

ISSN 0041-3135

RNI No. 25269

TRIVENI

(Estd: 1927)

INDIA'S LITERARY AND CULTURAL QUARTERLY



Chief Editor

Prof. I.V.CHALAPATI RAO

Vol. 83

OCT.-DEC. 2014

No. 4

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TRIVENI

INDIA'S LITERARY & CULTURAL QUARTERLY

VOLUME: 83

OCT.-DEC. 2014

NUMBER: 4

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Printer:

Prof. Y. Sreedhar Murthy

Publishers:

The Triveni Foundation (Regd.)

12-13-157, Street No. 2,

Tarnaka,

Hyderabad - 500 017.

Ph: +91-40-27014762

Email: trivenijournal@yahoo.com

Website: trivenijournalindia.com

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Original articles pertaining to literature, art, history, culture and of general interest (other than political) are considered for publication in **TRIVENI**. Articles should be brief and typed in double space, on one side only. **The soft copies of the articles can be emailed to trivenijournal@yahoo.com.**

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Inside Full page	Rs. 5,000	Rs.15,000

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We are happy to inform the readers that back issues of Triveni Journal from Vol.1 1928 to Vol.83 No.3 July-Sept.2014 are available for free reading at our Website trivenijournalindia.com.

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TRIPLE STREAM BHAGAVADGITA'S MOTIVATIONAL MESSAGE TO HUMANKIND

I.V. Chalapati Rao

Bhagavadgita contains a philosophy of human relationships, social and ethical values. It is the grandest of the sagas and noblest of the epics.

Many people have funny notions about Bhagavadgita which is the quintessence of the Vedas and a practical guide for men and women, particularly to the youth. It is the right royal road to success and happiness. Many people think that it is a serious book meant only for old people. They present the book when they honour a retired person who has become decrepit! How mistaken they are! In fact every young man should read it and follow the practical advice given by Krishna, the man of action. Action is good and inaction is bad. The book has nothing to do with religion nor is there anything ritualistic and esoteric about it. It is psychology and practical philosophy and an inspirational message to a doubting and despondent person, Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra.

Krishna says: "Whence has come this weakness not entertained by noble men, upon you O' Arjuna! Yield not to unmanliness. It is not worthy of you. Shake off this faintheartedness". Thus he galvanizes the dispirited man into daring action. He adds: "Strength is life. Weakness is death and sin".

It is strong medicine to serve as a remedy to the malady of many young people today who run away from the problems of life by committing suicide. For their difficulties and failures in life many people seek suicide as an escape from life. It is sheer cowardice. They do not realize that problems and challenges are part of life. After failures success will come like sunshine after rain as day follows night. No rainbow without rain. No gains without pains. Death is but change of clothes for the soul which is immortal.

Krishna tells all of us through the medium of Arjuna: "Strength is life. Weakness is death". By using the word 'Strength' He does not mean only physical strength. It is strength of mind. Swamy Vivekananda expands this idea into a clearer concept when he advises people "Your muscles must be as strong as iron. Your nerves must be as strong as steel and your will should be gigantic". Will is the real source of strength for translation into action. It is like a spark plug to the engine of the car. There may be petrol and properly inflated tyres without the spark plug. It is the electric spark plug which agitates the petrol, causes explosions and produces power. We have several young men today with motors motionless. The old adage "Where there is a will, there is a way" is trite but right. It is not failure but no action that is a crime.

Krishna further advises Arjuna "Get up, put your shoulder to the wheel. Having come into the world, leave your mark behind. Otherwise where is the difference between you and the stones?" Every human being is a unique person created to achieve something in life. Vivekananda develops this golden advice further. He says: "Stand up, be bold and accept responsibility on your shoulders and know that you are the creator of your own destiny. All the succour and help that you want is in yourself. Therefore, make your own future". Many people fall into the easy habit of blaming Fate, Destiny, other people and circumstances for their failures, miseries and misfortunes. It is nothing but shirking duties and responsibilities. Life is like the game of chess. For every move that we make God makes a counter move. Our moves are called 'actions' and God's counter moves are called 'consequences'.

Krishna gives further advice: "Action is good but inaction is bad. Be level-headed, calm, cool and unruffled. Perform action undistracted by attractions, remaining unconcerned as to success or failure and unperturbed by misery. Be equanimous. This is Yoga. That which is selfish is immoral. That which is unselfish is moral". Play your role (Swadharma) like a hero on the world stage and heroism is enjoyed by heroes. When success comes we should not feel elated and when failure comes we should not feel depressed. Failure is a detour but not defeat. When self is in, sense is out. Be disinterested, not uninterested.

Finally, He exhorts Arjuna "Put your faith in me", This is His trump card. He does not mean that it should be blind faith without action. True and unshaken faith leads to

dynamic action. "Faith overcomes mountains". Christ Jesus said "A mustard of faith can move a mountain." Scientists did research and discovered that faith creates hormones which cure diseases. Steve Jones, the C.E.O. of the Apple said "Have faith in yourself or something, gut, destiny, life. It gives you confidence. Follow your heart even if it leads you off the well worn paths and this will make all the difference". This is in his commencement address to the Stanford University, U.S.A.

Gita unfolds the essence of India's age-old philosophy, its time honoured tradition of meditation and how it leads to higher levels of consciousness. Today, the world has recognized the benefits of meditation.

Krishna's advice to Arjuna is a message to the mankind. This philosophy is confirmed by all great men of all times.

For example, Jalaluddin Rumi, the great mystic poet and philosopher said:

*You were born with greatness
You are not meant for crawling
You have wings
Learn to use them and fly.*

Vivekananda endorsed this motivational message while addressing the gathering as *Amrutasya putra* (Children of immortality), which means that we are not ordinary persons and nothing should deter us from eternal pursuit of glory. We should shine in use but not rust unburnished. We should scrawl our mark in history and should not become footnotes in history. We should be master copies to be duplicated by others but not Xerox copies.

BAPU: A MULTI-FACETED PERSONALITY

Dr I. Satyasree*

Bapu is a renowned painter, artist, cartoonist, illustrator and film director. He is a multi-faceted personality.

In a film career that spanned four eventful decades, Bapu directed 51 films. As a noted film director, Bapu's first directorial venture was *Sakshi* (1967) and the last one was *Sri Rama Rajyam* (2011). All his films have a classical touch and have become super hits. He received several prestigious awards - two National Awards, Raghupati Venkaiah Award, six Nandi Awards and two Filmfare Awards for his creative talents.

Bapu was a devotee of Lord Rama and he mostly took inspiration from the *Ramayana*. *Sampoorna Ramayanam*, *Ramanjeneya Yuddham* and *Seetha Kalyanam* are rated as all-time classics. His films, based on the *Ramayana*, have been shot on a grand scale. A reference to this epic is recurrently seen even in his other movies with social themes and family dramas. Bapu also directed some very successful Hindi films such as *Hum Paanch*, *Seeta Swayamwar*, *Woh Saat Din* and *Mera Dharam*.

He is a creative genius and displayed a penchant for depicting his heroes and heroines in a realistic and natural way, without make-up. If a heroine has expressive eyes, sharp nose, long hair and a perfect figure, she is called a Bapu Bomma. His close-up shots of the eyes of his heroines, Sangeetha in *Mutyala*

Muggu, Divya Vani in *Pelli Pustakam* and Nayanthara in *Sri Rama Rajyam* became something, which was unique in the Telugu film industry. He captures the emotions in the eyes of these heroines in such a way that they convey a wide range of human feelings silently, even without speaking a single word. His films highlighted the typical Telugu woman's beauty on the silver screen. He created some unforgettable scenes in his classics that are permanently etched in the minds of his ardent admirers.

As a Cartoonist, he immortalized various caricature characters. His jokes are quite famous among the Telugu speakers. It is no exaggeration to say that there is no Telugu home library that is not adorned with Bapu's Jokes Books. His jokes are filled with humour coupled with mild satire and instantly bring laughter. The most celebrated cartoon strip, Budugu, was brought out in collaboration with his life-long friend, Mullapudi Venkataramana. Bapu breathed life into these fictional characters - Budugu, Seee Gaana Pasoonamba, Radha, Gopalam etc; and made them come alive with their witty dialogues and funny expressions. These are memorable characters and are peerless. In fact, Budugu has become a household name and was given as a pet name to any mischievous kid in a Telugu home. Bapu-Ramana combination continued for six long decades. In a way, their creative partnership is phenomenal. They were like twin inseparables and collaborated in all the projects they undertook.

* Editor, Triveni

Bapu, the painter, is known for his versatility and unique style of painting - freehand drawing and economy of strokes. He used bright colours, and did not clutter the background. He is also credited with a new font in Telugu. His mythological figures and other paintings are well-acclaimed and they adorn the cover pages of many journals/magazines not only in India but also abroad.

Most of his paintings depict Indian culture in general and Telugu culture in particular in all its myriad forms. They propagate Indian traditions and values. His style is inimitable and matchless.

Though Bapu left to his heavenly abode, he still remains in the hearts of millions of his admirers all over the globe.

THE MOTHER EARTH

Dr. Emmadi Pullaiah

Oh! Our amiable and amicable
Mother earth, the divine manifestation,
endowed with beauty exquisite,
offering abode in your lap to the myriad,
without bias of the haves and the have-nots,
the virtuous and the vicious,
with a catchy slogan.
"All are equal to me".

You are a fascination-quotient,
admired and adored all over the globe,
for your services laudable.
Immortal are you like the brook,

with a preconceived notion,
"Men may come, men may go,
but I go on forever".
Are you not sailing
in troubled waters now?
You are exploited and exploded,
for unquenchable human thirst,
spoiling the ozone layer.
No irritation, no grim visage,
are exhibited by you,
despite all round human efforts
causing you loss irreparable.

At times, gone is your tolerance,
with behaviour cranky,
in the guise of disasters natural,
not sparing even the charming flora and fauna.

* Retd. Professor, Warangal

You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean: If a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty.

Mahatma Gandhi

OPENNESS AND SECRECY IN GOVERNMENT TWO SIDES OF THE COIN

P.S. Ramamohan Rao*

The Right to Information Act has led to a tug of war between protagonists of transparent governance and the 'never-say-die' bureaucracy. Disclosure of file notings is the bone of contention on which the latter has derived strength from the reservations, reportedly expressed by the President, service chiefs and some others. The argument is that the prospect of such disclosure in the future becomes a deterrent against recording of one's candid and objective opinion or advice.

Champions of Right to Information contend that while the honest and straight forward have nothing to fear, the dishonest deserve to be exposed.

The debate rests on the premise that notings reflect the pros and cons of the issue under consideration as argued by the various functionaries who make such notings. This might have been the case in British days and in the first decade or so of independence. But as the friction and conflict between the permanent civil service and the political executive got resolved, over the years, in favour of the latter, the practice morphed into one of the decision maker indicating the lines on which the noting' on file had to be developed from below and the bureaucracy complying with such a directive. In the vast majority of files the process goes something like this.

* Former Governor of Tamil Nadu

The paper under consideration, (PUC for short) received from the public or from another agency of the Government is 'summarised' on the noting file by the dealing official. He also makes the substantive noting with regard to rules, precedents and feasibility. In the process, the dealing official sets the tone and trend of the note in the direction which will lead to the outcome as desired by the decision maker. Thereafter, the various functionaries through whom the file passes merely append their signatures. Finally the decision maker adds his own signature or records a terse order. Similarly, the minutes of councils of ministers (cabinets) embody merely the decisions taken at cabinet meetings and not a record of the discussions leading to the decisions. When legislation is undertaken, the direction goes from the top and the notings are moulded accordingly. Instances of file notings reflecting different or conflicting opinions are rare, and occur only when temperamental or value conflicts occur between bureaucrats or between a bureaucrat and the political boss. Invariably, they lead to the removal from the loop of the more vulnerable individual.

In the light of the foregoing description of the process of decision making in Government, there is no real danger of shutting out candid expression of views or advice if file notings are thrown open. The exemptions against such disclosure, provided already in the R.T.I. Act appear adequate to protect

national interest and can be added to if sufficient experience with the operation of the Act warrants any. Stray instances of misuse can be dealt with under the penal laws. The fear of political abuse is antithetical to the premises and processes of democracy. Further, secrecy only leads to calculated leaks and corruption.

Therefore, the rigid stance of the Dept. of Personnel in the Govt. of India against disclosure of file notings has to be attributed to its innate resistance to any change or to collateral fears of exposure of the manner of its handling personnel matters relating to discipline, selections, promotions and career management. A good chunk of the litigation against the Govt. at the centre and in states relates to grievances of personnel. Disclosure of file notings can cause serious embarrassment to individual officers and their reputations. The cloak of anonymity behind which favours are dispensed will be ripped open. Of course, there is one real danger. That is the exposure to the public of how little the whole hierarchy of the senior bureaucrats really contribute to decision making or in the alternative, how well they cover their tracks.

The ruling in favour of free disclosure of file notings by the Central Information Commission headed by a former bureaucrat was welcomed by many as a breath of fresh

air. This ruling should be seen as the result of a plain reading of the Act and nothing more. After the initial euphoria fades there could be a gradual tightening of screws if these Commissions continue to be headed by former civil servants. The Act would retain its purpose and efficacy, only if they are headed by enlightened and reputed citizens, unconnected with Government.

How about the interesting proposition that opening up the Government will actually increase the level of secrecy? Here is a Quote from a "bulwark of bureaucracy" whose identity shall be left to the reader to guess. "..... the movement to open up Government always achieves a gratifying increase in the level of secrecy. Once a meeting in Parliament, local council, cabinet, is opened up to the public, it is used by those attending as a propaganda platform and not as a genuine debating forum. True discussions will then take place privately in smaller informal groups so the move to greater openness in public affairs has greatly strengthened the level of secrecy and therefore the quality of decision making in the higher echelons of government." The opponents of disclosure will only hope for the vindication of this. On the other hand, disclosures of file notings could prod civil servants to become bold and demonstrate that they are neither pliable nor obstructive and work only in public interest!

It's the questions we can't answer that teach us the most. They teach us how to think. If you give a man an answer, all he gains is a little fact. But give him a question and he'll look for his own answers.

Patrick Rothfuss, *The Wise Man's Fear*

ANGER- HUMAN ASPECT

M. L. Swamy*

*Krodhad Bhavati Sammohana Ha,
Sammohat Smruti Vibhramaha,
Smruti Bhramsad Buddhi Naso,
Buddhinasat Prunasyati*

Thus, said Bhagwan Krishna in *Bhagawadgita*, Chapter II, Sloka 63.

From Anger comes Delusion;
from delusion Loss of Memory;
From Loss of memory
the "Destruction of Discrimination;
And from Destruction of Discrimination,
he perishes.

Anger is a feeling of extreme displeasure, hostility, indignation or exasperation towards someone or something. The synonyms are: anger, fury, ire, wrath, resentment and indignation and they denote varying degrees of marked displeasure. Anger denotes strong, usually temporary displeasure. Rage and Fury are closely related in the sense of intense, unconfined explosive emotion. Fury is more destructive; but rage is more justified by circumstance. Wrath applies especially to fervid anger that seeks vengeance or punishment. Resentment is ill-will and suppressed anger, generated by a sense of grievance. Indignation arises out of seeing the mistreatment of someone or something dear and worthy. It is there in animals, insects, and every animate and inanimate object. So, friends, anger is not a simple word or a simple

phenomenon. It encompasses many aspects and facets. Suffice to say that anger is an all pervading nature.

"Anger is bad and is the root cause of all ills in our society. Anger is a weakness. Anger has to be controlled". The angriest man or woman in our society may be the first person to decry anger. Of course, anger is not good. It may be harmful to you. Enemies, bitter in some cases, may spring up out of anger. Physical violence may result sometimes. Your blood pressure will increase, resulting in strokes. Above all, you may lose your mental balance and your peace of mind. You may lose your identity as a man. Yes, it will be good not to have or develop anger at all. In that case we may end up as super men or saints! At the same time, I think that some sort of anger is also necessary. It may also be a necessary evil. It is like the 'hissing' of a cobra, without which it cannot survive. Otherwise, it will be harmed and killed by all and sundry.

Anger is like Cholesterol in our body, which is required. If you have too much cholesterol you may get heart attacks and other complications. So everyone tries to reduce and minimize the cholesterol in his body. But you have two types of cholesterol, 1) LDL (low density Lipoproteins) and 2). HDL (High density Lipoproteins). If LDL is bad cholesterol, HDL is good cholesterol. The more HDL you have, the more you will be healthy. It is actually the HDL /total Cholesterol ratio that is important. The higher

* First Engineer-in-Chief of the Govt. of AP, now settled in USA.

the ratio, the better. Just like HDL and LDL, in anger also, there are two types of Angers, Good Anger and Bad Anger. You cannot avoid anger. But a higher ratio between Good Anger and Total Anger makes you a better man, if not a perfect man. Anger in some cases does good, may be lot of good. I have many experiences in my life which proved that anger is not always bad; nay it is good in some cases.

As a boy I was very boisterous and used to make lot of mischief. My mother used to tell me not to do bad things or talk bad. But her warnings were of no avail. She used to get very angry and used to beat me. When I was running away from her, she used to chase me with a firewood stick and beat me left and right and bring me to my senses. If I am what I am today, it is mainly due to the anger, loving anger, my mother exhibited and implemented during the early years of my life. As per the pious norms and rules, if my mother had not exhibited anger, she would have had her peace of mind and retained her mental balance. But I would have ended up as a spoilt child and gone to oblivion. So, the anger of an affectionate and dutiful mother, father or any of our well-wishers is good for you, your life and your family and should be welcome!

