Chapter-V

Play of Leela

The poem is an ideal space where the entire drama of creation, the 'Leela' is staged. This ideal is never realized, but is nevertheless the eternal burden of the poet. The impossible task of writing the 'other' as the 'other' is here equated with the myth of the transmigration of the soul into 8.4 million different life-forms (species). It is not enough to identify with the other, reducing alterity to the sameness, measuring by the yardstick of universal human essence. The poet can articulate the 'worm' only by 'becoming' the worm. The poet cannot die with anything (any 'other) left unsaid for only the poet can lend voice to the 'voiceless' other. Every thing must be re-created, re-inscribed as a poem, for it to come into being, long after or before its existence in nature. The poem makes the stone visible, speaks its difference in a non-hierarchical, non-anthropocentric order.

However he is not unnecessarily mystifying the poetic act. The poem is rather an attempt at disentangling the complex web, the most complex inter-textual web perhaps, that we call a poem. He is demystifying the poet-god, as constituted in/by endless otherness. The poem is a site, a battleground of two powerful myths, those of the poet-god and the transmigration of the soul, leaving both slightly more wounded.

The space left by the disappearance of the poet (as author) re-constitutes itself into the 'who' of the question, "who is the poet?" "The singularity of the 'who' is not the individuality of a thing that would be identical to itself, it is not an atom. It is a singularity that dislocates or divides itself in gathering itself together to answer to the other, whose call somehow precedes its own identification with itself."¹ This dislocated, self-divided singularity which emerges in the void left by the poet traces the path constituted by its act of 'gathering itself together to answer to the other'.
The poem happens as an always already impossible but absolutely necessary answer to the call of the other, even before the other constitutes itself into the generality of a recognizable life form, a stone, plant, animal or a human being. This Kafkaesque metamorphosis not only deconstructs the humanization of the other, but also disrupts the continuity the habit of 'seeing' a particular worm as representing only the generality of its species. The poet cannot be relieved of his burden till each stone finds its voice, its difference in the polyphonic space of poetry:

कवी दा निरवां संबाव नाही 2
(Kavi daa nirwan sambav nahi)

Always engaged in this impossible task of self-creation as a site for 'gathering itself together' of the dissemination of 'other' voices. The poet is constantly aware of the guilt of stabilizing himself into a subject at the expense of answering to the other and he is always already constituted as absolutely answerable to the other. But this continuous self-making as discontinuous, ruptured, inadequate responses to the other as other has only the means of human language which is not enough to translate the countless languages marking and making the text of nature:

मेरे वाक अधूरे हुए
Shabad gange
Hond de geet vich shamil kivein hovaan 3
(Mere waak adhoore hun
Shabad gange
Hond de geet vich shamil kivein hovaan)

Human languages cannot measure upto the song of creation. The poet wonders if it is not the language itself which has debarred his entry into the other's world. This incommensurability between his human
vocabulary and polyphonous song of nature has interrupted his necessary participation in the *Leela*, the play of creation:

*Main bindu vaang bheen bheen nahi kar sakda*
Na panchi vang koo-2
Na poun vang sar-2
Meri boli ne mainu besura kar ditta hai
Te hond te kirtan vichon chek ditta hai

Paradoxically, it is his "own" human language which is both the possibility and the impossibility of relating to the 'non-human' world of nature. Perhaps it is this attempt to appropriate the language 'for his own purposes, which constitutes 'him,' as an unstable, self-divided subject. As Derrida says, "...there is no property of language, language gives rise only to appropriative madness, to jealousy without appropriation. Language speaks this jealousy; it is nothing but jealousy unleashed".5

He is arrested by language, the only means through which he can participate into the song of the other:

*Na main apni bhasha vichion nikal sakda haan*
Na main mahageet vich shamil ho sakda haan

However this 'alienation' does not constitute any original lack. It cannot give rise to any Modernist nostalgia about a lost 'natural' language. "This abiding 'alienation'.....appears, like 'lack', to be constitutive. But it is
neither a lack nor an alienation, it lacks nothing that precedes or follows it, it alienates ……no self that has ever been able to represent its watchful eye…………This structure of alienation without alienation, this inalienable alienation is not only the origin of our responsibility, it also structures the peculiarity………and property of language.” With no place for nostalgia or cynicism, the poet has no choice but to revitalize language, to make it into a poem, so that it might be reinvested into the space of otherness.

