

## POETRY IN POSTMODERNISM

*Manojkumar T. Mane, Research Scholar, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University,  
Sub-campus, Osmanabad*

**Abstract:**

*It is an attempt to locate the poetics of poetry in the scenario of postmodernism. Since poetry is somehow neglected genre in postmodernism it is breathing to retain in new form and its new thematic as well as semiotics. Even though postmodern poetry is the matter of argument concerning its productivity compare to classical poetry, it is on the move to get establishment as new avant-garde. No issue it faces the criticism as it is heightened form of modern poetry. The radical shift, language experiments and a step ahead of 'existentialism', 'absurdism' and 'ethical relativism', postmodern poetry framing new version of poetics compare to all earlier right from classical to modern. The concept of aesthetics is in dynamic splendid form since instability indeterminacy and cynical playfulness are key features of the postmodern poetry. Going beyond the existence of centre it has established order in disorder; coherency in incoherency and space for meaning in meaninglessness. Typical pluralistic features of postmodernism as polyphonic fragmentation in the poetry provide infinite potentiality in the interpretation causes uplift of the reader and readers' literary competency too. Clichéd style is seemed to be allergic instead it goes for never ending search for fresh semiotics. Along with all these postmodern poetry tried to prove that poet is always immortal along with its ART no matter what age he/she belongs to.*

**Key Words:** *Polychromatic, polyphonic, premeditated meaning, fragmented descriptions, intermittent impulses.*

Poetry in postmodernism! An interjection at the beginning of this brief discourse on the genre of poetry in specially social and cultural context is a matter of thinking. At globe poetry is just poetry. It is an exploration of Freud's ID active in everyone. No matter what country you belong, what religion you follow, what colour you are in and what race you come from. Exploration of ID in spoken or written form in terms of disintegrated verse points out disintegration and fragmentation in forms of art in postmodernism. It is quite true that whatever changes takes place in other genres of literature and art reflects in the territory of poetry too. A poet has to undergo the influence of his / her time and the political, cultural and over all social activities. No poet of today can find any originality unless he / she is representative in character of his / her time and all the critical notions he / she underlines for his / her every creative act. The notions of creativity available in form of postmodernism are discussed almost every platform of art as: fiction, drama, visual arts, architecture, music, and the poetics of all these arts; but postmodern poetics in poetry is still seen with distrust to support the perspective norms of poetry as absolute and there is no any requirement of change in it. The poetics of poetry up to 20<sup>th</sup> century went on exist and it has to be in the scenario of death in theory, myth, history, author, criticism, ad text itself too. Poetry cannot be exceptional for it. Even though, poetry is continued to be written in massive scale. Now creative poets are coming out just after having adequate schooling and they try to catch publishers for their poetry. Cyber industry too works for poetry contents and there are coveted prizes. Numbers of magazines are purely devoted in the work of propagation of poetry. Today poetry which is in post-poetry era finds good spirit. Many of the poems of this period are found as good as the poems of the times when poetry was considered as life and when it is said that poetry is really lived. In fact, the span of poetry is increased. Its domain is widening day by day. It

