

CHAPTER: V YOGIC REALISM II : THE POETRY TRILOGY

Persaud's Yogic Realism culminates into its final stage in the poetry of his three latest books namely, *A Surf of Sparrows' Songs* (1996), *The Hungry Sailor* (2000) and *A Writer Like You* (2002). These books together form a 'Poetry Trilogy' or 'a trilogy of poetry books'. In his Letter to O. P. Juneja, dated 20 Oct. 1998, he says, "This (*A Writer Like You*) completes a trilogy of books which started with *A Surf of Sparrows' Songs* (TSAR, 1996) – the middle book, *The Hungry Sailor*, ...". The poet traces his yogic journey through poems and takes a reader along on a journey through the reading of poetry. The realm that these poems explore is the inner world of mysticism and spiritualism. The poet uses various images and makes experiments with language to evoke the yogic experience. The first in the series is *A Surf of Sparrows' Songs* (1996). Persaud points out in his essay, "I Hear a Voice, Is It Mine?", "But if in *A Surf of Sparrows' Songs* I dealt largely with that writing which moves away from form, the stories in *Canada Geese and Apple Chatney* (1998) demonstrate both the Yoga of form (Hatha Yoga, the Yoga of form and postures) and the Yoga of the fluid and formless (Jnana Yoga, the Yoga of meditation on the formless) and various stages in between" (535). He thus connects his poetry with his fiction in view of the process of Yogic Realism.

As seen earlier, Persaud's stories in *Canada Geese and Apple Chatney* (1998) depict the narrator's struggles through confusion and perplexity relating to his identity and existence and his efforts at disciplining his sentiments with the codes of the Indianness. The mode is discursive and the objective is to know a writer's "being" as a writer of Indian origin and to involve efforts at "becoming" a writer of Indian origin. It is like disciplining aspirations and intellect with

knowledge. As a result, conflicting sentiments disperse and steady intellect emerges to become like the *Gita's* *sihitaprajna*. It becomes the yoga of knowledge, the Jnana Yoga.

Persaud's Hindu samskaras inform him that element of faith or devotion is pure, transparent and egoless emotion that can help him in the task. He, therefore, infuses his poetry with element of devotion. He believes that devotion softens the intellect and the ego and replaces conflicting sentiments and confused intellect with calm emotion of devotion. As a result, his mind becomes calm and steady to enable divine seeing. This is yoga of devotion or the Bhakti Yoga. Some of his poems with a devotional base become a kind of bhakti yoga, an offering to god. Thus, the book marks a significant shift of a writer-yogi's mind from intellect to faith. The poet wants the book to become a poetic offering to god, a "Poemanjali" or a poem offering.

The poems in the three books, *A Surf of Sparrows' Songs*, *The Hungry Sailor* and *A Writer Like You* depict three stages of a writer-yogi's experiences in 'writing as yoga' comprising of his conflict to concentration, his meditation with detachment and his comprehension of the Writer. These stages correspond to the stages of *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi* in the *Raja Yoga*. These are the stages of yogic realism that a writer-yogi acquires through gradual comprehension of the Real. The first book, *A Surf of Sparrows' Songs* deals with soul's flight in to the sky of psychosphere, while below lies the ocean full of mundane reality. The poet's mind indulges in the memory of the past and the perception of the present that fills it with perplexity and anxiety. He, however, gets a vision of the soul surfing as green eyes. He tries to contemplate on the vision. But it is flickering momentarily. The thought waves that memory and perception generate cause hurdles in the contemplation by reminding him constantly of his painful history and invisibility in the west. His poetry depicts the perplexities and anxieties of a

writer-yogi's conflicting mind and his struggle to remove thought waves from the mind. It is the stage of concentration.

The second book, *The Hungry Sailor* continues with the poet's struggle for concentration. The poet conveys it through metaphors of 'waiting', 'sailing' and 'islands'. The sailing stands for the mind's efforts to cut across the ocean of thought which is turbulent with thought waves generated by one's memory of the past and his perception of the present. The poet attempts to rid the mind of thought waves and empty it. It acquires the 'emptying of mind' through detachment and knowledge of a word that leads to understanding of the world. The mind thus becomes steady and calm to concentrate on the self. This is the stage of meditation.

The third book in the series, *A Writer Like You* deals with an aspect of 'cross-over to self and Self' that a writer-yogi works out through gradual comprehension of self. He cultivates insight in to the Reality and knows his self as its part. He aspires to be like the Self. The poems present a writer-yogi's efforts to get the vision of the Writer that evokes his aspirations to be like Him. In the process, there develops in him a yogic vision, a sense of 'seeing', the 'Divya drishti' or the divine seeing.

Sasene Persaud's *A Surf of Sparrows' Songs* (1996) continues with the poetic way of perceiving reality. The book is a widely acclaimed collection of poems for its value embedded in two literary qualities: First, it marks his experimentation in a kind of writing, which he terms as "Yogic Realism", a term that he has coined to define his writing as distinct from other writings in the west because of its content and form. It is a theory that he constructs to challenge the Western literary criticism and theories of writing. Establishing itself in the classical Indian

Vedic tradition, his theory presents Indian aesthetics as an effective tool to tackle most of confusions and misconceptions that hamper one's quest for Truth. The theory comes at a time when Western theories dominate the world literature and literary criticism under the glossy 'isms'. Persaud says that these 'isms' are deceptive as they change with the change in fashion in literary criticism and theory. The Indian aesthetics in stead stood the test of time and has accommodated various 'isms' within its ken over many centuries. Seen in this light *A Surf of Sparrows' Songs* illustrates his theory vividly.

Second, Persaud's experimentation with the English language to carry the weight of his theory, though sparingly, is noteworthy. He claims to be a practitioner of 'Writing as Yoga' that forms the foundation of his theory of "Yogic Realism". His experimentation thus converges basic concepts of yoga, Indian music, Indian aesthetics and Indian mathematics in service of the language of poetry. It works out a switch from language with aids (punctuation, verse breaks, etc.) to language without aids in order to have apt correspondence of writing to yoga. It brings about linguistic expressions that are likely to arouse interest of the reader and the literary critic alike. Even to an Indian critic, it may sound interesting to know how yoga, music and mathematics are metamorphosed in literary theory and writing, which the theorist claims to be "revolutionary". This book is, therefore, "revolutionary", claims Persaud.

The book becomes 'revolutionary' chiefly by its literary strength, the content and thematic concerns and techniques of expression. The spirit of revolution is felt right at the outset when Persaud chooses to ascribe the subtitle, a "Poemanjali", or a poem offering". The subtitle synthesises English and Sanskrit, West and East and the spirit of poetry and the spirit of devotion (*Bhakti*). The revolutionary nature of the text is also seen when he chooses to open the book with a citing from *Brhaspati Sutra*, a Vedic scripture dated 600 B.C. The citing bears a sense of

mysticism when the poet raises questions: "By whom came this variety?" The answer follows soon after: "From their nature was it born. There is no heaven, no liberation, nor any soul in another world" (Inside cover page, *A Surf...*). Such a citation at the beginning of the poetry takes the reader retrospectively into the Vedic ages and through it pushed into an exploration mould that the poet wants him to adopt to explore his self in a yogic way.

Persaud explains in his essay, "Kevat: Waiting on Yogic Realism" that *A Surf of Sparrows' Songs* is a single long poem. It is an unfinished long poem that continues into his present poetry script, "The Hungry Sailor: Poetry from South Florida". He comments on the publisher's error to publish its blurb, "this passionate sequence of love poems" on the cover of the book. He feels relieved to find that at least the subtitle, a "Poemanjali", i.e. a poem offering, has been retained on the title page. He explains that the book is a long poem in several meditations that flow from one to another. Each poem is not a poem by itself but a poem-fragment that has continuity until the last poem-fragment. These poem-fragments correspond to revelations that a yogi receives during the process of yoga. Though they seem to deal with themes of love and separation they are an examples of 'bhaktiyoga': yoga of devotion. He explains that the concept of bhaktiyoga came to him from Kevat's story in the *Ramayana* (4).

Persaud imagines himself to be a Kevat, a boatman whose job is to ferry people across the river. He establishes parallels between him and Kevat when he says, "I feel more like Kevat, the fortunate boatman in the *Ramayana*, whose dharma was to row people back and forth across the Ganga river year after year" ("Kevat" 1-2). He says that he too keeps on writing year after year like Kevat and waits for the moment of fulfilment. In case of Kevat, the moment of fulfilment arrives when God appears before him in the form of Rama and he offers his service to him to take him across the River Ganga. That is Kevat's dharma, his bhaktiyoga to god. Persaud

says that he is a writer and he must write, as that is his dharma- **because we must...because it is our dharma**" (emphasis retained, "Kevat" 16). He considers writing as his service, his offering to community and the Spirit/God/ Self.

Persaud once said, "If you take away Indian culture from me, I am nothing". Quoting him, Bageshree Vaze remarks, "Sasendarine Persaud's love for India flows through his poetry, though the Toronto writer has never set foot in the country of his ancestral origin". She describes him a poet who loves India from afar. She further remarks that his book *A Surf of Sparrows' Songs* celebrates the natural beauty of Florida with rich imagery that mixes with Indian images and icons (69). In this light Peter Nazareth's remark is noteworthy. Calling the book the poet's "epic journey" Peter Nazareth throws light on the origin of the book, "The Poemanjali was sparked off by Persaud's participation in a Caribbean Conference in Miami in 1994: he was struck by the presence of pipal trees, which he expected to find only in India, and a passageway was opened through time and space" (437). He gives an elaborate review of the book.

Persaud says that in his book he seeks to explore the world of yogic realism. He calls a poem a piece of meditation that reveals a glimpse of truth that a yogi would get during the process of yoga. He says, "For me Yogic Realism is the application of the spirit of yogic principles and forms, and the application of Indian philosophy and concepts, to writing" ("Kevat" 2). In other words, writing has to become a writer's yoga or union with the divine spirit/ consciousness. He strongly feels that the concept of Yogic Realism would serve him best "to hold his writing". This raises some questions: What does Persaud mean by Yogic Realism in writing? How does he work out the concept in his book? Does his application of the concept to writing sound convincing? An attempt has been made in the following discussion of Persaud's poetry in *A Surf of Sparrows' Songs* to find answers to the above questions.

Persaud says that as a writer he writes about the world, about people, and about reality. But this is not everything that he is supposed to do. He believes that he has to utilize writing “to make the cross-over to self and Self, the union” (Kewat 2). Like Kevat, he has to look for the accomplishment in the union with the self and Self, his God. As a writer, he has to look for this accomplishment by elevating his vision and writing beyond reality to comprehend Reality. He calls it ‘the cross-over to self and Self’. He cannot just grapple all the time with physical objects and the world. Like a yogi, he has to be a visionary so as to focus his mind on something specified that is eternal and permanent. He wants to cultivate ‘an-eye’ to see beyond the apparent reality. It is the vision of the Eternal Reality, the Truth.

Each devotee (yogi) perceives God differently, as having a form or as formless, as personal or impersonal, or as dual and non-dual. The goal of a yogi is to realise the Supreme Soul. The writer, in Persaud’s view, offers his art to God as yoga, as ‘anajali’ or ‘poemanjali’. In the Sanskrit terminology, yoga means union of ‘jivatma’ (individual soul) with the ‘Paramatma’ (the Super Soul). Persaud says that in view of Yogic Realism, “‘a Poemanjali’, or a poem offering’ implies that the offering of poems or ‘a Poemanjali’ is supposed to affect union of a poet with God who is the Poet or the Writer. While discussing Persaud’s Yogic Realism in ‘Pioneering Caribbean Author’, Anan Boodram quotes his words, “one is a person first, searching for one’s center and one’s self. One is not born anything, but is born a consciousness. That consciousness has an obligation to society, and of course, I can fulfil my obligation to my society in my writing” (1). This is the dharma of a writer that he has to fulfil through his writing.

The union of his consciousness with the Super Consciousness is the goal that a yogi seeks to realise in yoga. In Persaud’s view, this too remains the goal for a writer. In both the cases, the requirement is ‘the cross-over to self and Self’. In order to attain the ‘cross-over’, one has to

elevate his mind from realism to the yogic realism. He has to employ his mind to master his mind. Patanjali's *Yoga Sutra* defines yoga as "emptying [of] the mind" in the sense that one has to clear his mind by controlling and stopping thought waves to enter his mind – '*Yogashchittavrittinirodhah*' (*Yoga*. I.2). It elevates one to the stage of 'Sat-Chit-Anand' i.e. pure truth, pure intelligence and pure bliss, the stage of *moksha* or liberation. To empty the mind one has to focus the mind on something specified beyond worldly objects. Through it, he has to contemplate on his self and Self. In this light, Patanjali has another definition of yoga: 'Contemplation is the process of fixing mind on something specified, a 'murti' an idol or an image'- *Deshabandhashchittasya dharana* (*Yoga* III.1). In this way, one initiates himself in the process of yoga. Then he transcends his mind to perceive the Abstract or the Formless. In the process, he relinquishes need to external aids to focus his mind and assist concentration. Progressively and gradually he moves toward the stage of "samadhi" that is the union with God, the 'Paramatma'. This process is like a journey from the world of physical objects to the world of metaphysical reality. It moves inward to explore the inner world of self and the Self. It is a journey from realism to yogic realism leading one to self-realization through 'a progressive comprehension' of self/Self. Persaud quotes Aurobindo's definition of yoga: "But in thought, so in life, the true rule of self-realization is a progressive comprehension" below the title of his essay, "Kevat: Waiting on Yogic Realism", ("Kevat" 1). He perhaps seeks authentication to his concept of Yogic Realism that propagates writing through contemplation and meditation. Bageshree Vaze points out, "In any type of meditative practice, a yogi undergoes a similar progression from one stage of spiritual awareness to the next" (69). Persaud views the poems in the book as "meditations" leading one to spiritual awareness gradually.

In Peter Nazareth's view, the book appears like an epic journey of a writer-yogi, "Persaud's reference indicates that he has made an epic journey, with several battles fought and several pujas performed until the celebration of Diwali, of the New Year" (437). The poems in *A Surf of Sparrows' Songs* seem to convey Persaud's own struggles and pujas and through them the kind of struggles and pujas of a yogi.

Persaud claims that his book, *A Surf of Sparrows' Songs* (1996) demonstrates the concept of Yogic Realism and serves as a medium to explain his theory. He claims to follow the tradition of the sages of ancient India who used their works to illustrate their views or theories, "But to be a bit more concrete I turn to *A Surf of Sparrows' Songs* in such a way which the ancients turned to their works" ("Kevat" 4). We may thus surmise that his Indian consciousness is consciously at work in him to explain the concepts of yoga and Indian aesthetics through writing. Fraser Sutherland in his review titled, "Just a few gems in the poetry grab-bag" notes "new voices" in Persaud's poetry, "Persaud occupies a different, but no less interesting ground". He remarks, "Despite the book's rudimentary glossary some allusions may hobble those unfamiliar with Hindu mythology, just as some English verses prior to 19th century would do with a reader lacking classical education". He elaborates on the vocabulary and the musical aspect of the book, "The Guyana-born Persaud's poems mainly set in Toronto and Miami, are like miniature raags, sensuous units of Indian music obeying convention mysterious to western ears. But that can be a pleasure in itself, as is the poet's Joycean way of compounding words: 'firstchillywinds', 'sunslapped', 'southernbelle', 'earmuffedman'" (D10). In this sense, the book compels a reader to pay attention to neglected areas of Indian mythology, aesthetics and yoga.

A Surf of Sparrows' Songs contains 89 poems. Most of these poems are written to explain the concept of Yogic Realism. According to Persaud, they are not separate poems. Each

poem-fragment is “meditation” that stands for a revelation that a yogi gets during the process of yoga. One poem leads to the next poem to form continuity. Therefore, Persaud calls the book a long poem in several meditations, “a single long poem, an unfinished long poem which continues into my present poetry script, ‘The Hungry Sailor: Poetry from South Florida’” (“Kevat” 2). He conceives the poetry in two parts to mean to correspond to the two stages of Yoga.