In the administration in Government, especially if you are an engineer, you have to deal with hundreds and thousands of men. Good man-management is a key to success and speedy, timely and good execution of major projects. One of the tools of good management is Anger. Anger, verbal sometimes, is necessary, to give your disapproval to the way in which things are going and to mend them. Anger, even if exhibited by harsh words and language, need not necessarily be bad, provided it is used

with the specific purpose of mending the ways of your men. When I was an Assistant Engineer in 1951, there was an executive engineer by name P. Ramalingaraju. He used to get very angry during his inspections of works and used harsh language against his subordinates, who used to shiver during the inspections. I asked him once "Sir, why do you lose your temper and scold them so much? You can tell the same thing softly. You are unnecessarily losing the good will of your men. They may become discouraged and antagonistic to you". Mr. Ramalingaraju smiled and said "I shout at them to see that works are done properly and well. I have nothing personal against them. As for their good will, I will never lose it. They are with me always because I only shout at them but I will not hit them on their stomachs". I was surprised and later enquired from his subordinates. They all said with one voice "Mr. Raju is a very good and kind officer. Unlike other officers, who appear smooth and soft, he will not harm us and spoil our careers by charge sheet, suspension or dismissal. He wants only work and results. He actually likes us and loves us. We don't mind his anger". Benevolent anger is good and beneficial to both sides. Anger, what a great instrument!

There are other good aspects of anger. Normally, you lose good friends by your anger. But anger also sometimes gets new friends, good friends. Anger also in some cases brings friends closer and increases their bonds. I was Superintending Engineer at Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, in the year 1969. At that time, Dr. Krantikumar, a Ph.D. in Structures, worked with me in my designs office, as Assistant Engineer. He was a good, learned and efficient officer and I developed a special

liking for him for his knowledge and efficiency. Later in 1973, I was transferred from that place. Dr. Krantikumar continued to be in touch with me and whenever he wanted guidance or help in the department, for promotions, transfers etc., he used to approach me and I used to help him. In the year 1981 Government of Andhra Pradesh created the post of an Engineer-in-Chief, a Secretary level position, and posted me there. I was in charge of administration of the entire Irrigation department with 10 Chief Engineers working with me. One day, about five legislators called on me in my office and represented to me to retain Dr. Krantikumar at the place where he was working at that time, saying they needed him there for some more time. I got upset that the legislators were interfering in the administration and that Dr. Krantikumar must have been behind this political interference. I controlled myself at that time, told the legislators that I would look into it and sent them away. I did not act on this. After a few days, Dr. Krantikumar called on me in my office. As soon as he entered my chambers, I lost my temper and got extremely angry and shouted at him saying that he was going after legislators and bringing political pressure and sabotaging my methods of working and my administration. He was surprised and speechless and aghast, as he had not seen me like that before. I shouted at him asking him to go out of my chambers. He left my chambers, shaken and without a word. From that moment, repentance came on me and I started thinking as to why I unnecessarily got angry with him for nothing and hurt the feelings of a very good friend. I was restless for days. After three days, Dr. Krantikumar called on me again at my chambers. As soon as he entered my chambers, I went forward

and received him, took his hand and said, "Dr. Krantikumar, I am very sorry for what happened the other day. I unnecessarily got angry for nothing. I don't know what happened to me at that time. Please excuse me". I really meant it. I don't know what Dr. Krantikumar wanted to tell me, but he was flabbergasted and became speechless for some time and then he said "Sir, you are great! You are great! I actually came today to ask your forgiveness for what had happened the other day. But on the other hand, you are so nice to me. Actually, I did not approach the legislators to call on you for my retention. It appears they came to you on their own, as they wanted me there for some more time. Please forgive me if I had done anything wrong". I hugged him. From that time, we had become close and better friends. I retired in 1983. But even now, in 2001, we continue to be very good friends. Later in 1994, his son came to US and had training in the Computer software company of my son in Connecticut and came up well in life. We are good family friends. So, this is a case of anger, which did not destroy the friendship, but which helped in binding two good friends closer and firmer. You may probably classify this type of anger as "HDL Anger":

It is difficult to say either way whether Anger will harm you or help you in administration and in life. But one thing is for sure. Anger will bring you in its wake, blood pressure, strokes, ill health, inefficiency and above all lots of enemies! But good HDL Anger will get you new good friends, efficiency in administration, love and respect from your colleagues and above all peace of mind and joy for you and your friends. You may choose between the two!

AND ALL SHALL BE WELL ...

Prema Nandakumar*

It was good to remember Gandhari throughout this election. When Duryodhana had sought her blessings, she had simply said victory shall be with the side that follows dharma. Gandhari was a great tapasvin in her own right and what she said has, perhaps, come true after all.

Not that this general election had been less of a Kurukshetra than the one fought four thousand years ago. There had been no real bloodshed, nor killings. But the trappings of the earlier Kurukshetra like the trading of insults, the people who have not lost hopes for unity, the sheer myopia of certain politicians and the Salya-like charioteers were all there. However, there was a qualitative difference. Remember, four thousand years have not worn away the dark shades one saw dancing in Kurukshetra and we still weep with Uttaraa who has lost her young husband Abhimanyu and shudder at the insults exchanged by some of the heroes.

But barely a week has passed since the 2014 elections and we are already analysing the impact and wondering how even in this century, after all these lessons learnt through four thousand years, things haven't changed much. But the effect has. What was tragedy in the days of Karna and Bhishma, Draupadi and Aswatthama is today a farce. Mercifully so.

I could see one thing as I watched the election through internet postings and the rhetoric that was spewed at us through articles in the news papers and comments on them.

Some of the statements of the so-called educated elite of this country really baffled me. We do have such a high opinion of persons who have received their doctoral degrees at an early age, taught in universities, published books and managed to receive high awards. One such person says things which are not backed by factual information. He announced, "I am an intellectual". What is so great about calling oneself an "intellectual", I wondered. There was Bal Gangadhar Tilak who carried the entire matter for his Gita research in his mind and wrote the *Gita Rahasya* while in prison. But he never isolated himself as a learned or intellectual person. I have not read anywhere in Sri Aurobindo's writings any reference of his describing himself as an "intellectual". Well, we do associate the razor-sharp intellect with a certain diamond hardness but this person said in the same breath that he got carried away by emotion when he said he would leave India if Narendra Modi should become the Prime Minister! For all the "I, the intellectual" stance of the gentleman, it merely carried signs of a false bravado which could have been avoided by a certain inclusive approach to life and history.

Such mistaking of freedom for license came up again soon after. All because, the mother of the Chief Minister of Gujarat had chosen to go to the voting booth in an auto

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rickshaw and lives in a tiny house with her younger son and his family. For millions of old ladies like me, this is a matter of pride and the news item was received with hands held in salutation. Here is a true Indian woman, and we too should emulate such simplicity! Unfortunately, the free press in India which gives space for such heart-warming news items also gives space for freedom to denigrate others, overtly and covertly. Within two days, we read an open letter from the Congressman Rashid Alvi who wished to speak of the lady's son (the Chief Minister) as a heartless person in a bid to tarnish his image. It was addressed to Narendra Modi in a satiric vein: "Your mother is like my mother. I have immense respect for her. I may not be as resourceful as you are, but I would request you to allow me to provide her all the necessary comforts of life according to my capacity". If Rashid Alvi was trying to insult, the attack failed. He did not realize that living a simple life linked to high thinking has always been the Indian ideal. Giving up luxuries is automatically praised by the tradition. The ancient Tamil epic, *Jeevaka Chintamani* describes how the Queen Mother Vijayai renounced the world when she had seen to it that her son Jeevakan had gained back his kingdom and was crowned. In our own times we have the example of

Bhuvaneswari Devi who led a very spartan life while her son was hailed all over the world as Swami Vivekananda. It is sad

that the Congress Party did not distance itself from this cheap 'open letter'.

But what do comfortably placed and power-rich people know of what it is to love one's motherland at any cost? In this context I am reminded of an incident in Sri Aurobindo's life recounted in his *Tales from Prison Life*. The British police had been searching Sri Aurobindo's house throughout the night and had been ransacking about everything that they found there, mostly books. Inspector Cregan led the search.

Sri Aurobindo writes: "Cregan asked me: 'It seems you are a B.A. Is it not a matter of shame for an educated person like you to be sleeping on the floor of an unfurnished room and in a house like this?' 'I am a poor man, and I live like one,' I said. 'Then have you worked up all this mischief with the idea of becoming a rich man?' Cregan replied in a loud voice. 'Knowing how impossible it was to explain the love of motherland, sacrifice or the sublimity of a vow of poverty to this thick-skulled Briton I did not make the attempt.'"

I am delighted that Narendra Modi has followed the footsteps of our Master and never cared to fling back a reply barb. Now that he has begun well by opening a dialogue with Pakistan, let us pray that unified hearts will be on the increase and bring ultimately the unity of Mother India.

Courtesy: Sri Aurobindo's Action

The language of the Law must not be foreign to the ears of those who are to obey it.

Thomas Fuller

DWINDLING COHESIVENESS IN SOCIETY

Dr.V.V.B. Rama Rao*

The most important, and the not so well recognized, danger for our country is the dwindling cohesion of our society. Cohesion is the most important parameter for a society to exist. When this cohesion is challenged society stands in imminent danger of fractionalization, secession, segregation and finally disintegration. Society is a conglomerate of a people with a unique identity. Body Politic and Social Fabric are phrases, which suggest binding, and togetherness to make the group viable to stand on its own preserving its identity and homogeneity. Minor external differences, call them variations pleasantly, exist but they should not be accentuated for ill-conceived short-term gains.

Reverence for authority besides near similarity of mindsets and perceptions, makes for cohesion. Fellow feeling, mutual respect and reverence for age-old institutions and implicit obedience to authority make good 'followership'. Respect comes from trust and faith - faith in the honesty and uprightness of governance. We, in the past, had strong unifying and cementing force in Sanskrit, the epics, the classics, inclusiveness called heritage and most importantly, reverence for authority and loyalty.

Without cohesion of society nationhood becomes a shadow without substance. Bharat, in spite of the presence of many kingdoms and many rulers down the ages retained

cohesion of society. It is the successive foreign rules that began showing signs of weakening of the once robust national ethos. But, the awakening of the people and the struggle for Independence under the leadership of illustrious life-giving patriots turned to be a factor for growing solidarity.

During the last decade, dangerous phenomena like 'criminalization' of politics, infighting among political parties and thirst for power of adventurists with no idea of governance or basic sense of decency have crept in, making elections expensive as well as divisive. Whipping up of passions and narrow-minded thinking and mindless pampering gave rise to demands that threaten harmony and unity. Diversity and plurality, the inherent qualities of the nation are relegated to insignificance for each group getting the lion's share of power, money-power as well as power of governance. No one person or factor is responsible for the malaise.

Politicians, statesmen, intellectuals, all need to own up responsibility for the erosion of values. The nation is going up the corruption calibrations of the world nations. Thanks to the emergence of Globalization and Liberalization the gulf between the poor and the rich is widening and thus contributing to the rise of discontent, ill-will and mindless rivalries making the lives of the have-nots more and more miserable by the day. The terms Equality, Equitability and Social Justice are bandied about in an ugly manner with hideous

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narrow-mindedness inspired by skewed thinking and abnormal self-love.

This rot needs to be stemmed first and foremost. The mechanism of elections needs to be thoroughly overhauled. Cohesiveness and Plurality have been co-existent but now the two appear to be mutually exclusive in actuality. Intellectuals and selfless idealists need to assert themselves, more than ever. More idea-based organizations like the Center

for Civil Society are the need of the day. There is no dearth of intellectuals and self-less social workers. Voluntary agencies that work tirelessly for promoting social harmony and cohesion need to be brought into being, besides sprucing up the existing organizations working in the field. Individual reformation, mainly among the aspirants to political power, is essential. Efficacious screening tests for contestants in elections are necessary. Strong deterrents for the defiant must be there.

THE ACHING SOUL

Sai Shivanarayana *

All is apparently tranquil
But the soul aches
Logic abandoned;
Blind unreasonable uncontrollable
Sadness;

Grief floods the mind
But the tears don't come
The struggle of the Soul
In stifling agony

Amidst surface tranquility
Deep down the soul aches
Like a bird in a cage
In ignorant rage.

* A National Talent Scholarship holder; A First Year Computer Science Student of VJIT Bombay - a genius, prodigy with spiritual knowledge and innovative ideas - passed away at the age of 16 years.

Friends and neighbors complain that taxes are indeed very heavy, and if those laid on by the government were the only ones we had to pay, we might more easily discharge them; but we have many others, and much more grievous to some of us. We are taxed twice as much by our idleness, three times as much by our pride, and four times as much by our folly.

Benjamin Franklin

EMANATION OF UNNOTICED EMERALD IN FEMINIST ADVOCACY: A STUDY OF SINDHI WRITER POPATI HIRANANDANI'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

A. Komuraiah*

Popati Hiranandani is a prominent feminist writer. She is a Sindhi writer who authored over sixty books in her lifetime. Sindhi language is the language like Punjabi, Urdu and Bengali and it is the language of the sub continent which goes back to the ancient recorded evidence of civilisation. Sindhi literature is very rich and is generally considered to be among the world's oldest. Popati Hiranandani tried her hand at numerous genres such as the novel, short fiction, poetry, biography and literary criticism. For writing excellent books, she got *Sahitya Akademi Award* and the *Gaurave Puraskar* from the Maharashtra Government. Her works depict the longings and desires, affected by partition and describes the agony of women in the contemporary India. Her works have the themes such as pain of separation and reunion in both ways-fictional and real. Lakshmi (2006) rightly says that "Popati Hiranandani's works speak of independent and strong women."

Popati belongs to Sindhi community which is different from their counterparts in Bengal and Punjab. When the Bengali and Punjabi Hindus and Sikhs could recuperate their culture and language, they succeeded. Because of the partition, most of the Sindhi

people lost their lands and recognised positions in various administrative posts. They had twenty nine lakh acres of land which was sixty percent of total land in Sindh. The partition caused a terrible destruction to the Sindhu people. Some people left their regional places where they were born. As it is difficult to understand, Sindhu people only read the literature. When the books were translated, the Sindhi literature came into existence. Bansi Khubchandani, a Mumbai-based critic and short storywriter, says "There was significant contribution of new Sindhi writers in all genres of Sindhi literature for about 30-40 years after Partition in India, which made the state of Sindhi literature up to, say, 1980-90, very robust."

In the beginning, Popati had taken the teaching career. Popati had abundant love and affection for Sindhi community. We can see similar themes in her works. In the preface of one of her books she says: "I write what I feel. I do not want to entertain or amuse my readers. I endeavour to restore to the Indian woman her lost sense of dignity...At a time when women writers were not allowed to use the word *ishq* (love) Popati wrote a poem about the uterus calling it a small box beneath the navel." (Lakshmi, 2006)

**The Pages of My Life: An
Autobiography and Selected Stories**

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describes her experiences in the pre and post partition India. There are fourteen stories. She has mentioned some anecdotes. Her short stories give us a fictional account of comprehensive existence of womanhood. The book contains quite a few experiences of partition and its consequences. At the same time, Popati did not give any clue for controversial purpose. She protests against dowry system. In her real life, she was faced with the same problem. Her suitor's mother asked her 15000 rupees as dowry. Popati was earning more amount than her suitor was earning. She met the boy and told him that he should pay her a dowry. He could not pay and she would not marry him. She wrote in her autobiography that a woman is made to suffer "not on account of any vice in her character but because of her virtues". She never married in her life. She remained single, taking caring of her family after her father's death. The dreadful thing in her life was India and Pakistan partition in 1947. She was shocked to experience the horrible days. At that time, the Sindhi people, who are mostly innocent, were betrayed by the politicians. They blindly believed the statesmen and rulers who cleverly deceived them. Hiranandani in a sad tune tells that "We had to leave everything that was dear to us - the house, the garden,

my writing table!" She recollects the pathetic scenes when they left Sindhu, the agonies they had to suffer on the road, for she pointed at the danger of the journey through Pakistan, "All our furniture, household goods including our books, clothes, etc. were left behind in the house. We had to be very careful in not letting anyone know that we are leaving Pakistan because if Muslims found us, we would be robbed and finished."

When Hiranandani was eighty one years old, she died of cancer on 16th December 2005. In Sind, many Pakistanis held condolence meetings and paid homage to her. Unfortunately nobody, from Mumbai, where she lived for some years, knew that she had passed away. Her stories and books are prescribed as part of the syllabus in Pakistan but in India where she spent her life, her name was not heard. Many literary people too do not know her name. There is hardly one or two research works done on her writings in India whereas in Pakistan, there are uncountable works on her. I hope that literary people would choose their research on her works. She is the writer of more than sixty books but there is not a single critical book or single paper on her from India.

If you will not fight for right when you can easily win without bloodshed, if you will not fight when your victory is sure and not too costly, you may come to the moment when you will have to fight with all the odds against you and only a precarious chance of survival. There may even be a worse case. You may have to fight when there is no hope of victory, because it is better to perish than to live as slaves.

Winston Churchill

BHAVABHUTI: POET-DRAMATIST

Dr Usha K Srinivas*

Sages and rishis of ancient India contributed a wealth of knowledge in all walks of life, be it in science, art, literature, culture, philosophy, metaphysics or politics. Authoritative works by ancient Hindus that contributed a great deal to human knowledge are freely available either in original or in translation for all seekers of knowledge. One such scholar whose works are highly respected is Bhavabhuti who lived in the 8th century.

Bhavabhuti, also named Srikantha, was the son of Nilakantha and Jatukarni. Srikantha literally means 'one in whose throat eloquence resides', which people say is proved appropriate for Bhavabhuti. He was born into Dashastha Brahmin family of Padmapara, Vidarbha, Central India in Gondia district on the border of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. This sect of Brahmins is considered to be descendants of sage Kashyapa.

