Feminism In The Novels Of Shobha De

Shobha De's approach towards feminism is very simple and not complicated and complex as the western critics term it. She has taken feminism in her practical approach towards life. She applies it in delineating some of the bitter truths of female world, especially the double standard, paradox and exploitation shown by the male-dominated, traditional and orthodox society. She beautifully and candidly highlights the problems of suffering of women caused by the paradoxical, social, cultural and moral values set by men. Shobha De applies marriage, divorce, post-marital relationship, lesbianism etc. as the tools to progress her feminist stance.

DR. SUDHIR KUMAR

Shobha De, being a modern voice, becomes the symbol of highlighting different perspectives of woman's freedom and liberation. In her novels, Shobha De's main focus is to pin-point those customs, traditions and orthodox conventions of the society which place women in a position inferior to their counterpart Man. Basically, in the traditional orthodox society; women are treated inferior in comparison to men in terms of physically, politically, economically and socially. This feminist perspective has gained prominence ever since such women writers as Kamala Markandaya, Kamala Das, Shashi Deshpande, Amrita Pritam and Shobha De began to create and treat women's issues in their works and lay emphasis on the cause of their freedom and liberty. A variety of shades of woman's mind and plight is reflected in the writings of these women writers. The basic concept of their writing is a sense of rebellion against the social set up by their women characters. In their writings women are no longer portrayed in the traditional milieu where they are just identified as meek, weak, submissive and devotional creatures. The above mentioned women novelists and their character's constant struggle is the beauty of presentation of the fact that in these days women cannot be victimized. L. Sonia Ningthoujam rightly remarks about the portrayal of women protagonists by these women writers:

These women writers have created women protagonists who realize that they too have their own individual likes and dislikes. They want their voice to be heard in the society. Whether the voices of these women are received by attentive or deaf ears is not what matters. What, indeed, matters is that a new class of women has come up which is ready to take on the world to promote the women's perspective.1)

Particularly, modern Indian women writers have presented a different kind of women in their novels. Their women characters are the spokeswoman of their philosophy of women's liberation and freedom. Their presentation throws lights on the constant struggle of woman for their survival in a world which is too hostile and too crude and brutal towards them. Shobha De, who is quite unconventional and unorthodox in the presentation of women behaviour in her novels, is supposed to be the real spokesperson of woman's struggle for liberty, equality and consolidation of women power in the society. K. Mirabai rightly remarks in this context:

Shobha De's women are strivers and aspire, towards freedom, towards goodness, towards a compassionate world. Their virtue is a quality of heart and mind and spirit, a kind of untouched innocence and integrity.2)

Among her contemporaries, Shobha De differs from almost all the writers in her stance towards feminism. She is more and more unconventional in her novels than any other contemporary writer in India. Even women in the novels of Nayantara Sahgal are also liberal and unconventional but Shobha De goes a step further in creating such a dominant woman character in her novels. Her novels are the stories of modern themes love, romance, hatred, post-marital relations, development of women, appointment of women in various private and public sectors, and above all women belonging to high profile aristocratic society in the metropolitan and cosmopolitan culture. Her women are the women of strong likes and dislikes. They do not believe in the philosophy of the Ramayan and the Mahabharat the two great epics in which Sita, the wife of lord Ram and Draupadi, the wife of five Pandavas respectively presented in the context of struggle, devotion and survival of womanhood.

In India, every woman would like to be identified in relation to Sita and other devotional women characters projected in age-old Indian tradition and culture. Writers have presented the devotion, submission, womanhood, sacrifice and compassion of women in sympathetic manner. For instance, the sacrifice of Sita has been narrated in large number of epics written by different writers from time to time. Similarly, the ill-treatment of Draupadi by Kauravas is the subject matter of many epics and poetry of many writers. People sang the
devotional poetry in which love and sacrifice of women had been projected in beautiful, charming and sublime poetry. This is the reason that they do not want to come out from that set-up of mind. But, modern writers especially novelists like Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Kamala Markandaya, Shashi Deshpande and Shobha De have credit to highlight the problems faced by Indian women in the hands of orthodoxy from time to time. These writers have created such woman characters who are not ready to burn themselves in the cremation of their husbands rather they are ready to fight for their equal rights and prestigious living.

Shobha De claims to be a pioneer in the field of popular fiction writing because she is among the first to explore the world of urban woman in India. Her novels and essays shatter patriarchal hegemony. People regard women inferior to men because of their different sex. Alice Jardine rightly remarks about the various problems occurred in the life of women because of their different sex:

The putting into discourse of 'woman' as that process diagnosed is intrinsic to modernity; indeed the valorization of the feminine, woman and her obligatory, that is historical, connotations, as some how intrinsic to new and necessary modes of thinking, writing and speaking.(3)

In Indian society, the condition of women can best be observed in their relationship with men. The main focus which has been drawn by Shobha De is on the power and desire to dictate woman according to their own will. Shobha De's novels have emphasized the value of equivalence of power between men and women. Whenever this balance collapses, there is tension in society and consequently paradoxes and hypocrisy dominate. The "term power and domination" have been reiteratedly used in her novel Snapshots published in 1995. She has beautifully presented the power game amply played in metro cities, especially in brothels. One of the central characters of Snapshots knows the power game better. Champabai, who is the owner of the brothel, says to Rashmi in straight forward manner:

Never give yourself to any man for free. You know why? Men don't value anything they get so easily. That's why we are here: to satisfy their lust, not for sex but power. Power over women. Power over us you and me. If they buy your sex, pay for you, they feel like kings. Give it to them with love for nothing and they will kick you in the gut.(4)

In her stance of feminism, Shobha De has brought pertinently economic aspects of power struggle. She is of view that economic dependence of woman upon man makes them slave everyday. If women has to be economically self-dependent because money is the great force in the era which has highly been dominated and influenced by pump and show, where everything is related in terms of money and money. She realizes the same condition when she says:

Eventually, everything boils down to money the great leveller. There can be no talk of independence for women, without economic self-sufficiency. An independent mind or free spirit, is meaningless so long as the body and soul are being kept together by somebody else. (5)

Shobha De's main concern is to see woman in wider and broader perspectives. She is not interested in telling the stories of India's age-old tradition of sacrifice related to women as narrated by many historians and poets from time to time. Contrary to that, Shobha De's main focus is on the lives, achievements, hopes and frustrations, feelings and emotions of the corporate women, high-profile women, aristocratic women and the women who are really overstepping their male counterpart in everyday life. Again, Shobha De realizes the economic independence too much. She is of view that if women can live according to their own choice, their might not be any problems in their lives.

