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TRIPLE STREAM

REMEMBERING GOLDEN-VOICED SAIGAL

I. V. Chalapati Rao



Kundanlal Saigal, the immortal singer who entertained and thrilled millions of people with his divine music, visited this planet during 1904 and 1947. His actual arrival was on April 25th.

Music, the queenliest of the fine arts, is an art form that is universally appreciated by human beings of all ages and climes. Recognised as the greatest singer of the century and an all-time great, Saigal was a musical wonder. He not only captivated the hearts and minds of the connoisseurs but also brought joy to the masses with his God-gifted voice. His unforgettable melodies not only pleased the ears of his listeners but also became a part of our rich heritage. His music soothed frayed nerves and reduced the level of metabolism.

His range covered lyrics, ghazals, bhajans, classical music, children's songs and Rabindra sangeet. Viswa Kavi Rabindranath Tagore himself lavished his praise on him. During his brief life span of less than fifty years he acted in 8 Bengali films and 29 Hindi films. Each of them was a musical hit. As an actor-singer, he became popular in the films of New Theaters, Calcutta, having made his appearance in 'Chandidas', 'Street Singers'. A spate of films followed. However, he scaled

his peaks of fame when he shifted to Bombay, the Bollywood. Before his talent was recognised he held petty jobs in Moradabad, Kanpur and Ghaziabad. He was self-taught.

Saigal's greatest moment was when he sang soulful ghazals in Sangeet Mahotsav in Allahabad when eminent music maestros like Faiyaz Khan, Pandit Omkarnadh Thakur and Paluskar were present. Surprisingly the audience wanted only Saigal to sing. He gave a memorable concert of music for 2½ hours singing ghazals. He received a thunderous applause such as no musician ever got. Then he introduced his mother to the audience as the person behind the success of his performance. Such was his humility.

As a ghazal king, he is remembered even by the connoisseurs of music who never saw movies. The final ghazal he sang was 'Nukta chin hai gameh dil' from the film 'Yahudiki Ladki'. The great Mirza Ghalib was his favourite. He immortalised him in his own way singing his ghazals with heart and soul, interpreting the nuances and the deep meaning of his verses.

Saigal loved Urdu poetry and created a happy blend of music and poetry, producing an astonishing variety of emotions and feelings. Music was his life and soul. He was himself a poet and is said to have composed his own verses, set them to music and sang to the rapture of the listeners.

Saigal sang like a Sufi saint with music as a tool of meditation and a means of communion with God and self-realisation, carrying music beyond the bounds of tone and rhythm. What else can we say of the following

songs which made an indelible imprint on the souls of the listeners:

‘DIYA JALAO’ (in ‘Tansen’)
 ‘SO JA RAJKUMARI’
 ‘JAB DIL HI TOOT GAYA HUM JEE
 KE KYA KARENGE’
 ‘DO NAINA MATWARI’
 ‘KAROON KYA AAS NIRAAAS
 BHAYE’
 ‘BABUL MORA DUKH KE’ etc.

Each song is a masterpiece touching the heart strings!

Lata Mangeshkar, Rafi Muhammad, Kishore Kumar, Mukesh, Talat and all great singers acknowledged Saigal as their role model and icon. As a boy Kishore Kumar imitated Saigal’s voice and used to sing his songs for one rupee! He went to Bombay to see Saigal but could not see him. In an interview Lata Mangeshkar said that her life’s ambition was to sing 8th swara like him. Once she unsuccessfully tried to sing Soja Rajkumari like him. Ch. Atma, a well known singer, expressed his disappointment that he could not sing like Saigal. Ustad Faiz Khan tried his best and failed to sing better than Saigal’s song ‘JHULNA JHULAVORI’ which was recorded by the H.M.V.

It seems, Pankaj Mallick, the great music director, said that the sheer facility and the naturalness of Saigal’s singing concealed the tremendous effort he had put in..... Over the years he has become in a certain sense ‘a musicians’ musician’. In one film Saigal could not sing because of a bad cold. His mentor Pankaj Mallick sang his songs. The picture failed at the box office. When Saigal sang the same songs afterwards when the picture was retaken, it was a grand success! He sang in

Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Punjabi and Persian.

Saigal used to sing with minimum background music, only tabla and harmonium. From 1950 Pakistan Radio used to honour Saigal by introducing him as Shahenshahi Maushibhi Merhoon Kundanlal Saigal. We hear Punjab University is thinking of launching a new course in music on Saigal’s style. Smt. Shabana Azmi in a recent T.V. programme ‘Mortal Men and Immortal Memories’ praised Saigal saying that every song of his would cast a magic spell on the listeners.

Smt. Nina Merchant, Saigal’s daughter, said that her father was a man of character and that he never had any romantic relationship with any woman and that even the habit of drinking stuck to him when he once was advised to take brandy to get rid of a severe cold.

Today Saigal is not with us but as Naushad, the great music director said:

‘Naushad mere dilko na keen hai yeh
 mukmal

Nagman ki kasam aaj bhi zindahai wah
 Saigal’

(Naushad swears by his lyrics that his heart is certain that even today Saigal lives on)

After his passing away, a feature film called ‘Saigal ki Amar Kahani’ was produced to pay homage to the immortal singer.

Most of Saigal’s songs have a strain of tragic feeling plumbing the depths of our hearts.

At the highest level when it is soulful, music is akin to mysticism which takes humans to the high pinnacles of God-Vision. Such music came from Saigal “in whose voice there is a gold mine” as Jawaharlal Nehru said.

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GANDHIAN ECONOMIST E. F. SCHUMACHER

Aruna Ravela

Lokanayak Jayaprakash Narayan wrote in his *prison diary* (1976) “As I read E. F. Schumacher’s article a whole host of memories crowded in my mind. The most vivid of them was how on two occasions I had E. F. Schumacher invited (by the Planning Commission) how he visited Sokhodeora, spoke and stayed at Varanasi Institute and generally stimulated Gandhians, the academicians, the scientists and others. On his last visit, Mrs. Gandhi made him stay for 45 minutes (D. P. Dhar, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission had given him only 10 minutes and had expected the P.M. too to give him no more time). Mrs. Gandhi at the end of the interview asked Schumacher to give her in writing a few points on which she could ask her economic advisers to work. This Schumacher did. But nothing came out of it. As Schumacher himself writes in his article ‘Alternatives in Technology’ “Government is never more than the executive of the prevailing system, implementing that system’s philosophy”.

In India, the tiny layer of the elite barring rare individuals, wants more technology, more industrialisation, more mechanization and chemicalisation of agriculture. This is the ethos of modernism in India. If Schumacher momentarily impressed Mrs. Gandhi by his simple thesis, the system’s philosophy buried it deep down.

Who is this E.F. Schumacher whom J.P. had made reference to?

E.F. Schumacher, hailed as “Western Gandhi” was born on August 16th 1911 in Germany. He did not like to live in a country

ruled by dictator (Hitler) and so he decided to leave his country and settle in U.K. He was a student of Oxford University and did his doctoral research at Columbia, where he also worked as a Lecturer. He returned to England during the II World War and worked in a farm as a daily wage earner to earn his livelihood. At that time, he wrote an article on how the world’s monetary system should be reformed which impressed Maynard Keynes, the well known economist in those days. After the war, he went to Germany as an economic adviser and helped in the reconstruction of its war torn economy. In 1950, he was appointed as economic adviser to the National Coal Board of England and he played a key role in distributing the main business of the Board into 17 Semi autonomous areas because he believed that autonomy and decision making at a relatively lower level were essential to human working conditions. He advocated decentralisation of the economy to the maximum possible extent. A converted Roman Catholic, he says that he is much influenced by religious teachers and social reformers like Jesus, Buddha and Gandhi.

It was with his experience in Burma as an economic adviser to the Burmese Prime Minister that he realised the limitations of resources and know-how faced by the Third World. He realized that sophisticated or modern technology of the rich countries cannot be imitated by the underdeveloped countries because, apart from its feasibility, it disrupts the functional fabric of the culture. The technologies applied by the rich are the result of development and not cause of

development. Moreover, this sophisticated technology is termed as “Violent Technology” by Schumacher. The violence of modern technology is clearly expressed in the form of nuclear energy which is posing a threat to world peace. Even modern agricultural technology is violent as man sees his relationship to nature as one of warfare, tries to increase agricultural production by chemical fertilisers which do a lot of damage to the natural components of the soil without even trying to develop alternative methods of farming. No official research is being done in this aspect. Even in the field of modern medicine, medicine has embraced violence with the result that health services in most developed countries are unable to cope with the ever mounting psychological problems in general and in particular with modern or violent technologies. The solutions that appear to be effective and glamorous for the rich countries prove to be ruinous when the poor countries try to initiate them.

In order to evolve a suitable technology, suitable to underdeveloped countries, he set up an Intermediate technology group in London in 1966. This group published manuals providing information regarding how to produce locally the various labour intensive technologies. Field work was carried on in many developing countries like Ghana, Nigeria, Botswana, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia etc. recognizing the relevance of Schumacher’s ideas to local problems. The American Govt. established a national centre for appropriate technology in Butte, Montana, with a budget of 3 million dollars. Rural communities in many affluent societies too are beginning to appreciate the utility of intermediate technology, i.e. a small machine to produce egg cartons that his group had developed for

the farmers of Zambia is in great demand even in rich countries. E. F. Schumacher had attracted worldwide attention through his book “Small is Beautiful” published in 1973. He gave a moving expression of his philosophy of Intermediate Technology not only in his best seller “Small is Beautiful” but also in his various speeches and interviews. The intermediate technology should consist of the following four important criteria (a) Non-violence (b) Smallness (c) Simplicity and (d) Capital Cheapness. These four criteria need not be satisfied in every case but the satisfaction of any of them or a combination of them is essential. The innumerable examples he often quotes show that **not mass production for masses, economics in which people matter most, production not according to one’s greed but according to one’s need**, will reveal how he viewed economics from humanitarian angle. It is in this context that Indian planning and developmental programmes should be viewed in the light of Schumacher’s analysis of intermediate technology. Indian planners till now, in spite of their vocal stress on small scale industries, have committed a grave mistake in the selection of appropriate technology. Our developmental strategy is based on large scale industries which absorbed a major portion of our investment resources in a country where availability of capital is very scarce. We just imitated the developmental strategy of the advanced industrialised countries without paying due consideration to the pragmatic conditions of our society, i.e. increasing population, lack of infrastructure etc. The result being that after five Year plans we have achieved millions of unemployed apart from underemployed, a spiraling inflation with a number of our people living below the poverty

line. This may entirely be attributed to the wrong priorities in planning, and because of our inability to select appropriate technology suitable to our country.

Schumacher visited India in the year 1973 and in one of the interviews, he stated that it is not in India but in China that Gandhian ideas were implemented. According to him, Gandhi is one of the great modern economists that this age has produced. I would like to bring to the notice of the readers to the ideas of Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, one of the original thinkers of our times. Dr Lohia with his ample foresight coupled with a clear understanding of the Indian economic situation advocated "Small Unit Machine" in 1950 itself. But it is an irony that Dr. Lohia was ignored by the native wizards and the same "Small Unit Machine" when advocated by a foreigner was applauded. In his "Fragments of a World Mind" Dr Lohia writes "India has neither the skill and the resources, nor even the economic framework for large scale industry and large unit machinery. Large scale industry and

techniques were possible in imperial countries. I do not think that the effort can be repeated even apart from the question of desirability. She may not be able to make even a beginning if she plans her economic development in that direction. Her only hope is the spirit of inventiveness in the sphere of small unit machine, perhaps this conception of small unit machinery is also desirable from a social, cultural and world view point." Thus there is not only similarity of thought between Schumacher and Dr. Lohia but also in their perspectives of analysis. This great humanitarian economist, Schumacher, for whom quality of life rather than quantity of goods mattered, whose voice pleaded so powerfully for people, particularly for the poor in the third world, died on 4th September 1977 in Switzerland. But this message remains ever green as long as millions remain unemployed and under-employed in Asia, Latin America and Africa.

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VARIFORM RIVER

Nar Deo Sharma

Save her grit, time's guzzled
River's brimming blood:
Into sandsea she's shrunk.

Laughing, dancing, larking, drooping
Children doodle their juvenilia
On the river's sandspreadsheet;
Adults build there their dream-dwell
Camly, carefully, keenly.
Sprawling in her ugly undies unawares
Anemic river suspends people in starvation.

When pushed past in nostalgic years
We envision how the flurry of rain
Made the river wanton with waters:
Children lapped up her liquid love,
Floated their paper-pleasures;
The young rowed their boating bliss,
Famished fields fondled green-grow
River overflows with spiritual legend.

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VEDIC ECOLOGY AND ECO-CRITICISM

Dr. Falguni P. Desai

William Rueckert may have been the first person to use the term eco-criticism. In 1978, Rueckert published an essay titled "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Eco-criticism." His intent was to focus on "the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature." (Reprinted in *The Ecocriticism Reader* on p.107) Ecologically minded individuals and scholars have been publishing progressive works of eco-theory and criticism since the explosion of environmentalism in the late 1960s and 1970s. However, because there was no organized movement to study the "greener" side of literature, these important works were scattered and categorized under a litany of different subject headings: pastoralism, human ecology, and regionalism.

In the mid-eighties, scholars began to work collectively to establish eco-criticism as a genre, primarily through the work of the Western Literature Association in which the revaluation of nature writing as a non-fictional literary genre could function as: a fillip to the regional literature in which it had prominence; a counterbalance to the mania for 'cultural constructionism' in the literary academy; and a moral imperative in the face of mounting environmental destruction. In 1990, at the University of Nevada in Reno, Glotfelty became the first person to hold an academic position as a professor of Literature and the Environment. From the late 1990s, new branches of ASLE and affiliated organizations were started in the UK (ASLE-UK), Japan, Australia / New Zealand, India (OSLE), Taiwan, Canada (ALECC) and Europe

(EASCLE).

Eco-critics and theorists ask questions like the following: How is nature represented in literature? What role does the physical setting play in the plot of this novel? Are the values expressed in this play consistent with ecological wisdom? How do our metaphors of the land influence the way we treat it? How can we characterize nature? Eco-criticism can be further characterized by distinguishing it from other critical approaches. Literary theory, in general, examines the relations between writers, texts, and the world. In most literary theory "the world" is synonymous with society—the social sphere. The paper proposes to discuss eco-criticism as the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. One of the implicit goals of the approach is to recoup professional dignity for what is called the "undervalued genre of nature writing" The paper focuses on Lawrence Buell definition of "'eco-criticism' ... as a study of the relationship between literature and the environment conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmentalist praxis". This theory is discussed in contexts to our ancient Vedic texts. It reveals that we were ecocritic and eco theorists long back as concrete evidences are found in our ancient texts.

Eco-criticism expands the notion of "the world" to include the entire ecosphere. If we agree with Barry Commoner's first law of ecology, "Everything is connected to everything else," we must conclude that literature does not float above the material world in some

aesthetic ether, but, rather, plays a part in an immensely complex global system, in which energy, matter, and *ideas* interact. By the ethical stand eco-criticism takes, its commitment to the natural world as an important thing rather than simply as an object of thematic study, and, secondly, by its commitment of making connections. All eco-critics share an environmentalist motivation of some sort.

The concern for environmental issues is among the most topical issues in academic, business and political debates in both the developed and the developing countries. This paper examines some of the beliefs and practices underlying traditional Hindu religions' attitude towards nature and its strategic extension as a tool for Environmental conservation.

Ecological experts have lamented the decline of "nature worship" and have spoken wistfully of the need to import "Eastern Concepts of respect for the quality of all life forms." Even some of the most secularized nations are calling for a rediscovery of the sacredness of nature. For educationalists and human resource policy makers, religion centered education may be the answer for bringing about environmental behavioral change.

