetry Max. Marks-100

Rabindranath Tagore: "Breezy April", "The Child"; **Sri Aurobindo:** "Transformation", "Thought the Paraclete", "Surreal Science", "The Tiger and the Deer". **Sarojini Naidu:** "Summer Woods", "Village Song"; **Toru Dutt:** "Our Casuarina Tree", "Lakshman".

Section M: Poetry. Included Meena Alexander, a, the stom b, sita, Hoshang Merchant, Golkonda. 2, calicut to kannanore from puestone to fruit.

Jayanta Mahapatra: "The Whorehouse in a Culcutta Street", "A Missing Person". **Kamala Das:** "My Grandmother's House", "The Sunshine Cat", "The Dance of the Eunuchs". **Nizzim Ezekiel:** "Philosophy", "Poet, Lover, Bird Watcher", **R. Parthasarathy:** "Exile" 2 "Trial" Home Coming 1 **Keki Daruwala:** "Routine", "Free Hymn", "Death of a Bird"; **A.K. Ramanujan:** "A River", "Obituary", "The Striders".

Drama

Asif Currimbhoy: "Darjeeling Tea", **Nissam Ezekiel:**

Fiction. Mahesh Iattani .Final solution

Mulk Raj Anand: Two leaves and a Bud, **Raja Rao:** R.K. **Narayan:** Kamala Markandaya: **Bhabani Bhattacharya:** So many Hungers, **Anita Desai:** Cry, the Peacock, **Salman Rushdie:** Midnight's Children.

Prose

The Creative Ideal; **Jawaharlal Nehru:** Life's Philosophy;

(Break up of marks: 4 Essays + 4 Short Notes + 8 Obj.type)

(16 X 4 + 7 x 4 + 8 = 100)

POETRY-SECTION-A

Introduction to Sri: Arabindo Ghose (1872-1950)

Sri Aurobindo is universally acclaimed as the incontestably outstanding personality in Indo-Anglian literature. Indeed he is a signal phenomenon of our country. He was a revolutionary, a thinker, a creative writer, a playwright, a poet, a seer, a sage, a superman and a prophetic engineer of the Life Divine. But they are indeed all of a piece. As K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar points out: 'It is the same diamond the Immortal Diamond - with different facets turned to our gaze at different times.'

Sri Aurobindo was born on August 15, 1872 as the third son of Dr. Krishnadhan Ghose and Swarnalatha Devi. His father who had himself received his higher education in England desired to instil English ideas, ways of thinking and living and learning in his children as far as possible uncontaminated in Loretto Convent School in Darjeeling and later sent to England, where Aurobindo studied at St. Paul's School, London and then at King's College, Cambridge, where he was awarded a first in the classical tripe. Thus he was subjected by his brilliant cultured father to a process of westernization. An excellent linguist, he added German and Italian to his competent grasp of Latin, Greek and French. He left England for India in 1893, having received an appointment in the Baroda state service. The Baroda period (1893-1906) was the significant seed-time of Aurobindo's life. He seems to have indulged in poetry and politics simultaneously. Songs to Myrtilla, Urvashi Love and Death, the first draft of his epic, Savitri and some of his blank verse plays too are products of this fruitful period.

In April 1901, Sri Aurobindo married Mrinalini Bose. Meanwhile his intervention in Indian politics had already begun. He was a man pre-destined to play an important part in the emancipation of his beloved motherland. His brief but hectic spell as a political radical (1906-10) landed him in jail for one year. He had his first ineffable mystic experience of 'Narayana Darsan' during his destination in the Alipur Jail. It effected a thorough change in his very attitude to life and human destiny. From there he escaped to Pondichery in 1910 and made it his permanent home thereafter. He had several spiritual ex-

periences and he continued to pursue his yoga with and unflinching faith and total devotion. Thus in India, Sri Aurobindo transformed himself by starting with revolution and achieving revelation and enlightenment.

Continuing his yoga at Pondichery, he was joined in 1914 by a French lady, Madame Mirra Richard (later known as the 'Mother'), who recognised in him the 'guru' of her own quest. After another significant spiritual experience characterised by him as 'the descent of Krishna in the physical' or of the overmind consciousness on November 24, 1926, the Day of Realization (Sidhi), Sri Aurobindo withdrew into complete silence and seclusion for a period of about twelve years (1926-1938). He continued his spiritual quest as also his literary work comprising poetry, drama; philosophical, religious, cultural and critical writings unceasingly till his final journey to the heavenly abode on 5 December 1950.

Sri Aurobindo's Literary Output

Sri Aurobindo was a prolific writer with an enormous and varied literary output. His long poetic career spanning 60 years (1890-1950) yielded an impressive volume of verse of several kinds-lyrical, narrative, philosophical and epic. Most of his early poems are romantic lyrics. The prescribed poems "Trance of Waiting", "Transformation", "Thought the Paraclete" and "Rose of Gods" are fine, representative specimen of his meditative and mystic poetry. The poem the Tiger and the Deer is a radical, patriotic and meditative lyric. Among his longer narrative poems are included "Urvashi", "Love and Death" and 'Baji Prabhou'. 'Savitri' is his ambitious epic of 23,813 lines in twelve books on which the poet worked for more than half a century. Sri Aurobindo himself describes his much talked of, immortal creation 'as an experiment in mystic poetry, spiritual poetry cast into a symbolic figure'. His prominent prose writings include The Life Divine, Essays on the Gita, The Future Poetry and On the Veda.

Salient Features of Sri Aurobindo's Conception of Poetry:-

Though he was a great mystic, a yogi and an author of such works as The Life Divine which may be aptly described as a 'human computer on cosmic consciousness', Sri Aurobindo claimed that he was 'first and foremost a poet'. He evolved a poetic theory which is

remarkable for its spiritual and visionary character. His concept of poetry which is regarded as the poetics of the twentieth century, he being the Indian Aristotle. Some of the salient features of his poetic theory are given below:-

i) According to Sri Aurobindo, poetry is a sublime means for purging man of his baser instincts and bestial impulses, and for individual, social, psychic and with the deepest delight, which is not merely a god like pastime, but is a great formative and illuminative power.

ii) Poetry is 'the Mantra of the Real' through which the soul seeks a blissful union with the Absolute or the Supreme. Hence the poet is a seeker and a marker, his objects being Truth, Beauty, Joy, Good and Bliss. He is an inspired being, having the potential to lead his fellow beings to higher goals.

iii) Poetry necessitates the union of three elements: a) the highest intensity of rhythmic movement; b) the highest intensity of thought, substance and, expression, and c) the highest intensity of the soul's vision of Absolute truth.

iv) Poetic speech is the instantaneous expression of the poet's inspired spiritual vision. It determines its own form. The true creator and enjoyer of poetry is the soul. Hence poetic composition is a soul act.

v) The true function of poetry is to effect a harmonious rhythm between matter and spirit which will enable man to discover Divine Truth (Sathyam) Divine Delight (Sivam) and Divine Beauty (Sundaram). It is endowed with an incantatory power and thus help him to attain salvation or complete liberation from pain, suffering ignorance and maya.

vi) Hence it appears that Sri Aurobindo's poetry is the poetry of the future. A new realization, a psychic opening, a vast and profound solitude, a deep silence, a quickness to absorb all that descends from the higher and higher mental planes of consciousness, an absolute command over the style, expression, rhythm and cadence appropriate to the poetic substance - all these are absolutely necessary both for the creation and enjoyment in all its fullness and abundance, for the poetry of Sri Aurobindo.

Certain terms Associated with Sri Aurobindo's Poetry

In his writings like *The Life Divine*, Sri Aurobindo has employed certain mystic or spiritual words which find their application in most of his poems. A basic knowledge of such terms is essential for understanding his poetical compositions.

1. Soul Psychic:- In Sri Aurobindo's view, Matter, life and Mind are a triple aspect of higher principles. The fourth principle is soul which has a double appearance, namely the 'desire soul' and 'psychic entity'. While the former craves for possession and enjoyment of material things, the latter which is concealed behind is 'the real repository of the experiences of the spirit'. This fourth principle is the projection-bliss or the 'Sachidananda' under the conditions or 'soul-evolution' in the world. This is self-delight and the entire cosmos is also a play of this divine self-held back by ignorance and division in the superconscient being'.

2. Self:- Self is eternal, unborn, uninvolved in its activities. It can be experienced as the self of the individual, cosmic and also transcendent or the spirit. Self-realization is the eternal freedom of the spirit.

3. Overmind:- Overmind is a plane of consciousness freed from all ignorance, and falsehood. It is a creator of truth and a delegate of supermind, yet it does not have the integrity of the supramental truth. Overmind receives light from the supermind and divides and distributes it according to the need of the mental level. It has global conception of time and space; still lacks absolute supramental harmony.

4. Supermind:- It lies between "sachidananda and lover creations; it is the truth-creating instrument of the 'sachidananda' and a self awareness of the infinite. In every status it maintains the spiritual realization of the unity of all. Starting from light and truth, the supermind ever moves in the. It can hasten evolution, it is eternal reality. It is inevitably manifest in matter, life and mind and is essential for the divine transformation of both man and the entire earth.

5. Supramental:- It is not only truth consciousness, but a self effective truth-power. Its underlying character is knowledge by identity and like the supermind, it too can manifest its world of light and truth.

Besides these, Sri Aurobindo refers to certain other levels,

which are above our brain capacity or ordinary mental levels: Higher Mind, Illuminated Mind, Intuition and so on. The Higher Mind is full of greater intensity of spiritual light and comes with a vivid vision of fundamental realities and colours of truth as it seems to us. The intuition has realities and colours of truth as it seems to us. The Intuition has flashes of intimate sense of things; it depends spiritual sight into spiritual insight.

STUDY OF THE PRESCRIBED POEMS

I. TRANSFORMATION

Meanings and Explanatory notes:

Line 1

Subtle: fine, delicate, elusive.

This line illustrates the Questioning of the senses. The body is under complete control of the soul. There is no irregularity in his breathing which is generally associated with hurry or anxiety. Pranayama or deep, controlled breathing is a prelude to the yogi experience of trance and spiritual transformation. The poet's soul is preparing itself for the same.

Line 2

Members: organs or parts of the body.

Might divine: a divine, a spiritual strength.

When the soul perceives the presence of God, it undergoes divinisation of the body too. Every cell than becomes filled with God's power and vitality. The Spiritual vitality of the self permeates every single part of the body.

Line - 3

Infinite: Eternity which is metaphorically described as a vast, boundless ocean. It is common metaphor in much of Sri Aurobindo's poetry.

Like a giant's wine: Though incorrect grammatically this expression is an illustration of the powerful, condensed suggestive man-

ner of writing characteristic of Sri Aurobindo. 'Giant', conveys the idea of vastness while 'giant's wine' implies heavy into intoxication. The poet means that his entire body is reeling under the intoxication of divine bliss.

Line 4

Time is my drama suggests eternity.

Pageant: dramatic performance, suggests eternity as drama.

The state of divine consciousness lies beyond Time. In order to reach it, the soul has to pass through the world of Time, Space and Causation. It cannot be encaged or enmeshed like the body and thus it enjoys absolute freedom from the restraints of time.

Line - 5 - 8

Illumined cells: Same idea as in line 2. refers to the state of every cell of the body filled with the rapturous presence of God.

Joy's flaming scheme: pattern or design of the fire of knowledge. With the attainment of superconscious or supramental knowledge, the individual soul experiences an enlightening bliss in each cell. *thrilled*: experiencing horripilation, an index of ecstasy. *branching nerves*: the branched nervous system suggests the entire body. *Channels*: of infinite in line 3. *opal*: a precious stone, usually milky white with a fine play of colours. *hyaline*: glassy, clear and transparent. The words opal and 'hyaline' effectively bring out the dazzling splendour of supramental bliss, or super sensuous joy.

influx. inflow

Unknown, Supreme refers to God.

Almighty or the Absolute Brahman or Sachidananda who is beyond human grasp or comprehension.

The entire nervous system of the poet's body becomes a network of channels for the divine rapture or presence to flow in. His soul as well as his body is slowly but steadily being prepared for the Transformation by the inflow of divine strength and vitality.

Line - 9

Vassal: slave, captive.

flesh: carnal desires, sensuality. The poet is no longer a victim of base, carnal desires which render the individual prisoner and thus submerge him in grief. He has succeeded in subduing his senses like a true Yogi described repeatedly in 'The Bhagavad Gita'.

Line - 10

Here Nature is personified as a lady ruling man with a strong lead staff. The poet had surmounted the unending cycles of birth and death disease and sorrow characteristic of human nature and life.

Line 11

Senses narrow mesh stands for the physical reality. The poet is not caught up like a game animal in the net of sensuous or sensual desires and impulse.

Lines 9-11

Emphasize the same idea namely that the poet is transformed from a mere physical being with base, mundane aims into one infused with chaitanya or divinity.

Line 12

Soul Unhorizoned: a felicitous expression describing the condition of the emancipated soul.

measureless sight: The poet's freed self is able to see beyond Time and Space.

Line 13

God's happy living tool suggests acting in accordance with God's will. The human body is transformed into an instrument in the hands of the Almighty; the Supreme or the Unknown (line 6) has assumed absolute control of his body, since it has been liberated from the trammels of the senses.

Line 14

Spirit: poet's soul or self.

Sum or deathless night: connotes the infinite immortal divine spirit, or 'Nitya Chaitanya' the Eternal Effulgence.

The Almighty or Nitya Chaitanya gives light to the sun. The

spirit of the transformed body also merges with this supreme light, thereby attaining the acme of Yogi communication.

The Sonnet:-

The Sonnet is a short poem of fourteen lines rhyming according to a prescribed plan and composition. The original variety, called the Petrarchan sonnet, is divided into an 'active' consisting of eight lines usually with an enclosed rhyme scheme, abba, and a 'sestet' made up of the remaining six lines with the rhyme scheme cde, cde, or cde, edc. After the eight line occurred a pause which was technically called 'caesura' followed by a turn in the thought called volta. (For more details, refer to notes on Toru Dutt's 'The Lotus')

Critical Appreciation

'Transformation and Other Poems' are included in Sri Aurobindo's 'Collected poems and plays, vol.II'. The titular piece Transformation is a mystical sonnet, where the poet speaks as an illuminated soul, about his experience becoming a changed being suffered with divine consciousness. The octave describes the process of the divine transformation. The poet's breathing becomes calm and controlled filling every part of his body with a divine charged with the divine presence. His entire system, branches into fine channels for the flowing in of the ecstasy emanating from the Absolute the full stop at the end of the eighth line marks the caesura.

The idea of transformation expressed in the octaves is fully developed in the sestet. It begins with a slight turn in the thought (volta) when the poet starts describing his transformed state. He is no longer a man of flesh and bone; he is transformed into god's happy tool. His cells are illuminated with the rapture and joy of the unknown and the supreme. He is an emancipated soul who can now experience a divine transformation; not only of the soul but also of the body.

Thus in fourteen tightly packed lines, Sri Aurobindo expresses the divine transformation of his entire state of realization. With the descent of the supramental, he becomes suffered with eternal effulgence. Step by step, the various levels such as Higher Mind, Illuminated Mind and Overmind are reached before the poet's self merges with Nitya Chaitanya. The poet has employed quantitative

meter in composing the sonnet the rhyme scheme in the octave is abba, abba, in the sestet it is cdc, ede.

Critics have poured lavish praise on this sonnet. M.K. Naik observes that the sonnet 'distils the essence of a mystic experience.' In Nirmalya Ghatak's opinion: The poet inspires our breast with his supernal rapture, widening of his consciousness, symphony of words and spontaneous stream of lyrical rhythm and harmony.' In order to illustrate the poet's vision he quotes the line:

"My soul unhorizoned widens to
measureless sight"

Which he says, 'may be called eternal in the world of poetry'.

The poem incorporates Sri Aurobindo's concept of Integral Yoga of which transformation is keyword. It is not for an individual but for the entire humanity. Integral Yoga implies the divine transformation of each person gradually culminating in universal divinisation. It can be achieved by the ascent of man from below in simultaneity with the perfection of mind, life and body with the psychic opening pushing them forward; similarly, involution supports the evolution of the supermind to attain the planes of Sachidananda concealed in the mystic folds of light. Thus the transformation described by Sri Aurobindo in it is the affirmation of life. It is an integrated process of transforming. Every part and plane of the being into its corresponding highest counterparts. The- transformation is to be achieved in the body, an aspect neglected by other systems of Yoga. The supramental light is to be felt in the very cells of the human body, which is to be consumed by the Light, so that along with the self, the body will remember God and tingle with divine consciousness. Then shall the supermind descend into the subconscious and inconscient layers or planes of, our nature and effect the change.

Thus the sonnet Transformation is a brilliant exposition' of the concept and realization of the supramental transformation in poignant lines of poetic utterance and grandeur. The poet seems to declare that if every person undergoes this transformation the world will be converted to the Heaven. The preponderance of the first personal pronouns (I, me) indicates the unique and exclusive nature of the poet's mystical experience. The poem has been criticised for bearing

no religious feelings. But the fact is that Sri Aurobindo's intention was far from that; he merely wanted to evoke a spiritual experience of his. To conclude with the opinion of K.D. Sethma, the poet outdoes the ancient Indian scriptures in his aspiration to suffuse and transform earth's life with the golden Immortal which the Rishis saw everywhere pressing for manifestation.

II. THOUGHT THE PARACLETE

Meanings and Explanatory notes:

Thought:-

In order to understand this poem, one should know what thought is, its source and origin and its function and role in means spiritual ascent. To quote Sri Aurobindo: 'Thought is not the giver to knowledge but the 'mediator' between the Inconscient and the Superconscient. It compels the world born from the Inconscient to reach for a Knowledge that itself exceeds thought. It calls for that superconscient knowledge and prepares the consciousness here to receive it. It rises itself into the higher realms and even in disappearing into the supramental and 'Ananda' levels is transformed into something that will bring down their powers into the silent self which its cessation leaves behind it.

Paraclete: derived from Greek 'paraketos'

the words means comforter, a person called in to aid, and advocate or the Holy Spirit. In this poem Thought is considered to be the meditator between the self and Absolute.

Lines 1-5

archangel: angel of highest rank.

plunged: steeped

dream-caught: a felicitous expression meaning visionary.

immensities: suggests boundlessness of eternity.

crests: top part of waves.

the long green crests of the seas of life denotes the material plane.

Life is believed to have originated from water.

Orange skies: colour associated with the supramental consciousness.

mystic mind: the higher mental level.

self-lost: the self liberated from the individual level.

vasts of God: boundless region of God consciousness.

The poet's thoughts invaded the limitless region of the supramental in a trance state just as the highest of angels steeped. In an intense vision of divinity files part the material plane and the superconscient one.

Line 6-15

Sleepless: always moving, refers to the nature of thought.

glimmering: shining

wings of wind: thought which flies as fast as birds.

gold red: 'Gold-red is the colour of the supramental in the physical.' Sri. Aurobindo

trod: walked across.

The feet that trod space and Time's mute vanishing ends: refers to the Holy Ghost, which is above the trammels and restraints of the world of time and space.

Line 6-8

Thought, like the sleepless, ever moving wind, seeks the footsteps the frontiers of Time and Space, who is the Transcendent, supracosmic Reality.

Lustered: bright and gleaming.

Pale blue: 'pale blue is the colour of the higher ranges of mind up to the intuition. Above it, it begins to become golden with the supramental Light'-Sri Aurobindo.

Hippogriff: a fabulous creature resembling a griffin (a fabled monster usually having the head and wings of an eagle and the body of a lion), but having the body and hind parts of a horse. It is also a winged horse whose father is a griffin and mother a filly. It is a symbol of love.

Pale blue lined refers to the mental plane

eremite derived 'from greek 'Eremios' means hermit, recluse especially one under a religious vow.

sole: Solitary, alone

daring: confronting, facing boldly.

bourneless: boundless, unfathomable

The face.... gleamed as seen above Time and Space.

Line 8-12

The face as seen above Time and Space resembling that of hippogriff, a symbol of love, gleamed as it soared towards the unfathomable vasts of the higher mental planes like a lonely hermit.

world-abyss: dark hollows of the earth.

failed below: disappeared.

As the face or timeless self gleamed, thought disappeared. Thought is only a mediator to take the self to the higher mental planes after which it just disappears.

Sun realms of supernal seeing: beautiful description of the ecstatic supramental consciousness.

pauseless bliss: never ending joy of the supramental state.

While the dark sea of worldly pleasures pulls the poet down, his yearning to reach the last beyond tries to draw him up-wards. Thought thus progress from mind to overmind through Higher Mind and Illumined Mind.

Line 16-21

Hungering: Spiritual yearning, intensely, wishing to ascend to the supramental state.

unconned: unknown, unravelled higher mental states.

the last Beyond: the ultimate destination of the self, namely, the supermind.

rapture-stunned: overwhelmed with the indescribable ecstasy of the supramental state.

ethers: refers to higher and higher mental planes.

flame word rune is 'the Word of the higher Inspiration, Intimation. Revelation which is the highest attainment of Thought'- Sri Aurobindo.

rune: a magical song or poem.

These self is left to merge with the supermind, freed from material desires to tread alone to the highest level. Thus thought helps step by step in the realization of the infinite self. Thought thus serves as a helpful agent or mediator to hasten the flight of the eager soul to its highest goal, namely attaining the supramental state.

Critical Appreciation

Thought the Paraclete, a poem of twenty two lines, 'depicts the mind as caught up into layer after layer of what is beyond, leaving behind in the consciousness here a superb calm unbounded by the brief and the finite, a sense of some ultimate self without personal confines;' (K.D. Sethna) that is, it describes the flight of the human mind towards consciousness which it ultimately attains of the four separate 'movements' in the poem, the first (comprising the opening five lines) describes limited human Thought invading the realms of the invisible and being 'self lost in the vasts of God'. Thought, the great winged wanderer, the paraclete soars high like some bright archangel in vision plunging itself in the boundlessness of eternity. It is presented here as the mediator which takes the poet's consciousness to the vast regions of God-consciousness, it flies past the crest of the seas of life, beyond the orange skies of the mystic mind. It crosses over the normal limitations of even the yogi mind and merges in the superconscious.

The second movement (comprising the next ten lines) follows Thought's progress from Mind to Higher Mind from Higher Mind to

Illumined Mind, from Illumined Mind to Intuition, and from intuition to Overmind. It transmits itself beyond the reaches of Time and Space, on the sleepless wild, crossing the bare summits of the material worlds which disappear, as it soars even higher. It passes through realms of supernal being. Oceans of unending bliss attract it towards them, with sweet, alluring voices. This it is inspired to transcend each mental plane and go on to the next.

The third movement (comprising the next six lines) describes Thought racing beyond Overmind and disappearing in the region of the supermind. It expands its horizons crossing power. Swept silences and overwhelmed with the indescribable ecstasy of the supramental state. As it climbs up the high ethereal plane, it gradually vanishes singing a magical song in a slow rhythm. The last line marks the concluding movement: the realization of the infinite self is now complete, the ego is dead, the self is bare of all the sheaths of the Ignorance- it is 'lone, limitless, nude, immune. -Thus the poem is a vision which seems to convey the idea that on the disappearance of thought, the great winged wanderer Paraclete, only the self remain.

"Thought the Paraclete" embodies a profound philosophical thought. It is a self delineation of Sri. Aurobindo as a 'Purna Yogi' whose 'Sadhana' and 'Thapasya' have reached their zenith. About the poem, the poet has written thus: 'As thought rises in the scale, it ceases to be intellectual becomes illuminated; then overmental and finally disappears, seeking the last Beyond. The poem does not express any philosophical thought however, it is simply a perception of a certain movement, as also an earthly calm. It reveals before the reader's mental vision starting worlds of thought.

The poem is a sustained description of a liberating vision or an ascent of consciousness. The Paraclete derives from a Greek word meaning advocate, intercessor implies a little of the Holy Spirit, and is used frequently in the sense of the comforter,' (The Oxford companion to English Literature) It has Christian associations too, reminding one of the Holy Ghost and the archangel Gabriel; the word appears in the New Testament, where. Christ employs it to refer to 'the holy. It is a mediator between the unconscious and the superconscious. It seizes and harmonises the two extremes namely physical and spiritual consciousness. It urges man to prepare himself

to receive superconscious knowledge; it thus leads the ready self to the highest planes of vision and glory. To quote Nirmalya Ghatak: 'The poem needs no other inner meaning, only we can say that the seer-poet's spirit like the Holy Spirit or the paraclete ascends on the wings of thought through different planes of consciousness to the domain of the supermind.'

The poem is lyrical in sound and rhythm and the spontaneous outpouring of a single experience, which is rather incommunicable. Sri Aurobindo commented: 'A mystic poem may explain itself, or a general idea may emerge from it, but it is the vision that is important or what one can get from it by intuitive feeling, not the explanation or idea. Thought the Paraclete is a vision or revelation of an ascent through spiritual planes, but gives no names and no photographic descriptions of the planes crossed.' The poetic expression is packed with symbols and visions straight from the spiritual planes, observes K.D. Sethna. 'The central idea of the poem, which is the transformation in the self brought about as a result of the ascent of consciousness to the supramental level is suggested by the imagery and the music rather than closely argued out in terms of logical reason' (K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar). In the poem, Sri Aurobindo transmits his yogic experiences to us in words charged with the very vision and vibration of the consciousness pervading those transcendental worlds. Along with apt imagery and symbols, lucid and accurate phrases, sound and sense devices and mystic use of colours help to suggest the vision of undeniable reality. K.R.S. Iyengar also notes that the poem is, in the first place, an attempt to naturalize the catullan hendecasyllables in English verse. In the second place, It is an attempt to project in terms of poetry the flight of Thought as it takes off from the normal intellectual plane to higher and even higher mental, and mystic levels, finally disappearing, bound for the ultimate. As we read the poem full of incantatory rhythm (resembling mantra), we are expected to proceed from light to light, from one luminous revelation to another and so on till we arrive at and are lost in the rich illimitable calm of the last line.

Nissim Ezekiel could not appreciate poetry of this kind, and hesitated over some lines in *Thought the paraclete* which describe the spiritual planes. Sri Aurobindo displays broad-mindedness in Ezekiel's objection acceding that these lines have not the vivid and

forceful precision of the opening and the close....' However the poem has won wide acclaim and recognition among critics and scholars. Sir Kumar Ghose remarks: 'It is the authentic poetry of the subjective self, experiences native to it, that Sri Aurobindo has offered'. It is a poem to be read with feeling and enjoyed aurally, visually and in a mystic fashion, rather than one meant to be analysed, dissected or criticised.

Model, Annotation

The face Lustured., pale blue lined of the hippogriff, Eremite, sole, daring the bourneless ways over world-bare summits of time-less being Gleamed.

Sri Aurobindo's mystical poems are not a projection of any abstract theory. On the contrary they are a sincere poetic rendering of the poet's exclusive spiritual experiences. *Thought the Paraclete* is a brilliant example. The central idea of the poem is the transformation in the self brought about as a result of the ascent of consciousness to the supramental level.

The given lines constitute the second movement of the poem. They describe Thought's progress from Mind to Higher Mind, to illumined Mind, to Intuition and to overmind in secession. its face as seen above. Time and Space resembling that of a hippogriff, a symbol of love, gleams as it soars towards the unfathomable vasts mental planes like a lonely hermit.

'Pale blue' is the colour of the higher ranges of mind up to intuition says Aurobindo; Hippogriff is a fabulous griffin like creature with a face resembling an angel's. Eremite means a hermit. To the ordinary reader the passage may not convey sufficient sense. Rather, they should be read as a 'mantra' using which the poet tries to convey an incommunicable mystic experience.

III. THE TIGER AND THE DEER

Meaning and explanatory notes

Line 1

Brilliant: refers to the bright appearance of the tiger. If hides the murderous instincts of the bright appearance of the tiger. If hides the W.B. Yeats' Easter 1916 "A terrible beauty is born."

Crouching: Lowering the body with the limbs together, as a preparation for pouncing on the prey.

Slouching: Standing or sitting in a lazy, tired way.

The three words convey the typical appearance and movement of the tiger.

green heart of the forest: amidst the dense growth of trees in the forest.

Line 2

Gleaming: glinting, shining with evil

The line is an accurate description of the ferocious tiger. Compare Blake's "The Tiger"

Line 3

wind: one of the elements of nature

pitiless splendour: a felicitous description of the sinister (terrible) beauty of the tiger.

The poet imagines that even the wind which is naturally powerful and free, is afraid of the tiger who is a picture of brilliance, splendour, sublimity; yet of murder and callousness.

Line 4

Crouched and crept.... The repetition with the words in reverse order serve to heighten the tension just before the tiger pounces on its prey,

Line 7

And it feel..... deep woodland

There is a touch of pathos and tenderness in this line.

Line 8

The contrast between "the mild harmless beauty" (deer) and "the strong beauty" (tiger) is extremely effective.

Line 9

But a day may yet come....

The note of prophecy is a common one. Evil does not remain successful. It will ultimately be vanished (defeated) by goodness.

Line 10

Mammoth: large animal now extinct, believed to be the ancestor of the elephant.

The line refers to the imminent end to centuries of imperial British rule in India and other Asian colonies.

Line 13

Just as evil be gets evil, the powerful enemy (tiger, the British) will bring about its own downfall.

Line 14

A beautiful instance of alliteration of the "s" sound.

Critical Appreciation

The *Tiger and the Deer* is one of the early lyrical poem composed by Sri Aurobindo in free quantitative verse. Through powerful language and imagery, the poet conjures up in our vision the cruel, sinister grandeur of the forest crouching, slouching, pouncing and slaying the delicate beauty of the woods. The glinting eyes, the powerful chest and the soft soundless paws of the tiger together convey an awesome aspect. Even the wind which is naturally powerful and free, is frightened of the tiger who is the picture of brilliance splendour, sublimity yet murder and of making the leaves rustle, it sneaks through them fearing that its voice and footsteps may disturb the pitiless splendour it hardly dared to breathe, says the poet.

But thoroughly unmindful of anyone or anything, the tiger keeps crouching and creeping preparing for a final fatal pounce upon

the unsuspecting, innocent deer which is drinking water from a pool in the cool, comforting shades of the forest. As the gentle creature falls and breathes his last, he remembers his mate left alone, defenceless in the dense forest. Such tender feelings are beyond the pale of the ferocious tiger. Thus the mild harmless beauty is destroyed by the strong crude beauty in Nature.

But the poet does not despair at the sight of such ferocity and cruelty. The last part of the poem ends on a note of optimism and prophecy. Sri Aurobindo says that a day may yet come when the tiger will no more crouch and creep in the dangerous heart of the forest, just like the mammoth being extinct, no more attacks the plains of Asia. He is clearly indicating the imperial British rule in India and other forest deer shall drink water in the woodland pool in perfect safety and contentment. The powerful ones will cause their own downfall; the victims of today shall outlive their victors. These lines carry a suggestion that terror will be replaced by beauty, and death by life.

The entire poem is a vivid painting in words of the strong tiger's cruel killing of a soft and weak deer, the dramatic pose and posture, all movements and even each footstep of the tiger are living to our eyes in the rhythmic expression" (Nirmalya Ghatak.) The two pictures-of brutality and vulnerability are effectively contrasted. The locality chosen to represent the two animal is significant: it is their natural habitat. The movement of the ferocious bear described with the apt words and phrases bears testimony to Sri Aurobindo's command of the English language as well as his keen imaginative observation of Nature and her creatures. He has seldom drawn such a terrestrial picture in words as in this highly realistic poem. The poem also illustrates his theory of quantitative verse, which is left to find out its own line by line rhythm and unity.

The Tiger and the Deer is a metaphysical lyric of great significance and may be classed with some of his mystical poems like "Thought the Paraclete". It projects the bright and burning terror of the forest, namely the tiger which inflicts unprovoked disaster and suffering to peace and innocence, that is the deer. The poem could be interpreted as a symbolic expression of the modern craze for power and domination over the underdogs and the downtrodden; of the pre-dominance of *tamasik* (evil) over *satwik* (good). Based on such and

interpretation, the prophecy contained in the last lines of the poem indicate the transformation of souls leading to the divinations of the entire earth.

Before becoming steeped in yoga and mysticism Sri Aurobindo had a short spell of political activities, through which he tries to free Mother India from the shackles of the mighty British. The given poem is a product of such zealous political patriotic ideas and feelings. The prophecy embodied in the last lines was only a common expression of the hopes and aspirations of every Indian patriot. To conclude with the words of K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, 'The Tiger and the Deer' written in free quantitative verse brilliantly projects the bright and burning terror of the forest and at the same time, it insinuates the splendid future possibility of terror being exceeded by peace; death by life, the poem may be compared to William Blake's "The Tiger".

Model Annotation

But a day may yet come when the tiger

crouches and leaps no more....

As the mammoth shakes no more the
plains of Asia.

Sri Aurobindo was predominantly a mystic poet, but wrote lyrics too, particularly in the early phase of his poetic career. The Tiger and the Deer is one of the early lyrical poems composed by him in quantitative verse through powerful language and imagery of the unprovoked killing of an innocent, defenceless deer drinking water at a woodland pool by a sinister tiger.

The given lines occur at the latter part of the poem. They bear a prophetic note. The poet prophesies that a day will certainly come when the wicked tiger will no more crouch and creep in the dangerous heart of the forest, just like the mammoth no more attacking the plains of Asia. The poet is clearly indicating the imminent end of centuries of imperial British rule in India and other Asian countries.

The mammoth is a huge animal, animal extinct, believed to be the ancestor of the elephant. The poem bears testimony to Sri Aurobindo's patriotism as well as foresight. Before becoming immersed in yoga and mysticism, he had a brief spell of political activi-

ties, when he tried to free Mother India from the shackles of the mighty British. The given lines are an echo of that period.

Some aspects of Sri Aurobindo's Poetry

(with special reference to the prescribed poems)

Sri Aurobindo was a prolific poet whose poetic outpourings are sincere expressions of his experiences which range from romantic to patriotic and to highly mystical ones. According to him, the highest function is to have an existence of its own, to embody beauty (intense impression) and give variegated features. Some of these are outlined in the following paragraphs:

Lyricism: Much of Sri Aurobindo's early poetry consists of lyrics and sonnets. He emphasizes the soul-experience and music in his lyric poems. In his view, 'the lyric is a moment of heightened soul-experience, sometimes brief in a lightness of aerial rapture, in a poignant ecstasy of pain, of joy or mingled emotion...' His pure lyrics are mainly sonnets or bold innovations with the sonnet form. 'Transformation' is a brilliant Petrarchan sonnet describing the divinisation of the entire earth through human transformation or elevation to a higher spiritual state. *The Tiger and the Deer* is a metaphysical lyric which may also be regarded as suffused with patriotic feelings. Sri Aurobindo's lyrics in general may be considered 'maximum luminosity in minimum harmonies' (Nirmalya Ghatak). His lyricism bears the influence of English romantic poets and the Decadents or Aesthetes. But as Guruprasad observes: Even as a lyric poet, Aurobindo's versatile Muse is characteristically meditative, spinning out difficult gems of mystical and philosophical poetry. Truly, without ignoring the past vedic culture, he always looks at all mankind with a view to divinising mankind. His lyrics are charged with sincere emotion and marked by felicity of expression and propriety of images.

Mysticism: Perhaps the most prominent feature of Sri Aurobindo's poetry, particularly of the later years, is its mystical and spiritual quality, he is a great mystic poet in the ancient Indian tradition of the vedas and the upanishads. He is not an esoteric scholar employing his poetry as a vehicle for communicating his pet ideas and theories of mysticism. On the other hand, well versed in ancient mystical thought of India, he himself had intense personal and practical experiences of the Divine. Naturally, his mysticism does not savour

of artificiality. Sri Aurobindo says, 'I am an obstinate mystic.' Most of his mystical poems are characterised by lofty language and rhythm and fervour, all of which emerge directly from the spirit. There is no hide-and-seek play between the earth-consciousness and the consciousness of other levels. In this respect he has affinity with the vedic seer-poets and in a great revelation of poetry of in most truth'. (N.Ghatak); yet he is new and original in his poetic afflatus. He is a mystic with his eye constantly looking forward to a golden age of the divinisation of the entire earth. His mystical poetry surpasses the vedic and upanishadic mantras; it embodies a modern logic of the infinite, suffused with unprecedented colour, fragrance, grandeur and splendour. *Thought the paraclete* and *Rose of God* are two fine examples of such 'mantric' poetry of Rishi Aurobindo. Complete comprehension is often impossible, since what the poet actually experiences cannot be satisfactorily conveyed through words. Yet the incantatory rhythm of the poems is too obvious to be missed: they help to carry the reader upwards. For maximum enjoyment, these poems are to be read aloud.

Sri Aurobindo is obsessed with the legend of the soul. Poem after poem, he indulges in the flight of the self to the supramental and the descent of the latter, which can ultimately culminate in universal divinisation. *Transformation* and *Trance of Waiting* are clear instances in point. As K.D. Sethna points out, in his mystical poems, Sri Aurobindo 'brings out living symbols from the mystical places-a concrete contact with the Divine presence. Like Dante and the ancient Indian sages, Aurobindo has tried to express in words experiences that are essentially ineffable. He has dared and mastered 'the impossible, for the word could be power, and the poetic word could charge logic itself with the incandescence of magic, and give to airy nothings of mystical experience the vividness and permanent significance of autonomous, poetry' (K.R.S. Iyengar). In short, the reader of Sri Aurobindo's mystical poetry is required to quieten himself in wards and outwards as far as possible and listen in absolute silence to the poet's super normal speech or read the poem aloud; by such means an inkling of the mystical heights scaled by the poet may be obtained.

Imagery and colour

Sri Aurobindo's mystical poems in particular are characterised

by imagery of word-pictures and also apt use of symbols which he employs in order to convey at least a little of his superconscious experiences. An image is a key to his poetic palace. To quote N. Ghatak: 'Sri Aurobindo's experience and realization are so profound, vast and all pervading that it would have been impossible for even a man of high sensibility to have his poetic touch if the poet had not used images. His images appear before us as wonders and marvels in letters and words. The image of the ferocious tiger contrasted with the meek deer is realistically drawn. It is an instance of Sri Aurobindo's modernity and his capacity to evolve and realistic images without the loss of sound effect.

In poems like *Thought the Paraclete* and *Rose of God*, Sri Aurobindo has expressed his mystical experiences which tie beyond our human perception in wonderful images and thus lead us to the Divine Empire of Light and Bliss, which still remains undiscovered to any mental being or man. This kind of visionary beauty is the main characteristic of his word pictures. *Rose of God* vibrates with the images of symphonic sounds of all the perfumes of Arabia, and of all the colours and shine of most valuable stones and oceans and skies and rainbows, and of all the power and knowledge and light and love of the infinite.' (N. Ghatak) *Thought the paraclete* presents a splash of colours from pale blue to gold red which goes with the various images like the hippogriff and eremite to convey the idea of the supramental. Thus colour and sound devices synchronise well with Sri Aurobindo's images.

Symbolism: Sri Aurobindo's use of symbolism in his poems is a fine blend of eastern and western thoughts. They derive mostly from his vedic scholarship and partly from the Bible. His symbols vary in intensity. His mystical and spiritual poetry is a record of the far reaching and deep visions of the seer poet. The symbolic mood is well adapted to poetry of cosmic vision such as *Thought the Paraclete* and *Rose of Gods*. The symbols employed in short lyrics like *The Tiger and the Deer* too are insight symbols. The poet has extracted his symbols from the vedas, mythology, and day to day modern world of science and technology. As Sri Aurobindo's poetic vision matures and becomes intense, his symbols too appear to gain in strength. This is particularly true of some of his mystic poems like *Thought the Paraclete*.

Poetic craftsmanship.