Bhavabhuti received his education at 'Padmapawaya' a place 42 km southwest of Gwalior. Paramahansa Dayanidhi is known to be his guru. Historical evidence states that he spent considerable amount of time in Ujjain and its vicinity and was a court poet of King Yashovarman of Kannauj in the 8th century. Kalhana, a 12th century historian, also places Bhavabhuti in the 8th century saying that Bhavabhuti was found in the entourage of the king (probably Yashovarman) who was

defeated by Lalitaditya, a king of Kashmir in 736 AD. Yashovarman patronized Bhavabhuti and made him his 'court poet' where he pursued most of his literary activity. However, there are some reports that say that his birth place and the place where he composed his works are not the same and especially the plays were composed at 'Kalpi', a place on the banks of river Jamuna.

Bhavabhuti is well known as the author of three plays: *Mahaviracharita* (Exploits of the great Hero), *Malatimadhava* (Malati and Madhava), *Uttararamacharita* (The Later Deeds of Rama).

Even though the number of dramas written by Bhavabhuti is few, compared to many writers of his age, many opine that he occupies a unique place in the world of Sanskrit drama. In his critical essay on Hindu Theatrics, Sarvesh K. Tiwari says "Bhavabhuti's plays stand out for a remarkable finesse of language and that there is no writer who came up to Bhavabhuti in his wonderful command of Sanskrit, its fluency and elevation of diction". Tiwari also says that Bhavabhuti followed the established framework and norms set forth by the *Natyasastra* of Bharatamuni. His plays are considered equivalent to the works of Kalidasa.

Mahavirachitra:

This play is based on the epic *Ramayana* till Rama's coronation.

* Scientist, Writer and Translator, Hyderabad

Bhavabhuti, like Kalidasa before him, chose to render in drama the popular story of Ramayana. He made considerable changes in the story and its presentation to make it fit for stage performance. In terms of education and language and due to social norms, much of the knowledge in the epics was not available to common men and women. The purpose of dramas like *Mahaviracharita*, is not only to provide cheerful and jovial entertainment but also to spread ethical values and learning in the society at large. According to many, Bhavabhuti was very successful in this art.

Coming to the details of the play, *Mahaviracharita* is a seven act play. There is a controversy among scholars as to how much of it is the original work of Bhavabhuti. According to many, Bhavabhuti wrote the play up to 46th verse of act V. Either the rest of the work is lost or missing or the author did not complete it -- it is not clear. In the remaining work, there is a North Indian version composed by poet Vinayaka and a South Indian version composed probably by Subrahmanya. It seems neither of them is in tune with the style of Bhavabhuti. When one reads even the abridged versions of *Mahaviracharita*, deviations of Bhavabhuti from the original story of Valmiki become obvious, like Sita being present at Viswamitra's ashram along with her cousins Srutakirti and her father, Kushadhvaja, the romantic feelings of Sita when she sees Rama in the ashram, Surpanakha arriving along with Ravana's minister Malyavam at the site of Yagna and discussing the death of Tataka and Subahu, and Rama killing Vali in a fair battle, etc.

In terms of theme and presentation, *Mahaviracharita* is considered not so mature

a work of Bhavabhuti as he devoted two acts, acts III and IV, to a confrontation between Rama and Parasurama. However, in other aspects of the play like characterization and handling personalities, the changes he made to transform *sabda kavya* (a story to read) to a *drisya kavya* (a story to watch) and presentation of personalities like Manthara, Surpanakha and Parasurama Bhavabhuti is commended greatly. The play ends with Rama, Sita and Lakshmana returning to Ayodhya.

Malatimadhava:

Malatimadhava is an original, complex romantic play of Bhavabhuti that is considered unique. It is a ten-act play set in the city of Padmavati against the background of the palace. Malati is the daughter of a minister in the court of the king of Padmavati. Madhava is the son of a minister at Kundinapura. Malati falls in love with Madhava. Ever since she saw him, she drew his portrait and Madhava reciprocates her love and draws a portrait of her in turn.

However, Malati's father, in order to gain favour of the king, desires Malati marry a youth by name Nandana. Another girl by name Bhurivasu also loves Madhava. A side plot involves the love story of Malati's friend's sister Madayantika with Madhava's friend Makaranda. This complex love story involves sorcery, human sacrifice and tantric practice, with all the human jealousy. After several turns and travails, all ends well with the two couples getting married. According to the renowned Samskrit scholar Daniel H H Ingalls, "*Malatimadhava* is a work that combines love and horror with a felicity never again equalled in Samskrit literature".

Uttararamacharita:

This story of the later life of Rama is considered the most mature work of Bhavabhuti. This is a seven-act play dealing with the later life of Rama, beginning with his coronation, abandonment of Sita, birth of Lava and Kusa in Valmiki's ashram and their final reunion.

Though Bhavabhuti says he gave a dramatic form to the Ramayana katha of Valmiki, he presented the story in a new style with delicacy of art. The main characters and the events in the play are drawn from *Ramayana*, but the changes in the characters and the happenings Bhavabhuti made, including the happy ending are to give a message and a moral to the uneducated audience. Bhavabhuti presented the popular, well-accepted story of Rama with a new motivation implying a moral and a purposeful art.

The play begins with Rama and Sita chatting about their life in the forest. Lakshmana enters announcing that the mural along the walkway is finished and that they can see it. Rama, Sita and Lakshmana were happily reminiscing their life in the forest, when Sita expresses her wish to take a dip in the river Bhagirathi. As they came to the end, Sita feels tired and falls asleep. An attendant enters and informs Rama about the evil talk in the town. Subsequently, Sita was left in the forest near sage Valmiki's ashram and the rest follows with the delicate interweaving of art and moral.

In act III, dialogue between Sita's friend Vasanta, Rama and the invisible Sita in the Dandakaranya is only to be experienced to understand the delicacy of Bhavabhuti's descriptions.

For example:

1. "Call no marriage happy that does not have the knot of children to tighten it"
2. Rama (remembering Sita) "O' my heart, do not break open, do not gush open as water through rock"
3. " The pool overflows when full, why shouldn't the heart"
4. ".....but the moisture of my hands seals me to him"

Again in act V, the meeting of Kausalya and Janaka is portrayed with so much gracefulness that one has to read it to appreciate it. Bhavabhuti's expression, "call it love or friendship or delight, affection stitches two hearts together" by Chandraketu when he sees Lava stands true for ever.

The happy reunion of the family as presented in acts VI and VII is to be read and experienced for its sensitivity of expression. Though the drama is a deviation from the popular story of *Uttararamayana*, the happy ending is a wish of humanity at large, hence a befitting deviation by the poet.

Our generation never had a chance. When we were young they taught us to respect our elders and now that we are older they tell us to listen to youth.

Maurice Seitter

PATH FINDER TO STUDENTS AND THE YOUTH

C.V.G. Krishnamurthy*

The maladies of the present day students and the youth should be overcome with the clarion call of Swami Vivekananda - in his own words - "Strength is life, weakness is death, proceed with self confidence". The life histories of a few heroes with self confidence reflect in the world history.

Nowadays, we find students attempting suicide for a simple reason of failure in the examination, or for not being satisfied with the sound advice of their parents or for other flimsy reasons. The youth develop a fancy for cine artists and they do not know the dividing line between the reality and the magic of the trick photography.

They should read the life histories of patriots like Mahatma Gandhi and Subhash Chandra Bose. Swami Vivekananda kindled patriotism in Mahatma Gandhi and courage and bravery in Subhash Chandra Bose for establishing *Azad Hind Fouz*. Jamshedji Tata, the great industrialist got inspiration from Swami Vivekananda.

Bharat Ratna Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, the ex-President of India, laid down important principles to the youth for good existence in the changing times. There should be a serious search for guidance from able teachers. Listen to their principles with utmost patience. He cites in this context how he developed

inquisitiveness by observing the flying birds. This became a foundation for his advanced research and proficiency in Aeronautical Engineering and for missiles. He expresses gratitude to his primary school teacher. Further, he asserts that from time to time, the youth must be prepared to shoulder the responsibilities. Humility is an essential quality for the development of knowledge. He cautions here that excess of knowledge of power, without holiness makes human beings, devils.

The present day youth lack proper culture and commitment for any job in their life. From *Bhaskara Sathakam*, the poet mentions that aesthetic sense renders fullness to a scholarly person. He gives a popular example to elucidate it. A curry may be prepared nicely, but if it lacks a little bit of salt, it loses its taste.

The study of the biographies of great persons who came from humble beginnings gives inspiration to the young minds. The life history of the ex-Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, illustrates that wealth may not be a prerequisite for persons to become eminent. The biography of Bharat Ratna Dr. Abdul Kalam indicates that diligence and devotion go a long way in achieving the targets in life.

In the syllabus for schools, there should be lessons to inculcate the right values in life. Sometime in the past there were lessons in the syllabus to teach proper values.

* Retired Lecturer, Secunderabad

Nowadays, this is not found in the lessons prescribed. The Andhra Pradesh High Court Justice, Shri C.V. Nagarjuna Reddy, also expressed anguish about the absence of lessons to promote morals and good conduct. Even the parents do not bestow much thought for improving this situation.

Modern India which came out free from the clutches of the British Rule welcomes for upbringing the youth to become helpful and useful citizens. In short, the country needs "Young men with iron muscles and steel nerves," as expressed by Swami Vivekananda.

MY HEART LEAPS

Dr. K.Rajamouly*

Without any forethought, I keep
My heartiest heart leap so deep
Into the oasis of heavenly bliss
A quite welcome dip not to miss

To bloom a flower of infinite petals,
Brimful of nectar for winged mortals
And sing in the delight of full heights;
At a joyous sight of beautiful sights,

In quick response to honeyed sounds,
Spectacular nature wonders sans bounds:
The rain-drops, sprinkled, sure to refract
VIBGYOR, colors in treasures to attract

The peacock to spread wide its plumes
In the glimpse of blue clouds; joy blooms
High mountains to shine in the silver stain
The cuckoo to outpour its pleasant strain

Distant verdant vales be in the echo
On and on, of the most melodious flow
Bars of clouds in many diverse colors
All artists fail to portray its adventures

Dawn and dusk and east and west
All birds to flutter their wings in zest
The moon to sing and the stars to dance
Indeed, a miraculous event by chance

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Streams to glide past with their echo-roar
Of pebbles at the bottom after rain-pour

Yesterday is but a dream, Tomorrow is only a vision. But today well lived makes every yesterday a dream of happiness, and every tomorrow a vision of hope."

Kalidasa, *The complete works of Kalidasa*

WITH THE SAGE OF THE HOLY HILL

Dilip Kumar Roy*

I first heard of Sri Ramana Maharshi while I was a member of the Yoga Ashram of Sri Aurobindo. I asked Sri Aurobindo about the Maharshi and he wrote back that he was a Yogi of remarkable strength and attainments and that his tapasya had won glory for India. On another occasion he characterised him as a 'Hercules among the Yogis'. So I longed to pay a visit to Ramanasramam, situated at the foot of the hallowed Arunachala Hill.

When I arrived at the small house where the Maharshi lived, I felt a deep malaise. How could I hope to get peace and inspiration from him if I had failed to get it at the feet of my own Guru, who was surely no less great? Yet I felt sincerely that I had done well in coming to seek inspiration from the great Yogi who was venerated by spiritual aspirants of every category. At the same time, I wondered whether this was the proper frame of mind in which to seek peace from a mighty Illuminate! I entered the room of the great sage in the afternoon. It was just a bare hall in which I found him reclining on a couch. A handful of devotees were sitting on the floor. Some were meditating, while others were gazing wistfully at the sage, who sat stone still, staring in front at nothing at all, as was his wont. He never spoke unless somebody first spoke to him or asked a question. For fifty years he had been living on this Hill and had felt no inclination to leave it. In the earlier years he had lived in a cave on the Hill for many years in silence. In the Ashram, which had subsequently been built around him by a few of his devotees. He had now been living a singular life, blessing all, but

belonging to none, interested in everything but attached to nothing, answering questions but hardly ever asking any.

He gave the impression of Siva, the great God of compassion, who was there to give but not to ask anything of anybody, living a blissful, free and open life, with no walls of the ego to cabin the summit vision. I had, indeed, read what Paul Brunton had written about him and had heard a lot about his lovable ways from a dear friend of mine, Duraiswami, who had known him for years. Some other devotees had told me that he had been living ever since his abandonment of worldly life in a state of *sahajasamadhi* (super conscious in the ordinary wakeful consciousness). What I saw with my own eyes impressed me deeply, though I find it far from easy to portray what I saw, or rather experienced. Here was a man who lived like a god, supremely indifferent to all that we worldlings clamour for without cease. Dressed in a bare koupin (loin-cloth) he yet sat ensconced in a grandeur of plenary peace and egoless bliss which we could but speculate upon, yet never fathom. Kings had come to him with all sorts of rich offerings, but in vain; he had blessed them, but never accepted any gifts. He said one day to a disciple with an ironic smile as he pointed at a huge pandal which his devotees were building to honour him at the Golden Jubilee celebrations (1946): "Just fancy, they insist on erecting this for me when all I need is the shade of a tree to sit under".

(This is an extract from *Kumbha*, published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan)

A THINKER, A DOER AND AN ENTERTAINER: THROUGH THE EYES OF A BIOGRAPHER

Dr I. Satyasree *

In this article, I would like to highlight the three biographies penned by Prof I.V.Chalapathi Rao, the Editor-in-Chief of Triveni. Prof. Rao has to his credit more than 30 biographies - *Mahatma Gandhi, Mimicry and Mono Acting - World Renowned Venumadhav*(1978), *Sri R.V.K.M Surya Rau Bahadur Maharajah of Pithapuram*(1987), *From Farm House to Rashtrapati Bhavan- Biography of President Sanjiva Reddy* (jointly authored by I.V.Chalapathi Rao & P.Audinarayana Reddy-1989), *Sankara - Humanist, Integrator, Poet & Philosopher*(1990), *Serving Society through Industry-The Life of Shri KVK Raju*(1995) one of the top 10 industrialists of his time, *My Life is My Message- Bhagawan Baba*(1999), *Veteran Freedom Fighter, Eminent Journalist Madduri Annapurnaiah*(2000), *Durgabai Deshmukh - Life and Message* (4th Edition, 2008). He received the Award as the 'Best Biographer of the Year' from the Govt. of Andhra Pradesh for his biography of Pithapuram Maharajah.

All the above mentioned personalities are celebrities and legends, recognised for their outstanding contributions to the society in general and mankind in particular. The subjects chosen by Prof. Rao belong to various fields ranging from the President of India to a social worker; from a veteran

freedom fighter to an entrepreneur; from a God-man to an entertainer. In fact, it is no exaggeration to say that "his subjects chose him rather than he chose his subjects". On most of the occasions, he was asked to pen these biographies either by the Government or by Private organizations such as Nagarjuna Group or Telugu University.

The dictionary defines biography as 'The life story of a person written by someone else'. According to Prof Rao, 'In loose sense, biography is life-writing'. In the Introduction to President Sanjiva Reddy's biography, *From Farm House to Rashtrapati Bhavan*, he talks about the subjects considered fit for writing biographies - the men who guided the course of history, people who changed the thought and habit of their fellow humans and those who worked for the welfare of the mankind or otherwise served the country. He further adds 'There are 3 types of men - the thinkers, the doers and the entertainers - all belong to one human family'. I was prompted to select three biographies written by Prof Rao, three most illustrious persons, from three different fields: A Thinker- Dr Neelam Sanjiva Reddy, a Doer - Dr Durga Bai Deshmukh and an Entertainer- Dr Nerella Venu Madhav.

Writing the biography of a larger-than-life persona, a towering yet unassuming and down-to-earth personality in the world of politics is certainly an edgy affair. While

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introducing Sri Sanjiva Reddy, Prof Rao says that "it is very difficult to write the biography of a person who is a well-known public figure and whose political career spanned nearly five eventful decades and the difficulty level increases even more, because the person is still alive (at the time of writing the bio)". However, he makes a 'humble' attempt to sketch the profile of Sri Sanjiva Reddy. It is very well drafted and serves as a model for budding biographers as to how to outline the profile of a prominent statesman of Sri Sanjiva Reddy's stature, who rose to eminence by dint of sheer hard work. Sri Sanjiva Reddy's journey from farm house to Rashtrapati Bhavan is no mean feat. The author compares the arduous journey to that of the American President, Abraham Lincoln's journey, as described by the Americans, 'from the log cabin to the White House'. Sri Sanjiva Reddy did not come from an affluent family. He had neither a god father to help him 'pull' and 'push' nor someone to give him a 'lift'. To exemplify this point, the author says, 'Sri Sanjiva Reddy slowly rose from a humble starting-point to prestigious posts of political power and eventually climbed to the highest position in India - Presidentship - and this is an illustration to the common man's conquest of life with will and skill'. Sentences such as these present a vivid picture of the subject he is going to deal with.

When Sri Sanjiva Reddy assumed the President's office, *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, carried the headlines 'The one who "decides" - Mr N. Sanjiva Reddy has said he would 'very much' be a President who 'is neither seen nor heard, but who decides'. And he truly lived by this statement and affirmed at a public meeting held in the Public Gardens,

Hyderabad, which was convened to felicitate him, where he frankly and almost bluntly declared without mincing matters, "I will not be a Rubber Stamp President (in Telugu "a thandana thana" President - p 101). *Tribune*, Chandigarh, reported on 8.7.1977 that Sri Sanjiva Reddy had a 'Genius for doing things better than others.' On several occasions, he displayed his thinking capabilities and was considered a genius-par-excellence. He was bold and unconventional and was unhesitant to court criticism and controversies frequently. In the Epilogue, Prof Rao concludes by saying that Dr Sanjiva Reddy's life is indissolubly connected with the political history of India, particularly with the important events of the post independence period. Future historians will be in a better position to assess the true value of his services and his place in history.