Feminism in India can be understood in its relation with the concept of marriage. Marriage is an institution in India which unites male and female to live together as husband and wife. Marriage is a pious institution which flourishes all over the India, right from the beginning of civilization and culture. According to Dharmashastras marriage is a sacrament. The ideal however has now got defused with time and some new modification and alteration are taking place from time to time in this institution. But Indian marriage system has been taken by critics in different ways. For instance Simon De Beauvoir writes about marriage:

Marriage is the destiny traditionally offered by society. (6)

In her novels from Socialite Evenings to recent one, Shobha De shows her feminist approach towards the recognition of partiality against the ideology and principles structured for women. Rightly for the female of the third world, feminism means a rebellion wherein she struggle to achieve a racial, social, economic, moral, intellectual and spiritual equality with man. Sarah Grimke rightly appreciates such a protest:

Man has subjugated woman to his will, used her as a means to promote his selfish qualification, to minister to his sensual pleasure, to be instrumental in promoting his comfort; but never has he desired to elevate her to that rank she was created to fill. He has done all he could do to debase and enslave her mind. (7)

In her novels, Shobha De's women refuse to align themselves with the prevailing partial male ideology. They, of course, are the assertive women who often take up the revolutionary role and want to destroy the existing maleist social structure. In order to prove a point these women even do not hesitate to resort to radical lesbianism or an uninhibited sexual plays with different males. The author herself corroborates the feelings of these women by depicting their sexual union with males in detail in her works. In fact Shobha De does not hesitate in describing the copulation of even those women who are moderate feminists in her novels. The sexual escapades of Amrita in Strange Obsession and Mikki in Sisters are such feminist assumptions of the novelist herself. S. P. Swain says:

Pornography in Shobha De novels becomes a symptom and symbol of female's defiance of a male-regulated female sexuality. (8)

As a true exponent of feminism, Shobha De voices against the maleist culture and strongly detests the marginalization of believe in describing her women characters as love-slaves or bitches or mere innocent women or submissive wives at home. Her strong sense of feminism is visible everywhere. Pushp Lata appreciates the feminist concerns of Shobha De in these words:

Shobha De strives to undo this tilted and distorted image
of woman who cries for freedom and equality which still goes unheard in the patriarchal world. From this perspective, the women in her works are more powerful than men. Women are essentially represented sexually liberated and free thinking and have become known as the "New Women" in later twentieth-century fiction. But even more remarkable is the strength of her characters in the very culture that has judged her. Her female characters, especially only after they have gone through their own experiences, come to their real self. Her women may or may not be flappers yet they are much more physical and athletic than their mothers have been.\(^{(9)}\)

Shobha De's feminism is centered on her depiction of physical freedom, sexuality and stamina with feminist self-assertiveness in which traditional domestic values have been collapsed. A woman in her novel is free to think about the combination of pleasure, career and marriage. For her, young women seem to be the champion and companion of young men because of her fearlessness, brightness and modern outlook. In her novels like Socialite Evenings, Sisters, Strange Obsession and Sultry Days, Shobha De attempts to portray these much discussed feminine characteristic with authenticity and eagerness. She shows her women as the midst of materialism and how these educated and aristocratic women approach towards new values of human life. Pushp Lata remarks once again:

In her works like Socialite Evenings, Strange Obsession, Sisters, Sultry Days, Shobha De attempts to portray the above-discussed feminine characteristics. Her female protagonists are just remarkable when measured against men. Men-women relation is almost hollow, ineffectual and compromising. The men-women's complimentary image has been completely shattered. In her novels, the world is out of sexual order. She has tried to highlight discord in marital relationship. It is usually painful and destructive for them to be together.\(^{(10)}\)

Intentionally, Shobha De conceives the extra-marital affair of women as the stroke to break the traditional and moral values in society. This is one of the most important aspects of her feminism. Her women are daring and courageous in establishing extra-marital affairs to satisfy their natural urge. These women are not hesitant in using sex as calculated strategy to get social and financial benefit. Marriage for them is an insurance against social values. For instance in her novel Socialite Evenings, Karuna is such a woman who declines to follow the traditional path. Her marriage proves to be failure because it is without love, joy, mutual understanding and devotion for each other. Her husband is the true representative of an average Indian husband because he is unexciting, passive and uninspiring. She voices her protest and outrage against her futile and meaningless relationship with her husband. She says outrageously:

I think our marriage was over the day our honeymoon started. We have got nothing going. I don't love you never have. As for you I really don't know to this day why you choose to marry me. I don't think you even know who you married.\(^{(11)}\)

Shobha De's feminism deals with new pattern of social, cultural and modern values in which women feel independent and free way to adopt life as they need. She is more interested in manifesting the changing circumstances due to the outcome of material prosperity in the life of woman. Now, women are not ready to accept traditional role and activity assigned to them for a much longer period. Shobha De's women characters are clearly and intentionally violet those customs, traditions, conventions which are the sources of exploitation in our orthodox and traditional society. Shobha De continues the effort of Nayantara Sahgal who is perhaps the first Indian women novelist in India to utter the attitude of rebelliousness. One of her characters, Smirit says in her novel The Day in Shadow:

I hate this country except for the freedom it brought for countries and people, especially for women. But it is barbaric otherwise, full of rotten, elastic standards and the worship of money. I hate whole mass of human affairs.\(^{(12)}\)

In the novels of Shobha De, her women go out in enjoying the status as the new modern women are habituated to enjoy all the modern facilities available around them. They shatter the age-old concepts of traditional Indian women with their strong sense of assertiveness, individualistic approach towards life and they demand equality in every sphere of private and public life. In her novel, the new women have got extreme independence especially in the field of marriage, post-marital relationships and in sexual freedom. They do not want to depend on men for each and everything.

Thus, Shobha De's approach towards feminism is very simple and not complicated and complex as the western critics term it. She has taken feminism in her practical approach towards life. She applies it in delineating some of the bitter truths of female world, especially the double standard, paradox and exploitation shown by the male-dominated, traditional and orthodox society. She beautifully and candidly highlights the problems of suffering of women caused by the paradoxical, social, cultural and moral values set by men. Shobha De applies marriage, divorce, post-marital relationship, lesbianism etc. as the tools to progress her feminist stance. She does not want to put herself in any category regarding the mixture of her hatred against the man's behaviour as well as a unique and strange sense of independence which must be given to women in each and every sphere of life.