Anthropologists report that India is governed by religion. We have abundant myths in our culture. These myths are about nature, like rivers, trees, mountains, caves etc. All these entities are sacred for us as mentioned in our Vedic texts. We worship them and are reluctant to destroy them. Thus we were eco-critic ages back. In this paper very few references of our Vedic eco-centric approach will be drawn out to support my argument that

our Vedic text, our most precious heritage literature and world's oldest literature was truly Eco-centric. The real and indigenous culture of any nation is reflected in its literature. Plants have been an integral part of Indian life and culture, and hence it is but natural that all aspects of literature, namely songs, folk tales and proverbs of our country should have profuse references to trees, shrubs, climbers and their flowers and fruits. The discipline associated with conservation is ecological tradition. The respect Indians have for all forms of life is well known. Nature is protected with religious fervor. The sacred groves are the repositories of biological resources. Trees are protected and worshipped for their ecological, economical, medicinal and social importance. They are the representatives of ecology, species and genetic diversity. Sustainable society is one that functions and lives in harmony with earth systems such that future generations will be able to function with equal or greater ease and the quality of life will in no way be diminished. Our religious traditions teach us that the Earth is sacred, the fact that traditionally helps to exert control over how people interact with the natural world. *Only when the last tree has died and the last river been poisoned and the last fish been caught will we realize we cannot eat money. (Indian proverb)*

The use of Religion as a tool for environment conservation is justified because

- * Firstly most lasting social change is anchored in a deep moral imperative.
- * Secondly values based rationales for protecting biodiversity are widely held and persuasive.
- * Thirdly religion humanizes and personalizes

choices about environment and more importantly, understanding ethics backed by individuals' religions will help us make better decisions on complex issues.

The melodious madrigals of Sanskrit literature have scientific cum religious description of nature (synonym for environment) and indigenous systems of its restoration and stabilization. The carbon cycle, the water cycle, the food chains are some stabilizing tools put in practice by nature. A few illustrations are as follows:

* "Do not cut trees because they remove pollution."

(Rig Veda 6:48:17)

* "Do not disturb the sky and do not pollute the atmosphere."

(Yajur Veda 1:5:43)

* "We Invoke all supporting Earth on which trees, lords of forests stand ever firm."

(Atharva Veda 12:1:27)

* "Don't destroy forests with Tigers and don't make forests devoid of tigers. Forests can't be saved without tigers and tigers can't live without forests because forests protect tigers and tigers protect forests."

(Virat Parva 5:45:46)

* "It brings great sin if fire is not offered purifying material (havan); if trees are cut down on auspicious days, if human waste, spit and cough etc. are dropped in water." (The Supreme Being is surely another called paramatman as the Imperishable Ishwara pervades and supports the three worlds.)

(Shanti Parva)

* "*Yo devohaghnau yokapsu yo vishvam bhuvana, mavivesha Yo oshadhisu yo vanaspatishu tasmai devaya namonamah*"

(The deity who is in fire, who is in water, who is pervading the universe, who is in medicinal herbs and trees, that deity I salute again and again.)

(Shanti Parva)

Thus, since the ancient times, man has tried to explain his own creation and development of the environment, in which he lives in. Such explanations may have been presented in mythical and fanciful forms, but a deeper insight into them, explores the facts, at par with the truth of modern science. We should probe into scientific merit, rather than considering them as religious and mythical concepts. Religious epics of diversified sects of the world have records of their ancient thoughts, may be presented in mythical or fanciful form; are not childish stories or pre-scientific explanations, rather they are serious insights into reality. A time has come to consider seriously that religious practices are of great significance in saving the natural world (Goldsmith, 2000). Human evolution, both biological and cultural, has taken place simultaneously and independently throughout the globe, yet co-ordination of thoughts are alike under the common roof of nature. Modern science may be sophisticated, but it should not ignore the ancient ideas, which are not far away from the base line of human scientific thinking.

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Rig Veda 6:48:17

Shanti Parva

Virat Parva 5.45-46

Yajur Veda 1:5:43

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DESIGNER CHILDREN

S. Ramnath

Gone are the days of neighbourhood concept. We used to have the neighbourhood grocer, the neighbourhood tarkariwala, the family doctor with his box which we used to carry on his home visit and follow him with an empty bottle and bring back the “mixture” as it used to be called and small packs of powdered tablets. Where is the friendly neighbourhood saloon where we used to hear the neighbourhood gossip and read the issues of Filmfare and Screen which were banned at home. Those were good old days where life used to be spent in and around Himayathnagar at Hyderabad.

For everything we used to refer to the ‘Galli corner’ (street corner). Going to Abids or Koti for shopping used to be a luxury. Readymade clothes were never thought of. They never fitted anyone and there never used to be any facility for alterations. We always used to have the friendly neighbourhood ‘dirjee’ (tailor). The days of tailor-made clothes to suit one’s measurements are almost over. Even marriage suits, sherwanis, ghagra blouses and cholies are now readymade. One can buy them across the counter with minimum fuss and the required alterations and additions to suit one’s tastes.

Even marriages are readymade with matches being fixed over the internet, the bride and groom do not choose one another. The entire marriage proceedings right from printing of cards to fixing the venue, arranging the purohit, the dress, the food, welcoming the guests are arranged by agencies which specialize in such jobs at a price to suit every

pocket and render professional service. Some even undertake fixing the matches which besides being the source of earning also earns them a lot of punya since this is considered a ‘punya karya’.

After the marriage, you have readymade flats or duplex bungalows or villas, if you can afford one in gated colonies, which provide you with all amenities like club house, swimming pool, Gym, walking trail etc, etc.

After the marriage or even before the marriage, in case of people living together, one of the few things which people opt for may be tailor-made or custom-built babies. Gone are the days of neighbourhood Dayi or midwife who used to be called during the pregnancies and deliveries. The friendly neighbourhood maternity homes, where the specialist was called only for cases of Cesarean or forceps delivery are rare today. Every delivery is compulsorily a Cesarean.

Thanks to advances in the field of medicine even in the land of shrushti you can beget tailor-made babies. May be it’s the modern day pressures and demands which make a couple plan their baby. Before a baby is conceived, the couple plans for the timing of birth mostly sometime during the beginning of the academic year, so that the child is admitted in school at the right age and does not lose an academic year. Then the search for a school of their choice begins. They may even think of shifting their residence if necessary.

The time, date, day and the star in which the child is to be born is determined in

advance. Thanks to 'C' section cesarean. For this, the best of the astrologers is consulted. Ultimately a time may come when most of the stars and zodiacal signs would be rendered redundant because there would be no births under those stars and zodiacal signs. A situation may arise when the astrologers may go on strike with no shanthis to be performed.

For the busy mothers and truly soft mothers who have neither time nor patience to bear the pangs and pains of child birth, you have surrogate mothers who are ready to rent

their wombs. We can even go to the extent of determining child's sex before its birth though sex determinations tests are banned in India.

Scientists with techniques like cloning etc. may come out with a formula for predetermining the child's personal traits like colour of skin, eyes, hair etc. Hospitals will display photos and give presentation of the child's personality of how they would look like and their track record. The future child would definitely be a "Designer baby".

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HOMAGE TO A MOTHER

Dr. E. Pullaiah

Oh! my mother, Oh! My Goddess,
My heart of heart, soul of soul,
My most treasured possession,
How shall I pay homage to you?
You have nourished and nurtured,
Toiled and tormented,
Straining every fraction of second,
Facing every torrent of trouble,
With a passion for my perfection.

You are ever obsessed with a feeling;
"I have no other world,
except my child,
My child is my concern",
My babyish demands are well-met
With saintly temperament,
Mesmerizing and hypnotizing me,
Embracing novel techniques,

Most of times, you are smooth like milk,
And sweet like honey,
Sometimes, you are irate and sassy like ginger,
For my unruly behaviour and
My frivolous and nagging deeds.
You have turned a blind eye to them,
Conceiving it is your own beloved child
You might have been fed up with life,
But never with me.

It is only a physical demise, Maa!
Your spirit is ever with me,
Wherever I am, however I am,
Even in traumatic times.
I feel there is no substitute
For the power of motherly love
An emotional and inseparable bond.
Only worshipping you, fulfilling your dreams,
Boosting your morale is my solace and
gratitude.

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THE LAW OF INVERSION

Prof. V. V. Krishna Rao

We see many phenomena in the world which act opposite to each other. If the cost of any article goes up, the demand for it will go down. In mathematical language it is called inverse proportion. But there are instances where both quantities involved in a phenomenon will together move either upwards or downwards. This is called direct proportion. An example of direct proportion is: the increase of members in a family increases the expenditure. Direct proportion and inverse proportion are exact mathematical relations. The examples given above indicate only the broad meaning of those relations. It will help one to understand how two related entities influence each other as they begin to change.

Any law is a concatenation of events with similarities underlying them. A law may be qualitative or quantitative depending on the nature of the events linked. Lack of water for a plant will make its leaves dry up. Malnutrition will result in thinning of a child. These are qualitative laws. But there are laws which are very precise on account of their mathematical character. If a kilogram of sugar costs rupees fifteen, ten kilos cost rupees one hundred and fifty.

There are more qualitative laws in this world than quantitative ones. It is because quantifying observations involves experimentation and the use of tools. Such a thing may not be always possible. There are many individuals who might have made useful observations which could not be quantified for the reasons mentioned above and for other

reasons. But a qualitative statement can be framed comparatively. It can also be verified easily by making further observations. Such observations made by the primitive people constitute the body of knowledge of the early man. Many of them have become in course of time strict scientific laws borne out by systematic experimentation while some were denigrated as superstitions and even rejected for lack of experimental backing.

Many of us observe every day so many events which when analyzed and pursued further will lead to certain generalizations. This in fact is the origin and development of scientific study to understand the world around us. Knowledge thus gained assumes social character when shared by others. But if it is confined to the individual or a limited group like an esoteric secret, it will be lost in time and social progress is retarded. In the case of India, this is what had happened and thus much of ancient Indian wisdom was lost and is being rediscovered by the modern scientists.

As a personal experience, I will cite an example. In my life, I came across many such instances which induced me to fit them into an order, normally called a law. Long time ago, after the death of a relative, I was told that the person wanted to see me before dying. I was not aware of it but I felt very sad. Two of my colleagues who were in the hospital expressed a desire to see me but I had to postpone my visit to the next day. That "next day" morning I received the news that they had passed away. Obviously I had to curse myself for my unwise decision. These

instances had a premonitional effect on me. But I have not taken it seriously. But, later my two sisters passed away before the day I thought of visiting them during their last stage. Then it occurred to me that a strong law is invisibly operating in my thoughts which is responsible for these disappointments. This is what I call the “law of inversion”. This is something similar to the saying “man proposes God disposes”. This law appears to operate only in the case of people who are in the terminal stage of their life. I have therefore decided to nullify its effect. Whenever I came to know that somebody closely known to me was almost on the death bed, I made it a point to visit him at the earliest moment. Then he would live for some more days or months after my visit. This happened recently in two cases. I felt happy that my attempts could stall the

adverse consequences of the law that has been chasing me. But one latest failure to visit resulted in the confirmation of my self-made law. My failures in this respect are more than my successes in grappling with this “law of inversion”. In future I hope to score successes and emerge as the victor.

You may call it a superstition. But I call it an empirical law.

I will give an example to bring my experience nearer to yours. It must have happened at least once in everybody’s experience that when you go early to the station, the train is usually late and vice-versa. My law of inversion is something similar to it. When you know the law, you know how to apply it and benefit from it. After all that is the advantage of having knowledge.

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FROM THE POINT OF NO RETURN

(Late) Dr. Srinivasa Rangaswami

When you have to go,
go sooner or later;
A hefty medical bill left behind,
grudgingly paid
spoils the relief;
relief from a burdensome presence
now mercifully gone,
gone for the good.
But then, you ask,
‘What about the Docs and Diagnostic Centres
who too must flourish?’
That they will, anyhow,

with IT men and the Realty men,
and the quick-fixing, rich by the night around
with their sagging sacks of ill-gotten wealth.
Go you must, so go,
leaving in peace those around
to relish the thirteenth day feast.

** This is the last poem of Dr. Srinivasa Rangaswami, our regular contributor. He fought a heroic battle against suspected cancer in vain.*

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WHY NOT MARRIAGES BE SIMPLE?

Y. Krishnaiah

It is the season for marriages. One does not know whether it is an all India phenomenon or simply a regional one. At least in Andhra Pradesh, it is a gala season. Marriage, by all means, is a happy event for every family. There is nothing wrong in making it a memorable moment. But, one is troubled at the way marriages are being celebrated these days.

The most conspicuous feature is - the pomp and splendour, on the part of the super rich, the neo-rich, including the urban middle class. The last one feels it a great achievement to imitate the super-rich and the neo-rich. About the super-rich, less said the better. Even in the case of neo-rich, the same is the case. It can be understood in terms of their psychological framework, though it is not justified, if one keeps in mind, the larger social picture of India. But the most disturbing trend is the behaviour of the upcoming urban middle class in spending money lavishly for marriages, either under compulsion or willingly.

Therefore, some basic questions are in order in this context. Why do these people love to squander money like water? (Is it right in making light of water now-a-days?) Is it a phenomenon that is irreversible? One hopes, it is not. Who should come forward to halt this process? Generally, top-down approaches are faulted for the solution of any problem in the assumption that they are unscientific and don't deliver the goods. One feels that it is one social phenomenon that can be effectively addressed, if the opinion moulders (the elite) of the society come forward to set an example in remedying this social malady.

It does not call for big sacrifices. If anything, it is a financial gain. It is simply a question of mindset change. Of course, it is not that simple either. It demands only a drastic

shift in the priorities. Yet, it is not an impossible task for the willing. So, the elite should see to it that the marriages in their families are a low-key and simple affairs.

Another feature of urban middle-class marriages is the number of invitees. Like a marriage in a typical politician's family, the guests are in thousands. Marriages look now like "Kumbhamelas". One has to struggle to step on to the "marriage mantap" to bless the couple. Added to this, there is so much of wastage. All in all, one is constrained to feel that somewhere along the road, something has gone amiss. Over and above this, the height of absurdity is, some people tend to print two types of wedding cards. One for the rich, the other for the ordinary kith and kin. Any discrimination by itself is a dividing factor and leads to social rupture.

One hopes once again that the elite will rise to the occasion and do something to do away with this social abnormality. Even America, the leader of the capitalist society, with its firm belief in "market", speaks about certain shared values. Why can't we make simplicity a shared value? There was a time when even charity was a shared value. For good or bad, for the great many, it has gone for good. It is time all concerned strove to make simplicity a bipartisan value. Is not simplicity a basic Gandhian principle?

Finally, on closer analysis, one finds that it is sound economics to reduce the marriage expenditure and divert it to other productive channels. It is because, given the number of young people in our country, the expenditure on marriages would run into crores of rupees. Hence, it makes sense to make marriages simple and close circle affairs.

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ECCENTRICITIES AND PARADOXES IN LIFE IN “THE INHERITANCE OF LOSS”

*A.N. Guru Prasad
Prof. P. Eliah*

Introduction:

Kiran Desai in her novel, ‘The Inheritance of Loss’, touches various aspects of life as well as makes the readers think over the eccentricities and paradoxes of life. She projects all shades of human life which are found symmetrically poised and sometimes diagonally contrary to one another. Kiran Desai uses irony and humour as her tools to treat the novel. Desai explores the inexplicable and mysterious world.

Conflicts and Reconciliations:

“The Inheritance of Loss” is a story of conflicts and reconciliations. All the characters face conflicts and become indecisive for sometime and in the process of reconciliation, they encounter loss. The novel also evokes the sense of hope and betrayal as the story moves in forward and backward motion. The characters, while facing conflicts, give opportunity to hope to prevail upon and when the hopes are shattered by the situations, or the ill-response from other characters, despair takes its place in the minds of these characters.

Kiran Desai is a very successful novelist who subjects majority of the characters of the novel through eccentricities and paradoxes of life by which, the characters like Jemubhai, retired Judge, his grand daughter, Sai, her lover Gyan, and finally Biju, the son of Jemubhai’s

cook - to lose something or the other. Hence, Kiran Desai aptly fixes the title to this novel as ‘The Inheritance of Loss’, signifying the title to the core.

The novelist has successfully infused the effects of globalization, multiculturalism, inequality and different forms of love. Among the characters, when one gains out of something, the other loses otherwise.

Parallel Narrative Technique:

Hence, Kiran Desai chooses the technique of running parallel narrative wherein, Sai, the granddaughter of the retired Judge and Biju, the son of the cook of the retired Judge, who belongs to the shadow class of illegal immigrants in New York spends much of his time dodging the authorities.