Smt Durgabai Deshmukh is a doer. She is a multi-faceted personality, and is a true representative of women empowerment and worked relentlessly towards this goal and has many firsts to her credit. She was the first woman member of the Planning Commission, the first woman to receive the most coveted Padma Vibhushan together with UNESCO's esteemed award for literacy campaign. She is an institution builder. Prof Rao says in the biography, 'When Durgabai wrote her monumental treatise *The Stone that Speaketh* seventy five foundation stones were laid and as many buildings have sprung up. After her demise, at least forty new stones were laid and as many sprung up. There is no let-up in the service programme and the building activity'. She is one of those very few women who played a heroic role in the Indian freedom struggle. Prof Rao describes her as the Crown-Jewel of Andhra Pradesh, and says

she carried the torch of social reform and lit a candle instead of cursing the darkness around her.

Durgabai's achievements are discussed elaborately in the book. She was a competent leader, who swam against the current of tradition, custom and public opinion and deviated from the beaten track. Talking about her phenomenal popularity at the national level, Prof. Rao avers that there was no shortcut route to her success. She occupied the most coveted positions at the national level. He says that she was a woman who had grown bigger in each role and left each a bigger role than it was. She was a freedom fighter, social reformer, social worker, organizer, administrator, writer and pioneer in adult education.

Padma Shri Nerella Venu Madhav popularized the art of mimicry not just at the national level but also at the international arena. All the world was his stage and he is a master performer and a celebrated entertainer. He could mimic anybody in no time. When he was on a personal visit to the Gulf, it was reported in *Gulf News* (13 January, 1989) "Don't give Dr.N.Venu Madhav more than a second of your time. If you do, you will see

yourself mimicked by him." On the initiative taken by Venu Madhav, Sri Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University, Hyderabad, started a one-year Diploma course in Mimicry. This course, perhaps, is the first of its kind in the world. Owing to the several years of rich experience in his chosen field, he prepared the syllabus himself.

Writing about this artiste, Prof. Rao showers lavish praise on him saying that he is a gifted wizard of mimicry and a versatile artiste. He was a globe-trotter and was the first Indian mono-actor to perform at the United Nations, where heads of states, delegates and ambassadors were mesmerized by his exceptional performance. He would enthrall the audience by displaying his proficiency in several languages such as English, Telugu, Hindi and Urdu. He also mastered the various accents of English speakers and different dialects of some Indian languages.

It is a great experience in reading these three biographies written by Prof Rao and they are treasure troves. These three great personalities seen through his eyes leave an indelible mark on the minds of the readers.

One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, "My son, the battle was between 2 "wolves" inside us all. One was Evil. It was anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego. The other was Good. It was joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith." The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather: "Which wolf wins?"

The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed."

Cherokee Indian

MISCONCEPTION
(A Mother's Plight)
 Short Story
 (Translation of Smt. Devasena's Porapatu)
 V. Chiranjeevi *

Prasad comes into the Kitchen as Krishnaveni, his mother, is preparing breakfast. She is surprised, for Prasad never comes there at that time normally. She even begins to wonder whether it is real or she is only dreaming.

'Mother, what is this? Who ever asked you to do all this work in the Kitchen? what is your daughter-in-law, Ganga doing? Ganga! Ganga!' He shouts.

Krishnaveni is amazed a little.

Does he not know that she has been doing these chores all these years? Is he pretending or any change has come over?

As Ganga comes there, Prasad chastises her. 'Have you any sense? How dare you make mother slog in the kitchen at her age? Have you become so lazy and irresponsible?'

Ganga replies meekly, 'What can I do she won't listen saying, after all she too must have some pre occupation and can't sit idle.' Krishnaveni is still not able to believe all this. 'Is it her own son speaking like that? Normally Prasad dares not open his mouth in the presence of his wife. Something strange or mysterious is happening' she thinks.

'I am very sorry. It's my mistake. It shall not recur in future', apologizes Ganga. She looks at her mother-in-law grudgingly for making her the object of her husband's ire. She takes over the work in the kitchen.

Now Prasad with all love and affection leads his mother into the hall with his hand round her shoulder and seats her in the sofa. 'Come Mother, sit here. You have borne me and brought me up against all odds after the demise of my father. Is it not my bounden duty to take care of you at this age?' mews Prasad with all concern.

'Oh, You have realized it only now after all these years'. Krishnaveni muses to herself. She feels as if the eighth wonder of the world is happening.

From that day onwards it is all royal treatment for her. She is not allowed to do any domestic chore. Coffee and breakfast are served where she is. Hot water is ready for bath. Lunch and dinner are served hot, if not sumptuously. She is taken care of as if she were Queen Mother, all the while Krishnaveni wondering whether any miracle is taking place.

Ten days have gone by. Krishnaveni now looks quite hale and healthy, putting on a little flesh and weight also. Prasad makes it a point to sit by her side every morning and chat about

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this and that. Krishnaveni has a feeling that the earlier mother-son bond is once again getting revived.

'Mother, do you remember Naveen? Have you forgotten that fellow, my childhood friend about whom I always talk, that fellow who is well-to-do and bright in the class?' asks Prasad one morning suddenly.

She doesn't understand what is all this about. She asks Prasad, 'Which Naveen? I can't recall him'.

'No wonder you don't remember, for he did his Engineering elsewhere. Now he is in America. He is married, of course love marriage. He has a baby also. He often writes to me and every time he enquires after your health with lots of love', replies Prasad,

'Really! Does he remember me even now?' enquires Krishnaveni unbelievably. As if understanding her genuine surprise Prasad continues: 'Yes mother, not only Naveen, all my friends have great respect for you. They are even envious of me that I have a mother like you. Naveen is also one of them'.

Krishnaveni wonders why her son is talking about this Naveen so particularly with so much interest and that too so suddenly.

'But now mother, there is a problem,' mutters Prasad. 'Why do you worry for nothing? Whoever will miss such a wonderful chance?' adds Ganga.

What is this problem? Why her son and Ganga are showing so much concern for her all of a sudden? Krishnaveni is unable to

derive what is happening. However, she dares not probe deep into the matter; though she very much wishes to. She simply sits there tongue-tied and perplexed.

'Naveen is so much upset that there is none to advise or guide him. He is literally pining for motherly love', says Prasad.

'What, in these days of nuclear families where old people are considered a nuisance, it is strange this Naveen is craving for mother-figure?'

Krishnaveni blurts out as if thinking aloud. Ganga could feel the punch and pinch in her mother-in-law's words. Had it been some other time she would have pounced on her with all animosity. But she controls herself as it is not expedient now.

'Mother that is the whole problem. These fellows run to America for money and don't realize what they are missing. Now they feel sorry. The point is, mother, Naveen wants the love of a mother so badly that he wishes to have you with him for a few days and bask in the sunshine of motherly affection', concludes Prasad.

This comes as a bolt from the blue to Krishnaveni. What on earth does this mean? After all, Naveen is not related to them in any way. How come, he wants to take her, that too to America? Wonders Krishnaveni.

'I told him as much', replies Prasad, 'But he is insistent. His mother is no more. His mother-in-law is too busy with her responsibilities at home to go to America. He doesn't like to take any of his untrustworthy

relatives. So he makes this proposal. After all what is wrong in that?, protests Prasad a little irritably.

'Going to America is once in a life time chance. Nobody can be foolish enough to forgo such an opportunity' adds Ganga accusingly.

It now appears to Krishnaveni that she would be forcibly put in the plane and packed off to America, whether she likes it not. Also the expression on the face of Prasad is slowly turning into impatience. She decides to go to America if it is the wish of her son and if it gives him happiness.

Needless to say Prasad literally jumps with joy, though he keeps his feelings under leash.

Now the rest is simple. All arrangements for Krishnaveni's trip to America are made posthaste.

One fine morning she is on her way to an unknown land and on an unexpected expedition, utterly dismayed and at a loss to know what her future is going to be.

At the airport in America a young man approaches her asking her if she is Krishnaveni. Even before she replies, he curtly asks her to come with him. He doesn't even bother to take the luggage from her.

Krishnaveni is a little thrown off that this young man who is supposed to pine for the love of a mother should treat her so casually. She sits in the car. The young man doesn't even say a word during the drive.

As soon as they reach home he calls his wife Gowthami and says, 'Gowthami, the woman we have been talking about and looking for has come'.

Then a lean girl in jeans and a loosely hanging shirt appears and examines Krishnaveni rather curiously.

'Darling, she looks like one coming from a high family and anyone can easily take her to be our family member', observes Gowthami speaking in English.

'It's OK, don't give her too much lenience. Show her proper place,' Shouts back Naveen.

Krishnaveni, despite her meager knowledge of English, understands vaguely what they are talking about. What annoys her is the way they are addressing and treating her. She doesn't find any trace of love or respect in their behavior.

Then Gowthami takes Krishnaveni to a small room.

'This is the servant maid's room. This is where you stay.'

What! Servant maid! Krishnaveni is shocked. She just can't believe her own ears. She almost collapses.

Gowthami begins to reel off the list of chores Krishnaveni is expected to do.

'My husband and myself', says Gowthami, 'go for jobs. I have to go at 8 and my husband at 9. You have to prepare

good breakfast. Afterwards you have to take care of baby and look after housekeeping. No need to prepare lunch as both of us eat outside. However you have to serve good dinner with tasty Indian dishes. Everything is available in house. So don't go out and chitchat with neighbours. If there is any emergency, just press this switch, the security will come'. Gowthami goes on without giving Krishnaveni a chance to say anything and also unmindful of reaction.

'Take away her Passport', shouts Naveen from drawing room.

'Yes, Yes, Give me your Passport. I shall give it to you when you go back.'

Gowthami seizes the passport.

Now Krishnaveni clearly understands her plight. But a shadow of doubt tugs at her mind. She ventures, 'What is the name of your husband?'

'What do you want with my husband's name', Gowthami shouts back. 'call my husband 'Sir' and me 'Madam'. That's all!'

Still Krishnaveni's doubt is not cleared, 'Madam, how is Prasad known to Naveen sir?'

'Prasad! Who is that Prasad? We don't know any Prasad. We advertised in all Indian newspapers for a reliable, trustworthy, healthy

middle aged woman as a servant maid. In response to this Prasad has sent you. That's it' replies Gowthami theatrically.

Servant maid! Not a mother! Krishnaveni is rattled beyond measure.

Gowthami Continues unmindful of Krishnaveni's agony.

'One more thing. Prasad has already collected Rs.45, 000/- and Rs.7,500/- for month. So mind you. You can't raise any demand for money.'

Gowthami leaves the room unconcernedly.

Now it is beyond doubt what Krishnaveni's place is in the house.

'Something has gone wrong somewhere. Not here. Yes, it is in the 'misconception' of a mean fellow like Prasad who has cheerlessly sold off his mother as a servant maid. So she has been reared like a sacrificial goat. All the love and doting of her son and his wife are downright pretension. It is her fault not to understand the sinister scheming of her 'son' abetted by his wife. It's too late now. Her fate is sealed. She has to slog on as a servant maid for the rest of her life in this alien land, mourns Krishnaveni.

Tears well up in her eyes. Cursed be the day when Prasad was born to her, she thought ruefully.

Tact is the ability to tell someone to go to hell in such a way that they look forward to the trip.
Winston Churchill

LAUGHTER IS THE BEST MEDICINE

Peter Mc Williams

Many years ago, Norman Cousins was diagnosed as "terminally ill". He was given six months to live. His chance for recovery was 1 in 500.

He could see the worry, depression and anger in his life contributed to, and perhaps helped cause, his disease. He wondered, "If illness can be caused by negativity, can wellness be created by positivity?"

He decided to make an experiment of himself. Laughter was one of the most positive activities he knew. He rented all the funny movies he could find - Keaton, Chaplin, Fields, the Marx Brothers. (This was before VCRs, so he had to rent the actual films.) He read funny stories. He asked his friends to call him whenever they said, heard or did something funny.

His pain was so great he could not sleep. Laughing for 10 solid minutes, he found, relieved the pain for several hours so he could sleep. He fully recovered from his illness and lived another 20 happy, healthy and productive years. (His journey is detailed in his book, *Anatomy of an Illness*.) He credits visualization, the love of his family and friends, and laughter for his recovery.

Some people think laughter is a waste of time. It is a luxury, they say, a frivolity, something to indulge in only every so often.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Laughter is essential to our equilibrium, to our well-being, to our aliveness. If we're not well, laughter helps us get well; if we are well, laughter helps us stay that way.

Since Cousins' ground-breaking subjective work, scientific studies have shown that laughter has a curative effect on the body, the mind and the emotions.

So, if you like laughter, consider it sound medical advice to indulge in it as often as you can. If you don't like laughter, then take your medicine - laugh anyway.

Use whatever makes you laugh - movies, sitcoms, Monty Python, records, books, New Yorker cartoons, jokes, friends.

Give yourself permission to laugh - long and loud and out loud - whenever anything strikes you as funny. The people around you may think you're strange, but sooner or later they'll join in even if they don't know what you're laughing about.

Some diseases may be contagious, but none is as contagious as the cure ... laughter.

From "Chicken Soup for the Surviving Soul"

Courtesy: Sri Aurobindo's Action

EXTENDED ALLEGORY IN BAPU'S FILMS

Dr. M.V. Bharatalakshmi*

When cinema became a popular and powerful medium of Art, literary forms like allegory, satire have been employed successfully by many renowned cine directors, all over the world. Satiric allegory was used in Charlie Chaplin's films that reflected the socio-political conditions in Europe, during the Second World War. One would recall with pleasure, Chaplin's portrayal of Hitler in the Director a wonderful satiric allegory on Adolf Hitler of Germany. Different types of allegory, social, historical and political found their way into cinema. In Indian cinema, allegory is extended to mythology and the Epics like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharatha*. Bapu, alias Lakshmi Narayana, a popular cartoonist, carved a niche for himself in the hearts of Telugu people as a Cartoonist and a Cine Director. He wielded his brush to draw distinct caricatures that convey the flavour of a Telugu home.

Bapu's inseparable soul-mate and writer-friend Mullapudi Venkata Ramana's diction breathed life into Bapu's cartoons. Since 1945 the twin artistes had been regaling the readers of many Telugu weeklies and dailies. In the 1960s, they extended their artistic vision to a bigger canvas (cinema) to reach the wider public. Along with Ramana, Bapu created a new brand of cinema which has unique and inimitable style. Before launching on film making, Bapu and Ramana used to write cine reviews which were published later in the form of a book, Bapu Ramaneeyam. With that

experience of reviewing the best films of Hollywood as well as Indian movies, especially Hindi and Telugu, they developed critical perception of the great directors' caliber as well as their drawbacks, that paved the way for them in film making.

Bapu uses screenplay only as a sketch not as a concrete structure that heavily imposes itself on the direction and dominates the mode of presentation. Cinema becomes a metaphor to express his artistic vision. His movies sparkle with subtle sense of humour and avoid blatant violence. No fan of Bapu films would ever forget the humourous dialogues in *Andala Ramudu* (1973) which remains a classic example of Bapu's brand of movies.

Bapu's artistic sensibility is manifested so well in the devotional movies like *Sampurna Ramayanam* (1971), *Seetha Kalyanam* (1976) and very recently *Sri Rama Rajyam* (2011). No need to say that these movies are based on the *Ramayana*. Bapu being a staunch devotee of Rama, his sense of deep devotion flows as the under current even in the social movies and the theme of *Ramayana* becomes a recurring one. He cleverly employs allegorical semblance of the epics the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharatha* in his social movies *Muthyala Muggu* (1975) and *Manavuri Pandavulu* (1978). Mythological characters like Rama, Sita and Ravana from the *Ramayana*, and the Pandavas of *Mahabharatha* have allegorical

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representation in these movies. He chose the mode of allegory to interpret the modern social complexities. *Muthyala Muggu* means, 'Rangoli of Pearls'. In the south Indian villages, early in the morning, the traditional women folk sweep the front yard of the house, sprinkle water and decorate the wet ground with rangoli. The rangoli drawn with white flour against the wet black soil shines like pearls in different patterns. In such a pleasant rural scenario, people believe in the traditional values and sustain the culture of the land and live peacefully. The village women are docile and virtuous like Sita. There are modern Ravanaas who cast an evil eye on such innocent women.

The rugged rustic contractor in the movie, pretends to be a man of good artistic taste. Actually, this polished rogue is a contractor for murders, rapes and kidnapping. By taking a huge amount of bribe, he plots to sow the seeds of suspicion in the mind of the hero. In the *Ramayana*, Rama suspects Sita's fidelity on hearing the allegation of a washerman. He sends away Sita who was pregnant, to a deep forest. In the movie, the hero suspects his wife, on hearing the fabricated stories against her. He drives away his innocent wife who was pregnant at that time. Like Sita, she reaches a remote place, where a saintly person who has some semblance to Valmiki gives her shelter. There she gives birth to twins, (a boy and a girl). These children as they grow up, become devotees of Lord Hanuman and they imagine that Lord Hanuman talks to them. Just as Hanuman plays a key role in searching Sita, they find their father with the help of their pet monkey. At the end, the hero realizes his folly, repents and reunites with his wife, thanks to the efforts of his children.