The poetry in the Part I go up to page 14 without a break. These poems are marked by punctuation marks. However, the last punctuation mark is a full stop that appears on page 14. Persaud says that this part corresponds to the first stage of yoga, ‘the saguna samadhi’ in which a yogi needs external aids like ‘murtis’, idols, or images in any form or medium to concentrate his mind. These aids help him to focus his mind on ‘something specified’. Persaud says that here punctuation and verse breaks are “my (and the writer’s) ‘murtis’, objects which focus and control the mind and give meaning and rhythm in a reading” (“Kevat” 4).

Part II of this long poem continues from page 15 onwards. The poems in this part do not have punctuation marks. The language here seems to flow continuously and lucidly. There are no hurdles to hamper its flow. The flow of language represents the spirit soaring high in the psychosphere of the inner world, “the spirit is in full flow” (“Kevat” 5), asserts the poet. The poems generate images and one is allowed to comprehend the meaning through them. It then allows progressive comprehension of the inner world “to make a cross-over to self and Self, the union”. The language of poetry with punctuation marks and clear verse breaks helps to generate meaning. However, the language without punctuation marks and verse breaks represent the freedom of spirit, which seems to dominate the poetry in the second part. The former is the body and the later is the spirit. Though both the body and the spirit alone are contradictions by themselves, Yoga attempts a marriage of these contradictions so that they together give meaning

and existence to each other. Persaud quotes Radhakrishnan in this regards, "the spirit of man is the most significant clue to his reality and to that of the universe, more significant by far than the physical and the external" ("Keva" 5). This is the conviction with which spirit/ soul/ self/ Self gets the prominence in Persaud's poetry. Likewise, he views the yogic experience as a blend of struggles and pujas, the external and the internal, the body and the soul. A yogi involves him in pujas to empty his mind of all worldly interruptions, thoughts, desires, passions and attachments through concentration. He also prays to acquire confidence and strength of mind to overcome hurdles in yoga. Pujas and prayers form external and internal activities in yoga. A yogi performs them continuously to reach the ultimate stage of the 'samadhi', the Enlightenment. The book with its two parts suggests these two kinds of yoga. The book opens with a poem that conveys the quest-motif and confidence to renounce the world for the sake of this goal. It closes with a poem on the day of Diwali, a Hindu festival of light, signifying the state of enlightenment.

The first poem fragment titled, "The Indian Fig at Coral Gables" focuses on the quest-motif through references of Buddha and Mahavira. For the sake of their quest for knowledge and enlightenment, they renounced their sons, wives, and family. Their efforts fructified as the Enlightenment, the stage of 'Bodhi' or 'Buddha' or 'Mahavira'. It inspires the poet, "Is here this Bodhi Tree/ Calls come" (2-3). Persaud says that this poem, with several other poems, deals with the theme of pursuit of knowledge. Persaud also asserts that the poem implies politics in its tone and references like 'mine/yours', 'shorter/longer', 'encased', etc. In his essay, "I Hear a Voice, Is It Mine?" he states that writing as yoga or yogic realism itself is "a political act" to survive in the west (537). He employs writing as a tool of resistance. Resistance occurs at two levels, personal and general. In both, the motive is to create a space for the Self in his self and in this world

irrespectively. Both these external and internal quests should coincide to create a “cross-over to self/Self”.

The quest-motif continues in the poem-fragment, “Looking for the Fountain”. The poet refers to the legend of Ponce De Leon, the native chief of Florida who lost his life making love to the Caribbean Sea. In his search he faced hurricane and lost his speech. The poet relates Leon’s adventure and commitment to Buddha’s search for eternity to convey that yoga too demands the spirit of adventure and commitment and sacrifice. In the poem-fragment, “And We Will Not Say Goodbye” the poet conveys the quest-motif through an imagery of a hawk and a serpent. A hawk stands for a guru under a banyan tree with hunting passion for search signified by a serpent, “hawk-searched”. Siddarth attained Buddhahood in a flaky enlightenment after renouncing the worldly life. Uma, the consort of Lord Shiva too dedicated herself completely to Lord Shiva on the peaks of the Himalayas to attain “Satihood”: a womanly sainthood. The way of the Buddha is through knowledge while that of Uma is through dedication. The poet views that a golden mean like a guru has to perch like a hawk on all the evils of his devotee’s soul, “the hawk perches/ there/ there/ there”. The word ‘there’ is repeated three times to suggest a three-time distance at which a guru stays, physical, mental and spiritual. It also suggests a state of mind involved in ecstasy of “thri-taal”, an Indian classical rhythm played on the tabla. It signifies three-fold devotion and submission on the part of a disciple, “here/ here/ here”, of the physical body, the spoken word and the mind. It is a total submission in yoga, *kayen vacha manasa* that Arjuna announces to Krishna, *Karishye vachanam tava*, i.e. I will abide by (act on) what you say (command) (*Gita*, XVIII 73). The result of a total surrender is that, according to the poet, “two pairs of pupils/ two spectacles/ showing-searching/ becomes one eye in/ finger- shoulder-soul” (7). It brings about a union of the guru and the disciple. It is the first step in yoga for which the

terminology used is; *yogadiksha*, sanctified total submission to Guru for yoga. By it, one acquires eligibility to perform yoga. The poet also refers to Jatayu, a huge bird in The *Ramayana* to point at his exemplary devotion to Rama (7). Devotion is the first requisite in yoga. Love and dedication involves a yogi in puja or ritualistic worship. It is an initial step in yoga that arouses in him love and devotion to god. The poet implores the spirit through literary references like Shakespeare's Ophelia, the forsaken beloved of Hamlet, whose songs call her love to come back and meet her (8). It may become the rubric of "yogic realism".

The ocean provides atmosphere conducive to puja. It is the poet's favourite location. The seascape serves as backdrop in many of his stories and poems, viz. the story, "When Men Speak This Way" and number of poems in the collection, *Demerara Telepathy*. The ocean brings to him divine revelations. The poem, "Another Atlantic Ocean" mentions some revelations like "Ganga falling through the hair of Shiva", "touching toes in ancient pujas", "palms making tabla on green waves/ stirring in the circle of Shiva/ who stands on one leg" (4). It conveys a theme of 'silence', "silence we should have left/ on the sea shore" (5). It creates the mood of puja. The poem, "Puja Performed on Another Shore, South Miami Beach" describes the ocean as the site of the puja of the murti of Lakshmi. It is performed on another shore of the Miami Beach. The poet attends the puja. The sight gives him a feel that the puja is being performed in the temple of Goddess Lakshmi with things like 'the sea', 'seaweed', 'green-eyed waves', 'bare-breasted women', 'the tide churning coral and shell', etc. The milky water of the ocean looks like 'cheese-limbs' moving quickly like a piece of cloth being splashed in water. The tide looks like petals being offered on the altar of the ocean. Plants and shrubs grown on the seashore that mixed with coloured flowers offered to a departed soul look like a floral offering to Goddess Lakshmi sanctified with milk and devotional singing. He finds it most satisfying and saturating to soul (5).

After indulging in these mythical and literary reveries, the poet contemplates on his real life experiences. Things in reality seem to explain him some aspects of yoga. Lying on his bed, he watches the sunrise. He finds as if the earth were turning on its axis to produce a circular flame of Shiva golden in colour. Sticky gear and steering wheel of a car clenched to each other show him the attachment of a guide and the guided. A guru and a disciple move in yoga with common motif that is to surrender to the Goddess: "Hay Devi Kali / We must return to your altar" (9). A photographic exhibition at the South Florida Museum is another thing to give him the divine feel. The poem, "From the Future of the Past" (10) presents the poet's pondering. On his visit to the museum, the poet feels that he touched all things before through his soul and he is not a man; he is a spirit that lives beyond physical bodies. The poem has two parts: the first part is the physical world of the building, exhibition, and photographs etc. These things serve him aids to concentration. The second part contains the metaphysical experience to generate flashes of knowledge of self. The two parts may correspond to the two stages of yoga, the *saguna* and the *nirguna*. The poem suggests a trans-world movement of a yogi from the physical world to the metaphysical world in the initial stage of yoga.

A yogi feels insecure because of turbulent thought waves. He doubts that adversities surround him would isolate him. The poem, "In the Cultural Centre Courtyard, Miami" conveys his doubt through an analogy of a cultural centre in Miami. Cultural invaders in the west surround it. He explains a yogi's relation with a guru and god through number of analogies like pines needs support, "I want to touch your finger souls" (11); or a palm-leaf, or red bougainvillea or a child, each of them is in dire need of support of 'pink hibiscus', 'cream stone arches', or 'mother's arm' respectively. He, therefore, requests for a guru's company, "I cannot do this journey anymore/ Alone" (11). The poem, "A=O" too explains a yogi's relationship with God

with a mathematical equation 'A= O'. He imagines God as 'A' (Alfa) and himself as 'O' (Omega): the two letters make an algebraic equation. Though these two letters are equal as alphabets they are unequal in their semantic significance and mathematical value. The poet then compares him with a sponge and a shell and the God with an Oyster, a shellfish who would put pearls inside the shell (12-13). The guru discovers pearls lying hidden in his disciple. These pearls are formless like a sponge. A guru takes a dive into his disciple's self to surface them. He polishes them and gives them a shape. In this sense, a guru is capable of shaping his disciple in yoga who is all zero. A guru's grace counts most in yoga. A disciple has to cultivate a sense of zero-state, an ego less state of mind.

Further, the poem, "The Reading in the West Indian Restaurant, Miami Beach" evokes yogi's loneliness through homelessness that the poet feels in Toronto, "In your home, homeless in my mind /Homeless in my soul" (14). External loneliness leads him to feel loneliness within. He concludes, "I came zero-hearted /I go zero-hearted" (14). This suggests that he is cut off from the world. He removes worldly thought waves from his mind. As a result, his mind becomes empty. This is the yogic concept of 'emptying [of] mind'. He leaves behind all his memories of the past in Guyana. He is now preparing to leave Toronto and Miami too, of course, metaphorically. His heart is empty. His mind is empty. This prepares him for the second stage in yoga of contemplation, concentration and meditation. The poet remarks about the poem, "There is a strong sense of a clash of cultures and places, of north and south, east and west" ("Kevat" 11). The concept of change and Rome conveys the concept of plurality and references to Nazis and different kind of food, people, etc. add to the plurality. For the concept of plurality, he says, he owes much to Sam Selvon that among the plurality and changes he has "to cook his own food". It conveys that he has to manage his own material to write. He knows that he does not

have to bother to change the state-of-affairs in the world, as it is impossible to change things. He has to leave the world as it is and go ahead to fulfil his goal in yoga. A punctuation mark of a full stop here on page 14 signifies his relinquishment or renunciation of the world as it is. It marks the end of the first part. The poems focus on a yogi's psychology that prepares him for determined action. Pondering on the subject of withdrawal that started with the poetry of *The Demerara Telepathy* culminates here in the first part into determined action of renunciation of the world. The soul is now free to soar in the sky of spiritualism. The poetry in the second part, therefore, has poetry without punctuation marks and verse breaks to mark freedom of soul.

The *Kundalini Parashakti* is a central focus in yoga. It is a powerful storehouse of memory, particularly the ancestral memory. Energy in man is imagined as a serpent that curls around the *Kundalini*. Earlier in Part I, the poet refers to the *Kundalini* through images of the garden and the serpent, "(naturally The Garden/ as sex is no serpent/ and I/ only serpent god in name)" (8). Persaud's first name, 'Sasena' is derived from the name of the great mythological serpent 'Sheshnarain' who was Lord Vishnu's personal attendant and on whom the Lord reclines in the Ocean of Milk, *kshirsagar*. This is the relation he seeks to establish with the Serpent in the Hindu mythology and not with the serpent in the Garden of Eden according to the western mythology. A yogi has to give up support of external forms like murtis, idols, images etc. and concentrate on the Serpent Power that is the energy within to awaken the Kundalini. Kundalini is the power, the shakti that helps him to elevate his soul in yoga. When he is involved in the process he receives divine revelations. The poem, "Prelude" sets the stage for divine revelations. It opens with the line, "I have done this before" (15). In the middle of the poem, he says, "I see blurred horizons.../ I see far in to our /O" (15-16). The vision of the 'O' conveys the beginning of a yogi's quest of a guru as mentioned in the poem "A=O" (11-13). With awareness

of the Alfa and Omega of yoga, he is ready for the journey ahead. His strengths are channelised and his vision is duly shaped to catch a glimpse of divinity. The poem, "Flowers for Kali" speaks of divine glimpses in the opening lines: "Let us squeeze every salt drop/ From skin, every saliva/ Lick from tongue/ Moving down/ To Kundalini's base/ Resides our sleeping/ Serpent curled back is/ Front in curled hole" (16). A yogi prepares to elevate his prana, the bio-energy that flows inside the body. He concentrates on the Kundalini's base. In time, he attains awareness, "I am mata/...../I am the keeper time" (16). He elevates all his efforts, tastes and sex by purifying them. He offers them as flowers to the Goddess-mother Kali, "Hay mata Kali" (17). In this worship, he understands the meaning of his existence. The worship pleases his soul, "lolling/ our soul" (17). The worship to Kali is not mere ritual. It acquires a form of devotion as in the poem, "Another Atlantic Ocean" (9).

The poet conceives writing as yoga. He, therefore, focuses on the poetic process to become a yogic process. In the poem-fragment, "Too Soon", he confesses that he made haste in writing an epic, "Is this soon too soon/ To write epics/ Which occurred too quickly/ On the tiny bed" (17). He agrees that inspiration comes to a poet in a flash. An idea flashes upon his mind. It is like a seed that germinates into a poem. But the birth of poetry has to have adequate time. Persaud presents his views on "crafting" in his essay, "Kevat: Waiting on Yogic Realism", "But I was crafting too, (unlike writers and critics in the west) only I was doing it in the Indian, yogic way: writing a work over and over in my head – consciously and not so consciously breathing, thinking and living the work-" (10). A poem grows in beauty and colours with poet's nourishment through contemplation on ideas. But the 'too soon' attitude would affect the treatment adversely. The process of creation demands patience. A writer-yogi must have patience

to wait for the revelation. Waiting is an ordeal and it is like a night before the dawn of creation (17).

The poetic piece, "Looking Down from the Dadeland Mall, Coral Gables" presents a vision of the descent of the soul, in the opening lines, "All this/ Liquid comes down/ For you" (19) and in the closing lines, "Soul comes down/ For you" (20). In between these two points, the effects of the soul's coming are delineated. It comes as raining, "it is raining", a shower of bliss on a yogi. All worldly businesses melt in it and all exhibits of the past evaporate with it. All human existence and all talks of Karma that one learns from various sources fade away. It comes down to the knowledge of a 'zero', i.e. nothingness. The poet receives a call from water, "jump down, step down" (19). It signifies a call of the soul. To meet the soul, one should rid of his ego and arrogance and be humble. The soul is a real home. The soul is compared with water-colourless, sexless, tasteless, formless, and genderless. Dookie applies the comparison in his discussion of human soul as colourless, sexless, tasteless (*Canada Geese Apple Chatney*, 84). It is the 'nirguna' state of the soul, the formless and free of all attributes. Secondly, the round shape of a drop of water signifies a sense of the 'zero' consciousness, the ego-free state of the soul. Thirdly, the transparency of water signifies the transparency of the soul. Persaud thus employs a metaphor of water with its poly focal value.

The metaphor of water works through an image of a bay. The poem, "North Bay" conveys that the bay forms a counterpart of the inner bay of the poet's consciousness. The poet suggests his retreat when he says that he has walked out of the places with "maddening crowd" to "maddening memories" to coral ears that stand on the inner bay. He witnesses the soul's divine smile, "Your smile at soul's / Kingfishing-katak / To dusksong" (21). He searches into the bottom of the inner bay, and finds an image of "canegreen-eyes". It gets him to nothingness,

the state of 'O' (zero), "There is O/ In your absence/ O in your spirit/ Presence" (21). 'O', the formless, the *Nirguna* state of consciousness is the image of the soul that he perceives.