(Shabdaan vichdi langhdi
Ag di lhaat
Thar jaandi hai
Bachche dee cheek
Roula reh jaandi hai
Te athroo kewal paani
Main phir vi likhda haan
Cheek vichon
Peer jagaon layee
Asththrooan ch
Dard paida karan laye
Te agan dee laat garam karan layee)
Things lose their original shape when they 'pass' through words. The poet has to take an always excessive responsibility to reinscribe into the things what the familiarity of daily discourse has divested them of. However, this renewal of the language to welcome the other into its space does not correspond to establishing a firm contact between the word and the thing. The creation of new metaphors would not lead to pure receptivity of the 'presence' of the given thing. As Levinas puts it, "The absence to which the metaphor leads would then not be another given but still to come or already past .... To be given to consciousness to sparkle for it, would require that the given first be placed in an illuminated horizon - like a word, which gets the gift of being understood from the context to which it refers. The meaning would be the very 'illumination' of this horizon". The poem emerges in/as the imperative need to articulate the unique experience of the other in the general structure of a language. The poet's efforts to address this pressing need is thwarted from the very start. The event that is a poem can only happen in the interbreeding space of two languages, bringing the irreducible singularity of the other close to the logic of the generality. This event, this poem is the poet's dream of creating a new unreadable idiom which would nevertheless be read in the other language. He knows that he "can invent, break new paths only in "difficulty" by taking the risks of a reception that is slow' to come, discreet, mistaken, or impossible." These "new paths", are where the play between the word and the thing will be generated. These cannot be traced by the poet's signature above, unless it loses itself in the things, "the Other that one must force to counter-sign the poem in some way."

श्रोत ये बहुः
कविचे विचित्रव वः तृष्ण कवित्त ललिता
कविचे प्रकट शाली
श्रीम विचं विज्ञानं अंवथु विज्ञान शाली
श्रीम श्रवण शाली
दिव्यता दी तूह बक्त दुमाने
कहाँ मस्त तत्ती

.........

(जे मेरे बेड़ा
कहाँ मस्त मस्त तत्ती
मुखबंधे भिंडबंधे मस्त तत्ती
सन्तानंचे बक्तंचे महतंचे ब्रज पहिचे
लगि मस्त तत्ती
जो बुध गीत सही मेरे अपटी वश
गंज देखी चर्ची तै हे दे ......)

(जे मेरे कोल
कांभदे बिरस्ता दी गूल किये लाये
कांभदे शहद नाही
नाईनान विच लताकडा आत्रू चित्रन लाये
गिले शहद नाही

darea दी गूल करान वस्ते
वाग्दे शहद नाही
जे मेरे कोल
जग्दे मंग्दे शहद नाहीन
सुलाग्दे मेहक्दे शहद नाहीन
मुख्वरांडी कारांडी शर्मांडी भराण्डी पूंडी
नाच्दे शहद नाहे
तां कुकु जा परी मानु आपानी कालम
सांभ देनी चाहिदी है ते ते दे ......)

The words are the desire, the poem before it acquires the shape of the letters, which loses it singular 'voice' the moment it finds itself voiced in language:

अंकुळ रा सुह
सियरें अंकुळ मे
फिर फिर वे चट्टा रं

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Akhraan da khon
Jehrre akkhjar main
Likh-2 ke atda haan
Ohna da khwon
Mere sir painda hai)

His 'programme' of writing, authoring a poem dissolves into the unoriginality of an intertext which he cannot altogether escape:

(Rasoi vichcho shabad turke
Meri kavita vich parveesh kar jande hun
Is vichon adhrak te lasan dee

The authorial voice has to stop in order to yield the textual ground to other voices, which 'walk' into 'his' poem, overwrite it, contaminating the 'purity' of his 'original' voice:

(Rasoi vichcho shabad turke
Meri kavita vich parveesh kar jande hun
Is vichon adhrak te lasan dee

220
Gandh aaon lugg paindi hai)

Things from the kitchen as well as the objects of nature cannot be kept 'outside' the text', and there is nothing 'inside' the text which the poet can confidently call 'his' poem. As Barthes says, "The work in the best of cases – is moderately symbolic (its symbolic runs out, comes to a halt) The text is radically symbolic: a work conceived perceived and received in its integrally symbolic nature is a text. Thus is the Text restored to language; like language, it is structured but off-centred, without closure (........the epistemological privilege currently accorded to language stems precisely from the discovery there of a paradoxical idea of structure, a system with neither close nor centre)."16 The border between the text and the world, between the 'inside' and the 'outside' of the poem, between the original and the copy is impossible to be steadily maintained.