Sri Aurobindo's poetry is perfect synthesis of the inner and outer aspects; the form and matter. He was a fine craftsman who made use of various poetic forms, vivid symbols, concrete images, suggestive and picturesque diction as well as bold experiments with quantitative meter. He has utilized the lyric, sonnet, narrative form and the epic for conveying his various themes. *Savithri* is his immortal epic. He is the most prolific sonneteer in Indian English poetry, having one hundred and three sonnets to his credit. Most of them like *Transformation* are composed on spiritual and mystical themes.

Sri Aurobindo's experiments in prosody, especially in quantitative verse are significant. 'Quantity is the time taken by the voice to pronounce the vowel on which a syllable is supported.' in Greek prosody and whereas in English prosody, the same parameter namely quantity is assigned only a subordinate place; In English, stress pattern and intonation play a major role. Sri Aurobindo's quantitative system is based on the natural movement of the English tongue, the same in prose and poetry and not on any artificial theory. For instance in the *Tiger and the Deer*, he employs free quantitative verse, which is left to find out its own line by line rhythm and unity. Likewise *Trance of Waiting* is a bold experiment in the same measure. Regarding the poet's contribution to quantitative verse, K.D. Sethna observes: 'Sri Aurobindo has succeeded in making his conception of true English quantity and his vision of the hexameter as a force for the future because classical and English'.

Sri Aurobindo's mastery of the English language is superb, immaculate and impeccable (flawless). His diction is very suggestive, expressive even picturesque. He uses words drawn from diverse sources. Many of the poetic words like 'soul' 'self' 'trance', etc. have a modern technical connotation rather than an ambiguous luminosity. His style is highly flexible ranging from the neoclassical, Romantic, symbolic, modern narrative or dramatic, depending on the theme, mood and situation. Moreover he often uses sounds to convey sense. *The Tiger and the Deer* furnishes us with examples, where he uses apt words to suggest the stealthy sinister movement of the tiger.

Poet Aurobindo: An Overall Estimate

The poetic genius of Sri Aurobindo is too deep for adequate description. Besides being a thinker, a political activist (temporarily), seer, visionary and mystic, he is a true poet. He was a prolific writer; a great epic poet as well as a good lyric and narrative poet. He is often compared to classical poets like Homer, Virgil, Dante and Milton. He far surpasses other mystic poets like G.M. Hopkins in intensity of vision and exuberance of expression. His poetry has been criticised by several critics and reviewers on various scores like lack of adaptation to music and melody, obscurity, and so on. But most of the charges stem from a fundamentally wrong approach to this great poet. Sri Aurobindo is a yogi, a seer and a mystic in the first place, he is also a very great poet but in the second place. If Aurobindo the mystic is not understood, then Aurobindo the poet, in all his variety and complexity, too cannot be understood.

Summarising the accomplishment of Sri Aurobindo as a poet, Jesse Roarkee comments: 'Sri Aurobindo is one of our greatest poets, even in his lesser work. His lyrical gift, his endowment and wealth of the song that is the foundation of all poetry is rich and subtle and inspired with an unfailing, effortless pregnant power. 'Indeed in all that he composed, be it prose or drama too, there was a wealth of rich poetry with a profound ordering vision behind. He enjoys the honour of being the only Indo Anglian poet to have written epics. His achievement as a patriotic poet is as creditable as a romantic poet. Without exaggeration, it may be said that Sri Aurobindo has led his readers to a new, bold and beautiful world through his poems which may be aptly called 'the mantra of the real'.

Refusing various charges levelled against the rishi-poet, K.D. Sethna, a staunch admirer remarks: 'if there is no true poetry in this rishi, where shall we get it? Indeed Sri Aurobindo is a great poet, poet's poet, a poet of the present and future poet of men, of nature and of divine together. Commenting on Sri Aurobindo as a lyrical poet, Dr. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar observes: 'Sri Aurobindo's range is of the widest and covers a period of sixty years... there is no question regarding the variety, richness and cumulative in oppressiveness of the achievement; In range and scope, profound scholarship, classical temper, variety of forms, sublimity, intellectuality, mystical quality, fu-

sion of poetry and philosophy, artistry of creative imagination, and general poetic talent and skill, in lyrical genius, in the art of narration in epic grandeur and handling of spiritual images, Sri Aurobindo is 'the colossus of Indo Anglian poetry' (K.R.S. Iyengar)

While some critics assign a high place to Sri Aurobindo as a philosopher, they do not accord due justice to his claim as a poet. They summarily reject his mystical lines, even condemn it as vague, imprecise 'soul stuff' or 'spiritual propaganda'. As pointed out earlier such charges are baseless and stem from incompetence and inability to raise to his great genius, "poetry is fundamental for Sri Aurobindo and then he is a patriot and Yogi and Rishi". (Nirmalya Ghatak)

To sum up, Sri Aurobindo will ever be remembered as one of the greatest mystic poets of all ages. He is the true creator of a new type of poetry which may be described as 'mantric poetry'. His poetry is not for all and sundry, but is meant for those sympathetic readers who are willing to expose themselves with faith to the master spirit and pursue him in his spiritual and mystical journeys to higher unknown levels and planes of consciousness. His poetry can be enjoyed more by reading and experiencing the colours and sounds with which it is suffused, rather than by interpretation, analysis and dissection. He has been called the Milton of India. Sri Aurobindo the seer and mystic poet shall ever remain in the hearts of those who can understand him, for his stimulating and elevating influence, his sweep of imagination, his lucid, fluent expression, his command over the English language and his mastery of poetic craftsmanship.

Topics for Essay

1. Aurobindo as a mystic poet.
2. Sri Aurobindo's poetic achievements.
3. 'Transformation' as a sonnet
4. *Rose of God* 'as an example of poetry of prayer and vision, a variation on the sacred Name'.
5. Lyricism, imagery and symbolism in *The Tiger and the Deer*.
6. Thematic similarity of *Transformation* and *Trance of Waiting*.
7. *Thought the Paraclete* - an appreciation
8. The mantric poetry of Sri Aurobindo.

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3. Sri Aurobindo: The poet and Thinker	Nirmalya Ghatak.
4. Sri Aurobindo	Sisir Kumar Mitra.
5. The poetic Genius of Sri Aurobindo	K.D. Sethna
6. Indo Anglian Poetry	A.N. Dwivedi.
7. A History of Indian-English Literature	M.K. Naik
8. The Life Divine	Sri Aurobindo.
9. Letters on Poetry, Literature and Art	Sri Aurobindo

Rabindranath Tagore

Introduction to Tagore

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) one of the great writers of the century and indisputably the most towering figure in modern Bengali literature achieved world renown when he was awarded the Nobel prize for literature in 1913 for the English 'Gitanjali'. His global reputation as a poet, playwright, novelist and thinker, educationist and prophet has been facilitated by the excellent English translations of his work done either by himself or by others. He was a multi-faceted personality and a significant contributor to Indian Literature.

Tagore was born in Calcutta on 6 May 1861. His grandfather Prince Dwarakanath Tagore and his father Debendranath Tagore were great thinkers, highly educated and cultured aristocrats. Tagore's birth coincided with the dawn of Indian Renaissance and its three movements -religious, literary and national- influenced his personality and found superb expression in his creations. Though he was denied formal schooling and academic grind, yet he awoke keenly to Nature and life around him. He exposed himself responsibility to the twin worlds of the English Romantic poets and Indian devotional poetry in general. Tagore led a rich life experiencing both joys and sorrows of human life. He lost his mother early in life. He was married to Mrinalini Devi in 1883 and they had three children. He suffered many bereavements in life including that of his wife and his daughter which induced a mood of renunciation in him. He was a tireless worker. He played an active part in the freedom struggle. He established Santhi Nikethan and Viswabharathi. After a long life he passed away in 1941 just a year before the historical Quit India movement.

His Work

As mentioned earlier, Tagore was a versatile personality and profile writer. He was a dramatist, story writer, actor, musician and director besides being a poet. Some of his well known poetical work mostly English translation of works originally written in Bengali are The Crescent Moon, The Gardener, Fruit Gathering and Lover's Gift, besides Gitanjali.

I BREEZY APRIL

The poem 'Breezy April' is prescribed for detailed study.

Notes and explanations.

vagrant	:	gypsy like, leading a wandering life; hence free and uncontrolled.
swing of music	:	the sound of wind blowing is like the sound of swinging. Note the metaphor.
Thrill	:	excite, agitate, stimulate
enchantment	:	magic spell or charm
startling	:	awakening suddenly.
slumber	:	sleep.
wilful	:	obstinate; determined to have one's own way.
fantastic	:	strange and wild; wonderful.
courting	:	trying to win the affections of
lonesome shadows	:	caused by the branches of the tree.
fitful fancies	:	restless feelings, agitation.
Leafy language	:	rustling of the leaves (note the alliteration)
flitting of footsteps	:	moving lightly and quickly.
tumult	:	confused and excited state of mind.

Critical Appreciation of 'Breezy April'

'Breezy April' is one of the lesser known poems of Rabindranath Tagore, written during the mature phase of his poetic career. In this short lyric the poet visualizes himself as a tree and the Breeze in April as a magician and lover. The poem is highly sensuous, lyrical and even passionate. It is a fine illustration of Tagore's exquisite love poetry.

The poet (as a tree) address the Breeze blowing in the month of April as 'Vagrant', suggesting that the breeze is free and uncon-

trolled and leads a nomadic life like a gypsy. He asks it to rock him in its swing of music. The sound of wind blowing seems to the poet as though the wind were swinging; the tree swaying in the breeze to thrill or excite its branches with a magic charm or spell. The very touch of the breeze brings sweet surprises of delight and rapture to the tree.

In the second stanza, the tree says that in this life dream by the way side the breeze is in a strange and wild mood, obstinate and determined to have his way. He courts and teases the tree and shows himself to be inconstant. When the wind is still, the tree remains motionless when the breeze starts blowing the tree starts swinging depending on the intensity and direction of the wind. This ordinary idea is presented poetically here.

Once again the tree addresses the fragrant breeze of April and remarks that living with its lonely shadows, it knows all the fitful fancies or mental agitation, the leafy language and the flitting footsteps of the breeze. Here too as in the previous paragraph we have a poetic recreation of ordinary facts of science. The thick shadow of the branches of the tree create an atmosphere of solitude or loneliness around it. When the wind blows by fits and starts, sometimes fast, sometimes slowly, now in one direction, now in another, it appears to the poet as the agitated state of the breeze. The rustling sound made by the leaves as the breeze blows against the branches is spoken of by Tagore as the language of the leaves. The gentle, light movement of the breeze seems to him as flitting footsteps.

In the final stanza, the tree describes the effect of the breeze on it. All its branches break into blossom at the passing breath and whisper of the breeze; all its leaves break into a tumult of surrender at the wind's kisses. Wind is one of the agents of dispersion of seeds and shedding of old leaves, giving place for new ones. All this leads to pollination and fertilization; in other words, wind helps the tree to bear flowers and fruits. This simple scientific idea has been poetically rendered in the poem.

'Breezy April' is a two dimensional poem. One on hand it is a poetic recreation of scientific facts as outlined in the above paragraphs. On a deeper level it is a highly sensuous, very passionate lyric describing the meeting and mating of two lovers. Considered from that angle the tree becomes the feminine symbol; the bearer of fruit and

the Breeze the masculine symbol; the agent of dispersal of seed. This imagery is maintained throughout the poem. The poet (as ladylove) asks her beloved to rock her in his swinging embrace and cause her passions. Every touch of the lover has in store, great thrill or pleasant surprises for her.

The second stanza conveys the picture of the lady lying asleep all alone. She is suddenly awakened by her lover who is in a strangely stubborn mood determined to make love to her. The lady is not averse to his advances. He courts her and teases her and is capricious. The lady knows all the moods and states of mind of her lover. Having lived with him she can feel his pulse. Thus she observes (in the third stanza) that she knows all his changing moods, fits of passion and sudden desires. The rustling of the leaves is the lover's murmur to his sweetheart. She can even hear it when he treads lightly and slowly towards her.

The last stanza celebrates the happy effect of conjugal love. The lady blossoms out on hearing the sweet passionate words of her lover. She experiences great ecstasy when he smothers her with his ardent kisses. Thus by surrendering herself to her lover she attains fulfilment.

The poem is highly romantic in conception and Tagore has employed two important symbols in the poem. One is the breeze and the other is the tree. The breeze is symbolic of man's free uncontrolled, universal nature, capable of keeping life on. It is reminiscent of Shelley's "West Wind". Which is both a Preserver and Destroyer. Tagore visualizes the April breeze more as a preserver. The tree symbolizes the liberating role of the vegetative principle. It also stands for the Indian woman who comes forward with courage and self-confidence shedding her diffidence and shyness without ceasing to be feminine. Tagore has eulogized the Tree in other poems like 'Vriksha Vandana' (Homage to the Tree) 'Vriksharopan', (Tree planting) both taken from his Banabani ('Voice of the Forest').

Tagore was a lover of nature, not merely sensuously but spiritually. He approached nature with blended feelings of affection, gratitude and reverence. Individual phenomena of nature are described, eulogized and brought into a tender relationship with humanity. His love of trees, of nature and its elements can be related to his love of

the mother land, her environment and natural resources. The poet appears to be conveying the message that trees are to be preserved to the well-being of nature.

The poem has technical beauties too. It is written in four quatrains without a proper rhyme scheme. The lines are octosyllabic and have a rocking rhythm, a pendular swing so that we do not miss the rhymes. The diction is simple but enriched by alliterative expressions like 'sweet surprises', 'fitful fancies' 'leafy language' and so on. These felicitous expressions add to the musical quality of the poem. The first line of the poem 'Breezy April, Vagrant April' is repeated in the third stanza. This refrain helps to strengthen the bond between the two symbols -wind and tree- and also enhance the lyrical quality of the poem. The poem is typical of Tagore's nature love poetry, which is sensuous and soothing without being vulgar or banal. The lasting impression of the poem is one of pleasant tenderness and serene joy.

Tagore As A Poet

Rabindranath Tagore is a poet par excellence. He remarked "I am a poet and nothing else". The poetic spirit, of the essence of the Muse seems to have embodied itself in his personality. His poetry is the epitome of Indian culture and has been accorded international recognition. It is his English transcreations that helped him to be acclaimed as 'world poet'. Ezra Pound, W.B. Yeats, Stopford Brooke, and Nirad C Choudhari are among those influential critics who thought highly of Tagore's poetical works. The outstanding features of his poetry are given below:-

1. Lyricism

Tagore is primarily and pre-eminently a lyric poet, like Robert Burns. He has innumerable lyrics to his credit. In fact the Gitanjali which fetched him the much coveted Nobel Prize itself is a lyrical outpouring. The main quality of his lyrics is their song like quality. They are meditative and reflective and are remarkable for their spiritual or mystical character. Edward Thompson observes that 'Tagore is.. essentially a lyricist...' He is comparable to Sarojini Naidu in the music and tuned his lyrics culminating in 'Rabindra Sangeet'. However Tagore's English lyrics are mainly prose-poem in which the poet

uses musical language and incantatory rhythm. Breezy April contains all the salient features of Tagore's lyrical poetry.

2. Tagore as a poet of love

As a love-poet, Tagore is second to none. His love poems are remarkable for the intensity of feeling and charm of from Dr. A.N. Durvedi observes: Tagore's treatment of love in his poetry follows the method of Vaishnav poets. In Vaishnav poetry, the human becomes godly and celestial descends to earth'. Love according to Tagore's belief gives us immortality and youth; it is ever deathless and changeless. He presents the Romantic aspect of love. It is sensuous, passionate, tender and nourishing; never vulgar or banal. Breezy April can be interrupted as a sensuous poem. Tagore resembles Sarojini Naidu as a love-poet. He is also influenced by Keats and Shelly.

3. Diction, Style and Imagery

Tagore often uses highly suggestive imagery to reveal the intensity of 'love', as for instance in 'Breezy April'. His images are mostly sought from the world of nature. But ordinary conventional images and symbols become transmuted at his magical touch. Some of his images remind us of the Romantic poets. Gitanjali for instance abounds in poetic similes, romantic metaphors and suggestive and picturesque symbols. He succeeds in using these images to make abstract ideas concrete-a modern device. The Child or Sisuthirtha furnishes us with ample evidence.

Tagore exercised great care in choosing words for his verse. His preference was for highly suggestive, melodious and expressive words from a large fund of vocabulary. S.K. Chatterji has rightly described him a 'Vak pathi', the master of words. His poetry displays unique felicity of diction arising from the judicious use of appropriate and melodious words to convey his sentiments and moods. The relation between thought and expression is so carefully executed that substituting a single word can hamper the harmony of the piece. He also shows, like Sarojini Naidu, a preference for an ornate, rich, musical, and symbolical style.

4. Tagore as a poet of Nature

Like Wordsworth, Tagore was a high priest of nature. His attitude to nature is romantic. Like Keats and Shelly and Mrs. Naidu, he passionately loves the objects of nature and describes them picturesquely and sensuously. Yet he does not stop at that. Like Wordsworth, he too senses a transquillising power in Nature. He believes that God and Nature are one and the same entity. His love of Nature is often coupled with his concern for humanity, as in 'Breezy April' and 'The Child'.

5. Tagore As a Lover of Beauty

It is little wonder that a great poet like Tagore was a devotee of beauty too. As a poet, he sought beauty and happiness through beauty in life. He tirelessly pursued the ideal of beauty and Beauty was to him also Love, Truth, Goodness and Power. In this matter he derived inspiration from Keats. Yet one has to remember that Tagore was not only a votary of the beautiful, but also of the true and the good. His concept of beauty therefore is Platonic.

Miscellaneous features

Tagore was basically a mystic-romantic poet like William Blake, Wordsworth, Shelly and Keats. Tagore's magnum opus 'Gitanjali' is a superb blend of mysticism and romanticism. His lyrical outpourings are suffused with his love and concern for suffering humanity. They are universal in their appeal, revealing emotions and sentiments applicable to all times and climates. He boldly experimented with verse forms; he adroitly exploited 'prose-poetry' or free verse in his translations, 'The Child' for instance. His tenor is essentially meditative and lyrical. His imagery is forged in the smithy of Indian philosophy and spiritualism.

Tagore will ever remain as one of the supreme lyric poets of the world. Sincerity of feeling and vividness of imagery combine with the moving music of his verse. Though essentially a lyric poet, he succeeds in giving a rich dramatic quality to many of his poems. Like Shakespeare, Goethe and Kalidasa, whatever Tagore touches is elevated to a loftier plane of universal significance. In spite of the adverse comments of his detractors, Tagore has secured for himself a national and international status. As Prof. Durvedi observes: "His po-

etry is born out of an amalgam of the rich classical heritage of ancient India, the spacious ways of the Mughul Court, the simple varieties of the life of the people of Bengal and the restless energy and intellectual vigour of modern Europe". It is this combination of many diverse strands and themes that lend a certain resilience to his poetry. To conclude, Tagore will ever be remembered as one of the greatest world poets of all times.

Annotation (Model)

1. I know all your fitful fancies Leafy language, fitting footsteps.

Rabindranath Tagore is a poet par excellence. He is primarily and pre-eminently a lyric poet like Robert Burns. Lyricism, romanticism, rich ornate diction, tilting rhythm and effective use of symbols and imagery are some of the salient features of this poetic art. "Breezy April" is one of the less known poems of Tagore, written during the mature phase of his poetic career. In this short, sensuous lyric, the poet visualizes himself as a tree and the April breeze as a magician and charming lover.

In the third stanza the poet addresses the breezy April, as vagrant April and says that living with its lonely shadows, it (the tree) knows all the fitful fancies or mental agitation, the leafy language or the rustling of the leaves and the fitting footsteps or the light, quick movements of the breeze. Here we have a poetic recreation of ordinary facts of science. On a deeper level the poem is a highly sensuous one describing the meeting and mating of lovers.

The lines reveal Tagore as a consummate artist. The alliterative expressions 'fitful fancies' 'leafy language' and 'flitting footsteps' are felicitous and enhance the musical quality of the passage. Using a pleasant conceit he conveys the idea that the rustling of the leaves is the lover's words to his sweetheart. The tree symbolizes the liberating role of the vegetative principle. It also stands for the Indian woman who comes forward with courage and self confidence, shedding her diffidence and shyness; yet without ceasing to be feminine.

THE CHILD

The prescribed extract of the 'The Child' is for non-detailed study. Notes and explanations:-

first flush of dawn	: the initial of the red colour at day break
glisters	: shines
King stars	: refers to the visit of the Magi to Bethlehem to see the birth of infant Christ.
Spring, stream of water	: Symbols of life.
Hush	: silence.
portal	: doorway.
primeval	: very ancient, suggestive of pagans or heathens.
Man of faith	: The Messiah or the Saviour.

Critical Appreciation of 'The Child'

'The Child' belongs to the last Phase of poems composed by Rabindranath Tagore. It is the only long poem Tagore wrote in the first instance in English and later rendered into Bengali as 'Sishuthirtha'. It was originally published in 1931. He composed it under special circumstances. In July 1930 Tagore left for Germany and visited among other places Oberammergau and witnessed there the 'Passion Play' performed by the local villagers once in every ten years in fulfillment of an old vow. At the time the Lahore Congress Declaration for complete independence and Gandhiji's Dandi Salt Satyagraha lingered in the poet's subconscious mind. Gandhi's march and Christ's passion coalesced in his imagination, and when a German film company asked for a script bearing on Indian life, Tagore composed 'The Child' in "a fury of creative energy in the course of a single night" as Prof. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar points out. It is an impressionistic description of the journey of men and women of all kinds in the hypothetical Shrine of Fulfillment.

The poem is in ten sections, and the action pauses and heaves like the gigantic waves of the sea. A brief synopsis would be:-

I. The evocation of Night-a nightmarish vision of all mangled yesterdays culminating in the present inferno.

II. The vision of the Man of Faith on the hill amid the snow-white silence.

III. The day dawns and Man of Faith gives the call for the Pilgrimage.

IV. The pilgrims gather from all quarters.

V. The Man of Faith leads, the others follow; the days pass and the journey seems endless.

VI. Another Night: one of the pilgrims kills the Man of Faith as a False Prophet who has deceived them all.

VI. When the night ends, and they see their Victim again, they decide to continue their journey.

VIII. Led invisibly by their dead leader, they march on even during the night.

IX. They 'pass through obscure villages and' reach a hut in a palm grove near a river, and the poet of the unknown shore sings 'Mother, open the gates'.

X. It is the sunrise of Victory when the door opens and the pilgrims, see the mother with the child on her lap and all cry, 'Victory to Man, the new born, the ever lasting'.

'The Child' is a conventional allegory in which men from the valley of life, the banks of the Ganges, from Tibet and the 'dense dark tangle of savage wilderness' all assemble in one place. The Man of Faith leads these toiling and suffering multitudes on a long and arduous pilgrimage. The trials and tribulations are unendurable to everyone except the Man of Faith. He is denounced by his erstwhile followers as a false Messenger and is killed during the night by his own faithless and impatient followers. They are later shocked by what they have done and repent; this is reminiscent of Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" where the mariner kills the albatross as a bird of ill-omen and later repents his hasty action. The spirit of their slain leader leads them on during the night

The prescribed extract starts at this juncture. When the first flush of dawn shines on the dew-dripping leaves in the forest the man who read the skies announced that they had arrived. They stopped

and looked around. On both sides of the road were fields of ripe corn an obvious sign of prosperity and fertility. The current of daily life moved slowly between the village near the hill and the one by the river bank. The potter's wheel turned; the woodcutter brought firewood to the market to sell; the cowherds took their cows to graze in the pasture and the women with the pitcher on her head walked to the well.

But the pilgrims were not impressed or interested in those daily' routine sights. They looked for the king's cattle, the gold mine, the secret book of magic and the sage who knew love's utter wisdom. The reader of the skies assured them that the stars could not be wrong; for their signal pointed to that spot. And reverently, he walked to a wayside spring from which water rose up, a clear liquid like the morning, into a chorus of tears and laughter. Near it there stood a leaf thatched hut surrounded by a strange quiet in a palmgrove.

At the doorway of the hut, the poet of the unknown shore' sat and sang, 'Mother, open the gates'. Upon that ray of sunlight struck slantingly at the door and the assembled crowd felt the ancient chant of creation in their blood and they repeated the words. Thereupon the door opened; they saw a most glorious sight. The mother was seated on a straw bed with the baby (Infant Christ) on her lap, 'like the dawn with-the morning star'. The sun's ray which was waiting outside fell on the head of the child. The poet struck his lute and sang aloud: Victory to Man, the new-born, the ever living. Hearing his cry all the pilgrims including the king and the beggar, the saint and sinner, the wise and the fool joined him in chorus in hailing the Divine Infant. The poem ends on a significant note with the old man from the East murmuring to himself I have seen!

S.B. Mukherji, the author of a critical feature on Tagore has said that 'Sisuthirtha' or The Child is a Dantesque poem in spirit and vision. Here also is the story of Hell, Purgatory and Paradise, a story of Redemption through suffering, knowledge and purification. The poem opens with a buried image of the present civilization; reminiscent of Dante's Limbo and Eliot's Waste Land a civilization aimless, meaningless, lost in rats alley shrouded in impenetrable darkness. The sage who waits high on the mountain range is the symbol of Man the eternal, seeking for light eternal. He knows love's utter wisdom and comes down with his message of hope and courage, and leads

derelict humanity to a great journey towards distant goal of fulfilment. The journey becomes dreary, arduous. Ignorant armies clash at night in savage fury; they murder their master.

The Master is Saviour Christ and Mahatma, the Father of the Indian Nation, Gandhiji. The Man of Faith is the martyred Messiah. In visualizing the martyrdom of the Man of Faith in the Child, Tagore probably had prophetic vision of Mahatma Gandhi's assassination at the hands of Nathuram Godse some seventeen years later. Humanity is lost in darkness again but the march continuous. A sage of the East, perhaps one of three Magi is the torch bearer now; his message is love, courage, fortitude. When daylight comes the pilgrims gaze at their dead leader and the consciousness of their crime holds them together. They move from the darkness of ignorance towards the light of knowledge. Light dawns at last. Earth reveals its joyous abundance, its peace and serenity and the multitude eventually witness the Infant Christ on Mary's lap in a leaf-fringed cottage. It is to Tagore's credit that he has blended the images of Gandhi and Christ; East and West in the poem. For the light of Redemption in the Westland the poet of the modern West had turn to the East to the gospel of the ancient Upanishads: Datta Dayadwam Damyata ((give, sympathize, control). The poet of the modern East clings; to no moral doctrine for that light of Redemption but wings his way to a vast historical vision, the vision of an unvanquished humanist. As S B Mukherji observes: curiously Tagore conjures up the celebrated Christian image of The Holy Mother and Child but recreates it with humanistic covertness; the Redemption of Man in Tagore's Waste Land lies in Man through Man -Man the eternally reborn.

The Child is a poem of sublime vision. Its background is eternity. It vindicates Tagore's ultimate faith in humanity and evinces the influence of Christ. Tagore blends in the poem Hindu imagination and Biblical inspiration. The leader in the poem was probably modelled on the Mahatma. The poet has described the sorrows, the frustration the sordidness and aimlessness of life in a realistic and picturesque manner. The imagery and symbolism do not have the delicacy and visionary quality of lyrics in Gitanjali. They are realistic as M.K. Naik observes, the crude symbolism, garish color and general wordiness of The Child stands in sharp contrast with the subtler effects of Gitanjali.

Tagore has employed free verse in the poem. It has a rich cadence and easy rhythm. Alliterative expressions abound as for example, (dew dripping) leaves, morning melting into a chorus etc. The poem is reminiscent of T.S. Eliot's journey of the Magi. Tagore's intense humanism runs through out the poem. Commenting on its poetic beauty and significance Dr. K.R.S. Iyengar writes: There is something of Ibsen's Brand something too of Maeterlinck's *Les Aveugles* (The Sightless) and perhaps something also of Holderlin's *Der Tod des Empedokles* (The death of Empedocles) in Tagore's tremendous avocation of humanity caught in the Night, striving to transcend its burden of frustration and failure, breaking in the process yet refusing to accept the defeat as final; preserving with the quest still striving still hoping that man holds in himself the key to his own redemption that one day, the new-born, the divine child, will annul the burden of ages and once and for all the dichotomy between the desire and the spasm, the impulse and the act, the leap forward and the fulfilment".

The child concept assumes great significance in the case of Tagore. He not only loved children but believed them and looked upon them with respect. Hence he has chosen the title "The Child" or "Sisuthirtha" Infant Christ, a Divine child, is the symbol of goodness, compassion and peace. In fact, to Tagore, the child was an epitome of all the divine virtues one can think of.

The allegory of Sisuthirtha clearly implies that man can be saved or perfected only from within and not by an external Saviour. Each one should strive to accelerate the evolution of his soul; train to view things using his third eye and open the gate of true knowledge. Messiahs and Saviours can only show the way but the cruel world does not spare them. Step by step, man will purify himself and reach the state to perfect innocence and purify as a child. It is then that his Supramind will be activated into comprehending the real meaning of existence-that will be the end of his quest, the long journey.

SAROJINI NAIDU

Introduction to Sarojini Naidu (1870-1950)

One of the most illustrious of India's daughters, Sarojini Naidu very well served the cause of Indo- Anglian poetry during the dawn of her career. She was born in a highly cultured and an illustrious Bengali Brahmin family of Hyderabad on 13th February, 1879, as the eldest daughter of Dr. Aghornath Chattopadhyaya and Varada Sundari. While her father was a brilliant scientist, as well as a poet in Urdu and Bengali Sarojini indeed was fortunate enough to have such gifted parents. In Hyderabad, she was brought up amid the best of Hindu and Muslim cultures. She also acquired wide knowledge of Urdu and Persian besides English and Bengali.

Like Toru Dutt she started writing verse at an early age, displaying signs of charm and virtuosity. In September 1895 after she had passed her matriculation, Sarojini was sent to England where at King's college, London and Citron, Cambridge, she frequented literary circles of poets and critics such as Arthur Symonds, Edmund Gosse, and the Rhymer's Club. While Symonds inspired her to write moving English verse, Gosse heart of India, Sarojini accepted the advice, and began composing poems with an exclusively Indian background.

Sarojini returned to India in September in September 1898 without earning any degree. The year she married the man of her hearts' longing Dr. Govindarajulu Naidu, a widower and settled down happily in Hyderabad. The Nidus had four children. Sarojini has been described as 'an ideal wife' an ideal mother'. She found time to write poetry amidst the household chores and domestic responsibilities.

Despite her innate longing for the 'Repute of song', Sarojini was being irrevocably drawn into the social and political life of the country. Mahatma, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Jawaharlal Nehru, Tagore and others influenced her politically. Gradually her poetic sensibility underwent a change. It is to her credit that she could play the roles of a good wife and mother without ceasing to be a public worker and a poet. Her poetic urge became more intense with the awakening of womanhood following her happy marriage. The most productive period of her poetic career spans the year of their marriage to Dr. Naidu

in 1898 to 1914, the fateful year when she met Mahatma Gandhi in London and came under his spell from the day on wards, as though it were a coincidence, she almost ceased to be a poet and during the next thirty five years of her life she plunged into political activity making inspiring speeches, leading Satyagraha movements, upholding women's rights and fighting for India's freedom. The poet in her was smothered, and the singer silenced but not before Mahatma Gandhi had given her the title. 'The Nightingale of India'. On march 2, 1949, this 'Bharat Kokila' left her mortal frame, plunging the entire nation in grief.

Sarojini Naidu's poetical works

Very early in life her passion for beauty stirred her poetically. The craving for beauty - the eternal beauty - overwhelmed the poet and marvellous songs flowed from her pen. She has four collection of poetry to her credit.

1) The Golden Threshold

This was the first blossom of sarojini naidu's poetic genius and it appeared in 1905. On its appearance it took the English speaking world by storm, and turned out to be a best seller. It is divided into three sections: (1) Folk songs (2) Songs of music and (3) poems. The popular poems 'Indian weaves', 'Coromandel fisher's' and 'Palanquin Bearers' are included in this anthology.

ii) The Bird of Time

Sarojini Naidu's second book of poems appeared in 1912 under the title. 'The Bird of time'. Sir Edmund Gosse who wrote the Introduction observed that sarojini was in all things and to the fullest extent autochthonous. She springs from the very soil of India, her spirit although it employs the English Language as its vehicle has no other tie with the west. The title of the Bird of times is derived from Omar Khayyam's immortal lines. The Bird of Time has but a little, way to fly and lo! the bird is on the wing. It is indeed suggestive and meaning

The reception of the book was warm and it is called forth as spontaneous and vociferous appreciation as the previous volume. The Bird of Time' is divided into four sections.

1. Songs of love and Death, 2. Songs of the springtime, 3. Indian folk - songs of life.

(iii) The Broken Wing (1917).

This is the third volume of poems Sarojini Naidu published in 1917. It was dedicated to the Dreams of Today and the Hope and the Hope of tomorrow. These words are quite in keeping with Sarojini's style of poetry. She had been a singer of songs and a songs and a song- bird in every vein of her being, When she disclosed the title to Gokhale he simply asked her, Why should a song- bird like you have a broken wing? And the answer that followed was:

Behold! I rise to meet wing was possibly broken. The deaths of her dear father and Gokhale in 1915 had left her sad and depressed; and the first World War and India's freedom struggle only added to her low spirits. Qualitatively, 'The Broken Wing' is better than 'The Bird of Time'. There is more maturity and warmth of feeling, the depth and not the tumult of the soul in the collection. The poems in The Broken wing are grouped in four sections.

1. Songs of life and Death, 2, The Flowering Year, 3. The peacock Lute. 4. The Temple

(iv) The Feather of the Dawn (1978)

'The Feather of The Dawn' is the fourth collection of poems composed by sarojini Naidu. It was her daughter Padmaja Naidu who collected and edited all the rest of her mother's poems in this slim volume and published them posthumously in 1961. This volume proves that sarojini kept her lamp of poetry lighted at least to a limited extent, though she was then deeply engrossed in the national struggle for freedom. The title of the collection is derived from a dance by the DENISHAWN DANCERS based on the Indian legend that a feather blown into the air at dawn if caught by a breeze and carried out of sight, marks the opening of an auspicious day. Though the book was rather unfavourable and critically viewed by Nissim Ezekiel, Sarojini was very much in favour of the English critical world as may be gathered from some of the reviews of the first three books of poems. The Feather of the Dawn is a slender volume of thirty poems only, including four sonnets and other lyrical outbursts.

SUMMER WOODS

The poem 'summer Woods' is prescribed for detailed study

Notes and explanation

Painted roofs and soft and silken floors	:	these denote the artificialities of the so-called modern, civilized life.
Wind blown canopies	:	the expression figuratively means an overhanging covering or a summer-house with a natural leafy-roof.
cassia-wood	:	forest of cinnamon trees, hence fragrant and intoxicating breaking into flame blossoming into crimson flowers, suggestive of passion the poet's beloved.
Love	:	the poet's beloved.
Koel	:	(Hindi) cuckoo, usually associated with romantically poetry.
Glade	:	clear open space in a forest.
glen	:	narrow valley.
toil and weariness	:	hard work, drudgery and fatigue
care	:	worries, anxieties.
neath	:	beneath, under tangled boughs : entwined, branches, suggestive of passionate love, conventional symbol.
carven flutes	:	sarojini Naidu's favourite flute player krishna is suggested romantic associations.
slumbering	:	sleeping peacefully
eventide	:	evening time.
Engirt	:	encircled, embraced encompassed.

Critical Appreciation of "summer Woods".

The poem 'summer woods' is included in the II section entitled 'The flowering Year' of sarojini Naidu's third anthology of poems 'The Flowering Year' of sarojini Naidu's third anthology of poems 'The Broken Wing'. In this short lyric, The poet expresses her disgust at the artificialities of the modern, 'civilized' or mechanized life and longs to lie in the lap of Nature along with her lover. The poem is addressed to her lover. The poem is romantic, intensely emotional; at times passionate to the point of eroticism and a spring-like lyricism.

Mrs. Naidu begins her outpouring by expressing her disgust and dissatisfaction in her present style of life. She tells her beloved that she is sick and tired of 'painted roofs and soft and silken floors'. In other words the artificialities of pseudo modern life. She is obviously referring to the western influence in Indian furnishing and interior decoration in the Pre- Independence days. On the contrary, she longs for bowers summer houses with overhanging canopies of bright red gulmohurs. These look free and beautiful when the wind blows against them. Again in the third line she repeats that she is fed up of strife and song and festival and fame. What she really does not like is the made struggle and pomp and show of modern life; they seem too artificial, superficial and hollow for her taste. She yearns to escape into the forests, where in summer the cassia or cinnamon trees are blossoming into crimson flowers; she wishes to indulge in the passionate, intoxicating and fragrant atmosphere there.

She entreats her lover to go with her where the 'koels' or cuckoos call to each other from blossoming glades and glens. Their cries stir up her romantic passions, She wants to go away from the full monotonous world with all its humdrum activities, flattery and ostentation of public life. She has a strong urge to fling all her worries and anxieties and lie in the company of her beloved under the 'entangled branches of tamarind, moisari and neem. These Indian trees give, soothing shade and pleasant sensations.

Sarojini wants to bind their brows with jasmine spray and play on carved flutes; to awaken the slumbering snakes among the thick roots of huge banyan trees. Later in the evening, she wishes to roam with her lover along the bank of the river and bathe in waterlily pools where golden panthers drink in the concluding stanza, the poet tells

her lover that they should lie in tight embrace with "love-voiced silence" and "gleaming solitudes" in the deep blossoming woods. They are companions of the bright day, merry comrades of the night and shall be encompassed with delight like Radha and Krishna.

'Summer Woods' follows clear evolution of thought. The first stanza brings out a contrast between the poet's present world of pseudo modern, superficial, mechanized living and genuinely romantic, even passionate world of the summer woods. Like Keats she too wishes to leave this mundane world and seek solace and delight in her woods in the company of her love. In the second stanza we get the impression of day time when the poet with her lover wishes to lie under the shade of huge trees, forget their present lot and dream the most romantic, most joyous things. The third stanza takes us to evening time when the poet wishes to wander along the river bank and enjoy a refreshing shower. In the concluding stanza we get the impression that late at night in the dense blossoming woods the poet wishes to lie with her beloved like Radhika and Krishna, encompassed with delight. Thus through four quick continuous stanzas, Sarojini Naidu creates the impression that she wants to spend all the time—morning, afternoon, evening and night in the company of her lover in the summer woods.

'Summer Woods' is 'a supreme instance of Mrs. Naidu's love poetry. She can be described as the Indian Elizabeth Browning or Keats. This poem deals with sensuous, conjugal love. Being happily married to the man of her heart and dreams, she describes the passionate love of man and woman with perfect felicity and conviction. She employs various symbols, colours and expressions to create this aura of passionate, even erotic love. The crimson gulmohurs, the fragrant cassia woods blossoming into flame, the jasmine, are all evocative of passion.

Sarojini Naidu reminds us of Shelley and Keats in being romantic and lyrical. She uses a poetic style which is jewelled or exuberant. Felicitous expressions like wind-blown canopies of crimson gulmohurs, love-voice silence, gleaming solitudes etc. enhance the richness of the poem. The alliterative expressions such as glade and glen praise and prayers of men, the slumbering serpent kings etc. add to the lyrical quality of the poem. The title is apt, for summer is a

conventional symbol of joy, and the woods suggest a free, natural atmosphere far from the madding crowd and ignoble strife of human life. The poem is composed in four quatrains; it can also be considered as being composed in eight rhyming couplets. The lines are long, consisting of fourteen to fifteen syllables each.

'Summer Woods' is a popular poem of Sarojini Naidu written after her poetic powers had matured and sobered. Unlike 'village song' which depicts a young village maiden, little experienced in love yet attracted by the boatman's enticing song, this lyric portrays a woman who has experienced passionate love and who wishes to immortalize the ecstasy of blissful union. Like Mathew Arnold in *Dover Beach* she too feels that the love is the only panacea for the ills and disgusting artificialities of modern life. The escapist tendency exhibited in the poem is characteristic of Romantic poets especially Keats. Altogether the poem is an excellent sample of Sarojini Naidu's sensuous passionate lyrical poetry.