The vision of the formless continues in the poem-fragment, "In the Bath". On a hot morning in Miami, the poet wants to fly high. It conveys that when the "heatstung" words rob him of imagination and thinking, his vision tends to fly high. In an elevated stage of mind he gets a vision of goddess Parvati offering her love to Lord Shiva and feeling the union with the Lord, "Lingum worships yoni/ You are beyond me/ I beyond you/ Beyond me- you/ Are Shiva i Uma/ Commanding space itself/ And time beyond tongue/ Is still" (22). The divine vision takes him further to the plains of the Ganga to realise God as formless: "no form unformed"(23). The poem, "Shiva in Our Puja" elaborates on the Shiva-puja - water from a brass 'lota' (a small metal water-pot), milk from crystal glass, lime on the altar, leaves of 'tulsie' (basil-laves) sprinkled on the Mohanbhog and raising of the jhandi flag at the end of the puja to "Amrit to the readied hole" (24). A devotee is involved in the worship. He finds the Khajuraho sculptures too involved with devotion of a similar kind, "Bounces the Khajuraho breasts/ Rhythmically/ I am Shiva/ You are Shiva/ Who is Shiva/ In our puja" (24). The devotee is eager to know Shiva. The poet says that in these two poems he addresses the gender issue through spiritual questioning. The yogic position on gender comes through the half male and half female form of Shiva delineated in one creation story. It shows Shiva and Uma as one consciousness. While in another story, the two are different consciousness inhabiting different bodies ("Kevat" 13).

Etymologically, the word 'yog' comes from the Sanskrit root 'yuj', which literally means 'to unite'. Yoga demands a union of a guru and a disciple. The poem, "Brief Encounter on Stairway" explains the union through an image of Buddha under a pipal tree. On a stairway, the poet encounters two eyes, "Beyond pupils /Strung like warm droplets" (25). He realises, "In our

eyes singing/ There is no yoga/ Like the fingertouch (25). The union requires just a 'fingertouch' to transmit vibrations from the guru's soul to his disciple's soul. This metaphorical meeting of souls is vital to a yogi's progress.

In spite of divine revelations, the poet's mind is often clouded with thought waves generated by memories of the past. He gives a retrospective look on his past follies in the poem, "This Loss of Absence". The poet confesses that he had gone astray in the midst of "unsacred bunyan". Yet he continued contemplating on his search like Sita contemplated on Rama under Ravan's captivity, "Sits Sita sated" (26). He repents for his follies and regrets that his search is unaccomplished, "The loss of absence/ Love is/ Love" (26-7). His soul still requires cleansing. The poem, "Let me Bathe in Your Ixora Cluster" voices the poet's yearning to cleanse his self in the water of the divinity, "Let me bathe / In your water / Wash self" (27). He imagines himself as a honeybee-eager to suck honey from flowers. The bath is fragrant. It becomes yet more pleasant with the presence of a hummingbird hovering over rain-warm water. The poet enjoys the scent of soap, sex and soul. These three stand for physical, mental and spiritual pleasures. The final dip would bring to him purity and fragrance of the soul.

The divine revelations are not steady. They flicker for a moment and fade away. But if the mind is calm and steady they remain steady. The moment it gets disturbed or perplexed the vision fades away. The disturbance occurs with turbulence of thought waves, positive or negative, pleasant or painful. Both the memory of the past and the awareness of the present are impediments to a writer's divine revelations. To capture them, he tries to overcome the distractions. For instance, Canadians' indifference to nature and to spiritual talks annoys the poet. The poems, "Bee Poem I", "Bee Poem II" and "Under the Weeping Willow in the Morningside Park" express the poet's wrath through an image of a bee. Though Canadians are

indifferent to nature they decorate their houses with flowers, "lotuses on blue sofa" (28). Likewise, they remain indifferent to love, "we love who love you/ love i call" (28). The poet ascertains his condition in intellectual circles of Canada like a bee trapped in a world of indifference. A yogi too feels a similar condition of trapped in a world of indifference. Being an immigrant he suffers exclusion in the Canadian society like 'weeping willows' that "are spaced from maples and aspens". He warns Canadians that their pride of prosperity and unfriendly treatment may arouse wrath among immigrants from the South, Lanka or Florida. It would be like Hanuman's holy wrath to Ravana. He indicates a yogi's holy wrath to the world.

Metamorphosis or change is the requirement of yoga. The poem-fragment, "This Isnness This Isn'tness" conveys the change the poet perceives in time, "this space isn't what it was". The line recurs throughout the poem. The poet seems to juxtapose past with the present in order to evaluate the present. He evokes the picture of his pleasant days that he spent in Guyana in the company of colourful nature. Several times he received streaks of divinity. He had a romance of exploring the Orient and bringing it to infuse the lives. He also remembers painful past in the Caribbean lands that reduced his people to 'freckled feathers', or like a mole on the skin and "bruishing mine in gearchanging/ from admin assistant to admin assisting" (53). He terms the experience as "making butter in our hearts". However, the poet sees its positive dimension that one makes ghi by boiling butter and with ghi he can light a diya to God. Likewise, his pains and the anxieties melt like butter to become ghi that lights the lamp of the Indian ancestry- "validates Indian shade". Ghi nourishes creatures and it has fragrance and taste, "to self we flew" (54).

Canada frustrates him with lack of friends, "And there was no other/ To taste of another/ To smell of another/ To speak of another/ Understand another" (54). The experience poses to him several questions, "how can we understand THAT/ which is understanding the

UNDERSTANDER" (54). He feels like a brahmin who discards words and "learns thisness kissing thatness", learns the present in the light of the past (54). The poet hints at an immigrant's dilemma when his being 'here' is denied. It helps him to understand a yogi's dilemma, to know 'this' world – "learns thisness" to know 'that' world of spiritualism – "kissing thatness" (54). Like a yogi, the poet too aims at cultivating positive thinking that is to learn from follies and pain

The poet reflects upon the condition that he works in. The poem-piece, "No Summer Camp Farewell" gives images like "faucets"(tapping), "drainpipe", "the propped-up palms federally granted", "concrete walkways" to evoke the poet's experience of degeneration in life in the west. He says that rhythmic dropping of water from a tap stops your voices and takes away 'the music in your eyes'. The knowledge that he possesses is not valued in the west. It is allowed to waste down the drain. In this situation, he looks back on his ancestry to draw inspiration from the Indian icons, images, rituals and pujas, "You bring us love" (58). He asserts that the Indian thinking imparts the knowledge of the soul and fills heart with love. This knowledge leads him to explore the inner world. It brings to him eternal freshness and pleasure- "ever greening outer" (58). He wishes to transmit the knowledge to others through his poetry. Thus, the poem presents positive thinking.

In another instance, the poet is greatly annoyed at the writing practices in the west. The poem-piece, "These Lines' Elaborate Lies" conveys the politics of western writers to marginalize 'other writing'. The poet says that western writing conceals lies in sugarcoated form, "webbed in summer flowers", "laden with ripen fruit" and "sweet apple scent"(68) and camouflage truth under glossy 'isms'. He prefers to be truthful when he writes. Writing is a 'maya of words', a play of words like the world is a play of the Creator. Further, he does not agree with western poets' obsession with craftiness. The poem-fragment, "Another Harbourfront Reading" refers to

the point, “artsy heads absorbed craftiness” (75). He wishes that poetry should allow his reader to taste honey, to enjoy the divinity dripping from every component of life. An image of lamps on tourist ferries conveys that poetry should serve as Diwali lamps in the darkness to enlighten people’s minds.

The poet employs another Indian icon, ‘a cow’ to convey that in the west poetry is a waste. The poem-piece, “The Wandering Brahmin Cow Hugs Your Sleep” describes a cow wandering on seashore. It evokes a strong native feel and memory of India, “the grass is always sweetest/ shade coolest” (76). A cow is misplaced in the west. The place is not homely. Such ‘a brahmin cow’, the poet says, hugs his sleep and does not allow him to sleep to make his nights restless. The cow also stands for an Indian in exile. Despite of the best of things in the west, he feels restless and deprived of home. Likewise, the poem-piece, “Southern Belle Brahmin” conveys through an icon of a Brahmin that a poet is misplaced in the west. Further, through a misplaced dog in the west, “dogdisturbed sofanight” (77), he conveys misfit of Indian intellectuals. The Upanishadic icon of ‘Dog’ is employed in the story “Dog” (*Canada Geese and Apple Chatney* 1998) to convey a sense of companionship of dog, like that to Yudhushthira in the *Mahabharata*, with knowledge and wisdom (23). The image of a pandit pelting a stone at the Upanishadic dog conveys that a writer in the west despises knowledge and wisdom and seeks to thrive on borrowed ideas. A brahmin presence in the west may highlight the contrast with an act of begging, “The wandering/ Brahmin brings a battered begging bowl/ Accepts your pain your loves your soul” (77). He says that he has no pretensions about him to be a Gandhi to lead marches or to drink goat milk or a Sanskrit scholar. The poet is rather concerned about hard and uncompromising reality in the west in the midst of which he has to practice yoga. He wishes to take a sadhu’s position to leave the world in the manner leaves fall from trees in autumn-

“tonguered twirling to the ground” (77). The poet plays a pun with the word, ‘leave’ to convey that he wants to reduce his needs. He is determined to love, “We will love / We will love nothing unloved” (77).

Though Persaud romanticises and glorifies ancient and mythical India, he shows no patience with the commercialised Indians in the Caribbeans catering to western tourists. The poem-fragment, “Coconut Grove” conveys his wrath. The coconut grove is a sales outlet of ‘nariyelpani’ to tourists. The poem opens with an image of “the huge banyans encroaching the road” (55) to hints at Indian businessmen practicing exploitation, showmanship and adulteration to earn huge profit. They exploit tourists’ sentiments with a catchy image of the Indian culture, ‘Apna Desh’. They employ a heroine of a Hindi film as a sales girl, “Hindiwatercoconutfilm-vendorheroine” (56). They mix rum with ‘nariyelpani’, “rumandcoconutwater” (56). All these business tactics are meant to attract tourists and earn huge profit. The poet evokes images through word multiples or word-compounds in a Joycean way (Sutherland) that are “capacious”, i.e. having room to convey sense (*A Surf of Sparrows’ Song*, back cover of the title).

Memory often occupies the poet’s mind. The poem, “Remnants” (78) derives images from the poet’s memory of the past in the Caribbean land. They are the ebbing tide in the sea making murmuring sound and a seagull bird diving down to catch geese that flies on the lake water. These images give him a feel of melodious music of the sitar with rhythm. The music allows him to soar in the sky among clouds to get him a feel of the sublime. The poem, “Mystic” conveys the feel of the sublime with an image of a sparrow that flies over the stream in hot golden dusk. It is an image of Eternity. It becomes a part of the poet’s mystical experiences in meditation (78). In meditation, his mind calms down, as if in a sleep. All his passions and desires become quiet. In that condition he gets the knowledge and he wakes with the knowledge. Earlier

he looked for a method to free his speculations as he loved speculations. He now wishes to leave them forever in the interest of the Knowledge of 'O', Nothingness. Such knowledge is mystical. One gets such knowledge with meditation and contemplation.

The poet presents meditation in the poem, "Summer Meditation Ontario". The poem gives a number of pictures of frolics, pleasure activities or games on the ocean waters or on the seashore. He mixes natural images with those of the modern human world to evoke mystical aspect. For instance, the weeping willows sway like dhoti, the wind has embroidery of chlorophyll that looks like sequins, tiny mirrors stitched on a cloth for decoration, drops of chlorophyll float on the ocean waters and the sand to appear like 'green eyes' surfing over the ocean waters and the shore. The 'green eyes' mark a presence of the divinity in nature. The poet finds "redheaded woodpecker's tapping tip tongue" like a guru's alarm or command to return from the garden to the lotus posture, the padmasana. He gets an insight, "While frolickers splash laughter/ In the yogic lights in my head/ The openeyed sun winking knowingly/ The wavelets flashing your smiles" (52). He beholds the divinity in the things like frolickers, the sun and wavelets that he saw earlier. He views them with yogic light to sparkle his mind. Thus, the poem illustrates the working of yogic vision, or the yogic perception. A yogi perceives the world in a new light. It indicates transformation of his mind.

The poem, "Metaphysics" voices his wish to return to the world of metaphysics and mysticism, "I must return to the shady /Banyan eternity you knew" (33). But he regrets that the west misreads the 'banyan eternity' as exotic and unreal, "More fantastic than fantasy /More unreal than reality" (33). He claims that it "is the real", a real source of inspiration and confidence to him. This speaks of his love for Indian mysticism. The poem, "Mothers Fathers Love" also explains his love through the images of the brown songbird, the gold brown dog and

Ophelia. The images convey soul's imprisonment and its freedom. A father puts a songbird in a cage. A father stands for a host in the north and a bird stands for an immigrant. With unsympathetic and uncaring attitude to others' pains, a father puts the bird in captivity. In the context of yoga, the father is the world, uncaring and unsympathetic and the bird is a yogi who is caged in desires and passion. A bird wishes to go to south from where it can fly high in the sky. It signifies an immigrant's wish to return to roots, a yogi's wish to awaken the Kundalini. An immigrant contemplates on his ancestry for freedom. Likewise, a yogi contemplates on the Kundalini to find freedom for soul, "Ah ma you tried even for/ Our golden brown dog made you devī/ Found freedom/ In your worship/ Someone uncaged the brown bird" (34). The south is more pleasing and more lovable, the poet says, "cooler than conditioned room", "hopes to streak the sindhur sunset", "O southern Belle" (34). He loves to watch the beauty of the south with birds enjoying freedom to sip the beauty of nature on the river Damarera. There is no distinction, no discrimination. The poet confesses, "father kept hate I hated all these years" (35). Thus the father-bird, North-immigrant and world-yogi relationships convey a theme of freedom from the world. It is the requisite in yoga.

The poem, "Refuting the Buddha" acquires significance as it opens a new perspective on yoga. On viewing it against the opening poem, "The Indian Fig Trees at Coral Gables" (1-2), one gets overtones of politics. In the opening poem, the poet admires Buddha's path of enlightenment. In the present poem, he refutes Buddha's path of enlightenment, "On selves we cannot/ Sit under the banyan tree/ Fake line of enlightenment" (36). Further he says, "No sitting with well-fed disciples under pipal tree/ Holds any magic mystic enlightenment" (36). Such a contradictory reading may sound confusing, but it indicates development in the poet's reading. Earlier Buddha's path of meditation sounded logical to him. But now the poet finds yoga as more

logical way of worship as it propagates fusion of action (*karma*), knowledge (*jnana*) and devotion (*bhakti*) as against Buddha's dry quest for knowledge. A yogic practice takes one from 'form to formless' and 'sense to sexspirit' and holds bhakti above karma and knowledge. Buddha propagates meditation straight on the formless. A common man may find it difficult. Yoga involves music too. It begins with singing prayers and devotional songs and concludes in the 'anahat naad – OUM', the Eternal Sounds that render meaning to a yogi. The poem evokes some of the sounds, "Hay Shiva snowcovered/ On Himalayan bed/ You are MF/ You are AO/ You are US (36). Shiva is snow covered- calm, cool and full of patience. He is on the Himalayan bed like the soul is on an elevated state of mind, 'samadhi'. The letters "MF, AO, US" give out sounds that unfold multiple meanings. The poet thus appreciates 'Yoga' as a path to suit a common man.