बटे वज मन घर फिर्तिया टे
बटे बचही
बटे तीसी फिर्तिया
बटे भीसी बचही
बटे मुक्त छी पैठ
बटे चूँकि चा नैल 17
(Kade kalam shabad likhdi hai
Kade kadhshhi
Kade neeli sihae
Kade peeli haldi
Kade suraj dee dupp
Kade chulle dee sake)

The poem is counter-signed by so many other voices, that the poet has no option but to acknowledge the impossibility of deconstituting the otherness which is continually erasing his signature:
However, that is not to say that things are smoothly transferred into symbols. The poet cannot appropriate the nature either for his poetic discourse. Before inscribing itself on the page, the poem is always already written in the language of nature.

The poem is the intertext of nature, the play of creation, the postmodern text. As Derrida says, "Of course, if one defines language in such a way that it is reserved for what we call man, what is there to say But if one re-inscribes language in a network of possibilities that do not merely encompass it but mark it irreducibly from the inside, everything changes. I
am thinking in particular of the mark in general of the trace, of iterability, of difference. These possibilities or necessities, without which there would be no language, are themselves not only human. It is not a question of covering up ruptures and heterogeneities. I would simply contest that they give rise to a single, linear, indivisible, oppositional limit, to a binary opposition between the human and the infra-human. If there is no individual limit, then how does the human relate to its other, for instance, a river. The words describing a 'river' cannot represent the real river. There are discontinuities and pauses in language which you do not find in the flow of the river:

दरिया की बेदी परिभाषा
दरिया बीड़ी ना मबड़ी। 21
(Daria dee koi paribhasha
Nahi kiti jaa sakdi)

The disconnection between the word and the thing is comparable to the unbridgeable gap between the flowing continuity of river and spaced out, fragmented words which might describe it. Words are like containers or buckets which might carry some of the river's water even to the sea, but they cannot touch the 'real' river, its intense flow:

भाँडियाँ बिंदु
भाँड़ी अंं मे मबड़ा है
दरिया नदी
.... .... ....
दरिया नदी बेदी भाँड़ी है
स बिंदु से
दरिया बहात बाली पूर ते 22
(Bhandian vichch
Paani tan pai sakda hai
Daria mahin

........................................
Daria naa keval paani hai
Naa kinaara
Daria vagan waali dhooh hai)

The poem is a double gesture of articulating its failure to 'present' the signified while also pursuing it to 'present' the 'pursuit of the signs' themselves as its own possibility as a poem. While the poem's own account of its failure to represent the 'truth' of the river flows into a continuous rhythm, the river itself is described as representable only through one word, which is not limited to a few letters or sounds but becomes a symbol spread over countless miles:

(Shabad daria
Keval tin akkhkar hee nahn
Ah taan asanthaan milaan vich
Vichia hoea
Ehh sanket hai
Ki daria dharti utee
Vee turda hai
Ate samundar vichhon udd kee
Asmaan vich vee
Turda hai)
The river flies out of the sea and walks in the sky? The river then is quite a poem, but the poem is not the river. Ironically, the poet is celebrating the river as a poem while admitting his poem's failure to celebrate the river in all its 'truth'. Appropriating the symbolic potential of the 'river' for his poetic purposes, he admits that the 'otherness' of the river is not available to the humanistic discourse:

\begin{quote}
\begin{verbatim}
Dariya dee gul
Dariya vich hee
Kahi jaa sakdi hai
Dariya
Dariya
Dariya
\end{verbatim}
\end{quote}

(Dariya dee gul
Dariya vich hee
Kahi jaa sakdi hai
Dariya
Dariya
Dariya)

_Darya_ (river) is the never-present object of desire. It is what the subject 'lacks' but cannot master. The poem articulates the non-availability of the being in its plenitude, of the lost home of the subject before his coming-into-language. The desire to grasp the object is translated into the desire for meaning in language. The subject constitutes his shifting identity and creates meaning in the performance of desire in language. The _Darya_ of desire flows in/as the play of signifiers in/as the poem.

