

Chapter Three

Nativism and Practice

In certain cases, nativity/ *desiyata* tends to make literary writers foreground their native identity and concerns as the basis of all creativity. Nativism as a critical practice can possibly engage this phenomenon and can unearth the politics involved. Multicultural poets like Meena Alexander, Sujata Bhatt, E. V. Ramakrishana, Aimee Nezhukumatathil and various short story writers from different cultural affiliations like Nirmal Verma, Amarkant, and Milan Kundera have some nativist bearings in their writings. The present chapter is an attempt to experience nativism as a theory of practical criticism. This chapter analyses the possibility of politics of *desiyata* in the selected literary works with help of certain critical tools of nativism.

In his magnum opus *Orientalism*, Edward Said discusses western misconception about orient as European invention. Rooted in Western consciousness it is biased towards occident. He describes orient as a collective name given to exotic beings, haunting memories, landscape, place of romance and remarkable experiences. Discourse around orientalism¹ has three major components: academic discourse, style of thought and corporate institution. Academic discourse expresses and represents the particular culturally part and ideologically as a model of discourse with the supporting institution, imagery, doctrines, vocabulary, institution, colonial bureaucracies and colonial style. Style of thought is based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‘the Orient’² and the ‘the Occident.’³ It accommodates diverse group of writers, political theorists, economists, poets, novelists as such. Corporate institution is more historically and materially defined. ‘Academic discourse’ and ‘style of thought’ illustrate about the textual creation of orient, while ‘corporate institution’ illustrates how the discourse has been deployed to excuse authority and domination over the orient.

Said believes that orient is not an inert fact of nature. Italian philosopher and historian, Giambattista Vico, observes that men make their own history, what they can know is what they have made and extends it to geography. Geographical sectors like 'orient' and 'occident' are manmade. It is the power dominance relationship between occident and orient. The idea of cultural hegemony is relevant part of orientalism. Cultural hegemony works both inside and outside Europe.

Said mentions about the aspect of contemporary reality. The comparison of the orient with the West ultimately provides that the oriental culture and perspectives are inferior. The study of the orient has been always from an occidental or Western point of view. They are treated as objects and the term 'Orient' covers a geographical area and a range of population, many times larger and diverse than Europe. Such objectifications are originated from the assumption that orient is essentially with unchanging history while occident is dynamic with an active history. Orient and Oriental are considered as passive and non-participatory subjects of study. This is a political construction in which Western knowledge includes political significance.

The politics of representing East and West seem an important aspect in the literary texts of multicultural Indian writers like Nirmal Verma, Aimee Nezhukumatathil, E V Ramakrishnan, Meena Alaxandor and Sujata Bhatt. They bear nativistic urge in their poems and short stories. They seem to indulge intentionally or unintentionally in the politics of *desiyata*. They represent the multicultural, multilingual Indian perspective in their writings. Writings of these writers have nativistic tinge at various levels of production, consumption and circulation. Some of these writers seem to foreground *desiyata* to sell their product in the international market. They may not attempt it deliberately but somehow it seems so. These multicultural writers evoke their childhood memories, birthplace, experiences and mythical reference in their writings.

The very first writer to unearth the textual politics of nativism Meena Alexander was born in Allahabad, India in 1951. She was brought up in India and Sudan. She penned down a number of poetry collections. Her work includes *Illiterate Heart*, *Raw Silk*, *Midnight's grandchildren: Post Independence poetry from India*, *The Birds Bright Wing*, *Without Place*, *I Root my Name*, *Birth Place with Buried Stones*. She has received many fellowship and awards; John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, Fulbright Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, and The Arts Council of England. She is Distinguished Professor of English at the Graduate Centre and Hunter College at the City University of New York; and currently serves as an Elector, American Poets Corner, Cathedral of St. John the Divine. She is better known for her poetry; even she has authored several essays and a few novels. *The Birth Place with Buried Stones* is a collection of her poetry published in 2013. This collection expresses her feelings as being multicultural poet. It conveys the experience of travelling. She celebrates post modernistic fragmentation in her collection. She expresses trauma, memory, feeling, alienation and multicultural sensibility in her collection. Here we would analyse her poem "Birth Place (With Buried Stones)", from her collection *Birth Place from Buried Stones*. She expresses herself from native India to New York in her poem. She evokes feeling and memories from her childhood remembrances. She comes up with her different past experiences. How they mean to her? She looks at the totality of India as a nation with fragmentations. She evokes her experience in the poem. Diverse stark reality of a nation is portrayed through this poem. She shares living condition in India. She talks about events completely fragment and explores what comprises a nation through her experiences.