In this novel, Kiran Desai rightly projects the attitude of the characters towards the westernized pattern of living. For example, one of the protagonists is a retired judge, Jemubhai, lives in the Himalayas. In fact, he returned from England after feeling lost. He is full of self-hate and hatred towards his family, community and anyone for not being British. He is joined by his orphaned sixteen-year-old granddaughter, Sai, who is a westernized Indian brought up by English nuns. Jemu experiences the loss of position which has gone long ago, squandered away in the days of distrust and desperation. His instant reaction

to take the orphaned Sai into his fold is quite negative. He was reluctant to respond and neither he provides any solace to Sai. Living in a large house, Jamubhai is far superior to the poverty stricken people like his cook, Nandu.

Aspirations of Characters:

The novelist also explores many incidents to display the unmatched aspirations of both Sai and Biju through parallel narration in relation to the expectations and hopes of their families and their very disconnectivity from the roots by intelligently handling these two characters with the surrounding characters to bring about a correct picture about the political and cultural representation of Indian soil. For example, Sai, at the age of sixteen, falls in love with Gyan, her Maths tutor. This love affair is brought as an escape from the present agony about Kalimpong, which further becomes a cherishable dream for Gyan by his active involvement in the Gorkha National Liberation Federation.

“The Inheritance of Loss” is indeed a love story between a boy and a girl, between a father and his son, and a grandfather and his granddaughter; it’s where empathy and compassion often defines the quality of family relationships.

More importantly, the novel is about a certain group of people who are unmoored and somewhat at a loss in the modern world, where the onset of globalization doesn’t necessarily guarantee prosperity for them.

Kiran Desai runs the story in such a way that the incidents and the circumstances overlap one another in quick frequency wherein, the characters have no way out to

recede or progress further. For example, as the story of Sai and Gyan’s love affair progresses, violence in Kalimpong and its surrounding region escalates. Beginning as a relatively small guerilla movement, the Gorkha National Liberation Front eventually takes over law and order in the town. Gyan, Sai’s Maths Tutor-cum-lover, has to decide between westernized Sai - who represents everything the GNLF despises - and participation in a dangerous militant movement that could have serious consequences for him and his family.

However, Gyan, representing the poor, is being haunted by hope and despair while he is involved himself in the love affair with Sai. The distorting mood he moves with is about the social movement he wishes to take part. He, at the earlier stage, was indecisive and could not pronounce his judgement as to where he should turn his attention – either to continue his love activities with Sai or denouncing it by joining the social movement which is his dream to have a separate statehood to his place of birth.

In this process, Gyan undergoes much turmoil and resultant upon the spirit he carries with him always, he does not like some elements related to the social behavior of Sai’s privileged life, which prompts him to turn his attention from Sai to a crowd of ethnic Nepalese Insurrectionists, with an intention to register victory over oppression and raising his fist to authority.

Inconsistency in Characters:

As part of parallel narration, we

encounter another character, Biju, the son of Jemu's cook, moving from one ill-paid job to another at New York, finally gets to know that life is not all about the best comforts with 'Sofa, TV and a Bank Account'. Even though he tries to fit into the American Dream, he, in reality, finally appears to be a misfit.

With the help of parallel narrative technique, Kiran Desai tries to bring forth the fact that resultant upon the Globalisation and its effects, the world is always fast moving from one end to another which is evidently displayed through the social movements in India and the business movements and trends in the US. People involved in the process of change have to move so rapidly to cope with the speed otherwise, human relationship ends into trouble as the gap gets widened.

For example, the relationship between Gyan and Sai which has severely affected their love as they fail to negotiate and overcome the temporary complications in the process and the relationship between Biju and his father becomes complicated by distance wherein, the father over estimates his son thinking that only his son can help the immigrants to survive in the US.

On the other hand, Kiran Desai depicts the love element between Gyan and Sai wherein they lose their innocence and move their love amidst turmoil. Hence, these two characters experience Loss in their lives. Jemubhai, the retired judge also experiences the loss of identity. The cook loses his son and wife in the service of the judge. Biju loses everything in the process of overreaching for better lifestyle. The novelist projects the Gorkhaland agitation as a catalyst for this loss.

The characterisation part of the Novel reveals the outstanding technique of the

novelist, where, her characters, like people from all cultures, make sacrifices for their children, behave cruelly toward people they love, reject traditional ways of life and old values, rediscover what is important to them, suffer at the hands of faceless government officials, and learn, and grow, and make decisions, sometimes ill-considered, about their lives.

Conclusion:

Dealing with all levels of society and many different cultures, Kiran Desai shows life's humor and brutality, its whims and harshness, and its delicate emotions and passionate commitments in a novel that is both beautiful and wise.

These types of characterizations and disproportionate personalities with divergent paradoxes of the lives may have figured in the novels of Kiran Desai's contemporary novelists like, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri, Sashi Deshpande etc. But unlike most of her contemporaries, she explicitly juxtaposes the lives of rich and poor, attempting to fill what seems a puzzling gap in South Asian writing.

Nevertheless, while being a noble and absolutely worthwhile endeavor, the book is very much flawed. One thing is for sure that no other woman novelist has dared to handle the characters with these intense split personalities, over blown eccentricities and paradoxes in life as explicitly brought by Kiran Desai in her second Novel, "The Inheritance of Loss".

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'He is a poor writer who writes only for one country.'

- Henrik Ibsen

CROSS - CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Krishnamaraju Jagan Mohan Rao

Technological advances in communication, travel and transportation have made business increasingly global. This trend is expected to continue in the foreseeable future. This leads to communication between people of different cultures.

In this globalized world, one needs to communicate clearly with those from other cultures for several reasons. A primary reason is that businesses sell their products and services both domestically and internationally. Being able to communicate with others helps you to be successful in understanding customers' needs and communicating how your company can meet those needs, and in winning their business.

Another reason is that in addition to being a more effective worker, you'll be more efficient both within and outside your company. You'll be able to work harmoniously with those from other cultures, creating a more comfortable, conducive and productive work place. Further more, if cultural barriers are eliminated, you'll be able to hire good people despite their differences. Also you'll avoid problems stemming solely from misinterpretations. A final reason is that your attention to communicate clearly with those from other cultures will enrich your business and personal life.

In preparing to communicate with people from other cultures, we must look at their cultural differences and the special problems that our language present to those who use it as a second language.

Problems of Cultural Differences

A study of the role of culture in international communication precisely begins with two qualifying statements.

First, culture is often improperly assumed to be the cause of miscommunication. Often it is confused with the other human elements involved. We remember that communication between people of different cultures involves the same problems of human behaviour that are involved when people of the same culture communicate. In either case, people can be belligerent, arrogant, prejudiced, insensitive, or biased.

Second, we must take care not to overgeneralize the practices within a culture. We say this even though some of the statements we make in the following paragraphs are over-generalized. But we have little choice. So, to explain the problems of cross-cultural communication, it is necessary to make such generalizations for there are subcultures within cultures and a common practice in one segment of a culture may be unknown to other segments. Within a culture, townspeople differ from country dwellers, the rich differ from the poor and the educated differ from the uneducated. Therefore, the subject of culture is highly complex and should not be reduced to simple generalizations.

The classical definition of culture which is derived from anthropology is that it is a way of life of a group of people, the stereotyped patterns of learning behavior, which are handed down from one generation to the many through means of language and imitation.

(V. Barnouw, Culture and personality Chicago: Dorsey Press, 1963), 4

Similarly a modern definition is that culture is “the shared ways in which groups of people understand and interpret the world”. (Fons Trompnaars and Peter Wooliams, *Business across cultures* (London: Capstone, 2003), 53.

Two kinds of problems impede communication when people of different cultures try to communicate. Unfortunately, people tend to view their ways of culture as normal, sometimes superior and the ways of other cultures as bad, wrong. Specially, these problems are related to two kinds of cultural differences: (i) Differences in body positions and movements (ii) Differences in views and practices concerning various factors of human relationships (time, space, intimacy and so on).

Body position and movements:

The body positions and movements differ by culture, and these differences can affect communication. In some cultures, squatting is a common thing in sitting position but for others it looks primitive. The manner of walking differs among cultures. For example, Asian countries are likely to view the fast, longer strides of the western people as peculiar or funny and their own as normal. And when the Americans see the inhabitants of Asian countries bow on meeting and leaving each other, they are likely to interpret the bowing as a sign of subservience or weakness. Similarly, people from American culture feel standing up as the appropriate thing to do on certain occasions (as when some one enters the room), where as from some other cultures do not think so.

Movements of certain body parts are a vital form of human communication. Some of these movements have no definite meaning even within a culture. But some have clear

meanings, and these meanings may differ by culture. For example to say ‘no’ people in Japan move their right hand, and people in Sicily raise their chin. While Americans and Canadians shake their heads back and forth, people in Bulgaria nod up and down. Similarly, U.S Business people assume that a person who won’t meet their gaze is evasive and dishonest. However, in many parts of Asia, keeping one’s eyes lowered is a sign of respect.

People may misread nonverbal signals. They may overlook the signal entirely or may assume that as meaningless and romantic interest in a woman by running a hand backward across his hair, but most westerns would not see the gesture as significant. Conversely, an Egyptian might mistakenly assume that a western who exposes the sole of his or her shoe as offering a grave insult. (Charles E. Risch, “Critiquing written material,” *Manage* 35, 20.4. (1983): 4-6.

Calling some one by raising your hand, then taking your index finger and wiggling it toward you is considered rude in places like China, Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines. There, if you want to get someone’s attention, you put your arm out with your own palm down, and then make scratching motions with your fingers.

Something as simple as a handshake differs from culture to culture. For example, in Spain, a proper handshake must last five to seven strokes; and pulling away too soon may be interpreted as rejection. However, in France, the preferred handshake is only a single stroke. In Arab countries, you’ll insult your host if you turn down food, drink or hospitality of any kind. But don’t accept it too quickly either. A polite refusal (such as “I don’t want to put you to any trouble”) is expected

before you finally accept.

Views and practices concerning factors of human relationships include – social, nonverbal, legal, ethical differences.

Probably causing even more miscommunication than differences in body positions and movements are the different attitudes of different cultures toward various factors of human relationship. We'll review seven major factors: Time, Space, odors, frankness, and intimacy of relationships, values, and expression of emotions.

In some other cultures, (especially those of the Middle East and some parts of Asia) people are polychronic, viewing time in more relaxed way. They see planning as unwise and unnecessary. Being late to a meeting, a social function, as such is of little consequence to them. In fact, some of them hold the view that important people should be late to show that they're busy. In business negotiations, the people in these cultures move at a deliberately slow pace, engaging in casual talk before getting to the main issue. It is easy to see how such different views of time can cause people from different cultures to have serious miscommunication problems.

Space: People from different cultures often vary in their attitudes toward space. Even people from the same culture may have different space preferences. North Americans tend to prefer about two feet or so distance between themselves and those with whom they speak. But in some cultures (some Arabian and South American cultures), people stand closer to each other; not following this practice is considered impolite and bad etiquette. For another example, North Americans view personal space as a right and tend to respect this right of others; thus they stand in line and wait their turn. People from some other cultures

view space as belonging to all. Thus, they jostle for space when boarding trains, standing at ticket counters and shopping in stores. In encounters between people whose cultures have such different attitudes towards space, actions are likely to be misinterpreted.

Odors: People from different cultures may have different attitudes towards body odors. People in some cultures view body odors dirty and unsanitary while people in a different culture look at it as natural. Some people feel that it is an act of friendship to “breathe the breath” of the person with whom they converse and to feel their presence by smelling.

Frankness: Germans and Israelis are very frank and explicit in their relationships. North Americans are generally quick in getting to the point and blunt. Asians tend to be far more reticent or implicit and sometimes go to great lengths to save face or not to offend.

Intimacy of Relationship: In many cultures, strict social classes exist and class status determines how intimately people are addressed and treated in communication. Questions concerning occupation, income, title and such might be asked in some cultures. People from cultures that stress human equality are apt to take offense at such questioning about class status. This difference in attitude toward class status is illustrated by differences in the familiarity of address. Some Americans are quick to use first names. This practice is offensive to people from some other cultures, notably the English and the German, who expect such intimate address only from long standing acquaintances.

Values: Different cultures have different attitudes towards ethics. In some cultures, the view of work is relaxed, and productivity is second concern when their major concern is spiritual and human wellbeing. In American's

case, they're indoctrinated with the protestant work ethic. This puts hard work ahead of pleasure, and success will follow. The product of this thinking is an emphasis on planning, working efficiently and maximizing production. The North American employees expect to move freely from job to job and they expect employers to hire and fire as their needs change. In Japan, for example, employment tends to be for a life-time. The workplace is viewed much like a family, with loyalty expected from employees and employer. Such differences have caused misunderstanding in American-Japan joint ventures.

Expression of Emotions: Differences in social behavior are a common feature in different cultures. Some Asian cultures strongly frown upon public displays of affection, in fact, they consider them crude and offensive. Westerners, on the other hand, accept at least moderate display of affection. To Westerners, laughter is a spontaneous display of pleasure,

but in some cultures (Japan, for one) laughter can also be a controlled behavior in some social situations.

Many more such practices exist. Some cultures combine business and social pleasure, others don't. Some expect to engage in straight forward dealings. Some talk loudly and with emotions; others communicate orally in a subdued manner. Some communicate with emphasis on economy of expression; others communicate with an abundance of verbiage.

There are differences in views, practices, beliefs in cultures and subcultures. We cannot change these differences and make the world homogenous but our adaptability to the cultures is the only solution to all these problems. One can improve communication across cultures by 1) Studying other cultures 2) Overcoming language barriers 3) Breaking through ESL Barrier 4) Break through Foreign language Barriers.

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IT'S A WEIRD WORLD

K.V.V. Subrahmanyam

It's a weird world with savage blasts
Out to destroy fellowmen with hate;
Heaven knows how long this madness lasts
Will death roll the terrorist's appetite sate?

Science and I.T advance by leaps and bounds
Boundaries of nation states are shrinking
Rumour mills of envy and malice go the rounds
The vengeful are out to continue blood drinking

The adage has it "all religions lead to Rome"
Compassion engraved in all holy books;

But this seems not to have gone home
In those with fiendish, blood thirsty looks

Preachers and practitioners of ancient lore
Hardly have time to set their house in order
Their sermons should reach those on the floor
Cutting across inter religious border

Can this be real or an empty dream?
For humankind to survive vengeful plans
There should be a ray of hope and gleam,
To fuse universal faith and clans.

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SHAKESPEARE

K. V. Ramana Rao

The book of history shows a few recorded facts of Shakespeare's life. We have another book, that of his thought, his 37 plays. Here too he subjects himself to such a self-effacement that we have no means to know much of his mind. He is the most modest and reticent of writers.

Shakespeare's inner life also is little known despite the 37 plays that are a clouded mirror of his thoughts and experiences. His Brutus - like conflicts, his Hamlet - like sublimities of thought, his Horatio - like balance of mind, his Antonio - like moods of melancholy, his Lear-like innocence of the practical aspects of life, his Othello - like fires of the heart, his Portia -like legal acumen, his Prospero - like confidence, his Macbeth - like beliefs and ambitions - in short; the human side of his life is a closed book. This side is once for all entombed with him. We can never exhume it.

When he took up his pen, language rhythmized out in streams of honey and fire. The grand style is at his command. Great thoughts alighted at his door and waited for admittance. He must have a philosophy. Suffering, which is the parent of philosophy, is found in abundance in his life. He passed through many incidents such as his not too happy marriage, the early death of his son Hamnet, the decline of family's fortunes, the vexations he might have had during the blank years from 1584 to 1592, the wounds inflicted on him by the knife - thrusts of jealousy of writers like Robert Greene, the deaths of his parents and brothers. Such are the sad

contents of the cup of his life.