Annotation (model)

Companions of the lustrous dawn gay comrades of the night
Like Krishan and like Radhika, encompassed with delight.

Sarojini Naidu is world renowned 'as the 'Nightingale of India'. She was a poet of romantic love, lyricism, sensuousness and beauty. She has four volumes of poetry to her credit. Her third volume entitled 'The Broken wing' was published in 1917. Summer woods is a short lyric effusion 'the poet expresses her disgust at the superficiality of the modern civilized life and longs to flee to the summer wood with her lover.

In the concluding stanza, the poetess tells her lover that they should lie in tight embrace with love-voice silence and gleaming solitudes in the deep blossoming woods. The two are, companions of the bright day and comrades of the night and shall be encompassed with delight like Radhika and Krishna. Besides being a sensuous poem, summer woods can also be considered as having a mythical dimension. On the mythical level the lines contain the archetypal love-cry of Radha for the eternal flute player Krishna or Kanhaya, a theme which has been celebrated by Mrs. Naidu in ever so many poems.

The lines contain the essence of romantic, passionate love; mature conjugal love. Being happily married to the man of her heart, she describes the intense love of man and woman with perfect felicity the panacea for all the ills of this pseudo world. The lines also bring out the Romantic tendency of escapism in the poet.

Sarojini Naidu as a poetess

With four published volumes of poetry to her credit sarojini Naidu carved for herself a permanent niche in the gallery of English poetry. She mellowed from writing about English themes to a unique portrayal of Indian themes. Poetry came to her as a natural endowment, so that like the lark and the nightingale she sang in full throated ease. Her poetic creations truly convey the impression of being 'unpremeditated art'. Some of the outstanding features of her poetry are as follows.

Spontaneity and Lyricism

The first thing that strikes us in reading Mrs. Naidu's poetry is her exquisite melody and fine delicacy of feeling and expression blended harmoniously with freshness and exuberance of spirit. She is radically a singer of songs' or a song-bird, "the Nightingale of India" or 'Bharat-Kokila' as she has been variously described. Brevity, melody, subjectivity intensity of emotion condensed though-these are the familiar features of her lyric poetry. There is no burden of philosophic musing in her lyrics; yet she can be calmly meditative if she please, Her Lyrics are 'short swallow flight of song'. She is a supreme singer of beautiful songs. Songs bathed in melody and though 'Village song' and 'Bird sanctuary are two of her popular Lyrics.

2. As a poet of Love

Sarojini's poetry undoubtedly belongs to the Romantic school but it is the romance that in its most passionate mood does not descend into vulgarity. As a critic has observed, she has added to literature 'something Keats-like in its frank but perfectly pure sensuousness the man after her heart. Sarojini knew from experience all the nuances of passion, longing, desire, separation, agony and the ecstasy of man woman relationship and has given a true expression to these myriad feelings in her love- lyrics like 'summer-wood', for in-

stance.

She was fascinated by the archetypal myth of Radha and Krishna Besides writing a number of poems celebrating the 'Radha - kanhaya love theme, she has infused her love poems with a mythical dimension This is evident in 'Village Song' and Summer Woods.

Her Themes and subject matter

Like Tagore Mrs. Naidu too wrote periodically. Her main theme is love with all its attendant themes such as union, separation, hope, despair. She also tried more serious themes like the relation of the soul and God, Life and destiny etc. The Soul's Prayer is an example patriotic and nationalistic themes did not fail to rouse her poetic feelings. Based on the themes, her poems fall into five classes:

1. Nature poems
- 2) Love poems
- 3) Patriotic poems
- 4) poems of life and death
- 5) poems of the Indian scene.

Whatever the theme, it is intrinsically Indian.

Sarojini's poetic craftsmanship

Sarojini Naidu has earned tributes for her remarkable command over the English language. She displays an astounding mastery of words. Her diction is fluent and fiery, ornate and florid in keeping with the pattern of the Decadents. She shows command in the judicious use of rhymes. Her lyrics reveal a delicate and sensitive ear trained in the best poetic tradition. She uses a variety of meters with little fault in scansion. In general she does not limit her prosody to traditional metrical measures; on the contrary she is an adept at prosodic innovations. Many of her poems have little rhythm, as for example, summer woods. Her style is in no way imitative but gives us the impression of individuality as noted by Arthur Symonds.

5. Her use of symbols and Imagery

In her preference for an ornate diction, notwithstanding the sweet fancies of her poetry. Mrs. Naidu uses similes and metaphors in an abandoned measure. Her images have a strong Indian imprint. Her love of symbolism renders her poems multi dimensional as for instance 'Village song' and 'summer woods.

In spite of all her weakness, sarojini Naidu maintains her high

place among the classic poetry of the world. She is indeed a supreme artist in words imagery and patterns: her canvas is a whole nation. As for modernity 'She; like Jane Austin, was content to carve on two or three inches of ivory. As Edmund Gosse has admitted sarojini is 'the most brilliant: the most original as well as the most correct of all the natives of Hindustan who have written in English.

IV VILLAGE SONG

Notes and explanations

- Line 1. Pitchers: earthen pots for carrying water
2. Lone is the way and long " compare Robert Frost's line have miles to go before sleep.
- 3 tarry : Stay on., linger.
4. Lured : tempted, fascinated.
5. Boatman : the ferry man. Perhaps Lord Krishna who is reputed to entice radha and the other Gopikas.
6. crane: a bird with long legs and neck
7. owl : normally, a bird foil omen
8. tender : soft and smoothing
9. moon beams : moon light, conventionally associated with romantic love
10. smite : hit hard (here) cast its evil spell on the maiden.
11. Ram re Ram : a typical North Indian exclamation, denoting fear
19. betide : exclamation, denoting fear
21. succour : strengthen. comfort.

O! If the storm breaks : compare william words worth's 'Lucy Gray' Where the father fears a storm might break out:

Critical Appreciation

Village song is the opening song of the III section namely Indian folk songs of sarojini Naidu's second collection of poems entitled 'The Bird of Time. It is typical folk song by a Village maiden set to Indian tunes. The poem depicts a folk - theme: for panghat or water quay is the daily haunt of Indian rustics where they go to bathe or fetch water in pitchers, if where there is plenty of scope for gossip or secret trysts with their lovers. The village song expresses with tenderness and a certain native a young damsel's apprehensions concerning a long and desolate way which she has to cover after filling her pitcher from the Jamuna.

Having filled the pitcher at the at the panghat. The young maiden is now returning home. It is late evening. Her house is presumably in a village. Possibly in U.P. at a certain distance from the river Jamuna. In the normal course. She can return home before night-fall, eventhough the way home is desolate and distant. But this evening she was lured by the captivating song of the boatman and lingered on to listen losing all sense of time and place. She now regrets her folly and asks herself why she was thus tempted.

The maiden notices that shadows of night falling thick and she gets frightened. The darkness of the fast approaching night is increasing steadily. She hears the white crane calling. But her fears make her wonder whether it is hooting of the wild owl: for if so, the night must be well-advance. A touch of pathos is introduced when she exclaims that there is no moonlight to light the path and guide her. Born and brought up in a remote Indian hamlet. She has imbibed many a superstition and blind belief. She is afraid that in the darkness some snake will sting her or some spirit such as are supposed to haunt dark lonely places will cast its evil spell on her and she will die. Here Exclamation. 'Ram re Ram!' At the end of the first stanza is a typical one used by Indian woman folk in moments of great consternation, excitement etc.

In the second stanza, the maiden's thoughts turn to the plight of her brother and mother at home. Besides being afraid for her own

sake, she is troubled by the thoughts of worry and anxiety that her inordinate delay must be causing them. Her anxious brother must be murmuring what it is that keeps her away so late that evening. Her helpless mother can only wait and weep praying to the great gods to protect her daughter from the Jamuna's deep water and deliver her safely home. The waters of the river indeed rush so ferociously, and the shadows of the impending night gather so thickly like black birds in the sky that the girl is terrified of her predicament beyond words. She even fears that a storm may break out; in which case she wonders what would happen to her. Where will she find shelter to protect herself from the lightning. The maiden concludes the song with the conviction and hope that God alone (or Krishna the flute player and eternal lover) can impart strength and speed to her halting footsteps and guide her; otherwise Ram re Ram she will certainly die.

'Village song' is a multi-dimensional poem with an interplay of the real, mystical and the mythical. On the plane of reality, it is the spontaneous outpouring of a young maiden's fear when she suddenly realizes that she is alone on a dark night due to her own folly of waiting to listen to a boatman's song at the panghat, and that she has to traverse quite a distance to reach home. She is at a loss to know how late it is. To make matters worse, there is no moonlight to show her the way. Her far-off being stung by a serpentine quite realistic, considering the countryside background on a dark night in the rainy season. Sarojini Naidu adds a strong pinch of Indian flavour to the portrayal of the girl's fear by infusing it with a blind belief about evil spirits casting wicked spell on her. Her exclamation "Ram re Ram" too is naturally Indian. The imagery of darkness, owl and serpent also contributes the frightening, atmosphere. The maiden's troubled thoughts about her anxious folks at home and her total surrender to God for help and also realistically depicted.

On a deep perception it is a song of the soul craving for union with the divine, the soul is caught in the vicissitudes of this temporal world. Considered this way, the full pitchers would refer to the burdens of life a person has to carrying this mundane world, while crossing the ocean of material existence. The words 'tempted and lured' are suggestive the snares of delusion. The approaching shadows of night are evocative of ignorance, sorrow, despair and per-

haps death too. When the maiden sings 'The Jamuna waters are deep' it is the soul realizing how deeply it is lured towards the ocean of misery.

It needs protection from the storm of conflicting passion raging in its mind. The only solution the soul can think of is to the surrender to god. Only if the Divine spirit leads kindly on amidst the encircling gloom fear and danger can the human soul or jeevatma in Indian mystic poetry, particularly of the "Bhakti" cult including the verses of Mirabai Jayadeva and others. The imagery of darkness, owl and serpent connotes the infernal experience of the soul enroute.

On the mythical level the poem is the archetypal love-cry of Radha for the eternal flute-player, Krishna or "muralidhar". The reference to the tantalizing song of the boatman evokes in our minds the meeting and parting of Radha and Krishna, and the 'Raasakrida' of the amorous dance of the Gopis of Brindavan as depicted in various Hindu legends and folklore. Considered from that angle the village maiden is Radha who comes to the panghat on the pretext of fetching water but with the actual intention of meeting her lover. The background to the exquisite lyric is thus furnished by the popular Radha-Krishna myth which is known to all Indians especially the villagers, even in the remotest corners of our country. Such an interpretation is supported by the fact that it is Jamuna which is mentioned in the legends as the rendezvous. Krishna's charm and his enticing music are so irresistibly yet tantalizing that Radha is forced beyond her powers to stay back and lose all sense of time and place and give herself to gay abandon. A critic has explained the symbols and images in the poem thus: shadows rise like black birds in the sky. The Serpent represents the phallic fears of an innocent maiden. The dark river projects the mystic canvas on which Radha's quest for the recognition of the cosmic being his unfolded. The poem is so elemental in its power of evocation that its usual impression recalls the medieval paintings of the Kangra school on Raga Malhar. These depict Radha in the role of 'Abhisarika' tremulously awaiting Krishna against a stormy background.

The poem bears testimony to Sarojini Naidu's brilliant use of suggestive imagery. It is spontaneously Indian and drawn from the world of nature. An imagery of darkness and fear dominates the poem. The metaphor of the swift falling shadows of night, a moonless

night prepares the dark background. The shadows of evening gather so thickly, like black birds in the sky... 'These lines contain a vivid and graphic description of the thickening enveloping darkness. The figure of speech employed here is a simile. In another suggestive and evocative image, the increasing darkness has been compared to black birds collecting together in the sky.

The bird imagery is entwined with the night imagery. The white crane is a contrast to the wild owl. Darkness enveloping here is like a whole flock of returning birds flapping their wings and causing frightening shadows. The mention of the serpent is evocative of desires and temptations that lurk in the human soul thwarting its natural inclination to merge with the Divine. It also stands for phallic fear. The darkness of the night is enhanced by the mention of tender moon beams and lightening. This contrast of light and dark serves to bring out the contrast between man's desolation, ignorance, fear etc. and god's protection wisdom and peace.

The storm stands for the tumultuous passions in Radha's heart: the love, joy and expectation of meeting her beloved; the sense of disappointment when he does not arrive and tantalizes her with his absences as he is wont to. It also signifies these tempestuous feelings going on in man's soul torn between temporal desire and the spiritual need to merge with the supreme soul. It is to Mrs. Naidu's credit that she has succeeded in blending the various images to serve the different dimension of the poem.

The river Jamuna stands for life, hope and eternity. It may be mentioned in this context that while the Ganges is not referred to at all in Mrs. Naidu's poetry, the present folk-song is among those two or three lyrics in which Jamuna figures. This lack of love for rivers is surprising in the case of an Indian poetess and a staunch patriot.

Village song is written in two eleven line stanzas with a unique rhyme scheme: a b a b c c d e-e d in the first stanza and deed in the second. The lines are of varying lengths, varying between six and eleven syllables. By repeating the rhyme of the last four lines of the first stanza in the corresponding lines of the second the poet seeks to achieve continuity of theme in the two stanzas. Again the eleventh line of each stanza: 'Ram Re Ram! I shall die' is a refrain which helps to emphasise the central idea - the helplessness of the village girl

Radha or the human soul and the intense longing and need for Divine help. The expression 'Ram Re Ram' further intensifies the Indian flavour of the folk song.

The song is very touching and is infused with the spirit of the rustic simplicity of India. The panghat 'or water - quay which is the background of the poem is a romantic place typical of an Indian village. Managed to capture in the directness, immediacy and simplicity of a folk song. As a critic has observed, "Nothing like this' had ever been heard in the English language before. Here is India's contribution to English poetry'. Undoubtedly the 'Village song' with its moving romantic tune is the soul of the Indian soil,

TORU DUTT

Introduction to Toru Dutt and Her Work

Toru Dutt (1856-1877) is an outstanding name in the history of Indo-anglian poetry. The first Indian woman poet to write in English she is one of the most poignant samples of those who, much before time fell into the jaws of death. Her life is a mingled yarn of sunshine and grief. Beauty and tragedy. Successes and regrets. She was brilliant precocious, scholar and like many of her fellow nineteenth century writers both in India and in Europe. She died an untimely death bequeathing her poetry to a world that scarcely knew she existed at all.

Toru Dutt was born in a Hindu family in Calcutta on 4th March 1856. She inherited a rich and respectable ancestry. Her father Govind Chunder Dutt was a linguist and a cultured man with strong literary Bengali and also steeped in the Hindu myths. Thus born in a cultured family, permeated with literary and religious impulses, her brother Abinav and sister Aru were brought up in an atmosphere of fraternity and freedom, creativeness and learning.

When Toru was six years old, the family embraced Christianity and later travelled to

France and then to England. There the nameless pressure of the ancestral place was withdrawn and her fits quickly matured in that congenial atmosphere. In 1865, Elder brother Abu died of Tuberculosis. Toru and her elder sister Aru studied French and English literature and gained considerably mastery. Her four year stay in Europe

during which she assimilated the awakening spirit of the west, brought Toru a new awareness about the need for an East-West understanding.

The year following their return to India, that is 1870, witnessed the death of Aru, the second victim of Tuberculosis in the family. In 1875, at 'the age of nineteen, Toru, along with her father started studying Sanskrit and read classical works including The Ramayana, the Mahabharata, Sakuntala, The Vishnu purana and the Bhagavata purana. Thus she held on for a couple of years more in the soothing company of her father until the same disease claimed and consumed her life in 1877. She was buried at the CMS Cemetery in Calcutta.

The total literary output of Toru Dutt includes two books of poetry and two novels. A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields is her work of translation of 165 French lyrics by seventy different poets into English. Aru who had plunged into intellectual effort and imaginative production translated eight of those poems. The other anthology Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan contain poetic translations or recreations from Sanskrit into English, along with some original pieces. (Miscellaneous poems). The collection includes 'Lakshman' a ballad, 'Lotus' a sonnet and our casuarina Tree, a memorably lyric. Besides these, she also wrote a complete French novel, an unfinished romance in English called 'Bianca' and a large number of letters.

OUR CASUARINA TREE

stanza 1:

Line 2 indented : break in to the edge or surface of (something , as if with teeth)

4. in whose embraces bound: one is reminded of Dhritharashtra's attempt to embrace Bhima fatally after the mahabharata wars ended with the death of all the kaurva princes.

ll darkling : in the dark.

repose: relax, rest

Stanza 2

1 casement: a window that opens outwards or inwards like a door. Compare Keats' ' Magic casements opening on the foam' (ode to a Nightingale)

3. crest: top, summit

4. baboon: large monkey (of Africa and southern Asia) with Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu-adds an Indian flavour to the poem.

8 And to their pastures wend our sleepy cows: The line is reminiscent of the line in Gray's Elegy Written in A Country churchyard: The lowing herd wind slowly over the lea

10 hoar; gray or whit with age.

11 enmassed: accumulated, heaped up.

Stanza 3

2 Casuarina : a genus of trees of the Casuarinaceae family containing about 35 species, chiefly Australian but a few in India Malabar. The casuarina tree has long whip-like green branch which bear whorls or rings of small scale leaves.

4. Sweet companions: an autobiographical colouring is introduced by the reminiscence of Toru's soldier brother Abu and elder sister Aru. Both premature victims of Tuberculosis. Compare Keats' Odd to a Nightingale for similar memories of the poet brother Tom and sister Mary who too died of consumption. 'Whose youth growth pale, spectre - thin and dies.

6. Blent : blended, mixed.

8 dirge : song sung at a burial or for a dead person

9. shingle : small rounded pebble

Line 9 is reminiscent of a similar description in Mathew. Arnold's Dover Beech 'But now I only hear its melancholy, long, with drawing roar'.

10 . lament : utterance of grief

11 . happily : by chance

unknown land: the region of death from where no one returns

stanza 4

1. eye of faith: intuition

water-wraith: a water spirit or an apparition by a person seen shortly before or after his death.

5 classic - ancient fine

7 swoon : faint, slumber.

10 prime : most

11 clime : country

Stanza 5

1. fain : gladly (old poetic usage)

consecrate : dedicate

lay : song

3. for aye: for ever. The line refers to Abu and Arun Who are dead

5. When my days are done: perhaps a sad premonition of poet's own death.

6. deathless trees: compare Keats Immortal Bird in Ode To A Nightingale.

8. Hope on Death: personification

11. Oblivion's curse

Curse of being forgotten compare Shakespeare's attempt to immortalize his friends' beauty through his sonnet.

CRITICAL APPRECIATION

our casuarina Tree is one of the seven 'Miscellaneous poems' put together at the close of 'Ancient Ballads'. It is perhaps Toru Dutt's best known and the most memorable poem. It is remarkable poem where memory and nostalgia interplay in the lore of loss and longing. The whole poem may be perceived as poetic evocation of a casuarina tree which is described in detail. It communicates the poet's intense sense of loss due to the death of her brother and sister as defined through the relationship between them and the old casuarina tree in her garden. The poet evolves this relationship in three stages.

The first stanza is an objective description of the tree, It opens with an account of the giant tree festooned with the crimson flower of

a great creeper which wraps it wholly like a huge python. The tree is indeed gallant as it survives the stifling embraces of the creeper By day and by night, it is a centre of busy life accompanied by sweet bird - song. The garden reverberates with a sweet, solitary endless song sung often at night, from the tree while people sleep and relax.

The second stanza relates the tree to Toru's own impressions of it at different times. The rugged trunk (wound round and round by the python-like creeper) with a gray baboon resting on its crest in a statuesque manner, watching the sunrise is the first sight of the tree the poet sees when she flings open her window at dawn. As a contrast. On the lower branches, the monkey's puny offspring leap about and play. The shadow of the tree falls across the tank making the water -lilies look like 'snow enmassed'. The crimson flowers, the kokilas or cuckoos and the sleepy cows are accretion to the silent magnificence of the tree. Thus the first two stanza present a vision which establishes, the present changeless reality of the tree in its static dynamic beauty. They are romantic in description, expression and selection of imagery.

The denial of the carefully elaborated vision of tree at the beginning of the third stanza marks the strategic point of departure from, the present to the past. The tree overtakes its own grandeur and magnificence and assumes the symbolic role of a link between the pensive present and the joyous childhood of the poet. Grand and charming as the tree is, it is dear chiefly for the memories that cluster round it - memories of time when happy children played under its shade. The thought brings out an intense yearning towards the playmates who are now no more, Her sweet companions, particularly her brother Abu and her sister Aru who both died too young as victims of consumption were "loved with love intense: The casuarina tree blended with their images would linger in her memory till the not tears blinded her eyes. To her poetic fancy, the tree out of sympathy, sounds a dirge-like murmur, lime 'these a breaking on shingle beach'. It is the entire speech or 'Lament' of the tree that she hopes may perhaps reached the unknown land.

After linking up the tree with her sad yet loving memories of her lost brother and sister, Toru Dutt, in the fourth stanza of the poem, humanizes it, for its lament is a human recordation of pain regret. A

romantic weirdness inseparable from the concept of the tree, as a plaintive note emanates from it forever. Such a wail always strikes a chord of memory in the poet. The sweet, sad learnt crosses the lands and the seas and echoes in her soul even when she lies beneath the moon in distant lands like France or Italy. It had always sent thought winging its way homeward. The tree's wail evokes a sympathetic and mournful response and the vision of the tree arises before the poet. Along with the panoramic vision of the grand tree, thoughts about India also stir the poet's awareness. However it is erroneous or at least far-fetched to consider the tree as a symbol of the motherland as some critics do.

While the first two stanza describe the tree's external identity the next two explore its more authentic identity in the context of the poet's personal life. They are modern in the integral use of memory as a poetic device and in reflectiveness as their tenor. And the concluding stanza, which is a poetic cognizance of the sub conscious and mystical simultaneity, connects the past with the future. The pathetic awareness of the reality of death not only of her beloved ones but even of herself heightens the need of the bliss of eternity which makes the poet one with the immortality of the tree. The tree carries in it the seeds of immortality. It now commemorates those who are in blessed sleep of immortality. In fact, the poem sets in action a double process of commemoration. It commemorates the tree which already commemorates the departed ones. Thus it will remain a living symbol linking the past. The present and the future the concluding stanza with its rich, romantic fervor unfolds the desired of Toru Dutt for the immortality of verse and ends in the delightful line.

'May love defend thee from Oblivions' curse.

'Our casuarina Tree' is composed in eleven line stanza with the rhyme scheme. e a b b a c d d c e e. There is ripeness in the handling of the rhythm and phrase; the stanza form is probably a clever adaptation of the ten line stanzas of Keats' odes, and worthy of Keats too. The poetic diction is free of all superfluous twists and twangs. The words of Dr. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, "In the organization of the poem as a whole and in the finish of the individual stanza, in its mastery of phrase and rhythm, in its music of sound and ideas our casuarina Tree is a superb piece of writing, and gives us a taste of what

toru might have done had not the race of her life been so quickly run".

The poem combines Toru Dutt's love of nature with a tender evocation of childhood memories that are doubtless at the source her return to Indian themes in the last chapter of her brief life. It is a admirable blend of memory and desire, time and eternity, local touch and literary reminiscence, an objective description of the actual tree and charm of association with toru's childhood. The poem is more than the poetic evocation of a tree; it is a recapturing of the past and the immortalizing of the moments of times so recaptured. The tree is both a tree and a symbol; it cuts across times and eternity

'Our casuarina Tree' bears testimony to Toru Dutt's capacity for minute observation and varied impressions of the tree. What glow in it with the intensity of tenderness and pathos is the memory of her dear departed brother and sister. The experience is traumatic and excruciating in remembrance and existential in perception of human mortality. The poem moves from observation to impression and from remembrance to reflection. It is in its latter part, a humanisation of Nature, an existential lament on human suffering and finally it becomes a wish-fulfilment for immortality. Like Keats' nightingale (the Immortal Bird) the casuarina tree becomes immortal. Indianness for theme, utter authenticity and consummate self revelation reach their high water mark of excellence in this poem.

'Our casuarina Tree' has won world wide acclaim. 'The most remarkable poem ever "written in English by a foreigner shows her already possessed of mastery over the more elaborate and architectural forms of verse. S. V. Mukerjee is of the view that the poem is one of the great architectural pieces in English poetry. Likewise 'Lotika Basu is all praise for the 'riper perfection' attained in this splendid piece. In fact, few critics have passed any adverse judgement on the poem. Obviously, 'Our casuarina Tree' will be remembered as Toru Dutt's most memorable poem for its mellow sweetness and structural perfection.

Annotation (model)

O sweet companions, loved with love intense

For your sakes shall the tree be ever dear

The first Indian woman poet to write in English, Toru Dutt is one of the most poignant examples of those who, much before time fall into the jaws of death. Her poems are noted for their tenderness, pathos, and autobiographical touches. 'Our casurina Tree' is one of the seven. Miscellaneous Poems' put together at the close of the 'Ancient Ballads'. In this poem the poet describes the tree and relates it to her personal life.

The tree overtakes its own grandeur and magnificence and assumes the symbolic role of a link between the pensive present and the joyous childhood of the poet. Grand and charming as the tree is, it is dear chiefly for the memories that cluster round it - memories of a time when happy children played under its shade. The thought brings out an intense yearning towards the playmates who are now no more.

Her sweet companions, particularly her brother Abu and her sister Aru, who both died too young as victims of consumption, were loved with love intense. The Casuarina tree blended with their images would linger in her memory.

A strong pathos runs through these lines. The tree commemorates the poet's departed brother and sister. It is a living symbol linking the past, the present and the future. The alliterative phrase 'loved with love intense' enhances the lyrical quality of the poem. These are lines which combine Toru Dutt's love of nature with a tender evocation

of Childhood.

II LAKSHMAN

Notes and explanations;

Hark	:	listen (chiefly used in poetry)
succor anger or difficulty	:	help given in time of need, danger or difficulty
fly	:	hasten or hurry
hast thou?	:	have you?
environ	:	surround
throes	:	sharp pain

magic -bound	:	Spell bound
gird	:	fasten. attach
gird sword	:	prepare for action or attack
impious	:	unholy
Videham	:	of Videha. Vaidehi or sit. This is Toru Dutt's anglicised version of an Indian name.
dastard	:	mean deplorable
being of demoniac birth army	:	demons like Ravana and his army
grisly	:	ghastly, causing horror or terror
Cower	:	crouch in fear
brook	:	bear or tolerate
coverts which animals hide	:	areas of thick undergrowth in which animals hide
respite	:	rest
respite	:	relief from danger.
that piercing cry	:	It is Maricha in the delusive form of the golden deer who made the sharp scream.
He has a work	:	Rama's mission to kill Ravana.
Beseech	:	request
weal	:	Welfare
death fraught arrows enemies)	:	arrows that cause death (to the enemies)
Reft of	:	devoid of without
dun	:	dull greyish brown
loth	:	reluctant
lacerate	:	tear or inflict deep pain or (feelings)

disregard : disobey
orders of my chief: Rama's specific orders that
Lakshmana should not leave Sita.

A magic circle : the famous Lakshman -
rekha trespassing Which sita invited danger to herself by being car-
ried away by Ravana.

balk : prevent

sylvan : of the forest

somber : dark

cascades. : waterfalls

adevsaries : opponents

Hoarse the vulture

screamed : a typical sign of ill omen.

With dauntless air : fearlessly

The Ballad, a principle form of objective poetry arose out of folk litera-
ture. It is defined as a simple spirited poem in short stanza transmit-
ted orally and which narrates some popular story. Its subjects are
deeds rather than thoughts and are commonly furnished by the more
elementary aspects of life. Large space is given in them to tales and
the simpler interests of the domestic lot receive a full share interest.

In method and style, the ballad is characterised by straight
forwardness and rapidity of Narration. On the whole it is energetic It
is usually written in the Ballad Stanza or Ballad measure thought varia-
tions are possible. Stock descriptive phrases, refrain and incremen-
tal repetition are its other features. The tale opens abruptly without
any attempt at a systematic introduction. The tone of the ballad is
impersonal and detached with little or nothing to reveal the compose's
identity or personality.

The ballad is probably the simple form of narrative poetry
and has many intrinsic qualities as mentioned above: Coleridge's Rime
the Ancient Mariner Keats' La Bella Dam Sans Merci ' are two popu-
lar ballads in English poetry.

Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan

Toru Dutt's collection of poems, Ancient Ballads and Legend
of Hindustan appeared in 1882 posthumously with an introduction by
the noted English critic Sir Edmund Gosse. The way shows her root
into the soil of Hindu thought and tradition. In fact the active influence
of he parents and her ardent need for Indian roots prompted the poet
to write 'Ancient Ballads'. In this collection the East and the West
meet. This unique phenomenon combining three traditions -French,
Indian and English - has left the legacy ballads and legends for pos-
terity as a religious and moral instrument

Ancient Ballads has been the most popular of Toru's work
and her reputations as a pioneer in Indo-Anglian poetry rests mainly
on the nine ballads and legends and the single non-mythological poem
Our casuarina Tree. The legends were chosen at random from the
immortal classics like the Ramayana, The mahabharata and the
Vishnu purana. The collection includes savitri Lakhman, Jogadhya
Uma. The Legend of Dhruva and so on. Despite being a Christian,
Toru was moved by the beauty and sanctity of these legends and
interpreted them with insight and sympathy. They are also stories rec-
ollected in the tranquillity of personal agony from early childhood
memories. Thus an aura of nostalgia surrounds these narrations.
Feeling too deep for any other kind of expression.

The legends had been a part of India's racial consciousness
for centuries and it was Toru Dutt who first presented and interpret
them to the English speaking world. By the vigorous and pleasing
narration of these ancient legends of Hindustan, she struck a genu-
inely Indian note and conveyed to the West the intellectual and philo-
sophical traditions of this ancient land. Though her range of selection
was limited, her poetic vision encompassed the whole of the medi-
eval religious culture of India. Each legend exemplifies a few of the
immortal values and varieties of life as conceived by our rishis and
savants. As a critic has observed, 'Toru had accepted soul and God
as the main themes in her poetry and there told legends were a re-
peated quietest after the ultimate truth that lurks behind the Maya of
man's relationship with man nature and God". The poems are essen-
tially romantic in treatment of themes and the profusion of lyricism
links her towards worth and Coleridge.

Lakshman

'Lakshman' is in the form of a conversation between Sita, the wife of Rama and Lakshman, Rama's brother. The theme is based on an incident taken from the 'Aranyakanda' of The Ramayana. Rama had incurred the wrath of the demons by refusing the advances of Ravana's sister Surpanaka. To avenge her hurt and humiliation, Ravana, the chief of Lanka persuaded the demon Maricha to assume the enticing of a charming deer and come roaming around the hermitage in the forest where Rama, Lakshman and Sita dwelt. Deeply loved by the golden beauty of the deer, Sita implored her lord to fetch it for her. Despite his brother's warnings and forebodings; for he suspected it to be Maricha in disguise, Rama went off in pursuit leaving his wife in Lakshman's suspicions proved right. After a long pursuit, Rama could eventually shoot at the elusive deer. The arrow pierced its heart. With a terrified leap the deer sprang into the air, then fell to the ground roaring loudly and assumed its natural form as it lay dying. However the demon did not forget his revengeful intention even in death; for, as per Ravana's injunctions, he began to imitate Rama's voice screaming as though in mortal pain. "Oh Sita Oh Lakshman!" Sita as expected, heard those painful cries and urged Lakshman to rush to Rama's rescue. It is at this point that Toru Dutt begins her ballad.

The conversation between Sita and Lakshman forms the subject matter of the poem. In an agony of fear, Sita imagines that her husband is overpowered by his demon foes and that he is now battling against death. She asked Lakshman to hasten to offer Rama succour for she is certain that her lord is calling out to his brother for immediate help; wail, she feels, implies 'death's final throes', so that he has no choice but to go. She chides Lakshman for his inaction, for standing spell-bound and not rushing to the danger spot. She argues him to take his weapons and start. She wonders if the person standing before her is her brother Lakshman who is wont to be, 'swift in decision 'prompt indeed brave unto rashness' the man whom everyone look up to in times of emergency.

Seeing Lakshman's continued silence and unmoved nature Sita continues her hysterical outburst. She cannot bear the suspense. She remarks that if they fail to fetch help to Rama, they both can at

least share his death. Hearing these inauspicious words Lakshman urges the Videhan Queen to keep her cool. There is no cause for any fear. He praises his brother's prowess and valour and advises her to relinquish her 'ill' founded fears and wipe off her dastard tear. He asks her whether any demon can brave his brother's mighty arm or if there exists any creature that can harm Rama in any way. The lion and the grisly bear, the sun staring eagles; deadly serpents, all live in mortal fear of her Lord Rama.

Lakshman cannot even imagine that Rama would cry out for help, for his brother is not made of such stuff as to scream for help like a child or pray for rest or pardon. He tries to make his sister-in-law see that the delusive cry was only due to some trick of magic by the foe. He further, tells her that Rama is fortified against death by the very purpose of his birth; meaning the slaying of Ravana. He implores her not to ask him to leave her. His brother had commanded him to stay beside Sita as a body guard and ward off dangerous with his life if they came her way. He would not therefore leave her alone for in that forest bands of vengeful giants lurked who constantly brooded on their wrongs and vengeance and waited for the suitable hour to strike.

But unfortunately a woman's doubts are too strong to be allayed and Sita harps on the same old tune and blames Lakshman on various grounds, including cowardice, and even complicity with Rama's enemies. Her heated brain makes her blurt out that his concern for her is only a pretext for staying back. An open foe were far better than he was. Had she not seen Lakshman's prowess in the battle field she would have believed that he was a low coward. She insinuates that he had then been brave since his leader Rama had stood beside him. When the sun shines the cloud dazzles; but deprived of his radiance, it reduces to a shapeless mass of dull vapours - such is Lakshman's courage.

Intensifying her taunts in the same way, Sita next attributes his reluctance to leave her to a baser motive, angrily accusing him of desiring Rama's death, so that he might take possession of his elder brother's wife and kingdom. Lakshman is unable to bear heart aunts any longer. They lacerate his inmost heart and torture him like poisonous swords. He wonders remorsefully if this is his reward for

Life-long loyalty and truth towards his brother and her. But he sympathizes with Sita and does not find fault with her. Nevertheless, he feels that she ought to be less rash in judgement.

Lakshman declares that he will go; he cares little what happens to him; provided she were safe. Sita has cruelly wronged him by her accusations and thrown all norms of decorum to the winds. His regret is that in going away from her he is disregarding the plainest orders of his chief, Rama but she is prepared to shoulder the entire responsibility for his crime alone; as her boundless grief and unbearable remarks leave him no other courses. However, he requests her to think more charitable about him from then onwards. Before he departs, he draws a magic circle on the ground with his arrow and warns her not to step beyond it lest she should come to harm.

Lakshman once again acquits Sita of all blame for he knows that it is her grief and fear that have made her wild. They shall part as friends. He invokes a blessing on her before he goes, confident of speedy return both on himself and of his brother. As he went away no trace of anger was visible on his face: only a dark sorrow was present, for indeed Sita's piercing words had quite broken his heart and made him wish he were dead. His departures attended by ill omens.

The poem 'Lakshman' is not properly a ballad but a dramatic dialogue or colloquy. Harihar Das remarks that the poem makes departure from it superseded in that "it is not narrative but conversational" and he finds its tone dignified, rising sometimes to the heroic. This is certainly a proper estimate of the poem; for one thing the poem opens casually and abruptly and ends in a similar manner. For a complete knowledge for the legend, one has to study original Ramayana.

The two important thematic implications of the poem are (i) the gradual working out of Sita's passion and (ii) the dilemma of the loyal brother Lakshman. In fact, the former forms the more intrinsic feature of the poem. The opening verses convey to us a vivid impression of Sita's anxiety on Rama's behalf and her excited even hysterical appeals to Lakshman. She is foolish and cruel not out of any ingrained flaw in her character but out of an inexorable anxiety. The latter's fine justification of his elder brother is indomitable courage

and his absolute faith in his power serve mercy to set Sita at bay. The implied reproach for her lack of faith, containing a germ of truth, causes her to turn fierce upon one who meant only to comfort. The apparent indifference of Lakshman to the impassioned pleadings frustrates her, and she gradually works herself up to anxiety crisis. Reason vanished at the touch of immedicable fear; discretion is destroyed by benumbing sense of helplessness and a vague consciousness of a hostile fate surrounds her. She badly accuses him and applies the truly feminine weapon of bitter sarcasm. Thus we watch the gentle Sita's transformation through anxiety, tear, suspicion and horror into an unthinking perverse woman. As Harihar Das comments, this ballad, no doubt contains a skilful attempt at psychological delineation of character, simple and experimental but still showing a phase of Toru's genius with which we might otherwise have been unacquainted.

Toru has attempted a psychological delineation of character in the case of Lakshman too. He is the loyal brother torn between conflicting demands on his sense of duty. He is symbolic of man confronted with several moral choices in a difficult situation and forced to abandon permanent loyalties based on values in favour of the exigencies of the moment. The poem presents an insight into the strength of the bonds that bind the members of an Indian family. A critic has remarked that, now here outside Indian thought could we get so perfect a picture of brotherly loyalty and the poem illustrates how right he is. Lakshman remains loyal to the instructions of Rama and is not ruffled or perturbed by the accusations of Sita. The poet has effectively delineated the unflinching loyalty of Lakshman to his master.

The ballad offers a contrastive study of characters - Sita and Lakshmana. Sita as portrayed there is not the Sita of The Ramayana a perfect epitome of virtue, a non parell but a woman of common rank. The great difference between Sita and Lakshman is that while he understands the divine purpose of Rama's birth, she is surprisingly ignorant of the supreme powers of her husband. Lakshman is noble, patient, indulgent, confident, and affectionate. Even her veilest accusation does not provoke him, but only draws an affectionate and mild protest. He utters noble words to her. An unforgettable picture of this much-maligned brother appears at the end when he strides on with dauntless air' attended on all sides by evil omens. Toru Dutt seems to suggest that delusion comes out of ignorance and confidence out

of knowledge while delusion leads to sin in action and words confidence fosters faith and loyalty.

Though 'Lakshman' is not a regular ballad nevertheless it had many of its characteristic features. It narrates an episode which starts abruptly: the pace of narration is fast so that the interest in the plot never sags. We see the characters in the full swing of action. Tom Dutt's diction is naturally of the Victorian Romantic school. True, to the ballad motif, she employs true archaisms, compound words (death-fraught arrows for instance) and dramatic dialogue. She gives ample evidence of her prosodic skill in employing the Ballad Measure with her own innovations. She has employed octets or eight line stanza with alternate rhymes. The octets can be considered as made up of two quatrains each. The lines are octosyllabic. The diction is simple lucid and free for burdensome allusions. She articulates a moral vision through the poem which gives beauty and meaning to human life. Thus Lakshman is a memorable poem in all respects.

III THE LOTUS

Line 1. Love: the God of lover or Cupid identified by the Romans with the Greek Eros.

Flora: the Roman goddess of the flowers and the spring season

4 Bards: Poets

6 Juno: In Roman religion, the chief goddess of the Romans closely connected with every aspect of the life of women. She was worshipped as the queen of the heavens, the protectress of marriage the goddess of child birth and so on.

mien: bearing or aspects, as showing character.

8. Psyche: In Greek mythology, the personification of the human soul. As a character in classical mythology and in literature, psyche is known by the story of 'cupid and psyche', an allegorical episode in which the god of love abandons psyche, the daughter of a king for having enraged him by looking at him as he slept though he had forbidden it. However, the sympathetic invention of Jupiter helps

psyche to become immortal and become reunited with her love occupied. bower: summer-house in a garden or a shady place under trees or climbing plants.