Alexander addresses different events in her childhood from one place to another. She expresses meaningless experiences, she underwent in her childhood. "In the absence of reliable ghost I made aria/ coughing into emptiness, and it came (Sen 261). It explains,

that poet is giving meaning to meaningless life out of nothing. Life came to her without any significance. She had nothing all the way but emptiness in her childhood days. Nothing could bring her joy to her. In India she gained nothing out of nothing but emptiness. As poet says “A west wind from the plains with its arbitrary arsenal:/ Torn sails from Ganga river” (261). Blowing west wind brings storm but there was nothing like that in her life. Then, she compares her life with the “bits of spurned silk” or spoiled pieces of silk; which have no work or significance in the world. It describes different stages of her life; she is waiting to be twisted into new shape. “Stripes of jute to be fashioned into lines,” her anxiety/worry is about the new shape/ ideology/ or religion, in which she has to be twisted. Religion and other things have given shape in form of language. “What words stake-sentence and make believe/ A lyric summoning” (261). Her existence was shapeless in this world. It was completely disorganised. Poet seems completely fragmented what comprises India as a fragment nation. She explains belief system in her first stanza of the poem. Poet narrates the fragmented images of her childhood in totality and India as a diverse nation. Continuity in her events is missing, as she talks about different events and images without concluding one.

In the second stanza poet narrates how and where she come to this world: “I came into this world in an Allahabad hospital/ Close to a smelly cow pasture” (261). She revokes her childhood as a poor girl, born in rural area. Poet evokes the images of childhood troubles and stark experiences. Then she turns to the cantonment area in her childhood. “I was brought to a barrack with white walls/ And corrugated tin roof” (261). The symbol of barrack evokes her some kind of dreadful experiences in India. Corrugated roof symbolises the troubles and ups and down in her childhood. “Besides a Civil Aviation Training Centre/ --In World War II officers were docketed there—” (261). She goes back to her memories of World War and how the soldiers were assigned different jobs in the

aviation centre. She is talking about the micro level Indian society. She has observed everything very closely. There she used to hear sounds of jet in air produces multitude of air and noise. “Heaven bent,/ Blessing my first home” (261). That’s how she shares in childhood experience.

In the third stanza poet explains different aspects of complex Indian society. “In an open doorway. In half darkness/ I see a young women standing” (261). Then, poet describes the condition of women. What it is to be a woman in India and; her urge to be husbanded or child. She evokes a typical image of women as they are full of desire “Her breasts are swollen with milk./ She is transfixed, staring at a men.” (262). Poet describes the physical condition of a man. “His hair gleaming with sweat,/ Trouser rolled up,” (262). Poet describes the typical images of village life. Use of bicycle and mustard bloom symbolizes native life. “Stepping off his bicycle,/ Mustard bloom catches in his shirt” (262). Poet explains the misery of women and her problems in Indian society. The patriarchal system of Indian society; where women are seen inferior to the men. The way they talk to each other is quite typical. Poet could not understand the conversation between the two. They two have a family and the problems of a family has been depicted through this line “Their infant once a clot of blood/ Is spectral still” (262). Superstitions are part of Indian culture. Then she turns to the religion; how they pray.

Behind this family are vessels of brass
Dotted with saffron,
The trunk of a mango tree chopped into bits,
Ready to be burnt at the household fire (262).

The references to the saffron, chopped tree, household fire are sign of a religious belief system and superstitions. There may be something wrong in the family. They have cut the

tree and chopped it and burn in pyre. She might be referring, that people of India do believe in religion rather science. The poet explains what India is all about. How she has grown up in all those circumstance? She is talking about the evolution in Indian society through her personal experiences.

In the fourth stanza she explains India as whole through her personal experiences. We made images of India as a conflict free nation. But, the truth is otherwise. We have to think about the reality. Different images shown to the world are false. How this nation stares/ befool us. How we are trapped in the belief and religious system of our country.

Through the portals of that larger chaos,
 What we can scarcely conceive in our minds—
 We'd rather think of starry nights with biting flames
 Trapped inside tree trunks, a wellspring of desire (262).

Then poet gives the complex imaginary of the nation “Igniting men and gods, / A lava storm where butterflies dance—” (262). How we have different mythical references in our everyday life. Poet describes the different realities at the larger scale. “Comes bloodletting at the borders,/ Several tongues, riots in the capital,” (262). Poet evokes the fear of war and bloodshed in the country. How people burn twig to appease god. She refers several tongues to the politicians of our country. Things may be referred to the in secular characters of the nation. She explains the political divisions of India and India as a whole through this bloodshed imaginary. “The unspeakable hurt of history:/ So the river Ganga pours into the sea” (262). Poet explains history has witnessed all this crippled images of India. It is testimonial to the fact. These things are not quite natural to the Indian society. She universalizes the whole India through her personal experiences. This is how it goes in Indian society. She universalises what is native to her.

In her last stanza, she explains about the situation after bloodshed. “In aftermath—the elements of vocal awakening:/ Crude, spittle, snot, menstrual blistering,” (262). Here she evokes the picture dirty India. It symbolises the different place of nation; dirt, spittle and the lack of awareness among the people about the health.