References:

The Ironic Presence of Nature In The Novel of Arundhati Roy's: 'The God of Small Things'

The human world always interacts with the world of nature in the novel of Arundhati Roy. Nature in her novel acts as agent and helps to arouse the pity, pathos towards her characters by making them conscious of the grim existential realities. There is a constant interaction between the inner world and outer world of nature which has intense vision of life. In the novel 'The God of Small Things' of Roy, Nature thus appears as an ironic presence. The Ironic Presence of Nature And Spirit plays an important role in the novel of Anita Desai's fiction. As in the final section of the novel where shall we Go This Summer? presents Nature in its colourful variety.

Dr. Mamta Ekka

Nature plays a significant role in Arundhati Roy's 'The God of Small Things'. In the stark, barren and lifeless lives of protagonists Nature acts both as a metaphor of hope and life as an ironical presence that sharpens the awareness of a grim existence in the life. Roy's perception of nature is in itself quite delightful, in all its diversity - the river, flower, grass, tree, orchids, the seasons, the hill, seasonal-fruits, the starless sky, the risen river, quick and back, shaking towards the sea, cloudy night. As Arundhati Roy's 'The God of Small Things' novel begins, perceived through sights and sounds or nature, as her opening lines in the novel are:

"May in Ayemenem is hot, brooding month. The days are long and humid. The river shrinks and black crows gorge on bright mangoes in still, dust green trees. Red bananas ripen Jackfruits burst. Dissolute blue bottles hum vacuously in the fruity air. Then they stun themselves against clear window panes and die, fatly baffled in the sun". (1)

This opening passage of the novel is so rich in ironic presence of nature that it has harboured in its bosom the whole process of the events in nutshell by which a reader may easily be acquainted with the later sequences of the events. This passage is full of images, which suggest the richness of nature, thereby recalling us the very opening stanza of Keats 'Ode to Autumn'. This richness of nature presents an irony on the novel. In nature there is a feeling of fullness but in society there is a feeling of saplessness.

The sentence black crows gorge on bright mangoes in still dust green trees is equally very suggestive in nature. It reveals the love and sexual relation between Velutha, the untouchable and Ammu, the lady of the upper caste family, divorced by her husband.' Bright mangoes' suggests Ammu who, though the mother of two children, is still a blooming young lady. The term ‘dust’ is a symbol of evil or insignificant thing.

In the chapter of her novel "The Cost of Living"; Velutha reflects;

"She moved quickly through the darkness, like an insect following a chemical trail. She know the path to the river as well as her children did and could have found her way there blind - folded. She didn't know what it was that made her hurry through the undergrowth. That turned her walk into a run. That made her arrive on the banks of the Meenachal breathless". (2)

Nature acts as the agent of change in the attitude of Ammu and Velutha as roy describes;

"Behind them the river pulsed through the darkness, shimmering like wild silk. Yellow bamboo wept. Night's elbows rested on the water and watched them. They lay under the mangosteen tree, where only recently a grey old boatplant and boatflowers and boatfruit had been uprooted". (3)

Nature provides joy but it is also an ironical reminder of the grim realities of life as the line of opening-stanza of the novel expresses;

"Then they stun themselves against clear window panes and die, fatly baffled in the sun contains pathos". (4)

It arouses our sense of pity and catharsis. It says that inspire of their (Velutha, Ammu, Rahel and Estha and other mombattis of the novel) best efforts to assert their identity in a male dominated society which is full of social injustice.

The human world always interacts with the world of nature in the novel of Arundhati Roy. Nature in her novel acts as agent and helps to arouse the pity, pathos towards
her characters by making them conscious of the grim existential realities. There is a constant interaction between the inner world and outer world of nature which has intense vision of life. In the novel 'The God of Small Things' of Roy, Nature thus appears as an ironic presence.

The Ironic Presence of Nature And Spirit plays an important role in the novel of Anita Desai's fiction. As in the final section of the novel where shall we Go This Summer? presents Nature in its colourful variety. The description of the monsoon in needed lyrical:

The monsoon flowed--now thin, now dense; now slow, now fast; now whispering, now drumming; then gusting. There was never silence--always the roar and sign of tide, the moan of casuarinas in the grove below, tossed and hurled about in grey, tattered billows, the clatter of palm leaves that hung their ragged fingers down and made channels for the rain to spout down onto the roof. (5)

Nature provides joys, but it is also an ironical reminder of the grim realities of life. Sita tries her best to forget her sorrow and agony in the island of Manori but the rain persistently revives her memory: "Usually she repressed them with an agonized determination but the rain drumming, thrumming, pouring all about her locked her in, locked her up, forced her to turn on herself."

As the monsoon breaks Sita and her children stand on the terrace to watch the clouds. The clouds are "Kohl-black floating and shifting and casting a shadow over the 'slaty sea' changing in into green-black colour. A shaft of white sunlight is reflected upon the dancing waves of the sea. The clouds remain loose and buoyant. From the terrace Sita and her children watch the sails move in and out of the islands of light.

Sea and water are two dominant symbols in Where Shall We Go This Summer? In the presence of the island and the sea Sita never feels alone: "She never felt alone. She felt surrounded by presences -- the presence of the island itself, of the sea around it and of the palm trees alive."

Arundhati Roy also revealed in her book 'The Greater Common Good', "We have lived in the forest for generations. The forest is our moneylender and banker. In hard times, we go to the forest. We build our houses from its wood. From its rushes and splints, we weave screens. From the forests we make baskets and cots, ploughs and hoes and many other useful things; we get various kind of grasses and when the grasses become dry in summer we still get leaves...If there is a famine, we survive by eating roots and tubers. When we fall sick our medicine men bring us leaches, roots, bark from the forest. We collect and sell gum, tendu leaves, bahera, chironji and mahua. "The forest is like our mother; we have grown up in its lap. We know how to live by suckling at her breast. If we were made to live in a land without forests, then all this knowledge that we have cherished for generations will be useless and slowly we will forget it all."

The title of the novel is too straightforward to require any elucidation from the point of view of characterization.