'Sun' is a metaphor that conveys a sense of self-shining or shining by self. In the poem, "Sun in Letter" the poet says that the sun from the south brings thunderstorm in the north in the form of letter, "Jumps black ink from south / From mailbox" (37). He has faith in the sun, "sun...unborn never died". He wants people to shine by their own virtue, "Let us create suns in stars/ Spacelessness in space news/ From america south bharat" (37). The sun is like the golden ball in Hanuman's (the monkey god) mouth to signify that a person's frozen past hampers his speech. It is recoverable only in memory and not in reality. Further, the poem, "So You Will Not Wilt" describes the sun as giver of life to bloom beautiful flowers and ripen fruits. It dries and withers things in the north. The poet advises, "don't/ wilt under the southern sun" (41). About the north he says, "we tasted dust salt droplets/ on the skin forever" (41). He puts the sun as corresponding to yoga, "Contemplation is the process/ of fixing the mind/ on something specified" (41); and his faith in the southern sun stands for his faith in yoga. He finds western poetry useless like picking condoms and torn panties among shells, or as "A web of words

trapped” (42). He is sure that his poetry on ‘yogic realism’ will bring permanence of sunshine, “Soul tomorrow sooner than/ Lightning in a southern thunder/ Storm the permanence of sunshine/ Will you love me /In my worldless words” (42).

The poet spells out the characteristics of writing, that the school of Yogic Realism proposes. The poem, “For the Things We (Should?) Have Done in Miami” counts them: 1. It is based in native and natural surrounding, “Misty mornings bathing/ A surf of sparrows’ songs”; 2. It is visionary in nature. It voices a poet’s yearning to realise the Divinity, “I have seen your eyes/ Dancing over Niagra’s rims”; 3. It bears taste, smell and flavour of the Indian food, “Topped with cinnamon flavoured kheer/ And sugarsyruped gulab jamun wait/ For Indian dinner”; 4. It seeks to explore the world beyond seas and oceans. This exploration is metaphorical in nature and through it a poet seeks to go on an imaginary journey across the Indian continent, “Learn I toss it/ In oceans all waters from/ The Red River to the Yummuna/ Touch all shore we didn’t stroll; 5. A poem gives a vision of the Divinity beyond our naked eyes and senses: “Hot showers in your green eyes/ All other existences are hollow/ Gurgling drains/ In midsummer mornings” (43). This kind of poetry will open to a reader a world of soul, self/Self, he assures. It is a world of permanence and eternity.

Persaud welcomes Goddess Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge. The poem, “Shopping for D is Coming”, describes how he prepares for the arrival of ‘D’ that stands for Devi Saraswati. He thinks that his ‘Poemanjali’ is the best thing to offer to the Devi. He waits for the Devi’s coming, “Across Santiniketan” (45). A reference to Shantiniketan indicates Persaud’s reverence for Ravindranath Tagore and his school, Shantiniketan in India as a seat of knowledge and inspiration for literary creation. He, therefore, imagines that Devi Saraswati resides in Shantiniketan and will come all the way from it. Another person to inspire him is the ‘Tiger

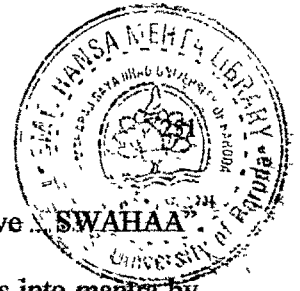
Swami', a yogi whom Yoganand Paramhansa refers in his book, *An Autobiography of a Yogi* (1967). The Tiger Swami is great for his eyes shining with the light of nirvana, "Nirvana touch my dear" (45).

The poem, "Since I Woke This Morning" presents a divine revelation. In the early morning at 3 a.m., he hears music, "Dew moist / In sitar spun starnight" (46). The music spins chakras across oceans. At such a time, the poet prefers to be lonely. The revelation thrills him. The poem, "Summer Fog" presents another revelation through a metaphor of 'green eyes'. The metaphor refers to mysticism and divinity that inspires him and guides him to explore the inner world. The green eyes glide around the poet's car. He finds in them a dance of "tonguetasting soul" flying over the treetops. The soul dances in to "mistwhite smile" in Vizcaya Gardens. The Garden is humid and sticky, "As honeystringed sitar/ Strums the rainjoy sound to/ Our fogfilled ears" (47). His ears receive the melodious divine music. But he regrets that his ears are 'fogfilled', that is filled with useless noises "of croaking water falling through gurgling drainpipe" (47). It does not allow him to enjoy divine music. The poet again employs the Joycean"-style word-clusters (Sutherland, 610) like "mismilk", "tonguetasting", "mistwhite", "honeystringed", "fogfilled", and "rainjoy" to evoke the sense through beautiful images.

The poem, "My Love Florida Fig" presents a yogic vision, "This is That" (57). It is the vision of Lord Vishnu lying on the coiled mythical serpent Anantha, "Verily This is That whirl of brown roots above/ Become milk limb in soil" (57). The poet is waiting for the Mazda, the foam that would circle and swirl him. He hopes to have the union of "the chocolate roots above and below your limbs". Through the phrase, 'chocolate root's of the mythical Vishnu and Mazda', the poet perhaps seeks to contemporise across many cultures the mythical image of the 'ashwattha' (banyan tree) that the *Bhagavagita* describes: *Urdhva moolamadhah shakham*

ashwattham prahuravyam, Chhandansi yasya parnani yastam vedas vedavit (15. 1). Krishna explains that this world is like a banyan tree, the 'ashwattha' whose roots are above in the sky and the branches are below in the ground. The verses of the *Vedas* are its leaves. One who knows the truth knows the Truth of the *Vedas*. The poet gives a vision of "eternal fig" with similar reflections, "which is with space which is not/ giving form to formless within/ we are meant to converge/ in your eternal fig"(57). The world is the manifestation of divinity. The eternal fig stands for Eternity that pervades in it.

Yoga calls for continuous worship and devotion. The poem, "Pujas: Long Island Manhattan Miami" gives a unique evocation of a Hindu puja in which the sound 'swahaa' recurs constantly. The word is significant for its emphatic musical sound that makes the recital melodious. The recital adds meaning to the offering in the 'yagna'(sacrificial fire). It evokes a state of ecstasy with a melody of the chanting of Vedic mantras. The poet believes that a yagna is performed nicely with offering, puja and sacrifices to various gods and goddesses. It opens one's mind to mysteries of life and universe. Through it, one finds solution to all doubts that arise in his mind. Inquisitiveness and reasoning are the characteristics of a western mind. They are viewed as causing hurdles in a puja, "Too many questions burst your head"(61). He juxtaposes the western world of intellectualism and the Hindu world of faith to explain the value of the latter. The poet writes the word 'swahaa,' in block letters- "SWAHAA" to make it distinctly scattered over the poem. It suggests that Indian islands of faith float independently and distinctly in the western sea of mad reasoning. These islands are art forms, warmth of love and companionship. "we warmed in your bed SWAHAA", "where in the world you walk", "me I walk like you SWAHAA", "I light your eyes on the Triborough", "Queensborough Whitestone Williamsburg", "Manhattan Brooklyn Bridges SWAHAA". The poet describes the effect,



“Words become mantra mantra become vibrations/ Become reality/ Becomes love (62). He believes that an act of writing has to become a puja to convert words into mantra by infusing faith in to them and gives out vibrations to link or bridge humans with humans.

In the poem “Speculation”, the poet attempts to determine one’s eligibility to be a Hindu through speculation: “The See-er is seen”, it means that a person requires to possess a faculty to see the divine, ‘divyadrishti’; “The Tester is tasted”, it means he has tasted the divine; “The Knower is known”, it means he knows the value of a guru who possesses knowledge. For these three characteristics, Arjuna is the ideal. The poet asserts a guru’s role in yoga. He explains with metaphors drawn from a traditional Indian kitchen like ‘a thawa’, ‘a chimta’ and ‘a pooknie’ to ignite fire and cook a ‘roti’. He views a guru to ignite consciousness in his disciple, “You come/ You ignite Indic consciousness/ Logic of the Logic/ Knowing of the Knower/ You come igniting curiosities” (67). He is like a catalyst. With guru’s help, a disciple gets revelation, “O is O/ O is nothing/ O is everything” (67) to know his self as ‘o’ that is a part of ‘O’, SELF. He also knows that ‘O’ is nothing and yet ‘O’ is everything, i.e. the formless is not visible and yet it is the ultimate Reality or Truth.

The piece, “Pilgrimage to Hindu Temple Hindu Bathing Ghats” presents another revelation on the poet’s metaphorical journey Hindu temples and bathing ghats on the bank of the river Ganga. He perceives three zones in a temple, the outer zone of sacredness, the intermediate spaces and the innermost part called the ‘garbhgrha’, the sanctum sanctorum. He interprets Miami as an outer zone of sacredness to purify one’s body with brightness and heat of the sun. A purified word is his offering to God. He views that writing purifies his ‘self’. The intermediate space in a temple corresponds to his life in the west. There are idols of deities with an idol of Devi Saraswati at its centre. She is the goddess of wisdom and learning. Yet he is

restless at the distractions caused by wealth loving and pleasure seeking seductive activities at a coconut grove, a park and a shore in the close vicinity. Questions cloud his mind, but he wait for no answers. He prefers to move in to the innermost zone, the garbhagrha where an offering is transformed into blessings: “And naivedya’s transformed to prasaada/ There are no angers no regrets/ No concerns expect exit and reentry” (69). It is a sacred abode corresponding to the Indian ancestry where he wishes to build his temple. It is like a place of pilgrimage, a “cross-over point in the space” (69). It is a space of Eternity, the Super Soul in which every one finds his/her space. The poet seeks to purify each soul he meets through his writing. The result is that each soul turns out to be a place of pilgrimage, a ‘firth’. In a yogic context, the human body is perceived as a temple and a Yogī has to meditate on the Kundilini located centrally at its ‘garbhagruha’.

The poem, “The Taste of Neem” evokes mood of nostalgia though the poet’s childhood memory of a neem tree at his nana’s place in India. It has a Shiva Lingum under its shade and a scent of Hanuman who uprooted the mountain for medicine. The poet mixes real objects with mythological references to elevate his nostalgia to a state of inspiration and devotion. Another poem, “Until We Meet in Parrot Jungle” too deals with the nostalgia in a similar way. The poet refers to the parrot story in the *Ramayana* to elevate his sentiment in exile. He juxtaposes Sita’s sentiment in exile with his longing for the ancestry. Sita in her second exile in the ashram of Sage Valmiki imagines that Rama, her lord would come to her in the form of a parrot and chat with her. She then listens to a parrot story The poet too longs for the stories of is ancestry, a parrot chatting, “immortal parrot stories/ in a newer Sanskrit book” (73). A parrot is like an ancient sage from the jungle who brings to him streaks of divinity- “green wings/ guided green

eyes" (73). He derives great support and strength from these stories. The poem signifies an act of converting nostalgia into devotion.

The poem, "Birthing at the Wateredge" evokes another revelation. The poet is standing on the rock on the edge of a lake. He prefers to stand on the rock alone and enjoy the solitude in nature. He finds that a tip of a maple leaf acquires a look of a chin with skin of sindhur colour, "on my right/ maples offer vermillion chins/ beside the golden aspens" (74). He finds fishing in a misty morning to become an act of lila, a playful act. One needs time and method to understand it- "to consume this lila" (74). These sights bring to him yogi revelation, "What I have to give/ My love/ Mixed with the yogic/ Roth crispbrowned in ghi/ For the puja" (74). He feels like being at a puja in which "a rock a stone is aasan" (75). He reaches a point when he knows, "I've no lines/ Can bring you no trout no bass/ Nothing except isn'tness/ Longing for Isness" (75). He has no worldly purpose and no worldly pursuit. He longs for spiritual revelation.

As seen earlier in chapter one, the system of Yoga perceives seven chakras or energy points located inside human body. These points lie in the Shushumna nerve channel with the Kundalini at its base and the Brahmrandhra at its top. A yogi meditates on the Kundalini to awaken it and arouse the prana to rise high. It signifies elevation of sexual potency to spiritual energy. Yoga demands discipline and determination with continuous contemplation and meditation on 'something-specified'. It helps elevation of energy. The series of poems, "Column First" to "Column Seven" presents contemplation on the seven energy points with each piece to relate to one stage. The first poem, "The Finger Lake: Column First" describes a serpent ascending the column of spines through images like, "god descends and pulls muscles", "race to Odysseus" and "city in valley sprawling up hills" (79). He views the Kundalini as a lake at the bottom that gives a reflection of eyes. It stores all energies of the human senses and mind. The

poet views it as the 'garbhagrha' in a temple, a sacred place to contemplate on. It is cool, dark and deep like a cave with a dim light in it at a height. The poet says that the space contains heavenly air- "Heavenly breath smells wooingly here" (79). The poet writes this line with spacing before and after, which conveys transmission of human energies from the outer world in to the inner world. The spacing suggests a pause before one enters the world of inner reality. The poet evokes the climate of the outer world through various images from urban life like; swallows in the autumn sky do not sip maple juice from aspen trees, 'do not sip juice'; in the afternoon glowing with golden light, an artisan in the west blows dark stains on golden limbs, 'blowing dark stains'; away from rocks and cliffs, cars in a city and on the public highway US 90 have windscreens shut with lined edges for protection from temperature outside, 'lined edges'; insulated wires hang overheads, 'insulated' (80). The picture gives a few suggestions that a man shuts him from nature with the help of modern technology, he loses sensitivity to nature and confines him to artificial life of a city, art in the west is like a stain on a golden limb, as it is created by exploiting and distorting nature and people's minds are conditioned-"insulated"- with given ideologies and are unable to change. The poet understands these conditions as hurdles in the path evolution of soul.

Later in the same poem, a change appears with a sense of 'arriving', "After you opened the door/ We have come/ We have arrived" (79). The poet imagines that a guru opens the door and takes him in the inn. The 'inn' signifies the inner world of spirituality. It conveys a sense of 'arriving' or homecoming through an image of Penelope's lord or suitor who arrived home after a long absence with Nymphs accompanying him on the journey with light and smile (80). He also says that his memory is shattered in pieces like a female deer whose pieces are joined

together tentatively. He would love to put together his shattered memory- "we will love"- to make it an integrated memory, an integrated self- "we are love" (80). This is arriving.

Writing is yoga and a writer meditates on a word. A "Word" is his idol or image, 'something specified' to focus his mind on. It is transparent until used, Persaud believes, "Sam Selvon had meditated and had captured a moment of eternity which he froze in words... "Everything that happens is word, pure expression is nothing" ("Yoga as Art...", -64). He uses this concept to view that a word conceals in it truth or reality. A writer meditates on a word to break open truth. It is his journey to the Truth or Reality. A yogi too moves in a similar progression from 'form' to 'formless' and further to the 'Formless'. The two stages of writing, 'Writing as yoga' and 'Yogic realism' correspond to the two stages of yoga, the saguna samadhi-form to formless, and the nirguna samadhi-formless to the Formless. The poem, "From My Girl and The City" marks an extension of Selvon's line of thinking with the borrowing of the very title. The poem appears like Persaud's tribute to Sam Selvon's contribution to the concept of 'writing as yoga'.

The discourse on 'a word' continues in the poem "Column Two". The poet says that a word is real and all other things, expression, poetry, fiction, fantasy, imagination, imagery etc. are unreal or abstract that are made with mingling of sentiments, opinions, imagination, fancy or fantasy. A word is transparent carrier of a writer's intention and in this sense it can hold the 'soul'. The words move silently on things as a silent tongue moves on a ghiskin. A telling of stories in 'shabda', a word gets realisation (82). Words evoke a happening in real. No poetry or no fiction can explain it. One who writes or speaks a word may die or perish with the time, but the word survives to make a heritage, "Only words we left behind loves". For instance, 'Zero's One' are among valuable verbal heritage from ancient sages over generations (82). It becomes a

mantra and acquires eternal value, "If words once words/ Are mantra" (82). The poet cites a unique example of the Gayatri mantra to explain the power of words, "Om bhur/ Om bhuwa/ Om swah/ Om swahaa" (82). The words are sanctified through spiritual practices. They form a potent heritage to carry the soul over ages. They generate vibrations in a reader. They ignite curiosity and inspire one to explore the world of mysticism and spiritualism. They have capacity to lead one to God. Hence, a writer has to know the value of a word. He has to focus his mind and energies on it as 'something specified' to explore the world of yogic realism. It is thus an object of concentration, an idol or an image that stays in the garbhagrha.

