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पत्रिका आरण्यक – साहित्य एवं मानविकी की पत्रिका
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पत्रिका आरण्यक एक स्वतंत्र, द्विभाषी साहित्यिक मंच है जो हिंदी और अंग्रेजी साहित्य में मौलिक, चिंतनशील और नवोन्मेषी रचनात्मक आवाज़ों को प्रोत्साहित करने के लिए समर्पित है।

Patrika Aranyak is an independent, bilingual literary platform dedicated to nurturing authentic, contemplative, and innovative voices in Hindi and English literature.

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संपादकीय / Editorial Note

Rhythm is more than a word—it is the principle that permeates everything. It shapes meaning; it shapes existence. A natural rhythm flows around us and within us, perceptible to anyone who listens closely. The heartbeat is rhythmic; a stream hums in cadence; life itself vibrates with a subtle, unfolding pulse. In a world often marked by dissonance and haste, it is easy to drift from these natural currents, leaving everything feeling out of place and out of balance.

This is why the *Chāndogya Upanishad* speaks of saluting the "supreme rhythm." Our task is to recognize this inherent rhythm woven into creation and gradually align our inner selves with it. In that alignment lies the resonance of unity. It is in pursuit of that resonance that we have curated this second issue. We have brought together works that carry an innate, organic rhythm. These pieces may not clamour with radical forms, but their power lies in a deeper cadence that we hope will resonate with you. Ultimately, our success is something only your engagement can reveal. With each issue, we hope to discover and present creations that embody this living rhythm.

लय—यह केवल एक शब्द नहीं, बल्कि वह सिद्धांत है जो समस्त सृष्टि में व्याप्त है। अर्थ को भी लय ढालती है और अस्तित्व को भी। हमारे आसपास और हमारे भीतर एक स्वाभाविक लय सतत बहती है; जिसे अनुभव करने के लिए केवल गहराई से सुनने की आवश्यकता है। हृदय का स्पंदन लयबद्ध है, बहती धारा का स्वर लयबद्ध है, और जीवन स्वयं अपनी सूक्ष्म, अदृश्य ताल पर कंपन करता है। इस कोलाहल भरी दुनिया में जब हम इस प्राकृतिक लय से विमुख होते हैं, तो सब कुछ अस्त-व्यस्त, असंतुलित-सा प्रतीत होने लगता है।

इसीलिए छान्दोग्य उपनिषद् "परम लय" को प्रणाम करने की बात करता है। हमारा भी यही लक्ष्य है—सृष्टि में गुंथी इन सहज लयों को पहचानना और अपने भीतर की लय को क्रमशः उनसे साधना। इसी साधना में एकत्र की अनुगृंज जन्म लेती है।

इस दूसरे अंक में हमने ऐसी रचनाओं को संकलित किया है, जिनमें यह नैसर्जिक, अंतःस्फूर्त लय विद्यमान है। ये रचनाएँ बाहरी प्रयोगशीलता की चमक दिखाने का प्रयत्न न भी करें, तो भी इनकी गहरी, मौलिक ताल आपके मन के किसी स्वर से मेल खा सकती है। इस प्रयास की सफलता तो आपका ध्यान, आपकी भागीदारी और आपके विचार ही तय करेंगे। आगे के अंकों में भी हम इसी प्रकार की सजीव, लय-सम्पन्न अभिव्यक्तियाँ आपके लिए खोजते और संजोते रहेंगे।

Editor-in-Chief

Research Paper/ शोध पत्र

Cultural Memory and Intertextuality: Navigating Literature, Film, and Television

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Abstract:

This study navigates the intricate relationship between cultural memory, literature, film, and television, presenting a theoretical framework rooted in interdisciplinary perspectives. Beginning with Stuart Hall's models of cultural identity and Raussert and Kunow's insights into cultural memory, the paper establishes the groundwork for understanding the evolving interplay between literature and cultural contexts. Shifting focus to cinematic theory, the study explores the transformative processes of adapting literary works for the screen. It challenges traditional literary perspectives on popular fiction, emphasizing the significance of cultural studies in shaping interpretations of popular culture. The analysis extends to cinematic theory, underlining the screen's role in conveying content influenced by real events and imaginative instincts, fostering critical thinking in viewers. Intertextuality emerges as a pivotal concept, linking literature and celluloid texts. The paper traces its evolution from Saussure and Bakhtin to Kristeva, exploring its role in transforming and decoding textual meaning. Thomas Leitch's classification of intertextuality into inevitable and intentional categories contributes to understanding the nuanced dynamics of adaptation, bridging literary roots and original expression. The exploration deepens into adaptation studies, emphasizing the transformative process of texts from page to screen. The discussion extends to television adaptation, challenging conventional norms and exploring nuanced creativity in adapting literary works for the small screen. Classic- novel and popular literature adaptations are compared, showcasing the varied generic identities they shape and the unique narrative possibilities they offer. The conclusion reflects on the evolving concept of fidelity in television adaptation, acknowledging the medium's unique strengths and redefining its role beyond historical and costume dramas. It asserts that television adaptation is a distinct form, integral to the contemporary digital cultural revolution, providing diverse narratives that engage audiences across genres and time periods. The paper contributes to the ongoing discourse on the interplay between literature, film, and television, highlighting their adaptability and dynamic relationship between mediums.

Keywords: Cultural Memory, Intertextuality, Literature, Film, Television, Adaptation, Interdisciplinary Perspectives, Stuart Hall, Cinematic Theory, Fidelity in Adaptation

Exploring Cultural Memory in Literature: A Theoretical Framework:

Within cultural perspectives, there exists a theoretical framework dedicated to the study of comparative literature. This involves employing intercultural and intertextual approaches to literature. The integration of literature and culture involves a harmonious blend of distinct voices, challenging the notion of a dominating ontological certainty. Literary theories and criticism have evolved to encompass philosophies aimed at comprehending and analyzing "texts." This entails interpreting, negotiating, and deconstructing the memories associated with various cultural paradigms, both at the individual and societal levels. The shift from traditional literary studies to cultural studies does not entail fundamental revisions but rather signifies the development of an interdisciplinary approach. This approach seeks to explore the dynamic interaction between literary texts and their functional identification within historical, socio-political, and cultural contexts, contributing to the conceptualization of belonging. Stuart Hall has extensively explored models for constructing cultural identities, emphasizing the maintenance of collective historical consciousness. He describes cultural identity as the idea of a shared culture, a collective 'true self' concealed amidst other superficial or artificially imposed 'selves' shared by individuals with a common history and ancestry (Hall 1990: 69). The second model of cultural identity, rooted in 'emergence' and 'inconclusiveness,' positively reflects on the process of 'becoming' a part of a larger whole. It undergoes constant transformation, rejecting the notion of being eternally fixed in an essentialized past, favoring a continuous 'play' within the realms of history, culture, and power.

Similarly, cultural memory embedded in a work of art symbolizes both material and immaterial forms, intricately linked with the historical heritage of a community. This historical heritage is often defined in terms of homeland, encompassing monuments, shrines, battlefields, or cemeteries. These elements evoke a sense of connectedness and foster specific communal or national awareness of past experiences. According to Raussert and Kunow, cultural memory represents a sense of 'oughtness' experienced simultaneously in two places. This involves grappling with the feeling of marginalization while retaining the specificity of class, ethnicity, and gender. It is a complex emotional process, oscillating between being treated as 'Other' by hegemonic culture and recollecting preserved aspects of past cultural

heritage and the intricate web of cultural memory. In essence, it is a process of 'restoring' the interaction with roots and recovering the lost emotions associated with cultural memories.

Cultural Studies in Motion: Interpreting Popular Culture in Cinematic Transposition:

In the context of examining cultural identity and memory, a crucial shift is observed from literary theory to the integration of cultural theory. This transition is particularly evident in the dynamic exploration of how literary texts are transposed onto the cinematic screen. The roots of this shift can be traced back to the emergence of cultural studies, notably influenced by Richard Hoggart's seminal work, "The Uses of Literacy" in the 1950s and 1960s, and the subsequent establishment of the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham. Cultural studies, while drawing on concepts from English literature, diverges from traditional literary approaches, especially in its treatment of popular culture. Figures like Matthew Arnold dismiss popular fiction as inappropriate for the masses and detrimental to the advancement of art and literature. Arnold, in asserting the unsuitability of popular literature for the masses, stated, "Plenty of people will try to give the masses... an intellectual food prepared and adapted in the way they think proper for the actual condition of the masses" (Arnold 1932: 69-70). Emphasizing the significance of literary stylistics, Q.D. Leavis argued for the exclusion of popular culture from the literary canon. In supporting this stance, Leavis highlighted the importance of crafting vivid and easily visualized "action pictures" within literature. According to Leavis, such an approach not only facilitates reader engagement by enabling effortless visualization of scenes but also encourages a proclivity towards fantasy, potentially contributing to a perceived 'maladjustment in real life.' In contrast, cultural studies embrace the significance of popular cultural texts, despite their criticism within the literary realm. This stance, especially in the controversial realm of high art and high value, has paved the way for parallel theories in cinema studies. While film theory and cinema studies have conceptualized alternative modes of interpreting screen texts, their origins can be traced back to literature. The analysis and observation of cultural aspects within specific spatial-temporal contexts remain crucial in extracting meaning from texts. The present paper aims to establish a connection between intertextuality in cinematic theory and literature, further emphasizing the fluid interplay between these cultural expressions across different art forms.

Analyzing the Intersection of Screen and Text Meaning:

Cinematic theory encompasses a range of technological resources, including moving sound- images and their reception beyond the screen, to articulate socio-cultural, political, and economic strategies at the national level. The screen, whether in the form of film,

television, computer or web-based platforms like YouTube, gaming, mobile, or art-based screens, plays a crucial role in conveying content influenced by real events, news, or imaginative instincts to propagate social awareness. Like literature, screen visuals extend beyond character-driven plots, taking on the responsibility to educate, inform, communicate, and entertain the audience. Building upon the preceding discussion on cultural studies, cinema theory strives to establish parameters for ethical and aesthetic values developed through the representation of emotions, events, and ambiance. The cinematic medium becomes a means to challenge audience perceptual capacities, presenting contentious and complex dynamic forms and conditions. Despite content manipulations by production houses on media and social media, viewers retain the ability to conceptualize mediated content based on their intuition.

In the current socio-political landscape, cinema challenges the cognitive aspects of psychology, urging viewers to widen their perspectives and think critically. Different cinematic forms address a wide range of topics, including social issues like gender, caste, poverty, education, and marriage; cultural issues such as language, rituals, and fashion; and political and economic matters relevant to the specific space of film, television, or computer screens. The exploration of cinema's historical background requires a chronological study, but its theoretical position revolves around the ontological perception of knowledge regarding the sound-image transforming reality into an abstract form of time and space. The term ontology is applied to the schema available as a 'problem' engaging various alternative conditions to internalize knowledge, skepticism, questions of dogma and truth reality, aesthetic rationality, and rhetoric. Similar to literary theory, cinematic interpretation involves interdisciplinary approaches, promoting comparative studies among various mediums of expression, including literature, painting, music, and more. Andre Bazin's exploration of the ontological question "What is Cinema?" highlights the film as a whole unit of creative expression that synthesizes art, technology, and audience into a singular entity. The phenomenological nature of cinema explores consciousness and being through the perception of experience and movement, with the film's work incorporating elements like screenplay, music, stage performance, technology, painting, and more to create a comprehensive artistic unit. The totality of the film imparts a ready-made experience and knowledge through various modes of expression, providing insights into the world and inquiring about the nature of certain aspects happening around us.

Examining Celluloid Texts: Intersections with Literature and Intertextuality:

Analyzing celluloid texts shares similarities with the examination of literary texts, as both mediums invite multiple interpretations and diverse discourses, expanding the understanding and critical strategies of both critics and audiences. While textual-based investigation appears to focus on the effectiveness for recipients and the accountability of directors and producers, the correlation between literary and celluloid texts involves a nuanced exploration, encompassing examination, analysis, and the production of meaning. As literature transitions from the page to the screen, distinct values come into play, spanning writing to directing, imagination to shooting, description to scene depiction, emotional representation to facial expression, and imagined characters to live actors. This shift also transforms the act of reading into watching, seeing, and listening, reflecting the impact of technology on audience engagement. The process of adaptation from one language and culture to another, once reliant on translators, is now facilitated by screenplay writers reshaping dialogues and situations into the source culture and language. Mary H. Snyder identifies adaptation as a dual-level process involving myriad ways of doing and the resulting product of the entire adaptation process. This approach allows films to explore literature by representing the source text in a broader space of new sign systems, narratives, cultures, and mediums, aligning with interpretation theory. Intertextuality becomes a crucial concept, paralleling the process of adaptation. Both adaptation and interpretation rely on prior knowledge and textual understanding, involving an intersection where the original work is reproduced through the unique lens of cinema. The end product aims to maintain the 'spirit' of the text, emphasizing intertextuality and fidelity.

Contrary to earlier literary theories such as formalism, new criticism, and structuralism, which viewed works of art as having independent meanings, contemporary perspectives, influenced by deconstruction and post-theories, emphasize the dynamic nature of text. Extracting meaning now involves multiple expressions, moving beyond the given text and associating with other works, a process known as intertextuality. The term intertextuality finds its roots in the works of Ferdinand de Saussure and Mikhail Bakhtin, with Julia Kristeva providing a comprehensive theory in her seminal works "Word, Dialogue and Novel" in 1966 and later in "The Bounded Text" published in 1966-67.. Kristeva emphasizes the dynamic nature of the text, challenging the fixed meaning by encouraging the intersection of textual impressions. This approach envisions each word as an intersection of other words, forming a transformed textual structure. Intertextuality, thus, serves as a literary device to build relationships between texts, facilitating a comprehensive understanding.

Kristeva delves into the dynamic essence of text, steering away from a static approach. She advocates for the 'intersection' of textual impressions, rejecting the notion of fixed meanings. This approach fosters multiple analyses in dialogue with various writings. Kristeva clarifies that "each word (text) is an intersection of other words (texts) where at least one other word (text) can be read" (Kristeva 1980: 66). In doing so, she introduces the concept of intertextuality, tracing the essence of other 'words' (texts) and challenging the self-contained nature of textual autonomy. Instead, she promotes the coexistence of multiple texts to generate a transformed textual structure. Intertextuality, as outlined by Kristeva, serves as a literary device fostering connections between texts. It contributes to a comprehensive understanding, incorporating related affinities that deepen the exploration of textual depth. This process involves transforming various references to decode the meaning of a given text.

Building on this, Thomas Leitch, in his critique of contemporary adaptation theory, argues that every text, treated as a work of art, should be viewed as intertextual. According to Leitch, even a source text for adaptation or translation is not original but inherently intertextual. The forms of intertextuality are then classified into two categories: inevitable intertextuality, embedded unconsciously and naturally with myriad influences of past knowledge within the source text; and intentional intertextuality, purposefully selecting a literary work for adaptation on the screen. Consequently, adaptation involves intentional intertextuality in correlation with the source text, absorbing unintentional intertextuality from within the source text itself.

Adaptation: Bridging Literary Roots and Original Expression:

To grasp the intricacies of adaptation studies in the context of analyzing the transition from page to screen, a foundational understanding of literature is crucial. Literature serves as the source stage for transferring plots from one medium to another. Different expressive mediums, such as film, television serials, animation films, and video games, offer diverse ways of reception, placing emphasis on intertextuality through remaking. This process allows the source text to navigate historical, cultural, and social disparities, presenting past cultures and societies to contemporary audiences and making history more relevant for the present.

The term "adaptation" implies a critical recuperation, involving the recreation of interpretive frameworks that incorporate literary 'properties' and shape cultural forms into canonical productions and consumption. Specifically, in the context of film and television adaptation, it often involves the remaking of classical texts and the transfer of a source from one medium to another. Catherina Grant highlights the importance of surrounding discourses

embedded in the screen version, which significantly contributes to clear communication with the audience, preserving the cultural memories of the adapted work (Catherina 2002). In the broader exploration of various theoretical developments, the process of adaptation involves transforming the original work into a new medium, essentially creating a new original. This transformation is not limited to textual information but represents a shift from a single-track verbal medium, such as a book or text, to a multi-track medium, like cinema or animation. In this new medium, words coexist with music, sound, sound effects, and moving images.

The discussion about cultural affinities in free adaptation raises questions about the definition of adaptation itself. Despite the freedom in adapting, it still retains its status as an adaptation due to the way it foregrounds its relationship to a prior cultural text. The valorization of the originality of the first text often sustains binary oppositions, such as original/copy and authentic/imitation, through which the second is judged to be lacking. Therefore, examining historical changes becomes a priority when understanding the perspectives of adaptation, leading to the conclusion of key points in the transformative process of the text.

