CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION
9.1 THE CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE OF THE POET

India has great cultural heritage which is still more palpable due to the cultural continuity of Indian civilization. India with its traditional wisdom opened to entire humanity an avenue of rich poetic imagination that finally resulted into the creative process of literature. Irrespective of the bonds of the linguistic taboos from the Vedic period to the development of Indian English literature, India as a nation underwent ever expanding experiments of creative forum through its literary existentialities. The present study is done under this light.

Not only has India produced great savants in its native languages but many Indians have adopted and excelled in their writings in the language they choose for the creative writings. English is one such foreign language which not only flowered in India but took on new semantic dimensions, hitherto unseen even in its native places. Poetry as the highest literary manifestation of emotional, cultural and civilizational expressibility occupies a foremost position in literary genre. Linguistic and semantic features are also rational to the higher zone of emotional properties and this fact stamps the validity of creative poetry written in English by Indian writers.

This study concerned itself about a modern savant of Indian English literature. The researcher has tried to analyze Indian English literature, which is said to have begun with Henri Louis Vivian Derozio and Toru Dutt. After them it took on a flight of its own with indigenous geniuses like Rabindranath Tagore, Sarojini Naidu and Sri Aurobindo. Many other poets after Sri Aurobindo were K D Sethna, N K Gupta and the academicians such as B N Seal, G K Chettur, Armando Menezeo and other maintained the poetic spectrum in their own manner.

The post-independence scenario witnessed a new growth for the genre of poetry. This period shows its relationship to the nineteenth century in the same way as that of modern age in British literature to Victorian. The
achievement of freedom in 1947 created a question for the emergence of a new national psyche for post-independent writings. The post-independence era is represented by a dozen poets such as P Lal, Nissim Ezekiel, Mamta Kalia, A K Ramanujan, R Parthasarthy and Arun Kolatkar, Krishna Bannerjee, Niranjan Mohanty, A K Mehrotra, Kamala Das, Pritish Nandy and Charu Sheel Singh, whose work is the subject of the present study.

Charu Sheel Singh follows in his writings the great tradition of poetry. He writes among Indian English poets, but he does not follow the low-mimetic zones of the realistic poetry either of A K Ramanujan or of Nissim Ezekiel. He follows the manner and the poetic form of Sri Aurobindo and Tagore, though using originally the mythic as the symbolic world of empiric and epistemological derivatives from the scriptures of India from the Vedas to modern theory of literature. It is simply an introduction or a separative method which makes Charu Sheel Singh a distinct and distinctive poet in comparison to others who are writing in the same age. Dr. Singh is such a poet who hardly cares to be anthologized only on the basis of low-mimetic zones of form and semantics. In the present research work, the researcher found that Charu Sheel Singh abides by the high principles of poetic craft.

Dr. Charu Sheel Singh is a poet, critic and literary theorist. He has a long experience of research and is well-acquainted with various schools of thought in literary criticism. But the most important aspect of his literary personality is his thorough knowledge of the spiritual traditions of the East. Often scholars attain perfection or near perfection in the Western traditions of theology and spirituality but seldom do they attain such a hold on the Eastern philosophical and spiritual traditions.

Dr. Charu Sheel Singh, was born in Farrukhabad district of Western Uttar Pradesh, and had his schooling at Tundla (Agra). He went to Aligarh Muslim University for his graduate and post-graduate studies and came to Varanasi in 1977 for his PhD in English. His PhD dissertation on the poetry of
William Blake in the light of Hindu thought has been called as a work of classical scholarship by Modern Language Review (1983). His postdoctoral studies took him to the University of Warwick in (1982). His Literary theory has been published as book titled Mandala Literary Theory: Concentric Imagination.