References:

(1) The God of Small Things.
(2) The God of Small Things.
(3) The God of Small Things.
(4) The God of Small Things.
(5) Where Shall We Go This Summer?
Human Struggle And Conflict In Salman Rushdie's *Fury*


**Dr. K. K. Singh**

The novels of Salman Rushdie are full of human struggle and conflicts. He is of the view that there is no scope of literature without human struggle and conflicts. Almost all his novels - *Grimus, Midnight's Children, Shame, The Satanic Verses, The Moor's Last Sigh, Fury, The Ground Beneath Her Feet, Shalimar the Clown* and *The Enchantress of Florence* are full of human struggle for survival. In these novels, the protagonists are caught in the world of self-disguise. Here, we find the story of human life in different perspectives. He seems to be both modern as well as traditional in showing the existence of human beings in this vast world. In his novels, human struggle and conflict are visible in the suffering of the protagonists. Their suffering is caused by alienation, search of identity, conflict of cultural plurality etc.

Salman Rushdie is the master of philosophical considerations and his novels are full of the study of the characters in terms of psychological output. He creates characters who are alienated from the root and always in search of their imaginary homelands. He is of the view that man fails to perceive today the very purpose behind life and relevance of his existence in hostile world. The great philosopher Camus is also of the same view:

A world that can be explained by reasoning, however faulty is familiar world. But in universe that is suddenly deprived of illusions and of light, man feels as stranger. It is an irremediable exile because he is deprived of memories of a lost homeland as much as he lacks the hopes of a promised land to come. This divorced man and his life, the actor and his setting, truly constitute the feeling of absurdity.\(^{(1)}\)

Similarly, Salman Rushdie has presented his characters in the world of struggle, conflict and dilemma. He is of the view that the modern man's problem is something else. Today in modern times, man fails to understand the real purpose of his life because he finds himself in absurd conditions. Similarly, Ionesco defines the true nature of human predicament in these words:

Absurd is that which is devoid of purpose, cut off from his religious, metaphysical and transcendental roots. Man is lost all his actions & become senseless, absurd and useless.\(^{(2)}\)

The malaise of the contemporary man has been aggravated in his novels. Salman Rushdie takes it as a crisis of present. In the real world the present century has been the dissolution of old certainties and traditions. The present age has shrunk in spirit, languishing in confusion, frustration, disintegration, disillusionment, bewilderment, meaninglessness and rootlessness. Paul Brunton rightly points out:

Never before were so many people plunged in so much uncertainty, so much complexity and settlement.\(^{(3)}\)

Like the modern men, the protagonists of Salman Rushdie like Saleem Sinai in *Midnight's Children, Iskander Harappa in Shame, Moor in The Moor's Last Sigh, Ormus Cama and Vina Apsara in The Ground Beneath Her Feet* suffer from the growing sense of rootlessness which has been manifested itself in their characters. They suffer in this world because of imposed alienation. Enrich Fromen rightly points out the effect of alienation and rootlessness of human being:

The alienation from oneself, from one's fellow men and from nature, the awareness that life runs out of one's hand like sand and that the one will die without having live that live one's midst that plenty and joyless.\(^{(4)}\)
According to old tradition of Indian legends, myths and history, pain and suffering are spread everywhere. If man has to come out from suffering, he has to illuminate ignorance because ignorance is the real cause of suffering and pain. But this ignorance cannot be illuminated overnight. There is suffering in the world as Lord Buddha says and according to him there is eradication of pain and suffering from human life by following the method of struggle in human life. Almost all his characters go through the process of “coming out” from suffering through constant struggle in their life. Flapping Eagle in Grimus, Saleem Sinai in Midnight's Children, Iskander Harappa and Omar Khayam Sakil in Shame, Mohamund in The Satanic Verses, Haroun and Rashid in The Haroun and the Sea of Stories, Moor in The Moor's Last Sigh, Vina Apsara and Ormus Cama in The Ground Beneath Her Feet, Malik Solanka in Fury and Payareal in Shalimar the Clown are such characters who go through the process of struggle and overcome several conflicts in their life and do not succumb before the harsh realities of life. They suffer from different kinds of problems - some self-made and some are imposed but the real problem is the problem of alienation. Walter Kauffmann pertinently remarks on the problem of alienation of modern man:

Whether we choose to speak of alienation or not, the experiences widely associated with that firm are often held to be distinctive characteristics of our time.\(^{(5)}\)

Salman Rushdie’s Fury is a novel of the conflicts which occur in the life of Malik Solanka. According to many critics, Fury is the presentation of Salman Rushdie's own furious life after the publication of his most controversial novel The Satanic Verses. There are many obvious interpretations of the novel delineated by many critics in which they have explored many autobiographical clues regarding the real picture of Salman Rushdie’s life. Salman Rushdie left London for New York in 1999 and the central protagonist of the novel Malik Solanka also left London for New York in 2000. Both Malik Solanka and Salman Rushdie are of the same age - fifty three and fifty five respectively when they left England for New York. In England, both began an affair with an ex-Indian younger women Neela in Fury and Padma Laxmi who is the second wife of Salman Rushdie to whom this novel is dedicated. Both Salman Rushdie and Malik Solanka have abandoned their respective wives Eleanor and Elizabeth West and their sons Asmman and Milan also. According to a large number of critics, Fury is the portrayal of real happenings in the life of Salman Rushdie after the publication of The Satanic Verses. Caroline Moor writes in Sunday Telegraph about the autobiographical sketches of Fury:

Fury is the very dubious combination of fiction and confession in which apparent self accusation slides equisely in vaunting.\(^{(6)}\)

Since this novel is the combination of fiction and confession, dream and realty, lust and love, life and death etc. human struggle and conflict are evident right from the beginning. The central protagonist of the novel is Professor Malik Solanka who has to fight with his own made world which is full of contradictions, paradoxes and conflicts:

Soon afterwards he plunged into, yes, television; which drew down much predictably envious scorn, especially when the BBC commissioned him to develop a late-night series of popular history-of-philosophy programmes whose protagonists would be Professor Malik Solanka’s notorious collection of outsize egghead dolls, all made by himself.\(^{(7)}\)

After his return to Cambridge, Malik Solanka ponders over his philosophical considerations; he constructs his own world and also destroys it for his own sake:

On his return to Cambridge he immediately started to construct microcosms of his own. From the beginning his doll’s houses were the products of an idiosyncratic personal vision. They were fanciful at first, even fabulist; science-fiction plunges into the mind of the future instead of the past.\(^{(8)}\)

Malik Solanka's life is the combination of activeness and boredom and his this paradoxical nature has been shown in this novel from time to time. After leaving the academic conflict, Malik Solanka became aware of the importance of the working culture:

Solanka soon learned the value of working, like the great matadors, closer to the bull; this is, using the material of his own life and immediate surroundings and, by the alchemy of art, making it strange.\(^{(9)}\)

Rushdie employs the form of the post-modernism in Fury to portray the character of Malik Solanka. In Fury the problem of Malik Solanka seems to be the presentation of his own cobweb in which he has been victimized. His departure from London to New York is the symbol of Salman Rushdie's new frontier of the 21st century. New York is the epitome of America, the city is a living paradox:

America, in the highest hour of its hybrid, omnivoros power. America, to which he had come to erase himself. To be free of attachment and so also of anger, fear and pain. Eat me, Professor Solanka silently prayed. Eat me, America, and give me peace.\(^{(10)}\)

Malik Solanka struggles to realize peace in his life but peace is not an easy thing to be realised in human life. Since his origin is in the oriental culture, he is fighting with internal as well as external forces to get peace in his life. God has given power, prestige, wisdom, honour and popularity to human beings but he had denied peace from human being. According to God, peace and rest can be obtained only through struggle.