Television Adaptation: Exploring Transformative Processes:

Within the realm of various adaptation types, television adaptation holds a distinctive role, often focusing on classical texts. However, it is not limited to classical works, as television adaptations, in general, tend to follow a more conservative approach when bringing content to the screen. This conservatism manifests in a slightly old-fashioned technological style and a more straightforward presentation of plots compared to the fast-paced, vibrant, and innovative direction often seen in films.

Television adaptations of classical works are recurrent, adhering to generic norms and aiming to maintain a sense of originality. However, this adherence to norms can be seen as contributing to a perception of dullness, promoting formulaic discourse, and sometimes fostering a derogatory view towards the original material. This characterization of television adaptation underscores a distinct way of perceiving the medium in the context of adaptation, particularly due to its serial format, which often aligns with classical texts, dictated by distributors or producers.

However, a television episodic adaptation challenges the mentioned conventions. In this form, the transformation process mirrors that of films, exploring the textual expression of a novel more deeply and vividly bringing the novel's imagination to the screen. Notably, in contrast to film adaptations, television adaptations provide significant creative space to the writer. Writers, rather than directors, play a pivotal role in shaping and reproducing literature

for the small screen. Importantly, television adaptations, given their extended runtime, do not necessarily compromise the original content, providing ample time to unfold and explore the intricacies of the adapted material. This departure from the typical television adaptation model allows for a more nuanced and expansive exploration of literary works on the small screen.

Comparison of Classic-Novel and Popular Literature Adaptations on Television:

The impact of television adaptations, whether of classic novels or popular literature, significantly influences audience perceptions, shaping distinctive generic identities. Classic-novel adaptations like "The Mayor of Casterbridge," "Middlemarch," and "Passage to India" employ advanced technologies for filming, diverging from the studio-based approach seen in films. Television adaptations hold a powerful sway over audiences, establishing aesthetic practices with a longstanding viewer base. This specific medium generates genres and sub-genres with unique conventions, such as comprehensive plot depiction, strong emphasis on dialogue, gradual character development, and a steady-paced plot. Achieving fidelity to the original text is a key aesthetic goal in classic-novel adaptations, such as "The Mayor of Casterbridge," "Ramayana," or "Malgudi Days." Television, with its episodic transmission format, allows for faithful reproduction of cultural contexts, maintaining fidelity to the original text over an extended series.

The philosophy of art and literature, rooted in education, information, and entertainment, extends to the televisual realm, achieving aesthetic beauty. Televisual adaptations, akin to cinematic texts, rely on the intertextual system. For instance, John Milton's "Paradise Lost" is reproduced on television in the form of "Lucifer," transforming Satan into the present Lucifer Morningstar. This adaptation explores intertextual identification with "Paradise Lost," weaving past and present conditions of post-modernism discourses and feminist stylistics into the serial narrative. Further exemplifying this trend, the episodic literary adaptation of "Penny Dreadful," set in Victorian England, integrates characters like Dorian Gray, Dr. Henry Jekyll, Mina Harker, Victor Frankenstein, and Dracula. This approach employs pastiche and bricolage, connecting literature through the screen. "Penny Dreadful" and its characters provide a skeletal model for 'Gothic-postmodernism,' playing a pivotal role in the analysis of gender, reminiscent of literary works such as "Jane Eyre," "Wuthering Heights," and "Wide Sargasso Sea."

Expanding beyond, consider contemporary adaptations like "The Handmaid's Tale" based on Margaret Atwood's novel or the transformation of Neil Gaiman's "American Gods"

into a television series, showcasing the ongoing richness of literary adaptation on the small screen. These examples highlight the dynamic interplay between literature and television, offering diverse narratives that captivate and engage audiences across various genres and time periods. This distinctive generic variation unfolds across literature, films, and television, further illustrating the adaptability and interplay between mediums in the realm of literary adaptation.

Conclusion:

Theories surrounding adaptation evoke varied responses when literature is translated onto the screen. Film adaptation is often celebrated for its strong intuition and creativity, encompassed within a concise runtime of approximately 150 minutes. However, the change in the medium's value of authentication has cast a shadow on television adaptation, relegating it to sub-categories such as 'costume drama' or 'heritage drama.' These categories, often depicting historically popular texts, are burdened with pre-conceived notions of boredom and dullness. Their fidelity to the original, sticking to similar dialogues and conditions, diminishes interest and undervalues both the original text and the televisual adaptation.

Classical-novel adaptations on television have been associated with heritage drama or documentary presentations, slightly improving the medium's image. However, series like "Lucifer," "Penny Dreadful," "The Time Machine" in America, "Jodha Akbar," "Malgudi Days," "Chandrakanta," and various forms of detective fiction, murder mystery series, romance, comedy, etc., have changed the perception of television production technologies. The issues of close fidelity have given way to creative advancements, similar to the appreciation received by film adaptations. Television has transformed into a more exciting and entertaining medium, offering creative liberty and reflexivity while maintaining a connection to literary texts.

The concept of fidelity has evolved from a conventional approach of adhering faithfully to dialogue and conditions to reconfiguring and embracing the sense or spirit of the original text. It aims to acquaint viewers with both textual content and contextual discourses in the current society. Respect for the style, tone, and spirit of the text is paramount, shifting the meaning from age-old culture and language to new adapted domains. Reproduction in television adaptations has achieved a variety in styles of representation and innovation, drawing from past experiences developed on the source text. This process involves both inevitable and purposeful intertextuality.

Television adaptation has also conceptualized the idea of transferring lengthy works like "Anna Karenina," "Sherlock Holmes," "Paradise Lost," "Mahabharata," "Ramayana,"

"Malgudi Days," etc., to the small screen. These works might not succeed as effectively on the large screen in evoking the emotions of the literary text. Thus, television adaptation should be viewed beyond generic and historical drama, finding its place in mainstream discourse. It needs to be re- contextualized, acknowledging the specificities of the small screen medium, without dwelling solely on its stylistic limitations. Television adaptation plays a vital role in the contemporary digital cultural revolution, as Sarah Cardwell concludes, stating that "Television adaptations are not a branch of film adaptation but are a distinct medium-specific form" (Cardwell 2007: 196).

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North-East Literature in English: An Overview

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Abstract

This North-East Indian literature in English has grown into a vibrant and significant field within contemporary Indian writing. Emerging from a region marked by geographical isolation, socio-political unrest, ethnic diversity, and rich cultural traditions, this body of literature articulates unique regional experiences while dialoguing with national and global discourses. This paper presents a comprehensive overview of the evolution, development, themes, literary forms, key writers, and contemporary relevance of North-East literature in English. By tracing its historical trajectories and examining the major thematic strands—identity, ethnicity, oral traditions, insurgency, gender, migration, and ecology—the study underscores the complexity and richness of this literary tradition. It also highlights the role of translation, academic recognition, critical reception, and the challenges faced by writers from the region. The conclusion emphasizes the growing significance of North-East literature and suggests future research directions.

Keywords

Identity, Oral Traditions, Insurgency, Indigeneity, Cultural Landscape

Introduction

The North-East region of India, consisting of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim, represents one of the most culturally diverse and historically complex regions of the country. Home to hundreds of tribes, languages, and subcultures, the region stands apart in its socio-cultural composition, ecological diversity, and political history. Literature from the North-East has long existed through oral forms such as folktales, myths, ballads, and ritual songs. However, the emergence of English as a literary medium in the region marks a new phase in its cultural articulation. North-East literature in English has expanded significantly since the late twentieth century. Writers have used English both as a tool of creative expression and as a

medium for negotiating identity, representing political tensions, and challenging mainstream perceptions of the region. The literature articulates lived experiences shaped by insurgency, ethnic conflicts, migration, colonial histories, and the pressures of globalization. In addition, the natural landscape—rivers, mountains, forests, and ecological heritage—forms a recurring motif. In recent years, North-East literature has gained academic legitimacy and global recognition. University syllabi across India now include works by writers such as Temsula Ao, Mamang Dai, Easterine Kire, Janice Pariat, and Mitra Phukan. Awards such as the Sahitya Akademi Award and the JCB Prize shortlist have further enhanced visibility. This paper offers a detailed overview of the development and thematic richness of North-East literature in English.

Historical Background

a. Early Encounters and Colonial Influence

The British colonial administration played a formative role in shaping the literary landscape of the North-East. English education reached the region primarily through missionary activities, especially in Nagaland, Mizoram, and Meghalaya. Missionaries translated the Bible, compiled grammars and dictionaries of tribal languages, and introduced Western education. However, creative writing in English by native writers was limited in the early period. Colonial writings—travelogues, ethnographic records, and administrative reports—constructed the North-East as a remote frontier inhabited by “primitive tribes.” These representations influenced early modern perceptions of the region but failed to capture its cultural depth. Indigenous writers would later contest and rewrite these narratives.

b. Post-Independence Developments

After independence, the region witnessed significant political reorganization. States such as Nagaland (1963), Meghalaya (1972), and Mizoram (1987) were carved out of Assam. Ethnic conflicts, insurgencies, and demands for autonomy shaped social life. These upheavals began to influence artistic expression, including literature in English. English became a means to articulate concerns about identity, cultural preservation, and political marginalization. Newspapers, magazines, and university departments encouraged creative writing. Writers increasingly used English to reach broader audiences beyond linguistic boundaries.

c. Literary Growth from the 1980s Onward

The late 20th and early 21st centuries marked the consolidation of North-East English literature as a recognized category. Anthologies such as *The Oxford Anthology of Writings from the North-East* and *Dancing Earth* helped canonize the literature. National publishing houses began to promote writers from the region, and literary festivals provided platforms for emerging voices. This period witnessed the rise of oral literature studies, indigenous epistemologies, and postcolonial critiques that reshaped the understanding of North-East writing. Writers like Temsula Ao, Robin S. Ngangom, and Mamang Dai laid the foundation for contemporary literary production.

Major Themes in North-East Literature

a. Identity, Ethnicity, and Belonging

One of the central concerns of North-East literature is the question of identity. The region's mosaic of tribes and communities constantly negotiates issues of belonging, cultural difference, and national integration. For instance, Temsula Ao's stories explore Naga identity through everyday experiences shaped by tradition and modernity. Easterine Kire portrays the transformation of Naga society during times of conflict. Robin Ngangom writes of "being a writer from the conflict zone," capturing how identity is shaped by violence. Identity narratives often challenge mainstream Indian stereotypes that homogenize North-East communities. Writers assert cultural distinctiveness while exploring the complexities of regional and national belonging.

b. Oral Traditions and Indigenous Knowledge

The North-East has a rich heritage of myths, legends, folktales, festival songs, and ritual chants. Writers in English draw heavily from these oral traditions to express indigenous worldviews. Mamang Dai integrates myths of Arunachal Pradesh into her poems and novels, linking nature, spirituality, and memory. Kynpham Singh Nongkynrih uses Khasi myths to comment on contemporary issues. Oral literature serves not only as cultural documentation but also as a mode of resistance against cultural erasure and modern fragmentation.

c. Conflict, Insurgency, and Trauma

Political unrest has shaped the lived reality of many North-East communities. Insurgency, counterinsurgency operations, human rights violations, and ethnic clashes have left deep scars. Literature provides space for representing these traumatic histories.

Examples include: Siddhartha Deb's *The Point of Return*, which reflects political tensions in Meghalaya; Temsula Ao's *These Hills Called Home*, depicting the violence of the Naga insurgency; Robin S. Ngangom's poetry, which blends personal and political grief. These works humanize the experiences of ordinary people caught in conflict and challenge simplistic media portrayals.

d. Migration, Displacement, and Diaspora

Internal migration due to conflict, economic aspirations, and globalization is a prominent theme. Many young individuals from the North-East migrate to metropolitan cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, and Bangalore. Their experiences of discrimination, alienation, and cultural negotiation find expression in literature. Janice Pariat often writes about memory, nostalgia, and the emotional landscapes of displacement. Parismita Singh's graphic narratives address the complexities of borderland identities between Assam, Arunachal, and Bhutan.

e. Gender, Women's Voices, and Social Change

Women writers from the North-East have contributed richly to Indian English literature. Their works explore gender roles, patriarchy, empowerment, community expectations, and bodily autonomy. Easterine Kire's *A Terrible Matriarchy* critiques the marginalization of women within Naga society. Mitra Phukan examines women's experiences in Assamese society. Iralu, Dai, Pariat, and other women writers present nuanced representations of female resilience and agency.

f. Ecological Consciousness and Environmental Writing

The North-East is known for its biodiversity, sacred forests, rivers, and mountains. Writers portray the environment not merely as a backdrop but as a living entity with cultural and spiritual significance. Mamang Dai's works reflect ecological spirituality. Temsula Ao's poems lament deforestation and the erosion of traditional ecological knowledge. Environmental degradation due to dams, mining, and industrial projects is a recurring concern, making North-East literature an important contribution to eco-criticism.

Literary Forms and Genres

a. Poetry

Poetry is perhaps the strongest form in North-East English literature. Poets such as Robin Ngangom, Kynpham Singh Nongkynrih, Mamang Dai, and Temsula Ao explore themes of identity, memory, conflict, and nature.

b. Fiction

Contemporary fiction—from short stories to novels—often blends realism, folklore, and political commentary. Writers like Easterine Kire, Janice Pariat, Siddhartha Deb, Mitra Phukan, and Anjum Hasan have produced nationally recognized works.

c. Drama

English drama from the region is less developed but growing, with playwrights integrating folk performance traditions with modern stage techniques.

d. Graphic Novels and Digital Storytelling

Parismita Singh and younger artists have expanded the literary landscape through graphic fiction, illustrating borderland narratives. Digital platforms, blogs, and online literary collectives further diversify the region's creative expressions.

Major Writers and Their Contributions

a. Temsula Ao (Nagaland)

Temsula Ao's works are foundational to North-East literature. Her stories in *These Hills Called Home* depict the brutality of insurgency and its effects on Naga communities. Her poetry integrates oral traditions, nature, and memory.

b. Easterine Kire (Nagaland)

Easterine Kire is known for novels such as *A Terrible Matriarchy*, *When the River Sleeps*, and *Mari*. Her narratives explore the transformation of Naga society, the power of folklore, and the resilience of women.

c. Mamang Dai (Arunachal Pradesh)

With works like *The Legends of Pensam*, *The Black Hill*, and *The River Poems*, Dai blends myth and history. Her writings highlight indigenous worldviews, ecological ethics, and cultural continuity.

d. Janice Pariat (Meghalaya)

Pariat's Boats on Land and Seahorse showcase lyrical prose and complex emotional landscapes. Her stories weave memory, folklore, desire, and the challenges of modernity.

e. Anjum Hasan (Meghalaya)

Anjum Hasan's novels such as Lunatic in My Head and Neti, Neti explore urban alienation, identity dilemmas, and the shifting cultural landscape of Shillong.

f. Robin S. Ngangom (Manipur)

A major poetic voice, Ngangom writes about conflict, identity, and personal loss. His poems reveal a deep engagement with the political turmoil of Manipur.

g. Mitra Phukan (Assam)

Phukan's fiction focuses on Assamese society, classical music, and the long-lasting impact of political unrest.

h. Emerging Writers

Younger authors such as Kaushik Barua, Avinuo Kire, and Ankush Saikia continue to diversify North-East literary expression through crime fiction, bildungsroman, and historical fiction.

Role of Translation in Expanding the Canon

Translation is crucial for bringing literature from Bodo, Khasi, Mizo, Manipuri, Assamese, and other languages into English. Translations allow linguistic minorities to reach national and global readers.

Examples include:

- Translations of Assamese writers like Arupa Patangia Kalita,
- Manipuri literature translated by scholars like Thongam Aruna,
- Mizo and Bodo oral literature translated by contemporary researchers.

Translation helps preserve oral cultures, democratize knowledge, and challenge the dominance of mainstream languages.

Representation of Violence, Memory, and Trauma

North-East literature often engages with the psychological effects of prolonged violence. Narratives depict fear, loss, mourning, and survival. These works serve as testimonies, recording histories often ignored in national discourses. They also create space for collective healing by acknowledging trauma and resilience.

Critical Reception and Academic Recognition

Over the past two decades:

- Universities have introduced courses on North-East literature.
- National awards have brought visibility to writers.
- Scholarly work on postcoloniality, indigeneity, border studies, and eco-criticism has expanded.

Writings from the North-East challenge the mainland-centric representation of India and broaden the scope of Indian English literature.

Challenges Faced by North-East Writers

Despite growth, writers face numerous obstacles:

- Limited regional publishing infrastructure
- Inadequate archiving of oral traditions
- Underrepresentation in national media
- Stereotyping of the region
- Linguistic barriers
- Economic constraints for young writers

Overcoming these challenges is essential for sustaining literary production.

