# Essays on Indian English Literature

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# FOREWORD

The question whether the writing of Indians in the English language is " Matthew Arnold in a Sari " or " Shakuntala in a Skirt " seems to have been resolved in a way by the adoption of the nomenclature " Indian English Literature " by Sahitya Akademi for this species of writing. The term incorporates a few significant assumptions. The humble "writing" is how considered to have acquired the volume and the quality sufficient to qualify it for the more elevated nomenclature of " Literature ". Moreover, in addition to the matter-of-fact implications of its being composed on the Indian soil and in the English language, the term has other overtones. The soul may or may not be able to select a body for its habitation, but it certainly can use it in its own way. The English language too has been modified by the Indian ' soul ' in so many ways, obvious and otherwise. Thus besides being, plainly and simply, Indian literature written in English language, factually and without any dero gatory associations, called ' Indian English '. In addition, this literature has, or ought to have, a spiritual dimension too—the vast span of a rainbow arch encompassing two cultures and continents—humid with the tears and effulgent with the smiles of the universal man soaring into the heavens and yet arising from, and also finally dipping into the soil and the soul of India. There are two poles which it attempts in varying ways and degrees to unite—the Indian and the Western, the spiritual and the material, the ancient and the modern, the orthodox and the industrial—sets of terms which often, but not always, tend to run into one another.

Beginning naturally with poetry and prose (though not of the type which we, like the surprised M. Jourdain, use every day), the Indian writer in English soon became enamoured of the pliancy and the Protean charms of prose narrative, producing quite a few memorable works in this genre. Recent trends seem to indicate a renewed poetic fertility.

What every new and upcoming literature needs is a helpful, but not too lenient, criticism which can analyse and more importantly, evaluate this literature in parts and also as a whole, on the basis of principles, both indigenous and modern. Unfortunately, though much has been done in this direction, a great deal still remains. It is here that the value of the present work lies

Dr. Atma Ram is a well known figure among Indian academics and his credential to analyse and judge the achievements of the Indian English writer are impressive. In this work he has chosen to focus on a few points of the broad panorama ranging from a study of folk elements and peasant sensibility to urban tensions, deprivations and alienations, from literary criticism to linguistics, from our fictional maestros like Anand, Narayan, and Raja Rao to one of the most important contemporary poets, Nissim Ezekiel, from Indians to an Indo-Anglian-Anglo-Indian (Mrs. Jhabvala) and an Indian settled abroad (Kirpal Singh).

I trust that this book will not only be interesting and useful for general readers and scholars alike but will also provoke lively and useful controversies, thereby contributing to the proper growth of Indian creative and critical writing in English.

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# PREFACE

I came in contact with Dr. Atma Ram when he was Assistant Professor of English in Himachal Pradesh University, Simla, and found him most enthusiastic about Indian English literature. He enjoys the good will and confidence of the student community (MA, M. Phil. and Ph D. levels) because of his hard work, excellent teaching and research competence.

*Essays on Indian English Literature* contains his critical articles on various Indians writing in English. Whereas some of the essays examine in some detail general themes, others focus on central concerns in individual novels. Dr. Ram has read critically a good deal of primary and secondary sources, and presents here perceptive textual analysis. His study is characterised by freshness of approach, originality of ideas and simplicity of style.

Now Indian writing in English is being increasingly introduced in Indian and quite a few foreign Universities. This volume should serve as a sample of standard criticism on a few Indian authors. I am confident that this volume will be of great interest to scholars of Indian English literature as also to general readers.

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# Chapter I

## Folk Elements in Anand's Novels

The folk motifs in Anand's novels have not received adequate critical attention. The folk element is undoubtedly a significant aspect of Anand's art and in a large measure defines his Indian roots. The tales of " Raja Rasalu " and " Heer Ranjha", for instance, and songs depicting the variety and vitality of Punjab rural culture are integral to Anand's depiction of peasant life. The spirit of joy in the love and adoration of nature, the intense attachment to land, the spirit of service and sacrifice embodied in the folk heroes, and the element of dour resistance to tyranny constitute the focal points of folk tradition. Anand also is conscious of some of the negative aspects of folk life. The fatalistic streak in the peasant character, his passive submission to *Karma* and superstitious beliefs come in the way of his acceptance of contemporary realities. Anand has brought together these two strains of the folk tradition in the peasant make-up. I propose to identify some of folk motifs in his novels and show how they influence the peasant character in his novels.

Mulk Raj Anand spent part of his childhood in the Kangra Valley. Although he lived away from India later for quite some time ( 1925-34 ) the Indian scene was always a living reality for him. In a complex world of two major phases, Indian and European, Anand struggled for self-discovery. —He wanted " a large clarifying grasp of the historical pattern but in terms of individual lives..."[1] His interest in higher learning, his philosophic turn of mind and his contact with Europeans created in him an urge for self-expression and scientific interpretation of phenomena around.

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1. Jack Lindsay, *Mulk Raj Anand : A Critical Essay*, ( Bombay : Hind Kitab, 1948 ), p. 9.

Nevertheless Anand was soaked in the folklore of the Punjab. He was converted to the folk by Gandhiji in 1929. In the thirties he spent a year in the Punjab to refresh his memories of childhood and boyhood. He stayed for six weeks in Kalanka Kar in Uttar Pradesh to be near the semi-serfs there. His admiration for D. H. Lawrence also sustained in him the passion for the folk. He began his literary career by rendering the Punjabi folktales into English in the form his mother had related them to him and made them models of his craft.

Anand inherited the poetics of his craft and brotherhood from his father and songs, tales, myths and epics of village community from his mother. Krishna tells us:

> My mother had a vast fund of folk tales, having heard them in the childhood from her own mother, as legends, fables, myths and other narratives of gods, men and birds and beasts have been told in endless variations for thousands of years on the flat roofs of the mud huts in the villages. ( Seven Summers p. 165 ).

There was a secret understanding between him and his mother for she could enter into his " Fairy world of imagining ". In fact she was " building this world for me every day with stories and legends and myths " ( p.169 ).

Raja Rasalu's story had irresistible fascination for him: " The heroic character of this tale had kept me breathless and tense. . . It fired my imagination " ( Seven Summers, p. 166 ). In his childhood Anand liked and freely mixed with poor peasants and the underdog. The abject misery and helplessness of the peasants filled him with utter disgust. He became impatient and grew critical about the very foundation of Indian Society. He began " to question everything in our background, to look away from the big houses and to feel the misery of the inert, disease-ridden, underfed and illiterate people around us. "[2] To him poor people appeared really great in their struggle. They ' suffered. . .

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2. Mulk Raj Anand, *An Apology for Heroism* ( Bombay, 1946 ), p. 53.

with a patience that was truly heroic."[3] As no one in India had produced the epic of their suffering, he was keen to write about them.

In Coolie (1936), Anand sketches the story of an orphan Munoo tells the burra Babu self-pityingly, "I am an orphan Babuji" (p. 39). The orphan theme in Anand is influenced by Dr. Iqbal's poem on the orphan and carries echoes of the bardic songs sung in Punjab villages. Symbolically, all the waifs and strays were considered orphans of the storm. The name, Munoo, figures in many folk tales of Punjab. The innocent hillboy is pitted against the rogueries of the town-world. He suffers patiently and seems to have taken for granted his identity of a servant, a slave.

Another peasant, Gangu, is the central character in Anand's next novel, *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937). In a fair, Budhu, the boy, looks for a ball, while his sister searches for bangles. The rural atmosphere is recreated through the language and actions of the workers. For example, Leila's song expresses their longing to return home:

> Mother O Mother
> O My Mother
> Whenever the memory of you come to me
> There is a sudden pain in my heart . . . (p. 120)

They are labourers but most of them hail from villages. And they carry the peasant world with them even when they live away from their homes. Budhu plays, "You be the horse, I will be the rider." Leila remembers her having played "Hide and Seek" with Jaswant in her village (p. 53). Gangu hums his old song as he digs the earth. He "felt as if he were singing a song like one of the old songs he used to sing as he furrowed his land in the Hoshiarpur hills" (p. 110).

Gangu remembers various faces of Eve when he has dip in the water: "There is something of the water about a woman. Flowing one way or the other, and restless like the waves...always

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3. *Ibid*, p. 61.

tender and kind" ( p. 11 ). M. K. Naik remarks : "surely this is no Indian peasant."[4] There is nothing un-Indian about his musings if we remember that in folk-idiom woman is often compared to the water and waves. It was quite natural for the old man Gangu, to recollect thus : his wife was dead not long ago, and he sees his daughter, Leila, having a bath in the stream. It becomes clear when we read the remaining part of the monologue: "Bu may she live long, my little Leila. She is a blessing. She is Sajani's gift to me, to tend me in my old age."

The novelist describes the misery and heartbreak of the villagers. He draws on the legend that there can be no love lost between the peasant and the money-lender.[5] The village folk are exploited everywhere. Narain thus refers to his unhappy lot :

> "You are not happy, then?" said Gangu concernedly.
> "Oh ! it is all right brother." said Narain.
> "I suppose it was in our Kismet. But at home it was like a prison and here it is slightly worse" (pp. 31-32).

The poor peasant is not only in the clutches of the *Sahukar* and *Sarkar* but is also a slave to tradition and superstition.

In the Lalu trilogy, Mulk Raj Anand dwells at length on the peasant and rural life. He follows the career of his protagonist Lalu, in these books; his childhood, his experience in the First World War abroad, his return home, and his interest in political ideologies. The action of these volumes covers a span of a few years, from shortly before the War to the disturbed post-War era in India. Lalu's original was Raja Rasalu.[6] Rasalu is full of *rasa* or the sap of life. The adventures of Raja Rasalu happened some centuries ago in the same Sialkot district to which Lalu belonged. The Lalu-Maya affair echoes the Hir-Ranjha episode. Lalu compares himself with Ranjha, and remembers the broken verse

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4 M. K. Naik, *Mulk Raj Anand* ( New Delhi : Arnold Heinemann, 1973 ), p. 53.

5. Mulk Raj Anand, "The Peasant and the Moneylender," *Folk Tales of Punjab*, ( New Delhi : Sterling, 1974 ) pp. 11-16.,

6. See *Folk Tales of Punjab*, pp. 82-107.

" Hire, ne Hire, how your love has bandied me in the world ( *The Village*, p. 169 ). The sturdy peasants carry on in France despite their suffering. For diversion they sing " Lachi " and " Harnami " and have much fun in the Punjabi style.

Through Lalu his creator also subjects the folk tradition to rational criticism. Anand believes that the old myths can only be used to the extent to which they are meaningful in the modern contest Lalu becomes a rebel to set things right. Given a chance, he thinks, he can change the very face of the village, " increase the productivity of the land and set the house in order and show them that he was not such a Patta Khan as they thought him " *(The Village*, p. 27*)*. He is sad to find that the peasants are taken in so easily. They are superstitious, and attribute things to fate " like animals living on the roots " *(Across the Black Waters*, p. 27 ). Through him the novelist pleads for political freedom as well as for the removal of " all ideas of the past which have almost become biological tendencies -- fetalism and dependence on God."[7]

Lalu tries to find a meaning in his past experiences, judges each incident of his bygone life. For him, without the sense of right or wrong man has no destiny. In reality, at moments of self-analysis he seems to make a distinction between his ordinary self and his best self. *The Sword and the Sickle* shows the anarchy of the miscellaneous world. But Lalu's thoughts for Maya offer some kind of direction, the need for brotherhood. In his bid to " cleanse " the peasant community, Lalu is himself transformed. His dream about Maya suppiles an answer to all his questions. His impulse to serve others has something of the refrain of a folk song " Two, three things were in my heart." Lalu comes to realise that " he who gives himself to the service of others is blessed, is enriched " ( p. 367 ). Although he ends his career in a prison, he sees a new hope. Anand pleads for the cosmic man who will return " to the native country, grow from the roots, in the paradise that could if we could love Prithvi, the earth . ."[8]

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7. Mulk Raj Anand in a letter dated 5 March 1976 to Miss Chvi Kim Yok.

8. Mulk Raj Anand in a letter to me.

The very names—Munoo, Gangu, Lalu--of central charac ers are indicative of unsophisticated life. The villagers think and act in terms of traditional proverbs. As Anand once confessed : "While writing spontaneously I was always translating from original Punjabi into English." It is essential to depict the society realistically. Anand maintains : "The way in which my mother said something in a dialect of Central Punjab could not have been expressed in any other way except in any almost literal translation, which might carry over the sound and sense of original speech."[9] So his peasants resort to "the unconscious use of Indian phraseology."[10]

The novelist, however, is also aware of the time-worn aspects of the tradition. To him it is just as bad to exaggerate the virtues of folklore as to minimise them. If at times he tends to underplay the tradition, it is the one manifested in his foolish characters. Slowly and steadily, his hero realizes the evil effects of effete tradition and revolts against it. His being a peasant helps him undergo a metamorphosis.

Folklore is integral to the life-pattern of a people. It incorporates deeply felt convictions and experiences, and is frequently at the core of the literature of the region. In literature it appears in two major forms : transcriptively and functionally. In a good work of literary art it is shown in action and is "present with all of the appeal in its own right, but it is put to work."[11] Mulk Raj Anand is engaged in imaginative extension of heroes into anti-heroes. He thus brings in the new characters of our own world into a new kind of fable to usher in new consciousness. In his work one finds the extension of the folktale into the contemporary period.

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9. "Pigeon Indian : Some Notes on Indian-English Writing," *The Karnatak University Journal : Humanities*, XIV (*1972*), p. 81.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

11. Henning Cohen, "The American Literature and American Folk," *American Folklore*, ed. Tristram Coffin (Voice of America Lectures, 1968), p. 272.

His deep insight and detachment enable Anand to present the folk in real colours. His aim is to arouse a consciousness, to make the sympathies, flow, and he largely succeeds in achieving this objective in artistic terms. *Coolie* and *Two Leaves and a Bud* d spel the impression that these poor persons are "sub-standard human." In the Lalu trilogy he recaptures the folk spirit. The Anand hero makes a quest for life, more life and consciousness· The novelist pleads for a return to the natural man, to simplicity and integrity of folk consciousness. The novelist pleads for a return to the natural man, to simplicity and integrity of folk consciousness. This justified his use of folk idiom, proverbs, literal "translations" and Punjabi English. To the purists, his swear words, expletives, honorifics may seem jejune or obtuse. But these are entirely natural here. The reader feels that he is with the peasants. Dr. Anand may not be the first to adopt this style, but he is certainly the first major novelist to use it so elaborately and effectively.

Anand is able to recreate in the vibrations of the rustic hero's speech his genuine voice of feeling. The novelist transforms artistically the allegedly non-literary material, keeping in the centre those in the labyrinth depth—the folk. The peasant's sense of joy is set in bold relief against the life's travails and sufferings. The rustic hero has to pass through an emotional struggle. The typical peasant is wedded to the land. So all Harijans in his works workship Guga Pir ( God of Earth ), and peasants eat the earth symbolically when they are treatened with the loss of it. Bakhas and Munoos dislike town and return to the hills and valleys. In reality, the folk-consciousness is in every act of theirs— here is the rhythm of the ancient world when men worshipped the objects of nature. The pattern provided by Indian villages is easily recognizable all over the country. Thus, the sensitive and effective handling of folk elements enables Mulk Raj Anand to present a powerful portrait of India.

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# Chapter II

## The Linguistic Devices in Indian English of Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand

The position of an Indian writing in English is peculiar. He chooses this language because he feels he can't write in any other including his mother tongue. Raja Rao's experience in this context it revealing :

When I started writing I found Kannada to be very limiting. For example, I wish to say " a young lady came to interview me," I would not have known how to say it in Kannada at that time for there was no such thing as " interview " and young ladies never interviewed ! The whole idea would have been foreign and I would have been writing in a language where there was no relation between the language and the idea expressed . . . . So Kannada was not good enough for me. [1]

However, our creative writer is bilingual, and English for him, is a second language, not the language of his emotional make-up. In this language there is bound to be an echo of his own mother-tongue. So Mahatma Gandhi advised Mulk Raj Anand to adopt any language that came hardly to him :

The need today . . . is to say your " say " in any language that you can command sufficiently well. You will find the echo of your mother tongue will come into this if your are honest and do not imitate other writers." [2]

There is another complex problem in respect of the material of the Indian language writer. He often writes about non-English people in non-English situations. He has to write about the

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1. " Raja Rao : *A Youth Times Interview* ", *Youth Times* ( Bombay; May 12-25, 1978 ), p. 13.

. " An Interview wi th Anand, " *Indian and Foreign Review* ( Nov. 15, 1971 ), p. 31.

people who do not speak English, not even any dialect belonging to the centum group of languages. The problem becomes particularly ticklish in regard to representation of dialogues and conversations, difficulty is implicitly stated in *The Cat and Shakespeare*: "How can you say with what is not what is?" Our major writers, Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand, are aware of this problem and make bold experiments with the language. It is interesting to examine the linguistic devices used by them in order to "convey in a language not one's own the spirit that is one's own."[3]

To Raja Rao, writing is *Sadhana*, a spiritual experience, a vocation "All his writings are addressed to himself. He once observed: I really think that only through dedication to the absolute or metaphysical Principle can one be fully creative."[4] The source of his nourishment is the rich cultural heritage of India, Sanskrit language and Vedic philosophy. His involvement in the Indian Culture is deep and vital. As he confessed in an interview.

"By force of circumstances, purely accidental and sentimental, I have lived abroad. My roots are in this country. That is why I come here every year and spend as much time as I can. I live abroad but I am chained to this country."[5]

Raja Rao was also influenced by the Kannada writers: "In Kannada, the Vechnakaras and then Kanakadasa and Purandaradasa affected me so profoundly that they seemed to have changed my style of writing."[6] He was, however, also exposed to the influence of the Western writers. Malraux impressed him: "Gide influenced my literary style and Malraux my literary

3. V. Y. Kantak, "The Language of Indian Fiction in English," *Critical Essays on Indian Writing in English*, ed. M. K. Naik and Others (Dharwar: Karnatak University, 1972), p. 211

4. S. V. V., "Raja Rao: Interview," *Illustrated Weekly of India* (5 Jan. 1964), p. 44.

5. "The Future World is being made in America: An Interview with Raja Rao," *Sopan* (Sept. 1977), p. 30.

6. Raja Rao, "Books which have Influenced Me," *The Illustrated Weekly of India* (10 Feb. 1963), p. 45.

expression "[7] Raja Rao realized that Indians writing in English should adopt a dialect that could accommodate Indian sensibility, a language that should stems from Indian thought and imagery.

