Mother-land and mother-tongue are two different names for one life-infusing force. Mother-tongue forms the most significant part of our roots. It is something that arises out of the needs, ties, joys, affections and preferences of long generations of humanity and is born out of the warmth of the soil. It is the language of our secret dreams, reverbrating our most personal hopes and aspirations. A chance encounter with one's own mother-tongue, when one is feeling low, lonely and sad in a foreign land can sure soothe and console while also warming the cockles of the heart. It is indeed like the mother's touch! Ramanujan puts it in a beautifully poignant manner how a professor of Sanskrit who is lost in Berlin, on one rainy day:

Suddenly comes home
in English, gesture, and Sanskrit, assimiliating.

The Swastika
On the neighbour's arm
in the roaring bus from a grey
nowhere to a green."

But why does one decide to express oneself in other
than one's own language which breathes and lives the
tradition, history and culture of one's own land? It is not
very difficult to understand it in the case of the Indian
writers, poets etc. using English. For over one hundred
years India was nothing but a colony of the great Empire and
it was natural for the Indians to remain in awe of
everything British. On the other hand, the study of English
language opened new vistas for the Indians, making them
aware of new ideas, attitudes and bringing within range a
whole new mode of experience.

Basically a creative person is above all the narrow
national bindings, restricting him as an artist, because
language is not merely a means of communication; it also
gives rise to the desire to put through something new,
unconventional and untried through language in unusual ways.
Artists tend to ignore parochial shackles as they are people
who like to root themselves in ideas as well as a different
language or culture. It only adds dimensions to their
being. No wonder many Indians have tried to adopt English
language as their own. The Indian writer writing in English
is under pressure, because he remains Indian in sensibility
while using English as the medium. There are fascinating
aspects to his peculiar position. In thoughts and ideas,
east and west are poles apart. The fusion of these two cultures remains an uphill task for the poet. "The Indian poet in English feels alienated by his language from the environment and from a living Idiom".\textsuperscript{2} The consciousness of the Indian writer is rooted in his environment and having to write in English makes him even more sharply aware of his Indianness and the limitations. This lends an element of tension, leading inevitably to a crisis of identity. This also brings in either nostalgia or guilt, a common experience of all exiles. The writer becomes a victim, a sufferer. Exile becomes metaphorical as well as metaphysical. The Indian poet writing in English has to come to terms with it all. Can the infatuation or the love affair with the English language, which becomes like the other woman be consummated? The alienation makes the poet more acutely aware of his nationality, taking him nearer to his roots, where he not only seeks tradition but also becomes aware of the need for tradition.

R. Parthasarathy is one such poet who after his infatuation with the English language and culture is over, makes a comeback to establish a vital relationship with his own culture. "Parthasarathy dwells upon the inner conflict that arises from being brought up in two cultures".\textsuperscript{3} In the beginning of his career he went to England, with the aim of settling there. But unfortunately his experience there
shattered his dream as he realised that he would always remain a foreigner for the English language and also the English nation. Disillusioned, he returned to India to rediscover himself and to establish his roots. He felt sad at the time he had wasted:

He had spent his youth
    whoring
After English Gods.
There is something to be said for exile:
    You learn roots are deep.

Parthasarathy says that he came back because he wished to come to terms with his Tamil past and thus to try to find the source of his alienation. He makes a conscious effort to fight the colonial mentality which has continuously haunted and alienated the Indian writer. Parthasarathy tries to overcome it by engaging himself in a close and intimate dialogue with the Tamil language. He is interested in finding a personal language which will bring him nearer to his own culture and tradition. It is also his attempt to root himself more closely in his Tamil tradition.