Also infant steps, a child’s hunger, a women’s rage
 At the entrance to a kitchen,
 Her hands picking up vegetable shavings, chicken bones,
 Gold tossed from an ancestral keep (263).

Here, poet describes the poverty, hunger in India and the way infant children are waiting for food. But, his/ her mother has nothing left to feed him/ her. The miserable condition of women in nation has been explained. Then, poet depicts that the importance of women is nothing more than doing household chores. Kitchen is the only place reserved for the women in the patriarchal society. Hunger prevails everywhere in India. “All this flows into me as mottled memory,/ Mixed with syllable of sweat, gashed syntax,” (263). She pursues all images into different colours. It made her past experience colourful by all these images, symbols and belief system. Different aspects make it India or a nation. Her every individual experience is like syllable. Her experiences are deeply injured by the amalgam of hard work, shame, poverty, hunger, miserable women life. Her single experience is a story/ pathetic story. “Strand of burst bone in river sand,/ Beside the buried stones of Sarasvati Koop—” (263). She explains how dead bodies are put into the rivers in India. She may be referring to the meaninglessness in the life as she had witnessed when she came to this world. After all you will find bones of dead. This is again the part of society. “Well of mystic sky-water swans/ Dip their throats and come out dreaming” (263). She concludes with the message of eternity. Human beings of this planet may deep into the water and come up with daring. Poet explains the different shades of the poet’s memory;

part of complex Indian society. The type of life poet led in her childhood. Similar patterns of life in a native context in different religions.

Meena Alexander in poem “Birthplace (With Buried Stones)” seems to foreground *desiyata* by depicting miserable pictures of Indian society. She depicts it through her childhood experiences. She narrates her birthplace, condition of women in patriarchal society. She explains Indian women only have access to the kitchen. But now, Indian women play pivotal role in academics, politics, sports, space programmes, entertainment etc. She does not consider that fact because if she adds it to her poetry; Western people would find orient different from their country. She has shown hunger, riots, bloodshed, superstitions of Indian society. She might not be having the present facts about the Indian society. She seems to be conscious of target readership and global market. If she writes about India in international market she may get more attention. Her much concern is about the Western readers. It seems, poet is doing politics in the name of thematics of nativity/ nativism. She foregrounds the cultural hegemony in her poetry, depicting India as place of bloodshed, riots, hunger and miserable life. It seems here as she has foregrounded *desiyata* to have larger readership. Poet has explained multicultural, multilingual, multiethnic entity through her experience in 21st century. Her cultural affiliations are revealed in her poetry. But the concern is that who she is writing for. Is she writings for Indian readers to reminds them their past or for Western readers to show India’s miserable condition is a question of academic inquest.

The other multicultural poet, Sujata Bhatt was born in Ahmadabad in 1956. She was brought up in Pune and the United States. She received her education from the United States. She received Commonwealth Literary Prize for poetry. Her poetical works include *Brunizem* (1988), *The Monkey Shadows* (1991), *The Stinking Rose* (1995), *Point No Point*

(1997), *Augatora* (2000), *A Colour for Solitude* (2002), etc. Her poems have been translated in many other languages. She has received a Cholmondeley Award in 1991 and the Italian Tratti Poetry Prize in 2000. She lives in India, Europe, Canada and United States. Her poetry deals with culture, time and history. Her beginning poetry collection deals with the theme of displacement, alienation etc. She affiliates her native background in her poems. She understand home as a part of her identity. While writing in global perspectives she retains native values in her poetry. In her poem *History is a Broken Narrative* she shows the postcolonial consciousness. Multicultural perspectives in her poetry come with her multicultural, multilingual background of Asia, Europe and America. Her poetry deals with Indian landscape and its philosophical expression. It also deals with the cultural identity, art forms, places, politics, memories and science. She writes for Indian culture and sensibility. She shows complexity of inner and outer world in her poetry. She sets her poem “A Word Spoken on Land” in the nativistic deep philosophical context. Paranjape also says the same about nativism that it “helps to situate a work of art in such a manner that its cultural affiliations are revealed”(Paranjape xiii). She writes about the East and West complex in poem. She creates plural identity to show the west. She begins her poem:

The word spoken on land
is worth nothing at sea—
It's meaningless, dangerous sound,
he's told. (Sen 460).

Here she creates ‘binary opposition’⁴ between East and West and reflects on how one particular symbol varies from place to place and culture to culture. She made distinction between the man made discourse of orient and occident. Poet may be conscious about the complexity of internationalism in her poem. She theorizes about spiritual or religious

belief/ disbelief system existing in India. The same cultural practices may differ from place to place. She appears to be examining 'our existing values system.' She is celebrating her Indianness by writings poetry about India and its spiritual or value system. Cecile Sandten says about her poetry that Bhatt writes "poetry to convey her awareness of 'being the Other' and at the same time present a kind of spilt identity, or ambivalence, as well as a sense of belonging to the 'West' and its specific historical, regional and linguistic backgrounds" (Sandten 89). Her much concern is all about to portray India as a spiritual, land of multi religious identity. Her next lines speak up the journey of spiritualism in India. "So the sailor turns mute/ as the ship sails south— " (460). Here she creates the complex of north and south. The sailor symbolises quest; it may be spiritual or something else. The discourse, of the south and north she explains, is about the cultural exchanges. She has been wandering around the globe. She might have felt cultural alienation. Then in the next line she explains how the sailor landed in unseen land.

