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Hindi Vishwavidyalaya

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Mamta Kalia



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LANGUAGE DISCOURSE WRITING

January-March 2010

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Editor's Note

Hindi has its own treasure-chest of classic writers. They are read and re-read, researched and reviewed, remembered and forgotten only to come up yet again. Time, the old gypsy man, anoints them with the rare salve of timelessness. We go to them repeatedly for that vintage voyage of exploration and discovery. Very often we are stunned by their simplicity of expression and complexity of thought.

Jai Shankar Prasad is one of such authors who offers us a variety of literary forms— short story, novel, poetry, drama and criticism. He worked tirelessly on all these forms and evolved a world of his own art and craft. Prasad and Premchand were contemporaries but no two writers could be more different. Prasad often picked up his content from history and let his imagination colour it with romantic idealism. Premchand's source of inspiration was the common man pitted against a dehumanised socio-economic system. They respected their differences and showed no bitterness towards each other. Prasad passed away in 1937 whereas Premchand died in 1936. They were prolific writers and had their own brand of patriotism at heart. Prasad was younger to Premchand by nine years. His contribution to Hindi literature was noteworthy in spite of his untimely demise. 'Chhayavad' movement found in him its best spokesman.

We carry Prasad's short stories and articles on Prasad and Premchand in this issue. Since Premchand wrote in Hindi as well as Urdu, Prof. Gopichand Narang was our apt choice for the study. Prof. Narang excels as an exponent of Urdu and Hindi criticism.

Markandeya has been a very significant author of the late fifties' nai kahani movement. He surpassed the movement by creating a new troika in Hindi— Markandeya, Amarkant and Shekhar Joshi. The three were as different as original. Markandeya not only wrote but influenced future writing, such was his spell in the sixties and the seventies. He is struggling for life in the emergency ward of Rajiv Gandhi Cancer hospital in Delhi while we carry his famous short story 'Priya Saini' in this issue.

Swadesh Deepak is another wayward genius whose short story 'Bagugoshe' was much landed in Hindi when it first appeared in the monthly 'Vagarth' edited by Ravindra Kalia. We hope its sensitivity is communicated to you, albeit in translation by Eishita Siddharth. He lives at an unknown address these days.

Dalit writing has emerged as a force to reckon with. Subhash Sharma traces its development in his candid study Dalit Literature : Some critical issues.

Naresh Saxena and Upendra Kumar are senior poets who bring their own energy and is insight into whatever they write. Naresh can infuse new life into any ordinary subject whereas Upendra Kumar explores love in an otherwise loveless situation.

Hindi language is lending attraction to all India-lovers. Our mythology and movies have contributed much to its popularity. The articles included endorse the contention.

Some of the fellow writers whom we lost in the past months are– Dr. Kunwar Pal Singh, Dilip Chitre, Asha Rani Vohra, Rama Singh, Rajendra Awasthi, Kalyanmal Lodha and Dina Nath Rai. We condole their loss and extend our sympathy to the bereaved families.

Manoj K. S.

MAMTA

Jaishankar Prasad

Translated by
P.C. Joshi

From her apartment in the *Rohtas* fortress, young *Mamta* watched the sharp and majestic movement of the river Sone. She was a widow. Her youth surged like the turbulent waters of Sone. With anguish in her heart, storms in her mind and unceasing showers in her eyes, Mamta found in the very affluence of her home a bed of thorns. She was the only daughter of Churamani, minister of the King of Rohtas. She had everything. But she was a widow— and is not a Hindu widow the most condemned and helpless being in the world— so where was the end of her sorrow?

Churamani quietly entered her apartment. There she sat forgetful of her being while the waves of Sone rolled on with a music of their own. She remained unaware of her father's presence. Churamani was pained beyond measure. What would he not crave to do for his daughter brought up in such affection? He left as quietly as he had come. Such feelings welled up within him very often but today he was more agitated than ever. His feet shook as he retraced his steps.

After a short interval he returned again to her. He was followed by ten attendants carrying something in big silver trays. The sound of the footsteps disturbed the quiet of the sanctum and Mamta turned to look. Churamani motioned to the attendants to put the trays down. The attendants withdrew thereafter.

“What is this, father?” Mamta asked.

“For you, my daughter! A present!”

Churamani said and removed the covering from the trays. And

lo amidst the golden evening there spread the radiance of the uncovered gold. Mamta was startled.

“So much of gold? Where did it come from?”

“Silence! my dear, it is for you!” whispered Churamani.

“So you accepted the enemy’s bribe? It is criminal, father it is ominous. Return it! We are Brahmins. What shall we do with so much gold?”

“This ancient and feudal dynasty seems to be nearing its end. Little girl, anyday Shershah can annex Rohtas and I shall be a minister no more. It is for then, my darling!”

“O God! For the rainy day! Such caution! Such daring against the commands of the Almighty! Father, will there be none to give us alms? Won’t there be a Hindu alive under the sun to give a morsel of food to a Brahmin? It is impossible! Return it. I am frightened. Its glitter is blinding!”

“Stupid!” exclaimed Churamani and went away.

Next day Churamani watched the palanquins entering the palace with a trembling heart. At last he could not restrain himself. He asked for the covers to be removed from the palanquins at the gates of the fortress. The Pathans growled.

“It is an insult to the honour of the ladies of the royal family.”

Hot words were exchanged. Swords

were unsheathed and the Brahmin was killed on the very spot. The King and the Queen and the treasury– all fell into the hands of the treacherous Shershah. Only Mamta escaped. From inside the palanquins appeared Pathan soldiers armed to the teeth and they captured the fortress. But no trace of Mamta was to be found.

To the north of Kashi the dilapidated *Dharma Chakra Vihar* had survived as a remnant of the glory of the Maurya and Gupta kings. Its steeples were damaged; the walls were covered by grasses and shrubs– and the onetime splendour of the Indian architecture was being soothed by the moonlight of the scorching summer.

Under the dark shade of the same *Stupa*– now in ruins– where the five disciples of Buddha were the first recipients of the sacred message of enlightenment– there, in a hut a woman was chanting the holy scripture in the light of the lamp.

“Those who worship me with single-minded devotion.....”

All of a sudden her reading was interrupted. A fierce and dejected figure stood before her in the faint glow of the lamp. The woman got up in fright and rushed to shut the door.

But the stranger muttered.

“Mother! I want shelter.”

“Who are you?” asked the woman.

“I am a Moghul. Defeated by Sher

Shah in the battle of Chausa I seek protection. I can't find my way onwards in this dreary night."

"From Sher Shah!" The woman was biting her lips.

"Yes, mother."

"But you are equally brutal— the same ferocious thirst for blood and the same savage expression is on your face. Soldier! There is no place in my hut— go and find a roof elsewhere!"

"My throat is choking. I have lost trace of my companions. My horse has collapsed. I am tired, dead tired!" He uttered these words and dropped down on the earth and the whole world seemed to be turning round before his eyes.

The woman was dumb for a while at this fresh calamity! Then she gave him water to drink and life returned on the Moghul's face.

She was thinking— "No alien deserves any sympathy! The cold-blooded executioner of my father!!" Hatred, burning hatred hardened her heart.

The Moghul burst aloud— "Mother, shall I go away?"

The woman again became thoughtful. ".....I am a Brahmin girl. Am I not dutybound to offer shelter to any guest at the door!No.....Not to all.....My sympathy is not for aliens.....But it is not sympathy.....It is the call of duty. Then?"

The Moghul got up with the support of his sword. Mamta said, "No wonder you may also turn out to be a traitor!

Wait!"

"Traitor! Hm. Then let me go! Temur's descendant will betray a woman! I will have to go. Strange are the ways of destiny!"

Mamta was speaking to herself. This is no fortress. But only a hut. Let him grab it if he likes. I must not fail in my duty. She went out and told the Moghul, "Go inside, O famished and fear-stricken soldier! Whoever you be, I give you shelter. I am a Brahmin girl. Even if the whole world fails in its duty, I must not!

The Moghul saw that majestic face in the faint light of the moon and bowed to her in silent reverence. Mamta disappeared behind the adjoining walls. And the tired Moghul entered the hut and breathed a sigh of relief.

In the morning from a chasm in the wall, Mamta saw hundreds of mounted soldiers roaming about in the compound. She cursed herself for her folly.

The stranger came out of the hut and said! "Mirza! I am here!!"

And the whole place resounded with a happy clamour of voices. Mamta became fear-stricken. The stranger said— "Where is that woman? Trace her out?" Mamta became more vigilant and vanished within the *Mrig Dao* and remained there the whole day. In the evening soldiers were preparing to leave and Mamta heard the stranger mounting his horse and saying!

“Mirza! I could give nothing to that woman. I found shelter in her hut while in distress. Remember this spot and build a house for her.”

And then they left.

Years have elapsed since the battle at *Chausa* between the Moghuls and Pathans. Mamta is now an old woman of seventy. One day she was lying in her hut. It was a cold winter morning. Her skeleton-like frame was shaking with cough. Some village women were present to nurse her for Mamta had shared the weal and woe of everyone all her life.

Mamta asked for water to drink and a woman offered it to her in a conch-shell. And then suddenly a mounted soldier was seen at the door of her hut. He was muttering to himself: “This must be the spot to which Mirza has referred. That old woman must be dead by now. Who will now tell me in which hut one day Emperor Humayun had taken shelter? Forty seven years have passed since then!”

Mamta heard it with suspense. She asked the woman sitting by her side “Call him!”

The mounted soldier came towards her. She said in faltering tones, “I don’t know whether he was the Emperor himself or an ordinary Moghul. But he stayed for one night in this very hut. I heard he had ordered to build a house for me. I remained inside all these years in the fear that my hut will be destroyed. God responded to my prayer. I leave it now for you to build a house or a palace whatever you like. I go to my eternal resting-place.”

The mounted soldier stood bewildered while the old woman breathed her last.

A magnificent octagonal temple was created at that spot with the following inscription:

“Humayun, the Emperor of seven lands stayed here for one night. His son Akbar has constructed this towering temple in his memory.”

But Mamta’s name was missing from that inscription.

Jaishankar Prasad (1889-1937) was a great herald of the romantic era in hindi literature. He wrote in almost every genre. ‘Kamayani’ is his most famous epic poem. His short stories were a blend of history and fiction. Prasad wrote novels such as Kankal, Titli and Iravati. His plays Dhruvaswamini, Chandragupt, Skandgupt and Vishakh reflected his humanitarian and philosophical attitude to life. He spent a major part of his life in Varanasi where he breathed his last.

Dr Puranchandra Joshi, born 1928 in Almora, is an eminent sociologist and academician. His areas of specialisation range from culture, literature, political ideology to rural development, communication and economic growth. Some of his well known books are: Bhartiya Gram, Parivartan aur Vikas Ke Sanskritik Ayam, Azadi Ki Adhi Sadi, Avdharnaon Ka Sankat, Mahatma Gandhi Ki Arthik Drishti, Sanchar, Sanskriti Aur Vikas and Yadon Se Rachi Yatra. His memoirs in hindi quarterly ‘Tadbhav’ have been highly appreciated. He has received life time achievement award from Indian Social Science Council along with other honours elsewhere. He lives in New Delhi.

PURASKAR

Jaishankar Prasad

Translated by

P.C. Joshi

The solitary Ardra star! Dark and black clouds rolled and rumbled in the sky with the beat of celestial drums. The god of light peeped from a cloudless corner in the East as if to watch the royal procession. A soft, fragrant odour rose from the earth in the lap of the mountains. The gate of the town opened for the royal elephant to appear towering among the crowds. The mighty congregation surged forward like an ocean of gaiety.

The sky poured on the earth— tiny, sunlit drops like *mallika* flowers. People hailed them as tokens of heavenly blessings.

Chariots, elephants, mounted soldiers stood arrayed on the ground. Visitors and spectators poured in. The royal elephant bent low and the King got down the stairs. Handsome virgins, and happy brides came to the fore carrying auspicious *Kalash* bedecked with fresh mango-buds, big trays of newly-plucked flowers, *Kumkum* and parched rice and sang melodious songs.

A gentle smile played on the King's face. The priest chanted hymns from the holy scriptures. Holding the golden handle of the plough, the King motioned to the lovely and robust pair of bullocks to move.

The blowing of trumpets and the showering of flowers by young maidens heralded the opening of this renowned festival of *Kaushal*.

It was a unique event, the festival, when the King himself acted the peasant for a day and worshipped Indra, Lord of clouds and rains with pomp and grandeur. People of the town rejoiced

and young princes from other kingdoms joined in this rejoicing.

Arun, Prince of Magadh, watched the festival from his chariot. His eyes were fixed on Madhulika while she helped the King with seeds from the big tray that she carried in her hands. The plot of land belonged to Madhulika and also the privilege of offering seeds for sowing was hers. She was a virgin unexcelled in her charms in her lovely saffron-coloured attire. The wind sported with her and now she put her garments in order and now her unruly locks. Womanly dignity and modesty gleamed in her smile. But despite her tenderness, she remained unfaltering in her duty.

People hailed the King as he ploughed the field. But Prince Arun– he was standing under the spell of the peasant girl. ‘What exquisite grace and innocent looks!’ he murmured to himself in silent adoration.

The main item of the festival was over. The King presented Madhulika a few gold *Mudras* in a tray. It was the reward for her land and a token of King’s generosity. Madhulika touched the tray with her forehead in reverence and scattered them away thereafter in honour of the King. Her majestic looks left the spectators spell-bound.

But the King was about to flare up, when Madhulika’s tender voice was heard:

“Maharaj! I got this land from my forefathers. How can I sell it and accept a price in return?”

Before the King could say anything, the old minister intervened:

“Silly girl! What do you mean? Spurning the royal present!” His tone was indignant.

“It’s worth four times your land. And then, don’t you know it is the custom of Kaushal? From today you are under the King’s protection. Thank your stars for this good fortune, Madhulika!”

“All subjects are under the King’s protection”, Madhulika retorted in an excited but firm voice. “Happily I offered my land to the King. But to sell it, no, it is not my right!”

The king turned to the minister with a questioning look and the minister answered:

“Maharaj! She is the only daughter of Singhmitra, the hero of the battle of Varanasi.” “Singhmitra!” the King exclaimed. “The saviour of Kaushal from Magadh! And Madhulika is his daughter?”

“Yes, Maharaj!” replied the minister.

“What are the rules of this festival?” the King asked after a moment’s reflection.

“The rules are simple, Maharaj”, replied the minister. “A good plot of land is chosen for the festival and the owner is paid in the form of a gift by the King. The owner himself takes care of the crop for a year and the land is known as King’s land.”

The King could not come to a quick decision. He kept quiet in perplexity.

The assembly dispersed meanwhile and the King also returned to his mansion. But Madhulika was not to be seen in the festival again. Absently she sat under the shade of the tender green leaves of the towering *Madhuk* tree close to the boundary of her land.

The festival was over– the calm of the closing night reigned all around. Prince Arun had kept away from the celebrations. He was restless in his sanctum. Sleep had vanished from his eyes. A redness glowed in them like that of the rosy dawn in the East. Not far from his view was a dove standing on one foot in a cornice. Gently spreading her wings, she yawned. Arun stood up. His horse was ready at the door and in a flash he galloped to the gates of the town. The sentries were in deep sleep. They started when the noise of hoof-beats assailed their ears. But the young prince shot forth like an arrow and vanished from sight. The robust stallion was bubbling with vigour in the morning breeze. Arun roamed hither and thither and at last he reached the spot where lay the troubled Madhulika asleep with her head resting on her palms!

Like the tender *Madhavi* creeper detached from the branches of a tree, she lay on the earth. Flowers were abloom and bees were tranquil and calm.

Arun motioned to the horse to be quiet. And his eyes were stealthily feasting upon the beauty of the sleeping young

damsel. But the naughty cuckoo broke the calm. It cried as if in reproof of a strangers' impertinence. Madhulika opened her eyes. She saw the figure of an unknown young man before her. Hastily she gathered herself.

"Young girl! You were in charge of last day's festival, isn't it?" The stranger was asking.

"Festival? Yes, it was a festival", Madhulika said and heaved a sigh.

"Yesterday....."

"Why does the memory of yesterday haunt you, young man?" interrupted Madhulika. "Won't you let me be in peace?" she added.

"Since that day, Madhulika, I adore you. Your beauty has captured my heart."

"My beauty or the display of my plight that day?..... Ah, how cruel is man! Go your way, stranger and leave me alone."

"Innocent girl! I am Prince of Magadh. I beseech your favour. My heart's desire gushes out for you....."

"Young prince! You come from the palaces and I am a peasant girl from the soil. Yesterday I lost even my land. I am unhappy. Does it behove you to laugh at a girl's plight?"

"I will help you get back your land from the King of Kaushal."

"No. It is the custom of Kaushal. I don't wish to break it whatever distress it may mean to me."

“What is the secret of your grief then?”

“Ah, it is the secret of the human heart. Young prince! Were the heart bound by laws, the prince of Magadh instead of going to a princess would not come to offend the dignity of a peasant girl!” Madhulika got up.

The prince left with injured pride. His pearled crown gleamed in the tender light of the dawn. The horse galloped away with great speed. But hadn't Madhulika hurt herself too? Her heart gnawed with sharp pain. With tearful eyes she was watching the dust rising from the horse's hoofs.

Madhulika did not accept the King's offer. Instead she chose a hard life—she would work in the fields of others and after the days labour return to her small hut under the *Madhuk* tree. She had only coarse food to eat. Hard toil had made her thin and weak but her devotion imparted a radiance to her countenance. Peasants held her in high esteem for to them she was an ideal girl. Days, weeks and years passed by.

It was a cold winter night once and lightening flashed now and then in the overcast sky. The thatched roof of Madhulika's hut was leaking. She didn't have enough covering to keep her warm and she was shivering in the biting cold. Her want today pained her more than ever. Man's material needs are limited. But the sense of loss varies in intensity in tune with the stress of changing

circumstances. So was the case with Madhulika. She recalled the past— It was two, nay, three years back when one morning under the same *Madhuk* tree the young prince had said.....”

What? Yearning for those flattering words, she asked— what did he say? Those words were so very well imprinted in her storm-tossed mind. And yet in that dreary night she dared not allow his image to appear in full bloom before her minds' eye.

She yearned to revive that precious moment. Her suffering had taxed her endurance to the breaking-point. The palaces of Magadh and their affluence seemed to dance before her in the flashes of lightning in the sky. Like a child running to and fro to catch the fire-fly on a cloudy evening, Madhulika was, as it were, chasing her dream! Clouds thundered with a terrifying roar and a furious downpour began. Was it the prelude to a hail-storm? Madhulika was stricken with fear for her hut. Suddenly there was a noise outside.

“Is there anyone to give shelter to a traveller?”

Madhulika opened the door and in the blaze of lightning she saw a man holding the reins of a horse. She was stunned.

“Prince Arun!” she exclaimed.

“Madhulika!”

There was a moment's silence. Madhulika saw her dream come true. She was dumb.

“Oh, only if you had listened then.....”
said Arun.

Madhulika didn't wish to give him a chance to comment on her sorry plight. She interrupted and asked:

“And what brings you here in this condition?”

“I rebelled and was expelled from Magadh. I have come to Kaushal for my living.” Arun said with his head bent low.

Madhulika was laughing in the dark and remarked.

“The rebel prince of Magadh! Guest of an unfortunate peasant girl! I welcome you, young prince, all the same to my humble dwelling.”

It was the grim silence and chill of the wintry night with the moon-light frost-stricken and the wind piercing through the bones and giving one creeps. Even then Arun and Madhulika talked to each other sitting outside at the door of a mountain-cave under the banyan tree. There was unrestrained ardour in Madhulika's voice while Arun was cautious and restrained in his speech.

Madhulika asked:

“Why do you keep your soldiers with you when you yourself are so hard-pressed?”

“Madhulika! They are my companions who will stand by me in life and death. How could I leave them?”

“Why, we could toil and labour, you and I and earn our living. Now.....”

Don't be mistaken! I have faith in my sinews. I will carve out a new Kingdom. Why should I lose heart?” Arun's voice was trembling as if he was afraid to say freely what was in his mind.

“A new Kingdom! What daring? But how? Tell me and let me also delight my fancy with it”.

“Not fancy, Madhulika! I will really make you the queen. Why do you worry over your lost land?”

A moment passed and Madhulika's mind was running riot. Her deep-rooted yearning surged up in her heart. “Young Prince,” she said. “I have pined and waited for you all these years!”

Arun could not check himself. Pressing her hands impertinently he asked:

“Then was I mistaken? You really loved me then!”

Madhulika was speechless. Her bosom swelled with rapture and excitement. Arun sensed what was passing through her mind and like a quick-witted person he burst out:

“If you wish, I can risk my life and make you the queen of Kaushal. Madhulika! I mean it. Would you see the terror of my sword?”

Madhulika trembled. She wished to say 'no' but only exclaimed— “What!”

“It is true, Madhulika. The King feels sorry for you since the festival and he won't have the heart to decline your

request. And I know for certain that the army-chief of Kaushal has gone far away to crush the hordes of hilly bandits.”

Madhulika was dazed by the proposal and a violent emotion seemed to overpower her. “Why don’t you speak.” said Arun.

“I will do whatever you say”, Madhulika said as if in a stupor.

Half-asleep as if with half-open eyes the King of Kaushal reclined on his golden throne. A woman attendant was swinging the *Chanwar* over his head while another stood at some distance in obeisance with betels and nuts in her hands.

The sentry came and announced: “Maharaj! A woman has come with some request.”

Opening his eyes, the King replied: A woman! Show her in.”

The sentry led Madhulika to the King. She greeted him. The King fixed a steady gaze at her and said: “It looks I have seen you somewhere.”

“That was three year’s back, Maharaj, when my land was taken for the festival.”

“Oh! All these years you passed in hardship and now you come for its price. Alright, you will be amply rewarded for it.”

“No, Maharaj, I don’t want its payment.”

“Silly girl! Then what?”

“About so much land from the barren

earth to the south of the fort– grant me that, Maharaj, and I will plough it. I have a partner now who will help me with his men. The ground will have to be levelled.”

“Peasant girl!” replied the King. “That is waste-land. Moreover, it has strategic importance because of its proximity to the fort.”

“Shall I return disappointed then, Maharaj?”

“Singhmitra’s daughter! What can I do? Your request....”

“Well, as you wish, Maharaj!”

On second thought the King said– “Go and engage your labourers on the job. I am directing the minister to issue a formal sanction.”

Towards the south of the fort on the bank of the rivulet, there was a dense forest. Its habitual calm today was ruffled by the movements of multitudes of men. Roads were being made by clearing shrubs and bushes overgrown all over. The town was far away and people hardly visited this deserted place. Even now no one bothered about what was happening. For hadn’t the King himself made a gift of the land to Madhulika?

Standing in a thick bower Arun and Madhulika rapturously looked at each other. Evening was drawing near and flocks of birds returning to their nests noticed a new stir and bustle in that dreary forest and responded with a happy uproar.

Arun's eyes glistened with exultation. The rays of the setting sun, softly played on Madhulika's flushed cheeks. Arun said: "Only a night more! In the morning you will be crowned as the queen in *Sravasti* and though banished from *Magadh*, I will be the King of an independent state."

"Terrible! Arun, I am amazed at your daring. With a band of a hundred soldiers only...."

"In the middle of the night will begin my triumphant expedition."

"Then you are sure of your success."

"Yes, Madhulika! Spend your night in the hut. From the morning the palace will be your dwelling place."

Madhulika was happy. But she was afraid for Arun. She would get excited and scared like a child. Suddenly Arun said:

"It is pitch dark now. You have to go a long way and I have to finalise our plans. Adieu for the night, Madhulika!"

Madhulika got up. Struggling her way through thorny bushes, she walked towards her hut in the dark.

The road was dark and dismal, gloom began pervading Madhulika's heart too. Some unknown force seemed to be squeezing out her heart's sweetness and her dear dream was vanishing in the gloom. A fear grew in her soul for Arun— "Well, if he fails in his venture, then?" All of a sudden she asked herself— "Why

should he win? Why should the Srawasti fort pass into the hands of a foreigner? Ah, his victory.....!..... But the King was proud of her, — of Singhmitra's daughter. Singhmitra, the saviour of Kaushal! And his daughter, a traitor? No. No. "Madhulika", "Madhulika", she heard her father calling her in the dark. She screamed like a hysterical woman and lost her way.

It was nearing midnight but Madhulika failed to reach her hut. She was moving onwards aimlessly— she was in a turmoil. In her mind now the image of her father and now that of Prince Arun would flash alternately. A light was visible before her. She stood in the middle of the road. A hundred soldiers were marching with torches in their hands at the head of whom walked a middle-aged, brave-looking soldier! He held the reins of the horse in his left hand and in his right a naked sword. The detachment advanced with firm steady steps. But Madhulika barred their way. The chief of the detachment came near. Even then she stood fixed to the ground like a statue. The soldier stopped his horse and said— "Who is there?" There was no reply. The other mounted soldier thundered: "Who are you? Speak out!" He was the army chief of Kaushal. The woman shouted as if in a fit of insanity.

"Arrest me! Kill me! My crime is so grave."

The army chief laughed: "Mad woman!"

“Ah, If I were mad, I wouldn’t have any agony. Arrest me and take me to the King!”

“What’s the matter? Speak out.”

“The Sravasti-fort will be captured by bandits within a few hours. They will launch their attack from the southern rivulet.”

The army-chief was dumb-founded. “What do you say?”

“What I say is true. Hurry up.”

The army-chief ordered a hundred soldiers to march towards the rivulet. And he moved toward the fort with twenty soldiers. Madhulika was tied to a mounted soldier.

The fort of *Sravasti*— the centre of the Kaushal kingdom— is plunged as it were in the reminiscences of its glorious past. Several dynasties have usurped a number of its provinces. It has only a few villages now to call its own. Nevertheless, it carries the halo of its past glory and that is what rouses the jealousy of others.

The sentries of the fort were amazed to find the mounted soldiers coming. They recognized the army chief and opened the gate. The army-chief got down from the horse-back and asked— Agnisen! How many soldiers are there in the fort?”

“Two hundred” was the reply.

“Collect them without any noise. March with a hundred toward the south— let there be no stir and no light.”

The army-chief turned towards Madhulika. She was released and taken to the King. The King was about to retire for the night when he saw the army-chief and Madhulika and was restless. The army-chief said: “I had to come because of this woman!”

The King paused for a moment and said:

“Singhmitra’s daughter! What brings you here again? Any obstacle to your plan? Senapati! I have granted her the land near the southern rivulet. Do you want to say anything about that?”

“Maharaj”, replied the army-chief, “Some secret enemy has planned to attack and capture the fort from that side.”

The King looked at Madhulika. She was trembling and sinking in self-contempt and shame. He asked: “Is that true, Madhulika?”

“Yes” was the reply.

The King told the army-chief “Collect the soldiers and I will follow.”

After the army-chief had departed, the King said: “Singhmitra’s daughter! You have saved Kaushal a second time. You deserve a reward again. Well, you wait here. Let me first take care of the bandits.”

Arun was caught in his subversive adventure and the fort was glowing in the light of the torches. The crowd shouted in great ovation. Joy pervaded all around. The Sravasti fort had been

saved from bandits. There was joy and gaiety all over and the meeting ground echoed with the clamour of multitudes of people. Seeing the prisoner Arun, there was a furious uproar from the crowd.

“Death to the traitor”. The King ordered in agreement– “Death to the traitor!”

Madhulika was called. She came and stood like a tattered woman. The King said: “Madhulika, you will get whatever you desire.” She was quiet.

The King said again: “I give you all of my personal land.”

Madhulika threw a glance at the captive Arun, and said: “I want nothing”. Arun laughed.

The King said: “No, you must have something. Come, tell me what you want?”

“Ah, what is there for me now!” she murmured to herself.

After a moment’s pause she spoke aloud: “Then reward me also with death!” And stood by the side of the captive Arun.

JAISHANKAR PRASAD: A PARTISAN VIEW

Rajendra Prasad Pandey

We have had a very few writers and poets in Hindi literature who have made their significant contribution to multiple areas of literature. Jaishankar Prasad is one of them, a poet, short story writer, novelist, critic and playwright, all rolled into one. He is equally competent in writing novels and short stories. A multi-dimensional creator and artist in the true sense! We have a few other such names like Bhartendu Harishchandra, Muktibodh and Agyey. Jaishankar Prasad has made a distinct mark in Hindi poetry by his amazing images, imagination and aestheticism with romance and passion. His poetic-diction is unique in itself.

Jaishankar Prasad has made his contribution in visualizing the social reality in the form of poetry; combining the real and the unreal, worldly and other worldly into a fabric of compassion and humanism. He has often been misread by many scholars as a poet of depression and escape. Hindi criticism has made a conscious attempt in marginalizing such poets and authors whose writings are not very vocal and loud in articulating and propagating ideas and reality in a profound fashion.

The poetry of Jaishankar Prasad also falls in this category. It is very unfortunate that Jaishankar Prasad and Suryakant Tripathi Nirala; Agyeya and Muktibodh are poised and presented in contrast and as opposed to each other. What we should have done was to analyse and assert the contribution and works of the respective poets in their own sphere with their own distinctive features and uniqueness.

Here we will be discussing some of the unique features of the writings of Jaishankar Prasad. Prasad is credited to have propounded the Hindi romantic poetic movement called '*Chhayavad*'. The collection of poetry published in 1918 '*Jharna*' by Jaishankar Prasad is rightly credited as new poetry full of freshness of language, and diction, voice of a change in perspective and presentation. This happened for the first-time in the history of Hindi poetry that nature was so close to man; moreover the treatment was also different. Nature was not treated as a stimulating factor for love and passion but in '*Chhayavadi*' poetry nature was presented in a live form; as a living being. '*Jharna*' is symbolic of expression of revolt against social and poetic conventions. By crediting '*Jharna*' as a pioneer of true romantic poetic movement in Hindi poetry, called '*Chhayavad*'; I am not underestimating the importance of poem '*Uchchwas*' by Sumitranandan Pant which was written in 1917. Of course, this poem came out with a new and fresh poetic diction and idiom. There was reflection of 'first-ray'—'*Pratham Rashmi*'. This expression has many connotations of meaning at various levels in Indian and world perspective. In spite of this fact '*Jharna*' is a more cohesive and concrete reflection of romanticism in Hindi.

Here we must remind ourselves that Hindi romantic poetry '*Chhayavad*' has many components of modernity unlike English romantic poetry. We can very

easily notice the contemporary freedom struggle of India as an under current in '*Chhayavadi*' Hindi poetry. Hindi '*Chhayavadi*' poetry is spread over two decades broadly 1918-1936. Interestingly this may be traced from '*Jharna*' to '*Kamayani*' (1936). Prasad may be said to be the true representative of '*Chhayavadi*' poetry for many reasons, the '*Chhayavadi*' poetry with earnestness and distinctive features is present in the writings and collections of Prasad. The other prominent '*Chhayavadi*' poets Nirala, Pant and Mahadevi could survive even after '*Chhayavadi*' poetic movement was over and they chose their different paths. Nirala was inclined towards more realistic and socially committed poetry whereas Pant embraced progressive movement and thereafter adopted Aurobindo philosophy; Mahadevi also could not add anything new in poetry beyond '*Kamayani*' era.

Ranging between '*Jharna*' and '*Kamayani*', there comes '*Ansoo*', '*Lahar*', '*Kanan Kusum*', '*Karunalaya*' etc. Jaishankar Prasad is significant for his new images, fresh and innovative poetic diction, wonderful imagination, lucidity of language and stylistic approach, aesthetic sense and so on at the level of form but he is more significant for his vision and understanding of human relations, treatment of love, problematizing and analyzing human sufferings in a broader perspective. Prasad chose to relook into the past and mythology of India and by visiting

and revisiting Indian history, he found some solutions to the problems of contemporary India; these solutions were more visibly and prominently reflected in his plays like 'Dhruvaswamini', Chandragupta and Skandgupta. I will take this aspect later on. Here I would like to mention that 'Kamayani' is such a great attempt made by Jaishankar Prasad that it could become a classical work of all time and all places because of its holistic approach and understanding mankind in totality. The broad range of problematics gives 'Kamayani' a status of great modern Indian epic. Starting from 'Chinta' and ending with 'Anand' Prasad mentions different dimensions of Human psychology. Based on mythological elements of Manu and Shradha or Kamayani and the terrific disaster of floods; this is infact the work of creation and evolution of modern man with all his goodness and evil.

'Kamayani' has invited great attention of Hindi critics. Many readings and attempts of appropriation, denouncement have been made. Kamayani could not receive a sufficient amount of appreciation of the great critic of the time Ram Chandra Shukla. Though he appreciates the epicality and presentation, language and diction of Kamayani, he was not convinced with the focus on Ida, representing rationality and wisdom, in comparison to Shradha, representing heart i.e., feelings and emotions. Referring to the line 'SIR CHADHI RAHI PAYA NA HRIDAY' (She

was carried away by mind and had no heart (emotions), it was referred to Ida as if Prasad was in favour of emotion or say Shradha who has had emotions and feelings embodied with her. Shukla ji suggests that it could have equally been said that (Shradha) 'RAS PAGI RAHI PAYEENA BUDDHI' (She was embodied with feelings and passions and had no rationality). The fact lies in this perception that 'Chhayavadi' poets have leanings towards emotions and passions; they were all carried away by RASATMIKA VRITTI (the emotive instinct).

Of course, there, can be no denial of the fact that Chhayavadi poetry is expression of feelings, emotions, passion and love in a form of lucid language and refined diction. Prasad being a representative of Chhayavadi poetry (he may be so, because of his poetic distinction), has expressed so many things in his poetry which refer to these features. His musicality of language, fascinating images, sensuousness and passionate expression in an amazing fashion make his poetry lasting and unique. 'Kamayani' is a great manifestation of modernity. Here is a man (Manu) who has lost all his belongings, he is the only survivor of his generation and the entire Saraswat Pradesh. He is sinking into worries of life, lamenting upon loss of what he had; an immortal world! the world which was associated with all the wealth and pleasure, may be sad like 'Eden Garden'. His encounter with Kamayani is a hope of life and opens an area of creation

and love. Beginning from worry and ending into 'Anand' (The absolute pleasure) is the horizon of the epic. This in fact is a process and search of philosophy of life. The world view of the poet is very clear- 'SHAKTI KE VIDYUTKAN JO VYAST, VIKAL BIKHARE HON HO NIRUPAY, SAMANVAY UNKA KARE SAMAST VIJAYINI MANAWATA BAN JAA'Y' (By synthesizing the sparks of energy, wherever they are, all together, we can make the mankind victorious, that can win over all the evils and obstacles).

This, indeed, is a great vision, a great desire for the betterment of human beings. This can never be a desire of a pessimist poet (as he is often described). Of course, there are elements of pessimism in Prasad's poetry, but a substantive amount is of faith, hope and love towards life and human values. One of the very significant studies of Jaishankar Prasad has been made by eminent poet Muktibodh in his critical work 'KAMAYANI : EK PUNARVICHAR'. Muktibodh described his poetry as a failure in totality. A great fantasy. A work which has been presented in emotive form but has had reality within it (BHAVVADI SHILP MEIN YATHARTHVADI RACHNA). The entire discourse made by Muktibodh is based on Marxist paradigm. To some extent his evaluation can be accepted but *Kamayani* is much more than a fantasy and failure of feudalism (Manu and his empire, divinity). This cannot be simply

viewed in terms of stages of evolution of human history as has been narrated by Muktibodh. *Kamayani* needs a relook to be given the parameters of its own. It is such a great work which denies to be evaluated on the canons of either Indian or Western literary theories of a particular kind, in fact a number of canons are required for evaluation of '*Kamayani*' in particular and Jaishankar Prasad in general. Like his images and language, the characteristics of his poetry are also very complex; having a number of layers. His poetry is difficult, to reveal. The meanings can perhaps never be explored. The statement of T.S. Eliot 'Meaning is a continuous process' may be applied in case of poetry of Jaishankar Prasad.