About his own work Parthasarathy writes, "From the beginning I saw my task as one of acclimatising the English language to an indigenous tradition". Parthasarathy has published just one collection, Rough Passage, a series of poems, written over a period of fifteen years which compel attention on one theme. The structure is three tiered: 'Exile', 'Trial' and 'Home-coming'. He has been taking out
or adding to it by continuously rerevising and polishing. So in a way we can say that *Rough Passage* is still incomplete or it is never going to be complete because 'exile', 'Trial' and 'Home-coming' are going to remain an endless process for him. About *Rough Passage*, Parthasarathy himself says, "*Rough Passage* is in the tradition of exile, where the English language and residence abroad are in the nature of attempts to situate myself more firmly at home. Eight hundred years of foreign rule can not be simply written off. The dominance of English in India made us exile in our own homeland".6

The poem records the poet's own experience and thus we can call it autobiographical or even a 'confessional'. Emotions that the poet expresses are intense; everything that happened, has really meant a lot to him, yet he is able to maintain an objective, dispassionate stance. It is ironical in tone and speaks volumes for the poet's bicultural influence. We Indians are emotional, intense people and do not really like to keep emotions in check while the westerns know how to keep their cool. Likewise, even the images the poet has used are rather western in influence like 'crockery rinsed and dried, traffic, photographs, smoke, ashes, dust, lanes full of smoke and litter', 'There are puddles of unwashed English Children', 'The Thames appears clogged' and the day is announced by the
'noises' of the trains, milkmen and newsboys. 'The Streets of Bombay are noisy, dusty, smokey', 'The Sun burns to Cigarette ash' - and many more like these. And, all this when his Indian mind is torn asunder by the conflict and the trauma between the east and the west. Stressing this fact Parthasarathy writes "One of the realities of the literary scene in our time is that of the exile as writer who takes his language and homeland abroad with him, or writes in a language, other than his own. Exile is seen as a rite of passage he must go through before he earns the right to speak". In Rough Passage, 'Exile', the first part opposes the culture of Europe with that of India, and examines the consequences of British rule on an Indian, especially the loss of identity with his own culture and therefore the need for roots. Against the turmoil of non-relationship, personal love holds forth the promise of belonging, and the second part, 'Trial' celebrates, love as a reality here and now. 'Home Coming' the third and final part of Rough Passage, explores the phenomenon of returning to one's home. It is a sort of overture made with the aim of starting a dialogue between the poet and his Tamil past. The strength of the poem derives from his sense of responsibility towards crucial personal events in his life.

The task that Parthasarathy has undertaken, i.e., to assimilate, the Tamil tradition into English, is not just difficult but elusive, too, and in a way is never-ending. The cultural shock he experienced in England was traumatic.
His stint there made him realise:

Language is a tree, loses colour
under another sky.
The bark disappears with the snow
And branches become coarse.

Language has colour and even texture and it makes you belong. Parthasarathy had inherited his love for the English language from his colonial past. But once in England he feels disillusioned. He fails to belong. However hard he may try, he is unable to catch the correct idiom of the language. As an Indian, he is always going to experience the time lag as far as the progress of the language and the real English literature is concerned. His problem is that he does not really have any real tradition of English as a language, whereas his own tradition he fails to express through English. English is not his mother-tongue. The language that in the beginning had appeared like a sheltering, benevolent tree becomes colourless and loses charm in a different environment; even the bark disappears and the branches feel rough and hard. The poet feels alone and lonely as he fails to identify with English culture. He describes his stark loneliness by comparing it with the uninviting, Cold Stone benches of the city park. What goes to make the nuances of the subtle experience is one sure by-product of his dual cultural influence. The pain and also the hurt he experiences is too much besides the sense of waste and loss, when at the age of thirty he
sits to take stock of his life:

As a man approaches thirty he may take stock of himself.
Not that anything important happens.
At thirty the mud will have settled:
You see yourself in a mirror.
Perhaps, refuse the image as yours.

And he realises the futility of it all. His affair with England is over, because he realises:

'Coloureds' is what they call us
Over there - the city is no jewel, either:
Lanes full of smoke and litter,
With puddles of unwashed English children.
On new year's Eve he heard an old man
at Trafalgar Square: It's no use trying
To change people. They will be what they are.

So Parthasarathy returns to reroot himself within the tradition, to discover and establish a rapport with his Tamil past or to engage himself in a meaningful dialogue with his traditional, cultural heritage. He also realises the significance of culture as the necessary foundation of language. Thus he makes a reentry in his own culture ready for readjustment. His heart is full of misgiving as he is aware of his limitations. He has lost so much time. He is burdened by his emotional past with English language as he speaks out in anguish and full of guilt:

My tongue in English Chains,
I return, after a generation, to you.
I am at the end
Of my Dravidic tether
Hunger for you unassuaged.
I falter, stumble.
Speak a tired language...