The viewers could make out the semblance of the theme of the film with *Uttara Ramayana*. Minute details like gestures and mannerisms of the characters were taken care of. A mild dig at psycho fancy is a brilliant piece of wit which will never fade away from the viewers' minds. The contractor (villain of the piece) takes care of himself not to fall prey to flattery. He employs two persons, one to play Mridangam and the other cymbals, when somebody starts praising the contractor, these two would pop up to play Mridangam and cymbals. The person who indulges in flattery would get the hint and stops buttering the contractor. This particular bit is repeated in the film, (whenever somebody praises the contractor the two would start playing Mridangam and cymbals). The viewers would cherish this naive piece of satire on psycho fancy. Bapu never made heavy sentimental stuff nor did he project crime and violence in strong doses. Usually the cine directors make Masala movies to appease public taste and hit the box office. But Bapu's films with artistic sensibility became popular.

As the title denotes *Manavuri Pandavulu* (1978) (Pandavas of our village) seems to have semblance to the Pandavas of the *Mahabharatha* the necessity of protesting the atrocities of a feudal lord 'Dora' brings to gather five young men of the village. They form into a team and are aptly called Pandavulu. One of them is Dora's friend's son, second is a rebel servant (Bheema) of Dora whom Dora succumbs to bonded slavery, third one Pardhu is Dora's nephew and the other two are the brothers of the girl whom Dora seduced. Being a rich man, Dora rules the roost that consists of twelve hamlets. Dora's younger brother Krishna whom Dora induces

to alcohol at a young age, seems to be a drunkard, but he keeps a vigilant eye on his brother's atrocities and counts his mistakes as Lord Krishna counts Sisupala's misdeeds. The Pandavas of the village are set against Dora. Like Duryodhana, Dora also has a 'Sakuni' like adviser Kannappa. The Pandavas of the village are protected and guided by Dora's brother Krishna. He encourages them to oppose Dora's hegemony over the innocent and the ignorant villagers. The scenes like Kannappa's plan to burn the house where the five sleep along with Pardhu's mother, Dora encouraging his servant to pull the saree of Bhima's fiancée and Krishna (Dora's brother) saving her honour by throwing his shawl over her, remind the viewers of the episodes from the *Mahabharatha*. These scenes have semblance to the episodes like Lakshagraha Dahanam and Draupadi Vastrapharanam where Lord Krishna saves the Pandavas from being burnt in Lakshagra' and saves Draupadi's honour in the royal court of Kauravas. Dora's son who is a profligate arrives on the scene with a call girl to cheat his father and loot the villagers with the pretext of industrializing that area. To impress his father, the son takes him to a glittering dance club (which is like Mayasabha in the *Mahabharatha*). Dazzled by it, Dora exclaims "Is it a Maya Sabha or Ayomaya Sabha?" Just as Lord Krishna is the Sutradhari in the *Mahabharatha*, in *Manavuri Pandavulu* Dora's brother Krishna plays a pivotal role.

He says that his mission is to wake up the ignorant and innocent villagers. At the end, the villagers chase away Dora and other culprits from the village. The curtain falls with a befitting sloka from *Bhagvadgeetha*,

Paritranaaya Sadhunam vinasayacha Dushkrutham, dharma samsthapana dhaya sambhavami yuge yuge. The viewers would easily infer the message. Whether it is an ancient society or modern society, the battle between *Dharma* (good) and *Adharma* (evil) goes on. Bapu, the director, a staunch believer of *Dharma*, projects its victory over *Adharma*. The conflict between the good and the evil is an established concept in the world Literature. Therefore, it has a universal appeal on the silver screen too.

Sustained allegory became a favourite technique with most of the film makers. Bapu made best use of it in a later film *Mr. Pellam* (1993). He pokes mildly at male chauvinism. He digs its roots and attributes it to Mahavishnu who comfortably stretches himself on Adishesha the soft foam-like snake-bed while his consort Mahalakshmi (the Goddess of wealth) sits at his feet and dutifully presses his legs. Then Narada arrives on the scene and provokes Mahalakshmi's 'female ego'. Mahavishnu who has been enjoying male privilege seems to be in trouble. Mahalakshmi challenges her husband to establish her supremacy. Mahavishnu thinks for a while and agrees to change his position. He cleverly stretches his legs towards the head side of Adishesha and Mahalakshmi has to sit at her husband's feet and continue to press his legs. Thus Mahavishnu beguiles her with his Vishnumaya.

On the earth (Bhuloka), Balaji, his wife Jhansi, and their neighbour have a allegorical semblance to Mahavishnu, Mahalakshmi and Narada. Owing to unexpected circumstances, Balaji, the bread winner of the house,

becomes a caretaker of his children and home while Jhansi had to play the role of bread winner. She combines the role of 'Mister' (Master of the house and the bread winner) for taking up a job and 'Pellam' (the wife) for whom the domestic chores become inevitable. At the end, Jhansi manages to trap the culprit who was responsible for the suspension of her husband. Balaji instead of appreciating her intelligence suffers from male ego and couldn't digest the fact that his wife was his saviour. He gets a chance to show his heroism when a snake enters the backyard of the house and is about to bite his children. Jhansi being mother of the kids was too stunned to plunge into action. Balaji suddenly shows his chivalry by

catching the snake and flings it away. The tail spark of the movie is very naive. The wives including Jhansi stand in a row, Balaji and his brand of husbands bow down before them as if they are venerating feminine power. With the pretext of touching their wives' feet with reverence, the husbands stoop down to pull their wives' legs. Now it is the turn of the wives to get a shock (a mild one!) Bapu was careful not to present detailed allegorical semblance, it is left to the audience to interpret, infer and enjoy. Bapu, the director, seems to be quite successful in handling satire and allegory and present them as sugar coated pills, which are happily savoured by the viewers.

RINGMASTER

Dr J. Bhagyalakshmi*

You welcomed me
With a smile on your lips
And a frame in your hands.
I was to fit into that
Like a circus animal
That jumps through a ring
Or sits on a stool
Or does many other feats
At the bidding of the ringmaster.
It is not my fault

If I look distorted,
Out of proportion,
Queer and stupid
While trying to fit into that frame.
Even that pleases you
As long as I am in the frame
Which you so carefully chose.
I am dwarfed and choked
In the effort
Now I think, I am fledging
Myself to the full
And see your eyes
Glowing red like two fireballs.

* Writer, Poet, Translator, New Delhi

R.K. NARAYAN'S NARRATIVE AND NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES

E.S.S.Narayan Trimurthy*

The short story has become the most popular literary form today. A fine short story offers us a pleasant exercise of letting our imagination enter into a fictional situation, or of identifying with a character in a story. Moreover, the short story is much shorter than a novel and strikingly enough. It is for this reason that this form of prose fiction has been engaging wider and greater attention all over the world. Precisely, it has become so characteristic of our time that one may go a little further to claim it as the organic art form of the contemporary age.

In the works of a narrator, technique and subject matter go hand in hand. In fact, technique is the most important device of exploring and defining the theme. It is the vehicle through which the narrator details his subject-matter and it's the best possible way of means for 'discovering, exploring, developing his or her subject, of conveying its meaning, and finally, of evaluating it'.

Narayan has experimented with varied methods of the point of view to suit the needs of the material in his stories. His comic vision of life encompasses blend of compassion, fantasies, illusion and ironies of everyday life. His stories are based on sustained narrative vigour. Hence, he succeeds in his distinctive art of story-telling by employing three types of narrations, namely, the first person

narration, the third person narration and the omniscient narration. Narrative technique includes predominantly point of view, form, setting and dramatization besides characterization. Technique also means various elements which constitutes a writer's workmanship.

One of the most vital features of a fictional writer's technique is the point of view or the angle from which a fictional work is delineated. Of late, critics are stressing the significance of the point of view as a means of linking it with a positive definition of the theme. The entire question of narrative style in the work is governed by the question of point of view. The author's selection of an appropriate narrative technique or point of view is vital to his or her art both as a means towards analysis of theme and enhancing of dramatic interest through broadening or narrowing of perspective upon the material. According to Cleanth Brook and Robert Penn Warren, narration comprises four kinds. They are 1) First Person, 2) First-person observer, 3) Author-observer and 4) Omniscient author.

Narayan focuses attention on the characters and their personalities rather than the social and political aspects of life. All his characters rely on mutual human relationship. Narayan's tradition and roots had led him to seek control over his mind. His uncommon temperament leads to no self-centered withdrawal. His integrity results in social

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participation, "If I have to worry, it's about things outside me, mostly not concerning me. "Narayan is the only Indian writer honoured with repeated attention by Naipaul. In his obituary to Narayan in 'Time' he reminds readers: "He was not interested in Indian politics or Indian problems....While the British ruled, Narayan never wrote about the Independent movement....The high feelings of Independence movement would have been too radical for it (Malgudi)".

One of the prominent techniques that Narayan uses frequently is the 'third person narration'. This narration is also referred to as 'limited omniscience', since the focus is laid on the protagonist. Off and on the writer purposefully intrudes in the narration. It enables the author to take part in all situations and enhances a down-to-earth touch to the story. Besides this, it facilitates the readers in comprehending the clues. This kind of intervention reveals the character of the protagonist.

The finest instance of employing third person narration is 'An Astrologer's Day'. The astrologer "had not in the least intended to be an astrologer when he began life" (The Astrologer's Day, P.2). In fact, it was a life forced upon him. He fled away from his native place as he left a person dead in a well. One fine evening, when he was returning home, a stranger approaches and pesters him to prophesy whether he would nab the man who tried to eliminate him. The astrologer felt suffocated and made desperate attempt to flee. After a great deal of haggling the astrologer took courage and said : "You were left for dead. Am I right?"

"Ah, tell me more".

"A knife had passed through you once", said the astrologer.

"Good fellow". He bared his chest to show the scar.

"What else?"

"And then you were pushed into a well nearby in the field.

"You were left for dead".

(An Astrologer's Day, P.5)

These brief but expressive dialogues portray a realistic framework and thus succeed in sustaining the narrative by incorporating the crisp conversation between the astrologer and the man. Narayan is influenced by the ancient technique of story telling which is ingrained in the Indian tradition. In considerable stories, the writer introduces a character whom he calls *The Talkative Man*. In *The World of the Story Teller*, Narayan tells us about *The Talkative Man* :

... a part and parcel of the Indian village community, which is somewhat isolated from the mainstream of life ... He is the source of entertainment In the village, a grand old man who seldom stirs from his ancestral home On the edge of the village ... except on some very special occasion ... When people want a story at the end of a day's labours in the field, Especially on evenings when the moon shines through the coconut palms ... He looks imperious and in complete control of the situation and self-reliant, knowing as he does by heart all the stanzas of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*.

The Talkative Man's ultimate aim is to provide entertainment to the public. He narrates incidents with its drama, excitement

and suspense. It's prominent that *The Talkative Man* plays the role of resourceful raconteur who evokes spontaneous delight in the story-telling. He is presented by Narayan as a man of wide travel and experience. The chief attraction for his stories is the charm of his character. The original example for *the Talkative Man* is the Bodhisatva of Jataka Tales, which is written through a dramatized mode of narration. It also achieves a sense of objectivity which leads to comment on the situations and characters. He spins his yarn from a variety of situations. Entertainment is central to Narayan's short stories. *The Talkative Man* is presented as a man of wide travel and experience. Thus, in order to achieve objectivity and depersonalization, *The Talkative Man* is created by Narayan and this technique is the most characteristic feature of Narayan's fiction. Things are delineated as they happen without any recourse to theorizing. It is left to the readers to perceive the ironic mode that Narayan employs in his fictional narrative. Without any preface or even editorial, readers will be taken straight to the point in order to heighten the dramatic effect. To be frank, Narayan does not give *The Talkative Man* a specific name rather a generic. Narayan employs the first person narrator as a medium to achieve a measure of ironic attitude towards the narrator while engrossing us with the charm of narration. Therefore, he synthesizes the tradition and innovation and ultimately both the narrator and his listeners belong to the long established oral tradition of story - telling, that is vibrant even now in our country side atmosphere.

The Roman Image is an outstanding piece of writing narrated by *The Talkative Man*, that deals with his rich and ripe

experience "years ago" when he was an assistant to an eminent archaeologist. The story commences with the usual world of facts and then moves on to the plane of the fantasy and ultimately returns to the world of actuality that he started from. It centers round a stone image accidentally discovered by the protagonist on the banks of the Sarayu river. With a lot of pomp and show, the archaeologist announces it as a historical Roman piece of art. Furthermore, he claims that this discovery would add new dimension to the annals of Indian history. The ironical comedy of the story is that the identity of the statue is made public by a countryman, who concludes that the image belongs to a dwarapalaka of a nearby temple. Thus, *The Talkative Man* interestingly goads the readers to believe the image being Roman. This is the spell-bound quality of R.K.Narayan. These kinds of stories reveal Narayan's inventive genius, workmanship and narrative vitality.

One more illustration with regard to Narayan's creation of *Talkative Man* is *The Tiger's Claw*. This story highlights his possible encounter with a tiger in a distant hamlet. *The Talkative Man* details his visit to the remote area with the beginning of an anecdote with innumerable significant things. This is followed by providing a crystal clear account of the actual place of the encounter, the rustling sounds perturbing the stillness of the night, his sense of being forlorn and of his dream abounds in full-grown tigers. He creates and recreates so skillfully an environment of a real fight with a prowling tiger. It is a fusion of excitement, humor along with suspense. One will extol his resourcefulness in presenting his account of adventure. Even when the truth about the

missing claw is known "he narrates in a funny way of the unknown tribes of the forest, if they catch a tiger cub, cut off its claws for some talisman and let it go". These stories based on *The Talkative Man* are at times palpably satirical; the tone of the narrator, *Talkative Man*, is just cynical enough to match the treatment. *The Talkative Man* gives us the story of an encounter with a man-eater and innumerable ghost stories. At his best, *the Talkative Man* has unusual powers of narration and discloses a treasury of experience accrued, no doubt, in his unending struggle for existence, working as journalist; or as an agent for fertilizers.

The third well-known technique that Narayan employs is the 'omniscient narrator', which is considered to be ancient of a writer. The omniscient writer perceives all about everything and thus provides much scope and thereby he can sketch characters and narrate the incidents. Stress is laid on omniscience rather than omnipresence in correspondence to the oral narration of the folktales. This method establishes straight contact with readers. The narrator at the superficial level would ever be roving from one point to the other providing details of his narration.

The relevant instance can be shown through *A Breach of Promise* in which Narayan devises the omniscient narrator carefully. It enlists the feelings of a young boy, Sankar, while approaching the temple of Goddess Chamundi and is reminded of his promise to commit suicide if he failed. He decides to end his life, thinking that he made a sacrilege for not keeping the promise. Ironically, he compensates his decision with

an oath of offering of coconut three times a week. The technique of 'foreshadow' has been employed by the writer, which serves as a clue to the reader's understanding. The writer passes on to us the intuitive responses coupled with feelings and emotions of the character by subtle nuances of commentary. He hardly diverts his omniscience to command the thoughts of his characters.

Narayan employs the technique of 'irony' so as to cull the contradictions that are inherited in human nature and experience. He focuses attention on the characters and personalities. The basis of his characters is imbibed in mutual human relationship. Narayan says, "I value human relationship very much, very intensely..... human relationship in any form, whether at home or outside. I think I have expressed this philosophy in my work successfully". Irony has been successful in making his characters and situations more lively and inspiring. With the help of complexities and contradictions of character, readers get entertainment. He is an embodiment of the comic spirit. Thus, it's significant to note that most of his attainments are comic rather than tragedy-ending. The greatness of Narayan's success largely depends on his minute-to-minute observations and typical ironical presentation of the story. He is endowed with keen eye, describing ridiculous aspects of life. This is one of the crystal clear features of Narayan's art of storytelling. Irony is a form of speech where we find real meaning is hidden and contradicted by the words used. Irony is considered to be a structural principle in work of art.

K. ISWARA DUTT AN EMINENT AUTHOR - JOURNALIST

T. Siva Rama Krishna *

K. Iswara Dutt writes that once he had a distinguished foreign visitor who revealed that K. Iswara Dutt was one of the Big Three of India that he wanted to meet. And they were Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India, the then Chief Justice of India, and K. Iswara Dutt - the Journalist. K. Iswara Dutt said that, on hearing this he was really flabbergasted. And by this incident we can easily conceive his greatness as an author - journalist.

Kunduri Iswara Dutt was a typical Andhra though Bengali in name. He was a brilliant leader writer, unequalled columnist of his time and an outstanding editor, author, radio commentator and encyclopaedist.

Early life, education and early ambition:

K. Iswara Dutt was born on 27th September 1898, in Rajahmundry, East Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh. His father, Kunduri Venkata Ratnam Pantulu, was an able teacher in every way. He gave Iswara Dutt a good start in life. He was a man of the highest probity and rectitude and never had compromised with truth and honour. He observed a strict puritanical code of conduct, which left his impress ultimately on all who moved with him. Being one of the trusted lieutenants of the great Viresalingam Pantulu, he indoctrinated Iswara Dutt with a liberal social outlook.

In fact, Iswara Dutt was more interested in liberal education than in academic education. He breathed the pure air of journalism almost from his adolescence. He studied Intermediate in the Noble College, Masulipatnam. There he was the Joint Editor of the Freshman's Magazine. In 1918 when he hardly completed his Intermediate, he was seriously thinking of knocking at the doors of Newspaper Offices. He addressed a long letter to Sri T. Prakasam to use his influence with Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and put him under him for journalistic training. Prakasam counselled patience.

In the meantime, he was preparing himself for the call of the pen. His study was vast, wide and varied. He says that Pattabhi's *Janmabhumi* created in him a desire to become a good writer, his study of congress addresses provided a treasury of English eloquence by Indians, revealed to him the possibilities of the platform.

Iswara Dutt had his first journalistic training at Independent (of Motilal Nehru). Later he resumed his studies. He joined the Government Arts College, Rajahmundry (1921-23) in B.A. Philosophy. There again he ran and edited a typed weekly - entitled *Nava Yuga* (*The new Era*). Thus, he gave a rich promise of his great future performance.