involves feminists, gays, ecologists, sociologists, lesbians, devoted mystics, human-rights activists, social reformists, anti-AIDS agitators, Dalits, subalterns and many more those who find poetry as medium to raise voice and to find propagation for their survive. Poetry in postmodernism became polyphonic. It does not discard the canons of poetry but it goes on making addition in the list. In thematic terms poetry behaves with wide open nature. It has followed Anything Goes phenomenon of postmodernism. It is now polychromatic to encompass all neglected themes in the genre of poetry of early time. It sounds postmodern in nature and even in structure of its presentation. It is quite flexible to cover coveted issues in human so it's in true sense an exploration of Freud's ID. It is in postmodern in the manner of postmodern and in the sense of postmodern. Postmodernism itself characterized for its exploration of the world found in ID and subconscious domain of society and accordingly world. Plurality, flexibility, uncertainty, indetermination and fluctuating in its interpretation are now the base of poetry known as postmodern. The poetics of poetry in present time is broad enough to wrap all those stuff hidden in dark and in subconscious mind of human. It explores those were reluctant to explore in the time of poetry. In this point of view the poetry in postmodernism is new avant-garde was rare even in modernism. Yes it is to be proper to say that modernism stimulate poetry to come out into new form quite contrastive to the form of poetry of early time. Poetry occupies great space in postmodernism; since, postmodernism is not just living in concrete jungles surrounded by heavy industrialization under the name of development, "it is our material and spiritual condition that is a consequence of the tension created by the incompatibility of our organic evolution with the sudden and overwhelming technological revolution that rendered all political and ideological frontiers meaningless. This condition of living does not comprise people's material possessions; it comprises their attitude and behavior determined by the material condition created by the forces of technology." (Shafi Shauq, 2008:44) The condition of human life is quite submissive to inescapable absurdities inherent in our materialistic fragmented world in search of premeditated meaning as it is tried by modernists. Now in postmodernism there is no way for lamenting the loss of values, for deep sadness and rejection, as it was faced by romantics with their allegiance to an utopian alternative; on the contrary it is better to focus individual's position amongst the givens that surround us. It is materialistic way of life in postmodernism may cause humanity and its values. In romanticism it was imaginative world in human warped and found it tiresome. It paved the way towards realistic way of the life. But the excessive utility and dependency on the world of high-tech may results in the same what faced by romantics with the world of imagination. We are living in high-tech materialistic digitalized world. Every one of us is under constant watch. Our every child is with android gadget, with internet excess in his /her hand and is constantly allured by child-devouring monster try to get in its clutch of radiation, long term harmful to human species. Grad narratives are replaced by mini narrative. Invisible tentacles in form of whatsapp, facebook, tweeter, instagram and online chat are now family member in everyone's home to destroy family communication under same roof which result in no sense of exit. Societies and accordingly nations are under the clouds of destroying violence, unaccounted killings by automatic deadly weapons, grenade attacks, landmines, tyranny, torture, cyber bug, human body as experimenting lab, loss of faith in each other and solitary confinement in crowd. We are in our land waiting for good, seeking refuge from the clutch of digitization and commoditization at our every move in our own society. Uncertainty in terms of security of life today we are being made to believe extravaganza of the virtual world presented us as Hyperreality fabricated by screens of cell phone, Television, computer and the screen of Hollywood- Bollywood films, animated graphics, soap-operas, DVD libido, cyber-sex sites in home and at workplace and now in our hand provided through per day GB datas from telecoms in our mobiles. Advance technology and its applications supply miracle working pills, human clones, xdoll industry under the name of sexual independency, robotic lifestyle and eclectic patch work fashion culture lead human towards its exploration of dark wishes. *Tantra mantra* practices and aggrandizement of *tilasmans* on electronic media take us in non-existed world. Artificial intelligence and cybernetic competencies are controlling power of human society. The shift of power is



You should enjoy your suffering.  
 Realizations come in the form of words  
 if not before.  
 Arguments weaken the facts  
 which in any event  
 never mattered, or existed.  
 You die as what you are.  
 Write bread lines. You don't test the limits  
 of what is by asking  
 the impossible of it.  
 Bunny haunches.  
 And it should go on from there  
 as if everything had happened.  
 The culture made a decision.  
 Mmmrm.  
 I am a mortal verb.  
 I am asking you, quietly, for you.  
 It's nice  
 to see a face.  
 Maybe something happens that mutes the speechless.  
 There's no way to recall a clarity.  
 Leached passions only over make the heart.  
 Don't go looking for it.  
 The language.  
 This sex could be our quiet lullaby.  
 All we ever do is fulfill our fantasies..... (ibid: 13)