Parthasarathy never fails to make a creative use of his agonised situation as most of his poems stem out of his predicament. And yet, "The poet, in giving expression to the agonised situation, is also subconsciously working on the Yeatsian statement on poetry which says that poetry is created from one's quarrel with one-self".13

Unfortunately even home-coming does not answer Parthasarathy's urge and quest for roots. The other alternative of the Tamil language is not enough for him. Tamil may have offered new potentialities or even added dimensions, yet does not really help him in his creativity. The poet continues to experience rootlessness and a lack of a sense of belonging. He feels sorry at the present Ossification of Tamil language and Tamil culture. Despite his intense desire he feels helpless to do anything positive to retrieve it from its present position. He helplessly declares:

There is little you can do about it
Except throw up your hands.14

And also,

To live in Tamilnadu
is to be conscious
Everyday of impotence.15
Once again he is haunted by the question of language and identity. The poet realises that the language of classical Tamil is no more and represents only a decadent, impotent, middle-class, hypocritical culture. Both Tamil language and Tamil culture exhibit a very clear impact of the west and also an influence of the films on them. The poet feels cheated as he once again loses his dream of purity. The Indian society and culture, especially the culture reared and nurtured in metropolitans smacks of western influence, to escape which he had returned to India and it makes the poet speak out:

The sky is no different.
Beggars are the same everywhere, The clubs are there, complete with Bar and Golf-links.
The impact of the West on India is still talked about,
Though the wogs have taken over.

All this makes the poet wonder why and what for he has come back! Every thing here has changed. The Newspapers have become the modern day scriptures. The sea appears to be tired. Cities are overcrowded, smoke filled, noisy and unfriendly and very clearly show the dehumanising and the deadening effect of the Western technology. People speak a tired language. As a result of the progress, materialism has engulfed the society. And so:

The city reels under the heavy load of smoke.
Its rickety legs break wind, pneumatically, of course, in the press of traffic. The sun burns
The poet's disillusionment with the city is spiritual, too. What he had hoped it to be and what it has turned out to be! The poet experiences a sense of loss. He also laments the sorry state of the great expectations and the hopes he had cherished for the language with which he had wished to rekindle his love has fallen into a miasma. Here Parthasarathy's attitude towards the city is different from Nissim Ezekiel's, who accepts the city as he sees himself a part of it. Parthasarathy's disillusionment seems to be absolute:

... The bull, Nammalvar took by the horns, is today an unrecognisable carcass, Quick with the fleas of Kodambakkam.

Even the meticulously tradition bound, Tamil mind has not been able to escape the sullifying Western influence,

The hourglass of the Tamil mind is replaced by the exact chronometer of Europe.

The poet, to his dismay realises that his return to India might be futile as the human condition is universal and does not really change with the change in environment and this makes him speak out in despair:
.... What have I come here for from a thousand miles? 20

The fact remains that even after his return to India, his sense of dissatisfaction persists and he continues to experience the agony of exile within his own country. Nostalgia had made him weave a different picture of home as the distance gives it all a romantic aura. The reality is down to earth and even, harsher. Everything turns out to be different from what the poet had imagined or expected it to be. Parthasarthy's idea of the real India is not the India of commerce, films, wrist watches, clothes-shops and the rule of the 'wogs'! The India of his dreams is free of all such things. Commenting on this attitude of the poet, Bruce King writes,

Such an attitude is typical of many who discover their roots and become nationalists while studying abroad. Usually, it was dissatisfaction with life at home which drove them abroad to begin with; returning home in search of an ideal they find their alienation has increased and they are now even more uprooted. Their dissatisfaction with their native land increases with their heightened awareness of what is alien, what is inefficient and of the fact that others do not have the same nationalist reforming concerns as themselves. 21