Salman Rushdie seems to present Malik Solanka wandering between two worlds-London and New York-for him one is dead and other is powerless to be born. After his arrival in New York, Malik Solanka expresses his painful experience in the mood of dejection and rejection:

America insulted the rest of the planet, thought Malik Solanka in his old-fashioned way, by treating such bounty with the shoulder-shrugging casualness of the inequitably wealthy.\(^{(11)}\)
Malik Solanka is not an old-fashioned man but his roots in oriental culture always put him in the midst of many problems all the time. In this novel Malik Solanka is fighting with the concept of globalization. It means that he is fighting with American ethos of new imperial power because there is no scope of human dignity and human values in such a world. He fights against the mechanisation of human feelings.

Everything in him fought against the mechanisation of the human. Wasn't this exactly what his imagined world was being created to confront? What could a head doctor tell him about himself that he didn't already know? (12)

Malik Solanka's vision of American world is full of conflict and paradoxes. Here, there is human disappointments, human fury, loss of faith, lack of human dignity and breakage in human predicament. Everything has been mechanized here. Happiness and unhappiness are redefined:

All around him the American self was reconceiving itself in mechanical terms, but was everywhere running out of control. (13)

Malik Solanka seems to be dwelling in the dilemma of two worlds, two ideas- one is human and other is mechanical. In the mechanical world-human problems are seen and absorbed more physically and less intellectually:

Unhappiness was redefined as physical unfitness, despair as a question of good spinal alignment. Happiness was better food, wiser furniture orientation, deeper breathing technique. Happiness was selfishness. (14)

After Malik Solanka's breakage with Eleanor, he comes in contact with Leena. Salman Rushdie, being a shrewd observer of his own self, sketches some of the real events of his own life autobiographically. He says that Neela was an obstacle like Padma Laxmi; between Malik Solanka and Eleanor:

Moreover Neela was now also an obstacle between himself and Eleanor. He had left for one apparent and one underlying reason the horrifying fact of the knife in the dark and beneath the surface of the marriage the erosion of what had one's overwhelmed. Furious newly kindled desire was hard to give for what calmer gentler old flame. (15)

In this novel, the struggle of different voices becomes the subject of the narrative. According to many critics, Salman Rushdie plays through the book with his conceit that is “to live is to create stories of oneself and to tell stories is to live.” Malik Solanka sees and describes his life as a narrative work in progress. He says:

The story you finished was perhaps never the one you began. Yes! He would take the charge of his life anew, binding his breaking selves together. Those changes in himself that he sought, he himself would initiate and make them. No more of this miasmic, absent drift. (16)

Malik Solanka's journey from beginning to end of the novel is full of different kinds of furies in his life because the same could be true for the novelist also. Solanka sees his life as sacked like fiction or drama referring to his arrival in Lilluput Balefisco:

His life! - was arriving, here in the South Pacific, at its final act. This was not a reasonable idea, but he had been, ever since the slightly tragic but mostly farcical events of the Night of the Furies, in an unreasonable frame of mind, having regained consciousness with a broken molar giving him considerable trouble, and a broken heart and wounded life that gave him more grief even the pounding tooth. (17)

References:

(2) Cathris Cahiers Dela Compagnie Madeleine Ranaud Jean Louis Barrault (Paris Number 20, October 1957)
(8) Ibid., p. 16.
(9) Ibid., p. 16.
(10) Ibid., p. 44.
(11) Ibid., p. 6.
(12) Ibid., p. 182.
(13) Ibid., p. 183.
(14) Ibid., p. 183.
(15) Ibid., p. 198.
(16) Ibid., p. 86.
(17) Ibid., p. 235.
Salman Rushdie's Epic World In *Grimus*

*Grimus* represents an apprehended struggle between two worlds - the world of mundane actuality and the world of spiritual and intellectual beauty. It is the conflict between the human world of complexity and the bird's world of fantasy. Salman Rushdie here fits in a story about the angel and the god which is the most seminal to the novel. In the world of myth, gods want to be replaced by the angel and the angel in turn awaits his own deliverer. *Grimus* plays the part of a creator of the world of Stone Rose. Flapping Eagle flees the complex effect of derealising of routine common sense world together with the evoking of a reality that lies hidden among the unrealities. The novel presents the conflict between the real and the unreal worlds.

In the vast realm of Indian English writing, the world of these writers is not limited to one village or one or two families or one or two districts or the boundary of few square kilometers. There is not the world of Thomas Hardy's 'Wessex' or Jane Austen's 'A Little Bit of Ivory,' their world is more extended even than the world of Henry Fielding or Charles Dickens. There is a continuous extension as far as the narrative of these novelists is concerned. Their narrative travels several countries and the beauty of the narration lies in the presentation of the continuation of life everywhere.

