

CHAPTER - VI

CONCLUSION

6.1. Poetic Communication: Opening the channels of dialogue

Poetry as Communication justifiably draws on all those aspects of pragmatic communication, without excluding philological, literary-historical, general-historical, and even biographical information which may serve not only to bridge the gap between the contexts of reading and the contexts of writing, but also to make literature/ poetry study relevant. It also aims to awaken sensitivity to poets' communicative faith in the readers' receptivity; a faith, which in a more perfect world, would itself be enough to bring readers of different backgrounds so powerfully together. In fact, the very concept of Poetic Communication resides in generating an experience free from space-time reality, in relating to analogies and balanced ornamentation, and enjoying through the 'flavour' (*rasa*) or aesthetic pleasure. It is opening the channels of dialogue or mutual communication, despite differences, even at emotional and intellectual levels.

6.1.1. 'Conventional' and 'Expressed'

There is a close resemblance between the concept of poetic communication as illustrated in the study and a few prominent theories of Indian / Sanskrit Poetics. The theory of 'suggestion' (*dhvani*) states that it is only through suggestion that one can experience the 'flavour' (*rasa*) of poetry. To elucidate the nature of *dhvani* in poetry, Anandavardana categorises the meaning of poetry into 'expressed' and 'implied'. The 'expressed' is either the literal meaning or the one conveyed through figures of speech, whereas the 'implied' meaning is the one arising from the 'inner' power of the expressed, which may be either a simple idea, or a figure of speech such as metaphor, or a *rasa*.¹ Anandavardana considers

the deliverance of *rasa* as the soul of poetry. It is the *rasa* that leads to an effect or impact on the reader, and thus, accounts for the poetic excellence, i.e. the deliverance of aesthetic pleasure. The critical mediation in our context relates to narrating the effect left over the reader, i.e. witty, ironic, humorous, satiric, or sarcastic, which, in fact, subsumes the ‘conventional’ and the ‘expressed’ meaning giving way to the ‘implied’. The study, therefore, bases its findings on an investigation of the syntactic structure, semantic structure, and the pragmatic domain of the discourse in a poem.

6.1.2. Contemporary English Poetry

A number of poets of the 20th century and the present decade display their communicative performance through their role of wit, irony, humour, satire, and sarcasm most effectively. They generate the said effects in order to facilitate the communication of their thoughts, observations, and experiences in such a way that the reader develops an association with it, and thus, takes interest in reading the poems. The list of such poets from the West is very long, but to name a few, it includes: Amy Gerstler, Grace Paley, Al Young, Dorothy Parker, Bruce Dawe, Annie Finch, Marianne Moore, John Tranter, Chris Wallace Crabbe, Francis Webb, Earle Birney, F.R. Scott, Davis Campbell, Vincent Buckley, Ishmael Reed, Reed Whittemore, Geary Hobson, Jayne Cortez, Adrienne Rich, Martin Espada, Richard Howard, Wendy Cope, Billy Collins, Charles Bukowski, Robert Creeley, Richard Wilbur, Henry Taylor, Howard Nemerov, Franklin Pierce Adams, Derek Mahon, John Betjeman, Paul Muldoon, J.V. Cunningham, Kenneth Koch, William Logan, Terensinka Pereira, Lyle Glazier, Judith Kerman, Peter Levitt, Anthony Piccione, John Enright, Thom Gunn, William Burroughs, and John Berryman. ² The same trend has also been observed in Indian English Poetry, and there are a number of such poets including Nissim Ezekiel, O.P. Bhatnagar, Shiv K. Kumar, Kamala Das, R. Parthasarathy, R.R. Menon, Krishna Srinivas, K.D. Sethna, Nalini Kant Gupta, R.K. Singh, P. Raja, I.H. Rizvi, P.C.K. Prem, D.C. Chambial, and P.K. Joy.

6.1.3. Reader interacts with the poem

The study reveals that the whole process of poetic communication comes into effect only after the reader interacts with the poem. The reader analyses, understands, and interprets the given poem in respect of the context that one creates in accordance with one's circumstances, situations, and experiences. Although the poet makes it a point of helping or guiding the readers in the building up of the context with the help of certain key words that are the meaning making devices, or discourse elements, the readers are free to have a context of their own. Thus, there lies the possibility of a gap between the context of the poet and that of the reader. And as the context varies, the reader may come up with an entirely different meaning of the poem. The poet creates a poem taking into consideration an implied reader, assuming that the implied reader would generate a meaning out of the poem being guided by its syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, and discourse elements. But it is not necessary that the reader decodes the poem in the same vein as the poet expects, and as a result, there may be a multiplicity of meaning in a poem.

