COMPARATIVE STYLISTICS

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Comparative imagination and dialogic modes of thinking are necessary for the comparative cultural study of postmodern writer's style. We live in the age of terror and translation, interculturalism and internationalism. The greatness of the work of art will be measured by not only its local, to use Edward Said's concept, "worldliness" but by the quality and richness of its intertextuality and internationality. Consequently, the traditional formula that "style is the man" falls short in the analysis of the complex international and intercultural textuality. As style is constructed by innumerable elements outside that man; the formation of the stylistic identity of that man largely depends on both intrinsic as well as extrinsic ingredients. At the same time, this individualistic French dictum cannot explain adequately how innate nativism d of Indian four caste-Varna hierarchical stereotypes of castealization shapes the styles of Indian writers born in different castes. Not only style but also the man himself is structured by culture and society. To use the famous phrase of SHU-MEI SHIH, "comparative racialization", should be linked with Indian "castealization in literature" to gain better comparative perspectives on Occidental and Oriental styles. In Western literature color consciousness is exhibited in imagery and symbols. Similarly caste consciousness is revealed in the structure of the literary feeling itself. U. R. Anantha Murthy's *Sanskara* and *Bharahiipuram* display how only insider can portray a specific sub-culture/caste group realistically. It needs particular local color, language register and style. The central theme of his *Bharahiipuram* is determined by the rigid frame of caste-varna frame of reference. The provoking event of the *dalit's* entry into the temple of lord Manjunatha is at its center. It is depicted through the experiences of the London returned English educated Brahman protagonist Jagannatha. It is colored not only by the author's autobiographical experiences, his nativism and leftist cum Gandhian ideology but also by the technique and style of John Fowles' *A Maggot* (1985). A peculiar caste conflict and its tormenting consciousness are innately computerized in the files of Indian consciousness in the brain. The novelist depicts the protagonist's 'stream of consciousness' in the ironic style as follows:

> Labyrinthine streets. Incapable of creating anything. Sewerless streets which had multiplied with the growing frame of Lord Manjunatha. If untouchables were to refuse to carry headloads of human waste out of the town for a weak, the stink would pervade the sanctum sanctorum of Lord Manjunatha. Jagannatha's body shook in utter disgust. Why was it that the shop lined streets with Brahmins and merchants had not produced a single thing of beauty?...(translated from Kannada by P. Sreenivasa Rao, 98-9).

It is a cultural paradox that the first temple entry revolt was led by the Brahman Sane guruji in Maharashtra, but no novel was ever written in Marathi. U. R. Anantha Murthy's Kannada *Bharatipuram* depicts the problem of temple entry for untouchables. Only cultural materialism can further explore the stylistic nuances of such style. The local elements of structures of feelings are

more dominant in regional language writings. To the other extreme the Indian English literature exhibits more complex international intertextuality in its style. Salman Rushdie is known for "chutanifying" Western literary tradition and his famous phrase "writing back to the empire" has become a key concept in the postcolonial theories. Now the style is studied in terms of semiotics of culture and cultural hybridity. The rich intertextuality of international interculturalism can be found in the last paragraph of Rushdie's *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995:432-34):

As for me, I went back to the table, and wrote my story's end…

At the end of this tombstone are three eroded letters; my fingertip reads them for me. RIP. Very well: I will rest, and hope for peace. The world is full of sleepers waiting for their moment of return: Arthur sleeps in Avalon, Barbarossa in his cave. Fin MacCool lies in the Irish hillsides and the Wonn Ourboros on the bed of the Sundering sea. Australia's ancestors, the Wendjina, take their ease underground, and somewhere, in a tangle of thoms, a beauty in a glass coffin awaits a prince's kiss. See: here is my flask. I'll drink some wine; and then, like a latter day Van Winkle, I'll lay me down upon this grave stone, lay my head beneath these letters RIP, and close my eyes, according to our family's old practice of falling asleep in times of trouble, and hope to awaken, renewed and joyful, into a better time(italic original*)*.