THE SONNET

The sonnet is a short poem of fourteen line typically five foot iambics rhyming according to a prescribed plan and composed to be sung to the accompaniment of some musical instrument. In the beginning it was associated with the thirteenth century Italian poet patriarch who addressed all his sonnets to his lady - love Laura; owing to the brilliant use he made of the verse from it came to be called the 'petrarchan sonnet'. It is divided into an 'octave' consisting of the first eight lines usually with an enclosed rhyme scheme abba, abba, and sestet made up of the remaining lines with the rhyme scheme cde, cde or cdc cdc. After the eighth line occurred a pause which was technically called 'caesura' and then a turn in the thought called 'volta'. This structure was ample and complex enough not only for the full expression but also the development of an idea; the expression being made in the octave and being fully developed in the sestet.

Another variety of the sonnet is the English consisting of three quatrains with alternate rhyme and concluding couplet. Sir Thomas Wyatt, Earl of Surrey, Sir Philip Sidney, Sir Edmund Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, John Donne and Keats are other famous sonneteers in English poetry, who have composed their sonnets in one of the two forms.

Critical Appreciation

The Lotus, as well as 'Baugmaree' are two sonnets included in the set of seven 'miscellaneous poems put together at the close of 'Ancient Ballads'. The lotus is an excellent lyric effusion inspired by Toru Dutt's aesthetic sensibility. It presents in the sonnet form the lyric version of the quaint story of the birth of that flower. The poem reveals the poet's keen sensitiveness to nature and, the responsiveness of her soul to colour, and is akin to Tennyson's Akbar's Dream.

The poem describes a skirmish between the rose and the lily for supremacy. The two flowers had been age-old rivals for the coveted honour of queenship. At the outset, love or Cupid posed a

rather difficult problem to Flora, the goddess of flowers; who was the undisputed queen among flowers? An instant reply could not be given. The problem got entangled in the age-old rivalry between the rose and the lily. To support one side was definitely to incur the animosity and displeasure of the other. The situation culminated in a classic war of position and colours.

Bards of power had long the claims of both the flowers. The flowers divided themselves into two rival factions and argued heatedly for their respective 'candidate'. Hearing the argument and claims of both sides, Flora felt that both the flowers were imperfect, lacking in one aspect or the other. The lily was pale and had a 'Junomien' but could the rose ever rise as high? Thus the strife went on reverberating in psyches bower leaving Flora in a quandary.

The poet then describes a piece of conversation between Love and Flora. Love demanded a flower which was as delicious as the rose' and as stately as the lily in her pride. Flora asked what colour he would choose'. Love first chose 'rose-red'. But hastened to change it to 'lily white'. Hesitated again and blurted out 'Or both provide' Finally on love's instance. Flora created lotus which combined the beauty of the rose and the innocence of a lily; further it was felicitous combination of the two colours Love had asked for. In this way the lotus was born the undisputed queen among flowers or the queenliest flower that blows.

The Lotus is a petrarchan sonnet. It is composed in fourteen lines, employ in g the rhyme scheme a b ba a ba b a cdc ddc. The first eight line form the 'Octave,. The full stop at the end of their eighth line mark the 'caesura'. The next six lines constitute the state which begins with the 'volta' or turn in thought. The octave is made up of two quatrain with enclosed rhymes a b b a in other words, the first and fourth lines rhyme as a enclosing the middle lines which rhyme bb. The sestet is broke up in to two tercets with the rhyme scheme cdc, ddc. The poem has three clear-cut divisions; the problem, the tension. The resolution. The problem, is to select the undisputed queen among flowers, it is posed in the octave, Love's approach of Flora, the age-old rivalry between lily and the rose and the flower factions and their strife in psyche's bower are all contained therein. There is a definite pause of caesura marked by a full stop at the end of the

octave. Toru Dutt makes a slight departure from the Petrarchan rhyme scheme in the sestet. Instead of dividing it into two tercets, the meaning necessitates the splitting of it in to a quatrain with the alternate rhyme c d c d and a concluding unrhyming couplet dc which however is connected to the quatrain, as the rhymes are repeated. The quarten contains the second movement namely the tension. It must be mentioned to the credit of the poet that just within the compass of four lines a whole conversation between love and flora regarding the choice of the colour for the undisputed queens of flowers has been presented. Her deft use of dialogue adds to the dramatic quality of the sonnet, a rare achievement considering that even the great sonneteers have rarely used it. The last two line of the sestet. (or sonnet) contain the resolution. Flora resolved the problem posed by Love by creating a new flower which was bolt h rose-red and lily -white, the lotus, 'the queenliest flower that blows'. Structurally 'the Lotus' is a great success as a petrarchan sonnet, it has an exquisite finish and liveliness all its own. It is fancy, free and exemplifies Toru Datt's delicate talent for building up a poem. All through the three movements pointed above, the structure and the poetic vision support each other, and they in turn create a unified interssion on the reader's mind. The contriving of situation at the outset the introduction of characters between the opposing groups of bards and finally the satisfactory resolution of the crisis, exquisite style and compact structure all these make it a fine dramatic piece. The poem indeed has all the elements of a drama: problem-situation tension, movement, suspense and solution. Besides, it has characters and dialogues taken on fact. It is, as critic has pointed out, a little drama in fourteen lines.

Toru dutt has exhibited exemplary skill in handling the subtle sonnet form. C.D. Narasimha is all praise for her when he observe that the admirable economy of word and phrase. She had not read her Sanskrit, french and English in vain -the evocative poet of Sanskrit the precision of French and the concreteness of English are all potentially present. The Poem, in the words of Prof.. K.R. Srinivasa lyengar "has an exquisite finish and liveliness all its own. It has brevity, precision, compactness and delicate balance; in short, perfection of workmanship."

The central symbol of the poem is the lotus -the-eternal flower of India Our national flower. According to Indian mythology, the lotus

is the seat of all knowledge, wealth and prosperity, In the Hindu puranas Saraswathy, the goddess of learning has chosen the white lotus as her throne, while Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity resides on the red-lotus. The red colour is a symbol of nasion and vitality whereas white suggests peach and innocence. The lotus combines the qualities of both these colours. Intuitively Toru Dutt may have felt that only by projecting this unaging symbol of India she could, to some extent, help to revive the glory that was India.

A striking feature of the poem is that all the characters and allusions in the poem are Western and the super imposing colourful image is that of the lotus. Toru has not included any mythological character of the Indian purans in her poem. Psyche, Juno, Flora and Love (cupid) are all from the Western world. The flowers, the rose and the lily-the main contenders for the high position, too are western. In fact in European literature particularly English, French, Italian any c German these two flowers frequently figure in various situations in their poetry. It is safe to assume that Toru Dutt must have drawn inspiration in her own subtle way from the reading of those literature

But the lotus - the lone Indian symbol in the poem blooms and outshines all the other images in the poem towards the close. Though the building up of the poem is based on western allusions, the poetess meant it to be essentially Indian. By the choice of the image of this undying flower, she was doubtlessly asserting the supremacy of Indian cultural and philosophical wealth and heritage. It was after a thorough understanding of the European culture and philosophy that she started studying Sanskrit; mostly because of her need for roots. Through this poem she portrays her discovery of roots in the vast and deep ocean of Indian philosophy and vision of life a Dharma or a creed which is a judicious mixture of the strong dark colour of passion, Maya and the pure dignity and calm aloofness of sanyasa or total renunciation.

The critic I. K. Sharma has a number of enlightening remarks to make on the poem in question. According to him, the poem is highly suggestive. It is not written in open praise at the lotus nor at any stage, does it smack of false national pride. Also, it is neither a rejection of the western ideal of love and life; nor is it a wholesome

grafting of the Indian on others. Sahitya for Toru Dutt, he says, lies in adherence to the age-old golden path that embraces all; destroys none. Only then there is a likelihood of higher growth. The lotus thus epitomises what Indian and Indian culture have always stood for.

The poem illustrates that both the rose and the lily find themselves in the lotus without any loss of their identity. Their colours are skilfully retained in it. In Sharma's opinion, the poet wants to suggest that each one grows higher when it learns the true art of living. In other words we grow when we grow beyond our self. Though far-fetched, this interpretation cannot be summarily rejected. Considering all aspects, 'The Lotus' is a marvellous feat of a very young poet. It is perfect in form, elevated in thought and lucid in faith. It is poetic, patriotic and prophetic, all at the same time. It reveals a mind that love without any distortion or prejudice all that is sane, sanguine and splendid anywhere in the universe. That is for dutt's testament of faith and the Lotus reveals it in a highly suggestive way.

Toru Dutt's poetic Art

Broadly speaking, the literary personality of Toru Dutt appears before us at least in three distinct forms - as a poet, as a prose writer and as a writer of letters. As a faithful translator in the first stage of her poetic development, she endeavours to manipulate English for the purpose of translation in piece in sheaf Gleaned in French fields, soon she reached the second stage of her poetic growth when she learned to submit her translative impulse to the guidance of her creative inspiration. Thus the translator grew and matured into a transcreator in ancient Ballads. As a poetess Torru Dutt compels attention.

Lyricism:

The most outstanding feature of Toru's poetry is it lyricism. Genuine lyric poetry and lyrical narrative poetry both of the romantic and Victorian types came in to Indo-English poetry with the generation of Toru Dutt. Some other renderings in the 'Sheaf' and most of the poems, in 'Ancient Ballads' are renderings in the 'sheaf' and most of the poems, in 'Ancient Ballads' are marked by lyrical fire. A soft, soothing lilt is felt on reading the. The Lotus and Our causarina Tree are lyrical pieces. Similarly the last few stanzas of Laksthman', where Lakshman bids fare well of Sita and invokes the sylvan spirits to

watch over Sita are lyrical outbursts. In all these case, the occasion of description is such that it renders the poetess lyrical and effusive in the expression of her soft secret feelings. The lyrical simplicity of Toru's verse is reminiscent of Shelley and Keats.

Narration and Description

Then narrative and descriptive powers of Toru Dutt are best seen in Ancient Ballads. She possessed the rare gift of story telling, of arousing curiosity and creating suspense and effective character delineation. 'Lakshman' furnishes us with an excellent example of the poet's narrative skill. Our casuarina Tree contains a beautiful description of the tree in all its magnificence. We may agree with Amaranth Jha that had she lived longer she (Toru Dutt) would have attained distinction in narrative verse and descriptive verse.

Keen powers of observation

Toru had a wonderful faculty of observation especially human nature. It is this that led her to comment on men, women, their manners and temperament. We see this capacity of hers in her delineation of both Lakshman and Sita in her ballad Lakshman. She sometimes presented sketches of Indian social life and reflections on social problems like the plight of the Indian widow as for instance in 'Savithri'. Her descriptions are picturesque and evocative. There is hardly any conflict between the nuances of narration and the demands of description.

Close observation of Nature

Toru's profound love of nature and her keen appreciation of natural beauties are clearly seen in all her poetic productions. The champaks, lotus and kokilas always stirred the in most of her heart and she burst into delightful melodious songs. In the face of natural beauty, her heart leapt up with an unspeakable ecstasy and her lips like Keats' quivered in a state of rapture. She was keenly sensitive to sound and sight, natural charms and catching colours. Her poems like 'Baugmaree, The Lotus and Our Casuarina Tree' are illustrations. In all this she was like Wordsworth, Keats and Shelley. Temperamentally she was closer to these poets than to anyone else. When we read her ballads we are struck by the large space given to painting nature. 'Lakshman' too contains brief, sketchy descriptions.

Toru Dutt's Indianness

Toru's poetry is intrinsically of her race and her land. Thanks to her mother's influence, she was very familiar with the Hindu myths and legends and she explicitly interpreted the culture of her country to the foreigners. Though she learned and like European culture and language, especially English and French and though she embraced Christianity, she nevertheless remained an Indian at heart and even had great reverence for Hindu gods and goddesses and the legendary heroes and heroines of the land. 'Ancient Ballads' are rooted in Hindu thought and tradition. Her sonnet, the Lotus, is a blend of the best in the cultures of the East and the West; yet one cannot help feeling that Toru Dutt wanted to highlight the supremacy of Indian culture and philosophy in the poem. As Sir Edmund Gosse remarks, 'Toru's Ballads breathe a Vedic solemnity and simplicity of temper and are singularly devoid of littleness and frivolity. The Hindu doctrine of karma is well stated in The Legend of Dhruva. In fact her 'Ancient Ballads' are a proof of her search for her Indian roots with all her Western training and faith. She remained Indian to the core. The stories of the past stirred her, and touched a responsive chord within her, as Amaranth Jha has observed.

Imagery and Symbols

Toru Dutt's poems are highly symbolic and rich in imagery. The Lotus is a symbol of the supremacy of Indian culture and philosophy of prosperity and the highest knowledge. In 'Our Casuarina Tree' the tree is both a tree and a symbol. Like Keats' immortal nightingale the tree is not born for death. Symbols abound in ancient Ballads too. Her imagery is often drawn with a masculine vigour and boldness. Though a fragile woman herself, Toru displayed great felicity in rapping with the sublime as well as the sinister. However, we do not find a systematic network of symbols in her poems. Figures of speech abound in her works. They are used both to adorn the language and to convey the idea more effectively. She uses the simile metaphor, onomatopoeia, personification, alliteration and hyperbole with great skill. Her figures are more of less conventional reminiscent of the Romantics and the Victorians.

Themes

Toru Dutt's themes are mostly melancholic. Nature, man,

death, suffering, pure love and patriotism are commonly dealt with in her poems. She renders them with tenderness and pathos. Her ballads are steeped in patriotic feelings and native traditions. The stories of the hoary past evoked a sympathetic response in her. Like Shakespeare she shows little originality in inventing new themes; like him again she renders familiar things as new. She is, as critic observed, less original in themes but more original in verifying them.

The Autobiographical Element

Though Toru was reticent and did not strain to project her life through her writings, her verse are not devoid of person touches. Both her poetical volumes contain impressive autobiographical flashes. A strong note of melancholy runs through all her poems. Our casuarina Tree for instance, is distinctly autobiographical in detail and in execution and contains reminiscences of the poet's girlhood and sweet companions, her elder brother Abju and elder sister Aru with whom she had played. Incidentally it is from her letters that we can learn most about her personal life.

Diction, Rhythm, versification

Toru's poetic diction is invariably simple, lucid and melodious though this is not fully true in the case of some of her translations. As an Indo-Anglian writer, her main achievement lies in her effective mastery of the medium. Her poetry reveals a subtle sense of the English tongue, a natural feeling for its rhythm and diction. There is in her versé a certain flexibility that renders it graceful and captivating. She is capable of variations in her diction. She sometimes employs iambic pentameter as in "our casuarina Tree" and 'The Lotus'. Sometimes she shows preference for the octosyllabic verse as in 'The Lotus'. Toru was at her best in the handling of the ballad and sonnet forms which are a delight to read. She seems to have had an especial liking for the sonnet form. Her use of rhyme frees them from the weariness and flatness of blank verse. What she actually lacked was mellow sweetness to perfect her Asian English poet, for which fate in the form of an untimely death also is to be blamed. Her lapses in rhythm are mostly traced in her translations in 'A Sheaf'.

English critics in general, particularly sir Edmund Grose and Dr. Edward J. Thomson do not have a high opinion of Toru's versifica-

tion. Many find it crude or 'wooden'. Her grammar is not impeccable, punctuation chaotic and her expressions are sometimes quaint or lame. As contrasted to this Sri. Aurobindo has observed: 'Toru Dutt was an accomplished verse-builder with a delicate talent and some outbreaks of genius and she wrote things that were attractive and sometimes something that had a strong energy of language and a rhythmic force. He has also commented that she has written poetry not as an Indian writing in English but like an English woman. She has a preference for run-on lines or enlargement instead of end-stopped lines so that the sense glides along without interruption contributing to metrical felicity.

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POETRY - SECTION B

KEKI.N. DARUWALLA

Keki Nasserwanji Daruwalla was born in Lahore in 1937 and was educated at Government college, Ludhiana. His works include 'Under Orion' (1970), 'Apparition in April' (1971), for which he received the Utar Pradesh state Award in 1972, 'Crossing of Rivers' (1976), and 'Sword and Abyss' (1979), and a collection of short stores. He has contributed to Opinion Poetry Australia (Sydney), Transatlantic Review (London) and Triquarterly (Evanston, Illinois). Daruwalla's poetry is appreciated for its bitter, satiric tone. This is rather exceptional in Indian verse in English but can be seen in Daruwalla's Under Orion, 'Dialogues with a Third Voice', 'Collage I' and 'Death by Burial'.

My conscience is a road-
a childhood has been trampled here
concretized and stamped over with the feet of passing year..
We erode each other, the road and I
neither giving way,

I scrape the road's back as I walk,

my head is horned
calloused and worn away.

(Dialogues with a Third Voice)

Daruwalla is intensely aware of his environment. In most of his poems, the landscape of northern India - hills, plains and rivers - is evoked. About his poems Daruwalla states, "I am not an urban writer and my poems are rooted in the rural landscape. My poetry is earthly and like to consciously keep it that way, shunning sophistication which, while adding gloss, takes away from the power of verse." The poems show an obviously Indian element, especially in his use of landscape. The landscape is usually used for ornamentation and it seems to come alive as a presence on its own when used otherwise. He tries to restore order in the chaos he finds around him with the healing touch of irony. His use of images is concrete and exact.

I Fire-Hymn - An Appreciation.

Daruwalla is a parsee and so the poem should be read from the Parsee point of view. Fire is god for the Parsees and hence the parsee concept of god, of death act as a background to the whole reading. Here the poet draws the eerie picture of a crematory. The child who walks with his father past a crematory sees the bone left behind after the fire has consumed the flesh to ashes. Scattered around are 'half-cooked limbs' and 'bone-stubs'. Pointing out to these the father says that the burnt corpse, the child wears to save fire from the sin of forgetfulness. The dead should not be forgotten. Later on, when as an adult, the protagonist had to consign his first-born to flames, the fire-hymn never forgot. It beautifully consumed the corpse and grants him forgiveness for teaching it not to forget. This was a great blow to him as it was his own flesh and blood that was so consumed. His mind and body broken, yet rebellious, he swore to save fire from the sin of forgiveness.

It is the tragedy, the anguish of the human soul, fighting against a greater power (viz death, fire) that is presented here. The mind of the child touched by the sight of the half burnt corpse is contrasted with the adult experience of having his child cremated. The poem should be seen as a personal prayer fraught with the conflict between the soul and fire, victor and victim, the vulnerable versus the invulner-

able, the ultimate truth seems to be that there is no armour against Fate. All human beings have to stoop to it early or late;

The Poet's colour consciousness is seen in his description of the flames consuming the corpse. The tone employed is one of intimacy between two very close individuals. They talk in a personal loving manner - a sort of loving quarrel some note which suggests intimacy.

Notes

Line 1. burning ghat: the crematory.

Phosphorescence: The fumes. This is contrasted with the ghost lights of the following line. i.e., the scientific explanation (phos) versus the mythical /superstitious (ghost-lights)

L.2 Wandering ghost - lights: the superstitions beliefs

L.3 Scuttle: move about like rats.

L.4 embers: flames

L. 6 ash: resonant with significance of the inevitable death. "Paths of glory lead but to the grave".

L.7 fire's debauchery: parsee concept of fire god, of Death

L.10 Zoroastrian: here, a parsee.

Lines 10-11: The mind of the child, touched by the sight of the half burnt corpse.

Lines 12-13: It is a sin to forget the dead. The fire in leaving behind 'half -burns fingers and bone-stubs' is committing a sin by disrespecting the corpse. The child's mind decides to save fire from this sin.

L.14 It never forgot: The fire-hymn never forgot

L.17 Tower of Silence: Structure on which the parsees expose their dead.

II Imagery in Keki N. Daruwalla's - The Ghaghra is spate

The poet evokes a nightmarish picture of the river in spate and the villagers terror is recorded with compassion and understand-

ing. The poem opens with a colourful picture of the landscape - the hills, plains, rivers described in a vivid manner. Ghagra which moves in her regular course, becomes more turbulent as the day advances. By dusk she is brown due to the turbulence and by night she is like a deep wound flowing across the land. At dusk the atmosphere was tranquil; in fact deceptively quiet that one never guesses at the flood imminent. The landscape is perfectly balanced with the paddy field, the water, the shadows of the trees and the birds. The imagery of the country side is beautifully drawn up by the poet. As twilight sets the river is hardly visible and suddenly amidst the tranquillity the floods come, in the middle of the night. It is a nightmarish reality that the villagers go through, where fears turn phantasmal. The poet draws a dismal picture of the pennilessness of human beings when they become victims of nature.

The rage of the river as she courses, through the village causing harm to man and animals is beautifully drawn. Amidst all this the sight of children enthusiastically cheering the rescue boats, is something that gives hope. Their child-like innocence helps them to see the lighter side of the tragedy, whereas they can only sit still with a blank and desperate look. The men are not angry with the gods or with nature. They accept the river's overwhelming might as their fate. The scepticism of the people is brought out clearly by the poet. Amidst this tragedy, the poet through the image of the chauffer-driven cars and the search for drift-wood, shows the callousness of modern society, where some people are unaware of what is going on.

The picture of the withdrawing river is more malignant than when she caused the floods. She has an animal passion about her and seems to take away anything available. After the floods the life of the fishes caught in the paddy fields is a sad one. When the mud dries, their life too ends. This is what modern society is. Nature when contrasted with human life expresses the tragedy very plainly. The language is very realistic and helps to draw the picture clearly - a very visual picture, colourfully presented almost as if taken out of a landscape painting.

Annotation - model

I swore to save fire
from the sin of forgetfulness.

The Child who walks with his father past a crematory sees the bones. Left behind after the fire has consumed the flesh. Scattered around are half-burnt limbs and studies of bones. Seeing this the father tells the child that fire has forgotten to complete its work. It is a sin to forget the dead. The fire is disrespecting the corpses, the child swears to save fire from the sin of forgetfulness. There is a conflict between the soul and fire.

This should be seen from a parsee point of view. Fire is God for the parsee's. Hence the parsee concept of God and fire act as a background to the poem. The usual myths about ghosts and wandering-spirits around a crematory does not frighten the child. The human soul which is relentless is fighting against a greater power - of death, of fire.

These lines are from 'Fire-Hymn' which is included in the collection 'Apparition in April'. Daruwalla is a parsee and so it is natural that he could write so vividly about the parsee concept of death and fire.

Passage for Annotation:

The burning ghat erupted phosphorescence and wandering ghost-lights frightened passers-by as moonlights scuttled among the bones.

2....Half ...cooked limbs

bore witness to the fire's debauchery.

3. the fire -hymn said to me, 'you stand forgiven'

Essay Questions

Write an essay on Daruwalla's use of irony.

R. PARTHASARATHY

Rajagopal parthasarathy was born at Tirupparaiturai near Tiruchirapalli in 1934 and was educated at Don Bosco High school and siddharth college, Bombay and at Leeds University. He was a Lectures in English Literature in Bombay before he joined Oxford University press in 1971 as Regional Editor in madras. His works include 'poetry from Leeds' (1968), 'The Twentieth century Indian poets' (1976) and 'Rough passage' (1977) which was a runner-up for the commonwealth poetry prize in 1977. He has a number of poems published in different journals. He was awarded the Ulka poetry Prize of 'poetry India' in 1966. He is a member of the Advisory Board for English of the National Academy of Letter, New Delhi.

"Exile", "Trial" and "Homecoming", together form the long poem 'Rough passage', written over a period of fifteen years between 1961 and 1975. Parthasarathy tackles the question of language and identity, the alienation that one feels in one's own country due to the inner conflict that arises from being brought up in two cultures. The strength of the poem derives from his sense of responsibility towards crucial personal events in his life.

1 EXILE - 2

In 'Exile', the first part of 'Rough passage'. The poet opposes the culture of Europe with that of India and the consequence of British rule on an Indian. He experiences a loss of identity with his own culture and therefore the need to trace his roots.

The poem begins with the scene of a room in a London flat where young men sit together talking of their country (India) and its art. This young man had spent his youth idolising the Englishman as God. Since he was so captivated by them. The young men realise that languages flourish in its own cultural backdrop and loses its vitality when imported. It's like a tree transplanted into another climate. The bark withers in the new climate and the branches lose their vitality. The only reassuring thought is that the past is always there to be cherished. It is something concrete, something real. In this new world, flaunting the dress and poise of the new folks, you are nothing but the 'coloured's among the whites. London city is no 'jewel' as was believed by the Indian during the British rule. Like any

other Indian city with its squalor and poverty, London too has its share of smokes and litter and poverty-stricken children.

In the ninth stanza, he hears an old man speaking a great truth, a truth which he himself had come to realise. It is that you cannot change people from what they are. They belong to the past and the new environment cannot change them except superficially. The British empire seems to be losing its glory. From Africa could be heard the voice of protest and stanzas eleven and twelve speak of the fall of the British empire. And in this context, the river Thames appears as a retraining force. Just as the martial powers of Boadicea, Queen of Iceni, was defeated by the Romans, so too the progress of the British empire comes to a grinding halt. Now sitting under the shade of the poplars, overlooking the Thames, watching London waking up to a new day, the young men realise that England has also lost touch with its past.

Notes

- L. 4 Ravi Shankar. The great sitar maestro
- L.5.6: typical room of bachelors
- 1.7 Whoring. Captivate by
- L.9-10 roots are deep: Your life as an alien, makes you realise that your roots are deep.
- L. 12 sky: culture
- L. 19 immigrants: The Indians in England.
- coloureds: different from the whites in colour; racial discrimination.
- L.27 . Realisation which dawns, like the New year bringing new promises.
- L. 28. empire's last words: first signs of the decline of the British empire.
- L.36. Boadicea" Queen of the Iceni, an ancient Celtic tribe, who was defeated by the Romans; in Britain.
- L. 37. Poplars" trees of the genus populus, usually characterised by the columnar manner of growth.

L. 38. suggests that England has lost touch with her past.

II EXILE - 8

The young man is now back in India among the familiar scenes of porters, rickshaw pullers, barbers, etc. The bridge hovers over them and the trees in the maidan offer shade to one and all. He is full of excitement and rushes to enjoy companionship. He still retains the smell of gin and cigarettes, reminders of the habits acquired in England. Passions overweigh words and you succumb to them. Right now he wants to experience life, experience emotional security. Maturity comes with the passing of years and it brings wisdom. The city of Calcutta, on the banks of the Hooghly gives him to the end. He has now passed from youth to adulthood. His youth he has left behind and now his duty is to be loyal to himself as an adult. In his hurry to be a man of experience, he has given up innocence.

Notes

L.1.3 a picture of India.

L.4 Bridge: Howrah bridge

L.6 TreeMaidan:

The comforting shade of the tree, the security offered by familiar surroundings, truly Indian.

L.12. Feelings beggar description: Words cannot express the feelings

L.14.15 Nothing....needs all: life has to be experienced; what needed is emotional security.

L. 16.17. The year. . find it: The young man going after experience to acquire wisdom.

L. 18 . Hooghly: river Hooghly in Calcutta.

L. 19. Job Charnock: Agent of the East India company's station at Hooghly and founder of Calcutta.

L.21. Bone urn: The skull, the brain.

L.22.23 ashes: ashes after cremation; suggestive of the end of phase of life, ashes of experience.

L.24 My life. circle: he is a man now, not youth

L. 25. I must. . half : as befits a man.

L. 26.27 I've forfeited.. man; in his hurry to be a man he has forfeited innocence.

III TRIAL - I

'Trial' celebrates love as a reality here and now. In the confusion of alienation and non relationship, it is personal love that offers the promise of belonging. This is what parthasarathy tells us in 'Trial', the second part of 'Rough passage'

Here, the poet wants to create an identity for himself. 'Mortal as I am', he says he must face death. Though he knows this, he cannot willingly give himself up to death. Everyone tries to cling on to the last straw. At the inevitable moment all say 'I haven't finished'. But no one listens to it because death is inevitable. It is love which holds forth a promise of belonging. Love helps to understand life better. And when love has helped, he realises his own obligation to love and decides to speak only good of the dead. He celebrates love as a real experience. Through his experience with love, he tries to find a solution to the problem of alienation.

Notes

L.1 Mortal as I am : all mortal things must die.

L.5 Where I... extremely : a dying man's desperate attempts to save himself.

L.9 Yet... unheeded: your screams go unheeded death is a reality.

L. 10 Love : Lust ; experience with love, with women.

IV. TRIAL - 2

The young man here speaks of his girl friend. Through the family album he tries to recapture the childhood of the girls as well as that of himself. The photograph is one which was taken when, they as children visited the Taj Mahal. In the fourth stanza he remembers his school days. Those were the days of the British rule and the English schools which he attended, did not give him enough. He grew up, full

of eager desire, listening to the juicy stories narrated by the cook. The cook is the one who provided mental nourishment. Memories of his father's death come to him, and he withdrew into a shell. Time, the healing factor, brought him out of it. And then as time went by he engaged himself with the divisions of adulthood. Childhood was left behind forever.

Notes

- L.1-6. Description of his girlfriend as a child.
- L.17 squatting: Sitting on one's heels; sitting like that before of the Taj, seems to minimise its beauty.
- L. 10: school was a mixture of everything.
- L.11-12 : The English schools did not dole out enough to quench the minds.
- L.14 agog: full of eager desire, with anticipation
succulent: juicy
- L.15.16 you rolled.. died : The psychological changes after the death of his father.
- L.19. bronzed: The physical changes of adulthood.
- L.20 touch wood day: decayed day
- L.21:Childhood is lost forever.

V HOME COMING-1

'Homecoming' the third and final part of 'Rough passage' explores the phenomenon of returning to one's home. It is a sort of overture made with the aim of starting dialogue between the poet and his Tamil past.

The poet comes home with the colonial hangover. English chains are still binding him yet the influence of his past culture pulls him back. His hunger for his Dravidian culture is left unsatisfied and so he falters and stumbles. He has almost forgotten his Tamil but he finds that he can still articulate with perfect ease. This is due to the unifying touch that the language has. The language of the great masters like valluvar has now acquired worldwide popularity. This is due

to the phenomenal growth of film and the poet is pleased at this growth that the language has gone through.

Notes

- L.1 English Chains: Colonial hangover.
- L.2.I returnyou: his homecoming
- L.4 tether:a particular limit
- L. 5 . unassuaged: unsatisfied
- L.6. father, stumble: due to his long separation
- L.8. Kural: Tamil classic of the third or fourth century A.D.by valluvar
- L.10 agglutinative: uniting
- L.11.12 Hooked on celluloid: combines simple words without change of form to express compound ideas; refers to the growing popularity of films.

VI HOMECOMING - 3

Here the poet draws a very tranquil picture of his ancestral home where a family reunion is going on. It is after a long time that such an event takes place. The earlier occasion was when his grandfather died. Relatives flocked to their house in Tiruchanur, suffering all the hardships of the journey. The greatest difficulty was in recognition due to the lack of correspondence with one another over the years. Once they recognised each other they gathered together with the usual homeliness that existed in this ancestral home and something that the poet missed while in London. The familiar haunts, the ordinary homely food, the siesta were all enjoyed by everyone with welcome fervour. Sundari was one of the naughty cousins who accompanied the poet on his pranks. Tree climbing was forbidden to the girls, but sundari ignored these warnings. But now, the very same sundari, was an elderly lady of forty years, a picture of motherhood, with her three daughters around her offering love and protection. It reminds the poet of what he has been missing all these years. Children are the support and hope of parents. This is a great truth that the Indian culture has taught us and which the poet found to be missing in the other cultures.

Notes

L.2. family reunion: the greatest event after his return

L.6. unlettered years: lack of correspondence over the years

L.10 Choultry: Inn.

not L.13 Sundari: one of his cousins; she disobeyed the order to climb trees.

L.18 safe planets: security offered by the children.

Model Annotation

Here, on the bank of the Hooghly.

in the city Job Charnock built

I shall carry this wisdom to another city in the bone urn of my mind.

After the poets return to India, he realises maturity brings wisdom and this wisdom comes from experience, he feels that the does not have enough experience to attain wisdom. So he goes after wisdom which he thinks he can get from the city of Calcutta on the banks of the Hooghly. What he learns from here he will take with him as the bones of the dead are carried in an urn. Here the urn is his own mind in which he can store all his learning. The ashes he carries are the ashes of experience. And it is through these experiences that he passes from youth into adulthood. His roots are embedded here and therefore the experiences got from here will make him a mature adult. And then it is his duty to be loyal to himself as an adult.

Hooghly is the river Hooghly in Calcutta over which the Howrah bridge is Job Charnock is the Agent of the East India company's station at Hooghly and is the founder of Calcutta.

Passages for Annotation:

1. There is something to be said for exile: you learn roots are deep.

2....It's no use trying

to change people. They'll be what they are.

3. That language is a tree, loses colour under another she
all 4. ".....Nothing can really be dispensed with. The heart needs

5. I've forfeited the embarrassing gift.

innocence in my scramble to be man.

6. Mortal as I am, I face the end

with unspeakable relief,

knowing how I should feel

if I were stopped and cut off.

7....of the dead

I speak nothing but good.

8...purged

you turned the corner in child's steps.

9. Over the family -album, the other night

I shared your childhood:

10. My tongue in English chains.

I return, after a generation, to you.

11. The dust of unlettered years

clouding instant recognition

12. Her three daughters floating

like safe planets near her.

Essays topics

1. The question of language and identity in R. Parthasarathy's poetry.

2. The inner conflict coming out of being brought up in two cultures, as reflected in Rough passage.

3. Personal elements in Parthasarathy's poems.

A.K. RAMANUJAN

Attipat Krishnaswami Ramanujan was born in Mysore in 1929. He is a Kannada poet, well-versed in Tamil and Kannada. His education was at D. Bhanumaiah's High School and Maharaja's college, Mysore. Since 1962 he has been at the University of Chicago, where he was professor of Dravidian studies and linguistics. He has translated the Sangam literature. His work includes 'Fifteen Tamil poem' (1965), 'The striders' (1966), 'The Interior Landscape' (1967), 'No Lotus in the Navel' (1969) 'Relations' (1971) 'Speaking of Siva' (1972 - one of his translated works), 'Samskara' (1976 a translation of U.R. Anantha Murthy's Kannadan novel) and 'Selected poem' (1976). 'The striders' was a poetry society Recommendation. He was awarded the gold Medal of the Tamil writers Association for The Interior Landscape. Ramanujan writes: "English and my disciplines (linguistics, anthropology) give me my 'outer' form-linguistic, material, logical and other such ways of shaping experience; and my first unity years in India, my frequent visits and fieldtrips and personal and professional preoccupations with Kannada, Tamil, the classics and folklore give me my substance, my 'inner' forms, images and symbols. They are continuous with each other, and I no longer can tell what comes from where. He has also contributed to a number of literary Journals and Magazines.

IA RIVER - SUMMARY

This poem was first published in 'The striders'. It begins with a realistic description of the river Vaikai in Madurai. Madurai was the seat of Tamil culture and a centre of great learning. As an evocation to a river, the poem is a great success. What the poet achieves through the poem is to ironically expose the callousness of the old as well as the new Tamil poets who close their eyes to the havoc caused by the floods. Poets write only about events which excite them, such as floods, unmindful of the destruction cause. It is ironic the river is filled with water only once a year. Poets are naturally drawn to write about beauty and it is when she is at her best that she causes the greatest danger to nature and life. The simile of cows and buffaloes is very relevant because they live in water. Poets on the other hand live in an ivory tower and are oblivious of what is going on around them. The poets still sang, but followed the old tradition of the old poets and

sang only of foods. The tendency among poets is to imitate. There is a dearth of imagination and so they are content with emulation. So ultimately, Ramanujan feels that the present is worse than the past.

II OBITUARY

This poem is taken from Relations. Obituary means the account of life, career and achievement of the dead published in newspapers. Here the poet remembers his dead father and the legacy he left for his sons. Through irony and a flippant tone he is trying to detach himself from the trauma of his father's death. When his father dies, there was no legacy left, but only a table full of papers, debts to be repaid, daughters to be married off and a decaying house. Being the 'burning type', his cremation was well completed. All that was left were the ashes, the coins with which his eyes had been closed and a few bones. The ashes were thrown, at the instruction of the priests into the river. He left them nothing else. No headstone had been erected in his memory. He was a poor, obscure person and by stressing his father's poverty and consequent suffering, he reveals his love for his father.

Many things happened to his father - like his birth and his death birth through a Caesarean operation and death by heart failure. These events have been entered in the pages of memory to be cherished by near and dear. His father has left behind a changed mother - mother who is now a widow and changed by grief. Another thing left behind but their father is the different rites to be performed annually according to tradition and custom.

The poet deliberately depersonalises the situation and out of this detachment comes a tautness and a strength. Sentimentalism is completely ruled out in keeping with the nature of the father. The interplay of past and present intensifies the poignancy. Ramanujan also uses the occasion to comment ironically on ceremonies and ritual associated with the dead.

Irony in Ramanujan's poetry

The poet's irony is all pervasive. Most of his poems about his family are tinged with irony. This is seen at its best in "Still life". Even things considered most sacred received an ironic, bemused treatment. For example in 'Obituary' an average and familiar day - to - day

transaction at the provision store is dramatised. Irony is dominated by good humour in 'Self-portrait'. In 'Warning' it is pungent and sardonic. K. Ayyappa Panicker says "the confessional note in the poems about close relations, mother, father, grandfather, wife and children gains it aesthetic validity from this ironic stance". His comments on life situations are never direct or explicit. In his 'Image for politics', he draws the picture of the victor-victim where finally the victories are eaten up. In 'The river' he speaks of those poets who are unmindful of what happens to others. Poetry is a sort of self-indulgence. The poets are excited at the prospect of a river in flood, but in summer when it is just a trickle, it is uninspiring. The moment which sends the poet into raptures, is a moment of havoc. In 'One Reads' he exposes a society that is morally diseased with pretenders and liars.

Ramanujan's poems like those of many of his fellow poets writing in English, suffer from what is called intellectual thinness'. Ironically, enough the first poem in his first collection 'The striders' (incidentally strider is the name in New England for a water insect) is marked by the intellectual thinness of its conclusion.

No, not only prophets
walks on water, This bug
its
on a landslide of lights
And drowns eye-
Deep-
Into its tiny strip
of sky.

Alienation in the poems of Ramanujan

Ramanujan is alienated in more than one and foremost there is the alienation, a fundamental one at Brahmin from an emerging secular, modern society. These second is a linguistic alienation twice over-that of a Tamil-born in Kannada society and that of a Kannadiga in a literary milieu saturated with non-Kannada elements. Thirdly there is a minor alienation in terms of two cultures-the alienation of a person formally trained in non-literary culture in the formative phase of his educational career but later pragmatically pushed

into literary realm. Lastly, total alternation or physical alienation as a result of his decision to make it good in North America.

The situation of mounting alienation leads to reverse romanticism. It is a frame of mind and the operational strategy which strategy which transforms remote into the immediate thus imposing a pseudo-realism on essentially romantic modalities of experience. Ramanujan's poetry tries desperately to turn the exotic in to the ordinary and thus make the ordinary the exotic, involving the strategy of reverse of reverse romanticism.

The striders is a slim and elegant collection of a little a forty poems. The title is very symbolic of reverse romanticism. The strider is the name of a water insect in New England. It also epitomizes the impossible interconnection between a Tamil Mysore Brahmin and a New England water-insect.

Passages for Annotation

1.....and afterwards
we climbed a tree, she said
not very tall, but full of leaves
like those of a fig tree.

2. Now she looks for the swing
in cities with fifteen suburbs
and tries to be innocent
about it.

Essay questions

1. "A.K. Ramanujan has the tendency to follow up a private insight until it completes itself in a poem". Discuss
2. The elements of irony and humour in A.K. Ramanujan
3. the confessional note in A.K. Ramanujan's poetry
4. "The poet has an eye for the exact physiognomy of the object described". Discuss with reference to the poems of A.K. Ramanujan.