The poem, "Column Three" refers to a yogi's longing for God's grace to go ahead in yoga or writing. He explains God's grace through an image of silver light of the new moon. The poet wants to lie nude in the open under the moon and receive the silver light. He hears melodious singing of milkmaids in the accompaniment of Krishna's bamboo flute. He is eager to receive the shower of God's grace with mind clear of fantasies and illusions, "We have come beyond the fancy love/ Letters lined poesy/ We have come beyond the fantasy / Into crisp midday-sun" (83). Like a yogi, the poet feels hunger of God's grace. It is a stage of curiosity and longing for knowledge of Real. His vision is now clear enough to capture the image of the Divine.

The poem-fragment, "Column Five" presents logic of the poet's faith in Hinduism. The Herbert Johnson Museum has an "upturn pendulum". It echoes warm showers of God's grace. The poet feels like kneeling before it. But excessive sexuality and materialism in a western life makes him feel out of place. For instance, Mother Mary with her "cherryredcheek" looks westward. The poet is cut off from his cultural roots, "unasian" and "unindian". He feels homeless like pines down the hill. In such a condition of homelessness, he wants to have his own

home and school, "Build a college home come back" (85). He does not mind if they are put "downhill", on a lower category. But at least that would ensure him freedom to move on the snow, to write and to express. He says that the Christianity keeps no place for a goddess. It does not value love. Reason reigns supreme and devotion is undermined in the name of reason and sophistication. He asserts that yoga values goddess as inevitable, "hay devi we would build a mandir" (85). The poet says that Hinduism attaches equal reverence to the female aspect of the human existence. There is a saying in Sanskrit, "*yatra naryastu poojyante ramantestatra devataha*", wherever a woman is worshipped deities stay there in happiness. In India, a woman is traditionally worshipped as a devi or a goddess, the Shakti, as the counterpart of the Shiva, the God. Shakti is the basic power to attain yoga. This discourse on gender reiterates Persaud's stand on gender-blind perspective on life and yoga. It raises a voice against increasing masculine domination and undermining of the feminine presence in the western culture and religion. The story "Dookie" takes up the issue, "Hinduism has at its base one Vedic concept that all forms of manifest energy is an embodiment of the female principle, the Shakti. The only male principle is god or the all powerful, pure cosmic consciousness" (*Canada-Geese and Apple Chatney*, 81). In the essay, "Kevat: Waiting on Yogic Realism" Persaud explains the Shiva principle in the light of the male-female principle ("Kevat", 12-13). Further, in the western context, the poet regrets for having no independence, "we are still primitives in concrete caves" (86), "yes we need separate space so soon" (86), at a music school he is taken as an intruder, "I am tired we are hungry" (86). Yet he enjoys God's grace. God's love saves him from nightmares and unpleasant dreams. He gets sound sleep with positive dreams like thousand limbs are moving in an eternal dance. His mind is at peace. He learns to live with adverse conditions and contemplate on the eternal principle.

The south-north dichotomy plays a vital role in Persaud's poetry. The south serves him a feel of home and 'window to India' with a memory of a roti at the Sangam restaurant, "Is it ghiskin or sweetgrass eyes/ Both doing the indian thing" (87-8). He loves to be a researcher to wrap him in Indian thinking- "wrapped/ in dosa roti" (88). He is tired of the western world, "tired of another world's imbalances" (88). He believes that love is a gift of the soul. Love elevates a body as the scarlet crimson sunrise elevates a look of a tiny airport. Turning to south is pleasing for him, while driving north makes him guilty-conscious. He wants to return to south like Penelope returned to her native place, Ithaca. He views his condition like Odysseus's fallen glory, compelled to eat curries. The poet views his return to south as his return to innocence.

The poem, "Column Seven: Diwali" is the final poem in the book that marks a significant accomplishment of the process of writing as yoga. It evokes enlightenment through reference to the Diwali, a Hindu festival of light. The poem opens with a conventional greeting, "happy new year!" to suggest that light of knowledge fills his life with festivity and pleasure. It is a stage of new awakening that follows a dark night of ignorance. The Diwali has significance to all Hindus. But to Hindus in exile it carries special significance. Bikhu Parekh observes that since the *Ramayana* remains "the central text" to them and since it describes Rama's homecoming to Ayodhya from a long exile on the day of the Diwali, Indians-Hindus in exile take the festival to echo genuinely their experiences of exile (123). With sentimental attachment, they relate the festival to their pining for homecoming. In a yogic sense too Persaud views the Diwali as homecoming signifying the stage of Enlightenment. It thus poses a goal to a writer-yogi.

The poetry of *A Surf of Sparrows' Songs* gives a unique experience of reading. A reader feels being in a company of soul surfing. A sparrow is a metaphor for soul and in that sense a sparrow's song is the soul's song. Thus the poetry tries to evoke soul's song. One hears it

through oppression and suppression of human weaknesses like ego, sex, passion and desires. The poet's job is to excavate and discover the soul's song from below human weaknesses and present it to a reader. Music and love are its basic features that make the song pure and sweet. He can offer it to God as 'a Poemanjali'. On a reader's part, yoga works in the form of "progressive comprehension". A sparrow's song gives him experience of reading that unfolds meaning to him. It evokes the concept of "writing as yoga" to resound as "reading as yoga". It demands from a reader sensibility to receive the experience in the right spirit. The poet helps his reader to cultivate an 'eye', a faculty of seeing and adequate mindset to comprehend the vision of yogic realism. He teaches him contemplation and meditation on a word that conceals reality. Thus, he views 'writing' and 'reading' complementary acts. Poetry can guide a reader's 'reading'. Likewise, reader's appreciation imparts sense to poetry.

By combining writing with yoga, Persaud seeks to write in a Hindu way to explore the reality. He displays confidence, faith and reverence for yoga. He handles the discourse in the English language and registers his resistance through yogic realism. It is a yogic way of resisting to the world in which any language may serve as mere tool and a transparent medium. No colour or cultural biases with colonial undertones affect him. Writing is a serious task for him and he has to perform it as dharma irrespective of any considerations. His poetry displays devotion of a Kevat of the *Ramayana* and he views a writer to become like him. He has to have hunger for Truth that serves him a catalyst in his venture of "yogic realism". Further more significantly, he views writing as to bring about a fusion or 'yoga' of a poet's "bhakti", devotion or faith with his 'jnana', knowledge and his 'Karma', dedicated action. Absence of 'bhakti' nullifies any knowledge or action. Hence, his poetry has to become 'poemanjali', love poems. This is the Indian viewpoint on writing that his theory of Yogic Realism seeks to cultivate. It represents an

Indian mind's resistance to western thinking. It implies politics, as he points out in his essay, "I Hear a Voice, Is It Mine?", "They wrote in a different time with a different compunction: 'to make it' in a Euro-world. I didn't care if I 'made it' in any world. I had a vision I would pursue" and asserts quoting the *Bhagavadgita* (III, 35) that Yogic Realism is his Karma-Yoga, his resistance to serve as a political act (537-538). The goal is to go beyond to "cross-over to self/Self".

"Travel on water" acquires significance for the poet in relation to his journey to yogic realism. In this sense, the surfing on water continues to signify the movement of the soul. The reason is simple that a journey on water is free of hurdles, impediments, distortions and suspicion of any risk that a traveller fears on land. In the poem, "The Black Road Came" in *The Wintering Kundalini*, the poet says, "Once we travelled on water" "more cautious/More contented" and "I speak for myself/ And I wish/ We traveled together/ On water" (85-87). Travel on water, therefore, remains his earnest wish. Through it he proclaims once again his withdrawal from the world in the interest of writing as yoga. "Water" signifies transparency, purity, innocence and freedom from any reservations. It signifies a state of 'zero' consciousness. The poet is sure that with all these attributes 'water' will pave a way to yogic realism.

The Hungry Sailor (2000) sounds like an extension of the poet's wish to travel on water. The metaphor of 'water' dominates his poetry with its counterpart 'a sailor'. The poet derives a metaphor of 'a sailor' from an image of 'Kevat' in the *Ramayana*. He explains in his essay, "Kevat: Waiting on Yogic Realism", the book *The Hungry Sailor* "too would be important in defining of yogic realism", it explores "yogic spaces and aspects of yogic realism, for another time" ("Kevat", 11). A sailor here is 'hungry', hungry to know more about self and his relation

with the divinity, Self. The poetry trilogy that began with *A Surf of Sparrows' Songs* (1996) continues in *The Hungry Sailor* (2000) with a metaphor of 'a hungry sailor'. Persaud imagines a poet as a hungry sailor like the 'Kevat' performing his dharma and waiting for God's grace. A poet too keeps on writing poetry and waits for yogic realism. For him, a word serves a sail and his writing is like sailing on the seawater. Poetry is like an ocean of water, pure, innocent, transparent and with 'zero' state of meaning. Writing poetry is sailing that is to take a 'waterway'. It is the poetic way. The poetry of *The Hungry Sailor* flows like water and the poet sails on it with an oar of a word. On his way to yogic realism, he comes across islands of various kinds, his memories, regrets, pains of betrayal, discrimination and neglect and alienations. They cause hurdles. He looks at them with detachment and leaves them behind in order to proceed on a path of yogic realism. He has reached a stage to overcome conditions of crying and complaining, or perplexity of exile and enjoy peace of mind with steady intellect and detachment, a state of 'sthitaprajna' (the *Bhagavadgita*).

The cover page of the book bears a remark, "The poetry here is fixed in Miami, radiating outward to Toronto, Georgetown and Ayodhya". The opening poem, "Returning to Miami" echoes the remark through the poet's return to Miami. Like Vassanji's protagonist Ramji in *Amrika* for whom home is Africa and homeland is India, the poet too feels in the west the "not-at-home anywhere" condition (Rushdie) or "always feel outside in someway" condition (Edward Said) (qtd. in Jasbir Jain, 80). But Miami serves him a replica to Georgetown in Guyana, his home, a site of his nativity and Ayodhya in India, his homeland, a site of his ancestry. Therefore, he prefers to write poetry in Miami. His poetry is not bound by space and time. It radiates beyond them through links and associations to receive vibrations from the ancestry. It also reaches out to his home and homeland with radiation and vibration.

The poet regrets that Indian writers in exile do not value Miami. They ignore the sunshine and warmth of the place and yet indulge in hunt for gold and riches like Spaniards of Florida. They are like an old woman searching a needle outside the house while she had lost it inside. The poet wants to write to explore his self. He means to value the inner search in yoga and there he sets up his quest motif. It can be worked out through curiosity that can be quenched with an act of questioning.

An act of questioning remains an ancient Indian method of acquiring knowledge. Most ancient civilizations in the east and the west followed it. The poem, "Returning to Miami" discusses how differently the east and the west view it. The west does it with an eye of suspicion and ever seeks to counteract upon it with storms of questioning. The western way of questioning is a heartless method that reflects lack of faith in the other person's knowledge. It also reflects arrogance of a person who questions. Against it, the poet poses the Indian way of questioning. It is an ancient Indian tradition represented by enlightened couples like Maitreya and Yagnavalkya. Questioning involves one's heart and his faith and respect for the each other, "We are coming/ to hearts" (3). It causes affinity and so is never tiring. It reflects genuine and humble curiosity on the part of a disciple. The poet imagines him and his wife as Yagnavalkya and Maitreyi involved in an act of questioning, "I would kiss your finger/ in the wife you've become/ *Maitreya*: "*Yagnavalkya* never tires/ of questions we have become/ answers" (3).

The poet views that western methods of acquiring knowledge operates at a physical height of mind that is intellect and arrogance where 'clouds' and 'shadows' of suspicion float, "in thighs of/ mountains floating/ beneath headset /Falling from air/ storms moved on full/ moon in sun-seated/ above clouds" (3). The Indian way of acquiring knowledge, however, is an act of becoming. It is an attempt to reach to a height of mind by attaining maturity. The poet regrets that

the west does not care for this criterion and the result is, "and there is no thinking like thought at 35000 feet" and "no becoming like being/... we unbecome/ in this green November" (3). The west closes a chance of mental upliftment and transformation through questioning. It rather reduces it to a puffing exchange of arrogance. The condition is like 'this green November', although green, but with biting cold and although smart but heartless with cold staring of doubts and suspicion. It is devoid of warmth of heart. The poet suggests that an act of questioning should have humility, faith and warmth of heart on both the sides. 'Returning to Miami' may be homecoming physically, but metaphorically it is returning to the Upanishadic method of questioning.

Winter is a metaphor of darkness. The poet views the Canadian winter as a witch- "blacker than all darkness". The poem, "Invitation to Winter" describes that it smiles through glass, "through flakes' buttery fall" (9). The poet regrets that his love for winter made him lonely. The words 'icecream', 'iceage', 'fluttery flakes' evoke effect of the chilly cold. He says that the winter has done a witch-work to convert tropics in to wintry lands. It is a trap to seduce one's identity. He invites weeds swirling up forth on green-eyed water, coral stone and sand to Canada to serve as lifeguards (9-10).

The green winter is followed by green autumn. The poem, "This Green Autumn" conveys contrasts in the western condition with the words 'green' and 'autumn'. It suggests that nature's greenery and beauty, 'flowers in summer' are transferred into air-conditioned offices, often 'unregulated' or 'distorted' like 'Kisses' thrown between elevators, floors and on vacant parking hours. He says that the west does not allow differences to prosper under uniform strategy of softness, "unwinding banyanrootsoftness/ wafer" (4). The images like "pink ixora and all that blooms/ on your graded papers/ blue folders" and "grass cut across asphalt/ edges greener than

oceanwater” (4) convey artificiality of nature and heart. He travels in a taxi driven by an Afro roadway worker. An Indian acquaintance is denied. The poet disagrees with this pretension of glitter devoid of essence. He prefers thinking and speaking with freedom, “and dog I finally cuddle-/ surprise showing in eyes” (4). “Dog” stands for one’s freedom to think and speak.

The poet seeks to rationalise his decision to withdraw from the western world and retreat to the sea or the ocean or the bay. The poem, “On Pelican Bay” describes his experience on seashore. A helicopter calls, “we are near we are far” (5). The clean solitude of the bay is distorted and disturbed with picnickers throwing paper and pampered children crying loudly. He wishes to enjoy nature with no intervention- “and we should/ drink stars from lips tonight trickling down your cheeks” (5). He denies any cooked pleasure of nature and ignores any authority in the west, “a high powered boat” passing by him. He denies belonging to such a world although he is very much present in it- “we are here we are not” (5). His denials reflect his reasoning to withdraw.

The first section entitled, “Afterlude” opens with a statement, “If raags are the melodic structures of music/ And raginis their unset variations/ what are the sounds from noninstruments?” (13) It defines ‘raags’ and ‘raginis’ and inquires about “the sounds from noninstruments”. The sound is the Cosmic Sound that yoga calls ‘naad’ or ‘Brahmanaad’ or ‘Naadabrahma’. The poet directs his search in the direction of the ‘naad’ to become the quest motif. The first stage delineated in the poetry of *A Surf of Sparrows’ Songs* seeks to capture the music of soul through sparrow’s songs to realise the ‘shakti’ or ‘prana’ or bio-energy to become a driving force in yoga. In the second stage the poet proposes to conduct a search for the ‘naad’ through different raaginis to act as catalyst in yoga.. A word embodies sound. A writer contemplates on a word to embark the sound that imparts meaning. Since raags and raginis are

composed with sound of a word they help to explore the Cosmic Sound that forms a part of yogic realism.

The poet conducts his search by exploring various facets of the Indian existence in the Americas. The first among them is the celebrations of Indian festivals across the American continent. The poem, "Celebrations in the Americas" (15) refers to the West Indian phagwahs with "a feast of bara baigani phulauri" with red powder and liquid squirted all around rising up to the sky with "*jhaals* clanging an ancient brass" on cricket matches (15). This festival of colours poses a contrast to the snowing in Toronto and parades in rain on New York streets. He pleads westerners not to take the red colour as blood. It is of red lilies' buds that sprout during the spring. The festivity of the spring, "basant bahar" goes in tune with the "raga kafi". It also goes in tune with the dance of Shiva in a circled fire with Holika in the full moon flame, chautal, roasted coconuts and ascetic ashes. The poet remembers 'Holi in Avadhpuri' that Rama played. He also refers to the Holi that Ravi Shankar, a musician in exile tries to play it with tunes of his sitar that ring from Calcutta to California. Swami Yoganand, a celebrated yogi too plays the Holi filling the air of California with spirituality. Now it is writerji who has to play the Holi (15). The poet views the celebration as tuned to music and leading one from to enjoy physical pleasure to its divinity and spirituality.