The Indian reader used to the traditional rhetoric of figures of speech, rhythm and other stylistic devices finds the stylistic games and subversion of the technique of grand style in postmodern writing very difficult to understand. It needs to be analyzed in the present contexts of its configurations in globalization. Hence "comparative stylistics" should be studied as an integral part of interdisciplinary cultural studies, and made more relevant to differentialist theories to counter the homogenizing forces of globalization. In fact, all cultures are translational and comparative. In the age of new computational schema of stylistics in machine translations has revolutionized the traditional concepts of style. As mentioned above, "style is the man" is the half truth; and it should be noted in terms of structuralism that both are "structured" by innumerable forces. Thus, "style is the dress of thought" is also the half truth. It is claimed that we have a rich tradition of rhetoric in Sanskrit; but it severely suffers from colonial amnesia and alienation from its own people. The history of its decline can be further traced in the colonial twin process namely Anglicization and Sanskritization. The latter was soon overpowered by the first; and it is one of the glaring colonial paradoxes that one of the indigenous elite Hindu intellectuals, Vishnushastri Chipalunkar, eulogized alien "English" language acquisition as seeking and drinking the" milk of tigress" and described himself as "Shivaji of Marathi language." This acceptance of the superiority of the master's language does not represent the Prospero-Caliban complex like the black aesthetics. On the contrary, it displays the brown man's trick of "emperor Jone's" use of "invisible bullets" to dominate his own community. The metaphor of Shivaji's sword is a contradiction in the colonial contexts and exposes hidden aspects of intra-cultural colonization. The research works on the impact of English on the prose style in the nineteenth century Indian literature display varieties of imitations and networks of influences. The caste/class hierarchies can be traced in its degree of

Westernization of styles of narratives. This is the colonial irony which exhibits sample cases of the process of internalization of the model of the white rulers to maintain native cultural hegemony. In contrast, the "black Afrikaners" used the slogan "black is beautiful" and used Creole English as a cheap goat milk to subvert and resist the domination of English. As pointed out above, it was post-Independent non-resident Indian Muslim Salman Rushdie, who wanted to "chutnify" the whole English literary and linguistic Western tradition, gave a new slogan, "Empire Writes Back", which was ignored by the less informed elite Hindu literati. Hence we need an independent theory of "Otherness", which I have expounded in a separate research paper.

The same unending tradition of using/ misusing alien aesthetic theories to maintain indigenous cultural hegemony continues till today. It is the Vedic tradition which shuns "comparison" totally; and this can be confirmed by reading the recent book by Milind Malshe and Ashok Joshi that introduces recent Western literary theories in Marathi, one of the constitutionally recognized major Indian languages. So we need a new comparative dialogic imagination for application of comparative stylistics without any mechanical catalogue of traditional binary oppositions. Racially "man is comparison". Fanon said "some streets are more comparative." All statements made in particular style are based on comparison. Shakespeare's famous metaphors "world is a stage" or life is a tale told by an idiot" cannot be read without comparing human life with a play. All knowledge and conceptual understanding begins with comparisons. The early philological comparative study such as P.S. Deshmukh's *The Origin and Development of Religion in Vedic Literature* (OUP, 1933) shows how the semiotics of culture was developed since the rise of *Brahman Granthas* and Manu *Smrati.* That cross-pollination of Oriental and Occidental linguistic and literary elements is lost sight of in binary opposition's stage in the colonial conflicts. The comparative stylistic studies of the Oriental and Occidental literary traditions have mostly lingered at the stage of "parallels" and "analogies". But the Indian Sanskrit aesthetic and stylistic theories have not been effectively used in practice since the colonial contact with Europe. The comparative cultural study, say, of stylistic presentation of rituals in Greek and Sanskrit drama might open new vistas for comparative semiotic investigations on the global scale.

My dozen comparative studies, both in English and Marathi, have demonstrated how we are dependent on the Western theories and concepts. On this background, the prose styles of the Indian novelists, belonging to different castes, creeds, cultures, regions and religions, should be compared to gain new perspectives on the culture conditioned comparative and dialogic imagination of Indian writer. Style has been traditionally defined as the "manner of linguistic expression in prose or poetry". In Sanskrit it is described as "rasatmak wakyam kavyaaha" (the sentence full of *rasa* is poetry". The similarities in "rhetoric" developments in East and West are traced by the analogy studies. However, the basic difference is that the Asian traditions of style are more lyrical, emotional and mythopoetic, while Western mostly rational, logical and argumentative. Both laid emphasis on diction, syntax, and various kinds of figures of speeches. New linguistic and other theories have brought about a sea change in the concept of style. For

instance, Northrope Fry hoped to bring scientific precision in its analysis and differentiated "demotic style" (rhythms and associations of ordinary speeches) from "hieratic style" (elaborative, separated from ordinary speech). Meanwhile Michael Bakhtin's theories revolutionized the conceptual thinking in such a way that the traditional descriptive terms such as "pure". "ornate", "simple", ", "rustic," "sober" etc became a suspect. Style was also classified according to periods and the zeitgeist (Augustan/British/Bhakti,renaissance),texts(biblical/puranic-mythological/),traditions (metaphysical,Islamic-Parsi),movements(romantic,Pre-Raphelite,dalit-rural,modern), institutions (scientific, Constance School, Vedic), individuals (Milton,Kalidas) and so on and so forth.