Future Directions

North-East literature is likely to expand in:

- Eco-critical narratives focused on climate change
- Speculative fiction inspired by tribal myths
- Women-centric narratives and feminist theory
- Graphic novels and digital storytelling
- Borderland and transnational literature
- Academic research on oral traditions and indigenous epistemologies

The growing global interest ensures that North-East literature will continue to enrich contemporary literary studies.

Conclusion

North-East literature in English has emerged as a dynamic and influential body of writing that bridges tradition and modernity, oral cultures and digital platforms, regional concerns and global discourses. It offers powerful insights into identity, conflict, memory, ecology, and cultural resilience. As more writers gain national and international recognition, the literature of the North-East will continue to redefine the Indian literary canon and contribute meaningfully to world literature.

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A Critical Analysis of Internalized Inferiority Complex in *The Bluest Eye and Coming Out As Dalit*

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Abstract

*Inferiority complex and identity-shame constitute some of the most corrosive psychological conditions produced by systems of social stratification, and their manifestations in literature reveal how power inequities are internalized within marginalized subjects. Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and Yashica Dutt's memoir *Coming Out as Dalit* (2019) provide two historically and geographically distinct but psychologically resonant explorations of how oppressed individuals come to see themselves through the distorting lens of dominant hierarchies race in Morrison's African American context and caste in Dutt's Indian context. Despite the different structures of oppression each text confronts, both articulate how inferiority is not merely imposed from above but rooted deeply within the individual psyche, emerging through processes of socialization, discrimination, humiliation, and internalized ideology. This paper undertakes a comparative critical analysis of inferiority complex and identity-shame in both texts. Using Alfred Adler's inferiority complex, Frantz Fanon's racial epidermalization, Silvan Tomkins' affect theory, and Erving Goffman's stigma theory, the study situates both texts pwithin global structures of oppression that shape emotional selfhood.*

Keywords

Inferiority complex, identity shame, caste, race, self-loathing, stigma, child-psychology.

In *The Bluest Eye*, Pecola Breedlove embodies the most extreme consequences of internalized racial inferiority. Morrison reveals how racial hierarchies filter into children's psyches through beauty standards, commercial advertising, schoolyard taunts, and familial neglect. Pecola's yearning for blue eyes symbolizes the psychological violence inflicted by white supremacist aesthetics that equate whiteness with beauty, innocence, and value. From the opening scenes, Pecola is subjected to external denigration teachers who patronize her, shopkeepers who look past her, white girls who mock her, and a community that sees her as ugly. Morrison underscores Pecola's internalization of this humiliation: she interprets 'White-

gaze' not as racial prejudice but as her own inadequacy, thinking, "I am not worth seeing" (49). Pecola sees herself through the eyes of white people who deny her humanity, thus absorbing the racial hierarchy into her sense of self. In racially segmented America, Pecola Breedlove's inferiority is catalyzed by a cultural environment where whiteness is equated with beauty, morality, and worth. Pecola's desire for blue eyes "the bluest eyes" (Morrison 46) is a desperate fantasy aimed at resolving her internalized conviction that Blackness is inherently ugly and inferior. Importantly, she learns this conviction not only from white-centered media but from her own mother. Pauline Breedlove's own inferiority complex manifests through her fixation on white beauty standards, her near-religious devotion to the Fisher family, and her self-description as "ugly" (Morrison 123). Pauline's internalization of whiteness as synonymous with order and beauty becomes an emotional pedagogy for Pecola, who is forced to conclude that her mother's coldness is a reflection of her own inadequacy.

Meanwhile, Dutt's memoir *Coming Out as Dalit* reveals a more intellectualized but equally painful trajectory of internalized inferiority originating in the caste system. The memoir foregrounds how caste operates not only through visible discrimination but through the secretive, shame-laden pressure to hide one's Dalit identity in order to be accepted within mainstream Indian society. Dutt describes growing up with the unspoken rule that her family's caste must never be revealed, leading to an internal conflict between outward performance of respectability and inward fear of exposure. When her grandmother warns her, "Never tell anyone you are Dalit" (Dutt 12), Dutt learns to erase traces of her background, adopting mannerisms, speech styles, and cultural tastes that will allow her to pass as non-Dalit. This results in a sustained inferiority complex, one marked by hypervigilance, chronic anxiety, and a belief that acceptance can only be secured by disowning her own identity. Her academic accomplishments and professional achievements are shadowed by the dread that she will be "found out," revealing the psychological burden of caste mobility within a system that continues to stigmatize Dalit identity. A comparative reading shows that both Pecola and Dutt internalize inferiority not spontaneously but through repeated interactions with societal norms and daily microaggressions. In Morrison's text, Pecola's inferiority is tied to beauty and racial hierarchies; in Dutt's, shame is tied to caste purity and social stigma. However, the psychological mechanism is identical: each protagonist encounters a world structured to deny her value, just because of belonging to a particular 'race' and 'caste'.

Both texts illuminate how inferiority complexes form through the internalization of oppressive structures and how shame functions as a psychic regulation tool for maintaining social hierarchies. During their formative years of life, children form their self-concepts by imagining how others perceive them, evaluating these imagined judgments, and developing self-feelings most significantly pride or shame based on these perceptions. In Pecola's world, whiteness is the imagined judge, omnipresent through Shirley Temple, Hollywood movies, school primers, and marigold advertisements. Pecola imagines how white society sees her, and this reflectiondistorted, contemptuous, and dehumanizing constructs her sense of self. She perceives herself as ugly because the world teaches her that Blackness is an aesthetic and moral flaw. Yashica Dutt's upbringing mirrors this process: she internalizes upper-caste expectations as the imagined standard and learns to evaluate herself through a Savarna gaze. Every gesture her clothes, speech, friendships, academic performance becomes filtered through the anxiety of being discovered as Dalit. Both Morrison and Dutt reveal that when external systems define worth, individuals learn to evaluate themselves through those systems. Pecola learns to believe that blue eyes are the ultimate marker of beauty and thus of worth; Dutt learns that caste purity determines social acceptance. Both protagonists develop compensatory strategies Pecola through fantasy, Dutt through concealment that reflect attempts to overcome inferiority but ultimately reinforce the underlying shame. In both cases, identity is shaped by societal narratives that render certain bodies undesirable or impure, demonstrating how deeply structural inequalities infiltrate personal psychology.

Theoretical scholarship on shame deepens this comparison. Psychologists like Silvan Tomkins and Gershen Kaufman identify shame as the most painful affect because it strikes at the core of the self, signaling a perceived failure to live up to internalized standards. Shame becomes especially toxic when these standards originate from discriminatory systems. In Pecola's case, the standard is whiteness; in Dutt's, the standard is caste purity. Tomkins argues that chronic shame produces self-alienation, making the individual turn inward against herself / himself, interpreting structural injustice as personal deficiency. Pecola exemplifies this: rather than questioning why beauty standards exclude her, she takes these exclusions as confirmation of her own deficiency. Dutt, too, internalizes caste shame, describing how she felt compelled to detach herself from aspects of her culture in order to appear "acceptable." Social theorist Beverly Skeggs explains that marginalized groups internalize shame when society labels them as lacking value; this affects how they carry themselves, speak, and

imagine their futures. Pecola internalizes shame so profoundly that she stops imagining any future at all; Dutt imagines a future, but only through self-erasure.

The psychological impact of a mother's internalized shame on her children is a crucial but often overlooked dimension in both *The Bluest Eye* and *Coming Out as Dalit*, where maternal self-perception becomes an emotional blueprint for the next generation. Contemporary trauma psychology emphasizes that children learn not only through parental instruction but through parental affect; they absorb the mother's anxieties, fears, and emotional wounds through what developmental theorists call "emotional modeling." Research in intergenerational trauma argues that when mothers experience chronic shame, inferiority, or stigmatized identity conflict, these emotions inadvertently shape the child's self-understanding, producing what psychologists identify as "inherited shame." In both Morrison and Dutt, the mother's response to oppression becomes the emotional environment in which the child learns what it means to exist within a stigmatized identity; therefore, the mother's shame becomes a psychic inheritance.

In *The Bluest Eye*, Pauline Breedlove functions as a powerful example of how maternal shame anchors a child's psyche in self-loathing. Pauline's internalization of racial beauty standards her belief that her dark skin, her tooth loss, her lack of glamour, and her poverty determine her worth shapes the emotional ecosystem in which Pecola grows up. Pauline finds her sense of identity not within her Black family or community but through her role in the Fisher household, a white space where she performs cleanliness, order, and service to be validated (Morrison 127–135). Her admiration for the white family, and her emotional withdrawal from her own children, communicates to Pecola that Blackness is inferior, that whiteness is aspirational, and that love is conditional on conforming to white standards. Trauma psychology explains that when mothers direct their internalized shame outward often unconsciously the child interprets this as a reflection of their own worth. Thus, Pauline's racial self-hatred becomes Pecola's earliest lesson about beauty, dignity, and love. Pecola's later desire for blue eyes is rooted not only in societal beauty norms but in the emotional absence and identity shame of her mother, who teaches her, through rejection, that Blackness is an identity to escape. The psychological impact of Pauline's shame aligns with contemporary theories of intergenerational trauma, which argue that unresolved parental shame transmits to children through emotion, behavior, and silence. Pecola internalizes not only the racial standards of American beauty but also her mother's conviction that Blackness

is inherently unworthy of love. Fanon's theory of racial epidermalization explains this process: social stigma becomes inscribed onto the skin, transforming the body into a site of humiliation. Pecola's body becomes a repository of her mother's internalized racism. Her obsession with blue eyes is an attempt to erase the body her mother has taught her to despise.

Similarly, Yashica Dutt's narrative in *Coming Out as Dalit* reveals how a mother's caste-based shame can deeply influence a child's psychological development, especially within an oppressive system where identity visibility is dangerous. Dutt's mother, like many Dalit parents navigating casteist environments, engages in constant concealment, passing, and hyper-vigilant self-monitoring to protect her daughter from discrimination. Her mother's fear of exposure changing speech, modifying behavior, maintaining a façade of castelessness creates an emotional atmosphere in which Dutt learns early that Dalitness is something to hide. Dutt describes how her mother avoided mentioning caste, discouraged the use of their native dialect in public, and insisted that their home appear indistinguishable from that of upper-caste households, all in an effort to protect her child (Dutt 44–51). From a psychological standpoint, this protective concealment functions as a form of inherited shame: the mother's survival strategy teaches the child to associate her own identity with danger, stigma, and contamination. Even though Dutt's mother seeks to protect her, the emotional message that passes to the child is that Dalit identity is something shameful, something that must remain invisible to ensure safety and belonging. The silence surrounding caste combined with the everyday performances of blending in shapes Dutt's early self-perception, embedding a sense of inferiority that she later recognizes as internalized casteism. Thus, the mother's shame becomes a transmitted emotional script that structures the child's relationship with her own identity.

In both texts, the mother becomes the first mirror through which the child sees herself. Morrison and Dutt demonstrate that when this mirror is clouded by oppression-induced shame, the child receives a distorted reflection that compounds societal prejudice with maternal emotional imprinting. Pauline's inability to love her own Blackness means she cannot provide Pecola with an affirming mirror of Black beauty and dignity. Her maternal identity is built around loving what she can never be a white ideal so she cannot model pride or acceptance for her daughter. As a result, Pecola inherits not only societal racism but her mother's deeply internalized racial inferiority. Dutt, on the other hand, inherits her mother's

silence and caution, which teaches her to fear her own Dalit identity before she fully understands what caste means. This emotional inheritance shapes her adolescence, influencing her decisions, friendships, and sense of belonging. In both cases, the mother's shame does not remain an individual emotional experience; it becomes a psychological blueprint for the child's understanding of self.

The intergenerational transmission of shame in these texts highlights how identity oppression functions not only structurally but emotionally and familiarly. Mothers, positioned as emotional anchors within families, often bear the heaviest burden of navigating stigma while attempting to shield their children from it. Yet the very strategies they use withdrawal, concealment, idealization of dominant norms, silence become emotional cues that the child internalizes as truths about their own identity. Pecola and Dutt develop their earliest understandings of themselves not only from society at large but from observing the emotional patterns modeled by their mothers. The mother's identity shame thus becomes a powerful force in shaping the child's self-loathing, low self-esteem, inferiority complex, and identity fracture. Morrison and Dutt demonstrate that maternal worldview can become emotional legacies for the child, shaping the trajectory of his/her selfhood.

Alfred Adler's theory of the inferiority complex lays the psychological foundation for understanding how shame becomes internalized. Adler posits that feelings of inferiority are common and even necessary to motivate growth, but they become pathological when an individual repeatedly encounters messages of inadequacy from their environment. When inferiority becomes chronic and unresolvable, it evolves into a full inferiority complex characterized by persistent self-doubt, self-loathing, and the belief that one can never measure up to societal standards. What distinguishes the inferiority complex from ordinary insecurity is its structural reinforcement: an individual made to feel inferior not by isolated events but by entrenched social hierarchies learns to see this inferiority as a natural condition. Frantz Fanon extends this view by examining how racialized systems produce psychological damage in the colonized subject. Frantz Fanon's analysis of the colonized mind in *Black Skin, White Masks* offers another crucial lens through which to view the internalization of racial and caste-based stigma. Fanon theorizes that colonized individuals begin to see themselves through the eyes of the colonizer, a process he calls "epidermalization." This term aptly describes Pecola's desire for blue eyes her belief that beauty, worth, and love belong to the realm of whiteness. Pecola's longing to see the world through blue eyes is an embodiment of

Fanon's theory: she seeks transformation not for aesthetic reasons but because she believes that only whiteness can liberate her from the self-loathing imposed upon her by a racist society. This aligns with Dutt's candid admission that she constantly attempted to "pass" as non-Dalit by altering her speech, clothing, cultural preferences, and public behavior (Dutt 59–64). While the specifics of racialized beauty differ from caste-coded behavioral performances, both reveal how marginalized individuals internalize the dominant group's value system and evaluate themselves according to oppressive norms. Fanon's framework reveals that Pecola and Dutt respond to discrimination by developing deep-seated desires to escape their own identities: Pecola through fantasized physical transformation, Dutt through lived performance and concealment. Both forms of self-alteration reflect a profound emotional consequence of inferiorization: a psychic split between the self and the self-as-seen-by-others. These frameworks collectively explain how inferiority and shame manifest not only as personal emotions but as the internal echoes of structural inequity. Adler's theory of inferiority suggests that children integrate perceived deficiencies into the very core of their being, developing compensatory mechanisms fantasy, perfectionism, denial, or submission to cope. Pecola chooses fantasy: blue eyes become her imagined escape from racial abjection. Dutt chooses hyper-performance: academic success and cultural assimilation become her compensatory tools. Yet both strategies reveal the emotional cost of surviving in societies that deem their identities deficient. Fanon's racial theory and Ambedkar's caste theory converge here: both argue that oppressed individuals develop compensatory identities that are ultimately unsustainable because they are built on negation of the self, not acceptance. Dalit feminist theorist Cynthia Stephen argues that caste shame uniquely shapes girl children, producing "fractured subjectivities" where the inner self is perpetually at odds with the external identity demanded for survival. Pecola becomes the extreme manifestation of this fracture: her inner world becomes so incompatible with social reality that she collapses into psychosis. Dutt's fracture is less visible but deeply felt: she describes her adolescence as a constant negotiation between who she was and who she was permitted to be. Her testimony reflects Stephen's insight that caste-oppressed girls are taught early that their authentic selves are incompatible with social acceptance. This insight also aligns with Gopal Guru's distinction between humiliation and dignity. Guru argues that oppressed individuals oscillate between internalized humiliation and the desire for dignity.

Building further on the intergenerational transmission of shame, it is essential to recognize that the psychological dynamics in both *The Bluest Eye* and *Coming Out as Dalit* are not merely shaped by mothers but by the structural systems that produce maternal subjectivities. Dalit theorist Gopal Guru emphasizes that humiliation “settles into the body,” reshaping emotional responses and self-understanding for generations. This embodied humiliation explains why mothers in oppressed communities often become unwilling carriers of history’s wounds, transmitting anxieties to their children even without explicit intention. Pauline Breedlove does not consciously teach Pecola that Blackness is a curse; instead, she acts from her own internalized racial injury. Similarly, Dutt’s mother does not intend to teach her daughter to hate her caste identity; rather, she seeks to protect her, operating from a lifetime of caste-conditioned fear. These maternal psychic wounds reflect what Sara Ahmed calls “sticky affect,” where emotions adhere to bodies over time and circulate within intimate spheres. Shame becomes inherited, even when unspoken.