In contrast, Prasad is much more open and suggestive in his prose. His expression and depiction of reality is more visible in his novel 'KANKAL'. His loudness can more easily be heard in his plays 'DHRUVASWAMINI', 'CHANDRAGUPTA', 'VISHAKH', 'SKANDGUPTA' and others. The contemporaneity of Prasad can be understood by the views and problems raised in these plays. The issues which he has raised are quite relevant even today. He was in true sense a great visionary, forward looking artist. The problem of women's liberation, love and struggle for independence (in Chandragupta), tracing the testimony and evidences from myths and the Upanishadas, he proposes clear and

category solutions to the problems. His women characters are not very 'over bearing' but in spite of their lyricality, they express their opinions as well.

On the whole Jaishankar Prasad is a great achiever of Hindi literature. His contributions were immense and lasting for times to come and for centuries.

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PRIYA SAINI

Markandeya

Translated by
Jai Ratan

I have kept it to myself far too long and can't bear it any longer. I must tell you about my woes, for it's getting too much for me. Decrepit with age and undermined by disease, this body of mine is now incapable of carrying its burden. It's a wonder that I have carried on for so long; my body should have broken down much earlier. Its sap of life was gone the very moment I deserted Priya while she was in the throes of childbirth. Since then I have been feeling as if someone has plunged a knife in my liver, leaving it flaring with pain. The pain does not subside even for a minute. Whenever I am confronted 'With an unsavory situation I feel as if my life is going to burst at the seams. That's why I keep peeping into people's sad and troubled eyes like a mad man. I have seen my sense of duty and pride dying a lingering death and believe me, I have carried them over my shoulders like a corpse, Without any compunction, to be thrown into some blind gorge. To my chagrin, these seemed to have drawn a wedge between me and Priya, bringing us to the brink of disaster. Otherwise what was that something that shook me to my very core? When boys and girls live and grow up together they are bound to be drawn towards one another; there, is nothing unusual about it. It is only a question of opportunity and fate, which people are prone to magnify out of all proportions. But for these, there was not even a remote possibility of my and Priya's coming together. We had not known each other before, nor had we any common contacts. We had stood there looking at each other. After a minute's awkward silence she must have realized the

absurdity of the situation, for she looked sideways and said, "Are you looking for someone?"

"No one in particular. Maybe you!"

"Me?" She shot the question at me and laughed. I almost quaked under her gaze I had spoken to her 'With a great show of bravado, hoping that my brazen reply would make her blush. But keeping a straight face, she just stepped aside in the narrow passage, making way for me to come in. Her behavior was matter-of-fact as if I was no stranger to her.

As I sat down in her room, I decided to take a firm grip over the situation.

"Do you live here with your father?" I asked.

"Yes," she said, sitting down in front of me. "But why do you want to know; If you could state the purpose of your visit it may help."

"I'm a student of Psychology. I'm doing research on the manifestation of fear in changing situations. I've drawn up a questionnaire on the basis of which I'm interviewing young men and women." While talking with her, I threw guarded looks towards the door, expecting that someone may turn up and demand to know with a lurking suspicion as to what was going on here.

"Take it easy," Priya said with an effusive smile." There's no one here. You wouldn't have found me here either but for the fact that my school is closed today. It's just a coincidence that we happen to meet. Since July I'm teaching dance in a girls'

school. Mother died ten years ago. Father is working with the *Akashvani* as an artist on contract basis for the last thirty years. I've a younger brother studying in college. This room has been in our occupation for the last two generations. My grandfather ran away from his village and took up a *darwan's* job with a *seth* who gave us this *room* and a long mezzanine running along the whole length of this room and ending up in the room in front, The *seth* had the windows of the other room closed and improvised a kitchen and a bathroom for us. This room though small is anyway big enough for me to spread a cot in it. After mother's death I've been living in this small room. During the rainy season and particularly in summer its windows..." Priya suddenly fell silent, showing signs of restlessness. "You know what I mean," she continued. "I'm explaining the situation to you."

"You were going to tell me something about the window," I said as if touching on her sore spot and intently watched her face.

Priya did not betray any signs of embarrassment. "The thing is that if I keep the door of the mezzanine closed in summer it becomes like a box," she said without faltering. "Then I put *out* the lights and open the window and get a feeling as if I'm sleeping in the open. Since we live on the upper storey, it's peaceful and quiet over here. You can see how uncongenial this locality looks. The railway line cuts across the road which is swarming with trucks, buses and cars day and night. And

then there are the *thelwalas*, coolies and factory workers raising a din all the time. All sorts of people live here. Do you see that big gate over there? It's the mill gate. There is trouble at the mill almost every day- sometimes marked by violence, even police firing."

She paused for breath. I thought she was doing this as a cover-up to her thoughts, especially about the window. The way she had opened out to me seemed to signify an inner contradiction, which did not accord with the impression that I had formed about her personality. In spite of the broad hints thrown to me I was cautious enough not to jump to any unwarranted conclusion, which would be like retracing your steps when you were almost within sight of your destination.

"This is hardly the place for the pursuit of dance and music," I said. "The noisy surroundings must be a great distraction."

"You're right in a way," she said. "But we cultivate these arts as professionals, in keeping with our tradition. Father is a man of saintly disposition. In other words, he considers art as the highest expression of all that is noble in man. And man, according to him, is one who is poor, defeated and full of suffering." Priya hesitated, fearing that I was not getting at her real meaning, and decided to be more explicit. "Noise and din, poverty and unhappiness— if you exclude these things what else is left in my poor country? This house is therefore no bar to the pursuit of our vocation. We don't go after that

sort of art which culminates in divine miracles. We live on a different plane, not divorced from our normal life. Father has not taught me dancing as an infliction. He knows that I have a liking for it and he has tried to put me on my feet."

Priya paused for an instant and I felt as if a dream had abruptly snapped midway which on waking up whetted the appetite all the more for it to have continued.

I got up. It was clear that Priya was feeling apologetic. She feared that she had bored me with her talk. "Forgive me, I seem to have talked a lot of rot. I started off all right and then drifted into irrelevances."

"I'm not surprised. You're an artiste, after all. Apart from basic human propensities, an artiste has another dimension to his personality, based on an agglomeration of acquired talents which are the first to disintegrate under the stress and strain of life." I swayed my head, looking very thoughtful and sad.

"Yes, the stress and strain of life..." she echoed my words and her face turned red with embarrassment. We stood there without looking at each other. It looked so odd, like something out of the blue. I could not lift my feet while Priya stood before me wordless. Then the tap hissed and water started dripping from it.

"It's 3'o clock!" Priya suddenly said.

"So the tap is on."

"We get water only in short spells and store it in vessels for use." She again fell silent as if she had said all that there

was to be said. I felt as if I had found my feet. "I'll go;" I said looking grave. She had only a small gesture to make - an imperceptible nod *of* the head, signifying that I could go. But she stood there mute, as if the words that she wanted to utter were caught in a whirlpool. Her unspoken words, "How can I ask you to go," rang in my ears. "I'll come some other day," I said and turned to go.

"No, no, no," pat came Priya's reply. "You won't find me here. I'm away most of the day, teaching in the school. Please let me have your address. I'll send you word"

Now we were both on firm ground. Taking my visiting card from my pocket I handed it to Priya. Without as much as glancing at it she folded her hands in farewell. Coming to the edge of the roof she stood there watching me climbing down the stairs.

"I'll wait for your message," I said from below.

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A doubt assails my mind. You must be thinking that I'm doling out fiction. I would urge upon you not to take it as the fabrication of my imagination. Otherwise we would get involved in the rigmarole of what is true and what is imaginary, what is real and what is tinsel. You may lay the charge against me that the whole thing sounds cinematic. An unknown young student enters the house of an unknown young girl without any introduction. And strangely enough, that

girl starts talking to him without any inhibition. She does not stop at that. She even thinks of writing to him. To tell the truth, I discern many false notes in the whole episode and today when I look back on the whole thing I wonder how it all came to pass. But at that time I was obsessed with only one thought - to look forward to Priya's message. Would she oblige? May be, maybe, not. No, no, I must hear from her.

In the next few days when I saw the postman my mind was filled with a strange expectancy bordering on trepidation. But when no letter came I felt utterly dejected. I had stopped going to the library and spent my time at home, organizing the matter that I had received in response to my questionnaire. One day an invitation card arrived in my mail and I opened the envelope disinterestedly. It was a personal invitation from the most prominent girls' school, situated only a short distance from my house. Why personal? I started studying the card. The star item on the programme was a dance by Priya Saini— 'The Quest for Man'. Below it was the Principal's name and in the corner in very small letters was scribbled Priya Saini's name. There was also another small card - an invitation to dinner after the performance. Everything became clear to me at the first glance and I eagerly started looking forward to that evening.

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I vividly remember it. It was the 5th of February. The winter was on the way

out and the weather had become lively. I reached the main gate of the school punctually at seven. Not that the place was unfamiliar to me. I used to pass by this side almost every day and saw the Nepalese gate-keeper sitting on his high stool, dozing.

It came as a bit of a disappointment to me to not find a crowd there, not even girls who are supposed to form the bulk of the audience, it being a girls' school. The *darwan* told me that the main function was over in the afternoon. Now there would be a dance by the dance teacher of the school for the exclusive benefit of the elite of the town including the management of the school. The students of the school had been debarred from seeing the dance for it was considered to be rather bold for them. I was shown into the enclosure meant for VIP's. The lights started fading and soon the auditorium was plunged in darkness.

Misfortune overtook me at the very first step. I had never thought that the path of love was strewn with so many troubles. On the one hand I was eager to meet Priya after the performance and on the other I was feeling subdued and out of place in a girls' school which had a proud tradition of conservatism. How would Priya react to the situation? Maybe, the right thing would be to slip away after the performance, instead of feeling put out in the midst of prying, inquisitive eyes. My reverie broke with the tinkling of the second bell. I saw the curtain rising against the cyclorama comprising the

distant backdrop of street lamps silhouetted against a gray sky. The whole scene created an illusion of the stage extending itself onto the audience except in the left corner where stood a house with a window open on the second storey and beyond it a chimney belching smoke. First I couldn't make out anything and remained engrossed in a tune emanating from a flute. Then I saw a shadow-play of pedestrians and processions emerging on the road. And lo, there was what looked like a naked figure framed in the window of the upper storey, trying to adjust her clothes. It was only then that I realized the significance of the whole setting. It was Priya's own mezzanine window, Then came a commentary over the mike in an easy, flowing language, 'The Quest for Man' was Priya's own creation: a blend of many dance styles, which according to her innovations broke loose from classical tradition. The purpose of dancing is not determined by pre-conceived regulatory principles. The dancers often associate themselves with the dance-form and being mechanical in their actions and being devoid of feelings they are unable to interpret the inherent cosmic significance of the dance. As it is, dance is an independent medium of self-expression in which one can delineate one's feelings from the very depth of one's being,

Here the meaning of 'The Quest for Man' was not a search for any particular individual who had disappeared from the scene. The searcher may not even be aware of what she was in quest of. The object

of search may be right in front of the danseuse or even lodged in her heart and she may be blissfully unaware of its identity.

Soon a rosy light gently rippled across the stage to the soft strains of the *jaltarang* and from behind that light emerged the scantily clad figure of Priya.

For the next hour and a half, people watched her dance with bated breath. Such sharp but rhythmic movements, lyrical in their conception seemed to be beyond the pale of imagination. People watched her spell-bound and Priya would stand statuesque gazing at the audience in fascination. In its totality of impression the performance was unique which words cannot describe adequately. But I cannot help saying that at the end of the performance my mental condition had radically changed. Somewhere deep inside my attitude towards Priya had hardened. When the lights came on, I scrutinized the audience. That sense of excitement and hesitation had vanished from my mind. I saw some women coming towards me, among them a gray-haired woman, who was introduced to me as the Principal of the school. A faint smile lurked round her lips. "Won't you like to go and congratulate Priya?" she said. But before I could guess what was at the back of her mind, two girls led me to the back of the stage where I found Priya surrounded by a large number of her female admirers and friends. They went away as they saw me approaching. Joining together her palms she smiled with the simplicity of a child. I knew she wouldn't ask me anything about her dance, "It was a

magnificent performance," I said.

"Don't be so laudatory. People will laugh. As you must have observed no men had been invited except members of the managing committee and their families. The Principal though strict is quite modern in her outlook." Priya turned around to accept someone's greetings.

"I think your Principal suspects there's more to it than meets the eye," I said.

"She knows we are friends. What's wrong about it?" There was an edge to Priya's voice though it did not lack warmth.

We were talking freely as if we had been friends for years. We moved to the dining table. Profuse in their praise, people gathered round Priya. But she did not neglect me. On one or two occasions, she even held my hand as if absent-mindedly and then let go of it immediately.

I found myself in a quandary. Not that I was not enjoying myself. But the whole atmosphere seemed to be against my grain. Everyone cast curious looks at me, thinking I was Priya's lover.

We were still at the dining table when the Principal swiftly came to us and placing her hand on Priya's shoulder said, "Priya, you must look after your guest and yes," she leaned over, "You may stay back and take the staff car on the second trip. I'll tell the driver."

After the dinner was over, many girls of Priya's age gathered around me and started badgering me. Priya, I found had discreetly slipped away. Evidently, the girls thought I was Priya's would-be husband.

“You must be careful,” one of them said. “She’s no ordinary bird. There are scores of eyes set upon her.”

“You must *do* some physical exercise,” another said. “Priya can make twenty-five spins on her heels without losing her breath.”

The girls cut all *sorts* of jokes with me which rattled me no end, especially because the jokes were lacking in sophistication. The sound of a car horn cut short our meeting. The girls scattered as they saw Priya coming towards us, holding bouquets of flowers. “Let’s walk up to the road,” she said. “The car should be here any moment.” I walked by her side in silence.

“Why are you looking so glum?” she said turning to me, “By the way, how are you getting on with your research?”

From her easy manners I could guess that she had extricated herself from the whirlpool in which she had found herself a short while ago. But I was still having a hard time of it. Priya’s talent and the ample recognition of it at the hands of the elite of the town made me feel small before her.

“I seem to have come to a dead end,” I said in a listless voice. I had to say something just to keep the pretense of good manners. My ordeal was cut short by the tooting of the car horn.

The driver opened the door for us. I stood aside for Priya to get in and then I sat down in the back seat, a little apart *from* her. What would have ordinarily looked

commonplace suddenly assumed a new significance. I was overwhelmed by her smell and the casual touch of her body.

“I’ll see you home,” she said. “Tell the driver the way to your house.”

After the car had taken one turning I asked the driver to stop.

“So soon?” Priya looked at me surprised.

“That’s where I live. I can see the southern wall of your college from here.” Priya got down and looked around.

“My rooms are upstairs. On the second floor.”

“Who else. . .?”

“I live alone.” I invited her to come up.

“Yes, I’ll come up for a minute. Just to have a look.”

Walking ahead of me she climbed up the stairs. I unlocked my house. She stepped in, cast a cursory glance at the courtyard and then entering my room sat down in a chair. Again a gulf seemed to yawn between us. I found myself in a predicament, not knowing how to set the ball rolling. I gingerly sat down in a chair in front of her, but I felt like plucking my hair and running down screaming. I got up and her eyebrows went up. “Where are you going? Do sit down.” I sat down again. She looked up at me. She had not completely cleaned the make-up from her face and her eyes were looking like slices of mango on her blotchy face. Her eyes after rolling like the fathomless sea rico-

cheted against the door and grazing past the window came to rest on the small table in front.

“You live very close to our school.”

I was silent.

“I’ll drop in again sometime.” She raised her head.

I was still silent.

“Don’t you like me to visit you?” She looked at me. There was pain writ large on my face.

“What’s happened to you?” She drew closer to me. I shook my head, saying that there was nothing the matter with me and got up again. Wordlessly, we walked up to the car, standing on the road. I opened the door, helping her into the car.

“You want me to go alone?” she said. “At this hour of the night?”

I looked at my watch. It was nearing eleven-thirty. I got in and sat down by her side and the car proceeded towards her house. This time she looked very lively and would not cease talking. Unknowingly, her hand would fall upon mine and she made no effort to withdraw it. Once I held her hand and she let it remain in my grip. Then she edged *closer* to me and I could feel that her body was trembling with excitement. It was an awkward moment for me, the infant-like self-confidence that had taken birth in me was throwing about its arms and legs, making its presence felt. Priya had suddenly leaned forward and her face had momentarily disappeared

behind her long hair. I put my left hand round her waist and as I tried to draw her to me the car blew its horn and stopped. I tried to remove my hand. “Sit still,” she said and asked the driver to go and ring the doorbell.

As the driver got down from the car she sat up straight and the next moment I found her between my arms. After a quick embrace and a kiss she hurriedly got down from the car. All this had happened swiftly, like a flash of lightning or like a spurt of pain across the heart, leaving me aghast.

I still remember her passionately quivering voice, “Won’t you get down?” But as I leaned forward towards the door she seemed to have realized the delicacy of the situation and asked me to remain seated. She pressed my hand between her hands and swiftly climbed up the stairs. When the car started I saw her shadowy figure leaning through the upstairs window. For a fleeting moment it reminded me of the setting of the ‘The Quest for Man’. My whole world was transformed where with the passage of each moment I found myself drifting towards a close preserve of mine where I lived with Priya. I was so much taken up with my own thoughts that I was not even conscious as to when I reached home and entered my room. For a fleeting moment my attention was riveted to the chair in which Priya had sat a short while ago. I changed and got into bed.

To tell the truth, I had found these

events most bewildering for they had been beyond the periphery of my experience. Otherwise they could have opened new vistas of happiness for me. The glimpse that I had got of Priya's art and her personality were so exhilarating and the manner in which I had been introduced to that new world of hers so captivating that now after such a lapse of time it has become difficult for me to believe that all this had really happened.

Your expectations must have soared high. But before your imagination runs riot, let me warn you that if you are hoping to witness kissing and embracing as a prelude to what would be coming next, you are in for disappointment. In fact, as my experience shows, reality is generally divorced from rank imagination. Had I been a hedonist, a story of this type would have had no novelty for me. Even if I had been a hedonist, the story would have been cast in a different mold, making it difficult for you to recognize Priya as a protagonist of this story. My predicament however was of a different nature. An intelligent and promising student, born in an ordinary peasant family who had worked his way through college on scholarships and was now associated with renowned scholars on a research project, could not break away from his peasant background. I had kept myself scrupulously away from girls and felt uncomfortable in their presence. Being imbued with certain ideals and mores of life, I had rigidly disciplined myself and claimed to be all-knowing. So the excite-

ment I had felt on meeting Priya for the first time at her house had now worn off and I had again withdrawn into my shell. I was therefore reluctant to accept at its face value what had transpired between us. Wasn't all this make-believe an extension of 'The Quest for Man?'

I kept tossing in bed the whole night and got up late in the morning. The eagerness to meet Priya became overbearing. Certainly, she could have dropped in for a minute on her way to school. I kept hovering between hope and despair. Sometimes I felt angry at Priya and then suddenly relented, realizing that she was up against many difficulties herself. In the midst of this mental dilemma, I fell asleep. I had even overlooked to close the door.

At about three in the afternoon I felt a hand over my forehead and I woke up. It was Priya sitting in a chair by my bed. "What's the time?" I asked.

"It's going to be three-thirty," she said consulting her watch. "Since when have you been sleeping?" she asked in a grave voice.

"I've been lying in bed since morning," I said. "I didn't sleep the whole night. In the morning while lying in bed I thought you may drop in on your way to school. Then I fell asleep and slept on and on. I woke up just now when you came,"

"You mean you didn't even have your breakfast?" Priya gave me a concerned look "Get up. We'll have tea somewhere,"

We went to a nearby restaurant where

we sat for a long time, talking. Our previous meeting, brief as it was, had kept us pinned to one small point. But this meeting seemed to have thrown us in a welter of humanity. I had never imagined that a woman could be so simple and naive and yet hard as flint. Fear and irresoluteness seemed to be foreign to her nature.

As we were coming out of the restaurant she said, "I'm suddenly confronted with a serious problem. I would like to have your advice about it. I'll talk it over with you in detail tomorrow"

At my insistence she said: "Today when I was taking my high school class the Principal sent for me. You know the kind of institution I'm teaching in. Owing to the patronage of the rich people of the town the school enjoys all sorts of privileges and we are paid well in keeping with the university pay-scales. Well, when I entered the Principal's office, I found the president of Manjari Trust sitting there along with a couple of other persons. On the table lay photographs of my last night's performance. The president was profuse in my praise.

Miss Mirdha, the Principal is very fond of me. She is a kind hearted woman and very learned too. She was educated in London, you know. The fact is that if she had not been there I could not have got this job. The president wanted to give this position to a film artiste to whom he was partial. But at the interview when the girl swayed her hips outrageously the Principal was so incensed that she closed her eyes with both her hands and refused

to take part in the proceedings.

Anyway, today Miss Mirdha greeted me with a smile and introduced me to those present in the room, including a cine photographer, an actor, and a director, besides a dance specialist. As you know, I lay no store by rich people and am averse to publicity. I refused scores of offers to dance in films. Father was pleased. "My child," he used to say, "There is no point in dancing before people who can't appreciate this art."

"As I looked at the people in the room, I suspected that something was brewing and my suspicion was confirmed when the photographer told Miss Mirdha that he had made a film of my last night's performance which he would like to show for the benefit of the visitors. I asked to be excused as I had to go back to my class. Miss Mirdha hesitated for a moment and then said, "Please stay on. There's no harm in seeing your handiwork in the film."

"I watched the film for some time but by ears were attuned to those four professionals who were explaining the finer points of the film, to Seth Ghinawan, the President of the school, in their own light and putting forward interpretations to suit their own ends.

"It's an eyeful, Sethji, isn't it?"

"And what suppleness and agility!"

"There is only one thing missing. Either she should wear more diaphanous clothes or we should add a sequence of rain to give a drenching to her clothes."

“The photographer kept babbling. “Sethji,” he said, “If I had known I would have given such a swell to her contours in this very film that people would have jumped in their seats. I would have made it a first-class money spinner.”

“I got up midway and went back to my class. It was too much even for Miss Mirdha. “I fear Sethji may come up with some outrageous suggestion,” she said to me later, looking worried. “I sense something fishy in the whole affair. But you need have no apprehension so far as I am concerned. I’ll stand by you. I’ve an inkling that they intend to arrange a special showing of this film on a commercial scale to all the rich people and collect a cool lakh or two. Since the school supposedly had a hand in preparing the film and it is being sponsored on behalf of the school, it will not be possible for me to oppose the scheme.”

“Miss Mirdha, why are you exercised over this matter? It’s no problem for me. Though I’m the daughter of a poor father I’ve my own pride. I’ll refuse to dance for them.”

“She seemed to have liked my remark and affectionately caressed my head. “It’s just the beginning, my child,” she said. “I fear there is more to it than meets the eye. But you need not worry. We’ll take things in our stride.” .

We had gone far, talking and it was getting late. Priya asked me to see her home. “Everything will crystallize in a day or two,” she said. “We’ll wait till then. As for me, I know my mind very clearly.

I won’t mind renouncing my job, if it comes to that. Once I get embroiled in this rigmarole, it will be difficult for me to extricate myself from it. I know where it’s going to land me. Not that...” She paused to emphasize her point, “...I don’t want to dance or that I’m averse to dancing on the public stage. I am prepared to dance by the roadside, in the fields, even before factory workers and the peasants. My life and my art are dedicated to them. Sometimes I feel that; I’m an ignoramus so far as art is concerned. But I know the suffering which is the hard lot of millions of my countrymen and also the glory and the pride they feel in upholding the great tradition of their country. When I dance I become one with them. They are the source of my inspiration and therefore, my dances in a way reflect their struggle and are dedicated to the new order they are striving to establish.” As I listened to Priya, her dance-drama, *The Quest for Man* came to have a new significance for me.

—You can bore through the heart of the most rugged mountains.

—You can confine the most turbulent storms within your arms.

—You are the creation, the power, the movement, the very breath of my life-my Priya

A curtain of darkness was whisked away from before my eyes and every movement of Priya’s last night’s dance descended into the depth of my heart like a melody. The same invocation to the gods, the same agony, the same thirst, the touch and

the embrace, the same pain of separation and the intense longing to be one with Priya: I had got lost in myself.

Now that I am recapturing those moments after the lapse of such a long time, I feel that I am wallowing in my own forgetfulness. I had decided to tell everything in a matter-of-fact way and not be swept away by the torrential flow of my own feelings. Now when I think of it, I wonder what had made me watch Priya's dance like one under some spell. Why didn't I have a foreboding of what was in store for me? Now I can see this in retrospect in a manner of speaking with my hindsight. But that night after seeing the dance, even though I had only a nodding acquaintance with Priya, I had found myself transported to a new world where beauty, faith, devotion and simplicity were no longer abstractions but embodied forms.

After talking to Priya's father I was about to leave when he called out to Priya and wouldn't let me go till I had partaken of some snacks. He came down to see me off and asked me to visit them again.

Past the stage of formalities Priya and I had now become friends. A bold girl, Priya looked askance at social fads and such-like orthodoxies. I had also shaken off my inhibitions and soon we became so free with each other that my house became a second home to her. I would daily escort her to her house. Kissing and embracing had become the common expression of our love but we never crossed the limits of propriety. I have a feeling that Priya would have resolutely set her face against

such indiscretion.

Days passed. One day Priya returned from the school much before the closing time, looking tired and dejected. When I asked her, she said that what she feared had happened. "Today the seth came fully armed and put two proposals before me: a play for the benefit of the school and a short film which would be the first art production under the auspices of the school. The official stationery is ready, the contract has been drawn up and all other formalities have been completed. Only my name remains to be signed along the dotted lines. Since the film will be produced in the name of the school, the school would have the sale right over it; which in other words means that as the producer the *Seth* will be entitled to half the profits accruing from the film."

"And what will you get for your pains?"

"Nothing. I'm only a commodity. Besides I've no entity apart from the school. By building up my image in other countries they want to enhance the glory of womankind. They also want to demonstrate the superiority of Indian dance over the other dance forms. Sethji will accompany me to London and the States." Priya suddenly stiffened and started laughing. I had never seen her laugh so uproariously. "What's wrong with you?" I asked, startled.

"It has given me a terrible jolt," she said. "Not that they have said anything harsh to me but because they think people like us to be so trite, insignificant and contemptible. My father used to say that the rich, when they reach a certain stage,

throw overboard all the values of life. They assess everything in terms of money—even the heart. We mean nothing to them. They don't rate us even equal to their pet dogs. You know they have also engaged a dress designer who will design dresses for me according to their own notions of what will go well on my body. The idea is that I should in turn cast off my clothes while dancing for a new wave film”

Covering her face with her hands, she burst out crying. I tried to console her but she wouldn't stop crying. A woman is a woman after all, I told myself - weak, sentimental and foolish.

“You should have refused outright,” I said.

“Do you think I've agreed?” she said. “No. I threw the papers in their faces. I've also quit my job.”

She had regained her composure. Taking a handkerchief from her handbag she wiped her eyes. “I'm astounded that they should have taken everything for granted without as much as throwing a hint to me. That hurt me more than anything else.”

“Only a short while ago, you had said something about the character of these people. If you think you are so perceptive as to know them under their skin, their move should not have caused you any surprise. In fact you shouldn't have felt so riled as this gave you yet another opportunity to confirm your beliefs,” I said timidly, weighing every word of mine.

“Of course, I knew what was coming

she said. “Otherwise, how could I have got out of this morass?” As she gained her composure, my anxiety decreased. To get out of this gloomy situation, I invited her to go out and have tea with me.

She washed and was ready to accompany me. Though a heavy load was off my mind, sadness had taken its place. Till now I had not been able to lay my finger at that part of her heart where she was like the common run of women - foolish, sentimental and indulgent. So I was always careful not to tread on her corns. Her crying like a child had disillusioned me. Though this was a god-sent opportunity for me to profess my love to her, I was also overwhelmed by a desire to break away from the beaten path and launch forth on my own. I, however, didn't allow such feelings to stand between us and my relations with her remained unsullied as before. But sometimes I couldn't desist from giving her a bit of my mind. I would raise my voice and blatantly contradict her, which only provoked her to come closer to me. A fire that had been kindled in my heart had gradually burst into flames. I would press her hand and she would wince with pain. Once when we were passing through a lonely spot I put my hand round her waist and drew her closer to me. She was surprised. I could feel her body trembling. *Aifer* walking some distance she suggested that we go to my room. “I'm not feeling well,” she said.

We remained closeted in my room

for three hours. I vividly remember the occasion. Not only remember - later I wrote everything down and when I confronted her with what I had written her face turned red with shame. "It conforms to facts, doesn't it?" I asked. "You see, I hate using force." She blushed again.

"You write so well. I was thrilled," she said.

Gradually, without our being aware of it our bodies had become the focal point of our lives and aspirations. Soon we felt that we were getting too much involved with our bodies and drifting away from the chartered course of our lives. But we knew of no natural constraint which could deflect us from our waywardness. On the contrary, we talked with great relish on the goings-on between us.

Early one morning Priya dropped in and told me that they were organizing a function in honour of Birju Maharaj at which she had been asked to dance. The invitation had been brought by her father at the instance of Miss Mirdha and the President of the Municipal Committee. "But listen..." she cast an anxious look at me. "...my legs shake. This morning when I tried to do some footwork my legs refused to bear the burden of my body. And you know what intricate footwork 'The Quest for Man' requires. I'm really worried."

"You just try again," I said trying to be helpful. "You keep imagining things"

She had taken up a two-hour part-time job in a dance academy for which she was paid reasonably well. She was

getting late and she got up gingerly. "Please see me downstairs," she said.

I accompanied her up to the Academy, impressing upon her to have some practice to limber up her body. But as I soon learnt, not to talk of pulling herself through her paces, she couldn't even cope with her dance class and left the girls midway. She burst into tears as she entered my room.

"I wish I could do something about it," she wailed. "My body has become stiff and useless," Resting her head against my coat collar, she started sobbing.

I was myself feeling very low, at that time. But I held her in my arms. "You need some rest," I said. "You look so tense and keyed up. A rest will do you good and after that some practice will put you back on your feet."

But she kept moaning and shaking her head. "You just don't understand," she said. "Practice can only give form to a dance. Mere footwork and beating to time and body movements do not make a dance. A dance must have a soul too, And a dance like 'The Quest for Man'.. .I.. .I..." She fainted.

While lying unconscious she kept mumbling: "Where are you? Who are you? How are you?"

I was greatly perturbed. To tell the truth, she put me in a huff. What was going on here? I couldn't even call a doctor. She opened her eyes after half an hour and looked around. Then she held my hand. "I'm all right," she assured me and

sat up, looking her usual self and with an air of satisfaction as if she had achieved her purpose. Her behavior opened the doors for me onto a mysterious world. "You were mumbling all the time while lying in a faint," I said.

"Was I?" she grimaced. "It couldn't have meant anything."

"Of course, it did!" I said. "I'm a student of Psychology and know what is what."

I was pained, all the more now when I think it was unbecoming of me to stoop so low and indiscriminately ask her such tell-tale questions unmindful of her state of mind and physical condition. But I seemed to have freed myself of all constraints. As if impelled by some inner urge, I harried her with a barrage of questions.

"You're at war with yourself," I cried. "Some inner conflict has taken hold of you. Oh God! The demonic power that you displayed in. The Quest for Man! No ordinary woman can be capable of it."

She was silent. Her silence infuriated me all the more. I was beginning to see things in a new light and it appeared the situation was now getting out of my hand.

As it transpired, Priya could not take part in the function. I was delighted to know that she was with child. At the same time I was assailed by the doubt that Priya had been hiding things from me. "You don't love me with all your being," I said. "There is someone else between us." I pushed her aside and got up in a huff. But she wouldn't let go of me.

"I'll tell you everything," she sobbed. "Yes, everything!"

Even a hint from her, like a ray of hope was reassuring. I hoped she would open out to me. I used all the tricks I knew, to make her confess by implication there was someone else in her life, even though in my heart of hearts I wished that it were not so - that she should say that it was all a canard, that I was the only man that she loved.

It was a period of great mental turmoil for me. I felt we were slowly disintegrating in that maelstrom of doubt and mistrust. At the same time, strangely enough, we could not brook each other's separation even for a minute. I would often knock at her door, not caring that the night had far advanced. She would promptly open the door for she knew that I would come. At times I felt so restless that I sat through the night writing a letter to her and then personally took it to her house, although I knew that there was no point in writing to her for there was no ban on our meeting; we could meet as and when we liked. For that matter the letters were crammed with foolish thoughts which made her weep. Then I would try to mollify her and tell her to forget about those letters and instead pose a question to her: "Tell me, what's the significance of that window in your dance-drama?"

"It has no special significance," she would reply. "I will explain to you some other time."

One day when she repeated this reply,

I was so infuriated that I caught hold of her and as she fell on her bed I tried to strangle her. "Tell me the truth," I cried, "Or I'll knock the life out of you. You gloat over my misery while I burn in hell fire."

But she said nothing. She didn't even try to release herself from my clutches. Then I clung to her and started crying. "Tell me, my Priya, my darling. Tell me the truth. I've a suspicion you are not mine alone. Or you would not have taken such savage delight in my suffering. Believe me, I'll not be angry with you. Without you my life is like an arid waste. Why do you hide things from me?"

In spite of my importunities when she did not come out of her shell I would start abusing her. The situation was getting grim, day by day, making us increasingly indifferent to each other.

She came to my house one morning and went headlong for me. "The thing which is causing you so much heart-burning is no more than an accident," she said. "You know there is a textile mill right in front of my house. Every day they have some sort of rumpus over there—a strike, a drama or a fracas. One night they were having a demonstration outside the mill gate when there was a police firing. I woke up in alarm and soon after I saw a shadowy figure entering my room through the window. Before I could leap out of bed I sensed that the police was making for our house. I was so frightened that even my voice died in my throat. I heard voices in the mezzanine and guessed

that the police was looking for some person. It struck me that if they laid their hands on the person who was hiding in my room he would be hauled up as the culprit even if he was not guilty."

"Of course, of course!" I mocked at her. "How could he be branded as a culprit? Hadn't he passed the night in your bed? Now stop passing on fibs to me!" I kept saying what came into my head while she sat there statuesque, listening to me.

"So he stayed in your room the whole night?" I continued. "Must have been one of those dirty, wicked, factory workers for whom you flung open your treasure chest. Now I have understood your dramatics. Maybe he was an old flame of yours."

I selected the choicest words to run her down while she sat there gaping at me, as I have said before., Then tears streamed down her eyes. I feared she would get up abruptly and go away, never to return. How will I live without her? Oh, I was really being cruel to her, castigating her for nothing. Maybe that fellow had not spent the night in her room. "Priya, speak to me. Say that he departed from your room at the first opportunity when he found the coast was clear. Why are you silent?" I groaned in mental agony.

Priya got up. "I feel so helpless!" she said. "I don't know how to quell your suspicion. Even if I knew you would run about on the road yelling like a lunatic. I wish I knew how to restore your confidence in me."