Such kinds and elements described above deal with the decorative surface features of writings. Instead stylistics today proposes basic decisions or assumptions developed by the author concerning series of complex relationships. Does he write or invisible forces get something written? Does he write with the "left "hand at day time and with the "right" at midnight? Even period or political speech style demands not only structural but also cultural investigations. The new developments in stylistics since the 1950s are not only based on linguistics and philosophy but also on various kinds of interdisciplinary elaborations, computational schemes of stylistics in translation, discourse analysis, deconstruction structuralism etc. In this context M.H. Abrams (2004:306) observes:

> Stylisticians who aim to replace or supplement the qualitative judgments of literary scholars by objectively determinable methods of research exploit the ever increasing technological resources of computers in the service of what has come to be called **stylometry**: the quantitative measurement of the features of an individual writer's style…

Simplifications and fitting features in formula for memorization is the salient feature of Sanskrit stylistics. Even today we stop with qualitative or quantitative determination of Aurobindo's use of symbols in S*avitri* and dalit writer's over use of the image of sun in poetry. It is a "fingerprint" of style of a single text or class of texts, for example, in most of the superficial parallel studies of African –American and dalit literature. Sometimes too much emphasis is given on the relation between, say, distinctive features of Raja Rao's style and traits of his Hindu-Brahminical metaphysics of psyche. Similarly the author's attitude towards world and the method of organizing experience are linked with his style. Gandhian prose style is a typical illustration of this kind. Linguistic or literary studies of style are run of the mill methods. Sociological and Marxist interpretations of the period style are many. However semantic-aesthetic and emotional functions of style in the text are less studied comparatively. Thus interdisciplinary pluralistic approaches have expanded the vistas of stylistic studies in which we have to increase the literacy of using stylometers

As a comparatist and postcolonial culturalist I propose that comparative stylistics is more relevant in the age of anglocalization. The recent dominant trend of the popularity of translated

texts in India has bred more hatred of the caste/culture group determined indigenous literatures. The fears of death of local languages and cultures have left us in an uncertain chaotic condition. It is reflected in the different styles of our writers belonging to different castes/creeds, regions and religions. For example, the e- mail message structure and subversive style of Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* has turned the protest in dalit literature topsy-turvy. The sate based revolt of *dalits*, which was over patronized for politically correctness by the highest caste/class critics, is turned upside down by Ashok Thakur's murder by ungrateful Halawai only for money. Here is an example of the use of no-aesthetic prose text in business management in the novel for adding not only a new stylistic device but for transforming it into the aesthetic property:

HOW DOES THE ENTERPRISING DRIVER EARN LITTLE MONEY EXTRA

1, When his master is not around, he can siphon petrol from the car, with a fullel. Then sell the petrol…

4. As he gains in experience and confidence and is ready to try something riskier, he can turn his master's car into a freelance taxi. The stretch of the road from Gurgaon to Delhi is excellent for this; lots of Romeos come to see their girlfriends who work in the call centers… (229).

This matter of fact plain style prepares us to accept the faithless *dalits* gruesome act of innocent loving master simply for money. A reference to Romeo brings in the international intertexts. It enriches the intercultural intertextuality. The advance comparative studies of differences in similarities of different languages and cultures might help us in differentiating stylistic devices at deeper levels. Process of translation begins with translation itself. Translation has occupied a central place in comparative studies today. Traditional boundaries of literary as well as linguistic analysis of poetic style have disappeared. Of course, comparative stylistics has its own limitations, like other disciplines, but it is more rewarding in the global village. Monica Dorothy (2008; 49) starts discussion of her theory of comparative stylistics as follows:

> One of the most essential contributions to the theory of translation ought to come from a theory of comparative stylistics, if it were not for the terminological paradox, we could call comparative stylistics a "grammar of style", determining universal parameters of style, which have their values set differently in different languages…(emphasis added).

From the broad perspectives in the foregoing discussion, the "grammar of style" of Indian writers is different from those in Anglo-American literary traditions. This is an attempt to end too romantic subjectivity and pseudo-universalism in conventional stylistic studies. The objectivity can be introduced by comparing stylistic variations in translations. Apart from such controversies without which there can be no progression, we are concerned here with the danger of being fully appropriated/assimilated/ acculturated by the dominant Anglo-American postmodern styles. A comparative study of prose style of Gabriel Garcia Marquiz, Günter Grass, Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai will explain some aspects of the historiographic metafiction.