Raja Rao is not a prolific writer, and he publishes at a strikingly slow speed : *Kanthapura* appeared in 1938. *The Serpent and the Rope* in 1960, *The Cat and Shakespeare* in 1965, *Comrade Kirillov* ( in English ) in 1976, *The Chessmaster and his Moves* in 1978. For ten long years the subject-matter of *The Serpent* has been gestating in his mind. He took four years to write *The Chessman* and two years to correct it. In fact, Raja Rao reflects on his literary material for a Pretty long time and in the process transcends the pointedness of expression. The peculiarities of medium tend to be adequately absorbed, and words come to acquire connotative meaning. Consider, for example, the use of " take " in the following lines from *The Cat* :

Her giving is complete. But the truth is, who is there to take? Can you? There is a story said of Sindbad the sailor. He was told by the jinn : Take, take all the royal treasury. He opened his hands to take. The hands had changed into gold. ( I read this in my old school text. ) That's taking[8]. ( p. 23 )

Raja Rao believed in the perfect harmony between idea and language and was influenced by the definition of " Kavya " ( Poetry ) in Sanskrit poetics. In Sanskrit poetics ' Kavya " has been examined in terms of content, not form. Various critics

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7. Quoted by K. Natwar Singh, *Stories from India* ( Bombay ; B. I. Publications, 1972 ), p. 123.

8. Editions of Raja Rao's novels used for references : *Kanthapura* ( Madras : Oxford University Press, 1974 ); Orient Paperback in case of *The Serpent and the Rope*, and *The Cat and Shakespeare*, and *Comrade Kirillov*. Editions of Anand's novels used for references : Hind Pocket Book in case of *Coolie*, and *Two Leaves and a Bud*; Orient Paperback in case of *A Lament on the death of a Master of Arts*, *Gauri*, *Private Life of an Indian Prince* and *Seven Summers*; Kutub in case of *The Village*, *and Across the Black Waters*; Jaico Book in case of *Untouchable*, and Sterling Paperback in case of *The Road*.

have explained the term "Kavya" in different ways. For Bhamaha it is the poetic expression transgressing the commonplace statement, containing rhetorical embellishments and poetic figures. According to Dandin, "Kavya" is the grouping of words in conformity with the sense. To Vamana, it is word and sense containing poetic excellence and poetic figures, whereas for Kuntaka it is a composition having heightened expression affording aesthetic delight to the *Connoisseur*. Bhoja, Mammata and Visvanatha all emphasise presence of *rasa*, poetic excellences and poetic figures in "Kavya". In short the Sanskrit Poetics in various ways stresses the happy harmony between word and meaning.[9] In *The Cat*, and *The Serpent* Raja Rao employs this type of language. He tries to arrange words in respect of their meaning. Synthetic languages indicate the relation of words in a sentence by means of inflections, where analytic languages make extensive use of prepositions and auxiliary verbs and depend upon word order. Now Sanskrit is a synthetic language, whereas modern English is an analytic one. Raja Rao tries to infuse the rhythm of Sanskrit language in English language.

The rationale of the language may also be studied with *is* reference to the theme of Raja Rao's work. The *Kanthapura* concerned with the impact of Gandhian idealism in the thirties in a village in South India. Here the novelist relies on the pattern of stories told in the Purans as also on the folk idiom and idiosyncrasies. Achakka, the illiterate, rustic grandmother, speaks breath-taking page-long sentences as "We, in India, think quickly, talk quick, and when we move we move quickly."[10] *The Serpent* is a notable philosophical treatise. Its theme is illusion and reality and the author here resorts to a kind of rhetoric to incorporate artistically Indian mytholoy, folklore and philosophy. *The Cat*

9. Bhamaha, *Kavyalankara*, I 34, 36; II. 85; V. 66.
Dandin, *Kavyadarsa*, I. 10.
Vamana, *Kavyalankara Sutravritti*, I. 1.
Kuntaka, *Vakroktijivita*, I. 7.
Bhoja, *Sarsaswatikanthabharana*, I. 2.
Mammata, *Kavyaprakasa*, I. 4. a.
*Visvanatha*, *Sahityadarpana*, I. 3.

10. Raja Rao, "Foreword" to *Kanthapura*, p. vi.

is an epic in prose concerned with deep philosophy. In *Comrade Kirillov*, where Raja Rao also discusses the *Mantra-Sastra*, the language is highly suggestive.

Some readers have noted two phases in Raja Rao's use of language. In the beginning ( upto *The Cow of The Barricades*, 1945 ) he dwells on the concrete and the particular. Thereafter, in novels like *The Serpent* he takes recourse to general recollections and abstract speculations. However, there, too, following the mode of Upanishadic dialogues, Raja Rao provides various links to make the difficult thought clear. In the Upanishads the conversation is often between a Guru and the disciple, the one already understands the theme or idea of discussion, the other does not. To make the abstract idea easy to grasp, the Guru employs some familiar example or analogy. Govindan Nair, too, clarifies how happiness comes out of happiness in this manner :

" Cant you see I am happy ? "
" Where does it come from ? "
" Where does water come from ? "
" From the tap. "
" And the water in the tap ? "
" From the lake. "
" And the water in the lake ? "
" From the sky. "
" And the water in the sky ? "
" From the Ocean. "
" And the water in the Ocean ? "
" From the rivers. "
" And the river waters ? "
" They make the lakes. "
" And the tap water ? "
" Is river water. "
" And so ? "
" Water comes from water, " she said. ( p. 50 )

There are thus connecting points, the links that take the discussion to the familiar phenomena or objects. In a conversation between Savithri and Rama, the philosophical debate becomes easy to grasp the analogy of reader is added towards the end :

" To whom does one belong ? "
" To one's self, Savithri. "
" What shall become of her that
does not belong to herself ? "
" Then must she belong to someone. "
" But if she belongs to one wholely,
or rather almost wholely, and to another
she be tied, as a calf is tied to a tether,
or as the plane is tied to the radar. "
" The plane must accept the direction
of the radar, that there be no accident.
Either you are a plane and you follow
national and internationl conventions –
or you do not fly. ( *The Serpent*, p. 363 )

Raja Rao works to effect a congruity between experience and expression, the inter-penetration of matter and manner. He employs numerous devices to bend the language, as it were to produce the desired effect. He inserts words and expressions from Kannada, Sanskrit and Hindi. He provides unobtrusive, straight translations of folk idioms, legends and proverbs. Consider, for example, a few lines :

You cannot straighten a dog's tail;
only a pariah looks at the teeth of the dead cow;
the youngest is always the holy bull;
every squirrel has his day; A man at home
is a good in the temple.

To the village folk, as to Little Mother, a proverb always means an incontrovertible truth. They often converse in terms of proverbs, legends. In similies familiar animals and birds figure most. Consider the following sentences from *Kanthapura*.

And yet he was as honest as an elephant; a rasping his as though a thousand porcupines have suddenly bristled up; our hearts beat up like the wings of bats.

Here is a telling reference to a commo nscene in Indian villages :

> That night, to come to my British boils, I was up and hunting my boils as one hunts lice in a girl's hair. I must tell you frankly : I liked it all– – just as the girls like lice being killed, there's an acute sense of pleasure when the two nails rub against each other, and the *chit* sound emerges. The louse is well and happily dead. As a child I also liked the sound of lice being killed in my hair. ( *The Cat*, p. 16 )

In *The Serpent* Saroja speaks about the trouble of a girl in her-law's house in a joint-family system :

> " But a mother-in-law is a mother-in-law, and she can bring tears to your eyes. And the sisters-in-law and the brothers-in-law. . . . "
> " Times have changed, Saroja."
> " Not in India yet--and certainly not among Brahmins." ( p. 257 )

The nature of the ever-extended relation in India is conveyed in this way : " He is my wife's elder brother's wife " brother-in-law ( *Kanthapura*, p. 39 ). This may sound somewhat an English, but there is no other possible way to express this relationship exactly. In folk speech, as *Kanthapura* shows, direct narration figures most. The novelist thus provides evocative details of village life.

Raja Rao, like Anand, employs some other linguistic devices such as collocational deviations and compounding of words. [11]

He favours some specific sentence-patterns. He writes " be " in place of are, as in the following sentences :

> " What wonderful animals there be in our land ? " ( *The Serpent*, p. 78 ); " Low untouchables they be, " said Little Mother ( *The Serpent*, p. 275 ); " All brides be Banares born " ( *The Serpent*, p. 293 ); " Hey there, be you at home ? " ( *The Cat*, p. 10 ).

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11. See : Ramesh Mohan, " Some Aspects of Style and Language in Indian English Fiction, " *Indian Writing English*, ed. Ramesh Mohan ( Orient Longman, 1978 ), pp. 195–200. K. C. Nambiar, " The Language of Indo-English Novelist, " *Indian Writing English*, pp. 150–156.

Then, the novelist attaches the name of the subject to the end of sentence to explain the pronoun that has gone before. Here are some examples :

> He will bring us Swaraj, the Mahatma ( *Kanthapura*, p. 258 ); I tell you, he was not a bad man, was Bhatta ( *Kanthapura*, p. 36 ); He was so noble and humble, Grandfather was ( *The Serpent*, p. 17 ); He is the whole of ourselves, uncle Charles ( *The Serpent*, p. 87 ); He is such a nice person, is Subramanya ( *The Serpent*, p. 258 ); He was wonderful–Kirillov was ( *Comrade Kirillov*, p. 73 ).

In *Kanthapura*, the mode of narration requires long sentences, without punctuation and prepositions. To quote an example :

> And Range' Gowda, who has stood silent by the tamarind, when he sees this rushes down and, stick in hand-gives one bang on the head of a policeman, and the policeman sinks down, and there is such a clamour again that the Police Inspector shouts, " Disperse the crowd !" and he slips round the bire with Moorthy before him. while policemen beat the crowd this side and that side, and groans and moans and cries and shouts and coughs and oaths and bangs and kicks are heard, while there is heard, *Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai* ! *Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai*! ( pp. 121-122 )

In this novel, Raja Rao recreates the rhythm of Kannada *language* and adopts the pattern of *Harikatha* to tell the story. The *Harikatha* mode of story telling, prevalent in India, contains a lot of discussion, diagression, description, reported speech, sermon, yet all these are organised, digested in the overall pattern of the narrative.

Raja Rao is a philosopher-poet. In place of literal " translations," he prefers concrete imagery essentially Indian in nature and tone. For example, in *The Serpent*, in the 7th November diary the frenzy of love is described in suggestive images :

> In the middle of the night, I know not what took hold of Madeleine. She came into my bed and mad. Such a big demand on me that I felt afterwards like a summer river- the sun sizzling on the Deccan plateau, and the stones burning; the cattle waiting with their tongues out; and the neem leaves on the tree, still. You can hear a crow cawing here and there, and may be the oppressed hoot of an automobile ( p. 163 ).

The writer concretises his images by using appropriate metaphors note, for example, the growth of Saroja's consciousness in these lines :

> I was intoxicated with Saroja's presence, like a deer could be before a waterfall, on an elephant before a mountain peak; something primordial was awakening in a creature, and I felt that maturity in a girl was like the new moon or the change of equinox, it had polar affinities. There was something of the smell of musk, of the oyster when the pearl is still within, of the deep silent sea before the monsoon breaks. ( p. 50 )

The novelist changes narrator in his stories in view of the need of the vision embodied. In *Kanthapura* the narrator is an illiterate, artless, rustic grandmother who speaks a typically village language. In *The Serpent*, however, the narrator, being a learned and sensitive Indian intellectual, stands at the opposite extreme. He naturally uses varied allusions and draws from French, Italian, Sanskrit and Hindi, though he relates legends and stories in the rustic way. In *The Cat* the narrator is a clerk who speaks the Babu English, that is " to say obvious things in parables and make you think it was such a small affair " ( p. 36 ). Here the language contains many of the phrases and usages current in the world of clerks. Consider, for example, the following conversation between Govindan Nair and Ramakrishna Pai ;

> He said; " Sir, it's done."
> I said, " What ? "
> " I say, sir, it is done. The thing is done. You have it when you want." I think I understood. But I was not sure. I was afraid to know lest the knowing be false. So I said,

" Which ? "
He said, " That. "
I was dumbfounded. " And that is ? "
' That is this ", he said as if he had said everything.
( p. 36 )

He is, indeed, " The kind of English spoken and heard in the streets and government offices by half-educated and ill-educated Indians."[12]

Anand is slightly more aggressive in his use of Indian English. The source of his literary material throws light on the nature of his Indian English. Lalu, we are told, is modelled after Raja Rasalu. The adventures of Raja Rasalu happened some centuries ago in the same Sialkot district to which Lalu belonged. The protagonist of *Seven Summers* sums up the entire episode.

> One of the stories which my mother told me was about the adventures of Raja Rasalu, a bloodcurdling narrative of how a young prince issued forth from his palace against the wishes of his parents, fought the demons, became an ascetic and finally won the hand of a fairy princess by defeating her father in Chess. ( p. 166 )

Munoo, the coolie boy owes himself to an orphan who figures in a poem by Iqbal. Iqbal's poem has also been sung in Punjab by the bards in almost every village. Bakha in the *Untouchable* has his prototype in an Upanishadic story current in different forms in Northern India. Similarly, several portrayals " derived their inspiration from the satirical modes of the bards, *Bhands* and the *mirasies* who poke fun on people during weddings and in their rounds to the villages."[13] Anand has translated folk tales of Punjab and designed his stories after the folk tales. He therefore maintains that " The way in which my mother said something in the dialect of Central Punjab could not have been expressed in any other way except in an almost literal translation, which might carry over the sound and sense of original speech."[14]

12. K. S. Srinivas Iyengar, *Indian Writing in English* ( Bombay : Asia, 1972 ), p. 404.
13. Mulk Raj Anand in a letter dated 19 June 1977 to the present writer.
14. Mulk Raj Anand, " Pigeon-Indian : Some Notes on English Writing, " *The Karnatak University Journal : Humanities*, Vol. XVI ( 1972 ), p. 78.

This becomes all the more convincing when we recall the source of Anand's inspiration for creative writing. In his young age Anand feel in love with Irene, a professor's daughter, and began to write for her a kind of *Confession*. The girl was happy with this venture and promised to marry the author if it came into the form of a book. The *Confession* ran in about two thousand pages, and later became the source-book of his writing. The nature and tone of this *Confession* was intensely intimate and personal as the girl was keen to know everything about his nature and nature. This work was bound to be in a language deeply influenced by the author's mothertongue. Throughout the process of translation was going on in his mind. Says the novelist : " While writing spontaneously I was always translating from original Punjabi into English."[15]

These sources came to have great relevance to Anand when he *came* in contact with the Irish authors like W. B. Yeats, J. M. Synge, Lady Gregory, and some other new Irish writers like Aeoer O'Donnel, Liam O'Flaherty and Sean O'Faolin. He went to Dublin in 1929, to be with Irene. The Irish writers had started a movement of " return to the people," bringing in Irish writing new living characters from among those who would never come into literature, whose speech had been ignored by those who had lived in English style. He witnessed, Synge's *Riders to the Sea* with a curtain raiser by Lady Gregory, entitled *Spreading the News* The language of Synge and Gregory stirred Anand to do some thing identical in his own writing. He felt that " the contemporaries of Ireland were all firmly grounded in human reality first and foremost."[16] He felt that in his *Bakha* ( the earlier version of *Untouchable* ) he could make a similar experiment. Lady Gregory admired the language of *Bakha* and exclaimed : " Surely, this is all like my " Killartan ". Anand was encouraged to make this " expressionism " of his folk more elaborate and conspicuous. He remarks : " The inverted speech of the peasants lent a charm to writing that became the envy of my own ardent soul."[17]

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15. Ibid., p. 81.
16. Mulk Raj Anand, " Pigeon-Irish & Pigeon-Indian, " *Commonwealth Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No. 10. ( March 1979 ), p. 5.
17. Ibid., p. 6.

In his " Pigeon-English ", Anand, therefore, undertakes to interweave Punjabi and Hindustani words into English. He employs various devices to incorporate the folk consciousness in his writings. He inserts words and expressions from Punjabi and Hindustani ( a form of Hindi with a considerable mixture of Persian and Arabic ). Anand's characters often take to the unconscious use of Indian phraseology. The Seth, in *Gauri*, speaks in this manner :

> " Ja, Ja ! I have nothing to do with you or your daughter.. Go to daktar Mohindra's haspatal and find her ! Go and eat the ashes . . . I will tackle the policies if they come here." (p. 194)

In *Seven Summers*, Ganesh's father says to him : " Ohe, don't go about listening to gossip.... The saaib logs are very strict. . . " ( p. 237 ). This practice is followed in respect of expletives and honorifies, too. There is an abundance of these— " Ari, " " Vay ", " Wah " " Ohe ", " Hazoor ", " Sarkar ", " Maharaj ", " ri " and " Sahib ", etc.— in conversations. Consider the following lines from *Across the Black Waters* :

> " Ohe ! Leave such talk, come drink up and let us have some more, and let us go and be happy, " said Subah boisterously thumping the table before him. And he began to sing.
>
> Wah ; Wah ! Lion ! flattered the Sikh, impressed to see the Subedar Major's son drinking as only a peasant could ( p. 41 ).

Like Raja Rao, Anand also used the device of " translation " of words and expressions, and is much more enthusiastic in this context. Consider, for example, the following lines from *The Village* :

> " My son, " said Gujri with an affectionate pout, pouring another glass of whey. " Look, he has come in the heat. And he must be hungry and thirsty. May I be his sacrifice ! "

> "Other sons of their mothers have also been working in the heat," said Sharm Singh dryly. And then he turned to his youngest brother and said, "I hope you have cut some fodder for the buffalo, too, otherwise she will dry up soon." (p. 19)

Besides, the twist and turn of expression, the syntax, too, follows the rhythm of colloquial Punjabi.

> Seeing me in Khaddar tunic and tight pyjama, he winced then said, "O bacha—you, behind Gandhi? Horniman Sahib also friend of Gandhi" (*Confession of a Lover*, p. 191)

Anand often uses "translation" of idioms, usages, proverbs so as to give a "feel" of life in India. Here are some examples:

> We ought to beat them with our shoes soaked in water, these judges of our ability as well as sychophants (*A Lament*, p. 49). The camel went in search of horns and lost his ears (*The Village*, p. 244). Your own wisdom and another's wealth seem great (p. 213). The thief turning sheriff (*Private Life of a Prince*, p. 139). Test a friend in trouble, a cow in February and a housewife when there is nothing left in a barn (*Seven Summers*, p. 194).

This should be read as Anand's effort at transcreation and not merely translation. The technique sounds most effective when the characters even reflect in terms of provebs. Here is an example in point:

> But Lalu was not interested in intrigues about promotion. He only repeated the proverb, "Never walk behind a horse or before an officer, for both will kick." (*The Village*, p. 244).

The villagers convey their beliefs and wisdom through their typical mode of speech. A woman refers to her husband as "they" and does not mention his name. The novelist informs the reader:

> And Sajnu had walked by the house with "them"... And she had stolen a look and nearly met "their" eyes (*The Road*, p. 37)

In the same novel Rukmani does not utter the name of her would-be-husband even to herself:

> And she had surmised that he (her father) was worried about the father of her brother's friend, whose name she could not take, because—why, was she not almost betro thed to that family? (p. 35)

The husband usually mentions his wife as his "other-self," or "the mother of my child," or "the onwer of my house." The villager swears by his parents when he says something definite or determined:

> I wouldn't be my mother's son if I didn't offer hospitality to you (*Coolie*, p. 226); I am not the son of Tote Ram the Chaudhri of barbers, if I can't arrange a match for that beautiful girl (*Two Leaves*, p.10).