She was repeating the same old question.

“Priya, you’re driving me mad,” I cried. “My heart will burst.”

It was getting too much for me. I didn’t know how to create those conditions again in which we could live in peace and amity. To my question she had a stock answer. But I wanted to hear something different from her lips - an answer in conformity with my preconceived notions. That answer, I knew, could turn me insane and I wished Priya would shout out a loud ‘No’ But all the same I wanted to force her to say what I wanted to hear from her.

Not only that, I would have given her a long questionnaire, asking her to give the answers in ‘yes’ or ‘no’. After she had set down her replies, I would have argued with her, ralsed a squabble, kissed her, wept and we would again come into our own in that harrowing solitude. But my question would still keep chasing her with the result that we would again fall apart and refuse to talk with each other.

We teetered between hope and despair, like shifting between sun and shade. One moment the sky would clear up, bringing golden sunshine and the next moment dark clouds would overcast the sky as harbingers of a storm, bringing disaster in its wake.

Priya’s physical condition had started undergoing a change. Considering our social norms she was getting worried over it. Her father had met me a number of times and wanted me to abide by our social conventions which would have reconciled

to everyone’s advantage. But Priya was reticent. She wanted to go to Varanasi with me for a few days. She was harboring an idea that with a little maneuvering she would be able to change my mind. Every day she would remind me about my research project. But the stalemate continued and we remained entangled in our own problems.

We had gone to Sarnath at the onset of the monsoons. We were happy and spent hours together studying the images of the Tathagata and went to the city at nightfall. We returned late and remained cooped up in our room in the Tourist Hotel. A light rain fell. Priya, who was tired of the muggy weather, was pleased. I removed her sari, and threw it aside and slowly started treading the path to love. Her body, smooth as glass, slowly submitted to my caresses. Over her slim waist there was just room enough for two rounded contours as there is for two kadam flowers on a narrow canvas. Over those orbs, upswept like the breast of a pigeon, her neckline had joined up with her shoulders and then tapered down towards the arms which rippled like gold. The lines running down her navel towards the pubes had become more pronounced as a result of which her thighs and buttocks looked more alluring. She had indeed undergone a sea change.

The clouds thundered in the distance and the windows rattled. It started raining heavily.

“Please open the window,” Priya said. “And if he comes in?”

Priya was taken aback. Her hands became limp.

“Whom will you opt for in that case?”

Priya lay still, watching me. My tongue became more acidic. “I’m not saying this to you out of spite or anger. Priya, if you were faced with a dilemma of this type how would you cope with it?”

Her face turned pale but she kept looking at me, wordlessly.

“He must have slowly removed his clothes,” I said, carried on by my own passion, “No?” I said hugging her and trying to draw her closer to me. “Why are you silent? Say something. Tell me whether he removed his clothes or not?”

“Yes, yes, yes!” she screamed, trying to get out of my arms. I pushed her away and she fell down on the floor. Her hands began to tremble and a shiver ran through her body as if life was ebbing out of it. I was scared. I quickly massaged her body and kissed her face. “Priya, I’ll never ask you again,” I said in a pleading voice. Just then her words, ‘yes, yes’ echoed in my ears and I felt as if they had seared my ears.

I rushed out of the room and, without caring for the inclemency of the weather I kept walking in the pouring rain unmindful of the direction in which I was going. My feet refused to walk and life fluttered in my throat but I did not stop. In the next few months I kept wandering from place to place and then went away to Bengal. Owing to exposure to rain that night I happened to catch a chill and kept coughing for months and even spat

blood but I refused to submit myself to treatment. Nor could I induce myself to return to Priya.

Maybe you are thinking that my troubles are imaginary and you must be feeling bored, taking my story to be an imposition. But sometimes life goes off the rails and everything comes to naught. But before you decide to forget this painful story I would request you to read a letter if only to see things in their proper perspective.

So, to continue with the story— call it a narration or autobiographical note of an individual— after six months when I returned to town and opened my room I found a number of letters lying on the floor. One of them was Priya’s.

x x x x x

My dear...

It was for your good that I did not tell you what you were so eager to hear from my lips. I knew that none of the answers would please you. If it could I would have even sacrificed my life to please you. I am not blind. I remember how you caught my feet and started crying. Then you took me in your arms and rubbed your forehead against my bosom. You assured me that if I told you the truth your love for me would not diminish. Believe me, I spent long nights thinking what I could do to restore your faith in me and bring you peace of mind. I was worried for I could not live without you. When you were not there the smell of your clothes permeated my mind and

I would talk to you by addressing your things.

I vividly remember that when you probed me ceaselessly and refused to eat, I confessed as a matter of expediency that that man had spent the night in the mezzanine room. At this you had felt so outraged that you had ripped apart your shirt. You even tried to plunge the kitchen knife in my breast. I had understood the state of your mind. You were an idealist who wanted to see your Priya as an image of purity which even the sun had not touched. Your ego kept writhing as a wounded snake at the thought that an unknown person had spent a night in my mezzanine room. You had deluged me with questions: why didn't I scream? Why didn't I wake up father? If you wanted to save his life you could have as well left him there and yourself come out. Why didn't you do so? He must have taken liberties with you. Where did he touch you? Here? Here? The light must have been off. What did he look like? His age? He must have sat down on your charpoy. Did he, really? If you find my questions embarrassing you may reply in 'yes' or 'no'. Or just indicate your answers with a shake of your head.

To tell you the truth, I was getting apprehensive. I feared you may take your own life in despair. So, like a statement to the police, I had devised a reply, shorn of all feelings and made myself inert like a stone. But now it's all over. I'm satisfied that I am going to be the mother of your child.

During the day I stand in the window, watching the people's faces on the road, especially of those going in a procession, or holding a *dharna* or a *gherao* and of those who are poor and afflicted. Then I reprove myself for such madness. That night I could see nothing in the dark. I couldn't find what kind of clothes the fellow was wearing, much less his age. Of course, he must have been young. I remember the tautness of his thighs and the prickly feel of his moustache. Nor have I been able to forget the smell of raw milk emanating from his body even after having lived with you for such a long time. The hold of his arms was so powerful and yet so tender that I wanted to swoon in his arms.

You had asked me whether he had repeated his visit. That has been my only regret which I have not been able to get over even after a lapse of one year. If only he had come! You repeatedly reminded me that he couldn't have forgotten me after having basked under my patronage. The plain fact is that I fear he must be dead; may be he was shot by the police that very night.

Today I'll not hide anything from you. It is time that you knew the truth as it is, for now we lack the strength to play hide and seek with the grim realities of life. You may not know that seeing your mental conflict and suffering I had many a time thought of annihilating myself. But then I realized that my absence may prove too much for you and I desisted from taking this drastic step.

My mental anguish is no less than yours. Added to it, your persistent questioning has riddled my heart. Since I am the cause of your misery, I should feel terribly guilty. But I am bereft of any such feeling. I'm not guilty. I have not betrayed my conscience.

That cold December night I lay shivering in my room, trying to woo sleep. The window of the mezzanine room which overlooks the mill opposite our house was partially open. A big crowd had gathered outside the mill since morning. I could see everything clearly under the glare of the electric light. They had fixed a mike at the gate but its sound was so loud and booming that I could not make out anything distinctly. Since morning there had been many scuffles which ultimately necessitated police intervention. At about eleven I had just dozed off when I woke up at the sound of firing. Pushing away my quilt I got out of bed and stood in the window. People were running about in panic with the police chasing them and firing at them indiscriminately. Some people dashed past our house and in the twinkling of an eye I saw one of them merging into the darkness and then suddenly showing up in the mezzanine window. He plunged forward, struck against my charpoy and fell down on my quilt. I tried to scream but a hand gently gagged my mouth. "Keep quiet!" the man said in a firm voice. "I'll do you no harm." He rose to his full length and stood facing me. As I stretched my hand to reach for the electric switch, a powerful hand fell upon my arm and

pushed it away. I shuddered. While backing away from him I crashed against a stool and I could feel the man's warm breath against my face. "Don't be scared. Quietly lie down in bed," the man said. "I'll clear out as soon as I can. If I did not have a pistol on me I wouldn't have bothered you, seeking a place to hide. I'm in danger."

Then I heard the sound of heavy footsteps on the stairs. I trembled with fear, not knowing how to get rid of the man. Holding his hand I gestured him to slip under my bed but he stepped back and stood against the window, trying to think of some way of escape. There was a furious banging on the other door and as I heard shuffling feet, I knew Father had gone to open the door. I broke into a sweat, and frantically gestured to the man to get under the bed but he refused to budge from where he was standing.

I heard Father asking the police in a hard voice what they had come up for.

"Has anyone come up?"

"No, none that I know of."

"But we saw someone going up."

"Why not find for yourself? I was sleeping with the doors closed and woke up when I heard you coming up."

"He has shot the security officer and escaped. I recognize him. He's from U.P. We had warned the Mill management time and again to be careful of him but they paid no heed. It's we, who have to face the music all the time.' Well, is this the only room you have in your possession?"

"Yes."

“And who lives here?” The police officer banged a *lathi* against my door. The man hiding in my room jumped up in fright and slunk away towards the window of the mezzanine room and hid behind it while I held him with one hand, my ears attuned to what was going on in Father’s room.

“What do you do?” I heard the police officer asking Father.

“I’m working with the *Akashvani*.”

“We’re sorry to have bothered you,” the officer’s tone had suddenly changed.

As the police departed Father closed his door and I stood in my room wondering how to cope with the situation. My first impulse was to tell father everything but I knew what the police officer had said and was afraid of the consequences.

“You go to sleep,” the man said in a feeble voice. “I’ll wait till the coast is clear and then go.”

Stepping forward he threw open the window of the mezzanine and looked down. People were still running about in the street and fighting among themselves. The man climbed on the window sill but I tried to pull him down. “There’s still danger,” I warned him and proceeded to close the window. I again found him breathing on my neck. Then I felt some pressure from behind and while closing the window his arms grazed past my cheeks. They were powerful arms and instead of turning my head away I rested it against those arms, relishing the sense of security provided by them. I don’t know what transpired after that. It was like a dream, where

I felt some pain, marked by a pleasant smell, as if when everything had been crushed and trampled upon, its allurements still remained, epitomizing a perceptive artist’s concept of ‘life’, with all its colors, atmosphere, rhythms and melody.

As the morning came, the turbulence of the flooded river had abated. Only its memory remained, coupled with the body’s weariness and a crumpled and messed up bed. As I sat there I looked around. There was nothing new. Everything was as I had been seeing for the past twenty-five years. As I tried to get to my feet my legs shook. At last when I managed to get up I realized that unlike every day, I lacked the strength to go out. I must change whatever I could except my cursed body which looked softer and more alluring than on other days. As I looked at myself in the mirror I discovered dark spots on my cheeks. I creamed my face and as I turned round I saw footprints under the window. My heart missed a beat. Picking up a rag, I covered the footprint with it. It may come to you as a surprise that I have preserved that footprint, even today.

“The Quest for Man’ will give you an inkling of what happened subsequently. I have striven to reflect my mind in this dance-drama. There is little more left to be said in words. I’ve no regrets, no remorse. Maybe another woman in my place would have felt differently. But I can say without any qualms of conscience that I was a willing participant in this inter-play of events, with body and soul. And it is

the truth as I know it. I don't want to take you in the world of make-belief for you are dear to me as my own life. I do not want to cause you further pain. For me there is difference between truth and education. 'The Quest for Man'. is the quest for truth. How can I say that I am repentant? I've no truck with untruth, lies and myths. I equate thought with character, the form cannot be separated from the contents. To be devoid of thought is as painful as for a fish to be out of water. Those who understand the realities of life have the key to that wisdom which makes them *seers*.

You have disillusioned me. I was mistaken in thinking that you had aligned yourself with the suffering humanity and it would, therefore be easier to bring you face to face with truth.

I hope you have got the reply to your question and it will set your mind at rest. For all I know it may take you on the road to fulfillment. As for me I would

beseech you not to torture yourself. I am conscious of the fact that this is not possible so long as you are with me. So I have no hesitation in saying that from now on we must go our separate ways and never try to meet each other again. Farewell,

Yours

Priya

Love stands for something subtle and mysterious which cannot be rationalized or argued about. Otherwise there was no reason that the situation should not have been retrieved. But whenever I have tried to solve this enigma the mystery has only deepened and in the end I have found myself striking against a wall. Priya's 'The Quest for Man' is still continuing but I find myself at the end of my tether. Priya's letter has put the stamp of finality over everything My metaphysical belief like an unending pain has become the mainstay of my life.

Markandeya, born 1930 is a prominent author of progressive movement of literature in the twentieth century. He writes about the have nots of rural India. Has been at the centre of literary polemics. Markandey has always been a free lance writer and spends most of his time in Allahabad. His major works of fiction are : Saimal ke phool, agnibeej (novels), hansa jayi akela, priyasaini, halyog (short story collections). Apart from writing, he has influenced an entire generation with his ideas. His book of criticism 'Kahani ki baat' reflects his energy of thought. He has always welcomed young writers in literature. Has been editing a literary quarterly entitled 'katha' since 1969. He lives in Allahabad.

Jai Ratan, has built a bridge between Hindi and English with his excellent choice of important Hindi texts. He is known to have translated most of the famous writers of Hindi into English. He now lives in Delhi.

BAGUGOSHE

Swadesh Deepak

Translated by
Eishita Siddharth

When I returned from college Maa was sleeping on the bed in the verandah. She used to sleep with her dupatta drawn over her face anytime, anywhere. Many a time I thought that I should ask her—Is the sleep hiding somewhere in her dupatta! Didn't ask! When she didn't understand something she used to abuse. She had an immense treasury of abuses.

She used to live with her middle son. She always used to come unannounced. She can neither read nor write. Whenever she asked her son to write a letter, she used to get the same answer— “What will you do at Veerji's place. Everybody speaks English there. Are you having some problem here?”

“Oh! Don't argue so much. How did this problem get in between? I'm missing Kake, what if he is unwell?”

The time to which Maa belongs was of unlimited number of children. Children— a yearly harvest. Maybe two died before I was born. When I was born she was determined that she won't let me die. She took the help of all the gods and goddesses. Locket in the neck, colorful threads in the wrist. If someone came to see me, she used to cover me with a sheet and say— “Kaka is sleeping. See him some other time.” Papa used to tell us about Maa's actions for the sake of amusement.

“When somebody comes why don't you let them see him? Even my sisters...”

“They will cast an evil eye. Do you wish to kill him? Your

sisters are complete witches. Even the flowers will wither if they stare hard and long. If something happened then I'll give poison to everybody and have some myself."

"Don't speak nonsense all the time. Nothing will happen to him. Let them see. People will talk all kinds of..."

"And what is this that you are pointing at. Give him a sweet name. Of what use will be your studies. And listen carefully. The name should be small and pleasant to the ears."

In those times papa was a matriculate. He was very educated for his relatives. He was a reputed hakim. The next morning before the patients came; he made Maa sit next to him.

I have thought Kake's name—SARTHAK.

Maa kept staring at him with eyes wide open. Then she shouted.

"Keep this Arabic-Persian name of somebody else. Sarthak.huh!"

"Bibi, Sarthak is a Hindi word. It's very meaningful. In a day or two you will get used to it. And tell everybody from my side. If anybody will distort the name, I'll break his legs. Some bastards will say Sathu, some Sath. Punjabis don't find peace unless they damage things."

Maa knew that he will really break legs. He has done it many a time. Every evening he gets on his horse in search of hostile relatives.

The day the name was kept, after

the pooja, Maa gave a warning to everybody with folded hands— "I have a request. Listen with complete attention. Kake's name is Sarthak. Do not distort it. It's an order by Hakimji. If he will get angry even god will not be able to save anybody. "

Everybody got to know the threat behind the folded hands. I was saved from becoming Banti, Titu, etc.

Maa came after some days of my wedding and the first thing she asked was,

"What does your wife call you?"

"Sarth."

"Where's the 'K'. Give her instructions. She should take the full name. Your dead father will get annoyed even there. He was a bastard. He will do something even from heaven. Look at this educated one! She has shortened your name."

I kept quiet. Nobody argues with Maa. How would have I explained it to her that when the body gets excited the name gets shortened first.

I thought that I should make tea while Maa is asleep. She woke up by the movement of the chair. I touched her feet. After saying, "May you have a long life", she asked "Why have you become so weak?"

"Mata, actually I have gained weight."

"Let the weight go to hell. Your face is like dried flowers. Listen, are you sleeping too much with your wife. One

gets weak.”

Maa can talk on any topic. She has been listening to the news on radio twice a day since years. She even knows everything about the dictatorship of America and Russia.

I thought, that I should tease Maa. It's been years to have listened to hymns from her mouth. Hymns! The juicy abuses of our Punjab.

“Mata I don't even tread near her, leave aside lying...”

“You are no good even after being educated. A woman is happy till the time she is in bed with a man. Later she starts to bite.”

“Leave it Mata. You'll have milk or should I make tea?”

At once there appeared worry on Maa's face. She asked in a frightened voice, “Kaka! Why don't you work full time like others? People come back in the evening from work. You are home at ten. No son. Have sense. What will you do if they will expel you? We have had enough troubles. If a man is jobless then all his qualities are just a waste. Like a thorn pricking in everybody's eyes.”

“Mata, when you don't know something then keep quiet. I teach MA classes. Two periods of one hour each.”

“It's ok. English people always work less. Do some other work also. Your body will rust.”

Mata starts with her book of

instructions when she is with me. When I was small she considered all seasons my enemies. Don't go out in summers, you will catch loo. Your uncle went mad after catching loo. You will be down with Pneumonia in winters. You will be confined to bed for a year. I had asked her once– “Mata when should I go out?”

“You just sit beside me. Both of us will talk. These women are all villainous. See the way they observe your looks with eyes wide open. If anybody will do some magic on you then even Hakimji will not have a cure for it. Take my word. When you will get older, it is women who are going to harm you. Men are born idiots. They never listen to anybody. They will always listen to the advice of their hearts.”

When I got up to make tea Maa explained me.

“Kaka, pour the milk freely and also the sugar. I don't want to drink black boiled water.”

While making the tea I thought that the brothers and sisters and the relatives always dislike Maa's talkativeness but I know that there are so many tales and stories inside her squatting with legs folded. Then she knows so much about the world. She has a habit of listening to the news on the radio twice a day. When man reached the moon she got the news first and Hakimji afterwards. He was reading some book when Maa told him, “You know something. Man has reached the moon.”

“Whether a man lives on the moon or on earth he will get hardships and pain.”

“You spoil the flavor of the talk. Maybe one will not have to work on the moon. No need to get married. No children at all. Then how will there be pain. ”

“You remained a fool. Where there will be man, there you will have all the work.”

I like Maa’s habit of talking. When she talks about the past days then many a time the shadows from the childhood take form.

I kept biscuits along with tea. She felt them by pressing them with her fingers.

“Kaka it’s hard.”

“Eat it after dipping it in the tea.”

Maa doesn’t have teeth.

I proposed to get them fixed. She has just one answer– “Hakim Saheb got his teeth fixed. He used to leap all the time and give weighty abuses to the dentist. When he used to get one grinded the other used to start pricking. Finally he kept them in his pocket. He used to fix them when somebody came. And then the distress started. Once I advised him– “to hell with the teeth. Which woman are you going to bite now?””

“Don’t speak nonsense all the time. No patient comes to a doctor who is toothless.”

“Hakimji, patients do come but not

LADY patients.”

Hakimji folded his hands– “Nobody can get away with you.”

Maa had the truths earned from her life. Not just the bookish knowledge. I like listening to her from the beginning. The fault of my brothers and sisters is that they often ask why and what. Maa gets started without any reference. Had she been literate she would have written anti-poetry.

“Kaka, you don’t drink THOOTHHA, do you?”

THOOTHHA is a word coined by Maa for alcohol. I kept looking at her. It’s not necessary to answer Maa in words. She understands the answer by the nodding of the head.

“Don’t drink. Your brother drinks. The clothes are hanging on his body. His mouth is like those who eat betel leaves.”

Maa has an amazing treasury of similes. Many similes are made by her.

I made tea and kept the cup on the table. I woke her up.

“Your eyes have become weak. Drink tea. We will get new spectacles for you.”

“I don’t need them–I have already broken three. I don’t find it when I keep it down. Your father used to search them. He always used to mutter because his book reading was hindered. He used to get angry and say– If you don’t know how to handle a child then there’s no need to give birth to it. He was a very

harsh man. Never feared anybody. Not even god. All his life he never kept his foot in the temple. But he never stopped me from praying.”

The height and stature of my father is still clear in my eyes. An absolutely carved out body. He told me once that his waist at the age of sixty measures the same inches as it did when he was twenty years old. When I asked him about getting frightened he had explained me— Fear is visible first of all in the eyes and the enemy gets to know about it instantly. The eyes must show the reflection of a weapon.

Papa used to talk very little. Even if he was angry he never used to abuse. He used to open his eyes take aim and get converted into a monster. When we were small his eyes used to be an entire armoury for us.

The gate clanked. I know, these are the boys and girls from the college. They come in their free period to have tea and a chat. The house is very close to the college. It's Ashi, Kulu and Rekha. Baljeet also. Ashi is very familiar; she asked straight away, “Who is this oldie Sir?”

“My mother.”

“We will call her dadiji.”

First Ashi touched Maa's feet and then everybody else followed. Maa became very happy. She asked Ashi what does she study.

“Dadi, English. Sarthak Sir teaches.”

“Does Kaka teach well?”

“He teaches well but doesn't speak well in English.”

“Oh! Get away. My son turns into an express mail when he starts speaking in English.”

Ashi never refrains from teasing anybody.

“Dadi where are all your teeth? Are they taken away by rats?”

“Silly girl, as one grows older the body parts start to betray one by one.”

“I'll get you a new set of teeth. My father is a dentist.”

“No way! I don't want any teeth-weeth. Kake's father had got them. They used to pain so much.”

Rekha asked, “Dadi, you want to eat something?”

“Yes, I'm a bit hungry. Get something soft for me.”

“Sir, does she take eggs?”

“Yes! What will you make?”

“Just wait and see.”

Rekha went to the kitchen along with Kulu. Maa said to Baljeet—

“Kaka, study with all your heart. Only then will you become a big man.”

Asha—“Dadi he never studies. Just watches girls.”

Maa—“Ashi rani, when boys don't sleep at night it's absolutely sure that some girl has made her way in their hearts.”

Ashi asked me—“Should I tell her the story of the new serial?”

I said just one episode, and not the whole serial.

Rekha bought eggs for Maa and tea for all others. Maa ate a piece of egg and was astonished.

“What sort of an egg is this, Kaki! It just melted in the mouth. ”

“This is scrambled, Dadi.”

“Now what is this?”

Everybody looked at me. I told Maa that this sort of an egg is made in milk.

Baljeet—“Dadiji, listen to a song from Ashi. She sings very well.”

It’s Ashi’s speciality that one doesn’t need to beseech her much to sing a song. She started singing a Punjabi song—“GUD NALO ISHQ MITHA.”

After listening Maa said—“Ashi bete, you are a storehouse of talent, beautiful and intelligent. From where we will get a suitable match for you?”

Ashi’s eyes were shining. Knew that she will babble.

“Dadi there is a boy. Only if you give the permission...”

“Who is such a boy! Let me also know.”

“Your son, Sarthak sir.”

“What! Kake is already married.”

“So what? Madam will do the job and I’ll tell him stories.”

“When a man starts taking interest in another woman’s stories he himself becomes one. A story of grief.”

I didn’t know then that Maa is telling my future.

Maa drew the dupatta over her face and went off to sleep. During this stage of life one goes off to sleep anytime. The body is doing a rehearsal for a continuous long sleep.

I was first surprised, and then frightened when I started dreaming about the sweet references of Ashi Sharma. I abused myself and she vanished. Girls are frightened by abuses.

I got up. I sliced the papaya into small pieces. I pressed them flat with my thumb. Now Maa will not face any problem while eating these. I spread some cream over the pieces.

Maa removed the dupatta. She ate a piece of papaya.

“Kaka, you eat. It’s very tasty.”

“I don’t eat sweet.”

“That’s why you never speak sweetly .Don’t be angry all the time. All your blood will burn. Leave it, no point in explaining you. Does water ever stabilize on oil?”

I kept quiet.

“Tell me one thing. You don’t hold Ashi’s hand!”

I stared at her continuously. She knew that I was offended.

“Kaka, what’s there to be angry? Nature has made the man a villain. Even if all his body parts are laid waste, his lust for a woman never goes.” Hakimji was over 60. A woman like an overflowing pitcher came to take medicine. She was talking with her eyes. Hakimji sat there, holding her wrist for a long time. He

had become very elated. I asked him after she went away– “Listen! It was her stomach that was paining. Why were you holding her hand?”

He said “In Greek therapy one gets to know about the ailment after observing the pulse.”

“You never observed my pulse. Just gave the medicine.”

“Bibi, even if God examines your pulse he won’t be able to know anything.”

“My intelligent Hakimji, just remember one thing. When a man undresses himself, it is he who is left naked.”

She started eating the pieces of the papaya. Then she looked at me and said–

“Postman Ramlal has gone mad.”

I looked at her silently. She will explain herself.

“Kaka, you send me money every month. Postman Ramlal comes to give the money order. He stops his cycle outside the house and starts making noise– “Shobha Rani come outside. The money sent by Ramji has come.” I always give him tea. Give him money for cigarette. Now since the past few months your student Bheem Singh comes to give the money. One day the postman stopped his cycle outside the house. Rang the bell. When I came he said– “Shobha Rani, your Ramji has become a Ravana. Now he doesn’t send the money order.”

I looked at Maa. I asked without speaking, “Then what happened?”

“You know it. When somebody speaks

against you I get furious. I gave the sweets to the whole family of Ramlal– “You bastard Ramlal! Don’t open your mouth when you don’t know anything. Your father sends money with a boy whom he has taught. My Ram will remain a Ram.””

“Shobha Rani it was a mistake. Ramji will remain Ramji. Then I gave him tea. Money for cigarette. He became happy.”

After Papa’s death Maa stopped me once from sending the money. Hakimji had deposited money for her in the bank. She used to get 1500 per month. Maa’s argument was that I have small children, their expenses...

Thought I should silence her forever.

“Mata, it is only after my death that you will stop getting money.”

She held my ear.

“Kaka! You spit fire! Speak a bit sweetly sometimes. Sometimes a spark is enough to start a fire. Even if everything is tried it will not be extinguished. You are even ahead of Hakimji when it comes to anger.

At that time I didn’t knew that Maa is making a prophecy for me. A fire– seven years long. Leave alone doctor, even ascetics failed to extinguish it. Then all the scenes had ended.

I asked Maa, “Should I give you something to eat?”

“Yes Kaka, get bagugoshe (pears) from the market. I really want to eat them.”

I was completely surprised. I was hearing this word for the first time.

“What bagugoshe? Say directly– Nashpatti.”

“Nakhas are round. Bagugoshe are long from the tail’s end and juicy. When we were in Pindi, Hakimji used to get a bag full of bagugoshe. Now a woman has her own temper. When I said no he used to explain– “Eat Bibi. Maybe your tongue gets a bit sweeter otherwise you are an armory.””

“I have never seen them.”

“Go ask for them.”

“I will feel shy.”

“If one doesn’t know something, what’s there to feel shy in asking? Play the small radio. I haven’t listened to the news since morning.”

She had never been able to speak the word transistor.

I never went to the fruit shop. What if the fruit seller asks what are bagugoshe? Then what should I take for Maa? I purchased chhole kulche. I thought as before why doesn’t Maa live with us? She is ready to leave even before she has come.

Actually, till this day her dialogue with this house is missing. She is the queen of conversation. And after being educated we have forgotten the language of conversation. We manage many things with yes and no. The water of our rivers has dried up. For Maa, we are foreigners. She has seven oceans in her heart and our oases have vanished in the sand. For advanced people a delightful conversation is a waste of time. She

had the talent of talking. But she is living in an extremely cruel time. She is always in search of a magical time. Laughing freely. Crying freely. Why will she live with us? Our doors are always closed from within.

I gave chhole-kulche to Maa in a plate. She looked at them and asked, “You didn’t find bagugoshe?”

I didn’t answer.

“You must not have asked.”

I didn’t answer.

She started eating the chhole first.

“Wonderful! What taste! My tongue is swirling. Such chhole can be found in Pindi.”

The people of Rawalpindi never speak the full name of the city. They have shortened it like the name of a beloved– Pindi.

“Give me more Kake .I’m relishing it. Why aren’t you eating?”

I lit a cigarette. I kept quiet.

“Don’t keep the agarbatti burning in your fingers all the time. You will rot from inside.”

She ate the chhole, drank water and asked, “Kaka! Do you remember the name of Jawaharlal’s sister?”

“Vijaylaxmi Pandit.”

“Yes! She was very beautiful. I went to meet her.”

I got frightened a bit. Why does Maa have to return to the old days again and again? Time is revisited during the last days of one’s life. It seemed that

she is parting away from herself. The present ends when one starts meeting the people from the past.

“Why did you go to meet her?”

“Kaka, we came from Pakistan in a bad condition. Jawaharlal kept us in tents in the Kulchhetar camp. He came to see us twice. All the medications of your father were left in Pindi. And then who had the sense to purchase the medicines for fever and cold. People put up petty shops. But your father didn't know any work.”

Why didn't he know?

“Kaka, he was the son of a zamindar. The whole day he used to press a cigarette in his fingers and take a puff and used to shake off the ash with a pinch. A well developed body. His flesh started melting because he used to eat a limited number of chapattis. Somebody stole his big, green umbrella. His body rotted and he caught tuberculosis.”

“You never told me...”

“He was a very harsh and uncouth man. He never shared his grief. You have the same habit as your father. He explained me— See Bibi, tuberculosis is a royal ailment. It is called rajrog. First of all there is no cure. And even if there is any then it may take years to be cured. I am telling you go to your brothers. The children will be looked after.”

“I won't live with the brothers. Their children are all vagrant and villainous. My children will be spoiled. You get

admitted in the hospital. I'll manage.”

When Hakimji used to be sad he spoke very difficult language.

“Bibi, it has been a long famine. The relatives come biting on if a woman is without the protection of her husband. Pakistan and Pindi are just a sad inheritance now. We cannot go a long way by holding onto past memories. Now children's life yours and will be full of pain and misery.”

He got admitted in a TB hospital near Patiala. It took five years for him to get well.

“What did you do? How did you bring us up?”

“Those were very hard days. The past life cannot be a support. Somebody told that the government has opened an ashram for widows. I met the in charge— Kamala Behanji. In those days people used to listen to others' pain and grief with compassion. She kept quiet for some time. Then said, “Shobha Rani, you are not a widow. How can I admit you? You go to Delhi and meet Vijaylaxmi Pandit. She is looking after the resettlement of women.”

Maa reached Delhi. Didn't ask how? In those days there were no buses. And just about a handful of cars. She reached the bungalow of Vijaylaxmi Pandit.

“Kaka, in those days one did not have to stand in a line and go one by one to meet the leader. The leader used to come out. He used to listen to the sorrows of everybody. I told her my

name, the story of your father's illness and his admission to the hospital. She was lost in thought. She got worried."

Vijaylaxmi- "Only widows are taken in the asharam. Your husband is still living Shobha Rani."

"Bahanji, he is almost dead. He may or may not get out of the hospital. My condition is no less than that of a widow. I have four children. What will they eat? How will I support them? Should I let them die with hunger?"

She was lost in deep thought. She told a man standing next to her that what Shobha Rani was saying is correct. What should be done? That man said that Shobha Rani must live outside. She should be given the stipend of a widow till her husband gets well. She asked me then. I brought the application. Kamala Bahanji had written the application in English. Vijaylaxmi Pandit read it. She wrote something on it and explained it to me.

"Give it to your Kamala Bahanji. You will have to live in a rented house. The government aid will be rupees One hundred per month. Do educate your children. Don't be frightened at all. Along with freedom one also gets some pain".

It's been years but Maa didn't come. It's been years I didn't go to Maa. My dreams had retired. I was a bird, but was unable to fly. I didn't pay heed to Maa. I didn't even pay heed to myself. I repented just in words, I didn't repent from the heart. My hell is with me. I live in a terrifying house of prey.

Brother called up to say that I should meet Maa, she can die anytime.

I reached. Younger sister placed the chair next to Maa's bedstead. I sat down. Younger sister said that I can smoke. Maa won't be affected anyhow.

Shobha Rani has turned into a bundle. A wasted corpse. Her body language has ended. There grew a makeshift bridge in my eyes, with Maa walking on it. The decision to break down this bridge has been taken. She wants a release from the whipping.

I cannot pray.

I want to speak English.

I saw an adorned reflection in the open door. There was the sound of the bangles. Some new bride. My younger sister asked from there, "Bibi are you awake or not? I am making halva."

Sister said, come after some time. Then told me,

"Veerji, its Ambarsarni. Got married here two months before. She attends on Maa all the time. She talks a lot. Don't you speak out something!"

In my knowledge Amritsar is the only place where the people are called by the name of their city.

I am trying to think about some sweet memories with regard to Maa. But the whole story of love had ended a long time back. All day, all night only the curtains of ashes are visible. Since long my non-bailable warrants have been issued. I always write postcards. I forget to write the name and address on them.

Ambarsarni came inside. Carrying halva in a plate. Sweet vapors are coming out from it. She looked at me. She kept the plate on the table and bent down to touch my feet. I blessed her. I should talk to her about something.

“Are you fine? What does your husband do?”

“There is total comfort Veerji. He has a Dhaba. He goes at five in the morning. He sends the lunch in the afternoon. He comes back around ten or eleven in the night along with the dinner. I just sit beside Mata and keep talking. I like talking very much.”

It is good to see a woman who is satisfied physically and mentally.

She shook her shoulder and said to Maa, “Getup Mata, eat halva. It’s getting cold.” Maa replied without opening her eyes, “Don’t want to eat.”

“Death is inevitable. Eat it Mata. Enjoy the taste before death.”

She opened her eyes. Seeing a dull shadow sitting on the chair she asked, “Who is it? Is it my younger brother?”

Sister told her, “ Sarthak Veerji has come.”

Ambarsarni brought the halva plate in front of her. She sided the plate with her hand.

“Give the halva afterwards. First I need to talk to this good son. Make me sit.”

She was made to sit by placing pillows at the head of the bed.

“Your blood turned out to be white.

You have come after so many years to see your dying mother. Younger air force turned out to be better than you. Comes to meet me. Pays for the doctors. Sahabji, you should have come just once before my death.”

I kept quiet. Maa turned into a pulsating wave. All strengths, all memories came back. But, the lighter the wave rises, the sooner it settles down.

“Why don’t you speak– you uncouth.”

I kept quiet.

Ambarsarni spoke, “ Veerji was very ill. Narrowly escaped death...”

Younger sister kept her finger on her lips. The younger brother also kept his finger on his lips. But Ambarsarni has already started.

“He was there in the hospital for many months.”

She asked the younger brother as to why she was not told about it. Brother said that it would have been problematic for her to travel.

Maa– “From when has it become a problem for a mother to see her ailing son? Do you all live in foreign land? I would have put oil in his hair. I would have massaged his legs. My son would have been cured quickly.” She winked and called me closer. My face was next to her face. She could see me now. She got totally terrified.

“Kaka, where are your hair?”

I kept quiet.

“Kaka, where is the fire of your eyes?”

I kept quiet.
“Kaka, Who has stolen your complexion?”