Writing in a foreign language, especially in English, is an unconscious socio-political act of translating Indian reality mainly for the implied alien reader. Comparative investigation of the survival of indigenous stylistic features on equal footing with the Western ones might reveal that the latter are privileged by the Indian comprador class. On the contrary the Chinese resist them by immediate translation of the alien text into Chinese and discuss it on their own grounds. But Indians invite the "foreign hand" to defeat their own rival culture groups. This is one of the reasons of our failure in developing a specific "internal stylistics" of Indian languages. Such important component of the "computational schema of stylistic translation is developed by the Canadian theorists. Chrysanne Dimarco and Graeme Hirst (2008:149) argue:

> The main feature of the schema is that the translation of style, according to our definition, requires three distinct bodies of stylistic knowledge: French *internal stylistics*, French-English *comparative stylistics*, and English *internal stylistics*. The internal stylistics of a language tells us how to choose syntactic structures and lexical items to express a particular aspect of style, such as clarity or economy. From comparative stylistics, we can gain understanding of when the target text should express different style from the source text and when the style should remain the same.

What is the nature of *internal stylistics* of Indian English? It is certainly different from French *internal stylistics*, because it is determined more by the first Indian language of the author. For instance, *internal stylistics* of R.K, Narayan and Mulkraj Anand can be distinguished on the ground of their mother-tongues Kannada and Punjabi as well as their sub-culture groups. Here we can hardly use the model of French-English *comparative stylistics*, because there is the possibility of the presence of Sanskrit- bhasha *comparative stylistics*. Abhitabh Ghose's *Suitable Boy* displays Hindi- Sanskrit –English *comparative stylistics*. The nature and scope of this internal stylistics depends on the author's degree of Westernization and knowledge of classical languages. This "innate" double bind can be traced in V.S. Naipaul's fiction also. The reasons for dislocation of Indian internal stylistics are too many to be discussed here. But K. Krishnamurthy has pointed out some of them as follows:

> Sometimes it looks as if Indian poetics has suffered more at the hands of scholar-specialists of the present century than by the traditional commentators in Sanskrit of the past who did not lay any claims to the modern-historical perspective. Unlike Aristotle, who has been much studied in the West, Bharata suffered undeserved neglect at the hands of Sanskrit theoreticians as well as modern Indologists, because the attention of one and all is turned to Bharata's central idea of *rasa* to the utter neglect of his over all vision of the entire gamut of poetry, drama, music and dance as embodied in the almost unknown key concept of *Lakshna* which underlies all his other concepts and which constitutes his contribution to aesthetics of fine arts…

Apart from the unending debate on revival and application of Sanskrit/ bhasha "aesthetic norms today, it is more interesting to study internal as well as comparative stylistics with reference

to some sample texts selected at random. For example, the Second Chapter of Anita Nair's *The Better Man* (London: Penguin, 1999:13) opens as follows:

The Reluctant Native

Once upon a time Mukundan had a life that in no way resembled the hell he had been exiled to. As a government employee as his working years had been spent in the living quarters painted for him. The rent had been negligible and the comforts many. When a fuse blew, he called the electrical department. If it dripped, the civil work men fixed it…(13)

One –screw loose Bhasi Stakes His Claim

The Partner grunted back and asked abruptly, 'are you troubled by piles?' 'What?' Mukundan burst out in surprise that slowly turned into rage. He wondered if the man was mad or drunk. What sane man would dare presume such liberty in their first meeting? And that too with a prospective client. (87).

Both passages show salient traits of Anglicization and Sanskritization. They also exhibit the tug of war between the alien and indigenous elements in the narrative. "Once upon a time" is the Indian age old convention of opening the tale. The Indian expressions such as "featherly", "and that to with", "one-screw loose" and the simplifies meaning of the plant "Lajjalu" instead of a difficult Sanskrit term for it show how Indian writers in English make conscious adjustments in choice of native words and phrases. In contrast to this the Latin term for the same plant is quoted and italicized carefully. The sentences beginning with "if", "when", "then" or phrases such as "in order to", "such as" and clauses demonstrate the samples which M. H. Abrams describes as "hypotactic style" in the western writing. They specify the 'temporal, casual, logical and syntactic relations between members and sentences.'(304). On the whole, the Western rational mode overpowers the rustic lyricism which is the part of aesthetics of regionalism. The novel is set in the rural part of Kerala. The higher degree of enculturation in Kerala in this novel also speaks volumes for impact of Western 'culture and imperialism'.

It is interesting to juxtapose Basavraj Naikar's hagiographic *Light in the House* (2006) with Nair's above cited novel. It is set in a village in Karnataka. In a way it is a 'bildungsroman' based on the life of a nineteenth century Muslim Sufi saint Sharif Saheb. His secular Brahman guru finally makes him his spiritual heir. This unity in diversity was to be presented in the foreign tongue. It needed a different "paratactic style" in which the members within a sentence, or else a sequence of complete sentences are put one after the other without any expression of their connection. The Western terms and expressions do not suit the Indian culture specific words and concepts. See how Naikar faces problems in finding equivalents for guru's "baithak", "anubhuti",etc.