The present researcher found that Charu Sheel Singh has inclinations towards philosophy and comparative religion. He used to study the basic texts of Hinduism and Buddhism as an undergraduate student at Aligarh Muslim University. The poet was greatly influenced by Adi Shankaracharya’s interpretations of the Vedanta and the Buddhist philosophy of Universal flux and emptiness (Sunyavada). The writing of Swami Vivekananda and Ram Tirtha played their role in firing the creative imagination of the poet. What makes Dr. Charu Sheel Singh’s achievement more important is that in spite of being a poet, who writes in English, he never let himself be bound by the narrow confines to language. He is a scholar of Sanskrit too and the Sanskrit texts open their secrets as easily to him as do the English epics. A Western scholar is adept at understanding and interpreting the Western classics but is lost in the Eastern texts and sometimes in his ignorance, he even denies their importance. A traditional Sanskrit scholar is spiritually unconcerned with the Western philosophies and does not take them in his purview. It was found during the course of this study that Dr. Charu Sheel Singh is unique in the way that on the one hand he writes in English and on the other he comprehends the spiritual implications of the Eastern classics. He adopts the standard ways for using English language as medium of reinterpreting the Eastern classics with a blend of postmodernism.

Researching about the philosophical dimension of Charu Sheel Singh’s work, it was found that the poet has the fruitful imagination which helps in taking flights of fancy which are meaningful yet vastly poetic. His imagery evokes the poet in his reader and combines the oriental and the occidental, the sensory, the psychic and the mystic. He works as a bridge between East and West, much like Eliot and Yeats, but with a more Indian and more spiritual perspective. Indian spirituality for Yeats and Eliot worked more as a mere peppering for their
Western philosophy, but for Dr. Charu Sheel Singh it is the main ingredient. The language of Charu Sheel Singh’s poetry is English and the literary technique is postmodernism/post structuralism, but the philosophy is Eastern.

The poet Charu Sheel Singh writes about the anguish of the modern world and posits that the world can find solace only in spirituality, as all of his poems depict. This is the contemporary relevance of the poet.
9.2 THE PHILOSOPHICAL TRADITION OF THE POETRY

Poetry has seldom remained without its philosophical traditions. The same is true about many Indian English poets. However, the spiritual dimension of Indian English poets provide additional philosophical encouragement to the modern reader.

Besides producing many masterpieces in Mandala literature, such as *Tapascharanam: Sukadev ki Pida, Songs of Life and Death, The Indian Hero, Creation Cocktail, Terracotta Flames, Scripture on Stone* etc. he has also made significant contribution to contemporary literary criticism. This work has considered all of these works in a process to understand the philosophical dimension of his poetry.

He has given his mandala theory, which is very useful for a better understanding of his poetry, as he defies categorization and his poetry cannot be explained by the existing tools of literary criticism. So unique and fresh is his poetic approach that he himself had to devise a way to analyze his poetry and give literary theory along with his poetic output so that readers can better understand his thoughts. His mandala theory is not deconstructivist but is rather pitted against it. It renovates and revives interest in some ancient concepts of Indian philosophy. This theory projects an idealist and archetypal notion of poetry and the poet. According to this theory the optimum expression of the poetic genius can only be the epic form. The researcher took special help from his mandala theory in order to analyze and explain the philosophical dimension of his poetry.

His first long poem *Tapascharanam* was found to be an example in continuity of the mystical journey from the world of time to eternity. The poems are a blend of medieval devotional poetry, yogic and spiritual traditions of the country. The context of *Tapascharanam* evokes legendary mythological characters of Indian tradition. Krishna Dwapayan, Ved Vyasa, and Shukdev Poem are full of the churning process of creation to write human story. Poet invoked “fossilized bones to erect museum of meaning” in this work.
‘Songs of Life and Death’ (1989) have the ‘Upanishadic texts merged into the arteries of a sleeping global Man’ ‘while the deep rivers infinite flow indefinitely’. It was found during the course of this study that ‘Songs of Life and Death’ laments the loss of balance and they become the anguished out pouring of a suffering soul. The purpose of the researcher was to delve deep into the “interior spaces of the mandala” and study the agony of the protagonist, a quest Hero, who is not happy with his destiny.

In the foreword to his translation of Gitanjali, Charu Sheel Singh pointed out that there are some similarities in working out the spiritual and temporal territories of the being for the process of becoming. He felt at ease academically with the poetic pattern of Tagore for continuing the mystical tradition of poetic creation. These features were found to pervade all of his poetic works in the present study. When he talks about Mandala theory he refers the text to the Vedic civilizational dimensions and at the same time becomes one with the poets of Bhakti Cult of different incarnations of Indian mythologies and ‘Indian Hero’ is one of them. The poet uses such images of poetic essence which make him an agonized soul because of the loss of moral values.