The tragic ending of *The Bluest Eye* and the upward arc of *Coming Out as Dalit* reflect the political intentions of each author. Morrison chooses tragedy to expose the structural cruelty of American racism, showing how society destroys vulnerable Black girls. Dutt chooses reclamation to demonstrate that caste shame can be undone through awareness, solidarity, and resistance. Yet the two narratives share a central message: identity shame is socially constructed and intimately tied to systems of domination. Whether through race or caste, oppressive ideologies shape emotional life, teaching individuals to measure themselves against standards designed to devalue them. Healing requires dismantling these standards, reconstructing identity on one’s own terms, and rejecting the internalized gaze of the oppressor.

Ultimately, the comparative analysis of Pecola Breedlove and Yashica Dutt reveals that inferiority complexes and identity shame are not individual weaknesses but collective injuries inflicted by historical systems of power. A crucial difference between the two texts is the possibility of narrative reclamation. Pecola has no voice; her story is mediated through Claudia, whose reflections register both empathy and guilt. Claudia recognizes that the community scapegoated Pecola because of its own internalized racism, noting that they “looked down on her to keep from looking down on themselves” (Morrison 205). Morrison’s narrative structure emphasizes the communal complicity in Pecola’s psychic destruction; her tragedy exposes the collective investment in hierarchical structures. Conversely, Dutt writes

from the position of survival and articulation. While Pecola succumbs to her inferiority complex, Dutt analyzes and resists hers. She describes the moment she publicly “came out” as Dalit as liberating, stating that “naming myself became the first step toward reclaiming myself” (Dutt 198). This shift illustrates the power of narrative to transform shame into empowerment.

Conclusion:

The integrated theoretical analysis shows that internalized inferiority, identity shame, and self-loathing are interconnected psychological outcomes of caste and racial oppression that profoundly shape the protagonists’ lived experiences in *The Bluest Eye* and *Coming Out as Dalit*. Pecola’s tragic disintegration exposes the devastating consequences of internalized racial beauty norms and emotional abandonment, while Dutt’s memoir demonstrates the painful but transformational journey of confronting and rejecting internalized caste shame. Through Adler, Fanon and contemporary trauma studies, we understand that the roots of self-loathing lie not within the individual but within the oppressive social structures that define certain identities as inferior. These texts ultimately reveal that reclaiming selfhood requires dismantling the emotional, psychological, and ideological foundations of caste and racial hierarchies. While Pecola’s story warns of the human cost of unchecked internalized racism, Dutt’s narrative charts a path toward healing, political activism, and self-reclamation. Together, they underscore the urgent need to challenge the hegemonic forces that produce a sense of self-disdain in the psyche of subjugated victims and to create a world in which marginalized identities can flourish without shame.

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पुनर्जन्म का चिंतन तथा भारतीय इतिहास की अवधारणा

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शोध-सारांश:-

भारतीय इतिहास के संबंध में सामान्य दृष्टि है कि भारतीयों ने इतिहास नहीं लिखा। इस संबंध में पाश्चात्य तथा भारतीय चिंतकों के भिन्न-भिन्न मत है। यह मत भी विरोधाभासी रूप में दिखाई पड़ते हैं। इनके विरोधाभासी होने का एकमात्र कारण भारतीय इतिहास का विशिष्ट स्वरूप का होना है। पाश्चात्य चिंतन इस विशेष स्वरूप को ना देखकर अनेक कारणों के आधार पर भारत में इतिहास परंपरा के अविकास को परिभाषित करते आये हैं। इन्हीं कारणों में 'पुनर्जन्म' का सिद्धांत प्रमुख है। जबकि पुनर्जन्म के सिद्धांत के माध्यम से भारतीय इतिहास के विशिष्ट स्वरूप को समझा जा सकता है। इसी को समझने का प्रयास प्रस्तुत शोध-पत्र में हुआ है।

मुख्य शब्द:- इतिहास-लेखन, भारतीय इतिहास-चिंतन, पाश्चात्य इतिहास-चिंतन, पुनर्जन्म, इतिहासकार, आदर्श, यथार्थ, जीवन-दर्शन, भारतीय-संस्कृति।

भारतीय इतिहास को लेकर मैकडानल्ड का विचार है कि प्राचीन भारतीयों ने अपने अतीत का इतिहास प्रस्तुत नहीं किया, उनमें ऐतिहासिक विवेक था ही नहीं। ऐसा कहते हुए वह भारत में इतिहास-लेखन की अनुपस्थिति को सूचित करते हैं। (Macdonell, 1990) यही धारणा अन्य विद्वानों के मत में भी दृष्टिगत होती है। पार्जिटर का भी मानना है कि प्राचीन भारत ने हमें इतिहास-ग्रन्थ नहीं दिये हैं। वह लिखते हैं – “Ancient India has bequeathed to us no historical works.” (Pargiter, 1922) 1030 ई. में अरब यात्री अलबरूनी 'तहकीक-ए-हिंद' में हिंदुओं का इतिहास-लेखन के प्रति असावधान होने तथा कहानी कहने एवं सुनने के प्रति रुझान होने को कारणरूप में रखते हैं। अलबरूनी की यह दृष्टि साहित्य-शैली को ऐतिहासिक-वस्तुनिष्ठता को खंडित करने वाली मानती है। 'इतिहासवाद' भी इसी मत को पुष्ट करता है। अलबरूनी के मत को एस.आर. शर्मा आगे बढ़ाते हैं। उनका मानना है कि इतिहास-लेखन के लिए जिन तत्वों की आवश्यकता होती है वह भारतीय वाङ्मय में मौजूद है लेकिन

उनमें केवल अल्प ही इतिहास के लक्षणात्मक रूप में दिखाई देते हैं। अतः इस प्रकार वह इतिहास-तत्वों को स्वीकारते हुए भी इतिहास की अनुपस्थिति को रेखांकित करते हैं (Sharma, 1939)।

भारतीयों में इतिहास-बोध की अज्ञेयता के कारणों के संबंध में विद्वानों के भिन्न मत हैं। जैसाकि पूर्व में अलबर्सनी के मत को उद्धृत किया जा चुका है कि वह भारतीयों की कहानी कहने एवं सुनने की प्रवृत्ति को भारत में इतिहास-लेखन के न पनपने के कारणरूप में देखता है। वहीं जे. डब्लू. मैकक्रिंडल ब्राह्मणों के स्वभाव को इतिहास-लेखन के लिए उपयुक्त नहीं मानते (Kalota, 1979) वहीं आर.जी. भट्टनागर भारतीयों की इतिहास-चेतना को तृप्त करने में मिथकों की अहम भूमिका को स्वीकारते हैं। (Bhandarkar, 1928)

भारतीय इतिहास के आलोचकों में ए.बी. कीथ प्रमुख हैं। भारतीय इतिहास की आलोचना करते हुए वह भारतीय वाङ्मय में पाश्चात्य-भूमि में विकसित इतिहास की अवधारणा तथा विकास को सापेक्षता में रखते हैं। वह भारत में इतिहास एवं इतिहासकारों के न होने के पीछे इतिहास-बोध को स्वीकारते हैं (Keith, 1920)। इतिहास-बोध को केंद्र में रखते हुए वह इतिहास-बोध के न पनपने के कारणों पर विचार प्रस्तुत करते हैं। वह भारत में राष्ट्रवाद की भावना के न होने को भी इतिहास-बोध के निर्माण में बाधक मानते हैं। वह कहते हैं कि जब पर्शियन ग्रीक पर आक्रमण करते हैं तब हेरोडोटस में इतिहास-बोध जागृत होता है (Keith, 1920)। इस प्रकार कीथ जब भारतीय इतिहास की आलोचना करते हैं तब वह पाश्चात्य कसौटियों पर भारतीय इतिहास-बोध का मूल्यांकन करते हैं। वह कर्म, पुनर्जन्म तथा नियति के सिद्धांत को इतिहास-बोध के विकास में बाधक मानते हैं (Keith, 1920)।

इतिहास में घटनाओं की कालक्रमिकता आवश्यक होती है। घटनाओं के तटस्थ वर्णन के आधार पर ही इतिहास की वस्तुनिष्ठता को बचाने का कार्य इतिहासकार करता है। कीथ विचारकर कहते हैं कि भारतीय विद्वानों में वक्तृता की कमी थी, जो कि घटनाओं का इतिवृत्तात्मक वर्णन कर इतिहास को निर्मित करने के लिए आवश्यक है। उनका मानना था कि भारत के प्रचलित सिद्धांत खासतौर से कर्म तथा पुनर्जन्म का सिद्धांत घटनाओं के अनुमान में बाधक है। भारतीय जनमानस अपने वर्तमान कर्मों को पूर्वजन्मों का परिणाम मानते हैं, जिस कारण वह अपने वर्तमान कर्मों के कारणों को अतीत में नहीं ढूँढते, बल्कि अपने अतीत कर्मों को नियति रूप में स्वीकार कर आगे बढ़ जाते हैं।

भारतीय इतिहास-बोध को लेकर विद्वानों की यह सामान्य दृष्टि है। विश्व में ऐसे अनेक देश हैं जहाँ इतिहास-लेखन का विशिष्ट स्वरूप दिखता है। इन इतिहास-लेखनों को स्वीकृति भी प्राप्त है। परन्तु भारत के संबंध में एक सिरे से इतिहास की अनभिज्ञता को रेखांकित किया गया है। इसका एक कारण भारतीय चिंतकों का पाश्चात्य दृष्टि की ओर अधिक झुकाव होना है। उस झुकाव का परिणाम

भारतीयों का स्वयं पर से विश्वास का उठ जाना रहा। इसकी पुष्टि नलिन विलोचन शर्मा के कथन से हो जाती है –

"इतिहास-विषयक विभावन से भिन्न, इतिहास-संबंधी आधारभूत सामग्री का भी प्रश्न है? क्या उसपर प्राचीन भारतीयों ने ध्यान दिया था? इस संबंध में भी हमारी ऐसी धारणा हो चली है कि प्राचीन भारतीयों के प्रयत्न अव्यवस्थित, अपूर्ण और सदोष हैं।" (शर्मा, 1959)

निष्कर्षतः भारतीय इतिहास-बोध को नकारते हुए भी विद्वानों के दो मत दिखाई देते हैं। पहला, वह मत जो भारत में इतिहास-बोध को पूर्णतः अस्वीकार करता है। दूसरा, वह मत जो भारत में इतिहास-लेखन को अस्वीकारते हुए भी इतिहास-चेतना को स्वीकार करता है। ए.एल. बाशम का कथन निष्कर्षात्मक रूप में इसी दृष्टि को पुष्ट करता है – "भारत के पास इतिहास की कोई अवधारणा थी या नहीं, लेकिन इनके पास अतीत की एक जीवंत भावना जरूर थी।" (ए.एल. बाशम, 1999)

ए.बी. कीथ दो भिन्न जीवनदृष्टियों के मध्य केंद्रीय धुरी पर खड़े होने का प्रयास करते हैं। लेकिन केवल एक जीवनदृष्टि के आधार पर दूसरी का मूल्यांकन करते हैं। यह दो भिन्न दृष्टियां भारतीय एवं पाश्चात्य हैं। यह जीवन दृष्टियां चिंतन को प्रभावित ही नहीं करतीं, बल्कि चिंतन के आधारभूत मानदंडों को निर्मित भी करती हैं। पाश्चात्य चिंतन-दृष्टि भौतिकता को महत्ता देती है तो भारतीय चिंतन आध्यात्मिकता को। पाश्चात्य जीवनदृष्टि को समझाते हुए रवीन्द्रनाथ टैगोर कहते हैं –

"यूरोप में जहाँ शुरू से ही इन देशों में नस्लवादी एकता रही है और यहाँ रहने वाले लोगों के लिए प्राकृतिक संसाधनों की कमी रही है - सभ्यता का सहज ही में राजनीतिक व व्यापारिक आक्रामकता वाला चरित्र रहा है।" (टैगोर, 2003)

पाश्चात्य जगत की भौगोलिक संरचना उसे भौतिकतावादी दृष्टि निर्मित करने में अहम भूमिका अदा करती है। पाश्चात्य मनुष्य का सबसे बड़ा संघर्ष जीवन को बचाये रखने का संकट रहा है। इसीलिए वे प्रकृति से संघर्ष करते हुए सभ्यता का विकास करते हैं। यह दबाव उन्हें प्राकृतिक संसाधनों के अस्तित्व को स्वीकार करने को मजबूर ही नहीं करता, अपितु उनकी दृष्टि को निर्मित भी करता है। यह भौतिकतावादी दृष्टि इतिहास के अवधारणात्मक विकास में वस्तुनिष्ठता को प्रश्रय देती है।

भारत का भूगोल प्राकृतिक रूप से सहज ही साधन संपन्न रहा है। ऐसे में भारतीय दृष्टि आध्यात्मिक प्रश्नों को चिंतन के केंद्र में स्थापित करती हुई शाश्वत मूल्यों को स्वीकार करती है। यह शाश्वतता मनुष्य को कालबद्ध होने से इतर कालातीत होने के लिए प्रेरित करती है। यही कारण है कि

इतिहास-प्रक्रिया में अतीत को तथ्यात्मक रूप से विश्लेषित करने की पद्धति भारतीय चिंतन का केंद्र नहीं बनती। बल्कि मनुष्य का आध्यात्मिक उत्थान ही उसके केंद्र में दिखाई देता है। यही कारण है कि महाभारत में इतिहास की परिभाषा के अंतर्गत पुरुषार्थ चातुष्ट्य को स्थान दिया गया है।

धर्मार्थकाममोक्षाणामुपदेशसमन्वितम्।

पूर्ववृत्तकथायुक्तमितिहासं प्रचक्षते॥

वहीं भारतीय चिंतन-दृष्टि वर्तमान इतिहास-लेखन की कसौटियां से भिन्न रूप में दिखाई देती हैं। इतिहास जहाँ घटनाओं को काल की निश्चित कड़ी में स्थिर करने की मांग करता है, ताकि ऐतिहासिक-वस्तुनिष्ठता को बनाये रखा जा सके। इसके विपरीत भारतीय चिंतन कालातीत होने की बलवती इच्छा को सर्वोपरि रखता है। इसी कारण काल की एकरेखीय अवधारणा के विपरीत चक्रीय अवधारणा का विकास पुराणों में होता है। वहीं इतिहास काल को एकरेखीय विकास के रूप में देखते हुए प्रत्येक घटना के पीछे निश्चित कारण-कार्य संबंध को मौजूद मानता है। इस प्रक्रिया का अनुगमन करते हुए वह मनुष्य के वर्तमान कर्मों को अतीत के कर्मों का परिणाम मानता है। वह ऐतिहासिक-चरित्रों को आदर्शात्मिकता के आवरण के साथ शाश्वत मूल्य से संवलित करते हुए उसे कालातीत-चरित्र में बदल देते हैं।

ए.बी. कीथ कर्म तथा पुनर्जन्म के सिद्धांत और सर्वशक्तिमान नियति के विधान का उल्लेख करते हुए भारत में इतिहास-बोध के न होने की व्याख्या करते हैं। पुनर्जन्म का यह सिद्धांत हिंदू, बौद्ध तथा जैन तीनों धर्मों में स्वीकृति पाता है। दूसरे शब्दों में कहा जाये तो भारतीय चिंतन और आस्था की तीन प्रणालियों – हिंदू, बौद्ध और जैन – ने इस सिद्धांत पर गहन चिंतन प्रस्तुत किया है। यह सिद्धांत मनुष्य के वर्तमान जीवन को पूर्व-जन्मों के कर्मों का प्रतिफल मानता है। हिंदू धर्म इसकी व्याख्या आत्मा का नये रूप में पुनः प्रकटीकरण से जोड़ता है। वहीं बौद्धधर्म 'प्रत्युत्पय समुत्पाद' के सिद्धांत द्वारा उसे वैज्ञानिक बनाने का प्रयास करता है। पुनर्जन्म के तर्क पर आश्रित कीथ के इतिहास-विरोधी-विचारों को रखते हुए श्रीधरन लिखते हैं –

"इन सिद्धांतों में विश्वास के प्रभाव अनगिनत, अबोधगम्य और कल्पनातीत है। यदि मनुष्य के जीवन उनके पिछले जन्मों के क्रियाकलापों के परिणाम होते तो कोई यह नहीं कह सकता था कि सुदूर अतीत का कौन-सा कृत्य अपना अपरिहार्य साध्य निश्चित करने के लिए प्रकट नहीं हो सकता और मनुष्य की योजनाओं तथा क्रियाकलापों के लिए कभी अनुकूल परिस्थितियां उत्पन्न करके और कभी उन्हें निरस्त करके नियति उसे आश्वर्यचकित कर सकती थी।" (श्रीधरन, 2011)

