While Agyeya gave new direction to modern Hindi poetry, it was Girija Kumar Mathur who carried forward the new poetry further in this direction. With his bold and novel experiments with the technique and accept a realistic depiction of the complexities of modern sensibility he urged a proper recognition of the modern trends in the context of contemporary social, political and cultural situation. He has been equally effective in propounding the cult of experimental poetry through his lucid and candid critical writings. As one of the eminent critics, Dr. Nagendra has held, "there is no controversy about Girija Kumar Mathur being the foremost amongst the 'new' poets - it cannot be doubted either that he represents the permanent aspect of 'new' poetry."

Girija Kumar Mathur is not shy of acknowledging his debt to Western influences particularly to Eliot, even though it is more in form than in content that his poetry bears the stamp of Eliot's influence. According to him, the poet has to leave the trodden path and explore new levels of consciousness, since:-

"The replies to all the questions;
Have already been obsolete;
And equally hollow are
The self-advertised treasures of individuals and Society."

Born on 22nd August 1919 in Ashokenagar (Madhya Pradesh), Girija Kumar Mathur passed his M.A. in English Literature from Lucknow University in 1941 and graduated in Law also. By this time the first collection of his poems 'Manjir' had been published. He started practising law but gave it up to take an assignment with the All India Radio in 1943.

1. Dr. Nagendra: Preface to Aike Lekpriya Hindi Kavi; Girija Kumar Mathur (P. 55)
2. Girija Kumar Mathur: Poem on New Poet in Tar Saptak (P. 200)
which he resigned after seven years. In 1950 he joined the U.N. Radia at New York for Hindi News. In 1953 he stayed in London and toured the whole of Europe and on return home was again appointed in All India Radio. In 1956 he visited Nepal, U.S.S.R., Czechoslovakia and Switzerland as a Member of the delegation of All India Radio. Other collections of his poems, Nash Aur Nirman, Dheep Ke Dhan and Shilapankh Chamkeele were published in 1946, 1955 and 1961 respectively. In 1960 he won an international award by the Czechoslovakian Government on a portion of his poetic drama Prithvi Kalp. Currently he is Additional Director General 'Doordarshan' (T.V.) at New Delhi.

The background and environment of Girija Kumar Mathur naturally exposed him to the Western influences, and his intimate association with the mass media has generated an irrepresible urge to communicate. This accounts for his emphasis on form and technique since he is keenly alive to the music of words", to the rhythmic appeal of lyrics, the beauty of the texture interwoven by a melody of sounds, and the use of the common style rather than the grandiloquent diction, the adoption of a technique demanding constant experiment so that:-

"Every word is at home
Taking its place to support the others,
The word neither diffident nor ostentations,
An easy commerce of the old and the new,
The common word exact without vulgarity
The formal word precise but not pedantic
The complete consort dancing together."³

As a post-graduate student in English literature in 1941, Girija Kumar Mathur had written a paper on 'The Theory of New Experimentation in Hindi Poetry' emphasising the need on the part of Hindi poets to be

³T.S.Eliot: Four Quartets: Little Giddings.
alive to the environment and acquire not only a sense of social facts but also a sense of history. The Second World War had begun to show its impact on the social and political life of the country and he urged the poets to express the frustration, the inner crisis and the isolation of the soul reflected in the conflicting values. The purpose of poetry, he says in his later critical writings, is to serve as a medium between man and the reality around him and the historical sense of which he is a product, so as to achieve a meaningful synthesis between him and the nature, environment, social order and inner feelings. He goes on to describe how revaluation was attempted in 1939-40, when a reaction had set in against the artificial hot-house atmosphere of the world created by the poets of the 'Chhayavad' School whose flights in the realms of fancy were almost farcical in the face of grim reality. Girija Kumar Mathur in the preface to his poems compiled in the Tar Saptak as well as in his later critical writings, bringing out in detail the background of 'new' poetry thus pointing to his own poetic manifesto. He refers to 'the obsolete, mediaeval values of 'Chhayavad' poetry' with its 'sham hypocrisy' and 'artificiality' which could no longer stand water, since the poetry was inadequate to express the modern sensibility, the torments of the human soul and the complexities of contemporary life. The philosophy of Karl Marx and Freud gave rise to new values, while the gift of the scientific age was not merely material advancement and leisure, but also an erosion of faith and the development of a certain cynical attitude towards life. The experimental poetry, according to him, brought about not only an "intellectual renaissance," but also helped to restore the organic totality of art as well as the parameters of values. What exactly are these values, he asks, and what is their criterion? In


There would be frequent references from the essays compiled in this book.


6. "Ibid." (Ibid. PP. 1 to 23)

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reply he quotes the famous lines from Kalidas:-

"Not all classical poetry is great
Nor are new experiments to be deprecated,"
estressing that true art is really objective - another concept advocated by Eliot. New poetry, Girija Kumar Mathur holds, widens the horizon of sensibility by portraying faithfully the conflict, hollowness, futility, suspicion, faithlessness and agony of mankind, and expressing these feelings instead of diverging itself from common life just for the sake of craftsmanship.

The modern poet voices the reaction against the obsolete, trodden path and debased experiences and explores new avenues when:-

"The dense ties in the mind are tangled
And the lanes of consciousness are darkened;
When logic and discretion are enveloped
By cobwebs 8
The poet has to be prepared for persecution since

"I have given new answers to the questions,
And deviating from the trodden path
Is a serious crime." 9

According to Girija Kumar Mathur, new poetry is characterised by an awareness of the environment, since so far the tendency was to seek an escape instead of facing life as it is:-

"When all were hiding the truth,
When the reality was set aside by expediency,
And was driven off from answers;
Art was a matter of convenience,
And the values merely artificial;
Faith was folly;
And within easy reach was fame through showmanship." 10

8. "Poem on The New Poet (Tar Saptak. P.199)
9. "Ibid.
10. "Ibid. (P.200)
The poet is, therefore, at pains to come to grip with the reality rather than the shadow;

"O heart of mine, touch not the shadow
Else you'd be doubly sad."

Since "Every living moment creates
A contact lost in memory
O heart of mine, touch not the shadow
Else you'd be doubly sad."

Eliot had similarly held that

"What might have been is an abstraction
Remaining a perpetual possibility
Only in a world of speculation.
What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present
Footfalls echo in the memory
Down the passage which we did not take."

But it is the Eliot of the Waste Land and The Hollow Men that has influenced him most, as in:-

"All over there is noise;
All over, there is plenty,
And yet all over there is the stillness of Death,
Crowds and fiith.

Every convenience gives rise
To a well-defined unfamiliarity,
And every busy schedule
Leaves us feel all the more lonely.
What shall we do?
How to seek deliverance from the crowds and the isolation?"

11. Girija Kumar Mathur: A Lyric written on 23.3.53 in Dheep Ke Dhan (P.117)
13. Girija Kumar Mathur: The World of Two Alternatives: Jo Bandh Nahin Saka (P.3)
The poet gives vent the despair and frustration at the bankruptcy of values in life:-

"There are all the blind alleys,
And most of the people are mad;
Intoxicated with themselves
Are either too complacent or too barbaric.
The villain is a hero
The discreet person is dubbed as a coward,
Only a few honest people
Just appear like criminals in the dock.