It is precisely the death of the 'real' self-identical _Darya_, which liberates the desired _Darya_ to inscribe itself as a dissemination into the process of signification. Its very unavailability is what creates it as desire as a poem. The poem proceeds self-consciously as an elaboration of its own failure to find the meaning or reality of _Darya_, The inaccessibility of
Darya as a referent or signified in the signifier Darya runs parallel to the poem's search for its own possibility of a meaningful exercise. Just as no vessels or buckets can measure or contain always-in-the-making 'truth' of Darya, The poem is not identical with the totality of its words, or its interpretations. It locates itself as a circumscribed space within an infinite flow of signification. It can only participate as another sign in the Leela, in the play of differences, freed from the hegemony of any meaning or truth, from binary opposition.

The repetitiveness of the word Darya (river) textualizes its reality, underlining the futility of pursuing the signified which ends up into a chain of signifiers:

\[ \text{Eh taan asankhaan meelaan vich} \]
\[ \text{Vichia hoea} \]
\[ \text{Ek sanket hai} \]

This excessive repetition marks the difference inscribed with the शविला as the signified recedes into the differential movement of the infinite regress of the signifier. There is no self-identical sign in which the signifier and the signified are sealed into the singularly self-same. The play of traces splits the integrity of the sign into unstable fragments:

\[ \text{Main shabdaan dian} \]
\[ \text{Chipraan naal hee} \]
\[ \text{Kavita likhda haan} \]
The poet confesses that he is not ready to confront all the consequences of signification the words might have. All he can seize upon is "the broken pieces of words" to construct his verbal artifact. However these dislocated signifiers make possible new semantic configurations, creating other intertextual zones which the reader can traverse as different experiences of reading. These splinters of words are still inhabited by all the traces of the history of their participation in the play of signification. Each of their reincarnations into the textual world of creation is haunted by the ghosts of their earlier roles in this *Leela* (play) of signs:

(Shambhala rut phalrushud chhe)

Poore soore shabdaan de
Sanmukh hon daa mere vich bal nahi)

(Samundar tak panhunchan layi
Dariya nu
Dharti te turna painda hai
Dharti utte turde turde
Us vich achople dharti
Vass jaandi hai

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Oh samundar ton
Parat aounda hai
Budh bar-2
Janam lainda hai
Dharti te turda turda
Budhdh dharti daa hee ho janda hai
Dharti te turna hee
Budhdh banna hai

Cut off from the teleological end of meaning and the hope of returning to original plenitude, the sign is forever caught in the game of differences. But it still escapes the grasp of any text; no discursive context can fully appropriate it. Its flow towards the 'sea' of pure meaning is contaminated by its journey through the land of signifiers. The traces of its each journey mark its eternal return to the land where it can signify its presence which is always under erasure. But how does a combination of words work as a 'poem'? The drops constitutive of the water of a river cannot account for the event of a flowing river:

Dariya
Boond boond vich vagda hai
Par boondaan dariya nahi
Shabad shabad jurr ke

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Kavita banhdi hai
Par shabad kavita nahi
Khariyaan boondaan vich vee
Nadi kiven vagdi hai
Shabad jurr ke
Kavita kivin bandi hai

How does a particular assemblage of words become a text, a poem? Do the words make the poem, or does the poem make the words? This mutually constitutive relation between the words and the poem, the water and the river is the non-foundational mystery of the play:

(Ha rahass daa naa
Nadi nu pata hai naa kavi nu
Par ohi pal sulakhane hun
Jinna vich paani
Dariya banda hai
Shabad kavita bande hun
Te samaan jindgi)

Only because there is no possibility of representing the Darya arises the possibility of a poem through its own self-disavowal. There is no chance of speaking to Darya or speaking Darya the 'idea' of a 'real' Darya, the signified of the referent Darya, realizes, rather desires itself unfolding as the deferred action of the signifier. This desire 'sees' itself as a poem.
Darya which comes to pass as the very confession of its inability to 'present' the 'reality', the inadequate 'truth' of Darya.