6.2. Expression of 'individuality'

A close examination of the poetry of Maha Nand Sharma and I.K. Sharma reveals the presence of poetic subversion (*vakrokti*), hyperbole (*atisayokti*), simile (*upma*), metaphor (*rupak*), image (*bimb*), and symbol (*prateek*) as the major elements of their poetic structure. They create contexts to pragmatically communicate emotions, sentiments, abstract-thoughts and ideas, personal revelations, wit and intellect, satire and sarcasm, irony, and humour, and construct their worldviews. The process they engage in leads them to contemplate over their experiences within the society, and the social concern depicted through their poetry brings them on the same plane. Although the themes and subjects they entertain in their poetry follow a similar overall process, the ways in which they define themselves lead to contrasting conclusions, and therefore to the development of different poetics, tailored to express their individuality.

6.2.1. Maha Nand Sharma: Reformation, Resurrection, and Recognition

Maha Nand Sharma primarily defines his identity by setting himself a task as a poet to give purpose to his life and to seek for himself a place in the society.³ This is realizable by writing poetry of a moral and didactic nature, which presumably imparts healing and companionship to the reader⁴, and therefore, also to himself. By writing such poetry he seeks to reform the society, as also to reflect his desire to be noticed and recognized by others. Therefore, Maha Nand Sharma tries to imitate the canons, such as Miltonic Verse in his long epic narratives (*A Rudraksha Rosary* and *A Spiritual Warrior*), Shakesperean/Elizabethan Sonnets in his collection *Autumn Strains*, and Wordsworth's style of Nature-descriptions in Blank Verse as used in *The Prelude*, i.e. rich imagery describing Nature in his long narratives as well as shorter poems.

6.2.2. I.K. Sharma: Personal

I.K. Sharma, on the other hand, interiorizes the process of self-definition. This enables him to conform to the expectations of society to some extent, while at the same time, he displays liberation through the poetic process that involves defining himself on the basis of his own independent thought, in a way that has not been imposed by the outside world. He imitates none, nor does he seek to play the role of a reformer. One finds him simply mocking/laughing at the idiosyncrasies of the contemporary world. A number of his poems on trivial/petty subjects such as cockroach, broom, milkman, teeth, camel, roadside workshop, peacock, nurse, clerk, gulmohar, bus, scarecrow, etc. confirm that he is capable of projecting smaller things and common day to day observations on a large canvas, highlighting a number of such aspects that could only be observed with his poetic binoculars. I.K. Sharma is, thus, able to extract poetry from everything around him, and this reflects his wit and intellect, largely in a difficult free-verse form.

6.3. Maha Nand Sharma: Certain Aspects

The study reveals that both the poets are similar to each other on a number of grounds, but differ remarkably in their discourse pattern despite sharing the essential ironic, humorous, satiric, and sarcastic tone. While Maha Nand Sharma sounds loud, I.K. Sharma is soft and self-restraint.

6.3.1. Art for Life's Sake

Maha Nand Sharma, with his nine creditable collections, is one of the prolific poets of the contemporary India. He contends that the primary cause of the failure of present-day poetry to reform society is “the paucity, if not the total absence, of spiritual content in it.”⁵ Like Sri Aurobindo, Sharma strongly believes that the aim of poetry is to elevate people spiritually, and it can be best achieved through rhyme and meter, for good metrical verse can be said to possess an appealing musical quality of its own, and the ritualistic nature of its rhythmical impact makes it much more memorable to the reader. This is something like Sri Aurobindian ‘mantric’ or ‘overhead’ poetry. Whether he reaches that level is doubtful but in all of his long epic narratives and most of his other poems, Maha Nand Sharma strictly adheres to a specific form of rhyme and meter *a la* Miltonic and Romantics. A believer in the dictum of ‘Art for Life’s sake’⁶, Sharma’s poetry is sublime, soul-stirring, and educative.⁷ It is marked by originality, creativity, realism, and mysticism.⁸ It evinces the influence of the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, the *Gita*, and other devotional and mythological literatures of ancient India. Inder Jit Lall opines: “Sharma is basically a spiritual man with a sound study of the Sanskrit classics and a taste for the divine subjects.”⁹ His epics are noticeable for catholicity of appeal and cosmic consciousness. His imagery is original, evocative, exciting, and startling. Mamta Sharma finds: “Greater application of the poet’s mind is observed in his predominantly intellectual images which are novel, unconventional and modern.”¹⁰ It is conspicuous for the reinterpretation of an ancient theme in modern national and international context. His poetry has a universal appeal as it communicates the age old conflict between the rich and the poor, male dominated social order, chaotic and lawless government, rampant corruption, moral degradation, etc. Maha Nand Sharma writes *A Rudraksha Rosary*

as a devotee of Shiva but his worldview is all inclusive, secular, and humane. He uses myths extensively and reinterprets them to make it suitable for his poetry and acceptable to the sensibility of contemporary age.

