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Editorial

India Inter-Continental Cultural Association, an organization devoted to the cause of world peace and brotherhood that started its journey with the first Writers Festival at Chandigarh in 2004 has come down a long way in its search for a better world marked by love, peace, progress and prosperity. The organization has been successfully working as a bridge between cultures and continents as its festivals represent a truly global shade of participation.

The 7th International Writers Festival was organised on 26th and 27th November 2011 at Wardha (Maharashtra) in collaboration with Department of Diaspora Studies, Mahatma Gandhi International Hindi University, Wardha. More than one hundred & fifty participants from India and abroad joined the festival.

The prime focus in the festival was Diaspora studies this time. The organization received all cooperation in this regard from Vice Chancellor MGIHU and its Department of Diaspora Studies. Since the Department of Diaspora Studies is first of its kind in India the discussions that followed over Roms, an old expatriate community from India, was quite interesting and enlightening. The Rrom participants in the festival shared the status of Rroms in Europe, their sorrow plight, exploitation and denial of rights to them.

Besides the academics a cultural programme was also held in the evening sessions of the festival in the open space of the university premises. The musical performances under the cool and open sky made the things quite enchanting. Poetry sessions were also conducted in which several poets from India and abroad presented their poems.

It is just to convey to our readers that *Kafla* has received the ISSN number and the current issue bears the number. This would be helpful for our readers and contributors who are serving in Colleges and Universities since for the purpose of APIs (Academic Performance Indicators) ISSN number is a prerequisite. The current issue carries essays, stories, interview and poetry from India and abroad.

The Executive and the Good Humor Girl is an excellent story by Bruce Adkins who carries a strong message through the account against the set stereotypes in the society and idolize a whore simply for being a good human being running not after dollars but for

genuine relations normally denied to them. Peace Mission by A. P. Somwanshi is again a good story that introduces the readers to multiple dimensions of peace sought by man in this materialist world. Somwanshi's account is a successful satire against prevailing sick psychology of man forcing him into the folds of traditional orthodox ways of seeking solutions to the material problems. She rightly goads man to ostracize the unscientific irrational modes of life from society. Bhupen Mahapatra in *The Dark God* crystallizes the various dimensions of war and struggle in life. The prime character Sheila is not only struggling against poverty in her village but also against the fear of loss of her husband who has been missing for some time in army. She dares not to explain to her son what war means who keeps on prodding her for the same. The gloom that her mother-in-law carries too for the last thirty years after the death of her husband also overwhelms her. The writer nicely coalesces the struggles or wars at individual level with the one the mother earth is faced with today.

Then there are critical essays *Stereo Types to Deconstruct* by Diana Kirilova; *Lithuanian Contemporary Fiction* by Almantas Samalavicius; *Humanism in the Poem "Father Returning Home" of Dilip Chitre* by L. B. Gayakwad; *Historico-Fictional Association/Dissociation in Partition: Narratives with Special reference to Kartar Singh Duggal's fiction* by Madhumeet; *Marathi saint-Poets* by S. B. Chavan; *An Analysis of Brotherhood in William Blake's "A Poison Tree"* by S. Florence; and *Conceiving World Peace Through Literature: Inner Connotations* by Shukla Bhattacharya. A. K. Chaudhary, a prominent Indian poet has been interviewed by M. Bhatnagar.

The poetry section contains the poetry of Ailynti Nonbri, Andy Jackson, Anjali Dewan, BushraNaqi, Dinko, Harekrushna Mahanta, Harish Pradhan, Hyacinth Pink, Jayshree Singh, Namita Nayak, P. Raja, Pronab Kumar Majumder, Snehsudha A. Kulkarni and **Greek Poems** by Dinos Koubatis, Eufrosini Kakogiannaki, Giorgos I. Botis, Panagiota C. Zaloni, Potis Katrakis, Theodora K.Heliopoulou, Zacharoula Gaitanaki & Zanneta Kalyva.

P.L. Sreedharan's poetry volume *Slum Flowers* has been reviewed by P. K. Panda.

In all the volume presents a collection of essays, stories and poetry that we hope would entertain and enlighten our readers.

Editors

The Excutive and the Good Humor Girl

Bruce Adkins

Greg Fletcher, wearing a cowboy hat that he hoped would define his new life, drove his Mercedes north out of Houston with Willie Nelson's "On the Road Again" blaring from his car radio. Greg hoped he didn't have another dizzy spell before he got to New Mexico and his 620 acre ranch that his last tenant had recently vacated. He dreaded the long drive, but due to health reasons his doctor advised him not to fly.

Attached to the glove department on the dashboard of his car hung a plastic bag that contained his medicine. High blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, you name it and he had a pill for it.

But outside of his health, Greg didn't have any worries. He was financially secure. And now at the youthful age of 49, he sought to give up striving to make more and more money. He was determined to forget the pressures, tensions and anxieties he endured for 24 years, most of which was spent serving as a high ranking executive of the Homer. Ramsey Oil and Gas Company. In addition he was tired of women by the dozens chasing after him because of his wealth. His wife died three years ago and he had given up finding another woman like her.

After a long day of fighting traffic jams and road repairs Greg checked into an Oklahoma City hotel, and then stopped off at the adjoining club to have a drink before having dinner and retiring for the evening.

Greg took a seat at the bar and placed his order when a girl squeezed in beside him. "Hey cowboy, buy a girl a drink?" she asked.

"I'm a non social drinker," Greg said, removing his hat and checking his appearance in the long mirror that ran along the wall behind the bar. The girl laughed and laughed, an outrageous, contagious laughter, Greg thought.

"That's so funny. What's your name?" she asked.

"John Wayne," Greg said without looking up.

"Ah, you're too fat to be John Wayne," she said, and laughed so loud that Greg couldn't help laughing too.

"Would you like a date John Wayne?"

"No thanks," Greg said, but then it occurred to him that he wouldn't mind having some cheerful company. He needed some laughter in his life and he didn't like to eat by himself. "Would you like to join me for dinner?" Greg asked.

She stood up. She was dressed in a red blouse, a white mini skirt and black zip up boots. She was tall, with thin shoulders, a flat chest, clear, dark skin and long black hair. Her lips were painted a bright red and a trace of rouge was still damp on her cheeks.

"I can't do that," she said. "I have to work. unless of course you'd like to pay me for my time."

"All right," Greg said.

"Are you talking about a romantic dinner in your room or what?" she asked.

She looked to be in her late twenties and so innocent that Greg wondered how got into her profession. "That's sounds like a good idea," Greg said. "But you can't leave off the romantic. I just want some cheerful company."

"Well, it's gonna cost you," she said. "I charge a hundred bucks for that."

"Ok," Greg said, as he finished his drink and got up from the bar.

"Up front," she said.

"You don't trust me," Greg said, as he peeled off five twenties from a roll of bills and handed to her when no one was looking.

As they walked to the elevator she stopped abruptly. "Say John Wayne, you're not one of those violent guys, are you? I've never been beat up before and I don't go in for that kinky stuff."

Greg turned and examined her up close. Despite all her laughing and confidence she exhibited, she looked timid and scared, he thought. "You can back out," Greg said. "In fact I've changed my mind. You can keep the hundred bucks. I don't need

any company tonight,” Greg said, as he stepped on the elevator without her.

Some twenty minutes later Greg answered the door to his suite. He had just come out of the shower and greeted her in his bath robe. “I came up to have dinner with you,” she said.

A whore with a conscience, Greg thought. “How did you find me?” Greg asked while opening the door for her to come in.

She laughed that contagious laugh again. “You’re the only cowboy registered in this hotel,” she said.

The two room suite was furnished with all the comforts of home. Paintings lined the walls. A vase of flowers and a bowl of fruit decorated the table and a morning newspaper laid on a chair beside a king size bed.

They dined on a variety of fish and vegetables and finished their dinner with a bottle of red wine. Greg, his unruly gray hair combed in place and dressed in red silk pajamas and a white robe, tried to get the girl to talk about herself, but the standing operating procedure as he came to understand was for the customer to do the talking.

“I’m headed back to my ranch in Happy Valley, New Mexico,” Greg began. “I’m tired of all the big city rat race and all the stress, noise and pollution. I’m going to kick back, maybe go fishing, grow a beard and try to lose about 50 pounds. I’m going to get healthy again,” Greg said, smiling. “But I’m running off at the mouth. What about you?”

“I don’t know your name,” she said.

“Greg, Gregory Fletcher,” Greg said.

“Are you a real cowboy?”

“Well, I’m going to be when I get settled on my ranch,” Greg said.

“Are you gay?”

“No,” Greg said nodding his head.

“Children?”

“No wife, no kids, I’m all alone.”

“Where do you get all your money, Mr. Fletcher? Do you rob banks?”

“I’m a gambler. I make most of my money in investments.”

“Good Lordly, I wish I could do that,” she said, while pulling her legs up under her like she might be performing a yoga exercise. “Well,” she continued, toying with her empty wine glass. “I hope someday to find a husband and have two kids before I get too old. Then, she paused and began talking so fast and Greg wondered if she was reciting her prepared speech. “I’m 27 and my name is Alberta although most people call me Birdie. I got raped when I was nine years old. I married at 15, but my husband got drunk and was run over by a train.”

She continued to tell one tale after another and Greg had trouble separating her facts from fiction. At one point he got so sleepy he went to bed. “Birdie,” he said. “You can leave if you want to. I’m going to sleep.”

Some two hours later Greg awoke to find Birdie down on the floor doing pushups and watching a late night movie on TV and laughing that outrageous laugh again. Greg sat up and watched her and starting laughing too. Then he turned over and went back to sleep.

Greg awoke the next morning with the sound of coffee brewing. From the shower he could hear Birdie laughing and splashing in the water “Hey, good morning,” she called out when she realized Greg was up.

While getting dressed she told Greg about the television show she watched last night and laughed and laughed. Greg, while watching the stock market report on the television found himself laughing too, but he didn’t know what he was laughing about.

“Won’t you have some breakfast?” Greg asked a few minutes later when she was finished dressing.

“No, I guess I’ll get going.”

“Do you have a busy schedule today?” Greg asked.

“No, I guess I’ll go back to my room and hang out,” Birdie said.

“Well,” Greg said, turning off the television. “You could ride out to the ranch with me.”

“Are you kidding?” Birdie said. “You think I’d go out of

town with a strange man. The last time I did that I got in trouble. But,” she said, pausing, “you’re a nice man. How much would you pay me?” She wore no make up and her long black hair was combed down below her shoulders. Her brown eyes reflected compassion and good will. She could have been a Sunday school teacher, Greg thought.

Greg smiled. “Oh yeah, I know it’s going to cost me.”

“Oh sure.”

“How much?”

“Well, let’s see. It’s a long way to New Mexico. Maybe about five hundred,” she said

“Just to keep me company?” Greg asked.

“Well, you know it’s gonna cost you,” she said, shaking her head. She looked so pretty at that moment, Greg thought. She stood there measuring him with her big brown eyes and her refreshing child like innocence brought a smile to Greg’s face.

“I’ll give you three hundred,” Greg said.

“No sex, not even a kiss?” Birdie asked.

“Just your company and good humor,” Greg said.

“I’ll take four,” Birdie said.

“Ok, you got a deal,” Greg said.

“Good Lordy! Just to ride with you. It will be like taking a vacation,” Birdie said. “But how am I going to get back?”

“I’ll fly you back,” Greg assured her.

Greg, concerned about being seen with Birdie in her provocative clothes stopped off at a ladies wear store in Oklahoma City and bought her a cowboy hat, boots, shirt and jeans plus a pair of running shoes that she insisted on having.

It was on the outskirts of Oklahoma City that Greg pulled his car off to the side of the road and held his face in his hands. “I’ve got to stop for a minute,” Greg said.

About that time a policeman pulled up behind them. “You can’t park here,” the policeman said.

“He’s sick,” Birdie said.

“Yean, well there’s a walk in medical center just round the next corner,” the policeman said. “You got to move this car.”

Greg put his car in gear and drove up in front of the medical center after stopping with a jolt.

“Your husband has high blood pressure,” the doctor told Birdie a few minutes later. Greg, after being checked over was dismissed with a shot, more pills and a warning to lose weight and cut down on his salt intake.

“Why didn’t you tell me you were a sick man?” Birdie asked when they were back in the road again. “I can’t be playing no nurse maid. How did I get myself in this mess?” she kept asking herself.

By that afternoon they had made their way across Oklahoma into northeast New Mexico. As they approached Happy Valley, located only three miles from his ranch, Greg stopped off at a super market and stocked up on groceries.

The old four bedroom ranch house, sitting well back of the road, looked the same, Greg thought, but he was shocked to discover his land that used to be good for cattle grazing was now filled with weeds and cactus plants. Behind the house were two barns and a big fenced vacant lot where in times past chickens and cows maintained their residence.

The interior of the house was clean, but the furniture badly in need of replacing reeked of a dry musty odor. Greg opened the doors and windows of the house and then tried out the telephone.

They only had two doctors in town. Greg called both of them, but the earliest appointment he could get to see a doctor was three weeks away. Then, while Birdie was putting away the groceries he called the airlines. “You can leave in the morning at four,” Greg said.

“That’s early,” Birdie said.

“You could stay here for three weeks and go to the doctor with me. I might need some morale support,” Greg said.

“Me, stay here three weeks,” Birdie said. “That would really cost you.”

“I might not be able to afford you,” Greg said.

“I’ll have to do some figuring,” Birdie said, but no sum was ever settled on.

After a light dinner they retreated to separate bedrooms. The next morning Greg was shocked to see Birdie standing by his bed dressed in shorts and in her new running shoes. “Want to go for a jog?” she asked/

A jog, a health running prostitute, Greg thought. What’s this world coming to?

“I been thinking you need to lose some weight and maybe I can help you,” Birdie said.

This is not the kind of stress free life I envisioned, Greg thought as he crawled out of bed. Maybe I should tell Birdie to leave.

Greg couldn’t jog, but with Birdie prodding him he managed, despite the hot summer heat, to walk two miles around the weeds and cactus of his ranch before he gave out. The next morning Greg, so sore he could hardly walk, tried to get out of exercising, but Birdie, with no mention of leaving the ranch, kept urging him on.

Birdie proved to be a good cook too, Greg thought, but he wished she would stop trying to starve him to death. She served him a bowl of oat meal, a banana and a glass of skim milk for breakfast, soup and salad for lunch and fish and vegetables for dinner. “I can’t exist on this diet. I can’t exercise,” Greg told her one morning. “I’m too weak.”

In addition to their daily exercise Birdie showed Greg how to plant a flower garden and how to care for a stray dog that had wandered on to the ranch. Later, Greg held the ladder while Birdie painted the eaves around the house where the wind and rain had inflicted so much damage in the past.

One night Greg awoke to find Birdie in bed with him and kissing him on the mouth. “You’re a wonderful man Greg Fletcher. Do you know you’re the first man that I ever willingly kissed,” Birdie whispered, but when she got no reaction from Greg she hurried back to her own bedroom located on the other end of the house.

At the appointed time Birdie went with Greg to see his doctor. According to the doctor’s scales Greg had lost 16 pounds and his

blood pressure although still not normal, was much improved.

On their way back to ranch that afternoon Greg handed Birdie an envelope. When Birdie opened it she squealed so loud Greg almost ran off the road. “Good Lordy, a check for three thousand dollars, one grand for each week I stayed with you. Is that it?” she asked.” Is this is for me?”

“Yes, but you don’t have to leave. You could stay longer,” Greg said.

The following afternoon when Greg came home from running errands he found his check along with a note on the dining room table.

Dear Greg, the note began.

By the time you read this I’ll be on the bus heading back to Oklahoma. Greg, staying with you these few weeks has been the most delightful time of my life. I didn’t know there were any nice men in this world like you. You have really opened my eyes. I’m going to find me a good job and hold out for that husband and two kids that I told you about. You need to continue your diet and exercise. Best of luck, Greg. You’re a great guy.

Birdie

PS—I’m returning your check since I don’t want to cheapen the best three weeks of my life.

How could she turn down three grand? Greg wondered. He wanted to tell her the time she spent with him was the most delightful days of his life too. But maybe it was just as well he got rid of her, Greg thought. She was a cheap prostitute wasn’t she? Yes, but she had no business being a prostitute, Greg reasoned.

The more he thought about it the madder he got. Two weeks later Greg wondered if he was losing his mind as he drove back to Oklahoma City. He stopped at the club where he first met Birdie and hung around there for over two hours, but she never showed up. Finally, the bartender told him he thought Birdie was working at the Hi Way Café located on the edge of town.

The Hi Way Café was a small place filled with loud music and cigarette smoke. “*I Didn’t Know God Made Honky Tonk Heaven*” was playing on the juke box as Greg was seated in a small booth near the back of the café.

Straining his eyes with every ounce of his energy Greg was disappointed for there was no trace of Birdie. When the waitress came back he asked her if a girl named Birdie worked here.

“She’s in the back,” the waitress said. I’ll go call her.”

A few seconds later Birdie, dressed in a white uniform with her long hair tied up on her head approached Greg’s table. Upon seeing Greg she put her hands on her face and screamed. “Good Lordy, what are you doing here?”

“Can you sit down?” Greg asked.

“I’m the only cook on duty,” she said, “but maybe for a minute.”

“Birdie,” Greg said, holding her hand. “I want you to come back to the ranch. He took a small box out of his shirt pocket and handed it to her. “Go on, open it.”

When Birdie opened the box an expensive diamond ring stared her in the face. “Oh Good Lordy,” she screamed again. Greg took the ring out of the box and placed it on her finger. “Is this for me?” she asked in disbelief.

“I want to make a respectable woman out of you. I want to give you a home and two kids if I can,” Greg said.

“You want to marry me?” she asked. “But why would you want to marry a girl like me?”

“Because I love you, damn it,” Greg said, not caring who heard him. “Come on, we’re leaving,” Greg said, grabbing her by the arm.

“You’ll have to get you another cook. I quit,” Birdie said, grabbing her purse on her way out the door.

Greg, in his blue jeans and cowboy hat and Birdie in her white cook uniform were married a few hours later in a small wedding chapel. Not long after the ceremony they checked into a hotel only this time there was no fooling around. “Come on Greg, we better hurry and have two kids before I get too old,” Birdie

said, laughing that outrageous laugh again.

Greg hoped he didn’t have a stroke as he successfully demonstrated his manhood for the first time in over three years. “If I die right now right now,” Greg said a short time later. “I’ll die a happy man.”

“Good Lordy, Greg Fletcher,” said Birdie. “You’re not gonna die now. Our life is just getting started.”

* *

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Mission Peace

A. P. Somwanshi

Trishna's eyes ran through the fast receding hilltops. The virgin greenery was enticing. The belligerent cries of thunder clouds calmed and rejoiced in *Shravan*¹ showers dancing in unison. Opening the panes, Trishna caught the rain drops in her palms and rubbed her face. She touched her closed eyelids with the cool finger tips. As showers poured down she at once shut the pane. Almost all in the Qualis were dozing off. The driver was dutifully driving. As Trishna shifted her gaze through the hind glass, suddenly the driver applied brakes.