Govindabhatta was sitting on the platform outside his house. He suddenly felt a longing to see Shari Saheb. He, therefore, called him, "Shari, O Shari, please come here quickly." Shari Saheb was not around physically. But nobody knew that there was telepath tic

communication between the two… Govindabhatta opened his eyes gently and asked him, "Elder brother, did you call me? Babdibhatta said, "Yes brother".. "Don't you know, this man has been obsessed with that Muslim fellow Shari day in and day out…(75).

This is a simple narrative technique without any stylistic experimentation. Dialogues are more than necessary but least dramatized. Amplifications and simplifications are intended to help the alien readers. The address words in Kannada for relatives have no equivalents in English. "Elder brother" is used for "dada" or "bhau" .These amplifications obstruct the flow of the narrative. His style becomes clumsy and "un-English" compared to Nair's more sophisticated and anglicized style. However, Naikar has used more indigenous elements than Nair. Nair's narrative is tinged with the few shades of Western postmodern style.

To the other extreme, we have the fine samples of distant diasporic nativism and of hybrid post- modernity. For some scholars postmodernism is a formal and stylistic category. This new aesthetic formation and employment of a parodist mode of self conscious representation has got greater momentum in the new millennium. It has become the style of our age. It breaks the traditional rules of form and content. It asks for transformations of critical assumptions. It presents culture as continually mutating entity. While commenting on postmodernism and postmodernity Simon Malpas (2007:31) argues:

These sketches of the different versions of postmodernism are merely a starting point, and must be developed if proper grasp of what is at stake in the postmodernism is to be attained. A discussion that focuses entirely on the stylistic features of postmodernist culture without investigating the social contexts from which it emerges is too crude to be particularly to be helpful to any serious critic of either postmodernism or postmodernity. It implies, for a start, that artistic style can be divorced from its historical and political contexts: that works, of contemporary art, architecture, literature or culture can somehow be separated from the radical transformations taking place in the world at present, and past artistic experimentation can turn its back on reality to become tied up only with self-reflexive question of form…(31).

Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) shows the emergence of new formal features and post- modern style. These transformations are connected and with the emergence of a new type of social life and SEZ cultural structures in India. They have shaped the spirit of current Indian novel. Nair's novel published in the same year is more modernist than Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*. It is not a metanarrative that breaks the "Great Divide" between high art and popular culture as in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*. Desai's novel with its playful style, its mixture of the popular and subversive references, parodies and fragmentary narrative structures might be taken as an example of postmodernism. Its international canvas provides a greater scope for hybridization of stylistic devices, cultural amalgamation and, to use Mikhail Bakhtin's concepts, "carnivalization and heteroglossia" as follows:

"Where is Gautama?" he had to ask.

"Where is Gaum"

"Where is Gauna?"

"Don't you know?" The Guyanese man said.

"Indians everywhere in Guyana man."

"Indians in gaum. Everywhere you look particularly Indians."

"Trinidad?"

"Trinidad full of Indians !! Saying-can you believe?" (21,22).

Desis against Pakis.

Ah, old war-

Where else did the words fly with an ease that came from centuries of practice? How else would the spirit of your grandfather rise from the dead? (23).

The foregoing extracts quoted from three novels demonstrate how stylistic variations are determined by our socio-cultural variations. So a central place should be given to style in theoretical study of culture. Theorists have concluded that stylistic variation constitutes a crucial nexus between individual and the community, between the linguistic and social. They focus on the relation between variation and the speaker's place in the world. John Rickford and Penelope Eckert write:

> Style is pivotal concept in the study of sociolinguistic variation. Style variability in speech offers the possibility of observing linguistic change in progress (Labov, 1966). Moreover, since all individuals and social groups have stylistic repertories, the style which they are recorded must be taken into account when comparing them (Rickford and Knox, 1994:265)). Finally, style is the locus of the individual's internalization of broader social distributions of variation (Eckert 2000).