6.3.2. Classical Style

Maha Nand Sharma's poetic craftsmanship bears the stamp of his scholarship. He deftly combines classicism and imagination with craftsmanship. His poetic technique shows the strong influence of Sanskrit and English classics. He employs Miltonic blank verse with delightful ease, confidence, classical lucidity, and vigour. A distinguishing feature of his poems is his admirable power of evocation of scene and atmosphere. Endowed with astounding poetic powers, Sharma bends English to his native ethos. His diction is apt, suggestive, and polished. He displays his mastery in the use of literary and rhetorical devices such as image, symbol, metaphor, simile, irony, satire, sarcasm, humour, pun, paradox, understatement, overstatement, personification, etc. to establish the communicative link with his readers. His prosodic achievements consist in the skillful handling of blank verse, Spenserian stanzas, sonnets, heroic quatrains or elegiac stanzas, and also long and short poems in different meters.

In Sharma's Spenserian stanzas, the whole sinuous progress of the first eight lines reaches a leisurely conclusion in the Alexandrine. At times, the use of one or two spondees in the Alexandrines makes its movement leisurely. Sometimes, all the wisdom contained in the first eight lines is gathered up in the Alexandrine. At times, his Alexandrines also contain a note of melancholy or triumph. Bernard M. Jackson comments on Maha Nand Sharma's use of Alexandrine in the following words: "...Indeed, Sharma's use of Alexandrine (on ninth and final line of each stanza) has so well succeeded in intensifying the pace and cadence of this offering, that the dramatic impact of the narrative alone would probably delight all lovers of ancient folk lore and heroic legend."¹¹ Amplitude is another characteristic of his Spenserian stanzas. His lines acquire a poetic charm with the figures of speech which are necessitated by constraint of the elaborate rhyme scheme of the Spenserian stanza.¹²

As far as sonnet writing is concerned, Shakespeare is Maha Nand Sharma's model not only in the simple outward rules of rhyme and lines but also in the more complex ones such as a turn in emotional tone in the third quatrain, making the concluding couplet clinching and introducing modulations in the iambic lines by substituting spondees at places. These modulations are carefully made such that it adds to the music of the lines. Most of his lines are end-stopped like those of Shakespeare. His concluding couplets are either an expression of the central idea in brief or an embodiment of some bitter comment.¹³

Maha Nand Sharma writes his elegies in elegiac quatrains with their rhyme scheme *a b a b* and their stately and leisurely movement in iambic pentameter lines. His elegies measure common ground with those of Milton and Gray in respect of their containing not only a lament on death but also a note of optimism at the end.¹⁴

An interesting tendency is observed in the short poems of Maha Nand Sharma when they are examined in their ascending chronological order of publication. The number of poems with specific patterns of alterations in the lines of varying syllabic length increases, and then, decreases. In using the alterations pointed out, the poet is guided by considerations of their suitability to express different feelings such as love, pathos, satire, humour, etc.

Another remarkable feature of Maha Nand Sharma's poetry is the exemplary use of similes and metaphors. The use of metaphor, sustained metaphor, mixed metaphor, and also dead metaphor impress the reader with their aptness and suggestiveness revealing the poet's fertile imagination. His expressions gain in suggestiveness with both conventional and unconventional symbols.

Maha Nand Sharma is equally good in using the figures of contrast such as antithesis, paradox, epigram, oxymoron, and climax, with telling effect and they have great aesthetic significance in his poetry. He uses them appropriately and effectively in order to construct his discourse of irony, satire, and sarcasm.

The appeal of Maha Nand Sharma's poetry also lies in his skilful use of the figures of association such as metonymy, synecdoche, transferred epithet, and allusion. The reader appreciates them as one has to reach imaginatively to the meaning of the object described, through the meaning of the object associated, which conceals it. The closeness of association, implied in the figure, impresses the reader. No less impressive and delightful in his poetry are the figures of imagination such as personification, pathetic fallacy, vision, and hyperbole. One also confronts figures of indirectness such as irony of speech, euphemism, and litotes at regular intervals, rather quite often in his poetry. The use of such figures or poetic devices/ornaments stimulates the reader's imagination to reach the hidden meaning, i.e. what is 'implicit'.