“Be careful ,” Trishna cried out.

“Oh ! so you are awake,” Piyush said from the front seat.

“Arecha ! So you alone are awake,” Trishna replied.

“Oh how can I doze off, sitting besides the driver? Shouldn't we be watchful? We should at least know to which God he is taking us to.” Piyush said sarcastically.

The driver laughed heartily , “Since you are awake, I am driving speedily. Otherwise I too would have dozed a bit.”

“Oh don't think of doing any such thing, we are supposed to reach *Guruji's*² house by evening.” Trishna asserted.

“Oh don't worry . We will reach in right time,” The driver replied.

As clouds gathered in the sky the Qualis winded the meandering road and reached *Trimbakeshwar*. Priyankar and the driver went in search of *Guruji's* place. In spite of the place being a smaller one, no one told the address correctly. “Just go to right and ask or go to the next lane.” All vague replies! Priyankar was irritated. He hastily walked to the end of the lane and found the nameplate. He peeped inside the *divankhana*³. It was packed to capacity. Priyankar fidgeted for the letter. One of the *sevaks*⁴ noticed and made place for him to sit inside. Two of the *sevaks* were busy noting down the *vidhi*⁵. Priyankar handed over the letter. He registered for the *Narayannagballi*⁶- two couples accompanied by two female family members.

Other occupants in the qualis alighted it, to move about freely. The streets were muddy and full of mounds of filth here and there. A typical look of earthliness in holy places of India. Trishna, Vedangi , Rasika and Maisaheb stepped down, Piyush moved about the narrow lanes. Centrally placed square branched out into narrow lanes and contained the *Kushavari*⁷. Trishna admired the tank amidst the stone built walls artistically beautified by stone carvings. The hues of the stone walls reflected in the water adding to the mystic look of the place. She thought that the mystic beauty of the place far exceeded its religious importance. The water in the tank dirtied by offerings belied the sanctity of the place.

“Hi Captain ! How far has our peace mission reached!” Piyush hailed Priyankar.

“Oh come on ! Just looking about for accommodation,” Priyankar replied.

“O. K. Come let's go together.” Both went in search of lodges for a night's stay.

Rasika was engaged in her baby. Trishna called out to Vedangi to accompany to the *Trimbakeshwar* temple. Maisaheb took hold of the baby and asked Rasika to go for *darshan*⁸. But she refused. The narrow road towards the temple was bordered by the stalls of flowers and offering. The white and coloured flowers bedecked in cane plates and the vendors calling out with '*Taisaheb* here, *Maisaheb*⁹ here' attracted the pilgrims attention. It being the month of Shravan the place was no doubt crowded by the *bhaktas*¹⁰. Trishna and Vedangi reached the main gate of the temple and chose to keep their footwears at a stall and bought the flowers and *prasad*¹¹. They entered inside the main gate and confronted the rectangular expanse of the temple. Being one of the twelve *Jotirlingas*¹², the temple had its own religious importance but what engrossed Trishna's attention was the deft stone carvings adorning the stone walls. What always perplexed her was the question as how could the artists manage to create such wonderful works of art in times of lesser advance of tools and means of transportation. They worshipped the *Nandi*¹³ and proceeded for the *darshan* of *Trimbakeshwar*. Trishna saw that the roof was dome shaped and

in right corner was a huge wooden chariot. The exterior of the chariot carved in oily black wood bore a sufficient proof of the artistic skills of the yore. The platform of the temple sloped down to the *Tripindi*¹⁴, the only place of union of *Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh* at a *pindi*. The mirror on the roof top reflected the union with clarity. The crowd in the *gabbara*¹⁵ allowed no lingering inside. Trishna and Vedangi stepped out and went for *pradikshana*¹⁶. The crowd turned to the *Gayatri* mandir in the premises.

“*Vabini*¹⁷ let’s move to the temple.” said Vedangi.

“Oh but it’s too late already, we’ll come later, all must be anxiously waiting for us.” Vedangi agreed, both walked hastily to the large gate.

Trishna looked back and threw a glance at the temple, trying to accommodate its beauty in her two little eyes.

They soon noticed the driver hunting for them. He escorted them to the boarding place. A tall narrow building in a narrow by lane.

Trishna woke up at 3 o’ clock, performed her ablutions and woke others in the room. Meanwhile an errand boy rang the chains on the doors. The two couples got ready hastily and proceeded to *Guruji*’s house. A large tea can was ready for the disciples. All were directed towards the *kushavarta* for bathing. Constant showers had rendered the air chilly and the lanes were soiled with mud. Walking barefooted towards the *kund* was an embarrassing experience to the city dwellers. The very thought of bathing in the *kund* made hair stand on the body.

“Oh come on lets enjoy the cool water!” said Piyush jokingly.

“You just think of enjoying anywhere.” remarked Vedangi.

“Oh, off course bathing openly early in the morning in the *kund* is definitely worth enjoying.” Piyush added.

Proceeding to the *kushavarta*, Piyush called out loudly, “Has the auspicious time struck?” as he winked at Priyankar. Collecting their copper pots from *Guruji*’s son, Priyankar passed them to others in queue. *Guruji* lined up the couples on the border of the *kund* and started reciting the mantras. The resounding from the stone walls echoed through the *Kushavart*. He elucidated the mantras. Trishna was all ears to grasp. Having lost their fathers

Priyankar and Piyush shaved off their heads clean. After the tonsure they returned to the *kund*, couples bathed in it and went to the crematorium to perform further rites.

The crematorium behind the *Trimbakeshwar* temple had five to six halls built on the shore of the Godavari for the rites. Volunteers lined up the couples and led them inside one by one. As they ushered in the *pooja*¹⁸ hall, Trishna marveled at the meticulous arrangements made. All were asked to squat beside the *chavrang*¹⁹ allotted to each couple. Sitting with mud smeared legs made it uneasy for Trishna, but there were no arrangements for washing legs. She reluctantly sat down. The main preist Kawthekar Shastri appeared on the scene. Dressed up in saffron clothes with *rudraksha malas*, fore head smeared with three lines of *bhasma*²⁰ and a saffron spot in the middle gave him the air of a real god man. The piercing look in his eyes held everybody’s attention. His loud *sanskrit* chanting mesmerized everybody. He explained in marathi the meanings of the *mantras*, making it clear to everybody that since their forefathers wishes remained unfulfilled hence their *atmas*²¹ were in satiated, knowingly or unknowingly the forefathers might have killed a snake, so the whole lineage has become the victim of its wrath and hence has to face hurdles in its progress. In order to set free the lineage from the wrath the ritual of *narayan nagbali* is performed. The pyre of images of *narayana*²² was lit followed by the *shraddha*²³ ritual. With *pindadaan*²⁴ the ritual of the first day concluded. Shastri asked everyone to observe *sutak*²⁵ and to keep a onetime fast for the day.

After the noon meal, the whole day was at their disposal. Trishna felt like walking to the hills. However it rained incessantly the whole day. The damp air and the soiled roads discouraged any outing. Trishna, Vedangi and Rasika chatted and passed time over a game of cards. Since the next day they were supposed to go early to *Guruji*’s place Maisaheb hurried them to bed. Trishna, however could’nt sleep. Her thoughts were roving around the day’s *pooja* and the topics of chatting. On their way back, the topic of discussion was of course the reason of performing the

narayannagbali. Mrs Salpekar said, “Our property dispute is pending since twenty five years .We own millions worth property but is of no use. We couldn’t educate our sons in private medical and engineering colleges, so my elder son is working in a bank and the younger has completed engineering diploma and is now working in a private company. The youngest son is still unemployed. After we performed this *pooja* the first time, I lost my father-in-law. Our *Guruji* advised us to perform it again. During these four years my mother-in-law expired. Our court case is in the last phase, so our *Guruji* advised us to perform it again this time. He said it would benefit. So this is the third time we are performing it. What about you Mrs Agrawal.?”

“We have come here for the first time. Both my sons were good at studies and are decently employed. But my eldest daughter was average at studies and is thirty years old now but is still unmarried. No alliance has yet materialized. So our *pundit* advised us to perform this *pooja*.”

Trishna had asked Mrs Deshmukh, a middle aged lady, “Who is performing the *pooja* from your family.?”

“My sons are performing the *pooja*. My husband was a chief engineer in MSEB. Four years ago he died in a road accident. Both sons are studying in college. The elder one is in medical college and the younger one in engineering college. However both are not faring well in the annual examination. Our *Guruji* studied their horoscopes and observed *sarpadosha*.²⁶ He advised us to perform this *pooja* and try this solution.” Trishna was amused to know the reasons.

Night’s silence had engulfed the place. Far away, Trishna could see a faint light on a distant hill. Somebody like me is awake at this hour, thought Trishna. Could it be the old man there? She at once felt a strange craving to walk there. The mystic air around her thickened. The flood of craving receded in her and she felt relieved.

On the second day of the *pooja*, Trishna felt the wave of fear run down her spine at the sight of the images of the *naga*²⁷ kept on each *chawrang*. Amidst chanting of *mantras* the image of *naga*

was offered to the flames of fire. The sacrifice of the *naga* would exonerate the lineage from the curse of killing *naga* by any ancestor knowingly or unknowingly. The *naga sbraddha* was performed hereafter. Accompanying relatives were asked to take *darshan*. It was followed by *pindadaan*, a host of crows landed down to touch the *pinda*. In no time the *pindas* were eaten up amidst loud sounds of ‘*caw caw*’, *Guruji* asked everybody to observe *sutak* of the *naga*. However no fast was to be observed. The ritual lasted for about two and a half hours to three hours. It was raining almost cats and dogs. Everybody was drenched head to toe on way back.

After the noon meal, Trishna went through the newspapers and had a niece siesta. Around three thirty she woke to find others snoozing in the room. She stepped out into the corridor and saw Piyush reading in a corner. As he saw Trishna coming towards him he passed a chair to her.

“Oh! Welcome *Vahini*. At last there is somebody around to speak to.”

“Oh! But you seem to be busy reading, won’t I disturb you?”

“No not at all, it was just a time pass.”

“But what had engrossed you so much?”

Piyush handed over the book. “Mystery of human mind, Wow! Sounds interesting.”

“Yes, it is. Anyway only ten pages to finish off. I’ll give the book to you.”

“So let me leave, you complete the reading.” Trishna got up.

“Oh no! *Vahini*. I’ll read it any time. When do we get time to chat?”

Trishna couldn’t resist it anyway. She asked, “How did you find the *vidhi*?”

“Oh! Very nice. *Guruji* gets it done very methodically, but if you ask me about my intention of coming for it, then it was definitely out of reluctance.”

It at once struck a chord in Trishna, “Oh really! I thought I was the only one to come so.”

“What exactly do you mean?”

“Doctor, do you really trust such rituals?”

“Here there is no question of my trust, I was simply dragged due to my devotion to my beloved wife and nothing more. I am as skeptic about it as you appear to be.”

“Yes, I really do not understand one thing. We have stepped into the twenty-first century but how come are mentally ages behind. Social reformers spent a lifetime convincing the futility of the rituals, reasoning on the lines of scientific thinking. During that period the masses welcomed their suggestion. But again the society seems to have reverted back.”

“I agree with what you say, qualified individuals like us are victimized to such unscientific practices. But at the same time there are some reasons that drag us along.”

“Yes, I agree there is definitely a reason for being dragged like this. Due to increasing materialism man has become self centered. He pines to possess almost everything. His high educational qualification has procured for him high paying opportunities. But when it comes to facing problems in life, he realizes that his education hasn't trained him to tackle them realistically. So while confronted with problems he finds himself totally at the mercy of circumstances. Anyway which experience were you speaking about?”

“I think I should frankly put before you the facts. Mrunmayi got nominally sick. I myself being an experienced pediatrician, couldn't diagnose her ailment. And by the time I could diagnose, it was found to be incurable.”

“But *vans*²⁸ said that somebody had done *karni*²⁹?”

“*Vahini*, Vedangi is an eye specialist. But I gave priority to the fact that she was a sick child's mother. And I don't think that I made any mistake. She herself mistook reality. And when I realized that Mrunmayi was suffering from a rare type of Lukaemia, I couldn't gather enough courage to convince Vedangi.” Piyush at once became emotional. However he continued further, “I got the original report changed and put before her. Once she was convinced that nothing was wrong medically with Mrunmayi, she started the search for possible reasons of her ill health. At that instance Priyankar

took her to some quack, a *bhagat* for consultation. From here the vicious circle started rolling. We have a tribal couple living besides our flat. Both are medical practitioners. Our little Mrunmayi often played at their place, the doctor's mother a kind old lady as very fond of her. The *bhagat* told Vedangi that the old adivasi lady had infected Mrunmayi with her black magic. Vedangi was overcome with this conviction, so as soon she got to know about new *boaa* or *tantrik*³⁰, she would rush to him with Priyankar's help. Meanwhile these practices kept up Vedangi's moral courage. I was the only one to know the truth. But found it futile to disclose it to Vedangi. She had just started her independent practice so it was essential to keep her emotionally strengthened.”

“But she says she actually found Mrunmayi more disturbed on the *amavasya*³¹ nights .”

“Actually it was her own interpretation of Mrunmayi's deteriorating health. I thought of disclosing to her the reality. But by that time she was terribly busy with various remedies suggested by the *bhagats*. I observed she was hopeful of regaining Mrunmayi's health. So again I kept mum. I observed she was behaving hysterically almost imagining the vague sounds and murmurs to be a reality. She repeated her experiences so often that all around her would definitely be convinced.”

“Do you mean to say it was all her hallucination?”

“And what else? An educated lady had almost turned into a helpless mother. When Mrunmayi's condition worsened she was adamant to take her to a newly found *tantrik* by Priyankar. She nagged for permission. I was uttermost disturbed feeling helpless for want of any medical treatment at this crucial juncture. So very reluctantly I had to give in.”

“And they had taken her to the *tantrik* I suppose?”

“Yes but Vedangi blamed me for not permitting earlier. Had I consented in time, she feels Mrunmayi could have been saved. Her misunderstanding went to such an extent that she demanded a divorce from me.”

“Oh really!” Trishna was surprised to know all that had occurred between them recently.

“To save the situation I have come here for the *pooja* although almost against my will.”

“I always thought that it is only women need to make compromises.”

“The bitter truth is that once ego gets the better of a person whether a male or female at least in married life, it certainly curtails the bond between husband and wife. As these ties break, it becomes inevitable to seek a new partner for relationship since it is a person’s basic need.”

“What do you exactly mean?” Trishna asked apprehensively.

“I belong to a very poor family, my family background is still backward. Even though I have qualified as a doctor, I still am a part of a humble and traditional family. And Vedangi’s background is world apart from mine. So it wasn’t strange for her to propose a divorce at a slight dissent. She can’t be expected to have the flexibility as she had to make no compromise in life. Had she taken a divorce her society would not have looked down on her. But my family background couldn’t bear the stigma as my younger brother and sister are yet unmarried. As I am professionally very ambitious, I did not want any marital differences to disturb my career. So I decided to settle the differences amicably.”

It was now Trishna’s turn to pour out her heart, “I too have been dragged like you. Every person strives for stability in life. He is striven by a strange understanding that extreme struggle is bound to yield stability. I was determined to complete my research work after marriage so we went in for planning. As soon as I completed my work, we anticipated an issue. However even five years of wait were fruitless. I was diagnosed to have no problem, but Priyankar refused to get himself checked by any expert. Meanwhile came Rasikatai’s divorce, this mishap in Vedangitai’s life and added to it professional failure in Priyankar’s life made him fatalistic. He started connecting every happening with fate and involved himself in all superstitious practices. I feel very insecure due to his attitude but reasoning is vain with him. And certain happenings surely stumble ones logical balance.”

“Oh what do you mean?”

“Certain happenings compelled me to agree with his line of thinking.”

“What exactly happened?”

“Some strange incidents took place. Three to four years back we were on our way to a marriage celebration to Indore. Travelling by road we stopped at a spot to have meals. We sat under an expansive shady tree. I unpacked our lunch boxes and all of a sudden a very old man stood beside us asking for food. Priyankar asked me to serve out for him first. He slowly was biting every morsel. We finished eating and went back to our car. Priyankar asked me to look back at the spot we had just left. And to my utter astonishment there was nobody to be seen on the spot.”

“What about the old man, did he run away?”

“Oh no! He vanished from the spot. He wasn’t healthy enough to walk away.”

“It was quiet strange!”

“Yes of course, Priyankar spoke about it to some people at the wedding ceremony. Some natives told him it seems that the jungle was haunted by the cursed *Ashwasthama*². And the thought of confronting the haunted soul often disturbs me. I hate snakes and it always happens that once in a while a snake is found lingering beside my bedroom window. So I am always panicky. Maisaheb happened to suggest this *pooja*. I am dead against these rituals but agreed to come along.”

“But *Vabini* lets pray for all those who believe in them. May God grant them fruition”

Both raised their folded hands towards the sky and laughed heartily.

Evening shadows darkened the place and mystified the damp air.

Notes

1. A month in rainy season observed as holy month for worship.
2. Priest

3. Living room
4. Volunteers.
5. Rite.
6. The rite of symbolic sacrificing of a snake as a token of repentance for the killing of a snake by ones forefathers.
7. A holy pond.
8. The act of seeking God's blessing.
9. To refer reverentially to ladies.
10. Devotees.
11. An offering blessed by God taken symbolically as token of his blessings.
12. One of the twelve holy places of Lord Shiva.
13. A statue of a bullock deemed to be used as a vehicle by Lord Shiva.
14. Three images of Linga, a male reproductive organ.
15. Sanctum in a temple.
16. To move around the image of God.
17. Reverential address to ones brother's wife.
18. An act of worship.
19. A four legged short table used as a platform.
20. A smear of ash powder.
21. Soul.
22. Symbolic image of forefathers.
23. A rite performed after a person's death by his family members.
24. Rice balls to be fed to crows as a token of offering to forefathers.
25. Mourning.
26. Curse of snake.
27. Snake
28. Reverential address to ones husband's sister.
29. An act of black magic meant to curse.
30. Quacks.
31. A no moon's night.
32. Guru Dronacharya's cursed son.

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The Dark God

Bhupen Mahapatra

'WAR' means what MAMA? What is a war - Mama? Why it happens; and how does war happens? Satru went on asking and asking to his mother -Sheela.

But Sheela keeps mum and speechless. What answer she can give to these innocent queries of her three years old son? Sheila's only son - kept disturbing and pestering her. But she could not summon up enough courage to find a suitable meaning and explanation, for the word, which could satisfy the curiosity of a three-year-old child. The silence of his mother, evoked more question marks, eagerly awaiting to understand and comprehend the etiology of war and unfold its history.