As it is common with the modern writers, Salman Rushdie's main intention is to project his protagonist in this world to face the harsh realities of human life and at the same time his strong contestential motive makes his writings more effective and aggressive. Sometime his world is full of fantasy and sometimes his world is full of reality. That is why he is the master of magic realism, a term which is rightly associated with his writings. M. Madhusudhan Rao rightly remarks about the projection of the world of Salman Rushdie in these words:

The world of fantasy is used to take a longer, telescopic view and as a instrument of detachment. But, there is a very thin and almost non-existent aura separating the world of fantasy and facts. Facts are as forceful and unmistakable as the magic of the dream is a superabundance of imagination of the reality. The world of myth and fantasy provides the superstructures for an essentially historical narrative.¹

Rushdie's world is in between fact and fantasy, the narrative always hovers between past and present, between myth and history and between reality and romance. Unlike Henry Fielding or Charles Dickens or Mark Twain, Salman

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¹ M. Madhusudhan Rao, *Salman Rushdie's World in* *Grimus* ¹
Rushdie is not a complete master of comic-epic in prose but his writings are able to project an epical world which is the mixture of past and present, history and myth, and reality and fantasy. M. Madhusudhana Rao once again remarks:

The narrative world progresses from the past into the present. It is in the manner of recovering a lost moment from the realms of Memory. This shuffling of temporal reality creates the illusion of dramatizing a nearly extinct history.\(^{(2)}\)

Salman Rushdie’s strong hold on myth and fantasy provides him a unique sense of imagination to narrate the reality of human existence with magical effect. His first novel Grimus, although weak in structure and the thematic pattern as the critics suggest, holds his strong sense of fictional world. The world of Grimus is an epic fantasy because the protagonist travels a large distance in order to search something. It is a fiction of scientific fantasy. G. J. V. Prasad rightly remarks on the worldview of Salman Rushdie in Grimus:

Grimus is a science fantasy, which like most such works, builds on the contemporary understanding of science as much as on cultural pasts and mystical, non-rational, symbolic descriptions of the world. Thus, it depicts for us the world view of the author at a particular point in his life, the way he uses his knowledge and his past in order to construct a world of the future and the way he deals with it. Ultimately then, the work is about contemporary life and its concerns.\(^{(3)}\)

Even though Grimus is his first novel, it shows his strong hold on his theory of “cultural pluralism” and globalization or cultural migration. This novel is about man's search for his sister. The quest of this immortal is now far a way to become a normal mortal human being again. The journey in the novel which covers a vast world turns out to be a voyage of destruction. It shows the disintegration of utopia that had gone wrong. Flapping Eagle narrates his past stories. He was an Exona Indian orphan. His real name was Joe Soe. He and his sister Bu-Dug were abandoned by the Exona race for some peculiar reasons. His sister broke the law by entering in the town for the first time she met Mr. Sispy, a pedlar who lured her by giving her two bottles one filled with bright yellow liquid and other with bright blue liquid. She and her brother entered the town and saw many curious things which were not common to them. Joe Sue saw an angel sitting on the rock at the soldier height. When he stretched both hands, the bird came peacefully in his grasp and latter attacked him injuring on his chest. Joe-Soe fought with the eagle bravely and aggressively. Bud-dug, his sister observed this incident from a distance and praised the bravery and aggressiveness of her brother and called him Flapping Eagle. Flapping Eagle had wandered the face of the earth for several centuries and covered a vast world. He fell from his yatch, fell through a hole in the sea and was washed ashore, on Calf Island. He learnt that there was a mountain called the Calf Mountain and the city bearing the name ‘K.’ The town was full of reprobates and discarded types:

Selfish, decadent people that no decent woman would want to be Near.\(^{(4)}\)

This is a novel about almost endless journey and infinite possibilities. Many such questions related to mythology are explored in the book through the journey of unlikely heroes- Flapping Eagle and Virgil Jones. Their quest is to found the machine, the Stone Rose which enabled Grimus to keep Calf Island, the island of the immortals; they need to stop the Megalomaine design of Grimus, even if it means their own destruction and the destruction of their island. Their quest for death for mortality is also a celebration of fertility of natural possibilities of Kaos as opposed to human control. How he was managing to achieve their quests is the story of the novel.

The real charm of the novel lies in the projection of extended world as it is habitual with Salman Rushdie. Here we find the intermingling of mythology, science and reality in one world. Dilip Fernandez rightly remarks about Grimus:

Grimus is an anagram of Simurg, in Persian mythology the bird with reasoning power.\(^{(6)}\)

Flapping Eagle came to know that the concept of free world was a delusion. He felt that he was destined to meet and deliver Grimus from his capacity. With the help of Johns he went to Stone Rose which held the key to the gate. At this juncture Salman Rushdie writes:

The Gate to Grims is similar to one through which you entered the sea of Calf. Though less crude, impossible to find it unless you know where it is, Grimus will certainly know you're coming; he may well try and close the Gate.\(^{(6)}\)

Grimus plays an important role of the creator with his Stone Rose which enable him to traverse time and space and materialize things by a mere flash of thinking. He was sometime disillusioned and sometime bewildered and felt that he should be relieved by Flapping Eagle. Each of them thought that he was the part of the other. Each of them likes to realize his presence in other's company. Flapping Eagle thought about the reconstruction of the Calf Island. But the inhabitants of 'K' only experienced monotony and stagnanant, shamenness fostered by Stone Rose. They would not flap their wings of spiritual exploration. The novel closes with the decision of Flapping Eagle to respect the Calf Island without Stone Rose. The novel is a powerful fantasy dealing with the different worlds and various characters at different times. Uma Parmeshwarawam rightly remarks about the world of fantasy of Salman Rushdie in these words:

It is an epic fantasy of vaulting imagination, full of strangely echoing, mysterious and extraordinary adventure.\(^{(7)}\)

The novel is a mixture of symbolic implications and these symbolic implications represent different world view of the writer. Even though it is the first novel of Salman Rushdie, he does not hesitate to cover the wide range of the globe. In this novel symbolism has been employed to represent different worlds of different characters. Flapping Eagle is the symbol accomplished soul, Calf Island is an emblem of chaos and anarchy, the people of ‘K’ represent dullness and loneliness, Stone Rose symbolizes monotonous
stagnation and Grimus is the symbol of rational thinking. All these characters portrayed in the novel represent their different worlds related to each other. P. Bayapa Reddy rightly remarks:

The novelist makes his point clear through the employment of symbolism. Flapping Eagle symbolizes a realised soul. Calf Island is symbolic of disorder. The people of K represent passivity and monotony. Stone Rose is a symbol of monotonous stagnation. Grimus is symbolic of rational thinking. (8)

Grimus represents an apprehended struggle between two worlds - the world of mundane actuality and the world of spiritual and intellectual beauty. It is the conflict between the human world of complexity and the bird's world of fantasy. Salman Rushdie here fits in a story about the angel and the god which is the most seminal to the novel. In the world of myth, gods want to be replaced by the angel and the angel in turn awaits his own deliverer. Grimus plays the part of a creator of the world of Stone Rose. Flapping Eagle flees the complex effect of derealising of routine common sense world together with the evoking of a reality that lies hidden among the unrealities. The novel presents the conflict between the real and the unreal worlds.