Anand adopts a few more devices to convey the folk consciousness. He distorts the pronunciation of words and represents it through wrong spelling. It is curiously raucous Punjabized English which plays havoc with the vowels as well as the consonants. The novelist attempts transcreation of folk speech and rougher brogue of Punjabi through such expressions: cirgut, daktar, dakdor, goverment, gorner, Holdar laften, notus, paltan, phrant, wulcome, yas, is etc. At times the "sounds" are reproduced so as to point out the rural way of expression: git-mit, burr-burr, pish-pish, khoor-khoor, tom tom, and so on.

It is advisable to study these devices in view of the situations wherein these are used. Anand, like Raja Rao, largely avoids these in descriptions or narrations, accept of course the insertion of some native words here and there. However, in conversations, dialogues and reflections (of characters) the Indian "expressionism" becomes most conspicuous. There occur for major types of situation in Anand: two Englishmen speaking to each other, one Englishman and one Indian in conversation, two Indians conversing with each other, an Indian thinking or speaking to

himself. Anand adopts the above-mentioned devices keeping in view the context of situation. In his novels Englishmen speak perfectly good English to each other. Croff-Coog's language ( *in Two Leaves* ) is an example in point. In other situations the author deliberately resorts to various linguistic devices. An English man tries to speak to Indians in wrong, badly accented Hindustani or Punjabi. When Mr. Long tries to intone the difficult accents of the Punjabi language, he is greeted with a burst of applause, laughter. and loud whispers of " Lock, ohe, Lehna Singh, look, ohe, Jhauda Sinha, the Sahib speaks our language " ( *The Village*, p. 140 ). Anand mentions this peculiarity in his comments as otherwise the ruances may go unnoticed. In this situation Indain characters try to speak plain English, though the influence of their first language is invariably there.

When all the speakers are Indians, " translations " and " transcreations " figure most, the speech is permeated with proverbs and folk idioms. All this is natural in a peasant's conversation. Consider the following conversation between Nihalu and Fazlu :

> " Sat Sri Akal, uncle Nihalu," he said with a twinkle in his eyes. I thought I smelt some food and so I came along. " Come, Fazlu, come on our head, come on our eyes," said Grandpa. ( *Seven Summers* p. 194 )

In such a situation the characters at times speak abusive terms and hurting remarks. Take, for example, the following conversation between Lakshmi and the Panwalla :

> " Why, vay, pan wallia; where is that Bhagatu of yours ? I am sure he took Adam Singh's purse."
> " Ja ! Ja, accusing my customers of being pic-pockets ! Dure ! Bure ! Bitch . . Don't make so much noise here!"
> " Hai ni, darkness has come; And just now he was all foi keeping me with him?"
>
> " Ja Ja, or I will call the policia and hand you over for solicituing clients like a prostitute." ( *Gauri*, p. 202 )

Here the literal " translations " and " plain English " follow each other so as to provide local flavour and intensify the effect. Consider these lines from *Untouchable* :

> " You eater of your masters," she shouted, " may the vessel of your life never float in the sea of existence. May you perish and die ! you have defiled my house ! Go; Get up, get up ! You eater of your masters ! Why didn't you shout if you wanted food ? Is this your father's house that you come and rest here ? " ( p. 70 )

When an Indian character speaks to himself, he is face to face with himself. His language is replete with Indian " expressions " and idioms. To quote an example :

> " What need you of a bag if you have four and spend five," said Lalu as he looked at the splendid knotted white string satchel in which he carried the rent to the temporary office. . . . ( *The Village* p. 119 )

Anand's Indian English creates no difficulty for the reader. The Indian reader understands him fully well, particularly when he keeps in mind the rich cultural heritage of the country. For example, when Bishan says to Jai Singh " You don't even go to school. . . We go to school and during holidays we graze cattle ( *Coolie*, p. 10 ), one knows that this also refers to a folk song of Himachal Pradesh. The foreign reader may find some words or expressions unfamiliar or difficult when these are taken out of their context. However read in the proper context these are quite easy to understand and appreciate. The novelist supplies numerous " clues " and " kev-words " for this purpose. Sometime he makes pairs of words by inserting words from Indian languages. Sometimes the English equivalents occur in the later part of the speech :

> " Hosh Karo ; Hosh Karo : Have you no sense Donkeys?" ( *Two Leaves*, p. 145 ), " Chal ! Chal; Mad woman; You will have to go " ( *Gauri*, p. 117 ). " Ohe Chacha, Wise " one ! ( *Gauri*, p. 241 ) " But where is the idea of izzet gone ? . . . Where is your dignity ? Where is your manhood ? " ( *Coolie*, p. 252 ); Maro Sale Ko ! Kill Him ! ( *The Road*, p. 110 ).

The writer also helps us to grasp the meaning through descriptions and hints given in-between the dialogues. Consider, for example, the following lines :

> " Look out, you son of a donkey ? " shouted the young man who sat astride it. Munoo stepped aside and escaped being barely escaped being knocked down into the gutter.
>
> " Ohe, illegally begotten; You will get killed, idiot; " A tirade of abuse descended of him from his uncle, who had rushed back. ( *Coolie*, p. 18)

It is but natural that Dr. Anand has now dropped the practice of adding glossaries, with their translations.

The contemporary Irish writers, too, experimented with language and tried to develop a system to impart a specific identity to Irish English. J. M. Synge, for example, tried to use a dialect in his plays of peasant life. His language is drawn from a virtually illiterate society, and contains some important traits of an Irish dialect : the nominal group, the suppressed relative pronoun, progressive forms, " And construction, " the copula reported questions, and "the after construction." [18] Raja Rao refers to Irish English in Preface to *Kanthapura*, and Mulk Raj, as pointed out earlier, was greatly inspired by the Irish writers to do something similar in respect of his own language. However, the task before the Indian writers is much more ticklish The Irish dialects belong to the *centum* group to which English belongs, whereas the Indian languages belong to the *satem* group. However, by using various linguistic devices Raja Rao and Anand succeed in infussing the rhythm of Indian languages into English. A study of *Kanthapura* for example, reveals the influence of the Kannada language and its literary tradition. In *The-Cat*, Raja Rao tries to induce the simplicity and harmony of Sanskrit into English. Anand uses a specific sequence of sentences. In lines like the following the emotional stress is translated admirably from the felt experience of the Punjabi into English language.

> " You swine, you dog, why didn't you shout and warn me of your approach ? " He shouted as he met Bakha's yes, " Don't you know. you brute, that you must not

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18. Nicholas Grene, " The Development of Dialect, " *Synge : A Critical Study of his works* ( London, Basingtoke : Macmillan, 1975 ), pp. 68-88.

touch me." Bakha's mouth was open. But he couldn't utter a single word. He was about to apologize He had already joined his hands instinctively—

"Dirty dog, Son of a bitch, The offspring of a pig," he shouted, his temper spluttering on his tongue and obstructing his speech, and the sense behind it, in its mad rush outwards. "I... I'll have to go-o-o... and get washed-d-d... I...I was going to business and now... now, on account of you, I'll be late." (*Untouchable*-p. 46)

In fact, both Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand make worth while experiments with English language and adopt various linguistic devices to convey Indian sensibility. Although no specific system emerges, yet their language stems from Indian thought and imagery and acquires a distinctive identity and suppleness.

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# Chapter III

## Peasant Sensibility in Kanthapura

Raja Rao's first novel, *Kanthapura*[1] (1938), is about a village in South India.

The novel describes the influence of Ghandhi's national movement on this obscure village. Its theme is "Gandhi and our Village."[2] The purpose of this essay is to analyse the incorporation of peasant sensibility in the novel.

*Kanthapura*, Raja Rao's first novel, is downright simple in structure. Achakka, a grand-mother tells the sad tale of her village to a newcomer in terms of reminiscences. After giving a vivid description of the village, she dwells on the peasants who are rooted in religious traditions. Moorthy, a University dropout, comes under the impact of Gandhi's ideas and becomes a true Gandhiman, a non-violent revolutionary. Although the Satyagrahis of Kanthapura suffer a good deal in the hands of Red-men, their spirit remains invincible. The village is ultimately reduced to ruins, but the village folk eagerly look forward to the independence of the country. In the end a fantasy world of *Rama Raj* is conjured up.

> They say the Mahatma will go to the Red-man's country and he will get a Swaraj. He will bring us Swaraj, the Mahatma. And we shall all be happy. And Rama will come back from exile, and Sita will be with him, for

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1. Raja Rao *Kanthapura* (1938), ed. C. D. Narasimhaiah (Madras : Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 1. Page references for subsequent quotations from the novel are given in parenthesis

2. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, *Indian writing in English*, (1962; rpt. Bombay : Asia, 1973), p. 391.

> Ravana will be slain and Sita freed, and he will come back with Sita on his right in a chariot of the air, and brother Bharata will go to meet him with the worshipped sandal of the Master on his head. And as they enter Ayodhya there will be a rain of flowers. ( p. 258 )

The villagers are depicted in realistic colours. Their names are made descriptive in nature—it is a typical rural way. For instance : Bent-legged Chandrayya, Cardamom-field Ramachandra, Coffee-planter Ramayya, Corner-house Moorthy, Front-house Akkamma, Cold-bangle Somanna, Nine-beamed House Range Gowda, Nose-scratching Nanjamma, Patwari Nanjundia, Temple Rangappa, and Waterfall Venkamma. Here Nature is a living being, and even hills, rivers, fields and animals have a distinct presence, a personality. Animals are thus referred to : "Meanwhile the cattle were coming out of the main door the whitty, the Blotchy, and the One- horned One and Lakshmi and Gauri..." (p. 20) Himavathy is a holy river. Many hills and fields are specifically named. For example : Bear's Hill, Bebbur Mound, Blue Mountain, Horse-head Hill, Kenchamma Hill; Bebbur-field, Big-bund field, Devil's field, Plantation field, Serpent field, Tank field, Triangular field.

In Kanthapura the villagers live together, and each, in a way is related to others. They are thus often mentioned in terms of relationships. For instance, when the non-violent revolutionaries try to enter the toddy booth, there are seen "the scattered crowd of children rushing here, rushing there, and *mothers, aunts, sisters,* grandmothers rushing behind them" (p. 185. Italics mine). In a village even a distant relation matters, and is thus mentioned in an exact manner : " He is my wife's elder brother's wife's brother-in law." This may sound rather dull and fetched to a foreign reader, but is there any other way known to an Indian peasant to describe this relationship ?

The language in the novel is saturated with Indian idiom and rural colour. Like Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao seems to translate simultaneously from a dialect, Kannada in his case. His literal " translations," breaking of formal English syntax meaningful. He includes many words from the Indian languages : *Ahimsa, Dhoti, Harikatha, Hobli, Khanda, Krait, Magh, Maistric, Mandap, Mlech,*

*Mutt, Odes, Pheni Pushya, Sravan, Tirtham,* to name a few. He frequently uses village proverbs, legends and concrete imagery in Indian context. For instance, in similes familiar animals and birds figure most :

Our hearts beat like the wings of bats, she has not a bandicoot to call her own, every squirrel has his day, the youngest is always the holy bull; and yet he was as honest as an elephant; a rasping hiss as though a thousand porcupines have suddenly bristle up, does a boar stand before a lion or a jackal before an elephant?

Numerous proverbs find a natural plan in the peasant speech :

> The policemen are not your uncle's sons, I saw you like a rat on your mother's lap, the first daughter milks the cow when the mother is ill, you cannot straighten a dog's tail; then is neither man nor mosquito in Kanthapura; only a pariah looks at the teeth of dead cows; land, lust and wifely loyalty go badly together.

Comparisons with familiar objects in villages are at once terse and authentic : For example :

> An auspicious idea came like a cart-light in the dark, soft as pumpkin's kernel; the sky became blue as a marriage shawl; hearts are squeezed like a wet cloth; young and bright as banana trunk ; lean as an areca-nut tree; every friend you create is the jasmine hadge.

Sometimes the peasants report to abusive, vulgar language. This however need not disturb us [3] Such an idism is an inseparable part of peasant speech and it is never implied literally. It is to the credit of the novelist that despite the limitation composed on him by his choice of the narrator, a grandmother, he could include still include this shade of language. At one time the peasants burst out when the wind or rain lets them down :

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3. It is sad to note that the novel was sought to be withdrawn from prescription in an Indian University because of two charges : it was obscene, and its language was Indian English. See C. D. Narasimhaiah, *The Swan and the Eagle* (Simla : Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1969 ), pp. 159-161.

> "Oh you prostitute of a wind. She is showing her tricks again. Stop, you bitch." ( p. 161 )

At one place Timmi cries out :

> " Oh, The Bell-field; May your house be destroyed may your wife die childless-I'll sleep with your mother " ( p. 233 )

Outbursts like these are fully at home. This is indeed " the natural speech of the rural folk transmuted into English."[4] With the effective use of the " dialect" and village material the novelist succeeds in conveying " in a language not one's own the spirit that is one's own."[5]

Raja Rao employs our ancient way of telling a tale. Here is a breathless story or stories illustrating the age-old tradition of story-telling.[6] The narrator's fast movement in speech is a part of our national characteristic. As the novelist maintains : " We, in India, think quickly, we talk quickly and when we move we move quickly.[7] Achakka's inordinately long, meandering sentences, use of blanks, digressions and expressions like " this and that ", " here and there," are meaningful. In the very opening sentence, as Mulk Raj Anand points out, " the reader can almost hear grandma talking."[8] Episode follows episode and, each one is integral as the story. The detailed accounts of Sankar ( pp. 133-143 ), Rangamma ( pp. 41-43 ) and Bhatta ( pp. 29-36 ) are revealing, essential for the narrative. Achakka is both a reporter and an interpfeter. In recording various events the narrator follows a dramatic technique. And by way of explanation she makes frank comments. The story is therefore related at two levels simultaneously. Such observations occur frequently :

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4. Srinivasa Iyengar, p. 391.
5. Raja Rao, *Kanthapura*, Foreward, p. v.
6. C. D. Narasimhaiah, *Raja Rao* ( New Delhi : Arnold-Hoinemann, 1973 ), p. 63.
7. *Foreword*, p. vi.
8. " Pigeon Indian : Some notes on Indo-English Writing," The *Karnatak University Journal : Humanities*, Vol. XVI ( 1972 ), p. 84.

> But to tell you the truth, Bada Khan did not stay in Kanthapura; To tell you the truth, Bhatta began all this after his last visit to the city; Rangamma did not understand this, neither, to tell you the truth, did any of us; To tell you the truth, Bhatta left us after harvest on a pilgrimage to Kashi; I tell you he was not a bad man, was Bhatta.

These remarks are indicative of her valuation which is in line with her creator's. This increases reader's understanding of events and characters, and serves as an unifying force in the work. To a foreign reader this may appear jejune or obtuse. However those " familiar with the vernacular and with the circumlocation of Indian speech habits will be delighted with Achakka's narrative style and its gossipy digressions."[9]

The villagers possess an ever-increasing sense of wonder, and their speech is full of practical wisdom. Here live noble souls like Patel and Moorthy. Moorthy could defy a policeman and assert :

" Coolies are men, Police Sahib. " He remains cool and calm in the face of utter cruelty and tyranny:

> . . . Ratna cried out, " Oh, you dogs," and the police spat in her face and gave her a slap that brought blood out of her mouth. But Moorthy said, " No swearing, please. Gandhi Mahatma Ki Jai" ( p. 199 ).

Raja Rao does not idealize the village folk, though he stresses their innate simplicity and sense of devotion. He is also aware of the evil spirits in the village : Venkamma, Advocate Seenappa and Bhatta. The cruel and calculating nature of Bhatta is deftly delineated. His coffer is ever full :

> He knows how much there is in it. Something around three hundred and fifty rupees. Already a little had gone; just ten rupees for Rampur Mada. Nuptial ceremony of some sort. Six percent interest, and payable in two months. Fine thing. Then Mada sends Lingayya. Lingayya's revenue is not fully paid. . . .

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9. Uma Parameswaran, *A Study of Representative Indo-English Novelists* ( New Delhi : Vikas, 1976 ), p. 147.

> Just twenty-one ruppes and eight annas. Payable soon after harvest. For six months it shall be ten percent interest. ( p. 32 ).

Sometimes the people are slaves to effete traditions and trite conventions. Dowry system is a bane to the poor :

> And he was telling me how he could find no one for his last grand-daughter. No one. Every fellow with matric or inter asks, " What dowry do you offer ? How far will you finance my studies ? — I want to have this degree and that degree." ( p. 37 )

Some oppose Moorthy's campaigns and schemes. The Swami does not approve of his mixing with the low caset people and instantly excommunicates him. Now Bhatta charges interest upto eighteen and twenty per cent from Congress members. To some it is difficult to offend Bhatta or the Government. There is however, a controlled yet amashing irony the handling of the subject. For example, the scene where the Swami's man defend the British on the plea that they are an avatar of God – Krishna– is conceived ironically ( pp. 126 – 127 ). On the other hand, the new version of Hari Katha is a sincere attempt of the peasants to understand and resolve their problems. The women who tried to enter toddy booth are dubbed as toddy people. The narrator, however, comments in a satirical tone :

> Yes, yes sister, we are toddy people. But we don't marry our daughters to gap-toothed sons-in-law. Nor like Bhatta do we go on Kashi-pilgrimage with toddy contract money. Do we ? ( p. 191 )

The Gandhian movement spreads in Kanthapura and the village becomes a part of All India Panchayat, a territory to be ruled by a parallel Government. The inspired women sing :

> There is one Government, sister,
> There is one Government, sister,
> And that is the Government of the Mahatma ( p. 207 )

Our villages provide a basic pattern easily discernable all over India. As Meenakshi Mukherjee observes : " It is therefore often in the rural context that the regional reality and the Indian

reality more or less merge.[10] Kanthapura is thus any village in India, India in microcosm.

As a discerning critic notes the novel describes three types of experiences. "There are at least three strends of experience in the novel: the political, the religious the social."[11] To the peasants Kenchamma is a "Goddess, benign and bountious." They are deeply religious in outlook. Moorthy, initiated into Gandhian faith becomes a veritable force in the village. As in the title story in *The Cow of the Barrciade* (1947), politics here too is kept in the background. But slowly and steadily Moorthy becomes a Gandhi man with a mysterious power to move the people: "What is inhim we ask that binds our hearts so? After all we saw him as a child, sister. And yet . . ." (p. 171). As the story progresses the three threads of experience tend to be one: the religious, social and political issues become one and the same. The blend is achieved when the villagers consider Moorthy the small Mountain. It is to be remembered that the Big Mountain is Siva, their Protector. Here the Gandhian ideal and the religious spirit merge together:

> "And what shall we call Moorthy?" said Radhamma. "Why, the small Mountain," said Rangamma, and we all said, "That is it," and so from that day we knew there were the Small Mountain and the Big Mountain to protect us.
>
> The Ganges, sister, is born on the snows of high Kailash. Oh, but when will it come, the call of the Big Mountain. Siva, Siva? (p. 176)

The religious elements and the social and political issues are artistically transformed into entity. It is natural that prayers and national songs are sung side by side. The objective is to attain independence, but the means adopted are religious: *Hari Kathas*, *bhajans*, fasts, prayers, and non-violent resistence. *Inquilab*, *Zindabad*, *Vande Mataram*, and *Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai* become charged slogans which impart them immense strength. These are

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10. Meenakshi Mukherjee, *The Twice-born Fiction: Themes and Technigues of the Indian Novel in English* (New Delhi, Arnold-Heinemann, 1971), p. 213.