6.3.3. Recognition Deserved

Almost all the poems of Maha Nand Sharma, be it the long narrative ones written in epic mode or Spenserian stanzas, or the smaller ones, communicate his message to the readers successfully. The poet uses an inductive approach in his process of communication, as he makes specific observations, which are mostly from the contemporary surroundings, and then, make them a base to communicate his philosophy or worldview. Mamta Sharma, too, observes: "He weaves into his narrative significant truths of life and serious reflections which impart the narrative depth and seriousness."¹⁵ Sharma deserves credit for being able to communicate the contemporary issues or experiences in the classical poetic pattern such as Blank verse or Miltonic verse, Spenserian stanzas, and Shakesporean sonnets, in contexts that are mythical, religious, and spiritual at the same time. He, thus, revives the interest of the present day readers in those ancient forms, which have become the passion of one of the leading contemporary poet-editor H. Tulsi, who edits *Metverse Muse* (Vishakhapatnam), and many others such as Nalini Sharma (India), R.N. Mishra (India), V. Lalita Kumari (India), C.D. Irene (India), Amar Nath Prasad (India), R.R. Menon (India), D.C. Chambial (India), S.L. Peeran (India), Aju Mukhopadhyay (India), I.H. Rizvi (India), S. Radhamani (India), S.C. Gupta (India), Bernard M. Jackson (U.K), Christopher Brewer (U.K.), Margaret Hays (Australia), Frances Hackney (Australia), Anne Hutson (Australia), Joy Rainey King

(U.S.A.), Don Tuthill (U.S.A.), J. Gordan Hindley (U.S.A.), etc. Maha Nand Sharma is able to communicate his serene thoughts/ideas, relevant to the contemporary situation, strictly adhering to the constraints of the classical norms and standards/style of poetry writing such as rhyme, metre, rhythm, structure, diction, etc. The musicality of his verse reinforces the channel of communication, and thus, helps the message to reach the reader more effectively. R. Rabindranath Menon rightly comments: “Metric lines are his passion, which the rhymes embellish invariably.”¹⁶

In order to suit to the modern sensibility, or meet the expectations and taste of contemporary readers, Sharma relies heavily on wit, irony, humour, satire, and sarcasm, which in turn, makes his message more effective, or adds strength to the overall impact, and thus, adds to his communicative performance. The selection of the words, the construction of phrases and sentences/lines, the tone, the rhyme-scheme, the rhythm, the imagery, and other rhetorical/poetic devices are creatively processed to suit the requirements of the intended message, and at the same time, meets the requirements of the verse form as well.

6.3.3.1. Maha Nand Sharma: Spiritual, Religious, Social and Political Awareness

Poems as in *A Rudraksha Rosary* may project him as a devotee of Lord Shiva, or poems as in *Flowering of a Lotus* may reflect his strong affiliation to ancient thoughts, Maha Nand Sharma is personally spiritual but secular in his worldview. His moral concerns cross all the barriers of religion and philosophies, and thus, he sounds relevant to people and society everywhere. His poetry communicates the degenerating social values, political decline, corruption at all levels, academic decadence, loss of moral and spiritual values, and the positive as well as the negative aspects of the advancements made in the sphere of science and technology. Kalika Ranjan Chatterjee finds: “Dr. Maha Nand Sharma reveals himself as a crusader for protection of fundamental human rights and his poetry is aflame with righteous indignation when he contemplates the basis of our caste-dominated Hindu society.”¹⁷ He also celebrates the rich Indian culture and tradition through *A Spiritual Warrior* just as he seeks to communicate the age-old myths and folktales to the modern readers, arousing their interest by contemporarizing and interpreting them. It is his

communicative performance that appeals to the readers of the present times, motivating them to shed what is unethical, and practice which is good. Therefore, Patricia Prime appreciates his poetry in the following words: “Sharma’s poetry ranks high in Indian English Literature because of the poet’s profound knowledge, his command of English, and his ease for expressing Indian sensibility. His spontaneity, ease and command in employing Miltonic blank verse, awareness of contemporary situations, descriptions of nature, vivid characterization and depth of feeling provide spiritual insight into what is, after all, a materialistic age.”¹⁸ Bernard M. Jackson celebrates Maha Nand Sharma as “a present-day poet for tomorrow’s world.”¹⁹

Maha Nand Sharma’s epic narratives display the context playing a very important role in the interpretation of the low-mimetic expressions, and as a result, its impact is high-mimetic in order. He himself describes the charming beauty of women in a very explicit, erotic, and sensuous manner, but does not approve of the same beauty in action, i.e. around him. He is not able to reconcile this dilemma, i.e. duality of his vision, and turns into a hard-core moralist. The conflict because of what he observes, and that he is unable to reconcile in his own imagination, lends a sarcastic tinge to his poems.