It is at the technical level we find derangement of the sentences. In *The New Sentence* we do see another feature of postmodern poetries: their commitment to ideas and critical thinking as postmodern poetry cannot be separated from the philosophical, critical, and political prose with which they regularly orbit. Sometimes it is not possible to decide whether a particular work is 'prose' or 'verse', 'criticism' or 'poetry'. Davies himself is a distinctly philosophical poet, exhibiting his own special intellectual commitment. "Postmodern poets seem to be difficult, 'They are clearly difficult' because they put a high premium on clarity of mind and vision. Such clarity is not easy to achieve, particularly in our time, when the media of human intercourse is a feeding trough of propaganda and feeling and soap. 'They are clearly difficult' because their work demands attention, attentiveness. And they are postmodern because the light they cast falls equally upon the just and the unjust, the trivial and the consequential." (ibid: 8) It is being constant attempt of the world to distinguish such things, but the distinction always results in the humanness of the lucid consciousness. The output is not just illusion of Disney land, a common subject in postmodernism, but the views from those places, the political judgment and the way we live in the world now. Postmodern poetry took us out of fantasy what romantics called 'imagination' and projected the realistic philosophy and the way of human life. Along with all these the world of uncertainty, indeterminacy, pluralistic and mixture of deconstructive culture we are landed in. Stability has departed for self-conscious skepticism and indeterminacy. "Postmodern writer is surface-bound and receives absurdity and meaninglessness with cynical playfulness and farcical unconcern. Grand narratives, as Lyotard tells us, are suspect and illusory because they undermine a pluralist view. 'The cultural logic of the late capitalism' has ramified in many directions one of which is the explosion of information which like an irresistible deluge has swept away stability eroded the basic infrastructure of many a concept. As

Baudrillard argues in his book, *Simulations* (1983) the onslaught of the media has led to the 'loss of the real' as the distinction between the real and the imaginary stands totally blurred." (G. R. Malik, 2008:03) The poets in postmodernism regularly seek to foreground their artifices in order to dispel that aura of genius and consequence for which poetry too often has sold itself on those market where no one to buy. It seems a hub of anarchy postmodernist landed in. W. B. Yeats might have predicted this:

Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.

(W. B. Yeats 1933:210)

Absurdist criticism is the alternative for postmodern critical method. In fact postmodern critical method is a step ahead of absurdity which at least attempts to get meaning in meaninglessness. It is mere wilderness provide us no criterion to judge and evaluate literature. The poetry in postmodernism is just self-legitimizing which requires no metanarrative to subsist on and is non-utilitarian; it is purposed only to be. It seems that postmodern literature especially poetry endeavors to mark the distinction between the universal and the timeless literature on one hand and to trash on the other hand. E. M. Foster's nihilistic way of thinking exhibited in *Marabar Caves in A Passage to India* aptly describes poetry in postmodern even it was written before:

Whatever is said, the same monotonous noise replies, and quivers up and down  
the walls until it are absorbed into the roof. 'Boum' is the sound as far as the human  
alphabet can express it, or 'bou-oum' or 'ou-boum' - utterly dull. Hope, politeness,  
the blowing of a nose, the squeak of a boot, all produce 'boum'. (Foster 1936:145)