The world of Grimus reminds us the fictional world of Swift's Gulliver's Travels or Virginia Wolf's Orlando or Defoe's Robinson Crusoe or Golding's The Lord of Flies. Here the world represented is highly imaginative and complicated dealing mainly with worldly or secular aspects of life and spiritual sterility. It is a novel of such hallucinogenic intensity.

References :

(2) Ibid., p. 136.
Colonial Consciousness and Identity Crisis  
(A Note on Arun Joshi's Central Characters)

The colonial consciousness in The Apprentice has divided Ratan’s soul. He is tempted by women, drinks and easy life. He finds changed values, truth, honesty, hard labour and character all meaningless. The parallel cultures of the rich and the poor moves in his mind. He sees corruption on national level. He finds no glory in family life, no merit in help and education. Restless, sleepless, he is terrified by the uncertain ties of life. The deviation from ideals torments him to the suppress the voice of his soul. The colonial consciousness teaches him to disbelive everything. He suffers within: “And all these years this terrible loneliness something that you may not suspect by looking at me .....blazes have turned upon me and turned me to ashes.”

DR. ANJEESH KUMAR

Indian English fiction is an integral part of commonwealth literature which shares the complex fate of third world art and is similar in traits. The duality of selves, the native consciousness and colonial consciousness are the distinctive features of commonwealth writers. Majority of them have been exposed to western culture. In this way, the experience of multiculturism has filtered into the lives of those who have over had the bad luck of being colonised this way or that way. The over all impact of colonial consciousness has made us class conscious. It has created situations for women’s liberation. It has deepened our self-centredness and proneness to materialism. Arun Joshi is not a novelist in the tradition of Mulk Raj Rand or R.K. Narayan, Kamla Markandya or Bhabani Bhattacharya. With Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai and Arun Joshi Indian English fiction makes departures and catches us with modern western fiction. Joshi is like Kafka and Camus, Sartr and Saul Bellow, Elison and Malamud. His central characters are product of colonial consciousness and they are in search of their lost self, their identity like Blancha Dubois of Tennessee Williams or Willy Loman of Arthur Miller. This paper attempts the colonial consciousness and identity crisis in the central characters of Arun Joshi.

Joshi’s Sindi oberai, in The Foreigner, is a product of cross roads of the east and the west. His dilemmas are of his parental cultures as he is born of an English mother and Indian father. He is brought up by his uncle in Kenya and educated in East Africa, London and America. The death of his uncle forces him to be complete foreigner, unsafe, insecure and a self seeker of identity. Deprived of his cultural roots, he grows into a wayward wanderer alien to his own culture. He opts for the life of an outsider with mental agonies and predicaments. Now he desires to escape his internal wounds, miseries and sufferings. He wilfully records this state of self pity: “I wanted to live without desire and attachment, I wanted peace and perhaps capacity to love ... But above all I wanted to conquer pain ...” Throughout his life, he undergoes several changes of mind and personality and happens to be an alien, while in Kenya, Boston and London. Against this cultural background Sindi cultivates a sense of detachment to over power the sad experiences and painful memories of his past. He tries to save June and Babu fearing his responsibilities and involvement, but soon changes his mind and develops his old sense of detachment. His idea of a foreigner or his sense of colonial consciousness does not leave his mind even for a minutes.” Perhaps I felt like that because I was a foreigner in America, but then what difference would it have made if I had lived in Kenya or India or any other places for that matter? ....I would still be a foreigner, my foreignness lay ...” Within me” At each steps he suffers, but he never takes it otherwise. His life is a long series of compromise, therefore, he maintains: There is no end to suffering, no end to the struggle ...” Like Babu he does not forget his roots, the process of changes, the conventional morality, the sense of existence and the colonial consciousness. He loves June without lust and passion but
his false sense of detachment drives Babu in a fit of passion to kill himself. Babu ends his life and June also meets the same fate. Sindi feels a sense of guilt and it brings him naked before the readers in search of existence. He comes to justify his identity, but lacks both individuality and self identity. He suffers a short of psychosis and fails in his relationship with Anna, Katty and June as he could not make a complete union in any case and in any way. In all cases he is terrified with the fear of being possessed and acts on the theory that “one should be able to love without wanting to possess.”

**The Strange Case of Billy Biswas** is something different than that of **The Foreigner**. It is because of Billy’s deep roots in family traditions and a fixed set of values. He says : If life’s meaning lies not in the glossy surface of our pretensions, but in those dark mossy Labyrinths of the soul that languish forever ...”(4) He goes to Newyork for the Engineering course, but opts for Anthropology :

“His output consists of a most incongruent mixture of book reviews, poems, fantastic short stories and some very crude essays on the science of anthropology.”(5) Though silly is crazy, he responds to Indian standards. In America he likes the company of the Negroes. He feels something inside but he is not yet sure. Meena fails to satisfy his thirst and he is attracted to Tuula and finally changes over to Bilasia. No pulls and pressures could unite his body or soul. He looks like a stranger to our culture. On the loss of his personal identity he writes to Tuula : “It seems, my dear Tuula, that we are surifly losing what is known as one’s grip on life.”(6)

He feels plenty of happiness in Bilasia. He has now no needs of stimulus like alcohal, dance, folksong or drum beating to transport him to the life he dreams of. The colonial consciousness and his lost self make him introverted. He finds enlightenment far away from corruption and material civilization and now he is renouncer of Meena, Rima and the modern world. Bilasia fulfils his choice of right woman.

The colonial consciousness in **The Apprentice** has divided Ratan’s soul. He is tempted by women, drinks and easy life. He finds changed values, truth, honesty , hard labour and character all meaningless. The parallel cultures of the rich and the poor moves in his mind. He sees corruption on national level. He finds no glory in family life, no merit in help and education. Restless, sleepless, he is terrified by the uncertain ties of life. The deviation from ideals torments him to the suppress the voice of his soul. The colonial consciousness teaches him to disbelive everything. He suffers within : “And all these years this terrible loneliness something that you may not suspect by looking at me ......blazes have turned upon me and turned me to ashes.”(7)

In **The Last Lbyrinth** colonial consciousness inflicts Som Bhaskar. Born and brought up in India, Som has his education abroad at some of the best universities of the world. It is natural for him to imbibe something of western outlook, but in fact infictions of contradictions are in his blood. A close examination of his personality shows insecurity, inadequacy, hollownese and a kind of restlessness in him. On one hand he inherits love for womansing, drinking and sexuality from his grandfather, on the other hand he gets the impulse to believe and surrender from his mother. In between two emotions, he becomes a labyrinth. He is torn between the faith and doubt and is helpless in his effort to explore the possibility of an equation between his colonial consciousness and self realisation. Finally he neglects his health , business , sanity and undergoes varied changes.