*The Indian Hero* (1993) reflects a sensibility completely immersed in the Indian mythical tradition. Charu Sheel Singh, the poet opens manifolds of imagination in his poetry apart from following the cultural and mystical ideology of India. He also theorizes the post-modern/ post-structural perspective which becomes symbolic of his universal elements in literature.

The purpose of this thesis remained intact for an in-depth study of the entire body corpus of Charu Sheel Singh’s poetry. While discovering new dimensions, the approach remained similar all through the course of the study. The researcher did the textual analysis of Charu Sheel Singhs’ works. The present study unveiled the various facets related to the philosophical dimensions of his poetry. It was found that Charu Sheel Singh followed the philosophical and
cultural configurations. The researcher found indigenous aspects and the Indian sensibility in the entire corpus of his poetry.

The present study paid attention to the fact that the language has yielded the fructiferous results for the productivity of the philosophical genre of poetry. The researcher also took care that the origination of the causative effects leading to the production to the philosophical genre of Indian English poetry were taken into consideration. The present study also analyzed the various facets that created the philosophical interest in the mind of the poet along with his life and formative influences.

As Tapascharanam is the beginning of Charu Sheel as a poet, the present study also analyzed it first and foremost. In the twentieth century Indian poetry written in English remained under the influence of the English Romantics, but it is Charu Sheel Singh who kept in continuity with his own methods of poetic creation at the instance of Rabindranath Tagore. Tapascharanam was found to be based on the epical tradition of the poetry and reveal through denotative, indicative and suggestive phrases, the high tradition of the austere practices or the mode of penances. In this poem the poet works out the subtle points that under the pressure groupism and propaganda, language sensibility are subjected to a process of corruption and debasement. In the name of the sentiments of Indianness, there are some poets who only revealed the low-mimetic zones of culture and Indian values in their poetic creation.

In the special analysis of the philosophical dimension of Tapascharanam, it was found during the course of this study that for Charu Sheel Singh, ‘cloud’ is ‘heavenly abode’ and ‘rainbow’ is its light. ‘The Sun’ and ‘the moon’ transcend him in the galaxy of paradise. He believes Kala is the prime move of the universe. Time is the teeming flux which moves unceasingly. Everything is in the hand of god and nirvana can only be achieved by tapasya. In the chapters of Agony and convulsion, it was found that the protagonist’s pida touches the climax. Phrases like ‘rotten branches’, ‘scorched perfume’, ‘writer’s
place’, ‘soul’s desolation’, ‘waterless pillow’, ‘children’s thirsts’ denote the agony and convulsion of disintegrated self in foreign lands.

During the course of this study, *The Songs of Life and Death* was found to be an important core chapter in the sense that it explains the relationship between the issues of temporality and spirituality. Temporality was understood to be the means of the philosophical aspects of the being for the process of becoming. The poet has used the meditational forms which finally become the Upanishadic reflections in the poetic contents of *The Songs of Life and Death*. It was found that the binaries of the two mystical aspects- life and death – here have been worked dexterously; and the poet has transmitted his inner eagerness to analyze that it is for the instinct of death, a man prepares himself, ignoring the aspects of life. In addition to it, the poet has brought into being his painful anguish and perceiving despair. These two elements enkindled in him rhetoric which leads to him to comprehend the real bliss of life. The researcher discovered these philosophical ideas in the text of *The Songs of Life and Death*.

It was found that the hero of the poem, the protagonist is the soul of the poet himself. It is a tathagata and Parivrajaka who is not happy with his destiny within the circles and would like to create a spiral zone that results in an apocalypse of sorts. Songs of Life looks for apocalypse, a judgment day which will grant his soul its eternal resting place of nirvana and will finally deliver it from the endless cycle of life and rebirth. The song of the cosmic epiphany is symbolized here in the songs of Krishna’s birth. Two seemingly opposite images are juxtaposed here – that of the flower, filaments and nectar on the one hand and that of sand-dunes and sandstorms on the other hand. Through these two different images the poet is trying to show that the Supreme Bliss is reflected in many of Nature’s forms and in also many great religious epics.