In case of search of meaning if we compare postmodern poetry with modern poetry we find modern poetry forced language to meaning erected scaffolding of legend and through illusion available in every poetry with arbitrary meaning. While postmodern poetry enjoyed freedom for words from the author's intended meanings and in terms of metaphoric expression it is dominating since its effect in world literature. The purpose of postmodern poetry seems an approximation to on-verbal communication by letting words free from the tyranny of the text and conversing through incoherent images likely in unlimited in numbers and in forms. It is mere urge of postmodern poets to liberate poetry from domineering principles and forms of time and set free the inherent generative and creative powers of language so that the poems, to be just expression free from imposed phonic and visual beauty. Every bits of involved milieu have to assume significance by human virtue of the immediacy of perception. The world of literature expects poets as free from the imposed mystic poses; the poetry has to size hard realities with an equal stark verbal medium by shaking off all sophistication to be ready to accept life in its ugly as well as beautiful rainbow. Postmodern poetry attempts to meet the expectation going away from tradition established by the poetics since ages. The polyphonic expression in the poetry for the reflection its intensity is its key aspects. The poetry has replaced linear narrative and the logical sequence by its fragmented descriptions and intermittent impulses. In the process of composition it is completely free from all aspects of poetics followed up to modernism. This manner as Robert Lowell calls it 'breakthrough' as it is freed expression from the tyranny of rules and regulation so called customs of rhetoric. In historical and social point of view postmodern poetry aims to show certain features of the contemporary avant-garde as we observe in for example, Bernstein's two sets of 'Language Writing' selections in *Paris Review*, 1983, and in *boundary 2*, 1984; or in Douglas Messerli's *Language Poetries, An Anthology* (1987). But still this poetry does not present any sense of how postmodern writing distinctively entered into new generation. The Language Movement well tried to create new compartment for postmodern poetry. The movement began (in the early 70s) as a relatively unnoticed event in the larger postmodern scene - at once localized (even atomized), and scarcely visible beyond itself; and it remained at the periphery of the larger scene throughout its years of

development in the 70s and 80s. Only now can we see the comprehensive understanding which this movement acquired, both practically and theoretically, of the larger poetical field in which it had emerged, and where it has always occupied only one relatively small area. Moreover the poetry those were associated with the Movement was always imagined as an event of the USA as the association wasn't fruitful. In *The Yellow Book* Havelock Ellis wrote an essay in 1889 to describe the style of contemporary poetry as he points out that contemporary poetry as "one in which the unity of the book is decomposed to give place to the independence of the page, in which the page is decomposed to give place to the independence of the phrase, and the phrase to give place to the independence of the word." (Jerome McGann, 1990: 10) Postmodern poetry is influenced by the factors wrapped Western history mostly after II World War. It is characterized by anxiety, helplessness, irrationalism and deconstruction. On the basis of these only Arnold Toynbee in 1947 used the term postmodern for the first time to denote final phase of Western History. Denial of centre, non-coherency are prime move as we notice in the postmodern poetry, which pave the way to raise some question as : if centre and essence are refused only chaos and confusion you are left with- chaos that cannot produce a cosmos which is order. So the disorder and panic are there in postmodern scene. As it is described by Croker and Cook "panic book, panic sex, panic art, panic ideology, panic bodies, panic noise, and panic theory." (Ahmed 1993:10)

There is radical shift observed in the poetry. In spite of all these postmodern poetry is not much different from old and modern poetry. Even it is not accused as non-sense or non-poetry. Many treat it as an extension to modern poetry. In fact it tries to assume itself what modern poetry dreamed to be. At initial stage the poetry is viewed as heightened form of the modern poetry on the basis of its denial of the essence, the center, absence of meaning and relativism as all these ingredients with the terms as 'existentialism, 'absurdism' and 'ethical relativism' were there in modern poetry too. Poetry is always determined by the ethos and philosophical of its age. But the postmodern poetry cannot be bound to its period and the condition of human in the common trouble. Clichéd style is seemed to be allergic instead it goes for never ending search for fresh semiotics as we observe in one of the best postmodern poems, *Semiotics* (1948) of Pamela Alexander. Individual reader and his/her likes, dislikes, beliefs, education, attitude and most important is life style all are in the consideration of postmodern poetry. It tries to uplift literary competency of today's common person. It is true that without the myth and classical literature it is difficult to retain for the today's poetry. No doubt it is in form and thematic concern it may be far from tradition of classical poetics but it produces famous names as it does not tend to gain name out of the work of poetry. The work of poetry and composing poetry has to be a matter pleasure but the commoditization of art may lead towards morbid and may cause a disease. Poet is always immortal along with its ART no matter what age he/she belongs to.

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