11. Narasimhiah *Introd.* p. vii.

Satyagrahis answer to suffering and tyranny. They, for instance, insist on reaching the toddy booth whatever the consequences :

> And the Police Inspector gallops across the road and brings down Chandrayya and Ramayya with the knob of his cane, and they roll over and fall into the ditch, and we say, " Now Rangamma, we'll go forward, " and just then *'as though in answer*, Moorthy shrieks out across the fence, " *Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai* ! " and we see his lips split and four policemen around him and somehow our eyes turn all to the Kenchamma Hill...( pp. 184-189):

In the struggle women's role is important. The author presents women as various forms of Shakti. Whereas Indian woman is coy, delicate and submissive, she is also firm as a rock, great in suffering. Shakti rises in them, and each of them is enthused at the proper time. Psychologically prepared for the titanic encounter, they get considerable inspiration from other's examples. It is to be noted that in the last phase of peaceful resistance it is Ratna, a woman, who takes over from Moorthy and leads the Satyagrahis :

> Then it is Ratna's voice that says, " Forward, brothers, in the name of the Mahatma ", and everbody takes it up and marches forward. ( p. 241 )

Earlier there is seen an insistent disapproval of " city boys," " city girls," and " city ways. " However, at the final stage this distinction vanishes. Gandhi is the Siva, the Rama, the Krishna. It is meaningful that the novel ends with a myth-solution. *Swaraj* is equated with *Ramaraj*. For Raja Rao, " philosophy is a passion, novel an expression."[12] He clothes his philosophic vision in the raw material of words. The novelist embodies peasent sensibility in Kanthapura. However, unification of various types of experience makes it universal in appeal.

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12. Raja Rao said this in a private conversation at the Conference of the Association of Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies in Delhi, January 1977.

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# Chapter IV

## Narayan's Portrait of India

One general reaction to R. K. Narayan's fiction is : " Oh, how real it is." One feels that his works embody the reality of life in India so easily and adequately. For example, the opening scene in *The Guide* is at once realistic in tone and description. Foreign readers are particularly struck with the element of social realism in his fiction. The novelist has to stress time and again that his characters and situations belong to a work of literary art :

> "Do brothers quarrel in India ? "
> "Of course, brothers would quarrel anywhere in the world," I said, and delivered a long discourse on joint family living in India. About fifty answers, always reminding the audience in conclusion that *The Financial Expert* was a work of fiction, not a treatise or a document, and the story was about an individual and was not portraying a type." [1]

The present paper seeks to account for this aspect of Nayayan's fiction.

Narayan's stories are set in Malgudi, an imaginary district in South India. Like Hardy's Wessex, Narayan's Malgudi has life of its own. However, Hardy shows the disappearance of rural mode of living, and the urban culture impinging upon rustic life, whereas Narayan describes both the old and the new existing side by side. We find here pastoral simplicity as well as contemporary complexity of life. The era of science and technology has set in, yet the old way of life has also its votaries. Margayya in *The Financial Expert*, for example, wishes to start again his old business under the banyan tree towards the close of the novel.

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1. R. K. Narayan, *My Dateless Diary* (New Delhi: Hind Pocket Book, 1960) p. 49.

R. K. Narayan concentrates on orthodox family and incorporates numerous features of Indian life. He largely deals with middle and lower middle classes who constitute the bulk of India's population. He describes various relationships in his novels with family as the nucleus. It is a patriarchal society where father's influence is immense and all-pervasive. In *Swami and Friends*, the father is an archetype of all father-figures in Narayan's later novels. Chandran's father in *The Bachelor of Arts* behaves like a medieval knight. Ramani in *The Dark Room* is a tyrant who represents cruel men in India dominating over women.

Man-woman relationship is important in Narayan's fiction. In *The Bachelor of Arts* the Chandran-Malathi affair is warm and romantic. In *The Dark Room*, however, the obvious movement is froma tragedy to a dramatic anti-dimax. Savitri is not blind to the faults of her husband, but she meekly gives in and keeps quiet. Srinivas in *Mr. Sampath* has no inclination for the normal husband and wife relationship, and he doesn't hold it sacred. Shanti comes to live with him as his mistress, and he justifies his conduct : "Every sane man needs two wives – a perfect one for the house and a perfect one out for the social life... I have the one. Why not the other ?"

Bullying husbands like Ramani and patient wives like Savitri are a common feature of our traditional society. Woman is a helpless creature to be guarded by her father as a child, by her husband in her youth and by her son when she is old and a widow. A female child is ever a liability. In Shushila the novelist portrays an ideal Hindu wife rooted in Indian culture. According to the Indian custom, a guest is a god, and a typical Indian woman like Savitri has "a genius for making the existing supply elastic and transforming an ordinary evening course, with a few hurriedly fried trimmings, into a feast."

Paternal love is one of the significant refrains in his fiction. Here, no character despises children, at least his own. In *Swami and Friends*, when Swami is not back till nine at night, his mother anxiously waits for him and stands like "a stone-image looking down the street." Chandran's parents love him intensely. His father languishes when he is away for eight months. Ramani is genuinely concerned about his children. Savitri is maternal instinct compels her to return home, and submit to the brutalities of her

husband. Krishnan of *The English Teacher* loves his daughter immensely. The parents miss their daughter in their hunting expedition. When she falls ill, they suffer quietly. Srinivas in *Mr. Sampath* too loves his son. Margayya in *The Financial Expert* is chiefly interested in his son, who has come as a result of many prayers. Jagan of *The Vendor of Sweets* pins high hopes on his own son. Vasu, the man-eater of Malgudi, is the only major character who dislikes children, but he is held up to ridicule.

Then, Granny is an inevitable part of the Indian household an integral feature of extended family. Narayan maintains that in a joint-family children are well brought up as there is a congenial home atmosphere for them.

> ...the children do not feel lonely, as they generally spend their time with their cousins, uncles or grandparents. As a matter of fact, in a big household children hardly ever cling to their parents. They get a balanced training as they are always watched by someone or the other...[2]

Swami's granny in *Swami and Friends* is benign, talkative, and ignorant. Swami's formative period is influenced by his granny. After the night meal, " with his head on his granny's lap, nestling close to her, Swami felt very snug and safe in the faint atmosphere of cardamom and cloves." She is a prototype of thousands of Indian grannies, who uphold the values of traditional society. Sriram's granny in *Waiting for The Mahatma* is a woman of strong will and conviction. She scrupulously sends to the bank every pie which she receives on behalf of her grandson and gives the entire amount to him the day he attains maturity. She, being a pious Hindu, cannot touch the skin of a dead animal.

Indian society is down deep traditional and caste-ridden. In this country arranged marriages is a common phenomenon, and horoscopes are often compared before marriage. This happened in Narayan's own life and he had to bribe an astrologer to marry Rajam. Chandran in *The Bachelor of Arts* could not marry the girl he loved because the horoscope did not match. This problem crops up in *The Financial Expert* as well. The astrologer who

2. Ibid, p. 72.

thinks that the horoscopes of Balu and Brinda do not match is dismissed with a fee of rupee one, whereas the one who testifies that the two horoscopes match perfectly is rewarded with a fee of Rs 75-00 Raju's mother in *The Guide* is first sympathetic towards Rosie. But she changes her attitude completely when she learns that Rosie belongs to the dancing girls class. Srinivas's wife does not take food cooked by a non-Brahmin. It is difficult for Jagan ( *in The Vendor of Sweets* ) to accept a non-Hindu as his daughter-in-law. Raman's aunt in *The Painter of Signs* decides to go on a pilgrimage when she learns that Raman will marry a Christian girl. Belief in supernatural communications, such as we find in *The English Tecaher*, is prevalent all over the world But in the traditional society of India even educated people have implicit faith in such things

Narayan's novels describe many other characteristics of Indian society. For example, it is repeatedly shown that in India it is a disgrace to fail in an examination. Here many young persons suffer miserably when they cannot pass an examination. In ' Isawaran ' the protagonist is a student who drowns himself in the Saravu river because he fails in the intermediate examination for the tenth time He feels that his life is meaningless ; " If I can't pass an examination even with a tenth attempt, what is the use of my living and disgracing the world ?" In another story entitled ' Breach of Promise ', a youth makes up his mind to end his life in case he does not pass an examination. It is a fact that most students in India depend on " Guides " and critics and don't study the " texts " critically In ' On the Abuse of Criticism ' Narayan laments that our students read Verity and Bradley, not Shakespeare. Gajapali in *The Bachelor of Arts* refers to Dowden and Bradley quite frequently. The vagaries of private tuses are treated realistically in *Waiting for the Mahatma* and *The Man-Eater of Malgudi.*

The novels are deeply rooted in Indian soil and mode of existence. Here distinctive features of Indian life are artistically treated, nothing remains undigested. To take two examples, Narayan in his youth fell in love with Rajam. But the horoscope won't match. So he bribed the astrologer to get these matched. They lived happily for quite some time and had a daughter. But later Rajam died due to typhoid, leaving her husband perplexed and lonely. It was a grief beyond description. He was asked to describe his experiences

in his next novel, but he could not. Later he had an experience of telepathy through Dr. Paul Brunton and was convinced that a communication with an individual after death is possible. He practised psychic contacts. He felt relieved as he found a satisfying pattern operating in his life. *The English Teacher* is the result. In the novel, Krishna is a lecturer in English in a college. He lives with his wife, Sushila and small daughter, Leela. They plan to own a house, and at last select one. However, Sushila dies of typhoid and Krishna feels isolated and crestfallen. He sends his daughter to school and through her is acquainted with the Headmaster. Incidentally Krishna is spiritually connected with his wife–through letters she sends him messages to be careful and have interest in life. The emotional experience is converted into aesthetic one. The novel thus turns out to be a powerful work of literary art. Says Lily Blair: "....but let me tell you, in future you may do well or ill, but to have written *The English Teacher* is enough achievement for a lifetime. You won't do it again and can't even if you attempt.[3]"

The novelist had heard reports of famine in Mysore and a story in which some Brahmins prayed to God for rains in knee-deep water for eleven days, and then it rained. This is really the starting point of *The Guide*. As the novelist points out :

> At this time I had been thinking of a subject for a novel : a novel about someone suffering enforced sainthood. A recent situation in Mysore offered a setting for such a story. A severe drought had dried up all the rivers and tanks; Krishnaraja Sagar, an enormous reservoir feeding channels that irrigated thousands of acres, had also become dry, and its bed, a hundred and fifty feet deep, was now exposed to the sky with fissures and cracks, revealing an ancient submerged temple, cocount stumps, and dehydrated crocodiles. As a desperate measure, the municipal council organised a prayer for rains. A group of Brahmins stood knee-deep in water (procured at great cost) on the dry bed of Kaveri, fasted, prayed, and chanted certain mantras continuously for eleven days. On the twelfth day it rained, and brought relief to the countryside.[4]

3. Quoted by Narayan in *My Dateless Diary*, p. 171
4. R. K. Narayan, *My Days : A Memoir* ( Mysore : Indian Thought Publications, 1974 ), p. 167.

At that time he had the idea of *The Guide* in his mind. In the story the main motif is made operative unobtrusively. He writes with deftness and control. When Raju comes out of the jail, he has nowhere to go. In a village he is taken for a saint. He stays on and befriends the villagefolk. After sometime there is a drought in that region. The villagers quarrel with one another. Through the wrongly delivered message Raju has to carry on a fast for rains. He becomes famous; people from far and near come to see him. At last he looks about and says, "Velan, it's raining in the hills I can feel it coming up under my feet, up my legs." He sags down. The novelist never calls Raju a 'Swami' only the peasants regard him as such. Narayan, indeed, "manages by a miracle of perception and choice of detail to convey the Indian reality without a single false feeling or gesture.[5]"

His narrative technique enables Narayan to present a micro cosm of Indian Society. He avoids authorial comments and employs irony as a vision, not as a device His humour is never satirical He tries to offer an objective viewpoint and includes comments as a part of description and narration For instance, the growing relationship between Rosie and Raju is mentioned in this manner:

> At the door of number 8 I hesitated. She opened the door, passed in, and hesitated leaving the door half open. She stood looking at me for a moment, as on the first day.
>
> " Shall I go away ? " I asked in a whisper.
>
> " Yes. Good night," she said feebly.
>
> " May I not come in," I asked, trying to look my saddest.
>
> " No, no. Go away,' she said. But on an impulse, I gently pushed her out of the way, and stepped in and locked the door on the world.

Narayan narrates the story at two levels : the superficial stage where the locale is dominating for proper interpretation of episodes, the deeper stage where general truths are incorporated in artistic terms. To give an example, the account of Raju from a

5 Edwin Gerow, " The Quintessential Narayan " in *Considerations*, ed. Meenakshi Mukherjee ( New Delhi : Allied, 1977 ), p. 64.

scout boy to Raju the guide and swami is gripping, sensational. But when it is read as the story of what circumstances make one do, it acquires greater depth and meaning. The charm of Narayan's art lies in the fact that at both the levels the story holds the wedding quest. The casual reader is happy to see Sushila's ghost in *The English Teacher*, or to learn of the heavy rains in *The Guide*. However, a serious student of Narayan is left thinking whether the ghost is a real one, whether the rains referred to are only a coincidence or figment of Raju's feeble mind. G. S. Balarma Gupta holds that Raju is a hypocrite throughout, whereas Prof Satyanarayan Singh believes that the denoue'ment is not consistent with the earlier part of the novel.

Narayan views life from an aesthetic distance as a movement. While standing at a crossroad, he gets sufficient material for his writing. As he once observed : " I have to just stand at the market road for my material."[6] The general pattern embodied in his novels is that of a circle—an order, a disturbance for sometime, and later the order regained with some modifications. An individual work, within the framework of the traditional society. There occur situations with tragic implications. However the novelist, a comic genius, escape this as he accepts life as such. Despite difficulties, there is something mysterious in Indian life which keeps it going. It is the innate zest for life, pleasure in sheer living, its religious routine. This is what enables Indians ( and the novelist ) to take a quiet and generous view of life. As he points out : "Most Indians pray and mediate for at least a few minutes every day, and it may be one of the reasons why, with all our poverty and struggle, we still survive and are able to take a calm view of existence." [7]

Narayan's locale is Tamil land, as Anand's Punjab, Bhabani Bhattacharya's Bengal. Life in Malgudi primarily refers to life in South Indian villages. However, village reality in India is easily prototype of national life. Narayan thus presents a viable portrait of India. A great artist transcends the limitations of a regional writer. "All great art " says T. S. Eliot," has something permanent and universal about it, and reflects the permanent as well as the changing . . . . no great art is explicable simply by the society of

6. R. K. Narayan " Why take life too seriously ? An interview with P. Bhogaraju *Indian Express*, dated 6-4-79.

7. *My dateless Diary*, p. 54.

its time".[8] Narayan's theme is basically Indianbut profoundly human in an international sense. 'The Astrologer's Day' is Indian in tone and setting. But the last line, the ending, imparts to it a universal significance. *The Guide* depicts the progress of a guide to a Swami in Indian context. But the inherent theme..... that man in the crowded world is all alone, and he is what circumstances make of him—is true for every man in this world.

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8. T. S. Eliot, "A commentary," *The Criterion*, XII (Oct., 1932) p. 74.

□ □

# Chapter V

## Anita Desai : The Novelist who Writes for Herself

Anita Deasi, the author of four novels and two books for children ( one is in the press ) is a gifted novelist of our time. Although her books have not been quite a success so far as sales are concerned, she presents the dilemma of mordern man effectively. The long summer days of the North had indelible impression on her snsibility, In her early childhood she was influenced by *Wuthering Heights*. The novel struck her " with the force of a gale " and even now she vibrates to it. In her twenties D. H. Lawrence. Virginia Woolf, Henry James, and Proust influenced her more strongly. Lately, the novels of the Japanese writers, Kawabata and modern poetry have had immense impact on her. Jane Austen's novels strike " no sympathetic chord " in her, probably because of the " headier " influence of the Brontes.

Anita Desai started writing at the age of seven, and she writes, with considerable ease and spontaneity. Her writing time is in the morning for about 3½ hours a day. All her novels contain autobiographical elements. Writing for her is a compulsion. She once observed : " Writing is hell, but not writing is infinitely worse. " She holds no special critical theory of the novel. However, she has much consideration for "pattern and rhythm." She has no definite idea in regard to the ending when she starts a novel. But as she writes on, the conclusion becomes clearer and clearer, and at last inevitable. She does not model her major characters after real people. Every book to her is a stage of her mind, a stage which she has simply outgrown. The locales of her novels have varied a great deal. She has written of old Delhi, Calcutta, London, and Bombay. *Fire on the Mountains* 1978 Sahitya Academy Award-winner is set in Kasauli in Himachal Pradesh. In an interview ( with the persent writer ) she gave an illuminating account of her art and convictions:

*In regard to the construction of a novel, which are the three : beginning, middle and ending—would you emphasise most ?*

I would not emphasise one more than the other. One cannot exist without the other. Each must be in ratio to the other—not in the sense of space, but of value and emphasis.

*That is your philosophy of life ?*

I would rather *not* make a statement of my philosophy for two reasons : one, it seems rather a pretentious and pompous thing to do, and two, I feel strongly that if I am to make any such statement, it ought to be done in my books.

*Did you have 'The Ambassadors' in mind while writing 'Bye-Bye, Blackbird ?'*

No, I certainly did not have *The Ambassadors* in mind when I wrote *Bye-bye, Blackbird...* of all my novels it is most rooted in experience and the least literary in derivation.

*How often do you revise your novels ?*

I usualy revise my novels from one end to the other thrice, never less, and often more frequently. There are always at least three separate drafts, anyway.

*Why don't you use the stream of consciousness technique in your writing ?*

A very odd questions. I have often been accused.. I mean said to indulge in the stream of consciousness in a rather accusing voice.. but no one has ever asked me why I don't. I haven't actually because for an entirely subjective writer like myself, this could easily become self--indulgence. To an extent, all writing is self--indulgence, and therefore one has to observe a certain discipline, set oneself certain limits. If I didn't, the stream of consciousness would become a dangerous method for me. Then there is another reason; I didn't wish to exclude the prismatic quality of life from fiction... I find it too interesting and a purely subjective method of writing would make it impossible

*Have you ever attempted a portrait of modern man or woman in your novels ?*

No.

*Which of your novels according to you is, your masterpiece ?*

Please, please. A masterpiece ? The very idea is ludicrous. have read too many of them to imagine my own books as anything but minor works.