The text itself is a Darya in which all kinds of signifiers flow as an intertext of images, motifs and meanings without either settling into a definite pattern or marching towards any final unity or truth. Images, words, ideas are often repeated, as they travel from one poem to another, without coming to rest in any fixed meanings, without finding any centre around which they might structure themselves. Rather they float on the surface, colliding, clashing with other things repeating themselves in different poems, thus creating further differences with themselves, fragmenting their 'identity' as signs, disrupting the unity of a sign never staying within the 'borders' of a poem, threatening its thematic unity and formal integrity, by continually crossing over to the poems.

Moreover, this intertextual surface is not defined as the binary opposite of any depth it must lack. It has its own depthless depth which consists in the crests and troughs of its uneven flow of signification, the continuous play of shifting meanings. However, it does not invite the reader to dive headlong into it in order to bring out the 'pearls' of meaning which might be lying hidden in the deep. You swim across its surface as another signifier performing in the dance, feeling, sensing and knowing himself as part of the Leela, another wave in the flowing intertext, desiring to spread it further, spreading in it like desire.

The poet can only wonder at this Leela, celebrate its events by constituting their, as well as his own meanings and identities as the very performance of his 'function' as a poet in awaiting the moment when he can receive the poem, script it on the page, and then withdraw to make place for the reader to sign his entry. Rather than being "an indefinite source of significations which fill a work", the author is "a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses; in short, by which one impedes the free circulation, the free
manipulation, the free composition, recomposition, and decomposition of fiction".30

So he can make do with the broken pieces of words, whatever he can lay hands on, to compose a poem, a bricolage which does not aspire to coherence and unity with reference to any grand narrative. He does not wish to leave the permanent mask of his signature on what he creates; he rather wants it to be erased as soon as it inscribes itself.'

The poet does not want to write with the revolutionary fire of the Modernist, Progressive Punjabi poet the grand narrative of a high truth.

31
(Mitti utte daag paoendi hai
Usnu saaf karan di
Sumett bakshi
Mainu agg di kalam na deh
Main kohtoor utte nahin likhna
Ghaah dean tirran die
Vartaan likani hai
Jis layee
Agg di nahi
Paani di kalam chahidi hai)
Rather he is more interested in writing the little narrative located within ordinary things like, for instance, the tuft of grass, for which he requires the fluid language which might produce rather than impede the proliferation of meanings:

He feels called to tell the story of these little things which make his world rather than the grand narratives of social or spiritual emancipation. The small events which make the Leala of 'this' moment, the world-in-the-making right now, may nor progressively lead to a great moment of higher value, but it is the poet's absolute responsibility, nevertheless, to remain a witness to their unfolding; it is this very responsibility as a witness which constitutes him as a poet:
विलय तेहे आँगा सी टैंट अंस तां
ढेकेदे पुटेदा फर चपा तां
तौबे बंधे सी चींबर तां

..........................

मदीं देह आर्द्र सिंह मध वहो भुंजा कुकी दी
भेट तां
बैंजी सिंह दारे ठंव तां
ढोंगी सिंह बजाए बली तां
पपां सिंह बजाए लुङ तां

..........................

रण दे ठंजी सूपली दी
बेंजी तां
पुलमेक दे भेंजी सिंह
अश्वी कर्मचार तां 33

Mai
(Raat bhar pyar di udeek kardi
Akh da jagrata haan

..........................

Sannh ton phahe gaye chor di namoshi haa
Sareer vechdi kuri di babasi haa
Birdh hoe anga di tutt bhajj haa
Ugde boote da chaa haa
Jamde bache di cheek haa

..........................

Sareer di anand vich mar rahe munda kurri di
Maut haan
Bandagi vich jurre hath haan
Nadi vich vagda paani haa
Narran vich vagda lahoo haa

..........................

Daa te laggi dropti di
Bebasi haa

233
Daryodhan de ankhan vich
Aayi vashna haan)

This crossing of the poet's language by the text of nature transforms both into a new field of signification where their counter-signing of each other disappears. The experience of reading the poem does not lead you back to nature. The words do not walk off the page to guide the reader to their referents. They cannot be congealed into "isolable meanings, such as those in dictionaries, which one might reduce to some content or given." Rather they fashion a complex new web which the reader disentangles:

(Jeev jantooan dean pairon
Bahut kujh likhdean hun
Je tuhade kol
Parran da saman hove ... A. R.)