6.3.3.2. Moralist Stance

Yet, his commitment to reform the society makes Maha Nand Sharma didactic which at times reduces the aesthetic pleasure. He may appear to some readers even boring, monotonous, and repetitive. His impact may appear declining at times, as in the longer narratives, where at places he is unable to maintain the grandiloquent structure and style. The ‘moralist’ in him makes him infuse contemporary episodes, mostly in an ironic or satiric vein, with moral lesson, and thus, affect his poetic force. Alternatively, this may also be viewed as part of his experimentation with the established norms and standards of the epic which may prove significant to future readership. Given the revival of interest in structured verse and/or metrical construction (as verifiable from various issues of *Metverse Muse*).²⁰ Maha Nand Sharma’s efforts to follow the grand models of Milton, Shakespeare, Spenser, Sri Aurobindo, and others to narrate his observations, ideas, and experiences, without

excluding the Indian myths and mythology, beliefs and philosophy, and norms and values, is ambitious but full of promises for emergence of a new sensibility.

Summing up, the study confirms that Maha Nand Sharma is a competent poet who deserves recognition and a high place among the canons of contemporary Indian English Writing. He has proved his worth as an ambassador of serious Indian Poetry in English with a literary style, classical and yet contemporary. His creative and critical use of the language to express his thoughts, ideas, experiences, and feelings via the medium of poetry projects him as an Indian to the core, despite his fascination for the great English poets' style. He unhesitatingly incorporates autobiographical elements in the weaving of his poetry. The sort of harsh tone that Maha Nand Sharma demonstrates in a number of his poems seems to be an outcome of the very harsh realities (challenges) of life that he encountered in the early years of his life. The religious bend (mindset) of his parents and the kind of upbringing he had, makes him strictly religious; and the regional orthodoxy of the place that he hails from, seems to be responsible in converting him into a hard-core moralist. He expresses and highlights the erosion of values, corrupt ways of the powerful and influential persons, and suggests the possible panacea to all contemporary problems in terms of a poetics which seeks to instruct and delight, and reform life and society. With moralizing streaks, Maha Nand Sharma merges the Modernist and the Victorian shades in his verses that are remarkable for phonetic patterning, lyrical flow, and enjambment. The tone of irony, wit, humour, satire, and sarcasm enlivens his socio-historical and political perspective. There is a virtual fusion of the Indian and Western aesthetics in his poetry and his poetic quest is essentially spiritual, inner, and God-ward, seeking liberation for himself and all.

6.4. I.K. Sharma: Poet of Modern Sensibility

I.K. Sharma's poetry, apparently simpler and less challenging than Maha Nand Sharma's, is rooted in the later twentieth century sensibility, characterized by the ambiguities and ironies of contemporary life. He is local and universal at the same time as he deals with varied human experiences, within or without. His poetry, largely in free verse form, is remarkable for simplicity, spontaneity, sincerity, subtlety, and gravity of thought and expression. In fact,

he, too, communicates via wit, irony, satire, sarcasm, and humour in his poetry. Like several American and British poets of the 1960's and 1970's viz. Lyle Glazier, Elizabeth Parker, Terensinka Pereira, Judith Xermon, Peter Levitt, John Enright, David Fraher, and Toni Piccione, he deftly manages the choice, variety, association, proportion, and succession of words, creating thereby striking metaphors. He successfully exploits the three powers of a word- denotative, connotative, and suggestive. The meanings are at once expressed, implied, and insinuated, evocative of certain hard and precise mental images contained by the words. His symbolic, gesticulative or dramatic way stimulates the thought-centres and projects forth certain special, deep or grave meanings, parallel to the expressed ones. It would be very apt to quote R. Rabindranath Menon, who is of the opinion: "Certainly the poet is aware of the relationship between cabbages and kings. The poet is witty and humourous, whimsical, sardonical, rewarding the reader with a rich harvest of thoughts and emotions."²¹ It so happens that one idea is carried over to another idea to make a new entity, the figure or image or symbol, which shares the characteristics of both. With his personal and lyrical style, and sentences and phrases as the units of expressions, he heightens the efficacy of even a quotidian experience, or common observation, with the help of the association of words marked by irony, satire, or humour. Considering from creative and critical stand-points, "his poetry is a new-found treasure, rich in evocative meaning, powerful in use of image and metaphor, and profound in its message."²² Bijay Kant Dubey is of the opinion: "he alongwith some other Indian poets, excels in the use of humour, fun, pun, irony, and wit."²³ He chooses to compose in unrhymed lines of varied lengths so that his ideas, thoughts, observations, or experiences could have an uninterrupted flow and rhythm. He puts together the words that come to him naturally, in a form, which makes his poem: "In a flash / they curl and settle themselves / into a humming line."²⁴ Free from the artificiality of rhymed lines, he follows a more balanced rhythmic base of alliteration, assonance, and even the self-same beat of emotions and ideas.