*What are your views about the modern Indo-Anglian fiction ?*

There is so little of it, it is impossible to hold any "views" on it . There simply isn't enough, in the sense of variety, value interest, significance.

*What is your opinion on the feministic tradition in Indian context ?*

I take it you mean the feministic tradition in literature in India. I am not aware of any. In fact, there are no traditions at all in the English written in India.

*How have your novels been received in India, and abroad ?*

Indian readers tend to be very cautious about voicing any appreciation of an Indian writer--in fact, they would not do so unless an English critic has led the way. There is a very cynical feeling that nothing can be expected of an Indian author — not if he is writing in English any way As for the West, an Indian writer is either totally ignored or, if he is noticed, then it is with a kind of half--amused wonder as at Dr. Johnson's dog : " Ah, he can actually walk on two legs ! " The solution is : " Ignore the reader, write for yourself."

Born on 24th June, 1937 at Massoorie, Anita Desai spent, her childhood in Delhi. Her father was Bengali, mother German. Her parents spoke English, Hindi, and German at home. Anita Desai, however, preferred to write and read English. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in English literature, and lives in Bombay. She writes short stories and book reviews. She is highly unassuming and modest. She does not have hobbies, though she has her own likes and preferences which are easily discernible in her writing.

Anita Desai studies the inner life of her characters in depth. Her novels follow an artistic pattern, embody her vision beautifully, and are fine specimens of involved writing. To some critics

the ending of *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* seems unassertive. However, it is to be noted that the pattern incorporated here is that of the monsoon. *Bye-Bye, Blackbird* has an impressive conclusion :

> Thinking momentarily of Sarah and Adit on their journey to India, he murmured, as a kind of parting salute to their end, also as a prayer to himself :
>
> "Make my bed and light the light,
> I'll arrive late tonight,
> Blackbird, Bye-Bye".

Here the depiction of Indians in a love-hate relationship is at once admirable and authentic. Similarly, the title of *Where Shall We Go This Summer* ? is suggestive and symbolic.

In *Cry, The Peacock* Anita Desai presents two contrastive outlooks. Whereas Maya is extremely sensuous, her husband has a cerebral attitude to life. Here is shown a conflict between two extremes, and the author seems to reject both. *Voices in the City* is mainly concerned with a quest for meaning in life. In *Bye-Bye, Blackbird* the novelist studies the problems of adjustment and acceptance faced by the Indian immigrants abroad. She reverts to the re elation of consciousness in her last novel to-date *Where Shall We Go This Summer* ? The novel dramatises a conflict between two types of courage : a powerful 'No' and a potent 'Yes' And the tangle is poetically resolved. *Fire On The Mountain* is the story of the turmoil is the mind of Nanda Kau . She craves for a secluded existence but at long last her peace is disturbed In clear *Light of Day* Anita Desai studies the existentialist theme of time in relation of eternity Anita Desai studies her characters with the confidence of a mature artist She is indeed one of the most distinguished and promising novelists of the younger set in Indian Writing in English.

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# Chapter VI

## A View of Where Shall We Go This Summer ? [1]

Anita Desai writes on the boredom and loneliness experienced by married women when they feel ignored and unwanted. It is a crucial period. The children grow up and become independent, while husbands are increasingly busy with their routine work. In this article an attempt is made to examine how searchlight is turned inward in this work.

Sita, the protagonist, feels sad and dull while living in her Bombay flat. She feels bored as the members of her family follow their own ways of life : Minaka, her daughter, has decided to be a scientist, her sons aer often quarrelling among themselves, and her husband, Raman. a factory-owner, is a matter-of-fact person. Sita had lived with some satisfaction with her father at Manori. Determined not to give birth to the ( already conceived ) fifth baby, she returns to Manori, to that very village-house, to squirm away from the hypocrisy and tedium of the middle class existence. But on the island too she is unhappy, restless, although she tries to hide her disappointment. She is an island on the island. At long last Raman visits her and they return to Bombay to face the wild realities of the mundane existence. On being asked about the fate of the fifth child, Anita Desai explained ( to the present writer ).

> It is born. It lives. It compromises. It accepts dullness, mediocrity, either closes its eyes to or else condones destruction, ugliness, rottenness. In other words it leads an ordinary life of the kind its mother tried so desperately to change only to find she could not. Perhaps, if it is true that the child in the womb is

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1. Atma Ram, "An interview with Anita Desai, *World Literature written in English* 16, 1 (April 1977), 97–98.

> affected by its mother's thoughts and actions during that period, it will inherit from her a kind of restlessness, a dissatisfaction of the spirit.....

That gives us a clue to the basic pattern of the novel. It seems to be an epitome of an irresistible yearning for a meaning in life. She remarks at one place : " I should have given my life a meaning " ( p. 86 ). To her experiences the Bombay flat and on the island appear contrastive in nature. These experiences are linked together inasmuch as they enable her to see into the mystery of life and offer a glimpse of purposeful existence. Even the ordinary incidents involving a wounded eagle or a crow interest and effect her. She had a peep into the meaning of life in her father, the magic man. Another glimpse of this reality she had in the meeting of lovers in a park—it was the moment she enjoyed most. She explains to her husband :

> " But you see, that was the only time I have seen that life has meaning. I thought my father's did – and then it turned out it didn't. And, normally, for all of us, everyone I know, it has none. But their lives seemed to have one – if not meaning, then a secret, a strange divine secret." ( p.107 ).

Does Sita succeed in her endeavours ? She makes desperate efforts, and is perhaps nearer her goal when she prepared, to welcome her husband on the island despite herself :

> Everything stirred, tumbled, rose around her. Strange, she thought – the man so passive, so grey, how could the very mention of him arouse such a tumult of life and welcome. She felt it herself – unwillingly, unexpectedly – but she felt it. ( p. 94 )

The emotion, however, proves flimsy, temporary. Raman notices only the dress of his wife, and has in fact come to the island to take Minaka to Bombay. He is not inclined to give a detailed account of his children and experiences in Bombay. Sita, with utter dismay, realises the sad fact of being betrayed by all. Says the novelist :

> Their betrayal had torn her open with such violence, now violence poured from her like blood. In it was also the

> shame, the disappointment : he had not come to see her to fetch her as she had supposed; he had come because Minaka had called him. He had betrayed her too. They had all betrayed her. Why ? ( p. 97)

The novel thus dramatises two kinds of courage : a struggle is between the positive No and a potent Yes. The conflict is resolved poetically in Lawrence's verse. Sita ultimately recalls the verse in full -- " The heifer, the grain, the slumbrous egg and she hereself " -- and understands everything in proper perspective. However, she does not achieve this harmony in life. Her children " only mean anxiety, concern - pessimism " ( p. 107 ) and her husband is the same person for her - grey, passive, unimaginative.

The story is told in three well-defined parts. The first section is devoted to Sita's coming to the magic island along with Minaka and Kiran. The second part deals with Sita's life at Manori twenty years ago. Here Anita focuses on Sita's father and his ways of life. In the final section the novelist returns to the Monsoon 1967, and takes up the remaining thread of the story. To convey the tumult in Sita's mind the novelist follows the pattern of monsoon winds. This enables her to delineate the inner life of her heroine.

The novel has numerous living characters. The nightmarish and adhesive Miriam, the heavy Mosses with his pungi, the adamant Minaka, the impatient Kiran leave a lasting stamp in the reader's mind. The most elaborately drawn character is Sita. Here Anita is perhaps at her best. She, for example, conveys the state of Sita's confused mind in symbolic gestures :

> "Oh, " she said, nuddling her hair with her hand, nuddling the sound with her feet, suddenly anxious to close this conversation and resume the silence of the past. (p. 108)

Desai is a keen observer and describes her characters in concise yet minute details. She thus offers a pen-picture of Raman :

> He never hesitated—everything was so clear to him and simple : life must be continued and all its business—Minaka's admission to medical college gained, new child safely brought forth, the children reared, the factory seen to, a salary spent. (p. 101)

The portrait of Kiran is interesting and fresh. He sounds convincing when insists on having his father's pen ( p. 96). His keenness to return to Bombay to possess one, two, three Dinky cars is understandable. :

> " Will we go to Bombay, now ? "
> " Later. "
> " In two minutes ? "
> " No, later. "
> " In ten minutes ? "
> " No, later. "
> " Shall I count hundred? After I have counted a hundred will we go ? " ( p. 100 )

The action and interaction of character is finely depicted where the parents discuss with different viewpoints Minaka's admission to the medical college while Kiran goes on asking for a new pen (pp. 96–97). The novelist, indeed, is alive to the inner life of her characters.

Since the novel incoporates a serious theme it is deficient in the comic or humorous elements. The author seems to share Sita's seriousness to a great extent. In the whole novel one finds only one light retort, and that too by a minor character, Joseph. This too occurs in the early part of the novel :

> "The memsahib is coming"
> "No! " They all cried in disbelief.
> "No one has come in twenty years," said Ali, cruelly.
> "No one will come now."
> "No ?" roared Mosses. " Then why did she send me twenty rupees ? " He nearly broke the glass as he slammed it down for emphasis.
> "For a lungi, you said ", said Joseph, the careless sceptic. (pp. 4--5)

The novelist relies heavily on words in Indian languages in order to create the desired effect. She inserts numerous words

from Indian languages-to mention a few, *chela*, *kaji*, *kurta*, *Jeevan*, *khana* and *burkha*. Many of the similes used are deeply rooted in the Indian soil. W. B. Yeats once asked Anand to use original dialogues in fiction : "Let us learn construction from classics and dialogues from ourselves."[2] Anita adapts English language to incorporate an essentially Indian sensibility with remarkable ease. Her dialogues are natural and meaningful.

Indeed, the novel is a poignant and moving story of Sita. It describes in artistic terms the tedium and monotony which haunt the married women in their later years. It dramatises a powerful struggle aimed at achieving harmony in life. It seeks to unravel the inner mystery of life, to discover the energy that nourishes spirit and discards pettiness, horror and hypocrisy of every-day life.

□ □

2. Quoted by Mulak Raj Anand in "Pigeon Irish and Pigeon English," p. 1.

# Chapter VII

## The Theme of 'Hunger' In So Many Hungers

Bhabani Bhattacharya embodies the theme of 'Hunger' in *So Many Hungers*. The novel deals with various types of hunger—some aspire for worldly success, whereas others aim at the intellectual attainment or spiritual progress. The central concern in the novel is the sacrifice characters make in order to win freedom. The purpose of this paper is to examine the theme of hunger so as to see how it imparts structural unity to the novel.

The novel describes the plight of peasants in Bengal during the great Bengal Famine of 1943. The Basu family lives in Calcutta whereas the grandfather has retired to the Baruni village to work with the peasants villagers for the independence of the country. He is called Devata for his noble deeds and patriotic fervour. He feels perfectly at home there and adopts a peasant family. Deeply aware of the predicament of India in the early forties, the grandfather knows that millions of peasants in Bengal are deemed to starve :

> Grandfather agreed. " Facts never tell much unless they are seen in terms of human experience. On his petty income the landed peasant can have just enough of his own rice to eat, no reserve for lean days. And the kisans —they must always be hungry save for a spell of two or three months in the year when they earn meals and a wage for field work. The hundred million kisans of India must always be hungry. It is a rare gracious day to have the stomach full. [1]

His son, Samarendra is an unscrupulous profiteer who in troubled water. His second son, Rahoul, a D. Sc. is diverted from

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1. *So Many Hungers* ( New Delhi : Orient Paperbacks, 1978 ), p. 25. All subsequent citations from the novel are from this edition.

research in scienee to the actual service of the common people, while the third, Kunal, loves army as a "career". Both Rahoul and Kunal go after their grandfather.

The scene is soon shifted to the Baruni Village and the Kajoli family. After a brief glimpse of the rural life and its leasurely race, we find clouds of war over Bengal. Then starts the disruption of village life. When the angry mob burns the *dakghar* and protest against their exploitation, the male members are arrested and put in jails. Kajoli is married to Kishore, a co-presined of Devata. Tradesmen, storemen, and capitalists take undue advantage of the war and create man-made scarcity. The peasants are slowly deprived of everything and rendered helpless beggars. Grief-skriken and starving they make for Calcutta in large numbers with the hope that the city will have some food for them. But their hope is belied and in the town they fare worse than animals. Devata is put in a jail for his involvement in the National movement. The Quit India movement gathers momentum in villages even and people like Devata, Kajoli's father, her husband strive hard to attain freedom. At long last the Kajoli family is shattered, and Rahoul alongwith others, courts arrest. He informs Samarendra on the phone: "Father, this is just to say good-bye. I am under arrest (p. 202)."

The hunger for food is one of the basic urges in man, and Bhabani Bhattacharya describes it "not in fragment but in its wholeness".[2] He dwells on the intense suffering of the people through the plight of Kajoli family and in scenes where common people suffer and languish. People with "hungers" of different types weave not in which the four folk are inextricably entrapped. The novelist presents a moving spectacle of human misery in which the only hope is the glimpse of the richness of human spirit.

The "hunger" for food is dominent in the novel. The consequences of the war and scarcity of food hit hard the village folk-they are deprived of everything, and as one cries at one place, "Hunger eats us — ". Their misery increases when the famine intensifies its hold. Even ants and animals come out to compete with the starving people for crumbs of food or dirt. At times hungry people eat with pleasure what animals refuse to take. In

2. K. K. Sharma, *Bhabhani Bhattacharya : His Vision and Themes* ( New Delhi : Abhinar, 1979 ), p. 46

this struggle animals often prove stronger than the suffering folk. On one occasion Onu digs a jam-tin from the rubbish and he feels delighted. But as he picks up the tin "a dog come snarling, claiming pessession. Onu dropped it in alarm and stepped back. He had no strength in his starved body to fight the dog" ( p. 170 ). Indeed, they are so miserable that death or injury would be a boon for them. Onu ardently prays in a temple for such a consummation :

> "I ask naught else from thee. Mother, I only ask this much : let a Japanese bomb hurt me, Mother.. only let a Japanese bomb drop from the sky and hurt me, Mother," (p. 190).

The calamity is somewhat natural, and help should come from man when it is deviced by God. However the rich around exploit the poor. The inhuman Government, greedy capitalists and unscrupulous traders and middlemen aggravate their suffering. The Government does little to fight the famine. As the novelist points out : "Guns, not grain moved into Bengal" (p. 153). That the rich have no empathy for the poor, is also underlined through an implicit linguistic nuance- "brother" used frequently by the tradesman does not mean what Onu calls "bhai."

Bhabani Bhattacharya views the theme of hunger in its widen perspective. When this urge concerns basic needs, it is understandable and excusable because all live by bread. It makes people helpless and wretched. A hungry man is forced to surrender his values, to act against his cherished convictions For example, owing to utter helplessness, Kajoli's neighbours give in and "sell" their daughters. The deeper implications of the famine are shocking : the emotional hardening and the death of the very spirit of people. Rahul realises this when he visualises the spectacle of object misery all around :

> The millions who had died gasping for food. The millions, who had yet to die of disease The uprooted millions who would live on without a living broken in body and spirit, shreds of humanity. The prisons packed with men and women who had dared claim a larger life for all. No enemy occupation could have effected a fiercer devastation ( p. 204 )

The adverse circumstances bring out the best in some people as the real nature of man often manifests itself in moments of crisis. At this level the spirit is invisible. At one time Onu wrests an empty tin from a dog and keep it for his friend. A miserable hungry man comes to surrender his ration card so that others with greater need could live on his ration. A woman lives a debased life to support others. Kajoli's mother kicks everything offered when she realises how the rich want to exploit the women folk in the family. She dies while making a sacrifice for her children. Kajoli too, resists all temptations. If at one time she gives in, it is primarily to help her family. And as she remembers of her grandfather, she at once spurns the offer and cancels her earlier commitment.

The sacrifice characters make to win freedom is the central concern in the novel. The Devata works for the independence of India through non-violent means. A true disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, he admires peasants and prefers to live in a village. Before his arrest he advises his followers to carry on their struggle and eschew violence :

> " Friends and comrades, do not betray the flag. Do not betray yourself, there is violence in your thoughts, that is evil enough. Do not make it worse by violence in action."

His personality serves as a unifying force in the novel. His message or memory inspires others in moments of distress.

As the story progresses, the hunger of the spirit becomes strong and all-pervasive. At this stage all sufferings tend to pale into insignificance. The Devata has attained this state in the earlier part of the novel. He works along Gandhian lines and regards his project as a long journey :

> " Ours is the harder task If we use the weapons of our enemy, we play into their hands. The supreme test has come. Be strong. Be true. Be deathless. " ( p.72 )

Rahoul and Kajoli steadily move towards this goal in due course of time. Towards the end Rahoul's wife Monju, too determines to follow the same course of life. She confesses this to her husband :

" So you begin your new journey ?"
" Monju, you know it was only a question of time."
" Darling " ... the softness of her voice caressed him-
" I, too, shall go your way soon. "
" You, Monju ? " The voice asked,
A pause, and then : " I am not the silly thing
I used to be, you know that." ( p. 203 )

Although ambitions of capitalists and tradesmen are satisfied yet they are completely dispirited and demoralised in the end. Samarendra, for example is broken in spirit : Kunal is reported missing and Rahoul is under arrest. Says the novelist : " When the bliss for which he had hungered for so many years came to him at last, it hit him like a curse, an evil thing!" ( p. 201 ). Soldiers of free India, on the other hand, emerge stronger than their sufferings. The hunger for freedom enables them to beax everything. Rahoul abandons his research. Quite conscious of his spirit's urges, he feels intensely for his people :

> Rahoul was completely self-possessed. Somewhere on the long, winding path of the years he had shed his fear of suffering and loneliness. What happened to him as an individual did not matter. It only mattered what happened to his people. He was indifferent, too, towards his captors, and his mind was without hate, without anger, in a nirvan of passionlessness. ( p.204 )

The prisoners find a new hope, a dawn coming over them, a flowering of the spirit : " Listening, Rahoul began to lose his sadness, for in that instant he saw the horizon of the east illumined by a new dawn " ( p. 205 ).

In sum, hungers of various kinds constitute the central theme of *So Many Hungers*. Different " hungers " lead to others and ultimately prove self-defeating, However, the " hunger " for freedom, a desire for a happier life for the common man is seen as a natural and legitimate aspiration of the spirit. This urge acquires strength and energy in distress and crisis. The evil is self-destructive. At long last the quest for natural gains leads to disillusionment, whereas the spirit of the suffering masses emerges triumphant. Rahoul along with other people ( *in the jail* ) feels a mysterious sense of victory, a sort of fulfilment :

> And strong exultation burned in his eyes and a strange intense look of *conquest* kindled in his face as he gave his voice to the united voices : The move they tighten the chains, the move the chains loosen. ( p. 205 )

*So Many Hungers* thus present a tale of suffering, but down deep it indicates a victory won after persistent struggle, a sense of freedom " growing out of the seeds of the spirit. "

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# Chapter VIII

## Raji Narasimhan's Search for An Image

The second generation of Indian English novelists chose specific aspects of life or themes. For example, Anita Desai seeks to unravel the mystery of life and the inner life of her characters. Mrs Nayantara Sahgal writes the political novel of India, whereas Shiv K. Kumar in *The Bone's Prayer* (1979) embodies the ethos of two cultures. Arun Joshi's work is characterised by a rich note of social realism. Raj Gill writes stories of passion and suspense. Kamala Markandeya studies the impact of modernity on tradition in terms of the East-West encounter. Chaman Nahal's novels show the author's sympathetic human involvement. Raji Narasimhan often selects a new theme – the liberated woman and her plight in the contemporary society.