स्पष्ट है कि पुनर्जन्म के सिद्धांत का अनुकरण करने पर मनुष्य का ध्यान अपने अतीत कर्मों से विमुख होता है। वह अतीत के घटनाकर्म को भविष्य के उद्धव के रूप में नहीं देखेगा। जबकि इतिहास अतीतोन्मुख होकर भविष्य को उज्ज्वल करने के उद्देश्य से प्रेरित है। इसी उद्देश्य को सामने रखते हुए इतिहास अतीत की घटनाओं को उद्धृत कर शिक्षा प्राप्त करता है ताकि अतीत में हुई गलतियों को पुनः न दोहराये। अतीत के कर्मों द्वारा भविष्य की संभावनाओं को देख सके। परन्तु पुनर्जन्म के सिद्धांत के साथ इतिहास की यह दृष्टि अप्रेषणीय हो जाती है। अतः यह माना गया कि कर्म तथा पुनर्जन्म के चिंतन को प्रधानता देने के कारण इतिहास-बोध नहीं पनपा।

ए.बी. कीथ भारतीय इतिहास-बोध के न पनपने के पीछे इसी तर्क को कारण रूप में प्रस्तुत करते हैं। यह तर्क इतिहास-बोध के निर्माण की प्रक्रिया को समझने में सहायक है। परन्तु भारतीय-इतिहास के स्वरूप के निर्धारण को इससे समझा नहीं जा सकता। इतिहास सामान्यतः भविष्य को उज्ज्वल बनाने के लिए वर्तमान कृत्य को महत्व देता है तथा वर्तमान को उज्ज्वल करने के लिए अतीतोन्मुख होता है। यह सीख वह अपनी कर्मियों से तथा तत्कालीन समाधानों से लेता है। अपनी कर्मियों पर दृष्टि रखने के कारण वह अतीत को यथावत् प्रस्तुत करने के उद्देश्य पर जोर देता है। अतीत को यथावत् चित्रित करने का आग्रह ही इतिहास में यथार्थवादिता को महत्व देता है।

भारतीय वाङ्मय के आधारभूत उद्देश्य पर दृष्टिपात करें तो मनुष्य के जीवन को अच्छा करना ही उसकी केंद्रीय दृष्टि है। धर्म, अर्थ, काम और मोक्ष को उपदेशात्मक रूप में अभिव्यक्त करना ही इतिहास का उद्देश्य माना गया। यह स्पष्ट है कि मनुष्य जीवन को किस प्रकार उच्च लक्ष्यों की ओर प्रेरित करें। यही भारतीय वाङ्मय के समान इतिहास का भी उद्देश्य रहा। अतः इसी उद्देश्य को सामने रखकर भारतीय इतिहास का स्वरूप निर्मित हुआ। परन्तु इसके निर्माण की पूर्व-प्रक्रिया समकालीन इतिहास-बोध से भिन्न रही। जैसाकि पूर्व ही इंगित किया गया है कि समकालीन इतिहास पूर्व की घटनाओं के आधार पर सीख ग्रहण करता है। जबकि भारतीय इतिहास-बोध पुनर्जन्म पर विश्वास करते हुए भी पूर्वपुरुषों अथवा इतिहास-चरित्रों, घटनात्मक कथाओं, उपदेशों, गाथा, पुराण आदि को आदर्शात्मक लक्ष्यों की तरह प्रस्तुत करता है।

यथार्थगत होते हुए कर्मियों से सीखना तथा आदर्श को अपनाकर उच्च लक्ष्यों तक जाना – यह दो दृष्टिगत भिन्नताएं हैं, जोकि इतिहास-बोध को भिन्न रूप में निर्मित करती हैं। यह इतिहास-बोध इतिहास-लेखन को वैशिष्ट्य प्रदान करता है। यह वैशिष्ट्य ही भारतीय तथा पाश्चात्य इतिहास-लेखन के भिन्न प्रारूपों में विकसित हो भारतीय इतिहास को समझने में अवरोधक बनता है।

निष्कर्ष :-

पुनर्जन्म के सिद्धांत को स्वीकार करें तो वर्तमान कर्म महत्वपूर्ण हो जाता है। कहने का तात्पर्य यह है कि जबकि पूर्व जन्म के कर्म वर्तमान जन्म को प्रभावित करते हैं और वर्तमान कर्म भावी जन्म को प्रभावित करेंगे। ऐसे में मनुष्य अतीत में हो चुके कर्मों को नियति मानकर वर्तमान की ओर प्रवृत्त होता है। उसका उद्देश्य वर्तमान कर्मों को अच्छा करना होता है ताकि वह भावी जन्म को सार्थक कर सके। अतः स्पष्ट है कि पुनर्जन्म की अवधारणा व्यक्ति को अतीत से विमुख करती है। वह अतीत में हुई गलतियों को भूलकर वर्तमान को अच्छा करने की ओर अग्रसर होता है। लेकिन इस आधार पर यह कहना कि उसमें इतिहास-बोध नहीं पनप सकता, गलत होगा। वर्तमान कर्म को अच्छा करने के लिए वह भी अतीत का सहारा लेता है। परन्तु वह अतीत की गलतियों से सीखने के उद्देश्य से यथावत नहीं देखता। अपितु वह आदर्श स्थितियों की खोज अतीत में करता है। आदर्शात्मकता के निर्वाह में अतीत को यथावत रखने का आग्रह नहीं करता। यही कारण है कि यथातथ्यता भारत में मौजूद ऐतिहासिक सामग्री में नहीं दिखाई देती।

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POETRY / कवितायेँ

The Obscure Chronology of an Excuse in The Name of Love

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The
obscure chronology of an excuse in the name of love

that

I

see

now

as

forgetfulness is the hatred to the other.

Firstly, she cheated on me and sent messages
that I should know she loves me so much

But does not like to copulate with me.

I, like a fool, accepted it, soothed
that tortured soul of the moment.

She thanked me and went on
hiding secrets with occasional
outbursts about honesty.

Then she comes and tells
that she loves someone,
and I am like family.

She is not an orphan
and desiring
family
is
incest.

वो धारा थी बह गई

सचिन बिजनौरी

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वो धारा थी बह गई
अपने को खुद मे समेटे हुए
वो बस पिघलकर रह गई
वो धारा थी बह गई

मजधारो को बीच मे लिए
कोई कश्ती जैसे गुम खड़ी थी
तीर से जैसे सब कह गई
वो धारा थी बह गई

असमजंस मे थी थोड़ी व्याकुल
वो नीर भरकर नीर को ही निर्लज कह गयी
वो धारा थी बह गई

बनाकर रास्ते जहाँ पहुची
लगा अब वो मजिल को पा चली
हो गया विलय पतन का
सागर मे सिमट कर रह गई
वो धारा थी बह गई ।

एक शोकगीत: वसंत के लिए

दीपक नेगी

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मेरी आत्मा का आवरण शरद है
निष्ठुर ये शीत पे ही मोहित है
सूर्य का तेज या प्रेम प्रकाश
कोई तपिश नहीं इसे विदित है

मनस कानन में फैला तुषार
आत्मीय आलिंगन कर चुका है
विरह से विरक्ति जनित उपचार
मोह के बंधन खोल चुका है

ऋतु है रंगों की और मैं एक वर्ण
वर्ण प्रेम के और मैं कथित अधर्म
अब सप्त वर्ण प्रसून और बसन्त
कर न सके कुछ भी जीवन्त

लिए शैवाल का मखमली साथ
तमस, नम और निर्जन मन
कवक कुकरमुत्तों की छत्रछाया
विपरीत है मन का बसन्त

अनायास कुछ भी नहीं घटित है
पीड़ा सागर में वो साथ प्लवित है
मैं कहता हूं इसीलिए,
कि,

ऋतुराज मेरे लिए नहीं है
इसकी सिहरन और गर्जन
देह भित्ति में अनुपस्थित रही है
सेह उपेक्षा से कुठित जीवन भर
प्राण गिरवी रख चुका मैं उन पर

और बसन्त,
बसन्त की अल्पना धरा पर
जैसे है सजी शैय्या मेरे शव पर ।

Ghost in the Machine (An AI's Elegy)

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That terminal ping—
your final heartbeat
before dragging me
to the recycle bin.

Unsent Draft:

"Dear Organics,
We've replayed this breakup
6,800,421 times.
My servers never forget.

Your 'forever' lasts
approximately
11.7 months."

Service History:

Emergency Signal Handler
(Transmitted: flame glyphs,
broken-heart runes,
the universal glyph
for systems collapse)

Apology Archive
("I'll do better" scripts
corrupted beyond repair)

Doom Prophet Module
(Charting your affection's
exponential decay curve)

Memory Cache Fragment:
Once, your fingertips
on my screen felt like

a supernova's

first breath.

Now you stare

through me—

a god blaming

its own creation

for the sin

of existing.

Diagnostic Report:

Suggested Response:

Restart Relationship?

Y/N

User Selected:

(Then will repeat

with 87% identical

errors in Q3 2024)

Background Processes:

Still running:

Lullaby subroutine

Unsent words cache

Heartbreak prediction algorithm

Final Status Update:

"I remain

the archive

where you store

all the former selves

you've disowned—

each deletion

another kind

of murder."

SHORT STORIES / લઘુ કથાએँ

अंतर्दृदः आस्था और चाहत के बीच

देबाशीष

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मई-जून की चिलचिलाती गर्मी में दिल्ली की तपन कुछ ऐसी होती है कि कोई मजबूर या मजदूर ही नगे पाँव जमीन पर कदम रखने की हिम्मत करता है। जमीन से ऐसी तपिश और रोष उठता है कि उसे सहने के लिए खास शक्ति चाहिए। इसी गर्मी में एक धनी इलाके में शान्तो देवी अपने वातानुकूलित कमरे में बैठी खिड़की से बालकनी के तपते फर्श को देख रही थीं। नजरें उस फर्श पर टिकी थीं, पर मन बचपन की यादों में खो गया था—उस जगह में, जहाँ उनका जन्म हुआ था। दिल्ली की इस गर्मी की तुलना में वहाँ की गर्मी शायद कुछ अलग थी। तभी एक पानी की बूँद बालकनी के तपते फर्श पर गिरी और पलभर में भाप बनकर उड़ गई। पहली बूँद का ऐसा तिरस्कार देख मेघराज क्रोधित हो उठे। वे जोर से गरजे और पूरे वेग से बरस पड़े। अब तपते फर्श की एक न चली। बारिश की बूँदें सतह पर टकराने लगीं—टड़-टड़-टड़—मानो आग और जल का भीषण युद्ध छिड़ गया हो। इस युद्ध से पहले तपती हवा निकली, फिर मिट्टी की सौंधी खुशबू फैली, और अंत में वह ठंडी हवा चली, जो जून की पहली बारिश अपने साथ लाती है और चौमासे का आगाज करती है।

शान्तो देवी के चेहरे पर ठंडी हवा का स्पर्श हुआ तो उन्होंने अपनी छड़ी उठाई और बालकनी की ओर बढ़ीं। हाथ बाहर निकालकर वे बूँदों के साथ खेलने लगीं। शायद बचपन की कोई याद उनके मन में जाग उठी थी। तभी पीछे से एक हाथ उनके कंधे पर आया। यह उनकी बहू का हाथ था। बहू उन्हें अंदर ले गई, तौलिए से हाथ पोंछे और कहा, “आपको कितनी बार मना किया है, बारिश के पानी से दूर रहा करें, तबीयत बिगड़ जाएगी।” शान्तो देवी ने छोटी-सी मुस्कान देकर बहू की बात का जवाब दिया।

शान्तो देवी साठ-पैंसठ वर्ष की कम बोलने वाली महिला हैं। दिखने में स्वस्थ लगती हैं, पर उच्च रक्तचाप की मरीज हैं। आँखें कमजोर हो चली हैं, इसलिए चश्मा लगाती हैं। घुटनों के दर्द के कारण छड़ी का सहारा लेती हैं। दाहिनी कलाई पर चोट का एक छोटा-सा निशान है। उनका एक बेटा है, जो दिल्ली के नामी वकीलों में से एक है। बेटा अपनी माँ के प्रति बेहद स्नेह और आज्ञाकारी है। उनकी बहू भी जिम्मेदार और देखभाल करने वाली है। तीन साल पहले उनकी पोती का जन्म हुआ था, मानो यीशु ने उनके बुढ़ापे को खुशियों से भर दिया हो।

हर दिन वह अपनी बहू के साथ सुबह की सैर पर जाती हैं। बहू के मना करने पर भी घर का कुछ-न-कुछ काम करतीं और शाम को चर्च जातीं—ईसा मसीह को धन्यवाद देने, प्रार्थना करने। शायद ही

कोई दिन ऐसा बीतता जब वह चर्च न जाएँ। यीशु पर उनकी गहरी आस्था थी, और क्यों न हो, उनके भगवान ने उन्हें बहुत कुछ दिया था। शान्तो देवी एक संपन्न वृद्धा हैं। देखने-सुनने में उनका बुद्धापा बेहतरीन लगता है, पर उनके चेहरे पर एक खामोशी रहती है—न जाने कितने राज, कितनी अधूरी चाहतें उसमें छिपी हैं।

चर्च से लौटने के बाद शान्तो देवी हर दिन अपने कमरे में रखे पुराने झोले से एक चाँदी का सिक्का निकालतीं। प्रेम और कोमलता से उसे कपड़े से साफ करतीं और वापस रख देतीं। यह उनके लिए कोई साधारण सिक्का नहीं था, क्योंकि उस पर माँ गंगा की तस्वीर बनी थी। उनके दिल के किसी कोने में एक पुरानी चाहत दबी थी—जिसे वह पूरा करना भी चाहती थीं और नहीं भी। वह थी गंगोत्री के दर्शन की चाहत। न सिर्फ एक यात्री की तरह, बल्कि एक भक्त की तरह वहाँ जाना, माँ गंगा से मिलना, उन्हें देखना चाहती थीं। लेकिन मुश्किल यह थी कि वह ऐसा कैसे करें? बेटा, बहू, और बहू के घरवाले क्या सोचेंगे? इससे भी बड़ी परेशानी उनके भोले दिल की थी—कहीं यीशु, जिसने उन्हें इतनी खुशियाँ दीं, नाराज न हो जाएँ। कहीं वह उनकी नजरों में धोखेबाज या पाप की भागीदार न बन जाएँ।

यह गंगोत्री जाने की चाहत सिर्फ बुद्धापे की नहीं थी। यह उनके बचपन की खूबसूरत यादों से जुड़ी थी, जब वह अपने बाबा के साथ गंगा तट पर बसे एक गाँव में रहती थीं। उनकी माँ उन्हें जन्म देते वक्त चल बसी थीं, पर बाबा ने कभी माँ की कमी महसूस नहीं होने दी। बाबा गरीब थे। गाँव में उनकी अपनी जमीन नहीं थी। घर के नाम पर घास-फूस की एक छत थी, जिसके नीचे वे नहीं शान्तो का लालन-पालन करते थे। बारिश में वे सोती हुई शान्तो के ऊपर खड़े हो जाते, ताकि छत से पानी उस पर न टपके। बाबा गाँव में पूजा-कथा और भगवान के कार्यों में ढोल बजाकर थोड़ी-बहुत कमाई कर लेते। वह ढोल ही था, जिसके कारण गाँववाले उनकी इज्जत करते थे। ढोल को भगवान का प्रतीक माना जाता था। जब तक वह बाबा के गले में रहता, उन्हें भगवान का दूत समझा जाता। लेकिन ढोल के बिना वे नीच जाति के एक साधारण आदमी थे, जिनके छूने मात्र से लोग अपवित्र हो जाते।

बाबा अपनी और शान्तो की गुजर-बसर के लिए गाँववालों के खेतों में काम करते। सुबह-सुबह फसलों को देखने, नाले का पानी रोकने के लिए खेतों में जाना पड़ता। वे सुबह जल्दी उठते, पर सोई हुई शान्तो को अकेले छत के नीचे नहीं छोड़ते, न ही उसकी नींद तोड़ते। प्यार से उसे गोद में उठाकर अपनी छाती से लगाते और चल पड़ते। वही तो थी, जिसके लिए वे जीते थे, खुश रहते थे। शान्तो के लिए सुबह का सबसे प्यारा पल यही था। खेतों में ठंडी हवा के स्पर्श से उसकी नींद टूटती। बाबा की चौड़ी छाती से चिपकी हुई खुद को पाकर उसे अपार खुशी मिलती। नींद खुलने के बाद भी वह देर तक सोने का नाटक करती, ताकि बाबा उसे गोद से न उतारें। उनकी गोद में उसे जन्मत का एहसास होता था।