The Songs of Life are in a sense are dreams of eternity, which are shattered due to the questions, raised by the same process. These dreams are shattered and then reassembled in an endless game of the contingent self verses. It
mirrors the higher longings of the human heart. It is in this sense that it is a work of high-mimesis.

*The Indian Hero and Other Poems* reveals the impact of the Puranic literature in the text of Indian Hero. There is a long tradition of *Avtaars* (incarnation of God) in the Puranic literature. The poet through his creative imagination has dealt with the myth of the earth and the metaphor of sky. The Earth first appears simply as a woman, but then she craves for her fulfillment; and it is the sky which fulfils its womanhood. The earth as mother represents the elemental realities with its physical attributes, while the metaphor of sky is infinite or without any limit (*Sunya*). So, this becomes an association of *Prakriti* and *Purusha* for the creative process of the humanity en masse. There are no limitations of the boundaries between the two; and they therefore represent the cosmic reality, irrespective of the sensibilities of the East and the West. It was found during the present study that the poet, while revealing the mystical and relational values between the earth and the sky, displays through his poetic imagination the signs of culture and the civilizational progression. Hence, it was found that the poems included in *The Indian Hero* exhibits a long journey of the being for the process of becoming. The very name, *Scripture on Stone*, shows the saintly history of Indian tradition. *The Indian Hero* was also found to be a work of high-mimesis, keeping with the other great works of Charu Sheel Singh.

Yudhishthira and Duryodhana were adversary of each other in the Mahabharata and they represent the opposite sides of good and evil, but the poet mixes the jobs and images of both of these characters and creates an image which on the surface looks confusing but in essence it is the modern image of an Indian hero, the one who is not so sure about his role in this world. Charu Sheel Singh has never confined himself to any particular branch of philosophy. He knows the philosophy of the West as well as that of the East. Being a poet, he is also very well-aware of the postmodernist realities of the east as well as that of the west. This fact was reverberatingly found during the course of this study.
9.3 THE ORIGINAL PERCEPTION

The sense of disillusionment from the definite and the accurate in the West led to the rise of post-modernism, just around the middle of the last century. The collapse of the definitive account in fiction as well as poetry led to post-modern narrative, which broke all traditions accepted till then. It did not have a unified narrative and it did not deal in cause-and-effect relationships. Though it took a little while for post-modernism to reach the East, when it did, it was not long before it became the dominant mode of artistic expression, whether it was fine arts or literature. To find these aspects in the poetry of Charu Sheel Singh was the original perception. The present study found that the philosophical dimension of Charu Sheel Singh’s poetry reflects postmodernist realities.

The research found that the hero of the poems is the archetypal myth, the entity which is within and also without us. He takes the form of a Krishna, a Christ, a Yudhishthira, a Bheeshma and even a Duryodhana. He manifests himself in an Eastern as well as a Western avatar. He does not distinguish between cultural boundaries and civilizational shackles, but it does make use of all of them. Most importantly, it takes the form of the inner hero, the individual soul which is trying to reach the supreme bliss, the universal consciousness and is getting obfuscated by the remnants of the earthly weights.

The process of The Indian Hero is a unique one in which the being departs from certainty of history, myth, culture and civilization towards a becoming in which he involves himself in the very mechanism of the journey. The hero is in the search of the supreme, but unlike the established myths, the hero of the poet does not find the ultimate easily. Instead he is in dilemma about the goal and the process itself. But the journey is not useless. He is reluctant to acquire a permanent image.

Creation Cocktail is one of the most defining of Charu Sheel Singh’s works. It is also one of the longest works of the poet Charu Sheel Singh. The research found that it is a work about a mother and a woman; about a mother...
wanting to become a woman. The woman is not just a person. She is more than that. She is equated with Earth. In many ways the travails of the woman are the travails of the Earth. The absence of traditional narrative is deliberate. Though it sometimes matches the style of great epics like Paradise Lost, it holds a distinctive place in the absence of traditional style. The freshness of Charu Sheel Singh’s poetry is his amalgamation of the traditional and the post-modern, the Western and the Eastern.