In *The Heart of Standing in You Cannot Fly* ( 1973 ), and *Forever Free* (1979) Raji Narasimhan narrates the adventures of her heroines with woman's place and position, as the nucleus. *The Heart of Standing* is the love story of Asha and Narayan. Asha a passive girl living in a working woman's hostel, is attracted towards Narayan, whereas Narayan is infatuated by Mona, a modern girl. Although his relationship with Mona is described in some detail yet his relationship with Asha sews as the unifying force in the novel. Vijay Khanna, the leader of girls in the hostel, insists on better facilities for the boarders in the end, the rebel girls are arrested, but later let out by the magistrate. Narayan in the process realises his true vocation and offers to plead their cause through his writings :

> " I am a writer. I am a man of feelings. I only want an opportunity to express them, that's all. And you are my opportunity. You ! "

He wants to be their public relations officer.

> " I am a writer, " Narayan pleaded in the dark, looking at the black face of Vijay in star light. " I will do your

> publicity work for you, Miss Khanna. I will write all your notices, posters, pamphlets, everything. I will be your PRO, please, please." [1]

The novel poses two fundamental problems concerning woman —how to remove injustice done to her, how to find a suitable match for her. The first issue figures in the opening lines of the book.

> "She poured kerosene oil on her clothes and set fire to herself."
>
> "She died, then?"
>
> "Naturally."
>
> Sabita Devi swung her beautiful black eyes in an arc like a dancer. "That much heat. The heat within hert Inside her heart. And the heat without. On her chest. Tall red flames Can you escape two fires? Raging a once outside and inside? Women are born to suffer." [2]

Sabita Devi's son, Narayan, is asked to do something. The cruelty on woman is echoed time and again through the plight of women hostellers. And towards the close of the novel, Narayan is awakened to strike the iron. He, therefore, calls Miss Khanna to be his "opportunity."

The second motif is studied in terms of Narayan's relationship—with four women--Phoolo, Asha, Mona and Vijay. The author suggests that Vijay and Narayan suit each other in all respects. Phoolo confronts Narayan only when she needs something. Asha is his inferior. Her inferiority is stressed in her refrain: "Narayan jee". It is to be noted that Mona often calls Narayan just "Nari". She considers him his equal. Narayan is happy during his adventures and pursuit of free love with her. However, somehow he does not relish the union, for him it is not a smooth affair.

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1. Raji Narasimhan, *The Heart of Standing in You Cannot Fly* (Calcutta: Writers Workshop, 1973), p. 121.
2. Ibid, p. 9

> " Mona, this is disgusting, vulgar, I am not interested in your past, " he pushed the picture away.
> " I am a very frank person, Nari".
> " Don't rake up the past, Mona. Aren't you a new woman ? You've always claimed that". [3]

Mona had lived with Pierre - but they never loved each other. She sounds like an Emancipated Elder.

It is Vijay Khanna, who suits Narayan most. This is shown in terms of their ideology, height and choice of physical features. All the four women are mentioned when the tangle is finally resolved :

> Vijay straightened up against the neem tree trunk,
> a little fatigued. Suddenly.
> " You really wish to do this ?
> Why do you wish to do this ?"
> Standing, she was face to face with him, his equal in height. Asha was six inches below his shoulder.[4]

Raji Narasimhan attempts to get at the image of a working woman in the modern society. This serving woman is not a happy creature, as her destiny is uncertain. Vijay asks Asha to realize and accept her true self :

> " Asha, Vijay turned to her. You know, there are sometimes when you see yourself as just one, single person without anything or any person behind you or before you : as sometimes in the morning on waking up... ... You must accept this sad being in yourself, Asha, it is an honest being, your true being..... ."[5]

In *The Heart of Standing* the protagonist is unmarried, whereas in *Forever Free*. she is married against her wishes. She feels restive and aspires for full freedom, self-fulfilment. She passes from one man to another, every time disappointed and disillusioned. She, too, symbolises the fate of a working woman. At long

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3. Ibid, p. 98
4. Ibid, p.131
5. Ibid, p. 81

last, she comes back to her widowed mother, crestfallen and sullen. She finds in her mother a solace, an anchor :

> Tomorrow I will return her the armlet. It is not pressing now. And after that, perhaps, I will sing the songs she'd taught me. And I shan't break down. For I have no hole in my voice now. There's a face there, giving it flooring and ground support. [6]

The heroine, a liberated woman, follows free adventure and love, and ultimately gets disenchanted. The novelist seems to imply that the goal set by her can't be achieved in the present context. This first-person narrative, however constitutes a bold endeavour to incorporate the image of such a woman in artistic terms.

The struggle for the place of woman in society can be viewed as a conflict between two important points of view : one that stresses the womanly qualities of woman and her obligations to society; the other that emphasises the full humanity of woman and her rights to the full and free exercise of her faculties. The one is more idealistic and sentimental and the other more realistic and in keeping with the socio-economic needs of the time. The one finds expressions in the writings of Hanna More, the other in the works of Mary Wollstonecraft The first point of view stands for the womanly woman, the second for the " masculine " woman. Fanny Burney's heroines, though virtuous and beautiful, and ever weak and diffident. The frequent use of negatives and " dashes " on their part indicates lack of confidence in their general outlook. They are, in general, inferior to the heroes The Jane Austen heroine, however, is not essentially much inferior to the hero.

Raji Narasimhan concentrates on this problem and tries to resolve the issue at the image-level Her novels show her protagonist in search of self-fulfilment, in search of something that eludes the grasp. She shows in full measure the fortunes of a liberated woman. Narayan's affairs with Asha, Mona, and Phoolo were just pastimes, his union with Vijay Khanna is the implied solution. This reconciles the old and the new. In her second novel the author considers one important situation : plight of an educated woman married to a person she does not love. Actuated by her natural instinct for freedom, she stumbles through

6. *Forever Free* ( New Delhi; Hind Pocket Books, 1979 ), p. 157

so many men, and finally achieves her objective in the shape of an image: " Our common womanhood, battered but stubborn and living ".

In works concerning woman's position, the " female " is often studied in relation to two vital levels of existence : Love and Sex. And stories without psychological compulsiveness tend to degenerate into cheap sensationalism. This, however, is not true for *The Heart of Standing* or *Forever Free*. *Forever Free* is, in many ways, comparable with Raj Gill's *The Infidel* ( 1979 ), as the heroines follow similar careers. In *The Infidel* Krishen Wallia, a rich businesman about forty-eight, lives a happy, calm yet uneventful domestic life. His wife, Madhu, teaches in the Goverment College for Girls and is a conservative woman. She is satisfied as long as her husband is true to her. Mr. Wallia falls in love with Kamini, his secretary's sister, a sexually uninhibited girl of twenty-four. The love-affair goes on with tempestuous intensity. They live in Dehra Dun as passionate lovers. Kamini insists for more and more fun and they fail to return to Delhi on the due date. Their car is incidentally stollen and later involved in a serious accident. Mr. Wallia is reported dead, and from Dehra Dun he makes hectic efforts on the phone to convince people in Delhi that he is still alive. He quarrels with Kamini and holds her responsible for his misery. He attempts suicide, but to no avail. At long last his mind cracks, his wife, too, collapses in the hospital.

Raj Gill's story to an extent verges on commonplace gimmicks, he seems to stress some details too much to create the desired effect. Madhu and Kamini are sketched as two different characters, a striking contrast to each other. Mr. Wallia is deeply conscious of this difference :

> She often made him wonder as to how he came to marry Madhu, who was the opposite of Kamini. No temper. No lust for life. Loving to a fault. Tender, forgiving, and sacrificing. Never demanding. Never wanting. [7]

In a way these two women represent two aspects of Dr. Wallia's personality. The writer makes an effort to effect a

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7. *The Infidel* ( New Delhi : Orient Paperback, 1979 ) p. 56

synthesis between these two divergent forces in terms of art. Mr Wallia remembers his wife during his sexual adventures with Kamini. He quarrels with Kamini on this account. However he dies while striving to save Kamini from further disgrace and embarrassment. At one time he imagines his dream coming true. "He could already see himself journeying back to Delhi sitting between them, each holding one of his hands and whispering endearments in his ears".[8] However, the dream remains a dream.

Raji Narasimhan, on the other hand, succeeds in weaving together all details into a neat, artistically satisfying pattern. Her story is supple, her language chaste and straight. Her irony is quiet and situational. For example, the conduct of Narayan and Mona when they retire to the cave in Qutb Scene is disgusting and shameful. But paradoxically, the lovers call the country "filthy". Raji Narsimhan can tell her tale, "the narration of events in time sequence". The opening conversation in *The Heart of Standing* may appear some what imposed or irrelevant to a casual reader. However, as one goes through the novel, one understands the story in the right perspective.

Indeed, Raji Narasimhan holds a great promise as she handles a major contemporary theme with clarity and confidence. She adds a new dimension to the Indian novel in English. Her novels are marked for selective social realism and depiction of "new woman". Although future of the liberated woman bleaks uncertain, yet her depiction in art constitutes an interesting venture. Raji describes woman in quest of freedom and self-fulfilment with considerable success.

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8. Ibid, p. 171

# Chapter IX

## Nissim Ezekiel's Hymns In Darkness : An Evaluation

The Indian English literature was largely imitative and derivative at its initial stage in the nineteenth century. However, slowly and steadily it emerged into a distinct form. In the present age it seeks to embody modern sensibility in an idiom deepl y rooted in our cultural heritage. In field of poetry, writers like S. M. Ranchan, Arun Kolatkar, R. Parthasarathy, K. N. Daruwala, P. Lal, Dom Moraes, A. K. Ramanujan, V. D. Trivedi, Arvind Malhotra, Adil Jussawalla, Pritish Nandy, S. K. Kumar, Nissim Ezekiel and Kamala Das have made significant contribution.

Ezekiel's Hymns in Darkness is collection of twenty- seven poems composed in the sixties and the seventies. Some of them appeared earlier in standard journals in India and abroad. The poet deals with a variety of subject—everything from the plight of a railway clerk to an advice to a painter who attracts his attention, moves him to poetic heights. Most of the poems, though downright simple and direct, are intensely evocative, satisfyingly sensuous and suggestive. At time the poet chooses very ordinary incidents and transforms them into things of rare beauty. For instance, ' Good Bye to Miss Pushpa T. S.' describes an ordinary incident. However, the poem begins with such briskness and flow :

> Friends,
> Our dear sister
> is departing for foreign
> in two three days,
> and we are meeting today
> to wish her bon voyage.

In ' How the English Classes Ended,' the poet refers to an incident which may happen ( or has happened ) to any teacher of English. *Hymns in Darkeness* is philosophic and subtle, incorporating insightful observations in artistic terms.

One misses here the freshness of A Time to Change ( 1952 ), Sixty Poems (1953), and The Third (1959). However, one notices in these poems a distinct growth again in maturity. Ezekiel's poetic talent is perhaps at its best, his tour be force being the disarming irony. The way information about pictures in a book reaches the poet is meaningful. It is an amusing situation :

My daughter tells my wife
Who tells my mother
Who tells me.

Sometimes the entire poem is conceived in irony. For exemple, one is greatly impressed with the sense of sarcasm contained in the following lines of Ganga :

She always gets
a cup of tea
presented for her
from the previous evening.

The poet makes us laugh and think simultaneously. This is how he speaks on giving reasons :

She gave me
six good reasons,
for saying No,
and then
for no reason at all
dropped all her reasons
with her clothes.

Ezekiel proceeds systematically in the treatment of his subject. In God for instance, he tells about a saint, sketches the inward story of the man, and finally strikes a deep note. Chaucer says :

That if gold ruste, what shal iren doo ?

And Ezekiel remarks :

If saints are like this,
What hope is then there for us?

One notices a movement within the poem. Only two poems in this anthology use rhyme. Here lines are marked for pace and precision. Consider the following lines :

Confiscate my passport, lord,
I don't want to go abroad
Let me find my song
Where I belong.

In others the poet adopts free verse, and his language flows like a fountain of water. Mark the rhythm and impulsiveness conveyed in lines like these

Your breasts are small
tender
like your feelings.
This is Pooh's world ;
you love
the Pooh in me.

Indeed Ezekiel writes with considerable ease and avoids ambiguity and diffusion.

Ezekiel's images and symbols are concrete and relevant. In Poem of the Separation reaction in the lover's life is aptly compared to the blast of a bomb :

To judge by memory alone,
our love was happy
When the bombs burst in Kashmir;
my life had burst
and merged in yours.

Similarly in London the basement room is symbolic, and the poet has, be one "a permanent and proud/metaphor of struggle : In the Couple the poet believes in the minimum politics of survival and success ; Indeed, Ezekiel's similies are telling, his phrases are revealing. Many of the poems are characterised by succinctness of language, freshness of approach and originality of ideas. The poet does not tell us about the nature of readers he writes for. But he is certainly 'a man speaking to men'. His railway clerk opens his heart to the reader and speaks in the tone of great intimacy :

I am never neglecting my responsibility,
I am discharging it properly,
I am doing my duty,

but who is appreciating ?
Nobody, I am telling you.

He establishes a rapport with the readers, although some of the subjects should be fit topics for A. Pope, too. His poetry makes an immediate appeal to readers in India as well as to those living overseas.

If a great writer grasps reality in terms of beauty and truth, Ezekiel may not be a major poet of India. But his poetry upholds great promise. Loves, as William Walsh observes, " both inward and detached, " it is " the task of love and imagination " Ezekiel may not be always great and inspired, but when he is, he is sublime.

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# Appendix I

## Some Studies on Mulk Raj Anand

Cowasjee, S. *So Many Freedoms : A Study of the Major Fiction of Mulk Raj Anand.* Delhi : Oxford University Press, 1977. p. 205, Rs. 60.

Singh, Satyanarayan (ed). *Kakatiya Journal of English Studies.* (Anand Number), Vol. II, No. 1, Spring 1977, Kakatiya University, pp. 270, Rs. 15/ $ /5 £ 1.5.

Sharma, K. K. (ed). *Perspectives on Mulk Raj Anand.* Ghaziabad : Vimal Prakashan, 1978, pp. xxx + 188, Rs. 50 / $14/£ 5. 50.

Alastair Niven, *The Yoke of Pitu : A Study in the Fictional Writings of Mulk Raj Anand,* New Delhi : Arnold Heinemann 1978, pp. 188, Rs. 40.

Saroj Cowasjee. *Coolie : An Assessment.* New Delhi : Oxford University Press, 1976 pp. 62, Rs. 5.

"Mulk Raj Anand is a major Indian English writer who has to his credit a large number of publications..... fifteen novels, seven collections of short stories, and many books on art, culture, education, etc. He has been indeed central fact of Indian literature for so long that it comes to people as a bit of a surprise to find him still in full spate." [1] More than half a dozen critical studies of his writings have appeared and the theme of Humanism in Anand has been done over four times. However, some critics dismiss him summarily, while others offer a somewhat general introduction to his works. There is also a growing feeling that his novels have been either underrated or misunderstood. N.K. Naik's approach is basically traditional.[2] whereas Dr Berry sees in him a Moscow

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1. *The Yoke of Pity,* p. 11
2. Naik, M. K. *Mulk Raj Anand,* New Dehli : Arnold-Heinemann, 1973.

stooge.[3] Dr. Sinha seems to be much more balanced yet not elaborate in his comment. Anand is now a controversial novelist with numerous admirers and denigrators. Even such a distinguished critic as K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar finds it essential to revise his judgement after re-reading his novels: "I find that Dr. Gupta is not satisfied with *The Private Life of an Indian Prince*, and has also quoted from what I wrote many years ago, in support of his view. I have since re-read the novel... and I now see things that I couldn't see before."[4] The recent critical studies of Anand's writings aim at fresh assessment of his works.

The book entitled *So Many Freedoms* by Saros Cowasjee is a study of the major fiction of Dr. Mulk Raj Anand. The writer has done some worthwhile research on this eminent author. He has earlier published two books: *From Writer to the Editor* and *Coolie : An Assessment*. Saros Cowasjee has two purposes in view. In the first place, he is keen to attempt a perspective analysis of Dr. Anand's novels, in the light of his nature and nurture. Secondly, he feels that the charge of writing documentary novels in respect of Anand is exaggerated. Like Iyengar, Cowasjee too believes that the novels like *Private Life of an Indian Prince* have not been appreciated fully. Cowasjee begins his book with an introductory chapter on the shaping spirit of the novelist, aptly named, "The making of a Novelist." It deals with Dr. Anand's life conveniently, divided into three periods. The *years from* 1905 *to 1925* constitute the formative period. Here Cowasjee concentrates on the novelist's childhood and adolescence against the backdrop of two diametrically opposed pulls of the religious and social convictions of his parents. The *years 1925 to 1945* are designated by Cowasjee as *The Years Abroad.* Now the critic gives a brief account of his experiences and adventures abroad. This period sees Anand emerging as a budding young writer. Cowasjee refers to the roles played by various writers like T. S. Eliot, Herbert Read and Bonamy Dobree in shaping Anand's literary tastes, and laments that due recognition has not been given to the help given by Dobree to the novelist ( p. 18 ). During this period Anand was introduced to the tenets of Marxism and developed a humanistic

3. Berry, M. *Mulk Raj Anand : The Man and the Novelist.* Amsterdam : Oriental Press, 1971.

4. Sinha, K. N. *Mulk Raj Anand.* New York, Twayne, 1972.

attitude to life. Earlier Margaret Berry had also supported this contention : " After 1945 Anand's literary theory, if not always his practice, stresses humanistic-oriented values. ( p. 14 ). Anand now viewed literature and the arts as mainly " religious and philosophical derivatives". ( p. 18 ). Then, Cowasjee dwells on the last phase . . . 1946 to date .... and sketches Anand's life in this country after his return in 1948. He describes the author's efforts in his self-assigned task of re-constructing a new India, the vilification he endured from both his party and the Congress, and notwithstanding all, the profusion of his literary output. He builds up the chapter with the help of Dr. Anand himself, drawing heavily on Anand's letters to him.

In the second chapter, entitled " *The Epic of Misery*, " Cowasjee shows how the miserable lot of the people around him moved the novelist to recreate the folk consciousness in his earlier works like *Untouchable Coolie*, and *Tow Leaves and a Bud*. The Anand hero undergoes a gradual progression in his caste and social standing. In the first novel he is a sweeper, in the second a coolie, and an uprooted field-labourer in the third. They are all victims of circumstances : " Princes or paupers, all his heroes are victims, some of society's making, others of their own. And he has for them.... a Christ-like, all-embracing, compassion." ( p. 41 ) Cowasjee analyses the three novels to show how effectively the author portrays the misery of an underdog in a harsh society. He cites opinions of several critics to substantiate his argument : Cowasjee asserts that *Coolie* firmly established Anand as " one of the most interesting revolutionary writers of our time ". The work contains within it the germs of his strength and weakness as a novelist. He builds up the chapter with the help of letters written by various critics to Dr. Anand.