We understand the relation between variation and social parameters, including class, caste, gender, ethnicity, social networks, local categories, and ideology. Naikar's third person narrative can be characterized as "stigmatized", end as the result of casual and unmonitored speech. Desai's first person narrative may be seen as "prestigious" end as the result of more formal, careful speech. Thus novelist's stylistic activities are therefore 'directly connected to the speaker's place in, and strategies, with respect to, the socio-economic hierarchy' (2). The notions of prestige, vernacular, audience influence, orientation and attitude to addressees, relation between register and social dialect, identity dimensions, identity performance etc are pivotal to the comparative study of style. Anthropologists view style as "distinctiveness: the culture and ideology of linguistic differentiation." The distinctiveness of the prose style of the above mentioned novelists is further ascertained by their different classes/castes, sects, religions, cultures and other hierarchies to which they belong by birth. The base of this plurality of style can be explained with reference to some comparative observations made by Lachman M. Khubchandani. His comparison of the Indian "organic" plurality and the European "structural" pluralism is more relevant in tracing the network of international interliterariness and interstylisticness. He has devised the "plurality square":

homogenizing organic, homogenizing structural, differentiating organic, and differentiating structural. He states:

> India, China, and Japan present typical cases of stratificational pluralism; the United States and Latin American countries can be identified as examples of 'liberal' pluralism; Switzerland, Belgium and erstwhile USSR typically 'corporate' pluralism. Recent trends in India, Canada and the United States point to the process of favoring corporate pluralism (2o).

In this respect Naikar's hagiography displays Karnatakian organic plurality in the local boundaries. Nair's regional fiction expands its range in Kerala. Desai's internationalism exhibits "recent trend of corporate pluralism".

More stylistic and other differences can be revealed by studying comparatively the postmodern style of Arundhati Roy. Her first "devastating" novel The God of Small Things can be well understood only if the reader is acquainted with the styles of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Günter Grass and Salman Rushdie. She has depicted the story of an internationalized Syrian Christian family in Kerala. It is richer in cultural hybridities, literary intertextualities and linguistic heteroglossia. Elsewhere I (see Patil 2005, 95-112) have examined its folkloric intertextuality. Rachel's family goes to receive Chako's British wife Sophia. This dramatic scene is full of parody, satire, superstition, farce and comedy. See the cultural carnival at the air-port:

> 'My aunt, baby'. Chako said.
>
> Sophie Mol was puzzled. She regarded Baby Kochamma with a beady-eyed interest. She knew of cow-babies and dog-babies- yes. (She would soon point to Rahel a bat boy) but *aunt* babies confounded her…
>
> 'D' you know who Ariel was?' Baby Kochamma asked Sophie Mol. 'Ariel in *The Tempest?'*
>
> Sophie Mol said she didn't….
>
> ..She wanted a smooth performance. A prize for her children in the Indi-British Behaviour Competition (145).

Roy's literary allusions and intercultural intertextualities of various kinds remind us of similar literary-stylistic carnivalization in Rushdie's fiction. Roy's literary competence can be judged from her lyrical, dialogic and lively pen-portrait of the Kathakali Man:

> The Kathakali Man is the most beautiful of men. Because his body is his soul. His only instrument. From the age of three it has been planned and polished, pared own, harnessed wholly to the task of story telling. He has magic in him, this man within painted mask and swirling skirts (230).
>
> He becomes a Regional Flavor.
>
> In the Heart of Darkness they mock him with their lolling nakedness…

Rahel (no Plans, no Locusts stand I), her back against a pillar, watched Karna praying on the banks of Ganga…(231) .

Juxtaposition of Joseph Conrad's famous novel, the *Mahabharata* and Kathakali, use of half spoken words, clauses, puns, parody, subversion, unexpected new coinages etc., are salient features of Roy's postmodern style. All these samples explain how "culture is difference". Its variability and potentiality is revealed when it enters into contact with another. It gives rise to various conflicts. In Roy's novel cross-culture encounters are many and setting moves from Bengal-Assam to Kerala. Cross-breeding of various kinds also gives rise to varieties of hybrid styles. It is a continuation of Rushdie's trend that challenged the Levician British "Great Tradition" of fiction. It is more interesting to compare his style with that of V.S. Naipaul

Rushdie is a Muslim NRI-immigrant, author living with the 'Fatawa' of death hanging on his head. Western scholars have not explained his rich inheritance of stylistic devices developed by the *Arabian Nights*, *Sailor Sidbad's Seven Adventures* and *Panchatantra.* Naipaul's Brahman roots were explored only after he received the Nobel Award. This Caribbean writer certainly displays the "cultural difference" but never resists the European tradition. This is the secret of his success story. Their debates on religious and other issues concerning India reveal their culture conditioning and ideologies. See how Rushdie discusses "the religious nostalgia agenda" in his *Moor's Last Sigh* (1999:338):

'Zeny, you're a Marxist', I pointed out.' The speech about a True Faith ruined by Actualyly Existing bastardization used to be young guy' standard song. You think Hindus Shikhs Muslims never killed each other before?'
'Post-Marxian,' she corrected me.' And whatever was true or not true in the question of socialism, this fundo stuff is really something new.'
Raman Fielding found many unexpected allies… Hindus, Muslims and Catholics on the verge of violent communal conflict…(338).