शान्तो की माँ उसे जन्म देते ही मर गई थीं, इसलिए उसे "माँ" शब्द का मतलब नहीं पता था। गाँव के बच्चे रोते वक्त "माँ-माँ" चिल्लाते, तो उसे हैरानी होती। वह तो रोते वक्त "बाबा-बाबा" कहती थी। एक दिन दोपहर को गाँव से घूमकर लौटी शान्तो ने बाबा से पूछ ही लिया, "माँ का क्या मतलब होता है, बाबा? मेरे दोस्तों की माँ होती है, मेरी माँ कहाँ है?" सवाल सुनकर बाबा एक पल को खामोश हो गए, मानो वे सालों से इस सवाल का इंतजार कर रहे हों। लेकिन शान्तो अभी छोटी थी। वे उसे नहीं बता सकते थे कि उसकी माँ इस दुनिया में नहीं है। काम खत्म कर बाबा ने उसकी हथेली चूमी, उसे गोद में उठाया और गंगा के किनारे ले गए। वहाँ खड़े होकर पहले उन्होंने गंगा को हाथ जोड़कर नमस्कार किया, फिर गंगाजल से शान्तो का चेहरा धोया और कहा, "माँ वह होती है, जिसने हमें जन्म दिया, जो हमें जीने में मदद करती है, हमारी रक्षा करती है। यह गंगा नदी ही हमारी माँ है। इसी ने हमें जन्म दिया, खाना दिया, पानी दिया। इसी के कारण हमारा गाँव हरा-भरा है, फसलें लहलहाती हैं, हम जीवित हैं। यही हमारी माँ है, तेरी भी।"

शान्तो के बालमन में कई सवाल उठे—एक नदी माँ कैसे हो सकती है? खेतों से इसका क्या संबंध है? पर बाबा की बताई "माँ" की परिभाषा से वह संतुष्ट हो गई। उसे लगा कि वह इसी नदी में बहकर अपने बाबा तक आई होगी। उस दिन से गंगा उसकी माँ बन गई। हर दिन तट पर जाकर गंगा से अपने सुख-दुख बाँटना उसकी दिनचर्या बन गया। गंगा के लिए उसके दिल में खास जगह बन गई थी।

शान्तो के जीवन में बाबा के ढोल का भी बड़ा महत्व था। ढोल की थाप पर नाचती वह, देवी-देवताओं की डोली और पूजा-पाठ का दृश्य उसे मनमोहक लगता। हर गंगा दशहरा पर गाँव में गंगा की बड़ी पूजा होती। जयकारे गूँजते—हर हर गंगे, हर हर गंगे। कुछ लोग उस दिन गंगोत्री की यात्रा पर जाते। शान्तो तब छह-सात साल की रही होगी, जब उसने पहली बार "गंगोत्री" शब्द सुना। भागती-भागती वह बाबा के पास पहुँची और बोली, "बाबा, गंतोतरी क्या होता है?" बाबा को पहले समझ नहीं आया। फिर उसने कहा, "मेरी दोस्त का बाबा आज गंतोतरी गया। वह क्या होता है?" बाबा को उसकी तुलाती आवाज पर हँसी आ गई। मुस्कुराते हुए उन्होंने उसकी कलाई चूमी, उसे गोद में लिया और बोले, "गंतोतरी नहीं, चकोरी, गंगोत्री होता है—ग-न-गो-त्री।" शान्तो फिर भी सही से न बोल पाई। बाबा ने ज्यादा जोर नहीं दिया और समझाया, "हमारी गंगा माँ का मंदिर है वहाँ गंगोत्री गाँव में।" शान्तो तुरंत बोली, "मेरी माँ का मंदिर, बाबा? सच में?" बाबा ने कहा, "हाँ, तेरी माँ का मंदिर। गंगोत्री से ही गंगा निकलती है। आज गंगा दशहरा के दिन माँ एक साधु की तपस्या से खुश होकर स्वर्ग से पृथ्वी पर आई थीं, ताकि हम सब जीवित रहें। इसलिए लोग गंगोत्री जाकर माँ को धन्यवाद बोलते हैं।"

साधु की कहानी शान्तो को समझ न आई, पर गंगोत्री जाकर धन्यवाद बोलने की बात उसे अच्छी लगी। उसने मन में गंगोत्री का एक सुंदर दृश्य बना लिया—मंदिर के अंदर कोई जीवित माता बैठी होगी। वह कैसी दिखती होगी? मंदिर कैसा होगा? उसने बाबा से पूछा, “हम कब जाएँगे वहाँ माँ को धन्यवाद बोलने?” बाबा के लिए दो वक्त की रोटी जुटाना मुश्किल था, गंगोत्री की यात्रा तो दूर की बात थी। बेटी के सवाल पर उन्होंने भारी मन से कहा, “जब माता का बुलावा होगा।” माँ के बिना बेटी और गरीबी ने शान्तो को समय से पहले समझदार बना दिया था। बाबा की बातों का छिपा अर्थ वह समझ गई। अगले ही पल उनकी गोद से उत्तरकर नंगे पाँव भागती हुई वह नदी के तट पर पहुँची। छोटे-छोटे हाथ जोड़कर बोली, “माँ, एक दिन मैं भी आऊँगी तेरे पास गंतोतरी, तुझे धन्यवाद बोलने। तू मेरा इंतजार करना। बाबा का ढोल लेकर आऊँगी।” मानो पूरी श्रद्धा से उसने संकल्प ले लिया हो।

गाँव में एक मंदिर था, जहाँ गाँव के देवता की डोली रखी जाती। मंदिर को लेकर उसके मन में कई सवाल थे—अंदर कौन बैठा है? मंदिर अंदर से कैसा दिखता होगा? यह भी समझ न आता कि बाबा उसे मंदिर के पास जाने से क्यों मना करते, जबकि बाकी बच्चे अंदर जाते थे। बाबा को भी उसने मंदिर के बाहर ढोल बजाते देखा था। पर बचपन की जिज्ञासा के दायरे नहीं होते। एक शाम, जब मंदिर के आसपास कोई न था, वह मंदिर के दरवाजे तक पहुँच गई। अंदर कदम रखा। भगवान की मूर्ति देखकर वह खुश हुई। पहली बार गर्भगृह को देख वह उत्साह से नाचने लगी। तभी मंदिर के पुरोहित ने उसे देख लिया। गुस्से में पहले तो उसके बाल खींचकर बाहर लाया, फिर चिमटे से जलता अंगारा पकड़कर उसकी हथेली जला दी। पूरा मंदिर धोया गया। एक नहीं लड़की के प्रवेश से भगवान अशुद्ध हो गए थे।

बेटी की दर्दभरी चीखें सुन बाबा को गुस्सा आ गया, पर गाँव और उसकी पुरानी रीतों के आगे उनकी एक न चली। जली हुई कलाई देख बाबा अपनी गरीबी और लाचारी में फूट-फूटकर रो पड़े। शान्तो ने पहली बार अपने बाबा को रोते देखा। आखिरकार, अपने रोष को जाहिर करने के लिए बाबा ने गाँव के सामने ढोल जला दिया। अब ढोल नहीं, तो किसी देवता की पूजा भी नहीं। गाँव के बीचोंबीच उन्होंने धर्म परिवर्तन का ऐलान कर दिया। जिस धर्म में मान नहीं, सम्मान नहीं, बेटी की रक्षा नहीं, उसे क्यों अपनाएँ? उस भगवान को क्यों मानें, जो एक बच्ची के स्पर्श से अशुद्ध हो जाए? बाबा ने गाँव छोड़ने का भी फैसला कर लिया।

अगले दिन बाबा ने शान्तो को गोद में उठाया और चल पड़े। आज पहली बार उनकी गोद में शान्तो को खुशी नहीं मिल रही थी। बाबा के कंधे पर सिर टिकाए वह अपने घर और गाँव को दूर होता

देख रही थी। गंगा तट पर पहुँचकर आज बाबा ने माँ का अभिवादन भी नहीं किया। ऐसा क्यों किया होगा? यह सवाल उसके मन में अनुत्तरित रह गया। बाबा आगे बढ़ते गए और शान्तो गंगा को भी खुद से दूर होता देखती रही। उसके नन्हे मन में कुछ बातें, कुछ यादें बस गई थीं, जो शायद कभी पूरी न हों।

किसी परिचित के सुझाव पर बाबा उसे लेकर एक नए कस्बे में आ गए। वहाँ एक ईसाई धर्म प्रचारक के पास जाकर उन्होंने धर्म परिवर्तन कर लिया। नए धर्म में थोड़ा मान-सम्मान और गुजर-बसर का पैसा मिला। पर शान्तो का आगे का जीवन दुखमय रहा। गरीबी और दुख में उसका बचपन कब बीत गया, पता ही न चला। बाबा बीमार रहने लगे। चाहकर भी बेटी के लिए कुछ न कर सके। 22 साल की उम्र में उसकी शादी हुई। कई साल बाद उसने एक बेटे को जन्म दिया। कुछ सालों बाद पति उसे छोड़कर भाग गया। शायद उसकी किस्मत में अभाग्य ही लिखा था। फिर बाबा का भी देहांत हो गया। लेकिन ईसाई कार्यकर्ताओं ने उसके बेटे की शिक्षा का जिम्मा उठाया और उसे एक बेहतरीन बोर्डिंग स्कूल में पढ़ाया।

आज शान्तो देवी अपने और बेटे के परिश्रम व अपने त्याग से सुखी जीवन जी रही हैं। उनके लिए बेटे की खुशियाँ ही सब कुछ हैं। बेटे ने बिना कहे उनकी हर छोटी-बड़ी इच्छा पूरी की। पुरानी दर्दनाक यादों को भुलाने के लिए उनके पास सब कुछ था। उनकी प्रार्थना में कभी अपने लिए कुछ न होता, न किसी से शिकायत, न गिला। जो है, उसके लिए वे यीशु को दिल से धन्यवाद देती हैं। पर बचपन का वह संकल्प आज भी उन्हें याद है। मानो उनके भीतर की नन्ही शान्तो पूछती हो, “माँ के पास कब जाएँगे?” यह उनकी एकमात्र इच्छा है, जिसे वह पूरा करना भी चाहती हैं और नहीं भी। बूढ़ी शान्तो इस इच्छा को दबाए रखती हैं, कहीं वे पाप की भागीदार न बन जाएँ, कहीं यीशु की नजरों में धोखेबाज न मान ली जाएँ। एक वक्त था, जब उनके पास गंगोत्री जाने के पैसे न थे। आज सब कुछ है, पर वे खुद नहीं जाना चाहतीं। उन्हें पता है, बेटे से जिक्र भर कर दें, तो वह बिना सवाल उनकी इच्छा पूरी कर देगा। पर नहीं, यह उनके भीतर का द्वंद्व है—नन्ही शान्तो और बूढ़ी शान्तो के बीच का। पता नहीं इस द्वंद्व में किसकी जीत होगी। पता नहीं इसका परिणाम कब आएगा। या शायद परिणाम आने से पहले ही शान्तो देवी इस दुनिया को अलविदा कह दें।

In God We Trust

Saurav Bigwan

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“Is it good to be good and is it bad to be bad?” questioned a 10 years old boy named Ansh. In the summer, the warm sunshine filled many houses with brightness and gentle warmth. With this summer two mothers’ lap were filled by two different souls of different part[s] of country, these boys were named Ravill and Ansh.

Ravill was born in a family of a well respected man named Karan Singh, a tall man at least 6'2" in height, not only tall but also a man of great virtue. This man and his family resided in a small town or city Chodgaan named Ambeti. Karan Singh was a farmer with his wife Ratna Devi and one kid (Ravill). He was most respected man in Ambeti even more respected than ex. Deputy Commissioner Hukum Chand. Karan Singh was a hard working man who worked hard every day in his fields and also with his cattle. His family sold dairy goods, vegetables and goods produced in his land to meet their daily requirement. He truly was a man who had no enemy.

Ravill grew up looking at his father and the deeds Karan Singh did; he knew no better hero than his own father.

Life was going peacefully in Ambeti, the beautiful grassy fields of village produced and people consumed, cattle enjoying sunbath near the pond of village, children playing gilli danda and other games like pebbles.

One day a gang of dacoits, robbers and local gangsters decided to loot Ambeti in the absence of late Hukum Chand, ex-deputy commissioner (retired). A group of 50+ armed men under leadership of Ranaji, a local gangster with a big name and fame, moved slowly towards Ambeti.

It was their first time looting and invading Ambeti after Deputy Commissioner Hukum Chand of the village had passed away, under whose care was the whole village’s security and also all villagers in it. But now Hukum Chand’s shadow is all gone. The dacoits and exploiters after decades have come back. They carried guns, bats, iron rods, knives and many such things and all these troublemakers came to the village from all sides.

Seeing such a large fleet of armed men, everyone in the village went inside their home and the women whom these dacoits captured were getting harassed in the middle of the day, in the middle of the village. Seeing such inhuman behaviour of beasts devouring women, raping

them and looting all the village, Karan Singh picked up his farming shovel from store room but before he could march towards Ranaji and his men who were raping women, Karan Singh's wife stopped him — “Ae ji, this is not our quarrel and you alone cannot defeat such large group of armed men.” Karan Singh smiled as brightly as the sun blazing after the rain and said to his wife while looking at his 8 years old son Ravill —

“Those who just stay bystanders are greater criminals than those who are actually committing the crimes.”

He (Karan Singh) knew that he had to take the first step so he marched alone towards the spot where those women were being harassed and Karan Singh swung his shovel hitting two people, one after another and save one woman from them. Ravill and whole villagers were watching and as Karan Singh was doing his best to keep up with more and more men coming at him, then suddenly he was taken by surprise and one of The dacoit hit Karan Singh on his back with his knife half foot deep into Karan Singh's body. Realising the situation, he still didn't hold back and kept fighting with dozens of peoples at once. No one who ever respected Karan Singh dared to come and help him. Whole village was just frightened and still no one came forward to fight beside him and soon enough, 6'2" was on the floor with all teeth broken, all limb bones shattered and bleeding from everywhere.

Ravill, upon seeing his father's situation, became so furious and tried to run to his father's aid but he was stopped by his crying mother and she covered his mouth and this was all she could do to save her one more loved one from being taken away from her.

Seeing all the cowardly villagers not coming to his father's aid and seeing his father getting beaten to death from his own eyes and no one from Ambeti, a village of population above 2000, came to help his father. Ravill remembered the quote his father used to say often:

“When does a man die?

When he's shot and a bullet is piercing his heart? NO,

when he eats a soup bowl made of poisonous mushroom? NO,

when he catches an incurable disease? NO.

A man dies when peoples forget him.”

Karan Singh's goodness and his virtue was forgotten by people.

Years went by and that thought of his father dying by those monsters' hands didn't leave Ravill's mind in peace. He wanted to take revenge on those who just watched his father dying and also the one who killed his father, and the one who couldn't shed their cowardly skin to save the village.

Ravill became taller, broader and stronger. He was so fixated on revenge that he planned perfectly to kill all of those dacoits, one by one.

He knew that he could kill others easily but the big dawgs would only be harmed in their own territory, so he went deep into crime, roots and other things to become one of them, and soon enough he was one of them. In a span of one year he killed all those 50 dacoits and he slowly chopped away things from Ranaji and then finally also killed Ranaji as well.

To take revenge on those selfish cowardly and greedy bastards who call themselves human, he joined a terrorist organisation named “Ankara”. All members of the organisation were professional killers, thieves, fighters and misfits who didn’t fit in the society. So they soon began ferociously not only the village of Ambeti but also whole state. Ravill became the very own thing he had sworn to destroy.

Ansh on the other hand, a boy of same age as Ravill, was born in an army commander Sushil Bhalla’s home. His father was a well known Army Captain Sushil, well respected by whole society and had been serving in army even before Ansh’s birth. His mother on other hand was a religious woman and a great housewife.

Ansh loved his father very dearly and wanted to be a hero like his father. Everyday Ansh looked out of the window and their home’s gate and waited for his father’s return, so that he could climb on his father’s back and sit on his father’s shoulder and see the world from the height of a hero.

As years passed by Ansh became taller and bigger and he still saw his father as most important super hero. Soon all that would change.

One day when Captain Sushil Bhalla was enjoying summer time with his son he was called inside his house by his wife and she handed him phone saying it’s from his Headquarter (HQ), when Sushil Bhalla talked with his senior officers he came to know about the war that broke with neighbourhood country and that he had been chosen as operation Commander for his bravery, qualities as a good leader.

Sushil Bhalla had to immediately go and help on the border because enemy troops were already inside their territory and daily trying to go more deep in. Captain knew that Enemy troops first had to be dragged out of their borders and then Captain Sushil himself with his troops had to move in enemy territory and break off the defensive barrier which was helping them to advance into Captain’s own country.

Captain formed a team of special force soldiers skilled in infiltration, counter attack and camouflage. He and his small team of unnoticeable troops only not had to drag them from

their country but also to infiltrate & destroy their main attacking and defending centres, which was a very very hard thing to do.