'Why are you so quite mother? Do Answer, what is a war after all?' Satru went on-

Sheela became immobilized, her. entire existence paralysed, the motion of the earth, the floating clouds became static, stationary - where can she get a befitting analogy for war? She herself failed to get an authentic picture of that small word. Has she ever fought in a war field? No, she has never thought of the necessity of war.

Sheela never had any enemy to combat. She never created any enemies even in her thought. Making enemies is not her forte - In spite of it all, she has fought her unknown war, struggling amidst the dense jungle of the verdant hills of Hariyana, where her parents and herself have fought day in and day out with poverty, disease and hunger often forcing them to the brink of death. This war was an incessant chasm, encompassing limitless boundaries.

Sheela has welcomed twenty-four summers in her lifetime, and has happily bade farewell to them. She has felt its heat embalming her two soft petals like palms. Often she has clasped her intensity of its heat by holding it and then again throwing it at the next moment like a piece of burning charcoal. These dreary

summers of her life has been accepted gracefully with stoic resignation. However, intermittent spring has come and gone in her life without her notice, with little leisure to recapitulate its commencement.

Along with her parents she bent down with a sickle, to harvest grains, to take care of cows and buffaloes, then again carrying pots of milk from village to village for distribution. Her evenings spent with little leisure, starts with taking back the cows and buffaloes to the stables to rest for the night. But she has the female counterpart, cannot be spared, as she has to prepare the evening meal beside the fire, clapping rough dough of wheat, flattening it with her palms.

Spring manifest itself only in the back yard garden, in the fields with the soft flower petals. Spring has its countenance shown in abundance amongst blossom of grapes and apples. But the radiance of spring has never expressed its youthful glory on her human body nor endeavour has been made to be conscious of its stimulating curves, and swinging slim bellies.

She still tenderly remembers her historical sixteenth spring while tending and guarding her father's cattle, beside the river Yamuna. She fondly takes in her arms a baby lamb. At that picturesque moment. Paramjit of the neighboring village voiced his endearing words - 'Sheela, look at the blossoms of the Kadam tree -can you see how beautiful they are?' Nature was the medium of manifestation of beauty. However, Sheela failed to respond to beauty, as the commonness of her life took in its stride everything beautiful to be a regular cycle of mechanical activities like sowing, weeding and harvesting. So, the kadam blossoms also seemed a regular appearance like the changing seasons.

Paramjeet had newly joined army at that time. He was broad-built and a strong man. He had a manly face with thick black hair that fell on his forehead. He had a pair of black piercing eyes as sharp as the arrows of Arjuna. Oh, My God! What a deep look he had; Sheela found it impossible to meet his eyes - she blushed at the thought and with down cast eyes, smiled at herself saying what a naughty boy, without waiting, she hastily proceeds ahead

with a load of cut sugar cane on her head. She dare not look back and glance at Paramjit to meet his gaze, even though her heart throbbed desperately for a second look for quite a while.

Now, the same Sheela cannot think of another war amidst the endless battle she had encountered in the life.

She now thinks about war with a new vision and surprisingly the same war has troubled the mind of his son who wanted to decipher it's meaning.

She picked up her son to her lap and stroked her fingers into his hair reassuringly - "That is nothing son, you'll get to know everything, as you grow up.

Perhaps, Satru was not satisfied with his mother's explanation. He had an idea that for some unknown reason, her mother does not want to tell him and so she is trying to cover up the issue. He again points out his figures to the fields, where two goats had thrust their horns at each other playfully; and fired another question, "Mom, are those two also doing war over there?"

The two goats had raised their feet and stood on toes and then banged their head against each other. Next moment, they again raised themselves on two limbs and fell down with a bang; repeating this game in cycles. This war continued to be an elusive game and Sheela became disturbed and perturbed, to explain to the child the difference between the human war and the animal war. Can he understand the difference? Sheela was confused. How can 1 explain the real war is not a game? What if he asks about his father Paramjit? She does not have an answer to the innumerable questions. She cannot tell the child that this man- begotten war becomes worse, than a goat - an animal- where man is the enemy of man. She cannot define it to the child that war is that culture which gives birth to man's inherent primitive Instinet of acquisitive power to possess and control what belongs to his neighbour.

These wriggling of intricate thought is intervened by a primitive voice beckoning her, "Sheela beti, come here?": She recovers from her reverie by the call of her mother-in-law. Before she could reach out to her, the elderly lady comes forward, sits beside her, and rebukes her for not listening to the son's questions

and clarify- “Tell him, Beta”, she counsels the younger lady, “if mother fears to talk about war, then how can the son overcome the fearful consequence of war?”

Sheela stared at her mother- in-law and introspected that this lady is also a mother. Before she could be a mother she had lost her husband in another war - defiled accident. Having got married at the age of seventeen, even now her husband includes in the list of missing soldiers.

Sheela appraised this senior figure of feminine example with a new admiration. Her advancing years had effected no tarnish to the radiance of her skin. The contour of her face and body still emanated healthy radiance like the beauty of the ripening wheat grains. She too awaits a dream - waiting for someone has kept her young .Her poignant motherhood and the maturity of her age mingles to create an aura of vigour and earthy sensibilities - she attacked Sheela –

‘Beta, do you dread war?’

“No, mother”. Sheela defensibly shies away her face.

When man fails to face realities he tends to evade the truth. He shirks away from truth as he would from a stranger or an alien. Can Sheela admit to herself that she is scared of war?

Sheela observed that the senior lady’s body still showed the bullet marks of the pain of losing her husband for the last thirty years. Her body and soul bore slit marks of the inhuman stabbing of war. The reign of terror of war is magnified in every page of history. The blood stains of war have fallen from Herosima to Himalaya and Berlin to Bay of Bengal, and settled down in the ocean and as fossils of war in between the buried layers of civilization.

Many-a-time she had over heard her mother -in -law talking to herself in her sleep – “why are you so late? I am lonely and alone.” The same mother has awoken Paramjit on that fateful day early in the morning coming beside our sleeping bodies she whispered - “I can smell an air of disturbance and I apprehend your leave may be cut short”- with a minute pause she said, “Get yourself ready beta, it is time to go back to duty”. There was a tremble in her voice- an urgency.

“Son, will you not look for your father this time? After toiling in the war-fields he might have fallen asleep amidst the snow-laden mountains. Why would anybody else bother to awaken him in such a God forsaken place?

The strangeness of creation is such that a mother pushes her own creation to protect her mother -land.

The equation between mother and motherland mitigates in mutual sacrifice. They revolve in two layers of concentric circle- the mother merging with motherland and vice - versa. After merging, the circles isolate and revolve in isolated spheres, and each one is fortified to protect and secure the other.

But the elderly lady re-affirms her faith about intricate bondage between mother and the earth. She comes closure to Sheela and says - “Can these two mothers ever be isolated?” Can you separate and alienate them? They enjoy an integral bondage with no status of inferiority or superiority. The mother sheds blood for the mother - land as the mother - earth is its existence.”

Mother -in-law comes more closure feeling the warmth of her breathe. “Look at me Beti, hold and feel my face, my heart, and my body. Do you feel there is any blood and flesh in it?” Sheela’s tear laden eyes appraised the mother and struggles to clear the mistiness in her vision, “Last thirty years has turned and made a marble statue- a body of stone out of me. Now also, I stand in the veranda” and wait and look out on the streets for olive coloured uniforms. If an unknown uniform clad appears, a strange sensation flows through my consciousness breathing life into my stony body. Suddenly new buds and leaves appear on a dried up twigs. Flowers seemed to open up their petals in harmony. In that sphere or ethereal existence, as if the earth has taken one complete circle on its axis to change the direction of my life. Everything seems to stand still and she hears the bells of temple and Churches ringing violently to herald a new era. The sky over the Mosque fell apart echoing a voice shouting at a pitch- thunder-bolting against the sky - Release me –Save me- I am the mother earth- a mother.”

“But, I am just a inspired homosapian. My animal instinct, my inherent primitiveness- the wildness of my ego-centric self

has always drawn me towards a sphere of darkness. My primitive animal instinct has taught me to overcome the struggle of existence. I cannot elevate myself to attain self enlightenment above the level of wishful filament.”

“War is that circle of darkness which is self explanatory of its existence. We have to just accept it and face it”

“I simply cannot- I failed to compromise with that sphere of darkness. Will Paramjit be lost and eclipsed in that world of darkness like millions of others, in the past - difficult to be identified?” Sheela cried with desperation, sublimating her emotions at the altar of a Dark God.

The senior mother smiled pathetically and rebukes; “You cannot just afford to say, I can not... .. One has to embrace Reality even though it is a Dark God. If we cannot release oneself from that “Unknown Darkness”, we cannot get freedom from a stony existence, there is no escape from this reality.”

Then mother -in-law drew Sheela close and held her strong arms, patting her on her back. Their tears, and shivers and pangs vibrated the atmosphere for a redressal.

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Stereo Types to deconstruct

Diana Kirilova

Stereotypes and prejudices

Contrary to what their negative connotations might suggest, prejudice and stereotypes are useful for us. They help us categorize the world around us into different categories.

According to the definition of Cambridge dictionary, a stereotype is a preconceived idea that people have about someone or something, especially a misconception. As for the term “prejudice, once again according to this dictionary, it means an unjustified and irrational opinion or feeling, especially when the result of insufficient reflection and knowledge.

In other words, stereotypes are preconceived notions and clichés and a prejudices is a feelings of irrational fear and antipathy. They are in a way, filters that protect us against an overabundance of information and allow us to judge someone you do not know, or know very little: they contract and simplify our view of reality.

From this perspective, stereotypes and prejudices have a positive function because they help us take quick decisions. Very often, however, they justify and substantiate the views and values of the majority. What is “frequent” is considered “normal” and the actions of a minority and social groups do not conform not to the “norm” are looked down upon. In general, stereotypes and prejudices are born - and this is one of their most striking features - in the mind of the “powerful” and are applied to the “feeble”

Dominated as the feeble are, they can neither control nor change the way they are perceived by others.

Lights and Shadows of the stereotype

The stereotypical self perception has a two way impact: It bears the non conform behaviour and allow it to go unnoticed.

So if you are considered a “nice old man”, it is possible that your negative behaviors be masked by the predominance of the stereotype.

Conversely, if we consider you a dirty gypsy or thief, then it is likely that some of your commendable actions be ignored or lessened

in value because of the evocative power of the stereotype. In order to fight against stereotypes, it is important that the people meet more often and exchange views over time. To find the person in his uniqueness, behind the stereotype, it is important that evidence of non-conformity to the stereotype be highlighted on a recurring basis. It is this repeated dissonance that leads us to enrich the vision of the other.

What are stereotypes about the Roma? How is a Gypsy perceived by the majority?

The commonly shared opinion among the majority population about the Gypsy varies across different states, but often it is perceived in negative terms. The gypsies are considered thieves, dirty people, uneducated, miserable ... and ultimately, harmful to society.

The ignorance about this group of people is the source of these stereotypes and hinders any possibility of reconciliation. Stereotypes or clichés are embedded in the minds and mental comfort they provide does not allow them to overcome fears by putting these convictions to the test. Yet, all that needs to be done is to open up ourselves to the Gypsy culture and take a closer look, finally forging our own judgments on the basis of a mutual acquaintance. One would hope that any major policy decision concerning Gypsies will be preceded by such an approach because if we let stereotypes guide our decisions, it can only lead to more mutual distrust and tension.

Negative stereotypes operate as a veil of ignorance that covers and conceals the positive sides of the Gypsy population.

Non-Gypsies refer more easily to the myths that sustain negative images and this exempts them from any effort to know them better and eventually changes the look, leave a side the dirty gypsy costume and the image of a gypsy who is a robber, violent and harmful to society. This negative, deep-rooted and caricatured portrayal of the Gypsy derives its strength from the social problems faced by the Gypsy population: illiteracy, unemployment, begging, delinquency.

As for the peoples of Europe, even here stereotypes die hard. When speaking of French people we think and imagine fashion, elegant French woman ... a myth! The French reality is quite different.

Differents traits are attributed to every nation. So when we speak of a Portuguese man, people say that they are workers, they are very serious and work hard. For the Chinese, we have a same story.

Talking about a Jew is to think about Shabbat, kosher food , endogamous marriage ... not to mention the physical type of Jew, the shape of the nose, facial features ...! Some stereotypes are often associated with specific behaviors and attitudes. Within the Roma population, sub-groups are distinguished by their own stereotypes. They often appear at weddings and traditional feasts. They are embodied in the clothes, food, occupation. These stereotypes are pieces of identification that ultimately trace the contours of a collective identity for each Gypsy group. This internal differentiation among the various Gypsy groups is explained by the different stereotypes attributed to them in each group.

Such stereotypes play an important role, when it comes to the interactions between the various groups especially on the occasions of marriage. For example, in the case of a Roma kaladarsh romni willing to get married to person belonging to a group of farmers, gypsies group kaldarash refer immediately to the stereotypes of the Roma group of farmers and can say “I won’t give my daughter to a poverty-laden farmer, “even if the family no longer practices these traditions. Internal interactions among different Gypsy groups often focus on stereotypes attached to the reference group at the expense of specific knowledge of the person concerned.

Efforts are needed at all levels to overcome barriers and preconceived ideas to improve mutual understanding ; the opinions need to be elaborated in consideration of the person and not its group. Relying or focusing on the stereotypes attached to a group will inevitably lead to errors whose consequences are can be very damaging in as far as “living together” is concerned.

A direct knowledge of the person presupposes an open-mindedness and willingness to know each other beyond the wall of stereotypes. This open-mindedness and willingness to listen to others and forge opinions solely on the basis of strongly developed interpersonal relationships is an investment that few people are naturally inclined to endeavor. Yet it is the only way conducive to the deconstruction of stereotypes, a path strewn with obstacles, resistance and an intellectual laziness ... so another combat!

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Interview

Arbind Kumar Choudhary in conversation with Mahendra Bhatnagar

A.K. Choudhary, the awarded editor and explorer of new style of poetic composition, has become a literary celebrity with his nine poetry collections in English within a short span of time. Due to the classical bent of mind Dr. Choudhary has been reviewed and interviewed across the continent. This literary celebrity believes in innovation, exploration and racy style rather than the existing trends of poetic composition. The imagery that he borrows from Nature and its surroundings for the prosperity of English literature is unparalleled. So far his poetic style is concerned, he is second to none. Due to his immense poetic potentiality he has been twice awarded by the International Writers and Artists Association, U.S.A. in 2011. His biography has been glittering in Cambridge Dictionary of English Writers, England and World Poetry Almanac, Mongolia besides a number of Indian poetry anthologies and abroad.

Here is an exclusive interview with Arbind Kumar Choudhary

Q1. From where do you draw your inspiration as a poet ?

Ans: The ailing humanity, butchery with mute animals, ecological disorder and humiliation are the things that spark my creative germs from time to time.

Q2. Which Indian writers have impressed you most and why?

Ans : Tagore, Aurobindo, and Medieval saint poets have impressed me most because Indian cultural prosperity has remained at the core of their works.

Q3. After R.N. Tagore, no other writer from India has bagged the Nobel Prize for literature. Your opinion.

Ans : Independent India has founded more than 300 universities with no global recognition at all nor have they treasured treasure-trove nor perfect environment to flourish at the global level. Bureaucracy also adds fuel to the fire to continue literary anarchy.

Political interference has polluted the entire literary environment across the country. How can you produce another Tagore amidst the literary anarchy prevailing across the country?

Q4. : Do you believe globalization could influence poetry in the present situation?

Ans : Change is the eternal law of nature. Globalization will accelerate the intensity of the poetic world because the world has turned nowadays into a small village. Poetry will flourish with globalization. The literary trend or movement will be changed in course of time. Tastes, likes and dislikes vary with the generation. There is nothing new for the creative world in this globalized village. Novelty, innovation and, above all, alteration are the universal law for the prosperity of poetry.

Q5. : What do you think the writer's role is in modern society?

Ans: The writer's role is not only to show the mirror to the society but also to show what it should be? Literature is not the mirror; on the contrary it is the guide, the path finder, the instructor that guides the course of the society for overall progress. The more it goes up, the less vice goes down. The writers are truly the spiritual gurus and their works are the wealth of the society. But the people must be aware of the pulp literature.

Q6. : How do you foresee the future of Indian English writing?

Ans: Indian English writing is gaining popularity worldwide, but yet has to come of age. The future of Indian English writing lies in the hands of Indian writers. However I expect its shining in future .

Q7. If you were given a chance to be born again, would you like to be a poet again or choose a different kind of life

Ans: The writers are the spiritual Gurus of the society and their works are the precious gems for all the generations to come. Writing is ,in fact, a noble profession. I love this profession most from the core of my heart. I also want to be a poet again to fulfill the incomplete dreams of this life.

Q 8. : Would you like to pass on a message to our readers? And a few final words about you as well.

Ans: I advise the readers to go deep of the subject. If they go

deep, they will enjoy it at heart and soul. Literature should be passion, not profession . Ignore those who criticize with negative intention. Read more, comment less. I was born and brought up at Sirajpur village of Khagaria district in Bihar and educated up to Doctorate from T. M. Bhagalpur University. At present I am actively engaged in creative works besides teaching at R. C. College, Majuli, Assam.

Q 9. : Do you find any contemporary evils against which you are compelled to fight?

Ans: Anarchy in all spheres of life is prevailing everywhere. Governance and bureaucracy have become cancerous in this country. My forthcoming poetry collection 'Leader' unmasks their faces for the awakening of the common masses.

Q10. : Poets are from all over the world, where do you hail from?

Ans: I feel myself a Lilliputian poet among a number of grand global literary celebrities.

Q11. What style of poetry do you prefer?

Ans: Rhyming pattern is my favorite style, but I compose verses in other forms also.

Q12.: How do you differ yourself from others?

Ans: I try my best to explore new ideas, new thoughts and racy style through my poetic heart. Innovation has become the racy style of my works. Apart from these I also try to bridge the cultural gap between the east and the west. The muse lovers can taste the racy style of the stanza in which sequence of l(love),m(mace),n(noyance),o(opulence),p(perforce) and q(quiescence) is maintained :

Loves mace

Noyances the opulence

Of the perforce

For the quiescence. (Love, P. 46)

Q13. Name one poem you are most proud of writing, the one that you personally cannot forget?

Ans: Leader

A wolf in sheep's clothing

Sheds crocodile tears for the suffering.

O Blood sucker of the sufferer!

Your name is Leader.

Faustus of the society

Has rare vision for the prey.

O Nest of the viper!

Your name is Modern Leader.

The reaper of Herod policy

Reaps dog –eat-dog policy.

O Satan for the unimpassioned grief!

Your name is Ultramodern Leader.

O Falcon for the sparrow!

Suck prey's bone –marrow.

Q14: M.B: Mention about your published creative works.