Persaud's search for the sound gets extended to a meditation centre. Being a centre preaching yoga, it is his first choice for the search. The poem, "Guru- Sisterji in Saks Hats" records his search. The opening line poses a doubt, "How to paint/ a Euro-Shiva mantra/ broken off Eurotongue?" (16), that is how to get a sound when everything, mantras and speeches are heavily coloured with European style. The guru's photograph bears a worried look like Rama's wooden foot wares resting on Ayodhya's throne. It reflects the physical presence devoid of spirit.

As Rama's wooden foot wares waited for the return of the lord and a guru waits for an end of a prolonged exile. The two are juxtaposed to highlight helplessness on the part of a guru. A guru's mind is corrupt with seductive influence of the west. The seduction is glaring at the centre, "Brahmin led by white and invites one to see it correctly untouchables!/ Georgian chants on Sanskrit Mantras" (16). He invites one to see it correctly, "If you could see Shiva dancing/ in sandalwood rage". The Centre Shop is like a mystic show with a price displayed glaringly. A sister's tender touch fascinates the guru and he indulges in sex with her- "Four hours of table top sex/ milked for yogic energy" (17). The poet is ironical at how a guru in the west exploits yoga. The voice inviting visitors, or imparting instructions to them, or bidding goodbye to them is equally seductive and deceptive- "a sugared voice" with "The European accent crisper than the winter/ night outside" (17) with abundance of sex -"dripping sex and yoga". He regrets that yoga is seduced with sex with the omnipresence of Bollywood sisterji in saks hats and a display of her photographs lurking seduction to add fuel to it. She plays enchantress on the guru and everyone at the centre and also on visitors. The poem closes on a touch of irony- "to see hear touch you once/ will I not come back!" (18) The poet's search at a meditation centre thus fails disgustingly. He is not happy with yoga ashrams and meditation centres in the west. In the poem, "Waiting for Her Grace: The New York Guruji" he observes that greed and sex lurk to distort yoga and a 'New York guru' benefits from it. It is a strong expression of the poet's disgust, "- the touch, the touch, the touch/ of Broadway or Hollywood or Bollywood!" (32). The repetition of the word 'touch' in the closing line highlights the poet's disgust.

The poet discusses the reason of the state-of-affairs of the Indian and African poetry in the poem, "Memories of Starapple". White stickiness of starapples stand for the western influence to stain the mouth of poets in exile that also include West Indian poets like Dereck Walcott. He

means that both Indian poets and African poets wrote poetry under the white influence and their mouths are sticky with 'milkiness' or 'whiteness' (20). He writes his best poetry under the influence of his own culture and speaks with "the memoried tongue" (20). He makes his poetry a weapon, as explosive as the dynamite, to resist seductive influences of the empires. The poet finds the Miami with sandy region to assure him freedom from the 'starapple influence'.

Persaud is a severe critic of lies perpetuated by writers in the west. Some writers of Indian origin too are dishonest about their culture. The poem, "The Moor's Last Lie" is a poet's lamentation on writers' lies. He refers to G. E. Moor (1873-1958) who influenced the minds of western literary writers with his "New Realism". Persaud views that lies spread by western writing is poisonous like the Moore's lies. He alleges that writers of Indian origin too join the conspiracy. Compelled by their success-dream, they perpetuate lies under the guise of realism. They do not know what injustice they are doing to their own culture with "Damn the river..." attitude (58). Persaud calls such a writer, "Oxfordaccentedfatawahidingswordman" giving a pun on the word "swordsman", a warrior and "wordsman", a writer. Both, under heavy British-European impact, are eager to invade the Indian culture like Mohammad Gazni invaded the Somanath Temple in Gujarat. Ironically he calls them "midnight children" to juxtapose with Yamuna's midnight children, Krishna and Balaram. The juxtaposition highlights impotency of writers of Indian origin in surrendering to lies. Makarand Paranjape alleges these diasporic writers for "an epistemic distortion" of the real (240) representing India as "Only a devalued and abused India" to make it marketable in the west (239).

The poet is like a Brahmin who annoyingly waits and throws stones at 'mongrels', dogs of mixed breed that always hunt for decaying flesh ("scavenging"), or like Raleigh stooping in status stealing tobacco from natives. He curses the British for wrongs to his culture, "get your

gold from your temples”, “shit on your gods”. They ignored the glories of India with fabricated stories of the Raj, “make you forget you”. He also curses western culture for seductive and degenerative influences, “the Stellas of the EuroSanskrit / whores of the world demanding payment in secularism” (59). He reminds them that India is not a weak nation like Bosnia, or Ireland, Isarael, P(sic)stan or Canada. He admits that down the history India suffered like Mary Magdalene, a prostitute saint and a frustrated poet. However, it has retained its glory, “we have bided our time at the pyre”. He seems to echo the position that Gandhi’s takes in *Hind Swaraj* (1937) against the British. He wants to keep the fire burning by adding ghi and believes that these sacred flames would see castes in true judgment, “Om Swaahaa...” (59). He wants to continue writing and also to chase such writers who are like ‘mongrels’. He views this gesture as fulfilling his obligation to his culture. He alleges that the New World prospers and prides at the cost of pride of Indians and their gods. He objects to merciless assassination of other cultures in the west.

The poet invites westerners to travel again ‘on water’. He appeals them to pacify the revolutionary spirit once held by Persians-turned- Parsis or implied in Imam’s fatwaha. He spells the word fatwaha, as “fat-waha-waha”. It is perhaps to coincide it with the word ‘swaahaa’ to mean ‘burnt to ashes in the sacred fire’. He persuades these writers not to be crazy about making writing sensational or a controversy for better sale. He views post-modernists as, “ye mongrelizing dogs of logic” with “yip-yap-language” and “theories of hybridity” (60). He shows his choice: “Well I am/ Travelling up to the sun with wings of wax and incense sticks” (60). He wants to move towards knowledge with sticky firmness and fragrance of devotion. He prays to Surya, the sun god to bless him with sparks of light of knowledge with which he would light the pyre and burn ‘the Moor’s last lie’, “Swaahaa”. He would ritually offer ghi on the sandalwood

and water for purification. He wishes to see “Om Shiva” dancing and accepting his offering and also that no flower or no poetry is denied, distorted or destroyed, “Om no flower-flame...” (60).

In the poet's view, Miami becomes a seat of knowledge. The poem, “Postcard from Jamaica” presents his contemplation on Miami. It is a place like India where sexual pleasure is balanced by need for intellectual stimulation (21). He rates it above America where Eurosadhus chant ‘Hare Rama, Hare Hare...’ in stereotypical mood. He searches for a daughter on its sand to perform the puja. The daughter is his poetry. She is not to be seduced by a white man. He views the spiritual dimension of poetry. He says that he has gone out to the sea. He gets companionship of those sharing his views, “cautiously eyeballing each other/ this little touch and/ pressure of fingers/ in surf rolling up” (22). The surf of the sea is the same that washes the Demerara bar and the Ganga Delta and mingles with the sacred confluence at the Jamuna. Goddess Saraswati feels pride of books and knowledge stored in Devon House. The place carries an effect of Gandhi's sacrifice and “Saraswattie is unnamed”. Under its effect he forgets all western learning that he had received on, “on expensive sofa-beds” (22). The Miami Beach is crystal, pure and sacred. It serves him a port to set out on a sea voyage. He reaches a stage where there is no looking back or turning back “to Euro-see”. He feels free from any impact of the west.

Summer is a synonym of Miami. It stands for brightness of knowledge. The poem, “Do not Grieve Said Rumi?” describes the poet's the summer passion for the place. He has journeyed from India to Miami and Miami serves him a replica of India, “blossoms flaring in our eyes”, “fire touches” and “golden shower on copper rod” (22). His summer passion is different from summer passion of a sexy dancer in the north. He remembers Krishna's advice in the *Gita*, “do not grieve”, “What is born is dead already/ consigned to the pyre”. He finds similar advice in Rumi's pages of mystic fire to console his grieved heart and inspire him for a meaningful action

(22). The sound on the Miami Beach ranges from festive to sexy, intoxicated, sticky, stereotypically distasteful and finally to surfing and consoling. The sequence of sounds narrates the poet's journey from noises of unfriendly and seductive host in the north to a friendly sound in the south.

The poet admits that he received many gifts from his mother country and culture, but he returned none. He repents for his ungratefulness to his ancestry. Therefore, in the poem, "Gifting the Light of the Soul" he expresses his wish to return better gifts to his people. The gift can be the light of the song and the soul, both literary and spiritual. The poem begins with a reference of Derek Walcott's poem, "The Light of the World" in which he expresses his wish to return to his people a gift of knowledge, "the light of the world" (23). Acknowledging his Caribbean connection to share the Caribbean resistance Persaud shares a similar concern, but with a difference. He counts the gifts that he received from India, 'little packages of pepper and thyme', 'the condiments of India in little lipped bottles', 'mustard-oil chatney pickle and brine', 'a coconut branch broom'. He admits that he returned not even a word for the fear of exposing his pains, his hurt. He feels guilty for it. He now wishes to gift his people his poetry to serve them song of the soul.

The poet ponders on his loneliness in a western world. He remembers that his mother's death made him lonely. None of his people accompanied him on his 'journey on water'. He set out alone on a boat and now he is alone on a boat in the ocean. What remains with him is God's blessings and darshan. It is like a yogi's loneliness after he renounces the world. He utters prayers in Sanskrit. Prayers serve him wooden guardrails against drumming waves of the ocean. There is no return for him. His relatives wept for him. But he could not send them a word, as he had nothing to feel pride for. Now when he has to return something to his people, it would be

“all love, ah the love, unuttered and unwritten” (24) and “the songs of a wandering brahmin” and “the fastidious yogi silence” (25). It is a gift of spiritual vision through poetry.

Parsaud explains an image of ‘a sailor’ to coincide with a writer-yogi. The poem, “The Hungry Sailor” refers to it: “- it was you and still/ is you who took me made me left me/ journeying as limbo sailor seeking / searching waiting for your grace” (25). It is a direct address to god like the Kevat in the *Ramayana* did. He defines poetry, “the butterfly in your eyes swirls on the rhythmic floor” and wishes if he could touch that “swaying of your soul/ in the flash of blinking blue/ lights” (25). Both these comprise the yogic revelation as Gopi Krishna mentions it in his book, *The Evolution in to Higher Consciousness* (1996) as ‘Kirlian aura’ (161-162). The poet waits for God’s grace, “to dump me over...o land” and like Columbus he feels like getting closer to encounter the land (25).

A sailor is sailing in the sea. Islands floating on the seawater pass by him. Likewise, a writer-yogi is involved in contemplation and memory floats on his subconscious to surface the facts of the past. Recalling the past, the memory causes disturbance and distraction to his mind. The poet’s memory of the past coupled with his observation of Indians in the present adds to his pain. He observes that Indians lacked confidence. The poem, “Boys on the Lake” (29-30) gives two pictures. Five African boys in pre-teen ask for change. Even their confidence in trivial tasks disturbs Indians involved in discourses, “parrot chatters”. Indian boys rose to action of confidence when they felt the loss of culture, “after ma died”. But they could not be assertive to face the “murderous rain of coral missiles” with “more controlled anger”. Consequently, they suffered loss as unvoiced and therefore “ununderstood” (30).

The poet narrates his ‘such a long journey’ from UP in India to Crestview in Guyana in the poem, “Unclosed Entrances, This Light of Our Loves”. He calls the journey; ‘unclosed

entrances' leading one to walkways imposed by the British masters and African rivals. He is standing on the stairwell 'alone'. The word 'alone' carries heavy tone like that in the poem, "Gifting the Light of the Soul" (24). It signifies that the soul has to travel alone. The poet walked on 'old walkways' and 'new walkways'. Old walkways are those that his ancestry indicates. New walkways are those that western masters prescribed. The poet highlights the difference. Old walkways give hope of inspiration and strength, "—the pave will be stronger/ around the fig's touch of southern/ charm of finger, a kiss- the belle" (30). The new walkways demand 'Jewish confidence' to create his space amidst alien cultures (30). The poet chooses the old walkways that leads to the evolution of soul. He thus reiterates the sense that he expressed in the poem, "The Black Road Came" in *The Wintering Kundalini* (85-87), but with something more to convey. The poem mentions two journeys, an outward journey, 'such a long journey' of exile from India to Guyana and the inward journey, 'such long journey' of exile within of struggles, resistance and evolution. They run parallel and intersect each other at times. Both lead to view, "the sun/ behind Krishna-skin clouds", "a tender/ drizzle cleansing eyes of all but/ inimitable moments" (30-31). The poet says that the knowledge, the sun guides him, "fingers not the/ same as another time place" (30). Earlier his knowledge of his community and culture guided him with words of his mother and father to inspire him. Now the spiritual knowledge guides him, "the flashingeve copperlemon butterfly/ the golden shower swaying in the Indian/ distance" (31) He calls it 'light of our light/ light of our loves'. He wishes that this light showers on him water to make his soul soft, "Let it rain all evening, let it rain all night" (31). The poet views his journey as a gradual improvement in his vision with enhanced perception.

Another point that pains him is man's arrogance that adds to his religious fanatics. The poem, "Aye (I) The Turk, Emperor" presents severe criticism of man's arrogance through

references to the demolition of the Babri mosque by Hindu fundamentalists in India in 1992 and the crushing of the Dalit movement by the upper castes in India. The poem opens with a statement of authority, "let them know I am emperor" (32). It then leads the reader through pages of history that unfold paining incidents like the assault on the Dravidian culture in the remote past up to the attack on Dalit's dwelling in the recent times. It imparts severe criticism, "no/ cries in the history heard for tree/ displacing shrub displacing moss/ displacing lichen destroying organism...to fit marble alien craftsman's/ tendril markings..." and "a whisper for shrine disfigured/ in bangla land" (33). He proclaims, "those who/ live by the rubble must perish by it" (33). He gives a call, "hey wake up man, woman...", "constructs must be unconstructed...all words to void of readerlessness" (33). He appeals to stop fighting in the name of construction and to save ^{the} natural surrounding with vines, shrubs, micros, birds, etc. The call sounds a bit prophetic.

The poet recalls the pride of India in the poem, "Call Him The Babu". 'The Babu' is Rohan Kanhai who was the first Indian cricketer on the West Indian cricket team. He fascinated Indians in the West Indies. The people recognized Kanhai's great cricketing feats as raising the pride of India. The poet calls him in the times of crisis, particularly when the Indian voice is ignored despite the "50 + 1 %" majority of Indians in the country. He relates him to the Hanuman figure that may shoulder India's pride (35).

The poems thus seem to weave a fabric with criss-crossing threads of the past and the present. The fabric reflects his mind with interplay of the past and the present. Such a mind generates understanding of world with a detached view. This view goes in contrast with the poet's earlier sentimental view of the world that mingles pain with regret to cause disgust. But in a revised view the pain works as inspiration to help his determination to part with the world.

The poet views his parting with the world as a bloom in the poem, "Bloom of Parting" which describes it as "fingering pockets for warmth". He found Canadians' love for Indian as "Autumn's rainbow spectrum from the suspension bridge", as "a last grasp's blossom of straw" and as "Judas -space- the final supper/ the bloom of death" (36). The phrase, "the bloom of death" goes in contrast with the title, "Bloom of Parting" to complete the circle. It conveys that the poet's living in the west is like bloom of death. He, therefore, prefers bloom of parting. Memory of his meeting with white poets pains him. The poem, "Because We Shared Water" describes a meeting of West Indian poets with them that occurs with contentions, "Poets possess the feminine soul" and a white poet is "The only male among the poets" and "Yes thumb of our fingers" (38). The conclusion is, "And we never returned. We never said goodbye"(38). Unfathomable abyss between the white and the coloured thus denies any wishful communication. It eventually leads the poet to mental withdrawal from the world.