KAMALADAS

Kamala Das was born at Punnayurkulam in southern Malabar in 1934 and was educated mainly at home. Hailing from an illustrious family which has a fine cultural background, her poetic style has a freshness and vigour seldom displayed by any other Indo-Anglian poet. Her poetry is noted for its powerful passion, a confessional strain and autobiographical themes. Most of her poems are remarkable for their power and raw truth. A bilingual writer, her works in English and Malayalam include 'summer in Calcutta (1965), 'The Descendants' (1967), 'The Old playhouse and other poems' (1973) and 'My story' (1974), an autobiography. A few of her stories originally written in Malayalam are published in 'Modern Indian short stories': An anthology' (1974). She was given the poetry Award of the Asian PEN Anthology in 1964 and the Kerala Sahitya Academy Award in 1969 for 'Cold', a collection of short stories in Malayalam. Her poems have appeared in *Opinion*, *New Writing in India* (Penguin Books, 1974) and *Young Commonwealth poets '65*.

I MY GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE - An Appreciation

This poem was first published in *summer in Calcutta* (1965). It reveals the poet's nostalgic yearning for her family home, Nalappat House, in Malabar.

The poem begins in the present tense to suggest the permanence of the house where once she was showered with love and affection by her grandmother. It is the memories of an innocent child's attachment to her grandmother and grandmother's house that is narrated here. She remembers the change that came over in that house of love after her grandmother's death. 'The house withdrew into silence' says the poet thinking of the past. This house boasted of great

personal library and her incapacity to read the books as a child is regretted now. The house is now infected with snakes and due to fear her blood turns cold like the moon. There is a persistent wish to go back to her maternal home, to just watch and listen to the 'frozen air'. In her characteristic way, out of despair, she at least wishes to pick an armful of darkness from there to bring to her present place of abode and keep it as a brooding dog behind her bedroom doors. Heart

broken, she is unable to proceed with her thoughts for sometime. Here, she put a vital question to her 'darling'-could he ever believe that she lived in such a house and was proud and loved' and had lost her way? This sense of loss is another characteristic of her poetry. She expresses her present difficulty where she is forced to beg for love in small change 'at strangers' doors' as opposed to her green past when love was flowing to her from her grandmother and the house.

Love is the deepest concern in this poem. The moving of the snakes among books maybe a poetic exaggeration but in the adult world it might be an expression of sexual libido as contrasted with of the innocent child's fright at seeing snakes. The coldness, the isolation felt by the poet is obvious. The air is frozen with past memories. It also suggests the lack of regality. The speaker perhaps has no security and the dog is a symbol of security. She who was once loved is now reduced to begging for it. From utmost security and love, she moves to desolation, frigidity and rearing. The poem is least objective and least ironic. Reiteration of 'cold', 'frozen', 'darkness' accentuate the lifeless existence of the protagonist.

Notes :

L.1 House : Family house at Nalapat. the nostalgia.

L.2: emphasis of the love she received.

L.2.4: recapturing the sudden change that befell the house after the death of her grandmother.

L.5. Cold: the fear; the chill that goes through her

L.7. blind : because the house is deserted

windows : in Kamala Das's poetry, window is always a link between the past and the present.

L.8. frozen with memories; also -suggestive of the lack of virility.

L.9 an armful of darkness: painful memories of the past.

L. 12-16: a listener is presupposed.

II THE DANCE OF THE EUNUCHS - AN APPRECIATION

Dance of the Eunuchs is the opening poem of kamala Das collection summer in Calcutta. The poet begins by describing a very hot summer day. The eunuchs come in their colourful dress and jingling anklets to dance and sing under the shade of the gulmohar. The hot weather is emphasised by the repetition of the word 'hot and the gulmohar too is fiery which adds to the effect. Their songs too were unpleasant. Though they sing melancholic of 'lovers dying' and children left unborn', they fail to produce any pathos because their voices are harsh and also because they indulge in their dance only with vacant ecstasy.

The metaphor of the 'half-burnt logs from funeral pyres' best expresses the details of their own bodies. The funeral imagery is symbolic of the sterility of the eunuchs and their decrepit bodies.

They

Were thin in limbs and dry' like half-burnt logs from

Funeral pyres, a drought and a rottenness
were in each of them.

This reveals the visual impression of the eunuchs who survive and suffer endlessly like 'half-burnt logs from funeral pyres'. The rainfall too is not regenerative. It is a meagre rain'. And does not bring coolness. Even the rain, which is a life giving force cannot wipe out the barrenness. The crows too pitied the eunuchs. The description of the noisy crows sitting as if stunned to silence, is a commentary of the whole scene.

The poem is reminiscent of T.S. Eliot's 'The Wasteland'. There is no affirmation that life should continue. The barrenness of the eunuchs may be suggestive of the barrenness in each of our souls. It leaves behind a sense of despair, a sense of waste.

Notes:

L.1. hot: The hot days suggesting the frenzy

Lines 1-6: sympathising with the eunuchs who are neither male nor female. The details of the weather and dancers set up the atmosphere of the poem.

L. 4. Jingling: here has a jarring effect.

L.10 lovers...The pathos, the melancholy

L.12. Vacant ecstasy: Sums up the mood of the poem: a devastating sense of her sterility.

L.13. half burnt logs: The plight of their bodies.

L.14 from funeral pyres: the inner vacuity and sterility of the eunuchs; they suffer endlessly.

L.14 . from funeral pyres: the inner vacuity and sterility of the eunuchs : they suffer endlessly.

L. 15. Even thetrees, as if stunned to silence; describes the barrenness.

L.17. Convention: The impression created by their dance

L.18. Thunder : Suggestive of rain

L.19. Meagre rain: even the rain offers no promise

III THE SUNSHINE CAT

This is another poem kamala Das' collection 'summer in Calcutta', where she speaks of the injustice meted out to women by men. The poet as a sensitive woman is in search of meaningful love and she hates to be treated as a symbol of sex. She flaunts flamboyant Just which was what the many men who knew her wanted. She feels that society is always against a woman. A man is free to go in search of love. Her own husband whom she loved, did not love in return, only watched as she was being used by the 'band of cynics' to satiate their lust. None of them could give love and they did not expect to be loved too. She seemed to be losing her sanity when she was forced onto the bed against her desire. The bed was no more a place that could offer her comfortable sleep. Instead it only reminded of the ugliness of what happened and she lay weeping. Then she resolved to build a wall around her to protect her vulnerability from society. In fact she is only pretending to be strong to face society. She says that she had the capacity to please her husband. After her middle ages, he realises that she had lost her vitality and what was a 'streak' earlier is only a 'line' now. And in old age she has lost everything. She

is frigid and unresponsive and therefore of no use to men. Her life has become a sterile waste. She is cut off from the warmth of loving and living and when the warmth is gone, she is as good as dead. Here her husband represents the society which is unfair to women.

Certain images like cat occur in Kamala Das. Cat is symbol of luxury, of selfishness, of femininity. She portrays here the predicament of the women whose lustre is lost leading to emotional death. Every iota of individuality is taken from society and when this society turns hostile the women are misunderstood and discarded.

Kamala Das as a confessional Poet

The term confessional was first used to describe the kind of poetry that Robert Lowell wrote in his *Life Studies*. Over the years this new trend has developed into the confessional school of poetry with certain well-defined characteristics. The confessional poets have a capacity for ruthless self analysis and a tone of utter sincerity. They speak in terms of an 'I' emphasized Lyricism and give us a psychological equivalent to of his mental state.

The poetry of kamala Das has many of the qualities of confessional poetry. She has dealt with the private humiliations and suffering which are the stock themes of confessional poetry. Her frank admissions and bold treatment of private life are very much in keeping with the nature of confessional poetry.

The poem 'The Suicide' carries the most vital elements of confessional poetry. Here the conflict is between the world as it is and the personal experience of the poet given in terms of the symbols of the body and the soul. The poem is a monologue addressed to the sea.

Kamala Das is concerned with herself as a victim. Sexual humiliation becomes a central experience in her auto-biography 'My story' the Old Playhouse is a variation on the same theme. All her quests for love end in disasters of lust. The sterility and vacant ecstasy at accompany 'The Dance of the Eunuchs' correspond to her own feeling of persecution and inadequacy. The image of the body as a prison which recurs in her poems may be traced to this deep existential anxiety that pervades all confessional poetry.

Confessional poetry is a struggle to relate the private experience with the outer world as it is. Such a struggle is seen in the poems of Kamala Das. In 'An Introduction' she struggles to keep her identity against the categorizes 'who ask he to fit in. Having refused to choose a name and a role she feels it necessary to define he identity.

I am saint, I am beloved and the
Betrayed. I have no joys which are not yours, no
Aches which are not yours I too call myself I...

The painful assertion 'I too all' comes from the predicament of the confessional poet. Her experiences are too common and ordinary to give her special identity. But the 'I' which experiences them, she insists is separate and unique. This, to her is the only way to retain her sense of person worth in the world of categorises.

To Kamala Das, death has none of the charms of a mystic experience. The escape she seeks in physical love are also suicides in the sense that, they feel a temporary merging of dualities within one self. The moods of a confessional poet are diverse and shifting. Confessional poetry is all autobiographical to the extend of being nostalgic. It is intensely personal. Kamala Das is able to transform her intense personal experience into a general truth. Her own predicament and her own suffering become symbolic of human predicament and suffering. She is intensely personal and universal.

Kamala Das - Feminine sensibility in her poems.

The tone of Kamala Das 'Poems is distinctively feminine. It is as though she lays bare a feminine heart without reservations. Srinivasa Iyengar says 'Kamala das' is a 'mercely feminine sensibility that dares without inhibitions I s to articulate the hurts that it has received in an intensive, largely man- made world". Kamala Das's feminine sensibility is not to be found in her frank confessions of her sexual life. Or in a detailed description of female organs. It is seen in her attitude to love, in the ecstasy when she experiences love and the agony when she expresses fear over the loss of youth and beauty in poems like 'Beauty was a short season'. In the 'Music party'. The woman desires to feel the warmth of love while the music lasts, is followed by the

pain of dereliction when left alone. Her femininity is revealed by being love torn without a word to say. 'Jaisurya' and 'Afterwards' are the best expressions of feminism. The mother's overwhelming love for the unseen childish revealed clearly. In the choosing of a name for the child even before he is born. The woman in her adores the child. Instances of feminine sensibility are seen particularly in those poems where she writes in the person of Radha waiting for Krishna to redeem her suffering. In 'Afterwards' She thinks of the child's future in the world and is grieved at the very thought of his suffering. Here is another instance of her feminine sensibility. Feminine sensibility stresses emotional bond which only women poets can achieve. Passages for Annotation. 1. the house withdrew into silence, snakes moved

Among books I was then too young

To read, and my blood turned cold like the moon

2. Or in wild despair, pick an armful of

Darkness to bring it her to lie

Behind my bedroom like a brooding

Dog....

3.....I who have lost

My way and beg now at stranger's doors to

Receive love, at least in small change.

4. Their voices

Where harsh, their songs melancholy; they sang of Lovers dying and of children left unborn

5.....Even the crows were so

silent on trees, and the children, wide-eyed, still;

All were watching these poor creative convulsions.

Essay topics

1. Language and imagery in the poems of Kamala Das.

2. Kamala Das as a modern poet.

3. The evolution of self in the poems of Kamala Das.

4. The treatment of the theme of love in Kamala Das' poetry

5. the auto-biographical in Kamala Das' poems.

6. Feminism in Kamala Das' poems.

7. The personal element in Kamala Das' poem.

NISSIMEZEKIEL

Nissim Ezekiel was born in Bombay in 1924 and was educated at Wilson College, Bombay and Birbeck college, London. He is at present Reader in American Literature at the University of Bombay. A very prolific writer, he is one of the most established of modern poets. His works include 'A Time to change' (1952), 'Sixty poems' (1953) 'The third' (1959), 'the Unfinished Mass' (1960), 'The Exact Name' (1956), 'Three plays' (1969), and 'Snakeskin and other poems' (1974), translations from the Marathi of Indira Sant and 'Hymns in Darkness' (1976). His poems have been published in Encounter. The Illustrated Weekly of India, London magazine and 'The Spectator'

Ezekiel's poetry is an attempt to come to terms with himself. He is trying to communicate on a personal level feelings of loss and deprivation. 'Scores of my poems', he says, 'are obviously written for personal therapeutic purposes Enterprise is one such work. He is a foreign Jew born in India.

I POET, LOVER, BIRDWATCHER

This is from the poet's collection 'The Exact Name'. Here he is trying to relate a poet to a lover and a bird-watcher. Very objectively he tells us that impatience cannot win birds or women. Similarly the poet should wait till the moment of inspiration Persistence and patience have to be exercised by lovers, bird-watchers and poets. The birds, similarly love cannot be forced-you get the object of you love only by patient waiting. There is a sense of tranquillity in this waiting. And the waiting proves fruitful when she surrenders to your love. Similarly the poet finds his waiting effectual when his poem achieves the desired effect.

In the stanza, he tells us that patience is a king of self-discipline. It wills you to do painful and unpleasant deed just like love, which is an excruciating growth accompanied by pain, it is a 'tapasya' which brings self-realisation. For Ezekiel, life and poetry are inextricably one. It is an effort to find harmony in existence. No irony or scepticism is infended in the poem. The philosophical content is conveyed metaphorically in a very terse style.

II Philosophy

This is a meditative, reflective poem which asserts the superiority of poetry over philosophy. Ezekiel studied philosophy in London where he lived in a basement room with 'philosophy, poverty and poetry' as companions. He begins by stating his love for philosophy and it is described as a place to which he often goes. While there, he forgets the realities of life, almost away from existence. However there it is all cold lucidity because everything is explained through logic. The warmth of human relationship is lost. However there is no dearth of idea and concepts. The poet then carries his imagination backwards, to prehistoric time, when the earth was just covered with mud. Time moves on and a million stars come and go and the evolution of man took place. Man is a creature of passions and he is agitated by these passions. But these agitation are nothing in the flow of time. Science and philosophy can explain a lot, but they cannot throw light on certain aspect of human nature. Certain dark myths can not be explained by philosophy or science. They can be explained only by the formula of light, and this wisdom is provided by poetry. The language of poetry appeals to the senses and can interpret many trust which remain as 'dark myths'. It speaks of common things, common human relations and so it is preferred to the cold lucidity of philosophy. Argument or logic is cold like a dead person and hence futile. Poetry has warmth and hence it is the source of life and wisdom.

Imagery in Nissim Ezekiel

Ezekiel uses imagery very sparingly. His use of imagery is not decorative, but purely functional. Some of the images are frequently repeated so that it acquires symbolic significance. Thus in "Enter-prise" the journey is a metaphor of life. It is also symbolic of the voyage into one's inner self. In 'Night of the scorpion' he describes the "flash of diabolic tail in the dark room" which is symbolic of the evil

that pervades the world and man is waging an ever continuing struggle against it. Home symbolises the place where one lives and also one's inner self.

Some of the other images are the woman, the city and nature. There is frequent recurrence of the pagan woman who is a great beast of sex. She is symbolic of defilement and corruption. The image of the virtuous woman which appears in his poems does not acquire great significance. The image of hair in 'Description' is a beautiful one. In the 'Morning walk' the image of the city is identified with other allied images -slums, hawkers, beggars, processions, drums and purgatorial lanes, nature for Ezekiel is a manifestation of the greatness and glory of the supreme. Wind for the poet is a sort of inspiring agent.

The images of hiss, rivers, wind, skies, sun and rain attain a definite significance in their contrast with the images of the city. The image of the basement room that occur in his poetry is reminiscent of his life in England where he lived in basement room. In his poetry, the basement room is an image of a place of refuge where he can be himself. It is the 'home' where 'grace' can be found. Ezekiel is not a symbolist poet, as the term goes, but as he himself says "city, woman and nature certainly lend themselves to symbolic imagery". Animals, birds and beasts are also parts of nature and so they are also symbols of purity, innocence and goodness, and so are contrasted with the defiled man, corrupted by life in the city.

Annotation passages

1. It started as a pilgrimage,

Exalting minds and making all

The burdens light,

2. A shadow fell on us-and grows

3.....I tried to pray.

Our leader said he smelt the sea.

4. We noticed nothing as we went,

A straggling crowd of little hope.

Ignoring what the thunder meant.

5. Home is where we have together grace

Essay Topics

1. Consider 'Enterprise' and 'Philosophy' as variations of the theme of self-discovery.
2. Ezekiel's use of irony.
3. Modernism in Ezekiel's poetry.
4. Journey as an image with special reference to Enterprise.
5. As confessional poet.

JAYANTA MAHAPATRA

Jayanta Mahapatra was born in Cuttack in 1928 and was educated at Stewart school and Ravenshaw College, Cuttack. He lives in Cuttack and works at Ravenshaw College. His works include 'Close the Sky', 'Ten by ten' (1971), 'Svayamvara and Other poems' (1971), 'Counter Measures' (1973), poems translated from Oriya and 'A Rain of Rites'. He has contributed to a number of journals. He edits 'Chandrabhaga'.

Mahapatra explores the intricacies of human relationships. His style is starting and refreshing and has an unexpected quietude. The economy of language and the images recall the subhasitas of classical Sanskrit. He says, "What seems to disturb me is the triumph of silence in the mind: and if these poems are inventions, they are also longing amid the flow of voices toward a need that I feel defensive". For the poet, love offers a sort of relief from the uncertainties one has come to expect, uncertainties one has come to expect of life. This can be seen in 'Lost' and 'The Logic'.

THE WHOREHOUSE IN A CALCUTTA STREET

This poem is from the collection 'A Rain of Rites'. It begins with a welcoming tone, promising a few hours of pleasure. He is tempted by being told that in the brothel he could meet all the women that he has desired and whose pictures he has seen on posters. All of them are there for the customer to pick and choose. He is told not to feel shy or guilty thinking of their wives from whom they part of the

present moment. The courtyard of the house promises 'a great conspiracy', something sacred. Here sacredness mingles with heresy because the sense of values is topsy-turvy. If the men are shamed of what they are doing. The women too are guilty of spending time in false chatter and prefer jewels to children. Children are just a dream for them, because in the modern family children are most unwelcome. Even the women, the epitome of maternal instincts do not seem to cherish children. Instead they prefer the ornamental pleasures of life. The instinct of man to be a parent is suppressed in modern society. In this respect there is no difference between the whores and the wives. The man in the company of the prostitute may forget his context in society. The rebellious thought, which you had as a youth, waiting to break down the walls of this Hippocratic society, has now vanished. As an adult, you indulge in those very same pleasures that you revolted against. Life is very short and fleeting. The poem ends on a note of reality with the man returning to his wife. The woman in the whorehouse has given him what he has come for and how wishes to free herself from him in the most business-like manner.

Notes

Whore house : the key reference point to the value system in society - a pointer to the sham in high class strata.

L. 6 there : the different women you have desired.

L. 8. startled: Pretended shock, prudish behaviour; the hypocrisy of society.

L. 10: the house is sacred because it allows you to do something unconventional; ironic

L. 11. great conspiracy; out of sight from society

L. 13. heresy; No pretension here.

L. 18. looked-after; no maternal warmth.

L. 19. Shooting stars; temporary brightness.

L. 21 dark spaces: emptiness created by the

lack of young ones; an echo of Charles Lamb's 'Dream Children' - a world of illusion, perfection.

- L.27. Little turnings of blood: one's flesh and blood
 L.28 rain bow: life of pleasure, harmony, fulfilment made so
 by children of one's won flesh and blood.
 L.33. Statue.....within: one's belief in oneself.
 L.35. disobeying toy: selfish concept.
 L.36. the walls: of society.
 L.37. mortal: insignificant
 L.39. as though it were real: s sense of illusion
 L.43 . against yours kind: predatory instinct of mankind.

Mahapatra's diction

The economy of phrasing and brevity are remarkable in mahapatra. For example in the Whorehouses in a Calcutta Street, expressions like the little. Turnings of blood/at the far edge of the rainbow' and 'her lonely breath thrashed against your kind' are terse and suggestive. He use the fewest possible words to express his meaning. His success as an Indo-anglian poet comes from his mastery of the English language.

What strikes us about his diction is his use of imagery which is fresh and original. It is the landscape of Orissa, with its it sea-coast and sunsets and sunrises that is mainly pictured in his poems. And when these images are handled with his masterful skill, they become symbolic scenes and sights of India as a whole. According to K. Ayyappa panicker, "An examination of the recurring images in Mahapatra' poems reveals that he is Oriya to the core. The sun of the Eastern coast of India shines through him. The Eastern sea sends its morning wind through them'. Mahapatra delights invoking the god of fire and god of water. Puri is a living character in most of his poems. The temple ,the priest, the beggar, the fisherman, the crow, all come alive before our eyes in their objective reality and concreteness and transform themselves into symbols and images. This is achieved through his mastery over the language. A street is described by him as a 'giant tongue' lolling out and reason is compared to wind in which the 'holy flower' sways.

Mahapatra has a keen eye for detail and through his use of language he can produce a well focused image which is beyond mere description. In 'A Missing person', he draws up the image of a woman who goes through a sense of loneliness, a feeling of loss, which even his reflected presence in the mirror cannot overcome. 'Crows' in Mahapatra are symbolic of evil, guilt and destruction; 'water' symbolises clarity and wisdom; 'rain' is symbol of purification; Rain image occur in a number of poems. The hand-! cup' too is a receiving image. He uses imagery from the world of science and pertaining to modern life, like T.S. Eliot or the metaphysicals. Thus in 'The Faith' we have 'Mornings like pale -yellow hospital Linen 'The image is symbolic of the ill-health of a whole nation.

He uses humanising epithets for the inanimate and non-human. In his expressions like 'furious wrinkled wall, indulgent sunshine', 'melting festival' etc.. the inanimate seems to spring to life. The human is linked with the non-human, the microcosm to the macrocosm. He exalts the ordinary and trivial to epic dimensions giving it human attributes.

Easy topics

- 1.The imagery in Jayanta Mahapatra's poetry
2. The tragic consciousness in Jayanata Mahapatra's poetry
- 3 . Mahapatra's concept of human relationships and .love.
- 4.The structure of Jayanta Mahapatra's poems

Useful Books:

- 1.K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar: Indian writing in English (Sterling publishers, new Delhi)
2. M.K. Naik: studies in Indian English Literature (sterling publishers, new Delhi)
3. M.g. Naik: History of Indian English Literature sterling, New Delhi)

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KEKI DARUWALLA

KEKI N. Daruwalla is a significant poet who made his mark on the Indian poetic scene in the 1970's. He is often considered to be an eloquent, angry, not-so young man. His satirical tone of poetic presentation sets him apart. His anger and contempt are directed against the dull, passive Indian life-style, the general incompetence, romantic illusions and so on. Yet he would claim himself to be a poet of the landscape. He says: "My poems are rooted in Landscape which anchors the poem. The landscape is not merely there to set these scene but to lead to an illumination".

Daruwalla's anger against corruption reveals a strong ethical and moral consciousness which often finds expression in satirical outbursts. His bitter ways of saying things are rather unusual in Indian poetry. Another important feature of his poetry is that even as he works on desire, memory and the immediacy of experience, he creates moods of depression. Because he feels that India is a land of darkness and despair with its passivity, fatalism and meaning less rituals. Yet he attempts to portray this real India by striking a balance between the outer reality and his inner consciousness of it.

Daruwalla believes that there can be no real tragedy in the modern world, for we are unfit subjects for tragedy and our little lives can be hardly fit subject for tragedy. Modern tragedy, according to him, will reflect our personal feelings of angst and related feelings of the negative kind. It reflects the social evils of our times, and these evil practices add up to the tragedy of our times. He also believes that physical and emotional life alone is not everything, and that one has to turn inward and find the power of "conscience". One must also think about and prepare for death which is another reality.

In the words of Bruce King, Daruwalla's poetic world is a "full populated world of politicians, writers, lovers, family, fakes, the corrupt, the tragic set in many places and with many events. It is larger fuller often more tragic (although not necessarily deeper or poetically superior) world than that found in the poetry of Ezekiel, Kamal Das or Ramanujan".

Keki Nasserwanji Daruwalla was born in Lahore in January 1937. After taking his master's degree in English Literature from Punjab

University he joined the Indian police service. His first book of poems **Apparition in April** in 1971. His third book **Crossing of Rivers** was published in 1976. His **Winter poems** came out in 1980. His poems figures in a number of anthologies, and he has himself edited an anthology of modern Indian poetry under the title **Two Decades of Indian Poetry in English - 1960**. He won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1984.

Daruwalla is known for his bitter, satiric tone and as one who writes from his experience of violence. He shows a preoccupation with some of the darker sides of existence particularly with the themes of death and destruction.

Daruwalla is one who believes, like many other poets writing in recent years, that poetry should derive its inner strength from a social awareness and a sense of commitment to changes that society is in need of and also the environment.

As a Painter of the rural landscape Daruwalla is remarkable. His focus is mainly on the north of India with its beautiful plains and pastures, its attractive hills and frightening rivers. Through this act of the will to focus very often on rustic India he demonstrates who he is different from many other poets of India writing in English in our times.

The vast landscape of this sprawling land comes alive in the pages of Daruwalla's poetry through his master touches. It gets its articulation in various forms and features - as hills, rivers, valleys, trees, plains and pastures. It gets its imagination inescapably, and he tackles it both in its wild and mild aspect. The poem "The Ghaghra in spate" is an example of the wild aspect, unfolding the terror that strikes the villagers at night as they fight the river. The change of the rivers' course every year and its colours at different times of the day are graphically depicted in the following.

And every year
the Ghaghra changes course
turning over and over in his sleep.
In afternoon she is a grey smudge exploring a grey
canvas.

When dusk readies her
 through an overhang of cloud
 she is overstewed coffee.
 At night under a red moon in menses
 She is a red weal
 across the spine of the land.

(Under Orion)

A similar portrayal of the low-lying areas of the Tarai infected with malarial mosquitos and hard-core bandits is to be found in the poem "In the Tarai", which is addressed to his friend Raju. Butcher, instead of showing compassion and understanding as in "The Ghaghra in spate" the poet becomes bitter and sarcastic. The following extract may be cited as an illustration of this biting tone:

It is nota bad district they all say
 Over the Ghaghra you have a ferry
 to carry your car
 There's an ice factory in town
 (ice that drips and sweats like flesh)
 There's an dhobi in your compound
 but take a tip, don't get your
 bush shirts starched
 they will hang limp all the same
 and smell like an Insemination centre.

(Under Orion)

The poet has written a whole cluster of such poems and put them together under a separate section called "poems from Target" in **Under Orion**. The other poems in this section are: "The Parijat Tree", "The Beggar", "Graft", "Death by Burial", "Ruminations I and II" and "Rail road Reveries". Of these, "The parijat Tree" is an instance of the

wild aspect of landscape, and the tree grows to be a symbol of greenery inspiring men to Yoga and meditation.

And so they came to the parijat tree
 Squatting in the shade of its fleshly branches
 Cross-legged and transverse-limbed
 All Yoga was here-all the asams
 every fluent stance
 in the arboreal jungle
 of this single tree.

The entire poem is structured around a legend about the Pandavas after the battle of Kurukshetra. Contrasted to this we find the scenes in "Death by Burial" and "Curfew -In a Riot - torn city", which are impressive in the whole range of Daruwalla's poetic universe. The poem "Railroad Reveries" is a nostalgic recollection of the charm of the distant landscape as experienced by the poet during a cold wave"

A landscape of distance
 of meaningless milestones
 crouching on the flanks
 Swallowed in the dust and the express -smoke
 the sad- eyed bitch upon the platform
 kicked about by urchins doesn't squeal
 head drooping, eyes bored, she walks away.

Daruwalla's second book, **Apparition in April**, though not as rich in landscape painting as the first one, has, nevertheless, a few remarkable poems such as "The snowman", "Pilgrimage to Badrinath", "To Writers Abroad", and "The Old man of the Sea" (Which is marked especially for its evocation of the dazzling yet devastating escape). Some stray, sporadic forays into landscape - portrayal have been made here, but they are sufficient to show the poets continued march along his chosen direction. As an illustration, the following excerpt from "Pilgrimage to Badrinath" may be quoted:

Along the valley of the buring sun;
 On flinty bridle paths which centuries have trod
 in penance and anonymous dust,
 the caravan of pain proceeds towards the gods.
 Stony eyes turn north ward towards tone
 and the grey austerity in the stance of hills;
 the snow-hush under granite skies,
 and the wind biting like a dentist's drill,
 Whipping the mist into a horizon.

Another illustration of his penchant for portrayal may be found in his "To Writers Abroad", where the scene is laid in Delhi, precisely in the lanes around the Juma Masjid:

Lanes around jumma masjid .
 welcome you to their coils
 to spirit and minaret
 amulet and charm
 the cry for baksheesh and the muezzin's call
 and the dervish hawking potency drugs
 cave erotics call you to their glooms
 where goddesses suffer from mastitis
 wounded statuary, one nostril
 at Somnath, the other at Ghazni
 The river calls: Clay -lamp libation
 offered to the eclipse to release the sun
 Ghats aflame with the dead:
 sorry we can't lay on these days
 a suttee - display in the flesh for you.

What strikes us most is the cinematic, sudden shift of the scene by which the poet takes us from the heart of the metropolis to the river Yamuna and its Ghats aflame with clay lamps and libations and burials of the dead.

Daruwalla's third collection of poems dealing with landscape, the central metaphor here being, the river Ganga. About this river metaphor, Vrinda Nabar, in an illuminating article on Daruwalla, writes thus: "The Ganga appears here with all its primal, religious and emotive connotations. The rivers' rhythm is that of life and death, of birth and rebirth, of passion and rejection.

...In and around it are all the sings of stagnancy, the tonsured heads, the fossilised anchorites, the tattooed harlots, and the dead who are brought to it shrouded in the anonymity of white".

The book has three parts- "The Waterfront", "Crossing of Rivers", and "In My Father's House". Opening with poem "Boat ride Along the Ganga", this book attempts to expose the age-old Hindu customs and rituals and their custodians. The tone is highly bitter and biting as is evidenced in the following:

Dante would have been confused her
 Where would he place this city
 In paradise or purgatory, or lower down
 Where fires smoulder beyond the reach of pity?
 the concept of the goddess baffles you
 Ganga as mother, daughter, bride.
 What place of destiny have I arrived at
 Where corpse - fires and cooking fires
 burn side by side?

Daruwalla writes, "I am not an urban writer and my poems are rooted in the rural landscape. My poetry is earthy, and like to consciously keep it that way, shunning sophistication which, while adding gloss, takes way from the power of verse". There is an obviously Indian element in Daruwalla's verse, especially in his use of landscape. When it is not ornamental, the landscape comes alive as

a presence on its own. The language is then pared to the bone. Images are concrete and exact.

"Writing a poem" says Daruwalla, "is like a clot going out of the blood". It is because his poems are closely related to his own experience as a man. It is this genuineness that adds to the value of his poetry.

Crossing of Rivers contains some charming snaps of landscape as well as those of "Nightscape" deserves special mention. To quote a few lines:

Votive lights are muzzled in the fog;

bloodstains on a frosted window.

As the night grows older

a flesh turns to carbon on the ghats

and the river keeps moving,

dark as gangrene,

temple shave to strain their necks

to rise above most scarves

wrapped around their shoulders

The fog on the river is like

a loaded raft

which the current cannot move

temple lights

are a splash of rhododendrons

and temple spires, cypress - dark

mark the water front ethereal

Is this a ridge

blank with pine

rising out of the mists

or a city of the dead

brooding over a ghostscape?

A literature that is just beginning cannot be vital unless it stems out of and is involved in the life around it. American literature, which arose and grew with the geography of the place, is one of the liveliest today. D.H. Lawrence was making a fundamental point when he said: "All creative art must rise out of specifics soil and flicker with a spirit of place." A distinctive Indian character, context, tone, sensitivity to language can be seen at work in most of the Indian poets. In Daruwalla there is enough evidence of a sensibility actually aware of and committed to present - day sociopolitical and cultural reality.

Nissim Ezekiel praises Daruwalla's capacity for sharp perception of environment and for forthright statement. Daruwalla scores heavily over his contemporary poets by depth of feeling, economy of language and originality of insight. While criticising the Indian social reality such a bitter, scornful, satiric tone has rarely been heard before - Daruwalla's long poem in **Under Orion** is a tour de force of energetic argument in verse. "It is obviously the end-product of a rigorous process in which attitude have been explored and choices made. Not surprisingly, the attitude to India is unsparingly unsentimental 'College', Daruwalla writes:

If we had plague

Camus - style

and doctors searched for the virus

there would be black - market in rats.

These angry words are perfectly in character for a poet who defines morality as the prudish pronounced with a prurient grin' and religion as 'the devil's tabibone and original sin'

Good at description and dramatising, this is how he brings to vivid life a scene of burglars being beaten up:

There is nothing much to distinguish

One lathiblow from another,

the same inverted back, the same are through the air,
the curve consummated on the cowering body
and beneath the raining blows a swarm of limbs
twisting like tentacles.

Daruwalla's criticism takes on new hues with his treatment of the Ganga. The Ganga does not mitigate human miseries or suffering it only "shows" them, exhibits them to the public gaze. His ganga poems depict the holy city of Benares as a repository of "Kites" and "tonsured heads" where faith has dwindled considerably and where the people and the panda have become ritualistic and superstitious. The poet's melancholy mood does not change and he watches with unblinking eye the naked dance of confused mankind in the soiled hands of inexorable Fate and chance. Such a mood may have a silver lining her and their but on the whole it remains gloomy and despairing;

The light is greenening
despair turning to mould
in a pickle jar.

and the poet does not try to conceal it at all: he rather makes it an integral part of the landscape itself and observes:

The landscape is so grey
they are milking the sun for light.

What Daruwalla attempts is not a deliberate denigration of Benares: he rather discovers it to be no better than many other ancient cities despite the fact that it is taken to be the abode of gods and goddesses. His insightful eye enables him to grasp things as they really are and not as they ought to be. This is tacitly suggested by him in the lines.

Let thoughts fly away like a scatter of birds
to some other town. But where?

To this question the poet himself offers a reply:
All cities are the same at night

When you walk barefoot
across their blistered backs.

Daruwalla beautifully articulates the idea of death in the poem "Death Vignette". He observes the way the dead arrive there shrouded in white covers as the horizon is it up:

They walk in time
outside time
walking with death on
their copper shoulders
acid - etched
on the horizon
a part of the landscape
on which they are walking.

A dip in the Ganga is bone- chilling, and the wind is unwholesome and lung - congesting.

The poem "mother" in two parts, captures his tender sentiments towards Mother Ganga, without wasting words in creating a halo or any kind of gloss. Flowing through the ages she has grown old, brown, unglossy and had developed "a cataract" within himself:

Sleeping on your banks
as you flow by
I find you flowing within my body.

The poem "Haranag", which is in three parts, at once establishes Daruwalla as a poet of living landscape: the bamboo jungle growing about this house and haunted by "the porcupine and bamboo viper, "the superstition that after each serpent in the bathroom facing the forest twice where the poet's wife faints in great fear until he comes to her help and kills it with a sick in utter rage. But the drama of superstition does not stop her and the wife keeps on dreaming of the serpent night when the poet is with her. She asks him for further appeasement of the ferocious serpent by offering milk and grain once

again. Thus we see that Daruwalla has created a memorable poem out of an ordinary incident. He doesn't simply tell us about the Haranag but recreates a proper background for its emergence and for superstition to have its fully play. The bamboo jungle. The nearby house, the bathroom, the serpent and the wife's horror: all tend to create a living scene of lushgreen landscape. In its quality the poem stands beside nissim Ezekiel's "Night of the Scorpion" which also recounts a similar domestic situation confronting the poet's family in utter confusion and consternation.

The fourth and last volume of poems brought out by Daruwalla, **Winter poems** has ample variety of themes. Yet he does not forego his old passion of presenting landscape. For example the title piece belongs to that category. It has two sections - "suddenly the tree" and "the poppy". This poetic piece once again confirms Daruwalla's penchant for reproducing the beauty of nature in a charming way. In the winter season, the tree and its surrounding wear a deserted look which the poet describes as follows:

the tree is now all bark and bough,
leafless twigs scratch
against the glass
like skeletal children
scribbling on a slate.
chalk - fingered.
There is a smell of hail
in the air and lightning - burns,
the just - widowed wind
beats her head against the glass - panes.

The same poem nicely sketches the unwanted disturbance created by the honey- thieves in the natural order of the universe in which the bees inevitably suffer and lose their hard- earned honey:

As the afternoon wore on
The honey - thieves came

and smoked the bees out.

Here the unfortunate condition of the bees has been compassionately brought out by the poet. Two remarkable poems of this collection are: "curfew 2" "Lorea", While the former is remarkable for this artistic finesse and situational tension prevailing in a town the latter is an admirable piece of imagination abounding in striking images of time and space. The latter may be quoted partly:

Dawn will as it always has,
escorted with pearls,
the earth chalice spiked with frost,
sandwiched between your rivers
"one lament and the other blood"
the land will fame like a tongue
of fiery green
threading the sierras.

Daruwalla's reputation as a poet rests comfortably on his penchant for describing, with graphic precision, the everflowing Ganga and the turbulent Ghaghra, the mighty hills, the sprawling mosquito-infested valleys. But at the same time he does not ignore the urban landscape since he is exposed more to rural India than to urban India, the former occupies the pride of place in his priorities. Given a choice, he would opt for rural life. As he says, his poetry is earthy"

Compliments are what he deserves for this bold approach. He proves that Indian poetry in English need not be always an urban phenomenon. Daruwalla's sense of commitment to the Indian reality, his honest and bold criticism of the Indian superstition, his satirical bite (though occasional) and above all his sense of precision abundantly qualify him to be considered a major poet of our times.

(i) Routine

"Routine" is a poem typical of the best and the most salient of Daruwalla's qualities as poet. It is a speaking picture of the kind of life that the policemen live during turbulent some and troublesome

times. But Daruwalla ironically calls it "Routine". and hence the title of the poem.

The authentic voice of the poet takes on farther authenticity owing to the fact that the poem is built on an insider's information. Daruwalla being part of the police force. It is valuable in its details since it is a recordation of experiential learning of life.

The British Raj has left behind a police force worthy of its name. In the hot sun of the month of June the heads of the police men inside the crash helmets are burning with summer heat. The asphalt roads seem to crumble under police boots and sticks. The people in the noisy crowd abuse the police with all kind of dirty words. But the police men are used to it. The provocative words range from 'mother' to 'sister-seducer'.

Karam singh is marching along with the speaker in the poem. Singh controls his rage but curse words come out of his mouth, and he says he has children older than the hooligans abusing him.

The crowd of miscreants is found setting fire to the tram cars as part of their protest. The crowd would like to burn the police too. The crowd is a thousand - strong, too strong for the platoon of police. But under the very trying circumstances, under heavy provocation, the speaker in the poem leading the police man, give orders for firing. He fires at a person who falls dead even as the other police men fire in the air.

The crowd disperse suddenly. The dead body is taken away for autopsy and the burning tram car is towed away. The tension is gone.

The policemen march back to their barracks.

But in the evening a political leader announced on the radio that they are marching forward.

Police action may not appear a suitable subject for poetic treatment. Yet Daruwalla daringly takes it up because it is part of lived reality. Moreover the difficulties that policemen confront on a regular basis remain, unfortunately, unacknowledged and even unnoticed. The poet's purpose is to highlight the unenviable work situation of the police force. Doing the "dirty" job of meeting violence with vio-

lence, these guardian's of law keep order in a disorderly society like ours.

What strikes us most is the highly realistic presentation, with a touch of matter - of - factness. The details are such that the readers are able to relate themselves to it without any difficulty. Moreover, the poet carefully tries to drain away the elements of emotionalism and sentimentality. No hyperbolic statements are used for the sake of exaggeration or special effects. In fact what impresses us is the use of understatements with telling effect.

The quality of the feelings is remarkable, because the feelings are genuine, authentic and therefore easily understandable. Since the feelings are kept down and kept at low key what emerges from them is the sincerity of purpose on the part of the poet.