So, he knows the heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to. To say that he has no philosophy or that he has not expressed it in his works is to underestimate the abilities of a genius. There is a psychological need for a suffering heart to express thoughts of philosophy for its own self-consolation and peace of mind. Shakespeare stands as a warning signal for our hasty judgements or misjudgements about his philosophy and the motives that move his great tragic heroes and villains. A deep philosophic mood came upon him in the year 1600. This mood began to question the ends of human existence, whether "life is a tale told by an idiot" and existence a futility as Macbeth thinks or a felicity as Hamlet confidently tells Horatio. He might or might not have expressed his philosophy. Here a shadow falls between him and our seeing. But it is philosophy that made him express what he did express.

The 37 plays he wrote dropped from his pen as kingdoms dropped from Antony's pocket (Antony & Cleopatra). He bequeathed them to the world and left them without any apprehensions about their preservation. The world will be the poorer if it ignores them. Sixteen years after his death they were collected and published by Heminge and Condell. In doing so the world has preserved its own humanity and its instinct to respect the legacy of a great mind.

Shakespeare thought of the problems of life like good and evil, fate and character, love and jealousy, ambition and duty, thought and

action. He was not hasty nor anxious to suggest solutions. He asks us to take a spectator's interest in life as it is only a "two-hour traffic on the stage". The Last Plays, *Tempest*, *Cymbeline* and *Winter's Tale*, do tell us that a patient wisdom that understands, a heart that forgives and a humanity that tolerates and adjusts, are the healing balm for the tragic blows of life. That is the quintessence of philosophy. The serenity, the balance, the dispassionate objective outlook, the confidence, revealed in the Last Plays - these do indicate the maturity of mind and life of a man who thought and wrote on man's life for nearly 30 years.

He handled a skeleton like English language and gave it graceful limbs of flesh and blood, a rhythmical gait, a heroic stride. English is his gift to England and to the world.

He gave hundreds of beautiful expressions to the world. From a single play, *Hamlet*, we have, glass of fashion, hold the mirror upto nature, slings and arrows, primrose path, mind's eye, a tale unfold, Out - Herod Herod, insolence of office, hoops of steel, natural shocks that flesh is heir to, to grunt and sweat under a weary life, sick lied - over

with the pale cast of thought and many others. His unequalled mastery of English and his amazing skill in handling the blank verse are feats of a genius beyond talent. "Age cannot wither nor custom stale the infinite variety" of his plays.

His end life was gentle and peaceful. He had very cordial relations with friends and fellow actors. He got back the honour lost by the family. He secured the grant of heraldic coat of arms, a symbol of social status. His father had a peaceful death in 1601 and his mother in 1608.

On 23rd, April, 1616, "The curfew tolled the knell of parting day" and of the departing of Shakespeare. There were a few to mourn his death. No flowers were dropped on him. The world did not know who it was losing. No flags were lowered to honour him. But the unseen flag of mankind flew half-mast.

Reference Books:

1. Shakespeare's Complete works, quarter centenary edition, by Peter Alexander – his introduction.

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KILLING THE DEAD

P. Mohan Chandran

You made me cry,
When my tears went dry!
You inflicted upon me pain,
When I was already slain!
You pulled my feet from under the ground,
When I was already drowned!
You pierced my heart with a bullet,

When I was profusely bleeding from pellet.
You threw a boulder on my head,
Not knowing that I lay there dead!
You hanged me with a long rope,
When on my life, I had lost complete hope.
You tried to kill me, time and again,
When from death, than life, I would gain!

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HEMINGWAY'S THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA: QUEST FOR VALUES AND MEANING IN LIFE

Prof. D. P. Digole

Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961) is what Gertrude Stein called 'the most radical spokesperson of the lost generation' expressing compellingly a feeling of rootlessness, of being lost from old values and conventions and from the rest of humanity in all his works. He was born in a restless, chaotic moment in history. It is quite significant that one of his earliest works appeared under the title of *'In Our Time'* (1925). The title is a phrase that Philip Young suspects of 'sardonically borrowed' from the prayer Books: "Give peace in our time, O Lord". The time Hemingway refers to as 'our' time is a time of violence, brutality and crises in value system. The term 'lost generation' is appropriately used to denote the two decades of early 20th century 1920-1930's slung between two catastrophic events - the First World War (1914-18) and the Great Depression (1929). The writers of this period documented the disillusionment and nihilism that prevailed at that time in their works. The exponents of the lost generation like Hemingway, William Faulkner, Scott Fitzgerald and Sinclair Lewis had a common feeling that 'they inherited nothing' - their universe is devoid of any moral or spiritual values. That is why, the hero of Hemingway's masterpiece *The Sun Also Rises* says, "All I wanted to know was how to live in such a world." All Hemingway novels like *A Farewell to Arms*, *The Sun Also Rises*, *For Whom the Bell*

Tolls and *The Old Man and the Sea* are tragic tales in the sense their heroes are defeated by a society 'without moral and spiritual values.' It is the purpose of this paper to interpret Hemingway's nihilism as a perpetual quest for values and meaning in life by using his magnum opus *The Old Man and the Sea* as the resource. His departure from the earlier existential view of meaninglessness and nothingness of life towards a more positive viewpoint is clearly evident in this novel.

The novel *The Old Man and the Sea* is a classic of American literature quite instrumental in winning the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1954. It narrates a gripping story of rare fortitude and heroic endurance and thus gives the message of moral victory in the face of material defeat. It is a parable of man's struggle against Nature conveying a valuable lesson of stoical fortitude and struggle. It is a drama of an old Cuban Fisherman's struggle with a huge fish called 'Marlin'. Santiago is the old man of the title giving a message of respect for life's struggle and for mankind. Hemingway through the character of his protagonist seems to say that 'human life is an endless struggle against the unfavourable forces of the world'. He is a man battling against great odds to establish a sense of value and meaning in life. The novel is to be read as a quest story as its protagonist Santiago is in search of a renewed sense of manhood and of his identity as a fisherman.

Santiago ventures far out to sea alone even after his bad luck of eighty-four days. Finally, on the eighty-fifth day, he hooks a giant Marlin in the Gulf stream. He struggles with the Marlin for two days and nights. During his struggle, he realises his relationship with the rest of the world. Therefore, he reminds the boy Manolin many times by uttering that 'I wish I had the boy'. This is suggestive of his loneliness and longing for companionship in his struggle. The fish was so powerful that it took away his boat deep in the sea many times. At last, on the 3rd day of continuous struggle, Santiago draws the huge fish to the surface after great difficulties and heroic efforts. He has to struggle against innumerable sharks on his journey back. The sharks eat all the flesh of the giant Marlin and leave only the giant skeleton. It is symbolic of defeat but he achieves moral victory and respect. The story of Santiago is thus the story of the man 'undefeated' in the face of great suffering and defeat of physical powers. His assertion of manhood is worth quoting here:

"A man is not made for defeat'
He can be 'destroyed' but not defeated."

Santiago puts forth the philosophy that 'life is a risky game' that one has to risk in spite of great odds and hostility. What Henrich Straumann comments on this novel in his book *American Literature in the 20th Century* is quite summative of its central meaning: "The novel undoubtedly reflects man's lonely and exhausting struggle for a belief in some achievement as a value which after being obtained will be torn to shreds by a hostile

world but will keep its significance for him who fought for it."

Hemingway intends to give his readers a vision of a moral world, that is intense, deep and fruitful, through the weather-beaten, sea-tossed fisherman of *The Old Man and the Sea*. Some critics interpret the novel as 'a novel of affirmation' marking a departure from Hemingway's earlier novels characterized by disillusionment and negation. Leo Gurko remarks aptly in this connection: "The affirming tone is in sharp contrast with the pessimism permeating such books as the *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms*." Philip Young regards this affirmative attitude towards life as a long evolution from the days of total despair. Santiago is not a permanently 'wounded' hero as was Jake Barnes in *The Sun Also Rises* and Lieutenant Henry in *A Farewell to Arms*. This novel is a powerfully urged metaphor which stands for what life can be. It is an epic metaphor of a contest where even the problem of moral right or wrong seems paltry before the great thing, that is the struggle, struggle against the impossible odds of life. Santiago may have been defeated by the sharks, but he has won a moral victory by virtue of his heroic battle that he has fought against them. Defeat does not crush the old man or drive him to a state of total despair. Hence, he goes back to his cabin after losing his lifetime's achievement of the Marlin and dreams of the lions on the African shores. The novel thus brings out the essential invincibility of the human spirit, a reverence for life's struggle and for mankind. Santiago's faith and hope rest, not upon any belief in a just and benevolent God, but upon his belief in man's

ability to endure pain and suffering: “What a man can do and what a man endures”.

Santiago’s character embodies certain vital moral values like love and compassion, courage and endurance and humility and charity. Santiago’s love for the various creatures of the sea shows his compassionate nature. He even loves the fishes, turtles, birds and everything in nature. He feels sorry for them as they have a harder life than human beings. He calls them ‘brothers’ many times during his journey at the sea. He comes to feel a great love and sympathy even for the creature which he has hooked and which he is determined to kill. He sees in the great Marlin a worthy adversary and he begins to feel for it a certain amount of respect. That is why, he says: “Fish, I love you and respect you very much but I will kill you dead before this day ends..... Come on and kill me. I don’t care who kills who....”

Santiago’s compassion and charity arise from a feeling that he and all natural creatures participate in the same pattern of necessity. His humanity and compassion combined with his heroism make Santiago a man who deserves our highest respect.

The novel is not devoid of a religious significance also. It is true that Hemingway does not show any fervent belief in the existence of a benevolent God. Santiago doesn’t think himself to be a religious man in an orthodox, doctrinaire sense, but possesses all those virtues which religion enjoins upon man. He bears a close relationship with the character and personality of Jesus Christ. He considers himself a sinner in killing the huge Marlin and the sharks. His suffering is also

depicted in terms of the suffering of Lord Christ. When the sharks attack the Marlin, the narrator says about Santiago’s cry ‘Aye’:

“There is no translation for the word ‘Aye’ it is just like the noise a man might make involuntarily feeling the nail going through his hands and into the wood”.

Here, Hemingway adds a new dimension to the personality of Santiago by equating him to the martyrdom of Jesus Christ. Mark Schorer sees the novel as ‘a moral fable’ where the protagonist, Santiago has a stature like Christ - an intense capacity to suffer for an appointed task with an evenness of mind in defeat.

To put it in a nutshell, the novel *The Old Man and the Sea* is a remarkable tale of courage, endurance, love, pride, devotion, struggle and suffering. It is much more than a story of a fisherman, a fish and a pack of sharks. It has a serious moral and deep-longing for meaning and values in life. This novel takes us into a world which has, to some extent recovered from the gaping wounds that made it so frightening a place in Hemingway’s early stories and novels. The world is no longer a bleak-trap within which man is doomed to struggle, suffer and die, but a meaningful, integrated place that challenges human resources and holds forth rich emotional rewards for brave men like Santiago. Hemingway’s quest for moral order and values in the hostile world thus ends for the first time on a note of hope and affirmation of life. He lives by cherishing all his values and finally accepting his morality fearlessly without compromising any of his values.

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URMILA THE UNSUNG HEROINE

Radha Murthi

When one recalls the great epic Ramayana, one is impressed with 'Sita' and her virtues. All devout Hindus like Sita, Tara, Mandodari, Arundhati, Kausalya etc. It is drilled into the minds of young girls, that they must emulate the noble qualities of 'Sita' and bring glory to their parents as well as the in-laws.

But no poet or writer ever cared to write about Urmila, the second daughter of Raja Janak, the younger sister of Sita, and the wife of Lakshmana, the inseparable brother of Sri Rama.

Many people feel that poet Valmiki himself did not pay much attention to Urmila's characterization and this is a great injustice meted out to her. But gurudev Rabindranath Tagore defended Valmiki by saying that the 'Adikavi' was so fond of Sita and was so engrossed in portraying her character that he had neglected to give much thought to Urmila, the unsung heroine of the epic.

Great poets and writers who came after Valmiki, wrote and translated Ramayana into several languages, but could not do justice to Urmila's character as there are not many authentic details available in the original Valmiki Ramayana.

Still, we have enough reasons to appreciate her virtues based on whatever little information that is available.

All of us have a nagging doubt in our minds as to why Urmila did not accompany Lakshmana to the forest. Though 'Sita' was not required to go to the 'vanvas', she requests, pleads, entreats, and ultimately

argues with Rama, persuades him to take her along with him. Her argument is that a devout wife has to be always by her husband's side. When this holds good for Sita, it should hold good for her sister Urmila too and she should have accompanied her husband. Since she did not do so it raises a question. Is it because Urmila did not want to go to the forest, or did Lakshmana not want to take her along with him?

Neither of the above reasons is reasonable enough for Urmila to stay back. The reason is something else.

While the whole drama of 'Kaikeyi' for a pound of flesh from Dasaratha and Rama, calling them to her inner chambers by Kaikeyi and telling them about the two boons she was promised by Dasaratha was going on the entire city and the inmates of the Royal palace of Ayodhya were merrily preparing for the coronation of Prince Rama. One of the boons Kaikeyi asked was to send Rama on 14 years of exile.

Urmila was also in a happy mood and being a creative person, and good at painting was busily painting the picture of Rama and Sita in their finery sitting on the Royal throne. She imagined in her mind's eye how 'Rama and Sita' would look as crown prince and princess sitting on the throne, and was painting the portrait.

In the meanwhile, decisions were being taken and the scene was set for Rama's 'vanvas', for Sita and Lakshmana to leave the palace and accompany Rama to the forest to serve him.

Lakshmana proceeded to his wing of the palace, to inform Urmila about the change in the situation and to take leave of her. As was typical of his nature he went rushing in an excited manner, shouting her name. Urmila being totally lost in her painting, was perturbed by his shouts, spilled the colours on the portrait and was upset about it. Seeing her perturbed, Lakshmana demands to know what the painting was about and why she was upset about it. Urmila tells him about the painting and says that she was upset because the painting was ruined. Lakshmana says that, “the real picture of Rama’s coronation is already ruined by Kaikeyi and now your picture is ruined by me. Do not feel sad. After all toys are bound to get spoiled, and claypots are bound to get broken. Dear Urmila, Rama and Sita are going to the forest and I am accompanying them to serve them. I can see you only after 14 years, on my return from ‘vanvas’.”

Urmila was aghast and stood speechless on hearing this. Her eyes were full with tears which came out in such a gush as if a cloud had burst. Neither Lakshmana asked her to come along with him to the forest, nor Urmila expressed the desire to accompany him. That one word from Lakshmana which implied that his main aim was to serve his brother Shri Rama did not let her say anything.

She softly told him, “My Lord, I will stay back in Ayodhya. You are lucky. Please go with Rama and Sita to the forest and serve them to your utmost satisfaction and capacity. Your service to them should be like a penance, coupled with love, regard and devotion. But my only request to you is, do not think of me even for a moment during these fourteen years. I have no desire to disturb your penance. Even

if you think of me what good will it be? As we cannot meet each other, it will only create restlessness in our minds. So do not think of me.”

What can anybody write about such a great lady who is the personification of sacrifice. It is believed that whenever any venerated and merciful souls tried to write about her their pens used to feel sad and slipped off from their hands! That is why it is told that nobody attempted to write about Urmila. Even saint Tulasidas said, “Hey Urmilaji, I am incapable of describing your noble qualities. I can only salute you.”

Urmila’s sacrifice is unparalleled, unimaginable, and cannot be expressed in words. Her sense of total surrender is exemplary. Lakshmana stood stunned and speechless on hearing her comforting words, which spoke volumes. He quietly left the place and went to Shri Rama. In fact Lakshmana was so grief stricken that he could not even tell Urmila, that she should go and bid farewell to Sita and Rama as she will not be able to meet them for fourteen years. Urmila mistook his silence as his desire that she should stay at Ayodhya only, and indeed, she stayed for fourteen years.

There is one more incident narrated often by some Mahatmas about Urmila. It is like this: A fierce battle ensued between Rama and Ravana, Lakshmana was wounded and was unconscious, Hanuman was given the job of bringing the Sanjeevani Mountain. As he was returning, he was passing through ‘Nandigram’. Bharath looked at Hanuman and mistook him to be a Rakshasa and brought him down with his arrows. But, after finding the truth about each other, Bharath asked about Shri Rama and Lakshmana. People

gather around Hanuman and when they learn about Lakshmana's predicament everybody including Kausalya and other queens start crying. Among so many, there were two ladies, one Sumithra, the mother of Lakshmana and Urmila his wife who neither cried nor looked worried. In fact Sumithra consoled Kausalya by saying that, she need not feel sad if something happens to Lakshmana, she will send her second son Satrugna to help Rama.

Overwhelmed by such noble gesture, Hanuman expressed the desire to meet Urmila. Bharatha took him to Urmila's wing of the palace and with Bharatha's permission Hanuman asks Urmila, "Mother, how is it that you are not disturbed by the fact that Lakshmana's life is in danger? Unless I take this Sanjeevani Mountain before sunrise, it is futile. Are you not feeling sad?"

Urmila replies, "Dear Hanuman, let us not worry about my husband. I know him very well. Every atom in his body is filled with the name of Rama and I am very sure that Rama

will protect him. The arrows that wounded him are not bothering him as you say he is unconscious. Instead, Rama is feeling the pain and he is crying for his dear brother. Besides, I, Urmila, the daughter-in-law of Surya dynasty, assure you that Sun-god will not appear in the sky till you reach Lanka with the Sanjeevani Mountain and fulfill the task entrusted to you. How can sun god rise and let his own progeny die. So, there is no need to feel sad and cry. You please proceed on your mission."

Hanuman left Ayodhya with tears streaming down his eyes, touched to the core of his heart by such total surrender.

The saga of Urmila is heart rending. Since no one mustered the courage to write about her nobility, nothing much is written about her. Let us bow to Urmila and try to emulate her, a steady, noble character, hidden behind the screen of adulation, yet stands out by her steadfastness and virtues.

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WHAT IS HEROIC

Pronab Kumar Majumder

It is no heroic to use gun
To awaken spectre of violence and misery
It takes more talent to have none
Suffering from violence and anxiety

Language of weapon is not of civil society
Law of jungle is the rule of terrorist
Which does not decide who is mighty
Peace-lovers are mightier than one least

It is no heroic to be a suicide bomber
Because many people can do it
It takes more virtue to be a peace-lover
Terrorising for moments is what can do a
terrorist

What they gain by stifling wisdom
Of humanity which is nothing but muting a
nation
Do they want to create a kingdom
Where man is nourished by flesh of another
man.

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PLATO AND ARISTOTLE ON POET AND POETRY

Dr. Arbind Panjiara

It is known to all that Plato was inimical towards poets and poetry. In his “Republic”, he banished the poets because they were very dangerous and harmful for the society. It should be noted in this connection that it was not his primary concern to discuss the nature of poetry and role of poets in society and in life. If poets and poetry fall within the ambit of his discussion or exposition, it is because he was interested in something else and poets and poetry emerged in the discussion as incidental and indirect phenomenon.

Plato was not interested in literature. His driving aim or overarching intention was to create a good society. If this was his aim, he had to discover the means to create a good society. The conception of good society differs from age to age and hence the notions of good society held by people living in Plato’s time have to be ascertained. The notions of good society consist of the concept of God and justice. Here education becomes very important for the creation of good society. This necessitates a discussion of God, justice and education. Poets and poetry do not appear at this stage. If good society is to be created, the first precondition is that the children must be properly educated and reared in a proper manner. The children love to listen to stories and it is necessary that the stories which are related before the children should be morally elevating and uplifting. Wrong ideas and dangerous facts should not be brought to the knowledge of the children. In ancient Greece,

Homer was the chief vehicle or medium of education and Homer was a poet. The situation is thus paradoxical. The poet was the usual fountain of information and knowledge at that time. Then how is it that Plato came to hold views and opinions against poets? In order to know it, we should have some ideas of the mind of Plato. We must be conversant with the factors which constituted Plato’s attitude and vision. Plato was the first person to systematize philosophy in the western world. He himself belonged to an aristocratic family in Athens. He learnt many things early in his life from Cratylus who was a follower of Heraclitus. As a result of this, he became a devoted disciple of Socrates. In his early life, it was his aim to have a political career. When he found that the oligarchical government had taken to bad ways and was taking steps which were tyrannical, he decided to shun political life. His indifference became more accentuated when his teacher and master Socrates was put to death. The only crime of Socrates was that he held views contrary to the views of the state and against the views of the majority of the inhabitants of Athens.

Plato’s theory of poetry is derived from the theory of knowledge or epistemology. He developed the theory of Forms. He made a distinction between knowledge and opinion. Knowledge is possible only if there are objects of knowledge. If there are no objects of knowledge, there is no possibility of the

existence of knowledge. But here we must remember one thing. If knowledge has to be absolute and changeless, the objects of knowledge must also be absolute and changeless. In the visible world or phenomenal universe, things are perpetually changing and hence knowledge based on visible objects of the world cannot be eternal and permanent. Plato therefore, had to find out changeless objects. He formulated a theory of archetypes or models or prototypes which are laid up in heaven. They are called Forms by Plato. These Forms are changeless and prototypes. The visible objects of the world have opposite quality also but the Forms have no contradictory or opposite quality. They are purest. Hence there are two levels of reality. One is the reality of Form and other reality is the reality of this visible world which is a manifestation of the Form. This visible world is an imitation of the reality laid up in heaven. The poet describes this visible world. He sees daffodils and writes a poem on them. He sees a Nightingale and he records his impression and reactions about the Nightingale. He finds the west wind blowing and he embodies his reactions about the wind. Then what the poet writes is an imitation of the visible world and this visible world is an imitation of the world of Forms. Hence a poem is an imitation of imitation and the consequence is that it is twice removed from reality. If a poem does not deal with reality and truth, it is not required in a good society. That is why Plato gave a verdict that a poet should not be allowed to work and operate in his conception of good society. Hence the views of Plato against poets and poetry are derived from his theory of

knowledge.

In the ideal state of Plato, only an ideal man can be permitted to live and at the same time the ideal man should be created by education. What is the conception of an ideal man? This is an important question. An ideal man is he who is a great lover of truth. He is dedicated to it. His aim of life is realization of truth. If the truth would be the highest ideal of all activities, these should be subservient to pursuit of truth and its final attainment. Now let this principle be applied to the case of a poet and poetry. If a poet tells the truth, he should be respected and accepted according to the philosophy and understanding of Plato. Now the question is 'Is a poet a lover or devotee of truth?' Plato points out that a poet is a liar. He is a big liar. He deals in falsehood. What he writes is tinted with unreality and tinged with falsehood. A poet arouses our sentiments. He fans our emotions. He may lift us and carry us to an ethereal world. He pleases us with glittering and sparkling images but the poet is far from truth and away from reality. There is a large measure of falsehood in his sayings and images. Hence the poet and poetry should be rejected on this account.

There is a third reason for banishing and disapproving a poet. It is true that he is an imitator of imitation. He embodies and describes the appearance of appearances. But he does not know the true use of what he writes about. He is not conversant with the nature of what he imitates. This is the great objection raised by Plato.

The fourth objection of Plato is that the poet appeals to the inferior parts of the human faculties. He does not please or influence the

rational principles which inhere in the soul. The capricious and wayward temper of men, is described by the poet because such a thing is easily imitated. The poet does not highlight the essential sense of truth. He deals with ever-changing surfaces. He should have been an expert in delineating the stable things in a calm manner, not in an excited manner.

The fifth charge is that the poet feeds and waters the passions instead of drying them up. This is a very serious charge against the poet according to Plato. Plato is opposed to passions. He is an advocate of reason. There is conflict between reason and passion and a citizen should be able to secure the victory of reason over passion. If this victory is not obtained, it is a serious flaw. Poetry strengthens, excites, arouses, sustains and magnifies passions. Hence poetry does something which is very harmful and dangerous.

The sixth objection is that poetry is something which degrades, debases and demoralises men. It debilitates men; hence morality is at discount in the case of the poet and poetry. Plato feels that greatness cannot be attained without due proportion of morality. Art and morality are coextensive. They are mutually connected. The character of the artist appears in the character of his work. Creation of art and poetry has an influence upon the life of man. This influence is expressed in terms of morality. According to Plato, the poet should also be a moral man but he is not so and hence he is not allowed to stay in the republic or state.

Hence we find that Plato's opposition to

the poet and poetry is caused by many factors such as his theories of knowledge, his theory of society, his theory of morality and his ardent desire to have an ideal society. If Plato was a disciple of Socrates, Aristotle was disciple of Plato, but this disciple has been able to demolish all the arguments of Plato against poets and poetry. It is a strange case of a disciple going against his teacher. Plato believes that art meant morality and therefore poetry should preach and teach morality. This became the hot topic of discussion for centuries afterwards. Aristotle was not a metaphysician like Plato. He was a practical man. He established certain aesthetic principles and the artist was required to conform to them. He prepared the ground for the study of aesthetics. He tried to end the controversy between art and morality. Another difference between Plato and Aristotle lies in the fact that pleasure was a bad word for Plato, imitating art becomes a corruptive influence. Hence Plato was opposed to it. He distrusts pleasure. Aristotle was not against pleasure and emotions. In his eyes pleasure is something healthy. It perfects the personality and makes it complete and wholesome. It is like bloom of health on the face of the young. Plato had interest in Mathematics, Aristotle had interest in Biology. Aristotle proceeded from things to ideas and Plato moves from ideas to things. Plato had a metaphysical mind. Aristotle had a scientific mind. Aristotle points out that poetry is not imitation of an imitation. David Daiches writes "Aristotle deals with Plato's attack on poetry as an imitation of an imitation - its a most

damaging blow. The poet does not simply imitate or represent particular events or situation which he happens to have noted or invented, he handles them in such a way that he brings out their universal and characteristic elements, thus illuminating essential nature of some events and situations whether or not what he is telling is historically true. The poet works according to the law of probability and necessity, not according to some chance observations or random invention". A poet invents or arranges his own story. He creates a self sufficient world and this world is more real and true than the actual world because it spotlights the universal and absolute truth underlying events and situations. This goes to show that art or poetry exposes the actual existing truth and is not twice removed from reality. It has rather an indirect and dynamic connection with reality. Again Aristotle gives a reply to another objection of Plato that art corrupts by nurturing and arousing passions. Aristotle points out that art or poetry does not nourish passion. It rather gives them harmless or even useful purgation. It controls the passions and makes them quiet and calm after excitement. Poetry rather gives a safe outlet for passions which are given a useful and proper direction and modification. If passions are thus channelised, there is moral elevation of man. Thus we find that Aristotle demolishes all the objections raised by Plato.

No doubt Plato has been regarded as the greatest philosopher of the western world. But we do not agree with many of the formulations of Plato. He ignored the

emotional and psychological aspects of art. He fails to understand that art can both stimulate human nature and elevate it. It is true that the artist and the poet tell us something which is not true and which is less than reality. A poet adds something unique and special to reality and thus gives us profounder truth and higher morality. A thing may be ugly or contemptuous but if the poet handles it, it becomes sparkling. The Daffodils have become immortal in the eyes of Wordsworth. The Nightingale has become an eternal creature in the hand of Keats. If the objects are lying in obscurity, it is the poet who brings them into limelight. The importance of Plato lies in the fact that he has cleaned the ground. He has enunciated some important principles and axioms. He has given us starting points and food for thought. The question is not whether he is right or wrong. The main question is what has he done? He has set men thinking. The critical effort has been given inspiration and direction by him. He has supplied ideas which have been discussed by generations to come. Many of his formulations and affirmations are of challenging nature and therefore they have provided stimulus to criticism. He has given starting points to many aspects of literary criticism. Therefore he is more than a mere path finder. He has blazed a track for generations to tread on it. He is the father of the greatest of critical heresies. He is also a fountain of that which is mostly living. He is light bringer ever guiding the steps of the latter critics. *

THE SCIENCE OF FAITH

Jasvinder Sharma

Every religion of this world teaches us to have faith in God or in some eternal superpower. This teaching of all religions is not mere nonsense or rubbish but it really works. In a recent survey, it was seen that faith on divine powers has a real impact on us and it enhances our prosperity in present day life. In this study it came out that persons having religious faith were contented and better off as compared to atheists and non-believers.

The believers in a religious faith are receptive to their aims and pursuits and they also help their fellow-beings. They make much progress at personal level and are quite satisfied with their lives. They achieve much more and they occupy a much higher place in the social circles. According to the survey, religious people contribute a lot more to the society. They give donations to numerous welfare institutions and work as volunteers. In their daily routine they help people in a sincere way. People having faith in God are more blissful and well-off.

Had there been no religion, men would have become crazy despite their acquiring abundant knowledge. Religious beliefs work as bridges of faith and conviction between man and nature. It is quite true that due to science and technological achievements we are not tormented by scourges of nature any more. Even then, in the moments of our sorrows and failures, we get relief if we surrender ourselves to the divine powers. So long as religion remains associated with our personal ethics and morality it has a positive effect on us but

as we get excessively clenched by superstitions, religion loses its usefulness.

Laxmi is a goddess of wealth and prosperity. There has been little or no discussion as to what should be the relationship between the economic development and religious upliftment. Robert Maclierre, an eminent economist has answered this question meaningfully for the first time.

He studied thoroughly the religious faiths and beliefs of various societies, the intervention of church and the economic trends prevailing at that time. He came to the conclusion that religious beliefs of hell and heaven are not a mere gossip and hearsay. The belief in the concept of hell and heaven do have a good effect on our advancement. A firm conviction and faith in such tenets and dogmas open up new vistas of progress and achievements since religion inculcates a feeling of honesty, hard work and obedience in the people of a society. But excessive indulgence in religious ceremonies does have a bad effect on the economic pace of the society.

Whenever the unwanted intervention of church increases, the economic wheel slows down. The reason is very simple; the resources are now spent on uneconomical and unproductive orthodox religious processes. If we apply these results to India, the whole picture becomes clear and it would become understandable why we lag behind the western countries. It is because we spend too many resources on religious activities.

God is considered to be an image of all virtues and this is the reason why not a single

thing is perfect which can be taken as final standard. Many reformers, wise men, gurus and avatars came into this world and they preached and cleansed the world but the world is still full of fallacies and drawbacks. A philosopher has rightly said, 'Forget that you will be faultless because no one can attain perfection. It is divine virtue.' An old saying warns, 'Best is the enemy of good.' To attain an ideal status is the dream of every human being. Man strives for perfection which is not yet attained by anyone before him.

This quest for utopia; a perfect system has inspired man to make great scientific advancement. His fast track approach has created numerous risks and hazards to the very existence of man. We undoubtedly have invented robots, rockets and automatic machines to minimize these risks but the mad rat race to surpass one another has made us impatient and restless.

The recent train accident in Japan has revealed the mentality of punctuality addicted people of a mechanized civilization. The all-time adherence to a strict time schedule and a demand for attainment of perfection in every act has made the Japanese robot-like who constantly remain under pressure of time. The people of other nations are nonetheless not lagging behind on this account. Flexibility required from a human being is missing everywhere.

In any other nation if a train is running late by 90 seconds it shall be assumed that it is in time but in Japan the delay, even one second is taken to be agonizing and unbearable. The pressure of time is more obvious in Japan. In the recent accident the train was running 90 seconds late and the driver of the train thought that if he did not

increase the speed of the train it would be awfully late. He increased the speed and the train overturned on a blind curve. 57 people lost their lives.

Flexibility is disappearing from our lives. We want everything on time as shown in the ad of domino's pizza. Rain or storm, the company promises to deliver pizza within 30 minutes. The strict time schedule and a lust for perfection resulted in the bodily and mental agonies of today's man. The snobbery to complete everything in time sometimes becomes an ominous risk for us.

Of late, a new controversy has drawn our attention that perfection is fatal in every field. In business, a product sells on the basis of its quality. A product becomes a brand when millions are spent on advertisements. It is the dream of every brand that it should not only lead its segment but should become the symbol of ultimate quality.

This unfortunate thing happened to Surf in India when it became the synonym to any brand of washing powder. Everyone started calling every brand of washing powder by the name Surf. After becoming a synonym of all washing powders, Surf brand lost its own distinctive identity. This resulted in forcing the manufacturers to take it back. The same dilemma is being faced by Switzerland. For centuries this country is known as a symbol of neutrality and nonalignment and due to this it has lost its international distinctiveness and individuality. Perfection at personal level creates complications for us and in its mad pursuit we are segregated from the rest of the world. A bit of incompleteness here and a drawback there make our lives lively and vibrant.

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HUMANISM IN TAGORE'S *GITANJALI*

T. Jeevan Kumar

In the 21st century, modern man lives in the grip of fear as the world is dominated by violence. Culture obviously is an outmoded creed, and humanism is under a cloud in the present Age. But the note on humanism is strongly struck in the works of several writers belonging to different Ages. They are faithfully dedicated to the country and to their art. In their works they examined the importance of man in national and international perspectives.

Humanism, in its strict sense, is a secular approach to life that accepts human responsibility and it endeavours in the shaping of an individual, societal, and global existence. According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*,

Humanism is a system of thought that considers that solving human problems with the help of reason is more important than religious beliefs. It emphasizes the fact that the basic nature of humans is good.

It is a term that is used with different shades of meaning and implication. It easily reminds us of the Greek humanism, the Renaissance humanism, and the humanism of the Romantics. The Greek concept of humanism stressed the importance of human body and the human mind – “man being the measure of all things.” His life here and now is more significant than the blissful hereafter. Greeks, as opposed to Christianity, had an abiding respect for human assets like beauty and freedom. It is embodied in the revolt of Prometheus against Zeus and his interest in the well-being of man.

The Renaissance humanism was in many respects a revival of the Greek humanism. It

is an attitude of mind attaching prime importance to man and human values, often regarded as the central theme of Renaissance civilization. It is traceable to the 14th century Italian humanist Petrarch, the father of humanism, whose scholarship and enthusiasm for classic Latin writings (“the humanities”) gave great impetus to a movement that eventually spread from Italy to all of Western Europe. It accepted the central position of man in the universe, emphasized the study of imaginative literature as against natural science. In its return to antiquity, humanism found inspiration in man's personal quest for truth and goodness. In the nineteenth century, the term ‘humanism’ came to be applied to the view of man, the general values, and the educational ideas common to many Renaissance humanists, as well as to later writers in the same tradition.

In recent years, the term ‘humanism’ has often been used to refer to value systems that emphasize the personal worth of each individual but that do not include a belief in God. At times it is very close to individualism, progressivism, and modernism. Thus, humanism literally may be viewed as devotion to human interests, and suggests a spirit that it is concerned with the welfare of mankind. It is opposed to all kinds of suffering and indignity of man and proposes to improve the conditions of human beings. E.M. Forster in his essay *George and Gide* lays down the characteristics of a humanist thus:

The humanist has four leading characteristics – curiosity, a free mind, belief in good taste, and belief in the human

race.

As an Indian Renaissance writer, Rabindranath Tagore comes before us as the prophet of the illuminated mind who bases truth on human experience and values on human nature, rejecting the truth and sanctions of a supernatural creed. Although Tagore was a poet, dramatist, novelist, short-story writer, musician, painter, critic, philosopher, educationist, mystic, patriot, above all he was a man who felt and saw the society and people's turmoil of his times. He lived ahead of his times both in life and thought. He emphasizes the importance of man above all types of orthodoxy, narrow-minded sectarianism, religion, parochialism, and violence. This broad humanistic vision has made him a writer of great relevance. Tagore sought an integrated approach to science and humanities in education with a view to blending eastern thought with western progressiveness. He was the most influential in introducing the best of Indian culture to the west and vice-versa. He was the first Asian to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913 for his translated version of series of song-poems *Gitanjali*. The Nobel Committee observed thus: 'The honour had been bestowed upon him because of his profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse, by which, with consummate skill, he has made his poetic thought, expressed in his own English words, a part of the literature of the West.' His works dwell upon universal harmony and spiritual sovereignty; regardless of the nature, culture, race and nationality of the human. Tagore's humanism in *Gitanjali* may be viewed in this light.

Gitanjali: Song Offerings, a collection of 103 English poems (Bengali version had 157 poems) bears spiritual and metaphysical

essence and talks about the aspirations of the human soul for meeting the divine. The element of celestial and heavenly love takes inspiration from the Vaishnava literature of ancient India. The songs are mainly of the closest personal connection between the poet and the Eternal, as lover and beloved, wife and husband, servant and master, friend and friend, as if the poet was trying to approach Reality in a personal way through personal relationship.

The book is a confluence of romanticism, mysticism, and universal humanism. The songs depict some of the most religiously felt experiences of the deeper life of man and of the universe. Their appeal would always be to the 'essential man'. They are there not to be intellectually understood, but to be heard and felt by the heart within. According to Tagore, spirituality does not mean an escape from the problems of life or a complete negation of life. It is not where we begin but where we end and how we conclude and culminate that matters most.

It is with this vision that Tagore beheld God in the tiller, in the toiler, in the child on the sea-shore of endless worlds, and in the panorama of nature's beauties. While on the one hand his poems persistently proclaim that life is meant to be lived, on the other, he is always conscious of the deeper meaning of life. He feels that the man has to take a share of the world's burden and not try to run away from the world. In that very famous poem of the tiller, he says thus:

Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads! ... Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee!

He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the pathmaker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower, and his garment is covered

with dust. Put off thy holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil.

Again

Come out of thy meditations and leave aside thy flowers and incense! ... Meet him and stand by him in toil and in sweat of thy brow.

These lines easily point out that God is to be found in the hard toil of daily life, and not away from the haunts of man. As a humanist, Tagore does not believe in any conventional religion. He is also opposed to any militant creed. As a liberal he is opposed to chanting and reciting the name of the Lord as it does not take him anywhere. He believes that God is there in the toil and moil of people. He can be seen in the figure of the pathmaker who breaks stones. He is an all absorbing mighty figure who is present throughout the universe, the one who leaves the world of illusion and identifies himself with the dusty soil can have the vision of the Lord. To be precise, meditations and continuous chanting do not take people to the Lord.

In song No.35, Tagore talks of the liberation of human mind and spirit from all fears. It easily abandons the doubts and embraces the realm of reason. It also expresses his values clearly. In his own words:

*Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depth of the truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;*

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;

*Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father,
let my country awake.*

In these lines Tagore comes before us as a lover of freedom who champions the cause of the value of democracy. He is of the opinion that an individual is one who is civilized and is not fettered by any force on earth. The use of police and army easily knocks the head of an individual. Similarly the acquisition of knowledge is to be freely fostered. The world must not be divided by boxes and narrow-minded walls. In each wall powerful forces control and lead others into a world of insecurity. Most of the people are so stupid that they do not understand the depth of the truth. They are so imperfect that they destroy the minds of others with their illogic and dogma. Naturally one must be guided by clear reasoning, ever widening thought and action. Such world according to Tagore is a heaven representing values like freedom, beauty, genuine concern for others, and aesthetic susceptibility.

Even in song No.83, Tagore comes out with the mother-son relationship, an aspect of humanism. He says thus:

Mother, I shall weave a chain of pearls for thy neck with my tears of sorrow.

The stars have wrought their anklets of light to deck thy feet, but mine will hand upon thy breast.

Wealth and fame come from thee and it is for thee to give or to withhold them. But this my sorrow is absolutely mine own, and when I bring it to thee as my offering

thou rewardest me with thy grace.

Though these lines reveal to us the love between son and the mother, they also spread that one must love one another.

The poet is often seen communing with the divine essence of life in the spirit of a comrade. He begins to find God in a comrade who soothes him by His healing grace. Likewise, there are many songs which bring enlightenment and they heighten our sensibility in the day-to-day existence. W.B. Yeats aptly described Tagore thus:

Tagore was the product of a whole

people, a whole civilization, immeasurably strange to us, seems to have been taken up into this imagination; and yet we are not moved because of its strangeness, but because we have met our own image, as though we had walked in Rossetti's willow wood, or heard, perhaps for the first time in literature, our voice as in a dream.

Tagore was a humanist to the core. He was also an idealist who came from a part of the world that valued peace. His *Gitanjali* illustrates ably his belief in humanistic values.

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THE TAMING OF A POET (A CONVERSATION)

I. K. Sharma

With his head in the clouds, he asked:
'Where does this path go?'

*'It doesn't go anywhere.
People come and go along it',*
said the old woman at the spinning wheel.
'Who are you, by the way?'
carried she on mockingly, knowingly.

'We are Travellers'.

*Travellers! Travellers are Sun and Moon.
Tell me who you are'.*

'Short-lived human beings. Fleeting,
momentary

*Treasure and youth are momentary. Not to
be relied on,
say our Puranas'.*

Face lost colour. Gathered, he said:
'We are Kings'.

'Only two kings: Yama and Indra'.

Nervously he added:
'I am that Magnanimous Soul that pardons
all'.

*'Oh! Can you be more magnanimous than
Earth and
Woman? No, no. You are someone else'.*

'Mother, I have lost

*'No. Son! He alone loses who loses his
character, and also
he who borrows money'.*

Felt he as if thrown in a pit.

She resumed. *'I knew, Mahapandit, who you
are
The Learned Poet Magh
But remember:
Humility, not arrogance, becomes the
learned'.*

*

KOVVALI WHO WROTE THOUSAND NOVELS

Poranki Dakshinamurthy

A single author writing nearly a thousand novels is a rare phenomenon in any language. It is rarer still to find success in various literary forms and gain wide popularity. Kovvali Lakshmi Narasimha Rao (1912-1975), popularly known by his surname KOVVALI, stands out as a unique example in modern Telugu Literature.

Lakshmi Narasimha Rao was born in a small town called Tanuku, in West Godavari District of Andhra Pradesh. Lakshmi Narasimha Rao had no schooling till his twelfth year. One of his elder sisters taught him the popular Telugu Primer Pedda Bala Siksha at home.

The boy went to his sister's village during a summer vacation. The opportunity proved a blessing and a turning point in his life. He was fortunate to find a small library in that village. He devoured all the books available in the library and developed great love for reading. Every sheet of paper, either printed or hand-written, was important for him. One day, he was pained to see a woman tear off a page from an epic poem, and use it to remove the excrement of her child. Later, when he dared to ask the woman whether she had ever read the book, she said, "No. The style and language are beyond my capacity to understand". Lakshmi Narasimha Rao got an important message from her naive answer. Language should always be simple, easily understandable and never beyond the reach of an average person. This lesson was always kept in his mind for the rest of his life.

After passing his School Final Examination in his sixteenth year, he felt restive and left his home and town. He became an aimless wanderer for a period of three or four

years. Later, he was admitted in an institute for undergoing Cooperative Training. But the young man of considerable creative talent could not feel happy within the confines of lecture halls. He preferred to spend the greater part of his time in the libraries of Rajahmundry.

Wisdom dawned on him to pursue a definite path of life and he took a strong resolve to become a writer in Telugu, by which he would be able to inculcate the reading habit among people. Works of almost all earlier writers were in archaic or pedantic style of Telugu, far removed from the common speech. Most people did not get attracted towards such books. Hence Kovvali wanted to write novels and stories in modern standard language of the Telugu speech community and to make the books available for sale at as low a price as two or three annas (one anna was equal to six paise, before the introduction of the Decimal Coinage in April 1957).

The first of his writings, 'Palle Paduchulu' (Village Belles) was a collection of three short stories – Kastajivi, Perindeviki Pelli and Pancamudevaru? The first story deals with the hard way of life of a poor couple. The second with the foolish custom of child marriage and the third one shows gradual transformation in the outlook of an orthodox person towards Scheduled Castes.

Chellapilla Venkata Sastri, one of the leading poets of his time, expressed his appreciation and approval for the language and style used in the novel Dasipilla and blessed the author. Another novel Tanaji, was published with an introduction by a respected educationist, Adavi Sankara Rao. The publisher dared to bring out the novel Flower

Girl, contrary to the opinion of a reputed scholar and poet, simply basing on the recommendation of an ordinary postman who happened to read the manuscript in the presence of the publisher. The attempt was a great success and the publisher asked Kovvali for some more novels.

In one year, Kovvali was able to write 100 novels, each containing about 100 pages. By his 25th year, Kovvali was able to publish 400 novels and another 200 by his 30th year. All of them were made available for sale on railway platforms as well as running trains.

Kovvali's novels depicted social conditions and family customs of the days of his boyhood and adulthood. He propagated social reforms like widow-remarriage, inter-caste and inter-religious marriages, abolition of dowry system etc. His language was simple, idiomatic and readable. His descriptions were attractive, some times rousing sexual excitement among the readers. On account of these features, Kovvali became very popular in a short time, mostly among the youth and women readers. Some of them used to write letters to him, seeking his advice for solving their personal problems. Some were love-letters indeed!

Envious of the success and popularity of Kovvali, some of the green-eyed writers and scholars denounced his writings as a heap of 'Railway Literature', implying that they were cheap, short-lived and devoid of literary values. But the ever enthusiastic writer was never deterred by hostile criticism.

Kovvali's popularity had attracted the film-field at Madras. He was invited to write stories and dialogues for the movies produced by some good companies. He became a film-writer by working for the movies Talli Prema, Santi, Ma Gopi, Bidala Asti and Sipayi Kuturu.

When he settled down at Madras, he

was very much available to some enterprising book publishers in the city. He wrote a detective novel by name Catumanisi, which was serially published. Another novel Visa Kanya belonged to the folk type. Jagajjana was a serial novel in 25 parts. 'Bhayankar', 'Rani' and 'Jayasri' were the pseudonyms used by Kovvali for some of the above publications.

On completing 60 years of age, Kovvali - a writer of more than a thousand novels - was greatly honoured by an elitist committee of hosts at Madras in 1973. A special volume of felicitation was presented to him on that occasion. The volume had rightly enlisted the names of all his 1000 books published by 30 publishing houses (Felicitation volume, pp 41-54).

"I think, an ordinary person aiming at great results can succeed only to some extent. But in my case, I have got the satisfaction of successfully developing wide readership among the public. I shall feel happier if other writers as well aim at that," said Kovvali on the occasion of his felicitation. He was honoured by the Madras University, Sri Venkateswara University, Osmania University and the Department of Education of Government of India, by presenting him certificates of Honour.

In spite of the continuous creative activity of Kovvali for over four decades, Telugu literary and academic circles did not make serious attempts to assess the value of his contribution to Telugu literature. Perhaps, some of the themes of his novels, his revolutionary ideas and extra-marital relationships of some of his characters did not prove worthy of a critics approbation. No comprehensive critical assessment has ever been made. But indisputably, a great increase in Telugu readership owes much to the contribution of Kovvali. *

TORU DUTT, THE CHILD PRODIGY OF POETRY

J. Vasu Sena

We need not doubt to acknowledge Toru Dutt as the child prodigy of Indo Anglian literature. Parentage assuredly throws light on her genius. She had an affluent and admirable ancestry. Born on 4th March 1856, in renowned Dutt's family Toru Dutt was short lived and the most brilliant bard of India. The Dutt's were reputed people in Calcutta. Her father Govin Chunder Dutt, a good linguist and a lover of Wordsworth's poetry might have had dreams about his children. So, he took the utmost care of their education. Her mother, who was a woman of affectionate and pleasant propensity, deeply read in Hindu myths must have been the source of inspiration for Toru's "Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan". Like other young people in India at that time, the Dutt's were also attracted by Christianity and embraced it.

After Abju (the eldest child of Govin), died at the tender age of 14, the daughters of Govin, Aru and Toru, dissipated themselves in literary studies. In 1869, they left for Europe and there Aru and Toru attended a French school at Nice. They learnt French and English. In 1871, they moved to Cambridge where Mary Martin became the life long friend of Toru. Hardly a few months later, they returned to Calcutta and in 1873 Aru died. This was a blow on Toru's sunniness and brightness and her spirit was diminished by the memories of her brother and sister. At this time, she published her renderings in English from French titled. "A sheaf gleaned in French Fields" in 1875.

She could not overcome her curiosity to

learn Sanskrit and by her letters to Mary Martin it is clear that she wanted to publish another 'sheaf' in Sanskrit.

"I hope I shall be able to bring out another 'sheaf' not gleaned in French but in Sanskrit fields" – wrote Toru to Mary Martin.

So, in 1882 "Ancient Ballads and legends of Hindustan" is the result. But Aru's death was a blow to Toru and she consoled herself in studying and learning Sanskrit since she felt she could satisfy the secret longings of her spirit.

She was more fascinated by the antiquity, magic, mystery and miracles of Ramayana, Mahabharata and Bhagavatha than Christian epics. Her intense love of some characters evoked and inspired the poetess in her. Thus she retold the ancient stories of marvellous protagonists like Savithri, Sita, Uma etc.

Sita is an excellent poem in which she identified the three children with herself with her brother and her sister (Abju and Aru). Poet Valmiki's hermitage is depicted pictorially. Sita in her miseries stands before us.

"The peacock springs; There, herds of wild deer race;

There, patches gleam with yellow waving grain.

There blue smoke from strange altars rises light,

There dwells in peace the poet-anchorite.

But who is this fair lady? Not in vain.

She weeps, for lo! at every tear she sheds

Tears from three pairs of young eyes fall

again,
and bowed in sorrow are the three young
heads.”

This perfect poem is a tribute to Toru’s
mother’s genius of story telling.

After Sita ‘The Lotus’ is a beautiful and
exemplary sonnet. Her fancy made magic in
this poem and her splendid talent in creating a
poem is displayed in ‘The Lotus’. Lotus is the
symbol of serenity, elegance, radiance and also
Hinduism. The flower factions are symbolized
with the factions of the followers of devotional
movements. Flora is symbolized as Adi
Sankara and the Lotus is symbolized with Adi
Sankara’s Advaita Vedanta, which bloomed
like a lotus in the flower garden of beautiful
flowers of different religions, which preaches
the oneness of omniscient God. She writes-

“But of what colour?” “Rose-red, love first
chose.
Then prayed, No, lily-white, or, both provide;
And flora gave the lotus, rose-red dyed,
And lily-white, queenliest flower that blows.”

In “Savithri” the description of Yama’s
approach to Savithri is more vivid and she
showed Yama as the greatest upholder of law
saying –

“Upon his head he wore a crown
That shimmered in the doubtful light” and
“His eyes had much of love and grace,
But glowed so bright, they filled with fear”.

There are some affinities between Keats
and Toru Dutt. Both died at a tender age and
both accomplished splendid poesy in a short

span of time.

‘Our Casuarina Tree’ has a parallelism
with Keats’ “Ode on Grecian Urn”. Human
life and happiness may be brief, yet Art may
enshrine with an ideal beauty that outlives—is
the keynote of ‘Ode on Grecian Urn’. Before
imperishable art, perishable human life is like
a bubble. Toru also emphasized the
immortality of her beloved tree. For Keats,
beauty and love are everlasting. In her
“Casuarina Tree” Toru also contrasted her
death with the permanence of a tree. The first
stanza is objective depiction of Tree. In the
second stanza, she relates her childhood
reminiscences with Tree.

“Mayest thou be numbered when my days
are done
with deathless trees-like those in Barrowdale,
under whose awful branches lingered pale
“Fear, trembling hope and death, the skeleton,
And Time the shadow”, and though weak the
verse,
That would thy beauty fain, oh fain rehearse,
May love defend thee from oblivion curse”.

She became ill, she had recurrent attacks
of fever and she became quite weak and
prostrate. The harrowing tale came to an end
on 30 August, 1877.

This is a tribute to the first and foremost
of Indian woman writers in English.

✱

EVEN THIS FOR YOUR SAKE

P. K. Joy

Again and again I've read your letter
That says you are ashamed to call me
 'mother'.

It curses my womb for bearing you
And wonders if all that you've heard is true.

I expected this letter; but not so soon,
I thought you'd need me till you're fully on
 your own.
Schooling just over, and you've got a low-
 paid post.
Your merits for being retained are yet to be
 proved.

After your father died of a bad heart disease
Life for me with none's care was far away
 from ease.
A tiny piece of land and a one-roomed little
 house
Were all that your father had left for us.

I brought you up by doing many a menial work
Hoping to get relief when you are big enough
 to work.
Day and night I slogged to meet our frugal
 needs
Your food, clothes and schooling were my
 concern indeed.

Wrapped in rags my body, frail, weak and
 starved
I went from house to house and worked as
 ladies' maid.
My misery and sorrows, I tried always to hide.
I wished you not to know that I was hungry
 and sad.

I used to sit awake and shed tears in nights
And pray that God should grant an early end
 to my plight.

It was a long journey. Every day was filled
 with fear.

My fierce will only has carried us this far.

When my work couldn't fetch enough to buy
 our bare needs,

To meet the deficit source, I sold our
 household things.

When nothing else remained, with bleeding
 heart I sold

My most precious chastity. For your sake I
 did.

If that's what you have heard now, yes, it's
 fully true.

Even that wretched thing with pain I did for
 you.

I realize, it's shameful to have an unchaste
 mother.

You wouldn't command respect, and disgrace
 you'd suffer.

I shall vanish to the realm that's far from human
 sight

None will see me or hear of. And public
 memory's short.

None will bother to remember a late petty
 whore.

But, my soul shall keep enquiring if you need
 my care any more.

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SHADES OF ROMANCE

R. Rabindranath Menon

A new species of women have landed with nets to catch the male fish stranded, in a stratagem. The pseudo-bachelors play games with those fisherwomen. The hook is tantalized sex. But the impatient brook no delay. So public gardens witness all obiter dicta of romance. The emphasis is on dress, gesture, grip and intimate touches and explorations that sate but not satiate the whipped-up desire, its winds keep alive the smouldering fire

The open ground is a safeguard against forced entries of augmented angst. The women slyly use their acumen, and charms whatever, to their advantage to gain a foothold. Garden-visitors avoid eye-contact after a side-long glance that sizes up the ribald seance. The dramatis personae grope in urban pits, and witness daily this lips-and-tits' exhibition in love and its antics. Each secret path refines its pyrotechnics.

Men impatient are let in as a last resort to the sanctum sanctorum lest they part

company to find more welcome pastures. Some, mere puppy love; others a struggle between man's wile and woman's giggle; also, second or third try. Very few lead to permanent ties. The morning dew melts in the sun. Later comes the 'Loo'.*

None here a beauty, many won't pass even muster, belong to middle class, or less, range from bloom to jaded. But the romance scenes are graded depending on the degradation reached in passing. Morals are seldom breached since they were hardly there in the grim battle of life, and the cup, full to the brim.

Clubs, swimming pools and dance parties are higher level scenes of strip-tease. Granted- since long, men tend to be loose, -but now women can't easily cook the goose and so tempt to attract through any ruse.

Alas! in this game, women bear the brunt; but truth has to be told:- 'The c*** is on a hunt'.

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GOODBYE, MY LOVE, GOODBYE

Adolf Shevedchikov

Goodbye, my Love, goodbye,
Life has passed, there is no link.
Only remember, do not cry,
I'll give you my trembling pink.
I don't want pity and crying,
I entreat you, do not mourn.

Everything in nature is dying,
Everybody believes in a new morn.
I don't like memory's compassion.
The last kiss. Let me go. Farewell.
I am the only one of your passion,
A crimson pink, an unforgettable bluebell.

A PERPETUAL FIGHT

R. Suryanarayana Murthy

<p>It is a fight the like of which no one can imagine A fight where the enemy has the edge Using weapons having the sharpness of a sword And having physical proportions of a devil though in human shape Mine are somewhat rusted nor can be wielded with any strength As creeping old age makes the muscles lose their sheen Still I garner all the strength to give a strong fight To escape deadly blows and cruel fisticuffs Though I survive I lie prostrate The devil declares its victory with a bugle sound Though it cannot kill as it pertains to the domain of God It shouts loudly “This is not enough I will have a bigger fight My plan is not to make mincemeat of your body It is to see your faculties are destroyed Your memory power, Your intellectual strength, your deep understanding of the past, Your capacity to stand up against untruth and injustice Will all disappear with one blow.</p>	<p>You will be reduced to a level Where man started his living millions of years back As a cave dweller, as hunter, eating raw meat or fruit With little brain power barring raw instincts I get up overcoming fatigue and slumber I realise I can yield no more ground if I have to survive Without faculties I will be nowhere They are my real wealth and shall remain with me While I am alive I may grow old in age but not in mind I challenge the devil for another fight Though hands shake and legs shiver The mind remains strong It tells the body not to lose heart As there are ways and means to keep the devil at bay The mind gets its strength from food received through subterranean channel Not known to anybody except myself As the feed goes on it continues the fight The forces well placed on either side The fight goes on, it is a perpetual fight It is part of the great mystery that is called human life.</p>
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RAJAJI – A PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE

M. L. Swami

Chakravarty Rajagopalachari is respectfully known as Rajaji to the world, the man Gandhiji once saw as his “only possible successor.” Freedom fighter, statesman, scholar, Rajaji was all this and more, a sage in every sense. He was born in 1878 and died in 1972, at the ripe age of 94 years.

I, for one, was a great admirer of Rajaji. Till the year 1953, we, Telugus, Tamils, Malayalees, Kannadigas and others were in one great province called Madras Presidency. Later also till 1956, I continued to stay in Madras. I am a part of Madras soil. During that time, as a boy and an adult I followed with admiration Rajaji, his life and achievements. At one of the political meetings at Kakinada in 1937, he was addressing a large gathering in English. Mr. M. Tirumala Rao, a prominent congressman and later a Deputy Minister of Union Government, was translating his English speech into Telugu. At one point, when Mr. Tirumala Rao was translating wrongly, Rajaji interfered and said in Telugu, “Na bhavam adi kadu. Idi” and explained further in clear Telugu. This means “Mera Bhav Vo Nahi hai. Ye Hai”. We were all surprised that he knew Telugu so well!

Rajaji was a very simple man. He was Chief Minister of Madras Presidency in 1953. At that time Godavari River had the highest floods so far recorded and hundreds of breaches occurred along the 300 miles long flood banks. Rajaji flew by a special aircraft from Madras to Rajahmundry and inspected the floods. He was such a simple man that it is difficult to say he was a Chief Minister. For

the journey from Madras, he brought his own food, cooked in his house, Idli, sambar, vadai, chatni, and Madras coffee. He not only brought food for himself but also for his colleagues and the officers in the flight.

There are many simple but significant events, which I know. But let me take you to the major significant events in his life, social and political, which changed the direction of our motherland, India.

MAHATMA GANDHI was the author, director, lead actor and producer of an amazing real life political drama called the Indian Freedom Movement. Among his many great qualities was his talent for spotting men and women of outstanding quality. Rajaji was the first and foremost person he spotted. Many had written about Rajaji and his many facets of his life, his achievements and failures. Here are some of the excerpts from the book “Profiles and Letters” authored by Mr. Natwar Singh, Former Secretary, External Affairs and Former External Affairs Minister of Government of India. These throw a different light on the life of Rajaji.

“Among the Navratnas (nine gems) of Gandhi, Chakravarty Rajagopalachari had his own very special position. At one time, he seemed the ultimate insider. He was among the handful of Congressmen, who talked to Gandhi on almost equal terms. His intellect was sharper and more balanced than that of most of his formidable contemporaries. In 1927, the Mahatma had said of Rajaji, ‘I do say he is the only possible successor’. S. Gopal, the historian, has called Rajaji, “an

extremely conservative follower of Gandhi.” Yet he was in his own way secular, well versed in ancient and modern political thought, and not afraid to go against the current. His career was to know many vicissitudes. His character never showed to better advantage than during those periods, when he was almost completely isolated politically from 1942 to 1945.

The broad outlines of his long life are well known. Although he became a member of the Congress Working Committee in 1919, he really came on the national scene, when he took over as Premier of Madras in 1937. He showed administrative talent. But his activities and conduct between 1942 and 1945 remain puzzling. He worked himself into a corner and in the process lost Mahatma’s confidence, which till then had been total and well known. Rajagopalachari had to resign from the Working Committee for suggesting a pact with the Muslim League and accepting the Cripps proposals. He even had a resolution passed in the Madras Assembly asking for a Congress--League pact. The Tamil Nadu Pradesh Congress president served him a show cause notice. C.R. resigned from the Congress and did not participate in the Quit India Movement. He was to pay dearly for this later. It was in 1942 that Gandhiji changed his mind, and declared that, “Not Rajaji, but Jawaharlal will be my successor.” It must have been a bitter blow and we will never know how Rajagopalachari felt because he never wrote or spoke on such matters. He was a detached enough person to accept the dictates of fate and his own imperfections.

In 1950, the question who should be the first President of Republican India was not of academic interest. Nehru wanted C.R., but

Sardar Patel had not forgotten 1942 and Rajaji’s role. Nehru could not have his way. It was another bitter blow. Here again, we have no idea of C.R.’s innermost feelings.

Rajaji came into my life quite unexpectedly. I recall his affection and warmth of feeling for me with gratitude. Somehow, we hit it off and for me a rich and harmonious association followed. The impression he left on me after a week’s stay in my apartment in New York in 1962 was indelible.

He was 85 when I got to know him. One had, of course, seen him. His dark glasses made recognition easy. Without them he would have gone unnoticed. He did not have a commanding presence. He was short and slim and had a striking resemblance to Voltaire. However, when he came to New York, his dark glasses had been jettisoned. He arrived in New York on a cool autumn afternoon in October 1962. He was leading the Gandhi Peace Foundation delegation to press a total ban on nuclear tests. The other members were B. Shiva Rao [Correspondent of *The Hindu*] and B.R. Diwakar [Information & Broadcasting Minister in the 1950s]. The combined ages of the three added up to an impressive 223 years. Being young and irreverent, I thought: “Fancy sending three stretcher cases to meet President Kennedy.”

Rajaji’s political relations with Pundit Nehru at the time were strained, but their personal relationship remained unimpaired. The Prime Minister had instructed the embassies concerned to extend all facilities to Rajaji. Here was yet another typical Nehru gesture, proving that private decencies could be practiced in the political arena. We were as usual short of foreign exchange, and the

delegation was sanctioned limited hard currency. I was asked if I could put up Rajaji in my apartment. This I willingly agreed to do and Rajaji, Diwakar and Rajaji's personal physician, spent nearly a week with me at 404 East, 66th Street. This was the great man's first ever visit outside India. He had been to Sri Lanka once but that was hardly abroad. I was curious to see how this sage of the old world would cope with the pace and mores of the new world. He arrived wearing a brown woolen achkan and to my great surprise, woolen trousers. But the trousers, he discarded. He found them too uncomfortable. He was back to dhoti.

Another member of the Embassy had kindly agreed to cook South Indian food for Rajaji in my kitchen. This was the only demand Rajaji made. I saw much of him at close quarters. What I saw I liked. In one week, he demonstrated with effortless ease and grace how the rishis (sages) in ancient India must have lived. His mind was complex but orderly. His intellect was sharp, his curiosity childlike, and his wit unexpected. I kept notes of my talks with Rajaji. Here are a few excerpts:

October 9, 1962: The conversation turned to the Partition of India. To provoke him I said, "Lord Mountbatten sold Partition to Panditji and Sardar Patel".

Rajaji: Now, let me tell you Natwar Singh - I sold Partition to Mountbatten. The Attlee Government had already made up its mind in that direction but did not know how to put it across in a concrete manner. Mountbatten asked me what he should do to break the impasse. I said Partition was the only answer. He first talked to Nehru and then

to Patel. They both had seen what was going on and accepted reality.

Natwar: But Gandhiji was against it and he held out till the very end. Why did he suddenly give in? It came as a great shock even to the young like me.

Rajaji: Gandhiji was a very great man but he too saw what was going on. He was a very disillusioned man. When he realized that we all accepted Partition, he said, "If you all agree I will go along with you", and after that he left Delhi."

These excerpts of Natwar Singh's book throw light on many things, which we probably don't know. We are told and believed that Gandhiji's successor was even from the beginning and always Jawaharalal Nehru. We are not aware that Rajaji was thought to be his successor upto 1942, when he differed with Gandhiji. The history of India and the world would have been different if only Rajaji did not disagree with Gandhiji in 1942. Probably the Nehru family would not have been at the helm of affairs of India for nearly four and a half decades. The country would have probably taken a different turn for better.

Rajaji's character never showed to better advantage than during those periods, when he was almost completely isolated politically. This is the lesson that we should learn and emulate from the life of Rajaji.

On this 125th Birth Anniversary, let us all pay homage to our great leader, Rajaji and dedicate ourselves to follow his great qualities of simplicity, steadfastness and bravery in times of defeats and disappointments!