Ans : My poetry collections are as follows:

1.Eternal Voices (2007)

2. University Voices (2008)

3. My Songs (2008)

4. Melody (2009)

5. Nature Poems (2010)

6. Love Poems (2010)

7. Love(2011)

8. Nature (2011)

9. The Poet (2011)

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Lithuanian Contemporary Fiction

Almantas Samalavicius

Lithuania regained its freedom in 1990 after several dozens of years of Soviet occupation, following a brief period of independence from 1918 to 1940. Prior to that it was colonized by Tzarist Russian empire throughout the whole nineteenth century. Tzarist colonization also deprived Lithuania from its written language: from 1864 to 1904 after a failed uprising against the colonial regime Lithuanian language was banned and this fact had a tremendous impact on its cultural development.

The spectacular ‘singing revolution’ of 1990 ended the Soviet rule. More than twenty years have passed and Lithuanian writers who once proclaimed the truth to thousands of their fellows crowded into parks and squares, now find themselves on the margins of public life. As elsewhere in central and eastern Europe during the fall of the Iron Curtain, writers, poets and other intellectuals performed an impressive but short-lived role as the political vanguard. Soon they were replaced in the public realm by more pragmatic individuals, politicians and economists whose talent lay in offering economically concrete and more realistic ideas rather than the abstract categories and slogans of freedom.

Since then, Lithuanian society has undergone many changes. After the events of January 1991 – when Soviet military troops in Vilnius murdered thirteen peaceful civilians who protested against military rule, after which an economic blockade was imposed on disobedient Lithuania – there was a hasty and in most cases unjust redistribution of former socialist ‘people’s property’ in an atmosphere of ‘wild capitalism’. Naturally, writers who played an important role in the political developments of national movement before 1990 had to step own and turn back to their more usual roles. Most of them started to take part in the processes of political normalization and creation of a democratic civic society despite of the fact they these processes were far

longer than anyone could imagine during the national resurgence movement on the eve of 1990.

A few years after the reestablishment of independence, it seemed as if literature was destined to die slowly and painfully: the circulation of books and literary periodicals went down, despite the fact that the period was marked with the rapid growth of new and as a rule short-lived publishing houses. However, after a half dozen years or so, the literary climate started to improve and major publishers began to claim that the literary market had become almost normal: sales of literary fiction grew again, and each year more and more novels and short story and essay collections by Lithuanian writers appeared. The realm of poetry, however. Compared to the last Soviet decades when print runs of established poets collections of verses were ranging up to seven or ten thousand copies, a thousand of copies now became a standard. Complains and heated discussions that perhaps Lithuanian authors had written too few manuscripts for the ‘drawers’ (i.e. intended never to be published because of strict censorship) during the Soviet era soon ceased, and many young authors surfaced on the literary scene. Despite occasional swings, a stable and more or less satisfactory market for Lithuanian literature (both poetry and fiction) came into being and general situation of writing somewhat stabilized.

One can ask – how does it look today? Despite the fact that the print runs for literary fiction are generally lower than twenty years ago – and this tendency seems to be common to all central and eastern European countries – the literary market today is more or less stable. Important literary events like international Vilnius Book Fair, which draws several dozens of thousands visitors every year, are undeniable proof that literature has a large number of readers and books are still important, though foreign translations well much better than books of local fiction writers.

Of course, when one looks back to the peak years of Lithuanian literature – a couple of years before and after the reestablishment of independence when a collection of poems by a renowned exile poet Bernardas Brazdionis was published and

sold in a print run of one hundred thousand copies and the leading literary weekly *Literatura ir menas* sold seventy thousand copies of each edition (the total population of the country at that time was roughly three million people) – one can be overtaken by nostalgic feelings. But all these exciting developments were triggered by political and social upheaval that was, alas, short-lived. These days poetry sells far more modestly in Lithuania, but without any doubt it still manages to retain its symbolic value and quality (as testified by large number of highest awards given to poets and numerous translations into other languages worldwide), and has a limited but nevertheless constant readership. However, as in most Western countries, almost no poet in Lithuania makes living from poetry. Those few who do, as well write fiction and plays for theatre, or add to their budget from translating foreign fiction. A certain economic stability for poets and writers of all genres is provided by government scholarships for creative work awarded annually by the experts and authorities of Ministry of Culture. One can conclude that freedom has its own price and sometimes this price is not in favour of literature or its sales.

Novel *Vilnius poker* by Ricardas Gavelis was published in Lithuania still ruled by the Soviet regime in 1989 in a print run of one hundred thousand copies – a precedent most unlikely to be matched in forthcoming decades. Probably the biggest challenge conceived to a drowsy Lithuanian literary climate on the eve of the re-establishment of independence, *Vilnius poker* caused a stormy reaction immediately after publication by Lithuania's then largest publishing house *Vaga*. Written for the 'drawer' (the manuscript was kept hidden in several pieces by the author's most intimate friends until it was finally published; he never revealed their names even until his untimely and mysterious death in 2002), the anti-narcissistic and anti-heroic novel was concerned not only with the essence of totalitarian power (the striving for absolute power and control is personified by 'THEM', eternal conspirators against humanity from the times of Plato), it also described a new type of human being, one created by Lithuanian culture and the Soviet system alike – the so called *homo lithuanicus*. This strange creature

according to the author outgrew its Big Brother (*homo sovieticus*) in narrow-mindedness, meekness, inactivity and cowardice combined with cultivated destructive, hypocritical pride in national symbols and glorious history of the nation (the symbol of power of the Grand Lithuanian Duchy, the only remaining tower of Vilnius Upper Castle, is for example described as a puny blunt phallus). The 'eternal city' – Lithuania's capital Vilnius is depicted as mortally ill, maimed and decaying body, where the inhabitants are strangers to each other and lead their mean lives overcome by external controlling power and their own inner feeling of powerlessness. In addition they compensate for their impotence by torturing their fellow citizens or those closest to them. Even the main character of the novel, who dedicated his life to understanding 'THEIR' malicious plans as well as his venerable teacher both reveal themselves as mean and the first one even paranoid person who demeans all and everyone and feels constantly superior any other Vilnius dweller because he can 'see' what others can not. Finally the readers even suspect him of a crime – killing his lover Lolita whose death remains unresolved to the last pages of the novel.

Given these qualities, it is no wonder that neither (post)Soviet Lithuanian society nor Lithuanian literature was able to stand up to the challenge of Ricardas Gavelis when faced with this open, penetrating, uncompromising and shocking prose. Twenty years after the novel appeared in the Lithuanian original, it was finally translated into English and published in the US in 2009. The English translation was extremely successful and the book was listed among the best translated fiction that was published in Northern America. In his further novels Gavelis explored the social changes in a postcommunist realm. These ironical, grotesque novels mirrored the complexities and absurdities of creating a post-dependence society and were met both with admiration and a lot of criticism. Nevertheless few would argue his prose left a marking imprint on the Lithuanian literature of the last century.

In the last decade Lithuanian literature lost Ricardas Gavelis, Jurgis Kuncinas and Jurga Ivanauskaitė, three important though controversial writers and yet undoubtedly representing the new

trend in Lithuanian prose fiction. Jurgis Kuncinas – a prolific novelist, short-story writer, essayist and translator from German was also setting the plots of his novels in Vilnius, as Gavelis did. Kuncinas was mainly depicting a ‘lost generation’ – fed up with promises and absurdities of Soviet communism, moved to the margins of social life. Ivanauskaite – a visual artist and writer was setting the tone of a feminist prose and eventually shifting her interest to essay writing, focusing on the culture of Orient and Tibet in particular. She died a few years ago remaining a cult figure among many people who turn to her writings for spiritual guidance and mysteries of the East.

The gap between the generation of writers who built their reputation in the period of dependence and remained visible in post-Soviet culture and the younger generation who matured during last two decades is especially evident. Few critics would disagree that it is those writers who are now in their late fifties and forties that have developed the strongest voice. Elonging to this generation is Herkus Kuncius, who publishes a new novel or short story collection almost every year. His latest novels *Anthology of a Drunkard* and *Lithuanian in Vilnius* published respectively in 2009 and 2011 are witty, subtle, at times sarcastic novels; the rupturing episodes of their postmodern plots are held together by the main characters. The protagonist of *Anthology* – a sworn drunkard performs his drinking odyssey all over Europe, the main character of *Lithuanian in Vilnius* – makes a cultural pilgrimage to Lithuania’s ‘eternal city’ and loses his mind captured by a syndrom which is pretty well known in Jerusalem where foreigners occasionally go mad, impersonate Christ and start preaching. Kuncius’ hero suffers analogous fate while entering Vilnius. Herkus Kuncius might be described as the most fully developed postmodernist in Lithuanian fiction, combining true erudition of a scholar with good knowledge of Western literature techniques and provided witty, humorous accounts of absurdities of human life. He parodies all types of people, professors and politicians, rich tourists and marginalized people take part in a carnival-like festivities of life mixing together and creating a variety of colorful

characters on postmodern stage, depicted with good knowledge of human vices and deficiencies.

In a recent collection of short stories *To betray, to renounce, to defame* (2007) Herkus Kuncius creates a narrative in which the older generation can recognize their life during the Soviet period. Nevertheless, he retells this life in a form of stories about sexual abuse. Sometimes, they strike as extremely accurate though metaphoric descriptions of the exercise of power. The world the the collections is made of those who abuse and those who are abused, sometimes the latter do not even understand the were molested. Kuncius can be regarded as the foremost critic of the Soviet period in contemporary Lithuanian fiction. He consciously deconstructs the history of dependence in order to show the impact of its systematic mentality on post-Soviet reality. It is impossible to get rid of history, its is possible to experience and eventually reconsider it drawing some lessons, as if implies the author. Revisiting and reconsidering are especially important to those who never had direct experience of that absurd system of lies. This concept is realised with the help of absurd, grotesque and irony, sometimes bordering with postmodern pastiche. One of the most important novels in this respect is his *No Mercy for Dusansky* published in 2006 in which the author employs a biblical structure to a story of teachings of degraded contemporary ‘Christ’ – a communist functionary who served in the repressive apparatus of the system. Kuncius follows the life-long career of his protagonist describing the ill and distorted reality of the corrupt communism.

Sigitas Parulskis can be also ranked among the leading contemporary Lithuanian prose writers. Establishing his reputation early as one of the leading (or perhaps the best) poets of his generation immediately after the re-establishment of Lithuania’s independence, he later shifted his focus to novels, short stories, essays and plays for theatre. His prose debut came with the book *Three seconds of the Sky* (2002) based on the experience serving as a paratrooper in the Soviet Army. Following the American writer and literary critic Ronald Sukenick, one could call this novel a

'docutext' rather than a piece of pure fiction. Despite certain flaws in form and the excessive use of army slang, this narrative drew a lot of attention to the author and made him a cult figure among younger readers.

Parulskis' most recent novel *The Mumbling Wall* (2009), is a sort of epos of Lithuania's twentieth century seen through the village of Olandija (Holland). A former political prisoner and deportee is found in a pit of filthy water – the author's challenge to new national tendencies to glorify, conjecturally, all former fighter against the Soviet regime and those persecuted by it. The tiny village turns into a metaphor of Lithuania's twentieth-century history: World War I and II, the Holocaust, post-war guerilla warfare against the Russian regime and the gloomy life of the Soviet decades. Parulskis manages to avoid being nostalgic, sentimental or narcissistic about the resistance during a half-century of foreign oppression. However, the narrative itself, unlike the novels by Kuncius is more modernist than postmodern, bringing to mind the western family-sagas of the first half of the last century. It is striking how, in his latest novel, this literary rebel employs traditional forms of narrative that might be associated with a general exhaustion of postmodernism in the West.

Parulskis' other works border between essay and short story. *The Naked Clothes* (2002), *Sleep and Other Women* (2005), *Northern Report* (2008) are all collections of essays that reflect a violent, somewhat cynical attitude to reality. And yet, these books undoubtedly demonstrate that he is among the most interesting and original essayists in present-day Lithuania.

The essay genre is successfully cultivated by another writer of Parulskis' generation, coincidentally a poet but also a translator from German: Kestutis Navakas. His collection of essays *Chronicles of Good Life* (2005) and *Two Bags Full of Snow* (2008) which somewhat oddly won him the National Prize (as he was always considered first and foremost a poet), Parulskis was awarded this most prestigious Lithuania's prize five years earlier. Navakas' essays are thematically varied: he writes about his childhood and teenage years, trips abroad, things he once possessed, even food

or reflects on the province as a state of mind, however, his essays are elegant and witty at the same time. It should be noted though, that the claim of some Lithuanian literary critics about *the boom of the essay* is yet premature. Despite the fact that there is an abundance of books classified as essay collections, most are either journalistic commentaries or otherwise they are extensions of short stories, as for example, practiced by female author Giedra Radvilaviciute. Among such publications, a small collection of texts *Relay* (2009) by poet Gintaras Bleizgys deserved at least passing mention. The genre of the essay is also cultivated by Lithuanian philosophers and social critics who in many ways have surpassed the writers in developing this literary form.

Except for Laura Sintija Cerniauskaite, who won the 2009 European Union Prize for Literature, and the less interesting but no less popular Renata Serelyte, there are few women among the younger generation who can equal leading male writers in Lithuania. Cerniauskaite and Serelyte coincidentally depict similar themes: the lives of young people who were born in a countryside (a large part of Lithuania's population is still rural) and moved to the city and become embedded in a new urban culture. Cerniauskaite made her debut while still in secondary school, with a collection of short stories *Three Days and Nights on the Threshold of the Beloved* (1994) and later gained her reputation with her second book published while being still a university student *Lucy Goes Skating* (2004). Her most recent novel *Thresholds of Benediktas* (2009), set forth these familiar themes. In a realistic manner, she tells a story of young gifted teenager who studies at provincial art school, his relations with an ageing and seriously ill father, and his sexual and spiritual 'initiation' into the world of adults. As in many contemporary Lithuanian novels, Cerniauskaite deals with a transition period: the contours of the present are rather dim, and though being a sensitive and stylish writer she does not aim to construct a metaphor of contemporary life.

It is hardly surprising that the rural dimension plays such a dominant role in the newest Lithuanian fiction, since the majority of the authors that have made their debuts in recent decades

were born and raised in the countryside, in a semi-rural, semi-urbanized cultural landscape, affected by forced collectivization of agriculture in the Soviet periods and a rise of large private farms in recent decades. Urban Lithuanian fiction lacks older and stronger roots, and only a handful of writers have dealt in any significant ways with the influence of contemporary urban realities on the lives of men and women of different generations. Lithuania's rural fiction can not be discussed without reference to the famous novel *The Life Under a Maple Tree* written by Romualdas Granauskas before the collapse of the Soviet power in the country – the literary work which summarized a rural novel of the period of dependence. This wonderful book remains exemplary to the very day. And yet, despite the dominance of the rural themes, the urban code is becoming more pronounced in the articulation of writers of younger and youngest generation in Lithuania. Beyond the fact that there is a generational shift taking place in Lithuanian fiction, it is also clear that new existential problems pertinent to urban life are becoming more and more important. The city is not only a background for a story, it is also a spiritual state of the mind of contemporary individual. What comes of these shifts remains to be seen.

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Humanism in the Poem “Father Returning Home” by Dilip Chitre

L. B. Gayakwad

Father Returning Home happens to be the leading poem in the social creed of humanity and hence, it has been luminous contribution of Dilip Chitre, who has discussed on the changing values of our society and has expressed sorrow that the issue of morality has been disturbed in Indian Families. He has shown an earnest feeling that culture and civilization carry on some assets in man's life by which he dwells peacefully in life. The fruitful benefit of it is reaped that other members of the family also pass their days delightedly with the assistance of the chain of understanding between member and member in the family. Family is an institution in which charity begins & every aspect of life is maintained on its own accord with the moral fear & charity, which is smelt & lived only on the basis of morality of unseen virtuous strength.

When we sit for meditation, we undergo the personality of morality & values, which have been brought accurately by our saints to reality & they have been themselves as morality and values of life, where, we have found out the personalities of theirs' in the living lives of them. But modern man has come very much away from these values of morality, and hence he himself and others have been affected due to its absence, as a result, man has been truly luxurious outwardly pompous, and hollow inwardly not to get anything for keeping real peace of mind

Morality and values declare to love and respect others to compensate for adopting respect for ourselves. But modern man has stopped to oblivion to kill the values and morality in his own life. He never knows that this selfishness of his will back really the doors of humanity, where, he shan't be alive to experience its effect.

Giving stress on the above discussion, we should now interpret the colorful meaning of the poem on basis of temporary and permanent aspects of life. Dilip Chitre was educated in Baroda & Mumbai. He has been teacher, Painter, a film maker & a

magazine columnist. He won the Sahitya Academy Award Contribution to Indian English Literature. He is bilingual & writes mostly in Marathi. He has cast light upon the serious issues of life called 'exile' alienation, and self-disintegration and death. He handled cosmopolitan culture an Urban sensibility & the related issues of life.

"Father Returning Home" is a poem available in his anthology, "Travelling in a Cage" where, he advocates the issues of a commuter, who goes through dull & exhausting routing. He experiences the melancholic life & is forced to digest steal food & a horrible alienation at home without a choice to be facing only soliloquy. His word of sorrows follows the delinking of the present & reluctantly, consumes only dried past and unborn future with the lapse sentimentality. Dilip Chitre shows this estrangement through imagery, subtle irony, and symbolic projection as a modern nomad.

While interpreting the faces of the old man, Dilip Chitre depicts that, the father travels on the late evening train standing among silent commuter in the yellow light. He knows that no one is there to wait for him at home, & hence, he implements on traveling on the late evening train, because it has been regularized going up & down between two places the yellow light symbolizes as the weakened & tired situation of the old man. Suburbs slide pass this unseeing eyes. His shirts and pants are soggy & his black raincoat stained with mud & his bag stuffed with books is falling apart. His eyes dimmed by age fade homeward through the humid monsoon night. As he gets off the train, he is drooped from a long sentence like a word. It means to say "if a word is thrown away from a sentence, it never spoils its meaning and the speaker is very clear to adjust the meaning without it." In the same way, the family members of the old man have been very smart to throw him out of the social structure of the family. They have forgotten that, he had been major man to plant the tree of their house. Every religion won't permit them to neglect him because "forgiveness, kindness & peace" have been the main ideals to make man's life raptures. But this charity & culture have been

discarded by his young family members. So they turn him to be existing only outside of the house forgetting humanity.

The old man hurries across the length of the gray platform, & crossing the railway line & entering the lane, hurries onward. His chappals sticky with mud symbolize his bigger-type of situation. He has developed a good family but no one has seen him with wood state of mind to protect him in his oldness. The poet has seen that, the modern culture of man has nothing to do with the old culture.

The old Father drinks weak tea. He goes into the toilet to contemplate eating the stale, Chapati & reading a book. I will draw your attention towards the verb, contemplate. To contemplate means to think deeply over the affair which, he had been doing with his own blood other men & women according to his sons & daughters. They don't think that they have been brought to this beautiful earth to enjoy life, which is always expected by Gods & Goddess in Heaven to enjoy with beauty of the earthly pleasures, according to the knowledge of saints. The sons & Daughters have forgotten humanity to their father in his oldness And, if they don't maintain this, they also are to face the same situation of the oldness, which their father is undergoing. And thus, values of real life will come to an end, and hence, the sons & daughters must think of their own lives, that their own relations also will go through such faithlessness & one day, in future, the values of the society will have dwelt like animals to be destroyed from the permanent truth of humanity which has been & will be only the basic of shelter to mankind. But Dilip Chitre is very much surprised of experiencing that this humanity has gone now out of the door of hearts of man & women, this poem represents the general social value in families that nobody has the careness for the old member of the family.

The old man contemplates his own estrangement from a man made world. He sorrowfully declares here his & the total old man's divorce from the man made world. Day by day, man is going through scientific changes which are coming to man only because he has made his own world. Coming out of the toilet he

trembles tremendously & the cold water is running over his brown hands. A few droplets cling to graying hair on his wrist. But his sullen children have often refused to share jokes & secrets with him. They have neglected him to be dead as a substance without soul. Let me tell you that every substance has been domain of our maker called God, has been the message of our holy scriptures, & hence these children have forgotten it, & that is the loss of the ethics according to Dilip Chitre .

The old man hasn't forgotten his "Maya" with the children, & hence, he can't sleep without listening to the static on the radio, dreaming of his ancestors & his grandchildren & thinking of nomads entering subcontinent through a narrow pass. Let me stress that the old man has been like a scarecrow in field which is in a hanging situation to be mute permanently, & to be useless, after getting pure harvest. And birds also never think of it & become intrusive in the field as sons & daughter of the old man, have appeared with him.

When we go through the situation of this old man, a question comes to Soul, I won't question to mind, why is this happening in the social atmosphere in the Indian families? The answer comes to the soul that the effect of the western culture, the personal development of man at the effect of the media which provides wrong message to the young generation. Altogether to say this modern man has gone into the oblivion totally to overlook the moral values like "love, belief respect, understanding, earnest feeling, affection, sacrifice, natural devotion"& he has been incapable to know the strange effect of his own passion of his mind. Mind dwells in the body which is grouped into the five elements & to turn this body towards humbleness and pure understanding 'Soul' is put into it to control man's 6 impulses called "Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Mada, Moha & Matsara' in the form of Maya. This Maya has made him so self centered that he has no command for controlling his 6 impulses-called Sex, Anger, Self Pretence, Temptation, Hating. He has been driving them as per his own mind & not the soul, which is really the great statue of humanity, Self Awareness & media to reach

solemn harmony to justify old & new generation to drive the petty squabbles from his life.

Body is an agency through which the word has been born & flourished when the great man has decided to do. Saint Ramdas says in His "DASBODHA", man should look at himself & others. If he continues to look at others, his way of behaving goes to be changing & one day he becomes the King of his own whims, which are to disturb & to kill others to fulfill the dried powers of wrong confidence .And such has been the situation with the children of this old man He has also not found time to teach morality & humanity to his children & he has been a prey to his own activities done with the children. Charity begins at home hasn't been practiced by this old man with the children. On the contrary, if he has been really a good father, his sons must have given him the respect, which they have been following with them slave. If it is not the fault of the old father, the roles of the children have been very much selfish. Their 6 impulses have made them manner less that they are neglecting their father who has brought them to this beautiful earth.

Body of theirs is very much complicated to create problems & they have no knowledge of a saint that they will be bending to the moral. History tells those who lessened to the bad passions of this body, they have gone to the distraction of LIFE. It is the simple thing that, if somebody troubles you, you are caught into the strange catch of psychology & you all are disturbed & found in a deep sorrow. The same is happening with this old man but the children have not studied of their bodies they haven't undergone the religious or moral literature & hence, their knowledge is only physical & so their result of behaving is experienced very much angry & killing to other family members.

To conclude I want to suggest humbly that the university should prescribe the syllabus religious & ethical on the life of Saints' by which the inner valuable of children will be shaken & they will be made submissive to understand our parents. Saint. Ramdas says those who consumed the fly of awareness, they get no test of food served & the over confidence is to be heightened

& they can't differentiate between good & bad hence this body of man must be purified to know the existence of others . Continuously if this body reads & digests goodness & moralism, no man goes to make injustices with others, and thus, this becomes a good source to the young generation to change them into humanists. If they are made humanists, the problems of such persons will easily be solved & the question of changing values of our society, the directionlessness & the definition of morality will come to change & the number one Indians' flag of culture will remain the same for not disturbing the old men like the father in the poem, & that will be the solidarity of nation with religion, morality & humanity.

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"THANK YOU VERY MUCH

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Historico-Fictional Association/Dissociation in Partition : Narratives with Special Reference to Kartar Singh Duggal's Fiction

Madhumeet

Whether or not one subscribes to the Aristotelian concept of all art as being basically mimetic, one has much less reason to disagree with the old Greek philosopher when dealing with the genre of fiction. A dramatic work is a mimesis of an action involving characters doing things or undergoing experiences as a result of the acts of other characters as well as of their own. What is applicable to drama may also be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to fiction which differs from drama only in the medium and manner of imitation, not in the object.

Historical fiction is today recognized as a specific sub-genre of fiction/literature. The action of a historical novel or study is fixed within specific spatiotemporal dimensions. For example, see the historical novels of Sir Walter Scott, an excellent practitioner of the sub-genre, so highly praised by Georg Lukacs in *The Historical Novel*. With the advent of the postmoderns the old spatiotemporal fixities have been boldly subverted and hybridism-mixing up of genres, styles, periods and place- -has not only been countenanced but canonized. Consider, for example, Rushdie's *The Moor's Last Sigh* or even *Midnight's Children*.

K.S. Duggal one of the most prolific of all the Indian writers writing in English today, is an eminent fictionist who though not flamboyant avant-garde like Rushdie is yet innovative in his own right. He is virtually wedded to an essentially innovative outlook. K.S. Duggal does not by any means lay a claim to the postmodern virtuosity of the ilk of Salman Rushdie, whom he admires with all his heart, yet he has given us a very readable, interesting and accomplished combination of fact and fiction in his book which lays bare the plethora of conflicts and conciliations in the very heart of India from the hoary past to the very recent times.

As is well known, every work of fiction, specifically historical or not, has its essential schema, if not plot, based on the spatiotemporal coordinates. In this respect it is “historical”. Most characteristic fictions of Duggal, though by no means all, deal with Punjab during the period of communal holocausts around 1947. Without being a true-blue historical novelist he presents the most vital and obvious elements in the experience of India (Punjab in particular) around the year of its partition in 1947.

The historico-fictional association/disassociation in many of Duggal’s novels and stories adds to his performance as fictionist of a particular region—Pothoar (the northern region of Pakistan extending around and including Rawalpindi to which the author originally belonged and where he lived before partition). Pothoar is Duggal’s “Wessex”. All the significant customs, practices, geographical features etc. of the area are there for the reader to see. Duggal is vastly more than a regional novelist, however. The locales of his novels and stories are extremely varied and extend all over India and go even beyond the boundaries of the country; and so do his themes. Nor does he limit himself to any one language or genre.

Before proceeding further to give an account of the encounters of Duggal with India’s history in his fiction, it is desirable to have at least a cursory glance at the theoretical position regarding the history-fiction interface. It is true that Duggal does not have any elaborate theoretical framework about the nexus between history and fiction, yet as practitioner of fiction he does have some unstated ideas on the same which can be inferred from his fictional products. At any rate, a quick look at the recent theoretical status regarding history-fiction interface would help.

From the days of Plato and Aristotle philosophers have tried to differentiate between history and literature (Greek: *poesis* or poetry. In ancient Greece poetry included drama, and so “poetry” was equivalent to all literature, being an inclusive term indicating all creative works). While Plato indicted poetry as a falsification of reality, Aristotle termed it as more philosophical than reality (=history). Contingency and arbitrariness bedevil life and its account, namely history. But chains of events as presented in poetry are governed by the laws of necessity

or probability, making poetry more philosophical than history. The poet, being at bottom a philosopher, does not believe in the dictum *post hoc; ergo propter hoc*. that is, because something has happened later than something else, therefore it is a properly philosophical consequence of the former. In poetry as well as philosophy, the entire emphasis is on *consequence* rather than mere *sequence*. Events in historical narratives are structured sequentially, while those in poetry (epic and drama) are structured consequentially.

Aristotle’s defence of poetry against Plato’s outright indictment of it as untruth leading to mental and emotional debilitation of its addicts is a celebrated *locus classicus* in the history of literary criticism. Inherent in this plea for imaginative literature is the question as to how far and in what way a poet may depart from the bare facts of history in the interest of artistic integrity and audience appeal. This question is particularly vital for historical novelists and other writers as well whose narratives include visible elements (like personages and incidents) from the well-known annals of history. All novelists, nay all realistic narrators of all kinds, are historical in the sense that every chain of events has an explicit or implicit spatiotemporal scheme. Even in novels, such a Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway* where time and location are fluid and dependent on the stream of consciousness, the time-place configuration, though shifting every now and then, is traceable though not entirely firm or insistently obtrusive. One may say that even in recent times with the advent of avant-garde modernism and postmodernism the literature-history nexus has more or less continued to survive—because no narrative discourse can be ahistorical altogether. This is particularly true of the tradition of the Indian novel, both in English and in indigenous languages. T.N. Dhar in *History-Fiction Interface in Indian English Novel* has very competently discussed the issue in the light of postmodern critical theory with particular reference to the works of Anand, Nayantara Sahgal, Rushdie, Shashi Tharoor and O.V. Vijayan. According to Dhar the history-fiction nexus, in the Indo-English novel in particular, very strong owes not only to the tradition of the novel in English but also to India’s colonial past. Dhar avers:

. . .the novel in India came into its own under the impact of the novel in the West, particularly of Britain. In fact, the novel's engagement with history was at the very root of its development. To present a truthful picture of life in their novels, the novelists located human actions in a recognizable geographical and historical space and a comprehensible time-frame. This paved the way for a more serious and purposeful engagement of the novelist with history in the nineteenth century. It was this novel which had a major influence on the novelists in India, first on the ones who wrote in regional languages and, later, on the ones who wrote in English.

Duggal is endowed with the equipment, discipline and competence of an academic historian and is also imbued with the spirit of Sikhism. He has written, profusely on the life and times of the Sikh Gurus and also translated *Guru Granth Sahib* into English quite competently. Kartar Singh Duggal in many of his stories as also his novel *Born of the Same Parents* deals with the times and situations as they prevailed in Punjab during the partition holocaust and the years which preceded and succeeded the partition.

History as the theme or the veritable storehouse of themes of creative fiction seems to cast a spell over many an Indo-English novelist. As literature more or less mirrors society, it does not just mean the contemporary society. At times incidents of great significance, which have made an impact on people and their life-styles or those which have left an indelible mark on people's psyche and thinking processes, become an inseparable part of fiction as much as of conventional history. Some happenings transcend the spatiotemporal limitations. Here the best exemplar is the partition of the subcontinent, which has become a part and parcel of our very existence ever since its occurrence way back in 1947. We read in the Preface to *India-Pakistan: Partition Perspectives in Indo-English Novels*:

Writers, who surfaced after independence, generally reflect either the freedom struggle or the ultimate attainment of independence with a critical attitude, bringing the darker aspects that made a mash of the struggle. It can be said that this attitude is imbued with a spirit of nationalism. The purpose of such criticism is to learn lessons from the past of the betterment of one's attitude of mind. In fact

consciousness of the bad is an essential prerequisite to the promotion of the good.

Gurdial Singh, an acclaimed novelist, says:

Society and the individual are creations of history. One can't know any character or situation unless he has conscious or unconscious knowledge of its history and class struggle. . . .The choice of characters out of the thousands one has known, is conscious as well as unconscious which gets developed during the process of creation.

In August 1947, the sub-continent spun off at a tangent from the unique ideal of non-violence as people started wanton bouts of communal mayhem. The decision of the British to partition the subcontinent into two separate nations—India and Pakistan—led to the most horrible orgies of violence the world has ever seen. Like the medieval plague the mania for murder swept across the face of northern India and Pakistan for a terribly long year and more. The Muslims, on the one hand, and the Sikhs and the Hindus, on the other, callously butchered one another. In that swift splurge of slaughter over a quarter of million people were done to death and many more lakhs rendered homeless. Communal frenzy caused huge exodus of population on both sides.

There are a good number of writers for whom partition provides the matrix of the plots. Writes V. Pala Prasada Rao:

Works on literature do not come into existence autonomously. They are associated with a number of social, cultural, economic, historical and political factors. It is these factors which help in the understanding of the genius, form and content. The partition novels are triggered off by an event invested with historical importance.

Partition is such a mega event as could not go unnoticed by the most insensitive soul. Sensible people all over the world were unable to comprehend how a nation, built around certain common symbols and shared ideals got so easily fragmented. Many Indians had never expected to get a partitioned and mutilated India in the name of Independence. Sensible nationalists on either side of the new international border were at a loss to grasp how their dream of a united and secular India was destroyed by rabid religious fanaticism. We read in "An Historical Perspective of Partition":

Reflecting on the whole gamut of events at the time of independence and partition, social scientists often reiterate the view that the partition holocaust in 1947 was the crown and consummation of British machinations, the culmination of a separatist process initiated by a colonial government to foster and promote its imperial interests.

Apportioning of responsibility (tantamount to guilt) for the tragic vivisection of the sub-continent continued to be a favourite blame-game for years and years after 1947. Individuals as well as communities in the aggregate were subjected to merciless criticism for their alleged roles in arranging or abetting the tearing apart of the once united India (Mother India). Jinnah was the obvious choice of Nationalists (not only “Hindu Nationalists”) for the severest flagellation, even as patriotic Muslims lavished on him the high-sounding, honorific title of *Qaid-e-Azam* (=A Great Leader). Another largely-shared opinion blamed the British, holding them guilty of encouraging separatism among the Muslims. In the atmosphere vitiated by accusations and counter-accusations even Indian nationalist leaders, chiefly Gandhi and Nehru (who were doughty champions campaigning for a united and free India) could not escape the blame of having eventually agreed to the partition of India on purely communal lines. Gandhi (a veritable demigod to most Indians) was brought down by the bullets of a rabid assassin because of his alleged partiality to the Muslims.

The writers on partition have portrayed the mayhem, rootlessness, the refugee status in woeful detail. They have also written about the political scenario. The partition novels also project the muddled Hindu-Muslim relations and the diabolical transformation coming over them with the changing political dispensation. The two nation-states, India and Pakistan, right at their birth witnessed the most massive to-and-fro migration in human history. From one end of the Punjab to the other, terrified people were fleeing their homes with whatever possessions they could carry. There was loot and plunder everywhere. Everyone was on the prowl to grab whatever he could lay his hands on.

With the announcement of partition, people of India and Pakistan began to dread, to quote Chaman Nahal, “the visitation

of ‘a prehistoric monster.’ They woke up to find that a great tragedy accompanied freedom. They were deeply cut by the decision, for one reason or the other, to divide the country.”

Chaman Nahal’s depiction in *Azadi* is a faithful projection of reality. Abdul Kalam Azad writes in *India Wins Freedom*, “When partition had become a reality even the Muslims who were the followers of the League were horrified by the result and started to say openly that this was not what they had meant by partition.”

The difference was not only religious but also social and economic. The economic difference which was more insidious has also been thrown adequate light on in partition narratives. The Hindus were better off and swifter than the Muslims in seizing the opportunities. The Muslims and the Hindus competed against each other not only for government posts but also for jobs and opportunities created in the wake of industrialization and urbanization in India. As the Muslims lagged behind in education, they could not vie with the Hindus. So the Muslims had all reasons to be bitten by the green-eyed monster. This was also one of the reasons why the Muslims wanted to have a nation- -a country of their own. In the urban areas, the Hindus were the dominant community. Moreover, the ubiquitous role of the moneylender was almost everywhere discharged by Hindus partly because of Quranic proscription preventing Muslims from practising usury. So Muslims had all the more reasons to wish for a separate nation. Thus this growing alienation of the two major communities has been a part of the background of most partition narratives. This estrangement and alienation was not an instant act but an outcome of cumulative feelings and experiences gathered over the years. Literature of partition gives ample instances of the same. V. Pala Prasada Rao writes, “The Muslims were convinced that under the leadership of Gandhi, ‘a non-violent violence monger’, as the butcher in *Ice-Candy-Man* puts it, ‘the liberation of Hinduism will benefit the Hindus only’ and that ‘the Muslims can feel free only in Pakistan.’”

Any historical discourse is expected to be a little if not sufficiently expressive of religious, cultural, political, and economic (or, in a word, ideological) issues which lead to social exchanges,

upheavals, and revolutions. The French Revolution, to take an example, was not merely a national phenomenon, but had its clearly decipherable political, economic, and cultural consequences as well as causes. Any fiction involving history-fiction association must take full cognizance of not merely political occurrences but the largely ideological issues and incidents which leaven and actuate the cataclysmic events which occupy the centre-stage in history as in the actual lives of the people affected by them. The fictionist making use of history must, to use Shelley's words, "look before and after." Whatever liberties a fictionist may take with the established historical truth, he must subscribe to the basic historical facts. Historical novelists may be romantic or fanciful but they have no legitimate power to change the established course of history. Even a fanciful novelist like Dickens has to do his home-work by poring over the pages of history before using it in fiction. To quote Andrew Sanders, Dickens before taking up the writing of his own novel *A Tale of Two Cities* "once rashly claimed to have read [Carlyle's] *The French Revolution* five hundred times."

Things are quite different in the case of narratives which have no association with history at all. For example, allegory or fable, unlike the novel, is not anchored in spatiotemporal specificities. The time-space frame is only a part of the vehicle, and not the tenor, of the improvised narrative. Even the characters in an allegory are more of carriers or vehicles of certain characteristics rather than psychologically complex viable human beings made of flesh and blood. Their actions and reactions are stylized according to a pattern. Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* and Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* are standard examples of allegory. More recently, we have works like Orwell's *The Animal Farm*.

The historical novel is at opposite end of the allegorical novel so far as adherence to spatiotemporal specificities is concerned. Take, for example, Sir Walter Scott's *The Heart of Midlothian*. Most of the major characters in Scott's historical novels, like this one, are non-historical. The historically important characters in his novels are only minor ones in the overall scheme. The novels are not

about them but about other, historically faceless, persons invented or conceived by the novelist's own imagination.

A novel like Duggal's *Born of the Same Parents* is different from both allegory and the historical novel, though akin to either more or less. Let us see how.

The allegorical character of the work is clear from the word "Parents" in the title. The "Split" is the geographical dismemberment of the once united India. The siblings split like the subcontinent. The whole family gets scattered. The symbolic intent of the novel in delineating the Hindu-Muslim divide is evident. A split is a chasm dividing two land masses with no bridges across.

Much more than its allegorical characteristic is the historical nature of this novel. Its historical parameters are cut and dried, not vague at all. The spatiotemporal specificities have been taken scrupulous care of. There is no blurring of the edges in this regard. *Born of the Same Parents* may therefore be called a historical novel. But there are one or two points which set this work apart from the usual genre of historical novels:

a) The historical period/framework of the novel is fairly recent, though not contemporary. Duggal here evokes the days around 1947—a fateful year in the history of the subcontinent.

b) Secondly, the writer is writing from personal knowledge and experience about places and happenings. His first-hand experience of the partition holocaust in his native Pothoar from which he was consequently uprooted like all Hindus and Sikhs—millions of them—gives an authentic touch to his narration. The narrative has an immediacy and authenticity of the kind not seen in run-of-the-mill historical novels based in lands and periods remote from the life and personal experience of the writer. Duggal is an authentic and authoritative chronicler of his age as Geoffrey Chaucer was that of fourteenth-century England. But *Born of the Same Parents* is not a jejune, matter-of-fact chronicle. It is an imaginative artifact pregnant with allegorical-symbolic implications which raise it above the level of most of the tales which are about recent years. It tries to make sense of the chaos of a terrible

holocaust in tragic terms- -in terms of a split between consanguines on either side of a line drawn by the erstwhile alien rulers. As long as they remained in power they ruled by the principle “Divide and Rule.” The tragedy is that they divided India before stopping to rule over it. The “split” is continuing to show ever after—much to our woe.

Despite the obvious merits of *Born of the Same Parents* the novel has mostly been cold-shouldered if not altogether ignored by most critics of Indo-English fiction. The scenario so far has been quite depressing. We have so far tried to take stock of the situation regarding the indebtedness of partition novelists to history. But, interestingly, a neat reversal of this statement too points to an essential truth. In other words, if partition fiction derives, in some measure, from history, it will also be used as a significant component as source material by the historians of the future for understanding the history of the subcontinent around the fateful year 1947. Of all the partition fictionists the works of Dr Duggal will have the pride of place in being used as authentic source material for the historians of tomorrow.

Dr Asnani rightly observes, “We can even go to the extent of saying that if the history of the modern India were written, historians would benefit immensely by reading the Indo-English novel, deeply grounded as it is in actual reality.”

In this context Dr Asnani has not only very rightly and convincingly emphasized the history-fiction nexus, but also shifted the normally accepted balance of emphases between history and fiction. It is commonly believed that a fictionist has to study history to turn out a historical novel, or even any novel with a definite locus in history. Asnani reverses the equation by remarking that historians dealing with the period of Indo-Pak partition must study the Indo-English novel grounded in this period to grasp it better in historical terms. Duggal an eminent fictionist of the partitioned India, could serve as a “resource material” for any historian of the period. In “recording” the events, in his fiction Kartar Singh Duggal maintains his dispassionate objectivity as well as his artistic integrity. As honest chronicler he strives to probe deep into the problem of

communal frenzy and hold both Hindus and Muslim equally guilty.

All the significant customs, practices, geographical features etc. of the area are there for the reader to see. Duggal is an excellent exemplar of what historical fiction can achieve as “creative” literature.

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Marathi Saint-Poets and Universal Brotherhood

S. B. Chavan

Poets are the acknowledged messengers of universal brotherhood, love and peace. They are the unique species that has always tried to serve mankind since times immemorial. This is especially true of the medieval Marathi Varkari Saint-poets of Maharashtra. Their poetry is a fine example of humanitarian love and universal brotherhood. The great saint-poets like Jnaneshwar, Namdeo, Janabai Ekanath, Tukaram, Savata Mali, Chokha Mela, Kanhopatra, the Muslim saint-poets like Latib Shah and Shaikh Mohammad etc. have contributed to liberal secular culture of Maharashtra. Their devotional verses are known as "Abhangas" written in praise of Lord Vitthala of Pandharpur. The pan-Indian Bhakti Movement had its resonance in the religious poetry of the medieval Maharashtra. There has been a great tradition of the Warkari Movement. Although the Warkari cult was initiated by Saint Jnaneshwar, it precedes him. Hence it is important to note that this movement did not have any specific founder because a tradition cannot be founded. The tradition of the Warkari cult of Maharashtra evolved through the course of the silent centuries that came under the violent attacks by the foreign invaders. It gave rise to a number of saints, sages, thinkers, mystics, gurus and philosophers who enlightened the masses with their humanitarian ideas and helped maintain social and religious harmony in the caste-ridden society.

Saint Savata Mali occupies an important position in the hierarchy of the great saints like Saint Jnaneshwar, Saint Namdeo, Saint Ekanath, and Saint Tukaram along with several other saint-poets and devotees of Lord Vitthala brought about cultural renaissance and survival in this part of India. Another significant aspect of the saint-poets of Maharashtra is that they worshipped Lord Vitthala of Pandharpur. Another interesting aspect of this cult of saint-poets is that they hailed from various castes and subcastes. For example, Jnaneshwar hailed from an outcaste Brahmin family; Namdeo came from a family tailors; Saint Sena came from a barbers' family; the woman saint-poet Janabai and Saint Chokha Mela belonged to the low caste Mahar families; Saint Rohidas was from a cobblers' family; Saint Narhari came from a family of goldsmiths and Saint Savata Mali belonged to the caste of gardeners.

Saint Savata Mali lived in the tradition-bound orthodox society that witnessed a moral and spiritual decline due to its inherent contradictions and cultural divisions. The society saw clear divisions between the high caste Hindus who had inherited

religious and cultural leadership and the underprivileged subcaste and lower caste masses languishing in poverty, ignorance and privation. The high caste Brahminical class was more interested in the outward puritanical and ritualistic forms of worship. It practiced untouchability and cared more for ablution, rigid, worship at altar (yagnya), rigid abstinence, rites, rituals, other orthodox religious practices. However, they were blind to the noble was more respected and equated with holiness and devotion to God. This led them into wrongly believing that cramming and chanting of verses from scriptures would ensure salvation from sins of previous birth and the curse of the present life even though they did not understand their true meaning. Nor did they ever try to comprehend it. The ignorant masses and low caste people were satisfied in worshipping lesser Gods with native traits. Ironically, both these factions defined religion in this fashion. As a result of this delusion the line of demarcation between religion and spiritual faith became very blur and expedited the over-all moral, spiritual and cultural decline. It was due to the rigid caste structure that parents of Jnaneshwar, and his siblings were subjected to intense social and religious segregation and also humiliation.

Savata is the senior most saint-poet, but he is quite different from his contemporary prominent saint-poets. Savata's personality was a perfect blend and balance of detachment and an attitude of cultivated indifference to the ordinary human vanities. All the saint-poets of Jnaneshwar's tradition used to visit Pandharpur for an ablution in the river Bheema alias Chandrabhaga and then visit the temple premises of Vitthal and Rukmsani on a regular basis. It was an earnest desire and an inevitable ritual of the entire warkari cult and the prominent saints like Namdeo. But Savata was an exception to this unwritten law of the cult. He believed that by doing one's duty and chanting the name of God (Vitthal) one could attain His grace and heavenly bliss, so there was no need for him to visit Pandharpur. In one of his Abhangas (Devotional songs/poetry) he argues that the ritual of visiting the holy town of Pandharpur was fraught with hardships

of an arduous journey and dangers, but mere chanting the name of Vitthal was enough for him to get blessed and have His grace. He was not interested in making an outward show of his faith in God. The output of his devotional poetry is quite scanty but the diction is quite expressive. Saint Namdeo was a true organizer and propagator of the ideology of the Warkari cult. Though he learned under the tutelage of his guru Saint Visoba Khechar and Jnaneshwar, he understood the ultimate truth about existence of God only during his spiritual encounter with Savata. Savata showed him the right path towards spiritual salvation by eating food in the company of Vitthal disguised as a Muslim fakir or Malang. He appealed to him to recognize His omni-presence and surrender to Him. This legend about Vitthala's appearance in the disguise of a Muslim Malang or Fakir clearly indicates tolerant religious views of the medieval Varkari saints to co-religionists and their abiding faith in the universal brotherhood.

The Varkari saints were free from narrow parochial ideas of caste, creed and racial discrimination. This is amply testified by the practice of the Varkaries who visit the holy town of Pandharpur on the auspicious days of Ekadashi the 11th day in July-August and in November/December every year. There is no hierarchy in the Varkari cult. All are on an equal level, so even an elderly Varkari or devotee of Vitthala who visits Pandharpur to see the akimbo figure of Vitthala inside the sanctum of the temple does not hesitate to bow in respect before a young devotee-Varkari. The Varkari saint-poets like Savata Mali, Jnaneshwar, Namdeo, Janabai, Ekanath, Chokha Mela inspired people to transcend the barriers of caste, creed and racial origin. While preaching spiritual pursuits, they never ignored the social reality around them. Savata Mali was the gardener poet of Maharashtra. He was aware of the social discrimination that people were subjected to. However, he thanks god for his low-caste social origin and rejects the orthodox rituals and rites of the contemporary religious establishment. He writes:

*It is good that I was born in a low caste,
It has saved me from false pride of high social position,
It is equally good that I was not born as a high caste Brahmin,*

*for it would have instilled in me a false pride of it.
Even a Brahmin can't escape from worldly responsibilities.
Being a low-caste person I am free from the rigid rituals:
Ablution, evening ritual bath and pride of clan.
Please bless this devotee of a low caste, with Your grace!*

These lines show the fault-lines in the social structure of medieval Maharashtra. In the social hierarchy the caste Brahmin was at the top and it enjoyed privileges. The caste-distinctions between Brahmins and non-Brahmins were very sharp. In social and religious spheres Brahmins enjoyed privileged position. The saint-poets such as Namdeo, Janabai, Tukaram, Jnaneshwar, Savata Mali and others protested against such man-made social discriminations. In the religious poetry or Abhangas the non-Brahmin poets have expressed their caste-specific grievances. They have strongly advocated inclusiveness/inclusivity in religious and spiritual matters. It was due to the rigid social structure and orthodox Brahminical domination, they had to observe caste differences. However, it is interesting to note that they never promoted and supported caste-based discriminations. Nor did they ever encourage any prejudice against any specific caste or religion. Theirs was truly a religion of universal brotherhood.

This is the fundamental difference between the Western theological thought and the Indian theological thought. For some western existential thinkers life is a purposeless purpose; it is a meaningless existence. They were concerned with how to make sense of it as they were stuck up in a duel between being and nothingness. Therefore, some of them advocated suicide as a way to escape the fundamental feeling of alienation from God, religion and from one's own self. This is a kind of negation of life. It is a kind of escape from life. However, in Indian spiritual thought we do not find this. The religious poetry of Marathi Varkari poets transcends this negation of life and offers a pragmatic view of life. The Abhangas or devotional poetry of Savata Mali has a humanitarian appeal. Savata Mali advises his readers to acquaint themselves with great thoughts of saints. The holy town of Pandharpur is a place where devotee-saints assemble to see their

personal god Vitthala, and enlighten people. Savata says that god is such a kind, affectionate and benevolent entity that men and women, saints and sinners are welcome to Him because He does not discriminate devotees on the basis of their caste or racial origin. In one of his Abhangas, Savata writes:

*Men or women, sinners or wrong-doers
see Him there and are absolved of their sins.
Even the holy scriptures of Vedas glorify His
kindness and generosity.*

In the medieval Maharashtra there were fierce competitive claims of authenticity of religious interpretations of god between the Shaiva and the Vaishnava cults. In Savata's poetry we find their resolution or reconciliation. It upholds the spirit of unity in diversity as all roads ultimately lead to a universal god. Savata rejects caste-based social structure. In one of his Abhangs he writes :

*Brahmin, Mahar and different religions and castes,
Bhagwant (Vitthala) never allows such distinctions.*

He denounces the empty rhetoric of one's social standing and preaches an idea of oneness of all. He advises people to understand essence of one universal god. He writes:

*Shiva, Brahma, and Vishnu are not a trinity,
but one and the same. Vitthala is its focal point;
... But for the company of saints only, I pine for nothing,
So let me not boast of any other higher calling.*

The poetry of Jnaneshwar also conveys the same message of universal brotherhood, equality and peaceful coexistence with co-religionists. In one of his Abhangas he writes:

*Salvation is the greatest matter in the world;
Let it be accessible to all the high-born and
the low-born too.*

Jnaneshwar's poetry has a universal appeal and value because it transcends the narrow ideas. He regards the whole world or universe as his family. His god is not merely a personal god but it is an omnipresent, kind and benevolent god. His devotional verses or Abhangas are prayers that say "All living beings should be happy". He tried to attain the spiritual unity of all human beings

in this world. His great mission of liberation of people from narrow ideas and instil in them a spirit of universal brotherhood is reflected in his Abhangas. He says :

*May the wicked be without depravity;
Let performance of good deeds fascinate them;
Let a spirit of universal friendship prevail among them.*

He cares for the well-being all living beings and writes:

*May all living beings be favoured with happiness
and a bliss of perfection;
May all living creatures worship the primordial being.*

The resonance of universal brotherhood is found in the religious poetry of Jnaneshwar's contemporary Saint Namdeo. Namdeo carried forward the torch of universal brotherhood through his journey to the north India i.e. Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Punjab. He composed many verses in Hindi and emphasised the oneness of God and tried to spread a message of moral uprightness through his devotional verses. He too preached universal brotherhood through his Abhangas. His 80 verses formed a part of the holy book Guru Granth Sahib. Hundreds of his Abhangas have inspired masses throughout several centuries.

Saint Tukaram's Abhangas or religious poetry is also a kind of celebration of man's relationship with a kind, benevolent, and omnipresent god. During his life time he suffered humiliation at the hands of orthodox Brahmins of his village but Tukaram continued to repose his faith in god and did not fall prey to narrow considerations of caste, creed and social standing . His philosophical ideas transcend the narrow geographical, linguistic and idealistic considerations. He tried to explore the place of human beings in the vast, meaningless stretches of universe and tried to present true nature and purpose of universe. Like other saints, Tukaram believes in the inner growth of man. This change from within can bring about a change in several other individuals and their social selves. In this way the reformation in the outside world becomes possible. In his Abhangas Tukaram presented his ideal vision of life. He demands that society is formed out of one and many, so an individual and society should work hand-in-

hand. His Abhangas celebrate man's essential unity with god and give a message of universal brotherhood.

Saint Ekanath of the 16th century Maharashtra continued the great tradition of religious poetry. His devotional verses are profound in thought and secular in nature. He used Hindi and its dialects such as Brij, Khadiboli, Awadhi, and Dakhani. He also knew Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian. He tried his hand in Telugu and Kannada besides Marathi in some of his compositions. His liberal humanist attitude can be seen in his use of Marathi and Hindustani in his work Hindu-Turk Samwad to exhort both Hindus and Muslims. Through his Abhangas he appealed to people to cultivate love for all living beings. For him every individual has a divine element in him. He says that every human being is important and therefore he must be respected. His devotional poems reveal great truths and emphasise the significance of the life of devotion and selfless service to humanity.

Latib Shah was a true follower saint of the 16th century Maharashtra. He wrote some of his Abhangas in Hindi too. Like him Shaikh Mohammad also belonged to the tradition of Varkari poets of Maharashtra. His Abhangas in Marathi talk about the essence of all things in the world. He preached universal brotherhood through their verses and strengthened the secular foundation of society.

Apart from these saint-poets, there have been innumerable saint-poets who have preserved the tradition of simple worship of god, mutual love and brotherhood. Their devotional verses have a unique quality that transcends the narrow confines of casteist, regional, linguistic, and religious confines. The saint-poets of our world have done a great service to mankind. They have struggled to lead humanity towards the noble goal of eternal truth of universal brotherhood, humanitarianism, freedom, world peace and justice.

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An Analysis of Brotherhood in William Blake's "A Poison Tree"

S. Florence

In this universe, human beings are the only species who can share and express their feelings, emotions, and ideas with others. They are the blessed ones created by God in His own image. Though God created all the species in this world, man is His wonderful creation with six senses, when compared to the other creations. Man lived happily in this world with development in almost all the fields like science and technology. But with this development, man becomes more acquainted with machines than with man. This develops a crack in the relation between man and man. Day by day, this crack widens and begins developing enmity even with his close neighbors.

Many writers have expressed their ideas regarding brotherhood through their works. Poems like Chaucer's "The Friar's Tale", Browning's "Soliloquy", Arnold's "To Marguerite", Frost's "Mending wall," Moore's *In Distrust of Merits*, Cummings' "A Man who had Fallen", Eberhart's "Am I My Neighbor's Keeper", Spender's "The Funeral", Lowell's "Children of Light" and "For the Union of Dead" and Blake's "A Poison Tree" deal with the theme of brotherhood, which is the need of the hour in this earth.

Brotherhood is a term that deals with maintaining close relationship with the people in and around one's residence. It is a term, the meaning of which goes on deteriorating nowadays. In this context, this paper attempts to analyse the theme of brotherhood in William Blake's "A Poison Tree". William Blake is a poet, artist, and a mystic. His important works include *Songs of Innocence* published in 1789 and *Songs of Experience* published in 1794. These two volumes of poems are his most popular works. These works show him as a gifted poet and a mystic. His *Songs of Innocence* deal with his mystical cast with its accent on the omnipresent and permeating quality of divine love and sympathy. *The Songs of Experience* strike a different mood. In these poems, the

prevailing atmosphere is sombre, mysterious and sinister, overcast with the breath of evil. There is a protest against the restrictive codes formulated by tradition. The poem "A Poison Tree" is included in *The Songs of Experience*. This poem brings out the idea that man must express his feelings, both positive and negative to others. Blake is of the view that suppression of human feelings will lead to many disastrous consequences. In order to prove this fact, he cites instances from his own life. Once he had an estrangement with his friend. He openly showed his displeasure to him. He frankly admitted that he was angry with him. This lends to reconciliation with his friend and removed their misunderstanding and strengthened their friendship. When the similar situation arose with his enemy he suppressed his anger. He showed no sign of displeasure to him. But all the time, he was harbouring ill-will against him.

The enmity and the hatred made him to wish that he was dead. The poet expresses this idea symbolically by the use of the metaphor of a poison tree. His hatred for his enemy grew like a baleful tree in his heart bearing a poisonous fruit. It shows how people categorize their fellows as friends and foes and how this affects their behaviour towards individuals. The poet says that he watered the tree by his tear which was the result of his resentment towards his enemy. His deceitful smiles too gave water to the tree. The speaker's anger begins to grow and the poet compares it with a small plant. The speaker creates a trap for his enemy by creating an illusion of friendliness. The tree brings him, something terrible yet tempting, a beautiful apple. This can be compared to story of the fruit of the Garden of Eden. The fruit of the knowledge seems good at first, but turns out to be something bad for which Eve was punished. In the same way, the speaker seems friendly towards his foe, but he hides his malicious intension. In the last stanza, the poet begins to speed up the poem to the climax. When the foe saw the apple, he becomes aware that he has fallen into the trap. The foe steps into the poet's garden "when the night had veiled the pole" (14). The apple fruit lured and attracted the enemy. Though he knew that the apple tree was his

enemy's, he trespassed into the poet's garden, stole the beautiful apple fruit and tasted it. Blake says: "In the morning glad I see my foe out stretched beneath the tree" (15, 16).

The principal theme of "A Poison Tree" is not anger itself but how the suppression of anger leads to the cultivation of anger. Burying anger rather than exposing it and acknowledging it, according to Blake, turns anger into a seed that germinates, which when nourished by the energy of the angry person, grows into a mighty and destructive force. An implicit theme of "A Poison Tree" is that god of the *Old Testament* is a god of wrath, winning, jealousy, and guile. Blake presents this theme in the poem by alluding to the story of the fall in the book of Genesis. The original title of the poem is "Christian Forbearance". The poem explains a truth about human nature. It teaches the moral how anger can be dispelled by goodwill or nurtured to become a deadly poison.

Thus Blake in this poem expresses the importance of being friendly with people by developing a brotherly relation with them. By means of a fable clothed in symbolism, the poet points out that when the natural feelings are not concealed and are allowed to express freely, a healthy state of mind prevails. But if the emotions are concealed without giving free expressions, it may lead to disastrous consequences. The poet clearly says, "My wrath did grow/ And it grew both day and night" (4, 9). The comparison of the wrath to a tree illustrates the idea that like the slow and steady growth of a tree, anger and wrath gradually develops in the mind into a deadly poisonous tree. This poem illustrates that Blake is not only an inspired poet, but also a great thinker. He has a philosophic cast of mind. According to Blake the poet's job is highly venerable. He is of the view that poets are similar with prophets. The poem stresses the need for brotherhood among people throughout the world. Globalization has brought the whole world into our hand. Let us live happily in this world with the slogan "The whole world is one family". Modern man suffers from many diseases due to the hiding or controlling of his feelings. The only medicine to this is developing, strengthening, and

maintaining brotherhood among people. When the speaker says that his foe was outstretched under the tree, it implies that the foe had consumed the poison and died, pleasing the speaker.

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Conceiving World Peace Through Literature: Inner Connotations

Shukla Bhattacharya

World peace begins with inner peace. What is reflected on the outer is merely a mirror of what is on the inner. Trying to change the world without working to change consciousness is like trying to change the image in a mirror without changing the object that is being reflected. The physical environment and circumstances we experience are merely a reflection of our consciousness. Our consciousness is created by our thoughts — the true creative force. To change our consciousness we must transform all our limiting thoughts. - Carol Hansen Grey

My first cathartic experience happened as a kindergarten student—the day I cried with soulful eyes, being all ears for my mother’s version of her love for me in honest but blunt terms. Once I broke down, she narrated the story of King Lear, referring to Cordelia’s words for her father, King Lear, when he asked how much she loved her. It was then when I first felt the need to necessitate and endorse ample supply of endorphins, created by the lyrics of the adrenalin within permissible prescriptions of endocrinology under the pseudonym of literary sensibilities. Ever since, I could consciously co-relate today’s search with an earnest appeal from the universal Mother, “What can you do to promote world peace? Go home and love your family”. Unlike breast milk, my first fortuitous food for thought was the question of real peace at personal and global fronts, fed by the finest fingers of fantasy.

A meticulous approach would perhaps target the base-line of the collective unconscious first. Years before kings and dynasties declared dauntless dissection of all forms—dawned Darwin’s theory of evolution. Survival of the fittest was indeed, striving for perfection. Implement live and let live, you are capitalized upon, stampede beneath the Big Bad Wolves, Big Brother barbarians. Like drops of water in an ocean, venomous vengeance piles up to the point of devastating domestic violence, civil and world

wars resulting to catastrophic thought attacks, suicidal *zugzwang*. Violence prevailing all around and within the self plays pivotal role. This vicious cycle revolves with greater force while carefully construing a sense of insecurity that poses serious self threat. Indicative of post-traumatic stress disorders, cruelty chronically emerges as epidemic and marks the eclipse of a smile. Pinning for peace is the most obvious prognosis.

In quiet contemplation, a transparent tinge of twist twinkles amidst all these harmful horror emissions. Literature flows on and on through the magic ink of intelligent observation while the flute of fearless fellow feeling flaunts the finesse, symbolizing the nucleus of lifeline which can be easily identified in its crystal-clear reflection on the impromptu human stance of connecting intensively and extensively with one another, longing to belong. Literature ignites this passion, with willfully wide shut eyes to noxious fumes of negative sensibilities that butcher cold bloodedly the divine distribution of neighboring nations in the name of power and possession, rather prefers to nurture the vision of peace in pigeons over the former; expedites the process of reaching out—like the ripple of rivers and ringing of migratory Starlings or Siberian Cranes, bending to bind beyond boundaries.

In this regard, I’m more than elated to observe that I have not a speck of doubt that no stroke of genius in the world’s most gentle civilization, would hide their ardent adoration for great works of literature which in some vital way or the other, have brought about that major turning point in the life of their valuable thought process.

Following are some findings from different journals which shed light on the nurturing potential of literature purely on therapeutic terms and how substantially the sown seeds manifest serious impact straight from grass-root level. To begin with, I cite the views of Jennifer L. Luke & Catherine M.

Myers, expressed in their paper ‘Toward Peace: Using Literature to Aid Conflict Resolution.’

“Providing opportunities for children to read and listen to stories that portray different types of conflicts and possible

resolutions helps them gain a broadened perspective and see the skills of peacemaking at work” (Schomberg, 1993, p. 9). Skills and strategies for resolving problems peacefully can be learned through well organized and frequent exposure to quality literature and activities that promote peace (Lamme, Krogh & Yachmetz, 1992). No single prescribed method exists for presenting this type of literature. Cassie Oransky, (Gainesville, Florida) begins each school year with a unit on self-awareness in which she employs literature as a catalyst for problem-solving activities. Marcia Walton implements a unit well into the school year titled ‘Peace Begins with Me’ that encourages children to discover what they can do to make the world a better place. A teacher may start the year with a unit on peace and conflict resolution and throughout the year return to books with a peace theme. Literature enables children to view both sides of an issue through the eyes of story characters and illustrates creative problem-solving. *The Hating Book* (Zolotow, 1969), despite not being a current publication, can provide a good starting point for teaching peaceful conflict resolution. It describes a misunderstanding that leads to one friend shunning the other. Finally, the rejected child asks why she is being treated in such a way. The children work out their problems when they try to understand the other’s point of view. *Clancy’s Coat* (Bunting, 1984) also deals with a misunderstanding between friends. Two old friends in dispute over one’s cow trampling the other’s garden come to understand each other’s feelings about the things they cherish. They are able to rekindle their friendship by talking and sharing.

Alone with a book, a child creates images somewhere within the secret chamber of the soul that surpass anything else. Such images are crucial for human beings. The day children no longer manage to imagine these images will be the day when mankind becomes impoverished. Everything big that occurred in the world occurred in someone’s imagination. The state of tomorrow’s world relies, to a high degree, on the imaginative faculty of those currently learning to read. Therefore, children need books.

‘We currently have - even without war - unimaginable horror, violence and repression in the world of which children are certainly

not unaware. As they see and hear and read about it daily, they will come to believe that war is a natural state of affairs. Is it not for us, at least in our homes and through our own example, to show that another way of life exists? Maybe then there is still a small chance to contribute, little by little, towards world peace.’ When Astrid Lindgren in 1978 was presented with the German booksellers’ peace prize, this is what she maintained in her widely popular speech of thanks.”

In the words of Marion Dane Bauer, the author of *Rain of Fire*:

“Did writing *Rain of Fire* do any good? Did it change even the smallest jot or tittle of the world around me? It certainly didn’t prevent Desert Storm. It didn’t even diminish in the slightest the great tide of euphoria that Desert Storm set off. We had our “honor” back, and I stood in the safety of my own beloved country, ashamed that this pummeling of a small, already war-torn nation could be called “honor.” Even if the war was necessary — and I am yet to be convinced that it was — surely the jubilation over our “smart bombs,” the euphoria over our “Patriot missiles” spoke poorly for our collective humanity, our responsible use of power. Has *Rain of Fire* helped any young person struggling with his own choices and with our society’s deeply held belief in our right to intervene around the world? Will it ever help one in the future? I will probably never know. I know one story and only one, and that is because a kind teacher shared it with me. A boy in her classroom, whose father was a veteran of Vietnam, would read only books about war. Fiction, nonfiction, current or past, it didn’t matter, as long as the subject was war. He gloried in them. One day the teacher gave him *Rain of Fire*, and he read it avidly. When he was done, he walked slowly to the front of the room. “You know,” he said, setting the book on her desk, “I’ve been thinking. Maybe war isn’t so great.” I wrote *Rain of Fire* for that boy. If it never touches another, my months of work to bring the story to fruition have had their reward. Have I changed the world? No. Will I ever write a book that changes the world? Of course not. At least not in the way the question implies. I don’t even dream such dreams. But the longer I live, the more convinced

I am that the only real change possible begins with changing myself. If I want to live in a peaceful world, then I must find ways to live and love and write the peace that I have struggled to find in my own heart. Let us give our children hope. Let's fill them with stories that tell them, over and over again, that peace is important, possible, worth striving for. Let's give them stories that allow them to understand the differences that separate us, to experience the humanity that connects us. Let's give our children stories that empower them. I am absolutely convinced that the reason stories were told around campfires in front of caves and continue to issue forth from our word processors is that they empower the listener, the reader. And that we are all starving to be empowered. Perhaps the single, most universal experience that comes with being alive is to feel helpless, overwhelmed, without power. A good story moves the reader inside another human being at a moment when that human being is ready to make a choice. And in the moment of that choice, character and reader are empowered. Let us give our children stories that fill them with power, with hope, but perhaps even more important, let us feed and nurture our own power and our own hopefulness. We have offered our children nothing — less than nothing — if we give them what we expect them to throw away once they come into the “real” world. *Rain of Fire* received the Jane Addams Children's Book Award for “its effective contribution to peace,” and I am proud of that award. But every one of my novels and many, many stories written by others speak as strongly to that theme, whether they deal with the activity of armies or not. Stories prepare us to choose peace when they prepare us to understand and accept ourselves, to understand and accept others. Peace is not just possible: it is essential if we are to survive. It is not just essential: it is a choice that you and I have the power to make. But the question is, do we believe ourselves when we speak of peace, write about peace, read stories to our children about peace? If we do, we can change the world. No, that's not quite right. If we believe in peace, if we live peace, if we offer peace up daily in our classrooms and our homes, we *will* change the world...one heart at a time.”

John Knowles discusses Tolstoy's insightful *War and peace* on the light that depicts how “throughout Gene's schooling, war threatens to break in and destroy the fragile peace of the school. The summer session represents the height of peace, as nothing, except for Finny's accident, was able to interrupt the carefree joy of those days. But, as the fall session begins, war slowly begins to encroach on the boys; they start their “physical hardening” at the school, recruitment officers start to come around, and the boys begin to talk about enlistment and the draft. The divide between peace and war is also representative of the gap between childhood and adulthood; while peace holds out, the boys are free to be oblivious of the outside world, and are weighed down by nothing. But, when they are finally confronted by the war, they have to grow up; the strain changes them from children into adults, and obliterates the peace of their youth.”

It is easier for us to co-relate and conduct a meticulous analysis of the context when Wendell Berry's words indicate similar notions. “We can no longer afford to confuse peace ability with passivity. Authentic peace is no more passive than war. Like war, it calls for discipline and intelligence and strength of character, though it calls also for higher principles and aims. If we are serious about peace, then we must work for it as ardently, seriously, continuously, carefully, and bravely as we now prepare for war.”

With generous use of truth, philosophy, reason, and imagination, there's not an inch of earth where literature hasn't traveled, advocating peace, in other words, permeating the dream of utopia. According to George Thomson (1946:65), “The poet speaks not for himself only but for his fellow men. His cry is their cry, which only he can utter. That is what gives it its depth”.

I must incorporate the valuable insight presented in his paper *Literature and the Advancement of World Peace*, by Chidozie Chukwubuike:

“The antithesis of peace is chaos and war is an extreme form of chaos. Global peace can only be advanced following the same pattern as the world wars. In other words, any remote attempt at cultivating peace among individuals and communities will

invariably result in the advancement of world peace. Different societies have their peculiar problems, which form the thematic focus of world's literatures. While Chinua Achebe was expressing worry over the consequence of military dictatorship through his novel ANTHILLS OF THE SAVANNA, Athol Fugard was somewhere talking about the fears, discrimination and oppression being suffered by his own people, the black South Africans, under the oppressive apartheid government. In Fugard's dramatic monologue, SIZWE BANSI IS DEAD, we see a pathetic character, Styles, whose struggles to change his situation almost assumed a personality of its own. And the nature of our world is that which is mirrored in all these literatures of the different societies of the world; societies that have no respect for other people's world views, societies immersed in corruption and other related vices. The indices, therefore, by which the advancement or otherwise of world peace can be measured is the frequency with which imaginative literatures either dwell on those social conditions that favour the advancement of peace or those that promote chaos. Again, *Things Fall Apart*, written by Chinua Achebe seemingly to address the colonial injustice done locally to the Igbo of Southern Nigeria, according to M.J.C Echeruo, "is not that local an event; that implicated in that example is the tension between globalizing systems (including religious imperialism) and their need to bring about world order on their own terms" (2003:16). What I am saying is that imaginative literatures should commit themselves to the advancement of peace first in the communities of their origin and that is the basis for their global relevance in the advancement of world peace. On a wider scale, imaginative literature needs to address the issue of hypocrisy. The Roman playwright, Seneca is credited to have written, that "He who gains most advantage from a crime is the one likely to have committed it". May be, imaginative writers (especially satirists) should begin to look out for those who benefit most whenever a local misunderstanding is being blown out of proportion. Writers of imaginative literature should be sensitive to the feelings and world views of readers of their literatures. No matter how

obnoxious you might think the ideology of another is, it is no justification for insult. Is it not a popular cliché that "two wrongs do not make a right?" When on February 14, 1989 Salman Rushdie was condemned to death by the former Iranian spiritual leader, Ayotollah Ruhollah Komeini for publishing the novel SATANIC VERSES, Naguib Mahfouz, winner of the 1988 Nobel prize in literature criticized Khomeini for what he described as "intellectual terrorism", but sooner changed his view and said that Rushdie did not have the right to insult anything, especially a prophet or anything considered holy. Permit me to cite one more example of such literatures that offend the sensibility of their readers and I shall be done with that. Recently, Dan Brown, an American novelist published a novel with the title, DA VINCI CODE. That novel is classified heretical among Christians. In the novel, the identity of Jesus is unconventionally treated and it provoked angry protests from the Christian world. It is important that writers of imaginative literature identify the dividing line between constructive presentation of events and unwarranted insult. Even Salman Rushdie, as experienced as he might seem in the field of literature, with several laurels to his credit, confessed his ignorance of that dividing line. I can agree with Ngugi Wa Thiong'o on the issue that a writer must take a side in politics (1982: iiv) only to the point where taking side does not imply being judgmental. As an interested party, the writer can not also be the judge. Let the characters be allowed to present to the reader the two sides of the conflict so that the reader can make value judgment without undue authorial interference. For imaginative writers to achieve this, they must be very conversant with their theme, and creative in handling language. According to Chinua Achebe (*Hopes and Impediments* pg 34) "when it (language) is corrupted, people lose faith in what they hear, and this leads to violence". On the question of theme, writers of imaginative literature can identify the high points in the efforts made towards the advancement of world peace and highlight them in their works, thereby, persuading global readership to begin to appreciate the need for peace in the world. Furthermore, the world needs the interplay of world views to

advance world peace. That is to say that, African writers must package African cosmology in their literatures; European writers should also bring forth theirs, likewise, writers from America and every other continent. The convergence of all these isolated ideologies on the world literary scene can help make people begin to appreciate one another and their various cultures better.”

Philosophizing, reasoning, reckoning, revolting, rejoicing, literature has sharpened intellects in all spheres of quality existence since times immemorial. Realizations that dawn on as a preface to post studying introspection, instill deeper impact on the psyche, drawing mindful attention to the kind of evolving that imbibes sincere traits of shunning away even the minutest molecule of matters that mishandle human harmony. I understand this even more thoroughly while thinking of English who ruled the nation, while English that showed me Wordsworth.....

* *

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With best compliments from:

Meet Surmeet
(Punjabi Poet & Singer)
C/o Captab Biotech,
Chandigarh
Ph. 92167 02748

AILYNTI NONBRI / Richly Blessed

We asked God for strength,
that we might achieve;
We were made weak,
that we might learn humility

We asked for health
that we might do great things;
We were given infirmity,
that we might do better things.

We asked for riches,
that we might be happy;
We were given poverty,
that we might be wise.

We asked for power,
that we might have the praise of men;
We were given weakness,
that we might feel the need of God.

We asked for all things,
that we might enjoy life;
We were given life,
that we might enjoy all things.

We got nothing that we asked for,
But everything that we had hoped for.

Almost despite oneself,
Our unspoken prayers were answered;
We are among all men,
Most richly blessed.

*

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ANDY JACKSON / Quasimodo

I am twelve when they tease you into me, name-first.
With your fist around my spine as I try to grow up
into my own upright self, I am quiet, think you small,
like you might climb out while I yawn or piss or sleep.
Your nest of collected sticks grows in this belfry chest.
Afraid and facing away, I blur mirrors with spit and hide
behind excuses to not take off my shirt at the beach.
The thin white frames of schoolgirls rise like lighthouses.

They call out my name in voices I have thrown.
No-one is saved. Through my eyes, the flickering
fires you fuel are signs. Men begin to close in,
waving their torches of word and fist. I fix a rope

to my mouth and lower myself down inside.
These bones enclose a flapping of echoes, what darkness
can't silence. Tendrils reach for my legs, memories
begging to be fed. But at last I clutch your throat

and haul you out. Your face is white and wet,
your bottom lip trembling with the weight of our shape.
You smell of the filth and luck of cul-de-sacs, your home,
my flesh. My arms reach around your swollen bulk

before I can think or flinch. We are two halves
of a heart stitched together with myth. Over my shoulder
you stare out to where the sun re-enacts its death.
Against your hump, my soft skin sweats and breathes.

*

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ANJALI DEWAN / Imperfections

Is it not strange
That despite being
Not always perfect
We think we never err.
We look for perfection
In others around us.
We boast about our
Absolute indispensability
We forget, we are
Moving bubbles of water
Within no time
They will burst.
Waves come and go
Leaving no impression
of their existence.
Life is transitory
Each one of us
Will vanish one day
Where, when nobody knows.
Sitting on a pedestal
Looking down upon others
We live in a
Fool's paradise.
Let us hold hands
Share our thoughts
Extend a helping hand
To those in need.
Bow our heads
To the Almighty
Who is Perfect.
Then only there
Will be blossoming
of the inner self.
Pure joy will encompass you. *

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BUSHRANAQI / Lahore

On the surface
the city wears a stereotyped face
as all its kindred habitats
struggling into modernity.

in its heartland
life and energy throbs
throng of people pushing
shoulder to shoulder
chipped broken or whole

sprawled over the city
crisp suburban areas
glimmer in green environs
debonair lads and ladies
strut under ornate canopies
sedated with an opium
lost in dull insensitivity.

a kaleidoscope swings
on minarets and colonnades
rising over a dwarfed turf
shuffling below like a beggar
clutching his woes

At nightfall—
shimmer neon lights
street lamps hiccup and stutter
starved of power outages
A melting pot
whisking mixed alloys
of cultural mores
melding a homespun cult
with a global cult thrown in
diluting its purity
a city's heritage

spills over
a change is spurred
turning once again
the course of history.

*

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DINKO / Arunachala

dedicated to Ramana Maharshi

First thou were a blazing column
then gold then a ruby
then later in our Kali-mire
dawn-coloured rock of mount

Thou art Shiva and all his faces
the face of mine the blood of all
the only face
and the One beyond faces

Thou art the bond of earth and heaven
their stony marriage
their eternal sameness
and immense presence

On thy crown of black
as the cheek of the god of death
the veil of fate is growing thinner –
I am thy breath and thou art me

On the top which is the bottom
in this naked heart
which is the Being laid bare
the masks are melting in the furnace of Dawn

The last of all names
the last word on the mortal lips
before the stillness of abyss –
Arunachala

DINKO / Shanti

Out of an everlasting blue theme
a green lightning springs from above
pierces into the sand and sprouts
from the smiling mouth of little Shanti

The suffering God shines from this mouth
and through the thatched roof her dark pupils
reach towards banana trees

They set her up on a filthy litter
and she clasps the thin crippled hands
and with even thinner voice she says: thank you

Thank you for bringing blue seeds
and green leaves in your eyes:
the smile is all I will ever give the world
my note in the everlasting blue theme
(Shantivanam, Tannirpalli, Tamil Nadu, 2002)

*

(Dinko, Croatia, Ph. ++385-915913698 <dinko2612@yahoo.com>

HAREKRUSHNA MAHANTA / Spiritual, Not Jew

Like Einstein she too
is a Jew, but she now
has been overwhelmed with
the nectar of spirituality,
linked with the cosmos
through meditation and:
Lord of Universe she now
terms with every now and then,
and Melissa you know
never allows herself to
be limited by the bondage
of a religion.

She is beyond that
like Sri Maa, a white lady
you know who came
from Paris shedding
her outfit as a Christian gal
to Pondicherry in India -
then a French colony
and discovered the true
essence of spirituality
under the guidance
of the guru
Sri Aurobindo and his
transcendental philosophy.
Sadguru Shivmuni, Melissa
adores as her guru and
his chakravedan yoga and
meditation does certainly
mould her as a real
spiritual personality
to lead the world
and guide the mundane
stereotype beings towards
the true ethos of life
and existence.
And already the mission
she has started with
her trendsetter book:
Silent Dreams - a must for
everyone who loves life
and spirituality.
It of course is beyond
the understanding of common
masses who while away their
time and energy in
enjoyment, earning and saving
of money, self and power.

A new era surely is
to herald in this earth
with more and more
Melissas coming out
for the welfare
of mankind.

*

(The above poem has been written being inspired by poet Melissa Mendelson of New York who has strong fascination of Indian philosophy, spirituality, yoga and meditation)

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HARISH PRADHAN / Relations

So many relations to endure –
Time is like a razor blade
It cuts both ways
So much time on Earth
And there is no time, indeed

We build bridges –
Long ones and short ones
And we move about in
In the company
Of our own follies
And they keep us apart

We create images
Thousands of them
And live with some
Till they fade away

Longer the life of images
Longer is the spell of suffering
And then, no more images. *

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HYACINTH PINK / The Curse

'Dead' ! She was abeauty,
Lovely, young and a sense of duty,
Her auburn hair cascaded her waist,
Fresh, fragrant, foolish yet had a taste.
Dead! How could she be?
More life lived in her corpse,
Than when she were alive!!
The quality of her soul radiated her body
Kindness, musical, evangelic.
Humorous, fat and funny.
Life was pretty damn good,
Until Sarah fell dead!!
The Curse was on her...
"Blood Cancer" they said
She was an apple with a bruise...
But why grieve over blemished fruit?

*

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JAYSHREE SINGH / Resting in Nest

Dear scholars are you retreating?
Are your leaves of Golden Quest unloading?
Do swear not to feel older
Let your heart not to become colder.

When returning to your nest, keep alive your fragrance
Do not forgo the costs of perseverance.
Sparrows in spring, scholars of light rest not until
Their aim they take it uphill.

Sparrows soar higher and higher
Invisible to the bird-catcher

Scholars climb up the ladder
Invincible like the researcher.

Sparrows in their nest care for their offspring young
Scholars in their dwelling nourishes their intellect young
The hungry sparrows return to nest with food and straw
The thirsty scholar return to his home with thoughts new and raw

Do not let the thinking mind sleep
Do not let awakened body asleep
The thoughts in the sea of dream
Open the sight to gleam
Lead the conscience in stream

Imagination brightens as sunrise
Alike the birds creativity touches skies
Be blessed with those prophecies
Play the tune of those ecstasies
Revolutionary mind like a buoyant leaf soar high
Capture vision of your thoughts without a sigh.

*

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NAMITA NAYAK / The Ostrich

A storm is rising
My heart is palpitating like...
like a candle under the
vehemence of storm.
Green grasses have started
turning grey apprehending a sudden chill.
Time and again, I am falling ill
My hands are trembling like
the ailing feathers of an aged crane,
Can not reach even the pen-stand
of my writing-table.

May be, the storm's fury will
uproot many ancient trees,
will demolish the glass house
and its furniture,
the earthen flower vases, the
cups, saucers and the old piano
will lie smashed under the
broken walls.

Dust will rise from the ground
Like molten lava, will blind
The blue-eyes and make the
curtains dirty.

Yes, it is too much...
I can't bear the storm's aggression
any more. So I have decided
to dig my own hole and
put my unprotected head
inside it.

I, too, have decided to put a
stone upon my frail heart
which will stop palpitating
like a moribund butterfly
on a dry stem.

Let the storm come
and blow over my head,
and blow over my endless shrunken dreams.
But I have promised not to
see its ugly wings.
Because like an ostrich,
I have buried my head
inside the hole.
And like a passenger of a
departing train, I am waving
my white handkerchief to the pregnant
moon and saying...

I will not return
To the mouse-trap any more.

*

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P. RAJA / Lessons in Love

Mst often
in all these years
I felt your fingers
round my throat.
I know
like the oldies of my home
you are in my shadow.

Many a time
you suffocated me
and drove me
into caring arms.

Every time I got off too easily
from your clutches.
I began to take a liking for you,
for you made my heart powerless though
you didn't dare to stop its ticking.

Every time you tortured me
I gladly learnt my lessons
Didn't those long lessons in pain
teach me what love is?

*

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PRONAB KUMAR MAJUMDER / Last Destination

The world is no a large village
Nobody lives alone, none is a lone islander
All the Family members not of the same age
But everybody is committed, not a bystander
Family feud not an exception but frequently born
Disputes are settled by saner intervention
No attitude of hegemony and subjugation
Cannot this be extended as world phenomenon
Why not religion and faith be accepted as personal
ally believed God cannot be a cause of enmity
I breathe in same air and view the same sky
Why then my identity is a cause of anxiety
If a peace loving individual can exist
Why not a peace loving society, a nation
Peace is a condition of mind you shouldn't twist
Let peace be the humanity's last destination.

*

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SNEHSUDHA A. KULKARNI / She

She, an earner in thousands
Waits for the floral bracelet
From him any day.
And pines for *Saree* as a present
From him, on her every birthday
According to his calculations,
Such an expense is surely a futile item
Whereas on her part those are to occupy
Important words in her poem
Through the flowers obtained from him

She expects to gather scent
And remains fascinated by the unity
Of the threads in the garment sent
He never understand her calculations
Taking those to be without accounts
She also knows it is in vain to multiply
The figures key and zero counts.

*

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Greek poems

DINOS KOUBATIS / Doubts of a Little Child

How do you know if the Negroes don't have a heart.
if the Yellows don't hide a soul?
How do you know if the Reds don't cry,
how do you know what's the each tribe's pain?
Why the Whites do we want for «us»,
all the nature's goods?
Why doesn't our heart feels pain
for the other children of our mother's earth?

DINOS KOUBATIS / The End of the War

Why today again do they rise the weapons
on the fields of the combat?
Yesterday they killed the Peace.
And if they said that they tight for Her,
what is the need of the war then and now?

*

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EUFROSINI KAKOGIANNAKI–LIVANIOU/Prayer

Lord...Every morning
the nightingale on the branch,
praises You and me along with it, I pray
and I send You an earnest request...

Take Your merciful look
at mothers that feel pain,
at Your orphaned children
that ask You,
that feel hungry and suffer,
feel cold and thirst...

Lord, I'm a mother
that I beg You on the knees.
Have mercy on people,
protect them from the suffering,
calm the torrents,
drive away the storms,
stop the war, bring hopes again
bloom the smile
shine again the sun.
Give love and embrace
all Your children.

Even if they have the color of violet,
of yellow daisy,
of snow – white rose,
of black small tulip.
All together, arm in arm,
they praise You
All together joyfully
they call you, Father

*

(Translated by : Zacharoula Gaitanaki)

Eufrosini Kakogiannaki – Livaniou, 19, KANARI street, 14343, New
Chalkidona, Athens, Greece.)

GIORGOS I. BOTIS / Coming of Spring

Your coming in, dear Spring
Winter scuttling off
Your angelic world aloft
- Hallowed form of this my world it brings -
your smile by change
your glance, so life - enhancing

GIORGOS I. BOTIS / My Treasure

My treasure so valuable
in joy and in sorrow
my companion and my faith
my treasure so invaluable
your embrace all worlds,
Heaven and Earth linked fate.

(Translated by : Philip Ramp)

*

PANAGIOTA CHRISTOPOULOU ZALONI
The Cure

We hope for the discovery of a serum,
To exterminate the bacillus
Of jealously and ingratitude.
That bacillus of improper behavior.
Those diseases which scourge
Certain people.
From within their structures, where they
Tend to create these diseases.

(Translated by John Francis Missett)

*

PANAGIOTA CHRISTOPOULOU ZALONI
When the Questions became Monsters?

The questions became monsters.
Burning fires of candlelight.
WHY? WHAT? And HOW?
Because?
I search for an answer everywhere
But? I find my life hanging upon.
Always above a question mark.
Oh I am truly tired of asking...

How can you deny your fate?
You are flaming from arson of sacrifice.
But you continue, you proceed.
YES, YOU CAN !
(Translated by John Francis Missett)

PANAGIOTA CHRISTOPOULOU ZALONI
In Happy Thoughts

The time of happiness is coming
You embroider borders
On white embroidery
I will wait
For that finest hour !
You say this is an undertone
That happy day
You decorate your house with flowers
Over the sun's rays
You jump up and down
Laugh and sing...
The time for happiness
Gets intertwined with your verse
They caress each other
Heading for the heart road

There, where you hid them
Is a bleeding white bird?
You don't talk
You cry a little in silence
Shivering in the expectation of happiness
You listen to the steps...
Then place
Your embroidery on the furniture
Wearing your white pearls
Then you await.
(Translated by John Francis Missett)

*

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POTIS KATRAKIS / The Hymns of Love

The hymns of love
which remained in our hearts
deeply rooted
will pass on to paper
and stay forever written
on the memory of future time.

There will remain written in memory
those sung even when our love
began to rise
even when it reached maturity
even when leaned towards dusk
and prematurely began poring
the sorrow into our hearts.
On the golden pages of memory
All will remain written.

*

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THEODORA KOUFOPOULOU HELIOPOULOU Sweet Odours of Thoughts

Feeling, joy and pain of life
a divine ambrosia for me.
To live on, to grow big, to ripen.
Chaos and order,
In sweet odours of thoughts
To transubstantiate.
Sweet odours are born for dream,
For life are born the thoughts.
Translated by : Zacharoula Gaitanaki

THEODORA KOUFOPOULOU HELIOPOULOU Not

I saw you and I admired you
I got to know you
and I felt sorry for you
in your solitude and your loneliness.
Oh ! Human soul
you are absent from your conscience
as if happiness, when you go astray
from the divine?
No.
Don't betray yourself
don't get lost in the night.
It's beautiful to be,
to love.

Translated by : Zacharoula Gaitanaki

*

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ZACHAROULA GAITANAKI / Of Forgetfulness

Those small hours
that the moments are confined
in the drawers of memory

keep a dim recollection,
make it a shot of your pain
and throw the dice

Even if come six in the line
give in forgetfulness the joy
to go for a stroll...

whatever hurt you much
let it become a teardrop
and a kiss to ease you.

ZACHAROULA GAITANAKI / Fatherland

For many years now,
he regards the foreign country
his second home.
But in his heart,
an eternal love
nests for Greece.

A handful of the native soil,
a small branch of lemon tree
and a seashell from Aegean Sea'
antidotes of forgetting.

Besides the icon he keeps,
in a small box, the soil,
the seashell, the flowers,
mementos from his fatherland.

*

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ZANNETA KALYVA / Together on the Seashore

A morning in Varkiza
by the sea
hand in hand,
we got together.

The sea was wetting
softly our feet
and we were dreaming
to be each-other's arms.

We were wet and we were dry
playing on the sand
and writing on it
I love you - "Te amo".

ZANNETA KALYVA / Together on the Mountain

Together on the mountain
we met one day,
we were wandering,
picking the best wild flowers.

We were playing with a daisy
"you love me?" "you don't love me"
but I'll always remember
when you started kissing me.

You were telling me tender, beautiful
and teasing words.

I passed my time joyfully
and I felt loving you much more
(Translated by Zacharoula Gaitanaki)

*

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Book-Review

Slum Flowers(2011)

P. L. Sreedharan

A.P.H. publishing Corporation

Price: Rs. 495

Reviewed by P. K. Panda

Like most of the present day poets Sreedharan is bewildered with the enigma of life and painstakingly wishes to expose his heart to the world through his poems. The very idea of romantic interpretation of existences and experiences seem to be the main thrust of his poems, which have long been receding from the public domain due to drudgery of life. That is why he deals with issues such as “Strikes” and “Divorce” or “Fallen Images” and “Pains” as exclusive topics for the exposition of elementary emotions and sensibilities in his poems. The solemn and simpler aspects of beauty and virtue is not visible anywhere. However, there is no doubt that he laments the absence of these humane aspects of life in discussing the presence of the dark and somber surroundings.

He has been able to manage, in the “Slum Flowers” a word picture of “E-Rain” creating an opportunity for the readers to feel the void in the three dimensional world in which even vegetables are not left untouched by the evil design of human mind (p. 27). In the poem “Kid’s Concerned” the emotion is not consistently flowing as typical to a lyric. The breaks are difficult to mend and pressurizes the reader not to do so. For example:

Don’t force them to
work
It’s against the
right of children!
They are carrying
their bags.
would it come under
the child labour Act?

Sunflower
bowed her
head then(p. 26)

Sometimes Sreedharan becomes very terse in his expressions that force his readers to stretch their ability to extrapolate as well as extend their imagination too much. “Broker” is one such poem to be quoted here as evidence:

As the
Salwar was
Loose,
Kamiz
Also,
The commission agent
Became fat
On the runway.(p.42)

All said and done sometimes his lines do not satisfy the norm poetry should inherently hold for the readers of poetry as a genre. In addition, in certain cases his language is not good enough to hold on to the basics of syntax. It goes without saying that poetic license cannot be as permissible as to approve the following lines in the poem “Disciplinary Action”:

When
Disciplinary
actions was initiated
against the dishonest
majority of the
member group
honestly shouted
slogans
against
and won.
sky bowed(p.54)

There is not a single punctuation mark in the whole of the poem. Not even a full stop at the end.

Despite these problems with the schematic as well as syntactic design of the poems, one can notice the intensity of finer sensibilities that has forced the writer to pen the poems and take pain to publish

them for a readership in search of an identity. Hope the poet will take more pain to sharpen his language skills and enhance the poetic beauty he wishes to shower on his creative endeavour.

What makes him a readable poet is his intuitive capacity; the like of metaphysical poets, so far as the use of conceit is concerned. The poem “My Lover” can be taken as a sample of this ability in him:

Though you
Have wounded
Me and I have
Sustained
Injury
You are my safety pin
I love you still (p.77)

I hope the collection titled *Slum Flowers* had more sense in it in terms of theme of the poems rather than just fulfilling a whim of the poet. I feel so, as many of the poems deal with plethora of other themes and do not move round the key symbol ‘slum’ in the title of the volume.

There is something sacred about a published book that cannot be explicitly provided here in a review. Some guidelines internationally followed cannot be overlooked in the design of a publication. For example, the publisher did not think it is worthwhile to provide a ‘Content’ page in the *Slum Flower*, which I believe, as an academic reader of literature for three decades, is unacceptable. I can conclude with a note that innovation and creativity are highly essential in any literary endeavour, more so in poetry so far as its content is concerned; but one should not cross the limits so far as the format of publication is concerned. It is possible only if one is arrogant enough to say: I care things only I care; rest is the problem of the readers to be solved by them.

* *

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Kafla Intercontinental's
8th. International Writers Festival-India
(International conference of Poets, Writers & Scholars)
(24-25 November 2012 - Bhubaneshwar (Orissa) - India)

Venue: NALCO Auditorium, NALCO Nagar, Bhubaneshwar.

Main Theme : Literature & World Peace with special focus on *VASUDHAIVA KUTUMBAKAM* (the whole world is one family).

Other suggestive Topics for Papers:

(i) Diaspora Literature (ii) Literature & World Peace (iii) Contribution of Saintry-Poets for Universal Brotherhood (iv) Devotional Literature (v) Tradition of Oral Literature (vi) Dalit Literature (vii) Modern & Experimental Literature (viii) Internet & Literature (ix) Literary Journalism etc. (x) Romani (Roma's) Literature & Language.

Any other topic in consultation with the organisers.

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On both days there would be presentation of abstracts of papers, discussions, poetry-reading, release of books/ C.D., singing, cultural programmes etc. etc. Minute to minute programme will be circulated during the conference)

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For Invitation letter, Registration Form & more details, please contact:

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