But in Parthasarathy's case, I would term it more to the temperamental restlessness which some people, especially creative people possess and which does not let them be at peace with themselves or with the world around and lends a
continuous tension to their lives. This tension eventually becomes a fountainhead of their creativity, and the poet or the artist is never really interested in resolving it. In the face of all this confusion, frustration, disappointment and dilemma, the poet gropes for the self and identity. His intense, emotional struggle although enriches his poetic experience, yet leaves him physically exhausted and emotionally drained. Still there is hope for the poet as he tries to relate with and seek comfort in love. The poet hopes to find a dynamics of relation that will rejuvenate the self. Love of the beloved or the language as the beloved one, will become the driving force of his life and help him in realising himself creatively. He employs the motif of language to suggest relationship. He pursues his new-found love for the Tamil language with a passion. "The language of love becomes the language of growth giving him the impetus to move beyond his living environment, where innovation is possible".  

With the unravelling of his love for Tamil the protagonist acknowledges his process of growth as he discovers affinity with something he had not related with earlier. Full of wonder and a controlled ecstasy he says:

I grasp your hands in a rainbow of touch.
And the awakening of love kindles new sensations in the poet,

I was a disused attic, till the walls,
The colour of pain, grew
In brightness through that skylight of your face.

The image of 'the skylight' refers to the opening of the wider influences of his traditional culture. Earlier, his mind was like a 'disused attic' where the acquired British culture and the inherited Tamil tradition were stored in total confusion. This love also offers ways for giving outlet to his creativity. The poet almost goes erotic like 'stones of Konarka' while expressing his love for the language with an intensity. Although the poet realises that his affair with English is definitely over, yet he can not deny the role English has played in his growth and also the significance of his twin inheritance. Past is never totally forgotten. Memories crowd in and intrude on his consciousness to haunt:

Curled around me
Are not the familiar arms
But an octopus past, blurring
The plate glass of my days
Sleep becomes impossible.

Here the poet is hinting at the obvious conflict and dilemma. He is also definitely aware of the significance of his own heritage which is the very source of life and a driving force. The ambivalence that creeps in, is rather
subtle, yet it is only his affair with the Tamil language that gives him hope and from then on he plans to concentrate on the development of his self. But the task becomes uphill. Even the intensity of his new-found love can not make him overcome the inherent inadequacies as Tamil, his own language, is no longer what it used to be, because:

The sun has done its worst:
Skimmed a language,
Worn it to a shallow.

Maybe like Nirad Chaudhary, Parthasarathy too blames Indian climate for not letting everybody make the best use of their energies. The hot Sun makes people lethargic and saps the energy. Here in India, the harsh Sun has not let the language retain its purity cherished by the poet in memory. Tamil language shows the influence of western culture on it:

You smell of gin
And cigarette ash. Your breasts, sharp with desire, hurt my fingers.

Here we find a graphic representation of the poet's affair with the language. The emphasis is on reality, the truth of passion and not on the falsehood and bitter charm of romance. The poet faces disillusionment and 'turns inwards' for solace, because perhaps that is the only way. The pleasure of love is only 'elliptic'. The poet suffers like he had suffered in his affair with English. Once again, he goes through the same pain,
I am living it all again: 
Being accustomed to pain is of no help. 28

So, maybe he must turn inward asking himself:

Scrape the bottom of your past.
Ransack the cupboard
for skeletons of your Brahmin Childhood
(The nights with father droning the
four thousand as sleep pinched your
thighs blue). You may then, perhaps,
Strike out a line for yourself
From the iron of life's ordinariness. 29

Love, too, fails to give him any relief because it does not really have the key to unlock all doors. In order to seek solace, he walks back to his tradition and tries to remove the "dust of unlettered years clouding instant recognition". 30 After all self can only be found in the familiar surroundings of the native land. The haze disappears on his father's death as he realises the significance of it all, i.e., he discovers that he is a part of that glorious, mysterious unbroken chain, uniting him inextricably with the past; giving his life unity and security:

I am my father now.
The lines of my hands
Hold the fine compass of his going:
I shall follow. And after me,
My unborn son, through the eye of this needle
of forgetfulness. 31

The poet decides that from now onwards he will not run after alien Gods or heroes and try to do away with all Western
influence because he has finally reached a conclusion:

How long can foreign poets
Provide the staple of your lines. 32

Accepting his roots as they are, he will try to come to
terms with himself and the life spread out before him to
derive inspiration from it. A new awakening and awareness
gets hold of the poet as sleep melts and,

All the silver
at the back of the faces
I have loved
Has worn off. 33

Finally, stripped of all his illusions he stands before the
mirror. He has to know himself from all over again that is
why the mirror reflects somebody different:

I stare at myself.
Often confront a stranger
in the scratched glass, 34
der perhaps, who resembles my father.