Iswara Dutt was a voracious reader, class lectures kept him away while college

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debates attracted him; indeed he attracted most of the audience. Thus, he brought a sense of purpose to undergraduate oratory. The President of the meetings hailed him as our second Chintamani. In those days, he was better known as vagabond by day and scholar by night.

His career on the street of (Ink) adventure: K. Iswara Dutt had his first journalistic stint in *Independent*. There George Joseph and Potan Joseph encouraged and appreciated Iswara Dutt in every way. Later, he joined the *Swarajya* under T. Prakasam. Then there were Khasa Subba Rao, K. Rama Rao, G.V. Krupanidhi et al. They were like Casabancas in journalism. Out of sheer loyalty and devotion they stood by Prakasam through thick and thin. Iswara Dutt started his pen-portrait writing while he was with *Swarajya*. Later, he joined *the Hindu* (1931) under A Rangaswami Iyengar. His *Sparks and Fumes* (a Collection of Pen Portraits of Andhra Leaders) opened to him the Golden Gates of the Hindu. Thus, he broke the Tamilian monopoly of half-a-Century. Later he joined *the Leader*, Allahabad (1931) under C.Y. Chintamani, his Guru. There he had a clash and crash with his chief and resigned. Then he launched his own periodical *Twentieth Century* (1934), an outstanding monthly. As Founder Editor of the T.C. he held his own and made it a grand success in the face of handicaps and hardships. It was instructive and informative and made exhilarating reading. His column *Sheaves* was regarded as a great feature. Thus, it blazed a new trail in responsible journalism.

Then *People's Voice* (or rather Pithapuram's Voice) which brought him and

M. Chalapathi Rao together. Later, he launched his *Weekend* in Allahabad, in collaboration with M Chalapathi Rao. Indeed, it brought a distinct touch to weekly journalism. Later, Iswara Dutt was P.R.O. to Sir Mirza Ismail in Jaipur and Hyderabad. There as P.R.O., he rendered valuable and admirable service. In Jaipur, he started a Social Club.

And again back to the street of Ink as Right Angle in *the Hindustan Times*. His weekly column *Miscellany* was an engaging mixture of politics and personalities with literary flavour. Later, home coming to *Leader* (Allahabad), as Chief Editor in Chintamani's Chair. But it was a crown of thorns. He tried manfully to stand the stress and strain but it was beyond his strength. He stood more for principles and this made him resign his place in order to uphold the highest traditions of journalism. He served *Pioneer* (Lucknow) and *The Tribune* (Chandigarh).

Then a brief wilderness, authorship, broadcasting and freelancing. For some time he was Parliamentary Commentator - Today in Parliament. He flitted from post to post collecting great friendships and valuable experiences. And there was nothing he touched that he did not adorn. There was nothing he did in his position that he became him so much as the manner of leaving.

His work for the fellow journalists and his leadership of their Union movement was notable. He was the life and soul of the movement. He trained a band of brilliant journalists. He was a great friend, philosopher and guide to many an aspiring journalist.

Master Artist and his works:

Indeed, Iswara Dutt combined Journalism and authorship so successfully that he became the envy and admiration of his fellow-journalists. In two branches of journalistic achievement and excellence - Pen Portrait and Light essay, Iswara Dutt excelled most of his contemporaries. He carefully cultivated the fine art of master craftsmen in the line - A.G. Gardiner, Spender, Garvin, Robert Lynd et al and added his own superb capacity and ability and vast, wide erudition to it. Indeed, he was a great pioneer in this field.

His works:

Sparks and Fumes (1929): Contains 13 delightful pen portraits of Andhra Celebrities. That Andhras had played an outstanding and determining part in the evolution of Indian Nationalism cannot be denied and to estimate and evaluate their achievement is a historical necessity.

He made the subjects of his portraits live through his pages. His judgements have been marked by wit, wisdom, discernment and sympathy. His style has vigour and freshness. His phrasing is crisp and convincing.

And All that (1931) : is a collection of 12 light essays that makes delightful reading. **Street of Ink (1956) :** is a brilliant, frank, lively memoir of a distinguished Journalist and also a vivid, vibrant picture of a period in India's Political and Social History. Iswara Dutt presents us here a panoramic view of an engaging gallery of men, matters and memories and situations as with a magic wand. His racy style is striking and startling.

My Portrait Gallery (1957) : This gathers with a national sweep, a large number of national worthies. This is history in terms of biography and politics in terms of personalities. The style is crisp, racy and balanced.

The Middles (1959): This is a collection of 30 middles - light essays that make delightful reading. They are replete with wit and wisdom.

Congress Cyclopaedia (1963): This is Iswara Dutt's monumental work. This is a compendium of congress men, matters memories, sessions, presidential addresses, their Obiter Dicta etc. It is informative and instructive and replete with knowledge and wisdom.

Dutt's writings sparkle with wit, wisdom and are of rare excellence. They will live long as masterpieces of English Literature. He was a brilliant conversationalist. He had one of the best private libraries in our country. He was an ideal host and he always delighted in lavish hospitality. His tastes were simple and delightful. The only luxuries he used to indulge in - at times - were, smoking of an opulent cigar - Light of Asia; and blowing of a pipe of peace and taking many cups of coffee.

Iswara Dutt died in 1968 at the age of 69 -- full of honours.

Undoubtedly, Dutt was not only a great man of life and letters of the Fleet Street, but also a great humanist.

THE CODE HERO

Dr. Laxman Palsakar*

Hemingway's *Santiago* could be compared with Wordsworth's *Leach Gatherer* and that of Tennyson's *Ulysses* where the reader would find courage, convictions and ability to fight with odds till death. The three of the above - *Santiago*, *Leach Gatherer* and *Ulysses* - though ripe could be found facing courageously obstacles in their individual life.

Santiago from *The Old Man and the Sea* was eighty four days on the high seas fighting death - trapping waves and the life snatching sharks. On the other side the old fellow could not catch a single fish for months together and the result was that he could not maintain friendship with his son who left the old man abruptly on the half way.

Hemingway's hero is entitled "tyro" and the code hero is the "tutor". The former is young and energetic, lost and confused and the latter is usually an old man who has become what he had to become and who has realized the potentialities of his operational area. The code hero is not Hemingway himself as the Hemingway's Hero was. He is known as a Code Hero because he represents a code

according to which the hero, who offers us and exemplifies certain principles of honour and courage which in a life make a man, conduct himself well in the losing battle that is life.

Such resemblances could be found in William Wordsworth's *Resolution and Independence* when the old Leach Gatherer - without fear & fire uttered - "once I could meet with them on every side but they have dwindled long by slow decay yet still I persevere and find them where I may show them with daunted zeal and mission of the wrinkled and old without losing their ambitious task with courage conviction and self reliance and realization.

Similarly, Ulysses in *Ulysses* proclaims to go ahead with that double bended body to see, search and learn the noble world. Such determined old men could be seen in many countries who desire to go beyond the sinking stars.

Ernest Hemingway's code heroes could be seen in his short stories, as in *Mr. Mannual* and in *The undefeated*. The short happy life of Francis is *Mocomber*, Harry Morgan in *To have and have not*, Mr. Frederic Henry in *A Farewell to Arms* and lastly Mr. Santiago.

* Retied Principal, Hyderabad

The only way to avoid being miserable is not to have enough leisure to wonder whether you are happy or not.

George Bernard Shaw

APPRAISAL OF HERITAGE

Prof. Hazara Singh*

Population of a country, referred to as human resource these days, has to be controlled in number as well as transformed in qualitative worth. Improving of quality calls for the appraisal of its heritage as reflected by popular epics, folk lore and mythological fables. As people regard the sages and heroes projected through them as their models, their concept of virtue or vice and right or wrong gets influenced accordingly.

Our principal epics were screened on television recently. Some of the observations made subsequently by the viewers, hailing from younger generation, were that :

- (i) sages of the past, without ascertaining about a situation fully, had been given to cursing rashly the persons who earned their uncalled for wrath;
- (ii) blind obedience to elders, so often neither in the interest of society nor consistent with accepted norms, had been adored as a virtue;
- (iii) sustaining or fulfilling a personal pledge, even though it was harmful for general good, had been regarded chivalrous ;
- (iv) certain petty incidents, which could have been overlooked with a sense of humour, led to catastrophic results; and
- (v) there had been different yardsticks for assessing the conduct of men and women.

All the aforesaid remarks seem to be relevant.

A person who considers cursing as his prerogative, acquires simultaneously the role of an accuser as well as that of verdict-giver. A system which denies to an alleged defaulter the opportunity to explain his action, before being declared guilty, is suffocating and terrifying in its effect.

Blind obedience not only perpetuates a set-up granting arbitrary power to the high-ups, but also makes the masses mutely submissive. Glorification of the fulfillment of an undue pledge by a well-placed person, contravening established norms, gives rise to a despotic structure in which needs and aspirations of deserving sections of society get usurped. Sense of humour reflects mental alertness and emotional maturity. People lacking this trait remain petty-minded, quarrelsome and egoistic.

A society prescribing a discriminating code for women remains retrogressive. The imposition of husband as a temporal god for his wife and the customs like *sati* (burning alive of the widow with dead body of her husband) and the prohibition of re-marriage to even a child widow could not be sanctioned by any just and humane norm.

Generations, fed successively on such beliefs, constitute a superstitious, intolerant, insensitive and backward populace, which the Indian society, still, predominantly is.

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The folk tales which have been narrated by elders to children since the hoary past have two themes in common, viz., a young man, cornered by poverty leaves his home and finds both bride and wealth all of a sudden. It is often a princess falling in love with him at first sight or a cobra, guarding a treasure, making a gift thereof to him. Such lore bears out that the society from which it emanates lacks enterprise and is fatalist.

In our mythological legends, the worshipper mostly seeks an unnatural blessing, such as sway over death for personal aggrandizement. The deity who bestows such a boon, so often is either likely to fall himself a victim to that granted wish or the other deities have to find out expedient measures to deprive the votary of the advantage of that unnatural blessing, because the blessed invariably turns out to be a tyrant. Such myths lend support to despotic regimes and do not encourage democratic aspirations, because the power to depose a despot is not shown to be lying with people but with a supernatural force.

The Constitution of India declares that she is a sovereign, socialist, secular democratic republic, which recognizes dignity of individual

and assures to one and all justice - social, political and economic. These aspirations are alien to our heritage passed on to us through our epics, folk lore and myths. Hence, either a complete break with such a heritage is called for or its logical appraisal is enjoined for our socio-economic regeneration. As masses cannot be torn in totality from their past, re-evaluation of old beliefs and customs is imperative, in case, Indian society is to compete with other nations who have acquired progressive outlook.

Medieval Europe gate-crashed into modern age after the prevailing dogmas and values began to be challenged and modified by researchers like Copernicus, Sigmund Freud and Charles Darwin. It is a tribute to the awakening created by those dauntless intellectuals and the tolerance imbibed by people under their influence that the Biblical Story of Creation was given up in favour of the Theory of Evolution. When the human brain and mind get released from taboos, an era of unprecedented awakening sets in. We need a similar initiative for awakening our society, in the absence of which, new mythological deities and heroes will continue to be created by sycophants.

True happiness is to enjoy the present, without anxious dependence upon the future, not to amuse ourselves with either hopes or fears but to rest satisfied with what we have, which is sufficient, for he that is so wants nothing. The greatest blessings of mankind are within us and within our reach. A wise man is content with his lot, whatever it may be, without wishing for what he has not.

Seneca

QUEST FOR IDENTITY IN THE SHORT FICTION OF SHASHI DESHPANDE: "IT WAS THE NIGHTINGALE" AND "A LIBERATED WOMAN"

V. Srilatha*

Shashi Deshpande, the well known Indian English novelist and short fiction writer has nine novels and seven collections of short stories to her credit. She has written wide range of stories with complex women characters which are realistic in nature. These women have analyzing capacity but with the fear of insecurity they do not dare to break the silence to build up the disturbed relationship.

The present paper deals with two stories "It Was the Nightingale" and "A Liberated Woman" from the collection of stories entitled Collected Stories Volume-1 focusing on the passion of the protagonists in getting identity in these stories. The paper analyses the situations wherein these women feel alienated, overcome the obstacles and their struggle in getting recognition.

Jaya, the protagonist in the story "It was the Nightingale" puts efforts to get identity in her career. She is supposed to leave her husband for the sake of her career for two years. She strives to express her longing for her husband, but she does not want to forego her opportunity. She has the fear of being convinced with the affection of her husband.

So she behaves obstinately and decides to spend time happily with her husband till she departs.

The story begins when Jaya comes home late as usual. Unlike her expectation, her husband does not speak anything, but she observes him and feels the "storm" behind his silence. "Only I, who know him so well, can sense the storm behind the imperturbable calm. I know his very stillness is intended to be a loud reproach." (62) She also endeavours to make the situation cool and pleasant.

She convinces her husband in preparing dinner rather than taking the trouble of going out and feel relaxed. "Thank God, we are eating at home." When the couple merges into oneness she is scared of being convinced and immediately recalls her career. Her quest for getting recognition and "bigger salary" makes her feel "stronger and fierce." She loves her husband and longs to give up her ambition for his love. She wishes to do many things to express her feelings but in vain.

He does not know, he will never know, how I have fought myself. How I have longed to give ambition and success the go-by and stay with him, throttled by his love. No, not throttled, that's not fair. It's a soporific, his love and mine, which makes me long to lie down in lethargic bliss. (65)

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She does not want to be like her mother "who stripped herself of everything and cried." When her husband asks her if she has done anything for so simple reason like that, she speaks in a low voice that her purpose of going is to get a "bigger salary." She does not have confidence, but her strong determination to build up her career makes her postpone the idea of having a child.

She recollects her mother-in-law who used to say that she has never left her husband after the death of her mother-in-law only to look after her husband. She faces obstacles at every corner, though her husband convinces her that her mother also understands her, she feels, "How can she when even he cannot? To me, our lives are intertwined, yet they are two distinct strands." She feels happy, as her mother-in-law is coming the next day, as she gets the chance of spending time with her husband in complete privacy, "particularly these last moments with him alone."

Though her husband tells her that, it is not pride or ambition but her obstinacy which makes her vice, she does not change her mind. Jaya recalls her mother who has "tortured herself and tormented" them and visualizes the difficulties of getting success at every step and feels each a treachery towards her. When her husband tells her about his grand aunt who was "selfless," Jaya understands that it is hard for her husband to accept her as she is, as he loves her, but she wants to upgrade her career as "it is much more important to be oneself than anything else" (Woolf 109).

They laugh by whispering Shakespeare's quotes into each other's ears and get ready to go to airport. She does not allow others to

accompany them only to feel togetherness with her husband, but later at the time of departure, she wishes someone to go back along with him. She carries the "memories of hurt" which are "bottled" inside her. At last she walks away with her "tearless," "dry and burning" eyes to build up her career.

In the story *A Liberated Woman* the protagonist, a doctor, goes to a friend's house after 'twelve' years of married life. They mutually share their experiences and life style. In the conversation, she recalls her personal experience and says, "what to say about a marriage where a love-making has become an exercise in sadism."

As the story unfolds, she challenges with her parents in getting married with a lecturer whom she loves. Though she enjoys the marital bliss in poverty, her efforts in getting name and fame as a doctor for thirty years make her a victim of a sadist husband. Her husband works in a "second-rate college," and does not earn much. Though he has succeeded in his writings, has not given up teaching. She tells in an unpleasant manner that "he can't forgive me for succeeding when he's failed." She says:

'It was all right for some time. Until our second kid was born. Since then we've been getting on. I've built a very good practice. I earn a good sum. I've earned a good reputation, too. Patients are now coming to me from far, in a few years, I've no doubt I'll be at the top.' (39)

While talking about personal things, she switches over to generalized relationship between wife and husband and asks him:

Have you seen really old-fashioned couples walking together? Have you noticed that the wife always walks a few steps behind her husband? I think that's symbolic, you know. The ideal Hindu wife always walks a few steps behind her husband. If he earns 500, she earns 400. If he earns 1000, she earns 999-or less. (40)

It is not just the money, the wife is not supposed to overtake her husband in anything. However talented the wife may be, she must be behind her husband particularly to maintain the harmony between them.

Her husband turns into a sadist when they give an interview to a girl who questions them "how does it feel when your wife provides not only the butter, but most of the bread as well?" He thinks "Thirty years or more between us, but still, you're a woman and I'm a man."

The very question changes the attitude of her husband. He has afflicted pain physically during that night, but she has mistaken it as her nightmare. The next day she will be shocked by seeing bruises all over her body. It is the most humiliating experience of her life. She waits for his apologies in vain.

[...] all bruised and sore and aching, my first thought was that it was a nightmare I'd dreamt too vividly. But there were the bruises-all over me.'[...] 'So it couldn't have been a nightmare, could it? And then I waited for him to say something. Anything. Apologize.

Explain. But he said nothing. Not a word. And I couldn't speak, either. It was too ghastly. It was shameful. Humiliating...' (41)

"Women all over the world suffer similarly neurotic and psychic disturbances, because they live in a male dominated world." (Sahsrabuddhe 74)

Since then she bears her husband like "a terrified animal" every night. She can neither scream nor cry as the kids in the next room may be frightened. The incident builds "a wall of silence" between them. She endures the situation patiently. To her surprise her husband forgets the happenings of the night and questions her "Good God, look at that bruise! When did you hurt yourself?" She also observes him that he is not pretending.

Listening to the situation, her friend suggests her to consult a psychiatrist. She being "an educated, earning competent woman" challenges her life boldly and becomes liberated. The story is open ended. Later she is interviewed by a women's magazine and is called "The essence of modernity."