What shall we do?
How to seek deliverance from premises and rashlessness?"14

One is reminded of Agatha's words:-

"In a thick smoke, my creatures moving
Without direction for no direction
Leads anywhere but round and round in that vapour
Without purpose and without principle of conduct."15

The poet draws a similar satirical picture on the contemporary life:-

"We are all pygmies.
In heart, - In mind -
In feeling, in consciousness,
In wisdom, in discretion.
Since we are ordinary common people
We are not very Important persons
Since everyone in all ages has desired
That we should remain dwarfs."16

The reason for this comment is:

14. Girija Kumar Mathur: The World of Two Alternatives: Jo Bandh Nahin Saka. (P. 3)
15. T.S. Eliot: The Family Reunion. (P. 301)
16. Girija Kumar Mathur: Poem on The World of Dwarfs in Jo Bandh Nahin Saka (P. 9)
"How else shall they get —
The audience to the speaker,
The followers to the leader,
The readers to intellectuals,
The crowds to the movements,
The worshippers to religions,
The weak-willed to narrow organisations,
The Clerks to the States,
The labourers for the factory,
The food to the canners,
The yesmen to the party-posses,
The slaves to the Kings,
The blind followers to the dictators,
The medics to democracy,
And nincompoops to ticket-seekers?" 17

One is reminded of Eliot's:-

"We are the hollow men
We are the stuffed men
Leaning together
Headpiece filled with straw"

and "shape without form, shade without colour,
Paralysed force, gesture without motion." 18

The liies in the chorus in Eliot's The Family Reunion are also relevant:-

"We all of us make the pretension
To be the uncommon exception
To the universal bandage,
We like to appear in the newspapers,
So long as we are in the right column" (P. 286).

17. Girija Kumar Mathur: Poem on The World of Dwarfs in
Ja Bandh Nahin Saka (P. 9)

Girija Kumar Mathur feels that the common man has been reduced to a machine and his lot is unbearable, as in the following:

"In the misty, foggy morning of winter,
With cold wind blowing, it is seven O'clock
Even the heat of the sun is frozen due to shivering.
The whole city is comfortably asleep beneath the quilts.
But he has got up shivering due to helplessness,
With both his arms crossed alongside his chest.
Beneath his eyes, heavy as office files.
In the dirt due to sleeplessness of many a night,
On pale cheeks there are stubs that need a shave.
In the cuffs of the crumpled shirt,
Instead of buttons, there are tied two threads.
His pullover, darned many a time
Has seen these winters already
While trying to smoke the cigarettes half-extinguished last night.
He goes on looking to the watch." 19

The poet goes on to describe the life of the clerk, how it "has become a lifeless machine," and how
"the pleasure of the night is turned
Into the worries for the morrow,
The golden sunset for him
Lies behind the walls of paper." 20

Evening comes and
"On the dust-laden files
Lies the stillness of the graveyard."

But his mind is wandering somewhere else –
"On these grassy lawns,
In the vacant eyes of his ailing wife.

20. Ibid.
From grand English houses
Sweat sounds of piano are heard
And he is disturbed by the memory of days that are no more." \(^{21}\)
The clerk is, however, impervious to such memories and vision and is only greeted by the ghost of reality:—

"The Cars go with ladies wearing sweet perfume,
The enchanting moonlight is immersed in fog,
But he goes on just like a machine—
Before his eyes there is nothing else.
Except the ever-increasing and ever-growing Thick, dry wall of papers,
Like the form of a white ghost."

These lines express a sense of futility of life arising out of what — characteristic of Indian conditions — but are reminiscent of Prufrock's sense of aimlessness arising out of plenty albeit:—

"I grow old……. I grow old……..
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled." \(^{22}\)

Girija Kumar Mathur, while describing such hollowness of life and feeling of want, creates a realistic atmosphere; as in the following description of the evening when the people start returning from work:—

High above this on the roofs,
And from the chimneys of these houses is spread
Fresh, light smoke mixed with the flavour of onions and turmeric,
And the cooking of fresh vegetables." \(^{23}\)

These lines remind one of Eliot's:—

"The winter evening settles down,
With smell of steaks in passageways.
Six O'Clock."

The burnt-out ends of smoky days." \(^{24}\)

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23. Girija Kumar Mathur: Poem on The Sunlight at Evening (16.2.47) in Dheep Ke Dhan (PP.43-47)
Girija Kumar Mathur then goes on to describe the row of cyclists with:-

"Carriers, baskets or tied to the handles
Are empty tiffin carriers in some,
While in the others are the files – starved all day over.
Which could never be disposed of in the office.
But there are very few such baskets
Which contain the seasonal fruits,
Or even the waves sold on the footpath –
Groundnuts, Kernel, plantains, guavas,
Or bread, cake, buns, biscuits.
And the lucky baskets are very few indeed
Containing cheese, tinned fruit, syrup or vinegar.
Otherwise they often come back empty
At the most there would be the leaflet of a new picture.
As the crumpled newspaper of the morning,
Or some cheap story-book
Which was brought by some friend –
Such is the fate of this basket."

And yet the poet refuses to accept defeat since the man looks forward to the "glowing twilight at dusk" after the day’s hard struggle, dreaming that –

"Even now, in sordid particulars
The eternal design may appear,"

Similar realistic depiction of the morning is seen in:-

"It is now eight O’Clock on a winter morning
The sun has appeared
And from the reefs can be seen
The descending shaft of winter sunlight
Wrapped in the soft wool

From the top it glances through the windows
And on the quilts that are used
And are now being rolled over."

Here, too, one hears Eliot's echoes:-
"The morning comes to consciousness
Of paint Stale smells of beer
From the sawdust - trampled street
With all its muddy feet that press
To early coffee -stands." 28

Girija Kumar Mathur's depiction of reality is not confined to sordid imagery alone. He is equally effective in portraying the colourful aspects without exaggeration - to emphasise the contrast between the spiritual values and the materialistic society, where one finds

"The bare legs dancing
Movement of peep-shows, burlesques,
Filling of pegs.
The night is still young -
Heaving bosoms, sleeveless arms and lovely thighs.
Look all the more esoteric.
Strip-tease and losing matches
Culture stands still
In the storm of the belle.
There is a golden mist all around." 29

The poet goes on to describe how he feels lonely in such an enchanting atmosphere, accenting the isolation of his soul

"Heavy coats, flowing skirts,
Black knots, bonnets, bells,
Lovely slacks,
Light nighties,
Golden silken hair,
Darling, dear Oh! Love.
Mademoiselle, senorita, Sweetie Honey,
But this golden mist
Is remote from me " 30

27. Girija Kr. Mathur: Poem on Wool of Sunlight in Dhoop Ke Dhan (P. 71)
29. Girija Kr. Mathur: Poem on The Fall in New Work in Dhoop Ke Dhan (P. 86-87)
30. Ibid. 

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The poet's satire on the contemporary life is effective as when he describes a scene in a modern drawing room, the furnishings reminding one of the opening scene in 'The Game of Chess in The Waste Land':-

"The modern drawing-room,
The cane sofa-set, carpets, divan,
The shades of mats, fishboards,
The light in the leaves of the aquarium,
Magazines and books,
Cacti, abstract art,
Shapes of strange birds in metal,
Dwarf hobgoblins, Japanese trees -
Branch of salvador,
Discussion of discussion, culture, spiritualism and philosophy".

But what follows in such artificial atmosphere is a descent from the sublime to the ridiculous:

"On the carpet were kept
Dirty shoes soiled with mud,
And while washing the soiled fingers in the glass of drinking water,
An intellectual said -
God knows when Science and Culture will unite".