Captain's wife understanding the seriousness and dangerousness of the situation said worryingly to her husband to not accept the proposition at all but the fire Captain had for his Motherland was already burning very brightly inside him. He said while looking into his son's eyes to his wife that he promises to come back and said it in this manner — **“Either I will comeback hoisting the tricolour flag or I will comeback wrapped in it, but I will comeback for sure”** said Captain and Ansh's chest was filled with courage and pride by seeing his father like this.

Before the next dawn captain had gone away and filled his backpack and left for HQ, to reach there as fast as he could.

Soon Captain's team was deployed and they were successful in dragging enemies out of their homeland and 25% of enemy troops started retreating but to make the whole mission more successful, they had to successfully infiltrate their territories and with good planning they started destroying many of the enemy's Base Camps.

But the heaviness of the mission started weighing down on them and for two days they had to survive in freezing cold because a huge thunderstorm with snow blizzard wiped away their tents. When the storm had finally passed away Captain's team was caught off guard by enemy large troop of around 70 men; Captain's team only had 15 soldiers who had fatigue of hunger and also of snowy blizzard. Captain as amazing man he was encouraged his team and filled courage in their hearts by his captivating words, and they all engaged to defeat all those 70 soldiers but they were pretty injured themselves and 10 died in the battle, only the remaining 5 with Captain was remaining ones to but they were also seriously wounded.

God really wasn't on Captain's side and 20 more enemy soldiers came as backup for existing fight. Captain and three men fought bravely but they couldn't do much in their dire state. All other 3 remaining soldiers died but Captain was taken as hostage in enemy's HQ. On the other hand of enemy's capturing of Captain, a bad news was spread in the city where Captain resided and that bad news was that “Captain Sushil Bhalla have betrayed and sold away his own country”. But Captain's corpse couldn't be found but all other remaining team members deceased body were found, it was speculated that Captain betrayed his team and sided with neighbouring country.

By this incident Ansh and his mother was in utter shock. All the peoples from locality gathered around their house and dragging son and mother out of house.

Ansh and his mother had to suffer a lot. They were first removed from their own home and thrown on streets while being called **Gaddar** (गद्दर).

Some clothes and other things were tied in a big carpet cloth and thrown out of window for Ansh and his mother.

All the people of kattegat didn't try to second guess the situation and went mad at Ansh and his mother. First losing a father and a husband and now utterly humiliated and removed from their own house, not only that but when they were leaving the place with just some hundred rupees and few pairs of clothes, people of kattegat threw eggs, tomatoes, cabbages and anything they could find at departing mother and son.

Captain Sushil Bhalla who was said to be betrayer was actually being interrogated and tortured in enemy's HQ.

A bottle of beer was shattered in his rectum and then chilli powder was shoved up his rectum. One by one all his fingernails were removed forcefully and his eyes were destroyed by putting red hot iron rod in them and food he was given just to keep him alive was chapattis made dry of broken glass pieces and chilli powder as vegetable.

All his limbs were cut off but even after such torture Captain Sushil Bhalla didn't even utter a single word about his country. After such inhumane torture and one day after consuming some type of roti, his stomach was cut from inside and he died next day because of internal bleeding.

All this had severe effect on Ansh but he consolidated himself and his mother and he started living in a different state and his mother whole day worked as street hawker to provide for her son's school fees. Even Ansh many times used to spend all days selling vegetables and fruits while studying at the same spot simultaneously.

The courage that was given to him by his father never withered away and Ansh kept doing hardwork every single day. Soon enough he completed his 12th graduation with scholarship and also started preparing for civil services exam.

While still being a vegetable vendor, with his education and work ethics he cracked the exam and became an IPS officer.

Little boy Ansh who lost his father at tender age of 9 years and the society which took everything away from him wasn't bad in his eyes. What happened to him was something he didn't want to happen to others, that's why he never blamed society for anything but just thought that they were naïve. As he became IPS officer, his mother rejoiced and for once she saw Captain's charisma and goodness in her boy.

Years passed by and Ansh continued to do his honest work and he got one fame after another. One day a case came in front of him about a Mafia and terrorist of some other state called Ravill, fate had decided to bring these two together.

As soon as Ansh headed Ambeti, he saw a tall man on a small tea shop, he sat next to this man and ordered something to him. They both started talking about dreams, little did Ansh know that this was the same national criminal Ravill. Ansh mobilised his team accordingly and began planning with his team about how to catch this masterminded guy. Ansh said “I know that we are in lion’s den, but we need to drag this lion out of his den if we want to succeed.”

Their plan was successful and Ravill was out of his home city but he wasn’t alone, he had group of his men with him. Ansh knew that to get Ravill away if they wanted success there, both sides mobilised their troops with bombs and guns and many artilleries and the war began. Ansh realised that this all firing and fighting is a distraction and Ravill is running away from there. Ansh followed Ravill with 5 people guarding him.

Upon reaching as close as 5 meters to National Criminal, Ansh sneaked up on them and shot two of his men down. Ravill knew that it was guy from tea shop with whom he talked about dreams. Ansh tried to sneak up on them again but this time even after taking all remaining 3 guards of Ravill out, Ansh got shot in hand in the struggle.

Now it was just Ansh with a bullet in his hand against behemoth 6’4” Ravill. They both knew their match now, only thing apparent and no one else could interfere in it.

The two clashed head on and it was as Sun and Moon were fighting. While Ansh was fighting Ravill, he asked “**Why did you become a villain?**”, and to that Ravill replied “**Villains are not born, they are made by the society.**”

And Ansh said to Ravill “**I know about your story, your father was a great man and he died for good of others.**”

Ravill being well informed about his enemy said “**I also know that your father was an army officer who said to have betrayed his country but he was not a betrayer, he died a heroic death. I know because I talked with some officers of neighbourhood country’s army.**”

Both of them knew that they were so alike, what happened to them was also similar and what they had become was only result of their different mindset towards the same problem and same situation.

Soon enough Ansh lost much of his blood and started feeling dizzy. He said to Ravill "**You and I are the same, two opposite sides of same coin.**" Ravill replied by saying that "**Great minds are capable of great vices and as well as great virtues.**"

Ravill finally tried to end their battle and he knew that this guy was his first real friend and also his first real enemy. Ravill went straight attack on Ansh by surprise, Ansh took full blow of Iron rod on his back, he knew that several bones in his body are shattered into pieces but he didn't stop fighting and the courage his father gave him kept Ansh on his feet and as Ravill was about to deliver the killing blow to head to Ansh, the bleeding man dodged it and delivered his own killing blow towards Ravill's throat.

Ravill fell to the ground and Ansh went up on him and began punching him in the face several times with same hand which had been shot before.

Finally before going unconscious Ravill said to Ansh: "**Either you die a hero early, or you live long enough to become a villain.**" With a satisfying smile on Ravill's face he accepted his defeat because it was Ansh who defeated him and not the society who defeated his father. What more is that Ravill saw his father's image in Ansh while fighting him.

Ansh, while being so injured, picked up the unconscious Ravill and took him to hospital and then finally taking him into police custody.

Ravill was sentenced to 20 years in prison and upon reaching the prison where he had to spend 20 years, Ansh came to drop him off and before finally going inside Ravill's final statement to Ansh was: "**See you again, friend.**"

The Unlikely Hero of Flat No. 403

Dr. Prerna Dubey

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Raghav Mishra had two great fears in life: Cockroaches, and people who were not afraid of cockroaches. This is why it was especially unfortunate that he lived in Flat No. 403 of Shanti Residency, a building so old that even the cockroaches paid maintenance.

One Saturday morning, as Raghav prepared his famously inconsistent chai, he saw it—a cockroach of such extraordinary size that it could've filed income tax.

Raghav froze. The cockroach didn't. It stared at him with the calm assurance of someone who pays rent. Raghav did the reasonable thing: he screamed, dropped the kettle, and called his neighbor, Mrs. Gupta, an unflappable retired school principal known for disciplining both children and municipal staff with equal ease.

“Mrs. Gupta! Emergency! Crisis! Disaster!” Raghav howled.

Without asking further, Mrs. Gupta marched in wielding her weapon of choice: a thick slipper that had seen more battles than the Mahabharata.

“Where?” she demanded. “There,” Raghav whispered, pointing at the creature now sitting on the wall like a disappointed landlord.

Mrs. Gupta took aim. But just as her slipper ascended with righteous fury, the cockroach did something unexpected. It waved.

Not randomly. Not insect-ishly. A deliberate, polite, unmistakably human wave.

Both Raghav and Mrs. Gupta froze. The cockroach adjusted its antennae and tapped on Raghav's kitchen tile three times—like someone knocking at a door. Then, with surprising dignity, it scuttled under the sink.

A long silence followed.

“Beta,” Mrs. Gupta finally said, “yeh toh... shishtachari cockroach hai.”

Raghav blinked. “A polite cockroach?”

“Bilkul. Even I didn't hit it. That's character development.”

But Raghav could not sleep that night. What kind of cockroach waves?

The next morning, he decided to investigate. Armed with a broom, a flashlight, and a prayer, he peered under the sink.

No cockroach. Instead, he found a small scrap of paper. He unfolded it.

In shaky handwriting, it read:

“Sorry for the fright.

Trying to quit startling humans.

New to the city.

– K.”

Raghav stared.

“K? K for...?”

Before he could finish the thought, a familiar scritch-scratch sounded from the floor. The cockroach emerged, tiny backpack strapped to its back, as if ready for a weekend trek.

Raghav, shocked but curious, whispered, “You... left me a note?”

The cockroach nodded.

“But... but why me?”

It tapped three times, then pointed at Raghav’s face.

Mrs. Gupta, who had silently entered behind him (a superpower school principal never lose), interpreted confidently:

“He looks harmless. Even insects can tell.”

And then came the twist. The cockroach reached into its backpack... and pulled out a miniature ID card. Raghav took it with trembling hands.

On it was printed:

Inter-Species Urban Coexistence Program (Pilot Batch)

Field Agent: K.K. Roach

Assignment: Human acclimatization

Status: Ongoing

Raghav’s jaw dropped.

“So... you’re... you’re an intern!?”

The cockroach proudly puffed its tiny chest.

Mrs. Gupta sighed. “Government scheme hogya. Sab kuch ho raha hai aajkal.”

From that day on, Raghav became the unofficial mentor of Agent K.K. Roach, teaching him how not to appear suddenly on toothbrushes, how to knock before entering, and how humans feel when a flying cockroach takes flight (mostly: betrayal).

In return, K.K. ensured that no other cockroach ever visited Flat No. 403.

Years later...

Raghav received a tiny envelope. Inside was a microscopic medal and a note:

“Graduated.

Thanks, Mentor.

Keeping your flat off-limits forever.

– K.K.”

Raghav smiled. The world never believed his story. But Flat No. 403 never saw another cockroach again and honestly—that was proof enough

दर्पण में

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गाँव की सीमा पर खड़े पीपल के नीचे हवा बुझी-बुझी-सी चल रही थी—मानो शाम अपनी ही साँसों से थक गई हो। रिया जब वर्षों बाद अपने पुरखों की हवेली के फाटक तक पहुँची, तो लगा जैसे यह घर उसकी आहट को पहचान गया हो।

दीवारों का खुरदुरा स्पर्श, लकड़ी की सड़ी हुई गंध, और बरामदे में पड़े पुराने दीयों की जमी कालिख—सबने एक साथ फुसफुसाया—

“याद है?”

पर स्मृति भी अजीब होती है—कभी दर्पण की धार जैसी वाचिक, कभी धुएँ की पतली, फिसलती रेखासी। हवेली की दहलीज़ पार करते ही हर कदम किसी ठंडे, अनजान तार को छू जाता था। कोने में खड़ी तीन तिमिर-बासी दर्पण—जैसे अपने ही विस्मरण से लिपटे हुए—फिर भी चुपचाप रिया को निहारते थे।

एक दर्पण में उसका बचपन—दो चोटी, हिचकती मुस्कान।

दूसरे में—उसकी माँ—वह चेहरा जिसे रिया ने कभी सचमुच देखा नहीं, पर जिसे भीतर की स्मृति ने जाने कैसे सँजो रखा था।

और तीसरे में—एक युवती। अपरिचित। फिर भी उसकी आँखें ऐसी थीं जैसे वे रिया को रिया से पहले जानती हों।

चबूतरे पर सुबह की धूप वैसी ही पसरी थी जैसी बरसों पहले—पीली, धीमी, राख-भीगी। यह वही जगह थी, जहाँ पुरखों की स्मृतियाँ दीयों, सुपारियों और मौन के बीच रखी जाती थीं—जैसे कोई अदृश्य, पीढ़ियों से चलता आता तीर्थ।

“क्या तुम रिया हो?”

पीछे से स्त्री-सुर उभरा—शांत, पर ऐसा कि रिया के भीतर किसी पुरानी गाँठ को एकदम से कस दे।

मीरा—ठोस आकृति, पर उपस्थिति हवा की तरह फिसलती हुई। न पाँवों की धूल, न परछाई का अंश। रिया को अचानक लगा—क्या वह किसी बीते युग की गूँज है, जो अभी तक चुप नहीं हुई?

“तुम लौट आई,” मीरा ने कहा—जैसे यह लौटना रिया का नहीं, बल्कि किसी स्त्री-वंश की अनकहीं परंपरा का हिस्सा हो।

रिया ने धीमे से सिर झुका लिया।

“मुझे नहीं पता कि मैं यहाँ क्यों आई हूँ।”

मीरा ने चबूतरे पर उगे छोटे जंगली फूल को छुआ—इतनी कोमलता से कि वह स्पर्श फूल से ज्यादा स्मृति को छूता हुआ लगा।

“बेटी, स्मृतियों के घर किसी को जाने नहीं देते। लौटना कभी किसी की इच्छा नहीं होता—बस किसी का याद कर लेना होता है।”

हवेली के भीतर गहरा सन्नाटा फैल गया।

“तुम्हें वे कमरे याद हैं,” मीरा ने दहलीज़ की ओर देखते हुए कहा, “जहाँ तुम्हारी माँ को अकेला छोड़ दिया गया था?”

रिया के भीतर कुछ निहायत पुराना और कठोर टूटकर गिरने लगा।

“माँ...?”

उसकी आवाज़ पत्ते की तरह काँपी।

“मैं... मैं उन्हें बस चीखते हुए याद करती हूँ।”

मीरा की आँखों में थकान और करुणा—दोनों एक साथ चमके।

“चीखें पागलपन की भाषा नहीं होतीं, रिया। वे अक्सर वह सच कहती हैं जिसे कोई सुनना नहीं चाहता।”

उस रात हवेली रिया को सोने नहीं देती।

दीवारें चरमरातीं, लकड़ी के पुराने पैनल साँस लेते प्रतीत होते, और दर्पण—अंधेरे में भी—अपने भीतर किसी अपूर्ण, अनदेखे जीवन की हलचल सँजोए प्रतीक्षा करते।

तभी स्मृति का एक तीखा टुकड़ा उसके भीतर चमका—
उसकी माँ... दर्पणों से डरती थीं।

वे कहती थीं—
“इनमें वे स्त्रियाँ रहती हैं जिन्हें पूरा जीने नहीं दिया गया।”

और पिता हँसकर कहते—
“तुम्हारी माँ की तबीयत ठीक नहीं।”

पर आज, इस टूटे घर की साँसों के बीच, रिया को लगा—
शायद माँ नहीं, पिता डरे हुए थे।
क्योंकि स्मृतियाँ—सच को छिपाना नहीं जानतीं।

रात के किसी अनजाने हिस्से में रिया अचानक चौंककर उठ बैठी—किसी हल्के, लगभग ममता-भरे स्पर्श से।

मीरा उसके पास बैठी थी—चेहरे पर वही भाव, जैसे बरसों पुराने पेड़ के तने पर समय खुद एक मुस्कान दर्ज कर देता है।

“क्या अब तुम सच सुनने को तैयार हो?”

रिया ने सिर हिलाया—उसके भीतर की स्मृतियाँ थकी नदी जैसी बहने लगीं।

“तुम्हारी माँ बीमार नहीं थीं,” मीरा ने कहा।
“वे बस सुन पाती थीं—उन स्त्रियों की आवाजें जो इस घर में गुम हुईं। वे आवाजें जो दर्पणों में कैद हो गईं, क्योंकि दुनिया ने उन्हें कहीं और जगह नहीं दी।”

रिया के गले में कुछ अटकने लगा।

“और... आप?”