The tone of the poem is marked by mild sympathy and a milder satire, reflecting the author's attitudes. The hardships the policemen are put to evoke the poet's heart felt sympathy. But he is not carried away by it. If anything, he tries to convert his sympathy in to empathy which is a dispassionate understanding of the suffering people pass through. The element of satire is indicated in the leader's hollow claim "We are marching forward" with the author's irony made manifest.

On the technical side the poem scores because of the easily rhythm in spite of no attempts on the poet's part to keep to the metrical formulae. Yet there is tendency to approximate to the rhythms of the iambic foot. What graces the poem most is its pictorial equality owing to the regular use of graphic images.

(ii) Death of A Bird

"Death of a Bird" is one of the more popular poems of Daruwalla. Its thematic significance revolves round the primordial concept of crime and punishment. What impresses us about the poem is the poet's attempt to relate human life with other forms of life. Respect to life being the adage overlooking this poetic construct it may be considered a profile poem with an emphasis on ecological imperatives.

The poem may be summarised as under:

The poet noticed the love-games of two birds under a crag-two monals. They clawed, screamed and mated. The female was not particularly beautiful. But the male was royal in splendour. Suddenly the poet person a shot down the male bird. The bird lay on the ground dead, eyes glazed. The poet and his companion put the bird in the ruck sack. But hearing the cry and shirk of the female bird felt guilty and it affected their walk. They had to drag their feet, almost.

Seeing the rain clouds they hurried the horse and it fell in to a gorge a thousand feet below. The scream of the dying horse was another reminder of the punishment awaiting them.

They walked across the forest during the twilight hour with gun shot being made every now and then to ward off wild animals. The poet's lady - companion was greatly scared and she asked, if there were wolves around. He had her hand reassuringly. They reached a cave well protected by pine trees, and though of spending the night there. Luckily there was a growing dog left there by resin tappers another protection.

They felt very cold, and to keep the cold off he lit a fire. And they sat around it, he rubbed her numbed limbs back to life and she was again energetic as before.

Each of them though the other was free from thoughts about the killing of the monal bird and the scream of the dying horse she rested her head on his chest, and seemed inclined to sleep. They had their dreams, and yet they were disturbed by the flapping of monal wings. The wolves, in their turn prowled about. The noisy wind of the night disturbed the lovers very much. The sound of the wind were almost like the moaning of a witch.

Early the morning the poet personal broke the gun in two as a sign of remorse for the knew how hard it was for them even to sleep owing to the memories of the monal bird he shot down, its blood on his hands, the tragic death of the horse, and the howling wolves overpowering their lives in mysterious ways. They noticed a brown bird flying out of the crag. Its shadow crossed them. It shrank with fear and sadness, and fell down half dead at their feet. It was the queen monal, the mate of the none he shot down. The poet's lady companion

ion said, "We are accursed. Just watch its eyes" This last incident gave them the fright of their life. They began smelling further danger awaiting them. Though the bird was almost dead its dyes flared terror like bits of dripping meat.

This multifacted poem shine on many sides with appropriate messages. The poem highlights man's cruelty to the fauna of the World. It speaks volume about the punishment that awaits every crime whether it is against man, or bird or beast, It highlights the human capacity for remorse, the last vestige of our being civilized. The sense of remorse of the couple was such that it disturbed even their love-making.

A significant aspect of the poem is its capacity to evoke appropriate feelings through the juxtaposition of cognate images. The image of the dying male monal. Blood stains on the poet's hand, the rain clouds, the twilight hour, the wet lanes of the companion body, the female monal flying fiercely, falling at their feet, the dazed look of the flaring eyes, the eyes looking like bits of dripping meat The poem succeeds to a large degree in evoking our warm sympathies towards the two birds who died for no fault of their but because of man's cruelty and greed.

A.K. RAMANUJAN

A.K. Ramanujan is one of the outstanding poets of our times. Though he turned to translations towards the end of his poetic career, his abiding interest in poetry gets manifested in his various collections of poems. What makes his poetry significant is a compendium of qualities like an astute intellectual bent of mind, his ability to depict the inner struggle, and his admirable mastery of language.

Legends and myths of India, her people and customs, the country's cultural and spiritual heritage; all these are woven into Ramanujan's poetry. Despite his long residence in the U.S. he did not cut of his emotional bond with India. In fact he used his poetry as a means of revitalising his India. In fact he used his poetry as a means of revitalising his India connection. Indian is certainly the hallmark of his poetry. In "Conventions of Despair" he says:

"I must seek and find

My particular hell only in my Hindu mind". He has three Hindu poems : "We Hindu: he does not Hurt a Fly or a spider either". The Hindu: her reads his GITA and is calm at all events, and "The Hindoo : the only Risk" They all have an Indian background, and yet they are into ritualistic mounting of Indian culture and its virtue. In fact, while treating Indian theme Ramanujan keeps a kin of clinical detachment and their to see thin in an honest, objective manner. The poem "A River" focuses attention on the role of the river Vaikai which flows through Madurai, particularly on its destructive role during the flood. Another poem AA Hindu to this Body", shows that the body is a important as the soul: the phrases and other expression point to this "Dear pursuing presence /dear body', and "don't leave me behind" poems like "Poona Train Window", "Some uses of History on a Rain Day", "Small Town, South India", "Old Indian Belief", and "Prayers to Lord Murugan" have a direct bearing upon Indian ways of living, Indian beliefs and prayers .

Even Ramanujan's poems on family relationships reveal a good deal of India. According to parthasarathy, Ramanujan depicts his family life untiringly as is clear from the poems collected in his second volume *Relations The family relationships mean a lot to him and they haunt or chase him in many poems*. These poems deal with memories, not always essentially nostalgic and sentimentally, yet significant in many ways. They also deal with the ambiguous find of freedom and loss they entail.

Among Ramanujan's family poems those on his mother do stand out. Viewed in this light, "Of Mothers, among other things" is a soothing poem which encompasses the mother's youth, her unerring care for the "Crying cradles", her devotion to work of the pains taking, domestic variety. He says:

My cold parchment tongue licks bark
in the mouth when I see her four
Still sensible fingers slowly flex
to pick a grain of rice from the kitchen floor.

The cultural dichotomy between the east and the west gets reflected in his poetry often. What makes his statement on the sub-

ject fascinating is his honesty with himself. In "A Love for a Wife" (addressed to his American wife) he says.

Really what keeps us apart
At the end of years is unshared
childhood. You cannot, for instance
meet my father, He is some years
dead. Neither can I meet yours
dead. Neither can I meet yours:
He has already lost his temper and mellowed.

Ramanujan's search for roots is almost an observation - a magnificent one at it. In many poems he turns nostalgic about this life in the family house. But, it is not he sentimental stuff that always turns out. The poem, "small scale reflections on a great House" is a case in point:

Sometimes I think that nothing
that ever comes into this house
goes out. Things come in everyday
to lose themselves among other things
lost loving ago:
lame wandering cows from nowhere
have been known to be tethered,
given a name, encouraged
to get pregnant in the broad daylight
of the street under the leaders'
supervision, the girls hiding
behind windows with holes in them.

Childhood is yet another theme of his poetry "Looking for a cousin on a Swing " recalls the innocent days of a girl of our or five

and a little boy of six or seven. It is a pleasant love poem. The following lines recapture her present dilemma:

Now she looks for a swing

in cities with fifteen suburbs

and tries to be innocent about it.

The exposure to contemporary urban life is to be witnessed in the poem "Still Another View of Grace". Which recounts the painful hesitancy on the part of the poet as part of a moral dilemma. It pictures the protagonist succumbing to the temptation. The poem "Still another for Mother" has the same theme:

And that woman

beside the wreckage van

on Hyde Park street: she will not let me rest

as I slowly cease to be the town's brown

stranger and guest

The confusion regarding his identity gets further deepened in the poem "Conventions of Despair", in which he says that he has to fit in or leave the modern world to avoid the bitter sense of isolation and agony

Yes, I know all that, I should be modern

Marry again, See strippers at the Tease.

Touch Africa, Go to the movies.

Impale a six-inch spider

under a lens, Join the Test

ban, or become the Outsider.

Ramanujan has eye for the specific physiognomy of the objects and situations as manifested in their luminous evocations in his various poems. Ramanujan says: "English and my disciplines (linguistics and anthropology) give me my outer forms - linguistic, metrical, logical and other such ways of shaping experience; and my first thirty year in India, my ways of shaping experience; and my first thirty

years in India, my frequent visits and fields trips, my personal and professional preoccupation with Kannada, Tamil, the classics and folklore give me my substance, my "inner" forms, images and symbol, They are continuous with each other, and I no longer can tell what comes from where".

His poems are like the changing patterns in a kaleidoscope, and every item he turns it around one way or other, to observe the more closely, the results never fail to astonish.

In the opinion of Parthasarthy, "In no other poet before Ramanujan is there his scrupulous concern with language. He has been able to forge an oblique, elliptical style all his own. It is an attempt. I believe, to turn language in to an artifact". In his poetic use of language, Ramanujan has been able to extend the resource of the English language and add a peculiar pungency to it by Indianising it. Occasionally it tends to be colloquial too At times it becomes epigrammatic, as in the short piece "Warming".

Poverty is not easy to bear,

The body is not easy to wear.

So beware, I say to my children

unborn lost they choice to the born.

The apparent simplicity of the language, how ever, conceals the depth of his thought.

In the handling of rhythm and rhyme, Ramanujan displays an interesting variety and astute skill. And this takes away monotony in his verse. Some of the accent-based rhythm give a bilt of this poems. Though not uniformly.

It is not surprising that Ramanujan has his weaknesses too. Some of his poems suffer from a kind of intellectual thinness. The rational adequacy of them is questionable. Sometimes experience are just presented without enough of a comment. As a result readers are forced to fed for themselves. This failure to offer an intellectually satisfying comment upon his experience is attributable to his inability to achieve a coherent pattern of thought (which would in its turn look rather stereotyped).

Ramanujan has made prolific use of images and symbols in his poetry. What makes them remarkable is their precision which shines by contrast with the diffuse style, the vapours abstraction of most Indian poets. But it is often said there are different levels of achievement in the use of symbols and images in the same poem.

The conjugation of theme and form adds to the strength of his poetry which is always a forceful utterance. He would not hang on to any particular literary devices. Therefore there are many experimental poems reflecting the versatility of Ramanujan's poetic propensities. Yet at all events he proves himself a communicator par excellence and that is what a poet ought to be.

The Striders

"The Striders" is one of the most philosophical poems of Ramanujan. Composed in the early part of his career as a poet, the poem sets us thinking just as it did Ramanuja. The strider or water bug in a common sight in the U.S. where Ramanujan lived for more than thirty years. This water-insect is too ordinary to be even noticed as of any value to anyone. Yet, for Ramanujan it is more than a mere insect.

Let us see what he says about it in the poem. The poet asks us to search for the thin-stemmed, bubble-eye water-bugs. What they will surprise us with is the way they manage to perch precariously on the skin, as it were, of the stream. They seem even to walk on water (the Galilee lake). The bug sits on land slide of lights, and drowns its eye deep in its small strip of the sky.

What strikes us first is the thematic novelty - approaching the insignificant insect as symbol of nature's magic. The wonder of wonder is the way the water-bug manages to sit or walk on water. The 'strider' called so because with its long capillary legs it seems to make strides or long steps. What enables the striders to manipulate their body on water is their apparent weightlessness. In a philosophical sense it implies that dispensing with worldly luggage will enable us too to manage well in the precarious stream of life.

Secondly, the poem impresses us with its extra-ordinary precision of description. With the minimal number of words, and the deft verbal strokes, Ramanujan achieves excellence in condensa-

tion. Some of the phrases like "a landslide of light" and "its tiny strip of sky" are indicative of the "enlightenment" the strider is capable of.

The extreme simplicity and brevity that Ramanujan brings to bear upon this poem may be considered beyond the ordinary run-of-the-mill Indian poet. Yet the verbal painting is such that the message goes deep down in the reader's mind.

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JAYANTA MAHAPATRA

Jayanta Mahapatra is widely read both in India and abroad. He is criticised and appreciated by his commentators for the same reason - that his poems are indefinable in simple terms. They are rather obscure in the sense that Mahapatra's poems defy grasp and are difficult to comprehend. May be the stylistic denseness, use of exploratory images make them rather obscure. He covers a wide range of subject matter in his poem: Nature, seasons, women temple, myth history, time and suffering and the like. One of the themes or some of them or all of them appear in any of his poems so naturally Jayanta Mahapatra is accused of thematic repetition. However Oriyan Landscape and mythology surrounding it form the central concern of his poems. He does deal with some of the contemporary problems too. His *Dispossessed Notes* includes a poem on anti-national activities in Punjab in the name of Khalistan and the Bhopal gas tragedy.

Jayanta Mahapatra in his poems portrays life as it is rather than as it should have been. Mahapatra's poetic world is filled with personal pain, guilt, remorse, hunger, desire etc. Based on knowledge emerged from deep thinking and profound suffering, Mahapatra talks about the mystery of existence. Sometimes Mahapatra's poem seems to be 'confused, made up abstraction which fail to connect with the reader'. We get a combination of antithetic style. His early poems are extrovert poems where he uses a narrative style. We can discern clear ironic, imagistic style in speculative poetry in combination with intense, involved and symbolic style.

Mahapatra mostly writes in free verse. There are no rigours of metrical verse in his poems. The stanza pattern is irregular. Some

of the poem have a colloquial and conversational tone. Even though the imagery and symbol are difficult to decode the voice that speaks through them is sincere and honest. His poems recreate the past in modern terms. Mahapatra's concern with the past does not stem from a mere desire of idealizing it but from a desire of watching the evolution of the person tout of the past. In a number of poems Mahapatra celebrates the memories of his childhood. Past and present co-exist in order to make life more meaningful. All these generalizations about Jayanta Mahapatra's poems apply to his poem "A missing person" too.

A Missing Person

In the darkened room
a woman
cannot find her reflection in the mirror
waiting as usual
at the edge of sleep.
In her hands she holds
the oil lamp
whose drunken yellow flames
know where lonely body hides

This poem belongs to his fourth collection, entitled "Rain of Rites" (1976). It is an autobiographical poem since it talks about the loneliness of his own mother. The memory of his lonely mother haunted him and he made it the subject of this short poem, "A Missing person". Mahapatra's father was out most of the time touring primary schools, in his bicycle. His sickly mother was left alone in the house. Since they could not afford electricity in their hosue, "the veranda with its adjoining little courtier seemed to flot in a ghostly atmosphere, filling me with a sense of insecurity..And the picture of my mother, holding on to the oil lamp in the shadow, the sooty flame swaying in the breeze, seemed to establish itself firmly in my mind", writes mahapatra in his article in The Dalhousie Review in 1983. And inexplicable loneliness of woman becomes theme of this piece. But the sentence structure is such that no definite meaning can merge out of these lines". Experience at various times in the writer exploits

in symbol of his won making'. Each poem of Mahapatra is a "voyage of discovery and has no preconceived beginning or end".

S.K. Desai's remark on Mahapatra stylistic denseness, is quite valid here: "His language works more in terms of....resonances and overtones than recognizable meanings". It is true that Mahapatra's poetry is not thought-oriented like Ezekiels, not is it image-oriented like Ramanuja's poems. In mahapatra's poem imagery and thought content are integrated to reveal meaning as it happens in A Missing Person".

Jayanta Mahapatra himself comments about the value of symbols and images in his poetry in ACLALS Bulletin, 1981 April.

"Today's poem utilizes a number of images and symbol to form a whole, leaving the reader extricate himself with the valid meaning or argument from them.....This is true of much of the poetry I have written."

He also firmly believes that "a great poem lets us embark on a sort of journey or voyage through symbols and allusions to encompass the human condition, "He confesses how be begins with an image or cluster of image adorn image leads to another. This is quite true of "A poem " A Missing person" happens to be a voyage of discovery about the solitude and he identity.

Darkened room - a symbol representing ignorance of the self.

Mirror - a common metaphor representing ignorance of the self.

Mirror - a common metaphor representing man's trappings within illusion.

The first stanza actually briefs about the woman's anguished self examination poet probably hints at the fact that Indian woman defies identify by being what she is, though she is lonely.

Words in this poem, have specific functions. The quality of the poem is enhanced as the words work through evocative sound patterns using word and images in unexpected ways as In "A Missing Person" Jayanta Mahapatra is able to create in Indian English idioms just like other Indian English poets. The precise image created by the phrase "drunken yellow flames" is uniquely effective and exceptionally eloquent. The image of the lamps has an air of spontaneity about it and it represents the tragic consciousness in his portraits of

woman. Use of humanizing epithets for intimate noun resulted in an attractive unconventional epithet. "Sleep". Is another metaphor used in the poem to represent the consciousness of the past, bruised wound past. The woman is trying to reconcile herself with her sad and lonely past by "waiting at the edge of sleep". It is an acceptance rooted in awareness which will make her wait of revelation about her solitary self. The woman search for identity and self hood leads her through illusion to reality, guided by a sense of tradition and suffering is interesting to note that women in his poems exist without a name. The women are presented in the most impersonal third person. A portrait of a village woman is painted with remarkable precision and compassion. A sharp sense of aloneness and the haunting feeling of loss within the self bring a quick sympathetic response from the reader. Thus complexity and elusive lucidity became the key concepts of mahapatra's poetic craft as exemplified in "A Missing person".

Questions

1. Comment on mahapatra's use of symbols and images
2. Write a critique of mahapatra's Indian sensibility

Books for further reading:

1. The poetry of Jayanta Mahapatra; A Critical study, Ed. Madhusudan Prasad.
2. Living Indian -English poets, Ed. Madhusudan prasad.

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DRAMA

Introduction

The Drama in England:

The drama is one of the earliest of literary forms. The epic perhaps is the earliest. The drama as a literary art in Europe arose from the Greek religious rituals and reached its peaks of glory in the great trio Aeschylus, Euripides and Sophocles. In England also it arose from the religious rituals at the medieval church. From the church it passed on to the secular world, where its aim was mostly to delight people, sometimes to instruct them. There were two strains in England at the beginning of the Elizabethan period; a popular drama that was not at all literary and a literary drama that was not popular. This latter type was written by educated people, mostly school masters and was based on the ancient classical model, or sometimes what was supposed to be the classical models. In the latter half of the sixteenth century a group of young men with university education entered the scene. There were six of them, Peele, Nashe, Creene, Kyd, Lyly and Marlowe. They were known as the "University Wits". Under the impact of the influence of the renaissance (and the Reformation) they produced plays. Which were at once literary and popular. Marlowe was the greatest of them all. Shakespeare (Who was born in the same years as Marlowe but started writing for the theatre when the former had left the scene) followed his own bent of genius and produced thirty seven plays, some of them great masterpieces. He remains the greatest of English dramatists. So far, drama was in verse. Now began the prose drama in English. The Restoration dramatists of the seventeenth century, the eighteenth century dramatists Sheridan and Goldsmith, and George Bernard Shaw and Galsworthy in this century degrees of merit. T.S. Eliot and W.B. Yeats in the twentieth century tried to reintroduce verse as the dramatic medium. Eliot's plays present religious themes.

Indian Drama in the Ancient times:

The drama in India is as old as the Greek Drama or older than it. Bhasa, Kalidasa, Harshavardhana, Bhavabhuti - these are some of our greatest dramatists in Sanskrit. It is of interest to students in Kerala that one of our perumals, King Kulasekhara Varma of

the 8th century, was the author of two plays in Sanskrit. After the Muslim invasions the drama seems to have fallen into a state of decline. It should not be forgotten that some dramatic forms associated with temples and some purely secular forms continuing the local languages till recent times. The fact that there lived in India many great critics from the days of Bharata and that they have taken great pains to classify and describe what they called the visual literature (roopakas) show the extent to which this literary form had evolved into maturity. Poet Goethe of Germany pays a great tribute to Kalidasa.

Sakunthala thus

"Would'st thou the young year's blossoms

and the fruits of its decline

And all by which the soul is charmed,

Enraptured, feasted, fed.

Would'st thou the Earth and Heaven itself

In one sole name combine,

I name thee, O sakunthala!

And all at once is said".

These are the twin streams of dramatic tradition inherited by the Indian dramatist. But before entering into a serious study of their achievement let us take a look at the conventional features of the dramatic art.

The Dramatic Art:

Of all literary forms the drama appeals to the largest possible audience. The visual appeal, costumes, stage setting, music and the histrionic talent of the actor render this wide appeal possible. It is said that when T.S. Eliot felt that he had a spiritual vision of life to convey and the poet had a social obligation to communicate his vision to the widest possible audience, he turned to the drama as the most effective medium for it. The elements mentioned above are generally termed extra-dramatic. They may be really extra-literary but not extra-dramatic. The literary ingredients of a drama are plot, character, setting, dialogue, style and view of life. These ingredients are common to the novel and the drama.

The plot is the story, that is to say, a series of incidents and situations, causally connected and organised in such a way that they form a unity and give aesthetic satisfaction. It consists of an initial incident, a complication, a crisis or turning point, a resolution or denouement and a catastrophe. In an ideal plot incident follows incident as cause and effect. They are closely knit together. If one is shifted to another place the whole story will become unintelligible. This is what Aristotle meant when he said that a plot has a beginning, middle and end.

The characters in the play are important then the plot. They have to be drawn vividly and rendered life-like if the drama is to yield aesthetic satisfaction. They are to be individual, credible and life-like. An unsatisfactory plot may not draw our attention to it, but incredible (not life-like) and dull characters will damn the play in the eyes of the spectators. These two ingredients are not to be thought of as two separate and unconnected things. They are interdependent. Plot decides character and the incidents themselves arise from character. If this is forgotten the whole play becomes artificial.

Next, there is the setting or the time and the place where the incidents take place and the characters act and interact. The physical, the social and the historical setting have to be vividly realised. Dialogue is all important in the drama because plot, character, setting and often the view of life can be presented in the drama only through the dialogue. A novelist can do these things through his own words. By way of narration. But the dramatist's hands are tied. Dialogue is his only means for almost everything. Style comes next. This is the writer's gift of saying what he wants to say most effectively. It is an expression, an index, of his personality. The writer's view of life is equally important. It is variously termed as philosophy of life, criticism of life etc. In the last analysis it is his view of life as it appears to him. It is not necessarily stated in words. But the way in which he presents the events and the people imply his view. This view is all important if at all the writer is serious in his art.

These are merely the mechanics of the dramatist's art. It lies deeper. It cannot be easily explained. We can only sense it when we come across it. "It is a fine play" we say. Or else "It is rather dull" in spite of its mechanics.

Still another aspect of the dram is the dramatic conflict. "No conflict, no drama" says George Bernard Shaw. The most obvious form of conflict is that between villain and hero. The conflict between good and evil is not the only kind. Sometimes it may even be between good and good as in Sophocles' *Antigone*. There may be a conflict inherent in a given situation as in Viola's predicament in the *Twelfth Night*. A much deeper and far more aesthetically satisfying conflict is the internal conflict as seen in the minds of protagonists in Shakespearean tragedy. The complication mentioned above arises from the conflict.

Action and interaction among the person involved - The *dramatis personae* - is of equal importance as the above. Robert Browning was deeply interested in the duty of character and its portrayal. He thought that the drama was the ideal literary form for this and he wrote a play. But it was failure and he was wise enough to realise it. Portrayal of character was there but a dram required interaction among the persons through which the plot was to move forward and characterisation to be realised. It was thus that Browning tuned to the dramatic monologue as his favourite poetic medium.

Another matter that deserves attention is the condition of stage representation that influence the nature and sometimes even the content of the drama. The Greek drama with its characteristic features was the product of the physical conditions of the Greek stage. So was the Elizabethan English Drama product of the Elizabethan stage. In addition to all the above, there are recent novel features in dramaturgy such as expressionism, the theatre of the absurd etc.

Above everything else the drama should reflect life. It should "hold the mirror up to life" as Hamlet says. This is of supreme importance for all literary forms. The greatness for the ancients has been attributed to the fact that they "saw life steadily and saw it whole"

INDIAN DRAM IN ENGLISH

Professor M.K.Naik reviews briefly the various attempts at the establishment of English theatres in India from 1776 onwards. Prof. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar has devoted a chapter on "Drama" in his masterly work "Indian Writing In English" (Chapter xii p. 227-Sterling publisher, Delhi) He traces the progress of the Indian Drama from

Madhusudhan Dutt's "Is the called civilization?" (1871) to Nizzim Ezekiel's "Malini" (1969) and Gurucharan Das's "Larins sahib" (1971). Tagore has to his credit such plays as "Mukta Dhara", "Natir puja", "Chandalika", "Sanyasi", "Sacrifice", "Malini", "Chitra", "The king of the Dark chamber", "The post Office" - these are some of Tagore's famous plays available in English readings, often his own, Aurobindo's plays "Perseus the Deliver", "Vasavadatha", "Rodogune", "The Viziers of Bassora" and "Eric" were written in English as original creation by the author. Tagore plays were mostly written in Bengali and rendered into English later. Vasudeva Rao, T.P. Kailasan, Bharathi Sarabhai, V.V. Srenivasa Iyengar, A.S.P. Ayyar, Lobo Prabhu, Asif Currimbhoy and Nizzim Ezekiel are some of those who have tried their hand in the realm of drama in English.

Very few critics seem to have devoted their attention to Indian drama in English. Almost all who have exercised their mind over the subject seem to be unanimous in their opinion that dram in English is the Cinderella of Indian writing in English.

"Modern Indian dramatic writing in English in neither rich in quantity nor, on the whole, of high quality. Enterprising Indian have, formerly a century occasionally attempted drama in English but seldom for actual stage productions". This is K.R. Sreenivasa Iyengar speaking The grand Old Man of Indo Anglian Literature. Here is Prof. M.K. Naik on the subject.

.....Drama is a composite art in which the written word of the playwright attains complete artistic realization only when it becomes the spoken word of the character on the stage, and through that medium reacts on the mind of the audience A play, in order to communicate fully and become a living dramatic experience thus needs a real theatre and a live audience It is precisely the lack of these essentials that has hamstrung Indian drama in English all along". In the course of his discussion of Tagore as a playwright Prof. Srinivasa Iyengar comments: "He was a poet, he trafficked in imagery and symbolism he invariably saw the universal behind the particulars. A play needs a plot, even as a house needs a firm structure.... A play doubtless needs a plot, character, dialogue, sentiments".

A drama is primarily a stage play. That is to say, it is meant to be acted on the stage. The criterion of its evaluation is its stage

worthiness. It is dictated by the kind of stage for which it is written. There is no theatre worth the name in India that provides the opportunity for dramatists to exhibit their skill. In the absence of a theatre with specific requirements of stage representation or even some sort of encouragement to enterprising writers, they, the writers, have mostly written for the readers: not the spectators. Their play are to be read and enjoyed rather than presented on the stage. They are pocket theatres. Most of them are of no value as stage plays. They may have literary value but they are not actable. This is one of the reasons for the arrested growth of the Indian drama in English. Perhaps another reason is that the raw material of this dram (the life represented, the men and women) is drawn from the rootless class for English speaking Indians who have no cultural identity of their won. They don't represent India, the teeming millions of India with their diversity, the common people who are the backbone of the country. Nor does this drama draw its inspiration from the rich cultural heritage of our nation except in the case of Tagore and Aurobindo and some of the minor dramatists. But these two were primarily poets and dealt in images, symbols, rhythms and other wares that belong to poetry rather than to drama.

Lack of action is another blemish of Indian drama in English. By action we don't mean the violent fights of the present day film but incident, situations that follow one another, incidents pregnant with suspense, irony conflict etc. This is the charge generally levelled against shaw's plays. But they are redeemed by the play of wit and humour by the intellectual swordsmanship, by the tricks and techniques of the public speaker.

Stagecraft in an art by itself. Sheridan's "screen scene" in "The school for scandal" and a similar scene in shaw's "Arms and the Man" are examples of consummate mastery of stage technique. We have nothing approaching this in our English plays. Consciously or unconsciously our playwrights seem to be addressing themselves to readers, not spectators. As if Currimbhoy' early plays showed great promise in stage worthiness but it proved to be a false dawn. His later productions are of a piece with the rest of Indo Anglian Drama

Asif Currimbhoy

Life and works of Currimbhoy - a brief sketch:

Asif Currimbhoy was born in Bombay in 1928 in a family of industrialists. His father was a liberal minded intellectual and his mother was a social worker. Asif studied in st.Xavier ' High school, Bombay and in the Wisconsin University in U.S.A. Graduating from for the University of California he came back to India and took up a job in the New India Assurance Company in Paris. Later he became a marketing executive in the Burma shell. Even as a student he had taken an interest in the drama as an art form. His plays are: Inquilab, The Refugee, sonar Bangla, The Tourist Mecca, The Doldrimmers, Darjeeling Tea, This Allien-Native Land, Goa, An experiment With Truth, OM Mane Badma Hum, Thorns on a canvas, The Hungry one, The Miracle Seed and the Dissident M.L.A. Currimbhoy experiments with variety of theatrical technique such as short scenes following in quick succession, the play within within the play, dual scenes, chorus chants, shadow cut-outs, pantomime, blackouts, choreography etc.

I DARJEELING TEA

Scenewise summary of the play

The main characters in the play, as marked out by the author himself, are Big Mac, Jennie, Buntty and Didi. Big Mac is a white planter in Darjeeling, a huge, brawny man, the descendant of Scottish settlers in Assam. Jennies his Scottish wife. Didi is mac's daughter in an illicit union with a Nepali woman. Buntty is a western educated Indian, an assistant manger in the tea estate. It is men like him who are replacing the white men in independent India. The other characters are Hugh the counterpart and rival of Mac in the plantation industry, Sally his wife, a white woman, Thapa the faithful watchman and bodyguard of Mac (he is a Gurkha), a marwari, a young man, planter's families, club staff, chairman, M.D. and other V.I.P.'s and their wives, and a band of musicians.

The scenes are very short and they shift in quick succession. They seem to be conveyed for film sequences.

ACT-1

The first scene is set in the planters' club. There are two

groups, one, the expatriate planters with their wives and town, a marwari, a shrewd businessman, the type who is slowly buying up the plantations from the English companies and two, young assistant managers and their families. The conversation shifts from one group to another. The white men are nostalgic of the olden days of the British Raj. When they were free to manage the estates as they liked. Their bosses in England left them alone to manage the plantations as they liked. Their wives also are sorry for what they miss. The Club is a remnant of past memories and is shabby now. Jennie is proud of her husband Big Mac. Half his salary goes on booze. Hugh slyly reminds Mac of their jolly time with coolie women and scotch whisky flowing like water. That is past now. No wonder Brown left India.

The Marwari is called the white marwari because he is relatively enlightened. He says the days of the big managing Agencies are over. Enterprising individuals are buying up the estates from the white men's companies. Mac is determined to stick on and so is Hugh. But their wives desire to go back to their native land. Jennie was a model once and could try to succeed even though she is no longer young. The young man claims that men like him are paid well by the managing agency house because they are cheaper than white men. The marwari says that their salary does not matter if they know how to keep a double set of books - Two sets of account books.

Bhupendra Bunty a young assistant Manager, educated in England, enters. He imitates the Englishman in drinking hard and other vices. He orders drinks for all the people present at his cost. He is the type who have to replace the British managers and drive his subordinates to do hard work. Now he is reporting for duty at Big Mac's estate.

2. The next scene is the living room of Mac's bungalow. Mac is reading a newspaper and smoking a pipe. Bunty is sitting on the carpet and talking in a courtier-like fashion to Mac's wife, Jennie. He suggests enacting a play by Noel Coward at the club premises. People from all over the place, two hundred miles around can be invited. And Jennie is to act in it. He persuades Jenny to take a part in the play.

3. The club. Noisy preparation for the play. There is also dancing and singing. Bunty, in a business-like manner stops the dancing and singing. Jennie enters. She is in command and gives out orders.

4. Mac's living room. Mac tells Jennie that she is changed. The play has brought back some of the old excitement. It has given her something to do. She is not satisfied with her life as a housewife looking after the house and ...she cuts herself short and leaves her feeling unexpressed. She has had no children and that sense of unfulfilment is nagging away in the deepest corners of her heart. She was a model in one of the leading fashion houses of London. She could go back as a model. Her hips have remained slender. The play doesn't mean much to her. But it gives her a release; a memory, a promise of something to live for.

5. Conversation in darkness between Mac and Bunty. Mac had promised him a long walk earlier. Bunty asks him when he is going to have it. Why is it that he doesn't make him work hard. Mac says that they will start next morning to the rang-Tang gardens. It is inaccessible by jeep. They propose to walk.

6. Next day. Early dawn. The majestic beauty of the rolling hills with miles and miles of tea bushes lies before them. (This has to be presented on a projected screen). Mac explains the hard work behind the two leaves and a bud plucked regularly every week for seventy years, when the tea plants and the shade giving trees are removed, and new ones planted in their place. The planters' life is not easy. He can't turn back. He is loyal to the soil and the people working with him. The hill people are the finest and loveliest creatures in the world.

7. Planters' home again. Mac and Jennie. Mac explains that it was a long walk. Poor Bunty! He must have been tired out but he did not show it. He wants to be a planter. That's why he suggested the like and did not complain. Mac realises that some of the gardens were neglected and needed tending. He himself has got back some of his own youthful vitality. Mac is satisfied with Bunty's ability.

8. Screen shots of the open scene of tea estates. The jungle also is shown on the screen. They are out on a shooting expedition. Bunty misses a bevy of birds. Then they are shown in the golf course. Mac shows Bunty a thing or two in playing golf.

9. Jenny and Sally in the club. The play has affected them all. It has revitalised them. The doctor has advised Mac to stop drink-

ing, says Jennie. Still mac is his old self. He does what he likes and sometimes explodes. He has taken the garden in hand seriously again. The rivalry between Mac and Hug is flaring up again. They almost had a fight the other day, sally explains that they both seem to have a silly feeling that they can't be friendly unless they fight like children. They seem to be itching for another fight.

10. Almost like a pantomime. Bunty is walking over to Mac's house. He is acting out his role in the play. He reaches out his hands to Mrs. Robinson (a character in the play). Saying they should elope. There was no other way. The light snaps on. The hand the he tries to kiss turns out to be that of Thapa the Gurkha, who goes out without batting an eyelid.

11. The last scene of the play within the play, Bunty makes a fool of himself in acting his part, not remembering the words.

12. The previous scene and the present one form part of the "Darjeeling do". The group who have come from estates from far and wide now separates into two. The men move into one room and women and children into another. The chairman of the tea board association addresses the men. Here reminds them that the individual proprietors are buying them. Out (the large companies). Labour is explosive. They are not to be underestimated. They are capable of violence sudden and terrifying. The managing agency houses are moving towards their end in India.

13. The women's side. The wives of the visiting representative and the managing Director, English women, talk to Jennie, Sallie and other. They look back with nostalgia to the old days. Elizabeth, a greying woman, a planter's wife, announces that she and her husband are leaving India.

14. Partial blackout. Loud blare of band music. Bunty dances, Big Mac and Big Hugh sit drinking with trace of smile and a challenge on their face. As the crowd starts dispersing the giants get warmed up and start fighting. They go on drinking and fighting. Everything is in shambles. At least they are taken home by their wives and friends. Curtain. End of Act 1.

ACT - II SCENE I

1. Mac's bungalow. Present are Mac, Jennie, Hugh and sally. The giants have black eyes and band-aids though it is a few days after the fight. Mac tells Hugh that his managing Director was going to sell Out. He had promised to give pension benefits. If Mac was willing they were ready to post him elsewhere -Ceylon, new Guinea, Africa etc. mac and Hugh and their forbears have been in India for three generations. Hugh remarks that it leaves Mac sort of alone. Mac doesn't reply. Both Jennie and sally wish to return home to England, each for a different reason. Sally's children are growing up in England and she doesn't want to be separated for long. She is homesick. Jennie doesn't reveal her reasons but she too wants to go back. Hugh suggests the Mac and he go back to England and start something like a pub or a boarding house. Hugh leaves shaking hand with Mac saying that his offer is open. Mac will be welcome any time. Mac explains to Jennie that the estate depends on him for the past forty years. Jennie points out that Mac is it still the same as when he was a boy. But things are changing and he is resisting the change. Mac replies that the garden is part of him. It goes deep. It is the only life he knows. Jennie asks him to retire more for his sake than hers. Mac is firm in his No".

2. Bunty comes bounding to Mac's house. He is in riding breeches and has a horse-whip in hand. He calls out but finds no one inside, nor even Tahpa. He goes and sits on Mac's chair, closes his eyes and relaxes. A pretty Nepalese girl comes in, walks on tip-toe, puts her hands over Bunty's eyes and kisses him on his cheeks. Bunty cries out "Oh Mrs. Macneel". He is stunned and confused at the sight of the girl. She is also equally confused. Her name is Didi. She speaks good English. As they talk, Bunty tries to grab her. But she hits him on the jaw. Mac and Jenny comes and Didi calls out to Mac "Daddy".

3. Mac's sitting room. Jenni, Didi and Mac. Didi says that she came away from the convent school because she was bored. She says she wants to be a planter and roam the hills. Mac is remind of a Scottish rhyme that speaks of love and beauty. To didi's query he explains that Scotland is a beautiful country, beautiful like poetry on a spring day. Though he was born and brought up in India his father

had taken him to Scotland for all his holidays when he was young. Didi wants to go there but she tells it is very far away. It is there. Jennie tells that Mac doesn't like going back home. Didi replies that home is remember. Jennie snaps back to her memory is longer. She remember him more as a young Scot than as planter. Looking coldly at Mac and then at the girl she remarks that 'we all make mistakes in life'. Didi is bewildered. The reference (we know) is to Mac's mistake in having a child in a Nepali woman. Mac replies that Didi won't know. All she remember is the little hut. Didi remembers her hut, her doll's house. Remarkable memory for a little girl. But she is not a little girl now. She is grown up. Looking at Mac seems lost in memories. Jennie is irritated at this and asks Didi to leave them alone. She is obviously jealous of Didi's mother, is in whose memory Mac seems lost. She doesn't like Didi. She calls him a bastard. Mac explodes in anger and strikes her. She complains that Mac has never told her what Didi's mother was like. That's why he wants to remain here, not the garden and the three generations. Mac replies that Didi's mother died nineteen years ago in childbirth. Jennie asks him why he did not leave the woman after enjoying her as planters usually do. He is too softhearted. She wants him to leave this place and go somewhere, any where. Mac is lost between anger and pity, understanding and reproach, confused, guilty. He goes out into the garden.

4. The author in a stage direction says that the next scene is optional but to leave for Kanchanjunga the next day. They go on horseback. The panorama of white-capped mountains dwarfs all humanity underneath casting a spell over the hill people, who worship it as a deity. They reach the spot of their pilgrimage after days of arduous, travel and nights of danger from the predators. The destination is a simple grave at the foot of the towering mountain. Didi's mother was buried there. She wanted it that way. Mac kneels and bows his head and prays. Thappa stands next to him touching his head (in salutation to the departed soul).

5. Planter's home again. Didi invites Mac to her doll's house. It is her home. Mac tells her that this (the large house) is her home. He had built the doll's house for her. This is the little hill people's wooden hut. Then he had taught her a game. In the hollow of a bamboo she was to give him of the fermented juice, sit across from him and see the change within him. But he had never told her anything about her mother.

6. Jenny and Bunty in the planter's house. Jenny shows him that little hut in the compound. A kerosene lamp is burning in the hut. She tells him that Mac and Didi are playing a game. Didi is wearing tribal dress. Mac is seen lying down. Didi pours the brew in the hollow dress. Mac is seen lying down. Didi pours the brew in the hollow bamboo and pours it into his mouth. She lists on her haunch a little away watching and waiting on Mac like the local women. Bunty understands from Jennie's sarcastic comments that Mac is re-enacting his days with Didi's mother. Bunty points out that her sense of humiliations comes from the fact that she is barren. She is angry. But Bunty tells her that he says this the only to enable her to face herself. Jennie tells him that Mac's affair with the coolie woman was not just an affair but a lifetime's love affair. His infidelity is repeated over and over again every time he plays this game. Then she comes close to him and asks him to kiss her. He hesitates but then she kisses him and he stands stunned. Then she asks him to go and leave her alone.