One is reminded of Eliot's

"But Devis, towelled from the bath,
Enters padding on broad feet,
Bringing Sal volatile
And a glass of brandy neat".

A similar irony is expressed in the discussion of "quasi-modern" people who say:-

32. " Ibid.
"Life has become so dull
The world is full of boredom
The people are all hypocrites, conceited
The reason is that the world is dishonest and corrupt.
Man in fact is basically an animal
What should we do?
All the values are perversed,
Only the man of money moves around.
Leave it alone, friend, let it go,
Let's have some coffee."  

Similar expressions recur in Eliot:—

"What shall we do tomorrow?
What shall we ever do?
The hot water at ten.
And if it rains a closed car at four."  

As well as in:—

"The ladies of the corridor
Find themselves involved disgraced
Call witness to their principles
And deprecate the lack of taste."  

Girija Kumar Mathur is disturbed by the erosion of individuality,

"on the horizon
Man is being afflicted by the solar eclipse."  

The Machine age has made the man conscious of his futility;
and the human soul and the mind are filled with sawdust— inanity, and
the entire environment is filled with

"The thousand sordid images
Of which your soul was constituted."

34 Girija Kr. Mathur: Poem on Discussions of Quasi-Modern in Jo Bandh Nabin Saka (P. 30)
37. Girija Kr. Mathur: Lyric in The Tar Saptak (P. 216)
Girija Kumar Mathur deprecates the "brain washing" and "the new decision on man's fate":-

"By nationalising the sector of thoughts,
The state has taken over the duty of thinking,
In the awards every year, to have a few selected themes
By killing the truth by half-truths
By describing every repression as the will of God
And every decision as a historical necessity..." 39

The poet is ruthless in decrying attempts to pervert history by glorifying only the victorious element irrespective of the justice of cause. He is aware that

"The Victorious one is always right
And he who is defeated is evil incarnate
This is the law of victory and defeat." 40

Eliot, too, feels similarly when he puts the following words in the mouth of Archbishop Thémae:

"You argue by results, as this world does
To settle if an act be good or bad." 41

The reason is that might is power and the mighty rules the nation since:

"The people are satisfied,
Not by sound logic, but by predetermined decision;
The people bow before
No discretion but blind faith;
The people are happy
Not with justice but with power;
They demand—not the man, but the hero,
They understand not the truth
But the end itself." 42

40. " Poem on History: A Fundamental Justice in Je Bandh Nahin Saka (P. 16)
41. T.S. Eliot: The Murder in the Cathedral.
42. Girija Kr. Mathur: Poem on History: A Distorted Truth in Je Bandh Nahin Saka (P. 17)
Eliet, tee, has stated:

"King rules or barons rule:"
The strong man strongly and the weak man by caprice.
The, have got one law, to seize the power and keep it,
And the steadfast can manipulate the greed and lust
of others,
The feeble is devoured by his own."43

The poet is deeply afflicted by the irony of situation, since history
appears farcical in the light of later events and developments:

"The consequences are all wrong
Since the beginnings in themselves are wrong
The entire course of culture
Is a series of ailments.

Man: an enlooker
Truth: The slogan of the crowd,

Every system:
A farce of a deaf nincompoop."44

Eliet, tee, states:

"History has many cunning passages,
contrived errriders
And issues, deceives with whispering ambitions,
Guides us by vanities."45

This, however, does not go to show that Girija Kumar Mathur does not
have a historical sense. He is averse to the erosion of individuality
in-as-much as it stems from a mechanised order of society wherein the
people deprived of their power of discretion and thinking, like Eliot's
Sweeney Erect, are made to ape the ways prescribed for them. He like
Eliet, has a strong sense of history and tradition also and refers to

43. T.S. Eliot: Murder in the Cathedral.
44. Girija Kumar Mathur: Poem on History: A farcical situation in
He Bandh Nahin Saka (P. 19)
45. T.S. Eliot: Gerantion.
historical sense as representing a life present:

"Open this Book of Eternal time.
The pages in the beginning are dim,
Some of the letters are obliterated,
The main page is lost.
The preface is not to be found." 46

And yet the poet is confident of the ultimate victory of righteousness over the evil, since according to him, history is ultimately

"The legend of triumph of earth,
Of eternal creativity,
Of the good of the community
Of the victory of righteousness
Over evil and tyranny;
There is always the Triumph of Beauty
Over the ugly and the inauspicious,
Of the Gods over the demons,
Of Aditi, ever Diti
Of Brilliant sun over the demons of Darkness,
Of Lord Rudra over Demons,
Of Indra over Vritra,
Of Rama over Ravana
Of Lord Krishna symbolising culture over the barbarism of Kansa." 47

These lines describe the essential faith in the virtue, in theism, in piety, in the spiritual values, characteristic of Eliot:

"The world turns and the world changes,
But one thing does not change.
In all of my years, one thing does not change,
However, you disguise it, this thing does not change:
The perpetual struggle of good and Evil." 48

The sense of history and tradition makes the poet aware of a sense of continuity and gives him the solace that the suffering is not new: it is eternal as time and so is persecution:

"Again, the same insults hurled in the past ages,
The same familiar opposition experienced earlier,
The same satire - sharp like arrows - and the same
And this, is not new." 49 hidebound anger

46. Girija Kr. Mathur: Poem on History in Dheep Ke Dhan (P. 132)
47. " Ibid. (PP. 133-134)
Girija Kumar's sense of tradition leads him to select legendary and traditional themes, like Yajnavalkya and Gari, Indumati and the grand vision of the universal:-

"The mystery of this glorious universe
Has not yet been solved by anyone,
Beyond these stars in the firmaments
There is yet another world left."\(^{50}\)

It is with an unfailing sense of faith in the greatness of his past and in the continuity of his traditional culture that the poet writes of Vijayadashami using characteristic legendary imagery:-

"In this haunted Machine-age
(ghostly)
The echoes of the memory of the past can be heard-
The old, untouched history like the bow of Lord Shankar
And these eyes full of fire like lightning and thunder belt
In which were burnt the thousand sons of Lanka."\(^{51}\)

The influence of Eliot is obvious; "Footfalls echo in the memory." Girija Kumar has renewed the faith of the poet in the transcendental value of the tradition which is not only of the past and the present, but beyond time:-

"So many sounds, noises and uproars have died down
But in the lines of creation and Annihilation,
An eternal everlighted candle is constantly lit
In which is contained the penance of Mother Earth.
Beyond the boundaries of nation, directions and time,
That Trinity goes on treading the flowers of heart
And with its azure and fair sanctifies
The history of centuries, nay of ages and epochs."\(^{52}\)

In his poem on the 'Buddha' the poet invokes the pastness of the past to be enlivened with the fervour of the present:-

\(^{50}\) Girija Kr. Mathur: Poem on Saffron of Character in Dheep Ke Dhan (P. 130)
\(^{51}\) " Poem on Vijayadashami in Tarsaptak (P. 182)
\(^{52}\) Ibid. (P. 183)
"Today we can hear the echoes of the footsteps of the ages - Let the Truth, Beauty and the Good of the Ages past be incarnate It goes on moving on the heavy pages of History Like a perennial show-capped range on the Himalayas."

The poet goes on to describe the unremitting efforts made to preserve the tradition at Sarnath, Taxila and Sanchi and save these from the swords of the Crusaders and to extend the preachings of Lord Budha beyond this country - to Japan, China, Burma and Siam, how love alone could conquer where a thousand swords had failed.