*Creation Cocktail* tells the story of creation, but it tells it with different perspective and in different style. The story of the birth and evolution of many thought-systems is also woven into the narrative, making it quite distinct. The present study found that here is in reality, no single narrative in the epic. It is in fact, a cocktail of many narratives; narratives of creation myths of different religions and civilization; narratives of the birth of many ideologies; narratives of the dawn of many cultures; narratives of the dawn of many civilizations. Folk tales grace the stanzas of this epic. Prophets and spiritual teachers become the anatomy of analogy and through this paraphernalia the story of creation is told.

*Creation Cocktail* refers to the deeper truths of creation, sustenance and destruction or better-termed de-creation. The story of evolution is also touched in the epic, but most it the outer peripherals, in an effort at creating high-mimesis, are turned into a narrative of the inner journey of soul. The epic shows an underlying current of oneness and stability in the creation, despite all the signs of chaos and disorder.

*Creation Cocktail* is a story in which the creation never ends. The traditional creationist accounts have a certain and a certain end. Like the Biblical creation began on day one and ended on day seven. It took a week for the Biblical God, Jehovah to complete his creation. More or less, every other creation myth, whether it is Babylonian, Assyrian, Hittite, Persian, Indian, Egyptian, Greek and Cretan etc. have a definite beginning and a definite end.
9.4 SUMMING UP

Charu Sheel Singh, being a post-modernist poet, does not believe in definite beginnings and definite end. For him the process is the end, and in *Creation Cocktail*, the process of creation is an endless process. It keeps on happening. Not only this, the process of the earth becoming a mother is also endless and the reader does not witness the fulfillment of her grant completely, which is partly because the aim of the epic is the process of creation and not the end point.

*Terracotta Flames* represents the thematic contents of the anguish and despair, which the study found to be a deep and abiding theme in the poems of Charu Sheel Singh. With his utter despondency and anguish-led burning inside because of the harassment of values, the poet paints the corrosive state of the contemporary being. The thematic contents of *Terracotta Flames* leave one with the piercingness of a subtle values in our contemporary life are disjunct, but they bring forth some supplements related to the values for the living standards of man. The poems included in the text of *Terracotta Flames* are important for two major aspects: historic temporality and linear configurations. The one stands for our traditional heritage in the form of culture; and other is meant for the cyclicity of time. However the literary creation with its high principles surpasses the bounds of the temporality and linear configurations.

*Terracotta Flames* is one long cry of anguish, and the genius of Dr. Charu Sheel Singh has turned that cry into a fruitful and teaching parable of human woes, which can help the reader into finding his own way to the Supreme reality.

The researcher found that *Terracotta Flames* is an interpretation of the human condition in modern times. It is about the state of contemporary life in all its plight and wretchedness. According to the poet, the modern life is not only about plight and wretchedness, but also about confusions and misdirection. The modern human being leads a materially fulfilled life but has no spiritual direction.
or anchor. He is like a flotsam. The poems describe the precariousness of life in our time. It demonstrates that this precariousness of life is not confined to a particular region on the globe. Like everything else in modern times, this plight is also global. National and local boundaries do not contain this plight at one place. Whole world is suffering from it.

_Terracotta Flames_ is like radiography of the contemporary times. It reflects the overt and covert miseries of the human existence and tries to dwell over the fact that this misery is worldwide. _Terracotta Flames_ is a good companion to _Creation Cocktail_ and also _Tapascharanam_. The poet has a particular knack for telling the woes of humanity and in these poems his talent works at best.

History is often at the receiving end of the poet Charu Sheel Singh, as his supreme poetic intellect refuses to cow down before its ravages. Sometimes its ravages are shown with in a low-mimetic mimicry of pity, sometimes the history is simply shown to be a culprit in the harshest terms possible.

One of the most important findings of the present study is the deciphering of Charu Sheel Singh’s epic poem _Kashi_ according to the mandala theory of the poet. Kashi is the divine city, the abode of Lord Shiva Himself. Civilizations have come and gone, ages have withered away but Kashi has proved its eternal credentials by withstanding the ravages of time. Throughout the historiographical narratives available on Kashi in different Puranas and other books, one has altogether missed a poetic avatara of Kashi in English. This is the first poem of its kind that evokes Kashi with mandala auguries that ultimately take their figural posture into the body of a Sri-Cakra the genealogical ambience of the goddesses who enfold Shiva in the form of a bindu surrounded by peripheries of multiple kind. The poem is an immense contribution to Indian English Literature in terms of its richness of experience and range of metaphorical imagistic repertoire. Before writing this long Mandala poem, Charu Sheel Singh has also developed his Mandala Literary theory. However, in this long poem, he
has dealt with the existential powers of Kashi. It is through the union of Lord Shiva and Parvati, this entire creation came into being. Here in Kashi, Kashi itself becomes the symbol of creative process. The mortal pyres near the river Ganga become the source of immortal imagination or we can say, these burning pyres become associative with the immortal existence of Lord Shiva. Kashi itself becomes a symbol of cosmos (Prakriti) which meets with an eternal cosmocity (Shiva) in order to materialize the concept of time and timelessness. Kashi as cosmic seed (Bindu) encircles the cyclicity of life and death; and produces the essence of all rasas that exist in Beebhat (Jugupsa) disgust. The poet has also included many other symbols which are related to the concepts of Purusha (Shiva) along with the description of the low-mimetic zones of the creative process. These aspects came to light during the course of this study while analyzing philosophical dimensions in the text of Kashi.

Etching On the Edge, Legacies and Golden Chariots works out the traditional heritage as legacies and the continuity of philosophical reflections. History in India, unlike the Islamic tradition and the European model of history, differs slightly in the sense that Indian nationals followed the memory lanes as the true essence of history and culture. The concept of Indianness does not produce the low-mimetic zones but it includes the indigenous sensibility in totality. It was found during the course of this study that in the text of Legacies the poet has dexterously used such metaphoric images and symbols which bring out into being the philosophical dimensions that exists in the process of Dvaita, Advaita and Vishishtadavaita. Golden Chariots deals with the mythical world, which includes Patanjali’s ‘Kavaliya’ and Buddhistic Philosophy of Sunyavada. Apart from philosophical reflections, the content of the volume deals with many of the short poems of cultural essence.

The poet then tells us the fact that though Baba never became a famous personality; at least not as famous as other saints like Gandhi, he was a great saint indeed. In very beautiful lines, the poet tells us that while ‘Gandhi’s train left the platform but Baba’s could not.’ While Gandhi involved himself in
politics and society, in order to emancipate his nation, Baba quieted down at his own place and dissociating himself from any historically-oriented societal process, he engaged in a spiritual procedure.

Indian sensibility does not create perfect villains. In that sense it is different from the Western sensibility. In West the logic is dialectic. There is good or bad; white or black. In India it is not so. There are grey characters too. Kumbhakarna, the brother of Ravana was not a bad character.

He fought with Ravana, because he had to honour the filial bond and as Ravana had asked for his help. The story is beautifully told by the poet Charu Sheel Singh in Etching on the Edge. Even Kaikeyi, the woman who sent Rama to exile is not demonized. The ambiguity of characterized personalities was found to be travelling in the hyper-interactive zones of Etching on the Edge, in this study.

Other poems equally use the philosophies of Advaita, Vishishtadvaita and Dvaitadvaita. The Shabda-Brahama is said to be insufficient in telling the miseries of Sati, in ‘Sati’ poem. The Tantra positions of meditation are told in the story of Veerbhadra catching and beheading Daksha, after Sati self-immolates herself on the pyre. The beautiful story of Nachiketa is told in the poem of the same name, with all the necessary philosophy intertwined with the story. The process of meditation when the breath from Ida and Pingala concentrate on the Sushumna is told in beautiful words.

During the course of this study, the research found that the poetry of Charu Sheel Singh is full of references from Advaita, Vishishtadvaita and Dvaitadvaita, but his understanding of the Western modes of learning and thinking was also revealed during this course.

It was found that Charu Sheel Singh uses the mythic as the symbolic world of empirical and epistemological derivatives from the scriptures of India from the Vedas to modern theory of literature. The researcher found that
Dr. Singh is such a poet who hardly cares to be anthologized only on the basis of low-mimetic zones of form and semantics. In the present research work, the researcher found that Charu Sheel Singh abides by the high principles of poetic craft.