I kept quiet.
“Kaka is there something which still has a grip over you. Say something, speak something.” How should I tell of something which is invisible! Which is always with me and cannot be seen? How should I tell? There is no language of dire misfortune. I have each and every distinctive mark. A small, fair ear which has a black mole on the backside. I don't even know the name of that femme fatale.

Maa- “Kaka, do you take the name of Ramji or not?”

I kept quiet.
Maa- “When Ramji closes one door he opens two others.” I lit a cigarette. The cruelty of the past days came back.

I- “Listen Mata. You will not say anything regarding my illness. You will not ask anything from anybody. Do you understand or not?”

Maa spoke with folded hands- “Ok my Hakimji.”

She started crying noiselessly. She is crying continuously. From a woman she turned into misery. And now, there came a rattling sound from her throat along with the weeping.

Ambarsarni asked us to bring her down, prepare the lamps, Mata is leaving. The younger sister caught hold of my hand, made me sit in the courtyard. She went inside. I am in the habit of observing pain from an ambush- always.

Sister came to take me inside. Said, the breath is being hindered.

I sat down. I held both her hands, pressed them. She opened her eyes and asked, “Kaka, Have you brought the Bagugoshe?”

I kept quiet.
“Never mind. I'll purchase them when I reach Pindi.”

She closed her eyes. Her eyes were closed forever.

Swadesh Deepak, born in 1942 in Rawalpindi, has been professor of English at Gandhi Memorial College, Ambala. He writes plays, short stories and memoirs. Has published fifteen books so far. He is known for intensity of expression and originality of thought. From 1991 to 1997 he remained in wilderness. His present address is again untraceable though his family lives in Chandigarh. Deepak's famous plays are Court martial, Sabse udas kavita, kaal kothri. Another book that earned him much renown is 'Maine Mandu nahin dekha : khandit sapnon ka collage'.

Eishita Siddharth, born 1984, is pursuing a post graduate course in English Literature at Lucknow University. She has already completed her Diploma in French. She is interested in literature and translates at will. Lives in Lucknow. Eishita is writing her first novel 'sabko maaf kiya' these days.

FALLING

Naresh Saxena

Translated by
Amitabh Khare

There are rules
About falling of things,
There are none
For falling of human beings.
But, things can't plan anything about their own fall,
Human beings can.

Ever since childhood such commandments have been pouring,
That if you have to fall,
Fall inside home,
Not *outside*;
i.e.
Fall in the letter, but be safe in envelop,
i.e.
Fall in the eyes, but be safe in blinkers,
i.e.
Be safe in the words-
Fall in intent!

I fell-
Internally,
Thinking that
'Being of an average height,
How much more
Than five and a half feet
Shall I fall?'
But what a height it was!
That my fall
has no end.

The truth of the fall of things
Was exposed
In the middle of 16th and 17th century,
When Galileo climbed
On the topmost step of Pisa's leaning tower
And announced shouting
"Residents of Italy!
Aristotle's saying is that
Heavier things fall rapidly, lighter rather slowly.
But just now,
You will see this dictum of Aristotle
Falling.
You will see falling-
Heavy canons of iron and
Light feathers of birds and papers and
shreds of cloth
together,
In one speed, in one direction,
Falling.

But beware!
We'll have to free them from the interference of air"
And then he actually demonstrated it.
Four hundred years later...
Nobody needs to shout from the Qutub Minar
And tell
How is today's air and how is its interference,
How the laws of falling of things
Have become applicable
On the falling of human beings.

And people
Of every size and significance,
People- overfed and bored,
You and we
Together,
Are seen
Falling
With one speed,
In one direction only.

Therefore I say, watch carefully
All around yourself
Falling of things
And fall !

Fall !
As falls the snow,
On lofty peaks
From where flow the sweet watered rivers;

Fall !
Like a draught of water down a thirsty throat;
Like water in the empty vessel
Fall,
Brimming it with the music of fulfillment !;
Fall
Like a drop of tear,
In someone's sorrow;
Fall
Like a ball,
Amidst the children playing;
Fall
Like the first leaf of autumn,
Vacating space for a new leaf to sprout;
Singing the 'song of weathers'
"Where leaves don't fall,
Spring doesn't follow there";
Fall
Like the first brick in the foundation
Building someone's home;
Fall
Like a waterfall
Turning turbine fans;
Fall
Like light
On darkness;
Fall
Like sunshine on watery winds
Drawing rainbows.
But hold on!

Only the rainbows have been drawn till date,
Not a single arrow for them, designed;
Fall
Like an arrow, shooting from rainbow
Turning barren land multi hued
With vegetation and flowers;

Fall
Like rain
On parched earth;
Like a fruit ripened,
Bestowing your seeds to earth,
Fall !

Hair fell,
Fell the teeth,
Eyesight dropped, and
From the hollow of memories, are falling
Names, dates and towns and faces and
Blood pressure is falling,
Temperature is falling,
Ratio of hemoglobin in the blood,
Is falling.

Why are you standing
Like a scarecrow,
Naresh ?
Before your whole existence falls,
For once,

Plan your fall,
Right cause and time of your fall, and
Fall on some arch enemy
Like thunderbolt
Fall!
Like- meteor shower
Fall!
Like- stroke of lightning
Fall!
I say
Fall!

Nice Children

A few children are extremely nice
They don't demand balloons and balls
They don't demand sweets,
They are not stubborn,
Nor do they ever throw tantrums

They obey the elders,
They obey the youngsters even
So nice are they.

We are on the lookout for such nice children
And immediately on finding them,
Bring them home,
Often,
On thirty rupees a month and two meals.

Water

Flowing water
Has left marks
On the stones.

Surprising!
That the stones
Have left no marks
On the water.

Identity

Be sure to be by my side, my children !
At that time
When I would be returning,
Finally,
Towards fruits and flowers and greenery.

From the fire of my body
The air around
Will become hot,
And will then go on changing the temperature of the air
Till eternity.

Along with smoke, I'll rise upwards
Turned into what you study as carbon dioxide
And will spread over plants and vegetation

Which, if they absorb,
They'll become a little greener
If there will be fruits somewhere,
Those will ripen a little better.

Whenever the sweetness of fruits reaches you,
Greenery looks prettier,
Or you feel the difference in air
You'll know
And will say
Oh !
Papa.

Naresh Saxena, born 1939, is engineer by profession and poet by aptitude. He is unique in recording everyday encounters in simple text and thoughtful texture. His rhythm of words is a challenge for the translator because it embodies universal discourse. His collection of poems 'samudra par ho rahi hai barish' was very well received and widely reviewed for its novelty and sensitivity. He is interested in audio-video media and has written for television. Has received Sahitya Bhushan Samman from U.P. Hindi Sansthan. He is also a flute player. He lives in Lucknow.

Amitabh Khare, By profession, a highranking railway official, by passion a poet, he is an avid reader of literature. Amitabh Khare translates only when he likes a work of art intensely. He makes an attempt to transcreate the internal rhythm of the original poems. He lives in New Delhi.

MOODS OF LOVE

Upendra Kumar

Translated by
Premlata

(1)

Now endure it;
 You smiled at me
Of course without any reason,
 Thereby invited
An evergreen pain

(2)

The overwhelming presence of yours
 Makes me forget
What all I thought;
 Any way—
The expression of my speechlessness
 Brings a smile on your lips

(3)

With all its cruelty
 And tenderness
Gushes the sea of love!

Compelling in its assurance
Just to be yourself

(4)

When you were looking
For a shady tree
In the bright sun of the day
Why could you not see me?

(5)

Wearing colours of my liking
These days
On your lips and nails;
Sure you are going to make me cry
one day.

(6)

Salt in a dish
Brightness of the floor
Colours of the curtains
Aesthetics of the living room;
Are the small things
That make
Life's most beautiful moments.

(7)

It gives a beautiful glow
And an everlasting 'love'
Yet at climax

Every song of life
Is silent.

(8)

In the evening of life
Over and over again
I remember
The romance of love!

(9)

No restlessness
No complaint
No wait
No other images or idioms of love
No arguments from the beloved
No entreaty
Your love is so sweet
Denying all the rules
Of the book

(10)

Looking for you in spring
I went across the
White clouds and blue sky
Along with the sun
Talked to God
And came back
After a while.

(11)

Anything is possible
In this wonderful forest
You coming out of a lovely water fall;
Or you metamorphosing
Into a beautiful creeper
Love and nature
Aren't they alike!

(12)

Man on earth
Thinks about love
And plans to reach Mars;
People on Mars
May not think about earth
But certainly
Must be in love

(13)

The banks of an endless stream
Memory of the vast woods
As I watched
Turned slowly
Into a picture of yours

(14)

Standing without you
Alone and sad
I found myself

At a window of the past
Of 'lost and found' luggage.

(15)

The law of gravitation
Was understood
Not after seeing
The fall of an apple
From a tree;
It resulted from the gravitation
of a beloved's body
felt by the enchanted earth.

(16)

Before I met you
My past was vast and endless
Now it is limited
Since the time you met me.

(17)

I was climbing up
And up
Charmed by the beauty;
Reaching the summit
I found
I was a cloud
Getting merged with
Other clouds.

(18)

Do you still write love stories?
You asked me
Meeting after years,
Yes I do, I do...
But you had gone
Far away
Before I finished.

(19)

A flower is beautiful
When it blossoms,
But withers away with time;
Yet it keeps on blossoming
In memory.

(20)

Boasting about my knowledge
I said, "still water gets rotten"
You gave a mischievous smile
And asked
"and *still* love?"

(21)

We were sitting hand in hand
When we watched the fall of a star,
We did not make a wish
Lest it may get fulfilled!

(22)

We sat down by the
side of the river
tired of walking and felt
the river had also dried up
tired, reaching there.

(23)

Don't know where
But we were together
When along with the rainbow colours
Of hope;
The setting sun's hopeless and
Colourless colour
Was spreading
In the back ground.

(24)

Often I did this
Whenever I missed you;
Dialed your number
Listened to your voice
And replaced the receiver
Silently.

(25)

“When does a river stop?”
You said with sadness;
And I let myself go
With the current of life.

(26)

Excited, I was gathering
Little tremblings of rain
And gathering them in my soul;
While you were watching
worried
The leaking of the roof.

(27)

After you left
I asked your 'Bindi'
With a smile
If there would have been no mirror
Where would have you
Stuck it?

(28)

You got a little faded
When your friend laughed with me
Then for nothing
Your friend went on laughing
That evening.

(29)

If you are there
In each of my pore
Then where am I?
"Search in me" you blushed.

(30)

The rays of the sun
Of your beauty
Took me to sky like water drops
Then with clouds
I poured on earth
Like rain of love.

(31)

In my memories
It came again and again
And continued increasing
Your love
Like 'fixed deposit'

(32)

Sitting on the dining table
Fork and knife in hand
My foot upon your foot
Felt the taste of this touch
On my tongue as well.

(33)

Enjoying in a wedding
I suddenly ponder;
Do you still look for me
By your side
While dancing.

(34)

In the darkness of a cinema hall
 Flowing from the tips of your fingers
Mutual pleading, denying and loving
 The story of the film
I remember no more.

(35)

In place of covered bullock carts
 Brides going to village
In a jeep—
 Raising dust clouds
On people like us
 On path.

(36)

You could never sleep
 Without talking to me
Now you sleep
 The moment I start talking.

(37)

Would you call me
 Or would you go to the temple
As usual
 Tomorrow
On my birthday?

(38)

How many times I felt ashamed
Of myself
For having doubts about you
You don't even know.

(39)

Don't know
How and what you remember
Now
On the date of our marriage.

(40)

In a car accident
Due to a mistake
Of your own
You gave
Such a furious look
That not only me
Any stone
Would have melted.

(41)

Though we had consecutive numbers
Our plane seats–
Fell far apart
You kept looking all night
At the lady
Sitting next to me!

(42)

In the middle of a lake
On a paddle boat
The strong winds
Scared us of dying
Despite the 'love'.

(43)

You love the colour 'blue'
It was a surprise to know,
As most of my things
Are patterned 'blue'.

(44)

Neither you nor the handkerchief
I only remember
The way you picked up quietly
The handkerchief I left behind.

(45)

Sounds and their echoes
How suddenly they came
Spreading the light of meaning
To our voiceless silence.

(46)

Love is like war
Aggressive and extremely giving
It also ends like a war
Silence, repentance
And finally forgiveness.

(47)

There are hundreds of sand particles
In the moments of my memory
I am asking the light
To allow me to gather
Some of the moments
Like a garland of flowers.

(48)

Distance between life and death
Was calling me
Lying near my stone like feet
Yes, I also wanted
To meet the winds
But soon
You changed the scene

(49)

The 'milky way' had sprinkled
Its water on your heart
Thirsty for ages
I drank a sip of fire

(50)

In the ruins of a deserted temple
I am a small flickering lamp
Of the sanctum- sanctorum;
Where signs of your coming
Are scattered like the flowers
Of worship.

(51)

It was a great excuse
To go far, bathing together in a river;
Slowly, with the erosion of time
The river moved away
From the village.

(52)

The wind has swallowed
Cruelly, all your words
You intended to send.
Rain is drinking away
Some of them
And others will be covered by clouds.

Upendra Kumar is a well known poet in Hindi. Has published many collections of poems. He has been in the civil services and retired from the ministry of defence. On one hand he writes strong earthy poems like sattu and on the other, love poems like premprasang. Some of his books are chup nahi hai samay, udas pani, apna ghar nahi aya and gahan hai yeh andhkara. He lives in New Delhi.

Premlata, born 1946, teaches history at Maitreyi College. Has written several articles and research papers. She translates occasionally.

PREMCHAND AS A SHORT STORY WRITER : USING IRONY AS A TECHNICAL DEVICE

Gopichand Narang

Translated by
S.S. Toshkhani

I am not writing this article as an apologia; what has prompted me to write it is the feeling that even after 44 or 45 years of his death, Premchand has not been made acceptable by people in his entirety. Writes Radhakrishna, a Premchand expert, at one place: "Sharatchandra Chattopadhyaya in Bengali and Premchand in Hindi were greatly renowned in their time...Sharatchandra appeared suddenly in Bengali literature and dominated the literary scene. His arrival was an event, with the Bengali speaking people identifying with him and receiving him readily with great warmth. As against this, Premchand did not make his appearance in the Hindi literary world as a phenomenon. He found his place in it only through untiring efforts and exceptionally hard work... In the Hindi literary world, he did not get the respect he deserved during his lifetime. On one hand titles like "*upanyas samrat*" (emperor of novelists) and "*kahaniyon ka shahanshah*" (king of kings of short story writers) were conferred upon him, and on the other he was given no more importance than a king of playing cards. It was only after his death that people started paying sufficient attention to him." These are words of a Hindi writer, occurring in a book published in 1978. In the first instance, the Hindi-Urdu tussle regarding Premchand is not yet over. Most Hindi speaking people are still

unaware of Premchand as an Urdu writer, and a majority of Urdu speaking people does not have any curiosity about Premchand as a Hindi writer. This in spite of the fact that Premchand's personality and his art cannot be understood unless one knows about his original initiation, the background of his writing and editing work, the conscious or unconscious influence that Urdu had upon him. Later he switched over to Hindi and adopted it as a medium of his creative expression, and therefore so far as Urdu is concerned it is not possible for one to understand Premchand fully unless one understands his attraction towards Hindi and his contribution to it. No significant critical work has so far appeared which does justice to Premchand's concurrent Hindi-Urdu personality with full impartiality and objectivity. Secondly, even within the sphere of a single language, there is no unanimity of views regarding many essential things concerning Premchand. In this respect, what to speak of the controversies regarding him among Hindi speakers, the situation in Urdu is not any less regrettable. People have divided Premchand into parts and have distributed these parts among themselves. At least on the occasion of Premchand's birth centenary one could have expected the Premchand experts to present Premchand as a whole without any kind of intellectual reservation, bias or partiality. As a reader of Premchand it pains me to note that appreciation

and recognition of Premchand's creative personality has become prey to various political, semi-political, religious, social and linguistic differences and prejudices. And the hostilities instead of being subdued are being more and more provoked day by day. Friends seem to have mostly forgotten what Premchand actually was and what he was not. They are expending their powers of description on recounting his political and religious affiliations. This means that Premchand the politician and Premchand the reformer have gained more prominence and importance than Premchand the creative writer. In these controversies maximum help is obviously taken from the prefaces, letters, articles and narratives written by Premchand, and from his creative writings the least. As this procedure is essentially non-literary, the reaction to it has also been very sharp. So, what is happening for the last few years is that some friends are regarding Premchand as an area of their political fiefdom. They have reserved all rights of praising Premchand in their name and have isolated Premchand from the rest of the world, that is, the creative world of fun and frolic, happiness and sorrow, high and low, black and white, denial and acceptance in which an artist can put a question mark against his own faith and commit contempt of even God's court or can see the highest truth in the world drown in the mist in the circumambulatory path of thought. These ignorant friends of Premchand have cut

off Premchand's association with this "untrustworthy world". Once it is decided that judgment is to be made on the basis of plain political commitment alone then of course Premchand is greater than the greatest artist of the world. He is a communist and a revolutionary from head to foot. Whatever he has in him is true, auspicious and beautiful. No weakness or error of his is actually a weakness or an error. There are others who think that well, if this is what Premchand really is, they have nothing to do with him creatively. Perhaps Premchand's soul itself may be feeling distressed by such a state of affairs. And if he gets a chance to revisit this world he may not perhaps recognize his own image as it is being presented at some semi-political, semi-literary 'international seminars' and symposia. A bad consequence of such a monopolistic attitude and ideological obsession is that some people have begun to feel an aversion for Premchand in their minds. If at all there is a discussion on Premchand, it is usually limited to his short story 'Kafan' (The Shroud) or, if someone is more generous he may condescend to discuss 'Godan'. Apart from 'Kafan' and 'Godan', Premchand is all defects and nothing more. He was a realist and an idealist, he had no artistic sensibility, his realistic writing is superficial and puerile, his reformist and moralistic points of view show up everywhere preventing him from carrying out his obligations as a high class artist.

In short, there is hardly a defect which Premchand does not have. Obviously, this attitude is totally negative and as non-literary as the earlier one. If the earlier attitude arises from political reservations and stretches advocacy to unconditional eulogizing, the other attitude too is a result of intellectual reservations – to the extent of denial and contradiction as well as fault-finding. What was real Premchand? How vigorous is his participation and contribution in creating and giving shape to the Urdu short story tradition? What is his contribution and importance and what is his intrinsic quality? We cannot escape from this by simply saying that he is the father of the Urdu-Hindi short story. The purpose of the present article is not to define what Premchand was as a whole, nor to investigate all aspects of his important contribution and his intrinsic qualities. My purpose is just to give expression to the feeling that we cannot do justice to Premchand unless we focus on Premchand as a creative writer detached from pressures of political ideology or partly ideological issues.

Premchand made his appearance as a creative writer at the turn of the century and after working hard day and night for thirty-six years he made the barren field of Urdu-Hindi novel and short story writing perennially green and enriched it with a splendour whose colourfulness is increasing day by day. Every work created by a great artist is not of the

same level and we find a constant intellectual evolution taking place in mature writers. As Premchand died at a young age, his latter day writings invariably present the best examples of his art. It is said that Premchand wanted Sharatchandra to write a preface to his first short story collection '*Sapta Saroj*'. He went to Calcutta for the purpose and met Sharatbabu. It is said that when Sharatchandra heard his short stories he was greatly impressed and remarked, "No one apart from Ravi Babu can write such short stories in Bengali. At least I am not capable of writing a preface to your short stories." Generally Hindi-Urdu critics present this event as Sharatchandra's compliment to Premchand. In my view this is a good comment on Premchand's art of that period. Sharatbabu was an extraordinary artist. His refusal must not have had to do with humility alone. Probably it had something to do with a feeling of lack of intellectual closeness too. What I mean to say is that Premchand was no bright star. His art learnt to bloom little by little like a bud that is buffeted by winds and bathes in dewdrops and then blossoms into a flower. In Premchand's creative journey we find a gradual progression to maturity. He sowed the seed in the soil and watered it for years. This was a painful, patient and also encouraging process of which we have examples throughout his creative journey. What I want to emphasize here is that a short story like '*Kafan*' does

not have the status of an event in the history of Premchand's art. It has its roots spread far and wide in his short stories. In order to illustrate my point I would like to briefly discuss '*Kafan*' first and analyze his other short stories later so as to draw attention to the artistic roots of '*Kafan*' which run deep into his creative and intellectual journey.

In the initial period, Premchand was influenced by the *daastan* (long romantic narrative) genre of Urdu. Then there was a period of stories which had a feudalistic setting. After stories of this period like *Rani Sarandha*, *Gunah ka Agnikund* (The Fire-pit of Sin), *Raja Hardaul*, etc, with honour as their theme, pieces of art which show that he did indeed know human psychology and was capable of portraying reality flash forth at many places. For constraints of space, we shall search for realism in his short stories only and of these investigate only those few which are illustrative of the fact that high creativity is a widespread phenomenon in his short stories.

Here a detailed analysis of *Kafan* is not our objective. Everyone knows that in *Kafan* reality has been ruthlessly and relentlessly depicted. But those who try to explain this symbolically, that is interpret childbirth as the coming time or the future generation, relate a woman in labour to Afro-Asian societies or describe the intoxication caused by toddy as revolutionary fervour – that sort of criticism can at best be regarded as a simplistic attempt born out of ignorance,

and needs to be ignored. These people do not know that the essence of the short story lies in the irony of a situation that has not allowed a human being to remain a human being but has debased and dehumanized him. To highlight the impress of the artistic perfection of *Kafan* and its essence one need not necessarily dwell upon its symbolism but read it at the level of irony. In irony words do not have the same meaning as appears on the surface; their objective is to point sarcastically to some painful aspect of unseen reality or some tragedy inherent in the situation. The way the upper castes and ruling classes have wrung the very soul out of man and deprived him of even his ordinary human sensitivity, or forced him to live at the level of an animal, this short story presents a painfully ironical picture of that. The painfulness of the situation and its irony are brought out at the very beginning when Madhav's young wife Budhiya is shown writhing in labour inside the hut while the father-son duo is sitting outside in silence before a burnt out fire. The woman is in agony in the dark autumn night with such heart-touching sounds of moaning emanating from her mouth again and again that the two are frightened, but no one is prepared to go inside because of the suspicion that if he does the other person will make off with a large part of the stolen roasted potatoes they are eating. Although this short story is an excellent example of economy of words and depicts

a horrifying reality in extremely harsh words, yet the words Premchand has used to explain Ghisu and Madhav's mental processes go against the grain of the irony and ironical suggestion present in the whole short story, for the short story is complete even without these.

This family of *chamaars* (leather workers) had a bad name in the whole village. Both shirked work. That is why they did not get work anywhere. Until they would starve for a couple of days the two wouldn't move out of their home for work or for theft. Writes Premchand about Madhav's ways, "Madhav was not only following in his father's footsteps like an obedient son, he was even bringing name to him." For, if he worked for one hour, he also smoked the *chillum* for another long hour. This undercurrent of irony can be discerned everywhere in the short story – in the situation, in the attitudes of the characters and their behaviour and in the words used in the dialogues. Here is an example of the irony that we find in employment of words:

They own no property except a couple of earthen pots and cover their nakedness with torn rags. They are free of any worldly worries. Loaded with debts, they tolerate abuses and are beaten up by people, but they damn care about all that...Had they been ascetics, they had no need to practise

suppression of desire or resignation before God's will.

The short story is centred on the death of Budhia. The tragedy of this helpless and distressed woman casts its dark shadow on the entire short story, but apart from the sound of her moaning which rises again and again as a throbbing pain, Premchand does not give any account of her actions or reactions. And though he has described the heart moving scene of her death, it is only indirectly and in just three lines:

“In the morning Madhav went inside the room and saw that his wife was dead. Flies were buzzing over her face. The gaze of her petrified eyes was fixed upwards. Her whole body was smeared with dust. The child in her womb had died.”

From the middle part of the story the tragedy of her death and the irony of words fully grip the mind. In the part that follows this grip becomes stronger and the situation becomes intensely grave. The shamelessness and insensitivity of the characters is fully revealed. However much degraded a man may be he cannot do without some outward show to live even at the level of an animal. When Budhiya was dying, what to speak of getting her medicine, father and son had not uttered even a word of sympathy or comfort to her. And now when it was time to collect some money for performing her last rites

and buying her a shroud, Ghisu goes to the *zamindar's* house and prostrating before him, says with tears in his eyes—

“Master, I am in great distress. Madhav's wife passed away. Poor woman, she was in agony for the whole day – for the entire night we sat by her bedside. We did whatever was possible, gave her medicine, but she left us, giving us the slip. Now we have no one to give us even one piece of bread. We're ruined, master! Our household has been destroyed! Sir, I'm a slave of yours. There is no one except you to see that she gets a proper funeral. Whatever we had was spent on her medicine. Master, if you are kind, then alone will she get a proper funeral.”

What a yarn, this, on sitting by her bedside for the whole night and spending on her medicine!

In fact the whole structure of the short story is based on irony. It is through meaningful sentences such as these that Premchand exposes the seamy aspects of human life. Had he done so in a simple and obvious manner, it would not have made such an impact. The money collected for giving her a decent funeral is not spent for that purpose. The element of grim irony introduced in the short story with the father and son eating roasted potatoes and letting Budhiya die

moaning and crying assumes an enormous dimension when the climax is reached. That's how Premchand weaves its climax. Ghisu and Madhav manage to collect a 'neat sum' of five rupees by going from door to door and then go to the market for buying a shroud. Here Premchand refers to Budhiya's dead body in just one sentence so that the image remains in the mind and helps in accentuating the tragedy of the situation and creating a high paradox:

"The kindhearted women of the village came, looked at the dead body, shed a tear or two and went away."

In the last part of the story the irony of the situation reaches its high point when looking for cloth for the shroud the two instead of purchasing it find themselves in front of a liquor shop and go inside, 'as though it was something that was previously decided'. There is a dead body lying at home and here we have these two drinking with the money meant for buying the shroud. But the image of the dead body remains in their minds and so they justify their behaviour in various ways. In these dialogues most of the words do not mean what they apparently seem to convey. They are lancets immersed in satire that expose man's hypocrisy, selfishness and covetousness and strike at the entire situation to show in how many ways he deceives himself and what sort of compromises he makes in order to survive. In the end the shroud too burns

up with the dead body and turns into ashes, they both think. She couldn't have taken it with her. "Had we received these five rupees earlier, we would have spent it on her medicine." After drinking indiscriminately and gorging *puris* and fried liver, the two bless Budhia, "How good she was, poor woman. Even as she died she got us such good things to eat and drink", and also, "If our souls are pleased, won't she too earn religious merit?" But Madhav, who was the one to have applied vermilion to her hair (married her), feels occasionally anxious: "We too shall get there some day or the other, *Dada*. If she asks why you didn't get me the shroud, what shall we say?" There is an argument between the two. The father says, "She will get a shroud and a good one at that... Do you think I am a jackass? Have I been wasting time all these sixty years of my life? Why, the same people who gave us the money will get her a shroud. But of course, we'll not be able to lay our hands on money." Premchand has sustained this pitch in the last part of the story as much as he could so that he is able to raise the sensibility of grief to its maximum intensity and sharpen the lancets of satire as much as possible. Both father and son drink to their heart's content and give the *puris* left over on the leaf-plate to a beggar:

"Here, have this. Eat your fill and bless her. She whose money bought this has died... Bless her with all your heart. These

are really hard-won earnings.”

Madhav says:

“She’ll go to heaven, *Dada*.
She’ll be the queen of heaven”

Inebriated, Madhav’s heart is moved and he begins to cry. Then Ghisu consoles him:

“Why do you weep, son? Be glad that she has escaped this web of illusion – the snare that the world is. She was very lucky to have broken the bonds of illusion and attachment so early.”

After drinking, the two begin to sing and drop down dead-drunk right on the spot. So in this manner the short story presents through the situation it depicts, the behaviour and conduct of its characters and their dialogues as also through its jabs of satire a sense of intense pain and deep shock. The atmosphere in the entire short story is charged with irony. Premchand unveils a grim reality and for the last time does it so well that the entire short story becomes a whacking slap on the face of so-called ‘humanity’ and ‘nobility’. This too is a fact that in *Kafan* the shroud is but a symbol. There is one shroud for which the search is on and which will be draped around Budhia’s body. The other shroud is Budhia herself—she shrouds the child who has died in her womb even before it is born.

For a dispassionate depiction of

reality it is necessary for the artist to maintain an objective distance from it so that he does not let it be obscured by the glow of morality and idealism which he envisions as a sunrise for humanity. He should show only the compassionate face of reality through his act of surgery. This thread of candid depiction of reality can be discerned in *Do Bailon ki Kahani* (The Story of Two Bullocks), *Idgah*, *Miss Padma*, *Shatranj ke Khiladi* (The Chess Players), *Dudh ki Kimat* (The Price of Milk), *Sava Ser Genhun* (A Kilogram of Wheat), *Nai Biwi* (The New Wife), *Pus ki Raat* (January Night), *Jurmaana* (Penalty) and many other good short stories of his. In *Nai Biwi* Premchand shows a young wife sliding towards immorality. She is married to a wealthy old man decrepit with age who thinks that love can be purchased with money. But the new wife is more attracted to the rustic young servant than her aged husband. This is something against Premchand’s ideals of morality. In Premchand’s short stories we usually come across notions of *karam-dharam* (piety), *pativrata stree* (faithful wife) and *pati parameshvar* (‘God’ in the form of husband), but in *Nai Biwi* compulsions of realistic writing make Premchand daringly depict an ironical situation:

“She (the new wife) drew her *anchal* (fringe of the sari) over her head and went towards her room, saying to the servant – “Lala will leave after he takes his meals, why don’t you come

over...”

Artistic objectivity can be seen in *Idgah* also, although in this short story it is present as an inner impulse. This short story is significant in the sense that at one end Premchand has drawn in it a picture of Islamic egalitarianism and at the other explained the pernicious fact of social inequalities, showing that at the instinctive level a close connection does actually exist between richness and poverty, high and low, and social discrimination. Till they were in the Idgah grounds, all were equal, but once they come to the stalls put up at the fair, even the small children, not to speak of their elders, begin to feel the distinction between high and low. Actually, the short story ends with the purchasing of toys. But Premchand is given to committing one excess or the other even in the best of his short stories. So he (the boy Hamid) is willy-nilly taken to his granny Ameena and an attempt is made unnecessarily to change Hamid's natural behaviour as a child to that of an old person and old Ameena's behaviour to that of a child.

The scene at the Idgah grounds forms the core of the short story:

“Suddenly the Idgah grounds come into view. They are shaded by dense tamarind trees from above. Below, a *jajim* (a floor covering of chequered linen cloth) has been spread on the paved floor with endless

rows of people, standing one after the other, offering *namaz* (prayers). People are standing in rows which extend even beyond the paved floor where there is no *jajim*; whoever comes, stands behind those in front. No one is asked about his status or position, everybody being regarded as equal in Islam. The villagers too washed and joined the congregation. What a well organized gathering it is. Lakhs of people bow in tandem and sit down in tandem and this is repeated a number of times. It appears as if lakhs of electric lamps are going on and off simultaneously. What a unique scene in which uniformity and expansiveness create an ecstatic effect on the mind. There is some attraction which binds these people together in one bond.”

But soon after the prayers when the children come to the bazaar at the fair and pounce upon the stalls of toys and sweets, a painful scene of social discrimination unfolds. Mahmud, Mohsin, and everyone else go up in the sky in the merry-go-round and come down, riding on the wooden elephants, horses and camels and poor Hamid is left standing alone. At the toy stalls someone buys a soldier, someone a king, someone a holy man, Hamid can purchase

neither toys nor *revadis* or sweets. What he purchases is a pair of iron tongs because he thinks of his grandmother who does not have a pair of tongs and burns her hands while picking up *rotis* from the griddle.

Sava Ser Genhun, like *Balidan* (Sacrifice), is among the several short stories which read more like a prologue to *Godan*. This short story is about a simple farmer, who minds his own business and is concerned with no one else, who knows no trickery and is absolutely free from dodge and deceit. One day or the other he is bound to fall into the clutches of a priest or a moneylender. He gets so stretched on the rack of exploitation that he toils throughout his life, spits blood but is unable to free himself from the burden of a *ser* and a quarter of wheat. He thinks that all this is the consequence of the bad deeds he may have committed in his previous birth. His children starve and he dies in great agony, but like the curse of a god not only he but his wife and his children are not able to get rid of the burden of a few grains of wheat from one birth to another.

Similarly, *Do Bailon Ki Kahaani* (The Story of Two Bullocks) is apparently a story of animals, but in actual fact even this story is deeply ironical and realistic and the irony that it brings out is that animals give proof of having a better understanding of things than self-seeking human beings. Jhuri is no idealistic farmer, his in-laws are also farmers but

they do not treat Hira-Moti well. This is the case with the watchman of the animal pond and also the man who purchases the bullocks at the auction. Apart from the fact that it beautifully points to the central position that a bull occupies in our everyday life, it is actually about relationship, that is, if a human being is devoid of sympathy despite being a human being and knows only how to exploit, then he is inferior to an animal. On the other hand if a down-trodden man or an animal is treated with sympathy then the ocean of his heart overflows with love.

Jurmaana is a small story. It too has realism and irony as its essential elements, and the irony it highlights arises from the simplistic nature of its characters. The short story lashes out at exploitation and servitude. Allarakhi never gets her full pay. This is something that happened half a century back and happens even today. Allarakhi is crushed under the millstone of injustice and continues to be crushed even today. Sometimes she accepts this as her fate; sometimes she knowingly prefers to keep quiet lest she is deprived even of this half pay. But on one occasion she gets her full pay and suddenly she blurts out a small sentence, "But this is the full amount!" The cashier asks – "What is it that you want? Do you want less?" And she replies with the same simplicity and candor, "There is no penalty this time." This one word 'penalty' is the soul of the whole story. The sense of

fear and helplessness it carries, the pain and subdued defiance it points to, is what makes the short story immortal.

The essential elements in the craft of *Doodh ki Kimat* (The Price of Milk) are also based on irony, a significant value that all these short stories have in common, a value that has made *Kafan* immortal. It is not a matter of technique alone, even some of the opening words of the songs in *Kafan* are found in earlier short stories also. The song 'Thagini kyon nainaa jhamakaave'(O deceitful one, why do you dazzle with your eyes?) at the end of *Kafan* exists as a full fledged *bhajan* in *Agni Samaadhi* (Self-immolation) which is sung while going towards the fields during the ... night. In *Kafan* it is the toddy that intoxicates, in *Agni Samaadhi* the song is sung in a mood induced by *charas*:

In *Doodh ki Kimat* when a child is born to the village *zamindar* Babu Maheshnath, everything is taken care of by Gudad and his wife Bhungi, who in fact are untouchables. Bhungi acts both as a midwife and a wet nurse. As her mistress has no milk, Mahesh Babu's child drinks Bhungi's milk and Bhungi nurses her three month old child on outside milk. Premchand says sarcastically, "It's another thing when we are ill and can't help it. We dress up or eat *khichadi*, but once we recover we have to follow principles. As though morality keeps changing, sometimes it's this and sometimes it's that. There's one morality for the king, another for the

subjects, one for the rich and for the poor another. The rich can eat with anyone they like, enjoy with anyone they like, there are no bindings for them. Bindings are for others." Gudad dies in an outbreak of plague. One day Bhungi falls victim to a black snake while cleaning the gutter at Mahesh Babu's house. Her son Mangal, who wasn't fortunate enough to be brought up on his mother's milk, and who looked a pigmy compared to Mahesh Babu's son Suresh, now begins to hang around Mahesh Babu's door and lives on the leftovers of the house. He builds his shelter under the *neem* tree in front of the house—

"... a torn piece of jute matting, two earthen bowls and a *dhoti*, which had actually been discarded by Mahesh Babu, the place made him equally comfortable in every season — winter, summer and the rains."