'This concept has been further elaborated by Girija Kumar in his symbolistic play' Prithvi Kalpa' where an attempt has been made to depict the entire universe, with the earth, sun, moon, other satellites and stars and "space" music in the background:-

"Earth!
Here is stretched the nameless, endless, eternal time,
The endless, unwrapped net of Time,
Bright, fine, circumference of the creation, shapeless
Flower in the unseen water without any support."

And the wailing warning from the approaching headland
Are all sea-voices, and the heaving greener
Rounded homewards, and the Seagull.
And under the oppression of the silent fog
The tolling bell,
Measures time, not our time, rung by the unhurried
Ground swell, a time
Older than the time of chronometers...."

53. Girija Kumar Mathur: Poem on The Buddha in Tarsaptak (P. 181)
54. " Prithvi Kalpa in Tarsaptak (P. 209)
The poet is conscious of the constant, untiring cycle of time:-

"The daily routine is made and ended,
And started again afresh
In the ceaseless sphere of the wheels,
For ages the wheels of life go on
In this world of constant changes
The dynamic epochs stretching into centuries have passed,
These wheels are the basis of culture and civilisation". 56

The imagery is familiar: in the Murder in the Cathedral, Eliot has described how

"golden October declined into Sombre November
And the applies were gathered and stored, and the land became
brown sharp points of death in a waste of water and mud,
The New Year waits, breathes, waits, whispers in darkness.

Girija Kumar Mathur shares with Eliot a faith in the ultimate good
of mankind in the evolutionary process:-

"The wheel of progress never stops
The process of evolution goes on uninterrupted,
It ushers in an era of new society
When the evil dies out like faded, stale flowers." 57

This is in conformity with the hope expressed by Archbishop Thomas that:-

"all things
Proceed to a joyful consummation" 58.

Eliot's concept of

"Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future
And time future contained in time past" 59

is reflected in Girija Kumar Mathur's:

"We forget that all past and future are contained in present;
And this was our mistake." 60

56. Girija Kr. Mathur: Poem on Wheels in Dheep Ke Dhan (PP. 32-34)
57. " Ibid. (P. 34)
58. T.S. Eliot: Murder in the Cathedral. II (267-268)
60. Girija Kr. Mathur: Poem on Remaining test of Fire in Jo Bandh Nahin Saka (P. 54)
This theme of the unity and singleness of time recurs in the later poetry of Girija Kumar Mathur who also depicts the stillness of the moment:

"At this time there is no feeling,
There is just a desolate isolation,
No thought,
No disturbance,
Nor any question,
Or subject for discussion.
This night is not really night,
This room flying in air, is not room.
This familiar city—
Which one is it? I do not know.

Like silent swans
The people are swimming across
Where are they going?" 61

The strains of T.S. Eliot are unmistakable, for apart from the reminiscences of "the unattended moment, the moment in and out of time," 62 "the stillness, as a Chinese jar still moves perpetually in its stillness," 63 "unreal city under the brown fog of a winter dawn," 64 the following lines are relevant:

"What is that sound high in the air
Murmur of material lamentation
Who are these hooded herdes swarming
Over endless plains, stumbling in cracked earth
Ringed by the flat horizon only

61. Girija Kr. Mathur: Poem on Moment Beyond Time in Jo Bandh Nahin Saka (P.45)
62. T.S. Eliot: Four Quartets: Dry Salvages V.
63. " Ibid. Burnt Norton V.
What is the city over the mountains?
Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air
Falling towers,
Jerusalem, Athens, Alexandria
Vienna, London,
Unreal...."65

The same sense of stillness, isolation, aridity and hollowness is depicted in another poem by Girija Kumar Mathur:

"Since grey evening
There is an unusual silence,
Swept over the city.
It looks as if all the voices
Have been dried up by a big sponge.
The people are afraid to talk to each other
Lest someone may get to hear
That unseen
Which is hidden in the vacant space of desolation,
After some time,
They close their frightened eyes
As if running towards within
Inherdes."

The similarity is too obvious to need any comment: the images of
"the frosty silence in the gardens after the agony in stony places,"67
the woman who "fiddled Whisper music on these strings,"68 voices singing out of "empty cisterns and exhausted wells,"69 as well as the following lines are relevant:

"In this brief transit where the dreams cross
The dream crossed twilight between birth and dying."70

68. " Ibid.
69. " Ibid.
70. " Ash Wednesday. VI.
Girija Kumar Mathur is deeply influenced by Eliot's concept of time and some of the poems compiled in Je Bandh Nahin Saka are categorised as "Poems on the sense of time". The following lines bring out the fluidity and abstraction of Eliot's technique:

"In the sound mirror of desolate distance
Walking, all of a sudden my body
Was turned into three bodies;
Emerging at one point
These strangers started walking together
In different directions.
And I could not know
As to which one is mine."

Eliot has expressed similarly:

"Who is the third who walks always beside you?
When I count, there are only you and I together
But when I look ahead up the wide road
There is always another one walking beside you
Gliding wrapt in a brown mantle, hooded
I do not know whether a man or a woman
-But who is that on the other side of you?"

The poet is deeply tormented by the conflict of his soul and for him the choice is difficult;

"On the one hand, there is logic
On the other hand, there is tradition
Between the two storms
The darkness is doubled.
Which one should I leave;
And which one should I accept?
0, the endless waiting of my soul!"

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71. Girija Kr. Mathur: Poem on The Partial Truth in Je Bandh Nahin Saka
73. Girija Kr. Mathur: Poem on The Pain of the Prophet who Failed in Ibid(P41)
Eliot's lines are relevant in this context:

"And you see behind every face the mental emptiness deepen
Leaving only growing terror of nothing to think about;
Or whom, under ether, the mind is conscious but
conscious of nothing -
I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope."\textsuperscript{74}

The poet explores the hidden levels of consciousness and finds words too inadequate to express his sensibility:

"Behind me lies the new darkness of every moment,
Ahead me is stretched the shadowy form
The passage is through
Deep levels of consciousness
Which, once touched, gets further and further
Which is net and remains untouched...
All the faces swim behind in the past
Every experience appears to be a cry of falsehood,
Ahead is the wandering of experiences as a screen,
not yet gained,
Filmy smiles, beyond touch.
The existence is all
Enveloped by tombs,
Containing the words,
The inarticulate is related \textsuperscript{75}

Here apart from Eliot's
"The word without a word, the word within
The world and for the World\textsuperscript{76}
and "Those who are torn on the horn between season and season:
time and time, between

\textsuperscript{74} T.S.Eliot: \textit{Four Quartets: East Coker II. in Je Bandh Nahin Sake (P.99)\textsuperscript{75} Girija Kr.Mathur: Poem on The Melattes of The Inarticulate, Je Bandh Nahin Sake (P.99)\textsuperscript{76} T.S.Eliot : The Ash Wednesday (Pt.V)
How and how, ward and word, power and power, these who wait
In darkness? 77

There are definite strains from the Four Quartets, particularly
lines like:

"Footfalls echo in the memory,
   Down the passage which we did not like
Towards the door whenever opened," 78

"Shrieking voices
   Scolding, mocking, or merely chattering,
Always as sail them, the word in the desert
In most attacked by voices of temptation,
The crying shadow in the funereal dance,
The loud lament of the disconsolate chimera." 79

Perhaps the most reminiscent of the lines are:

"O dark, dark, dark. They all go into the dark
   The vacant interstellar spaces, the vacant into the vacant" 80

As well as "one has only learnt to get the better of words
   For the one thing one no longer has to say, or the way in which one is no longer disposed to say is.
   And so each venture
   Is a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate." 81