Such a choice of free verse form not only suits the poet's sensibility but also demonstrates his creative bias which too indicates his philosophy of expression. The syntactic structure of his poems adds strength to the semantic meaning of the text, facilitating pragmatic

communication. Some of his poems display a line-break at the end of a thought, and also rhyme-scheme, but it is not adhered to throughout the poem. He may, sometimes, employ end-rhyme scheme to let the thought continue to another line or stanza but ultimately this ends up in communication of irony, or humour. In fact, I.K. Sharma exploits the poetic devices at his disposal to derive suggestiveness as well as to communicate the intended message as subtly as possible.

6.4.1. Turns 'inward' to achieve peace

I.K. Sharma displays a repeated use of 'silence' as a recurring image or metaphor in his poems such as 'After the Storm', 'Sow the Seed Deep', 'The Shifting Sand Dunes', 'To the Clouds of the New Millennium', 'Three Cheers for Haryana', 'Dharamsala 1', 'Dharamsala 2', '21st Century', etc. that reflects his inner state of staying calm and undisturbed amidst all the turmoil around him. This communicates his tendency of turning 'inward' to achieve peace.

One also finds the repeated use of desert landscapes and imagery, or symbols associated with desert, in a number of his poems such as 'The Shifting Sand Dunes', 'Happy Home', 'May in Jaipur 1982', 'Waiting for Rain', 'A Lonely Furrow', 'The Camel', 'New Heaven of Freedom', 'To the Clouds of the New Millennium', 'Wild Love', 'Missing Point', etc. This fact may be understood as every author/poet is a product of one's time and environment, and as I.K. Sharma comes from Rajasthan, most of which is a desert, he has a penchant for it. O.P. Bhatnagar in his paper 'New Indian English Poetry Today', comments: "I.K. Sharma brings the landscape of Rajasthan to a living presence combining serenity with humour and satire."²⁵ Another remarkable feature that surfaces up as a result of the study of poetic communication in I.K. Sharma's poetry is the presence of rural set up and ethos in a number of his poems such as 'Gangu Teli', 'A Bull Castrated', 'Waiting for Rain', 'Our Village Bus', 'My Maiden Ride', 'Happy Home', 'An Encounter', 'Conscription', 'Drum, Drum, Drum', 'Testimonial', 'A Lonely Furrow', etc. Probably, I.K. Sharma is the only poet along with T.V. Reddy in the contemporary Indian English Poetry, who delineates rural settings and ethos to such perfection. Recently, K.V. Raghupathi in his article 'Social

Inclusion and Exclusion in Indian Poetry in English' comments: "Sadly, Indian in English carries little depiction of rural scenes and characters. Among the third generation poets only two poets T.V. Reddy and I.K. Sharma seem to have written about rural life."²⁶ As Nissim Ezekiel is widely celebrated for his depiction of urban landscapes and culture, and Jayant Mahapatra and Niranjana Mohanty for their portrayal of Odisha's landscapes and culture; I.K. Sharma equally deserves the attention of the academia for his unparalleled depiction of desert and rural landscapes and culture, thus, lending a native ethos (Indianness) to his poetry. In other words, it may be claimed that the sensibility of I.K. Sharma is rooted in Rajasthan, like Jayant Mahapatra's in Odisha and Nissim Ezekiel's in Bombay.

6.4.2. Short and Lyrical

Unlike Maha Nand Sharma, I.K. Sharma prefers to write shorter poems, or the ones, which can be finished reading in one sitting. This means that the reader can experience the poet's words without straining himself much. I.K. Sharma's contemplative voice centers on social, political, and economic issues that concern everyone at every place. Rita Nath Keshari expresses a similar opinion: "Sharma's poems are not obscure jottings that try to masquerade as outpourings of a sublime kind. He is alert to the reality around him." She further adds: "Sharma has looked practically at every aspect of life with sensitivity and deep concern."²⁷ He believes in exposing what people try to conceal, and thus, reveals the naked truth. His communicative brilliance lies in displaying through a few words what Maha Nand Sharma attempts to preach and moralize about in a long narrative. Many of his poems leave a gentle smile on the face of the readers and convey the message more deeply. Dr. G.D. Barthe affirms: "He may have few equals but no superior in dealing with the comic."²⁸ I.K. Sharma, thus, exploits the suggestive capabilities of a word to its fullest and proves more successful than Maha Nand Sharma in communicating the weaknesses, ills, drawbacks or idiosyncrasies of the contemporary society. The poet shares Maha Nand Sharma's concerns about rampant corruption, degenerating political system, hypocrisy, and intolerance all around, and succeeds in drawing his reader's attention to all that challenges life today more effectively. He appears more sincere and honest with his aesthetic

performance than Maha Nand Sharma, who aims at teaching or preaching morals. One notices that the themes of I.K. Sharma's poetry are wide enough to appeal to people everywhere. Even the pessimistic note in some of his poems successfully x-rays the core of the society's sickness and forces readers to think.