Then, in a new land he has never seen,
 he watches butterflies;
 catches two of them to bring back
 to his treeless island— (460).

She explains India through the spiritual evolution. A passenger comes to new land of religion, culture, historical importance. Butterflies symbolises the deep philosophical meaning in Indian religious practices. The traveller may take up or understand the deep significance of Indian belief system and may interested to export his deserted island. The faith and belief system may not exist, in his treeless island. "Little nymphs he won't set free" (460). Bhatt talks about the, belief system, incarnation, nymphs and miracles in her native sensibility. She is in dilemma to give a proper explanation to her native religious, philosophical thought process. As, she concludes her poem:

“What shall I name you?”

He asks—

“What shall I name you?” (460).

She creates a discourse of her own. She may be feeling identity crisis to name her writings. She has created east and west and south and north complex in her poem. While writing poetry she is conscious about the readership in global market. She offers new discourse of belief/ disbelief and religious symbols and practice to the western audiences. If, she writes about the unexplored themes; she will get more attention of the readers. She portrays India as a land of belief and spiritualism for the readers of West. In such a way she seems to foreground *desiyata* in her poetry.

Another multicultural poet, Aimee Nezhukumatathil was born in Chicago, in 1974. She is an Asian poet and essayist. She draws themes from her Philipina and Malayali background. She is professor of English at the state University of New York at Fredonia where she was awarded a Chancellor’s Medal of Excellence. She teaches environmental literature and creative writings. She has authored poetry collections. *Luck Fish* (2011), *At The Drive-In Volcano* (2007), and *Miracle Fruit* (2003) are some of her best poetry collection. She has received many awards and honours for her poetry, including gold medal in poetry award from independent publisher book award, Eric Hopper award, Tupelo Press Prize, The Glasgow Prize and Asian American Literary Award etc. are some of her awards for her achievement in poetry.

The poem “Bibliomancy” has been taken from her poetry collection *Luck Fish* published in 2011. In her collection of poetry Nezhukumatathil uses the imagery, memory from India. The poem “Bibliomancy” is about the old practice of using to determine who you will marry. She uses folklore images, from India, and explores ancient practices in India. The

practices of horoscope, and *nakshatram*, for match-making take place in India. There are memory and anticipation of south and north and east and west in her poetry. Her poem begins as:

Begin with the thick book splayed open
 on a kitchen counter and watch the way
 the girl stab and stabs at it with her eyes
 closed... (Sen 33).

Here she is portraying the context of being a girl/ women in India. She talks about the ancient practices/ rituals in India. As her lines says that someone is observing the unmarried girl from the kitchen counter. The person may be observing the girl to evaluate the abilities of cooking food, as it is important role for an Indian girl after marriage. She offers the context of how girls were being observed by the astrologer/ relatives for marriage to determine her future after marriage.

...The little teeth bites on the page stand
 for a screaming, the way peacock screech
 with disgust whenever they catch sight
 of their own clawed feet (33).

Here she depicts the physical appearance of the girl as it is the basic parameter in India to determine someone's capability of being married. All these sign system are basic parameters in Indian context for marriage. Whom you will marry? How will be your married life, happiness, children etc.? Aimee Nezhū is creating the complexity of meta narrative, based on ancient Indian practices. Here she explains that even her physical appearance offer a kind of prediction of fortunes/ misfortune.

...Each word pokes out
 a new promise, a fortune, better than any cookie:
 she will meet a boy who keeps smooth rocks
 in his pocket. She knows what to listen for (33).

Here the evolution of girl's physical appearance is over. The astrologer is predicting future of girl. After capturing her each movement, astrologer predict the future that "she will meet a boy who keeps smooth rocks/ in his pocket. She knows what to listen for." Aimee is very much concerned about India and Indian culture in her collection *Luck Fish*. She is sharing the memories of her home state Kerala where these types of traditional practices take place. She is sharing the pain of migration. Here in the poem "Bibliomancy" she perceives East as part of tradition/ superstitions. The politics in her poetry, as she offers an account of Indian marriages/ match making is just for the sake of writing about them. She might not be that much conscious about the practices in India about the marriages. India is multicultural, multilingual, multi-religious diversified nation. There are so many marriage ritual and practices. She is offering to the West, a tradition of deciding the future of a girl for marriage. Whatever she has portrayed in the poem may be applicable to her home state Kerala only. It cannot be applicable to all Indian states. She may be emotionally charged with her memories of native place as it, evoke whole constellation of feeling, though, perception. She may have political motive behind writing on such themes. People from some political entities want to designate our nation as the rich cultural, religious nation or what we call *Vishvguru*. It has been portrayed through the writing to demonstrate India as the begetter of the world. She might be much conscious about her target readership. She lives in New York, she is well aware about the psychology of the West. India has been represented as a country of snake charmers and folktales. People from the west may be much interested to read such kind of unexplored things. She may be