ACT-II-Science II

1. Next morning. Jenny and Mac. Jennie has packed her clothes. She is leaving. There is a heated argument. She tells him that he adopted Didi only to remind him of her mother. Last night she felt that Mac was with the coolie woman. She is going to Scotland. Her offer is open, as Hugh said, She will be waiting for him. Then she leaves. Mac covers his face with his hands and stands with shaking shoulders.

2. Some weeks later. Evening. Mac's home. Bunty comes and reports that there is labour trouble on one of the estates. Roby has been beaten up. Mac orders Thappa to get the jeep out. Bunty suggests calling the police but Mac is against it. They will mess it up. There are about three hundred of them. Some are likely to be outsiders. Bunty points out that Mac doesn't realise the situation. It is political. They are influenced by the Naxalites. They don't talk or negotiate. They kill. Mac grabs a bottle of liquor and drives out. Bunty promises to go with him but a minute later. As Mac goes out he picks up the phone.

3. Planter's house. It is night. The jeep comes back. Mac and Bunty come in to the house. Mac says he wouldn't have believed it if he had not seen it himself. He agrees that they, Mac and Bunty wouldn't

be alive now if the police hadn't arrived. Bunty tells the truth that he had phoned them. Bunty points out to Mac that they have to learn new tricks to meet the new menace. They should consolidate one union in their gardens with the whom they can negotiate. That is what the proprietary gardens are doing. Also Mac has to be careful after the day's incident. All that they want is to get one man, no matter who. Mac feels safe as long as Thapa with his Kukri is around. Mac takes another drink with his eyes afar. He declares he has a long way to go. The choice before him is Scotland or Kanchanjunga. They are both waiting for him. He wants the lights to be dimmed. He feels tired.

4. A few weeks later. Morning. Didi dressed in local clothes. They croon like two doves.

5. A few days later. Mac's bungalow. Didi is sitting outside on the steps, weeping silently. Bunty comes. Didi rises and rushes to him. Mac has had a heart attack again. There had been an earlier stroke. The doctor had advised him to stop drinking. But he had gone on as before. Now he is under sedative. Didi had tried to stop him from drinking but it was of no avail. He did not allow her to call Mrs. Macneil. Sometimes in his delirium he is calling out then name of Didi's mother, sometimes Jennie too. Sometimes he seems to avoid even Didi. He talks only to Thapa and that too in a hill dialect that Didi can't understand. Bunty tries to console her saying he will be back to normal soon after a good rest.

6. Mac's bungalow a few days later. Mac is reclining on a chair, his feet covered with a blanket. It is raining heavily outside. Thapa is silently standing near his master. The kerosene lamp in the little hut is lit. Mac asks if the lamp is really lit or it is his imagination. The shadows of Bunty and Didi are seen in the hut. It is as it should be, he remarks. But it was a secret reserved only for this game. And it hurts. He feels jealous as Jennie felt. He asks for a drink. Thapa hesitates but Mac is insistent and he drinks slowly. It was raining like this when he lay in the hut with Didi's mother. His emotion for her was one that surpassed love. He asks Thapa how he could ever leave the place with its memories.

7. Some days later. Late evening. Mac and Thapa. Mac asks if the light in the hut has come on. It hasn't. Mac has lost count of the days. He is sipping the country brew. He remembers his sweetheart,

the hill woman, the day she died and her cry of pain merged with the cry of the child. He hears the sounds first, sound of a thousand voices. Thapa doesn't hear at first. But soon it grows louder. "They are coming for me" says Mac and cries out to Thapa for help. The sheath of Thapa's Kukri is lying on the floor. He cries out to Thapa very loudly. A scream. Then again silence and shadows. A thousand fireflies retreating into the darkness. (This can be presented by the director in two different ways - one, the hallucination of a dying man or two, as actual crowds and fires). Bunty comes rushing in. Mac is dying. He asks if the little hut is burnt over. Bunty says "yes". Mac dies. Bunty is holding him and crying.

8. The club as in the first scene of the play. The same group as before. The proprietary owner of the garden. No expatriate managers. Bunty sits and drinks at the same table as Mac and Hugh occupied before. A proud young recruit enters declaring "There are going to be some changes".

STUDY AIDS

Textual and Critical Essays 1. Asif Currimbhoy's "Darjeeling Tea"-A Critical Appreciation

The scheme of the play is the predicament of the westerner who is born and brought up in India and who prefers to remain in India after the disappearance of the British Raj in the country. Big Mac is a Scotchman by descent but he and his forefathers have lived for three generations in India. India is his country and he prefers to live here after 1947. Almost all his fellow countrymen have left for England. Mac's wife is Scottish. But he had loved a Nepali woman and had a child in her. She died in childbirth. Other Englishmen used to enjoy the will women and forget about them. But Mac's love for Didi's mother is a passionate attachment. The tea plantations are being bought up by individual proprietors and the large managing agency houses have sold out. Mac's is the last British company in the field. At last his managing director also has told him that they are selling out. Mac loves his wife. But she is jealous of his attachment to the coolie woman and her daughter. She wants to take Mac anywhere out of India. His M.D. also has offered pension benefits to him or posting elsewhere. Hugh, another manager offers him a partnership in small business. But Mac prefers to stay on in India. Trouble starts among the labourers. The

Naxal movement has penetrated into their ranks. There is a different kind of labour movement. They don't negotiate; they kill someone, anyone, Mac has had two heart attacks. The Doctor has told him to stop drinking but he goes on drinking hard. His wife Jennie leaves him. As he lies recovering from his second heart attack, crowds of naxalites come and burn Didi's little hut. Mac has one more stroke and he dies heart-broken. His tragic predicament is the theme of the play-the conflict between two loyalties.

This is brought out through Mac's story, which is really the story of all Weterners who were attached to India and chose to remain in India. Mac is the central character. He is portrayed with sufficient skill. He is moderately individual and credible enough to live in our memory as a living human being. In the portrayal of the other characters too the dramatist has succeeded. Jenny, Didi and Bunt are portrayed well. Even Thapa, the Gurkha guard, ever loyal by his master's side lives in our memory through he doesn't speak a word throughout the play.

The setting becomes vivid on two or three occasions, when we are shown the miles and miles of tea gardens and when Mac prays at the foot of Mount Kanchanjunga, where his Nepalese beloved lies buried. But this is not possible on the stage of a theatre. Asif Currimbhoy suggests a projected screen for this. The other scenes are set in Mac's house and in the club.

The dramatic conflict is pervasive. There is Mac's internal conflict between his loyalty to his wife and to his deceased beloved. Jennie herself is torn between her love for Mac and her jealousy for the coolie woman, who is dead but holds Mac immersed in her memory. Bunt wishes to occupy Mac's position but he is loyal and affectionate to him.

An interesting feature of the play is the innumerable short scenes following in quick succession. Some of these obviously can't be staged in a theatre. The scenes requiring screen projection and the innumerable short scenes give one the impression that the play was conceived as a film sequence.

In spite of some comic scenes verging on farce and the cheap stunt of the fight between Mac and Hugh, the final impression is tragic.

We are not told what happened to Didi. But the impression that we get is that she burnt with her doll's house. Apart from that Mac's own cry 'Thapa, Thapa' is tragic in the extreme. Currimbhoy's treatment of the subject is one of sympathy.

TEXTUAL AND CRITICAL NOTES

1) DARJEELING TEA

1. Mac- a character sketch:

Mac is a Scottish manager of a large plantation in Assam. He was born and brought up in India. For three generations they have been in India. As a boy Mac has visited Scotland with his father. But the only home for him is India. When all white men leave India, he chooses to remain here. Even his friend Hugh leaves but he offers a partnership to Mac in some small business in England or Scotland, which they can run together. Mac is firm in his resolve. Jennie's departure affects him, he is big in stature and has the authoritarian ways of the white men in India. He is nostalgic about the old days. But at the same time he knows everyone of his subordinates intimately. He commands their loyalty till the advent of the naxalities. His love for his wife Jennie is real, but Didi's mother, the Nepali woman is enthroned in his heart for ever. Sometimes he is immersed in her memory. His pilgrimage to her grave at the foot of Mount Kanchanjunga and his act of kneeling in prayer is a touching scene. He loves his tea garden, he loves this country and he loves Didi and her departed mother. He loves his workers and subordinates. He calls Bunt "Laddie". He dies of heart failure. But it will be truer to say that he dies of a broken heart.

2. Jennie:

Jennie is Mac's wife. A Scottish by birth, she was a model in a reputed fashion house in London. She knew Mac as a young man and accepted him as her husband. Their early years were quite happy. The white "madam", the manager's wife commanded a great deal of prestige in those days. But two things have been nagging at her heart for some time now. In the first place, she is barren. She can't bear children. Secondly she is jealous of the coolie woman whom Mac loved and of his daughter Didi. The former was dead and gone. She could have adopted Didi and made life for Mac and herself happy. But the sting of jealousy and the white woman's contempt for the coolie

women gnaws away into her peace of mind. She makes a clean breast of her feelings to Mac and asks him to go with her anywhere out of India. But Mac prefers to remain here, True to character she decides to leave India and promise to wait for Mac till he comes back to his own country.

3. The central theme of the play "Darjeeling Tea".

Asif currimbhoy's play Darjeeling tea depicts the tragic predicament of the white man who has accepted India as his home and remains here after the departure of the British raj. A handful of such men really existed in India in the decades following Indian independence. But their fate was unenviable. Their power and social prestige was gone, though some of them like big Mac continued to command the loyalty of their subordinates. They had no roots in English or Scottish life. India was their country, the only country they knew. Their white friends and colleagues leave them and go back to England. In the case of Mac, even his wife leaves him though he has always loved her. But Mac's love for the coloured woman was real, sincere and passionate. He has no contempt for the Indians, He loves his daughter Didi as though she were a white child. The strange turn that politics takes in India come as the last straw on the camel's back and huge, muscular, magnificent Mac dies heartbroken with the names of the two women whom he loved on his lips. His divided loyalty to these two women and to India and England provide the central conflict in the play.

Fiction

Mulk Raj Anand

Mulk Raj Anand is the most prolific of all the Indo-Anglian novelists, whose reputation as a writer has perhaps been greater outside India. He wrote several novels, short stories, treatises on art and culture and he remained a committed writer through out his life. Some of his life. Some of his novel have been translated into many languages all over the world. Though have been translated into many languages all over the world. Though Anand is nearing ninety years, he is busy in writing yet another novel.

Anand has earned undisputed place in Indo-Anglian fiction. He is a writer of certain principles and has always tried to remain true

to those principles, throughout his career as a novelist. He used literature as a means to the alleviation of the suffering fellow human beings. He wrote about the lowest dregs of humanity, living in utmost poverty, squalor and degradation and showed that they could become heroes of fiction. This is a distinct departure from the tradition in India, from writers like Banckim chandra. Chatterji and Tagore. Anand attempted to expose the ugliness in life by dramatising the non human realities. He was irresistibly drawn to towards the teachings of Gandhiji and his novel Untouchable was mainly given shape in Gandhi's Ashram.

Anand wrote about his views as a writer and philosopher in the book named Apology for Heroism. He says that he sought to recreate his life through his memories of India in which he grew with a view to discovering the vanities, vapidities, the conceits and the perplexities through which he had grown up. The media for him as a writer are memory and imagination. The substance of his work became the whole of his varied life which covers the whole gamut of human relationship. He says, in the thirties, the pink decade, social problems superseded the private ones, which found expression in the literature of the period. It is true that Anand accepted Marxism but he considered humanism as the more comprehensive ideology.

Mulk raj Anand was born in Peshwar in 1905: "born of a father who had broken away from the hereditary profession of partisanship and joined the mercenary British -Indian army, and of a peasant mother After graduating from the University of Punjab he went to London to study philosophy from the University of Punjab he went to London to study philosophy under Prof.. Dawes Hicks. There are many stories about his decision to be India .According to Anand the immediate cause of his impetuous decision was "my father hit my mother" . All the ,his stay in Europe, about twenty years, was a very productive period in his life. He was awarded PhD in 1930 in 1930. During his stay in Europe he made friendship with many leading writers of the time. His reputation as a writer would have touched new heights if he had not been drawn into anti-imperialistic sentiments. Anand's long stay in England made him not only an arch enemy of the British attitudes but also a true Indian, a real patriotic son who dived deep into the ethos of Indian culture to weave them into the very texture of his stories Anand's return to Indian was not merely a return of native but

the return of a genius who carried with him the best in Greek and European thought. He is also a true Gandhian though he is mostly mistaken as a Marxist.

Anand was lucky to get instant recognition as a writer when his early novels were published. His first novel *Untouchable* carried a preface by E.M Forster and it was greeted by writers like R.H Scott James, V.S Prithett, and Bonamee Dorbee. Anand wrote his novels in quick succession. Almost all his best novels were published between 1935 to 1940. Anand's sociological approach to literature has attracted adverse criticism too. Novels like *Untouchable* and *Coolie* which appeared in 1935 and 1936 provoked his critics to dismiss his novels as propaganda literature.

It must be remembered that Anand took to writing at time when India was passing through very critical problems. He was merely responding to the events in India. All patriotic intellectuals had a clear aim, a sense of commitment, to build an India which was free from all kinds of oppressions. Anand, as a writer, could see before him the suffering mass. The untouchable the coolies the peasants etc. - crying for one or other form of emancipation. They possessed him deep in his conscience with the result that whenever he took his pen, only the life of the lowest flowed through it and he wrote his novels with a sense of acute ache in him. All his novels depict man's helpless subjection to slavery and dejection and Anand also pinpoints the social obstacles which hinder full human growth. He regards his novels as part of the freedom movement in India - in the case of *Bakha* from the condition of rejection and in the case of *Coolie* from the fact of being left out of life by a society in which every hand was raised against him. In fact, freedom becomes the hero of his novels. Anand does not portray any kind of sentimental sympathy. But raises the question of the right to attain fullness in life; it is a revolt against all kinds of social oppression, suppression and depression. However Anand is not a mere propagandist. He is an artist. He knows the history of the development of the novel to the present time. His novels reflect his genius, which makes him a first class novelist. So the proletarian basis of his novels should be taken only as the artistic aim to eradicate evil.

When all the novels written by novelist become a mere varia-

tion of the same theme seen in the first few novels, there is a danger of facing a declining response from the reading public. His *Untouchable* and *Coolie* were, of course, well applauded by the reader but, then his subsequent novels become a mere repetition of the plight of coolies with different names. This is a charge from which Anand cannot escape and this is also the reason why he could not produce anything better after his first novels.

There is one element in Anand as a writer E.M Forster rightly praised. Anand came to fiction through philosophy. It must be admitted that there is the weight of previous thoughts in Anand's observations and moral analyses. This could be seen in his first novel itself. Anand gives the untouchable boy *Bakha*, three options. Conversion to Christianity where he can escape from the oppression of caste Gandhian model of emancipation; and finally, seeking the help of science, Under the tutorship of Anand K. Koomaraswamy, Mulk Raj Anand took a keen interest in Indian art and philosophy. So he has in him the perfect blend of all that is best in the world - as he puts it, the Alps of European thought and the Himalayan wisdom blended perfectly.

Another aspect of Anand as an Indo-Anglian novelist is his method of presenting rustic speech in English. He gives his own translation of the Hindi words, or inserts original Hindi words in English, or some times gives wrong spelling to give an echo of the original rustic dialogues. Then suddenly he gets back to his real English, which is never Indian in any sense because of his strong command of the language which he acquired during his long stay in Europe. In fact the problem of imparting originality to Indian culture in English language is a problem which all Indo-Anglian writers confront. But most of them try to forget this problem so that they could escape from the charge of being internationally artificial.

TWO LEAVES AND A BUD

This is a novel which only a writer like Mulk Raj Anand can write because the story demands a thorough knowledge of English customs and habits on one side and on the other the rustic sentiments of India stretching back to the beginning of this century. Anand could artistically blend these two extremes because he had the experiences of both and also because he has the retentive power of keeping all his experience unexpurgated.

The novel *Two Leaves and a Bud* is born out of an experience he had when he lived for a while near a plantation in Assam. Anand's anti-imperialistic feelings touch a new water-mark in this novel, resulting in the bannig of the novel for some time. The theme is, ofcourse, once again that of a collie. The coolie in the novel is Gangu. With false promise of high wages and free gifts of land he, with his family, was enticed away to the hills of Assam. His kismet brings him his wife, his young daughter and his young son in to the poor hands of the Angrezi race in a tea garden in Assam. He did not know that he was leaving his native land to live in prison....." this prison has no bars but it is nevertheless an unbreakable jail". He also did not know that he with his wife and children had landed in a garden of badmashes where "nobody's mother or sister is safe".

The British planters had agents everywhere when to recruit coolies to work in the gardens in Assam. Anand says in the novel: The position of the plantation coolies in India is in many respects, similar to that of the cotton plantation slaves of the southern states of North America....."It was a monstrous crime against humanity. The wages of a coolie on the Indian plantations remained 5 rupees per month for about seventy five years. As de Havresays in the novel 'our Britions, who never, shall beslaves when and enslaved themillions of Asia, And these Britons were the money-grabbing, slave driving soulless managers and directors everywhere.

Mulk Raj anand takes up this imperialistic attitudes of the British in India and weaves around it a beautiful story which moves with the tender rhythm of the plucking of tea leaves in the plantation in Assam-two leaves and a bud, two leaves and a bud. Gangu, his wife sajani and his daughter Leila are some of the cruel victims of the terrible exploitation by the white people in the tea gardens. Buta Ram who brought them from Hoshiarpur had to tell them that these Angrezi sahibs were just like mai-bap. and Gangu who loved soil more than any thing else in this world was also promised that he would get a piece of land in Assam. all together he had anticipated love and wealth in Assam even though it required a long journey to reach that heaven. after all life is like a journey', he thought. But when he came to the promised land he found it was infested with mosquitoes and fireflies, geckoes, blood-suckers and all the other malignant creatures which presented such virulent challenge to the existence of

humanity. And what kind of 'mai-bap' did he meet?. These white mai-baps considered Indians contemptible and barren. "These immediate experience of Gangu in Assam was very bitter and cruel". the bellybought him to Assam and he found the three annas he earned too merge to support his belly

As his life hardened Gangu discerns a combined conspiracy against him which he calls his kismet. he thinks that God has singled him out for all the suffering in the world. Gangu narrowly escaped from an attack of malarai but his wife sajani fell a victim to this disease, and runs from pillar to post to meet the burial expense. The authorities who did not provide a congenial place for the coolies to live a healthy life segregated the infected quarters and treated them like devils. So Gangu was denied even a meeting with the sahib when he went to him, begging for help to cremate his beloved, who stood with him like a rock when she was alive.

Contrasted to all those cruel white souls in Assam is the gentle English sahib. De la Harve. Probably his love of zoology made him quite sober to all living creatures, including the coolies. It is he who ruminates in his mind. The perennial problems of the suffering coolies and it is again Harve who educates the coolies about their rightful place. "It is the system" he tells his sweetheart Barbara, that one must hate. He reminds her that they were brought up "by the sweat of these coolies". They built grandiose, gothic homes for themselves in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras and barns for the coolies. He knows the whole history of British invasion into Assam, first in the form of East India Company and later the slow annexing of the whole of India. He educated Gangu about his right which finally ends up in an abortive mutiny. The revolutionary episode in the novel, the combined resistance of the coolies to the cruelty of the sahibs has the echo of the beginnings of the swaraj movement in India. However the coolies were not well organised: they were without a leadership, except the spirit of freedom and emancipation they received from de la Havre. They were crushed ruthlessly by the Raj, using all the modern weapons at their disposal, including the aeroplanes. Altogether the coolies felt like a leaf in a storm, and Anand was careful to show that the Indians were congenitally lazy and the wealthy among them joined the British to make their proletarian life more miserable.

So gangu continue to suffer. Unlike his counterparts in Anand's other novels, he has a group of people to share the imposed tragedy in life. Yet gangu remains singled out, even the small patch of land which he earned as a coolie became useless as heavy rain washes away the fruit of his labour. Like the character in Hardy's novels, she watches helplessly "the violent play of god. It was not poverty, and because alone which made Gangu suffer in Assam. His daughter, Leila, becomes an object of the unquenchable lust of Reggie Hunt. Thought the novelist and perhaps, god were kind enough to save her from being raped by Reggie, gangu is finally killed when he makes an attempt to save his daughter. An impartial white jury finally found him not guilty which is probably a hint that Leila will end her life in the hands of Reggie Hunt.

Reggie Hunt is an interesting character in the novel. He is drawn in contrast to Bede La Harve. He is the Assistant planter. He is known among the coolies as the badmash sahib. Reggie liked to imagine that he looked like Napoleon Bonaparte. He comes to the coolies in the posture in which Napoleon came up to his men. To waering like again over the pygmies. He flogged coolies as they "needed constant goading". At the sight of him the coolie women shuffled like hens at the arrival of a much-dreaded cock. Whisky, women, golf and riding on his Tipoo with his whip bradishes high are the constant interests which keep Reggie occupied in his life.

Two Leaves and Bud is a proletarian novel written probably with the intention of highlighting the anti-imperialistic sentiment in India. But it has all the ingredients of a good novel. It deals with human nature swayed by the forces of good and evil. The novel touches upon almost all existential problems and stirs the readers' imagination to look within himself for a cure of the man-made maladies, the long monologues of Havre may be a bit boring for the readers but he reminds them of some of the human problems which they try to evade. Havre studied nature and he also studied the actions and his love of humanity and all loving beings in nature give a spongy touch to all the bullying and bleeding in the novel.

Raja Rao

Life and works

Raja Rao was born in Hassan, a small town in Mysore state in 1909. He was educated in Hyderabad and in France. He first married a French lady interested in translating Bhagavad Gita into French. His wife was his first literary critic and she was basically responsible for the Indianness of Raja Rao's English work in the sense that it was she who pointed out to him that it was rubbish to write Macaulayan English, so he even tried to write in Kannada, but his Kannada works have no intrinsic value. A short story, Akkayya was his first publication in English.

Raja Rao is not a prolific writer like R.K. Narayan or Mulk Raj Anand. He has only five novels to his credit. His first novel, Kanthapura, appeared in 1938. The Serpent and the Rope (1960) gained more importance as a metaphysical novel. The Cat and Shakespeare (1935) is a cosmic version of The Serpent and the Rope. Besides these and Comrade Kirlowv (1976) Raja Rao has also published another novel, The Cheemaer and His Mover (1988). The Policeman and the Rose (1976) The Cow of the Barricades and On the Gangana Ghat are a few of his collections of short stories.

Raja Rao firmly believed that the Indian novel can only be metaphysical in nature. In his hands the novel was an instrument of metaphysical consciousness. He himself declares that certain aspects of his life are emphasized in each novel so that they are accurate statements of life. The Serpent and the Rope for example is held as his spiritual autobiography where he talks about the failure in his marriage and the search for his Guru. He visited Gandhi Ashram in nineteen thirties and was involved with India's political problems. He was interested in the progressive writers' movements and had connections with socialist leaders. This national experience is probably reflected in Kanthapura.

KANTHAPURA

It tells the story of the effect of Gandhism on a complete Indian village. The novel as much does not put forth any political ideology. But it can be read as a political novel in the sense that it presents the impact of Gandhian ideology. Raja Rao was inspired by Ignazio Silone's political novel Fontamara. In Kanthapura Raja Rao is present-

ing the political and social reality in the mould of a legend or myth, of Rama and Krishna. In *The Cow of the Barricades* Raja Rao presents the political struggle for freedom in mythological terms. Just like *Kanthapura*.

Kanthapura as a Gandhian Novel

In the novels published during the nineteen forties and fifties, nationalism and Mahatma Gandhi had a significant place. In some of them Mahatma Gandhi appeared as a character and in some other his ideas were freely propagated. K.S. Venkataraman in his novels *Eurupgan the tiller* (1927) and *Kandhan the patriot* (1932) portrayed Gandhi's ideas on Ahimsa, a weapon for political freedom and spoke about the removal of materialism. Venkataraman avoids introducing Mahatma as a character but concentrates on giving the national perspective. Mulk-Raj Anand in his novels of the thirties propagates Gandhian attitudes and puts the forth solutions to the political and social problems of India. In his *Cooolie* (1936) we can see the Gandhian star against dehumanization of the underdog by the society. In *Unpuchabel* (1935) Gandhi appears as a central character and reproaches those who indulge in violence and refuse to recognize untouchables as legitimate members of the society. The post-Independence writers after a brief gap brought Gandhi back to the literary front. K.A. Abbas in his novel *Inquilab* (1955) presents the Mahatma in person along with other political personalities of the Gandhian age. *Inquilab* begins with Jallianwala Bagh tragedy, picture of the Salt Satyagraha and closes with the Gandhi-Irwin Pact of 1931. In R.K. Narayan's *Waiting for Mahatma* also Gandhi appears as a person and not as a symbol. If waiting for Mahatma pictures the impact of Gandhi on a single individual, Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* unfolds the impact of Gandhi on a whole community. Manohar Malgonkar in his *Bend in the Ganges* (1964) revives the Gandhian theme by probing into the ideology of Ahimsa not only as a political weapon but also as a philosophy and way of life. Nayantara Sahgal also presents a Gandhian character in her *This Time of Morning* (1965).

However Gandhi is no longer a prominent figure in the contemporary English novel.

Kanthapura does not bring up Gandhi as a flesh and blood character. But the whole novel, with Gandhi's Salt Satyagraha as its centre, is replete with Gandhian spirit and ideals. Gandhi is here mythi-

cized by presenting him as an avatar (incarnation of God) and equating him to Rama or Krishna. The historical person of the Mahatma is approximated to a well-known archetype though accepted by the common man as reality. Gandhian ideals are to the village as religious commandments by their avowed leader, Murthy, spin, practice Ahimsa and speak truth are these watchwords. The initial reaction of the villagers to Gandhi wins them over using their own coin namely religion. Especially the women folk in the village organise themselves under the umbrella of Gandhism.

The portrayal of how Gandhism influenced Murthy, through his vision, also gives a legendary touch to Gandhi's figure. Gandhian ideals are Murthy's obsession. Murthy, a Brahmin, mingling freely with the pariahs, remains every inch a Gandhian. But in the end, only the poor peasant women remain as the staunch Gandhian with the hope that the Mahatma would save them. But *Kanthapura* is completely destroyed and Murthy muses: Mahatma is a noble person as I am but the English will know how to cheat him, and he will let himself be cheated" and he also joins hands with the Gandhian in Nehru, who strives to build swaraj of equals. Murthy is the incarnation of nationalism by itself.

A sthalapurana

Kanthapura is a typical Indian sthalapura as Raja Rao himself uses the terminology in his foreword. Raja Rao neatly places the village *Kanthapura* in the historical map, giving all the geographical boundaries. Religion is the centre, the deity Kenchamma reigns supreme, of the village life and the legendary stories connected with the Goddess with references to particular geographical points. The village is the centre of action with its day to day life, the legendary stories connected with the goddess with references to particular geographical points. The village is the centre of action with its day to day life, temple, blessing ceremony etc. The village is neatly presented in varied sections: the Brahmins' quarters, potters' quarters, pariah quarters and the colonies of Skeffington, Coffee Estate, Waterfall, Venkamma, Front House, Akkamma, postmaster Suryannarayana, Nose-scratching Nanjamma. All these typical characters emphasise the communal life of the village. They remind one about the simple vast characters of Hardy's novels. Like Manohar Malgonkar's *Combat of Shadows* and

Mulk Raj Anand's *Two Leaves and a Bud*, a glimpse of the life on a plantation is also portrayed in *Kanthapura* through the planter and colliers of Skeffington estate. At another level, the planter represents the Britishers and colliers in turn stand for the Indian victims under colonial rule. The stock character in the rural novel, the greedy money lender also figures in *Kanthapura*. But here of a difference, it is a true Brahminbhatta who plays this role.

Narrative Technique and style

In his forward to the novel, Raja Rao declares "one has to convey in language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own". accordingly Raja Rao chooses a unique style to narrate his story. Here the story is narrated by a village grandmother. There is no division into chapters no flashbacks or shift in chronology. The grandmother narrates the whole story in the style Puran's and interminable tale". episode after episode. the narrator is also a participant in the action. The use of a single participant narrator the grandmother also resembles the traditional Harikathas: Like the Harikatha narrator, the grandmother also introduces songs in between. "Direct rendering of conversations make the narration as dramatic as Harikathas. By alternating simple narration, intervening songs and dramatic conversation, the audience's interest is sustained. There are a lot of upakathas as in puranas; for example the digressive discourse on serpent lore.

The political history of India itself is mythicized in *Kanthapura*. the story of Mahatma Gandhi for the first time, is presented as a Harikatha. On many occasions, Gandhi is referred to as Rama delivering Sita from the hands of the Ravana. Like Britishers, Gandhi is also talked about as an avatar like Krishna. In the legend, usually the deity's mission never gets defeated. But here *Kanthapura* is completely committed is organized in the temple. Their political procession begins in the guise of religious procession. Thus throughout the novel myth and history are interwoven with each other.

Raja Rao has successfully captured the Indian rhythm and tone in his language. He retains a few Kannada expressions. The native abusive terms like "you Pariah dog". "you bearded monkey" "son of a concubine" etc are common. Translation from the native idiom, repetitions and picturesque epithets are some of the linguistic de-

vices of *Kanthapura*. Raja Rao uses only typical Indian images like "as tame as a cow" like "Hanuman to Rama". archaism, conventional figures of speech and colloquialism also form part of his style. It is noteworthy that Raja Rao does not translate idioms mechanically. He uses "crush it in its seed." "for" nip in the bud". "Cock and bull story is written as "Cock and sparrow story".

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R.K. NARAYAN

Among the English novelists, Thomas Hardy is very distinctly remembered because his novels are rooted in a particular region called Wessex. Thus he earned the title of regional novelist. R.K. Narayan also wrote his novels by fixing his stories in a particular place called Malgudi which is situated on the border of the states of Mysore (old) and Madras. But we must remember that Narayan is not a pessimist like Hardy, the comparison is just limited to the fact that they both are regional novelists.

Though, it is very easy to discern this quality of Narayan as a regional novelist, scholars have not been able to locate the precise area of his genius. T.D. Burton writes: "He seems quite lacking in the national self-consciousness of M. Rao or the social radicalism of Mr. Anand." It is very difficult to agree with Burton because a close reading of reading of Narayan's novel will reveal that he is conscious of all human and social problems. The truth is that Narayan has transcended all these problems in his own comic way. In fact his comic genius has a cosmic view of human suffering. Mr. Sampath is a novel which reflects all these great qualities of the author. R.K. Narayan is a comedian writer but we have to understand that he tries to depict a balanced view of human suffering without being carried away by sentiments. He seems to be telling his readers that through the vast panorama of social life he depicts in his novels, or through the vicissitudes of human actions and interactions in his stories he can make them realise how absurd it is to take every thing in life serious.

By confining himself to Malgudi, Narayan is able to gain mastery over all the situations and characters in his story. He knows every street of Malgudi and seems to have studied all its inhabitants thoroughly. So the readers do not feel that the story is an invention coming from the imagination of the author but a realistic portrayal of the people he has known, and the variety of the people in his novel are so immense and the situations so numerous that the novelist is able to carry his readers with him and give them a feeling of having seen the whole universe in Malgudi. Malgudi expands itself in Narayan's novels into the very universe itself in which the readers discover a wide variety of human experience. Malgudi's kinship with humanity or the very universal nature of the crisis in Malgudian soul

makes R.K. Narayan a great novelist. Narayan wrote several novels. Each one of them depicts a particular aspect of human aspiration or predicament. *Swami and Friends* is his earliest novel. As the title suggests Swami is at the centre and he is influenced by his friends. This seems to be the recurring pattern of Narayan's novels. And this also is surely a weakness as writer. The readers can easily detect a particular pattern recurring in all of his stories. From an average state of life his protagonist moves to an extraordinary state and is again brought back to the average state; but, of course, with all the experience of the journey.

KAMALA MARKANDAYA

Introduction

Kamala Markandaya is catalogued as a "socio-critical" by S.C. Harrex. Her primary aim is to satirise the society. Socio-cultural pre-occupations like clash of sensibilities tensions in families as a result of conflict between tradition and modernism, emotional response to British Raj and the East-West cultural interaction from the matrix of her plots. She belongs to a Brahmin family in Mysore and is married to an English man, and is settled in London. But she herself declares "I do think of myself as an expatriate write, All my thought processes are Indian, my parentage, religion and schooling are Indian....all my formative factors are Indian". The Indian culture conflict which is the experience of a writer of exile, is one of the problems handles by her in her novels. Kamala Markandaya has ten novels to her credit. Her maiden novel *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954) and *A Handful of Rice* (1966) are rural novels, depicting the hand-to-mouth existence of the rustic families centering around the life in an Indian village and city. *Silence of Desire* (1968) and *Some Inner Fury* (1955) depicts the interaction. If *Possession* comical attitude of Lady Caroline Bell, her *The Nowhere Man* (1969) and *Pleasure City* (1982) picture the British technocrats in Indian soil, interacting with the native people. Markandaya's novels in general deal with social relations and personal conflicts.

Rustic characters

Just like Hardy's portrayal of rustic characters in his novels we get realistic depiction of village folk of in *Nectar in the sieve*. Kunthi, the match-making grandmother, Biswas are all memorable characters. Village gossip in the rustic life is also artistically presented.

The relationship between Rukmani and the English man, Kenny is also talked about the village folk.

In her early novels, Kamala Markandaya presents the wife in her customary role of the Sati Savithry archetypical pattern. She idealises motherhood in her portrayal of Rukmani. Nathan's roots are in his fields and he dies then he transplants himself from his native village. But Rukmani's roots are in her children and she comes back alive to her home. In *Nectar in A Sieve*, Rukmani reigns supreme as a mother-priestess uniting the family members by means of mystical

life force. On the other hand, we have the picture of Kunthi, as Eve-incarnate. There is the depiction of Ira who turns to prostitution, driven to it by poverty. The maturing element of woman or mother is stressed. But Ira emerges a new woman by being herself in choosing her own life. She also shows the will power and mental strength to bring forth the Albino child she conceived outside her wedlock.

BHABANI BHATTACHARYA

Introduction

Bhabani Bhattacharya is a leading Indo-Anglian novelist of the period of independence. His novels have been translated into many foreign languages. He belongs to the group of socio-realist writers. He presents the rural scene effectively in his fiction. Bhattacharya firmly believed that "art must teach, but unobtrusively by its vivid interpretation of life". He presents truth in his novels he interprets human predicament through realistic representation. Most of his novels have a historical back drop. His maiden novel *SO MANY HUNGERS* (1947) and *HE WHO RIDES A TIGER* (1952) deal with the Bengal famine and its consequences. *MUSIC FOR MOHINI* (1952) and *A GODDESS NAMED GOLD* (1960) also deal with poverty and hunger. *SHADOW FROM LADAKH* (1966) shows a streak of Gandhism. *A DREAM IN HAWAII* (1978) deals with the encounter between the East and the West.

SO MANY HUNGERS

In many ways it resembles Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve*. It is a realistic portrayal of the exodus of an Indian village Baruni in the event of man-made Bengal famine. The story revolves round two families—one a peasant family from the village and another a middle class family in the city of Calcutta. If Kamala Markandaya analyses the social and economic aspects of poverty and village life, Bhattacharya dwells on the political aspect of the theme of hunger. *SO MANY HUNGERS* happens to be the last political novel about the freedom struggle.

In Baruni village we have the peasant family consisting of Kajoli her brother and mother. In Calcutta city there is Rahoul's family. Rahoul is a leading scientist and Professor and his father Samarendra Basu has his own dreams about his children. These two families are artistically connected through the character called Devata Basu who is Rahoul's grandfather and Kajoli's well-wisher. These characters are individualised yet they are typical characters representing a particular group. For example Rahoul's father, Samarendra has his eye on amassing wealth for the sake of his sons. During the famine he organizes the Bengal Rice Limited with an eye on profit. From the

beginning till end we see him always preoccupied with the problem of shares and profit. Rahoul represents the patriotic youth who gives up his scientific research for the service of the poor and needy. He gets inspiration from his grandfather who connects him with the peasant family in the village. Kajoli stands for the innocent, suffering peasant subject Devata who acts as a link between these two deferring groups, appears as a Gandhian figure in the novel. Devatha, with his simple living and his practice of Ahimsa and nonviolence, hunger strikes, etc., stands for the Gandhian ideal in the novel. The entire plot deals with the man-made famine during World War II. The novelist gives the message that war is evil. During the war the government buys up the villagers of their livelihood. There is mass arrest in the wake of the Quit India Movement and all village elders are imprisoned. The village youth have enlisted in the army. The novelist against this political backdrop pictures the exodus of the innocent peasants as refugees to Calcutta city. Kajoli with her mother and little brother also arrives in Calcutta, witnessing and experiencing death, hunger and sexual violation on the way. Rahoul the leader of relief work for these poor victims of famine somehow misses Kajoli the whole narration is very pathetic yet poetic, realistic yet dramatic.

The title of the novel.

The *SO MANY HUNGERS* is very apt and symbolic for this realistic portrayal of man-made hunger. The novel analyses the theme of political, economic and social exploitation during the time of war. Here against the backdrop of World War II we see capitalists like Samarendra Basu, hungering for money. At the political level, the Britishers are hungry for imperial expansion, while the Indians are hungry for their political freedom. Kajoli's hunger is not only for food but it is also a hunger for self-respect and dignity. Above all these symbolic hungers, the basic hunger for food is graphically and compassionately presented in the novel.

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Prepared by

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ANITHA DESAI

Introduction

Anitha Desai is a powerful and persuasive voice among the Indian women novelists writing in English. She always evinces a keen feminine sensibility, an acute awareness of the existential crisis particularly with reference to women. Her psychological explorations effected through a lyrical style loaded with rich images and complex symbols render her fictional world a pulsating and absorbing one. She made her impact on the literary scene in the year 1963, with the publication of her first novel, *Cry, the Peacock*. It was well received by both the readers and critics. Her second novel *Voices in the City* asserted her prowess as a feminist spokesperson especially focusing on delicate human relationships, the centrestage being occupied by alienated selves. By now she has published eight novels more; She was awarded the Kendra Sahitya Academy Award for her novel *Fire on the Mountain* and the Author's Guild Award for Excellence in Writing for *Where Shall We Go this Summer?*

Her thrust is on characters, In all her works her chief concern is with the exploration of human psyche. She places her characters in delicate human situations demanding choices and commitments. These characters relentlessly embark on self analysis. Ultimately they discover themselves in the game of life. Anita Desai makes imaginative use of the reaches and implications of loneliness. Very often Loneliness leads to alienation. The alienated characters weave unfulfilled dreams in their lonely terrains, They often become simmering lonely towers, though delicate and at times delirious.

CRY, THE PEACOCK

Brief Outline-Story/structure:

The protagonist of this lyrical novel is Maya, a highly sensitive young woman married to an established, rich lawyer, Gauthama. He is much older than her. Really they are emotionally and temperamentally on two different planks. Maya is an imaginative individualist with all the trappings of a true romantic poet. Whereas Gauthama, out and out a pragmatist, is just her opposite in all his mental deliberations. The husband wife alienation is at the very core of the novel.

Though nearly four years have passed after their marriage they do not have child, Maya is obviously too much attached to her pet, Toto. In a way Toto is a child substitute. Its death shocked her beyond bounds. It created a veritable vacuum for her and her anguish knew no limits. Gauthama on the other hand took it is something very natural. For him death is a fact with which everyone has to reconcile. He was almost unaffected by Toto's death. Desai uses this attitudinal difference to strike at the very root of her major theme, alienation.