No doubt the poet is eventually a stranger to himself, since the words
have failed to express the inarticulate in his sensibility:

"Wandering aimlessly like a stranger in an official function
   I myself feel like own past memory" 82

Girija Kumar has brought out the frustration and the isolation of
the human soul - the aimlessness and aridity, re-enacting the atmosphere

77. T.S.Eliot: The Ash Wednesday. (Pt.V)
79. " Ibid.
80. " Four Quartets: East Coker. III.
81. " Ibid.
82. Girija Kr.Mathur: Poem on The Relation of the Inarticulate in Je Bandh Mahin Saka. (P.44)
of *The Waste Land*. He portrays the indecision and anchorlessness of the individual mind and the sordid reality of the surroundings:

"I saw myself, frighteneed,
Wandering in a city sunk beneath an earthquake,
Where all the doors are barred,
The corridors full of refuse,
The verandahs haunted,
Staggering, broken pillars
At every step,
There are blind darkened stairs
Which I falteringly climb
And every time tunnable against the ceiling,
There is no way to get out now —
I am extremely thirsty;
But alongside are only murderous well,
In which I can only fall down
It's a blind, dark, darkened closed world." 83

The imagery reminds one of Eliot's "here is no water but only rock," "doors of murderacked houses," "voices singing out of empty cisterns and exhausted wells" 84, and

"I think we are in rats' alley
Where the dead men lost their bones." 85

Girija Kumar Mathur depicts the people with paralysed sensitivity in the modern world:

"At intermittent intervals
The unconsciously hanging cloud
Turning into a flower of wound


.....175
Drips thick drops of mud like gamaxin
On the grass,
On the leaves,
On the houses,
On the people

Whose sensitivity is paralysed by fear and hatred. 86

Eliot's reference to "dry sterile thunder without rain" is relevant:-

"Not the cicada
One day grass singing
But sound of water over a rock
Where the hermit thrush sings in the pine trees
Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop drop
But there is no water". 87

In general, Girija Kumar Mathur shares with Eliot a sense of atrophy of soul and benumbing of sensibility:-

"I could not
speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither
Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,
Looking into the heart of light, the silence." 88

The poet describes how

"- on a distant remnant pillar of burnt steel house
My severed head goes on seeing the dancing of my body
And giving a running commentary." 89

Eliot had expressed a similar sense of hollowness in:-

"This is the dead land
This is the cactus land;
Here the stene images
Are raised, here they receive
The supplication of a dead man's hand
Under the twinkle of a fading star." 90

86. Girija Kr. Mathur: Poem on After Disturbed Births in Jee Bandh Nahin Saka (P. 25)
89. Girija Kr. Mathur: Poem on Dance of severed Bodies in Jee Bandh Nahin Saka. (P. 71)
90. T.S. Eliot: The Hallow Men. II.
The poet, like Eliot, compares modern life to an aimless journey into wilderness:

"The outward objects
May be seen and yet remain unseen;
The same houses, localities, lights,
The same resthouses coming again and again
The feeling of some existence;
Sometimes distant, sometimes near
Like this creation.
This inarticulate, endless darkness."  

Eliot's reference to the "twilight world" in which "the dream cross" in Ash Wednesday are applicable in this context:-

"Those who walk in darkness, who chose thee and oppose thee.
Those who are torn on the horn between season and season, time and time, between
How and how, word and word, power and power, those who wait
In darkness."  

The exploration of the levels of consciousness attempted by the poet bears a close resemblance to Eliot's as in the following lines:-

"I am fully symbolised
In each shaped situation;
I have 'happened'.
Now nothing of me is left out
And I am not there -
There are only sad situations
Which no longer are mine."  

One is reminded of Eliot's description in the Waste Land "I was neither living nor dead, and I knew nothing," as well as "the mind is conscious but conscious of nothing" in the East Coker.

91. Girija Kr. Mathur: Poem on Journey in Meditation in Jo Bandh Nahin Saka (P.43)
92. T.S. Eliot: Ash Wednesday V.
93. Girija Kumar Mathur: Poem on Afternoon at Konarak in Jo Bandh Nahin Saka (P.8)
Girija Kumar Mathur refers to the reel of a film:

"Very interesting,
Very painful,
In each pose,
A silent shrieking,"

reminding one of Prufrock's feeling.

"As if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen."95

As well as the "voiceless waiting" in the Dry Salvages(II).

The poet goes on to describe how he finds himself in that reel:

"In a foggy crowd
Another face emerging and fading
In similar countless faces,
A redundant extra
That came for a moment and vanished in a moment
The entire crowd was also dissolved and it vanished
A living moment became a thing of the past
And I, too, was swept off the screen,
Removed from the hall,
And only the vacant chair remained."96

Here, too, the familiar imagery of Four Quartets can be discerned:

"As, in a theatre,
The lights are extinguished, for the scene to be changed"97;
"The bold imposing facade are all being rolled away"98 and

"the unattended
Moment, the moment in and out of time."99

As an imagist, Girija Kumar Mathur has been profoundly influenced by Eliot in conveying a deeper meaning through symbols. Like Eliot, he, too, has chosen some of the bold and striking images and as stated earlier,

97. T.S. Eliot: Four Quartets: East Coker.III.
99. " Ibid. Dry Salvage. V.
it is mere in technique than in content that Eliot's influence is more pronounced. Girija Kumar Mathur rightly attaches great importance to form in poetry, since according to him, the modern sensibility could be expressed only through a new idiom. The modern poet is faced with the problem of expression in the context of the modern complexities of environment. Girija Kumar Mathur himself has achieved unique success in selecting striking, colourful and sensual images to unfold the layers of consciousness and experience and in this respect he has displayed superb craftsmanship in modern Hindi poetry. His images are vivid and they transform even the most ordinary incidents and situations into living, pulsating moments. For example, while describing the early winter morning, he vividly portrays sunlight descending—

"On the small tea tables
The sweet vapour from tea-cups and the Kettle," reminding one of Eliot's:

"There are rattling breakfast-plates in basement kitchen
The wrapping up of bedrolls and quilts is associated with
"The pages of the night's sweet story
Being turned ever."

The sunlight is compared to the "softness of the cotton wool" (like Eliot's "the shaft of sunlight"), and while the headlines of the morning paper are now stale:

"The shapes of artificial faces are vanished,
And now are left behind real figures,
The prisons of those who wear the mask of fresh statement every day,
Who wrap themselves up in coats of colourful promises,
And descend the stairs of the glass-house
And showing false hopes."

100. Girija Kr. Mathur: Essay on Reaction of Modernity in Nai Kavita: Seemaen Aur Sambhayanavan (P.III)
101. "Poem on The Weel of Sunlight" in Dheep Ke Dhan (P.72)
102. T.S. Eliot: Morning at the Window.
103. Girija Kr. Mathur: Poem on The Weel of Sunlight in Dheep Ke Dhan (P.72)
104. "Ibid.

........179
Girija Kumar Mathur has expressed images of smell, sound, fog, season, roses, time, isolation, but he has excelled most in his images of moonlight that recur in his poems again and again. He even calls it 'Chandarima', a novel expression invented to accentuate its beauty and elegance and give it a much more colloquial touch:

"This dazzling moonlit night,
The moonlight is so bright that one could put the thread in the needle,
The crows mistake it for the day and caw-caw;
The houses look bright as if recently whitewashed."  

But what follows is even more striking:

"The full moon is so clear
As if the art paper is cut in a circle."  