also aware about the consumption of her writings. She presented a collection of many belief/ disbelief system of India. She is creating East and West complex in her poetry. She might be unfolding the ancient narrative, for the sake of target readership. She is going back to the roots, sometimes roots make you false. She might be contemplating her childhood memories. But, whether these things are there or not, is still an illusion. She may be in unfavourable situation that's why she is writing about the India. She may be feeling identity crisis. But, her observation cannot be taken close indeed, it seems false consciousness. She creates binary opposition, the complex of how the marriages take place in India. She is roaming around the globe. So, whether the place she is writing about is native for her or not. She was born in Chicago, brought up India, Philippines, and USA, and settled in New York. Which place does is consider as her native, is an illusion. She was born in Chicago, but she is writings about India for the publication, prize and target readership. She created binary opposition between East and West; it is only man made discourse. She talks about the ancient marriage practice; but she is not aware that these things are not part of our popular cultural practices. Now, bibliomancy has been replaced by many matrimonial website in India. Her basic concern may lies in selling her product, not in the spiritual evaluation to linguistic experimentation it serves to the society as Nemade says about nativistic writings. She has foregrounded *desiyata* to sell her product in international market. Internationalism is against the basic concept of nativism. Namade says "the greatness of literary movement or an author is not decided by international standards" (Paranjape 235). Her concern is about the target readership⁵. Finally, she is a professional poet she needs some stuff from the east to sell to the west.

E V Ramakrishnan an Indian academician, poet, translator and critic. He is a bilingual writer, writes in English and Malayalam. He teaches comparative literature at Central University of Gujarat. He has published volumes of poems *Being Elsewhere in Myself*

(1980), *A Python in a Snake Park* (1994), *Terms of Seeing: New and Selected Poems* (2008). He was born in southern Indian state Kerala. He spent his academic career in north India. His poetry combines irony with wonder, critique with elegy, moral concern and philosophical immersion. The poem “The Tamarind Tree” appeared in his poetry collection *Terms of Seeing: New and Selected Poems* (2006). Ramakrishnan’s poem shows his discomfort in Gujarat life. In his poem “The Tamarind Tree” poet is constricting his memories from his village in Kerala.

He begins his poem: “You are the nearest we ever had/ to a native manifesto” (Ramakrishnan N.p.). Here, he expresses his feelings and attachment to the place and evokes his village memories in Kerala: “An annual convention of parrots/ on the sea-routes of the sky (Ramakrishnan N.p.).” It refers about the attachment to the morning/ evening natural beauty, chirping of birds and their nest at his tamarind tree. Sea is the symbol of life/ death; he takes us to the deep philosophical meaning of human life and hectic schedule of people. Poet is tracing back his memories of home, where nothing has left; his entire relatives have gone to the different part of the world of their bread and butter. Tamarind tree as he says symbolises his family tree. His close relative only meets once in a year. In the next lines:

In your book of beginnings,

An earthworm speaks of how the rain began.

Your roots exhumed bodies form ponds (Ramakrishnan N.p.).

Now it is not possible to chase the rainy season in Kerala. Now it is written only in books; coming generations might know about the Kerala/ southern monsoon through the narrative; they will not be able to see the original. The stories of rain will be narrated by someone else. Then, he talks about the roots of tree. The roots of poets are also exhumed

in many parts of the globe. Poet might be remembering his past with the nativistic insight. Poet talks about the different past of both of them “Our past has never been the same.” He creates binary opposition in his poem:

You meet the south-west monsoon
on equal terms, in an uprising of rain.
Like a parenthesis that pre-empt the sentence,
you are a parallel world of slowness and light (Ramakrishnan N.p.).

Here poet creates ‘binary opposition’ of south and west. He shows that how south- west monsoon is different from the place he lives. Poet may not be concerning about the production, distribution and market value. But, it seems that there is something which is rooted in native roots. The question arises why poet is writing about it in his late career. Whether he doing politics in the name *desiyata*; or really he has concern about his native place.