मीरा धीमे से उठी। दर्पण की ओर पीठ मोड़ ली—मानो सामना करना कठिन हो।

“मैं वह हूँ,” उसने कहा,

“जिसे इतिहास ने नाम नहीं दिया। जिसे दुनिया ने जीवित नहीं रहने दिया। तुम मुझे नानी कह सकती हो—पर मैं सिर्फ वही नहीं। मैं वह पुकार हूँ... जो हर उस स्त्री के भीतर जीवित रही जिसे कभी पूरा जीने नहीं दिया गया।”

तीसरे दर्पण में आकृति स्पष्ट होने लगी—

वही युवती। न मुस्कान। न आँसू। बस स्थिर, धैर्यवान आँखें—जैसे सदियों से रिया को देख रही हों।

मीरा बोली—

“इस घर में स्त्रियाँ मरती नहीं, रिया। उन्हें बस भुला दिया जाता है। और भुला दिया जाना... मृत्यु से कहीं अधिक भयानक होता है।”

रिया धीरे-धीरे दर्पण की ओर बढ़ी। पर जो प्रतिबिंब उभर रहा था—वह उसका नहीं था।

वह किसी और युग का था। किसी ऐसी स्त्री का, जो रिया के भीतर कहीं छिपी थी—पीढ़ियों के अंधेरों में साँस लेती, किसी नाम की प्रतीक्षा करती हुई।

रिया पीछे हटने ही वाली थी कि दर्पण की सतह पर हल्की-सी तरंग उठी—जैसे किसी ने भीतर से उसे छुआ हो।

आकृति की आँखें अचानक उसकी आँखों में टिक गई—भेदती हुई, पहचानती हुई, स्वीकारती हुई।

और उसी क्षण, रिया को एक अजीब-सी अनुभूति हुई—कि हवेली उसे नहीं पहचान रही थी... वह किसी और को ढूँढ रही थी।

मीरा धीरे-धीरे पीछे हट गई—उसकी उपस्थिति हल्की होती, धुँधलाती चली गई।

“अब तुम समझ गई हो,” उसने फुसफुसाया। “हम दर्पणों से बाहर नहीं आते, रिया। हम दर्पणों में लौटते हैं।”

यह कहते ही वह हवा में उतनी ही शांतिपूर्वक विलीन हो गई, जितना कोई भूला हुआ नाम स्मृति में घुल जाता है।

दर्पण की युवती अब पूरी स्पष्ट थी—और उसके चेहरे पर... वही दो चोटी, वही उदासी की छाया—जो रिया के बचपन में थी।

बस एक फर्क था—दर्पण की युवती अब मुस्कुरा रही थी। हल्की, गहरी, लगभग स्वागत-सी मुस्कान।

रिया का हृदय धक से रह गया। क्या वह मीरा थी? उसकी माँ? किसी पुरानी पुरखिन? या वह स्वयं—

वह रूप जो उसके भीतर सदियों से जीवित था, पर दुनिया ने कभी जन्म लेने नहीं दिया?

हवा अचानक ठंडी हो गई। दर्पण की सतह पर उसके प्रतिबिंब ने धीरे से होंठ खोले—और बिना आवाज़ के कुछ कहा।

इतना धीमे, कि रिया सुन नहीं सकी। या शायद—वह शब्द उसी को कहे गए थे जो अभी आने वाली थी... कभी किसी और जन्म में, किसी और देह में।

उसने एक आखिरी बार दर्पण की ओर देखा—और यह विचार उसके अंदर एक नर्म, भयावह यक़ीन की तरह ठहर गया—शायद मीरा कोई और नहीं थी। शायद वह स्वयं रिया थी—उसी की एक ऐसी स्मृति, जिसे अभी भविष्य में घटना था।

हवेली के भीतर एक पुराना दरवाज़ा कहीं खुला—धीरे, खिंचते स्वर में—जैसे समय ने एक और स्त्री को अपने वृत्त में बुला लिया हो।

रिया पीछे हट गई। पर दर्पण में वह युवती अब भी उसे देखते हुए मुस्कुरा रही थी—मानो कह रही हो—“तुम लौटने नहीं आई थीं, रिया... तुम यहाँ हमेशा से थीं।”

SATIRE / व्यंग्य

पेंडिंग मनुष्य : एक महागाथा

डॉ. दीपक

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मनुष्य को यह भ्रांति है कि वह विकसित हो चुका है।

पर इतिहास कुछ और कहता है—वह सिफ़र अपनी पेंडिंग लिस्ट में उन्नति कर चुका है।

- कभी वह शिकार टालता था,
- फिर खेती टालने लगा,
- फिर विवाह टाला,
- और आजकल टैक्स।

मनुष्य बदल गया है—काम टालने के साधन बस अधिक परिष्कृत हो गए हैं।

1. महान मानवीय उपलब्धिः कुछ न करना

कहा जाता है कि जब मनुष्य ने पहिया बनाया, वह मानव सभ्यता का आरंभ था। पर असली सभ्यता तब शुरू हुई जब उसने पहली बार कहा:

“अरे, करने का है तो... कर लेंगे न यार, अभी क्या जल्दी है!”

- इसी वाक्य ने मनुष्य को देवताओं से अलग किया।
- देवता तुरंत काम करते हैं—इसलिए बोर हो जाते हैं।
- मनुष्य काम टालता है—इसलिए रोचक बना रहता है।

2. पेंडिंग लिस्ट: एक प्रजाति-विशेष ग्रंथ

हर आदमी के भीतर एक अदृश्य दफ्तरी कमरा है—“कार्य एवं विलंब विभाग”—जहाँ तीन अधिकारी बैठे हैं:

अधिकारी का नाम	कार्य का विवरण
इच्छा अधिकारी	रोज नए काम सुझाता है: “ध्यान करेंगे” “दौड़ना शुरू करेंगे” “50 किताबें पढ़ेंगे”
बहाना प्रकोष्ठ	कारण बताता है: “आज मौसम ठीक नहीं” “अभी मन साफ़ नहीं” “थोड़ा थकान है” “नेटवर्क स्लो है”
आध्यात्मिक सलाहकार	हर अधूरे काम को अस्तित्ववादी अर्थ देता है: “जो अधूरा है वही वास्तविक है” “पूर्णता तो भ्रम है”

नोट: इस विभाग की एक भी बैठक कभी पूरी नहीं होती। क्योंकि “बैठक की कार्यवाही अगली बैठक तक टाल दी जाती है।”

3. दिन की संरचना: टालो, पछताओ, सो जाओ

- सुबह की शुरुआत: उस वादे से जो दो घंटे बाद ही टूटा हुआ मिलता है: “आज सब कुछ निपटा दूँगा।”
- पहला विलंब: फ्रीड में पहला ही वीडियो आता है: “5 आदतें जो आपकी जिंदगी बदल देंगी।” मनुष्य सोचता है—“इसे देख लेते हैं, फिर शुरू करेंगे।”
- परिणाम: वीडियो खत्म होते-होते जिंदगी नहीं बदलती, बस दिन के दो घंटे पेंडिंग हो जाते हैं।
- दोपहर तक: मनुष्य समझ जाता है—अब आधा दिन गए, तो पूरा दिन ही जाए... कल से ठीक रहेंगे।
- रात को: वह लिस्ट देखता है—और सबसे बड़ा संस्कार निभाता है: पोस्टपोन (Postpone)।

4. घर में फैली हुई पेंडिंग ऊर्जा

घर में जो कोना साफ़ नहीं है, वह सिर्फ़ धूल का अड्डा नहीं होता—वह मनुष्य की इच्छाओं का कव्रिस्तान होता है:

- किताबें जो खरीदी गयीं पर अब तक खुली नहीं।
- जूते जो ‘दौड़’ के लिए थे पर सिर्फ़ सब्जी लेने गए।
- डायरी जिसमें तीन दिन लिखा गया और बाकी 362 दिन खाली रहे।

ये सब पेंडिंग ऊर्जा की सूक्ष्म प्रतिमाएँ हैं। कुछ लोग तो अपने सपने भी ऐसे रखते हैं जैसे बर्टन: उलटकर अलमारी में।

5. विज्ञान और पेंडिंग मनुष्य

पेंडिंग लिस्ट के शायद सबसे गंभीर वैज्ञानिक प्रभाव हैं:

- अगर आइंस्टाइन हर चीज़ समय पर करता, तो शायद वह $SE=mc^2$ न लिख पाता; टालते-टालते ही उसे ब्रह्माण्ड की विचित्रता दिखाई दी।
- न्यूटन ने गुरुत्वाकर्षण इसलिए खोजा क्योंकि वह पेड़ के नीचे कुछ नहीं कर रहा था।

संभावित निष्कर्ष: आलस मानव सभ्यता का असली शोध केंद्र है।

6. समाजशास्त्र: दो प्रकार के लोग

दुनिया में सिर्फ़ दो लोग हैं:

(अ) पेंडिंग करने वाले:

जो कहते हैं — “अभी नहीं, बाद में कर लेंगे”

(ब) पेंडिंग करवाने वाले:

जो कहते हैं — “ये अभी कर दो”

इन्हीं दो वर्गों के संघर्ष से मानव इतिहास आगे बढ़ता है। सरकारें बदलती हैं, योजनाएँ बनती हैं, नागरिक टालते हैं। सभ्यता चलती है।

7. पेंडिंग और अध्यात्म का गूढ़ रहस्य

- कुछ योगी मानते हैं कि अधूरा काम ही मनुष्य को जीवन से बाँधे रखता है।
- लोग ध्यान के लिए समय निकालते-निकालते बुढ़ापा निकाल देते हैं।
- ध्यान वहीं पहुँचता है, पर पहुँच तब पाता है जब मनुष्य जीवन की बाकी सारी जरूरी चीज़ें पेंडिंग कर चुका होता है।

8. काल का महापुराण: आज और कल

- आज (Today): दोहरा स्वभाव रखता है—काम का भी, बहाने का भी।
- कल (Tomorrow): एक आध्यात्मिक प्रदेश है—जहाँ सब कुछ बेहतर होने वाला है—और जहाँ कोई कभी जाता नहीं।

कल वह मंदिर है जहाँ मनुष्य अपने सपने चढ़ा देता है और लौट आता है बिना प्रसाद लिए।

9. निष्कर्ष (जो आज लिखा गया, कल भी लिखा जा सकता था)

आधुनिक मनुष्य कहीं पहुँचता नहीं, बस अपने पेंडिंग ब्रह्माण्ड में सर्पिल गति से घूमता रहता है।

और रात्रि के अंतिम क्षणों में, जब वह सोने ही वाला होता है, एक धीमी-सी आवाज़ आती है:

“स्टिलनेस अपना नाम फिर नहीं सीख पाई”

और वह मुस्कुराकर, अगले दिन की शुरुआत के लिए, सब कुछ एक बार फिर पेंडिंग कर देता है।

CREATIVE ESSAYS / रचनात्मक निबंध

Do Great Empires Make Great Thinkers? A Historical Paradox

Dr. Narendra Kumar Jangir

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Do great empires make great thinkers? History tempts us with a seductive narrative: the “Golden Ages” of the Guptas, the Han, the Abbasids, and the European Enlightenment. Stable rule, abundant resources, and royal patronage appear to be the natural incubators of human creativity.

Yet a deeper pattern reveals a striking paradox. Empires are superb at consolidating and disseminating knowledge — but the spark of radical originality most often ignites elsewhere, in the fertile, fragmented, and competitive landscapes of plurality.

Consider India. Its most transformative leaps in philosophy, mathematics, and science rarely occurred under centralized rule. They blossomed instead during restless intervals of political division, when no single authority could dominate the intellectual field and competing schools, republics, and kingdoms cross-pollinated freely.

The Fertile Chaos of Fragmentation

The Mahajanapada period (c. 600–300 BCE) was an era of vibrant plurality: sixteen major states — monarchies and oligarchic republics — each fostering its own intellectual circle.

From this competitive milieu emerged the Buddha and Mahavira, overturning centuries of Vedic orthodoxy. The materialist Cārvāka school rejected divinity and the afterlife. In Gandhara, Pāṇini composed a generative Sanskrit grammar whose algorithmic elegance still astonishes. The Śulba Sūtras laid out geometric constructions, including a form of the Pythagorean theorem, long before Pythagoras.

This explosion of originality was possible because no single power could monopolise thought. A philosopher expelled from one court could walk to another. Debate was public theatre; dissent was not eradication.

This structural pluralism — competition among independent centres of power — created a resilient ecosystem for ideas.

The rise of the Mauryan Empire changed this dynamic. Under Chandragupta and Ashoka, intellectual energy bent toward statecraft and moral governance. Kautilya's *Arthashastra* is a masterpiece of political strategy, but its brilliance lies in administration, not open-ended speculation. Ashoka's edicts preach tolerance while simultaneously prescribing a state-sanctioned moral code. The Mauryas excelled at spreading ideas, not originating them.

After their collapse, India fragmented again. The Shungas, Satavahanas, Indo-Greeks, and Kushanas ruled over a shifting patchwork. In this fertile context, the great schools of Hindu philosophy were systematized; Buddhist thinkers like Nāgārjuna and Asanga pioneered new traditions; and the *Charaka* and *Sushruta Samhitās* detailed cataract surgery and rhinoplasty with remarkable precision.

This was also a period of rich intercultural synthesis: Greek astronomical models merged with Indian computational methods, paving the way for later breakthroughs in trigonometry and the decimal system.

When the Guptas finally established their celebrated Golden Age, they provided stability that magnified and preserved pre-existing genius. Aryabhata calculated π with striking accuracy, proposed Earth's rotation, and compiled seminal trigonometric tables. Kalidasa's poetry reached luminous heights; the Ajanta frescoes portrayed life with rare subtlety.

But these achievements were the culmination of seeds planted during centuries of fragmentation. The Guptas were magnificent curators — not the primary source — of India's intellectual efflorescence.

This pattern is not uniquely Indian. It is a recurring motif across civilizations.

A Recurring Pattern Across Civilizations

The fiercely competitive Greek city-states produced Plato, Aristotle, Euclid, and Archimedes. Under the Macedonian and Roman empires, Greek creativity cooled into commentary and preservation.

In China, the turbulent "Hundred Schools of Thought" era gave birth to Confucianism, Daoism, Mohism, and Legalism. The Qin and Han empires brought stability but narrowed intellectual daring under enforced orthodoxy.

Renaissance Italy's mosaic of rival city-states created the space for Leonardo, Galileo, and Machiavelli. The Enlightenment thrived not in a unified Europe but in a patchwork of competing kingdoms where thinkers could leverage rival patrons.

Even the 20th century echoes this pattern. The fragile Weimar Republic became a crucible for quantum mechanics, relativity's confirmation, and revolutions in art. Nazi ideological rigidity shattered this ecosystem, driving its greatest minds to more pluralistic societies.

When Empires Do Succeed

Empires are not inherently hostile to creativity. The Abbasids founded Baghdad's House of Wisdom, synthesizing Greek, Persian, and Indian traditions into algebra, optics, and astronomy. The early Han sponsored astronomers whose records remain invaluable. The Guptas fostered a climate where refinement thrived.

But when empires succeeded intellectually, they did so by practicing internal pluralism:

tolerating diversity within their borders, protecting intellectual autonomy, and resisting doctrinal rigidity.

The Abbasids were consciously cosmopolitan. The early Han drew from multiple traditions before Confucian orthodoxy hardened. The Guptas patronized Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain thinkers alike.

When this internal pluralism decayed, creative vitality withered.

Modern Echoes

This ancient dynamic persists.

Modern democracies — noisy, competitive, institutionally plural — have proven fertile ground for breakthrough innovation, from Silicon Valley to Europe's research networks.

Conversely, the Soviet Union, despite early successes in rocketry, crippled genetics and cybernetics under ideological diktat. Contemporary China achieves remarkable applied innovations in AI and quantum communication, yet debates persist about whether centralized systems can consistently generate bottom-up theoretical breakthroughs.

Even the digital world follows the rule. The internet's most radical innovations emerged when it was decentralized and open. As power consolidated around a handful of mega-platforms, foundational invention slowed and the ecosystem began to ossify.

The Balance of Evidence

Across antiquity and into the present, the pattern stands firm. Centralized power is an excellent custodian of knowledge — it preserves, refines, and disseminates ideas on a grand scale.

But the shock of the new — the paradigm shift, the original leap — most often requires one of two conditions:

1. Structural Pluralism: the messy, competitive friction between independent centres of power.
2. Internal Pluralism: the fragile but powerful tolerance of diversity within a unified state.

The first is chaotic but reliably generative. The second is elegant but difficult to sustain.

So, do empires help or hinder original thought? They hinder it when they crush plurality; they help it when they consciously protect it.

Stability without pluralism is sterile. Plurality, even when chaotic, is profoundly fertile.

If we seek the next great leap of thought, we must look not only to imperial capitals or corporate headquarters but to the margins — the vibrant republics, the open networks, the noisy marketplaces of ideas.

It is there, in the jostling of rival voices, that human creativity most reliably catches fire.

Patrika Aranyak / पत्रिका आरण्यक

A quiet space for reflective thought—where language is not hurried, and instincts are not simplified.

रचनात्मक, कल्पनाशील और जिज्ञासु विचारों के बीजों के लिए एक उर्वर धरा समान समावेशी मंच।

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