In an earlier poem he refers to "sweet and sour moonlight":-

O Moonlight!
"Whatever medicine is left
In the bowl of my age;
That contains all your different juices,"  

His images are sensual, even exotic:

"On the bare body of moonlight
There is no garment,
She is just wearing a filmy negligee
To show herself to the wind."  

In another poem he invokes the image of the moon

"As cool as curd"

And stars as

"Naps of cool cottonwool"

The poet is really enchanted by moonlight and in referring to it employs all endearing, colloquial as well as exotic terms:

105. Girija Kr. Mathur: Poem on Chandarima (27.9.52) in Dheep Ke Dhan (P.110)
106. "Ibid.
107. "Poem on Sweet and Sour Moonlight in Shilapankh Chamkeele.
108. "Poem on Desirable is the Moment; Enlightened in Dheep Ke Dhan (P.25)
109. "Poem on Full Moon Light in Winter in Dheep Ke Dhan (P.127)
110. "Poem on Moonlight; Scattered in Je Bandh Nahin Saka (P.56)
"The shapely moonlight
Wearing a sleeveless blouse,
Under the bright shadows of elms,
Undaring, confidently,
With a slow gait
And slowly chewing, elaichi
With intoxicated sexual urge
Prancing about."\(^{111}\)

Even the first twilight in spring is compared to "the white flowers of ice."\(^ {112}\)

The landscape of dawn is tinged with a unique beauty when the "constantly lighted lamps of night are put out":-

"The symbol of the rule of Darkness
This last lamp is extinguished
This last star - from the heavy battlements
With the destruction of the fort of Darkness\(^ {113}\)

Even fog - a familiar image with Eliet though not used symbolically - recurs in the poetry of Girija Kumar Mathur. The road to the hill station, is "winding with pine trees enveloped in the shades of grey fog."\(^ {114}\)

The "fog of winter moving" makes the "heat of sunlight freeze"\(^ {115}\)

"The lake of fog
Full of unconscious mess\(^ {116}\)
The encumbrance of spring is described as:

"Today the forests are coloured as if into saffron,
The sky with hues is like a yellow bud blessed in spring,
The body hidden in garments of saffron,
Like the shadow of gold.\(^ {117}\)"

\(^{111}\)Girija Kr.Mathur: Poem on Beauty obsessed Moonlight in Je Bandh Nahin Saka (P.55)
\(^{112}\) Poem on The First Evening of Spring - (P.54)
\(^{113}\) Poem on Dawn. A Landscape in Dhup Ke Dhan (P.19)
\(^{114}\) Poem on These Expressions of Love in Je Bandh Nahin Saka
\(^{115}\) Poem on Part of a Machine in Nash Aur Nirman. (P.57)
\(^{116}\) Poem in The Shape Starts Taking Smell in Je Bandh Nahin Saka.
\(^{117}\) Today the weeds are coloured as if into saffron in Tarsaptak (P.171)
Very few other modern Hindi poets have been successful in vividly portraying before the mind's eye the pictorial beauty of the spring with its colours and smells. To Girija Kumar Mathur, the creeper in early winter is like "the ray of green sunlight," 118 while the sunlight of winter in the sky is "Like the light, warm cotton wool of semal." 119

The sunlight of autumn, is however, different:--

"The lonely afternoon of autumn,
In the white, warm, flakes of clouds
The strong sun rises and then sets
In houses lonely laziness yawns," 120

The last legs of the night are shown as staggering and expressed through striking, meaningful images that convey much more than what the words can ordinarily contain:--

It is the last shadowy hour of the staggering night,
In the sky, like light smoke, there are distant golden stars
That keep a watch with heavy eyes,
The slow breeze blows laden with sleepiness.
The city drenched in rain
Is still dreaming of the dawn;
In the long, dim or avenues are haunted
By the tired sadness of the light burning whole night," 121

The description of the rainy days is equally striking:--

"The rainy day is set in the west,
The night full of clouds emerges
Treading softly the dust-laden flame of the lamp
The wet passages get lonely gradually
Which bear the mark of heavy wheels,
Like the thoughtful lines on the brow." 122

118. Girija Kr. Mathur: Poem in The Dream of Night of Early Winter in Jo Bandh Nahin Saka (P. 73)
119. " Poem on The Ruins of Qutb in Tar Saptak (P. 175)
120. " The Afternoon of Autumn in Tar Saptak (P. 177)
121. " Poem on Staggering, Faltering Night in Tar Saptak (P. 172)
122. " Poem on Rainy Day in Tar Saptak (P. 179)
The clouds are "black as long hair," and the night is full of lovely
drops like the body; the lighting is "like dazzling of gold
ornaments." The landscape of the "coolness of earth, and the
flower of the sigh of the dust-laden earth" is only matched by
the description of the festivities at the Diwali:-

"The evening is standing like Goddess Lakshmi of the House,

With the body of yellow rays,"

Girija Kumar Mathur invokes the familiar imagery to express sensitive
feelings. In doing so he takes care to use common speech and yet to
evoke the depth of sensitivity almost unparalleled in modern Hindi
poetry. The use of common imagery is employed, as in the Prufrock poem
"I have measured out my life with coffee-spoons" or "I shall wear my
trousers with their bottom rolled," mainly with a view to accentuating
the realistic perception as in:-

"To-day, while in the lonely evening
I was looking at the used clothes
To pass my time,
A small piece of silken bangle
Fell from the folds of a silkshirt."

The radium of the clock is pictorially described:-

"In the darkness laden with weariness
Like two black dazzling eyes
A radium clock ticks in a sleepy corner,
Like a light sound of loneliness"

He goes on to state that on the shadow of radium signs
"There was the silent union of two shadows
Beneath the shade of the radium
The silent, still waiting kiss was implanted."
In such images the influence of Eliet is unmistakable:—

"Investing firm with lucid stillness
Turning shadow into transient beauty."  \(^{129}\)

Girija Kumar Mathur refers to the decadence in society and bankruptcy of social values:—

"These semi-conscious cultures
Immersed in exotic scents" \(^{130}\)

And the soul as "the mirror of filth" \(^{130}\)

reminding one of Eliet's:—

"Sawdust restaurants with oyster shells" \(^{132}\)

and "The thousand serpid images
Of which your soul was constituted" \(^{133}\)

In his later poems, however, Girija Kumar Mathur has attempted novel, bold and original images. The cheeks of the new-born child are like "fluffy flakes of raw cotton", "the meat of lips" is like "the curve of toys" and the body is soft like "cream of fresh milk" \(^{134}\). He describes the sphere of whiteness on a blackbeard \(^{135}\) as representing the truth, and the passages as "the complex, complicated game of snake and ladder" \(^{136}\) reminiscent of Eliet's:—

"History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors and issues" \(^{137}\)

In the poem on Fantasy he refers to

"Flewing in the distant wind
In a colourful foamy dream
Markets like Ornate Chandeliers
And enshrined in shades of prisons
Houses, cities, Successive functions". \(^{138}\)

The lines are reminiscent of Eliet's:—

"Doubled the flames of seven-branched candelabra
Reflecting light upon the table as

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\(^{129}\) T.S. Eliot: Four Quartets—Burnt Norton—III
\(^{130}\) Girija Kr. Mathur: Poem on Reawakening of Asia in Dheep Ke Dhan (P.24-32)
\(^{131}\) Ibid.
\(^{133}\) The Preludes.
\(^{134}\) Girija Kr. Mathur: Poem on New Born Baby in Jo Bandh Nahin Saka (P.21)
\(^{135}\) " Poem on The Brine of Truth. A Dream (P.5) ibid.
\(^{136}\) " Poem on Sense of Time ibid. (P.8)
\(^{137}\) T.S. Eliot: Gerontion
The glitter of her jewels resembed,
From satin cases purred in rich profusion.\(^{139}\)

Girija Kumar Mathur refers to the "face hidden in the dust blown by
the chariot of History"\(^{140}\), the images in Khajuraho evoke in him a sense of
"half-still moments"\(^{141}\). In the morning rush everything like breakfast is
half-finished\(^{142}\); the sunlight is like" the flame of camphor on the altar
yet to be worshipped".\(^{143}\) He feels young at a stage of life, and the
"moment like the rosebed is imprinted on the mind"\(^{144}\) and "fresh have
become these fleeting moments of life". He shares with Eliot a love of
images pertaining to rosebeds and rose gardens:

"In the row of countless roses
I kept on searching for that rose
Which was not before me

Or with me —
But was far behind me
What an invaluable moment it was with me
In a night years ago when we were separated
A voice almost forgotten
Kept on walking with me for some time;
But I looked not behind,
Only went on listening to the meaning of the sound."\(^{145}\)

Here the strains of *The Four Quartets* are unmistakable:

"The unheard music hidden in the shrubbery,
And the unseen eyebeams crossed, for the rosebeds
Had the look of flowers that are looked at".\(^{146}\)

In a moving reel he refers to "the silent shrieking",\(^{147}\)

while Eliot mentions:


\(^{140}\) Girija K. Mathur: Poem on *The Meaningful* in Je Bandh Nahin Saka (P. 31)

\(^{141}\) " Poem on *Eternal Pleasure* ibid. (P. 59)

\(^{142}\) " Poem on *The Union of Filial Affection* ibid. (P. 65)

\(^{143}\) " Poem on *Afternoon at Konarak* (P. 86)

\(^{144}\) " Poem on *Dance of Silken Faces* in ibid. (P. 64)

\(^{145}\) " Poem on *An Evening of Red Roses* (P. 75) ibid.

\(^{146}\) T.S. Eliot : *Four Quartets*. Burnt Norton I.

\(^{147}\) Girija K. Mathur : Poem on *Moving Reel* in Je Bandh Nahin Saka (P. 47)
"The crying shadow in the funeral dance,
The loud lament of the disconsolate Chimera."

Eliot's words:
"It is impossible to say just what I mean:
But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in a patter
on a screen."

are reflected in Girija Kumar Mathur's:
"Inside the box of the biscope
The magic lantern is new thrown open
Gradually the scenes of all moving patterns
Grew smaller;
Of which I am a spectator
As well as an object itself."

The exiled soul, according to the poet, is afflicted by a sense of isolation:
"All dazzling - here
The fireworks lovely -
Like a tep is dancing
My heart
Or Atmosphere."

Similar expressions of Eliot are "menaced by mementos, fancy lights," and
"This is the time of tension between dying and birth
The place of solitude where the dreams cross."

The most striking imagery presented by Girija Kumar Mathur is of Yuri Gagarin when the poet invokes the familiar and traditional imagery of the man putting a mark of vermilion in the parting of wife's hair:
"The first vermilion mark of his eyes
Of the first Man
Was put and remained still
In the bare parting of Time's hair."

148. T.S. Eliot: Four Quartets: Burnt Norton V.
149. Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock.
150. Girija Kr. Mathur: Poem on Chilka Lake in Jo Bandh Nahin Saka (P. 93)
151. Poem on Exiled Soul in Ibid.
152. T.S. Eliot: East Coker II
153. The Ash Wednesday VI.
154. Girija Kr. Mathur: Poem on Space Man in Jo Bandh Nahin Saka (P. 63)
The poet is aware of the effectiveness of the images and some of the poems compiled in _Je Bandh Nahin Saka_ are categorised as "The Rhythm of Images".

He admits to having

"Plucked the flowers of many an image
Surrounded in misty fog"  

and also laments that his

"Life is spent in compiling the fragments of images",
reminding one of Eliot's lament on

"Ridiculous the waste and time
Stretching before and after"  

and his references to "a heap of broken images".  

The successful use of the images is mainly due to the poet having used a common style and the direct word to describe the depth of sensibility. Girija Kumar Mathur has experimented with the language and has made the words evocative by distorting their spellings, thereby adding also to the dictionary. His references to "bashful silence" and "still moments" point to his awareness of the inadequacy of words to express his meaning:-

"There are not so many words
As there are meanings,"  

In a later poem he states:-

"Containing the words
In the relation of the inarticulate".

However, Girija Kumar Mathur does not subscribe to Agyeya's theory that the language of modern poetry cannot help being diffused since it expresses the modern sensibility. On the other hand, he holds that diffused style, strained expressions, laboured images and broken symbols only go to reflect the absence of clarity in the poet's mind, and is certainly by no means desirable." His own language is free from such characteristics.

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155. Girija Kr. Mathur: Poem on Interview in _Je Bandh Nahin Saka_ (P. 96)
156. T.S. Eliot: _The Waste Land_ I _The Burial of Dead_.
158. Girija Kr. Mathur. Poem on the What was not told in _Shilapankh Chamkeale_.
159. " Poem on _The Relationship of the Inarticulate_.
He excels in producing direct, simple, striking images in a colloquial idiom but invests his words with a unique melody and lyrical appeal. That may perhaps be one of the reasons why Agyeya considers him primarily as a lyricist rather than a poet.¹⁶¹ No doubt, Girija Kumar Mathur is a superb lyricist and his poetry is marked by a musical effect hitherto unknown in blank verse. He had displayed superb craftsmanship, too, in the choice of his words, innovations with adjectives and abstract nouns evoking the depth of sensibility, use of original and appealing images blending tradition with novelty, and the experiments with rhythm and verse. This, however, does not eclipse the essential poet in him, since he displays the width of experience, depth of feelings and intensity of sensibility essential in a great poet. No doubt, his poetry does not conform to set patterns as Agyeya's; nor does he imitate the Western poets in all respects; but his contribution to modern Hindi poetry in giving it a new direction is unquestioned. In his critical writings he has attempted a much more lucid and forceful exposition of the experimental school in Hindi poetry than Agyeya and apart from assimilating the western influences he has brought to bear on his poetry as well as critical writings a sense of contemporaneity as well as a synthesised communion with the environment around him.

Girija Kumar Mathur stresses technique, since according to him, good poetry remains incomplete in the absence of proper technique, notwithstanding the originality of contents.¹⁶² He has described in detail how he has practised his own theory: how he provides colour and background merely by scenery. Similarly he considers it essential to form a basis for the landscape in his poetry, as in 'The Shadow of the Radium',

¹⁶¹ Agyeya: Contemporary Hindi Literature (p. 59) ¹⁶² Girija Kr. Mathur: Preface to Tar Saptak (p. 168)
"The Afternoon of Autumn". The use of "rounding up" as in painting is also resorted to by him in some of his poems. For the language he uses evocative expressions and sometimes takes liberty with spellings to convey the desired effect. To evoke the images of loneliness, love, sky, beauty etc. he uses day-to-day words - soft and sweet and melodious - and creates an atmosphere of awareness of the feelings or the situation he dramatically presents. The words are employed with a marked emphasis of the sounds or the musical quality and at times the spellings are slightly altered (as "seensan" instead of 'sunshn') to convey a feeling of the utter loneliness. 163

Girija Kumar Mathur has propounded his theory of the original meaning of words in his essay on "The Theory of Sound: the Original Meanings of Sounds". 164 According to him the sensitivity of delicate expression lies not in alliterations or other figures of speech but in a harmonious combination of sounds in the words to be used in poetry for the creation of the desired effect. The sound is, therefore, meant not merely for an ornate rhetoric but for conveying the hidden meaning which the poet wishes to convey. He goes on to elaborate how this had been practised by the Sanskrit poets with success - even in the Vedas - and in modern poetry the sound is to be treated as the "penumbra of meaning." 165 

The combination of sounds represents the expansion - and not the bankruptcy - of the language, and both for artistic effects as well as emotional appeal this technique can be used with success - as was done in the past by poets like Surdas, Dev etc. The sweep of time and space, the associational responses to notion, volume, sound, dimensions, space and time and the tangential movement pattern of the rhythm are all based on

163 Girija Kr. Mathur: Preface to Tar Saptak (P. 169)
164 In Nai Kavita: Seemaen Aur Sambhavanayen (PP. 23 to 52)
165 Girija Kr. Mathur, Ibid (P. 27)
the theory of the sounds which can confer vastly varied meanings on the
words by the selection of a skillful design and melodious structure. The
vast expanses of experience, the unfathomable depth of sensibility and the
peignant intensity of feelings can all be expressed by a synthesis of me­
edious sounds in day-te-day speech rather than by an eloquent diction.

While breaking completely fresh ground in this domain, Girija Kumar
Mathur has been clearly influenced by T.S. Eliot who asserts that "the
music of poetry" should be "a music latent in the common speech of its
time," 166 and that this is "not something which exists apart from the
meaning." 167 Girija Kumar Mathur - both in practice as well as in his
critical writings - shares Eliot's emphasis on the music of poetry in its
totality: "the music of verse is not a line by line matter, but a question
of the whole poem". 168 Like Eliot, he is keenly in "search for a proper
modern colloquial idiom" 169 and considers the medium of expression as
essential in the context of the present day conditions for which the deca­
dent school of 'Chhayavad' poetry was totally inadequate. The urban ima­
gery has, therefore, replaced a love of nature and highly differentiated
experiences are conveyed in a precise manner tinged with an intellectual
intensity to signify their organic totality, 170 and according to him,
this realism in the language is the main seed of the poetry of the future
and the poets of tomorrow would accept this language of reality." 171
Girija Kumar Mathur has painted on a large canvas and
experimented not only with words, idioms and parenthesis, but also with
rhythm and metres. Like Eliot, naturally, he has used free verse and has
admitted his preference for "run on" lines over the "end-step" ones for
the creation of sympathetic vibrations. 172 Girija Kumar Mathur has used

167. " Ibid (P.29)
168. " Ibid. (P.36)
169. " Ibid. (P.38)
170. Girija Kr. Mathur: Preface to Tar Saptak (PP. 190-191)
171. " Essay on New Poetry: A Historical background in
Nai Kavita Seemaen Aur Sambhavanayen (P.97)
not only free verse, but also sonnets, ballads, monologues, folksongs in free verse, and these experiments combined have not only created a new rhythm or unique beauty but also brought about a revolution in technique. In this search for a proper vehicle for expression, Girija Kumar Mathur has not resorted to experiment for its own sake, but undertaken the laborious — but not laboured — process of "shifting, combining, constructing, expunging, correcting" 173 which Eliot considers essential to the creative process. At the same time he is painfully conscious of the growing tendency amongst the modern poets to pervert the language by conscious attempts to distort the metre, use hollow and meaningless images and mean vulgar or indecent symbols and laboured catchwords in order to give an appearance of novelty. 174 In decrying this tendency he seems to endorse Eliot's views that "the craving for continual novelty of diction and metre is as unwholesome as an obstinate adherence to the idiom of our grandfathers." 175 Girija Kumar Mathur does not subscribe to the view that mere repetition of the departure from time-worn style would create "new" poetry. He has deprecated the tendency on the part of some of the poets to indulge in "self-statements", like "I am a corpse", "I am a martyr", "I am a dog", for the basic reason that, in the first instance mere statement cannot be termed poetry. Furthermore, the poet's personal feelings have no place in poetry — certainly not the feelings of self-pity and emotion. 176 In this he shares Eliot's view of objectivity and extinction of personality in poetry and that "the mere perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates." 177 On the other hand, the poet, according to Girija Kumar Mathur, is to be alive to his environment and assimilate the trends,

177. T.S. Eliot: Tradition and the Individual Talent in The Sacred Wood (P. 54)
since new poetry ultimately aims at establishing the individuality of man
against a background of social uncertainty in an age of mechanical pro-
gress, material prosperity, resulting in the isolation of the souls and loss
of faith. 176

More than any other modern Hindi poet, Girija Kumar Mathur combines
tradition with novelty in his approach to poetry and his writings are
characterised by intense sensitivity, expressed through a novel technique.
No other contemporary poet — not even Agyeya — has brought built up a
more elaborate and dispassionate background of the experimental trends.
Girija Kumar Mathur has a keen sense of fact as well as of history; and
while on the one hand he has expressed the futility of human existence and
the isolation of the human soul, he has also referred to the time dimen-
sions and the eternity of time. A characteristic feature is the use of
traditional imagery and the colloquial idiom to appeal to the modern
sensitivity. In all these aspects, he is profoundly influenced by Eliot,
but he has not merely imitated his themes and concepts. He has assimila-
ted the trends in modern Western poetry, but retained his own individuality
by adjusting these influences to suit the Indian conditions. Thus whatever
traces of Eliot are discerned in his poetry, they are not plagiarisms
but influences and bearings welded into a perfect art which is Girija
Kumar Mathur's own and has wide relevance to his readers. Many of his
images are original and tinged with a homely or legendary flavour and
though his poetry bears an unmistakable impact of the symbolist movement
in the West, it would be uncharitable to consider him as a mere imitator.
No other modern Hindi poet is more alive to Eliot's concept of "auditory
imagination" and Girija Kumar Mathur's bold experiments in craftsmanship
have carved a niche for him in modern Hindi poetry.

178. Girija Kr. Mathur: Essay on The Emergence of Non-acceptance in
Nai Kavita: Seemaen Aur Sambhavanayan (P.11-13).

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A veteran Hindi critic, Dr. Nagendra, has summed up Girija Kumar Mathur's contribution to Hindi poetry as unique: that he is the foremost amongst the new poets is hardly controversial - it cannot be doubted either that he represents whatever is of permanent value in "new poetry", 179. He brackets him with Agyeya; but Agyeya with his greater maturity and more brilliant genius is more individualistic and tends to be unethical and anti-social at time. On the other hand, Girija Kumar Mathur is not obsessed with self-praise and is readier to surrender his ego to the demands of art. Though intellectually he may lag behind Agyeya, from the point of view of technique, Girija Kumar is far superior: he has a more refined sensitiveness to the beauty of the sound and the meaning, and his craftsmanship is richer. "In times to come, when the noise of propaganda dies down," Dr. Nagendra observes "when the history of new poetry would be written dispassionately, the name of Girija Kumar Mathur would remain in it as unique amongst its founders." 180

179. Dr. Nagendra: Preface to Aj Ke Lekpriya Hindi Kavi, Girija Kumar Mathur (P.35)

180. Ibid. (P.36).