The theme of 'looking back' continues in the poem, "Among the Pipal Tree of South Florida", however, with different connotations. It marks a turn in the perception. A pipal tree in Florida inspires him to look back. It is like a window to the India ancestry. In the essay, "Kevat: Waiting on Yogic Realism" the poet talks about its spiritual effect on him:

I touched self and Self – entered a special time and space sparked by those huge, extraordinary pipal trees across US Highway 1 away from the campus. Under those sacred trees I had been transported down time, I had suddenly come into contact with Buddha and all those great rishis before and after him, those ancient seers who sat under those trees. (Kevat, 9)

A 'pipal tree' being an Indian icon of sanctity and enlightenment is an inspiring sight in the west. Its presence is great solace to him, with "aired roots" to serve as "a wall against the storm", to

serve as “an asram” and “an asan for meditations” (40). Being “the site of the Buddha’s first sermon”, it revives Buddha’s renunciation, penance and samadhi (40). It provides telepathic links for divine revelations. He regrets that writers in the west are “the wordmythmakers”, untruthful, unreal and fabricators and a western mind is “a mind never once in the solitude/wonder”, unable to grasp the mystical value of Indian stories (40). To an Indian writer in exile, these things serve as “moments of epiphany”, or as “a balloon of sensuous juices” to squeeze ecstasy. It is the creativity that operates beyond time and space (41). The poet looks back on his journey of mind. He admits that one such moment of epiphany put him to the “Buddhahood”. But in his immaturity he could not overcome the falsehood about it, “the lie of *bhodi* trees’ *bodhi* leaves”. Fabricated stories frustrate him. The Sanskrit parrot stories, the Tulinama, on the other hand, give him true joy, “parrots *kataking* overhead away and to Tulinama” (41). He values Sanskrit literature as capable of leading a writer-yogi to moments of ecstasy.

Transformation is a basic concept in yoga. The poet refers to the transformation he observes while standing on the bridge over the Coral Gable Canal, “a cathedral changed to a hospital and then to a hotel” (41). It marks a change from religiosity to humanity to pleasure-seeking commercial instinct. He views the transformation of his unromantic tale of “Kala Pani” into romantic tales that the west worked out by converting agonies, loss and denials and sufferings into stuff for pleasure-seeking western readers. Further, he notices transformation of thousands of Indian fruits and trees that are “reincarnated” in the west, for instance, “the imili become tamarind” (42), etc. The poet regrets that those educated luxuriously in the west, “the well fed students” fail to understand the “imili-tamarind” transformation and other kinds of transformation. The poet alleges that they do not care to even know them. The west also ignores the “sindhur-poinciana” transformation. Although with one entire street named ‘Poinciana’, they

do not bother to know about the source of the name, 'sindhur'. Likewise, they do not bother to know about "the Golden Shower of blossoms", "a royal umbrella", or even "the pink ixora flowers" that hedge the bungalows so commonly (42). The poet observes that students in the west lack a sense of inquiry, curiosity and zest for knowledge and yet they boast of their knowledge. The poet feels like an 'anti-hero' in a place, 'Dade County'. Canadians too treat him like that. In this condition, the poet prefers the *sadhuhood* (42-43).

The poet views that the west distorts knowledge with luxury, business, sex and universality. They call it "intellectual's quest" "to/ be sophisticate" (43). It, however, brings about degeneration of gurus in the west. Ironically he says that "Sidhartha", a guru "honeyed the merchants, women, the obsessed casteless/ disciples hungry for new brahminship" (43). His corrupt disciples rename the ageless pipal tree as a *bhodi* tree. The poet juxtaposes a guru's preaching with Buddha's first sermon to highlight the contradictions, "the lie/ of bhodi trees' bhodi leaves" (41). He points out that the name 'Gautam' has the origin in the Hindu literature. With these examples he conveys that transformation occurs in the west as degeneration of mind to convert an immigrant writer in to "a translated being" (Salman Rushdie).

The poet reviews Indian writing produced in the west in the light of transformation, "shredding your shredding of the Naipaul your a-polemic mind saw wronged woman wrongly wrongly wrongly" (43). The repetition of the word 'wrongly' makes the statement ironical about transformation. He says that he cultivated the understanding under the impact of Indian sages, 'parrots', "after parrots had possessed my soul" (43). He got rid of sentiments of "the black water" to cause indecisiveness in him, "to Indian or not to Indian, to Hindu or not to Hindu" (43). He confesses that such an indecisive state caused "intellectual fencing" among his Indians writers too at which writers like V. S. Naipaul got annoyed, "Naipaul your Highball" (43). He

confesses that he got into the trap willingly, “trapped ourselves willingly”. He prefers to fall back on the Upanishadic knowledge (43).

Detachment is first requirement in yoga. The poet explains it through a story of a woman beyond forty in the poem, “With the Sun Behind”. She looks back on her faded beauty and remembers that she was pretty once with young feet on sand, thighs unfitted legs, the waistline like the roll of waves with prints of a bikini time. The poet suggests to her that she should reduce her desire of this kind. He feels that ‘A nude white woman’ has to be restricted to a painting. He views desires as “the cracked up mirror/ in your heels” (49). They lift a person to a fake height, like plots of a feminist novel that are written with no revisions. A white woman in a painting gives him understanding that a woman in reality is different from a woman in fiction. The former is like ‘a woman’s deep sleep with snoring’ and the latter is like ‘surf slamming sand and sleeplessness’ (49). He understands that the simultaneity of such contradictions is a feature of life and one has to learn to live with them with the least distractions. A yogi has to train his mind in this way. As a result, he cultivates confidence to stay steady and calm in the midst of stormy and seductive contradictions.

The poet has faith in positive working of nature on body and mind. It may even affect transformation of mind. The poem, “Later the Same Morning” conveys his faith through his memory of how his parents and people in India valued the ancient Ayurveda and nature, “daddy offering the ancient Ayurveda”; how it endows life with heavenly bliss, “this paradise fit of limbs” and “ma’s milky madar broken for Shiva’s flowers” (49). Nature provides healthy environment with herbs and medicines. The poet refers to a process of preparing ayurvedic medicine from the ‘saijan’s webbed leaves’ (49). He enjoys these moments of epiphany. But his enjoyment is disturbed with a sound of an alarm clock ringing in the morning and with the

hustle-bustle of his European partner preparing for office. In his obsession with routine business the partner ignores flowers in a garden. He invites him to join him to office, but he declines the invitation. The poet shows a clear choice to adhere to the Indian culture, “No leave me in honeyed morning among coconut palms, / vermilion saman bloom, the cassia’s golden shower, copper/ rods glowing in the transformed morning” (50). He enjoys transformation in nature like “sex transposed/ heads” (50), that is sex elevated to beauty, innocence, purity and spirituality. The phrase “leave me” repeats twice in the poem to assert the poet’s choice for transposed nature. In the company of nature, he wants to inhale *prana*, “the candy floss dew in my nose climbing/ down the Kundalini”, and do the Kundalini yoga for an “appointment with soul” (50). He thus views nature as conducive to yoga. Aurobindo views nature as the basic force in every state of existence, “to drive it to transcend itself”, “in order to advance itself to a new symbol-being” with “a better combination of mental, moral and physical energies”. This is yoga that discovers Supermind in man. In this context, he views yoga as “the upward working of Nature” and the integral yoga as the harmonised progression “accompanied by a dynamic new-creation of our nature” (1997, 109, 116 and 369).

The poet’s knowledge and understanding prepares him for a metaphoric departure from the western world. It marks an end of exile with homecoming. He juxtaposes his exile and homecoming with Rama’s exile and homecoming to Ayodhya to highlight the difference. The poem, “The Day Before Departure” explains the difference, “except for the absence of Sita” (51). Rama returned home with Sita, his ‘shakti’, power. No Shakti or power accompanies the poet back home. The poem presents the poet’s pondering on ‘Shakti’, *prana* or bio-energy. While taking a departure from a month-long academic event held in Miami in Florida, he found some women participants devoid of genuine curiosity. They were like “chorus beyond Greek Drama”,

or female guards at the service of the Maurya Emperor, or a phalanx of Amazons. They cannot be true companions or his shakti. This makes him feel Sita's absence that is loss of power or impotency on his return home.

Persaud presents his pondering on the loss of Shakti in reference to the western feminist discourse on the women of ancient and modern India. Western feminists make a strong case for Sita and Draupadi, "He was Sita's Rama" and with greeting "SitaRama". They attempt to rewrite the *Ramayana* keeping Sita at its centre to give stories with rebellious spirit. They want to change the history that way. American journals encourage such stories with wide publicity. The poet calls such non-metaphorical response to Rama as "sunsand line of poetry" (52) and questions sincerity and originality of the women writers. He refers to the trilogy of Gandhis' assassinations in India, Mahatma Gandhi's by a Hindu extremist, Indira Gandhi's by a Sikh extremist bodyguard and Rajeev Gandhi's by a woman suicide bomber. He also regrets Indian politicians' slavish expectations in Sonia Gandhi, "Gandhi of Italy, calling her to chair the party...to rewrite our history" (52). He wants to convey that any such attempts to rewrite history go futile. He relates them to "Yudhisthir's folly" in the *Mahabharata* of staking Draupadi at the roll of loaded dice that comes down the history, "up history, down to the Mauryan Emperor". It ironically reflects that an Indian trusts an alien woman. He further views Sonia's futile attempts to rewrite the history of modern India like feminist writers' attempts to rewrite the *Ramayana*, the history of the ancient India. The poet views it as an American design to conspire against the basic cultural texts of India. He calls it a wrong interpretation of 'womanhood' or the Shakti under the impact of western feminism. He relates it to the loss of 'shakti' or impotency that he feels on his homecoming.

The poet's impotency makes him feel the condition of Ponce, a wounded warrior devoid of any strength. He is unable to know or recognize 'The Fountain', the source of knowledge. On hearing the noises of "Sita's women", western feminists planning departures, he feels like drowning in a swamp with moss, frogs, mosquitoes, or mounting a strangler fig twined like sexy limbs (53). A Hindu story published in a European book is like a sky of fabrication. These are the traps he wants to avoid when he prepares to return. He can see that the night of ignorance is getting over and the knowledge is dawning on him, "Sun now peeping over treetop with a crimson question" (53). With a call of knowledge, the Senorita-Sita's logic or the western feminist logic fades away like fog, "sunblocking lotion" (53). He passes a short time of seclusion—"shortlived talking to/ self" (54). He has to wait for the right moment of departure, 'until the surf grows taller and stronger' and clouds change into blue hue like the *Neel Kantham* or the *Krishna* colour (54).

Persaud gives two images, the baby's birth and the mother's death. He associates them with sky, ocean, clouds, watertops, thundershowers and lightening. He relates his mother's tragic death with loss of culture. He relates the baby's birth with "the Shiva dancing drops on the zinc roof" (55). He lost his mother because he was trapped in rules and he could not violate them and disobey her (*Dear Death*). He now wishes to break the rules to free his mother, "trapped/ for years in rules we would break again and again regardless/ of gods, guardians or lovers" (55). A baby's birth signifies a woman's freedom from the mother's womb. He thus relates it to freedom of culture and of soul. He views imposition of authority through rules as mere comedy, impotent, unsteady and cooling down one's ability to think respectively, "a toothless tiger of drops, a line of sand and blanketing waves" (55). He questions, "why let salt dry to unpleasantness on skin?" (55), and warns, "beware the thunderstorms/ – the lightening is bad" (55). He counteracts the

authority of rules with Krishna's energy through Krishna's rebellion against Indra, "But if thunderbolt is Indra, lightening is *Krishna lifting Gobarḍhan*" with courage, "let...Indra strike if he dares- I am Krishna, I am Shiva, I am *Lakshmi Kali Durga*" (56), "dance the Nataraja on rules" (56). His confidence shines. He is sure that these gods and goddesses "will cleanse salt from our skins". He prays to Durga, "hey *Durga*" to tame the tiger of authority. It is a prayer to Shakti that a yogi offers. Persaud uses conventional Hindu images of gods and goddess to explain the spirit of rebellion to resist loss of energy that the west affects in him.

Despite his preference for the ancestry, Persaud does not ignore modernity. Modern transportation and communication systems too inspire mystical thinking in him. In the poem, "Bodymovers", the poet describes four kinds of trains at different locations, 1. The toy train running at snail's speed up hills to Darjeeling, "HURRY HURRY SPOILS THE CURRY"; 2. The underground train in the New York city, "The Apple's black undercity jumping/ cars expertly: *I have come with the power of god/ Jahovah to rid this world*"; 3. The Metro Mover moving above the streets of Miami with elevated stations and 4. An overcrowded train rumbling in a West Indian city taking children to school and farmers to market places with "the green engine snorting like a rutting bull" (68-9). These four views give a varied perspective on 'movement of bodies'. The Darjeeling train is seductive with its slow speed. The New York train speaks of America's arrogance. The Miami train suggests movement above the worldly affairs of an elevated kind of an enlightened soul with mystical glimpses, "flickering of sunshine morning" and the ocean at a distance. A West Indian train reflects on a real life movement on the earth with all contradictions. Metaphorically, these four vehicles suggest different movements of mind, viz. seductive, arrogant, lofty and real. A West Indian train further reminds him of the Kabaka government's decision to abolish the railway, "That ReverseMidasMan" acting conspiracy

against the Indian childhood and peasantry, “- not all the same...loose their fierce independence,” (70). The memory disturbs him, “exiles from our souls exiles from ourselves”. Ironically, he describes his status, “We are now citizens of the world”, “World-citizens”. It sharpens his desire to return home, “We/ must return, we must return, we must...Return receding into silence” and “my/ mother – I have Indian blood, creek you know!” (70).

‘Waiting’ is a crucial stage in yoga. It corresponds to *Dharana*, contemplation on a specified object and implies a yogi’s faith in God. Persaud’s essay, “Kevat: Waiting on Yogic Realism” elaborates on the issue of ‘Waiting’ through a metaphor of Kevat by relating a writer’s waiting to Kevat’s waiting for Rama. The poet sharpens the intensity of his waiting by juxtaposing the two through an image of ‘a hungry sailor’. The poem, “Looking at Rain” elaborates on the poet’s waiting. He waits for clouds to clear and thunder to be calm. He waits for rain to quench his thirst in the heat of a day. He recalls the spring in the “rainfresh” Connecticut valley with melodies of birds, with robin’s bright movement, sparrows fluttering their wings to fly, and birds like bluejays giving out melodious echoes. The present experience spurs his memories to view his “‘heroic’ loneliness” (71). He gets a new insight. A man is like something “on a roll” operated invisibly, “Works are writing themselves....” (71). He gets wisdom of detached actions in which ‘a doer’ becomes an instrument, “*nimittamatra*” of the Almighty (*Gita*.3.35). This marks transformation in the poet’s thinking.

With new wisdom of detachment, the poet develops an ironic perception of the world. The poem, “A Unique Treasure of America” gives an ironic view of America’s treasure, “‘American’ firsts” (71). He confesses that the elites like him are instrumental in enriching it for a few dollars, “I have no voice and yet I have to download philosophies of the rishis on your ‘American’ firsts” (71). He employs an idea of being ‘instrumental’ to reflect on the irony with a

contrast to Indian ethical viewpoint. America borrowed 1. individualism of many civilizations, 2. logic of Nyaya, 3. 'netherworldno' – the Neti knowledge of the *Upanishadas*, of the Carvaka. And yet it claims it as their innovation and contribution to the world. He alleges Americans for stealing, patenting and copyrighting over others' possession, "another name and concept you/ stole and patented and pretended you invented" (72). As a protest, he prefers to rely on the original knowledge from India and wait, "wait at water's edge- how much longer- on the preoccupiedwithquenchingthirstorhunger" (72). In this renewed perception, hunger or thirst becomes the priority.