The reader's critical engagement with this new signifying thing must take intertextual route which will be re-marked by his traversal of it. He must participate into, rather than observe, the play of signification, sign his own "positional" difference to re-make the poem:

(234)
(Shabad kande hun
Aapna aapna angootha la ke
Ud jaana chahonde haan par
Main eh kavita sehje sehje likhni hai

Jo shabad dheeraj naal
Mair kalam di nok nal turange
Ohlaan nu he roop devanga

Mere ander ek taal de chaal hai
Samein de anginat bindu ho ke
Anhoe ho jaande hun

Bindoo taan nuktian ute turde hun
Nukta na lambai na chutaai na mottai
Rekha kehndi hai je nkte nahi

Ek taal

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He wants to create the impossible, a singularity, a poem, a new self-description. The language, words cannot stop at the meaning, will not move at his pace; he cannot fix them into his meaning, they refuse to be tied to his signature, Leaving their mere traces with him, they slip away into the known and yet-unknown context and interests, leaving his 'poem' at the mercy of a reader, another set of words, who will arrest their movement, to create his own meaning. And yet given luck, their movement might correspond to a movement within the poet, a succession of movements which he desperately wants to keep from perishing into nothingness by writing them, remembering them slowly how he is constituted by them, by the other continually changing through them. The postmodern poet faces this paradoxical moment. He can neither give up the ideal of writing a new poem, of presenting the unpresentable, nor can he overcome the contingency of language and selfhood which can only produce an assemblage.

There is all the difference between submitting to the love of language, the unknown and unknowable possibilities of signification the words carry, and subjecting the words to the desire for a certain, final meaning:

भे मँगायः हूँ शिव्यक
गरी वलण
हिमकां रा मिकब वलण गँ
हे खिं वेलिए मगँ
मँगायः महादीमः लगा

236
How does the poem take you closer to the earth? Because the "poem
does not hold still within names, nor even within words. It is first of all
thrown out on the roads and in the fields, thing beyond languages, even if
it sometimes happens that it recalls itself in language, when it gather itself
up, rolled up in a ball in itself, it is more threatened than ever in its retreat:
it thinks it is defending itself, and it loses itself."39 But being thrown out vulnerably on the roads is equivalent to Realism. It is poetry rather which deconstructs the truth of any given or formulated reality:

Rather than being the repository of all truth, the poet finds himself to be nothing but this impossible task of speaking the unspeakable. The poem as this impossible responsibility as possibility of the impossible responsibility moves very close to what Derrida says about deconstruction: "...there is a duty in deconstruction. There has to be, if there is such a thing as duty. The subject, if subject there must be is to come after this."41 All that cannot be contained within the discourse of reason falls within the realm of the poet-the individuals as little narratives seeking to articulate their own difficult
truths in the absence of complete information provided by a grand discourse:

When the factuality of history is constructed as 'the reality' of life, it must be destroyed by "the lightening of responsible dreaming," by the revitalized event of poetry. And this responsibility is not limited or calculable. As Derrida says, "....there neither can be nor should be any concept adequate to what we call responsibility. Responsibility carries within it, and must do so, an essential excessiveness. It regulates itself neither on the principle of reason nor on any sort of accountancy."  

The poem happens as the responsibility of articulating the secret of a thing, the secret that a thing is:

(Jinha daraan nu pakke
Jinde lug jande hun
Oh kunjiyaan naal nahn
Kavi di dastak naal
Khulde hun)
But why then is this utter responsibility creating all this 'real', and not just postmodern textual pain. What is more real than the pain a fish has to suffer through its passage from man's mouth to his stomach in the Darwinian tale of long evolutionary journey from 'the fish' to 'The Man'? Isn't it some food for (poetic) thought as to why man's own evolutionary ancestor has now become 'his food'?-

**Bhojan**

Bande de mooh ton pate tak  
Jaandi jaandi mashali puchdi hai  
Taan phir mashali to manukh tak da  
Yagaan yuganter lamba  
Safar kyon?