Cowasjee devotes the next chapter to the Lalu Trilogy : *The Village* ( 1939 ), *Across the Blackwaters* ( 1940 ), and *The Sword and the Sickle* ( 1942 ). He examines these nevels and states that the Trilogy is the best examplification of Anand's " mechanistic Determinism." The IV Chapter is devoted to the study of *Big Heart* ( 1945 ), and *Private life of an Indian Prince* ( 1953 ). Cowasjee pin-points the distinctive features of each and cites various critics in confirmation. He shows how the novels had been overpraised or under-estimated. In the end he concentrates on the later novels and fictional autobiographies. He maintains that

the *Private Life of an Indian Prince*, which provides a fitting climax to Anand's distinguished career as a novelist, also rings the curtain down on it. He seeks to answer one question : Why are the author's later novels unsuccessful ? The book has a good bibliography and an Index appended to it.

Cowasjee's study of Anand's major fiction has some distinct qualities. He adopts no particular approach but employs various schools of criticism as and when they suit him. His analysis is systematic and perceptive. The constant complaint about the Indian-English novelist is that many biographical details are not available. Cowasjee rightly remarks : " Little information is available on Anand's personal life." ( p. 12 ). With the help of the novelist, he attempts to reconstruct a viable account of the writer's life. This enables him to explain away in some detail the charge of social documentation in Anand's fiction. Anand thinks that literature is to reveal life in all its contraries and in the process to create an awareness in the reader. Thus the social impulse is central to his writing In fact, " A work of art, be it a novel or a painting or a play, is first of all a social event ". ( p. 38 ).

However, this work is not without some blemishes. The opening chapter is quite impressive, though the rest of the book appears to be just a loosely strung collection of his reviews of Anand's novels. The analysis of the novels appears somewhat sketchy, and the scrutiny of the novels is not always in relationship with the existing critical scholarship in the area. More importantly, there is not a single tangible thesis that emerges from Cowasjee's discussion. The book looks a central concern which is to be found in Dr. Gupta's book on Anand. Some observations are rather casual and misleading For example, his comments on Anand's style are rather inconsistent. At one place he states that Anand " writes plain bad English " (p. 95 ). In the same paragraph, he asserts that ' Anand and Raja Rao are among the first and best exponents of Indian English. ' ( p 95 ). A couple of paragraphs later, he writes that Anand's prose is rhetorical, full of clitches and florid, that " whole passages are written in inflated, lofty jargon " ( p. 96 ). There is no attempt to assess Anand as a novelist in terms of various aspects of the novel. And the book is without a conclusion. Despite all these limitations, Cowasjee's book is a sensitive study of Anand's novels.

Dr. Satyanarayan Singh has brought out the Anand Number of his Journal. He maintains that Anand's works need a revaluation, particularly in reference to the literature produced in India. According to him, there is also a need to apply Indian Aesthetics to examine his writings. " Any rigid adherence to a set of literary beliefs might hamper one's communion with the spirit of works which have their own diffusions " ( p. iv ). Since a cross-section of Indian public has tried to discount Anand for his repudiation of irrelevant traditions, Dr. Singh advocates a fresh study of Anand's novels and claims that " the essays in this issue develop in varied ways a new focus on Anand's projections into revolutionary romanticism. " ( p. iv ). The volume contains seventeen essays on various aspects of Anand's novels, " notes " on five of them and an After-word by Mulk Raj Anand himself. Eight of the " pieces " have appeared earlier in journals of repute in India and abroad.

For Jack Lindsay, the writer has a definite place in the world literature, because " for the first time in Anand's works India is defined on a grand scale " ( p. 2 ). Anand has thus a historical significance, too. R. T. Robertson discusses *Untouchable* as an archetypal novel. He describes it as " the best example we have in Commonwealth literature of the archetype of the conflict between society and the individual who is trying to free himself from it. Niven concentrates on the " Lalu " Trilogy He discovers in Lalu " an embodiment of the spirit of India's masses " ( p. 37 ).

Binay Krishna Bhattacharya discusses *Two Leaves and a Bud as a testament* of man's inhumanity to man

This book has some outstanding features. Some of the contributors try to assess Anand's novels in relation to contemporary literature. The study, whether textual or comparative, is often analytical and illustrative. Topics like " Anand in Novels " and " Anand's idea of the novel " are entirely new However, one feels that a few particles are too brief and general. Paradoxically enough, the collection includes no article on the novelist's language (Pigeon English ) or style although E. Nageswara Rao makes a contrastive study of the dialogues of E. M. Forster and Anand. The question of transcreation of folkspeech and rougher brogue of Panjabi in Anand's English is interesting. The novelist has expressed his views

on the subject at length from time to time.[5] *The Kakatiya Journal* would have gained considerably if some contributor (preferably from North India) had tried to examine the Pigeon-English of Anand and collate the influence of Gaelic on the Irish writers and that of Panjabi-Hindustani on Anand's English. Dr. Satyanarayan Singh has at times placed together articles of unequal length and merit. The technical aspects of Anand's writings have been ignored. It is yet a praiseworthy attempt to collect in one volume critical material on one author and the editor of the Kakatiya Journal has done a commendable job of it. One can't ask the various writers to contribute on specific topics at a short notice. Yet, these articles cover a wide range of Anand's fiction and provide a worthwhile perspective of the author's sensibility as a writer. Here an attempt is also made to assess his literary talent from a typically Indian point of view.

Dr. K. K. Sharma's *Perspectives* on *Mulk Raj Anand* proposes to compensate for some deficiencies. Dr. sharma maintains that despite numerous studies on Anand, there is not available any thorough "evaluation of Anand's mind and art." His volume, therefore, examines his fiction from more than one critical stance *Perspectives* contains sixteen essays, four reprinted from K. K Sharma's earlier book entitled *Indo-English Literature* (1977). Dr. Sharma has made a judicious selection of his contributors and topics. It is a collection with specific purpose and direction. Instead of including articles on much-discussed novels, he prefers critical papers on different traits of Anand's art. In "Introduction" the editor assesses the novelist's views on various aspects of the novel. In his essay 'Why I write?" (it was included in the *Kakatiya Journal*, too) Dr. Anand recounts in some detail the incidents and experiences that made him a creative writer. Dr. G S. B. Gupta believes that one should take into account Anand's whole work in order to understand him fully. He thinks that "no critical work on him can be deemed thoroughly complete unless it takes into consideration his various other books and articles on fine arts. culture, education, politics and so on, plus the practical efforts he has been tirelessly putting forth in the great cause of international

5. Foreword to G. S. Balarama Gupta's *Mulk Raj Anand: A Study of* his Fiction in Humanist Perspective. Bareilly: Prakash Depot, 1977, vi.

peace and amity, and in that of the welfare of man in general" ( p. 15 ). In this paper, Dr. Koushik finds Maxim Gorky's ideology embodied in Anand's[6] fiction.

Some contributors make very insightful observations...Saros Cowasjee on *Untouchable*, M. K. Naik on Anand's short stories, Dr. Rameshwar Gupta on " The Gandhi in Anand ", Prof. Harish Raizada on " Ethics and Aesthetics ", S. C. Harrex on structures in Anand's works. Gillan Packham attempts an appreciation of Anand in the historical context. He traces the influence of " Thirty's Movement " on Mulk Raj Anand. For Suresh Nath Anand's fiction constitutes a " literature of protest. " C. P. Mathur holds that the problem of national integration has been touched upon at various levels in Anand's work. His novels, therefore have great relevance today : " Addressing himself from a truly cosmopolitan platform to all the English-knowing Indians and foreigners, he can prove it to be a bridge of understanding between the North and the South, the Hindu and the Muslim, and the East and the West " ( p. 64 ).

Here Anand's works have been examined from diverse angles For example, Deiter Reimenschneider examines Anand's writings in the light of Marx's definition of human labour, whereas Ron Shepperd attempts a re-appraisal of the alienated hero. Suresh Nath sketches the major causes that lead to alienation. The essay on " Ethics and Aesthetics " could be studied side by side with H. C. Harrex's " Quest for structures". The comparative evaluatiot. of Anand and Tagore, and the study of Anand's writings vis-a-vis Gandhian ideology constitute meaningful approaches to the study of the novelist. Dr. Gupta, moreover, has included both fans and detractors of Anand so as to present a balanced pic'ure. The book could have an added advantage if some of the articles were a bin more comprehensive and the burden of too much documentation had been lessened.

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6 For instance, in the following critiques :

(i) *The King Emperor's English* ( 1948 )

(ii) " Pigeon-English : Some Notes on Indian English Writing', *The Karnatak University Journal* ( 1972 ).

(iii) " Pigeon-English & Irish-English", *Commonwealth Quarterly* ( March 1979 ).

Anand is a versatile genius who needs a deeper exploration of his works. Most criticism on him has been of the traditional and general type. Alastair Niven attempts a critical examination of his fictional writings from a special point of vantage in his *Yoke of Pity*. Some aspects of Anand are repeatedly mentioned..for in stance, his use of Indian English, his social realism, etc. At the root of derogatory criticism of the novelist is perhaps the element of didacticism, the abundance of allegedly unreasoned statements in his works. For example, Raji Narasimhaiah feels that the didactic becomes non-creative in the last part of Anand's first novel :

> " O.. a didactic sequence in an Indo-English work of fiction only too easily becomes non-creative.... The whole of the concluding portion of Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* .. bears this out. " [7]

Dr. Niven, therefore, aptly takes up basic issue for fuller examination. *In The Yoke of Pity* : Can great literature be didactic ? He studies the fictional writings of Anand in the light of this problem. In this context he holds that Anand's works need an revaluation and that the external point of view would have its own advantage :

> ' Anand stands in need of revaluation.... a British reader of his work may, paradoxically, be able to assess Anand's contribution to the art of fiction more objectively than some of those who know better the novel's terrain and the author's personality. ( p. 11 ).

Prof Niven outlines the distinctive features of Anand's fiction in the introductory chapter and undertakes a fresh study of hi- major novels and short stories. He draws heavily on primary and secondary sources and uses his correspondence with the novelist to throw light on various issues. Alastair Niven shows that Anand makes a persistent attempt to ' find the whole man", he is " more concerned with man and all the values they live by then with any single value or set of values in themselves. ( p. 119 ). The blend of intellectual desire for objectivity and the emotional urge for commitment " account for the central energy and tension of this

7. Raji Narasimhan, *Sensibility Under Stress*. New Delhi : Ashajanak ( 1976 ), p. 4

major twentieth century novelist". He attempts to describe the goodness of heart in terms of the vibrations of the rustic hero's speech. Dr. Niven ably defends the last passage of *Untouchable* as this part of the novel " carries convictions through the intensity of emotion, the spirit of determination and commitment " (p. 55) His discussions are plausible and meaningful because these incorporate one integrated pattern.

The author of *The Yoke of Pity* follows a logical pattern as he begins with the autobiographical novels. He rightly thinks that these works have been underrated. Anand is a conscious artist who embodies his deeply felt experiences in his writings. For example, he shows in *Seven Summers, Morning Face, and Confession of a Lover* how the patriarchal society inhibits the children and seldom allows them to grow to adulthood. In this respect the reading of Butler's *Way of All Klesh* work him from subservience and Kafka' letter to his father released the vibrations of protest. Dr. Niven's comment, therefore is insightful and original. The author examines the essence of Anand's work in terms of its context: *the yokes of pity*. Prof. Niven views great literature as a product of a specific phenomenon, and draws our attention to the social· political movements that influenced Anand. He believes that " in considering the impact of his writing the reader should be aware at least of how Anand's first chance to view India objectively in the late 1920's coincided with the moulding influence on his thought of his studies abroad " (p. 119).

Although Dr. G. S. Balarama Gupta's study of Anand (1967) is revealing, yet in general earlier critical works on Indian writers have been rather introductory, repetitive, and one-sided in approach. However, Dr Niven avoids these pitfalls and dwells on the theme of his choice with considerable clarity. He quotes extensively from Anand's letters and secondary sources He examines the novels in detail yet keeps the thesis of his work straight. He also concentrates here on Anand's lesser known work. Being a foreigner he brings to bear on Anand's fiction a greater measure of detachment and passion. A sympathetic study of Anand's work from a significant point of view thus emerges. Perhaps the book could still be more impressive and a bit more comprehensive if the writer appended an index. All in all, *The Yoke of Pity* is a leading study of Anand's writings. It should provoke further research on the novelist as various aspects are studied here from

new angles. The book stresses the relevance of biographical criticism to Anand's fiction and implicitly underlines the need of a literary biography of this intellectual giant. It is, indeed, a classica study of Anand's novels.

Saroj Cowasjee's monograph on *Coolie*–Anand's most representative work—is significant, since the critcic-concentrates on one work in some detail. In the first section the writer sketches the salient featurs of Anand as a writer. Thereafter, his literary creed is underlined keeping in view Anand's own assertions and convictions. In the central section of the book Cowasjee comments on the structure of the novel and its characterization. This part is elaborate and most effective. In the end, he makes some observations on Anand's prose style. Thus the critic seeks to examine *Coolie* in the proper context and offer a fair assessment of the novel.

Cowasjee's pattern is clear, his approach is systematic and illustrative. He provides numerous examples in support of his arguments. He adopts an approach of comparative study and gives ample evidence from primary and secondary sources. Although he is an admirer of Dr. Anand, yet he is also aware of the novelists weaknesses as an artist. Sometimes Cowasjee feels that Dr. Anand forgets the limitations he has imposed on his characters and thus strikes a false note. For example, a nigh watchman thus directs the coolies to move away from a shop: "Go away from precincts of this shop. Lala Tota Ram does not allow any coolie to lie about near here. There is a cash-box in the shop". Here Cowasjee makes a significant observation: " Now what watchman would tell the coolies whom he suspects of possible thievery, that there is a cash-box in the shop? ( p.33 ).

Here *Coolie* is largely studied in relation to *Untouchable*. Cowasjee appreciates Anand's portrait of peasants, and believes that the novelist presents the village folk in realistic colours. " Anands rustic characters, like those of Wordsworth and Hardy, reveal a solemn dignity born of long suffering " ( p. 40 ). Even the names — Munoo, Lalu, Gangu--- are indicative of unsophisticated life. Cowasjee makes a very pertinent and original remark in respect of Mrs. Mainwaring. According to him, the novelist gives too much attention and space to her' " What is wrong with this ( last ) chapter is that Anand gets so involved pillorying the Anglo-Indian woman that he loses sight of his here " ( p. 53 ).

One, however, does not find Cowasjee always persuasive. When he tries to justify Minoo's coming to Simla, he does not care to explain the stand taken earlier by celebrated critics like Jack Hindsay, C. D Narasimhaiah, and Meenakshi Mukherjee. As times quotation from the text takes much space and the account tends to be descriptive rather than analytical. For example, Cowasiee seems to give inordinately long quotations when he wants to present a glimpse of Munoo's life ( pp.38-39 ). Sometimes he appears to take an ambivalent position, particularly in respect of Anand's Indian English. For instance, it is not easy to reconcile such statements ' " Anand's straining for effect accounts for much bad writing " ( p. 58 ); " Inspite of lapses into questionable prose, much of Anand's writing is first rate and stands comparison to the best in Indo-Anglian fiction " ( p. 60 ). Perhaps it were better if Cowasjee had written a few more pages and straightly confined himself to remarks on Coolie alone, and further, if he had drawn comparisons with other Indo-Anglian writers too.

In reality one is impressed with the earnestness and dedication that the learned scholars have brought to bear upon the criticism of Anand's fiction. These studies provide glimpses of the new criticism of Anand done without pride or prejudice. The analysis of the individual novels are particularly revealing, and books like *The Yoke of Pity* certainly break new grounds in the field. The external critic offers much more appreciative and penetrative account of the novelist. This is what the author himself feels, " In general, I find that foreign critics are far more understanding of the intentions than many of the Indian professors. "[8] Contributions of scholars like R. T. Robertson M. Fisher and Dr. Reinenschneider are telling examples in point. Our academicians, ironically enough, often lack the intimate knowledge of the people Anand writes about. For a detailed study of Anand's aspect of the novel, our writers still awaits his critic. These studies, by implication, highlight some viable topics on Anand's writing for further research and Serutiny----Anand's short stories, his women, his language, characterisation in his novels, Parent-Child reations in his fiction, Education in his works, and so on. Most critics establish their contentions with

8. Mulk Raj Anand in a letter dated 24 November 1977.

the help of answers supplied by the novelist. It is advisable to read his novels as works of evolution of consciousness. He requires a comprehensive literary biography of Anand for a fuller understanding and appreciation of his writings.

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# Appendix II

## Mrs. R. P. Jhabvala : An Estimate

Mrs. Jhabvala is a European writer who lives in India. She tries to incorporate the clash of backgrouds in her writings as her favourite theme is east-west encounter. The major motif in her fiction is the marital dirsomance which may arise from maladjustment. Mrs Jhabvala writes about India. Some critics maintain that her books are among the best writings about India, whereas others consider these minor works of art. It is advisable to reconsider the issue keeping in view her chief concerns in her Novels.

I

Mrs. Jhabvala's works contain love stories set in India though the lovers are not always unmarried.

*Esmond in India* dwells on Esmond's life in this country. Shakuntala, a young fashionable lady, is attached to Esmond, a married man. Esmond's wife, Gulab, lives a passive existence because the spouses have different temperaments and tastes. At long last Esmond is fed up with Gulab as well as India. He is friendly with Betty and decides to leave for England in her company. Gulab finds herself alone and without protection lives with her mother. Gulab's mother is happy to see her daughter in her house again.

*To whom she will* deal with the love story of Amrita and Hari. Amrita's grandfather wants to send her to England but she prefers to stay with Hari in India. Although Hari is conscious of the feelings of Amrita, his response to her never crossed the boundaries of superficial adolescent enthusiasm. He loves Amrita but at the same time cannot get over the charms of other girls. Krishna Sen Gupta, a paying guest at Amrita's home, asks Hari if he would like to go to England with Amrita and marry her there. Hari avoids a direct answer, and starts telling him about his love

for Amrita. Krishna tells Hari that shortly she will be leaving for England, and asks him a direct question, "Would he like to go with her?" Amrita's grandfather approved of the choice of Amrita. Vazir Dayal, a non-conformist, wants to help Amrita and Hari with money. But as Hari is not sure of himself all the plans fail. Hari goes to see his prospective bride and is drawn towards Sushila Anand. So Hari falls into the arms of Sushila Anand and Amrita marries Krishna Sen Gupta. He had genuinely tried to fill the gap between them, but when he could not, he filled the gap himself. The novel, *To whom she will*, ends on a note of reconciliation achieved through marriage.