If Mangal had any friend it was a dog who being fed up with his fellow dogs had come to seek shelter with Mangal. Both ate the same food and slept on the same jute matting. In Premchand's short stories dogs, bulls and other animals do not pitch in for nothing. They help him expose the brutal selfishness of man which has made him more degraded than animals. In irony contradictions and similarities of behaviour get highlighted. Look at this attack:

“The religious-minded people of the village were surprised at this generosity of Mahesh Babu. That Mangal slept right in front of his door, hardly fifty cubits away from it, was something they felt went against religion. True, the sweeper too has also been created by God, but social decorum too is important.”

One day Suresh allows Mangal to take part in the game ‘riders and horses’ out of pity, as no one will come to see who is touchable and who is untouchable in a play. Mangal asks, “Will I always be the horse and never be the rider?” But why should Suresh let a sweeper’s son ride on his back even if Mangal’s mother had fed him on her milk? Mangal is caught and forced to be the horse. Naturally, it led to a quarrel. When the mistress of the house comes to know about it, she scolds Mangal as much as she can and asks him to get out from his shelter under the *neem* tree. Mangal picks up his clay bowls, folds the piece of jute under his arm and goes away weeping, thinking that he will never come back to the place again. So what if he dies of hunger? But as evening approaches and hunger becomes intense, his sense of humiliation weakens. A dog in any case is an animal, but poor Mangal’s condition is no better. The two have no choice but to go back to the same door and lick the leavings and leftovers of food. Mangal goes and

stands hidden in the shadows. Just then a *kahaar* (utensil cleaner) came out with a plate of leftovers and they both could resist no longer. Mangal came out of the darkness and stepped into the light. The dog was already in the light. “Here, eat this, I was about to throw it away.” Both Mangal and the dog began to eat the leftovers sitting there under the *neem* tree. Mangal stroked the dog’s head with one hand and ate with the other and the dog sat wagging its tail. This was the price of the milk that no one could pay.

The sensitivity and compassion that mark *Shatranj ke Khilaadi* (The Chess Players) have been grasped and brought out with great effect by Satyajit Ray. Interestingly, we find only a few sentences in the original text of the short story about the decline of the Oudh state:

“The clock had just struck four when footsteps were heard of the army marching back. Nawab Wajid Ali Shah had been taken captive and the army was now taking him to some unknown destination. There was no commotion in the city, no violence. No brave-heart spilled even a drop of blood. The Nawab took leave of his family just as a daughter goes to her father-in-law’s house, weeping and wailing. The *begums* wept, the maid-servants wept, the Mughal ladies wept and so the kingdom

came to an end.”

But the shadows of this historical and cultural tragedy can be seen waving over the entire story. Like *Kafan*, irony is an essential element in the technique of this short story also and like Ghisu and Madhav, Mirza Sajjad Ali and Mir Raushan Ali too have become hollow. In the former man has become debased and in the latter he has become insignificant after touching the height of wretchedness. There is also a sardonic undercurrent in the story – all Indian princely states are no more important than pieces on the chessboard of the foreign imperialist establishment. As for the social situation this is how it was like:

“Early in the morning, the two friends would sit down after breakfast and set up the chessboard. The chess pieces would be arranged and manoeuvres for the encounter would begin. And then they weren’t aware when it was day and when evening. Word would be sent time and again from inside the house that dinner was ready and the answer would be, “Get along, we’re coming, lay the table”. Exasperated, the cook would have no option but to serve their meal right in their room and the two friends would do both the things—eating and playing chess—simultaneously.”

In this atmosphere of degeneration what was going on in the harem has also been exposed by Premchand through contrasting characters and their ideas. There is the incident in which Mirza Sajjad Ali’s Begum calls him to the bedroom on the excuse that she has a headache. Meantime, Mir Sahib (Mir Raushan Ali) shifts some chess pieces to suit his requirement and strolls on the terrace outside to demonstrate his innocence. The Begum, already furious, dashes into the room, overturns the chessboard and throws the pieces away. She has still the vitality in her. On the other side, Mir Sahib’s Begum would like her husband to stay away from home. She never complains about his chess playing. Rather, if he is late sometimes, she reminds him of it. But, on being turned out of Mirza’s house when they set up the chessboard at Mir’s house, Mir Sahib’s constant presence becomes a hindrance to the Begum’s freedom. Finally she lays a plot and a cavalry officer of the royal army comes inquiring for him. The call scares the wits out of Mir Sahib, for “the summons could well mean that we have to go to the front and die an untimely death”. The two friends agree that they will not meet at Mir Sahib’s house any more. From then on they start playing the game in a desolate place near Gomti, while the Begum pats the horseman on his back for putting up the disguise and secretly starts to indulge in debauchery. In the last scene we find Premchand’s

artistic skill at its peak, his incisive satire reaching the bottom of the decadence that marked the political situation and social atmosphere of the times. If 'irony' is understood as the use of words that say exactly the opposite of what they seem to mean, then what unfolds itself is the aesthetic meaning of irony. The two friends, carrying with them small durries under their arms and boxes containing *paans* would go and sit inside an old deserted mosque on the other side of the Gomti river. On their way they would buy a chillum and tobacco and after that they had no worry about this world or the other. No word would come out of their mouths other than 'check' and 'checkmate'. In order to let the inner meaning have a sharper impact, Premchand makes a slight symbolic reference to the political game that the British were playing. It was a game in which 'check' was always reserved for the empire and 'checkmate' for India. Viewed from this angle, the short story, like *Kafan* and *Poos ki Raat*, is also marked for its economy of words to which Premchand usually pays scant attention. One day when the two friends were sitting inside the ruined mosque, playing chess, they suddenly saw the Company's soldiers passing by. Mirza Sahib made repeated pleas for help from the British army, but Mir Sahib was aware of nothing else apart from the game of chess.

Mirza: By Allah, you are a very hard-hearted fellow! Such a

catastrophe has taken place and you don't even feel shocked! Alas, poor Wajid Ali Shah!

Mir: First try to save your king and then mourn for the Nawab. Here, this is check and this is checkmate! Come on, give me your hand!

After this, Premchand just writes: "The army passed by taking the Nawab along."

At last it was evening. The sun had already set on the kingdom of Oudh. In the ruins, the bats began to screech. The swallows returned and settled in their nests. But the two players were still at it, like two bloodthirsty warriors engaged in a deadly battle." This "deadly game" was being played at all levels – individual, social, political as well as historical. Throughout this part of the story irony has been incisively used as a technique. Words here are not just words but signifiers pointing to social decadence, to a political tragedy. They display a subtlety of meaning and deep creativity that can eternalize a truth at the level of art. Time and again they make their moves and change their stratagems, but the game already stands checkmated. Finally they come to abuses, their wrangling gets worse. They go to the length of abusing each other's forefathers. Rusted swords are drawn out. Both display their flourishes; the sound of clanging is heard. Both get wounded, fall down and die writhing in

pain. At the bottom of this horrifying scene is an intense perturbation and a heart rending irony:

“These two, who had not shed a single tear for their king, gave up their lives to protect a chess queen. Darkness had descended. The game was laid out. The two kings graced their respective thrones ... There was dead silence on all sides. The crumbling walls, the dilapidated turrets and minarets of the ruins looked at these corpses and lamented.”

Who doesn't know that these corpses are deeply and meaningfully related to the atmosphere in mid-19th century India, or that the dilapidated walls and crumbling turrets and minarets of the ruins remind us of the tottering and enfeebled Mughal rule? Or that 'the kings who graced their respective thrones' were only wooden chess pieces? The connection between 'the chess queen' and '*jaan-e-aalam*' (the king), is as intensely painful as it is ironical and this is what shows how successful the story is. 'Darkness' is symbolic of decline. At the end of the short story, the game is checkmated but the chess-board remains laid out. This is the chess-board of life on which the game though checkmated is yet not checkmated and the historical game of winning and losing continues to be played.

This whole analysis will remain

incomplete if we do not mention *Poos ki Raat*. In this short story too Premchand has presented a very painful situation with awesome objectivity, scraping the wound inflicted by landlordism with the lancet of irony. Irony breathes life into this short story also. The plot has been so constructed and the dialogues so woven one after the other as to present a situation that is essentially ironical, but the effect it creates makes our hearts ache over man's helplessness. At the very beginning Halku coaxes and cajoles his wife to give the three rupees collected for buying a blanket to 'Sahna' and the teeth-shattering cold of winter begins to grip our soul right then. The flattering tone that Halku adopts again and again while talking to Munni and the way Munni retorts angrily and aggressively remind us of Girdhari's wife Subhagi in *Balidaan* and Dhaniam in *Godaan* who in her outspoken and garrulous tone unveils the condition of the exploited classes of the society. Isn't it true that if there is life in Premchand's characters it is only in his women? If anyone has the strength to fight injustice it is these women or if there is a flash of resistance or struggle it is in these very characters, who may be biologically weak but the impulse of humanity in them has not yet died, nor have the compulsions of circumstances yet been able to shatter them.

“I say, why don't you give up farming? You toil so hard, and whatever you produce goes

to pay up the arrears, and that's the end of it. We are born only to pay the arrears – No; I won't give the money, never."

"Should I then let him abuse me?"

"Why should he abuse you? Is it his kingdom?"

At the end also she speaks with the same gusto: "I won't pay the land-revenue of this field. Let me say, if we cultivate the land it's to live and not to die." The dog in *Kutte ki Kahaani* (The Dog's Story) who boasts of Mangal's friendship in *Dudh ki Kimat* (The Price of Milk) and in *Budhi Kaaki* becomes the cause of joy for Ladli, is also the dog who is Halku's only companion and helper on the field. On a night when even the stars in the sky appear to be numb with cold, Halku lay shivering on his bamboo cot, wrapped in his old coarse cotton sheet at the edge of his field; with his canine companion Jabra lying crouched under the cot, his mouth pressed into his belly, making moaning noises in the cold season. With the westerly wind piercing the body, neither of them was able to sleep.

"Halku got up and took some embers from the pit to fill his chillum. Jabra too got up. Smoking the chillum Halku said, 'Would you like to have a puff? The cold doesn't go, but the mind is diverted a little.'"

We have already referred to the

relationship we find between man and animal in several short stories of Premchand. When they talk they talk in a silent language, but the attachment and communication between them are perfect. When Halku cannot sleep at all, he wakes Jabra up and stroking his head puts him to sleep in his lap.

"There was a strange stink coming from the dog's body, but hugging him close gave Halku a happiness that he had not experienced for months."

Here Premchand needn't have clarified that "Halku was troubled by his poverty which had got him into such a state". But you can't be sure about Premchand, even in the best of his short stories a weak sentence or two are liable to come from his pen.

The cold increases and there is still one watch left for the night to end. Halku gathers some dry leaves from a nearby orchard and makes a fire. The flames rise and begin to touch the leaves of the tree. At last, warming himself in a vast ocean of darkness, he stretches both his feet. In the last scene the leaves have all burned and darkness has again enveloped the orchard; Halku is sitting by the warm ashes, but as the cold increases, he is overpowered by languor. All of a sudden, Jabra begins to bark loudly and runs toward the field. Halku feels that a pack of animals has broken into the field. Sounds of jumping, running and grazing begin to be heard,

but Halku consoles himself saying, “No, with Jabra around, no animal can enter the field. Perhaps I had an illusion.” Jabra goes on barking and does not come back to him. Sounds of animals grazing continue to be heard, but Halku does not move from his place.

“Warmed up, he was sitting there in cozy comfort and did not move from his place. Finally, he wrapped his sheet around himself and fell asleep on the ground near the ashes.”

This is how irony of the situation fully unfolds before us. Premchand weaves the last scene with the strands of irony laced with pain:

“In the morning when he woke he saw the sun was high and Munni was standing there saying, “What the hell are you doing here, the whole field has been ruined.” Halku got up and said, “So you are coming from the field?” “Yes”, said Munni, “it is all devastated. How can anyone sleep like that?” Halku made up an excuse, “I narrowly escaped death and you are worried about the field. I can’t describe what a terrible stomach ache I had.”

Jabra was lying flat on his back underneath the shelter.

“Jabra is still sleeping. He has never slept so much.”

It is easy for an animal to get away from things, but difficult for man to do so. Jabra put his life at risk and

only after he did his duty he went and slept. It is only man whose destiny it is to get crushed under the millstone of oppression, deceit, greed, selfishness and profiteering – and also to confront these. Sometimes he wins and sometimes he loses. Sometimes he makes a fire, spreads light in darkness, warms himself up, continuously fights cold and is victorious over it, but is also overpowered by the warmth of his own body. Man is a melange of strength, weakness, courage, and adventure. There may come a moment when, in the midst of his greatest struggle or fight, he may lay down his arms and let death pass over his head. Summer and winter, darkness and light and life and death continue to peep into his life just like this. To see a crop destroyed before one’s eyes after it is sown and nurtured and is ripe for harvesting and not being able to do anything about it is a situation painfully ironic and depicts man’s helplessness. Premchand’s sensibility and love for humanity are more successful at places where he has woven his plot after picking it from situations full of elements fostered by irony, using barbs of satire to give voice to the behaviour and conduct of the characters.

This discussion on these few short stories proves at least that Premchand was aware of human psychology. He not only had a heart full of sympathy and love for humanity, he also had the vision to recognize reality and the pen to describe it. The way a true artist restitutes

reality, lights lamps with it at the level of thought, and the way he transforms past reality and eternalizes it at the creative plane with the help of his artistic skill, of this there is no dearth of examples in Premchand. He could see things beyond morality and emotionalism The ideals of truth and justice, courage and heroism that he chiseled, at some places, he has shown his own characters shattering them. He had the artistic courage and the dispassionateness that this required. Some of his writings are candidly realistic and structured around irony. Even so, Premchand cannot shrug off the allegation that he displays strong moralistic and reformist tendencies in some of his earlier as also latter day works. At the beginning of this article we had quoted Sharatbabu's views about Premchand. In Bengali language the traditions of psychological expression and social realism that had been bequeathed to Sharatbabu were very high and significant. Premchand was not so fortunate. He himself prepared the soil, sowed the seeds and raised the crop. This was the situation that prevailed in novel and short story in both Hindi and Urdu languages. After *dastaans* (long narrative stories) and Abdul Halim Sharar and Nazir Ahmad, this was a very big step. As big as that of Vishnu's Vaman incarnation who had measured the entire world in three steps. It was no ordinary feat of Premchand that he introduced an entirely new world, an entirely new man in Urdu-Hindi fictional literature. But of course he was not so great a

revolutionary as not to have made any compromises at any level. He had learned to tread slowly; his morality was middle class morality and it was natural that his writings should have borne its markings. Perhaps it was not possible for him to avoid this. From tales of demons and fairies he had moved on to the womb of the earth, to fields and barns and huts and bowers and from princes and princesses to the poor, wretched and distressed, helpless, destitute people, ploughmen and labourers, people who pass whole life wearing nothing but torn clothes, and to animals who lick their hands and give them company. In that age it was not within his power, or within the power of any other Urdu or Hindi writer for that matter, to take a greater risk than this. Premchand spent his entire life removing obstacles from his way. He served Urdu as well as Hindi. What he wrote in Hindi he published simultaneously in Urdu. The foundations on which later writers raised high mansions of Urdu-Hindi short stories and novels were actually laid by him. Premchand's mental, intellectual and artistic evolution had been a continuous process. Coming out of the environment of *daastaans* he moved on to the environment of Rajput valour and chivalry and then venturing beyond that he understood India's suffering, experienced its yearning for independence and also learnt to understand man. In this he took the help of his earlier ideals as well, tried

Gandhian ideology and relied on communism too. But like a true artist he knew how to move forward, how to accept and to reject, to spurn someone as well as to treat someone as one's own. He never turned away from this right of his. The greatest fact about his art is that he always outgrew himself

and did not remain confined to one spot or one phase during his creative journey. The point to ponder is if he had lived longer would he in his future creative journey have taken a flight on the wings of romantic revolution or given expression to coarse realism after the objectivity of *Kafan*.

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THE THEATRE ARISING FROM WITHIN THE STORY

Devendra Raj Ankur

Translated by
Satya Chaitanya

Every play has a story in it and every story, a play inside it. If we stretch this saying a little more, then we can say that every art is theatrical in its original form and conception. If this is true, then why do we have to adapt the story into a separate play? Is it because the play inside the story is in such abstract form that to bring it out in solid form it has to be adapted into a play? Is it because from the standpoint of the elements of pure theatre, the story is an incomplete medium and in order to take it to its fullness, we have to resort to the theatre? Is it because the birth of a new genre through the consonance of the separate structures and grammars of two genres contains drama?

More important than the answers to these questions would be trying to find out in what form and shape the theatre that is already present inside the story exists in it. One theatre is what is visible in the various events of the story, in their sequence and tensions and resolutions. A second theatre related to this is born of the structure of the story, because each storyteller, in order to make his message as intelligible, as communicable and as effective as possible, weaves it with a singular warp and woof, a singular pattern. The elements of both these theatres are essentially available in the narration of the story itself. But there is also a theatre that takes place outside the story or apart from it, and this process goes on at least at two levels-between the

storyteller and the listener, or else between the reader and the story itself.

If we go back to the birth of the story, we see it is born originally out of the process of telling and listening. It will not be out of context to mention here that in fact the credit for the birth of the theatre goes to the tradition of telling stories, in which over time the element of acting out entered, meaning gradually the process of telling stories got converted into 'showing' stories. This telling-listening was a social process, in which the entire community participated. Even if the storyteller was a single individual, it is certain that those who listened to it were always more than one in number.

In different parts of the country, we do not even know for sure how many styles of storytelling and listening exist even today, such as the *Pandavani* in Madhya Pradesh, *Kirtan* in Maharashtra, *lai Haroba* in Manipur, *Batposh* and *Pabuji ka Phadh* in Rajasthan, *Akhyan* in Gujarat, and *Alha Udal* in Bundelkhand. Even if we do not go that far, the practice of elders like grandpa and grandma telling stories still exists in our families, though joint families have no doubt been slowly reduced to the point of extinction.

All the styles and traditions of storytelling that have been referred to so far, beginning with ancient times to today, are based on the oral narration of stories. Here, stories are not written or printed in advance. It is also quite

possible that the storyteller is creating the story on the spot as he is telling it, while he is passing through the process of narrating it, [if what is being told is not known in advance], but what is worth mentioning is that a theatre and stage world of the story begins to take shape here too. First of all there is the live presence of the storyteller, his voice, his narrative style, his gestures, his facial expressions and at times his suddenly standing up spontaneously with the flow of the story, his beginning to dance, or beginning to act - meaning his reaching the stage of 'showing' whatever he is narrating. Even though the audience has nothing concrete before them, don't they see that world of sight, don't they experience it, and don't they, through the medium of their immediate reactions, establish an inner relationship with those numerous characters and incidents? This is the theatre that might quite possibly not be too far present in the story itself but depends on the art of the storyteller and the receptivity and imagination of the listener.

A totally different form of this experience comes into being when the story is available to the reader in written or printed form. No doubt, here the process of experience is diametrically opposite, because whereas during the first process an entire community is present, in the second process this is limited to a single reader. In fact, even the living presence of the writer, creator or narrator no more exists here. In place

of words being spoken aloud, the reader in his solitude reads their silent presence with his eyes, and perhaps also listens to them inside himself. But the visual universe of the story takes shape here too, even if it is only for that single reader. If this process is given yet another shape, where either the author himself or someone else reads out that story, then that experience becomes a third possibility between the extremes of community listening and the reading of a published story in solitude.

In brief, from the analysis so far it becomes entirely clear that the theatricality of a story could be found in the original composition itself, and in order to discover it, it is not at all necessary to deform and distort the shape of the story by transforming it into a play. Since we are today concerned mainly with modern composition of the story that appears before us in the form of published words, let us take our discussion forward, keeping that in front of us.

All the different kinds of relationships connected with stories that I have talked about so far are mostly in the context of listening to and reading stories. A fresh new link in this relationship is 'seeing' the story. One could ask if the listener or the reader was not seeing the story in the first two processes too. Of course he was seeing it, but that seeing was as abstract and formless as words themselves. Whereas in the first two processes the reader or listener keeps

seeing before the eyes of his mind a picture of the words he is hearing or reading, in this process, in contrast, he sees the story taking place before him in a solid, living and real form - he sees it, he hears it, and he as though reads it, along with the original words and form of the story. Without displacing the grammar and mould of a visual genre like the drama.

Thus this process is of course the next link in the experiences related to the story, but at the same it is also in some way or other totally different from them all. And this distinction, this newness and difference, is born from the entry of the actor in the place of the storyteller or writer, which never before happened in any style or tradition of storytelling, and perhaps there was no need for it either. After the coming of the actor, the story became mainly acting out and not mere telling. It should be underscored here that whereas a genre like the story in its printed form remained addressed to a single individual, with the intervention of the actor it was once again transformed into a community experience- and this is not by any means a very small journey. And the most significant aspect of this is that the story completed this journey on its own, and on its own terms, and from within itself brought to life a theatrical world for the audience.

It is natural to be curious about what new things begin to happen when an actor presents on the stage in its original

form a story that has been written and published - what are the new aspects that come into being in that process that we call the emergence of the theatre of the story from within the story? In order to know this, in order to understand and experience this, what could be a better alternative than to keep before us a few stories as examples and try to create this theatrical world out of them?

With this purpose in mind, I have taken up Premchand's *Kafan* [The Shroud] and Agyey's *Gangrene*. The two stories are totally different from each other in their plot and structure. Whereas *Kafan* deals with the story of characters like Madhav and Ghisu in the third person narrative style, in *Gangrene* the first person narrator presents before us a heavy atmosphere filled with monotony and sadness, and within that atmosphere presents before us pictures of the mundane life of characters like Malti and her husband and children.

Kafan is divided into three parts— night, day and again night; The hut in which they live, the market and the liquor shop.

This is how the story begins— A father and his son are sitting in silence in front of a hut, before a fire that has died out. Inside Budhia, the wife of the young son, is writhing in labour pain. As she lies there, she lets out such bloodcurdling cries that the hearts of both freeze. It is a winter night, the world is enveloped

in deep silence and the whole village has become one with darkness.

If we transform the story into theatre, there will be no need to say any of the words in the above description. We can easily have a hut constructed, and have a small died-out fire placed in front of it; we can have from inside the hut either live cries of a woman in travail or the recordings of a woman's cries on a tape recorder; and we can have in the middle of the whole scene the physical actions and reactions of two people who are shivering in the cold. We can show all this happening in hazy light. But this whole visual world is a mere depiction or reproduction of the narration of the story. If the director is very imaginative, he would deduct one or two items from the above, or add to them. There is no doubt that a play will be created by this, but the sights, feelings and drama that is naturally available in the story in just words will be more interesting and richer than this.

But imagine we keep each word of this narration as it is without altering any - then several alternatives open before us to transform them into a theatrical experience on the stage. Just two characters can sit in a corner of the stage and address this whole passage to the audience, or say it to each other. We can have three characters in place of two - two men and a woman. Each man can speak the narration related to him, and the woman can say the narration related to her. Another alternative is

that the woman can do the narration related to the men, the men can do the narration related to the woman, and the narration related to the ambience could be done by all three together. In any case, whatever means we adopt to present this short scene in so many words, apart from the presence of the actors on the stage, we do not require any property or other external elements on the stage. The actor is now free and independent as his own self, meaning whatever he is— describer, storyteller or commentator or whatever— he is not the character, unlike what happens right from the beginning of a play.

The next four paragraphs appear as conversation.

“Ghisu said, ‘looks like she’ll not survive. It has been a whole day. Go, take a look. inside.’”

“Madhav said, irritated, ‘If she has to die, why doesn’t she die fast? What will I do taking a look?’”

“How pitiless you are! You spent a whole year in pleasure with her, and now such callousness!”

“What am I to do? I can’t stand her agony. I can’t watch her flinging her arms and legs about.”

Of the actors who were just telling us the story, one says, “Ghisu said,” and instantly he gets transformed into a character. The same kind of displacement takes place in the other character when he says, “Madhav said,

irritated.” If we study the story so far on the basis of existing styles and traditions or in the context of drama, it becomes perfectly clear that the theatrical experience is totally different from all these. Here we do not have just a single narrator who keeps changing his role, nor do we have a theatrical device like the *sootradhar* present, or the invisible separation like that of a writer and the reader. In other words, we have the writer present here, and each and every word of the story; we have a team of two or three actors present here, and a stage - and on that much is happening in the form of solid events for the eye to see, but in spite of all these, ‘there is the same amount of space and freedom for the imagination of the spectator, listener or reader. Don’t all these things together make the stage presentation of the story more dramatic? What more theatricality do we need in a story written in a third person narrative style than that the character is speaking about himself, but keeping the role of the other person before him? The critic might immediately respond by saying that this has already been demonstrated before us long ago by Brecht through the medium of techniques like alienation. They are quick to forget from where Brecht took this technique: from the very same story in which it was present from the beginning.

This process of the transformation of the actor— at times pure storyteller, at times narrator, at times commentator,

and at times listener, spectator, reader and finally character— goes on constantly from the first to the last scene, with an effortless, easy, natural flow. Without any prop, technique or grammar not being imposed upon its original form by force.

I have deliberately chosen to clarify what I want to say by taking up a single short scene from *Kafan*. There would be no point in taking up the whole story to say this, nor will it be desirable. My intention was merely this: to enquire into how a story, even when we do not make any changes in the original words, on its own, assumes the form of a visual essay. Whatever stage-possibilities I have written about here are all there before the staging. It is possible that during the staging many other new things take place. And this possibility will always be there that another director will create some other unknown magic even while keeping the story as it is. Since Agney's story *Gangrene* is written in the first person narrative, it appears before us bringing with it a totally different world of experience. The story begins like this:

"The moment I set foot in that empty courtyard in the afternoon, I sensed as though the shadow of some curse is hovering over it. Something unspeakable and intangible but heavy, solid and quivering was spreading over it..."

"As soon as she heard me approaching, Malti came out. Seeing me, recognising me, her wilted facial expression bloomed

just a little in sweet amazement and then became as before. She said, 'Come,' and then, without waiting for an answer walked inside. And I followed her."

"Reaching inside I asked, 'Is he not here?'"

"Hasn't come yet. He is in the office. Will be here in a short while. He usually comes around one-thirty or two."

"How long has he been out?"

"He leaves as soon as he wakes up in the morning."

"I said 'Hmm,' and then I was about to ask, 'And what do you do all the while?' but then I thought it was not right to question her the moment I came. I started looking around the room."

"Malti fetched a fan and started fanning me. I objected and said, 'No, I don't need it.' But she did not listen to me and said, 'Vah! How come? You have come from such hot sun. Here...'"

"I said, 'Okay, give it to me.'"

"Perhaps she was about to say no. But at that moment she heard the sound of a baby crying in the other room and gave the fan to me without protest and putting her hands on her knees and supporting herself, rose up and went outside, her exhaustion coming out of her mouth in a 'hmm'."

So this is the opening scene of the story, which has been presented in the first person narrative using "I". It is evident that the moment the change into the 'I' takes place, it is as though the

actor effortlessly produces the presence of the author on the stage. Now two paths are clearly open before him - should he get into the role of becoming the character from the beginning till the end, meaning should he merge himself totally with the personality of the writer, or should he, instead of becoming the writer, remain the actor that he is in real life and along with it keep on performing the role of the character in the different situations presented by the story? In which case, he will get more opportunities to seek the possibilities of a second or third dimension in his acting and present them.

In the same way, what process of acting should the other character Malti adopt? Should she keep on behaving as asked by 'Me'? Should she pick up some narration from the story in hand and share it by herself with the audience, even if it is about herself? Should the verbal narrations of the story be transformed into gestures of mundane living? It is certain whichever one of the above options we choose, its effect will be to make the stage presentation of the story as imaginative and attractive as possible.

The two stories that have been discussed above have both narration and dialogue. But imagine a story in which there is only narration and no dialogue. How should the actor treat such a story? Should he treat it as a long monologue or as a long dialogue? But the challenge becomes even more complex if the

narration is not in the form of spoken words. What I mean by not being in the form of spoken words is that the words are not the vehicle for the character's thoughts or memory. Because the words that are born in our mind or brain when we think about something, or when we remember something - can those words have a tone? If yes, then of what nature?

Supposing we compare this with a story which is written exclusively in dialogue, in which there is no separate narration as such? Can we consider that a play? For instance, Ramesh Bakshi's story *Talghar*, or Krishna Baldev Vaid's story *Sab Kucch Nahin* or Krishna Sobti's story *Aey Ladki*. All three stories are written in dialogues - can we call them plays? What is it that, in spite of both being in the dialogue style, makes one genre story and the other, play? Is the essential nature of the dialogue appearing in stories the same as the essential nature of words used in the dialogue of a play? According to me, these are such points as can be helpful in the direction of analysing these two genres separately.

It is necessary to have a brief discussion or analysis here from the point of what the contributions of other theatre elements like music, lighting, costume and so on are in the stage presentation of a story. If the story depends too much on these aspects, will it not cease to be a story and become a play? Remember that experience in which a community of listeners or readers,

listening to or reading *Kafan* and *Gangrene*, create for themselves the visual universe hidden in it. This visual universe is different for each listener or reader, including the music, lighting, costume and so on, and has its own independent existence and identity. On the contrary in the stage presentation of a play, the moment all those elements are seen in concrete form, the same single picture and imagery is created for the entire community of audience - meaning, in spite of there being nothing presented on stage in the story, everything is present in it; and in the play in spite of everything being present, what it does is to limit the expanses of our vision and imagination.

For this reason the discussion of whether in the staging of a story theatrical elements have been used or not appears meaningless to a large extent. If while reading a story it can create in our mind and in our brain its impact, there

is no reason why when we see it happening on the stage in exactly the same form, this impact will not be created.

It has also been seen many times that when a story has been read in the printed form it is not discussed widely, but when it reaches people through the medium of the stage, the audience is invariably affected by its impact. It does not happen just like that - it happens due to all those elements that transform the story into a stage experience. In this process the words of the writer do get recognition, but the actor too gets the opportunity to come to the fore bringing with him all his competencies and potentials. If all these are possible by presenting on stage the story in its original form or as the theatre emerging from it on its own, then why would it be essential to transform the story into a play and present it on stage - what will be the meaning and fitness of doing so?

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DALITS AND DALIT LITERATURE : SOME CRITICAL ISSUES

Subhash Sharma

Various sociologists have underlined the relationship between literature and society through mediation in different ways. Adorno emphasized more on aesthetics while Herbert Marcuse focused on philosophical dimensions of existence. Leo Lowenthal views literature as an historical store of individual experiences that are influenced by social contexts. To him, the life experiences gained from literature are both individual as well as socio-historical as a writer either supports or opposes the historical conditions of his time and place. He also valued the popular literature. Unlike empiricists, he does not propose a sociology of production and distribution nor accepts literature as an institution. He focuses on class basis of text under production aspect, social context under distribution aspect, and readers' reception to the text under consumption aspect. Lucien Goldmann emphasises on world vision that is inherent in the life of social class but is expressed in philosophy, art and literature only. Therefore, according to him, the search for world vision begins in the study of a text, not in the study of a class. But he has not given due importance to author who is simply a medium (for him). But, in practice, a writer's understanding, vision and stand has a significant bearing on the depiction of social reality.

The terms 'dalit' and 'dalit literature' are highly contentious and controversial. What is dalit literature? Its answer depends more on the perspective and attitude of replier (subjectivity) than on the objectivity. Om Prakash Valmiki, a dalit Hindi writer, in his book "Dalit Sahitya Ka Saundarya Shashtra"¹ (Aesthetics of Dalit Literature),

propounds that the situations of uncertainty in the minute wearing of idealism strengthen only the statusquoism and the masks of idealism desharpen the struggle for fundamental change. There he criticises various critics of Hindi literature to whom to be a born dalit is not mandatory for writing dalit literature. He quotes Kashinath Singh: “ To write about horse, one need not be a horse”. But he disagrees with Singh saying that one may write about outer features of a horse (gait, organs of body, buttocks, voice) only, not his tiredness, hunger, thirst, pain and feelings about his master-these are exclusively in the internal domain of the horse. However, Valmiki escapes from answering the key question: how will the horse express himself? Similarly how can an illiterate person express his feelings in writing? Though, at least theoretically, one may say that even an illiterate person may express orally (oral tradition is rich in the forms of folk songs, folk dances, puzzles, sayings etc) yet it is further relevant to ask why most of the literate persons don't write creatively or why most of the illiterate persons don't express orally? These questions clearly indicate that literature primarily requires a certain kind and level of creativity and artistry, which is usually not expressed by all human beings.

However, for elaboration, Valmiki further quotes S.S.Bechain, “Dalit is one who has been given the status of a scheduled caste”², But Kanwal Bharti goes one step further “Dalit is one upon whom the rule

of untouchability has been imposed, who is compelled to do hard and dirty work; who was prevented from getting education and doing independent profession and upon whom the touchables imposed the code of disabilities: herein only those castes are included who are called Scheduled Castes”³. Mohan Das Naimishrai thinks dalits to be almost equivalent to Marx's proletariat, but he finds the term dalit broader as it includes social, religious, economic and political exploitation whereas the term proletariat is limited to only economic exploitation. Therefore, to him, the proletariat is basically the victim of economic inequality whereas dalit is basically the victim of social inequality. Thus dalits are those who are on the lowest ladder of a hierarchical social system. Narayan Surve, a Marathi dalit poet, broadens the term dalit by including not only Baudha or backward castes, but also all the victims. Another dalit Marathi writer, Baburao Bagul, thinks that the term dalit signifies revolution. To social scientist E.Zelliot, the term dalit implies, “those who have been broken, ground down by those who are above them in a deliberate and active way. There is in the word itself an inherent denial of pollution, Karma and justified caste hierarchy”⁴. To Rajendra Yadav, in addition to untouchables even women and backward castes, are dalits. But S.S.Bechain disagrees with him “By this (including women and backwards) the correct picture does not emerge in literature. Dalit literature is the literature of those untouchables who do not get

respect socially. The harassment of those, who are victims of caste discrimination at social level, is expressed in words and is becoming dalit literature”⁵. Similarly another dalit writer Kanwal Bharti defines dalit literature as one in which “dalits have themselves expressed their pain whatsoever reality dalits have experienced in their life-struggle, dalit literature is a literature in that expression. It is not an art for art’s sake but literature for life and desire to live. So, needless to say, in reality, only the literature written by dalits forms the category of dalit literature”⁶. Again another dalit writer, C.B.Bharti defines it in this way: “It is a broad, scientific, realistic, sensitive literary intervention. Whatsoever logical, scientific, free from the prejudices of tradition is literary creation, we call it dalit literature”⁷. Further to Baburao Bagul, “Dalit literature is the literature that accepts the liberation of man, that accepts man as great and that opposes the greatness of dynasty, varna and caste”⁸.