If 'the fish' had been finally condemned only to the repeated traversal of a passage from man's mouth to his stomach, then who/what, and why did this who/what, put 'the fish' through this long, long ordeal of evolutionary journey? Who will spare a thought, a response for the virus 'who' was born and died in a bubble which turned out to be an entire world of experience of living for it? -

(Bande de mooh ton pate tak

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Jaandi jaandi mashali puchdi hai
Taan phir mashali to manukh tak da
Yagaan yuganter lamba
Safar kyon?)

Not is it a question of just a fish or a virus only. 'Man' likes to eat, has an endless appetite for, whatever it finds tasty or nourishing without even thinking about giving a chance to the possibilities, the seed of another fruit, that that 'eatable' embodies:

Eh phal da ras
(Eh phal da rus
Bahul sawad hai
Jis nu pe ke
Phal bich baithe beej ne
Sampuran hona si
Te ek hor birkh ban na si)

Only a poet can go to the root of this unequal difference. "The difference between "animal" and "vegetal" also remains problematic. Of course the relation to self in ex-appropriation is radically different (and that's why it requires a thinking of difference and not of opposition) in the case of what one calls the "non living", the "vegetal", the "animal", "man", or "God". The question also comes back to the difference between the
living and the non-living." 48  Perhaps the difference is constituted by the curse of language:

> भेंटी बेंटी है मेरी मैं शेष हूँ नहीं कर पाऊँ शेष नहीं कर पाऊँ
> है देवें दे बीजाट शेष शेष कर पाऊँ

> रा मे अफ़सर जिन में दिखा सब बना जानगा
> रा मे महाकाल फिर सब बना जानगा जानगा

Meri boli ne manu besura kar deeta hai
Te hond de kertan vichon chek ditta hai

Na main apni bhasa vichon nikal sakda haan
Na main mahageet vich shamal ho sakda haan

The poem has come into the world of language like an orphaned child. She does not know how this world will treat her. In the absence of any paternal protection, how would the poem negotiate the world of signs and meanings?

> मैं भी मैं भी है
> दिखा मंत्र मंत्र
> फिर शुरू नहीं में
> पहले पहले मिलिहा है

> फिर शुरू समान भा मंत्र है
> फिर शुरू क्षण है
> अफ़सर फिर में मंत्र है
> फिर शुरू करता है

> परिवर्तन वह मंत्र है
> फिर शुरू
> जोनी है रहे
> सम-सम बंधे हंगा मंत्राण

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Somni
Ik sajjraa shabad
Jis nu main
Hune hune sirjia hai
Eh kise ve
Chinnh da jama paa sakde hai
Kise ve bhavna nu
Aapne vich sama sakda hai
Kise vee bhavnaa nu
Paritimbat kar sakda hai
Is nu
Godi le lavo
Lavarish bache vaang sangda
Ehdar odher jhaak reha hai

The poem is like a newly coined word which is reluctant to enter the signifying system, fearing misappropriation as a sign or meaning.

However, the postmodern poet knows only too well that poetry can no longer be assigned a serious Eliotic 'function'. Poetry cannot lead back to the world. It gives no solace to the suffering people. It does not alleviate the pain of those living in wretched conditions. It does not have the transformative potential Modernism demanded of it. It can only refer to 'itself', to other poems, to an ever-expanding intertext of signifying systems where meanings clash, contradict, cancel each other:

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The poem cannot enact any absolutely singular event. It is subject to the writing’s hell of eternal reputation. As Blanchot says, "....poems are not things but only words that refer to other words, and 'those' words refer to still other words, and so on into the densely overpopulated world of literary language. Any poem is an inter-poem, and any reading of a poem is an inter-reading."52

It is not a Blowian kind of intertextuality where a poem results from sub-conscious oedipal struggle with a precursor poem, but rather a
conscious entry into an intertextual discursive space where the 'Leela' of so many mutually contradictory meanings is staged;

The text does not generate any critical meaning which would put an end to the 'Leela', the paradoxical play of the signifier in search of the very absence of the signified.
References

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7 Mark Robson, *op.cit.*, p. 116
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10 Jacques Derrida, *op.cit.*, p. 116
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*Ibid*, p. 845

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51  Ibid, p. 831
52  'Blanchot' in Victor Taylor and Charles E. Winquist (eds.),
    New York, 2001, p. 24
53  Navtej Bharati, op. cit., p. 693