The next writer Nirmal Verma was a Hindi novelist, short story writer, translator and activist. He got Sahitya Akademi Award in 1985, for his short story collection *Kavve or Kala Pani*. He was also awarded highest literary award for Indian writers, Jnanpith award in 1999. He was remembered for pioneering new form in Hindi short story writing, *Nayi Kahani*⁶ is considered as the milestone in Hindi short story writing. His collection of short story *Parinde* (1959) is considered as the first work of new genre called *Nayi Kahani* apart from that he has written travelogue, essays in his writing career. He has translated Czech writers. His major works include *Ve Din*, *Antima Aranya*, *Ek Chithara Sukh*, *Lal Teen Ki Chhat* (Red Tin Roof), *Raat Ka Reporter*, *Parinde*, *Jalti Jhari*, *London Ki Raat* etc. He was invited to translate Czechoslovakian writers in Hindi by Oriental Institute in Prague. He translated Karel Chpek, Milan Kundera, Jiri Fried, Bohumil Hrabal’s works into Hindi.

He got influenced by the Czech writers. In an interview he says that their influences were “not stylistic but taught me various small things” (Peer N.p.). the themes in Verma’s fiction seem to be imported from Europe. His short-story “Parinde” deals with conflict and contrast between modernity and tradition. It connects readers of Indian subcontinent through its languages. In his view “Language is not merely a language in which you write, but it is something in which an entire traditional world of a person is reflected. The modern carries the resonance and echoes of the past and that is not available to English writers” (Bruijn N.p.). He writes in Hindi just for the sake of writing in not because he feels comfortable but he do not consider necessary to become conscious about his identity in India/ Indian. He says that “an English writer has to consciously bring in Indian motifs in his writings, which is artificial and makes it very false” (Bruijn N.p.). Verma offers western themes in his fiction.

Verma seems to indulge in such kind of politics of publication and target readership. Though he belongs to Hindi literature yet his selection of subject matter and treatment is all borrowed from European literature. He appears to foreground his *desiyata* for his local audience only. Setting of his stories appears like in foreign locations. He shows disorder of human life in his stories. His stories have existentialist approach. “Parinde” depicts the psychological approach of his characters. It is not a single story rather it is the stories of different characters. Nature runs according to the will of his characters. Characters regulate story and nature in his stories. Strangeness is major themes of his story. In “Parinde” when the major character Latika is sad, suddenly dark gloomy clouds appears. When they are happy, flower blooms.

Story grounds the urban life and urban educated characters; belongs to the feudal and capitalist society. His characters are hanging ‘in between’ federalism and capitalism. His character wants to look like bourgeois; but they are not proletariat. Individualism is the

one of the major theme in his story “Parinde.” Every character has their own identity; hides something from the other fellow beings. The question of identity, social reputation of characters well covered in the story. Unauthorised, people enters in his stories. There is an irony in strangeness.

The basic concern of the story is chronological details of the past events of characters life. It deals with the memory of the characters. There are only signs for something to express. There is emptiness in the life of characters. They only want to remember the past. The title itself shows that there is no such permanent place for birds. It is also applicable to the human life and misery of human life. Latika, Hubert and Mukherjee are the major characters. Mukherjee says to Latika that don’t you think that we are living strange life and one day we will die in isolation. It would be very difficult for me when I will return to my native place and there nobody will recognise me. Every character has a past and lives in his/ her past. But Hubert’s condition is pathetic because he doesn’t have any past. He wants to create past of his own.

Verma has not used native techniques in his story. It is more like a travelogue. It is a fragmented story, as postmodernism celebrates fragmentation of its past. The existentialist approach seems to be imported from the West, as he reads widely and appreciates the works of Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre. All the characters are fighting for their survival and living life worst than the birds. The question of identity arises in every character. Are they waiting for anyone or something to happen? It connects to the existence of human life. Krishan Bhavuk, an Indian academician says “parinde is the symbol of dead souls; story ends of putting off the lamp and mark the death of Hubert (Chutel 96). There are so many existential elements in the story like, convent school and prayer of god everyday in the school. Question of existent, characters neither waits for someone nor have any significant place in the society. Strangeness, fear of death, war and

trauma are other major elements in the story. Verma offers environment sponsored trauma in the story. Past love, happiness, deep psychological insights of the characters are other major existentialist elements in the story. Latika feels happy when she came to know that someone is still interested in her.

Namvar Singh maintains that “Parinde” is the first story in genre *Nayi Kahani*; it is unbelievable that these stories belongs the same language where story writers are struggling in city, village, town, and triangle of love” (Singh 31). It offers the picture of serious inner problem of human life. Each and every word becomes the big question ‘are they all waiting? But, for where, where shall they go’? Verma has tried to free Hindi stories from the fetters of the tradition of Hindi story. He added new dimension to the Hindi short story; a perspective to the reality of modern world. Silent characters and emptiness also sometimes searches something out of it.

Surender Choudhary, a literary critic calls Verma’s stories full of mysticism. The characters are not stable rather they seem very boring. There is a lack of Indian consciousness in the story. Story lines, theme and subject seem imported from abroad. Choudhary says Verma’s fiction is imported from the writers like Borkhes, Lawrence, Vladimir Nabokov, Ernest Hemingway etc. The magical impact through the language cannot be ignored in his story. These entire things are practised in Verma’s story. It seems like a foreign story written in Hindi language. Choudhary calls Verma’s stories ‘brilliance without significance and Verma as ‘puppet of experience.’