Toto's death ignites a train of thoughts relating to death and other unconscious fears in Maya.

Gauthama and Maya appear to be two distinct islands unto themselves. Maya, equipped with her poetic mind, indulges in a tantalizing journey down the memory lane. Soon she unearths an early incident from the backyard of her evergreen mind. As a girl she had gone with her ayah to an albino astrologer. The astrologer has professed unnatural death to either husband or wife after her marriage. This remembrance suddenly affected her in many ways. Maya became a neurotic brooding over on her plight and the essential loneliness imposed on her through her marriage, Ironically enough this was arranged marriage, the chief architect being her own dear father,. She time and again now remembers that they had been married for four years. She painfully realises that "it was now to be either Gauthama or I" (CP33)

This aching realisation that she has only a short time to be on this lovely land quagmires her love for life. The fear of the oncoming death makes her a mere broken bundle of nerves. Maya loses her peace of mind, rest and even sleep.

At this stage she makes a persistent effort with the support and sympathy of Gauthama. From her angle she fails singularly in all her desperate efforts to do so. She is on the brink of a virtual breakdown. Maya says:

Yes I am going insane, I am moving further and further from all wisdom, all calm, and I shall soon be mad, if I am not that already....(CP 108)

As a way out, perhaps hopping against hope, she tries to revive her native self by deliberately going back to her childhood memo-

ries. Perhaps that enables the readers to know more about her delicate self. Her father's affectionate hold on her probably threw her out of gear with the harsh, mundane, concrete, pragmatic world of Gauthama. In that far away and long ago world she lived as a toy princess in a toy world (CP 89).

Maya's mother had died very early, and ever since she clung on to her father, who danced according to her whims and fancies. Probably, she conceded to marry Gauthama, a much older person than her, seeing in him father substitute. But unfortunately this only did her more harm than good, for Gauthama could never step into the shoes of her father. Correspondingly her obsession with death steadily increased. Her father just disappeared from the home circle. Now she knew, from a belated letter that he is in Australia. But neither her father, brother nor husband comes to her rescue. She is forced to lead a hysterical nightmarish life. She with an existential anguish admits, "There was not one of my friends who could act as an anchor any more, and to whomsoever I turned for reassurance, betrayed me" (CP, 64) The neighbours and surrounding only bring to her scenes and thoughts of death... For to her only death offered an escape route.

Maya imaginatively identifies her own plight with the mortal agony of the peacocks cry for its lover with a sure knowledge of death to follow. (CP 14)

Arjuna, her brother's letter mentioned about her horoscope. Gauthama even made a causal enquiry about it. Ever since Maya thought, "Might he not put me in peril of my life? Did he not love life too, its problems, their solutions their methods of solution?" (CP 151)

Maya gets some relief when her mother in law and sister in law come and stay with her. But that evokes only a temporary talk; a pseudo interregnum, bound to explode in no time. Exactly that is what happens. Once they go back to Calcutta, Maya begins to think in new directions. Couldn't the prediction hold good equally for Gauthama too? Soon these hazy thoughts pitched on the fate of Gauthama solidifies. In a logical, charged vein. She argues that the albino "had never said anything to suggest that it was I who die young, unnaturally and violently, four years after my marriage, nothing to suggest that he even thought that" (CP 164). In her yearning for life, she places Gauthama as the one affected by the prediction. She took refuge in

the fact that Gauthama, in keeping with the Bhagavdgitha precept, deemed death to be the end of human activity. Or in other words he did not attach much importance to life or death.

The author devotes a long chapter to describe and verbally paint a storm scene, obviously externalising the inner turmoil of Maya. Surprisingly enough Gauthama being totally in his routine work/cases, is totally oblivious of the storm that raged outside. This perhaps serves as a pointer to his impervious nature as opposed to the haunting and almost poetic response of Maya to the changing moods of nature. Probably this imperviousness to life on the part of Gauthama helped Maya to confirm her decision on his fate. Finally the inevitable happened. On that ill-fated day Maya coaxed Gauthama to go to the roof for a walk. When Gauthama was in her hiding the moon from her vision, she pushed him over the parapet to "pass through an immensity of air, down to the very bottom" (CP 208).

Maya justifies her wanton ways to Gauthama's family members by asserting that "it had to be one of us, you see, it was clear that it was I who was meant to life, you see, to Gauthama it, didn't really matter. He didn't care, and I did" (CP 15-26)

In fact Maya's aberrant psyche played the havoc. Perhaps, Anitha Desai by exploring the mind in crisis exhorts the need to identify the root cause for such a malaise.

The end is certainly a bleak one, for before Maya's relations get time to take her to a mental asylum she commits suicide, ironically enough, at her parental home at Lucknow.

The thrust of the novel is on the portrayal of the thought flow through the mind of the anguished, alienated, feminine self, Maya. Of course Anita Desai, quite in keeping with her concern for the women on crisis, places Maya at the very centre of the family circle. Her thoughts, obsessions, memories. Imagination and even reckless leaps bring forth the suffering woman in her. Maya's judgements may be wrong. Her actions may be questionable. She is even guilty of a "willed murder". Still the stream of consciousness strategy assuring free flow of unpremeditated thoughts, nurturing a rare rich chord of intimacy between the afflicted and the onlookers/ readers, gives the novel a laudable structural cohesion. The growth and the inevitable fall of

highly imaginative feminine self are traced admirably in *Cry, the Peacock* by resorting to a style in every rift loaded with the rich one of images symbol, lyricism & sheer poetry.

C. Write an essay on the following

(Approximate length 1250 word)

1. Comment on Anita Desai's treatment of the theme of alienation in *Cry, the Peacock*.

OR

To what extent could you reckon Anita-Desai as an existential writer? Establish your view in the light of *Cry, the Peacock*.

Ans: Anita Desai's novels are imaginative and incisive analyses of the human psyche, particularly feminine psyche. Very often she ties up her artistic pursuit with alienated people, especially women. Apart from the complex thought streams which she generates through her entrapped, isolated characters, she prevails upon them to gaze their inward eye towards certain fundamental existential issues. Though Desai does not spin a peculiar or particular existential philosophy, her characters are often acutely conscious of existential problems.

"Turning inwards, her fiction grapples with the intangible realities of life, plunges into the innermost depths of the human psyche to fathom its mysteries, the inner turmoil, the chaos inside the mind" (Asnanio, Indian Literature)

In *Cry, the Peacock*, Desai makes every effort to portray the highly sensitive poetic mind of the alienated young heroine, Maya. Everything is seen from the point of view of the woman. To give expression to the aches and joys of the alienated woman, Desai resorts to the interior monologue technique swinging freely from the present to the past and vice-versa. She freely mixes memory and desire in a poetic way.

The theme of alienation is struck at the very beginning itself. The young, pampered and highly sensitive Maya is married to a much older man, Gauthama, a pragmatic, least imaginative man. The inherent contrast is brought home to us through the very names steeped

in myth, Incompatible marriage is the basic cause for their discord. Their divergent pasts and dramatically opposite present attitudes also contribute to the inevitable distancing, consequent alienation, and the unfortunate ending. Desai spares no effort to portray the chaotic world of Maya, her conflicting thoughts, inexplicable obsessions, and bemusing dreams". (She) ably explores the turbulent emotional world of the neurotic protagonist, Maya who smarts under an acute alienation stemming from marital discord, and verges on a curious insanity" (M Prasad, 3) Actually Desai created a bewitching surface of lyricism, but behind and beneath it she brings to life an abiding existentialist. These two layers together lend strength to *Cry the Peacock*, essentially focused on the theme of alienation.

The very title suggests the anguished of a wounded and lonely psyche, desperately looking for companionship and love. It turns out to be a moving account of a persistent struggle for survival; existence on the part of Maya. The hold of loneliness on her becomes all the more intense when she fears and feels that she has lost all relations father brother and husband-from whom she expected love, companionship and protection (*You may use the details given in the outline to elaborate this point*)

Yet another dimension to Maya's existential crisis arising from her smothering isolation is lent by bringing in a haunting sensation of mortality. It often assumes demonic proportions. Her journey down the memory lane-the albino's prediction regarding the demise of one of the partners within four years after her marriage-makes her existence insufferable. Her excessive love for her father (father-fixation) too weaned her away from Gauthama, her husband. The contrasting life-styles of her past and present also pains her. Maya's poetic sensibility and highly imaginative potential enable her to paint vivid scenes of disconsolation & impending death. All her efforts; passionate pleas for love and care from Gauthama simply fails for Gauthama quite bluntly outpourings of Maya (her streaming inner monologues) invariably echo her lacerated (wounded) psyche. Though immersed in pain, Maya loves life intensely for all its worth, colour, richness, variety and beauty. Therefore the life-death contrast is viewed from different angles, using the highly imaginative feminine psyche of

Maya. Her pet dog Toto's death, her father's departure to Europe, her brother Arjuna's disappearance, her husband's insensibility (matter of fact, philosophically detached attitude to life) all generate baffling disjunction and disquieting thoughts of mortality. (Ref. the outline for more details) Thus Desai links the layers of alienation and existential crisis very effectively in the psyche of Maya, a test case.

Beauty and pain are interlaced, for that is life, especially when some one like Maya, endeavours to built up a dream world banking on her poetic resources. She cannot fit with the rat race of life, for she yearns to live the life on her own terms. Oppressed by the seemingly enemical surroundings, broken relationships, life sapping, horoscope based albino prophecy, she couldn't but act in an aberrant way. For here it meant the inescapable leap for self preservation; existence. Maya's inchoate thoughts, raging conflicts and existential crisis are richly reverberated in select scenes culled from nature.

The night sky, stars, moon, the bear and its master, the cabaret dances, the peacock, the raging storm and the life are only a few symbols of the rich Desai repertoire to bring the complexities inherent in Maya's alienation and existence alike. (Ref. the text for more details)

The paradox of life is that one is ever alone, in the ultimate analysis. Maya's case is not an exception. Even in a crowd she is lonely. Even in the thick of life (apparently so) Maya is threatened persistently by the danger of an annihilation. Desai subtly merges the twin themes-alienation & existence.

Maya's frenzied act which dispatches Gauthama to the other world doesn't solve her problems for she soon slips into insanity. Ironically, she too is liberated (is she?) only through death. Maya committed suicide before she could be reformed. That is the way of the world in *Cry, the Peacock*. Love, even at the cost of death, alone could, liberate one from the pangs of alienation and existential riddle.

2. Comment on the narrative technique in *Cry, the Peacock*.

Bring out the characteristic features of Anitha Desai's style with special reference to *Cry, the Peacock*.

Give an account of the imagery (symbols) in *Cry, the Peacock*.

OR

Write an appreciation of *Cry, the Peacock* highlighting its theme and form.

(Length approx. 1250 words)

Ans:

Anitha Desai's *Cry the Peacock* as its very title suggests, centres round the perennial themes of love, life, loneliness and death. In this sick, hurry and divided world every individual is like a wounded bird with clipped wings and bleeding throat. It becomes more so when a lacerated feminine psyche haunted by hoary vision of death hunts for life in a lonely terrain in a desperate and passionate vein. The heroine of *Cry, the Peacock*, Maya wedded to a much older man, Gauthama, a hard core pragmatist proponent, of a detached philosophic attitude to life & death, forcefully unravels her mind with no reservations. The first person narrative point of view is adhered to for facilitating the stream of consciousness technique in narration, banking quite resourcefully on the interior monologue strategy. The whole novel is in a way an impassionate statement of the remembrance of things past and present. Maya's gradual withdrawal from the ramshackle, mundane household to a private world of dreams, wishes, fears and pregnant thoughts is faithfully recorded through this narrative technique which allows free flow of thoughts.

As an aid to this narrative strategy, Desai makes her style palpably lyrical, which permits poetic flights. Maya's reaction to her pet dog, Toto's death and the departures of her dear and near ones is recorded in an emotionally overcharged style, profusely sprinkled with images and symbols drawn primarily from mother nature and native myths, (Try to give examples from the text. Of course I cite a few instance below.)

Maya's idyllic lost childhood world stands out as a symbol in direct contrast to the present harsh world. There is an inbuilt contrast between her idealised father and the least imaginative Gauthama, her aged husband. The symbolic ramifications of father fixation motif are

also imaginatively used to strengthen the narrative scheme. It certainly adds to the complexity of Maya's thoughts hinged on alienation and existence. Maya's as is a quest for the sensitive self now profusely bleeding by the slings and arrows of an outrageous fortune. Her fervent disquieting pleas in the dead of night in her inward terrain point to cling to life by any means.

A whole range of images are drawn from nature, specially from vegetable and plant life, birds, animals and other natural phenomena. The author's imagery enables her to make the abstract thoughts of Maya quite concentrate and real. Maya thinks of herself as "a patridge plump and content" and her hand is "a well-fed pigeon" (134) Her happy past is struck here. And Gautama is like "an antique owl" and a "meticulous tortoise" (208) Gautha is as calm as "the meditator beneath the sal tree" (8) Maya relates her happy sensations and pleasant emotions with birds, plants, flowers, fruits and poetry. She remembers a game she played with her brother Arjuna in her childhood. One cannot miss the differences between them here. "Mine were awkward kites that never lost their earth bound inclination. Arjuna's were birds hawks, eagles, swallows-in the world" (135)

Her romantic nature is fully brought out in descriptions like, "I am waiting for his (her father) in the shade of the bougainvillea.... High, incessant sounds from jut of the very sun and air on such a morning, like crystals in syrup. Delight made be drowsy (CP 36-37)

Her deteriorating sanity and psychic fragmentation too are symbolically depicted. (*There are many instances see the following one as a sample*)

All White flowers, chaste, sweet flowers, luring the snakes. They come towards these virgins of the night with only their small cold eyes glinting in the dark and they clung to the bending stalk, and with forked tongues lash and lash again at the heart of innocence (CP 126)

(*Cite more examples from the text*)

The diseased psyche of Maya is reflected well in animal imagery, Erotic starvation, sexual oppression, fear of death all get well echoed in such scheme. For example the later cabaret dancer (sexually exploited) and the early trained bear are juxtaposed well in the

anvil of Maya's mind with one and the same feminine concern-lack of love & sexual oppression.

The "wild cat calls" of the cabaret dancer sound to her as "the howls of preying wolves hunting in packs in the darkening jungles" (83)

The bear balances on its tired feet, his snout in the air as though in prayer and his unexpected small paw frail curled like a sleeping child's.....shaggy, clumsy, old and exhausted" (86)

An extension of the images of the performing women and bear the image of the caged monkeys at the station completes the picture of Maya's intense suffering at her assumed captivity (Indira, Anita Desai 16)

Light-dark contrasts are also plenty in CP. It is use as and the part of the symbolic structure and is an element of Desai's style (illustrate) Colour symbolism is also put to good use in CP. The images of moon, and stars bearing white colour from an important part of colour through such bold strokes. "Shooting star, rocket, comet, great fountain of light.....Let remain so. Let me it remain....." (CP 23-24)

Yet another vital set of images employed by Desai are sexual images. Maya's repeated references to the frenzied dance of the peacock for its mate. The cooling and mating calls of the pigeons the heavy silk-cotton trees, the male papaya trees, the withered pink carnations and red roses reflect her repressed sexual desires. (Indira 22)

The cry of the peacock, a symbol of love, hope fulfilment and death (Liberation) is used almost as refrain.

Note the two most significant passages which forebode the final catastrophe-The love and the lover's demise.

"Pia, the cry Lover, lover, Mio, mio I die I die... The monsoons came to an end (CP 95)

It may be noted that the symbol of the dance of peacock merges with the symbol of Shiva's dance which is used at the end of the novel before final doom. It symbolises the dance of death.

And the rain clouds emerged against from Agony, agony, the mortal agony of their cry for lover and death.

Desai brings about necessary stylistic titles to fully reflect the changing moods of the victim heroine Maya. (Cite a few examples from the text)

The storm before the final calm is a classic instance. The Novelist paints the mental storm by not only furnishing the oppressive details relating to the external storm, but also by using a thoroughly shocking, opposite vocabulary and other stylistic nuances.

Vivid visual and tactile images brings out the juxtaposition of an alienated, thwarted spirit and a barren landscape.

The garden, and beyond it.....

Pressure was tremendous suffocating

Maya's reactions to the dust storm is also another clear instance where Desai effect a laudable merging of the symbolic, emotional and the stylistic.

What agony in ecstasy, what in nine magnificence I moaned,..... my own soul.

Anita Desai's narrative strategy is primarily stream of consciousness. Interior monologue eminently suits her concern to highlight the lonely, aberrant psyche of markedly imaginative feminine soul, Maya. For the author, she is a case study. The cage of loneliness only brings in unnatural death for both the wife and husband.

Maya leads a perilous existence. Ultimately liberation if at all achieved, is only at the cost of her own life. Life itself is a bundle of paradoxes. Anita Desai hammers out a narrative pattern. Lyrical style and symbolic substructure packed with a variety of images to suit her theme.

Objective type questions

1. Cry, The Peacock suggests

- Joyous cry of the peacocks (lovers) while mating.
- Cry of the peacocks for mating.
- Liberation through love and death.

2. The most haunting memory of Maya.

- The bear dance.
- Her mother's death.
- The albino's prophecy.

3. Why did Maya hide Arjuna's letter from Gauthama?

- To prevent Gauthama from learning Arjuna's whereabouts.
- To keep Gauthama in the dark regarding her horoscope.
- To preserve some family secrets.

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Prose

1. LIFE'S PHILOSOPHY By Jawaharlal Nehru

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964), India's first Prime Minister, was educated in Harrow Public School and University of Cambridge. Born as the son of Motilal Nehru, the wealthy lawyer of Alahabad, he came under the influence of Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi. Giving up a lucrative practice at the Bar, he plunged into the Indian struggle for Independence and went to jail several times. Nehru is generally described as the architect of modern India. He was Prime minister of the country from 1947 to the year of his death, 1964.

A British writer has described Nehru thus: "He allied his consciousness of his own status with that of his intellectual ability and his belief in a very English form of parliamentary reformist socialism; and with a very effective sense of political, and with a determination to assert Indian independence as well as to achieve it. His vision of India as a major Asian power was shown in his policy of neutrality during the Korean war and neutralism thereafter as by his signature with Chou in Lai of the Panch.-Shila and co-leadership of the Bandung Conference of 1955. Nehru's decision to keep India in the Commonwealth was perhaps the single most important development in the evolving structure of the Commonwealth.

Nehru was also a brilliant speaker and writer on almost all aspect of Indian life and culture. He was honoured with Bharat Ratna', the highest civilian award for distinguished service to the nation.

Nehru's works include the *Discovery of India*, *Glimpses of World History* and *An Autobiography*.

The essay "Life's Philosophy", prescribed for study is taken from the *Discovery of India*, published in 1946, one year before India got Independence. It was written during his imprisonment following the Quit India movement. In this book the style is highly personal and poetic.

In this extract, Nehru speaks about his philosophy of life and convictions.

Life's Philosophy; A Summary.

Nehru says that a few years ago, he was more sure about his philosophy of life. However, as a result of the events of the past few years in India, China, Europe, and all over the world he had lost that clarity of outline and he is now not as sure of his aims and objectives as he used to be before. In him there was a growing distaste of politics and his whole attitude to life appeared to undergo a transformation. The ideals and objectives of yesterday were still there but they had lost some of their lustre. Human nature is an enigma. Ages and ages of effort had failed to reform it. Are such efforts doomed to fail?

Another question that agitated Nehru's mind is the problem of ends and means. Were they tied up inseparably, acting and reacting on each other? Or are they separate from each other? Is it always possible to pursue the right means?

Nehru says that his early approach to life's problems had been more or less scientific, coupled with the optimism of the nineteenth and twentieth century science. Some sort of vague humanism appealed to him.

Religion as he saw it, practised and preached, did not attract him. It appeared to him to be closely associated with superstitious practices and dogmatic beliefs. Its reliance supernaturalism also repelled him. However, he knew that the majority of people all over the world could not do without some form of religious belief. It has, of course given us a set of values, but those values (at least some of them) had no application today.

Nehru compares and contrast religion and science. Religion deals with the uncharted regions of human experience. And science deals only with those regions that can studies with precision. Even though science tell us much, it does not tell the whole truth. For this we should seek the help of religion and ethics. The old controversy between science and religion has now taken a new form-the application of the scientific method to emotional and religious experience.

Religion, according to Nehru, merges into mysticism and metaphysics. Mystics, which appear to be vague and soft and flabby irritated him. But he says that metaphysics and philosophy have a

greater appeal to his mind since they required hard thinking and application of logic and reasoning. Nehru says that in the ancient world both in Asia and Europe, the inward life was considered to be more important than the external. But now man is more materialistic in his outlook.

Almost all human beings accept unthinkingly the general attitude characteristic of their generation and environment. Most of us accept also certain metaphysical conceptions as part of the faith in which we have grown up. But Nehru says, he has been attracted towards metaphysics. He was more interested in the world in which he lived. He says he was favourably disposed towards the assumptions regarding the existence of the soul (atma) and the 'Karma' theory of cause and effect. But he takes them not as part of religious belief but of intellectual speculations.

Nehru felt that spiritualism is a rather absurd way of investigating psychic phenomena. At its worst it is a mean of exploiting the emotions of some over-credulous people who seek relief of escape from mental trouble. However he says that he has a sense of mysteries of unknown depths. But according to him, the best way to understand them is the way of science.

Nehru does not apply the word "God" to the mysterious force in the universe because god had come to mean much that he did not believe in. He was incapable of visualising God in a human form. While he could appreciate monism, he could not understand it much. He would rather subscribe to the old Indian or Greek Pagan and Pantheistic beliefs.

Nehru says that some kind of ethical approach to life has always had a strong appeal for him. He was attached by Gandhiji's stress on right means. Gandhiji's application of an ethical doctrine to largescale public activity was, according to him, remarkable. The idea that ends and means are not really separable has created a deep and abiding impression on the minds of a large number of people. Nehru says that a study of Marx and Lenin had produced a powerful effect on his mind and helped him to see history and current affairs in a new light. To him the practical achievements of the Soviet Union were also impressive. He believed that Soviet Revolution had advanced human society by a great leap. However, he was too much of an individualist

and believer in personal freedom to like the regimentation practised by the Soviet regime. He could accept the Marxist philosophical outlook without difficulty even though it did not answer all his questions.

Nehru points out that there has always been an attempt to find an answer to the riddle of the universe. In this attempt, man has passed through various dogmatic creeds. Social evils are sometimes attributed to the original sin; to the unalterableness of human nature or to the inevitable legacy of previous births as in India. Thus one drifts away from rationalism to irrationalism. In such an intellectual climate Marxism seemed to him to offer considerable help because it first in with the present state of scientific knowledge.

However, Nehru makes it clear that he had little patience with the leftist groups in India, because they spend much of doctrine. The real problems for him, Nehru says, are problems of individual and social life. In the solution of these problems the way of observation from precise knowledge and deliberate reasoning should be followed. It is true that this method may not always be applicable in our quest of truth, because art and poetry and certain psychic experience belong to a different order of things. We should always pursue objective knowledge tested by reason.

Nehru is convinced that the method and approach of science have revolutionized human life. The technical achievements of science such as its capacity to transform an economy of scarcity in to one of abundance are remarkable. Space-Time and Quantum theories have utterly changed the picture of the physical world. Recent researches into the nature of matter, the structure of the atom, the transmutation of the elements, and the transformation of electricity and light have carried human knowledge much further.

Nehru says that the question whether there is a unity in the universe is now debated even though philosophies like Bertrand Russel have said that man's loves and beliefs are but the outcome of accidental collocation of atoms. The latest development in physics have demonstrated fundamental unity in nature.

Modern science has sometimes been compared to the Advaita Vedantic theory. Both try to understand the mysteries of nature. Nehru concluded his musings on life's Philosophy with the assertion that the

spirit of man is amazing. He has tremendous capacity for self sacrifice. There is something godlike in man as there is also something of the devil. The future is dark and uncertain; but life had its own joys.

Short Answer Questions

1. What is Nehru's attitude to religion?
2. What is Nehru's attitude to science?
3. How does Nehru view metaphysics and Philosophy?
4. What are the reasons why Nehru does not approve of spiritualism?
5. Summarise Nehru's views on Gandhiji as revealed in this essay?
6. Why does Nehru say that the Marxian philosophy has always had an appeal for him?
7. What, according to Nehru are the real problems in India now and how can they be solved?
8. Discuss Nehru's views on the fundamental unity in nature?
9. What does Nehru mean by the 'why' and the 'how' of scientific thought?
10. What reasons does Nehru advance to support his statement that the spirit of man is amazing?

SALMAN RUSHDIE

Midnight's Children (Fiction)

General Introduction

Salman Rushdie has emerged as one of the front ranking novelists of our times. His fictions have made a tremendous impact on a whole generation of writers both new and established. He has been proclaimed as our most exhilarating inventive, prose stylist and a writer of breathtaking originality. He has written six novels: *Grimus*, *Midnight's Children*, *Shame*, *The Satanic Verses*, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* and *the Moor's Last Sigh*. He has also published a collection of short stories *East-West*; a book of reportage. *The Jaguar smile: A Nicaraguan Journey*, a volume of essays, *Imaginary Home lands* and a work of film criticism, *The Wizard of Oz*.

Expatriate Sensibility

Salman Rushdie is an expatriate writer. Anyone reading Rushdie's novels, or talking to him is struck by his obvious attachment to his Indian roots. Most of his education and adult life have been British. But his imagination still feeds on the subcontinent and a strong part of him still identifies with India. He says "was born an Indian citizen and remained so for the first seventeen years of my life..... Because I choose to live in England, it does not mean I've divorced myself from India".

Rushdie is clear about what expatriation implies. It implies gains and losses. The losses relate to the dreadful possibility of closing one's connections, and memories. A novel like *Midnight's Children* could have been written only from outside India, not from inside. India has this tendency to split up when she is watched from within. She becomes India only when one looks at her from a distance, and this suggest a gain of expatriation.

Magic Realism

Rushdie is associated with what is called Magic Realism. Coined by a German critic, Franz Roh in the 1970s, this term has been most usefully applied to Latin American writers like Borges and

Garcia Marquez. According to the revised edition of the Oxford Companion to English Literature, "the magical realist novels have, typically a strong narrative drive in which the recognizably realistic mingle with the unexpected and the inexplicable and in which elements of dream, fairy story or mythology combine with the everyday, often in a mosaic of kaleidoscopic pattern of refraction and recurrence". It affords the novelist endless licence.

As a Novelist

To the making of Rushdie the novelist, many traditions and authors have contributed. Fairy tales, Persian and Arabic adventure fates, allegory, religious epics, Islamic assembles and battleday narratives, Gothic fiction, revenge tragedy, and science fiction. Reading his fiction involves listening to the echoes of several masters of fiction Sterne, Dickens, Kafka and so on.

Like Garcia Marquez, Rushdie aims at captivating the reader, holding him under a spell and holding his curiosity to the break point. They put a high premium on narrational skill and compare their roles as similar to jugglers. Rushdie sustains the readers curiosity by cleverly concealing significant segments of truth. He offers delayed, fragmented expositions, mixes the contexts and fractures the chronology.

Fantasy as a genre has never lost it hold on people. Fantasy transports the reader into strange worlds, other times and other states of mind, and they all compel attention. Rushdie's "Haroun and the Sea of Stories" has been hailed as a fairy story, a piece of literary fantasy on the mock epic pattern. Some sources claim that it began as bath-time story for his son. It is also said that when he was forced into exile Rushdie took up his son's challenge to write a book that a child could read. Most children can enjoy this piece of pure story telling though some of the clever puns and autobiographical allusions are understandable only to adult readers. The touch of irony is such that it partakes of the mode of narration available in most of his other books of serious intent.

The Iran-led fatwa against Rushdie, announced in 1989 over his novel *The Satanic Verses* which enraged fundamentalists has once again dogged both his creative and his personal life. He re-

mains, of course, essentially under house arrest or is in hiding. Unable to move freely in public for fear of being murdered. The price on his head was increased last year by Iran's 15 khordad organisation to \$ 1.5 million.

The BBC's plan to adapt Rushdie's master piece *Midnight's Children* lie dashed on the rocks of intolerance, censorship and international politic king of extraordinary complexity. The novel begs to be adapted: its more or less linear narrative span several generations, and monumental historical events untold around its main characters.

Midnight's Children scrupulously even-handed in its treatment of India's religious communities. There is nothing in it to offend religious sensibilities. The novel has been translated into 25 languages and has sold five million copies world wide indexing its immense popularity.

MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN

Introduction

Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's children* marks a significant moment in the history of Indian Fiction. It gave a new direction to the Indian novel in English and marked the beginning of a new phase of writing. It heralded the arrival of a cosmopolitan sensibility and an uninhibited use of English.

The New York Review of Books calls this novel "an extraordinary novel that incorporates the stupendous Indian past with its pantheon, its epics and its wealth of folk Lore and fairy tales, while at the same time playing a role in the tumultuous Indian present/Described as one of the most important novels to come out of the English speaking world in this generation, it has been compared with the post-modernist novels of Gabriel Marquez, Gunter Grass and Milan Kundera. This 450 page novel written by the London-based Indian, has been hailed by Malcolm Bradbury as a "genuine contribution, to fiction, a brilliant experimental novel that is also a very funny book".

The novel draws attention to its strange and highly imaginative quality through the use of inventive literary decisis such as unconventional word play, audacious disagreement of syntax, the stunning fusion of oral narrative, history, fiction non-fiction, journalism, snatches from

Hindi film songs, fantasy, surrealism, magical realism, stream of consciousness into a bewildering yet purposeful and eloquent collage.

Structure

Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* is a complex, multilayered, rich, many-stranded, episodic, loose and meandering novel. According to Rushdie, the form represents the very basis of Indian art which is pluralistic. It has got to do with combining of many different ways of looking.

The novel runs into three parts. Part I concerns itself with the events that took place in India from 1915 to 1947. Part II deals with the childhood of Saleem Sinai, the protagonist. Part III is primarily on Emergency operations and brutalities in India during the seventies. Surprisingly, the fortunes of the protagonist are similar to those of the post-independent India. Rushdie weaves contemporary events political and historical into the main spectrum of the novel to reduce the singleness of effect.

The protagonist of the novel, Saleem Sinai is the "Central consciousness" and the events of the novel filter through his inclusive consciousness. He narrates the story of his grand father. Adam Aziz, a young doctor with a good medical degree. One fine morning, he was taken to the house of Ghani Sahib, an affluent landlord, in Kashmir. He was asked to examine Naseema, the ailing daughter of the land lord. He examined the patient thoroughly through the perforated sheet, a white sheet, having a hole of seven-inch circle in it. This becomes a major symbol in the novel. Ironically he married her later with "A-I fine dowry". Adam gets the job of a doctor at Agra University. While he is shifting his family to Agra, he witnesses here Jallienwala Bagh Massacre in Amritsar. The narrative account here is in the shape of a selective recalling of the past from the vantage point of the present.

Part II of the novel begins with the financial faced by the family of Saleem Sinai. After a few trials and tribulations, the members of his family migrate to Pakistan, with a view to settling in Karachi permanently. They become victims of the 1965 war.

Part III of the book which runs like a fantasy, dwells upon politics directly exaggerating the Emergency operations. Saleem grows along with India with all her excesses of Emergency, her inner

Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* exhibits ironically the contemporary events that look place in India.

Bombay becomes the concrete background for the narrative progression. The evolving world of Bombay is realised by the writer in many metonymic and synecdochic versions. Without this Bombay world, Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* is definitely bleak. It lays down for him the narrative lanes and bye-lanes of the fictional world of the protagonist, in his quest for identity. Thus both time and space unite in evoking the diverse emotional and grotesque details and creating a truly living and "Kicking World" of Bombay in the narrative.

Though the fictional locate is firmly rooted in Bombay, with all its realistic details, it moves across the Indian sub-continent from Kashmir to Rawalpindi and finally to Delhi, to dramatise the quest of the protagonist for identity.

There are closer similarities between Rushdie's fictional world in *Midnight's Children* and *One Hundred Years* at the level of plot construction, by the use of dual plots on the basis of a principle of simultaneity and the *fantastic* or magical realism.

National History and Politics

Midnight's Children operates by mutual interaction and fusion of the national history of India over a period of sixty years from 1915 to August, 1978, and the domestic history of the Azids, the Kashmiri Muslims. The microcosm of the domestic history of the Azids is artistically and emotionally well integrated into the larger macrocosm of India's national history. The microcosm of the Azids is heralded by the protagonist, Saleem Sinai, through his quest for identity. The temporal reality of the microcosmic and macrocosmic worlds operates by a principle of simultaneity.

Though Adam Aziz not keenly concerned with India's Freedom Struggle, his life is nevertheless, criss-crossed by it. On the day he reaches Agra to start his new married life, on April 13, 1919, it is also the day of the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh. The starting of the second generation of Saleem Sinai is simultaneous with the arrival of the Cabinet Mission of Pethic Lawrence and Cripps and A.V. Alexander. The conquering of Mount Everest in 1953 is also an occasion for the discussions in the family as the discovery of Amina Sinai's (Saleem's wife) frailty by Saleem Sanai. The formation of the *Midnight's Children's* club in 1957, is coincidental with the partition of

the state of Barmby. The death of Nehru is also the occasion for the passing away of Dr. Adam Aziz.

Rushdie did not have to invent a framework for his fiction. It was already there in events which led to colonisation and the events following the independence of a colonised nation. What Rushdie has done is to weave into this framework, the experiences and lives of individuals affected by these transitions and turn affecting them in certain ways.

The framework of Indian independence history provides, like a myth, a parallel structure that makes it easier for readers to orient themselves to the other bizarre events that happen. The use of the historical parallels becomes a stylistic device that enables the unfolding of meaning at a paradigmatic level. The far-fetched connections and comparisons are made believable by the knitting together of the personal and historical when the narrator traces the events surrounding the death of Adam Aziz with the sickness and death of Nehru in 1964.

The narrator Saleem Sini, is born at the very stroke of midnight and finds himself 'handcuffed to history' experiencing everything that the country born with him undergoes. He is involved in the most fantastic way with all events on the subcontinent.

Saleem's life covers the period from Independence to the lifting of the Emergency, but charming sports of bygone times are also visible through the 'open sesame' of the perforated bedsheet. The gamut of events covered by the novel includes the agitation against the Rowlatt Bill, Jallianwala Bagh massacre, the formation of the Indian National Army, the dropping of the atom bombs on Japan, communal riots, the dawn of Independence, the Assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, the Hindu succession Act, the closing of the atom bombs on Japan, communal riots, the dawn of independence, the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, the Hindu succession Act, the closing of the Suez Canal, the submission of the election of 1957 and 1962, the Chinese aggression, the liberation of Goa, the death of Nehru, the Kutch War and the Indo-Pakistan War of 1965, the Bangladesh War, the imposition and the lifting of Emergency. On account of Saleem's stay in Pakistan, some events of that country have also been brought into focus.

Narrative Technique

The narrative technique is another aspect which draws considerable critical attention. One notices a continuous oscillation between the fictitious and the factual. In the very opening paragraph of the novel, the narrator makes a statement about his mode of narration.

'And there are so many stories to tell, too many such an excess of intertwined live events, miracles, places, rumours, so dense a coming of the improbable and the mundane! I have been a swallow of lives and to know me, just the one of me, you will have too swallow the lot as well'. Saleem adopts various narrative modes to convey experience. At times the narrative voice presents an assortment and cross section of dates, facts and figures related to public and private issues. In sharp juxtaposition, there are also instances when the reader is shuffled manner. This facet of the novel's narrative technique helps Rushdie's attempts to vividly present the variety and multitudinousness of India and her people.

Rushdie seeks to break the barriers of Time and Space as found in a normal sequential progression. He seeks to liquify and dissolve temporal barriers and rearrange them in new geometrical shapes.

The narrative in the novel is in the shape of a selective recalling of the past from the vantage point of the present. The reader finds innumerable episodes of the past that are tied together by the person of the narrator.

Language

Rushdie's mastery of language is total and more effective than most of the Indian novelists in English. There is something remarkable in the experiments with language to capture the milieu of the contemporary events of the day in his novel, *Midnight's Children*. In the words of M.L. Raina, 'No Indian novelist has had the courage to handle the English language with gaiety and joyousness of Rushdie.' To make his language more effective. Rushdie employs certain linguistic devices which make the novel more appealing and powerful.

Rushdie's prose is brilliant. It has a wide range, to suit every purpose, whether it is comedy or nightmarish fear. He plays it like a master juggler. So complete is his control over it that it takes in all that

he wants to convey and that includes Indian thought patterns, Indian speech-patterns and Indian social peculiarities.

Rushdie uses the off-beat language for a creative purpose. It is mostly realised from the Bombay world, both his fictional and existential locate. The expressions such as 'what happened neztism' 'what on earth was it?' and 'Pinocchio' are semi literary, colloquial and born out of the fast chanign speech habits of the 'Bombayites'. The reason for Rushdie's choice of such a language may be to dramatise the culture of the urbon elite of the modern India.

Midnight Children's club

Saleem Sinai is one of the 'Midnight's children born between 12 midnight and 1 A.M. on the night of August 14-15, 1947, the hour of free India. Out of a total 10001 such children, 420 die and 581 survive upto 1957. All these imaginary beings meet and discuss and quarrel' in the parliament of Saleem's mind, forming a Midnight children's conference. These children, a sort of multi-headed monster speaking in the myriad tongues of Babel, are a metaphor for Indian society, the very essence of multiplicity, one thousand and one ways of looking at things. They represent the nation's Psyche.

Saleem Versus India

In suprisingly numerous ways, India is Saleem Sinai and Saleem Sinai is India. They very time of his clock-ridden, crime-stained birth hand cuffs him to Indian History. He stands in Manifold relationships to history-as its twin companion, its creator and its victim, in addition he is the chronicler, a participant, an ironic overviewer and an inspired visionary.

Saleem Sinai's 'map face' also represents the map of India, her vastness reflected in its largeness. The disfiguring 'birth marks' on the face seem to be a certain of the holocaust of partition. The bulbous Byzantine domes of the temples may be suggestive of the Himalayas just as the 'ice-like eccentricity' of his 'sky-blue eyes' seems to point to the azure skies of Kashmir. The 'dark stains' spread down the 'western hairline' the 'dark patch' colouring the 'eastern ear' clearly stand for the two wings of Pakistan. The 'something lacking in the chin' might be a hint at the thinness of the southern part of the Indian Peninsula.

Saleem's growth also mirrors the development of free India. His launching upon 'the heroic program of self-enlargement' soon after his birth and his huge appetite seem to be a pointer to India's ambitious five year plans and the large amounts of foreign aid, especially American.

Contributions

The new Indian novel in English is a phenomenon of the 1980's and the trend setter was Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's children*. Here the narratology has altered. Realistic fiction and chronological narrative have been discarded as being insufficient to convey the vastness and complexities of experience and life. Allegory, symbols, fantasy, magical realism, narrative fluctuating backwards and forward in time, the compelling use of narrator, fluency in story telling and the unveiling of layers and layers of meaning have all become a mode of writing. Experimentation with the English language and sheer invention have resulted in the formation of new language rhythms. Slick craftsmanship and continuous experimentation with narrative technique have created new dimensions and positions and possibilities for Indian novel in English.

Another striking achievement of Rushdie is his ability to create an Indian atmosphere and Indian world by the use of idiomatic British English without so painfully restoring to the practice of translating the Indian idioms into English or literally transposing the Indian physical world into the fictional world.

Rushdie's narrative technique is most intimately based on realising the world of political and domestic history in a moment of simultaneity, which is a post-modernist practice.

Rushdie's fictional prose undoubtedly represents a refreshing departure from the tires, conventional models of Anand, Raja Rao and Narayan. Rushdie will long be remembered more than anything else for this English and the direction he has given a new school of writers like Amitav Ghosh, Sashi Tharoor and Arundhati Roy. Thus Rushdie's linguistic and stylic achievement will perhaps be the greatest contribution to the Indian novel in English.

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