After having wiped the slate clean of his Western
influence, the poet is firm in his resolve of digging into
his traditional past, history, culture, mother-land and
mother-tongue. He remembers his mother, letting the
nostalgia meander in:

This sepia landscape tugs at my eyes.
Circumspect, I raise the lid
To sniff at Mother's turmeric days
in Nanjangud.
And even much more than that:

A more than smug childhood
I have eviscerated since
from the scalloped folds of her sari. 36

The poet hints at the possible growth and the growing away from the warmth of the love of the mother-land. He also laments the loss in the river of culture, that is symbolic 'vaikai' which now almost resembles a sewer as nobody seems to have any use for the indigenous culture because of the malefic foreign influence which is slowly eroding the roots:

There's eaglewood in her hair
And stale flowers. Every evening
as bells roll in the forehead of temples,
she sees a man on the step
clean his arse. 37

Yet, there must have been something that has endured the relentless knocks of time and has been able to retain the semblance of old glory: "Knuckly stones protrude from under the skin of time". 38 Something has survived despite the cruel assaults of time as the slow but inexorable elephant of history has moved on. For the poet it is a homecoming of sorts. After all the turmoil, the trauma and the conflicts, the road beckons him homewards, to his roots, "The street in the evening tilts homewards". 39 The poet is determined to close all links with his Western past. He is hopeful, despite sadness which he experiences like an
'indigestible lump',

I return home tired,
My face pressed against the window of expectation. 40

The life for the poet seems to have come a full circle. He is back at the point from where once he had started. He tries to adjust by finally accepting himself and the change in him, 'I am no longer myself'. He has learnt to use the past to acquire a perception of the present and through a continuous process of dislodging, the poet has arrived at a new place of understanding. He makes a total confession to purge himself of all feelings of sadness, remorse, guilt, conflict and ambivalence etc. He says: "My heart I have turned inside out". 41 The poet sounds cynical while stating, "I should not complain", 42 and finally,

I should be content,
I think to go through life
with the small change of uncertainties. 43

Making an attempt to analyse Rough Passage is a complete experience as we with the poet gradually go through the gamut of experience. It opens before us a whole panorama as we feel with the poet the agony and the trauma of the exile. The goal is to belong. At one place the poet had felt alienated from his own roots, while at the other he is alienated from his own self.
Parthasarathy's exposure to two important cultures is a necessary by-product of the British colonisation of India, and also of India's slow but sure transition from the agricultural into an Industrial society. Sensitive as a poet must be, this in itself must have made his problem of identity an acutely painful one.

Consequently, all experience must have been a cause of deep agony for Parthasarathy. Because 'Exile' becomes symbolic when the vision of life remains unfulfilled. Parthasarathy's 'Exile' is lack of communication and of emotional insecurity, giving rise to feelings of exhaustion and rootlessness and making the protagonist feel forlorn. And, this failure to communicate, this inability on the part of the poet to establish rapport makes him feel bitter and unhappy. We can also say that Rough Passage as a poetic experience brings about the problem of relationship, i.e. relationship of self with self, relationship of the self with one's past traditions, culture and history and the relationship of the self with the existing world; to be able to bring and restore balance in all these worlds and still be able to preserve one's identity. That is how that Parthasarathy brings in love because when there is no relationship love makes one belong. It was love which he had experienced with the English language and it is love again which is making him relate with Tamil. Thus 'Rough Passage' becomes an 'objective correlative' of Parthasarathy's total experience and "translates into poetry..."
the poet's passage from the sense of alienation to the awareness of a sense of discovering the world, its values, traditions and roots - to which he can form a close - linking psychologically contending relationship". 45

Basically, it is the poet's own inability to relate and the lack of relationship that makes him sound introspective and even wistful. The poem Rough Passage is written in the form of a Dramatic Monologue with too much intensity of emotion involved. The poet seems rather wary of owning up all the intensity. That explains the careful distancing of the poet from the protagonist in the poem. He exhibits a lot of emotion kept in leash and assumes a pose of cynical objectivity, using a great deal of irony, ruthlessly and deliberately mocking himself.

As a poet, Parthasarathy's confrontation remains - to be able to relate. The exile becomes life-long as the poet remains absolutely alone, in it. The poet's inability to relate makes the 'exile' self-imposed too. This also brings to mind the factor of 'mobility', i.e., how to be mobile or how to adjust, adapt or relate in this highly changeable world. I tend to agree with the critic Bruce King, when he says:

... And this is part of larger, almost universal problem of the twentieth century writer faced by rapid modernisation, the loss of cultural traditions, the influence of mass media
on language, the alienation which results from mobility and education, and the relativity and fragmentation of values and standards caused by the expansion of our sense of the world due to increased communication, travel, and the internationalisation of culture.

It is living in such a world where one experiences the loss of love and innocence which amounts to the loss of a vision, Parthasarathy has to adjust. On coming back to his country too, he experiences a cultural shock as he discovers the superimposition of a new culture on the old one at a greatly accelerated rate of change. The dirt and filth of a modern Industrial locality suffocates the poetic sensibility of the poet. Life seems to have become too mechanical. How to attain true freedom in a mechanised society which tries to kill whatever is fine in man and nature, appears to be the prime concern of the poet.

This signifies the typical discomfort felt by him as an exile mainly because he finds that his Dravidic values with their primitively spiritual overtones have been supplanted by the materialistic concerns of a civilisation like that of Europe's. Thus 'Exile' predicament of the poet remains prominent, and is hardly resolved.

Parthasarathy's concern becomes existential as he gropes desperately to find a way to adapt himself in this changing world. Having lost precious time, he is now determined to bring quality to the other half of his life. He realises that he has already lost the thirty precious
years of his life by being purposeless and directionless. He realises the significance of the personal responsibility that he owed to his life as a human being. There are obvious examples of the poet's dissatisfaction with the way he had lived his life till now. He keeps analysing his life with the firm resolve of improving it from there on.

The cultural concerns are part of the intellectual, moral awareness; although they take on a different significance, being specifically associated with his Tamil background....

Parthasarathy's poetry is woven in the fabric of contradictions, contraries and ambiguities, paradoxes and maladjustments; the ensuing tension and the poet's ability or inability to resolve the tension or even the capacity or the incapacity to come to terms with it. Past and present in his poetry remain as past and present though the poet keeps juxtaposing them. "The discovery of roots leads to the discovery of transience in which we all are rooted".49

In Parthasarathy, we discover a restlessness. Neither the exile nor the homecoming satisfy his quest. Similarly, both the alternatives, English and Tamil, are equally inadequate for him. Maybe, he purposely wishes to keep the dilemma and the tension alive to keep his poetic spark glowing! Looking at it broadly we can say that besides the state of exile and the problem of relationship, the poem
Rough Passage deals with the issue of an artist, facing the problem of expression in the present complexities of the time, age and region. In the words of O.P. Bhatnagar,

The basic theme of Parthasarathy is not merely of an Indian but of an artist exploring the possibilities of both poetry and art in the given contexts and what he has been able to make out of his trial and tension.

There is no doubt that the artist's talent lies in his ability to perceive what is going on in life more subtly and in greater depth than the rest of us, an ability to feel and see that which remains unnoticed by others. Parthasarathy is an artist who sees immense possibilities in writing as an exile. He sets it as a challenge, a gap to be bridged between his Indian traditions and western upbringing and believes that the triumph of the exile lies in transcending and transforming his world and out of such hybridisation a newness can emerge. Parthasarathy realises that till that goal is achieved, the continuous conflict, struggle and pain will help him in his creative process, adding dimensions and lending intensity.
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