Hill station location, missionaries schools and the characters names and nature seem either upper class or foreign. The use of plenty of English words and sentences project his foreign influence on him. The everyday life of the characters in the story and their habits seems foreign imported. They often visit disco, bar, restaurants, night club, parties in pubs.

Everything lacks in the contemporary Hindi short story tradition. All the characters involved themselves in the hot talks, parties, opera, and musical concert in the story. They have small concert in the night, drink cream coffee after the parties. All these elements are celebrated in the story.

The different symbol denotes the high class/ elite culture. People smoke cigar rather smoking cigarette. They listen sermon by clergymen/ father of the missionary school. They go to the picnic spots. They play games like billiard rather playing Indian game. He evokes the typical images about the girls in India. As “*Sab ladkiyan ek jaisi beokoof aur sentimental hai* (All the girls equally fool and sentimental)” (Verma 67). It celebrates multitudinous of the characters psyche. Narrative seems like ‘stream of consciousness’⁷ in the story. Somewhere Verma seems to be inspired by the West. The images, story line, themes seem to belong from the Europe where he spent ten years of his life. Symbols like, “let the dead die,... blessed are the meek....sermon of the mount” (Verma 74) are just imported western narratives. In Indian Hindi contemporary writings we may get rarely such type of story line and images. Indian celebrates the pluralism but it is dominated by the Hindu religion and its sub division. Rarely, we could find such type of narrative in Hindi short story tradition in 1960. Father of the missionary preaches the children “Jesus said, I am the light of the world—thy that followed me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have a light of life...” (Verma 74). Here, author’s major concern is about the story line, the tradition he follows, is unique. Celebrations of events seem elite class. His characters are having identity crisis. Dr. Mukharjee, who has no such place to go after school. He is worrying that if he returns to his native land, would not be recognised by the people. Coffees, fancy dresses, meadows, hamburger, sandwich, whisky, piano, mouth organ seems denotes the symbol status of his characters. He has used several English sentences “what do you want? What do you want?”(93). Usually in the story line

characters sing in their own language but his characters are different. Mr. Hubert sings “In a back lane of the city, there is a girl who loves me” (100).

Amarkant, Hindi short story writer and novelist, was contemporary to Nirmal Verma. His stories have different narratives. There are no such similarities between the stories of Verma and Amarkant even though both are celebrated Hindi short story writers of 1960's. Amarkant got Sahitya Akademi Award in 2007 for his novel *Inhi Hattiyaron Se*. He was also awarded Jnanpith Award in 2009. He is considered short story writer of Premchand's *parampara* (tradition). His short stories are considered milestone in the postmodern Hindi fiction. Short stories like “Deputy Collectory”, “Dophar Ka Bhojan”, “Hatyaare”, “Zindgi aur Zonk” are his popular short stories. *Inhi Hattiyaron Se*, *Kale Ujale Din*, *Kuch Yaaden Kuch Baatein* are some of his notable works.

Amarkant's short story “Deputy Collectory” is a story of unemployment of rural lower middle class and their hard work and struggle to survive in the society. The major characters of the story are Shakaldeep, Narayan and Jamuna. While Verma's characters are very dull, desperate and pessimistic, and they have no reason in the human life; Amarkant's characters celebrate human life and seem optimistic. They search happiness out of nothing. They do not lament on their misery of human life rather they celebrate it as belief system. Shakaldeep's son Narayan is preparing for the exam of deputy collector. He has attempted exams many times, but could not succeed. Even though, they are hopeful for him. We do not find such things in the Verma's narrative.

Amarkant portrays the picture of lower middle class family and clashes of husband and wife. Their struggles for the future of children are part of Indian rural middle class. The futuristic dreams of the middle class to live better life are part of Amarkant which could not be traced in the narrative of Verma. The narration of belief system, religious practises

and superstitions are major narrative technique of the Amarkant. He shows some kind of fear to the god, as Aristotelian phrase 'pity arises out of fear.' Shakaldeep was an atheist, and criticises his wife for worshipping god. But, he becomes religious when his son starts preparing for deputy collector exam. He changes his rude behaviour to his wife and children. He starts visiting temples. Sometime, people make fun of him, for his behaviour. His son Narayan clears written exam and attends interview and his name appears on seventeenth number out of ten seats. But, the irony of the human misery is that a father should be happy for his son's selection, rather he feels happy that his son is alive. We find a story in "Deputy Collectory", a story of Naryana and his preparation for the competitive exams; while there is no such story in "Parinde." "Deputy Collectory" is a story about the expectation of bright future and its dreams. It is about the search of possibilities in the future. There is kind of joy, excitement and self satisfaction in his story. Amrakant's narrator is not dead; he is still struggling for the better future. The possibilities are still alive in his characters. There is kind of progressiveness in the stories in Amarkant. Language, themes, subject matter seems to be connected to the people. Verma come along with the dreadful, dry story. There is no such story in Verma. There are stories of characters in story. Verma's characters dominate nature; while Amarkant's characters are dominated by nature. Verma's characters are self centred. There is no beauty aesthetic in Amarkant's narrative while Verma has proper space for beauty aesthetic in his narrative. Verma depict that the human life is worst than anything; his characters does not values human life. Amarkant's characters worship human life and consider it sacred and higher than anything else. If we compare Verma with European and American writer; we find similarities between them and Verma. He had been in Czechoslovakia for more than a decade to translate Czech writers in Hindi. He seems to influence by theses writers.