Compare this subversive yet multicultural and dialogic style with Naipaul's anti -dialogic, less comparative and traditional superiority complex colored tone of style in his *A House For Mr. Biswas.* The snake killing scene in it exhibits Naipaul' own 'inheritance of loss':

'Say Rama Rama Sita Rama and nothing will happen to you'. Mr Biswas said. Anand repeated the words, faster and faster… (282).

But these are negligible remnants of, to use his rival Derek Walcott's phrase used for Indian culture (which Naipaul condemns) "the epic culture". So Naipaul's literary style display's maximum characteristics of British language, culture. It can be described as an assimilative aesthetics of distant nativism (see pp. 318-9).

In contrast to Naipaul's modernist style, Rushdie's postmodern style is richer and vision much wider and comprehensive. The number of characters representing innumerable religions, countries, cultures etc., in his *The Moor's Last Sigh* is so big, like Marquez's *One hundred Years*

Solitude, that it is impossible to remember all of them. His use of other arts such as film, painting, sculptor, as well as sciences has added new dimensions to his style. It cannot be analyzed by simply listing images and symbols. It needs to be studies in terms of semiotics of culture. Let us see how he introduces the character and event with the master strokes of his style:

> She was of Japanese origin, but spent much of her professional life working at resorter of paintings in the great museum of Europe. Out of the blue, Vasco Miranda had called her at the Fundacio Joan Miro in Barcelona-saying only that she 'came highly recommended'- and invited her to visit him in Benengeli to examine, and advice on, certain palimpsest-paintings he had recently acquired… When she arrived at the little Alhambra, bringing with her the tools of her trade, as he had expressly requested she should be showed her his own Moor and the x-rays of the portrait below, and asked her if it would be possible to exhume the buried painting by removing the top layer (420).

Such complex sentences and multi cultural references make the postmodern style more difficult to understand in terms of modernism. A comparative cultural approach deciphers its philosophy of conflict, not universalism but particularism, contextual difference and variability. Claire Kramsch argues:

> Consider, in fact, the differences among people due to such factors as age, gender, social class, family history, regional origin, nationality, education, life experiences, linguistic idiosyncrasies, conversational styles, human internationalities. Given these differences ad the enormous complexity of human relations, communication in general and, a fortiori, communication in a foreign language should be all but impossible. And yet, more often than not, we do understand one another, however imperfectly, however imperfectly (Introd.1).

In order to provide wider grounds for comparative stylistics, let us compare a single alien sample text to this corpus. Keith Gandal's *Cleveland Anonymous* (2003) is his very first novel which represents the 'melting pot' pluralism of American culture. It is rather difficult to imagine this "enormous complexity of human relations," hybridity, a complex family history, sex with step daughter/step sister, violence, adventures and magic realism in contemporary Indian fiction. His postmodern paratactic style holds our attention in the opening paragraphs of the novel:

> We lost our virginity on the bank of the Cuyahoga the day the river caught fire. As far as I knew, It was the first river to catch fire in the history of the planet. What you might call a major geological event. It was the earth's virgin aquatic blaze. The ancient elements of Fire and Water impossibly mixing in Cleveland in the summer of 1969
>
> I was there with Mary Jane. She was my foster sister. It was Sunday. Nobody was around. We were down by the steel mill. This was where we used to hide from our step father. Now he was gone, but we still came here. We were sort of playing "Huck Finn". We didn't actually have a raft, but we had a lot of imagination. We were both slaves to something we couldn't name. The river made us feel free, even though it was polluted and full of dead fish (1).

'The river catches the fire' is not the statement merely decorated with modernist imagery. The clauses such as 'the earth's aquatic blaze' and river "polluted and full of dead fish' contribute much to the over all structure of magic realism in the novel. It depicts the theme of incest and disability. We can hardly imagine such bold exposure in Indian fiction albeit there are reports of incest trials in the civil courts in India. One sub-section in Chapter number three ends as follows:

If you get into that tub, you we'll be crippled for life, says the voice.

There is a thirteen –year old girl in the tub. I give a start. How many hallucinations can fit in the tub? Her breasts are small, the size of plums, and her hair thick and yellow like dandelions. Her fists are clenched and her teeth bared. Her face scarred with tears. *If there is nothing wrong with your back now, then what about Maria?*

There is a knock on the door, and it opens. I turn around. A woman with a black crewcut is in the doorway. Something falls in the pit of my stomach.

"Sorry", the woman says ad disappears (40).