O.P. Valmiki criticises two categories of non-dalit writers’ views regarding dalit literature. First view does not accept the existence of dalit literature-thus it is biased with anti-dalit varna-caste mentality. Second view accepts the existence of dalit literature but opines that its forefathers/leaders were ‘savarnas’ (higher caste Hindus). To him, the second category is more dangerous than the first, because it does not think essential for dalit writings to be done by a born dalit writer. Similarly,

he also criticises a section of dalit writers who consider dalit literature as disgraceful because by writing autobiographies, dalit writers are expressing themselves-these autobiographies entertain the non-dalit readers, on the one hand, and create inferiority complex among the dalits, on the other. But, Valmiki calls them ‘Brahmanic dalits’ who grab the benefits of reservation provided under Indian Constitution due to the efforts of B.R.Ambedkar-they compete to become ‘Brahmans’ and their ideational infertility makes them opportunists. To him, dalit writers took inspiration from the autobiography of B.R. Ambedkar ‘Me Kasa Jhalo’ (How I Was Made) and developed the genre of autobiography that showed the mirror to society. Therefore, he is of the opinion that dalit writers should make a thorough study of the available non-dalit literature despite disagreement and ideological opposition, only then they can reach at certain conclusions. Second, dalit literature should stand like a hard wall against injustice, exploitation, oppression and social inequalities, only then its social responsibility and ideological commitment would be proved.

Thus most of dalit writers consider dalit literature as one written by dalits themselves. To put it differently, it is a literature ‘of dalits, for dalits and by dalits’! However, both terms dalit and dalit literature, are contentious. The term ‘dalit’ is a generalistic category but in reality an identity is rooted in history as a ‘specific’

category, not as a general category. In India, it is historically proved that 'specific identities' (in terms of sub-caste, community, residence, dynasty, language, etc) have existed. Therefore 'dalit' as an umbrella term for all scheduled castes does not fit in the actual social reality. Second, there has been major social changes in terms of 'upward' and 'downward' mobility amongst various castes. Some untouchable castes, in due course of history, were accepted as 'savarna' and, on the other hand, some upper castes lost their prestige and position in the caste/varna hierarchy. For instance, Nadars in Tamil Nadu and Edawas in Kerala took the benefit of upward mobility and discarded their previous untouchable status. Similarly in South Bihar(now Jharkhand) and Bengal Cheros and Bhuians became Rajputs in early 19th century. Here the lesson learnt is that if an untouchable caste discards its traditional (dirty) occupation and takes up modern occupation, it improves economic status and is linked to the power structure, its social status may change from untouchable to touchable one. Third, there occur intra-dalit conflicts due to oppositional interests between different ex-untouchable sub-castes (due to specific identities). A cobbler boy would not like to freely mix-up (sitting and dining together) with a sweeper boy, not to say of inter-marrying between these two specific dalit sub-castes. Fourth, for taking benefit of protective discrimination (reservation of jobs, seats in educational institutions, stipend) most of the ex-untouchables use

their 'specific identity' (sub-caste) and after taking the benefit, talk of 'general dalit identity' elsewhere; thus there exists some kind of ambivalence and dualism on the part of most of dalits in this regard. Fifth, it is not true that these dalits have always been the sufferers and deprived in every way in all aspects in all regions in India: for example, Dusadhs in North Bihar, Bhars/Rajbhars in eastern U.P., Cheros and Bandhawats in Chhotanagpur (Jharkhand) and others in different parts of India in medieval period have been the rulers. Finally, it is also evident in different parts of India that after taking the benefit of protective discrimination, many of the dalits with higher prestige/post try to distance themselves from their community masses (both general and specific identities) on the one hand and try to be closer to the elites of the upper castes, on the other, due to some form of 'sanskritisation'. This tendency also falsifies the generalistic dalit identity.

As far as the issue of dalit literature is concerned, the position taken by most of the dalit writers 'of, for and by the dalits' is also not acceptable because of following reasons:

In O.P. Valmiki's view, dalit literature has following features:

(a) Dalit literature requires a separate aesthetics and it will add to the aesthetics of Hindi literature. Dalit literature is a 'literature of negation', born from

the struggle and revolt and there is equality, freedom and fraternity, on the one hand, and opposition to caste and varna⁹, on the other.

(b) It is optimistic for a better life in future, despite adverse circumstances-it is a 'literature of future'¹⁰.

(c) Earlier during Bhakti movement period there were saint poets from amongst dalits, but they had no dalit consciousness for social change. Similarly during 1960-90 some dalit writers were active with a class perspective, away from the caste/varna struggle, and they were day-dreaming without real dalit concerns, hence their writings don't fit in dalit literature¹¹. Dalit consciousness requires acceptance of B.R. Ambedkar's philosophy, Buddha's atheism and non-existence of soul, and opposition to feudalism, Brahmanism and communalism¹². It tries to redefine the ideals and outcomes of Hindi literature¹³.

(d) Self-experience is the key to dalit literature-expression without fetters. It emphasises on the intention and content of writing, not the form and style. It negates imaginary standards¹⁴.

(e) In dalit literature there is not merely a copy of reality but realistic recreation of ordinary characters in ordinary circumstances¹⁵. Here philosophical and artistic show is not needed.

(f) Dalit writers struggle on two fronts: first, their poverty-ridden settlements and darkness therein; second, the outer system that has poisoned their life through social inequalities and discrimination¹⁶.

(g) Dalit literature is against the incarnation of gods and god-like heroes who are protectors of Brahmins, but anti-women and anti-dalit, they are war-lovers. It treats past as a black chapter. Hence dalit literature focuses on the greatness of every individual¹⁷. It re-establishes Karna, Shambuk and Eklavya as true heroes who were ill-treated in mainstream literature.

(h) Dalit literature criticises the inegalitarian land distribution¹⁸ and related issues like panchayati raj system, which in the view of Ambedkar, is 'the workshop of casteism and varna system'.

(i) Dalit literature negates sanskritised language and its poetics, rather it uses easy and simple Hindi language, which is used by the common people in everyday life. Dalit literature does not mind using abuses and bitter words- it negates the traditional principles of 'purity' and 'greatness' in literature because it considers purity and greatness in language as artificial and elitist¹⁹.

First, as Marx and George Lukacs have rightly observed that a top rate literary production is done only when the writer transcends his class. This is to say, he has to 'declass' himself. In Indian context, in addition, it is required of a writer to 'decaste' himself, as in western context it is required of him to 'derace' himself. It is very interesting to note that most of dalit writers criticize non-dalit writers for being biased, for seeing thing 'from above', for justifying the hierarchical varna / caste system, therefore they demand,

in different ways, that non-dalit writers should 'decaste' themselves in order to grasp the nuances of dalit experience as well as dalit perspective. But, unfortunately, they themselves do not 'decaste', rather they portray one-sided hyperbolic, narrow and limited picture of social reality and experience. Thus most of dalit writers practise 'reverse caste discrimination'.

Second, if non-dalits' writings are condemned on superficial grounds (say, the use of term 'Chamar' by Premchand in his novel 'Rangbhumi' led to the burning of his significant social novel 'Rangbhumi' by several dalit writers in 2004 in Delhi) or on the ground that non-dalits have no moral right to write about dalits, dalit literature being the privilege and 'exclusive copy right' of the dalits – the domain of dalit literature would be narrower, limited, one-dimensional, uncritical and non-creative due to lack of dialogue between different conflicting views / perspectives. And thus this tendency is highly harmful to the literary creation in general and to dalit literature in particular.

Third, most of the dalit literature is limited to autobiographies (and to some extent short stories) based on childhood experience of several decades long ago. Thus instead of portraying the contemporary socio-economic and political reality realistically, they depict outdated so-called self-experiences.

Fourth, with a narrow and limited world-

view, Hindi dalit writers have not been able to write quality literature in general and quality novels in particular as a novel depicts the whole life in an era, most of dalit writers have not been successful in depicting a great novel. Different characters speak differently on a specific issue as happens in true life-situations. As a noted critic Ian Watts rightly observes that reality lies in the way in which a novel presents the kind of life ('how' rather than 'what'). But most of dalit literature does not go beyond 'what'.

Fifth, most of dalit writers focus on caste as 'a prime mover of social behaviour', 'a powerful force conditioning social mindset of dalits' (Punalekar). Thus for them caste is an all-pervasive institution- it determines the position and direction of Hindu society, hence the entire society is subsumed by the caste, and other aspects like economic, political and cultural are secondary and subsidiary to the caste. But it is not true historically. Sometimes political factor, sometimes cultural factor, sometimes economic factor and sometimes social (caste) factor, or more than one factor, becomes decisive in Indian society. Actually there lies a dynamic and dialectical relationship between these facets of life. Therefore dalits' view of caste determinism (society in caste) is not always tenable in practice. Many dalit writers like Baburao Bagul are of the view that in India the Hindu view of life is all-pervasive-even non-Hindus' (Christians,

Muslims, Sikh, Bauddhas, Jains etc) mentality is likewise believing in soul, rebirth, sin, reincarnation etc. Hence they declare the entire Indian literature as 'Hindu literature'²⁰. Bagul further observes: "Power-struggle, victory-defeat, sublimation of the victorious and devilisation of the defeated is the specificity of the culture and literature of Hindu society"²¹. He further adds that the form of Indian democracy is ordinarily casteist, a caste in majority rules in an area and once reaching the top of the political power, that caste finds the power of religion conducive. He observes: "Those who see the sorrow, providers of sorrow and the guardians of sorrow-givers, their writings were expressed in the form of 'parallel literature' in Hindi. It is strange that 'dalit literature' in Marathi and 'parallel literature' in Hindi came at the same time"²².

But these observations are not fully correct. In fact, the entire Indian literature is not Hindu literature. There have always been different types of Hindi literature and the 'parallel literature' (especially stories of Rajendra Yadav, Kamleshwar, Mohan Rakesh and Madhukar Singh) has been different from the mainstream literature. Two verses from Sanskrit literature, the classical ancient language of India, also support my point: First verse says: Let all be happy, let all be disease-free, let all see...

"Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah, Sarve
Santu Niramayah,
Sarve Bhadrani Pashyant, Ma

Kashchit dukh bhagbhaveta".

Second verse says: Ayam Nijah
Parovetti Gadna Laghuchetsam,
Udar charitanam tu vasudhaiva
kutumbakam.

(This is mine, that is yours, is the tendency of a small person; to great persons the entire earth is their family). Further an ancient book 'Vajrasuchi' (by Aswaghosh) written in Sanskrit has been quite revolting and liberating.

These two Sanskrit verses composed in ancient period clearly see all as human beings only, not as 'we' versus 'they'. That is, there is neither religious consideration nor caste consideration, neither power struggle nor victory-defeat consideration. No doubt there has been caste discrimination in India in theory and practice, yet caste does not encompass everything. Had the society been absolutely rigid, how there were processes of upward and downward mobility in the caste hierarchy, change of castes, emergence of new castes in an era and disappearance of old castes in another and different status of different castes in different parts of India (in some parts higher status, in other parts lower status). Further some ancient scriptures like Manusmriti talked of discrimination in the arena of occupation, education, law, economy and polity on the basis of Varna but Varna was textual while caste was contextual.

Sixth, it is not out of context to mention

here that most of dalit writers are intolerant to others writing about dalits. Though some of the dalit characters of Premchand (say Ghisu-Madhav in his story 'Kafan') have not struggled and revolted against the prevailing system, his other dalit characters (like Surdas in his novel 'Rangbhumi' or Siliya in 'Godan', or dalit woman in 'ghaswali') have taken a strong stand against exploitation of various sorts ranging from individual to gender to community to the nation. One cannot forget the fighting spirit of Surdas against the colonial system, bureaucracy and capitalistic industrialisation. He fully understands that he lost the struggle because of disunity against the united enemies (British empire and Indian capitalist class) but he declares he will fight again and again unitedly as well as re-construct his hut again and again. Thus Surdas is like modern Ravidas (respected by all). Premchand took a stand for dalits' all round liberation (social, economic and political) and went beyond treating them sympathetically, rather applied empathy. But Premchand too was marked by limitations of that era, and it has to be kept in mind to be fair to him. As Sadanand Shahi rightly observes: "It was not Premchand's fault that by his age Kabir had reached there to give consolation to Ghisu-Madhav (of 'Kafan' story), not Ambedkar. Therefore it seems to me that protest to 'Kafan' (by dalit writers) means protest to Kabir"²³.

Seventh, dalit literature, especially in Hindi, has been less creative, artistic and

imaginative rather more vocal, bold and aggressive. The so-called self-experience pervades at the cost of creativity and aesthetics. Often populist slogans, abuses, emotional outbursts, opposition for opposition sake, revengeful depiction of upper caste characters, fatwas to non-dalit characters, repetition, depiction of outdated practices as present ones and thus these dalit writers make dalit literature more a 'natural stock' or 'raw materials' of sociology than artistic literary creation. As Manager Pandey perceptively remarks. "Literature is an art and it takes time to mature. Having feeling is not enough ... The quality of literature that has a tradition of five thousand years can not be sought in the literature of dalits that has barely any past. On the other hand, the dalit should understand that literature is an art"²⁴. Further Lowenthal in his three books 'Literature, Popular Culture and Society', 'Literature and Image of Man', and 'The Art of Narrative and Society' rightly emphasises that in creative literature experience of reality and a perspective to it is more significant than depiction of reality. He rightly disagreed with Walter Benjamin's observation that in history only the voice of the victorious is expressed – to him, actually in true art often the voice of the defeated and desire of their victory are expressed in history.

Eighth, most of dalit writers have a limited vision and worldview, hence they write/publish second rate autobiographies or third rate novels. O.P. Valmiki's 'Juthan'

is a third rate autobiography but it got undeserving publicity inside and outside India due to media hype and promotion by some western scholars with an imperialistic view of dividing Indian writers on the basis of caste. Thus though there is more public space for dalit writers (many journals have fixed columns for dalit discourse, or have published special issues on dalits like 'Hans' and 'Kathadesh') yet there is no depth. Actually any creative literature requires 'internal, essential and indivisible unity between form and content' (Lowenthal), but most of dalit writers harp on content at the cost of form.

Ninth, most of dalit writers have deliberately ignored the intra-caste conflict and gender conflicts among dalits in their writings because then they would be exposed from within at various levels. Dalit writers like Dharmvir have been anti-dalit women due to his feudal mentality to condemn dalit women. But Kaushalya Vaishyantri ('Dohra Abhishap') has shown that dalit woman also suffers from male chauvinism at the hands of dalits themselves. Actually a dalit woman has triple curses: economic (poverty), social (untouchability) and gender (patriarchy).

Tenth, most of the dalit writers are intolerant to criticism and are 'victims of immediacy' ('here and now'- as phenomenologists call). They are almost blind followers of dalit politicians (especially B.R. Ambedkar), hence their thinking and understanding is not broadened. A

revolutionary writer shows the way to the politicians and others (literature as a guide) but dalit writers have been playing a role secondary to dalit politicians. They are victims of 'identity politics' too but in reality national culture remains always greater than the sum total of sub-cultures (identities), though I recognise the free play of great / national and local / little cultures at a given place and time, both having autonomous as well as interdependent spheres.

Finally, as I have shown elsewhere in detail after analysing four Hindi novels (by Premchand, Ugra, Giriraj Kishore and Jagdish Chandra) to realistically depict dalit characters in a novel, it does not seem to be necessary for the writer to be a born dalit. Rather his world vision and the capacity to empathise with the dalits by transcending his social (caste) and economic (class) backgrounds can prove to be helpful for enabling him in carrying out his mission²⁵. Actually certain kinds of mediation are required for depiction. That is why Raymond Williams emphasises on social totality, mediation and hegemony. His 'cultural materialism' focuses more on generation than on social structure, community than class, and experience than ideology.

However, to be fair, one may say that dalit writing is a facet of a broader democratisation of Hindi literature in terms of number, voice of dissent, and coverage of some unexplored areas. The inclusive-

ness and perspective from below is leading towards a new social process of creativity with a 'Paradigm Shift' from 'objects of writing' to 'subjects of writing'. This is an appreciable tendency but they should not only welcome and tolerate criticism from outside (non-dalits) but should also do introspection and self-criticism so that a matured and critical dalit-writing may flourish in Hindi literature. Dalit writers have to broaden their perception about non-dalits writing about dalits, because ultimately the range and depth of art matters the most in creative writing, in the interest of the dalits as well as Hindi literature. Actually, following Mikhail Bakhtin, we may conclude that neither the internal world of the creative writing is fully self-dependent nor fully dependent on external world, rather the dichotomy of internal and external worlds is false. The dialogical language, creative communication and imagination are the essential pillars of creative literature, but unfortunately most of dalit literature lacks these qualities.

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2. Ibid, P.13
3. Ibid, P.13

4. E.Zelliot (1996),"From Untouchable to Dalit", Manohar Publications, New Delhi. P.267
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7. Ibid P.15
8. Ibid. P.16
9. Ibid P.16
10. Ibid P.21
11. Ibid P.30
12. Ibid. P.31
13. Ibid. P.33
14. Ibid. P.50
15. Ibid. P.59
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17. Ibid. P.74
18. Ibid. P.79
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OBSERVATIONS ON DHARAMVIR BHARATI'S 'SURAJ KA SATVAN GHODA'

Avirup Ghosh

The most successful stories are those that tell themselves. The most telling of all tales are those that, instead of evoking an illusory world of fiction around the reader, question the validity and veracity of reality itself and thereby erase the fine, fecund line that separates fact from fiction. By drawing attention to the materiality and palpability of its own medium and by dissolving its metaphorical and symbolic devices into its narrative synchronicity, Dharamvir Bharati's *Suraj Ka Satvan Ghoda* makes it difficult to tell where facts end and fiction begins. To any reader it is about telling stories that eventually get written. To any reader who is acquainted with critical terminology, it is an acute instance of metafiction in Indian literature. To any critic armed with weapons of literary and extra-literary jargons, it is a canvas on which shades and not colours are played off against one another. But somehow, in spite of being unconventional and somewhat idiosyncratic, the story remains essentially simple.

The part of the difficulty that is produced during a reading of *Suraj Ka Satvan Ghoda* is the fact that an ordinary reader, much like a critic, would pay more attention to the form of the story, rather than its content. In critical terms, the '*sujet*' gains a pre-eminence over the 'fable' that is automatic and perhaps deliberate. At the heart of the novel we have the character *Manek Mullah*, who is also the storyteller. He is only a character in his own stories and stands out of them when he is telling them.

There is, obviously, a lapse in time between the events that he narrates and the here-and-now when he narrates them. We may say that with the passage of time his emotions have been recollected in relative tranquillity. Let us map out some of the co-ordinates of this story-telling/writing process: why does Manek tell his stories? How does he choose to tell them? And finally, is he really telling from his own experiences? Of these questions, the issue of narration would be the most tempting one for critics. In spite of the impression that *Suraj Ka Satvan Ghoda* is largely an experimental frame narrative whose employment of metafictional strategies leads it towards post-modernistic tendencies, follows a conventional narrative order. This can be validated by Manek Mullah's own preference for the Aristotelian legacy. He defines 'the beginning' as that which is preceded by nothing and is followed by 'the middle'; 'the middle' as that which is preceded by 'the beginning' and is followed by 'the end'; and, 'the end' as that which is preceded by 'the middle' and is followed by nothing. To logically extend Manek's position is to infer that a story is something that is situated between nothing and nothing. What then is this alchemy that links nothing unto nothing and impregnates it with fires of creation?

The story is chronological. The author chooses to present it as told by Manek without moral injunctions. The author, like Manek, is split into two- the observant,

often-commenting listener who, along with Omkar and Shyam, is lured by the storyteller and his tales; and the objective reporter of the stories as told by Manek. The sequence of events clarifies the chronology. The women who come and go in Manek's life— Jamuna, Lily and Satti- form the lynchpin around which the stories turn and advance. They are chapters in Manek's life which is somewhat complicated by the fact that one chapter spills over on the next and compete with each other, figuratively, for prominence and impression. An episode begins before another has ended. The characters mostly know each other and are even related: Manek feels an unconscious adolescent attraction for Jamuna; Jamuna loves Tanna; Tanna marries Lily with whom Manek had established an idealised sort of love; Tanna's father, Mahesar Dalal is crazed with Satti whom Manek loves but, when the time comes, cannot muster courage enough to save her. The impression that we get from the inter-relationship of the characters is one of a microcosm that represents a larger theatre where the subjects of love, betrayal, guilt and, most importantly, humanity are played out.

Perhaps a lot of people will recognize that *Suraj Ka Satvan Ghoda* is a love story in spite of Manek's warning against the inanity of what he calls the 'negative love story' scheme. (The despair and the sense of loss can only be diminished after the sufferer has lived through them

and refined them into art or maxims.) The three women in Manek's life represent three different kinds of love. The strange fascination that grips Manek suddenly one day for the same Jamuna with whom he grew up can be ascribed to friendly love devoid of sexual content or even possessiveness. The idealised relationship between Lily and Manek is transcendental and a figment of beautiful impossibility—an impassioned celebration of a moment's divinity. There are, on the other hand, sensuous overtones in the way Satti is described which evinces the mild physicality in Manek's attraction towards her intertwined with thrill of danger embodied in the perpetual presence of her knife. The three women fade in and out of Manek's memory but retain a ghostly presence in his consciousness. The 'bildungsroman' evolves through a series of experiences of economical, societal and personal shifts and as Manek goes along he lives his story, or stories, writing and re-writing it, always half-conscious that he is a character in a novel.

In Satyajit Ray's *Apur Sansar* (The World of Apu), Apu tells his friend about the strange, enchanted novel that he is writing, apparently based on his own life. But we find later in the film that his life becomes so intense and incandescent with vicissitudes swathed in episodes out of his novelistic conception that he disseminates his manuscripts from the top of a hill. The pages that contained bits and pieces of

his life, imagined and lived, scatter float and descend like pollen-grains and at that moment of intersection of life and fiction, reality and romance, an acute perception is affected. Life, with all of its ontological cliches, is meaningful but that meaning is lifeless in spite of art's constant effort to re-vitalise it and exhume some essence whereby the great duality of mutability and immortality may be resolved. And it is a situation where the protagonist stares straight into a darkness of incomprehensibility. At one point in *Suraj Ka Satvan Ghoda*, Manek finds it difficult to express his love for Satti and briefly considers resorting to his poetic abilities to convey his feelings. But poetry is a language that Satti hardly understands and her painfully sensitive rendition of songs drowns the artistry in Manek's poetry. Even Manek acknowledges the superiority of Satti's singing in terms of emotional impact. One day, when he is on his way to a publisher with the intention to get his poems (originally intended for Satti) published Manek is interrupted by Satti. This has an emblematic valence because it suggests a momentous instance when art is over-powered by life. In the end, Manek's love poems remain unpublished, perhaps destroyed by their creator, with traces of them as residual remains in his mind: when asked to recite, he begins but is unable to recollect. Manek Mullah does not write his story; he tells it. He may have forgotten his poems but not his story. Why does he tell it?

Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* begins with a stage darkened and the narrator Tom Wingfield emerging from that darkness to tell his story (or 'history') which has sat on his soul like a heavy load and has become increasingly burdensome with the itinerary of time because it is a story of guilt un-atoned, guilt half-understood. Like Conrad's *Lord Jim*, it is a story of abandonment and crisis. When Tom ends his story he asks his sister Laura, whispering unto the past, as it were, to blow out the candle, to terminate memory. Manek's act of telling his stories should be seen not just as an effort to ease his guilt— an invocation to *Mnemosyne*— and come to terms with his past but also, more importantly, his attempt at understanding the deeper mysterious patterns of his life. Once understood, they can be thawed into didactic conclusions with social meanings and dressed in the garbs of Marxism to cater to the disciplines of sociological thought. Manek's insistence on morals and didacticism acts as a cue for story-telling and an excuse for objectivity but with the completion of the story-cycle, and with the explanation of the significance of the title of the story, an emphasis on meaning returns and it is not entirely personal: at the end Manek's story is connected with the experience of the lower-middle class, their daily struggle with things beyond and within their control. But life goes on, Manek seems to say. There is something that drives life forward

through the sound and fury of the world. It may be the Hegelian historical agency or the evolutionism of the social Darwinists; the Platonic yearning for the Forms or the Shelleyan imagination: there is no doubt that it is a kind of consciousness that is always manifesting and re-incarnating itself in time, space and memory. It is embodied in the figures of the future, the child of Tanna, the child of Jamuna. The allegorical sounding phrase 'seventh horse of the sun' brings to mind a plethora of myths including Socrates' allusion to the symbolic horses drawing the chariot of the soul in *Phaedrus*. Within the story it also recalls the horse-carriage driver Ramdhan, a briefly outlined but significant character whose assistance to Jamuna in time of her need can be seen as either humanistic or symptomatic of climbing the social and economical ladders. The former interpretation is the dominant one, no doubt. It is a strategic play on the part of Manek Mullah to untie the meaning of his story from its specificity in his own life and free it to the realms of universal humanity. In other words, the explication of the myth of the seventh horse is devised to take the readers into several directions of history, myth-making, philosophy and obviously storytelling.

The reliability and legitimacy of his story is brought into question by Manek himself. If we discuss the pragmatic aspect of the story, we can clearly see that the story is a purgative medium:

by telling it, Manek purges his memories and he purges the literary consciousness of his audience that is dominated by the romance genre (such as Sharat Chandra Chatterji's *Devdas*). If the story is 'true', it is evident that Manek's betrayal of Satti and her supposed death pushes him to the edge of despair and fills him with existentialist angst and incapacitates him toward any positive exploration of his life because it forces him to look inward, into his own self, severed from the ordinary ties with society and friends, and confront the shadows in the dark woods of Dante's *Inferno*. It is only after he realizes that Satti is alive, his guilt is partially reduced, if not atoned. And that reduction helps him relate the incidents. If the story is not true, the narrator is playing Proteus, creating elaborate illusions only to demolish them in order to exercise his authorial control and didacticism. Either ways, the novel is fiction about a fictional character telling stories. Manek's yearning for '*nishkarsh*' is a simplistic endeavour to find ways in which life -not just his own- can be lived and come to terms with. Manek also illuminates that the reader, depending on his literary disposition, can see the ending as either a sad one or a happy one in view of the destiny of the main characters. The novelist is handed down the responsibility to write the novel because he has a certain kind of imagination- evident from his rather graphic dreams - that, however, he chooses not to employ. He does not

invest the story with symbolism and clarifies, more than once, that the novel is presented as told by Manek Mullah. The absurd issue of a sequel to the story-cycle is rendered cleverly invalid by the disappearance of Manek. The film version directed by Shyam Benegal ends with a union of fact and fiction when, while having tea with his companions Manek meets none other than Satti and as she retreats and fades into the background, he follows her and disappears. Thus the narrator erases himself out of the story and precipitates himself as the central character. This can be called a narratorial suicide that brings about a closure and at the same time feeds answers to open-ended questions related to the possibility of the exhaustion of storytelling, if not stories.

There are quite a lot of literary references in the text: from Sharat Chandra Chatterji and Rabindranath Tagore through *Little Red Riding Hood* and Oscar Wilde to Dante and Chekhov. These references suggest the deference and importance of literature in life and life in literature: the two cannot be divorced and are dependent on each other for expression and evolution albeit their constant divergence. It is significant that in spite of his interest in storytelling, Manek would keep no book in his room. Instead, he has material tokens culled from his own life, such as a knife and a horseshoe which are symbols from the past that speak louder than words. What makes the novel somewhat immune

to criticism is that it has an in-built criticism that constantly refers to the story being told. Manek and his listeners often intrude the story-telling process by making observations, commenting but never quite digressing. In fact, the entire story can be seen as an elaborate digression which only ends with the disappearance of Manek Mullah, the digresser, leaving and leading us to question the basic mimetic status of the story.

William Styron once said that one comes out of reading a great work with a slight sense of exhaustion which is the result of the feeling of having lived several lives. *Suraj Ka Satvan Ghoda*, in a brief space, makes us re-think about several things that we have come to take for granted like relationships, beauty, art, failure and most importantly, ourselves.

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HISTORY IN HINDI LITERATURE : 1864-1930

Hitendra Patel

In India, history writings developed at two levels. In the nineteenth century some Indians had internalised the western modern perspective of history writing and their history books were more or less in line with the history writings produced by the British historians in India. These books got crucial institutional support when history books were needed for school and college education in the years after 1857. On the other hand, at another level, a different kind of popular history writing began which articulated the visions of the growing intelligentsia in the age of nationalism. The age, considering the popular aspirations from the past, needed to retell the tales of Indian past as well as a vision of better Indian society. After our independence, academic history writing tradition flourished due to continued government support and access to modern educational institutions and these history books were considered proper history books whereas the latter remained powerful in public discourse outside academics. It would not be incorrect to say that popular histories could not be eclipsed by the academic histories even after independence. Both types of histories have developed along different paths, maintaining their autonomy.¹ This paper seeks to prepare an account of histories written in Hindi in the years between 1864 and 1930. As every society has its own singers, poets and writers it has also its own historians who prefer to see the past the way community wishes to. The tensions emerging due to the pressures of scientific and academic history writing had often been resolved through a complex manoeuvring of literary, historical, popular and traditional spaces and idioms. In this paper some aspects of complexities involved

in this history in literature are discussed.

In Hindi, the intelligentsia had been conscious of their social responsibilities from the days of Bharatendu Harishchandra when this language emerged as a modern language. The writers of Bharatendu era, the period between 1874 and 1900, also shared the concerns with their Bengali counterparts like Bankimchandra, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar and Rabindranath Tagore for writing proper history books in their own language for giving their readers a proper national perspective of their past. Hindi writers took inspiration from Bankimchandra saying that the history written by the Englishmen must not be taken as valid history of Bengal and those Bengalis who took these as valid ones were not true Bengali. ²

Like the icons of Bengali renaissance, leading Hindi writers of Hindi renaissance- Babu Shiva Prasad, Bharatendu Harishchandra, Keshavram Bhatt, Pratap Narayan Mishra and others wrote on Indian historical past. But, the number of Hindi historical books had not been as impressive as that of Bengali since the tradition of writing history books in Bengali had been much earlier than Hindi.³ After 1857, many History books in Bengali were written for school and college students. ⁴

It is obvious that these academic history books were qualitatively different from the popular history books penned by writers like Rajanikanta Gupta. In 1860s, the trend of writing historical stories began which

was inspired by James Todd's tales of Rajput warriors of Rajasthan. Bankimchandra's novels made this genre more popular. Some of these books were historical in form and literary in content. Some books followed historical accounts but at the level of narration some subtle literary devices were employed. Of these most representative books include Rajanikanta Gupta's *Arya Kirti* and *Vir Mahila*, Chandi Charan Sen's *Jhansir Rani* and *Maharaja Nanda Kumar*, Nagendra Nath Gupta's *Amar Singh* and Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar's *Baji Rao*. Some others like Girish Ghosh, Dwijendralal Mitra and others made historical fictions and plays popular.

In Hindi, the beginning of history of writing can be attributed to Babu Shivaprasad Singh who wrote three volumes of *Itihas Timir Nashak* between 1864 and 1873. In this, Singh, following the colonial historiographers, discarded puranic tradition of history-writing to write evidence based authentic history. In this, he, like British historians, painted Middle Age as the period of darkness in which the Muslims destroyed Hindu temples and cared little for the progress of the land. He attributed the credit of freeing this nation from the hands of Muslims and putting the nation on the path of modernity and progress. Singh, however, did not find fault with Muslims alone; he also wrote passages against the Brahmins which infuriated some orthodox Hindus.⁵ Singh's another history book *Vir Singh Vrittant* was also taught in schools for decades

along with *Itihas Timir Nashak*.

Some other history books were also written in Hindi. Of these, mention can be made of Keshavram Bhatt's *Hindustan ka Itihas*, Shivnandan Sahay's *Bharat Varsh ka Itihas* and *Bengal ka Itihas*, Deen Dayal Singh's *Bharat Varshiya* Itihas (1890), Gokarna Singh's *Bharat Varsha ka Samast Itihas* (1899), Uma Nath Mishra's *Hindustan ka Itihas Pratham Bhag*, Saryu Prasad Mishra's *Nepal ka Prachin Itihas* (1909), etc. Apart from these well known history books some lesser known translation of history books were also made available. A biography of Mughal emperor Akbar -*Badshah Akbar ka Sankshipta Jivan Charitra*, written by Dr Brauer in the format of a novel, originally published in Dutch from Hague in 1872 seems to have been translated into Hindi around 1872.⁶ It is interesting to note that in a time when many historical books were written which had expressed anti-Muslim sentiments, in this book Akbar was shown as a great Indian ruler.

Many history books were written in Hindi in the early twentieth century which aimed to please the government. Of these a representative book is Pandit Lajjaram Sharma's *Victoria ka Charitra*, published in 1901 from Shri Venkateshwar Press. The language was fortunate that it had editors and writers who knew Bengali and Marathi as well. So, a number of books were translated as soon as it came in these languages. Among Hindi readers Romesh Chandra Dutt's book was translated into Hindi by Baldev Mishra which was

published by Shri Venkateshwar Press in 1901. Rammohan Ray's biography was written by Yadunandan Mishra in 1917. To keep Hindi readers aware of eminent people of India a useful encyclopedia of well known people titled *Madan Kosh* was published by Madan Lal Tiwari of Itawa in 1907. This can be used as an important source for knowing contemporary historical assessment of different greats of India. Life sketches of one thousand greats were prepared in this collection. Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, great editor of *Saraswati*, published a book on the lives of great Indian women in 1909. In this he had praised women like Lakshmibai as a divine, jewel of a lady whose valor was unmatched.⁷

In these history books the academic and literary perspectives were mixed to prepare accounts which blended modern history with communal and casteist perspectives to colour a national narrative. This was more explicit in the history books prepared by Hindu organisations. In a history book which was widely circulated the chapters were

1. Contents
2. Universe and Bharatvarsha
3. Map of the Universe
4. India as the Guru of the World
5. Episode of Creation and Wheels of Time
6. Original Place of the Creation of Mankind and the Varnashram Bonds
7. Social Organisation of Bharatdweep
8. The Eternity of the Vedas and the

Shastras

9. The Religion of Bharatdweep and the Glory of its Knowledge.⁸

The impact of this type of history writing was such that these histories were in circulation even in 1930s. Even during the heydays of the nationalist movement in 1939 Mishra Bandhu, Dr Shyam Bihari Mishra and Pandit Sukdev Bihari Mishra, wrote a 423-page history of India. A look into the chapterisation scheme gives an idea of how Puranic history writing was at work.

1. Geography and Some Knowable Things

2. The Main Pillars of Indian History

3. The Significance of Indian History

4. Ancient Kingdoms

5. Bharat of Pre-Buddha Times

6. The Rigveda – First Mandal

7. The Rig Veda – The Remaining Mandals

8. Four Vedas

9. Chronology

10. Treta Yuga – The Kingdom of Surya

11. Treta Yug – The Dynasty of Paurva

12. Treta Yug – Different Branches of Chandra Vansha

13. Treta Yug – Bhagwan Ramchandra

14. Dwapar Yug – First Half

15. Dwapar Yug – Mahabharata

16. Early Kaliyug

17. Brahman Literature Yug

18. Sutra Sahitya Yug⁹

An example of the kind of history writing which was in existence in the Bhojpuri-speaking region can be seen from this excerpt: “Believing in four Vedas, six shastras, eighteen purans and thirty-three crore devata Hindus to begin with, differentiated according to *bhav-bhaesh bhasha* (language, beliefs and customs), and then the Mahabharata caused further havoc. The one or two gems of valour that remained were finished off by Lord Buddha’s ahimsa...our ferociousness simply disappeared, our sense of pride deserted us, and as for anger, all sorts of sins were laid at its door. The result: we became devatas, mahatmas, or for that matter nice fellows [*bhalmanas*], but we lost our spunk. No fire, no spark, simply cold ash, that’s what we became: ‘*nihashankam deepte lokaih pashya bhasmchye padam.*’

And on the other side in the desert of Arabia a soul appeared who was as brave as his word, and in whose new religion killing, slaughtering, fighting and marauding were the principal elements...”¹⁰

The History textbook taught at the matriculation level in Bihar schools in 1921 was written by Pandit Ramdahn Mishra and revised by a famous scholar Prof. Ramawatar Sharma. In this book too the chapters were arranged in such a way that Aryan times, non-Aryan times, Manusamhita, Muslim times and independent Hindu and Muslim states were taught as different chapters. In describing

the events the writer had no hesitation in saying that Hindus were fighting against the Muslims. In the context of a war between Anang Pal and Mahmood he wrote in the following manner: "Raja Anang Pal ... faced the enemies at Peshawar. But, the labour of the Hindus proved futile."¹¹ His assessment of Mahmood was: " Mahmood was a plunderer, greedy and idol-demolisher."¹² Obviously, even this modern history that was taught in Bihar's schools gave the Hindus and Muslims historical categories through which one could understand the history of India.¹³ The textbook was not out and out a communal interpretation of Indian past and there had been some passages that gave the impression to readers that there was an assimilation of cultures in the 'Muslim' period.¹⁴ But, what was crucial was that the impression that Muslims were attacking Hindus and the peace-loving Hindus waged war against the cruel Muslims survived even in this narrative. The writer was particularly harsh on Aurangzeb.¹⁵

A survey of the novels written on historical themes reveals that these novels were written to support the morals of *Nissahay Hindu* (Helpless Hindu) by providing stories to make them feel good. A title- *Nissahay Hindu* sums up the mindset of the religious Hindus of the Hindi intelligentsia of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This novel was written in 1881 by Braj Ratna Das, a well-known Hindi writer, and the plight of the vulnerable Hindus was narrated in it.

During the post-Mutiny period when

the British Government considered the Muslims the main culprits for the revolt, the emergence of this threat perspective is very significant. Perhaps the helplessness of the old elite to absorb the forces of change could be a possible explanation.¹⁶ The story of Bankimchandra's *Anand Math* can help to understand this. When Bankimchandra wrote *Anand Math* in a serialised form for his journal *Banga Darshan* the sanyasis were fighting the British. As Bankimchandra was a government official, writing a novel on this theme could have caused a problem. So he decided to make the sanyasis fight the Muslims without changing the storyline. The main concern of the writer was to arouse national consciousness. For this the Hindus needed to be supplied with stories from history in such a way that they could be seen with the qualities of a brave and dignified community.¹⁷

There are a number of Hindi novels that were written between 1870 and 1917. The books written by Kishori Lal Goswami, Gangaprasad Gupta, Jairam Gupta during this period are most significant. Kishori Lal, the father of historical romances, wrote *Hridaya Harini va Adarsha Ramani*,¹⁸ *Lavang Lata va Aadarsh Bala*,¹⁹ *Gulbahar va Adarsh Bhratrisneha*²⁰, *Tara va Kshatrakulmalini*²¹, *Kanak Kusum va Mastani*²², *Hirabai va Behayayi ka borka*,²³ *Sultana Razia beghum va Rangamahar mein halahal*,²⁴ *Mallika Devi va Banga Sarojini*²⁵, *Lucknow ki kabra va Shahi Mahalsara*,²⁶ *Sona aur Sugandha va Pannabai*²⁷, *Lal Kunwar va Shahi*

Rangamaharaj,²⁸ *Noorjehan*,²⁹ *Gupta Godana*.³⁰

All these novels were not pure historical romances as the second title suggests. These books were written with Hindu Brahmanical sensibilities where the man-woman relationship and the relationships between mother and son, master and slave, father and son, brothers and sisters were depicted as ideal, using the values of Hindu families. The Muslims entered these stories either as cruel villains or as beautiful women who were dying for their Hindu lovers. In some cases Muslim women like Noorjehan and Razia Sultan were written about but it seems that these stories generally highlighted the intrigues at the courts of Muslim rulers rather than the qualities of these powerful Muslim women. Some other writers followed this pattern of writing. Ganga Prasad Gupta followed this pattern of writing in *Noorjehan va Sansar Sundari* (1902), *Veer Patni* (1903), *Kunwar Singh Senapati* (1903), *Veer Jaimal va Krishna Kanta* (1903), *Hammeer* (1904). Jairam Das Gupta wrote *Kashmir Patan* (1906),³¹ *Kishori va Veer Bala* (1907),³² *Mayarani* (1908), *Veer Varangana va Aadarsha Lalana* (1909), *Rani Panna va Raj Lalana* (1910).

The other more significant historical novels that depicted the greatness of the Hindus in

historical times are: *Maharaja Vikramaditya ka jivan charitra*,³³ *Maharaja Chhatrapati Shivaji ka jivan charitra*, *Veer Narayan*, *Jaya*,³⁴ *Anarkali*, *Barahvi Sadi*

ka veer Jagdev Parmar, *Prithwiraj Chauhan*³⁵, *Kotarani*, *Tantia Bheel*, *Panipat*, *Veer Bala*, *Naradev*, *Rani Bhavani*, *Noorjehan va Jahangir Begum*, *Padmini*, *Roothi Rani*, *Veer Maloji Bhonsale*, *Maharana Pratap Singh ki veerata*, *Saundarya Kusum va Maharashtra ka uday*, *Veerangana*, *Veer Bala*, *Jaishree va Veer Balikam Maharani Padmini*, *Rana Sanga aur Babar*, *Mewar ka uddharkarta*, *Maharashtra Veer*, *Razia Begum*³⁶, *Pranapalan*³⁷, *Veer Churamani*, *Bheem Singh*, *Krishna Kumari Bai*, *Anangpal*, *Rajput Ramani*, *Lalcheen*³⁸ *Vichitra Veer*, *Veer Mani*, *Sone ki Rakh va Padmini*, *Rani Durgavati*, *Swapna Rajasthan*, and *Aadarsha veerangana Durga*.

In these novels the storyline follows somewhat predictable patterns. Invariably the Hindu characters are struggling to achieve the ideal. Between these characters and their ideals are the Muslim characters. In almost all stories the cruelty and selfishness of Muslims is invariably present. In those novels where the Muslims are to be retained for the authenticity of the story the whole situation was depicted as if all characters are seen intriguing against each other. The moral of the story was that Muslims are cruel, selfish, intriguing and dishonest.

If we add the large number of works translated from Bengali to Hindi,³⁹ which were also

historical novels, we have a substantial amount of literature produced during the 1870s and 1920s which can be considered

literature whose objective was to arouse national sentiments by pitting Hindu heroes and heroines against Muslim villains. In addition, a number of Bengali works were translated by the writers of Bihar, like Ishwari Prasad Sharma, in which the Hindu perspective was quite obvious.⁴⁰

About these history writings a scholar has aptly observed that these historical texts were prepared by those who themselves were not historians; they were writers as well as creators of a new ideology.

⁴¹ In these texts, the present remained always present and the concerns of the writer determined his entire narration. The description itself conveyed the message. Even in the narratives which had to concede the defeat of the protagonist, the history writer gave the moral victory to the vanquished. In some histories like the history of struggle between Alexander and Porus the history was narrated in such a way that the result of the war became immaterial and the moral victory of a Hindu king was writ large on the historical narrative. As long as the historical accounts were useful for promoting the ideology of the intelligentsia these were acceptable. The problem areas were left out. The case of history in dreams is interesting to see how the desired history was written with the device of dream situations. The trend was initiated by Bhudev Mukhopadhyay in 'Swapnalabdh Bharater Itihas' and this was followed, in Hindi, by Radhacharan Goswami, Ambikadatta Vyas etc. This kind of history was read with great interest by contemporary Hindi readership.

It would be desirable, however, to keep in mind some other efforts of history writing which strangely remain ignored by historians. In vernacular history writing three books should be mentioned: Shad Azimabadi's *Tawarikh e Suba Bihar* (1870), Bihari Lal Fitrat's *Aina e Tirhut* (1883) and Munshi Binayak Prasad's *Tawarikh e Ujjainia*⁴².

Some other sources suggest that we should pay attention to some lesser known people like Sahamat Ali Khan and his writings. Scholars are familiar with Bharatendu Harishchandra's Ballia address and its significance for its modern contents but a book, published in 1882 has cited some passages of this remarkable Muslim scholar to suggest that he was equally pragmatic in his approach much earlier.⁴³ Some other writings, which appeared in the contemporary magazines like *Harishchandra Magazine* in 1870s suggest the existence of modern pragmatic ideas in the writings of Hindi writers.⁴⁴

It can be suggested that the historical writings of late nineteenth century Hindi writings had been very different from writings of 1920s and after, when a new perspective had emerged due to mass movements and enlargement of political space. It is true that we come across various examples of radical views expressed in Hindi literary space⁴⁵ but, on the whole, it can be admitted, the Hindi literary space was heavily dominated by people with traditional ideological mindset. History writings of this phase also reflect similar ideological orientations.

In the early history writings we find a mix of scientific and traditional perspectives. Writers had, in general, hoped to see progress in society but they also criticised the way this progress had brought a cultural degradation in society. As early as October 1893 a respected paper carried an article- 'Is this Progress or Decline?' which can be seen in this context how aware writers had been about the adverse impact of British rule. "आज घर में हाहाकार मच रहा", प्रजा अन्न के कष्ट से भूखों मर रही है, जिसे देखो विषाद वदन ही पाओगे। किसी के मुख पर हँसी नहीं है तब क्या इसी का नाम उन्नति है? बाहर जैसा दिखाई पड़ता था अब भी ज्यों का त्यों दिखाई पड़ता है, परन्तु जिस भाव के विकास में भारत वासियों का गौरव था उस पर आज भावान्तर हो गया है। जिस शक्ति की वृद्धि से मनुष्य का मनुष्यत्व बढ़ता है आज समग्र भारत सन्तान उस शक्ति से विहीन है! केवल स्वार्थ ही की ओर सबकी दृष्टि है केवल स्वार्थ के लिए सबों ने जातीय स्नेह और ममता को छोड़ दिया है। भारत सन्तान आज मरकत का त्याग करके काच संग्रह करने की अनुरागी हो रही है। भले बुरे का विचार न करके जिधर मन में आता है उसी मार्ग का अनुसरण करती जाती है। पाश्चात्य शिक्षा का प्रभाव प्रति दिवस बढ़ता जाता है माता-पिता के साथ अब भारत वासियों का वह सद्भाव नहीं रहा। आहार व्यवहार की सब रीतें बदलकर कुछ से कुछ हो गयी हैं, जिस देशवासियों का परिवार पालन मुख्य धर्म था, जो अतिथि विमुख जाने पर अनिष्ट की आशंका करते थे आज उसी देश के वासी आत्माभिमानी होटल जाते हैं क्या यह उन्नति है?... हमारे पूर्वज एक सामान्य उपाय के सहारे दस मनुष्यों का भरण पोषण करने में समर्थ थे किन्तु हम शिक्षाभिमानी उनकी उपेक्षा प्रचुर धनउपार्जन करके भी दस जनों का पालन करना तो दूर रहा किन्तु अपना भी पेट सुखपूर्वक नहीं भर सकते और न अपनी प्रतिदिन उपयोग की आवश्यकताओं

को दूर कर सकते हैं। तो भी हमारी वेशभूषा और भोग विलासपयोगी पदार्थों की आवश्यकता अभी तक चरम सीमा को नहीं पहुँची।"46

Upto this point the writer might be said to have been influenced by reformist propaganda but beyond this the writer had produced an informed economic critique of British rule. He said, "अंग्रेज सौदागर विलायत से अप्रयोजनीय और सुखकर-सी दीखने वाली नई नई चीजें हमलोगों के विलास के लिए लाये जाते हैं और हमारा क्लेश संचित द्रव्य इंग्लैंड को ले जा रहे हैं। जिन सब वस्तुओं की कोई आवश्यकता नहीं है और न उनका ग्रासच्छादन से कोई सम्बन्ध है तो भी न मालूम कि किस मोहिनी शक्ति के प्रभाव से हम अपना असंख्य धन व्यय करके भी खरीदते जाते हैं, परन्तु यह अनुमान कर सकते हैं कि यह रुचि भेद ही हमारे अनिष्ट का मूल है जो हो यह संसार की बातें थीं इन्हें जाने दीजिये किन्तु आजकल हमलोगों की एक इच्छा और भी बलवती होती जाती है वह यही है कि चाहे जितना ही रुपया क्यों न फूंक दिया जाए किन्तु समाज में मानरक्षा अवश्य करनी चाहिए। परन्तु सच पूछिए तो हमें इस बात से कुछ भी अभिज्ञता प्राप्त नहीं हुई, कि मान किस में रहता है बस इसीलिए हम अपना सर्वस्व स्वाहा कर रहे हैं और अनेक बार अविमृष्यता के कारण हमें पछताना भी पड़ता है..."47

In the conclusion the essay said, "हमारा समाज इन दिनों जिस अवनति के क्षीत में बह रहा है जिस पाश्चात्य सभ्यता के वशीभूत होकर समस्त भारत सन्तान जर्जरित हो गई है...हमारा समाजबन्धन शिथिल हो गया है, दूसरे जातीय प्रेम में हमारी अरुचि हो गई तीसरे शिक्षाभिमानी अंग्रेजों का प्रताप हमें उठने ही नहीं देता... अंग्रेजी राज की शिक्षा के कारण विलायत जात द्रव्यों में स्पर्धा ही नहीं बढ़ती

जाती है किन्तु उनके भरोसे हम अपना सर्वस्व छोड़ बैठे हैं। यदि विलायत से दियासलाई की आमद न हो तो दीपक जलाना कठिन पड़ जाता है, गर्मी और जाड़ों के कपड़े यदि विदेश से न आवें तो नंगा रहना पड़े। पिल्स और मिक्सचर यदि अमेरिका और इंग्लैंड के डॉक्टरों के बनाये न हों तो बीमारी को आराम न पहुँचे... अपने देशजात द्रव्यों को हम घृणा कर छोड़ ही बैठे... हममें अब स्वजाति प्रेम नहीं रहा, इसी से इतनी शोचनीय दशा हो रही है, नहीं तो देशीय कारीगर उत्साहहीन होकर अपना व्यापार छोड़कर क्यों दूसरी दूसरी वृत्तियों का अवलम्बन करते! विदेशी पदार्थों में जितनी हमारी अभिलाषा बढ़ेगी, उतना ही समझना चाहिए कि हमलोग उन्नति के मूल में कुठाराघात करते चले जावेंगे!" 48

There can not be any denial that in the writings of Hindi intelligentsia of the period between 1880 and 1920 we can discern strong Varnashram ideal bias but the writers had been quite democratic in their language and approach. They wanted to make an impact on the large majority of people by informing them about the past and make them aware of their responsibilities. The writings of this period are significant for enriching Hindi and trying to make use of Bengali and Marathi publications for the benefit of Hindi writers. A large number of Bengali texts were translated into Hindi in these years. The role of press like Khadagvilas Press and Shri Venkateshwar Press was crucial in this. Some history books also tried to use a language which was understandable to both Hindi and Urdu users. Shiv Prasad

Singh's history book was written in the language of everyday use. For example see this description- "हैदरअली से अंग्रेजों का जो सुलहनामा हुआ था, उसमें शर्त थी कि बचाव के लिए दोनों एक-दूसरे की मदद करेंगे। लेकिन जब मरहटों ने हैदरअली पर चढ़ाव किया तो अंग्रेजों ने उसे कुछ भी मदद न दी। इस बात की उसके जी में बड़ी लाग थी। वह सन् 1780 में एक लाख फौज लेकर चढ़ आया और अंग्रेज अमलदारी में हर तरफ लूट मचा दी।"⁴⁹

This proximity of three languages in history writing is worth taking note of. In 1874, Bharatendu Harischandra wrote in Hindi which had been influenced by Bengali - "जिस प्रकार अमेरिका उपनिवेशित होकर स्वाधीन हुआ वैसे ही भारतवर्ष भी स्वाधीनता लाभ कर सकता है।"

The history books written in between 1870s and 1890s show the tendencies of Hindi writers to write freely on caste and regional histories showing regional perspective. Of these Harischandra's *Agrwalo ki Utpatti* (1871), *Charitavali* (1871-80), *Puravritta -Sangrah* (1872-74), *Maharashtra Desh ka Itihas* (1875), *Uday Purodaya* (1877), *Boondi ka Rajvansha* (written in 1880 and published in 1882 from Bankopore), *Khatriyon ki Utpatti* (1873-78, published in 1883), *Badshah Darpan* (1884), *Chittorgarh* (published in 1890).

Some scholars have rightly said that writers of Hindi books based on history

had been trying to do what Walter Scott, Bankimchandra and Harinarayan Apte had achieved in English, Bengali and Marathi languages.⁵⁰ The popularity of Bengali literary historical books was particularly noticeable. Kashi Prasad Jayaswal in 1899, then a young man, had observed that these imitations of Bengali novels lacked the spirit of Hindi and these should not be considered novels of Hindi.⁵¹ He was also concerned about the fact that the unhistorical features of Bengali historical novels, like showing the Muslims as barbaric and cruel people, were creeping in Hindi novels as well.⁵² But this kind of writing continued for many years. A large number of Bengali books were translated into Hindi and later novels written in Hindi were received with enthusiasm. Rajanikant Gupta's book *Arya Kirti* was translated as *Bharatiya Veerata* by Baidyanath Sahay in which a favourable history of the rebel leaders like Kunwar Singh and Lakshmibai was particularly highlighted. This book had been published in 1923. By this time the revolt of 1857 had started to be taken favourably by Hindi writers. This shift, signalled by Ghadar party publications and articles of *Prabha* was crucial for a new kind of history writing in India.⁵³ Even the translations of the books of earlier times were done with a different mindset. This subtle change is particularly noticeable in Iswari Prasad Sharma's *Sipahi Vidroh ya San Sattavan ka Ghadar*. This book was based on Rajanikanta Gupta's volumes on the history of 1857 but it showed a shift in the evaluation of 1857 rebellion.

In conclusion, it can be said that we need to take into account a large number of Hindi tracts which had shaped the historical sense of educated people of Hindi speaking regions. We find that a large number of these historical tracts were works of fiction disguised as history. Scholars have discussed about *itihās ras* which produces historical flavour but which does not actually contain valid historical accounts. Ever since the historical texts are open to discussion like a literary text with literary devices, a trend which had gained ground after Hayden White's *MetaHistory*, the question of historical imagination has become a big concern for historians. It is interesting as well as significant that when issues like Ayodhya or 1857 come up, academic history finds itself facing a popular history often backed by historical fictions and oral traditions. It is important that we study in history how things actually happened but it is equally important why people want to remember things in their own way. We probably need more dialogue between these disciplines to answer this question.

1. Partho Chatterjee argues that the academic histories, written in English, are meant for only those who share common concerns and idioms. See Partho Chatterjee, 'History and the Domain of the Popular', *Seminar*, 2002.

2. For a detailed discussion on this see Rupa Gupta, *Sahitya aur Vichardhara: Bharatendu evam Bankimchandra* (Delhi: Yash Prakashan, 2006), pp. 229-31. This book convincingly discusses how views of Bankimchandra had been taken favourably by Bharatendu and others. She also adds that Hindi writers also took inspiration from Marathi historical books.
3. In Bengali, first history book was published in 1808 when Mrityunjay Vidyalankar wrote *Rajabali* which was based on Purans. The scientific historical texts were produced in Bengali after 1857. Ishawarchandra Vidyasagar and Ramgati Nyayratna translated an English history book- *History of Bengal*.
4. Among these textbooks most notable books were Bhudev Mukhopadhyay's *Puratattva Sar*, *Banglar Itihas*, *Romer Itihas*, *Englander Itihas* and *Swapnalabdh Bharater Itihas*, Krishna Chandra Ray's *Bharatvarsher Itihas* (its ninth edition came in 1870), Kshetra Nath Bandyopadhyay's *Sishu Path Banglar Itihas* (1872), Khirod Chandra Raychaudhary's *Samagra Bharater Samshipta Itihas* (1876), and Bhola Nath Chakravarty's *Se Ek Din aar Aei Ek Dini arthat Banger Purbo O Vartaman Avastha Bharater Puravritta* (its fifth edition came out in 1875) etc.
5. For a sympathetic account of Babu Shivaprasad Singh's *Itihas Timir Nashak* see Vir Bharat Talwar, *Rassakashi*.
6. Its one available copy gives details of its translation in German in 1972 but there is no mention of its Hindi translation. I am grateful to the librarian of Bhagwan Pustakalya, Bhagalpur for making this rare copy available to me.
7. Generally Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi is referred as a great Hindi editor who had criticised the leaders of 1857 revolt as murderers but in this book the tone of his writing is different. Particularly he had picked Lakshmibai for praise. According to this book the piece on the queen of Jhansi was written originally in 1904. See Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, *Vanita Vilas* (Lucknow: Ganga Pustak Mala Karyalaya, 1926 [1919]), pp. 39-67.
8. This book had its year of publication mentioned as Kalegartabda 5037, perhaps indicating a calendar for Kaliyuga.
9. Dr Shyam Bihari Mishra and Pandit Sukdev Bihari Mishra, *Buddha Purva ka Bhartiya Itihas*, 1939.
10. Mannan Prasad Dwivedi, *Musalmani Rajya ka Itihas, Pahila Bhag*, Shyam Sundar Das (Varanasi: Kashi Nagari Pracharini Sabha, 1920), pp.1-2, cited in Shahid Amin, 'On Retelling the Muslim Conquest of North India,' in *History and the Present*, Partha Chatterjee and Anjan Ghosh (eds.), (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2002) p.25.
11. Ramdahin Mishra, *Bharat ka Matriculation Itihas* (Bankipore (Patna):1918), p.49.
12. *Ibid*, p. 51.
13. Pandit Ramdahin Sharma, *Bharat ka Matriculation Itihas*, (Bankipore, 1918).
14. *Ibid*, p. 129.
15. *Ibid*, pp. 129-30.
16. We have already discussed Karl Mannheim's views on the transitional phases from pre-modern to modern situations. In these turbulent times "Just as nature was intelligible to primitive man, and his deepest feelings of anxiety arose from the incalculability of the

- forces of nature so for modern industrialized man the incalculability of the forces at work in the social system under which he lives, with its economic crises, inflation, and so on, has become a source of equally pervading fears". See Chapter 2 for more discussion on this.
17. For details see Rupa Gupta, *Sahitya aur Vichardhara* (Delhi: Yash Prakashan, 2006).
 18. This novel was published in 1890 in *Hindustan*. The editor, Pratap Narayan Mishra, was the man who created the famous slogan, 'Hindi, Hindu, Hindustan'. It got published as a book in 1904.
 19. It was also written in 1890 but as Pratap Narayan Mishra had left the paper it could not be published in *Hindustan*. It was published in 1904.
 20. It was published in *Saraswati* in 1902.
 21. Published in 1902.
 22. This book was based on *Bajirao and Mastani* written by Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar, the famous Maharashtrian writer born in Bihar, who wrote many Bengali books. It is difficult to know whether the original book had been as anti-Muslim as the Hindi book was. It was published in 1904. This narrative line was reused somewhat differently by a Hindi journal *Manoranjan* some 10 years later.
 23. Written in 1904, published in 1905.
 24. The first part of this novel was written in 1904 and the second part in the next year.
 25. Written and published in 1905.
 26. Published in 1906.
 27. Published in 1909.
 28. Published in 1909.
 29. Published probably in 1909.
 30. The first part of this novel was written by Devakinandan Khatri. Kishorilal wrote the other three volumes in the early 1920s.
 31. The background in this novel is the cruelty Mohammad Azim Khan and his brother Zubbar Khan, the Muslim rulers of Kashmir, showed to the innocent Hindu people. Ultimately, the novel tells us, that Punjab Keshari Ranjit Singh emancipated the Hindus from their rule.
 32. In this novel even Akbar the great was depicted as luring a princess of Mewar. Ultimately all his conspiracies failed. Gopal Rai, an authority on the novels of modern India, sums up the novel by saying that its main theme is the depiction of Akbar's baseness and the princess' bravery and devotion to her husband. (*Akbar ki neechata tatha kishori ki veerata aur pativratta ka chitran upanyas ka mool pratipadya hai.*) Gopal Rai, *Hindi Upanyas Kosh Khand ek* (Patna: Grantha Niketan, 1968), p.131.
 33. This book was written by Kartik Prasad Khatri and was published from Muzaffarpur in 1893.
 34. This was also written by Kartik Prasad Khatri of Muzaffarpur in 1897.
 35. Two books with the same title *Prithviraj Chauhan* were written, by Jayanti Prasad Upadhyay and Pandit Baldev Prasad Mishra.
 36. This was written by Brajnandan Sahay, a famous Hindi writer of Bihar in 1915.
 37. This novel was written by Siddhanath Singh and was published by Ishwari Prasad Sharma of Arrah in 1915.

38. This book was written by Brajnandan Sahay in 1921. Sensing its popularity this book was translated into Gujarati in 1926.
39. For an idea of the amount of literature which was translated and published in Bihar we can see the list of books published by Khadagvial Press, Patna. In the period between 1889 and 1907 these important historical works were translated from Bengali to Hindi and published :
- Rajsingh (Bankimchandra), translated by Pratap Narayan Mishra, 1894. (Another translation was done by Kishorilal Goswami in 1910)
- Indira (Bankim): translated by Pratap Narayan Mishra, 1894.
- Yuglanguriya (Bankim): translated by Pratap Narayan Mishra, 1894. (Three editions were published.)
- Radharani (Bankim): translated by Pratap Narayan Mishra, (improvised by Hariaudh), 1897.
- Kapalkundala, (Bankim): translated by Pratap Narayan Mishra, 1901. (Three editions.)
- Durgesh Nandini (Bankim): translated by Radhakrishna Das, 1901.
- Amar Singh (Nagendranath Gupta): translated by Pratap Narayan Mishra, 1907.
- Chandrasekhar (Bankim): translated by Brajnandan Sahay, 1907.
- Indira (Bankim): translated by Kishorilal Goswami, 1908.
- Devi Chaudhurani (Bankim): translated by Akshevat Mishra, Prabhudayal Pandey, 1913
- Madhumati (Purnachandra Chattopadhyay) : translated by Vyas Ram Shankar Sharma, 1886.
- Rajendra Malati (Prasiddha Mayavi), 1897.
- (For the complete list see Dhirendranath Singh, *Aadhunik Hindi Ke Vikas Mein Khadagvilas Press Ki Bhoomika* (Patna: Bihar Rashtrabhasha Parishad, 1986), pp.298-99.
40. Ishwari Prasad Sharma was one of the most important Hindi writers of Bihar until he died in 1927 at the early age of 34. He wrote more than 30 books. In the present context his works which helped in the creation and glorification of the Hindu past we can mention *San Sattavan ka Ghadar*, *Sipahi Vidroh*, *Shakuntala*, *Sati Parvati*, *Chandrakumar va Manorama*. His accounts would tilt towards the Hindu version of history given the slightest opportunity. Even when he was writing a biography of Dadabhai Naoroji he started mourning the sad state of the Hindus.
41. Sudipto Kaviraj, *The Unhappy Consciousness; Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay and the Formation of Nationalist Discourse in India* (Delhi: OUP,1998[1995]), pp. 107-11. For some more discussion on this see Partha Chatterjee, 'Introduction' in Partha Chatterjee and Anjan Ghosh eds., *History and the Present* , (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2002), p. 10.
42. Binayak Prasad started writing this book in 1883. The Maharaja of Dumraon had invited scholars to suggest the method of writing proper history. Many, including Bharatendu Harischandra, suggested use of local sources like family history and oral history for a proper historical account. See Surendra Gopal, *Urdu Historiography in Bihar* (Patna:

- K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute, 2004), pp. 79-80.
43. Babu Ramdin Singh, *Bihar Darpan*. Dhirendra Nath Singh ed., (Darbhanga: Babu Kameshwar Singh Kalyani Foundation), 1994.
44. See Dhirendra Nath Singh, *Bihar Darpan*.
45. For a remarkably radical critique of caste system see *Hindi Pradip*, April 1889, p. 4.
46. *Bihar Bandhu*, October 1893.
47. *Ibid*.
48. *Ibid*.
49. Babu Shiva Prasad, *Itihas Timir Nashak-2*, p.16, cited in Vir Bharat Talwar, *op. cit.*, p. 69.
50. Madhuresh, *op. cit.* p. 230.
51. K. P. Jayaswal, 'Hindi Upanyas Lekhako ko Ulahan', *Hindi Pradip*, January, 1899. For details on this see Gopal Rai, *Hindi Upanyas ka Itihas* (New Delhi: Rajkamal Prakashan, 2005[2002]),pp. 79-80).
52. *Ibid*.
53. This shift is dealt with in details in Hitendra Patel, 'Gadar ke Pratham Rashtriya Andolan Banane ki Katha' in Devendra Choubey, Badrinarayan and Hitendra Patel eds., *1857 : Bharat ka Pahala Mukti Sangharsha* , Delhi: Prakashan Sansthan, 2008, pp. 29-35.

Hitendra Patel, born 1968, obtained his doctorate from JNU and joined Rabindra Bharti University, Kolkata to teach modern history. He has published books and articles in Hindi, English and Bengali. Has recently published a book in English on Khudi Ram Bose and a novel in Hindi 'haaril'.

HINDI'S PLACE IN THE UNIVERSE

Yutta Austin

Translated by
Ravindra Narayan Mishra

The age of globalization

We all hear, read, and know - our age is age of globalization. The world shrinks. There remains no unknown place, country or race, where the influence of other country is not visible. Like a small village the world has become a place where we all know everything about one another, talk to one another, work with one another and influence life mutually.

Since the time people started to discover unknown areas and countries by traveling they used to wonder at the strangeness. But nowadays this word has become almost unnecessary. Is it because we know everything about everything or is it because difference is becoming uniformity? When we are talking about globalization do we even ask what does it mean and what is its consequence? Is globalization of today introduction of one another, mutual exchange between equals, from which every country might benefit? Or it is imperialism of this age whose benefit would go to western countries and loss—economic, cultural and linguistic—to the developing countries.

Does this globalization alleviate inequality or exacerbate it ? Doesn't it force poor countries to become like western countries by suppressing diversities?

By looking at the world it becomes clear that globalization is only western atrocity, exploitation. And to get a share of its benefit a good many developing countries happily give up

a big chunk of their literary wealth, which could have been their contribution had it been equal globalization.

The method and consequence of this globalization is clearly visible in the spread of the English language. In the Observer newspaper of March 2001 Robert Macramé has deliberated on this topic at length. He showed that the spread of the English language was the result of administrative, cultural, scientific and business expansion. English language, British rule, American culture spread all over the world together with international scientific cooperation and international trade, because it was the language of the rulers in all these political, cultural, scientific and commercial transactions. English was not any easier and Macramé believes in spite of myths English is extremely a wrong selection to be main language of the world from many points of view. He says English is neither easier nor more beautiful than other languages and due to its phrasal nature learning it is not so easy. He calls its arbitrary diction and pronunciation source of weakness, not strength.

In spite of that English has become language of authority, the language of information, language of advertisement. Majority of the people in the poor countries take it as key to education and prosperity. Busy in the struggle to feed their kids, do these people get time to take interest in their culture-tradition?

But in this world people talk to each

other through the medium of five thousand different languages, and each of these languages is an image of a unique culture and history. Each one of them has words for whose meanings one doesn't get even words in other languages. Today's imperialistic globalization suppresses and destroys the fruits of these diversities of the human race. And here in the west only few people understand that the loss of those other cultures would be our loss as well because the dangerous disease of our greed is not letting the world advance but is ruining it.

Because of previously being the colony of England even India has been the victim of the illusion of the greatness of the west. But India is no small developing country. It is one of the biggest countries of the world and has the ability to become a major player in the power games. So it has the ability to alter the situation. Had it wished it would have tried to change the direction of globalization. It can work to get entry to more players at the stage and can protect diversity.

But would it have to do this work through English language only? The national language of India is Hindi and it is the contact language. Crores of people use Hindi naturally, is there any special role to language in this shrinking world of today?

The family of Indian languages

To gauge the role of Hindi we should look at its source and nature. It is one

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of the Indo-European languages but this classification is not old. In Europe linguistics is not an old science. Still even before its inception people could see the similarities between languages. They used to find a lot of words of one language having similarities to words of some other language. Even before the planned study of the languages in the sixteenth century people had agreed about Germanic, Roman and Slav categories of the European languages. Those days interest in these languages remained limited but when printing and spread of books started and many explorers used to return from distant countries with information of unknown activities, fresh interest in languages was generated. While studying languages some linguists soon noticed great similarities between Sanskrit and the European languages. In the sixteenth century itself Sussety of Italy found some common words in Sanskrit and Italian. In eighteenth century many scholars worked on this subject. For example in 1725 Benjamin Shultz, a German missionary working in India expressed in a letter that Sanskrit and European languages have similarities to a great extent.

When the British were ruling India, many of them started studying culture and history of the country. William Jones, a judge at Fort Williams wrote a letter in 1786 which has been severely criticized. In this letter on the one side he established deep relationship among Sanskrit, Greek and Latin on the other

among Sanskrit, Kelt and Persian languages. He wrote about Sanskrit language:

Its structure is unique. It is more enriched than Greek and vaster than Latin. It is more refined than the two languages together. And all the three of them have the same source.

Gradually the interest of the scholars increased. In 1791 the German translation of Kalidas's Shakuntalam got published. In 1816 France Bap compared Dhatu forms of Greek, Latin, Persian and German with that of Sanskrit and laid the foundation of Indo-European linguistics. Now while studying languages scholars started paying attention to relations among them. First efforts of preparing the family tree of languages started.

There are many ways of grouping languages. Relations among languages can be determined on the basis of similarities or differences in construction of words and sentence structure of languages and sound arrangements. Surely, such comparisons face many problems. Because like human beings even their languages are progressing with inimitable activities and behavior. In spite of this a lot of work has been done for hereditary classification of languages.

The scholars have found that the languages that are spoken in Europe and most of the West Asia belong to the same family. There is some disagreement among scholars about the place where

those who spoke original language of this family used to stay. The predominant view of the archeologists and linguists is that perhaps these people used to reside in Anatolia or Southern Russia. Spreading with farming on the one side the language reached Europe and on the other side it reached Iran and Northern India. Changing in its own way at different places the language took the form of lingual family.

Hindi Language

The linguists have divided the Indo-European languages in four stages according to their evolution and changes—all the contemporary European languages have been kept in the fourth stage or category but Latin Greek and Sanskrit belong to second category, and being the oldest language the Vedic language has been kept in the first stage, nearest to the original language of the Indo-European languages. Many ancient words are still found in different Indo-European languages, and ancestors are being seen in descendents.

Hindi is a member of Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European languages. These languages were being spoken in Iran and northern Indian region three thousand years ago. Either it had reached there with the migration of the Aryan tribe or according to new research of the archeologists it was the dialect of the inhabitants of this area who had been living there for a few thousand years. More knowledge has been acquired about Indian languages of this time than

about Iranian languages, because in both the camps old scriptures and writings that have been found in the Indian books and writings are older and they are also larger in number. But from the acquired sources it is clearly visible that the Sanskrit language of the Vedas and the language of 'Avesta' [Ancient Iranian Scripture] have lots of similarities.

The evolution of Indian languages is known. The ancestors of Hindi were Sanskrit, Prakrit and Apbhramsha. But when Muslims adopted Shurseni dialect [Khari Boli] they started using it together with Persian and Arabic words. The modern image of Hindi which has been formed in process is not only the descendent of the Indian branch of the Indo-Iranian but it has deep relationship with the Iranian branch. This extremely beautiful and powerful reflection of the interconnection is seen in the Hindi literature of hundreds of years. But in the Hindi dictionary more diversity of linguistic sources is found. Due to Dravid influence—vowels, many words, word forms and some constituents of sentence structures have been adopted. Later on many words of English and many constituents of sentence structure could also be seen.

There are two consequences of this history. On the one hand because of large numbers of words being from Sanskrit they resemble Indo-European ancestors. Their relationship with most of European languages is obvious. This way Hindi links European languages of

present times with ancient heritage of Indo-European languages. On the other hand by absorbing the languages and dialects of the rulers and common men of all the ages Hindi emerges as a living image of Indian history and many cultures. Therefore Hindi's image looks like multi-sided prism- at one time Sanskrit language reflects the other Indo-Iranian mixed heritage. At times it also appears to be real sister of the European languages. At one moment it is marching with self respect of the ancient language at the other it becomes ever adolescent and talks of contemporary life with unlimited freshness and novelty. It happily benefits from other languages and adopts some of their words and then conditions them according to its own nature. An open language accepts the contribution of the other but in spite of the changes it continues to be the same language. Hindi is a beautiful and powerful language. Its systematic grammar and imaginative dictionary can clearly reflect even minute differences. Its script writes words from other languages more logically and effectively than in their own languages. Where would one get a better medium of communication?

Relation between Hindi and other European languages

When one looks at Hindi and European languages one finds such words in European languages every now and then which clearly resemble some words in Hindi. Besides this there are many such

words whose similarity is not visible but becomes clear when one pays attention to standard rules of historical linguistic change. This way the linguists have found that the word 'Chakra' in Hindi, 'circus' in Latin and the English word 'wheel' were born from same original word which is called 'kuekulo'. But here there is scope to show only some examples which can establish relationship of different European languages with Hindi with natural equality.

The vocabulary of post Germanic language is very old. Time and again I have found similarity between some of their words and Hindi words. They call 'Aur' 'Aa' or 'Aankh' and Nai for 'Nahi'. Prefix 'Sam' is called 'Sam' only. This suffix is found in other Germanic languages. In Dutch Sath- Sath is called 'Saman'. In German it is called Tasujaman. While in English language the word same means 'Saman' only.

Not only the words but also its grammar and phrases appear to be like that of Hindi. In both the languages the fact of not harming is called 'Bal banka na hone dena'. And both put dust or soil in the eyes. In Hindi when the meaning of verb is experience of some feeling the person undergoing the experience is presented in the form of verb. It is less in the form of subject. For example it is said 'mujhe dar hai', mujhe afsos hai etc. It happens in German language also. mujhe acha lagta hai is expressed in German in the same way. In the form of subject in English- 'I like'. The meaning

of the German word 'Atam' was earlier 'Atma' now it has become Sans. Hriday is called 'Hearts' and 'Halka' is called 'Hell'. Similarities are seen every where.

In Slav languages 'Meh' is called 'Meja' or 'Meda' and 'Din' is called 'Den' or 'Dan'. The thing people wear is called 'Vesh' or Vastra in Hindi or 'Vas' which is a Sanskrit word that is Indo-European. What is it called in European languages? The form that the words of Romance languages have acquired through Latin Vestis resemble Hindi words. For example in French it is called 'Vetmo' and in Italian it is called 'Vestity'. A form of this word Vest is found in many European languages. It is found in French and also in all the Germanic languages. Here its meaning appears to be shrunk. It becomes waistcoat or 'Baniyan' and now-a-days this word has arrived even in Hindi in this form. In Germanic languages 'Vastra' is called Kya kya its origin is in Hindi word Gli whose meaning is 'Lipatna'. In Slav language the word for Vastra Thodasa resemble Hindi word 'Ojhal'. It makes relation possible. In this way in Hindi one can find the sources of _ or_ forms of words of all the European languages.

Hindi and English

The relationship between Hindi and English is also the same, but now they have another relation as well because for last three hundred years English has influenced Hindi which continues even today. Earlier because the British were ruling over India and afterwards because English was seen and continues to be

seen even today as the language of education, authority, prosperity and communication. The words have made their way in Hindi like this were not the result of any fundamental linguistic changes but were adopted because of social and political conditions. They have not distorted the natural construction of Hindi. For example they use Hindi-English verbs not according to English forms but according to Hindi grammar. They say 'Main Use miss Karta Hoon' [I miss him]. The British had brought many unknown machines for which there were no words in Hindi. This led to many words of English being adopted in Hindi. This is how in Hindi we find many words determined by different evolution but having origin in the same Indo-European word. These words have different meanings for example the word 'Gadi' or 'Kar' are offspring of same original word but 'Kar' is a form evolved in English then entering Hindi.

These days English language is penetrating other languages all over the world. The influence of English over mediums of media and global network is so strong that it appears to be threatening the use of other languages. In spite of this living language is an open language. Hindi has been showing it for hundreds of years in the form of its own realization that it has no weakness in adopting words from other languages. Actually it gives strength, vibrancy and life. That is why it runs no danger of losing its identity.

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The features of Hindi and its role

We have seen that the word 'Vastra' is related to some words of many languages. But in addition to this don't people use the word 'Kapda' in Hindi? And this is not an Indo-European word. Actually it has entered Hindi from Austro-Asian language. This is one small example which clearly illustrates vast nature and structure of Hindi.

The Hindi of our age is the product of a long chain of old and new sources, starting from Vedic Sanskrit coming to English through Prakirt, local dialects, Persian and Arabic. Its European relations are spoken in all the continents of the world. Its Iranian relation is spoken in some countries of Asia and Europe. And its Arabic element has relation with middle east. Due to the influences of all these factors Hindi is a fresh and live language, in which past, present and many cultures become intimate companions.

Hindi is mirror to many cultures of the world. It is true about many religions also. It is both image of Indian History and element of Indianness. which is called unity in diversity. It is a unique pure language also and appears to be bastard too and both its forms are so well connected to other languages that in true sense it should be called the world language.

But there is no parity between features and ability of Hindi and India and its place in the world. According to

authorized sources as mother tongue Hindi occupies second place in the world. But the respect Hindi gets is not even a shadow of its position.

In India in addition to being mother tongue of most of the Indians Hindi is called national language and contact language. But its publicity is hindered due to many historical and political and commercial factors. But when there was British rule the British planted this idea in the minds of Indians that in spite of everything British culture, language, education was of a higher class. Even today India suffers from this mindset. How common is the idea that English language is key to progress and prosperity. It is a trick but Indian people are supporting it. This condition would continue till Indian people would themselves change the role of English. Those in business like to do their work mainly in English. In south politicians and businessmen create hurdles for Hindi.

These days India has become capable to take care of its growth. But the gap between English knowing urban educated people and poor villagers is widening because of this linguistic difference and it stops the development of the whole country.

Many people worry about this situation. They express their views and suggest remedial measures. In 1999 in the special issue of 'Gagnanchal' published on the eve of the Sixth World Hindi Conference famous writers and scholars had written about the role and place

of Hindi. Hindi writer Girdhar Rathi has to say—

“If you would wish to teach English from class one then which language would grow. About Hindi communalism starts mainly because of Hindi and Urdu. It starts from both sides. By dividing language into community one more political weapon is made.”

Describing the condition forcefully Abdul Bismillah has written—

When students [from Poland] studying Hindi come to India they are surprised to see that people out here talk to them in English not in Hindi while in Poland English is spoken very little. This thinking that without English we can't be modern and civilized is a contribution of slave mentality.

Suresh Uniyal, a story writer of Hindi has expressed his views about the influence of English over Hindi—

There is nothing wrong in accepting the words from English which have entered common lingua franca. But it should be only as much which can be naturally digested in the language. It should not happen that the language itself should appear to be alien, as is happening in case of 'Hinglish.'

But this is not something new rather it is old, Mahatma Gandhi had already said, I know an Englishman does not talk to another Englishman in any other language but English. When I find an Indian talking to another fellow Indian in foreign language I am greatly pained.

And what we see at the national level is also true about international level.

Balram, a story writer and journalist has clearly written—

Like many other countries of the world international dialogue between India and its neighboring countries is also carried only in English. It may be wrong or right but this is reality. And so long as Hindi does not become a recognized language of the United Nations the condition is going to continue like this. Then the question arises why not the UN give this place to Hindi? Whatever be the political reason, it may be because of the condition of language or due to ignorance or neglect about its importance. Because of this the officers may not have interest in this work. Is it that the western eyes look at Hindi as an unimportant language as if it was the language of an ex colony? Particularly when the inhabitants of the ex colony like to speak the language of the ex rulers and think of that language as superior to their language.

But the importance of Hindi is genuine and true. All its features should be kept in mind.

- It is spoken by lots of people all over the world.
- Being relative of all the Indo-European languages it is also connected to English and languages of West Asia.
- Its vocabulary is an image of Indian, European, Persian and

Arabic culture.

Its script is uniquely based on human speech. It can show most of the sounds of all the languages in a proper and straight manner.

With the help of systematic grammar and great imaginative vocabulary Hindi has special power.

If this speciality is not accepted in western countries this is because of the mentality of not treating others as equal. If one approaches it with clear heart then it comes out that Hindi which is the language of so many people and

which resolves cultural and linguistic diversity seems to be appropriate for globalization. Particularly of such a globalization which honors the principle of equality in the world. A globalization in which one country does not exploit another country, instead all the countries respect one another. Whatever be the spread and popularity of English it would always be the language of imperialism and exploitation. Hindi is language of people, is language of living and coexistence. One should use and advertise it with perseverance.

Courtesy: ICCR

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HINDI AND INDIAN STUDIES IN SPAIN

Vijayakumaran

ORIGIN AND THE SEAT OF HINDI

University of Valladolid, an ancient university in north of Spain, 193 k.m. away from Madrid, the capital of Spain, dates back to 13th century. This is an exceptional heritage, reflected in its stone walls and numerous historical artifacts. Around its almost 425.000 square meters of buildings, spread over faculties, university schools, institutes, central services, accommodation and sport facilities are hidden architectural treasures and other works of art, which have become part of the university's heritage throughout the nine centuries (from the 13th to the 21th) Valladolid has shared its destiny with the three other cities which form part of the university: Palencia, Soria and Segovia. Thus the University is a multi campus university.

It is one of the prestigious universities of Europe, which has a patronage of Kings and noble men and the Palace of Santa Cruz is converted as the seat of the chancellor's office. The university looks onto the city through an exceptional Baroque façade built between 1717 and 1718, following the design of Pedro de la Visitación. It leads to the Historical Building, constructed on the site of the original medieval Studio, which was demolished and rebuilt several times until, at the beginning of the 20th century, the architect Teodosio Torres gave it its current form, conserving only the façade due to its exceptional architectural and symbolic value. Its central body is crowned by the emblem of the university, a sculpture of the Victory of Wisdom over ignorance and the representation of the monarchs who were most prominent in their protection of the University of

Valladolid; Henry III, who donated his Tercias (ecclesiastic taxes) to the University; John I, who exempted its members from payment of taxes; and Philip II, who awarded the university full jurisdiction. Other buildings complete the historical-architectural heritage of the university. Outstanding in the city of Valladolid is the House of Los Zúñiga, one of the first examples of Renaissance-style domestic architecture in Valladolid, home to the Buendía Centre and the Publications Department Secretary's Office, and the so-called Casas de la Beneficencia (Houses of Social Welfare), two splendid examples of 16th century palatial architecture, today housing university administration offices. Equally treasured is the late 17th century Prison of the Royal Chancery, currently the Reina Sofia University Library, and the former Hostelry of Santa Cruz College (now a hall of residence), which dates from the last third of the 17th century. Palace of Santa Cruz, declared a Historical-Artistic Monument in 1955 and now the seat of the Chancellor's Office. Founded as a College by Cardinal Mendoza in 1484, work was begun in late Gothic style and continued until 1488.

CENTRE OF ASIAN STUDIES

University School of Management Studies was found in the year 1857, corresponding to the year of the first independence war of India against European colonialism. It has the department of Centre of Asian Studies, which was inaugurated in 2000 but was formally established on

23 May 2001, constituted a governing body with the Director of the centre as Prof. Jose María Ruiz Ruiz and Secretary as Luis Oscar Ramos Alonso. The other office bearers such as the Indian and SAARC studies went in the hands of Guillermo Rodriguez Martin, the present General Secretary of CASA de la India. Mrs. Pilar Garces Garcia, the present Vice Chancellor of the University for Institutional Relations was in charge of the Japanese Coordinator and Mrs. Blanca Garcia Vega was handling the Chinese studies. Thus a full-fledged Asian Study Centre got to function in the University from 2001 and it's the beginning of the course of study of Hindi in the University also. The present director of CEA is Mr. Luis Oscar Ramos Alonso.

HINDI CHAIR IN THE UNIVERSITY

Accordingly cultural exchanges programmes between India and Spain got realized from the year and workout till day. The first Hindi Professor to teach at academic level in the University was sent in 2004, and the Hindi Courses were designed by him according to the academic calendar of the University. Hindi is recognized as a language course of the university, and the degrees and valid certificates for doing Hindi, were being awarded to the students of Hindi, as it was customary in other language studies of the Centre of Languages of the University of Valladolid.

The enthusiasm to study Hindi language was generated by the ongoing

cultural programmes which took place in the CEA (Centro de Estudios de Asia), right from its beginning. When the students of Hindi were asked their aim to study this language, the response was and is to know further into the composite culture of India through this lingua franca. According to them India is Hindu and Hindi is the tongue of the Hindu. We could remember the verses of the national poet of Pakistan Muhammad Iqbal, who wrote his 'Taran-e -Hind', a patriotic song for the undivided India :

“Hindi hai ham vatan hai, hindostan hamara, hamara—”

The present student in a developing country like India could not dream of an academic course merely designed for acquiring knowledge or information in the real sense. Here the Occidental Education aims at the enhancement of knowledge of the intellectuals, and not more than this pragmatic work on their education. But the third world country student is starving to make an academic career out of his education and find the way to make both ends of his life meet. Especially in modern India, we could find this pragmatic benefit, behind the student education. Anyhow, in Spain the students of Hindi are not only from the right stream of academic education, but 80 % of them are from the employed hands, who want to enjoy the Hindi films, songs, tour India and try to read the literary and cultural text books of India. They are also aware of the multilingual situation prevalent in

the country, but are not aware that Hindi could not become the unique national language of the country. They do compare their national language Castellana - Spanish out of the four national languages of the country the other three being Cataluña, Galicia, and Basque.

HINDI CLASS TIMINGS AND THE OFFICE OF THE HINDI PROFESSOR

In Spain there is hardly any University having a permanent department of Hindi, as in some of the western countries. But the Hindi chair is maintained throughout by the deputed professor of Hindi consecutively substituting one after another. Therefore, academic Degree or Post graduate level courses or research in Hindi is not to be expected in the near future. However, the present Hindi classes are designed considering the time of the majority of the employed students ageing from 40 to 60 years. The appropriate time for the study is thus fixed for the evenings except for the holidays Saturday and Sunday. Even for a household labourer, construction worker or most of the office personnel in Spain, we could see these two weekend holidays executed as a right of the employed. Spain has the reason for naming these days as holidays according to the mythology. All around the world the etymology (word history) of most of the days of the week is linked to Roman mythology. In Spanish, the coinage of the terms Saturday and Sunday weren't adopted using the Roman naming pattern. Spanish word *Domingo*, the word for Sunday, comes

from a Latin word meaning “Lord’s day.” And *Sábado*, the word for Saturday, comes from the Hebrew word Sabbath, meaning a day of rest (in Jewish and Christian tradition, God rested on the seventh day of creation (Genesis.1: 1-28)). Thus the actual day of rest happened on Saturday and the holiday came as Sunday. So the custom to have both days without work in a week is benefitted for almost all of the working community in Spain, and which is realized in the academic field also. But for the research students and the investigating professors of the University, they can have access to their departments irrespective of these holidays. Anyhow, the department is kept open on Saturdays for having some special consultations with the teachers or seminars with some special arrangements.

Hindi professor is consulted in his office in Casa de la India on anytime except his class hours in the University by the local public and those interested in cultural studies of India. Hence, he has to do a double role in this academic world, and he has to maintain his office in Casa de la India, far from the University where he teaches. Taking for granted that the presence of a permanent Indian in Casa de la India, (house of India) constructed for maintaining the cultural harmony with India and Spain, this arrangement is viewed in a healthy state. Regarding the performance of the Hindi professor in Casa India, it can be read in a separate discourse. The public is very much keen on learning and having touch with Hindi for, they

approach the professor for getting scribed their names in Hindi or getting some greetings scribed in Hindi with the professor. Sometimes they do have some of the film songs in Hindi with Spanish translations or transliterations, but not at all satisfied with the interpretation, seek the help of professor. For compensating this meeting, the professor has started the meeting of the interested public and the Indian culture lovers of Spain along with students of the course, a cultural association in the name of “Hindi Sangh”, which is cited separately.

The duration of the classes will not be more than 2 or two and a half hours, either with a break or without. But for some time, the Intensive Hindi Courses for One month duration could also be made where four or five hour per day classes can be held with an interval in between. That course is designed only for the particular group of persons who plan for a tour to India. There will be a charm for Indian Film Festival or ‘Image India’ programme. The present Oscar Song ‘Jai Ho...’, sung by A.R.Rahman is accepted by the students of Hindi and for translating the film ‘Slum dog Millionaire’ into Spanish the translator was keen to keep the nuances of the original Hindi songs without translating them in Spanish even though the film went with spirit in the country.

George Weber¹ made a study of the 10 most influential languages of the world. According to that in the order of language native speakers of the world China is number

one followed by English and Spanish and Hindi is placed in the fourth place. It is also evident from the records that America is a country nourishing Hindi in almost all academic courses and some of the administrative uses like that of Pentagon. UNO has given Hindi the sixth place next to Spanish as its official language. It is estimated that the combined total number of Spanish speakers in the world is between 470 and 500 million (spreading in 20 countries), making it the third most spoken language by total number of speakers (after Chinese, and English). Spanish is the second most-widely spoken language in terms of native speakers. Global internet usage statistics for 2007 show Spanish as the third most commonly used language on the Internet, after English and Chinese. Where as Hindi is spoken by 487 million (366 million with all varieties of Hindi and Urdu + 120 million as a second language in 1999) according to Indian Census 2001. Currently the population of India is 1,173 million and 168 million is currently the population of Pakistan. (294.4 million speak properly Hindi as a first language): 258 million of 1,028 million speak Hindi according to the 2001 Indian census. In terms of 10 top world languages Hindi is estimated as 5th next to Spanish. But Spanish people normally under estimate Hindi as very difficult to learn. Still there are a lot of Hindi learners and writers in Spain and they are translating from Hindi and Sanskrit texts to their mother tongue.

For learning Hindi there are three books

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of Grammar texts in Spanish. The first one is written by Ana Thapar² (1987), the second a translation from the English version of his own English book “Beginners’ Hindi” into Spanish by Rupert Snell³ (2007), and the third one and the most complete grammar by Vijayakumaran.C.P.V co-authored by Jesús Arribas Lazaro⁴ (2010). In these series Rupert Snell has provided two CDs, and Vijayakumaran has given one CD for supplementing the book for self study. There are two more texts related to Hindi for daily use and for the use of travellers. GeoPlaneta⁵ published the latter by translating from the book ‘Hindi, Urdu, Bengali Phrase Book’ and the former is by Ana Thapar⁶ in the year 2009 with the title ‘Hindi de cada día’ literally translated as ‘Hindi for everyday use’ (the book got printed with a Hindi caption- “batchit ki Hindi”) with illustrated CD. It is paradoxical to see that the CD is not of conversational Hindi, but of monologue and each and every oration got its Spanish translation. Just for avoiding this ambiguity this author has experimented with true dialogues in Hindi in his audio CD supplied with the book – ‘Hindi Fácil’ -‘Sara Hindi’ where the conversations are taken from the Bus stand, Bus Stop, Railway station, vegetable market, doctor-patient dialogue etc. appending the 14 lessons. The theoretical study of Hindi and Spanish was done by Vasant Ganesh Gadre⁷ (1996), but which was in Spanish and the Hindi part in Spanish transliteration.

By referring to the above books of

grammar and daily use the self study of Hindi is really not materializing as the students find the language very difficult and they require a proper guide in person for them. Most of the students who had done the course and got enrolment are the occasional tourists and business men in India. The literature of Hindi also is quite highlighted in the Spanish books and journals. In addition to that there are several journals in India and abroad which are dedicated for the publication of Indian languages and culture in Spain like “India Perspectiva” and “Papeles de la India”.

As stated the Hindi syllabus of the University of Valladolid is structured for the pragmatic use of the students to reach their goals. Hence three levels of education are planned. First level initial or primary for learning from alphabets to syntax leading to the conversational use of Hindi with reading and writing skills, and much focus is given to the conversational side rather than the grammar. Here the student should try to master the script as soon as possible. The second level or intermediate is where the real grammar teaching is made and more and more emphasis is given to the structure of Hindi. In the first and second level media help is sought like videos or cinemas and film songs, for supplementing the classes. The third level or advanced Hindi is to provide skills for learning the literature., and the real charm of the literature of Hindi is imparted to the students. The selected poems of Kabirdas, Surdas, Tulsidas, and modern Hindi short

stories and poems are taken for granted. More attention is given to the translated versions of the Hindi literature in Spanish, so that the students will be able to compare the original with their translation. But the problem with almost all translations available is they are made from the intermediary sources of French or English and the translations are not reliable. While explaining the meaning of the literary piece if the translation is referred, some sort of under expression is felt in the class rooms.

The language orthodoxy of Spanish people is to be mentioned on the occasion. The people communicate and do everything in Spanish as if they breathe in Spanish. So the Hindi professor has to make strain to teach through their tongue. Some of the language teaching experts mention the teaching of a language through the same language for immediate effect of the same. That is this author’s experience while studying intensive Spanish course conducted by the University of Valladolid for foreigners during the month August 2007. The date is mentioned because the present professor of Hindi in this University replacing the former Hindi professor, was to start his career in September 2007 with his unbearable Spanish tongue to teach Hindi. Thanks to the students who were very liberal to correct the professor in learning good Spanish. Anyhow, the modern teaching tools like the power point presentations, the CD, DVD, recorded voices using the language laboratory could not

solve completely the problem of teaching Hindi through its own tongue. Teaching of Hindi using pictures, gestures, songs, and games also supplement this exercise.

COMPARATIVE AND CONTRASTING ANALYSIS OF BOTH LANGUAGES IN CLASS ROOMS

The linguistic origins of Hindi and Spanish are quite different, since both are coming from essentially diverse backgrounds.. These languages of Indo-European have the common ancestry of Sanskrit, but the Iberian-Latin root of Spanish is different from that of the Indo-Aryan origin of Hindi language. Spanish is a Romance language which evolved from Latin, a highly inflected language with an extremely flexible word order. Because Spanish is directly derived from Latin and because its verbal forms are so clearly marked for person, number, tense, aspect, and mood, it allows considerable flexibility in the ordering of elements in its sentences. The Indian teacher who has a basic knowledge of English would be confused to use his knowledge in Spanish – Hindi class, since the same sound of English is not observed in Spanish. Spanish people claim that they sound the phonemes according to the script. This has some resemblance with some of the Hindi phonemes also; hence ‘a’ is the primary vowel in Spanish and Hindi, but ‘aa’ a low central unrounded vowel is absent in Spanish. Similarly high front rounded vowel ‘ii’, back rounded vowel ‘uu’ (‘oo’) are absent in Spanish. The two latter vowels

mentioned sound in Hindi ‘<Ç’ and ‘>Ξ’. Similar is the case with digraphs ‘ai’ and ‘au’, which are taken as diphthongs in the language. The basic five vowels cannot replace the thirteen vowels of Hindi. The consonants are grouped in Hindi as ‘velar’, ‘palatal’, ‘retroflex’, ‘dental’, and ‘labial’. But the Spanish guys have problem in identifying the ‘retroflex’ from ‘dental’. Similar is the case of those consonants, where only sound ‘s’ is possible in Spanish, and nasal vowels ‘anusvar’, ‘anunasik’ and nasal consonants. On the implicational aspect of the teaching of both of these language, separate essays are written but to mention that more than commonness in these two languages contrasts are in abundance. Except the proper nouns all other nouns in Spanish are supported by articles such as definite article which is also not the structure of Hindi. The teacher has to be careful while translating some of the words into Hindi, for the gender is expressed according to the definite or indefinite article preceding the noun word. The common personal pronoun ‘tu’ in Spanish has the same significance in Hindi, but the functional and semantic aspects in both languages are quite distinct. The second person and third person pronouns, which are by and large used in Hindi denoting respect, but the cultural and cognitive level of Spanish learners, cannot digest this very soon. For example ‘tum’ expresses moderate divergence from high honorific reference. It is used by Hindi speakers in addressing many relatives (especially those not senior to the speaker),

quite often in addressing close friends, and regularly in addressing persons of lower social status than the speaker. To quote R.S.Mc Gregor:⁸ “Care must be exercised in using the pronouns ‘aap’, ‘tum’ and ‘tu’, which have different honorific values. In normal educative usage ‘aap’ is the pronoun of address to one’s seniors (though not usually to close female relatives), and also very generally to one’s peers and others whom one addresses on equal terms. ‘aap’ is used with a third person plural verb, whether the reference is to one person or more than one.”

Outside the class room the Spaniards will address the Indians and foreigners with the honorific pronoun ‘usted’, and the class room teacher also addresses the learners with the corresponding Hindi usage ‘aap’. Even though the learners take this for granted, they could not maintain this address throughout, for according to them the progressive thinking of the people and the students take to treat one and all as equal and personal pronoun ‘tu’ in Spanish is common in and outside class. Hindi professor got a little bit ashamed of this address in student-teacher relationship.

The use of adjectives in both languages follows the other difficulty since Spanish carries adjectives followed by the word to be qualified while in Hindi usage it is reverse. Word order and emphatic usages are common both in Hindi and Spanish and their meaning differ in each oration. The basic syntactic pattern of Spanish is

similar to English i.e. SVO, whereas Hindi has always the rendition in SOV. The Spanish verbs have three patterns of conjugation, those infinitives ending in ‘ar’, ‘er’ and ‘ir’, of course with some exceptions of irregular verbs as well. But Hindi does not have this, and the irregular verbs in Hindi are very much limited to 5-6 and only signify in their past tense conjugations. Similar is the case with compound and auxiliary verbs in both the languages. To teach the conjugation of the tenses in Hindi is most easy but to compare and contrast them with the Spanish structure is a Himalayan task. The aspects, moods, imperatives, subjunctives etc. are changeable according to the structure. Even for paraphrasing both the languages care is to be taken to scribe an exclamatory sentence or interrogative sentence in Spanish to replace similar ones in Hindi. For the exclamation mark is to be put in the beginning and end of the sentence, but in the beginning it will be upside down. So is the case of a question mark at the head and tail of a Spanish sentence. To sum up, the contrasts in both the languages are enormous as Hindi has its own linguistic and grammatical signs and Spanish has its own, with exceptional similarities on some of the Sanskrit based vocabularies in both the languages and some of the pronouns, gender, number and phrases.

The first professor of Hindi got three and a half years to replace with his follower, in July 2007. He had done two level

teachings- the primary and secondary from February 2007 to June 2007. The present professor Dr.Vijayakumaran of Payyanur College of Kannur University started with an Intensive Hindi language learning course in the month of September 2007, immediately after acquiring basic communicative skill in Spanish language by doing an “Intensive Spanish Course for the Foreigners” conducted by the Centre of Languages of the University in the month of August 2007. Owing to the absence of students for the secondary level, he had to do first long duration course in Hindi at the primary level from October 1, 2007 to January 23, 2008. The enrolled students were 20 who continued with the professor for the consecutive courses of intermediate and advanced studies in Hindi. Accordingly the future courses were planned from February 2008 to June 2008, October to June 2008, October 2008 to June 2009 and September 2009 to May 2010 for primary level or ‘prathamik’. The secondary level or ‘madhyamik’ was scheduled from October 2007 to January 2008, October 2008 to June 2009 and September 2009 to May 2010 without overlapping one course with the other. For advance course Hindi for the first batch to continue for the third level the duration was from October 20, 2008 to June 15, 2009. For the students of high interest in Indian culture and Hindi literature the topics selected were verses from Kabir, Surdas, Tulsidas, Mirabai, modern poems in addition to the short stories of Premchand, Jaishankar Prasad

etc. Part of epic poem Ramcharitmanas is selected as well as the other selections of Bhakti poetry to get introduced into the Hindi Bhakti Literature. One of the students Mr. Jesús, in this batch is termed co-author to the book ‘Saral Hindi’ due to his dedication to the language and culture of India.

POST GRADUATE COURSE IN INDIAN STUDIES AND HINDI

Till now, three post-graduate courses on Indian studies were held in Valladolid University. The first was during the year 2004-05, the second in 2005-06 and the last 2008-09. Initially there was an enrollment of 30-40 but gradually it is decreased and in the year 2009-10 the course was suspended due to the shortage of students. The main course objective is to provide a better understanding of society, culture, and history of India. That knowledge can be applied in the Spanish labor market where there is a new openness to Asian countries as well as addressing issues of intercultural nature, institutional sectors, social services, NGOs, secondary schools and so on.

The course is intended to provide an overview of the many facets of traditional and modern India. The interest that exists in Spanish society over the subcontinent now encourages us to offer a detailed picture of the realities that often are treated too superficially in the media.

The course objectives are: to provide

an update on the many facets of India, to show cultural social and religious complexity, to analyze the economic, scientific and intellectual stages in India in recent decades and contributing to improving the dialogue between cultures. The curriculum offers a total of 24 credits that students must enroll in a minimum of 20 corresponding to 200 hours.

The venue of the course was selected as the Faculty of Arts, University of Valladolid, in front of the School of Management Studies where the Hindi classes were being held. Some of the classes are arranged in Casa de la India also. Occasionally some parallel activities were located elsewhere. The subjects and topics with their corresponding credits are as follows:

I. History, culture and geography of India with 4 credits. The topics introduction to history, civilization and geography of India.

ii. Economy, society and contemporary politics with 4 credits. The corresponding topics are the rules of the current economic system, society and identity in post-colonial India, current political structure, foreign international politics and trade and legal system.

iii. Philosophy and religion with 4 credits, and the topics being philosophical systems, history of religious thought, and religions in India today.

iv. Hindi language with 4 credits on the theme of writing and pronunciation,

grammar, conversation of Hindi.

v. Aesthetics and literature with 4 credits. The topics dealt are aesthetic theory and literary criticism, classical literature, medieval literature, and Indian literature in English language.

vi. Art and culture with 4 credits including the topics history of art and architecture, performing arts, music, movies in India Thus a total of 24 credits. Among this the first part of the history, culture and geography of India was marked as compulsory subject and the contents of performing arts, music and movies are theoretical and practical.

Some of the professors and the specialists in India all over the world along with the specialist professors in the University of Valladolid, the Hindi professor, the director of Casa de la India Dr. Guillermo Rodriguez and Mrs. Monica de la Fuente who got diploma in Indian Classical Dance by Kalakshetra College of Fine Arts in Chennai, used to teach these courses.

‘HINDI SANGH’

As said, the formation of Hindi Sangh was to unite the students of Hindi of the University and the public who are interested in Indian culture and the language and literature of Hindi. The permanent venue selected for this is the Indian House or Casa India, but occasional meetings and workshops etc. were being held outside this office, anywhere in the Municipal premises of Valladolid. Monthly

meetings were proposed and a voluntary secretary was elected from the audience to assist the professor in arranging the meeting and communicating the notice of the programme to members. All were done voluntarily

This organization started working in House of India in the patronage of the director of India House and under the directorship of the deputed Hindi professor. The outstanding programmes held by the Sangh are: “the workshop of AshtangaYog: theory and practice” for 4 consecutive weeks in the month of January-February 2008, “Baisakhi, Vishu-Pongal celebrations”, “Indian cooking show”, “Indian dress styles”, “celebrations of Christmas and New year in India”, “Deepavali celebrations” “Onam celebrations”, etc. are to mark some. There were a series of presentations on the topics like “Hindu mythology”, “Hindu and Christian pilgrimage in India”, “Indian Society”, “Bhakti movement in India”, “Indian Literature” etc. The participation of the public apart from the students of Hindi lead the programme to a grand success. Therefore, the professor is invited to nearby villages and Municipality Civil centres to perform some of the workshops and presentations. Some of the leading cooks of the area, could also take notes on the special Indian cooking, and most of the ladies liked wearing saris which was realized in the demonstration in the workshop. Hindi film songs, dances, films etc. were leading cultural entities that attracted many of them. For the promotion

of these Indian cultural identities the role of House of India, Embassy of India, Madrid and the University of Valladolid is praiseworthy.

Some institutions like the University of Navarra, Casa Asia, Barcelona and Madrid provide high opportunities for the promotion of Indian culture and spread of Indian literature in Spain. The University of Navarra had a plan of translating and publishing the classics of Miguel Cervantes, the father of modern Spanish literature in Hindi. Vibha Mourya⁹ (2006), Professor of Spanish in the Department of Germanic and Romance Studies at Delhi University has the credit of publishing the masterpiece “Don Quixote” in Hindi where as her research student Sabyasachi Mishra¹⁰ (2009) translated “Novelas Ejemplares” into Hindi direct from Spanish. Modern Hindi short stories are being published in the contemporary Spanish journals. In addition to these, Barcelona and Madrid have some specific institutions and autonomous universities for Indian studies and for the promotion of Indian culture and translation of Hindi literature. Some of them are highlighted in the bibliography appended. Some of the earlier translations to Hindi were held from indirect sources from French and English and recent trends are to get the direct translation from and into Hindi.

Altogether, the use of Hindi and Indian studies in Spain is very attractive. As the spirit of learning Hindi and Indian literature is day by day increasing in Spain, thanks

to the House of India and the University of Valladolid in particular for promoting the best of their interest in maintaining the statuesque. Casa India used to receive Indians on State Government or Spanish Government Scholarship or from the Municipality of Valladolid India-Spain projects to assist the institution in some project works, or literary and cultural activities of India which are realizing time and again. On occasions of India-Spanish tribunal, India-Spain summit, Indian Film festival, Image India festival, Hindi and Indian culture is highlighted to the peak, apart from the technological scientific-diplomatic relations between the two countries. Sometime a whole team of Indian students from the University of Salamanca or from the capital Madrid arrive in casa India to witness the Indian day, where the whole Hindi atmosphere is created. Whenever, the actors or cultural activists reach Spain, they also prefer to use Hindi in their conversation rather than English. On the Indian festive days, the Bollywood films will be screened in Hindi, and a cycle of such films will be arranged for the public, with or without the subtitles in Spanish. In the near future we can expect a full fledged Hindi department functioning in the University. The author is proud of his excellent students in Hindi,

who were assisting the professor in writing his book on “Sara! Hindi” (Hindi Fácil) and the Audio CD supplementing the book, to record their voices as Spanish natural speakers.

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