Milan Kundera (b.1929) was a Czech born novelist, short story and political writer. He lived in exile in France and wished to read work in French language. He created controversies in his writings and his books were banned in the Czechoslovakia during communist rule. He worked in Institute of Advanced Cinematographic Studies Prague. He has been nominated several times for highest literary award, Nobel Prize. His notable works are *The Joke*, *Life Is Elsewhere*, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, *Immortality*, *Laughable Loves*. Apart from novels and short stories he has written essays. He explores dual tragic aspect of totalitarianism. He has received many literary prizes and awards like, Jerusalem Prize, The Austrian State Prize for European Literature, International Herder Prize, Czech State Literature Prize, and Ovid Prize. Narrative structure of short story “Symposium” from the short story collection *Laughable Loves* seems similar to the Verma’s short story “Parinde.”

In the story “Symposium” Kundera narrates the story of five doctors divided into five acts. There is no such story as in “Parinde.” It is story of character and their past experiences. All his characters are high class, well educated. It includes mythical references. Every character has his/ her theory of human science. In the story nobody talks anything important rather make slander. His characters hide their present appearance beneath of past appearance. It has contradiction as well tragedy. His characters are desperately longing for closeness. There is a serious lack of depth in the characters.

If we start comparison between the contemporary Western and Hindi contemporary fiction, then Verma seems to close with western fiction. His themes, use of language, symbols indicates the presence of western thematics in his fiction. It seems that he has used *desi* locale in his writings to provide these with a broader canvass only. He may not have used *desiyata* deliberately but it seems so. Intentionally or unintentionally he has depicted the picture of the West in Hindi. Verma might be considering his Indian Hindi

readership in Europe and America. The story does not connect to the Indian culture rather it connects to the West.

All these multicultural writers develop a kind of imagination about India. Meena Alexander revokes her childhood memories and her experiences about India. Sujata Bhatt, writers about the belief system, north-south complex. Aimee Nezhū writes about ancient marriage practices. E V Ramakrishana remembers his past memories in Kerala. Nirmal Verma writes English story in Hindi language. They foreground *desiyata* for a certain reason.

Notes:-

1. Orientalism, as a style of thought, is based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and the 'the Occident.' This definition is expansive and can be accommodate as diverse a group of writers. That is, very large mass of writers including poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, etc. can be included.
2. Orient: Said describes, orient as a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences.
3. Occident, countries and the people of the West.
4. Binary Opposition, is a pair of related terms/ concepts that are opposite in their meaning. It is a system, by which, in language and thought, two theoretical opposites are strictly defined and set off against one another
5. Target Readership, intended readership of a publication in the market. The group of target readership can be formed by of the people of certain age and communities, and class. It is an activity of market management. Authors writers for the certain group of readers. They think about their readership and pen the stuff according to the requirements of their target readers
6. *Nayi Kahani*, movement start with Nirmal Verma. His short story collection *Parinde* (1959) marks the founding stone of *Nayi Kahani* (The New Story). There is two category of *Nayi Kahani* writers. First, belongs to the writers of urban background, Nirmal Verma, Mohan Rakesh, Rajender Yadav, Kamleshwar belongs to that category. Second, belongs to the writers of rural background, Amarkant, Markendey, Shivprasad Singh, Renu, Shekhar are the major writes. Namvar Singh defines *Nayi Kahani* as, you can read it continuously and when you like to finish it. You can talk about them on table talk. When you finish it you will find that you did not get anything.

You cannot think about it; but you realise I have read something good. Writers of this are those who do not have anything of their own to say. Or they do not have any perspective about the life. In an article published in 1956, Namvar singh explains about the *Nayi Kahani* rather *Nayi Kavita* (The New Poetry). Surender Choudhary divides new story in to two categories first one belongs to the modernism, like Verma and second belongs to the progressiveness like amarkant, follows premchand's tradition.

7. Stream of Consciousness, is a narrative device seeks to depict multitudinous thoughts and feeling which passes in the mind. The term was coined in 1890 by William James in his work *The Principles of Psychology*. The term was first time used in 1918 by Mary Sinclair in literary context, discussing a novel. James Joyce, Virginia Woolf are the major writers who used this narrative techniques in their fiction.

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