Thus Jaya, the protagonist of "It Was the Nightingale" gives priority to her career rather than getting bound to her husband, while the protagonist of "The Liberated Woman" overcomes the situations of alienation of her husband and becomes liberated woman. In this way both the women have challenged their lives boldly and have succeeded in getting identity.

EVERY BOAT HAS A HOLE

O. P. Arora*

"Don't blame only the poor."

"Why not? They are ready to sell their vote for a bottle of desi wine or a few hundred rupees. It is no democracy. They make a mockery of this democracy."

"No, not only they. Everybody is ready to sell his vote for a consideration here. The only consideration is consideration. How much? Or what kind of consideration? We are all corrupt or corruptible."

"No, not everybody, Vivek. There are always exceptions."

"Very few. And even those who are at the top and have everything in the world, they too are subject to temptations. Man is like that," I said.

We were discussing democracy, elections, and the fate of our nation. Big things. Small people discussing big things.

"No, Vivek. Everybody is not that bad. There are many..." Before Ashish could complete his sentence, guruji walked in and sat on the bench.

"Look at guruji. Such a simple man. No wants beyond the minimum. Always smiling and helping everybody. Teaching yoga and pranayam to every seeker without asking for

anything in return," said Ashish forcefully, excitedly.

I folded my hands as usual.

Ashish wanted to score the point. "Do you think guruji can ever be subject to any kind of temptation? No, never. What a graceful and self-negating man! What an epitome of godliness!"

I smiled. "My respects to guruji. With due apologies, I would only say: Man is a strange bundle of contradictions. You are never sure when even the best of the men might fall a prey to the devil of temptation."

"No, no, impossible. There are always people who resist all sorts of temptations, and are the saviours of human race."

Everybody there said, yes, yes, and as usual, they asked guruji to recite the Gayatri Mantra and begin the daily prayer and pranayam.

Guruji, in his melodious voice and inimitable style, started the daily prayers. Everybody closed his eyes and got engrossed. In the summer we went to England. My daughter lives there. She had to attend some summer course, and she insisted on our coming to her place and be with the kids in her absence. They couldn't be left alone, she said. We found it was our duty to take care of the kids. When we returned, we thought of

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everybody and brought some small gifts. Everybody was excited and thanked me profusely. When I gave one tee-shirt to guruji, he smiled and said, "What shall I do with it. You know I wear only kurta-pyjama. I have never worn these western dresses. I am a simple man."

"I am sorry, guruji. This too is a simple dress. However, if you don't like it, you can give it to someone else. I shall bring a shaving gell for you."

"No, no, I don't need anything. But in case you have a spare shaving gell, that will be a good idea. You can take this tee-shirt back."

"No, guruji, you can keep this too, and give it to someone you think would like it."

Next day, I brought a jar of shaving gell and gave it to guruji. He was extremely pleased and immediately put it in his 'jhola'.

It was my birthday. As was the custom, I brought a pack of sweets like everybody always did.

"Take a big piece of burfi, Raman. Your favourite."

But he said, "That won't do. We want a feast."

"Why so? That is how we celebrate everybody's birthday here," I said smilingly.

"No, no, it's a special birthday. Birthday after your England visit. You went abroad for the first time. A treat is certainly due," said Naren.

Everybody shouted, yes, yes.

"OK. What do you want?"

"Costa Coffee. The simplest treat," shouted Vijay.

A new Costa Coffee joint had been opened recently in our area and everybody had been excited about it. We had all been eagerly waiting for an opportunity to have our first cup over there.

I smiled and instantly said, "Done." Everybody was delighted and shouted Happy Birthday in chorus.

I turned to guruji, "I would be happy if you also come. Please join us."

"No, no, please forgive me. I can't come. I never go to restaurants. Moreover, I don't take coffee. Please go ahead, and enjoy yourselves."

I didn't insist. Next Saturday, we all met at the Costa Coffee. Everybody said, it was good. Everything about it was pleasing. Furniture, counter, cups... above all the ambience. Paintings on the walls, aesthetically satisfying, marvellous.

"But I don't understand," said Ashish, "why you invited guruji. You know he never goes out; at home too he sits on the floor for his dinner."

"Well, I didn't know that much. I thought it would be discourteous on my part not to invite him. But once he said, no, I neither insisted on his coming nor made an issue of it. He is free to live his kind of life."

"Good that you didn't force him," said Ashish. "He would never have agreed. It would have been embarrassing for him to say no again and again."

"I would never like anybody to do anything for my sake, something that goes against his grain," I said emphatically.

Naren quipped, "But what is there in it? Once in a while, it should have been OK for him. That would not have disturbed his spiritual balance."

Everybody laughed. Ashish grew serious. "He is not an ordinary person. He is a disciplined man, and cares only for the higher things. He has some kind of divinity in him. Small, ordinary things don't attract him. He is beyond them. In fact he is an ascetic."

"OK, enough of guruji," screeched Gaurav. "What about coffee?" "Y e a h , " everybody shouted.

As I stood up to place the order, I saw someone walking towards our big table. The light was dim, and I couldn't recognize him immediately. Everybody looked at the figure amazed, eyes wide open.

The figure gradually sank into me. "Guruji, you! Here!"

"Why? Vivek, aren't you glad to see me here?"

I said haltingly, "Guruji, I am delighted. But...but..."

Ashish was dumbfounded. But Naren handled the situation. "Guruji, you look wonderful in this tee-shirt. Trousers too.

Great, guruji, great."

Guruji smiled. "This is the same T-shirt that Vivek brought for me from England. And I thought I must join you all to celebrate his birthday. It would be odd if I don't."

"But guruji, how about the trousers?" Said Vijay, his eyes brimming with naughtiness.

"Oh that, it is my son's. A bit tight perhaps."

"No,no," said Naren, "that is perfectly OK. Latest fashion. You should always wear such bright, tight clothes. You look so youngish, and smart too."

"Really! You like it!" said guruji, pleased. I looked at Ashish. He was really sad. I didn't want to spoil the party. I turned to guruji, "We are delighted to see you here. I am particularly grateful to you for joining us here on this occasion."

"No, no, no need for thanks. I am glad I got this opportunity of coming out and looking at the world." I couldn't believe my ears. Ashish's eyes clearly revealed his disgust.

"OK, guruji, what would you like to have? I know you don't take coffee. Some cold drink or ice cream or something else?" I said hesitatingly.

"No, no, I too would take coffee. Let me have a taste of this world-renowned coffee. I learn that they specially brew it. Once in a while everybody should have some fun too." They all shouted in chorus: Wow! That is the spirit.

Only Ashish couldn't raise his eyes.

QUEST FOR IDENTITY IN THE SELECT NOVELS OF ALICE WALKER

Thriveni Mindi*

Maintaining one's identity simply means being one's own self. Quest for identity as a challenging issue of life engaged the minds of great African-American intellectuals. With their creative imagination, they closely analyze the theme of the loss and search for identity. Female bonding is an important aspect in the evolution of black female identity. Identity of a black woman is what discloses to others who she is.

Black women find themselves "suspended", economically and psychologically, carrying the burden of a two-fold repression as black persons and as women. The quest for a 'womanist' self-definition has motivated the black woman writer to undertake an exploration of her historical identity.

Alice Walker is one of the pioneers, who celebrate black womanhood in their writings. She calls herself a womanist because womanism, in her opinion, expresses women's concerns better than feminism. It appreciates and prefers women's culture, women's emotional flexibility and women's strength.

Introduction - Identity: "Generally speaking, female identity is a political, social, and cultural stance that is pro-woman. what keeps feminism in a constant of dialogue, however, is the fact that feminists do not necessarily agree about the definitions of terms

as basic as women, let alone what it would mean, precisely, to be pro-woman".(Warhol:308)

Maintaining one's identity simply means being one's own self. Quest for identity as a challenging issue of life engaged the minds of great African-American intellectuals. With their creative imagination, they closely analyze the theme of the loss and search for identity. Female bonding is an important aspect in the evolution of black female identity. Identity of a black woman is what discloses to others who she is.

This paper attempts to find out the trial of the black women in search of self and identity. The entire Afro-American community was condemned to endless suffering, yet the black woman's condition was much worse than the black man's because "To be Black to Female" was to be in "Double Jeopardy" (Beal90). Because of her ability to do man's work and her extraordinary reproductive capacity, the black woman was treated by her white master as an indispensable commodity. As a result, black women find themselves "suspended", economically and psychologically, carrying the burden of a two-fold repression as black persons and as women.

The quest for a 'womanist' self-definition has motivated the black woman writer to undertake an exploration of her historical identity.

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Problems Faced by Black Women: I personally see the early seventies as a period of transition when in response to active consciousness-raising activities black women expressed their distrust of men (in literature) in the form of fore-warnings that one woman (often a mother figure) passed on to another. 'Womanhood' during the struggle for liberation from slavery and during its aftermath, the reconstruction, and the black woman worked alongside the black man although black political leaders upheld the strictly patriarchal. Black women's writing, on the other hand, presents a completely different picture. The focus here shifts to the black woman as an individual, struggling towards freedom and selfhood, right from the slave narratives down to the present times, there has been a conscious or sometimes unconscious repudiation of the many myths that surround the black woman.

Afro- American Women Writings: The persistent search for and sometimes assertion of, an independent, integrated identity with a sphere that can be called one's own has been an insistent theme in the writings by Afro-Americans both past and present. This finds full expression in black feminist writings, especially in fiction. They depict her pain of being black and female and, at the same time, present her desperate search for her genuine self. The oppression of these women is an outcome of American racism and sexism which are interconnected as modes of dominant. Racism figures as a dominant theme in the works of black authors, irrespective of sex. Black women have been victimized not only by racist and sexist assumptions but also by scholarly neglect.

The journey from Zora Neale Hurston to the writers of the eighties is an arduous one marked by the loss of faith in the black man, and the awakening of consciousness geared towards the creation of a female network. Zora Neale Hurston (one of the foremost black thinkers to attack American capitalism for creating a tier of socio-economic classes that ranks black woman at the bottom) was Walker's literary ancestor.

The concerned black women writers like Toni Morrison and Alice Walker have looked at the black woman from an insider's point of view and tried to discover what happened to her as they fulfill the different kinds of responsibilities in their lives. For feminists like Morrison and Walker, there is also a search for that Blackness or "Africanism" that America shaped in order to define its own whiteness. But they emphasize the discovery of the real self, the real Africanism. Major female characters from Morrison's *Sula* to Walker's *Meridian* are seen readily rejecting marriage, wifehood, motherhood. This shows the reflecting of the black woman writer's involvement with feminist ideology. On her own, Walker closely resembles Toni Morrison in her authentic depictions of the horrors which blight the lives of black women.

Alice Walker: This paper discusses the Quest for identity in the fictional works of Alice Walker through her double implications of racism and an examination of the African American experience itself. Alice Walker, an activist during the civil rights movement of the blacks in the U.S., goes beyond the protest novels of Richard Wright, James Baldwin, Chester Himes and others to assert the ethnicity of her Black characters. Alice

Walker fights the myth of the black motherhood as a stereotype of strength, self-abnegation and sacrifice. Alice Walker reported that over one hundred million women and girls living in Africa have been genitally mutilated and that she feels threatened by media reports on "growing practice of female circumcision in the united states and Europe, among immigrants from countries where it is part of their culture".

Alice Walker is one of those pioneers who celebrate black womanhood in their writings. She calls herself a "womanist" because womanism, in her opinion, expresses women's concerns better than feminism. But as an Afro-American woman writer .she is more "committed to exploring the oppressions, the insanities, the loyalties, and the triumphs of black" (interview 192) Alice Walker coins the term to describe the conscious of liberated black women. It is a definition that underlines the difference between black feminism and white mainstream feminism: "womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender" foremost it is a political philosophy and a stand. It aims at collective struggle which is whole and non-separatist.

Alice Walker's works typically focus on these struggles of African-Americans particularly women, and their struggle against a racist, sexist and violent society. Her works deal not only with the problems of black women, but also with the possibility of change and progression, even though it shows process. The history of black women in the United States begins with the forced migration of millions of African women from the interiors of the west coast of Africa.

The Color Purple by Alice Walker:

Alice Walker is the first African - American woman writer to win the Pulitzer Prize for third novel *The Color Purple* in 1983. *The Color Purple* explores the issues of spousal abuse, incest, lesbianism, subjugation, and dehumanization. *The Color Purple* (1982) has generated the most public attention. In this novel, Alice Walker introduced her own theory called 'womanism'. The dominant themes of *The Color Purple* are female assertiveness, female narrative voice, female relationships and violence. In the *Color purple*, the identity crisis that grows from the violence within family during Celie's childhood is explained, traced to its origin, into significant different ways.

The Color Purple is a post-colonial, gynocentric classic that chronicles the grim struggle and gradual transformation of a plain, poor, God-fearing, perennially battered black American teenager named Celie into a fairly decent -looking, self-confident, bold and most important of all, financially independent woman. The present paper is an attempt to study the entanglements of Celie's life and the conversion of a non-identity, a nothing, into a person with a distinct identity: and her journey toward emancipation.

Walker's protagonist Celie writes to God, Nettie to her sister Celie, and Celie to Nettie. The letters reveal the injustices that women incur from men in the United States and in Africa. This novel chronicles Celie's growth from a dependent, defeated personality to an independent, liberated woman with purpose and drive.

Barksdale comments: "Sexual conflict in *The Color Purple* is thus stark and dreary

and rooted in the traditions and practices of slavery with its emphasis on male prerogatives and patriarchal control. (Barksdale 1986: 409)

Walker emphasizes the entrapment of black women, the interior colonization they suffer from because of their dependence on men for everything. Once they unite in woman-to-woman relationship, they no longer need the men. They even manage to free themselves economically since they are hard-working and smart. Walker also portrays the racial domination of the white man in her portrayal of Sofia and her defiance of the white domination. Celie's sister Nettie is the third major woman character who journeys through life on her own. The paper attempts to show self-recognition of Celie, and through which processes she then as a woman who can stand on her own feet without any kind of dependencies. Alice Walker presents as to how collective effort of woman can empower women and this Celie draws her strength from it and later on reciprocates by helping other women.

Meridian: Alice Walker's *Meridian* is a feminist novel. It points out the audaciousness and courage of African American women in the moment and their willingness to sacrifice and struggle on its behalf, as well as their ability to take charge and become agents of social change for the liberation and wholeness of people. The protagonist Meridian becomes an activist to help change an American society that oppresses women and African Americans by placing restrictions on them. One of the fundamental ideas of the novel *Meridian* is a women's struggle. Walker centers on race and class issues, as well as incorporating feminist

issues of gender. African-American women's struggle to cope in life is a central theme in the novel.

The first chapter of *Meridian* exemplifies the archeological approach to narrative by Meridian's life and ancestry synchronically, as though it were the strata of one archeological site at which each unearthing of an antecedent redefines the structure of the whole. In *Meridian* (1976) we see further instances of black evil and inhumanity. Mrs. Hill's father had beaten his wife and children with more pleasure than he beat his mule.

Gloria Wade-Gayles comments on how the black women are in deeper shadows cast by slavery than those which engulf their male counterparts: In the institution of slavery, black people, regardless of sex or age, were slaves. In the institution of patriarchy, black women, regardless of age, are slaves (Wade-Gayles 1930; 317)

Meridian, one of the most celebrated novels, reflects her strong belief in the black womanist tenets. It tells the story of the black woman in the period of transition, the story of a coming to consciousness and a subsequent development of self and search for authenticity. *Meridian* (1976, 1986) centered on the life of a black woman, it presents her search for selfhood against the background of rapid socio-cultural changes of the 1960s. She is a civil rights worker who comes to perceive the true meaning of feminine freedom when she can redefine her role which has been imposed on her by a patriarchal and racist society.

Thus, *Meridian*, is one of her most celebrated novels, reflecting her strong belief

in the black womanist, tends to tell the story of black woman in a period of transition, of a coming in consciousness and a subsequent development of self and search for authenticity.

Conclusion: Alice Walker also shows through her works how African American women made sacrifices in their lives to join the campaign to free their people. Walker noted that African American women who struggle alongside the men received little recognition for their contributions, for nationalist men desired to subjugate women in traditional roles of wives and mothers. She articulates the literary image, representation, and female narrative voice of previously silenced poor African American women. She allows them to be confidants engaged in intimate communication. She has been identified with black movement. She has a split on questions of anti-Semitism, integration, class, religion, region and increasingly sex. She

was the most evocative and impressive representative of women's movement of her era.

Alice Walker is one of the pioneers, who celebrate black woman hood in their writings. She calls herself a womanist because womanism, in her opinion, expresses women's concerns better than feminism. It appreciates and prefers women's culture, women's emotional flexibility and women's strength. A womanist approach embraces practice and theory and criticism all at once. Womanist criticism subverts classical Eurocentric feminist criticism. Womanist refers to women of color who embrace universality rather than separatism. Further, women who are womanist are survivors, and they love and appreciate other women and women's culture. They form bonds by empowering themselves and other women. The ideal women always emerge as whole human beings.

AFFABILITY

(Mine ness)

Ramakrishna Rao Gandikota

When mind is shattered
A pleasant Hi
a blossoming leaf let in spring
When love fails
a look understanding
very much oxygen of life
When all hopes are
ground to smithereens
a compassionate pat on the back itself

a lightning and enlightening in darkness
When engulfed in whirl winds
of despair and despondency
a hand of firm support
a magnetic therapy.
In this wired weird world
of busy business affairs
a mere S m s! a hello!!
enlightens endears and enlivens.