I.K. Sharma, besides semantic awareness, also displays a philosophical bias in his poetry. A contemplative voice is pervasive all through his poetry, and the ideas and emotions are represented through suggestions rather than direct expressions. R. Rabindranath Menon expresses: "... there are latent meanings and messages which go home to the perceptive reader. He has a light hearted, tongue-in-the-cheek approach to the subject matter, but has the talent to convey forcefully more than what the lines verbally carry." ²⁹ The use of the language, themes, rhetorical devices, images and symbols, and all other poetic features employed by I.K. Sharma clearly reveal that he sticks to the Indian sensibility and his own unique poetic style all the time.

Yet, in some of his poems, for example, 'Guestrom', 'H', 'The Return of the Artist', and 'Conscription', his vision seems to have been blurred: the poems seem to have lost their organic unity, despite irony. His expressions seem extrinsic in poems such as 'Waterfall' and 'Cockroach'. The poems such as 'Dharamsala 1' and 'Dharamsala 2' display loose structure as well. At times, one also comes across a very good line juxtaposed with another tending to be banal, such as "the bull too passes by unannounced, / goats come near the visitor and go back / voicelessly with banana skin in their mouth," ³⁰ A few of his poems open with great promise, but taper off into constrained semi-dead abstractions, for example: the poem 'Myth', which is a sonnet, opens with a striking catchy line, "When close-fisted history turns deaf", but quite soon it begins to flounder. Writing long poems does not seem to be his *forte*, and therefore, whenever he attempts to write a long poem, he is unable to meet his poetic brilliance, for example: the last four stanzas of the poem 'Waiting for Rain' seems to be an unnecessary addition, and the poet would have done better if the eighth stanza would had been its last stanza; similarly, the last four stanzas of the poem 'The Earth Speaks Again' seems to be an unnecessary repetition or elaborate description of the

contemporary times, and the poem would have generated greater impact on the thought-centres of the readers if it would have ended with the lines, “Only Machiavelli is alive / with his towering lies / and is growing in size.”³¹; and again, the poem ‘A Shadow on Your Face’ seems to entertain too many things at a time, which is unlike I.K. Sharma’s poetic style. But these minor pitfalls, which are rare exceptions, do not challenge the authority of I.K. Sharma’s poetic competence and the study discovers his poetry possessing a unique appeal of its own that suits the modern taste and temperament.

6.4.3. Rare ‘Irony’ and ‘Humour’

Summing up, the study affirms that I.K. Sharma deserves to be recognized as an important signature in the post-1970 Indian English Poetry. His poetry covers all the three faces of India- rural, sub urban, and urban. He celebrates places, people, geography, and wanders through them all clicking likeable pictures in the mind where he admixes to it ‘irony’ or ‘humour’ to make the little turn into great, and great appear little. As such, his poetry is a revelation, an unveiling. His earth-bound poetry, faithful to terrestrial matrix, has horizons of visions and perceptions. The austerity of Sharma’s poetic art, the condensation of his style, the economical precision of his language, the impressiveness of his imagery, the sharpness of his wit and irony, the contemporariness of his subject matter and themes make him a ‘modern’ poet of great relevance and significance. He deserves to be called a very sensitive and representative leading poet of the time. He stands unrivalled in the evocation of irony and humour in poetic communication today. R.K. Singh is justified in saying that “you are perhaps the only serious poet, who has humour so competently handled.”³² R.K. Singh further comments: “Conjoining the concerns of poetry and the concerns of life, he composes poems with quiet intensity- which is his very strong point.”³³

6.5. The Striking Contrasts

The comparative study also brings to surface the striking contrasts in the poetic style of Maha Nand Sharma and I.K. Sharma. Most of the poems of Maha Nand Sharma are written in rhymed lines of standard metrical lengths, whereas I.K. Sharma prefers writing in