*The nature of passion* concerns the affairs of Lala Devraj Verma's family. In the opening chapter the Lala reflects on his family affairs at his children and feels happy over their lot. In the past he was a middle class man, but now he is quite different. He loves his youngest daughter Niumi, most and is keen to see her well settled in life. Nirmal has a brief affair with Feroze. She is engaged to Amar Nath's son Kulu, and seems to have everything she drempt of in her life.

*The Householder* concentrates on the problem of a householder. Prem, the householder, faces difficulties as a teacher, as a husband and as a father. He is a Hindi teacher working in Khanna's private college getting Rs. 175/- P. M. He cannot plea for higher pay or reduction of house-rent though these obserues him intensely. Prem is not happy with Indi. There is a note of dissonance in their marital relations but there is also attraction especially after the birth of a child. In between the pages we meet Sawmiji, Hans and Kitty who are trying to achieve spiritual values. Here the westerners, like Hans and Kitty, banker after spiritualism and Indian philosophy and Easterners like Prem, Sohan Lal and Chanddha, banker after materialism.

*In Get Ready for Battle* we find that the materialists have an upper hand over the spritualists and idealists. But they can't achieve the victory completely as the spiritualists and idealists never give Gulzari Lal, a materlalistic person, lives separately from his wife, Sarla Devi who is a spiritualist as well as idealist. Gulzari Lal has got a mistress Mrs. Kusum Mehra ( a widow of a Military Officer ) who looks after him as well as his householder. Gulzari Lal wants to put his son by Sarla Devi, Vishnu in the

business. Vishnu is married to Mala and has got a small daughter Priti. They all live together. Mrs. Sarla Devi lives with her brother, and is usually busy with her religious rites. She wants to help the poor and the downtroddon, but her son is materialistic like his father. Kusum tries hard to get her relations legalized with Mr. Gulzari Lal. For this Gulzari Lal has to take divorce from Sarla Devi for which he is reluctant. Mrs. Kusum meets Brij Mohan, Sarla Devi's brother and persuades him to agree to it. Sarla Devi doesn't bother about these worldly things. We have another character Gautam who is also an idealist and imagines a world where the human beings can live in unity with nature. Gulzari Lal and Kusum starts in total contrast with Sarla Devi and Gautam.

In A *New Dominion* the novelist has described social, economic, moral and spiritual conditions of contemporary India. It has been done by dividing the work into various episodes presented under subheading like Lee Travels, Gopi comes to tea, Asha is loved and so on. Raymond, a tourist comes to India and becomes friendly with Gopi, young student. Asha, a middle aged princess, who is a widow is a non-conformist. She falls in love with Gopi and they become attached with each other. Lee Margaret and Evie have come for spiritual quest. They meet Swamiji who is a strange mixture of spiritualism, worldiness, materialism and sexuality. He says that we must destroy to create, and establish her physical relations with his disciples. In the end Asha takes Gopi to Manour where her father had an estate. Raymond also accompanies Gopi. There Asha detains him and prevents him from attending his wedding. Lee also decides to go back her parents.

*A Backward Place* depicts the story of Judy and Bal. When the novel opens, Judy is already married to Mr. Bal and has two children, one son named Prithvi and one daughter named Geeta. Etta, Judy's friend, advises her to leave Bal and lead a free life away from the bondage of a joint family. But Judy does not want to leave Bal in spite of the financial hardship as she is emotionally attached to him. It was a love marriage. Bal had gone to London as an Indian delegate to a conference of International youth where he met Judy and married her. Bal has an artistic bent of mind and is keen to become an actor. He does not take any other job and lives in an imaginary world. Judy has a rational bent of mind and she takes up a job against the family wishes. In the beginning Bal

does not like that she should go to the office, when he sits at home but later he becomes used to it and rather welcomes it so Judy makes sacrifices for the sake of her family. Judy adopts the Indian way of living and even Bhuaji and Shanti her sister-in-law like her. At first she cannot understand how the Indians take everything so lightly saying " God provides." But she also ultimately adopts this view. Bal and Sudhir are studies in contrast Whereas Bal is the embodiment of irrepressible optimism whereas Sudhir is the embodiment of pessimism and cynicism. Judy presents a contrast to other European characters, like Etta and Clarissa, who are always after easy and comfortable life.

*Heat and Dust* tells the story of Olivia's life in India, as known through her letter to Maira and as ascertained by her niece ( narrator ) who comes to India to know about the facts of Olivia's life. Olivia marries Douglas and comes to India to live with him. She is fond of him and loves him from her heart. Olivia is later introduced to Nawab and Harry, and Nawab starts paying frequent visits to Olivia's house. In due course of time they become very friendly and start going out for picnics. At first, Olivia didn't get time to tell to Douglas about Nawab's visits, thereafter she intentionally avoids telling him. Once they go to the Shrine of Baba Firdous. Nawab approached her and she also can't resist him. After this incident they start meeting more frequently and openly in palace also. Olivia is pregnant by Nawab and she tries to get abortion done with the help of the Begam. Begam arranges for the mid-wife. Dr. Saunders discovers the reality about everything and the abortion becomes public. Olivia does not want to face Mr. Douglas, she goes to Nawab's palace and lives there afterwards as he buys a cottage for her.

## II

Mrs. Jhabvala bagged the coveted Booker Prize for her *Heat and Dust*. She has written a number of novels and short stories in and about India. Her earlier works are fine comedies, although there is little of ' laughter holding both its sides'. Mrs. Jhabvala's recurring theme is the East-West encounter. She takes up this theme in *Esmond in India*, and thereafter she is never tired of it. In her early novels, like *To whom she will and The Nature of Passion*, she lacks depth and artistic fineness. Her pattern is a bit too bare, and the involvement of characters at times superficial.

Her earlier novels have been compared with Jane Austen's works. It is, as she points out in an interview, partly because of her preoccupation with the same sort of society and her ironic detachment. Like Jane Austen, she concentrates on a few families in her novels, and is excellent in her field. *The Householder* is the story of Prem and Indu. *To whom She Will* deals with the love story of Amrita and Har. *The Nature of Passion* is about a self-made man and his greedy children.

There are, however, many points of departure. Although in the vivid description of family life and social problems her novels are effective, she is not as penetrating and humorous as Jane Austen, her treatment of love and marriage is not as authentic and interesting. Whereas Jane Austen confines herself to the experiences felt down deep in her pulse, Mrs. Jhabvala sometimes incorporates other's experiences in her works of literary art. What is here source of information about the sexual habits of Indians? Mostly, the many foreign girls she meets who travel around India. Then she describes married life of Indians in some detail, whereas Jane Austen sticks to the experiences that fall to a maiden's lot. What interests Jane Austen, strictly speaking, is not marriage but courtship period, one or two years in a girl's life when she is becoming conscious of the factors that make for a happy union between man and woman, one comes across numerous sex-descriptions in Mrs. Jhabvala's works—for example bed-scenes in *The Householder* and the Asha-Gopi affair in *The Travellers*. Jane Austen scrupulously leaves such subjects for other pens to dwell upon.

Being a sensitive observer, Mrs. Jhabvala handles her stories with greater grasp and confidence. She knows how to tell a story. In this respect, she may be compared to the famous British critic-Angus Wilson. She deals with the mysteries of Indian psyche with consideraly success in *Like Birds, Like Fishes* and *Experience in India*. In the story *The Widow*, the forlorn heart of a lady is laid bare when she confesses to her lover. If you know how empty my life has been, how lovely.

The novel, however, is a loose form and a writer can conveniently put in many things. ' It's much looser form. You can put in much more.. ' But its loose plot or rambling quality is not its *tour de force*, unless something very significant is offered by way

of *obiter dicta*. Mrs. Jhabvala can depict and recreate isolated scenes of Indian life with great competence. For example, her description at queues of Delhi bus stops, her account of an Indian woman with bangles, jingling and jangling up and down shimmering in silks and satins are quite vivid and moving. A thing divine. However, her earlier novels offer no good specimens of the onward movement of action or that " dynamic sequential element in literature. "

In her later novels, however, Mrs. Jhabvala displays greater maturity and fineness of grasp. A *New Dominion* is a masterpiece of high degree. Mrs. Jhabvala of earlier works is not altogether absent But there is a marked change ( or development ) in her art and in her attitude to India. On probing deeper, she realises that something serious is " rotten in the state of Denmark." She discovers that life is tragic. She expressed her vision of disenchantment when she remarked : " I loved everything during my first five years... But later that changed I saw a lot I did not like." It is here that she is with the author of *Grief*. In the prize winning novel, *Heat and Dust*, she got an apt image to say what she wanted to say. Although the novel deals with two English women of different generations in India, it conveys with amazing clarity what Angus Wilson calls " the feeling of India, its squalor, its miseriest, its enticements, excitements of its paradox."

Some readers complain that Mrs. Jhabvala is anti-Indian. If it is so, Jane Austen too was anti-English. However, this sort of criticism is beside the mark Both the novelists give evidences of compassion and love. Two pertinent questions arise about Mrs. Jhabvala. Does she present a plausible portrait of India, modern India ? Are her experiences transformed, in terms of art ? The obvious answer to the first query is generally speaking, no. One finds no genuine solution or true spirituality in her novels as if these don'ts at all exist here. Perhaps the ironic writer fails to notice this redeeming aspect of Indian life. For this, one has to turn to Tagore, Aurobindo and E M. Forster. As a painter of Indian life, she does not succeed much. The basic cause lies in the nature of the pattern she selects for herself. She concentrates on the high or middle class society, the society which can hardly be representative of Indian psyche. She knows little about the half a million villages where the real India lives. So her portrait is bound to be topsided and fragmentary. Writers like Mulk Raj Anand, Kamala Marka-

ndeya, R. K. Narayan and Nayantara Sahgal present a broader more varied and convincing spectrum of Indian life. It is indeed meaningful that Mrs. Jhabvala figures neither in Mrs. Verghese's *Problems of the Indian Creative writers to English* nor in Mrs. Meenakshi's *Twice-Born Fiction.*

In sum. Mrs. Jhabvala seems to have discovered her field in *Heat and Dust.* She is now " determined to withdraw from contemporary India." It is, indeed, difficult to extract a pattern from the present, immediate present. " The present is too new and unpredictable, " she once observed. She is, indeed, a conscious and promising novelist. Till now she was only a minor novelist of our time. She has similarities with Jane Austen. However, the basic difference between Jane Austen and Mrs. Jhabvala lies in the choice of their themes and the types of audiences they write for. Jane Austen seemed to write for a few readers interested in family relations in a country town, whereas Mrs. Jhabvala wants to write about India for the Western reader. Jane Austen tries to describe a couple of years in a woman's life just before marriage, while Mrs. Jhabvala describes a few years in a woman's life just after marriage. It is but natural that in Austen love and marriage are engaging subjects, whereas in Mrs. Jhabvala the theme of mutual adjustment is supreme.

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# Appendix III

## Kirpal Singh—The Poet of Ideas

Kirpal Singh, a poet of great promise, was born of Sikh father and Jewish mother on 10 March 1949 in Singapore. He was educated in Singapore, earned his M. A. degree from the University of Singapore and later obtained his Ph. D. degree for his dissertation on Aldous Huxley from the University of Adelaide in 1976. According to him, the most important incident in his life was the news of a Columbia Plan Scholarship in 1976 which enabled him to travel to Australia and come into close contact with a different way of life : " This has left an indelible mark on both my life and writing career ".[1] Kirpal Singh took to creative writing in 1962 at the age of twelve owing to the encouragement given by teachers, especially one Mrs. Mary Yeow. Thereafter stimulus came both from teachers and friends.

Dr. Kirpal Singh has published extensively. His books include: *Singapore Pot-Pourri*, 1970; *Articulations*, 1972; *Twenty Poems*, 1978; *Patrick White : A Critical Symposium* ( with R. Shepherd), 1978. *His two critical works will appear in the near future : The Stellar Gauge ; Critical Essays on Science Fiction* ( with M. Tolley) 1980; and Edwin Thumboo : *The man and his Work*, 1981. Dr. Singh has also published his articles and poems in numerous journals all over the world including *Commentary, Hemisphere, The Journal of Indian Writing in English, Pacific Quarterly, Southern Review, The Journal of Commonwealth Literature, World Literature Written in English, etc.*

Kirpal Singh takes up a small or simple fact and imparts to it a unique significance through the authorial comment. For instance, in ' Waiting ' he finely suggests that waiting is useless since it brings " the night of one's imagination " :

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1 Kirpal Singh's reply to a questionnaire : 14 June 1979.

to wait is to go into the past and future
of one's life and think of events that
one waited for——in vain.
to wait is to recede into memory
playing havoc with expectations
that come too late——in vain.
to wait is to count one's heartbeats
without the right apparatus
hoping everything is fine and right
without the nightmares that haunt the night,
of ones imagination
to wait is to die——in vain.[2]

Throughout the poem " in vain," serves as a revealing comment on different situations. Still water is deep—the author seems to agree without any reservations. However, as he goes along he strikes a clear note of dissent :

I know of one
Everyone calls a still water.
" Still water runs deep you know ".
Yes, still water runs deep
go deep and still
It stagnates and breeds germs ( p. 12 )

Kirpal Singh follows a systematic scheme in his poems and lyrics. He concentrates on apparently insignificant detail yet in due course adds a moral idea or conclusion. For example, prostitute is a familiar person of little importance in the beginning of the poem. Says the poet :

Everybody knew her.
She had come from a far
here to make her livelihood;
Here where there was plenty
to tempt and taste. ( p. 26 )

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2. Kirpal Singh, *Twenty Poems* ( Calcutta : Writers Workshop, 1978 ) p. 30 Subsequent page references are incorpoated in the text of the essay.

The poet then examines her problem and profession and feels that the people who despise her deserve ridicule :

And those ladies
That spat when she happened to walk by them.
They were incapable
of satisfying their men
( Who incidentally, afterwards come to her ) ( p. 27 )

He, thereafter, reaches a plausible conclusion which is indeed the reverse of what he had begun with :

Nobody really knew her. ( p. 28 )

In his poetry Kirpal Singh treats artistically the day-to-day incidents. His poems are marked by the freshness of approach, simplicity of idiom. The poet strives to unravel the complexity of life in terms of deeply felt episodes and moral ideas. In ' Musings ' the entire life pattern of the modern man is vividly delineated in terms of the plot of a novel :

and so life, this life, our life
like the plot in a novel
goes in-out, zig-zag
playing suspense to retain interest.
character defined by circumstances.
Circumstances defined by context,
context defined by birth,
birth defined by accident.
and life moves on endlessly.
accident after accident,
renewed, reassured,
the character comes up again,
played to old turns modified ( p. 18 )

The distinctive quality of Kirpal Singh's poetry lies in the natural blend of direct statement with satirical note. In ' To a Visitor to Singapore ' the tourist's activities are thus referred to :—

You come to my country loaded with your richness
we offer you a convenient stop

allow you to tempt us, lure our pretty girls
corrupt our innocence
because we need your money to survive ( p. 24 )

Dr. Singh's poems have a haunting music. The melody is felt with greater intensity in shorter poems like ' This Land', 'Joy', and ' Fragment'. Here repetition in language is meaningful. Such lines in ' Dig' contain rhythmic beauty and the sound of words adequately echoes the sense :

dig,
dig,
dog to the core.
strip the self,
layer by layer,
layer by layer.
discover the self,
discover yourself,
self and self
at the core
are one. ( p. 21 )

The reader can feel and appreciate in full measure the rhythmic movement in these lines in ' Episodes ' :

In late autumn,
I walk with head down
thinking how far away.
is home ( p. 25 )

As a writer, Dr. Kirpal Singh may be compared with noted poets like Nissim Ezekiel and Shiv K Kumar. As a cursory glance over the titles of their poems indicate, they all choose ordinary objects or themes. But they differ substantially in respect of echnique. In the case of Ezekiel, the process of creation "ranges tall the way from inspiration to planned construction. Sometimes I wait for a poem, oftener I ' go ' for it "[3] He therefore describes man making an earnest effort to understand himself. Prof. Ezekiel

3 Nissim Ezekiel's reply to a questionnaire : 10 July 1979.

analyses various situations with detached irony. Shiv K. Kumar conceives a poem in terms of a growing image, a unified substance. As he once observed : " It's always a floating image ( never an idea) that gets frozen in the mind, and then like a chrysalis it begins, to unfold the wealth of its ambience. One image leads to another and a poem comes into being "[4] It is but natural that Kumar's poems often tend to " think " through metaphors and images. A commonplace episode or incident at long last culminates in a new meaning.

To Kirpal Singh, however, the moment of poetic creation is somewhat different He experiences intense agitation when the " first stirrings of a poem are felt. There is a feeling of internal composition. There is a forgetting, a hibernating before the poem is physically delivered".[5] He thus begins with an idea on fact which in the course of development is reversed in validity. A close study of Prof. Kumar's ' To aprostitute ' ( *Subterfuges*, OUP, 1976, p. 27 ) and Dr. Singh's ' Prostitute ' ( pp. 26-28 ) illustrates the essential difference of the technique of two poets. Dr. Singh's poems are easy to grasp as they flow smoothly like a waterfall. To quote an example :

the quivering leaf
the fluttering wing
the anxious heart—
how they merge.
the melody, the rapture,
the divine palpitations,
the unknowing mind—
of how they merge.
joy
merge and emerge. ( Joy )

Kripal Singh is at his best when he achieves a natural infusion of ideas and emotions in poems like 'At James'own, South Australia', 'Web', and ' Anzac Day in Adelaide.' Some poems appear,

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4. Shiv K. Kumar's reply to a questionnaire : 20 July 1979.
5. Kripal Singh's reply to a questionnaire.

simple and commonplace to a casual reader. However down deep the poet conveys great complexity of experience as he often dispenses with capitals, punctuations and articles. Consider, for nstance, the poem entitled ' Smoke and Ashes ';

You smoke
i don't
you smoke
i don't
you smoke
i don't
between us
only
smoke and ashes

Various readers naturally respond to Dr. Singh's poetry in different ways, yet they all recognise in it a splendid achievement in poetic technique [6]

Kirpal Singh adopts a peculiar language and style. In his emotional and devotional "pieces" the influence of Punjabi language is there, and he writes with ease and confidence. Ezekiel employs apt similes and metaphors, whereas Dr. Kumar's images come from various disciplines. But Dr. Singh avoids the poetic figures and instead resorts to reasoned statements and quiet irony. At times he reminds one of A. Pope's sharp wit. In his satire he ' exaggerates ' and a poem like ' Interests at Heart' is reminiscent of the description of Hampton in *The Rape of the Luck* (Canto III, II, I 1–16 ).

In fact, Kirpal Singh is a sensitive poet of ideas. A man of integrity and conviction, Dr. Singh writes directly. His poems have an intense meaning for the reader. In respect of techique his poetry definitely breaks new ground and enriches the tradition of modern English poetry.

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6. See "Four Responses to Kirpal Singh's 'Smoke and Ashes'," The Journal of *Indian Writing in English*. Vol. 7, No. 2 (July 1979), 72-80.