* Retd. Principal, Kakinada

(Telugu original by Dr. Dwa. Na. Sastry, an eminent Poet, Critic)

DARKER ASPECT OF THE NEW YEAR

THE PLUS & MINUS OF NEW YEAR

Bhavana S. Chary*

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>(1) What have been the repercussions of the new year 2013, which has passed. More of a 'farce' than a reality, far-fetched! With umpteen number of tragedies and calamities in its wake! Penury, destruction, weathering & denudation, of both the physical & social environment.</p> <p>(2) With the rich turning richer, the poor turning poorer each day; The bonded labour drowned in debts for generations to come; Exploited by the unmerciful demons, the landlords; Who have their wealth well locked up in Iron safes.</p> <p>(3) A news of embittered society falling into the realms of turmoil and chaos, outrage, scandal, rape, disorder of community and episodes of kidnappings; The sufferings of the common-man taking bad shape on a daily basis; With no food, clothes and shelter for the famished bellies of their offspring.</p> <p>(4) Is this the 'India', envisioned by our fore-fathers and national leaders; The 'Mahatma' The 'Chacha Nehru' and 'Sardar Vallabhai Patel' What sort of sordid state of affairs, are we heading for; `With crime, corruption, mud-slinging, treason, the talk of the day.</p> | <p>(5) Apart from this deteriorating seamy side of life confronted by us; Are our hope, dreams & imagination being cast in a new mould; Can we wish for a country, from the golden ages marked by history; O God! Bring happiness & cheer, make this world a better place to live in.</p> <p>(6) Accidents, suicides, murders in cold blood, hordes of artillery & warfare; Do not give a fair picture of the world, destined to be; O God! Please shower happiness, bliss and tranquility; On the parched, scathed and starved mankind and populace.</p> <p>(7) Let the earth be filled by the full-coloured flowers in bloom; Let the ripples of water flow tranquilly without turmoil; Let the Gods shower boons and blessings from the heavens above; May the New Year, rise to the occasion; and spread messages of peace & love.</p> <p>(8) With a note of despondency, I seek to declare; Fie on the rich, who feign, innocence and good-will; Let not the poor, truthful and hard-working, bear the brunt; God! Have mercy! and pay full dividends to the prayers of good folk.</p> |
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* Poet, Satna, Bihar

THE MOST CELEBRATED PLAY 'RAKTHA KANNEERU' IS 60 YEARS YOUNG

Dr I. Satyasree*

Raktha Kanneeru, the film version of the most celebrated play, is into its 60th year and has not lost its sheen and still remains to enthrall audience. Thiruvavur Thangarasu penned the Tamil play, *Raktha Kanneer*, with the legendary Tamil actor M.R.Radha as the protagonist and it enjoyed instantaneous success. It was enacted thousands of times not only in Tamil Nadu but also in countries like Malaysia and Singapore. C.Nagabhushanam, well-acclaimed Telugu actor, reprised the role of M.R.Radha nearly 2000 times. In fact, though Nagabhushanam acted in several films after that, he was popularly known as *Raktha Kanneeru* Nagabhushanam. This is a testimony to the popularity of the play. The play holds a unique record as one of the most staged plays. Perhaps, *Adrak Ke Punjey*, written and directed by Babban Khan, is the only other Indian play, which entered Guinness Book of World Records, as the world's longest-running, one-man show.

The play was made into a movie in 1954 with the same title and the lead role was enacted by M.R.Radha. The year 2014 marks its 60th year. The film, produced by National Pictures, became a super hit and created history. Radha's sterling performance gave a classical touch to the movie and made

it a memorable one. C.Nagabhushanam added his own charisma and used to be very witty on stage as he churned out the dialogues extempore. For instance, Mr.Neelam Sanjiva Reddy, former President of India, was once in the audience. There was a dialogue asking the hero about his disease, i.e; leprosy. Nagabhushanam spontaneously pointed out to Mr.Reddy and said, "Asking me whether I have this affliction is like asking Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy his caste". Nagabhushanam had such presence of mind and a great sense of humour! He entertained the audience with his sparkling repartee and amusing dialogues.

Occasionally, he would use mild sarcasm, laced with humour, to highlight the contemporary socio-political conditions. He would sometimes pass caustic comments on the wrong-doings of people. His punch dialogues became immensely popular because they were not scripted and rehearsed. They just flowed smoothly and spontaneously, depending on the situation, and were very well appreciated by the audience.

The plot is very simple. The play begins with a rich man, returning to India after getting educated in England. He marries Chandra, his cousin. However, he intends to enjoy life to the fullest, with wine and women. He falls for Kantha, a prostitute and film star, who encourages him to spend all his wealth on these two vices. He neglects his wife and

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insults his mother. Kantha loots all his money and throws him out of her house. She abuses him and kicks him out. He has no other option but to beg in the streets. He is afflicted with leprosy and is completely destroyed. Finally, he realises the blunders he made, is reformed and shows remorse. As a transformed man, after his death, he wants his statue to be erected, to serve as a lesson to all. His statue should remind people about the ill-effects of vices.

The story conveys a moral and is quite relevant even now. It has a contemporary flavor and reflects the moral fabric of a society. The essence of the play lies in its skillful portrayal of the protagonist as a 'bad guy' and

from there, sketches his journey in three stages - "Formation- Reformation-Transformation". These are the three crucial stages in personality development, which paves way to self-realisation.

The contemporariness of the play makes it one of the most admired plays of our times. These are the days, where we forget even the title of a play / cinema, the moment we step out of a theater. However, plays like Raktha Kanneeru leave a lasting impression and are permanently etched in the minds of the audience because of the brilliant plot, ingenious script, and thought-provoking dialogues. Besides, the legendary actors, in their own inimitable style, made the play immortal.

DREAM. BELIEVE. INSPIRE.

Anvita Chitrapu*

Dream your way through things,
And make your dreams come true
Everything is possible for me and for you!

Believe in yourself and just keep trying
Do your best and just keep smiling

Inspire yourself and inspire others too
It's easy both for me and for you

Believe in yourself and inspire others too
It is easy for me and for you!

Believe in yourself and the rest
will fall into place
Always keep trying and keep up
with your pace

So do all you can do?
To make your dreams come true
Get inspired and inspire a few!

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Writer, Hyderabad

BOOK REVIEW

**Real Colossus Remembered.
A Brief Narrative of "The Mahatma"
Author: C. Janardhan
Price: Not for Sale**

It is just nearly seventy years since Mahatma fell to the bullets fired by Godse. The present generation has almost forgotten the Great Soul. May be the next generation would wonder whether a man of the kind of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi ever walked on this planet in flesh and blood.

Mr. Janardhan made a brilliant attempt to bring out the qualities and virtues of the great man in a very concise manner. We cannot call it a biography. Yet, it has the elements of a biography. The author has concentrated on the Pillars of Gandhian Philosophy, Truth, Nonviolence, Untouchability, Religious harmony, place of women in the society, the uplift of village folk and building a strong India from the grassroots.

The author drew our attention to Gandhiji's involvement in the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, his first involvement in the cause of the minority Indians in South Africa, and ill treatment on the basis of colour, caste and creed.

He has also in a subtle way expressed where Dr. Ambedkar and Gandhiji differed on a principle, on having separate electorates for the untouchables. Next to Gandhiji the author has a great admiration for Dr. Ambedkar and Sanjivayya.

At the International level, he feels only two are worthy of comparing with the Great Soul. Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela.

The author expressed his vision of India, what India is capable of achieving with the advancement in technology and in what direction we are moving and where the destination would be and what obstacles we may face on the way.

Having been a high level police officer, the author brought out his views with his rich experience on the reforms required in the police services to make India a safe place.

This book should be acquired by all libraries so that the youth will understand the Gandhian way of life.

Chitrapu Ramakrishna, Hyderabad

**Frames of Fancy
Author: V. Lalitha Kumari
For Copies: 5-21-136/1, 2/14, Brodipet,
Guntur-522002
Pages: 108
Price: Flair for Poetry**

Frames of Fancy by V. Lalitha Kumari is an anthology of her poems, portraits, elegies, articles and translations. The book is divided into five sections and it is a compilation of the author's published pieces of poetry in Triveni and Metaverse Muse, an acclaimed poetry journal, serving the cause of structured verse. In the poetry section, the author has used

different poetic forms such as Ballade, Davidian, Kyrielle, Roundel, Triolet, Villanel etc; quite effectively to enhance the quality of her poems. The first part of the book has a collection of fifty poems, covering varied themes, with titles such as Sun Flowers, VIBGYOR, Twilight Glow, Beauty, Rainbow etc; that appeal to the aesthetic sense of the readers.

In the next section, she sketches thirteen portraits and in the first one titled, Lord Srinivasa, The Cynosure, she sings the glory of the Lord of Seven Hills thus:

Thou Lord of Seven Hills, the most pompous
Of Gods on this side of River Indus
Is there any temple with such splendour?
Is there a god that matches your grandeur?

The research article on P.B.Shelley and Devulapalli brings out the similarities in the themes of these two great writers. The last part is translations and it contains the first three cantos of Soundara Nandamu, the poetic work of Sri Pingali and Sri Katuri, the famed twin poets, besides other articles like Mendicacy, Monkhood and Subhashitams.

Regarding the price of the book, the author mentions in a novel way, 'Flair for Poetry'. Perhaps, it is her poetic sensibilities that made her say this and true to her words, the book should certainly be read by discerning readers, who have a 'flair for poetry' and can wholeheartedly appreciate the beauty of poetry. The cover page is designed tastefully and is very pleasing to the eye.

Dr I. Satyasree, Hyderabad

I believe that the man who observes self-control in thought, word and deed, right in the midst of the world, is verily the true ascetic. If things do not bind us and if we are not attached to things even when they are easily available to us that according to me is the greatest test of our detachment than merely withdrawing to a lonely forest.

Mahatma Gandhi

We do not leave so great a void in society as we are inclined to imagine, partly to magnify our own importance and partly to console ourselves by sympathy. Even in the same family the gap is not so great. The wound closes up sooner than we should expect.... People walk along the streets the day after our deaths just as they did before and the crowd is not diminished. While we were living, the world seemed in a manner to exist only for us for our delight and amusement, because it contributed to them. But our hearts cease to beat and world goes on as usual and thinks no more about us than it did in our lifetime. The million are devoid of sentiment and care as little for you or me as if we belonged to the moon.

William Hazlitt

READERS' MAIL

Generally, you refrain from writing about our country's corrupt politics and unscrupulous leaders and prefer to write on literature, art and culture and about men and women who have enriched life with their invaluable contributions. However, your article on Indian democracy and the present situation "... economically developing (euphemism for backwardness), socially divided, politically unstable, ethically depraved, culturally confused and spiritually blind" is not only a graphic account of the prevailing, deplorable conditions but also a keen expression of your anguish. Your well chosen remarks from the writings of Dr. Amartya Sen, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya and King Frederick's 'funny solution' add luster to your superb editorial.

Leena Sarma's fine description of the train journey in 1990 with two co-travelers whose identity is not revealed till the end recalls O Henry's stories of suspense. Readers feel surprised to know that the two men "who spread a cloth on the floor and went to sleep while we occupied the berths" were Mr. Vaghela and our Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Dr. Satyasree's charming essay on Amul girl's "punch lines coupled with a striking message" blending humour and sarcasm, like "Satyam, Sharam, Scandalam" makes delightful reading. Dr. Sheila Balakrishnan's "Human Interest", Dr. Rajamouli's "The Essence of Poetry", Dr. Arbind Piniara's "Reservation in Judiciary" and the other contributions too are very interesting and TRIVENI continues to sparkle with splendid gems".

M.G. Narasimha Murthy, Hyderabad

We always wait for your editorials which are the reservoirs of knowledge.

Dr. Emmadi Pullaiah, Warangal

Your article "Indian Democracy - Political Class" is timely and an eye opener for the politicians. I am really happy that you are still writing powerful articles appropriate to the present day situations. Go on with your life mission.

Dr. C. Jacob, Narsapur

Your editorial is a bit different from the earlier ones. Reference to Rip Van Winkle is apt. I enjoy it very much.

R.R. Gandikota, Kakinada

Triveni has been doing great service to the Indian culture. Minimizing the pedestrian academic essays aimed at showing "publications" for professional advancement in Indian Universities and colleges, the great journal, read by even Gandhiji, should publish articles on aspects of the multiple Indian subcultures showing the real India to the world outside. Of course, there have been occasional articles on purely regional and sub regional cultures. But there should be real variety of Indian multiculturalism in Triveni as a confluence. I will certainly be happy to do whatever I can (with my own limitations) to spread the message of Triveni across the continents.

Prof. D. Ramakrishna, Warangal

NEW MEMBERS

The following is the list of Donors/ Members who have joined the TRIVENI family during Jul.-Sept. 2014. The TRIVENI FOUNDATION welcomes them.

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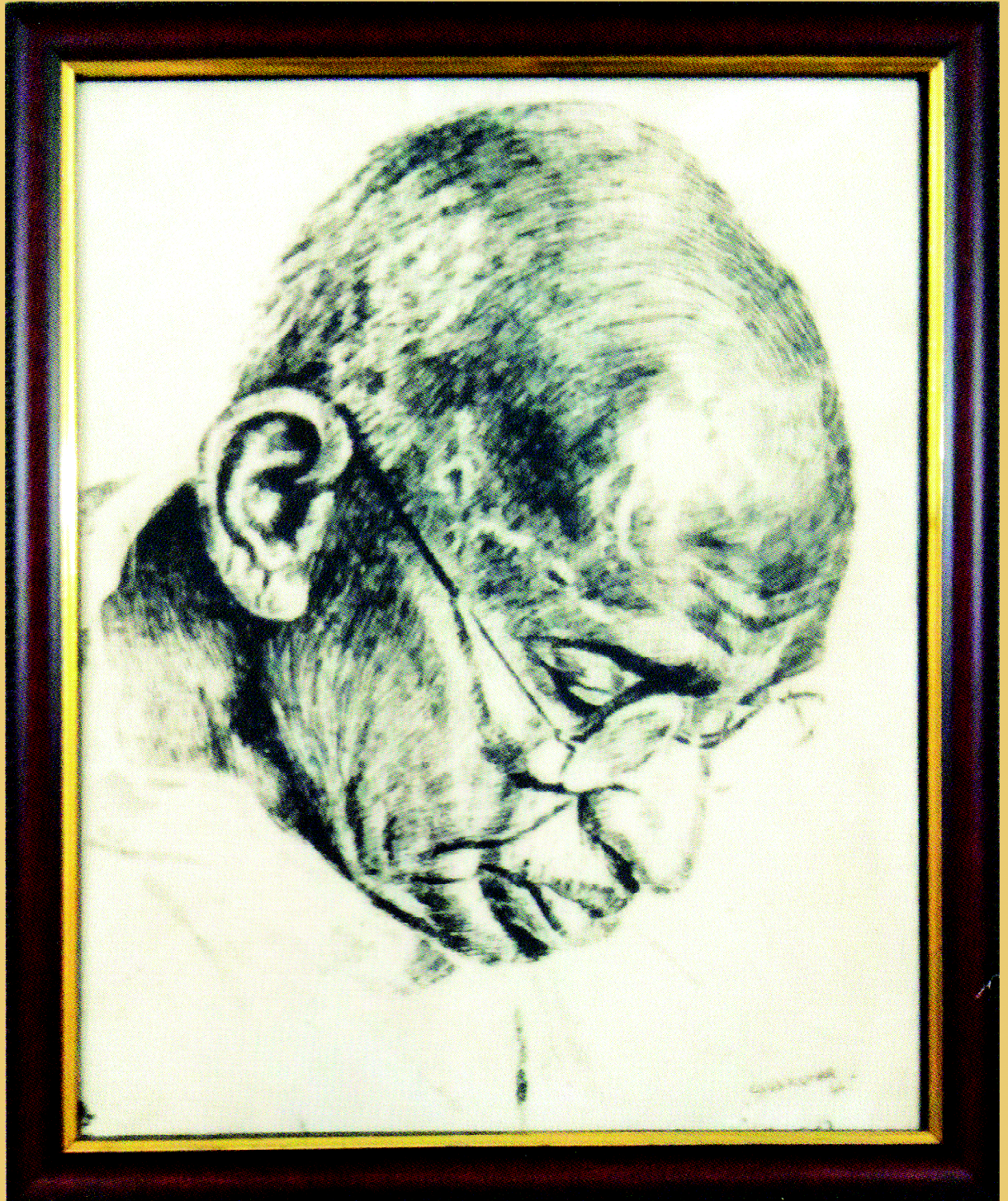
Journals like **TRIVENI** devoted to literature and culture, naturally cater to a limited number of intellectuals and are not to be considered as successful business propositions in any country. They need the active support of the cultured few. We earnestly solicit the patronage of philanthropic persons to enlist themselves as Patrons and Donors and extend their co-operation to the cause of Indian literature and culture. Donations to **TRIVENI** are exempt from Income Tax, Under Section 80G (2) &(5) of the I.T. Act, 1961. vide Proc. No. DIT (E)/HYD/ 80G/52(04)/Ren/08-09, dated: 21-08-2008 of Director of Income Tax (Exemptions), Hyderabad, deemed to have been extended in perpetuity vide IT Circular No.7/2010 [F.No.197/21/2010-ITA-I] dt.27-10-2010. Donors are requested to draw Demand Drafts/Cheques in favour of 'Triveni Foundation' payable on any bank in Hyderabad.

Our dear subscribers may note. In view of the escalation of the paper cost and printing charges it has become increasingly difficult to meet the expenditure of the journal. We are constrained to increase the annual subscription to Rs.200/- and life subscription to Rs.2000/- We shall be grateful if our long time members also cooperate with us by sending the balance amount. Donations are welcome.

TRIVENI FOUNDATION



Common man's livelihood or Elite's Artifact. In India from Kashmir to Kerala we find beautiful art pieces made on the venation of peepal leaf.



By K. Sivamurthy