The novelist discovers his dilemma and problem of identity as such: “There are people whose sense of identity at the end of life does not go beyond ....may be what you want is a mystification ... sooner or later.”(8) Som’s dilemma is born at the meeting point of colonial consciousness and Indian ehoes and there is his futile attempt to escape it.

**References :**

2. Ibid., P. 61.
3. Ibid., P. 20.
6. Ibid. P. 97.
History of Sonnet in English Literature

This famous collection of sonnets was a kind of encyclopedia of the poetry of love and passion. After that, several Italian poets composed sonnets which have still remained popular. They include Serofino de Aquila (1466-1500), Cartiglione (1478-1529), Michelangelo (1475-1564), Cartiglione (1478-1529) and Tasso (1544-95). In the sixteenth century, there was also an outburst of sonnet-sequences such as De Bellay's L'Olive (1549) and his Regrets and Antiquates de Rome (1558), and Ronsard's Amours (1552) and his sonnets Pour Helene (1578). Philippe Desportes (1546-1606) was a minor poet and so less important, but Malherbe (1555-1628) was a major poet who was largely responsible for establishing the Alexandrines through his sonnets.

A sonnet is a song; its sound creates music and makes it a lyrical poem. Except for the curtal sonnet, the ordinary sonnet is a poem of fourteen pentameter lines. The exact origin of the sonnet is unknown, but it was first attempted in Italy and it was made popular by the poet, Petrarch in the fourteenth century. So it is called the Italian or Petrarchan sonnet, which consists of two parts: the octave (the first eight lines) and the sestet (the last six lines). The sonnet deals with only one idea, especially the idea of love, which is developed in the octave and concluded in the sestet. Watts-Dunton has very lucidly explained this function of the sonnet in the following lines of a sonnet composed by himself:

“A sonnet is a wave of melody;
From hearing waters of the impassioned soul;
A billion of tidal music one and whole flows in the
‘Octave’
Then returning free, its ebbing surgeon in the 'Sestet'
Roll back to the deep of Life's tumultuous sea.”

(a) The Petrarchan form of which the octave rhyming abcd, abcd and the ‘sestet’ rhyming cde, cde or sometimes cdecde, or in any combination;
(b) the Spenserian form which contains three quatrains and a complete rhyme abab, bc, bc, cd, cd, ee; and,
(c) the Shakespearean form, again having three quatrains and a couplet, rhyming abab, cdcd, efef, gg.

The commonest of all is the Italian form. In the other two forms of the sonnet, a different idea is expressed in each quatrains; each grows out of the one preceding it; and the arguments, themes, thoughts and dialectics are concluded and tied up, in the end couplet.

Now let us throw some light on the Petrarchan sonnet. This form of sonnet perhaps developed from the Sicilians strambnotto. It consisted of the quatrains to which were added two tercets. The earliest Italian sonnets are attributed to one Giaconada Lention (b. 1215-33) of the Sicilian School of Poetry. But the form might have been invented by another poet at the court of the Emperor Frederick II in Sicily.

This famous collection of sonnets was a kind of encyclopedia of the poetry of love and passion. After that, several Italian poets composed sonnets which have still remained popular. They include Serofino de Aquila (1466-1500), Cartiglione (1478-1529), Michelangelo (1475-1564), Cartiglione (1478-1529) and Tasso (1544-95). In the sixteenth century, there was also an outburst of sonnet-sequences such as De Bellay's L'Olive (1549) and his Regrets and Antiquates de Rome (1558), and Ronsard's Amours (1552) and his sonnets Pour Helene (1578). Philippe Desportes (1546-1606) was a minor poet and so less important, but Malherbe (1555-1628) was a major poet who was largely responsible for establishing the Alexandrines through his sonnets. In Spain, the sonnet was introduced by the Marquis de Saintliness (1398-1458). Some nobly prominent Spanish sonneteers who followed him were Juan Boscán (1490-1552) and Garcilaso dela Vega (1503-36). Two poets who established the sonnet in Portugal in the sixteenth century were Miranpa
and Antonio Ferreria. The sonnet could not be established in Germany till some what later and than mostly through the work of Weckerl (1584-1653).

The sonnet continued to flower and flourish in Italy during the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries. By the sixteenth century, it had spread to Spain and France. It reached England through the work of Wyatt and Surrey in the first half of the sixteenth century. After their deaths, it was not practised for some years. Thus Sidney led the way to a great outburst of sonneteering. Thus sonneteering became a popular habit, a conventional code, a modish artifact of gallanty and compliment. No poet between 1590 and 1600 failed to try his poetic skill at this poetic device. During those ten years, more sonnets were composed in England than in any other decade. Thus, the Elizabethan sonnet took two forms: (i) the Italian or Petrarchan; (ii) the English or Shakespearean form. During this period, both kinds flourished to the full. But the English form of the sonnet flourished better than the foreign model. Wyatt began with a group of the Italian type. Surrey introduced the English form. The Elizabethan sonnets owed a great deal to the French sonneteers who had preceded them. It was contemporary French, rather than older Italian influences which first stirred in the Elizabethan mind a fruitful interest in the sonnet. The first inspiration came from Clement Marot the protestant French poet of the early years of the sixteenth century, who was a contemporary of Wyatt and Surrey. He studied Petrarch with ardour, translated into French some of his sonnets and odes and made two or three original experiments in the sonnet form under the title of Esigrammar. After his death, Ronard and his companions continued writing sonnets. Thomas Watson was the earliest Elizabethan to make a reputation as a sonneteer.

Sidney entered the field very soon after Watson set foot there. He undoubtedly is a pioneer among Elizabethan sonneteers. He may fairly be credited with marching at the head of the contemporary cavalcade of sonneteers. His collection of sonnets Astrophel and Stella was written between the years 1580 and 1584. They were not published till 1591. Sidney's sonnets form a connected sequence. The poet, under the name of Astrophel, narrates the course of his love and passion for a lady to whom he gives the name of Stella. Thus the theme of the sonnet was nearly always love, the real or imaginary joys and sorrows of the love and his adoration of his mistress beauty. This is the theme of Sidney's sonnets. He writes a whole series of sonnets, which together tell the story of a real incident in his life, his love for Stella who is Penelope Devereux, daughter of the Earl of Essex, and his disappointment.

References: