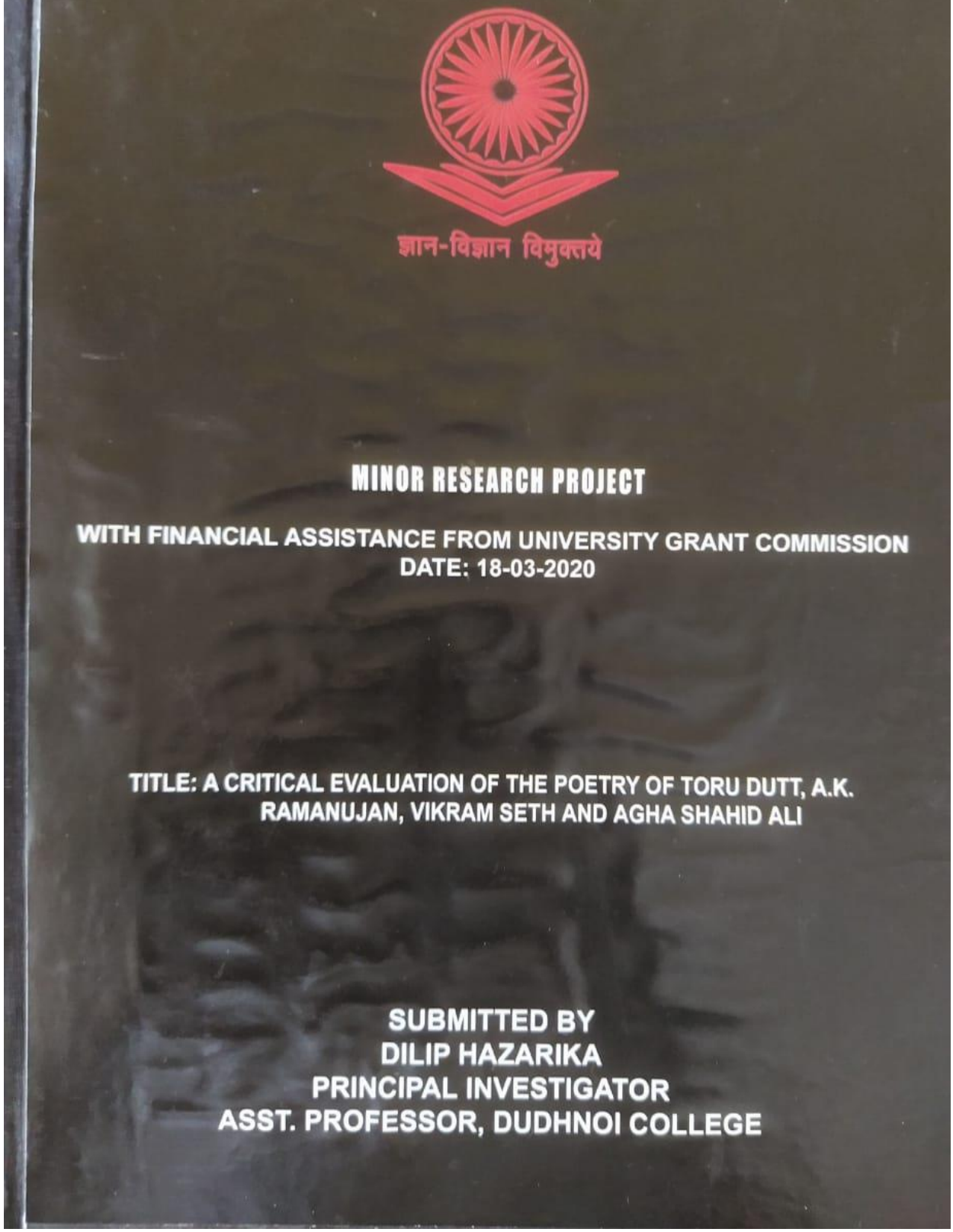
ज्ञान-विज्ञान विमुक्तये
MINOR RESEARCH PROJECT
WITH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM UNIVERSITY GRANT COMMISSION
DATE: 18-03-2020
TITLE: A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE POETRY OF TORU DUTT, A.K. RAMANUJAN, VIKRAM SETH AND AGHA SHAHID ALI
SUBMITTED BY
DILIP HAZARIKA
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
ASST. PROFESSOR, DUDHNOI COLLEGE

ज्ञान-विज्ञान विमुक्तये

MINOR RESEARCH PROJECT

WITH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM UNIVERSITY GRANT COMMISSION

DATE: 18-03-2020

TITLE: ***A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE POETRY OF TORU DUTT, A.K. RAMANUJAN, VIKRAM SETH AND AGHA SHAHID ALI***

SUBMITTED BY

DILIP HAZARIKA

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

ASST. PROFESSOR, DUDHNOI COLLEGE

Preface

This comparative critical evaluation on the four Indian poets is the outcome of a minor research project done for a period of two years under the financial assistance of UGC vide letter no. F-.5-223/2014-15/MRP/NERO/1919. The work makes a foray into the different aspect of the poets in order to bring out the various dimension of their poetic communication.

While undergoing this research, I was immensely helped by Dr. Gopal Phukan, Principal, Dudhnoi College and Dr. Monoj Gogoi, Co-ordinator, IQAC, Dudhnoi College, to whom I express my gratitude. I am also indebted to different Librarians, agency and persons who helped me in different phases of the work.

Principal Investigator
(Dilip Hazarika)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Indian English poetry emerged in the early part of the 19th century and continued to flourish till today. Before the independence, it lacked originality and vigour. Parthasarathy, in his *Ten Twentieth Century Indian Poets*, went to an extent to say that, 'Indian Verse in English did not seriously exist before independence'. According to him the Indian poets in English felt alienated by his language from the environment and from a living idiom; and there was no tradition from which to evaluate his works. They were always conscious of their Indianness, which reflected a crisis of identity. M.K. Naik, in his *A History of Indian English Literature*, also expressed a similar view regarding the early Indian poetry when he said that those poets 'can hardly be expected to write with India in their bones… their major subjects are Christian sentiments, nature and Indian history and legends and … are content to play the sedulous ape to the British Romantics.'

Both these views tried to justify, in a slightly different manner that the Indian English poetry did not seriously exist before Independence. However, though Naik accuses it for being the 'sedulous ape to the British romantics', it seems, the main weakness lies in, what Parthasarathy said, alienation from environment and an anxiety of Indianness. In that time, almost all Indians, except a select few, despised the English language, so those, who used that language were almost recognized as linguistically untouchable which eventually led them to be socially outcaste. Like untouchables, the earlier poets had to confine themselves within a limited number of readers in their country. Therefore, they had to depend upon the foreign readerships. But this did not solve the problem, it indeed created, subsequently, a huge problem; and unfortunately, the early Indian poetry could not come out from this problem ever. As soon as the readership changed, it demands a great change in the writings too - it needed to suit the taste of the readers; because, on the whole, writings can survive only by being fed on the readers. Since the readers, as they were mostly from England, fed up on the discourse of an orientalist India, any writing about India would soothe their ears or suit their taste only when it conformed to this imagined orientalist idea. Oriental world, as against the occidental world, propagates the idea of an exotic, wild and uncivilized world. Along with this change of readership, another factor that contributed to the early Indian poetry is their inability to write in an idiom that is intrinsically English in nature.

They could not claim a position that their European masters were occupying. To sustain as a poet, they had to, inevitably, take recourse in becoming a representative Indian poet. By representing India in a manner and in a tone that soothe the Britishers' ears, they can only think of sustaining as a poet. This urgency had added an anxiety whether they had been able to represent India or not. In such an attempt, they ended up writing on those themes which were common to India—myths, legends and archetypal images.

Thus, pre-independence poetry which was basically written to soothe the ear of a group of prejudiced readers had nothing to do with the poets' perception of life and the world. Then, why they wrote poetry? Bruce king seemed to provide an adequate answer to this question when he commented that pre-independence poetry were mostly hobby like. It was as if their deliberate choice; inspiration had nothing to do; as if they chose poetry as an alternative to, say, husbandry. Therefore, Bruce King, while looking back to this poetry from the last decade of the twentieth century, he found that the earlier poetry was, 'a mass of sentiments , clichés, outdated language and conventions, and ossified remains of a colonial tradition…'

Though all these comments tried to present the exact condition of the pre-independence poetry, still, it seems, their comments were too generalized statements. Poets like, Toru Dutt needs special treatment. It will be injustice to put her along with the other earlier poets. From the critical attention that she received, it is possible to imagine her noteworthy contribution to the Indian English poetry. M.K. Naik said that Indian English poetry developed from imitation to authenticity with her. Similarly, Rosinka Choudhury says that 'in her poetry, we confront for the first time, a language that is crafted out of the vicissitudes of an individual life, a sensibility that belongs to the modern India'. Therefore, we can say that the critical comments offered by Parthasarathy, Naik and Bruce King are too generalizing and they undermine such critical attention that Toru deserved.

Whatever may be the weakness of the early poetry, the post-independence poetry emerged completely free from the grasps of those spells. According to Bruce King, the poetry of this new generation became a 'part of the process of modernization which includes urbanization, industrialization, mobility, independence, social change, increase communication (in the form of

films, television, radio, journals and newspapers), national and international transportation networks, mass education and the resulting paradox that as an independent national culture emerges: it also participates in the international, modern, usually westernized world.

The new poets who began to appear at independence were in love with the English language, excited by their discovery of such late nineteenth century and twentieth century poets as Hopkins, Yeats, Eliot, Pound and Auden; their concerns in their writings were individual or expressions of the human condition in general, rather than the prisons and superseded issues of political independence. The nationalist political need for a useable past with its emphasis on national classics, mythology and representation of typical characters, no longer seemed relevant. Instead, the younger poets were more likely to write about life in the city and their personal desires and discontents. Their emphasis was more on aesthetic, rather than on the politics, nationalism and mythology. The new poetry was part of the post-independence modernization of Indian society and emerged first in the larger urban areas.

A few critical works by the pioneer of this new generation will show the trend that the Indian English Poetry was to follow. In his talk on 'Ideas and Modern Poetry', Ezekiel held out his poetic theory that 'modern poetry is not used to do what prose can do: the propagation of ideas is not the job of verse. Modern poets should try to find a language which will match the actual speech habits, rhythms and typical attitudes of the twentieth century'. He also wanted that poetry be grounded in reality, reflection, experience and have a logical discursive form. It is in this theory, most of the poems were written. However, at the same time, he also faced a tension because he soon realized that poetry only grounded in reality, reflection, and experience and with a logical discursive form cannot reach the higher echelon of poetry. He felt the need for another thing. In his another lecture, *'Poetry as Knowledge'*, published in *Quest* (76 May, 1972), he mentioned this and urged that a poem must 'strive to fuse thought and emotion in images that have moral and philosophical implications'. In other words, he wanted poetry to be invested with moral awareness, truth, self-knowledge and mature experience.

While Indian English poetry was moving towards a new direction, appearance of R. Parthasarathy, in the poetic scene made a slight twist to that direction. As revealed in the introduction to *Ten Twentieth-Century Indian Poets*, Parthasarathy, like Ezekiel, advocated for poetry which has an unusually dense compression, economy, reliance and imagery drawn from his environment. Moreover, his poetry reflects self-knowledge; emotion reflected upon and aims at maturity of vision. But unlike Ezekiel, he felt alienated from the local culture and environment. Therefore, he urged while writing in English, some other things to be accomplished by an Indian poet. In his essay 'Whoring After English God', referring to that urge, expressed his desire for an 'unobtrusive personal voice' on the poet's part to reveal the everyday reality. Examining the Indian English verse he found that Indian poet will not have the social and cultural nuances it would have in England and America. And the poem is more an object in itself than a kind of transmission of knowledge to others, there is a need to forge an unobtrusive voice to use language as artifice. In other words, he calls for an idiom that is inevitably Indian in nature Though Parthasarathy's anxiety—anxiety of being alienated—seemed to be similar with that of early Indians, yet he is different from them at least in two-ways to heal this anxiety. Firstly, he did not try to root himself by invoking representative Indian themes—myths and legends—like the early poets; rather he attempted to root himself by invoking 'Indian reality'. Secondly, language used by ancient poets was completely derivative and imitative; they were far removed from the Indian reality; but his use of language is as close to 'everyday reality as can be'. He preferred a language which can carry the nuances of Indian life. This sort of perspective offered by Pathasarathy influenced the poetic scene of that era. A. K. Ramunajan also wrote poetry to conform to that order though it was not evident whether he was influenced by him or not. Parthasarathy praised Ramanujan and cited that it is 'possible to overcome such… by recovering an apparently lost tradition'. Poets like Agha Shahid Ali and Vikram Seth were also, to some extent, influenced by this rhetoric.

Though poetry in the 70s and 80s were mostly influenced, explicitly or implicitly, by the rhetoric of Parthasarathy yet, it was not the only trend at that time. There were two or three trends always under current. One such current emerged from the influence of the group of experimentalists. Quite contrary to the Ezekiel and Parthasarathy's aesthetic, Dilip Chitre, an experimentalist,

offered his own aesthetic of the avant-garde. He claimed that anything creative challenges, nullifies all previous moods of expression. Consequently, a new speech rhythm, new syntax, vocabulary, imagery resulted from 'revolutionary structural upheaval deep within the creative poet's personality'. Such changes show a change in society itself during a generation. A major poet breaks away from the previous moods of consciousness and this will always be obscure to most readers. So the new poetic tradition that followed from him often appeared to be obscure. The 'poet will hit upon the new' and 'crash into the unknown', annihilating in that process the habitual poetics of the past tradition. Chitre, who introduced this concept in the introduction to his *Anthology of Maratha Poetry* (1967), concluded by claiming that all kind of knowledges and experiences are now part of what goes into poetry.

From historical point of view, if we examine the shift of aesthetic in Chitre from the earlier poets—Ezekiel, Parthasarathy,etc.—we will find it actually reflective of the shift of human consciousness—a shift in consciousness caused by the conglomeration of cultural influences and increased communication since the second World War which shocked traditional societies; and while making life absurd created a new kind of meaninglessness. In other words, great poetry expresses a new consciousness in recent decades; therefore, there is a need for a new poetry which will either express the anarchy of the time or imposed order on it by some alignment of what would otherwise seem incongruous. Its form is likely to be a musical organization in space, rather than logical exposition of ideas, thoughts and feelings.

With, A.K. Mehrotra, another experimentalist, Indian English verse again changed its course. In his essays, 'The Emperor Has No Clothes'(*Chandrabhaga 3, 1980)*, he not only offered his poetic aesthetic, but also criticizes existing Indian poetry as well as the poetic theory of Parthasarathy. He complained about the excitement and despair on the India English poetry. He relates this weakness to the poet's excessive desire to root himself in his own culture, ignoring other things which are for him a limited theme. Therefore, he introduced surrealist notion of writing of poetry where free association is supposed to free the unconsciousness of one's mind. As a matter of fact, this sort of poetry, like Chitre's Avante-garde tradition, did not follow any

logical structuring and they are too obscure. However, one radical difference between these two trends is that while Chitre's aesthetic showed shift in consciousness, Mehrotra's aesthetic requires that some kind of real or imagined world be ordered and given a particularized existence.

Along with the surrealist tradition, a confessional poetic tradition also exists. In this trend, poetry is often filled with sexual desire, anger and rebellion shaped rhythm and form. Poets like Shiv Kumar, de Souza, Kamala Das followed that trend.

It is evident then, that the post-independence poetry not only markedly differed from the pre-independence poetry, but also during the last few decades, it developed into various directions acquiring new significance. In other words, there is no continuity between these two periods of poetry. Therefore, if one examines the contribution of individual writer, the highest recognition will go to those who wrote after independence. Here, in this project an attempt is made to evaluate the contribution of the four Indian poets—Toru Dutt(1856—1887), A.K. Ramanujan (1929—1993), Vikram Seth (1952--) and Agha Shahid Ali (1949—2001). While to cover almost all the poetical works of Toru Dutt and Ramanujan, it also tries to assess some of the important poetical works of Vikram Seth and Agha Shahid Ali. While discussing their individual contribution, the focus is chiefly on their aesthetics and their critical reception.

Though, its main purpose is to highlight their contribution, yet it undertakes to discuss some implicit issues too. For instance, as shown in the discussion, the trend of poetry did not remain the same before and after the independence; moreover, critical responses were harsh too pre-independence poetry. In this research project, a critical attempt is made to analyze this allegation as well reception.

Moreover, among the four Indian poets selected here, there is a loose thread of connection. All of them were, more or less, have exiled experience. Except Toru Dutt, who stayed three years in Europe and then returned, all others had spent a considerable period of time in exile. Therefore, here, we would like to make a study of their exile experiences in their poetry.

Last, but not the least, we would like to make comparative study of three post-independence poets in the in the light of how Indian English verse developed in that era. However, though we will be discussing three implicit purposes in bits and pieces in the first four chapters, the exclusive study will be made in the sixth chapters.

References

1. Parthasarathy, R, '*Introduction to Ten Twentieth Century Poet'*, (New Delhi, OUP, 1971)
2. Naik, M.K, ' *A History of Indian English literature'* (New Delhi, Sahitya Akademi, 2006)
3. King, Bruce *'Modern Indian Poetry in English,* (New Delhi:OUP, 2004)
4. Choudhury, Rosinka, 'the Dutt Family Album', *An Illustrated History Of Indian Literature in English*, A. K. Mehrotra (ed) (New Delhi: Permanent Black,2003)
5. Ezekiel, Nissim, '*Ideas and Modern Poetry'*, Indian Writers in Conference, (ed)
6. Ezekiel, Nissim, '*Poetry as Knowledge'*, Quest (76, May 1972)
7. Parthasarathy, R, 'Whoring After English Gods', Writers in East-West Encounter, (ed) Guy Amirthanayagam, (London:Macmillion,1980)

TORU DUTT

Toru Dutt(1856-1877),third and the youngest child of Govin Chunder Dutt, born as a hindu and baptized along with the other members of the family in 1862, was a frail and fragile in her physical appearance and, as her father wrote, was a 'Puny and elf-like, with disheveled treses/ self-willed and shy …/ intent to pay her tenderest addresses/ to bird or cat,… but most intelligent'. Both Toru and her sister were educated in the English way of learning and their father took proper care in this respect. In 1869, the Dutt family left for Europe and the two girls, first attended a French school at Nice and then a year later, when the family went to London, they took lesson in music and became 'good musicians'. Living in a furnished house, they started translating French poems into English. Toru's knowledge of French and English were astonishing. So intimately did she identify herself with everything that was French that French became her favourite language. In the Words of Sir Edmund Gosse, 'to the end of her days Toru was better French than English scholar. She loved French the best, she knew its literature best, she wrote its language with more perfect elegance.'

In 1871, the Dutt family moved to Cambridge where both the sisters attended the lectures for women and made friends with Miss Mary Martin, who was to be Toru's lifelong friend and the recipient of most of her letters. In 1873, the entire family returned to Calcutta. Now the sisters plunged into a feverish dream of intellectual effort and imaginative productions dividing their time between the city house at Rambagan and the garden house at Baugmaree. But Aru's endeavor became incomplete as she, aged twenty, succumbed to consumption, which was at the same time, a heart rendering calamity for Toru and Govin Chunder Dutt.

As for Toru's taste and attitude are concerned, we can formulate an idea through the fifty odd letters addressed to her friend Miss Martin. Though there is inevitably much in them of the usual schoolgirl gossip about the trivial minutiae of daily life news of the calving of a cow and killing of a large snake; and at one place one find her demanding a mosquito curtain for her canaries; yet

there is something much more than the surface meaning: a sad awareness of passing of time and strange intimations of maturity, as, for instance, when she declares, ‘ I am getting quite old, twenty and some odd months and with such an old fashioned face that English ladies take me for thirty’. She also shows surprisingly lively interest in the social and political scene. When a European who had killed his ‘syce’ is reported to have been fined only 2 pound, she commented indignantly, ‘you see how cheap the life of an Indian is in the eye of an English Judge’. Her comments on the book she read showed a well-developed critical sense. She wonders why Hardy’s heroine generally marries the man who she loved the least. An impish sense of humour too breaks out occasionally, as when, on being chided by an elderly relative for not getting married yet, she replied demurely, ‘I was only waiting for your permission.’

Her attitude towards England was ambivalent. In her letters she mentioned, ‘I wish I was there’ and ‘I so long to be there’. She misses at home the ‘free life that … led there’. When she drove by the Calcutta harbor, the sight of the steamships fills her with a sudden desire to jump abroad one of these ‘homeward bound ship’, she even refers to her own countryman (quite innocently though) as natives. But her study of Sanskrit during the closing years of life brought her nearer to the springs of her own culture; she ceased to be a ‘brown English woman’. She now realized ‘how grand, how sublime, how pathetic our legends are’, and during the last few months of her life she writes, ‘strange to say I do not much relish the idea of leaving Calcutta. I am very fickle, for it was I who regretted the most leaving England. I wonder why so.’

These odd fifty letters, in a way, show what kind of poetry she was to write. The kind of contrast that she experienced in her life about foreign and native culture is reflected in her poetry. As a matter of fact, her first collection is directed to foreign culture, particularly French. But with the change of her vision, as she writes in the letter, the next volume is to do something with the native cultures. In both the cases, it is accompanied by her strong critical sense, which saved her being imitative. Moreover, in her poetry there is always an overwhelming sense of death, sorrow and alienation.

Toru Dutt's tragedy is that she died just when her talent was maturing with the discovery of her cultural roots. Of her two collections, only one appeared in her own life and that was not in the nature of original work. *A sheaf Gleaned in French Fields* (1876) comprised 165 lyrics (in the second edition it increased up to 206) of about a hundred French poets, translated into English mostly by her, only eight poems by her sister Aru. *Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan* (1882), published posthumously shows how keatsian in pace was the progress achieved by Toru Dutt during the last two years of her life. Two of these ballads deal with the archetype of Indian womanhood, Sita and Savitri; four narrate the legends of youngsters, Dhruva, Butto, Prahlad; one recounts the legends of the goddess Uma. As these lists indicate Toru is the first Indian poet to make an extensive use of Indian myth and legends.

Her first volume of poetry *A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields*(1876) which was a large octavo volume of 234 pages(including 40 pages of notes), was printed by the 'Saptahik Sambad Press at Bhowanipore in March 1876 and was dedicated to her mother, which sold out quickly. In May 1878, then, her father (as she died in 1877) brought out its second edition with a prefatory memoir by him. This edition also exhausted within two years and the third one followed in 1880 published by M/S Kegan Paul & Co. London.

The process of translating French poems into English actually began when she was yet in England, and continued it after her return to India. Moreover, she used to publish them in the 'poet's corner' of the Bengal magazine from time to time. Her final contribution to this well-known magazine was a rendering of A Barbier's 'La Cavale', which her father had discovered among her manuscripts after her premature and sad demise and which he had sent for publication thereafter.

The *reviews* of A Sheaf were generally positive and favorable. The reviewers welcomed the volume in papers and periodicals like, 'Hindu Patriot', the Englishman, and 'Indian Charivari'. About the reviews in the 'Englishman', Toru wrote that it was generous and candid'. The Indian

Mirror and the 'Madras standard' were the next to notice the existence of the book. The later took Toru for gentleman and she was much amused and perhaps a little flattered at this mistake. Many other good reviews appeared in the 'Bengal magazine', 'Bengalee' and the 'Friend of India'.

The foreign presses were not lagging behind in noticing the book. In august 1876, the examiner of London published a two column review of it by Sir Edmund Gosse. It is partly quoted below:

'…it is obvious that to have translated pieces from the best French poets, such as might come under a pupil's notice in any ordinary school anthology, into English prose, would have been a respectable feat for an Indian girl. What, then, is our surprise, to find Miss Toru Dutt translating, in every case in to the measure of the original, no less than 165 poems, some of the no less intricate in form than perplexing in matter. Thus amazing feat she has performed with truly brilliant success.'

In one of her letters to Mary Martin, commenting on Sir Gosse's review of the sheaf, she says, 'it is rather a long notice, full of two columns, very generous and frank a little funny too. It is the best notice that has been written on the sheaf, and I thank the reviewers whoever may be, most heartily.

Another reviewer E.J. Thompson compares Toru Dutt with Sappho and Emily Bronte for her 'fiery and unconquerable soul' and praised her for finer sense of critical acumen reflected in her scholarly notes on individual poets and poems.

The volume mostly represents the romantic school of the French poets, the school which sought to express freely the thought and feeling of individual in a moving diction and metre. In French, the main exponents of this school were Victor Hugo (the Poet) and saint Beauve. Others to adorn the galaxy of this school were Verlaine, Gautier, Nervel, Borel, Deschamos, Leconte de Lisle, Baudelaire, Soulary, Bouilhet etc. although the dominant concern of Toru in this volume is the

translation of the French Romantic poets, the poets of the other ages are not completely ignored. She gives us a few pieces from the transition period poets, such as Chenier, Courier, Beranger and Lamertine too. She even goes back further and gives poems of Parny and De Florin of the 18th century, of Searron and P. Cornellie of the 17th century and du Bartas and du Bellay of the 16th century. Besides this, Toru translates the work of these poets who stood a little apart from the Romantic School, namely, de Vigny, de Musset, Barbies, Brizeux, Moreau, Dupont, Mme Ackermann. She also includes some pieces by Heine, Germany born poet.

Of all the poets rendered in this volume, Victor Hugo holds the most important place with 31 pieces figuring in it. Evidently, Hugo was Toru's favorite and she allowed more space to him than to anyone else. Her renderings have succeeded in capturing the charm and delicacy of Hugo's French poems and the vigour and variety of his diction and metre. Hugo's multi-pronged personality peeps through them.

F. de Gramont is represented in the sheaf with 17 poems and T. Soulary with 14. Their immaculate skill in soneetering induced the translatress to give them this representation. Out of 17 pieces by Gramont selected for translation, 15 are sonnets. One of his best sonnets is 'Sonnet Freedom'. Harihar Das has also spoken of Toru's Partiality for translation of sonnets.

Among other poets T. Gautier and sainte-Beuve are represented by six and five pieces each. Other poets are represented by three or two or only one.

A cursory glance at the book convinces the reader that Toru was not doing her work with any well-planned method in mind and that is why she did not allot space to individual poets according to their established position in French poetry. Thus, Gramontis over exposed, while Lamartine, whose place is besides, does not receive adequate attention, although the translatress thought of Lamartine and Laprad highly. Only four of Lamartine's poems and one of Laprade's are given in this volume.

Toru's whole effort of translation was not basically motivated by the excellence of French literature; rather it can be viewed more as an outcome of her staying in France and her learning of French language. It is more as a literary exercise than as any literary pursuit. Still she shows

the sign of mature translator. Her translation reveals that she could understand perfectly the ethos and sentiment of each of the poets which is inherent in every poem. It is surprising that Toru could do this seemingly daunting task in such a short period of time without falling in literal word to word translation. With its passion and sentiments, her works are most close to the original works in the France language. What is more important is that the Note that she adds at the end shows her depth of understanding and her critical faculty. Edmund Gosse found the Note 'curious' and 'bewildering' since 'nothing could be more naïve than the writer's ignorance at some points, or more startling than her learning at others'. Gosse's comment on the note reflects the general impression on the volume of poetry. Though in some cases Toru appears to be naïve and ignorant, in other case she appears to be startling. Within the short period of couple of years, Toru learnt the French language, read the literature and translated it into a foreign language—a daunting task. Gosse's allegation is not unexpected, still need to be observed minutely such a reaction. Toru might miss socio-political connotations of some poems or might fail to apprehend underlying irony or sarcasm or might overlook allusions and references, but she was always careful enough to bring in successfully the nuances of the original poems in the translation. This and along with her passionate involvement in the subjects like bereavement, separation and death transcends the barrier of language and instinctively she could identify with such a topic. This emotional and instinctive responses to French poems surprises Edmund Gosse, because being a westerner his ears were used to the orientalistic diction and idiom from the Indian English writers. The huge shift in the works of Toru within the short span of time startles him.E.j. Thompson found nothing 'naïve' and 'ignorance'; rather he found it 'astonishing'and admired the 'independence and masculinity' of her criticism.

Thematically speaking, many of the poems in *A Sheaf Gleaned in the French Fields* are patriotic in content, while many other poems, like those of English Romantics who made common things and experience as the subject deal with, multiple things like doves and butterflies and swallows, homely toys and simple scene, kindness and bravery and child life and ideal manhood. The romantic side of life appealed to her imagination most. One such poem is Gensoul's 'My Village'. 'After the battle', Gramont's 'Sonnet-Freedom' and Berat's 'my Normandy', on the other hand, saturated with patriotic instincts.

But Toru was more sensitive towards subject that spoke of 'separation and loneliness, exile and captivity, illusion and dejection, loss and bereavement, deadening reasons and untimely death.' Because before the book was published she had lost her brother Abju and sister Aru untimely. Moreover, being a Christian convert, she felt socially and culturally alienated. Therefore, the poetry of Valmore, Musset, de Vigny, de Nerval, de Lisle, Dupont which dealt with such themes caught her attention. But as a translatress what she could do to express her inner sorrow was very limited, because translation commands thoughts and expression of the original writer. The only thing that the translatress can be expected to do is to take liberty in the choice of words, phrases, expressions and to some extent, tone and style. Toru Dutt seemed to take full advantage of this liberty, yet at the same time had been able not to spoil or distort the very essence of the original poem. The lines mentioned below which are actually a translation of Beranger's ' My Vocation' seemed to be an expression of her own plight:

A waif on this earth,

Sick, ugly and small,

Condemned from my birth

And rejected by all,

From my lips broke a cry

Such as anguish may wring

Sing—said God in replt

Chant poor little thing. (p.9-16)

Taken as a whole, *the Sheaf* contains some really charming songs in it, such as Hugo's 'Lines', Beranger's ' My Vocation' and Berat's 'My Normandy'. 'My Vocation' was, when Toru was alive, prescribed for the entrance Examination in Bengal Universities. The poem 'On the Death of a Young Girl' is of great interest to us, as it is deeply autobiographical boding ill of her own existence. After all, the Sheaf is a literary work of which we can be proud despite its minor

lapses and Harihar Das seemed to be right when he observed had Toru written nothing more than this, she would have left behind her something that will not soon die away.

The sense of loss which shadows Toru's life—either by cruel clutch of death or by social and cultural alienation—continued in her second volume. However, it was an attempt to bridge the social and cultural gap that she was facing. Here, she tries to be a representative Indian poet.

(II)

After returning from England and France, Toru realized that to become an Indian one need to know one's cultural roots. She also felt that without knowing this one could not be a poet of that country. Realization of this and together with the overwhelming sense of alienation took her to learn Sanskrit as well as the past of India. Obviously then, her second volume 'Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan'(1882) was a product of her new consciousness.

Ancient Ballads was published posthumously in 1882, with an introduction by the noted English critic sir Edmund Gosse. Apparently, Toru had originally planned a series of nine ballads and legends for the poem, but when her father searched her paper after her death, two were missing, or possibly not written. He filled up the gap with 'The Legend of Dhruva' and 'The Royal Ascetic and the Hind', the two tales that she had translated from the Vishnu Purana and that had appeared in 'The Bengal Magazine'.

The volume had received a lot of critical attention and indeed, had been praised by many critics. Sir Edmund Gosse, in his introduction to the volume, welcomes it thus:

"We believe that the original English poems which we present to the public for the first time to-day, will be ultimately found to constitute chief legacy to posterity."[4]

On the other hand, for T.O.D. Dunn, the volume is not only a 'legacy to posterity' but also an epitome in which the poet is not "willfully analyzing her ideas'. He wrote:

For the first time in literature of this kind, there is struck a genuinely Indian note and through the medium of a perfect English expression there is conveyed something of the sincerity of a mind proud of its native and…Her verse is finely knit, vigorous and a pleasing variety. It is never

obviously imitative, and moves with such freedom and independence as are from genius creative work.

Toru Dutt's biographer Harihar Das praises this volume as the truest expression of her intellectual assimilation of the spirit of English and French literature.

Among the poems that catch reader's attention is 'Savitri'—a legend mentioned in the Mahabharata—which narrates the troubled fortune of the princes Savitri and her courageous encounter with the God of Death to get back the soul of her husband Satyavan. This poem shows Toru's intellectual understanding of the spirit underlying the legend as the poem tells so heart touchingly the legend in a language which is simple and lucid and in a tone which is appropriate to the mood. Moreover, she shows her command over the economy of world, and the whole poem is written in octosyllabic meter with an alternate rhyme scheme. But at the same time the poem is not from criticism. Harihar Das complains that Toru used 'repetitions of a word to fill up the requisite number of syllabus in a line' and quotes the following lines as example:

'it was that fatal, fatal speech'

'A gleam of faint, faint hope is born'

'Pale, pale the stars above them burned'

'The day long, long will not appear'

The next legend in Ancient Ballad is Lakshman, a story taken from the Ramayana. It dramatizes the events of Maricher, disguised as a beautiful golden deer, who came in front of Sita to attract her attention and the subsequent abduction of her by Ravana. The narrative, written in conversation form, chiefly centred on Sita's relentless persuasion of Lakshman to get his brother rid of the possible dangers who has by the time gone to hunt the golden deer and Lakshman's procrastination to abide by her order as he was commanded by his brother to guard her and not to go away. The poem ends with Lakshman going sadly to the jungle to protect Ram after he was harshly scolded by Sita that it was his ill-intention that keeps him within home. Toru write this

legendary event very vividly and picturesquely in a language which is simple and lucid and the tone which appropriate to the context.

Moreover, the gradual working out of Sita's passion forms the most interesting feature of the poem. The opening verses convey to us vivid impression of Sita's anxiety on Ram's behalf and her excited appeals to Lakshman. The latter's fine justification of his elder brother's indomitable courage and his absolute faith in his power, serve merely to set Sita at bay. The implied reproach of her lack of faith, containing a germ of truth, causes her to turn fierce upon who meant only to comfort. She badly accuses him and applies the truly feminine weapon of bitter sarcasm. With all this anxiety and procrastination, the poem contains a skillful attempt at psychological delineation of character.

'Jogadhya Uma' is an important poem in which Toru narrates an incident showing how a paddler who sells 'shell-bracelet' meets a beautiful maiden who was actually a super-human figure. In writing this Ballad, Toru shows the best kind of creative originality that can be thought of. Her skilful composition of the poem with antique flavor from a mythological story and its translucent simplicity distinct it as one of the important poems. It is difficult to accept the verdict of Latika Basu when she remarks 'the Indian atmosphere of the poem is sometimes spilt by the rather jarring introduction of priest's house which is anything but a scene that seems to be mere English than Indian.' It is likely that Toru had not yet fully forgotten her English association. But the content, setting and the treatment are all essentially 'Indian'. Harihar Das considers it rightly as 'a germ of art among the Ballads of Hindustan'.

The other poems that consists of Ancient Ballads are 'The Royal Ascetic and the Hind', 'The Legend of Dhruva', ;Sindhu', 'Butto', 'Prehlad' and 'Sita'. Each of these is beautiful account of either a past legend or a folk tale. The kind of concreteness and precision that she showed in the first three poems of the volume can also be seen in these poems.

Ancient ballads, as a whole, contain narrative loaded with lyrical profusion of joy and sorrow, anger and pathos, hope and frustration. But such profusion does not, in any way, retard the flow of the stories of the poem. From the volume it seems that the pathetic scenes and events appealed the poet most. Possibly, because it had something to do with what she saw at her home and what she herself suffered. The kind of moral purpose—a poet rooted in Indian culture—that she aimed

to achieve through this volume of poetry made the volume a thoroughly Indian in true sense. It is steeped in Hindu ideas and sentiments and gives a vivid picture of Indian life and customs. No conscious attempt has been made to express thought or tradition alien to her people and culture. The sententious remarks interspersed in the ballads suggest Toru's familiarity with the best expositions of Hindu view of life. This what she makes ';Shavitri' say:

I know that in this transient world

All is delusion,--nothing true;

I know its shows are mists unfurled

To please and vanish

Similarly, the fatalistic doctrine of the popular Hinduphilosophy is expressed in the poem 'Sindhu':

It is my destiny,

O fear not thou, but pity one

Whose fate is thus to die.

Again, the doctrines of 'karma' and 're-birth' find an outlet in consoling remark of Suneetee towards her son:

The deeds that thou hast done

The evil, happly, in some former life,

Long, long ago, who may alas! Annul

Or who the good works not done, supplement;

The sins of previous life must bear their fruit

The ivory throne, the umbrella of gold

Their best steed, and the royal elephant

Rich caparisoned, must be his by right

Who has deserved them by his virtuous acts

In times long past. Oh think on this, my son,

And be content.

Indian in every sense, the volume successfully transformed her dream into reality; but the sad thing is that she had departed before the publication of the book. So, her anguished soul could not know how warmly the book was received by the readers.

At the end of *Ancient Ballads*, Toru adjoins seven miscellaneous poems which immediately display Toru's creative power at its best. They are more or less personal poem. 'Near Hastngs' is the first poem recording in England which describes an incident in which she and her ailing sister were resting on the beach near Hastings, when a lady appeared before them and started talking to them. Before she went away, she offered a few roses to Aru and thereby won Toru's undying gratitude. The poem has Toru's characterstics clarity and simplicity of style. 'France-1870', the next poem, written in a meter strangely irregular, shows Toru's love and admiration for France, which she welcomes as 'head of the human coloumn', while for 'Levite England', she reserves scorn and rebuff. In it, the poet expresses her true sympathy for France during the France-Prussian war. There is a much of passionate feelings in the poem and the year accustoms itself to the strangeness, there is a certain charm about the great irregularity of the rhythm, in which no two verses are alike.

'The tree of life' is an account of a delightful vision that the poet once had when she lay awake with a sense of weariness with her father's hands in her. In this silence of the passing moment, there shone, all of a sudden a strange light stretching itself over a vast plain. In the midst of this

illimitable plain, she saw before her eyes a 'tree with spreading branches and with leaves'. Beside the tree stood an angel, who plucked the leaves and bound them around her head and add their delicious touch the fever in her limb soon gone. Thereupon, she pleads for some leaves to be bound around her father's forehead too. The poem ends with the disappearance of her vision.

The next poem, 'On the Fly Leaf of Erckmann—Chatrian's Novel Entitled Madame Therese', records the impression made upon Toru by an incident recorded in that novel, when the French lines were wavering before the Prussian onslaught and the falling standard was marked by a woman—slander, tall and brown—and an attack was led by her and a drummer boy. It is marked even by greater irregularity of rhythm than that found in 'France-1870'.

'Baugmaree' and 'The Lotus' are two praised sonnets included in this volume. In the first one, the poet speaks of the scenic beauty of the garden of her family. It is full of the light-green graceful tamarinds, the mango clumps of the green colour, the palms standing erect like gray pillars, the seemuls leaning over the quiet pools, the bamboo stretching eastward and, above all, the white Lotus looking like a cup of silver. In the midst of such natural beauty, the poet thinks one is sure to feel fresh and cheerful; and thus, the poem displays the poet's love of nature in a diction which is simple and a rhythm in iambic pentameter. Moreover, the poet here uses the imagery like 'Red-red, and startling like a trumped sound', to describe the colour of the seemul which bear an affinity with Toru's contemporary American poetess Emily Dickinsion.

'The Lotus' is a quaint story of the birth of the flower. To end the strife as to whether the lily or the rose was queen, psyche at last went to Flora and asked for a flower that should be 'delicious as the rose and stately as the lily in her pride'. Then flora, to solve the problem once for all offers the Indian lotus—'rose red eyed/ and lily white, queenliest flower that blows'. This sonnet and 'Our Casuarina tree' have been considered as 'beautiful poetic pieces, the outburst of poetic genius'.

'Our Casuarina Tree' is a really remarkable poem. It is an admirable blend of local touché and literary reminiscences of objective description of the actual tree and the charm of association

with Toru's childhood. It opens with an account of the giant tree, festooned with the crimson flowers of a great creeper which wraps it wholly like a huge python. By day and night, it is centre of busy life and sweet bird song, the finest objects on which Toru's eyes rest as she flings wide her window at dawn. The shadow of the tree falls across the tank and makes the white lilies look 'like snow en-massed'. Grand and charming, it is 'dear' chiefly for the memories that cluster round it—memories of a time when happy children played under its shade. The thought brings out an intense yearning towards the playmates now no more. To the poet's fancy, the tree in sympathy sounds a dirge-like murmer like the 'breaking on shingle beach'. It is the 'eerie speech' or lament of the tree that, she hopes, may perhaps reach 'the unknown land'. Such a wail always strikes a chord of memory in her eve when she was travelling in France or Italy; it had always sent through winging its way homeward brining recollection of the tree dearly loved in childhood. The last line of the poem, with its romantic fervor, unfolds a desire of the poet for the immortality of the verse and ends with the delightful line,--' My love defended tree from oblivion's course'. The critical world had received this poem with open hearts. E.J. Thompson considered it as 'the most remarkable poem ever written in English by a foreigner, shows her already possessed of mastery over the more elaborate architectural forms of verse.'

About the imagery and beauty of the poem, Harihar Das remarked 'for its rich imagery, the music of its verse and the tenderness and pathos with which it is instinct, we would pledge the poem second to none in this volume. On the whole with the *Ancient Ballads*, Indian poetry progressed from imitation to authentication. Of course her authenticity lies not only in her treatment of wide range of themes but also equally lies in her deft and varied use of metres and poetic devices.

(iii)

Toru Dutt is a poet artist who applies herself to art sincerely and tries to 'grow from within ceaselessly'. It is the desire of application and growth that is so conspicuous in her art. It is this desire that makes her restless to experiment (not to imitate) with a number of themes and verse forms. It is this that explains the great dynamism and substantiality of her poetry. She shows a sure grasp at more than one poetic mood. 'Savitri' reveals her skill in brisk narration,

‘Lakshman’ a keen sense of drama, and the sonnet ‘Baugamaree’ a flair for description. But it is again a mark of her peculiar ambivalence that she misses all-together the dramatic irony inherent in the finale of the story of ‘Sindhu’, where the prophecy of the boy’s helpless parents that king Dasaratha too would die of grief at parting from a child comes like a fortunate curse to the king who was childless.

Toru Dutt’s imagery makes evocative use of local colour. The forest in which Butto wanders is full of ‘the somber soul’, ‘the bitter name’ and ‘the seemul, gorgeous as a bride’, though one wonders how the ‘Pampas’, more typical of south America have found their roots here. A jarring note is similarly struck when the peacock in Sindhu’s forest are endowed with ‘Argus Wings’. However, while describing the seemul’s red flower, she writes what is perhaps her most remarkable line; ‘Red, red and startling like a trumpet’s sound’—an image surprisingly modern in its use of synesthesia, a device so affectively used by Edith Sitwell.

Toru Dutt’s diction is naturally of the Victorian romantic school, and true to the Ballad motif, she employs archaisms like ‘hight’ and ‘dight’. She gives ample evidence of her prosodic skill in employing different forms like the ballad measure with its variations (eight syllable quatrain, a mixture of eight and six syllables, lines arranged in eight and twelve line units); blank verse; five eight and eleven line stanza forms, and the sonnet. Her ‘Casuarina Tree’ is written not only in eleven line stanza pattern but also follows certain rhyme schemes which produces rhythmical beauty to the poem. The rhyme scheme followed in the poem is—a b a a c d d c e ee. so far as her sonnets are concerned they are written in iambic pentameter line and follows a rhyme scheme like—a b b a a b b a cd cd ee. Unlike Sarojini Naidu, she is no singer and her short poems like ‘Our Casuarina Tree’ often strikes a note of nostalgia. In her narrative she is sometimes flat-footed as in ‘Savitri like her new life much’ and ‘can we such/ A matter delicate, Proceed?’. Her artistic immaturity is also revealed when, ignoring the lesson to be learned from Milton’s deliberate vagueness in his description of death in Paradise Lost, book II(‘the other shape/ If shape is might be called that shape had none’), she attempted a detail description of Yama, the God of Death and fails to create the desired effect of awe ant terror. At one place she even descended to bathos when she makes Savitri take her husband’s soul, ‘no bigger than a thumb’, and run to his lifeless body in which she presumably inserts it, like clever housewife armed with a do-it-yourself kit swiftly sitting a spare part to a faulty kitchen stove.

As far as her use of figurative speech is concerned, Toru effectively used it as ornamentation as well as medium to express ideas. The chief devices that she has frequently used are metaphor, simile, onomatopoeia, personification, alliteration and hyperbole. A few instances where she uses similes are ; 'when guilded like a music string Savitri's presence through the room', 'nor melt his lineage like the frost', 'it came as chainless as the wind', 'they lacerate my inmost heart/ and torture me, like poisoned swords'. (from *Savitri*)

As for the use of metaphor is concerned, the following lines can be cited:

'His merit still remains a star' (p-22)

Or 'the pair look statues, magic bound'

One beautiful instances of onomatopoeia is:

But the good

God's purity there loved too truce

Mirrowed in dawning womanhood'(p-58)

The frequency of the /d/ sound in it gives a sense of holy fear in God-fearing view.

Instances of alliteration can be found in the following lines like:

Stern Warriors, when they saw her, smiled

As Mountains smile to see the spring. (p-24)

The stressed in the /s/ sound produces an alliterative effect in these lines.

Apart from these effective uses, what is most impressive about Toru Dutt's poetry is its virtually total freedom from imitation (in contrast to KashiprashadGhose and M.M. Dutt) at an age when most writers are in the their artistic swaddling clothes. She quotes from Wordsworth and Pope, but it would be difficult to cite definite example of psittacism in her verse. This indicates that

hers was an individual talent capable of growing according to the laws of its own nature. It is therefore said that she died Keats-like before her pen had gleaned her 'teeming brain'. Edmund Gosse's well-known description of her as 'this fragile blossom of song' is certainly misleading. There is nothing 'Glass Menagerie' like about Toru Dutt's poetry. Her best work has the quality of a quite strength of deep emotion held under artistic restrain and an acute awareness of the abiding values of Indian life. Permitted a few more years of life she could have proved capable of far greater things, as her actual achievement, though slender, unmistakably indicates. Today, among the earlier poets who receive reader's attention, it is always Toru Dutt and her poetry. Most writers have their favourable opinion about her work, yet there are critics like Bruce King who would like to Judge the works of early poets, including Toru Dutt, as something inferior.

(IV)

Writing about Toru's contribution M.K.Naik remarks in his A History of Indian English Literature that with Toru, 'Indian English poetry developed from imitation to authenticity'. Rosinka Choudhury, similarly, opined that 'arguably, Toru is the first modern poet in Indian English and she brought the personal and cultural experience into her writing'. One who is acquainted with this positively directed remarks about Toru will be startled when he reads Bruce King remarks: 'poetry of the pre-independence period was. . . a mass of sentiments, clichés, outdated language and conventions, the ossified remains of a colonial tradition'.

By the term 'pre-independence', Bruce King refers to the all works done before the independence of India. Therefore, Toru Dutt is also not free from this accusation. Hence the veracity of their opinion demands closer inspection. Though King's accusation is in complete contrast to what Naik or Choudhury observed, both views, it seems to me, are correct as far as the context in which they are said. Both views are spoken in different context. Naik and Choudhury view Toru's works by judging the comparative qualities of previous writers like, Derezio, M.M. Dutt, K. Ghoseetc, whereas King's views emerge from the comparative judgement of the post-independent poets basically. Therefore, words like 'from' and 'arguably' are important in Naik and Choudhury's opinion respectively. Only few writers like, Derozio,

M.M. Dutt, K. Ghose were writing before Toru, whose poetry is highly imitative of the British writers. It is in this aspect of originality Toru passes from imitation to authenticity. While being imitative the earlier poetry was far from presenting reality, their language imitated the British masters in two ways. Firstly, in the absence of any poetic tradition(in English) in India, most of the early writers selected the colonial writers as their models, and the consequences was much unexpected though they did not realize it at that time. The inherent weakness of the any Indian at that time to have mastery over the English language and then to write with it resulted in imitation—imitation in diction, style, themes and even, thought. Therefore, this imitative poetry has nothing to do with the day to day reality. Poems were tainted by this tendency; everything seemed to be borrowed from the English masters. Derozio's 'Harp of India', for example, is a poem where the central image 'Harp' itself is an instrument favored and used by the English romantics. Moreover, sonnets like, 'To My Student of Hindu College', 'To My India', are not only Byronic in tone but also close imitation of him in styles, in rhyme, rhythm and meter.

Secondly, their language bears the colonialist notion of orientalistic discourse. It gets its meaning through orientalist discursive dictionary, and hence their poetry is not about India for an Indian; but about India for the westerners. Their poetry was made to soothe the ears of the west. The west who presumed them to be civilized constructed an image of the orient as something inferior, savage and barbarous. Early Indian poetry was directed to construct this reality. Poems like 'Fakeer of Jungheera', 'The Songs of Brahmin', for instance, describe the old exotic ritual of 'Sutti' very vividly. Similarly, the inferior status of Indian civilization is also described in 'The Harp of India' that the civilization of India which was once superior and advanced, now damaged and demeaned. It is symbolically interpreted in the poem through a broken harp incapable of producing music.

The language of early poetry was not only imitative and orientalistic, but it is also accused of romanticizing and sentimentalizing the facts. Its tone is often accompanied by the unnecessary flood of emotion. Kashi Prasad Ghose's 'To a Young Hindu Widow', for instance, despite its subject matter could have written about any set topic, in any place:

Ah fair one! Lone as Desert Flower,

Whose bloom and beauty are in vain

How dark was that too fatal our

Which brought the lasting grief and pain!

This sentimentalizing tendency has its unfortunate effect in creating a lack of relationship to an environment. In short, the language of the early poets was distant, vague and unfocussed.

With Toru however, language took a new turn. Her use of language was neither fully imitative nor orientalistic. Undoubtedly, Toru, who was brought up in English culture, much have been influenced by the British poets; but nevertheless, she was free from blindly imitating the foreign language and kept a balance between imitation and authenticity. Most of the poems in the *Ancient Ballads* are either written in blank verse or in octosyllabic meter and follow a rhyme scheme which is English in nature; yet her diction managed to be relevant to the social and cultural context. Her language often used to bring the social and cultural nuances of the Indian life. 'Her language', Rosinka Chaudhury wrote, 'addresses her experience, her vision radiating beyond the boundaries within which most of the nineteenth-century poetry in English was confined. Her awareness of her indianness is not restricted to Indian historical themes and the reworking of Indian legends. The mythological content of her poems does not exist extrinsically, but is integrated with her consciousness, her memory. In her poetry we confront for the first time a language that is crafted out of the vicissitudes of an individual life and a sensibility that belongs to modern India'. Therefore, her description of Savitri is genuine without exaggerating a bit. This genuineness in description also freed from falling in orientalist trap—an accusation made upon the early poets. She was always true to the fact. In the legend 'Dhruva', for instance, she is describing the Hindu belief in 'Karma' and 're-birth' very vividly.

Here she is not exaggerating life like Derozio's description of the ritual of 'sutti'; which is limited to particular sect of people, but he described it with such a composure that it extended to the whole Indian. Moreover, her poems crafted with greater economy and precision are free from sentimentalization. They invite attention equally both to the mind as well as to the heart.

That is why it is evident that with Toru there was great change in Indian English Writing. It was a change towards authenticity. It was to that authenticity that M.K. Naik was hinting at in his comment. And in a way, the premise for modern poetry which actually began after Independence could be found in her. Therefore, Soyinka's comments have also its veracity. Now if we see Naik's opinion closely and questions how much authenticity Toru brought to the Indian English Writing? The answer is certainly not much. She brought authenticity to be only a true representative Indian poet. In thus trying to be a representative poet she turned back towards the old colonial themes like singing the myths and legends of the Indian past. Therefore, when Naik talks about 'authenticity', there is always an irony behind it. The reason for going to the past is also traceable. Firstly, like most of the early Indian writers, she also felt the 'anxiety of Indianness'. The early writers always had an anxiety about readership and their positions. They knew that after being struck to the English culture, they cannot expect many readers in the Hindu orthodoxy; the ultimate readership was, then, the British. At the same time they also felt the anxiety that they cannot write like the British Masters. If they tried, they might lose the position of a poet because in this case he or she will be a subject of ridicule. This anxiety finally led him to be an anxiety of Indianness. However, with other poets, that Indianness consists of a constructed image of the west and with Toru, it is the image as-it-is. Secondly, it is evident that there was no poetry before Toru which excludes orientalist discourse and colonial subject matter. So she had nothing to depend on. Lastly, I think, her brief span of life prevented any possible progress she would have made in future.

As a matter of fact, then, her very representative nature excludes everything else. It went to the extent of excluding almost herself. But it will be wrong, if it is completely denied that there is no self-portrayal in her poem. Indeed, it is in her poetry that we, for the first time, find self-analysis. Apart from the sonnet addressed to her father in the *Shief,* there are seven poems in Ancient Ballads which bring her inner woman out. In 'A Mon Pera' she laments at the fact that the flowers which bloom at one place fades away at another place, which is symbolic of her own condition. Similarly, in 'Our Casuarina Tree', there is an overwhelming sense of loss. Her self which is sympathetic towards French finds expression in two other poems. It is in this aspect, it seems, Rosinka Choudhury had seen the seed of Modern Indian English poetry in her. That's why the word 'arguably' is very important in this comment.

But how far, the poetry of Toru is document of her *self* ? Closer inspection will prove that her poetry analysed a very small part of her. If poetry is to be thought, as Nissim Ezekiel said, a fusion of experienced and feeling then her poetry only partly fulfills this. If we see her biographical accounts, we will find that the kind of experience and feeling that she had was completely disastrous and horrifying. It was an experience of loneliness, horror of death and sense of loss. From the very childhood, when their family converted into Christianity, they were like outcaste in the orthodoxy Hindu society. Her social interaction was limited to a very few people, within her own brothers and sisters. This sense of alienation was even more overpowering and unbearable when she came back from Europe and lived almost secluded life. The experiences of the horror of death are more shocking. She saw her brother and sister dying of consumption—leaving her behind. Moreover, she herself died after a long suffering. Therefore, her inner self was shattered by the relentless banter of horror and alienation. It always shattered her spiritual wholeness. Her unfinished novel *Bianca* carried this pessimistic mood of her life—with multiple deaths occurring here. But if we look for such experience in her poetry, the result is frustrating. Except a few poems mentioned earlier, the poems are either translation or dealt with colonial subject matter. Her poetry, then, fails to depict her life experiences. It is in the light—poetry is the criticism of life and that experience and feeling are two essential elements in poetry—Bruce King judged the poetry of pre-independence era. The opinion that has been quoted here was made by him in this light.

Still this opinion cannot be applied in the case of Toru in direct way. What he accused of early poetry as a mass of sentiments, cliché and outdated language, can be applied to anyone, except Toru. Bruce King himself was aware of the fact with Toru that there appeared a great change in the early poetry; still he did not hesitate to generalize her works with others in the same breath. That's why the opinion bears an ironic twist. When King expressed his views, he had already got acquainted with the aesthetics of the modern poets like Ezekiel, Ramanujan, R. Parthasarathy. Their poetry is completely free from the earlier poeticism. None of them ever dealt with any colonial theme like myths and legends of the past. 'self' always took an important place in their poetry which they formed with a realistic background with proper analysis. For Ramanujan, for instance, 'self is ever changing and ever developing theme in his poetry. So he says in 'Self-Portrait', he resembles everybody but himself. Similarly, Ezekiel's aesthetic centers on the need to acquire integration or the wholeness of self. Again with the coming of the group of

Experimentalists, there appeared a revolutionary change in the aesthetic of poetry. Having read all this, Bruce King did not feel necessary to distinguish Toru's authenticity or 'modernity' from her earlier writers. Her innovation or experiment was too small to secure her a place with the modern poets of the post-independence. Therefore, for Toru, Bruce King remark always bears an understated meaning. Therefore, Toru Dutt is a beacon light for the modern poetry that broke the link with the earlier imitative poetry, and at the same time ushered a new era for poetry.

References:

1. Gosse, W. Edmund; 'Introductory Memoir', Ancient Ballads. (London: Kegan Paul & Co.1882) pg. xii
2. Gosse, W. Edmund, The Examinar, dated 26th August, 1876.
3. Dutt, Toru; AShief Gleaned in French Field. (Calcutta: Nabu Press, March,2010)
4. Gosse, W. Edmund; 'Introductory Memoir', Ancient Ballads. (London: Kegan Paul & Co.1882). pg xxii-xxiii.
5. Dunn, T.O; The Bengali Writers of English Verse, 1918, pf 22.
6. Dutt, Toru; Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan (New Delhi: Book Jungle, March, 2010)
7. Das, Harihar; 'The Classical Tradition in Toru Dutt's Poetry', Asiatic Review, pg-700.
8. Dasgupta, Jyotis Chandra; 'Toru Dutt', National Biography for India:IV, pg 304
9. Thompson, E.J; 'The Life and Letters of Toru Dutt', Supplementary Review, pg 342-343.
10. Das, Harihar; 'The Classical Tradition in Toru Dutt's Poetry', Asiatic Review, pg-342.
11. Naik, M.K; A History of Indian English Literature,(New Delhi: SahityaAkademi, 2006) pg-37.
12. Choudhury, Rosinka; 'the Dutt Family Album', An Illustratyed History of Indian Literature in English, A.K Mehrotra(ed), (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2010) pg.69
13. King, Bruce; Modern Indian Poetry in English, (new Delhi:OUP, 2004)

A.K. RAMANUJAN

(1)

If Toru Dutt's poetry belongs to, what Bruce King called, a mass of sentiments, cliché, outdated language and conventions, merely ossified remains of a colonial tradition and just formalized ornamented self-expression, then A.K. Ramanujan poetry differs substantially from it. His poetry results from a fusion of thought and feeling. In other words, his poetry is invested with moral awareness of truth, self-knowledge and mature experience.

Born in 1929, Mysore, Ramanujan is a tri-lingual writer, excelling in English, Tamil and Cannada languages and one who has curved a niche for himself both in the field of translation and in the realm of poetry. Beginning his career as a lecturer in English literature at Quilon, Belgaumic and Baroda for eight years and finally worked as a professor of linguistics and Dravidian studies in the well-known University of Chicago. He is the author of fifteen books which include verses in English and Kannada. His translations are as follows: *Fifteen Poems from Classical Tamil Anthology* (1965), *The Interior Landscape* (1967), *No Lotus in the Navel* (1969), *Speaking of Shiva*(1972), *Hymns for Drowning* (1981), *Poems of Love and War*(1985) and the famous Samaskara written earlier in 1976. He also co-edited a volume on folklore and Indian literature. His original poetic compositions in English are: ***The Striders*** (1966), ***Relations*** (19710, ***Second Sights*** (1986) and ***The Black Hen*** (1995)

Possessing the modernist's temperament, Ramanujan makes a conscious effort to break free from the shackles of the conventional mode of writing poetry. Hence not only are his themes not centred on the traditional mould but his entire approach to poetry is unconventional. Like most of the modern poets he prefers to write in free verse, thus liberating himself from the constraints of a regular pattern. In preface to the Lyrical

ballads, William Wordsworth defined poetry as the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin in emotion recollected in tranquility'. Ramanujan's poems however reveal a marked deviation from these oft-quoted definitions of poetry. According to K. Venkata Reddy, 'it is recollection emotionalized in un-tranquil moments that appears to be the driving force behind much of Ramanujan's poetry'.

Having spent decades in the west, he formed a crystal clear picture of both the oriental and occidental cultures. The foreign milieu provides him with a platform to evoke a contrast between the western scene and his eastern background. A remarkable facet of Ramanujan's poetry is his deep-rooted Indian sensibility. Despite his expatriate experience, there is nothing really westernized about his poetry. Barring a few stray ones, most of his poems revolve around Indian themes set against an oriental backdrop. Even poems like 'Christmas' which reflects certain features of the western milieu, are actually used to delineate the contrasting pictures of the East and the West.

A sharp memory accompanied by a capacity for objective analysis enables him to recall even the seemingly unimportant details of his life. Ramanujan vividly recalls the various experiences of his childhood in his poems. However, these are not tearful recollection and do not have the stigma of nostalgia attached to them. He has a tendency to depersonalize his personal emotions. Moreover, despite the fact that 'home' is a recurrent metaphor in his poems, he does not cling to it like an emotional anchor. Thirdly, if variety is the spice of life, Ramanujan has plenty of variety, sprinkled with a generous helping of a spice in the form of varied poetic devices like irony, imagery, metaphor and so on. He writes with equal poise on the royalty, commoner, the learned and the religious. He is equally at home while describing mute animals, human relationships and abstract feelings. Glimpses of both the rural and the urban are sighted in his work. If he can give a picturesque description of flowering trees in a poem like ecology, he is also capable writing on as mundane a subject as 'Epitaph on a Street Dog'. Then while he is intensely personal in 'Love Poem for a Wife-1', he appears to be thought provoking philosopher in 'the Hindoo' poems. 'A Minor Sacrifice' reveals his comprehensive knowledge of Indian mythology while 'a River' expresses his undisguised contempt for people who

overlooked the devastating aspect of nature. Actually, through the immense thematic varieties in his poems, he has transmuted the 'common into the unique, the local into the universal and the familiar into the mystical.'

While Ramanujan's poems appear to be chiefly preoccupied with a personal nature, particularly during the fledgling stage of his poetic career, his later poetry reflects an increasing concern on the part of the poet to establish a connection with reality. In an interview with Rama Jha, Ramanujan had himself admitted that the 'social reality has ultimately to be felt by the poet too.' Although social concern forms an integral part of his inner consciousness, he does not deliver moral sermons. Being a sensitive poet, he perceives certain things more clearly than the layman. But unlike other poets, he does not lash out his fury against the insensible society; he merely jolts people into awareness and then leaves them to judge for themselves. As A.K. Srivastava writes 'Ramanujan is no preacher, nor does he suggest remedies and palliatives for the ills of the society and for the erosion of human values.'

Another facet of Ramanujan's poetry is that he does not make any self-professed announcement like T.S. Eliot; his poetry is definitely a reflection of his anti-romantic attitude. Even in love poems addressed to his wife, he expressed his thought in a matter-of-fact tone. His poems which contain imagery from nature do not necessarily reveal the fundamental principles of romanticism. Finally, an innate ability for handling versatile themes, a penchant for various stylistic devices, a firm hold over the English language, an enriched and varied vocabulary coupled with a comprehensible understanding of the Indian ethos are the chief characteristics of the poetic self of A.K.Ramanujan. He emerged as an individual who has not denounced his cultural heritage and succumbed to the allurements of an alien ideology. Despite being exposed to a westernized milieu, he has been able to develop poetic identity of his own. In fact, he voices his preferences for a Hindu mode of attaining salvation. Ramanujan is a modern poet whose inner consciousness has been considerably influenced by a scientific temper and an analytical bent of mind. He can be favorably compared with other eminent poets of Indian English

writings. His death on July 13th, 1993 has been an irrevocable loss to the Indian English literature.

(II)

It is evident then that A.K. Ramanujan's poetry is intense, down-to-earth and socially relevant. He has a kind of broad-spectrum poetic sensibility which encompasses intense personal poems, childhood memories, religious experience, philosophy, history and wide variety of human situations. His preoccupations with relationship within the family are significant because he wants to examine these relationships in a manner to ascertain their position in relation to other human experiences.

A good deal of his poetry explores the obsessive memories of his childhood with analytic intelligence of the West. Obviously, there is a recurrent search for roots in his poetry which takes the form of memories of childhood and maturity as they have been distanced by his staying abroad. The terror felt at the sight of wriggling snakes and the shock received when he saw the corps of a scantily dressed woman on the beach is but a few examples. The recollections of such incidents were mainly done while he was in America. His frequent visit to India seemed to have been for the purpose of renewing its roots. The poem 'Of Mother's among other Things' is one of the nostalgic reminiscences of his childhood where he fondly recalls the image of his mother as she flits about the house doing her household works. Bowed down with the pressure of domestic world she hardly has any time to cater to her looks. The poet describes her uncared-for physical appearance thus:

…her hands are a wet eagle's
Two black pink crinkled feet,
One talon crippled in a garden
Trap set for a mouse. Her saris
Do not cling: they hang, loose
Feather of a onetime wing. (p.61)

The archetypal image of the mother as a symbol of patience, endurance and self-sacrifice is evident in the poem. The domestic experiences continue to enslave her. In the repressed atmosphere, she loses her individuality and her identity is lost amidst the familial duties.

In 'Still Another for Mother' the poet describes a certain incident in London which recalls a flood of memories from his own past. In Hyde Park Street, as he slowly tried to adapt himself in the alien land and gradually came to be accepted as one of the inmates of the place, the sight of a plump and a calmly woman and of a good-looking, short-statured man reminds him of a situation in his own life. In his subconscious mind, the poet identifies the large buxom woman, who may have resembled his own mother. The 'handsome, short-limbed man with a five-finger patch of grey/ laid on his widow's peak', probably the lady's son, reminds the poet of himself. As the man walks away from his mother without turning back the poet recollects of his own separation from his family. The poet walks away from the scene pretending that neither he nor the woman in question was really affected but in the innermost recesses of his mind:

Something opened
In the past and I heard something shut
In the future quietly
Like the heavy door
Of my mother's black pillared. Nineteen century
Silent house, given on her marriage day
To my father, for a dowry (p.15)

The heavy door of his house that closed behind him is perhaps symbolic of the door of childhood that was clamped shut as he stepped into adulthood, journeying to the west, leaving behind his native soil. In this context, it can be said that perhaps it is this symbolic door of dissociation envisages his alienation from his roots. This assertion however, should be taken with some reservation as the dissociation was never complete

with him. That is why Bruce King seems to be right, when he writes in Modern Indian Poetry in English 'In Ramanujan's *The Strider* and *Relations*, poetry seems to grow out of Indian experience and sensibility with all its memories of family, local places, images, beliefs and history while having a modern stance with its skepticism, ironies and sense of living from moment to moment in a changing world in which older values and attitudes are often seen as unrealistic'.

Some other points which treat the memory and the relationship between the past, present and various emotions, particularly anxiety, fear, sexuality and nostalgia include 'Breaded Fish', 'Looking for a Cousin on a Swing', 'Small Scale Reflections on a Great House', 'Snakes' and so on. Memories of childhood crowd the wide gamut of his imagination. In several of his poems, there is an accurate representation of certain instances. In the poem 'Snakes', Ramanujan is often reminded of these wriggling creatures in mundane situations. Not only that, he also can trace a similarity between snakes and his sister's plaits. Similarly, the suppressed memory of a half-naked dead woman on a sea beach is pushed on the surface when the poet is served a dish of breaded fish. He was unable to concentrate on the delicacy before him as his mind traced back to the time when he had seen:

> A dark half-naked
> Length of woman, dead
> On the beach in a yard of cloth,
> Dry, rolled by the ebb, breaded
> By the grained indifference of sand. (p.4)

As the incident flashed before his mind, he was greatly unsettled as he mentally rushed 'for the shore', my heart beating in my mouth.

The way in which childhood experience assume a different shape in later life can be felt in 'Looking for a Cousin on a Swing'. This recalls a trivial incident of sharing a swing with a girl cousin and afterwards climbing a blooming tree with her. The pleasant

experience shared by the close proximity of a premature four- or five-year-old girl and a slightly older boy of six or seven years was completely innocent then. Having given this description of innocent fun, Ramanujan is quick to shift the scene from the village of the past to the city of the present in which the same little girl, having now blossomed into a mature young woman, is on the look-out for companions to gratify her passion:

Now she looks for the swing
In cities, with fifteen suburbs
And tries to be innocent
About it. (p.19)

Here we see how the memories of childhood which is innocent itself bears sexual connotation when time passes. It is in this dynamic aspect of memory can also be read his other poem 'Small Scale Reflection on a Great House'. The house here, as Bruce King writes is 'symbolic of the mind in which all new experience and information become part of the past and is changed, just as the past is changed by experience of the modern world'.

Sometimes I think that nothing
That ever comes into this house
Goes out. Things come in everyday
To loose themselves among other things
Lost long ago among
Other things lost long ago;

But the poem can also be read as a representative Hindu tradition in its accommodation to disparate myths, ideas, philosophies, its tolerance of eccentricities and failures, its assimilation of the new without producing the transformation which conflict brings to the foreign mind, is both unchanging and continually changing as the foreign is domesticated:

And ideas behave like rumours
Once casually mentioned somewhere
They come back to the door as prodigies

Born to the prodigal fathers, with eyes
That vaguely looks our own,
Like what uncle said the other day (P.96)

Ramanujan's attitude here may be thought nostalgic of a great tradition, but the comic absurdities throughout the poem and the ironic distancing in its conclusion imply the complacency of such a comforting view of tradition and continuity which ignores the harsh actualities of experience.

Another important aspect of Ramanujan's poetry is his use of South-Indian life. His 'A River' is about truth, the reality of the river and kind of relations between the present and the past. In Madurai, the poets of the past sang of the city, its temples and of rivers as full. While in 'every summer', the river 'dries to a trickle', the poet 'sang only of the floods'. When there are floods, they are destructive causing deaths and damages but present-day Tamil poets still echo the old poets and ignore reality. No one writes of the 'pregnant woman/ drown with perhaps twins in her'. This poem answers to such poetic myth making. While the poem shows a realistic debunking of the romanticization of traditional Tamil culture, the irony of the conclusion distances the speaker and shows alienation rather than involvement. This is the kind of irony found in Jules Laforgue or the early T.S.Eliot, in which the self is defended by an anaesthetizing of possible emotional response into a non-committal, witty disdain:

It carries away
. . .a couple of cows
Named Gopi and Brinda
And one pregnant woman
Expecting identical twins
With no moles on their bodies

With different coloured diapers
To tell them apart

The attitude in ‘A River’ is a more witty complex distanced version the satire found in ‘Epitaph on a Street Dog’, with his insistence on a sordid reality: ‘she spawned in a hurry a score of pups,/ all bald blind and growing old at her paps’. Again, there is a purposeful deflation of romantic India, and this time through references to ‘the low melons moons’ and ‘peacocks’ that makes a contrast to the reality. The apparently derisive view of India in ‘A River’, ‘Smalltown, south India’, ‘Epitaph on a Street Dog’ might be contrasted to ‘Love Poems for a Wife-1’, with its memories of shared family relationship and a common heritage. This is one of the several poems about the problem of marriage and should not be regarded as simple nostalgia for the closeness of Hindu family relations. The details within the poem of a shared heritage are a bit absurd:

Only two weeks ago, in Chicago,
You and Brother James started
One of your old-drag-out fights
About where the bathroom was
In the backward.

The conclusion of the poem builds up to humorous exaggeration:

. . .probably
Only the Egyptian had it right:
Their kings had sisters for queens
To continue the incest
Of childhood into marriage. (P.65)

The ‘namelessness of childhood’ refers to a time before the development of personal identity and ego; while it does symbolize a time of unity without the strife that arises from separate wills, it can hardly be considered an answer to the problems of marriage. It is rather used as tongue-in-check as an unrealizable ideal. Within the poem there is

enough family conflict mentioned to show that a common family past does not prevent this agreement.

However, in 'Love Poems for a Wife-II', there is a shift from the previous theme and tone and becomes considerably more tender. His poetic sensibility is aided by the use of logic. Instead of lamenting his unshared childhood with his wife, he tries to take a peep into his wife's past. He does not feel like a stranger anymore. On the contrary, he makes a conscious effort to empathize with his wife's sentiment regarding her past.

Though the use of private experience, and particularly the inner world of memories and the continuities and discontinuities with its past, can be seen as the basis of many of Ramanujan's poems, yet they are not attempts to intellectualize like Ezekiel's early works, nor do they have Daruwalla's sense of a violent world in which fulfillment is doomed to tragic failure, nor are they Mahapatra's metaphysical relationship between the creative impulse and the world outside the perceiving self. They are the memories of a past which shifts while the self and others change. In 'Self-Portrait' he is, although a product of his past, a stranger to himself. As there is no fixed essential being, rooted in an unchanging 'namelessness of childhoods', so there is no pure existential product of personal choice. The core of the essential self remains as in inner world, but his is modified by changed circumstances and decisions. The essential self develops, evolves, changes; it grows from seeds in the past towards the future which while unknowable is already being formed.

In his 'Hindoo' poems, he highlights the self-deception of the familiar stereotyped Hindu by showing how his veil of outward tranquility is shoved aside during moments of crisis. In the poem 'The Hindoo: He does not Hurt a Fly or a Spider', the poet persona not only mocks at the Hindu theology embracing the concepts of birth and re-birth but he ridicules his own beliefs and attitudes as well. Nevertheless, he is unable to break free the shackles of age-old ideas, which seems to have a firm grip over his analytical mind. Thus, he burst into a confession:

It is time I told you why

I'm so gentle, don't hurt a fly
Why, I cannot hurt a spider
Either, not even a black widow
For who can tell who's who?
Can you? It's once again my
Great swinging grandmother,
And that other(playing at
Patience centred in his web)
My one true ancestor. (P.62)

In 'The hindoo: the only risk', on the other hand, he out-rightly rejects the practice of denouncing spontaneous physical urges through a suppression of emotions. This, he feels, is not the way for attaining 'moksha', or the liberation of the soul. Struggling to maintain a cool façade of the side of a woman's humiliation, or not being affected by a friend's suicide or resisting the temptation to pick up the kitchen knife to hurt oneself or 'curve up wife and child' con not be regarded as an attempt towards the true freedom of the soul. A forced exercise of self-controlled, which would include a check over food habits, refraining from glancing all that is ugly and repulsive and strictly abstaining from everything branded as immoral, cannot be regarded as a state of equanimity. On the contrary, it is essential to maintain one's balance; otherwise, this attempts at stoicism can entail a greater danger of being labeled as 'heartless':

At the bottom of all this bottomless
Enterprise to keep simple the heart's
Given heat,
The only risk is heartlessness. (p.90)

A detail analysis of Ramanujan's 'Hindoo' poems will show the poet's obvious dissatisfaction with the loopholes of the Hindu religion. Beneath the surface satire and the irrelevant tone of these poems, we can hear the poet's cry of despair at the decline of his religion. Thus, he is deeply pained at the derogatory state of Hinduism. He cannot help

expressing his concern at the misrepresentation of Hindu philosophy. On the other hand, he finds it impossible to sever his ties from his religion, while at the same time he cannot overlook the discrepancies. Another serious limitation of Hindu view of life is expressed in 'The Hindoo: He Reads His Gita and its calm at all Events'. The poet finds it impossible to adopt a passive attitude towards both virtue and vice and be immune to joys and sorrows alike. In this connection, M.K.Naik says:

'is the poet trying to suggest here that in spite of all his traditional training as a 'sthitaprajna'(the man of tranquil wisdom) he's profoundly disrupted when he finds that in life sometimes elemental innocence becomes a sacrificial victim, and realizes that these strange law of life is more ancient than the most ancient religious systems?'

Being a sensitive Indian, the poet is also conscious of the hopeless condition of the post-colonial India, which is effectively communicated in 'Compensations'. The chaotic disorder enveloping the country soon after independence is mirrored in the poem. The poet is appalled at the prevailing state of affairs in his motherland. He not only comments on the fact that the crippled warriors of the world wars are allowed to dance anywhere they want but he also ridicules the current state of politics. The way to fame in politics is by remaining a mute spectator in all controversial matters and not giving any unfavorable reaction. In other words, the present political scenario demands an absolute surrender of individuals wills. Thus, the poem commences with the words:

I've even heard of surviving
World war men with wooden legs
Doing cha chacha's and jitlerbugs
At army hospitals, near debris
And craters, especially
Outside the amputation theatres;
The dumb and the colourblind rise
Rapidly in politics. (P.109)

In a humorous way, he continues with this description of the inept people handling the wrong jobs not meant for them:

. . .the born deaf
Practice psychiatry as
To the practice born; fingerless
Men become the tailors for royality,
. . . stutterers becomes salesman
For things like machine guns
Or pet wood peckers (P.109)

Ramanujan was very much a socially conscious poet. This social awareness is further evident in 'Prayers to Lord Murugan', where he expresses his venom at the so-called respectable people of the society and criticizes the tendency of the average Indian who tightens his clutches on the fading glories of the past instead of achieving something worthwhile on his own, he is too busy putting up a show of greatness. In the words of Lakshmi Raghunandan:

'the fifth section of the poem is denigration against the hypocrisy and selfishness that have shed in to corrupt Indians. The truly brave Rajas of yore have given place to hypocritical weak rulers who cannot complete what their ancestors have begun. Like leopards and tigers leaving their kill to be demolished by civet ants and hyenas, these rajas cannot do anything for their country. They can merely pose in photograph with corpses of silken nine-foot tigers that their sycophants have shot, or sleep under country fans in selfish laziness while their hearts are:

. . .worm cans
Turning over continually
For the great shadows
Of fish in the open
Waters.

Although Ramanujan did not reject his cultural roots and Hindu heritage, he is essentially a modernist. He has a clear vision and makes use of his analytical bent of mind. In 'Death and the Good Citizen', the poet offers a divergent solution for the disposal of the human body after death.

Ever the Keatsian chameleon, in the final six years of his life, Ramanujan could forge contraries to recreate a world in which he could, like his salamanders, find birth in death and death in birth. He prayed for double vision and found it in the interconnectedness of vegetables and minerals, man and animals. Above all, he found life-in-art and art-in-life. Nothing is simple in the later years of his poems; the seeming simplicity is deceptive. For example, in the title poem of his posthumous collection ***The Black Hen***, (1995), a maker looking at what he has created and becomes terrified. The idea is further extended in the poem 'Museum'. The horses in a Chinese painting have a nocturnal power; they 'prance' out of the wall with uncanny ability are able to strike their target 'night after night'. They seem to be imbued with compulsiveness of a repetitive dream. The seven-line poem is a striking example of the poet's view of creativity.

(II)

A.K. Ramanujan displays wide range and great assurance so far as his use of the medium is concerned. On the one hand, he delights in experimenting with language; while on the other, his academic background in linguistics enables him to handle language with felicitous aptness. He is a poet who can give vent to his feelings and experiences just the way he wants to. Nowhere do we find him groping for the correct words for expression. At the same time, his poetry betrays a picture of lurid transparency, or what Chirantan Kulshresthra called a 'chiseled workmanship'.

The poetic craft of A.K. Ramanujan incorporates a number of elements. An apt choice of words, vivid imagery picturesque representations and a tendency for precision and detail are the hallmarks of his craftsmanship. According to Taqi Ali Mirza, 'the terseness of his diction, the consummate skill with which he introduces rhyme and assonance into the

verse, the sharply etched, crystallized images and the disciplined handling of language make Ramanujan one of the most significant poets in India.'

Ramanujan often makes use of various parts of the human body as images. Fingers are a significant symbol for they are associated with the Indian mind largely steeped in the Hindu tradition. In the poem 'The Opposable thumb', for instance, Ramanujan describes three different kinds of hands to point out the importance of the thumbs. The blind boy has an extra thumb which is described as 'a bud like node complete with nail/ phalanx and mole/ under the casual opposable thumb.' The Muslim weaver's thumb on the other hand, resembles a 'puckered stump, sewn like a sausage head'. The poor old grandmother has only the thumb to boast of. She has been deprived of other fingers—a standing testimony of her husband's ill temper—she had to bear the brunt of her husband's 'knifing temper of Sunday morning half a century ago.'

Normally, the position of the thumb empowers it with a capacity to oppose the other four fingers in the palm. But in the mentioned cases, it has different functions to perform. The extra thumb in the blind boy's hand symbolizes advantage, unique on its own, almost making amends for his loss of sight. On the other hand, the shriveled short thumb of the weaver is a distinct hindrance in the way of taking accurate measurements. The absence of the other four fingers in the grandmother's hand gives it a unique position of conspicuousness, as it no longer confronts anything else. It is also a mute reminder of women's suffering down the ages.

A.K. Ramanujan also used animals as images. He often makes use of animal imagery to denote some primal emotions. His famous poem 'Snakes' reflects his fascination as well as his fear for a snake as a child. In his childhood, he was filled with an overwhelming sense of fear which hunts him even in later years, not in any wilderness as might be expected but in the oddest of places like libraries and museums. He uses many expressions which are aptly suggestive of snakes like the 'twirls of their hisses', 'a basketful of ritual cobra', and licking 'the room with body's curves'.' and 'ringed with ripples.'

Another poem which uses an image from nature is 'The Striders'. It is an imageric description of a water insect standing erect while the water is flowing rapidly under it. However, the image appears to be ambiguous because whether the poet praises the water bug for its ability to stand, and not swept away by the water or he ridicules the short-sighted vision of the bug is not clear. While using imagery as a poetic device, Ramanujan makes sure of laying due emphasis on colour as well. Black, white, yellow, orange and green are the recurring colour symbols in his poetry. In the poem, 'Anxiety', the poet feels that fear can be figuratively represented as a tree without branches but anxiety cannot find a metaphor to end it. The state of anxiety is compared to a slimy snake slithering unsteadily about but it lies in a kind of drowsy stupor:

> Not awakeful in its white-snake
> Glassy ways like the eloping gaiety of waters,
> It drowses, viscous and fibered as pitch (P.3)

The expression 'viscous and fibered as pitch' is a contrast against the texture of water while the word 'pitch' is pitched against the descriptive 'white snake', thus merging both the neutral colours of black and white into the making of anxiety. Black and white is also indicative of racial discrimination as is suggested in the concluding lines of 'Take Care':

> Down there, blacks look black
> And whites, they look blaker (P.3)

Yellow is a frequently used colour symbol in his poetry signifying fear. The sight of any shade of yellow, even in libraries and museums is enough to send a shudder down his spine as he is immediately reminded of snakes.

In ‘Prayers to Lord Murugan’, the orange and blue colours have been employed to symbolize untiring and selfless devotion or bhakti. Orange is the colour donned by pilgrims who go to offer puja to the image of Lord Murugan which is situated on hill-tops. Blue is associated with devotion. Thus he writes:

When will orange banners burn
Among blue trumpet flowers
Of trees
Waiting for lightenings? (P.113)

The ‘Shade of Trees’ refers to the devotee’s charge for spiritual enlightenment that comes as a sudden flash of lightening. The poet further addresses Murugan as the ‘Lord of Green’, suggesting that the ancient Dravidian Deity is the harbinger of spring and futility. He is invoked upon to resist the ravage wreaked by the destroying insects:

Lord of Green
Growing things, give us
A hand
In our fight
With the fruit fly. (P.113)

Poets like Ezekiel, Arun Kolatkar and Kamala Das also used the colour symbol in their poems. However, the symbolized volume of colours vary from poet to poet. For instance, while Ramanujan uses yellow to fear, Kamala Das uses it to denote regeneration. Kolatkar uses colour as they have been interpreted in the traditional symbols. Thus, blue and yellow are associated with divinity, while red stands for passionate love. Parthasarathy seldom refers to colours, but colour obliquely suggested in his poetry is grey. He speaks of fog, smoke, and ash. Thus, colours appear differently to the sensibility to the poets.

Another poetic device that Ramanujan used was irony. As has been described earlier his irony is a Laforguean irony where initial involvement of the poet turns out to be

alienation at the end. Apart from irony and image, Ramanujan uses several other devices to enrich his poetic style like similes, metaphor, personification and so on. The use of simile is rampant in his poetry. In 'The Opposable Thumb', for instance, the speaker compares his grandmother's bulky leg to an unwieldy log of wood. In another poem, 'relations', the predicament of a person caught in the wave of human relationship is compared to a deer that is unable to escape the clutches of a hunter.

Apart from similes, Ramanujan also used implied comparisons that is, metaphors, in his poetry. In the poem 'Anxiety', fear is metaphorically represented as a branchless tree. In 'Chess Under Trees with an Ex-Maharaja', the several independent kingdoms spread throughout the length and breadth of the country are metaphorically described as 'dynasties of the mountain pine'. (p.27)

Other poetical device used by Ramanujan is his skill of repetition. He handles this repetitive device with laudable ease and grace, without landing an air of monotony to the poem. A few such telling examples are as follows:

Dwelling on the yellower vein
In the yellow ember (P.4)

Or

City of temples and poets
Who sing of cities and temples.

There are other aural effects too which must be taken into consideration. Alliteration is one of them. Some of the lines containing the alliterative effects are:

I think of a man falling
A*p*lumme in a *p*arachute. (P.51)
Amazed at pyramidfuls
Of mummies swathed in millennia (P.74)

Paradox is at times introduced in Ramanujan's poetry by his use of oxymoron. The phrase 'icy fire' and 'the love you hate' (One, Two, Three Arguments Against Suicide) are a few examples of oxymoron. 'icy fire' reminds us of 'Kubla Khan' where Coleridge speaks of a 'Sunny pleasure dome with caves of ice'. Another example of anti-thesis occurs in this poem 'On a Delhi Sundial' where the poet writes of the 'certainties on the uncertain pulse'. Some more instances of such paradoxes are brought out in 'Epitraph on a Street Dog' like 'alive enough to die' and 'the cold of her love'.

Thus, one can deduce that in his poetry, Ramanujan excels as a technical artist. He follows both the conventional and unconventional art of writing. He experiments with free verse, sonnets, common place words and expressions, rejuvenating them as metaphor and images.

Thus, an in-depth analysis of the poetical works of A.K.Ramanujan establishes him as an outstanding poet who has curved a niche for himself in the field of Indian English poetry. He is one of the most distinguished poets who bear the best features of his rich native culture and the detached outlook resulting from his exposure to the western milieu for a considerable period of time. His poetic self presents a unique amalgam of the traditional and the modern. If this sensibility is rooted in the Indian heritage, his vision is definitely that of a modernist. His credit lies in his remarkable ability to maintain an appreciable balance between tradition and modernity. Ramanujan is, thus, actually a gifted Indian intellectual who has savoured both the Eastern and the Western cultures.

(IV)

As a major Indian poet in English, then, Ramanujan invites obvious comparison with his illustrious contemporaries such as Jayanta Mahapatra, Nissim Ezekiel, K.N.Daruwalla and Shiv. K. Kumar. The poets have their distinctive voices and aesthetic preferences and yet it is possible to explore the similarities and differences in their approach to transmuting the Indian experience into poetry. There is a meeting ground between the poetry of Ramanujan and Mahapatra in the sense that both the poets are profoundly

influenced by the respective traditions to which they belong. Like Mahapatra whose poetry is steeped in Oriya culture, Ramanujan also makes an artistic use of the traditional Tamil world view in his poetry. With Nissim Ezekiel, Ramanujan shares the satirical voice and the dry wit. Like Ezekiel, he is aware of the contradiction in Indian life. There is a discernable element of social criticism in the poetry of both these poets. Both have severely criticized man's folly and corruption. They possess the capacity of shifting from a light-hearted playful tone of voice to a serious and stern style.

The most talked about quality of Daruwalla's poetry is his authenticity so far as landscaping painting is concerned. Ramanujan, whenever he feels the need, can show the same minuteness, concreteness and lucidity. Daruwalla too, like Ezekiel is capable of wry comments on the contradiction in the individual and society. This quality is shared with Ramanujan. Moreover, like Daruwalla, Ramanujan's work can be also limpid and abstruse by turn.

Shiv Kumar is somewhat a confessional poet, closer to Kamala Das rather than to either Ramanujan or Daruwall for that matter. The self, often tortured, is at the sharply focused centre in Kumar's poetry. This feature of confessionalism is not so prominent in A.K.Ramanujan's poetry. In fact, while Kumar's poetry scans the inner recesses of the mind, there is nothing to probe the inward consciousness in Ramanujan's poetry. But there is some common meeting ground and that is, both these poets display tremendous authenticity and power so far as their transactions with reality are concerned.

To conclude, A.K.Ramanujan stands out as an eminent poet who has curved a esteemed position for himself in the realm of Indian English poetry. Despite his death in 1993, he will always be remembered as a poet gifted with varied poetic sensibility, blessed with treasured trove of memories which the passage of time refuses to corrode, as skillful technical artist and also as one who maintain a perfect balance between the traditional and the modern. He is credited for having kept intact his originality despite being a subject to the onslaught of various influences both Indian and the western.

REFERENCES:

1. Reddy, K.Venkata; 'Recollection Emotionalised in Un-tranquil Moments', *The Poetry of A.K.Ramanujan, Critical Studies in Commonwealth Literature,* (New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1994) P. 88
2. Paul, K.S; 'Ramanujan—Ezekiel', Nokadar: AesthaPrakashan, 1981, P. 3
3. Jha, Rama, ' A Conversation with A.K.Ramanujan', The Humanities Review vol. 13 Jan-June. 1981, P. 5
4. Srivastava, R.K; 'Reflection of Growing Dehumanisation in Ramanujan's poetry', Contemporary Indian English Poetry, Atma Ram (ed); Calcutta: Writers workshop, 1980) P. 62
5. Ramanujan, A.K; The Strides (1966) 9from collected Poems; New Delhi: OUP, 1995)
6. King, Bruce; Modern Indian Poetry in English, (New Delhi: OUP, 2004) P.115
7. Ibid., P.216
8. Naik, M.K, 'A.K. Ramanujan and Search for Roots', Dimensions ofg Indian Poetry in English Literature, (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1984) P.19
9. Raghunandan, Lakshmi, 'A.K. Ramanujan', Contemporary Indian Poetry in English. (New Delhi: Reliance Publishing House, 1990) P.194
10. 10. Mirza, Taqi Ali; 'A.K.Ramanujan's Particuilar Hell', Indian Poetry in English: A Critical Assesssment. (ed) ShahaneVasant A. and Sivaramakrishna: Madrass: The Macmillan Company of India Ltd., 1980; P-160.

VIKRAM SETH

It has been evident from Ramanujan's poetry that Indian expatriate poets do not write from the position of a distinct foreign community such as the exiled black or West-Indians novelists, but their writing reflects the perspectives of someone between two cultures. Most of them look back on India with nostalgia, satirically celebrating their liberation or asserting their bi-culturalism, but they also look back skeptically and wryly on their new homeland as outsiders, with a feeling of something having been lost in the process of growth. Sharat Chandra, for instance, writes of India as a place of financial, moral and cultural corruption, a land of social injustice and poverty, expect for those in power or position of influence. The brief biography on the cover of April of *Nanjangud* records, he left India because of its social and political oppression. But while having in disgust was his hands of India, he also appears to be rootless and undefined in his American surroundings. The same is true with Shiv Kumar also. Like Sharat Chandra, he reveals a similar anger towards India, but at the same time also reveals a sense of not really belonging to anywhere. With Vikram Seth's poetry, however, the matter is different. He wrote neither like Sharad Chandra or Shiv Kumar, nor Completely like Ramanujan. Seth, who came to prominence when his *The Humble Administrator's Garden*(1985) won the Commonwealth Poetry prize for Asia and when Random House, New York, brought out The Golden Gate 1986, a long novel in verse, followed another approach. *Mappings*(1981) records his dual feelings of nostalgia for India after Studying abroad for many years and his continuing attraction to the 'notes of other birds/ the nightingale, the wren'.

The poems collected in *Mappings*, as pointed out by the poet in a brief forward, were written when he was in his twenties, and was a student in England and latterly in California. Though the poet was appreciative of his poems, which he rather humorously called 'the first fruits of my self-determined genius', yet he found it difficult to get a publisher initially and published it by himself, and distributed it among his friends and relatives. Afterwards, about ten years when the book was considered for a reprint by Penguin India, he was not enthusiastic. He called his poems as his 'juvenilia' and considered them as 'embarrassingly callow'. Actually, they were neither sentimental nor callow. They had a distinct voice and an attitude—a voice tender and youthful,

and a fine sensitiveness to different things in life. The volume has a collection of twenty-three poems, including two translations; and the dominant concern that prevails through it is, as Bruce King said, 'youthful restlessness or concern rebellion and ambivalent feelings towards family, especially his father with whom he appears to have strong disagreements'.

In fact, a probe into human relationship is an important trend in these poems. Occasionally it is parental, but in most cases, it is a relationship touching on the contact between two persons verging on love. Allied to these are such sentiments as desire for attachment and adjustment, and operation of such feelings as pleasure and bliss on the one hand, and bitterness and emptiness on the other. Moreover, a strong sensitivity to nature, nature's beauty, references to routine things of life and attachment to life, a sense of distance and nearness, and a knowing sense of pain hidden by levity, changing mindset linked by different places, incapacity to fight time and counter death, an awareness of misery and how people are deprived and about life and hope and uncertainty also provide the poetic structure in this volume. On the whole, one can say that the poems of *Mappings* show a young, sensitive soul ranging from love to nature and mutability, in a mindset of both levity and seriousness and in a frame flippant and ruminative.

The first poem 'Panipat' shows the poet's dual feelings of nostalgia for India and his attraction for foreign and his attempt to adjustment at both. When the first world is detailed with aunts gossiping in the courtyard, parrot's crackling in the neem trees; the other world of attraction is indicated by notes of other birds—the nightingale and the wren. His attempt to adjustment takes place in two levels. Firstly, as a transition in the mental level through music which takes him away from the local time and place to:

. . .god knows where-
Into a universe
Beyond-beyond panipat!

The poet's reference to music is strictly reminiscent of Wordsworth's reference to music in 'Solitary Reaper', where the song is also sung with a melancholy strain. And as in here, so too in

Wordsworth, the music provides transport to a different realm of joy and happiness. This second level is concerned with sense-perception-taste of eating a slice of mango which leads to an awareness of both familiar and foreign (well-known and alien). In fact, the poet's perception is a unified one, from routine familiar details, through a 'mournful meditative mood' and in a context of trees and birds to a semi-mystical, romantic expression on mind.

The youthful restlessness and his rebellious attitude, as Bruce King pointed out, can be seen in the poem 'Departure Lounge.' Unlike 'Panipat', here he examines his relationship with his father which dramatically changed from his initial youthful rebellious attitude to a mutual realization. He is well-remembered of his father's 'unheeded cruelty' of heavy beatings in the simple act of his giving 'a 50-paise coin/to a girl in rags'. And from that moment his 'act to you had one intent/ to thwart you'. However, this new attitude did not remain long as in the case of Ramanujan. With Ramanujan, as in the 'Obituary', there is a permanent hostility emerged not from a child's disliking as in the case with Seth; rather it was due to some ideological difference between sons and father. Probably Ramanujan did not like his father being both a mathematician and an astrologer at the same time. He felt perhaps, a sense of artificiality in the scientific mind of his father. With Seth, the rebellious attitude changed with the passing of time. Now he re-analyses their relationship and found that in spite of his father's momentary anger, he was always obsessed with 'nothing but the best/ will do for my kids'. He even plunged into his father's past and found that a humane heart was always there with him. Therefore, he sheds all his misconceptions and feels emotionally attached to him. However, the poem does not end with that of optimism. Though he now lives in thousand miles away from his father and there is little chance of any strive with him again, yet, his heart is saddened by the fact that he may equally loss his father's love. He is now far away to be touched by his father's love. The last lines of the poem are important because it expresses the fear faced by every exiled Indian. They not only feel uprooted from his/her home but also feel alienated in the new surroundings. The same sense of culturally dislocated and alienated can be felt in other poem 'Diwali'. However, in his second volume The Humble Administrator's Garden the theme is further explored.

A number of poems in Mappings deal with love. They are all bathed in the warm glow of love found and effervescent like champagne; the bubble with cheer happiness and the reader feels that Seth's cup truly runs over the measureless contentment. Seth serenades his love like a medieval lover, and almost burns incense at his lover's feet. These poems are also remarkable for their humour/ whether Seth is describing a chance encounter in the course of a long flight or a lazy Sunday morning spent in bed. Poems like 'Aubade' and 'Sonnet' speak eloquently about the nature of Seth's love, showing how he is totally caught up in the moment. In the former poem, feelings of love are mixed up with nature—nature forming as background to realize love, a situation reminiscent of the beginning of Fitzerald's Omar Khayym:

Wake up!the smudge of Dawn

Low on the hills has shot

The bay with light. Don't miss

These minutes . . .

I grant I want to see

Your face against the dawn

Wake up, therefore for me. (P. 22)

Omar Khayyam also provides the title and background in 'The Sultan's Turret' where Seth not only writes about love with images drawn from nature like 'Aubade'; but also gives a sexual undertone:

Dawn light, I wake up; and wait for you, uneasy

With early dreams. . .

But I am content, wombed in the quilt with you

To let the car-hums, chirrups, ticks and tocks

And your soft breathing holds me. . . (P.42)

Two poems ‘Guest’ and ‘Dubious’ are unique in that they portray homosexuality. These poems are brave ones, for both the realistic ease with which Speaks of the subject, and for the total disregard he feels for the censure of the world. Seth also speaks of the love lost with a remarkable poignancy in the poems like ‘To Manijeh’ and ‘The Walkers’. Anyone who has ever loved and lost will recognize in these meditative poems the soulful mourning of passing of love.

Love is thus, a central to his existence, making him soar with the eagles when he has it in his grip and plunging him into the bottomless inky depth of despair when it eludes him. But he is resilient enough to survive. So he says in ‘The Balcony’:

If I have bent so far and not snapped, it

Cannot destroy me now. This thing will pass

As it has passed before. Elation is

No birthright. (P.46)

‘Distressful Honeymoon’ also deals with love lost and its acceptance. Seth reaches the conclusion that ‘. . .love, like the rest/ of our emotions, sometimes needs a rest’. However, ‘Progress Report’ is written slightly in sardonic vein, attempting to disguise the pain felt at parting.

Seth’s Nature poems, in Mappings are two kinds—one is purely objective describing *per se*, the other is subjective in which the poet deals with his pain by hoping that Mother Nature will wrap a numbling blanket around him. ‘A Winter Word’ belongs to the latter category, while ‘Grand Canyon’ is a marvelous example of the former, capturing the quintessence of California’s great

landmarks in four short lines. ‘Tomatoes’ is again subjective conjuring up scenes of nature in relation to the poet and his world. ‘Rain’ pulsates with a feeling of quiet desperation, a hope for even a temporary reprieve from the cares of the world, and is moving in its simplicity. ‘After Three Years’ finds the poet’s seeking the meaning of existence in the resiliency of nature in surviving the worst of blights and drawing hope and inspiration from it.

Some of the poems in this volume meditate on the complexities of life. These are poems like ‘Switching Off’, ‘Mappings’—poetry that is born out of pain, forced from the soul by suffering ‘Close of Pain’, apparently, is about life and death, and more correctly, how death ends all, and hands the suggestiveness of the title. But death here is a limited death, limited by time and place. It is a totality, the total extinction of life on the earth, the occasion being nuclear explosion, the result of man’s foolhardy ambition to acquire ultimate power to subdue each other. Though the poem has different layers of perception, one overlapping the other, yet the final perception is one of the great fears, of mankind’s collective headlong rush towards certain doom being brought by nuclear madness:

. . .to late we perceive

Our playthings, grown autonomous, knowledge in use

This practical, that ideal good at last

Rear doom toys that will undo nine tenths of us

Leaving the breathing dead we call survivors

On a radiant waste. (P.48)

The poem powerfully expresses sentiments that any sane person will doubtless share; it shows that life can be good, but notes with a despair that if man’s madness continues, the earth will

soon be blasted off into lifelessness. Seth says in the end 'it is a pity/ but nothing new to an old universe'.

'Mappings' characterizes the tone of the entire collection. The keynote of the poem is the acceptance of life as an evolutionary process, in the course of which one lives in one's wake, experiences and memories that mould one's character. The basic tenet is that one does not change completely over the years—one evolves, and every facet of one's erstwhile self is hidden just beneath the surface, blending with the present self and forming a composite whole. The sharp visual image conjures up the scene:

> That was young self. I want to touch
>
> His shoulder, make him smile, show him how each
>
> Sorrow and failure that lacerates his heart
>
> Can heal or numb itself. (p.71)

While talking about many selves mapping upon one another, Seth resembles Ramanujan's 'Self Portrait'. In the Ramanujan's poem, there is a confusion as to his real identity—'I resemble everybody/ but myself'—and is an attempt to search for real self devoid of ego. In other words, in Ramanujan's poem there is an attempt to uncover the various mappings. 'Mappings', on the other hand, is not exactly a search for self on Seth's part. It is a support for the wholeness in life. One may not like or approve of one's past, but nevertheless, it must be accepted and accounted for. In its advocacy for the past is also implicit the anxiety of an exile. A similar tone is also expressed in 'A Morning Walk'. But apart from the pain of an expatriate, the poem is also extremely heartfelt in its portrait of the rude reality of the Indian life. He says 'to wander through the streets of Calcutta is/ to face the whole world's misery on the heart'. While living in America in a state of 'all things good/ food, shelter, health are mine', he is equally conscious of and indeed, guilt-ridden by the fact that in India many people 'weep for food/ their children's limb

will atrophy, brains not/ swollen for lack of it'. The dichotomy in his mind is further revealed when he says:

I draw my easy non-consumptive breadth

. . . but others, even those who fear to die

Suffer with quietude, with spent relief

The final amnesty from want and grief. (p)

The parallels have been drawn not for the sake of feeling good about his own life—they stem from a feeling of helplessness of the unbridgeability of the abyss between the haves and haves not.

Mappings, therefore, is a collection of personal poems which speaks of alienation and borders on a boundary of self-analysis. The title is appropriate, quite in keeping with the basic themes of the poems, which dwells on the past and chart out the poet's course in his early university years. There is in this poem a candidness that addresses itself to the heart and touches the soul in the way all great poems do. Many of the poems furnish the bits and pieces about Seth's life. Other's reveal a maturity of thought process that is startling in one so young. These early poems have unmistakable emotion behind them, and its expression is such that it invites the reader to share in the poet's joy or pain. This is what constitutes the charm of the first collection.

Seth's next collection *The Humble Administrator's Garden*, is a travelogue of sorts. It is primarily visual and reflective, merging nostalgia with a traveler's sense of detachment and observation. Nature is omnipresent here; even the sections into which the book is divided take their name from an arboreal theme. The poet reflects on three cultures that he has known—Chinese, Indian, California—and each culture is represented by a tree that is the symbolic embodiment of its respective geographical location, the Wutong tree for China, Neem for India and live-oak tree for California.

The trifurcation is noteworthy not only for its cultural connotations but also for the way in which it reflects the poet's state of mind in each of these places. While writing about China, Seth is moved primarily by the landscape and the people—he finds the Zen Gardens and the simplicity of the people fascinating. In the 'Neem' section, he is at home and consequently shifts the autobiographical and in Live-Oak, he grapples with issues about expatriation, love and a fast-paced culture.

In the 'Wutong' section of the poem, Seth is at peace with himself and with the world and the poet's eye is on what is objectively before him, rather than on the intricacies of his own sensibilities. Some of the poems are picturesque landscape description. Seth's art uses such graphic description images that the poems are like snapshots of moments frozen in time. Such poems include 'The Master of Net Garden', 'The Humble Administrator's Garden', 'A Hangzhou Garden', etc. None of these poems are longer than fourteen lines, but the words come to life and turns into pictures. Seth uses a clever juxtaposition of senses: colour, smell, touch, the play of light and shadow to achieve this effect. But for critic like Bruce King, these poems are not merely about picturesque description of Objects; it means much more. 'The Humble Administrator's Garden', for instance, according to King, is metaphorically about nature of Art. It offers a real pleasure Garden of Chinese art built from practical experience of life in implied contrast to the ideal imagined worlds of Keats or Yeats':

> He eyes the rainbow Bridge. He may have got
>
> The means by somewhat dubious means. But now
>
> This the loveliest of Gardens. What
>
> Do Scruples know of beauty anyhow? (p-5)

Whatever may be the metaphorical significance of his poems, it is evident from his portrayal of nature that his poems have marked similarities with that of the Pre-Raphaelite's poets, with their emphasis on the photographic replication of a scene in woods. Seth achieves this effect without being archaic. The effect that is produced by employing the simplest of words is astonishing. To illustrate this point:

Wisteria twigs, wisteria leaves, mauve petals

Drift past a goldfish ripple. As it settles

Another flower drops. Below, redly,

The fish meander through the wisteria tree. (p-22)

Apart from these scenic portrayals, the other poems in the 'Wutong' section depict life in Chinese cities. In these poems emerges a note that makes Seth feel at home in china unlike London and California. There is a sense of something nearness or affinity in those poems. 'The Accountant's House', for instance, is not only about manners, behaviours and hardship of Chinese people, rather his identification with the pathos of Accountant's family. Despite the fact that the family had lost their son accidently and now deeply saddened, yet the family received the poet with hospitality, which makes the poet to share their sorrows and to identify with them.

If we go back to Seth's portrayal of life in Chinese cities 'The Great Confucian Temple, Sozhou' and 'Nanjing Night' can be taken into consideration. The former is purely a descriptive poem—describing vividly the surroundings of Sozhou temples; the latter captures the essence of life in a big city with its characteristic sound and sight:

Full moon, the Nanjing walls, bicycle bells.

Two children huddle in the ten o'clock movie crowd

Against the plunging cold. The air foretells

Snow, moonlit snow. (p-10)

'Research in Jingsu Province' is a poem in which Seth's background in Economics directly contributes to the form. The poem is rendered statistically, in ironic contrast to the life it depicts, and takes dig at the meanings and inaccurate collection of Economic data. The poet feels that he

would learn things of far more value by imbibing the spirit of the place and by getting to really know the people who are now merely furnishers of economic data for his doctoral thesis in Economics.

There are two love poems in this collection—'From a Traveller' and 'A Little Distance'. The former is highly allusive requiem for love left behind in California, while the latter explores a relationship that by mutual consent has become restricted to platonicity for a while.

The entire poems display an undercurrent of serenity that seems deep. There is in them certain meditative quality that reveals a soul that has found contentment with its life at that time.

The 'Neem' section, reflecting on Seth's Indian heritage, is primarily autobiographical. The poet is in home turf; and in 'The Comfortable Classes at work and Play', he portrays a morning in the life of the Seth's family, including the family dog, the flowers in the garden, and even the peacocks in the neighboring house in the portrait:

A squirrel crawls on top of Ganesh

Oscar turns over on his stomach and rolls about,

Seven satbhai-champas chatter and burble below the Bignonia trellis.

The rat-ki-rani and malati and harsinger mingle their scent

. . .and parrots flash across the sky. (P-29)

Seth devotes an octet to each member of his family, and in the eight lines manages to pinpoint each one's *raison detre* completely. The poem, thus, makes very interesting as an autobiographical piece.

The theme of anxiety of an expatriate that he explores in his former collection, Mappings continued in this collection too. 'Homeless', for instance, shows his envy towards those who have permanent home—' I envy those/ who have a house of their own'—house, here, signifying one's rootedness to definite identity. Behind his jealousy to those who 'have a house of their own' is his own uncertainty caused by uprootedness. So, in a subtle way he expresses his

anxiety. But, to speak metaphorically, the poem also expresses the fact that the poet may also support a cosmopolitan life, because one who 'rest on what is their alone' and does not live on sufferance' or in a 'stranger's shell' is like living a life to 'review the seasons from one lair', void of any experience. People, like Seth, who had varied experiences in varied places, think such a life is not worth living.

The final poem in this section 'From Babur-Nama: Memoirs of Babur, first Moghul Emperor of India' is a poetical rendition of some of the episodes of the prose autobiography of Babur. Thus, the poem in this section, for the most part, betray an uneasy restlessness, prompted by the misery that Seth sees around him.

The poems in 'Live-Oak' have all been written during Seth's stay at California where he found out how to have funs. He found friends, love, laughter; but also a sense of uncertainty, a feeling of restlessness, of not quite belonging to anywhere that came with the cultural displacement. The poems, thus, in this section are a mixed lot, and several of them evoke neither sadness nor joy—they are just spread out accounts of Seth's life. 'Curious Mishaps', 'Waiting', 'Abalone Soap' belong to this category. 'And Some Have Madness Thrust Upon Them' reveals the somewhat amusing face of American Consumerism, while 'Abalone Soap' portrays an aspect of Californian life in vivid style.

Poems like 'Song: Coast Starlight', in rhymes and tunes reminiscent of Tennyson's poems. We have the reference to a journey and the poet's exaltation that is coming to a restful end:

> . . .the coast starlight
>
> Will get me to the city by tonight
>
> Will get me to the city and my friend
>
> Will get me to the month-long journey's end. (P-460

‘Love and Work’, written in a similar vein, reflects the ennui that comes through living a life devoid of any meaning due to the lack of the stabilizing anchor that love and friendship provide. The poem ends with uncharacteristic pessimism.

‘Ceasing Upon the Midnight’ has an obvious parallel in Keats’s ‘Ode to Nightingale’. Seth is in the same suicidal mood, but throughout the poem there is the tacit understanding that the poet is far too sane to actually to commit such an act. He just toys with the idea for a while, decides that his room with its phone-rings, fridge noises and ticks and hums, would make ‘unpacific tomb’. So, he goes outdoors to cease upon the midnight: playfully cherishing his gloomy mood:

. . .ah, tonight,

How rich it seems to be

Alive unhappily. (P-63)

The poem also searches for an identity that transcends geographical barriers. In an apt simile, Seth compares his life to an aimless meandering:

Down a dead river on plain,

Null, unhorizoned, whose terrain,

Devoid of entity,

Leads to no open sea. (P—63)

As in Keats, Seth, too has been reminiscing on what seems to him futile existence. However, he soon finds his funny bone again, and as grey owl hoots in the night; he imitates the cries/chants shreds, invents replies’, and now for him ‘to cease upon/the midnight under the live-oak/seems too derisory a joke’. So, ultimately, he ‘sleeps in sound’.

There is only one nature poem in this section—‘Between Storms’, which is an artistic portrayal of a storm season in California. All other poems—‘From California’, ‘Spring of Content’, ‘Moonlight’, ‘Unclaimed’—are love poems. ‘From California’, is a coming to terms with love that has passed. In ‘Spring of Content’, as the title suggests, the trend is towards a sense of

fulfillment and content and that is aided by nature. From the beginning the nature indicates a change towards a throbbing fresh life;

It has grown fresh and still,

The blond hills have turned green. . .

The opthalomologist' salmomd tree is full

Now, swathed with frost-fine blossom and the scent. (p—55)

While in the midst of such natural environment, the past matter of disturbance in love cannot disturb him anymore. The nature provides him a different kind of fulfillment:

. . . I lie hours

Cat curled and narcoleptic on the lawn

And think of nothing—not even you're away

Or that to-day is-is it?-Saturday. (p-55)

In 'Moonlight', unlike the former, nature cannot provide him the spring of content to heal the pain caused by a possible broken love affair. Here the pain is much stronger to be easily consoled. Therefore, in an attempt to analyse, he found his inability to shed the past memory of conjugal love, is the main cause of his grief. The speaker also reflects upon the fact that his past beloved could live without being disturbed possibly because she could shed the past happy memory. At the end the speaker urges himself to take such a step:

. . .to you memory appears

Too little worth analysis or tears

In my heart too I will if not to last. (p-56)

This poem has an obvious similarity with Ramanujan's memory poems. Like this poem of Seth, Ramanujan's 'Breaded Fish', 'Snakes' memory is treated as troubling factor.

'Unclaimed', the last poem in this volume, delves into the realm of loveless lovemaking, where no hopes and expectations are shared, and correspondingly, no pain is shared as well.

Thus, from the above discussion, it is evident that China provides the predominant influences, followed by California and India. The poems in Wutong section reveal Seth to be at Zenith of his peace. California arouses to much restlessness and reminds him of lost love; India, with all its poverty and misery, weighs heavy on his sensitive soul. On the whole, the collection is an important one and deserved to be awarded Commonwealth Poetry Prize for Asia.

In its aspect of prosody, his metrical propensity makes for a change from the general preference for free verse among Indian poets writing in English. In the event, his facility turns out to be a mixed blessing: the reader can be swept on a flood mixing doggerel, parody, banality, romanticism and sentimentality with much ease that is fascinating. Seth is a gifted pasticheur of styles. He can be neat:

> In wreaths of ache and strain
>
> The bent rheumatic potter
>
> Constructs the forms, with pain (P-27)

He can be painterly:

> Wisteria twigs, wisteria leaves, mauve petals
>
> Drift past a goldish ripple. As it settles
>
> Another flower drops. Below, redly,
>
> The fish meander through the wisteria tree. (p-22)

Or he can be sharp:

The plaster statue of a man in red

With pudgy vehemence and rolled-up sleeves

Proclaims the oppressive heritage in deed.

Inside the hall six workman renovate

The verveless splendor of a corpse of state. (p-9)

His poetic style is a curious mix of the modern and the Victorian. His forte is light versed, and his true métier is Victorian narrative. To have restored the drive of narrative to verse is Seth's principal contribution to poetry. After all, Seth's verse is always readable, even if the pleasure does not always find room in which to deepen into reflection, when bustled by rhyme and metre from charming, to cute, to rollicking, to droll, to quaint effects with such deftness.'

Seth's poetry has been able to receive a lot of critical attention. His narrative and descriptive skill as well as his capacity for effortless and impeccable rhyming are well taken. His narrative skill best seen in his *Beastly Tales*, can also be seen in many other poems including 'Babur' and his descriptive skill in many places and portions of the poem in creating an Atmosphere, or making out a picture or even concentrating on references to nature. M.K. Naik's point in this connection that Seth excelled in providing dramatic elements to his poems and shaping dramatic monologues is very relevant. Similarly, critics point out the presence of wit, humour and irony in his poetry. Bruce king speaks of 'amused enjoyment' and 'tongue-in-check', Patke of 'energy and cheerfulness' and Naik speaks about his 'delicious irony'. In fact, humored irony with an ingenious capacity to integrate them in the total context as substantial part of the total attitude is what characterizes Seth's poetry. As part of one's own being, Seth's poetry provides a strong trend towards self-scrutiny, of a sense of loneliness and uprootedness, as well as a rationalistic and a self-deflecting way of viewing things around him. The critics admitted them in various ways. It may be pointed out that the critical attention given to Seth's poetry goes to the core of his poetry and at the same time, it is interesting to note that the attention is guarded and cautious, and for whatever reasons may be a reluctant praise.

References:

1. Bruce King, 'Exile: Ramanujan, Sharat Chandra, Kumar, Nazareth, Seth', Modern Indian Poetry in English, (New Delhi: OUP, 2004 pg. 226.
2. Vikram Seth, Mappings, (New Delhi: Penguin India, 1994). The subsequent quotation related to this collection is quoted from this edition.
3. Bruce King, ibid, pg. 228
4. Vikram Seth, *The Humble Administrator's Garden,* (New Delhi: Penguin India, 1994) the subsequent quotation related to this collection is quoted from this edition.
5. S. Patke, Rajeev, 'Poetry Since Independence', An Illustrated History of Indian English Literature, (ed) A. K. Mehrotra, (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2010) Pg. 274.

AGHA SHAHID ALI

Unlike Vikram Seth, Agha Shahid Ali's exile feelings were different. From *Mappings* it is evident that Seth would be as comfortable to hear the 'notes of other birds,/the nightingle, the wren,/the blackbird' as he would feel 'to hear the koyal sing'. That is why, though occasionally Seth felt exiled, it never sustained for a long time. He always tried to come to terms with the situations—appreciating beauty and critiquing other. But with Agha Shahid Ali the matter is completely different. He felt his exile a painful and unbearable separation because he had a strong physical and emotional bond with his family and Kashmir where he grew up. He was conscious of the change brought by time and felt that in no way he could become the previous self. Therefore, an elegiac note always persists in most of his poetry with an undertone of time as a dictator. Moreover, he tried to imagine himself with those he had lost. Most of his poems, then, are nostalgic. 'Postcard From Kashmir', the prologue in the collection, The Half-inch Himallaya', adequately sums up this state of the poet's mind. In the changing world the poet's mind was occupied by diverse events and experience, and he became a part of the larger cosmopolitan. And as he became a part of the larger cosmopolitan, his childhood memory of Kashmir and other got shrunken, which otherwise he would like to recollect exactly. He says:

Kasmir shrinks into my mailbox

My home a neat four by six inches.

. . .Now I hold

The half-inch Himalayas in my hand.

This is the home. And this the closest

I'll ever be to home. (p-29)

And the whole volume virtually is the explanation of the theme raised in the prologue. Written with an underline structure the volume can be structured into four parts—first three parts consisting of eight poems each and the last with six poems. The first section describes, indeed, fantasies, his family history in Delhi. In 'A Lost Memory of Delhi', the title itself is, to some extent, misleading. Because the title suggests a kind of memory which is lost; but the poem itself unfolds we will find that actually he did not have such kind of memory at all. What he does here is that he fancies having some kind of memory—memory before his birth in 1948, where he imagines mother and father as newly wedded and himself as a part of them. Even he thinks of his conception:

They go into the house
Always faded in photographs
. . .but lit up now
. . .i want to tell them I am their son
Older much older than they are
I knock and keep knocking
But for them the night is quiet
This is the night of my being. . .(P-30)

Though, apparently, the poem is a mere fantasy and hence no deep meaning can be associated to it; yet in deeper level the poem shows closeness and security that a family offered to each member ion an Indian society. And this is the closeness and security that Shahid felt absent when he lived in America. The second poem—'A Dream of Glass Bangles' though based on fantasy like the former, the importance of the poem lies in presenting the imagined future. Here Shahid imagines what the future of his mother would be in Kashmir. Published in 1987, the poem catches the tempo of Kashmir during the last years of 80s, when it was full of turmoil. He imagines apparently calm environment—'my parents slept/warm in a quilt studded/ with pieces of mirror'—violently disturbed. A common scene when Kashmir became the apple of discord between India and Pakistan in the late 80s and 90s. He imagines his house been surrounded by men and set it on fire and also his father being carried away, obviously, to be killed. Mother, on the other hand, helplessly weeping inside a fire devoured house:

The air a quicksand of snow
As my father stepped out
And my mother
Inside a burning house
A widow smashing the rivers
On her arms. (p-32)

The scene of a crying woman with her tears rolling like rivers and smashing her face on arms was common in that time and by imagining his newly wedded mother in this condition, what Ali tries to depict, perhaps, is the larger condition of Kashmiri women. There was no security in their life. This aspect occupies a substantial position in Shahid's mind and he explores it further in his later collection *The Country Without A Post-Office* (1997).

Humorously exaggerated 'Snowmen' traces Shahid's ancestral line and hence autobiographical. He says about his ancestors—'a man/ of Himalayan Snow/came to Kashmir from Samarkand,/ carrying a bag/of whale bones:/heirloom from sea funerals./ His skeleton/curved from glaciers, his breadth arctic'. However, the autobiographical nature of the poem does not lie in this description—it cannot be indeed. It lies in the metaphorical implication of the last paragraph. A snowman can exist only in winter; in summer or spring he cannot. He will melt inevitably. After imagining himself as a snowman, the last few lines of the poems bear heavy significance:

. . .they won't let me out of winter,
And I have promised myself
Even if I'm the last snowman,
That I'll ride into spring
On their melting shoulders. (p-34)

In fact, his imaginings of himself as a member of snowmen family bear a deep connotation. As any imagined snowman cannot exist in heat and his identity is limited to within cold, so Shahid is aware of the fact that he cannot be the same person inside Kashmir and outside of it. That's why when he says 'I've promised myself. . .(to) ride into spring' it suggests his inevitable separation from Kashmir that time is to bring. As soon as he is aware of his separation he realizes that he will be the last snowman; he will be a part of different and varied experiences and became a cosmopolitan. And he will no longer be the former man; Kashmir will be shrinking in his mind as a result.

This sense of lost implicit in the poem is also present in 'The Decca Gauzes'. This time the lost is not exactly brought by time; rather it is due to the presence of the imperialist power. Here he mourns at the fact that Decca Gauzes, a kind of cloth, which was 'known as woven air, running/water, evening dew' is no longer in use. Because the Britishers did not use this. They prevented its use. And, then, the product, coarse expensive materials, is marketed. Thus sense of past glory now diminished can also be found in 'After Seeing Kozinstev's King Lear in Delhi'. A beautiful poem describing the ancient grandeur during the time of Moghul in contrast to present poor condition where:

Beggars now live here in tombs

Of unknown nobles and forgotten saints

While hawkers sell combs and mirrors

Outside sikh temple. (p-50)

The image of a Kurtz-like character in the previous poem is also present here which shattered the harmony of the city causing upside down. Zafar, poet and emperor, who otherwise would have a respectable position, is now being chained and dragged to watch his sons being hanged.

Moreover, he was exiled and in spite of his repeated request to offer him two yards of lands for his burial in his own place, the colonial rulers denied him. And he died in exile: and was buried in Burma. Though both the poems deal with different matters, yet in the presentation of cruelties

of the britishers they are identical. Moreover, both the poems are allegorical representation what happened in the whole India during the colonial period.

'The Seasons of the Plains', which ends the first section, may be contrasted with 'A Monsoon Note on Old Age'. In the former, the poet imagines his past during a rainy season in Lucknow, but in the later, he fantasizes a possible future, fifty years later, during a monsoon season. But the place he imagines is certainly in America. The scene he imagines is very terrible—an old tattered man, sitting by a window and gazes helplessly outside. The last two lines, again, bear his loneliness caused by his emotional attachment to Kashmir; and instead of thinking about death, he says he will go on over exposing the image of his home land. Because by that time he is aware that Kashmir has shrunken in his mind. Thus, this sort of poem shows that Shahid could not take his separation lightly and could not even root himself in any other situations. That is why when Bruce King had said—'while Ali is conscious of exile, of the way, especially in India, language and culture cause separation, differences, there is also an awareness that multiculturalism, change exile, difference, loss, and nostalgia are common to the human condition as seen in the lives of his own family, his friends and admirers—is, it seems, slightly misleading. Shahid never thought of his exile as a 'common human condition'; rather he thought it as unbridgeable gap. He was always of an absence; he always thought of himself as the last snowman going to be melting in other places. Moreover, his imaginings of old tattered age when he is hardly forty years old, when his dominant thought will be to overexpose the shrunken image of Kashmir, and not death shows his obsessive concern with Kashmir.

The third section of the collection begins with 'A Wrong Turn'. Here the title is symbolic. The wrong turn refers to here is the turn from Kashmir to abroad, which he later realizes to be wrong turn for him.

I thrust my hand
Into the cobwebbed booth
Of the town's ghost stations
The platform a snake-scaled rock,
Rusted tracks waiting for a lost train,
My ticket a dead spider

Hard as stone. (p-60)

However, the poem may also refer to the contemporary ‘sabrs-shatila-massacre’, where harmony is completely destroyed like:

. . .the summer
Of 1857, the trees of Delhi
Became scaffolds: 30,000 men
Were hanged. (p-60)

And the town became a massacred town. Whatever may be the true meaning, the poet himself took a turn after this to abroad. The couple of poems, then, depict his experiences in America. ‘Vacating an Apartment’ is about poet’s vacating an apartment in the course of his living in America. The poet feels sad at the fact that as soon as he leaves the room, the owner is quick enough to clean all the testimony left by him and prepare it for the coming tenant:

They burn my posters
(India and Heaven in flames)
Whitewash my voice stains,
Make everything new,
Clean as death. (P-61)

He, then, imagines the new tenants to be a man and a pregnant woman who would be interested in insurance policies and such other things; nothing about the sort of poet’s poetic mind. The poet’s existence will be totally forgotten. This poem might be contrasted with ‘The previous Occupant’, where the poet imagines the previous man to be one who has similar taste with that of the poet and imagines unifying with them:

No detergent will rub his voice from the air
Though he has disappeared in some country

As far as Chile

The stains of his thought still clean

In phrases to the frost on the windows. (P-63)

Thus, both the poems, though, are apparently contrasting, yet they show the poet's feeling of absence of security, otherwise offered in a close family circumstance, in a foreign land, and his endeavor to make such an environment in that land. However, if we compare closely these poems written about his American experience, there is certainly huge thinning of poetic texture in it. The earlier poems were thick with nuances and wide with its associational link: on the other hand, the poetry of American experience fails to bear all these.

The sense of insecurity and loneliness in a foreign land lead him into a mental trauma in which he has a nightmarish vision. In 'Survivor' he imagines as if his long absence in his home has been replaced, as people no longer feel his absence. Therefore, he thinks that his place will be permanently occupied by silence—he will be forgotten. He will be lost. The poet expresses this traumatic vision through a metaphor of expedition to Nanga Parbat. He sees his home filled with by the sympathetic voices of the neighbors. In the meantime, he is also aware of the fact that his position is replaced by somebody who exactly imitates his life in the house. As Shahid stays for a long time outside, he feels that his absence in the Kashmiri home is filled up like somebody in the poem-first by silence and, then, by oblivion; which will completely outlast him. So, the poem ends in a very complex way:

He is breathless to tell her tales

In which I was never found. (P-72)

This apparently simple but complex poem can be compared with 'In the Mountain'. Like the former, here too, a melancholic strain caused by divided self is present. He says 'somewhere without me/ my life begins', and 'he waits to told him/ but wrapped in ice/ he by-passes me/ in phantom cart'. This poem which echoes 'The Wrong Turn' and 'Snowman' also shows his gradual loss of place in his home. The last line—'he waits for my news of death'—shows its further link with the 'Survivor'. The sense of dividedness in these two poems bear semblance with Ramanujan's 'Self-Portrait' where he, in his attempt to search for self, is surprised that he is stranger to himself. He has no single self but many; formed by its correspondence to the outside

world. It varies with the various situations. But with Shahid Ali we neither find any search for true self nor any confusion evoked as a result of it; what we find is his inability to act through his true self due to his dividedness. Ali realizes that he left his own place only to conform to the step of time; otherwise, the security and comfort found in that place is beyond question. The practical necessity therefore threatens his true self. As a result, a melancholic strain prevails in his poems.

The themes that the narrative of *The Half-Inch Himalaya* start discussing towards the end—uprootedness, insecurity and loneliness-became the prominent motive in other collection published in the same year—*A Walk Through the Yellow Pages*. Written in a surrealistic mood, the first part 'Bell Telephone Hours' follows in its structure the group of experimentalists, like A.K. Mehrotra, Jayanta Mahapatra, in which free association rather than any logical structure is supposed to liberate the unconsciousness of mind. For instance,

Then I mailed my bones

Wrapped in bared dreams

Corteous, I enclosed

A stamped envelope

But no one answered. (P-85)

Moreover, these poems are full of incongruity and humour. In the fifth stanza of the poem—'Today, talk is cheap, Call somebody'—he imagines a meeting with a seraph:

I prayed, 'Angel of love,

Please pick up the phone'.

But it was the angel of Death.

I said, 'Tell me Tell me

When is doomsday'?

He answered, 'God is busy.

He never answers t5he living.

He has no answers for the dead

Don't ever call again.' (P-89)

The combing of two different situations here, are built to create incongruity and hence, to evoke laughter. Yet through the language and associations of these parts, one will always be aware of a melancholic strain caused by his cultural dislocation. 'I call at night', he says but 'no one picks up the phone,/ I only hear/ the busy signals of nightmares'. While these lines indicate the gradual emerging of gulf between his two cultures, it may also in another way, imply an awakening of existential anxiety—the signals of nightmares in him are due to his social loneliness.

The last poem-'Hansel's Game'-in these volume, which is a fairy-tale like, could be said that while Ali's revisions of fairy tales is an attempt to invoke childhood, it shows the impossibility of such a return. Life is a narrative of various stages in which maturing and surviving means becoming similar to, in the process of mastering, the source of one's fears. Here the narrative begins after the happy ending when Hansel's mother tells him 'the womb's no place for a big boy like you' and pushes him out into the world again on the road' from the womb to the grave'. Wiser now, no longer innocent, he lives comfortably and keeps the witch in the basement. On special occasion instead of cake, 'we take portions of her/to serve' and 'our own father washes/ her blood from the dishes'. The poem, it seems, makes a plea for his own condition because it implies that when one is to come out from the golden days childhood, a 'witch had to be somewhere near' to deviate one. But he 'did not let her/ I played innocent', on the poet's part, is his attempt to retain childhood ever. This line which echo Wordsworth's 'Ode' shows that to be innocent is the most difficult when one grows up; because it is inevitable that time will corrupt one's innocence. Therefore, this poem marks the poet's painful awareness of the difficulty to be rooted in his childhood memory. The surrealistic touch in the last few lines, keeping the witch in

a basement room and being served on her occasionally are also an attempt not to be swept away by the outside world. However, all these attempts will prove to be futile.

So far Ali is lamenting his taking the wrong turn or the loneliness or the insecurity in a foreign land, but with the coming of *The Country Without a Post Office* (1997), the lamenting tone has changed to a helplessness of a sympathetic observer at seeing the paradisiacal Kashmir turning into Hell due to political turmoil in the 90s. In a brief introduction to his *Rooms Are Never Finished*(2001), he explicitly mentions the purpose of his previous collection. In 1990, Kashmir—the cause of hostility between India and Pakistan since their creation ion 1947—erupted into full scale uprising for self-determination. The resulting devastation, large scale atrocities and the deaths by some accounts of seventy thousands people has led to despair and rage, then only rage, then only despair. Because both the countries are nuclear powers, Kashmir may be the flash point of nuclear war. This ongoing catastrophe is the focus of *The Country Without a Post Office* and also it provides a backdrop to *Rooms Are Never Finished*.

Therefore, the image of newly wedded woman in 'A Dream of Glass Bangles', weeping inside a house engulfed by fire while her husband is taken away by militants, obviously to be killed, or the image of a massacred city in 'Wrong Turn' come vivid and fresh in this volume. In 'Farewell', a poem written in monostich, the image of Kashmir is that of full of 'Army Convoys all nights like desert caravans' and regrets at the activities of politicians or the ruling class people who make 'a desolation and call it a piece'. Moreover, he regrets at himself for his passive rule in healing this problem. 'I See Kashmir From New Delhi at Midnight', which is a blend of both fantasy and reality, links with the previous poem by extension of the image. Here the image is that of a city which is 'visible in its curfewed night' and the poet imagines a meeting with a dear friend—Rizwan—who was killed in interrogation camp of Army, where people under suspicion were tortured inhumanly like 'drippings from a suspended burning tyre' on their naked back until they died. The brutality was not limited to these only, the army also, in the name of pacification, occasionally fires on the mass that assemble to mourn deaths of a previous firing. As result, Kashmir became a place where the rhythm of life stopped suddenly, the happy songs

of life is replaced by the sobbing of mothers who have lost their sons. The gloomy and troubling picture of Kashmir is further represented in 'Dear Shahid', as 'men are forced to stand bare foot in snow water all night. The women are alone inside. Soldiers smash radio and televisions. With bare hands they tear our houses to pieces'. Moreover, references to Rizwan are made here—Rizwan, Guardian of the gates of Paradise, only eight years old. Though Ali poignantly expresses the miserable condition of Kashmiris, he never offers any solutions for his problems; instead he himself takes shelters—as in 'pastoral'-in a reverie of happiness returning to Kashmir which in reality lost forever.

In the period 1997 to 2001, though he was apparently disturbed by the chaotic conditions of Kashmir, he was overpowered by different events—his mother's sufferings from brain tumor and then, her death. For a time being, his former grief was replaced by a private one. 'Lenox Hill' is one of the most passionate poems written by a son to mourn the death of his mother. He says his mother was the source of inspiration to poetry as well as subject of his poetry—' my mother is my poem'; and he thinks her death is equivalent to his own death—'the beloved leaves one behind to die'. He also compares the sorrow caused by her death to that of the sorrow caused by the weeping of Zainab when, after keeping her home—a story related to Muharram. Ali's next collection *Rooms Are Never Finished* (2001) predominantly captures this tone where the dilapidated condition of Kashmir provides it undertone.

Agha Shahid Ali maps the geographical and psychological terrain of his second home, America, in *A Nostalgist's Map of America* (1991), acting as a cartographer and stargazer as he mediates on themes of journey and exile, myths and politics, history and loss. It has, like most of his collections, a significant organization with sections leading to sections, recapitulations of themes and images and underlying narratives. There is a prologue—Eurydice—which creates the tone and is followed by four subsequent sections. The first section is set in the Southwest, United States and the five poems move from the personal to the mythic to the anthropological. 'Beyond the Ash Rain' begins with an announcement of themes:

> When the desert refuse my history
>
> Refuse to acknowledge that I lived
>
> There with you, among a vanish tribe. . . (P-110)

The second poem is the rehearsal of lost and shows his increasing closeness to a new life in America. In the last poem of this section, 'I Dream I Return to Tucson in the Monsoon', this is furthered by the blurring of boundaries between India and America, personal and historical, loss and fantasy.

While section II consists of only three poems, 'In Search for Evanescence' is itself a sequence of eleven poems. The theme of Evanescence which unites the section comes from a poem of Emily Dickinson. The poems are addressed to a friend living in southern California who died of AIDS. Section III, a sequence of thirteen poems called 'From Another Desert' continues the motive of loss and desert and retells an Arabic love story, common to Persian and Urdu literature, in which Majnun, the possessed or the mad one has scarified everything for love. The legend has acquired a political dimension in which Majnun can represent the rebel; Laila, the loved one, thus becomes the revolutionary ideal. In Arabic or Islamic literature, love poetry is usually understood to be about love of God, but Ali belongs to the more recent tradition where the significance is understood politically:

. . .will he bring a massage

From her eyes, so far away now, gazing

At a dream in which the ghost of prison

Are shaking. (P-139)

The eight poems in section IV returns to desert and such other themes and motives as myth and water while providing a farewell. The concluding poem, 'Snow on the Desert', begins with 'every ray of sunshine is seven minutes old. . . so when I look to the sky, I see the past?. . . specially on a clear day', and moves by various imagistic association from New York to Tucson, New Delhi and Bangladesh. It is time to recollect:

. . .of everything the Earth

And I had lost, of all

That I would love

Of all that I was loving. (P-164)

Commenting on this collection, Bruce King writes, 'all is actually interested in knowing about the past of others and is able to assimilate the lacunae of foreign history with his own imagination. In *A Nostalgist's Map of America*, his own exile is transformed and assimilated into the topoi of travelling Americans, the Americans always on the road between places. The book of poem is his own version of the 'being on the road' novel or autobiography as he travels by car, aeroplane, train and imagination to friend, places, memories and the past. As in the American versions there are mention of specific roads, exits, radio stations, places and people. Ali is often literally, behind the wheels and on the road between one place and another. Whereas the American artists invest here and now with everything, making experience the only value, Ali treats being on the road as a journey of the imagination, fancy and memory'.[2]

The formal structuring of the poem is paralled by linking images of earth, water, rain, mirrors, windows, reflections, diamonds, turnpikes, express ways, stairs, trains etc. 'such images assimilate with the images of the seas, ghosts towns, silver cities, silver fractures, chance village, the mirrored continent, etc.'[3]

In fact, all his collection contribute to the same underlying narratives and all are linked. It is in this use of image, he shows more proficiency than other exile writers. Though Shahid started out writing mostly in free verse, and then switched rather abruptly in neat career to working in various demanding forms, he was never a partisan: 'he was willing to put the poem across. But often *A Nostalgist's Map of America*, he began to feel that for him certain aspects of free verse had become too easy and he sensed the need for a new direction, new difficulties. His mother's illness and death, and a chance meeting with James Merill made this shift inevitable. His mother was diagnosed with brain cancer in 1996, which shook him to the core. The pitch of grief in his poem about her is almost unbearable; such overwhelming emotion required new means. And Merill's friendship and example encouraged him in every ways; he even gave Shahid his first rhyming dictionary.'[4]

As for his of language is concerned, they follow to some extent, the surrealist traditions of associations. Hence, sometimes his words do not derive its meaning from the logical structures it follows; rather associations are made through its link with the unconscious of the poet. However, he used the technique not as an experimentation; rather he used it to liberate his unconscious which was full of wide gamut of thought and feelings; and the traditional form of poetry is too limited to express all these. His use of fantasy and reality can be explained to this cause. Some of his poems, like 'Survivor', 'In the Mountain', he combines the world of fantasy and reality. In the former one, he depicts a description with a dead friend; and in the later, he fantasies a different kind of living in contrast to our existence. But he does not do this fantasizing for no purpose. What he finds through presenting one kind of reality is very inadequate. Therefore, in spite of mixing of facts and fictions, we find in his poetry the realistic portrait of his purpose.

Moreover, his narration often takes a conversational tone and, hence, frequently dramatic. At the same time, his form and texture change with the change of content or genre. For instance, in his poem entitled 'Ghazal', he sticks to the canonical Persian form. It is composed of autonomous and semi-autonomous couplets that are united by a strict scheme of rhyme, refrained and line length. The opening couplet sets up the scheme by having it in both lines, and the scheme occurs only in the second line of every succeeding couplet- i.e., the first line (same length) of every succeeding couplet sets up a suspense and the second line (same length but with different rhyme and refrain—the rhyme immediately preceding the refrain) delivers on that suspense by amplifying, dramatizing, imploding and exploding. Similarly, the poems related to later genre, i.e. 'dear Ahahid', dissolves the poetic line and length and becomes prosaic. In the same vein, poems meant for explaining ideas, like 'The Bless Word: A Prologue', which he would like to elaborate in the next few poems often takes the form of prose.

In the field of rhythm in his poetry, he, in most of his poetry, did not follow any particular meter. Neither did he follow any rhyme scheme. Moreover, he hardly uses other figurative devices like alliteration, assonance etc. It seems, his thoughts completely predominates language and not the other way. While Ali brings an Islamic tradition of high lyricism into English, his diction can also be clipped, economic as well as winged. Allusions range from the Quran and Greek mythology to Shakespeare, Emily Dickinson, G.M. Hopkins and Auden during the time of rapid cross pollinations of cultures and people, he blends the radically different traditions of Islamic

poetry with that of Europe, renewing the former probable Islamic link in such Renaissance form as the canzone,'[3]thus enriching the both. This versatile genius, however, could not live a long time. Like his mother, he too suffered from cancer and died at the ripe age of 52 in 2001. His death is a great loss to Indian poetry.

Although, the better poets of the Diaspora bring out most clearly how Indian poetry in English is rooted in the time and place of the past while being a part of many overlapping cultural and literary traditions within India and abroad, with Agha Shahid Ali or A.K. Ramanujan, it is often impossible to say what is distinctly Indian or what is foreign. The same is often true of such poets as A.K. Mehrotra and Jayanta Mahapatra who lived in India and who, at times are strongly influenced by Indian literary traditions. Perhaps the conventions of poetry and other arts in many cultures are of a similar species and, for those with the right words and craft, interbreed with marvelous joy.

References:

1. Agha Shahid Ali, The Veil Suite: The collected Poems, (New Poems: Penguin India, 2010). The subsequent quotations cited here are quoted from this edition.
2. Bruce King, 'The Diaspora: Agha Shahid Ali's tricultural Nostalgia', Modern Indian Poetry in English, OUP, New Delhi, 2004, Pg- 271.
3. Bruce King, 'The Diaspora: Agha Shahid Ali's tricultural Nostalgia', Modern Indian Poetry in English, OUP, New Delhi, 2004, Pg- 271-272
4. Daniel Hall, 'Forward of The Veiled Suite', Penguin India, Amherest, 2008. Pg 17
5. Bruce King, 'The Diaspora: Agha Shahid Ali's tricultural Nostalgia', Modern Indian Poetry in English, OUP, New Delhi, 2004, Pg- 274.

CONCLUSION

From the preceding individual discussions of the four poets, it is evident that they have made immense contribution to the Indian English poetry. They not only increased the bulk of it, but also enriched it. Their poetry was well-received by readers and most of them had been able to get recognition by winning literary awards. Ramanujan, for instance, was awarded 'Padma Sri', in 1983, 'Gold medal of the Tamil writers' Association in 1969, and Sahitya Academy Award posthumously. Vikram Seth too received Commonwealth Poetry and Sahitya Academy Award. Agha Shahid Ali achieved international recognitions winning Guggenhein and Ingram-Merrill Fellowship and a Pushert Prize. Moreover, his *Rooms Are Never Finished* was a finalist for the national Book Award in 2001. In comparison to them, Toru Dutt's recognition was limited. There are reasons for this saddening aspect. People were, at that time, hardly aware of literary activities. But from the present-day readers' perspective her poetry will be recognized as obsolete and out-of-date and appears not worthy of prize. Though considering her previous poets, she appeared to be modern, yet in the present context of Indian English poetry her contributions seem to be outdated. The fact that her poetry basically dealt with colonial subject matters, lack the touch of contemporaneity, not deeply rooted in experience and feelings, is now largely felt as drawbacks and it overshadowed her originality. This new realization itself shows that the Indian English poetry in the late 20th century has been able to come out from those drawbacks; and implies that this new poetry is more deeply rooted to experience and feeling and they are backgrounded by the philosophy of the poet. Poetry of pre-independence was mainly stereotypical in nature—whether in theme or treatment. The same sort of themes was treated time and again. Their poetry did not have any associated meaning. What they presented were the final though the thing that they presented was always distant. With a few poems published in the Ancient Ballads, Toru, however, seems to come out from that drawback, still the originality produced in term of the associational meaning is not something great. It lacks complexity and vastness of experience. For instance, her outstanding piece 'Our Casuarina Tree' concretizes emotion and feelings' and hence, the language here, is burdened by connotive associations of

sense of irrevocable past. But here the association is not heavily textured. That is why the poem is decodable and expendable. On the other hand, with the poets of the independence the poems become more heavily textured. It uses more and more associations and meanings. For instance, Ramanujan's 'Self Portrait' is a small poem in bulk, but the meaning it will produce will be expendable to a large extent. When he says, in the poem, he resembles everybody except himself and he is a photograph signed by his father in the corner, he is actually taking up a larger issue. He tries to say that man operates on the level of ego, hence he is susceptible to varied behaviors that comes with the change in the outside world. Man's true self lies beyond this ego level. This awareness enables him to think that so far as he acts in that level, he is not his own self. His identity would be as a son of his father. Thus, apparently the simple poem has intricate associations. Similarly, in 'Museum', another poem by Ramanujan, the apparent simplicity is misleading. The seven-line poem is a striking example of the poet's view of creativity.

As people who appear in dreams

Are not themselves, the horses

Are not horses in the Chinese painting

That prances out of wall

To trample the flowers

In the emperor's garden

Night after night.

The idea of horses jumping out of the canvases may be a Chinese notion, but the use he put it to is quite astonishingly his own. The action of horses is tied to what happens in repetitive dreams. The dissenting reader, who might have wanted to stop and think about the logic of the dependent clause, is caught and pushed ahead by the twin sides of the comparisons, the people in dreams and the horses in paintings.

If the ‘people’ who ‘appear in dreams’ are not themselves, they must have had an identity prior to their appearance in the dream and an existence where they ‘are themselves’. Logic outside the poem wants to say: look here, how can you imply that people ‘are themselves’ outside the dream? And yet the poem compels us to re-read till we begin to see. It could be said that either the dreamer or the dream itself has reflected or deflected ‘the people who appear in dreams’ to become ‘not themselves’, and likewise, the horses in the Chinese paintings are ‘not horses’. Obviously, there is a difference between the refractions or deflections of person from that of horses. The horses are not horses unlike the humans who are ‘not themselves’. The poem has human perspectives. And yet, if they are not horses, then why do prance as only horse can do? Obviously, they are horses enough, but something else too. Perhaps the people who appear in the dreams are sufficiently themselves to be recognized as such. The horses in the paintings seem to have repetitive compulsion, a nocturnal one, of coming off the museum walls and destroying ‘the flowers/in the emperor’s garden/night after night’.

Flowers in the emperor’s garden are obviously different from flowers in nature. The emperor’s garden is tended by a gardener who makes artistic arrangement of some natural. One assumes that the flowers are flowers, and, therefore, different from the ‘not horses’ and people who are ‘not themselves’. However, in the action of the poem, by destroying the flowers night after night’, we assume that it is happening in the actual world of power and politics, but somewhere in the same region where dream exist. But since more words are used for the paintings than for the dreams, the poems is saying something art and life too.

In life, the poet believed in Jungian interpretation of all dreams. Accordingly, if all the parts of the dream were the dreamer himself, then the subjects and objects within the dream and paintings are all parts of the dreamer or the artist. The terror in the poem is the artist’s terror, of parts of his work creating havoc night after night, wreaking the flowers in the garden.

Thus, post-independence poems are widely explainable. Various associations are made through metaphorical, ironical or symbolical interpretation. They use all these devices like any of the modern poets of the twentieth century English poets. Hence, most of the poems of this period

show the poet's creativity to a great extent. It is in this aspect of creativity, the post-independence poetry developed much from the earlier one.

Moreover, the earlier poetry insisted on rhythmical beauty in the poem. Of course, it was due to their imitative nature as they strictly imitated the English metrist. But with the modern poets, they realized that the strict rhythmical beauty will limit the scope or range of the poems. So, they opted for free verse—where expression of thoughts and feelings are the main objects of the poetry; not the rhythm.

The new poets who begin to appear at the independence were in love with the English language, excited by their discovery of such late nineteenth century and twentieth century poets, such as Hopkins and Eliot. Their concerns were individual or the expressions of the human condition in general, rather than the peasants and now outdated issue of political independence. The nationalist political need for a useable past, with his emphasis on national classics, mythology and representation of typical characters are no longer seemed relevant. Instead, the younger poets were more likely to write about life and their experiences. Their emphasis was more on the aesthetic, ethical or interpersonal than on politics and nationalism.

With Ramanujan, as discussed earlier, poetry seem to grow out of Indian experience and sensibility with all its memories of family, local places, images, beliefs and history. While having a modern state of skepticism, ironies and sense of loving from moment to moment in a changing world in which all the values and attitudes are often seen as unrealistic. While Ramanujan can evoke the warmth of traditional Indian family file and the closeness of long remembered relationship, more often he shows conflicts, arguments, surprises; he also shows that the supposed glory of the Tamil cultural heritage is a fiction which ignores the reality of the past. With Vikram Seth, however, it is a probe into human relationship that constitutes an important trend in the poems. Occasionally it is parental but, in most cases, it is a relationship touching on the contact between two persons verging on love. Allied to these are such sentiments as desired for attachment and adjustment, and operation of such feelings and pleasure and bliss on the one hand; and bitterness and emptiness on the other. Strong sensitivity to nature and nature's beauty, and understanding through time and change across time, references to rooting things of life and attachment of life, sense of distance and nearness, personal and impersonal attachment of relationship, a knowing sense of pain hidden by levity, change in mindset linked

by different places, incapability to fight time and counter death, awareness of final extinction and how that can be avoided, a strong social awareness about misery, life, hope and uncertainty are some of his stands that provide his poetic awareness.

Though Agha Shahid Ali's poetry, like Ramanujan seemed to grow out of Indian experiences and sensibility with all its memories of family, local places, beliefs and history, his poetry also moves imaginatively across borders associating and examining experiences in a variety of lands and situations to establish relationships or to recall what has been lost. Loss or nostalgia can crop up in his poetry for parts of his American as well as Indian past. He has always been interested in what others have lost—whether it be a Northern Indian culture of his mother or the American Indian past of the Arizona, where he, for a time, lived. His lyrical nostalgia provides continuity and a spring board of fantasy. If the poetry appears to accept the world as it is, such lyric sensitivity can be misreading; the Urdu ghazal is by its nature elliptical, lyrical. While writing in modern English verse Ali is also influenced by the conventions of Persian and Urdu poetry, specially the ghazals with his concise use of repetitive images and phrases, to develop suggestion of symbolic narrative, its elliptical metaphors, imaginative leaps and reliance on the reader to bring together a diversity of unrelated couplets into a supposed metaphoric narrative.

However, unlike both of them—Seth and Ramanujan—Ali brought a new kind of technique to his poetry. Following the experimentalist group of poets, Ali brought into his poetry the quasi-surrealistic mode of presentation. Moreover, unlike Seth, he does not have a strong sensitivity to nature and nature's beauty; and if he sometimes gives scenic description, there is always a deeper application associated with it. He was always concerned with the political activities behind the beauty of Kashmir.

One of the purposes of these research activities is also to show the aspect of 'exile' in all the four poets; because all of them had some kind of exiled experiences. Toru Dutt lived three years in Europe; and the rest three spent a considerable period of time of their life abroad. In recent decades, however, the older boundaries between the nation and the outside world have become fluid. For many writers, the choice between living in India and abroad now seem a product of a time before low-cost international travel expenses, the internationalization of economy and increased opportunity to study, live and work abroad. Hence, the feeling of loss and exile in the hands of better writers turn into a more encompassing vision. But the condition was not the same

when Toru Dutt stayed abroad. There was always at that time charges of being not Indian were made on writers who did not conform to some nationalist notion of what Indian culture and tradition should be. The nationalist finds an idealized past as the useful symbol of identity. And the exiled poets returned to this subject anyhow. This was what happened with Toru Dutt too. However, she did not feel so much of an exile while she was abroad. Later she realized that her cultural differences from the mass made her exile even in her native place. So, she desperately wanted to go for the nationalist theme of the past—legends and myths of India.

In recent decades, the expatriates view poetry differently. 'they do not write from a position of a foreign community, such as exiled black or West Indian novelist, but their writing reflects the perspectives of someone between two cultures. They may look back on India with nostalgia, satirically celebrating their liberation or asserting their biculturalism, but they also look skeptically and wryly on their new homeland as outsiders, with a feeling of something having been lost in the process of growth. The ability to tolerate accommodates and absorbs other cultures without losing the consciousness of being Indian marks the expatriate poets'.[1]

Sharat Chandra's poetry, for instance, gives a sense of being uprootedness in his new country, the United States, and also shows the self as insecure, except among family. Being at home neither in India nor in the new world, he often fantasies a third nation where he will be at ease. He writes of India as a place financial, moral and cultural corruption, and a land of social injustice and poverty except for those in power or position of influence. Shiv Kumar's poetry also reveals a similar anger towards India and a similar sense of not really belonging anywhere. However, Ramanujan wrote a different kind of poetry from them. In him there is no feeling of anger toward India; neither does one feel the sense of loss overwhelming in him. There is in him ever-connecting link between Indian and American experience. While in USA, he always looks back to his childhood and establishes a connection through recollecting memory. In an interview with Rama Jha, he said that his writing obtains its nourishment from his Indian culture: 'these are the roots, that is what binds us back to our childhood and all the early years'.[2] Therefore, memory played a vital role in his poetry. Moreover, southern Tamil tradition played a role in his poetry. He often tried to approximate himself with his own culture. But he does not glorify it; he also looked it critically. He, for instance, in 'A River', criticizes the whole Tamil tradition of

writing poetry where the poets tried to romanticize, leaving hardship and difficulty of real situations.

There is however, another approach exemplified by Vikram Seth. His poetry records a dwell feeling of nostalgia for India after studying abroad for many years and his continuing attraction for the 'notes of other birds/ the nightingle'. Seth tries to compromise with both the situations. Poems which reconcile his experience in China are as joyful and ecstatic as any poem on one's own country can be. Here he does not seem to feel at all the feeling of exile. That is why he is more attracted to the natural beauty in the gardens. However, with the poems of American experience, we find the voice of cuckoo disturbing him while luxuriously in USA. There is a sense that he too feels lonely here and wants the Indian family security back.

In Agha Shahid Ali, however, the feeling of exile and loneliness dominates the other concern. As seen in the earlier chapter, where Ali's poetry is discussed, Ali had a very comfortable and warm family environment in India. He feels the absence of warmth and family security largely when he begins to live in USA, which is reflected in most of his poetical works. Moreover, he is painfully aware of the deterioration of the political condition of Kashmir—his beloved place. Nevertheless, he cannot help to bring Kashmir out from the problem. This sense of helplessness evokes a gloomy tone in his poetry. Thus, it becomes evident that though all the poets mentioned above felt the exile experience, it had a different reaction from them. Toru felt it as an anxiety to her identity and the rest thought it as some kind of isolation which they found hard to conform.

To wind up, this thesis makes an attempt to evaluate critically the contribution of the four poet-Toru Dutt, Ramanujan, Seth and Ali—and also to trace a thin line of development between pre-independence and post-independence poetry. Moreover, it endeavors to critically examine the exile experience of the poets since all of them had some sort of exile experiences.

References:

1. Bruce King, *Modern Indian Poetry in English* (New Delhi: OUP, 2004) Pg-209-210.
2. Rama Jha, *The Humanities* Review (Vol.3, No.1, January-June1981) Pg. 5-13.

PRIMARY BIBLOGRAPHY

1. Toru Dutt, *The Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields* (Calcutta: Nabu Press, March 2010)
2. Toru Dutt, *Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan* (Book Jungle, March 2010)
3. A. K. Ramanujan, *The Strides* (1966) (from Collected Poems, New Delhi: OUP, 1955)
4. A. K. Ramanujan, *The Relations* (1971) (from collected Poems, New Delhi:OUP,1955)
5. A.K. Ramanujan, *The Second Sight* (1986) (From Collected Poems; New Delhi:OUP, 1995)
6. A. K. Ramanujan, *The Black Hen* (1995) (from collected poems, New Delhi: OUP, 1995)
7. Vikram Seth, *Mappings*, (New Delhi: Penguin India, 1994)
8. Vikram Seth, *The Humble Administrator's Garden,* (New Delhi: Penguin India, 1994)

9. Agha Shahid Ali, *The Half Inch Himalayas*, (from The Veil Suite: The Collected Poems; New Delhi: Penguin India, 2010.
10. Agha Shahid Ali, *A Walk Through The Yellow Pages*, (from the Veiled Suite: the collected poems; New Delhi: Penguin India,2010)
11. Agha Shahid Ali, *The Country Without a Post office*, (from The Veiled Suite: the Collected Poems; New Delhi Penguin India, 2010)
12. Agha Shahid Ali, *A Nostalgist's Map of America*, (from The Veiled Suite: the Collected poems; New Delhi: Penguin India, 2010)
13. Agha Shahid Ali, *Rooms Are Never Finished*, (from The Veiled Suite:The Collected Poems, New Delhi: Pengin India, 2010)

SECONDARY BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Bruce King, *Modern Indian Poetry in English*, (New Delhi: OUP, 2004)
2. M.K. Naik, *A History of Indian English Literature*, (New Delhi:Sahitya Akademi, 2006)
3. A.K. Mehrotra (ed), An Illustrated History of Indian Literature in English, (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2010)
4. K.A. Agrawal, Toru Dutt: The Pioneer Spirit of Indian English Poetry, (New Dehi: Atlantic, 2009)
5. Suman Ghose, A.K. Ramanujan: As a P{oet, (Jaipur: Book Enclave,2004)
6. Seemita Mohanty, A Critical Analysis of Vikram Seth's Poetry and Fiction, (New Delhi: Atlantic, 2007)
7. C. Benvenuto, 'An Interview with Agha Shahid Ali', The Massachussets Review, Vol 43. No-2, Summer 2002; pg 26-273.
8. S.M. Tageldin, 'Reversing the Sentence of Impossible Nostalgia: The P{oetics of Post-Colonial Migration in Sakinna Brukhedenna and Agha Shahid Ali', Comparative Literature Studies; Vol-40, No-2003, Pg232-264.
9. Jahan Ramazani, 'Metaphor and Post Coloniality: The poetry of A.K. Ramanujan', Contemporary Literature, Vol-39, 1998, npg-27-53.
10. Bruce King, 'Review: A Satirica Neoformalist', The Sawanee Review, Vol44, No.3, 1986, pg lxiv-lxvi.