From 'Buds and Blossoms'

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TELUGU DALIT POETRY: AN OVER-VIEW

K. Purushotham

Just as the working classes have the potential to establish a classless society, the oppressed castes have the potential to establish a casteless society.

- K. G. Satyamurthy

Telugu literature in general and poetry in particular was sluggish in the 1960s, and a much needed jolt was provided by a group of eight poets under the pseudonyms of Cherabandaraju, Bhairavaiah, Jwalamukhi, Nagnamuni, Nikhileswar and Mahaswapna who christened themselves '*Digambara Kavulu*,' Naked Poets. Avant-garde in nature, the poets deviated from the well-established literary conventions, and wrote poetry in the manner hitherto unimagined and unaccepted. They disturbed the complacency of the writers challenging their fixed traditions, rigid ways of looking at reality and their literary canons. Literature, subsequently overcame stagnation through a cleansing revitalization.

The Naked Poets made news in everything they did including the way they launched their anthologies. The first of their anthologies was released in 1965 at a street corner meeting by Nampalli Pandu, a rickshaw puller; and the second in 1966 by Jangala Chitti, a hotel servant. Their third anthology, which had kick-started the modern Dalit literature, was dedicated in 1968 to an untouchable man from Krishna District, Kanchikarla Kotesw who was burnt alive by the caste-Hindus accusing him of committing theft.

A series of other atrocities and massacres against the Dalits at Karamchedu,

Padirikuppam, Neerukonda, Thimmasamudram and Chundur brought the Dalits together for the first time to launch concerted and sustained protest movements. Socio-political outfits like Dalit Mahasabha (1985) against oppression and for social justice had been floated. The fifty-nine Dalit communities in A.P, Malas and Madigas being dominant, organized themselves launching agitations and movements.

Telugu Dalit writers contributed to the Dalit theory by means of building the Dalit discourse and activist movements. Taking inspiration from the first modern Telugu Dalit poet, Gurram Jashua, the modern poets asserted their Dalit identity:

I am Manu
Humanity is my enemy
There is a conspiracy by the fair-skinned ones
To outcaste me

Poetry became a means of expressing the personal and collective experience of marginalization. Vemula Yelliaiah expresses his anguish:

I am the one burning dead bodies
Thrusting down the blazing body with a stick
Shoving the burning pyre-wood into a heap
Wrap the shroud around me

Modern Dalit poets, continuing the Dalit tradition set by Jala Rangaswamy, Kusuma Dharmanna, Nakka Chinavenkataiah, Nutakki Abraham, Premaiah and Boi Bhimanna, dealt with such themes as

untouchability, denial of public places like schools, temples, streets, hotels, and village-wells.

While the first generation educated Dalits were content with the spoils they gained in the form of politics and employment without making contribution to the liberation of their brethren, the second generation educated Dalits, being responsible and responsive, took part in the agitations, rallies and meetings besides making intellectual contribution in the form of media write-ups and literary output. The forms of agitation the caste-Hindus adopted against OBC reservations in the state and implementation of the Mandal Commission Report resulted in the rise of Dalit consciousness with an active role played by the Dalit activist-poets like Kathi Padmarao and others.

One of the important offshoots of the Dalit assertion is the launch of the Dandora Movement – an agitation for the classification of the Dalits into ABCD for the benefits of reservations. Over the years, this has set in divisionism between the Malas and the Madigas positing one against the other. Kathi Padmarao writes in ‘I am Manu’:

Mala and Madigas clash
I am there now
Not only in the Brahmin streets
In the barrel of Madigas and horn of Malas too
My job is to upset rhyme and rhythm between the two

The Dalit poets destroy and reverse the established symbols and myths, and construct their own myth. The poets create an ‘alternative aesthetic redrawing the map of literature, by discovering and exploring a

whole new continent of experience that has so far been left to darkness and silence’, the writers bring to focus the ignored, suppressed and marginalized aspects of experience, world view, and reality.

Dalit poetry rejects the norms set by Sanskrit poetics and established traits like propriety, balance, restraint and understatement. Sivsagar writes reversing the myth:

Needles thrust into eyes
The tongue being cut off
Lead having been poured into ears
Manu is rolling himself round/In the cemetery

The diction of these poets is deliberately subversive as it challenges the middle class notions of linguistic decency.

One of the problems of the Dalit thought has been to fight the enemy within resolving the conflict between the caste and class. When it comes to the question of Dalit liberation, certain poets believe in the class. For instance, balladeer, Gaddar, whose songs and ballets inspired thousands of Dalits, is uncompromising about the class-based solution:

Having been scorched again and again
Turned into an atom bomb
Having become an atom bomb
We detonate to reform the society
We will build another world that would
Treat humans as the humans.

Another revolutionary poet, Salandhra puts it:

What if I am called by whatever name
When I become a drop of tear

Blossomed in the eye of a comrade
When I imagine the goals of the martyrs in my
wounds

The revolutionary Dalit poets valorize the
fighting spirit, sacrifices and the immortality of
the Dalit activists who lose their lives working
in the cadre of the underground Left.

Contrarily, the Dalit activists question the
class based violent struggles in which it is the
Dalits who are used as the pawns. U.
Sambasivarao, a noted activist/writer would
question:

Those that hack my throat haunting us
Are certainly my tormentors
They keep professing us to
Join the class war
As all the labourers are of one class
They give up Dalitism of uprisings
We may be poor devoid of food
But we are rich by caste

Several other Dalit poets denounce that
revolution is not a solution to the Dalit
problems. Thinkers like Sivasagar, intellectuals
like Kancha Ilaiah and Chandrabhan Prasad
would argue that the Dalit problem need Dalit
solutions as Shikhamani would satirize
poetically:

I who sang heartfully
The heroic death of revolutionary warriors
Couldn't be moved by
The mercilessly chopped bodies inflated
Having been stuffed into gunny bags and
Trampled into marshland

J. Goutam too would critique the class-
based solution:

Sacrifices! Heroic march-pasts!
The prisons of the State

Glue them all on the face of this fellow
Let's surge ahead/Let hundred flowers
blossom, and
A thousand thoughts contend
Hail Marx, hail Mao and Lenin
Beware of Maoism

Any liberation struggle has a double
responsibility, as Paulo Friar would opine, to
liberate themselves and to liberate their
oppressor. There is a need for the Dalit writers
and activists to visualize a Dalit world view
negotiating for the socio-cultural and political
spaces:

The real heinous thing
Which is in their minds
Let's be united, my Dalits
Let's cleanse the shit of their minds
Let's transform them into humans
Let's unveil a new human of togetherness

Dalit women poets like Challapalli
Swaruparani, Darise Shashinirmala, Jupaka
Subhadra and Madduri Vijayasree have
represented in their poetry the repression
against the Dalit women by the upper caste
men, women and the Dalit men too. Their
poetry is more thoughtful and less given to
anger and abuse. Shashinirmala would ask the
caste-Hindu women to join hands in the
struggle giving up her own oppression of the
Dalit women:

Crossing over these cordons
Will you come down a step?
Shall we walk on the same track?

Sandhya writes:

What if house-flies swarm her
What if she is a soiled beggar
What all you need is skin

What all you need is
Leather that contracts and expands

The new phase of Dalit writing seems to be more mature, sober, larger in its concerns, more conscious of form, less angry and complaining. Besides asserting the Dalit identity, there is even a tone of its celebration by the new generation poets. Shikhamani questions:

I question
How the black colour
Is allotted to me
When it's not there
In the circus-feats of
Rainbow and the five-colours

I am writing off
The aesthetics of a thousand years
That made the verse untouchable
That made the verse a Vedic ritual
I am the bard
The Dalit bard
Who has come to split the bow of colour.

And he apologises:

Forgive me my Dalit!
In the entire poetic history of a thousand years
I couldn't pen a single line about you except
The blindfolded devotion and salivating erotics

One of the unique and the rare Telugu literary features is the genre of songs being used for 'conscientising' the Dalit subjects. The most famous among them are Gaddar, Gorati Enkanna, Guda Anjaiah, Masterji and Andhesri who spread the message of liberating the Dalits through the song.

The whole Dalit poetic discourse has been not merely a protest and dissent; the

ultimate goal is to wrest the power; to look at what the index finger of Babasahab Bhimrao Ambedkar points:

You, scoundrel
I understand now
What the four closed fingers of Babasahab
Mean!

the Dalit poets also visualize how the caste-Hindus would try to assimilate the Dalits:

The day when a crow heads a country
The cuckoo too claims to be a crow
It would say we don't differ in colour
But only the tunes differ

Whatever be the case, Vemula Yellaiah, a Madiga poet asks:

The minority caste-Hindus
Should step down now
At the shrieks of *chendalas*, the wretched
Who gauged the earth.

True to what a seer poet Potuluri Veerabrahmam's caste-dialectics predicted:

The time is impending
When everyone subordinates you
The fortune of reigning the empires would be ripe
My words are but sure to materialize
The same people that scolded you
Will be healed of their stupidity
When themselves begin to adulate you

The day was not too far away as proved by the Dalit leaders who are in a position to call shots in the contemporary politics of power.

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BOOK REVIEWS

'Dear Reader' by D. Ranga Rao. Author's publication through Triveni Foundation, Hyderabad - Rs 75, p.140.

In this fine anthology, Sri D. Ranga Rao has included his essays, sketches and stories. The author's forte is the informal essay, a literary genre which once enjoyed great vogue among the English - educated elite. Unfortunately, it is one of the literary casualties of what Matthew Arnold called "This strange disease of modern life/with its sick hurry, its divided aims." The contemporary generation has neither the time nor interest to amuse itself by reading a humorous essay recounting common experiences of ordinary people. It is therefore to the author's credit that he sought to revive a dying or dead literary form, especially in Indian English literature.

Reading these articles is a rich and rewarding experience. There are a couple of essays on the changes wrought over the human body like baldness and obesity. Sri D. Ranga Rao draws his material from his own personal observation and experience and from his knowledge of literature. (He was a teacher of English language and literature for over four decades). He gives a list of famous bald men such as Shakespeare, Leonardo Da Vinci and remarks, "All bald men are great!" similarly, he says that obese people are jovial by temperament and expatiates on the virtues of plump people. The travails of people under medical treatment are presented in a humorous manner so that reading it mitigates the suffering at least temporarily. His criticism

of the medical profession is gentle and humorous. In a letter to a young doctor who was about to set up practice, he mocks again politely at the way medical profession is transformed into a business. There are a couple of essays on how people thrive on cheating. "Ramaswamy" and "Konda dora" illustrate deception as a vocation. "Avadhani" deals with humorous consequences of a clerical error which misspelled Advani as Avadhani. The good-for-nothing Avadhani and his boastful father make a futile, pompous and expensive trip to the Air Force Headquarters for a job because of this.

"Diggers' Paradise" is a dig at the uncoordinated, ill-planned and unending digging up of the roads and streets by umpteen government and private agencies causing a lot of inconvenience to the public. "*Yavudu Murdi?*" turns the joke on the author himself whose ill-equipped journey to a different linguistic state cost him dearly. "Journey by Steam Engine" narrates the realization of the author's boyhood dream to travel in the railway engine. At the end of a two-hour ordeal, there was an unrecognizable metamorphosis of the author because of the soot, smoke, heat and noise in the engine. There are a few essays which are tributes to great savants such as professors S. Radhakrishnan and K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar and to a musical genius, M. S. Subbulakshmi. The author had interacted with these distinguished persons.

Each piece in this collection is enjoyable because it reminds us of our own experiences

and embarrassments. The author's informal style, grip on the English idiom, urbanity and humour are evident on every page. Our frenzied age may not be quite suitable for writers like Charles Lamb, E. V. Lucas and Robert Lynd, but Sri D. Ranga Rao carries forward the personal essay and attempts to lighten the burden of modern living and even to make us smile.

“Dear Reader” is a record of the author's acute observations, varied interests, subtle humour, gentle satire, and facility with the English language. The book also reveals, though unwittingly, the pleasant and graceful personality of the author.

E. Nageswar Rao

The God of Shirdi by Dwarakanath Kilambi, Plot No. 47, Bhagavathi Enclave, Satyanagar, Kothapet, Hyderabad-500035. Rs. 60, p.211.

This book is targeted for common readers in English to convey the message of Sai Baba and to facilitate *parayana* to be completed in seven days. It is in a simple language and available at an affordable price. The material has been culled from various books on Sai Baba, primarily ‘Sri Sai Saccharita’ by Sri Hemad Panth, a publication of Shirdi Samsthan and also from Sri Sadguru Sai Leelamrutham of Sri B. V. Subrahmanya Sastri and Sri Sai Bhagavatham of Sri I. Sanjeeva Sarma. The book is divided into eleven chapters to numerically synchronize with Baba's *Ekadasa Sutras*.

As written in the preface by Sri V. K. Chary, Professor Emeritus of English, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada, ‘the book is written by a devotee of Sai Baba and first and foremost, it is to his devotees, that it opens its pages.’ Though it is known that Sai Baba attained his Samadhi in 1918, a lot of mystery surrounds his birth and childhood. The author has dealt with this topic meticulously. The author has detailed Baba's teachings, preaching and philosophy with lucidity and clarity in an impressive form. He has included the various incidents in Baba's life and miracles performed which convey a message and give a direction to a *sadhaka*.

Chapter XI particularly highlights Baba's philosophy and message. His simple living and austerity, aversion to fasting, views on religious tolerance, dispassionate enjoyment, food and solitude, humility and Baba's stress on *Sraddha aur Saburi* (faith and patience) are explained in detail.

The book makes interesting reading and leaves a spiritual imprint on the reader who does *Parayana* of this book. The author is a blessed devotee of ‘sadguru’ Sai Baba and in every page of this book, we can feel the footprints of Sri Sai Baba, which will undoubtedly touch the devotees' heart.

I strongly recommend the readers to own a copy of this book for their personal library and secure the divine blessings of Sai Baba ‘the God of Shirdi’.

I. Hara Krishna

READERS' MAIL

The demise of Shri. Vemaraju Narasimha Rao garu is an irreparable loss to the world of literature, art and culture in general and to the TRIVENI FOUNDATION in particular. He was not only a great scholar, writer and patron of art but also an excellent literary critic, a 'sahridaya' in the Sanskritic tradition. As he was an unfailing source of inspiration and guidance to numerous writers and artistes, he will always be remembered with gratitude for his generous help and encouragement.

M. G. Narasimha Murthy
Hyderabad.

I posted an Inland letter to you today, appreciating your 'Leader' in Oct-Dec 08 issue of Triveni reg: population explosion under title LESS POSTERITY MORE PROSPERITY.

I suggested even levy of penalty on a couple (i.e. withdrawing facilities existing to them now) if they produce more than two children.

E. V. Rama Subrahmanyam
Secunderabad.

Your editorial "Less Posterity More Prosperity" makes enlightened people more enlightened. Your giving the meaning of continence as Brahmacharya in brackets is wisely done.

Noticed the correction in the case of life member Sri P. Subrahmanyam. Many thanks for the care you have taken.

Dr. C. Jacob
Narsapur.

I wish to pay my tribute to the managing

trustee of TRIVENI late Sri Vemaraju Narasimha Rao on his sudden demise and convey my deep sense of sorrow and condolences to the members of his family.

May I wish you once again all health and happiness in New Year 2009.

Dr. Arbind Panjiara
Bhagalpur, Bihar.

I am most grateful to you once more for the generous comment with which the Silver Jubilee Issue of MM has been acknowledged.

Your latest "Triveni" was received a few days ago and I look forward to some uplifting reading.

H. Tulsi
Visakhapatnam.

An erudite scholar like you, pursuing academic growth at this age really motivates young researchers like us. A true academician, you are an example of esteemed personality tirelessly seeking and giving knowledge. Your contribution to the literary field is immense. Kindly bestow upon us your good wishes and blessings for furthering our academic career.

Dr. Sudhir Nikam
Thane.

I gratefully acknowledge the receipt of Jan-Mar: 2009 issue of TRIVENI. I missed two issues of TRIVENI for which I felt like starving for a long time. Such is the delicious food of mind that TRIVENI provides.

Pronab Kumar Majumder
Kolkata

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