This unlikely combination of the clean, crisp prose of Ernest Hemingway and the playful haunting magic of Marquez can be compared with its Indian postmodern counterparts cited above. Sam and Mary Jane are Jewish kids growing up in Cleveland during the '60s. The fire becomes the defining moment in their lives when Jane disappears and Sam is struck by disability. The action covers 24 years. The protagonist's of Marquez, Grass, Rushdie are also struck by disability. The jacket cover of *Cleveland Anonymous* explains:

Gendal's urgent prose successfully represents the staccato pulse of a world people can no longer comprehend. In his story, rhythms of madness dominate. Slowly the reader realizes that these rhythms might be the ones that make the most sense at the start of our new century.

This shows how the concepts such as" author's personality and individual style," "the zeitgeist of style"," rhythms and emotional equivalence", "pure aesthetic experience", etc, which were very popular in aesthetics of modernity, are now challenged on various grounds. Now a predominant awareness shows that style could be more fully accounted for text-immanent linguistic explorations. Genre- wise comparative stylistics is another area also shows efficiency of stylistics in literary studies. The researchers have studied comparatively the achievements of the second year undergraduates in the experimental group undertaking stylistic approach and of those undertaking language based approach. They arrived at a conclusion that the linguist analysis is more useful in study of poetry than prose. Style means the ways in which language is used in particular genre, by a given person for a particular purpose. The distinguishable features of prose style can be detected. Poet's experiments with language are more interesting than those of the prose writer. Aesthetic effects in poetry cannot be separated from the creative manipulations of particular linguistic code. Japanese "hyku" poems and Ezra Pound's imagist poetry use different

language codes. In prose, that creative manipulation is seen more in characters, themes and arguments. Metaphor in poetry shows how everyday language is different from language of poetry. Culture conditioned stylistic devices make all the difference.

But we do not delve deep into controversies over the purest forms of linguistic stylistics. What we are concerned with here is the comparative literary stylistics of Indian fiction and especially with its comparative cultural analysis. Ronald Carter's observations more relevant in this regard:

A distinguishing feature of work in literary stylistics is the provision of basis for fuller understanding, appreciation and integration of avowedly literary and author centered texts. The general impulse will be to draw eclectically o linguistic insights and to use them in the service of what is generally claimed to be fuller interpretation of language effects than is possible without the benefit of linguistics, in general, the analysis will be multileveled and not confined to the kind of single-level rigorous exemplified by much work in linguistic stylistics, indeed, it is argued that style itself results from simultaneous convergence of effects at a number of levels of language organization (Introd.7).

I believe that the fictional discourse is also a "social discourse" determined by our culture in a peculiar way. The umbrella term "discourse stylistics" may be used to analyze a dialectical interrelationship between first ad second languages and social structures. The foregoing discussion has made it clear that comparative stylistics takes us beyond the traditional concerns of stylistics with aesthetic values. It leads us towards its concern with social and political ideologies encoded in texts. So labeling an author as "a maker of style" is a half truth. There is no easy one to one correspondence between words and what they refer to "objectively" in the world. Edward Said's concept of "worldliness of text" throws light on the stylistic affiliations of the text. The use of word is historically determined. In Michael Foucault's words our knowledge and beliefs, theories and practice are discursively produced. Hence not only poetics but also politics of culture is equally important in cultural products with certain trademarks and specific styles. Style also adopts political stance. Human knowledge, beliefs, theories etc, are not universal as humanitarians believe. Their origins are traced into socio-semiotics. If we scrutinize comparatively a few more sample texts from Indian regional languages, the significance of comparative stylistics will be more validated. It will reveal how 'meanings' are always discursively produced as well as it is a part of image building cultural industry. Bringing socio-historical and socio-cultural comparative stylistics with scientific stylometer to the center of interdisciplinary cultural comparativism is our main preoccupation here.

The effect of anglocalization on Indian stylistics is a separate topic for research. A comparative study of Bharati Mukhergee's style in *Tiger*'s *Daughter* (1972) and Aravind Adiga's style in *The White Tiger* (2008) will display bring our the effects of Anglo-American Project of modernity on the first and of the electronic age of globalization on the latter. This lies beyond the scope of this study. Finally some characteristics of postmodern style should be noted for removing

the layers of modernism which have blinded the Indian followers of American New Critics. The postmodernism of style, deregulation, decolonization, hybridization, disruption and dislocation are bound to influence all cultural products. There are no more securities and continuities of "Great Tradition" of novel. The revolutionary changes have taken place in attitudes to literary style. For example, Simon Malpas writes:

> For Jencks, postmodernism is the style of our age, and particularly contradictory one at that. From global politics of fashionable cuisine, postmodernism is present in all aspects of contemporary culture, and particularly in art. Because of this ubiquity it is difficult to catorise according to a simple set of rules or attributes…(11).

> This is why there is a greater need of developing advanced comparative cultural stylistics to study "online literatures" and machine translations. This is a challenge of new Web literature and writing its history in the digital space.

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