unrhymed lines of varying lengths. In Maha Nand Sharma's poetry, especially his long narratives, one finds a repetition of similar images, metaphors, symbols, similes, words and expressions, again and again; whereas there is no such repetition in I.K. Sharma. The poetic style of Maha Nand Sharma clearly reflects a deep influence of the eminent poets of the West, whereas I.K. Sharma's poetry is absolutely free from any such influence. Maha Nand's poetry often entertains grand philosophical, religious, and spiritual themes; whereas I.K. Sharma does not entertain such grand themes in his poetry, and his themes are petty common and simple in nature. Another distinguishing feature between the two poets is the way they handle 'women' and 'sex' in their poetry: Maha Nand Sharma, despite his spiritual attitude, uses 'women' and 'sex' effectively for spiritual transformation or elevation; whereas I.K. Sharma uses them for humorous and satiric purpose. One also observes a discontinuity or abrupt deviations in Maha Nand Sharma's poetry, especially in his long poems; whereas there is no such deviation from the main subject in the other poet. The structure of I.K. Sharma's poems is more compact than that of Maha Nand Sharma. The over-emphasis on the moral preaching or didactic function of poetry in Maha Nand Sharma mars its poetic essence, whereas the poetry of I.K. Sharma is more enjoyable and pleasing to the reader because of the lack or even absence of any such pre-determined objective. It is observed that I.K. Sharma is able to present his thoughts, ideas, observations, and experiences more succinctly than Maha Nand Sharma. Some of the poems of both the poets display the use of the so called 'Indian English', i.e. nativized version of the language: In the case of Maha Nand Sharma, it seems to be a part of his natural writing style; but I.K. Sharma uses it intentionally, which is quite apparent from the syntactic structure of his poems, to arouse/generate irony, satire, or humour. The degree of suggestiveness is greater in the poetry of I.K. Sharma, which provides his poems greater amplitude for multiplicity of meanings. The poetry of Maha Nand Sharma is heavy with 'native ethos', making it suitable for a limited number of readers or audience; whereas the poetry of I.K. Sharma is comparatively more universal in appeal, thus, encompassing the interests of a greater number of readers or audience across the globe. The longer poems of Maha Nand Sharma are more appealing to the senses of the readers than this shorter poems, most of which seem

to be an offshoot of the longer ones; on the other hand, I.K. Sharma is lyrical and often attempts to compose short poems, and he does it exceptionally well.

6.6. Bridging the Gap

The analysis of the poems show that communication of wit and irony in the two poets is not devoid of humour, satire, and sarcasm, i.e. wit and irony further lead to the evocation of humour, satire, and sarcasm. The two poets deserve more attention especially that of the academic stalwarts, as O.P. Bhatnagar believes: “The sensibility which can see and create satire cannot be regarded as incompetent at handling a foreign medium like English.”³⁴

The study reveals that the two poets selected for the study contribute immensely in the progress of Indian English Poetry. They serve as a link/chain in bridging the wide gulf/gap between the pre-independence Indian English poets and the new Indian English poets, i.e. the poets of the last decade, thus, their poetry marks a stage of evolution or a phase of transition in the long journey of Indian English Poetry. They depict similar concerns in a number of their poems. They use poetry as a medium to communicate their social and political awareness.

6.7. The Communicational Approach: Its Advantages

The methods and techniques employed by the common readers, critics, scholars, and even academicians in the critical analysis, understanding, and interpretation of poetry has been a sort of constraint in the complete exploration of the poems as they approach poetry with a pre-conceived frame of mind. They view only a particular aspect, or a few limited aspects of poetry being guided by any particular school of thought, or critical ideology. Most of the critical studies related to Indian English Poetry are either concerned with the themes, poetic style, imagery, rhetorical devices, inherent message/purpose, or meaning sustained; but none deals with the intended basic purpose behind the writing of poetry, i.e. its communicative aspect. Therefore, the approach adopted in the present study is refreshing in the critical study of poetry as it crosses over the dogmatic principles or approaches guiding the analysis

and interpretation of poetry, and gives due attention and importance to the pragmatic-communicative aspect of poetry.

The study makes an attempt to apply communicational perspective to literary texts, a la Roger D. Sell, even if selectively. Even as the two Indian English Poets, Maha Nand Sharma and I.K. Sharma, are rather new and little known to English speaking audiences abroad, their texts have significant cultural, social, and political roles to play; and therefore, their discourse has been analyzed and interpreted in terms of its syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic features to highlight their excellence as poets of Wit, Irony, Humour, Satire, and Sarcasm. Though Sell's concern is revival of interest in literary study with tolerance for conflicting views of critics, the focus in the present study has been on the intrinsic merit of the two Indian English Poets, and encourage literary/critical dialogue about what/how they communicate through their poetry. Pragmatic issues of dialogicality, commonality, intellectuality, and ethics have been addressed to provide a communicational perspective.

The study of the contemporary Indian English Poetry on the parameters of 'Poetic Communication' definitely adds new dimensions to the sphere of critical analysis. The approach exhibits a technique of complete exploration of a poem as it starts at the syntactic level and culminates in the effect on the reader. The study brings to the forefront the enthralling poetic exuberance and excellence of contemporary Indian English Poetry, as the two poets are the representatives of the genre.

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