'Conversion' is a high-pitched concern that Persaud reiterates often. It sparks sharp debates. The poem, "The Crossed Missionaries" refers to one such debate reflecting on sweeping acts of conversion of religion of Christian missionaries across the world. He names three of them, Christobal, Padre Cancer and Lief Erricsson. To highlight their intentions the poet employs the word "crossed" with three-fold implications: to hold the cross, to hold a crossed view on others, "crossed eye thinking" and to punish by fixing on the cross. The first is the action, the second is the intention and the third is the result, "What he gave/ the natives (crossed-eye) they gave him back (the cross)" (73). He thus relates conversion to the Karma theory of the *Bhagavadgita*. He also questions to damage that conversion causes to harmony in nature, "If you can convert a cow to a goat a peacock to a pig..." (74). Aurobindo views that Yoga restores harmony in nature (369). He remembers Vyasa of the *Mahabharata* for his brilliance "charactering that geneology of genealogies" (74) and ends the debate on a Vedic-sutra style, "We will take care of ours – only we can" (75). It reminds Gandhi's reply to Britishers in the *Hind Swaraj* (1937).

'Cricket' too receives a renewed perception in the poem, "Stumps". It acquires a metaphysical dimension with 'stumps', 'players', 'baseball bat', 'pavilion', 'a field with clipped grass' to mean respectively a goal, practitioner of yoga, the energy or prana, condition of retreat and the nerve channel leading to the mind. Several lines too carry metaphorical value, for instance, "an old 45 rpm of sparrow's song" indicates singing of devotional heart; "white flannelled players running like sparrows swaying" refers to a yogi's mind swaying between 'good' and 'evil' and between doubts and hopes; "We gamed" conveys that he got the spirit of the game (76). Further, the question, "Or was it I alone/ exploring the game?" hints at the isolation of a yogi and the phrase "exploring the Gables" hint at his mind's struggle for transformation of mind. The title "stumps" points at the goal of yogic realism and the phrases in the closing line, "to look backforward, analyze mistakes" and "love again" (76) indicate a need of introspection and analysis for a renewed vision. The poem, thus, points at a convergence of three processes, retrospection on the past, introspection on the present and concentration on the future.

'Morning' is a metaphor to suggest an enlightenment of mind. The poet views morning in a 'yogilike' fashion. The poem, "This Morning Which Is Not For Love" describes it in the 'Neti' way of judgement. The negations repeat in the poem, "This morning which is not", "Waves banging unheard by", "Only this morning's smog is not that dew lining" (77-78). He compares a morning of his vision with the morning that he lived in the west. A morning of his vision is "a glimpse of Upanishadic's/ yogis splitting atoms of light in a clearing on the forest floor"; "a Florida dawn"; that among the banyan trees when yogis split particles of atoms in ancient ashrams. It is pleasant with catbird songs and bluejay calls among pines, banyans and bamboos. On such a morning one is compelled to love, "And it was impossible to unlove". He wishes that

he would grow old in “an academic-ashram town” (78). The morning in the west, on the other hand, is “this unmeasurable rule of lives”, “unlined by sparrow’s songs”, “undistracted” by a computer fan and a clicking keyboard. He contends that western intellectualism endeavours to conceal human weakness of lust and the Indian intellectualism, the “puranic motivator” gives rise to six systems of philosophy (77).

‘Invisibility’ is another concern that receives a renewed perception from the poet. The poem, “The Invisible Man” presents it in a ‘different time and knowledge’. He refers to Ralph Ellison who still operates his agenda of the silencing of women ‘invisibly’. Even after his death he remains a remote ancestor from Europe to lay unresisting impact on American writers of high sensibility like Toni Morrison, Ishmael Reed or Alice Walker. Persaud admits that marginal writers like him had to wait, “We waited in silence” with contempt, “I laughed the feminist apology” (78). Referring to the histories of the black slavery and the indentured labourship, he says that the affluent white in America viewed the black as gangs of pilferers and robbers to be handled with caution. They ignored the African protest in New York. The fight between the white and the black is like the fight of two pythons, “the West African white python god and the black pythons” in which the coloured pythons are silent witness and rendered ‘invisible’. It serves as island to cause impediment in a writer’s yoga.

The prana remains a central focus in the cult of Kundalini in Egypt and India. The mention of python in the poem takes up its discussion, “Ancient Egypt and ancient India wearing serpents on a Shiva-arm swaying to the music of...” (80). Gopi Krishna too mentions it in the book, *The Evolution in to Higher Consciousness* (67-70). The poet means that the fight between the white and the black pythons suggest a fight of arrogance wasting energy. Yoga values energy as vital for evolution of self. Music too plays a vital role in the Kundalini Yoga. The impact of

devotional singing and music causes 'swaying' effect on the serpent that curls at the base of the Kundalini. The poet imagines him as among 'hungry sailors' who sing and dance around the swaying fire, "hungry sailors ourselves" (80). It causes the arousal of energy or the serpent power that leads to the awakening of the Kundalini. As the hunger for the spirituality increases it gives a force to a yogi's 'sailing', his yogic efforts. A writer-yogi too sails in the ocean of the unconscious with poetry. But he views that "the fevered/ look of ageing academics and poets" in the west arouse a tug of war between white and black writers at conferences, confluences and seminars in which Indian writers are rendered invisible. They eventually end up with "little sad stories/staged during seductions" (80). This condition cools down a writer-yogi's creativity.

The poet values Africans' vitality of fierce protests to inspire energy in Indians to protest against their invisibility and silence with similar fierceness. He regrets that Indian lack of energy of Africans and curiosity of scientists, "a million year old and yet still can't find their souls" (80). He wishes that Indians should undertake genuine efforts in soul-searching with energy and curiosity. He also reflects on his own lacking and idling with soul-searching. But while appreciating Africans, he is aware of blind racism too that limits their ability to challenge ideas (80). He wants Indians to cultivate moral and mental strength to challenge ideas. In this context, he refers to the ancient tradition of questioning. He knows that Indians have potentiality for it, "sure you can/ question Brahma Vishnu Mahesh-" (80-1). The circle that began with the first poem, "Returning to Miami" (3) on the point of questioning thus gets over. The return is complete.

The poet returns to Miami metaphorically. It is an object for contemplation, 'something specified', a seat of knowledge, a replica of the ancestral land. The poem, "My Love My Love Miami" relates his love for Miami with response to its nature, birds, time and seasons. He

contrasts his response to time with a westerner's obsession with schedule, "But would you know anything except The Schedule?" He denounces any association with a place 'without birds' response, "Get out of here- that's no woodpecker". He announces, "I am a student of nature- birds" to love wild life, "a turtle breaking the blackwater surface for air", "Then the startled fishhawk's flight and the snake's" (81). He displays a Wordsworthian zest for nature. He asks a westerner whether he remembers Lawrence's serpent poem or the first lessons of 'a woodsgirl in the city almost threading a snake'. It carries connotation of energy in yoga. He speculates on time 'the opening closure of the night' and the sound "khat khat khat" to relate them to "The Schedule for the Flight". He regrets the delay with 'work undone' and 'a wait' (82).

The waiting allows him to contemplate on Selvon's girl who loved London. The poet has 'his girl' too who aroused in him love for Miami. Spiritually, the 'girl' connotes for 'prana', or bio-energy, or 'Shakti' and the 'city', London or Miami, stands for the seat of the Shakti that is the Kundalini. Secondly, the image of a woodsgirl in the city threading a snake evokes a sense of prana. This ultimately connotes to spiritual quest, "My love my love, Miami" (82). It marks the beginning of the Raja Yoga. The poet thus acknowledges Sam Selvon's inspiration on him to explore the heights of mysticism through writing.

Once again an image of 'a postcard' appears in a new light to sum up the yogic vision. The poem, "Postcards from Miami" presents eight postcards in eight poem-fragments. Each postcard stands for one stage in yogic perception. The first postcard explains the poet's preference for a postcard as a means of interpersonal communication, "To replace the phone with this tropix postcard" (87). In spite of modern means of telecommunication in good variety, easy accessibility, promptness and affordability, a postcard serves a potent counterpart to resolve the 'silence' of the north with personal touch and voice, "even the long silences unresolved" (87). It

may reach late, but it cannot be ignored as it serves a written document. It allows 'soft' voice to his memory, pleasant or agonizing. It heals, "cements" wounds and calms the ghostly effects of past conflicts through an awareness of 'distance' that it brings to his mind. It provides him a "space for selves" in a place made 'new' or strange with Canadians' heartless professional smile and disinterested treatment. Like "dolphins escorting and leaping", a postcard carries the poetic imagination to an aesthetic height, to make it innocent and free in spirit, "unwild" and "uncaged" (87). The poet wishes that dolphins, postcards and people should have freedom to love or miss love and to convey sentiments. Thus, he raises physical dimension of a postcard to a height of sentimental need.

The second postcard explains the reciprocal aspect of receiving other's voice and call, "To hear your voice, Accept your/ call!" (87). It allows exchange of love, "We shall return together love," (87) and bridging contacts, "a seven mile stretch of bridge/ over sea, over milky water" (88). The poet mentions two bridges. One is "over sea" signifying physical transmission to consolidate sentiments through human contacts. Another is "over milky water" signifying spiritual transmission to elevate personal sentiments to sentiments of devotion. A postcard serves like 'the prana' to affect upliftment of soul. The mind learns to love death, 'dear-death', "the closetodeath think of love" (88). The circle that began with Persaud's first novel, *Dear Death* (1986) gets over with this poem with a mark of fearlessness.

The third postcard gives an image, "Christmastreelit" to signify a call of "she", Shakti to go ahead and unite, "but come she said, come together" (89). With fishermen's boats and various activities on the beach, he admits over talking, overwork and over owning to arouse envy in others: 'rainstorm', 'yearlong wrath', 'hibiscus' and 'almond vines that he guided'. But despite losses and gains, he receives a call of Shakti, yogic power (89).

The fourth postcard serves him a vehicle to carry away fear and invisibility that his people suffered in the political turmoil, "the unbrochured areas", "invisible flowers" as "I-man", "an invisible man". It gives a momentum to his yogic efforts with fearlessness.

The fifth postcard is the poet's letter of invitation to visit some areas like the Bay side that gives the Spanish music and Latin and Lambada music of gypsies. He says that the Katak dance of India that is popular in European houses. He juxtaposes European fondness to "patenting the yogi's art of intuition" (91) to highlight Indians' serious apathy to music and art. He regrets that Naipaul calls an Indian art "million mutinies" (91) and an Indian writer in exile too ignores it. The poet is confused whether to celebrate the present or to harp on sad melodies of the past regrets, "if I should be writing/ summer elegies or winter laments" (91).

The sixth postcard relates the poet's confusion to the summer of "eternal fountain" and the winter of "chilly silences". He found the confusion in Derek Walcott too. On self-verifying he feels happy with the confusion. He in fact enjoys the confusion. This indicates an enhanced condition of a yogi's mind that takes the contradictions, good and the bad or the favourite and the unwanted alike. He once suffered confusion of high sentimentality. He now enjoys the confusion of contradictions in life with ironic detachment.

The seventh postcard explores the Creation theme. The poet refers to a baby in the mother's womb, "orbed". Various images like "this wash of canegreen waves hypnotic", "this twinkling of banyan leaves reyouthing soul" (92) saturate his mind. He views "inverted" banyan with "these roots in the air", branches like "stringing fingers to pen". He relates the image of "the ashwastha" in the *Bhagavadgita* with poetry with roots of imagination soaring high and its extension in physical words on paper. He views an act of poetry natural, unifying and nourishing to nature, "fig roots threading earth/ and fertilizing fingers" (92). This poetry marks a sharp

contrast to that written in an air-conditioned computer lab, with fiction overlooking 'the pleasures of saman bloom on the lawn' and also the colours of the holi celebration. The poet also juxtaposes a university campus with an ashram to mark a contrast. Though a university campus can be free from vices of the place, the academia deceives itself with subjectivity. An ashram is involved in experiments in the tantra or mystical science in the interest of creativity. The poet admits that he is involved in such experiments with feverish zest, "as truth, poetry and love!" (93).

The final eighth postcard deals with the yogic vision, "Vision clarifying". It is the final stage of transformation of mind with an ability 'to see'. It is the Divine Vision or the Yogic Vision. Ironically, he says that it is different from his auntie's vision that relies on her memories. It is like blindness. His vision is like the "sun's variegated green". It is a vision of creation like, "a newborn as/ exited as us sheparding/ it out to the ocean/ where waves rolled/ and nights sparkled with/ stars and laughter" (93). It is like collecting shells in the company of boys. It is a vision of hope that the future generations will involve them in creative efforts. With this hope he collects shells and offers them to god with love. He gets awareness that his new creative act of poetry will stay safe and will lead him to love god. Thus, the final postcard focuses on spiritual dimension of poetry that makes writing as yoga.

These eight postcards seem to represent different elements of life operating inside the body: I. 'Earth', the grosser constituent through passion of regret for the loss; II. 'Water', through references to the 'sea' and 'milky water' and a bridge; III. 'Fire', through references to lights that brighten the dark waters of the ocean; IV. 'Air', through references to invisibility that pained his heart; V. 'Sound', through references to sounds of dance and music, "the yogi's art"; VI. 'Eather', through the poet's mystical dilemma of what to write, 'summer elegies or winter

laments'; VII. 'Mind', through reference to the image of a banyan tree corresponding to that of the 'Ashwastha', the tree of Knowledge and creation of new knowledge; and VIII. 'Vision', a subtler constituent through evocation of the Creation Story and offering to god. All these elements constitute psychic centres or nerve centres located inside the body in the Shushumna nerve channel in the sequence of: *Muladharachakra* (earth and water), *Manipurachakra* ('fire'), *Anahatchakra* ('air'), *Vissudhachakra* ('throat- sound'), *Ajnachakra* ('eather'), *Brahmarandhra* ('mind') and *Sahasrar*, the highest psychic centre ('vision'). As the prana or the bio-energy moves up the channel it pierces through these centres to acquire a purer state through purgation and cleansing of impurities. It also breaks open the three nerve knots, the 'Brahmagranthi' at the *Muladharachakra*, the 'Vhshnugranthi' at the *Manipurachakra* and the 'Rudragranthi' at the *Ajnachakra* ("Glossary of Sanskrit Terms", *Hath Yoga Pradipika*, 202-219). The opening of the knots signifies the freedom of the prana from three attributes of mind that hamper its creativity with attitudes and biases. The prana breaks open these knots with sufficient purification and consolidation that occur simultaneously in the body. The eight postcards suggest this process as occurring in a writer-yogi's psyche. Consequently, the horizons of his mind are widened to have the yogic vision.

It may be noticed that a series of post cards poems occurs at the end of the book, *The Hungry Sailor*. A series of poems, Column I –VII too occurs at the end of the book, *A Surf of Sparrows' Songs*. This coincidence appears like the poet's design to explain the process of yoga in two phases. In both the cases seven poems stand for seven energy centres, Chakras in the body through which the prana or a writer-yogi's poetic energy moves upward. They mark two processes, cleansing and purification of prana and its transformation and elevation. The series of poems at the end of *A Surf of Sparrows' Songs* suggests that a writer-yogi's poetic energy is

purged of sentimental attachment to have cleansing resulting in calm and steady mind. The series of poems at the end of *The Hungry Sailor* suggests that a writer-yogi's poetic energy attains transformation and elevation of thought waves with ironic detachment, a vision of equality, *samadrishiti* (the *Bhagavadgita*). It is a Divine vision, or the yogic vision.

The final poem, "Please Don't Ask for Closure" conveys the yogic vision. The poet's mind is open up to new horizons and now he asks for 'no closures'. He ignores what is happening around. He does not wish to intervene nature, "Let the sun shine...". He is determined to write, "well I'm using a pen..." (94). He tries to preserve the smell of the soil of his native land in his memory. He wishes to offer his poetry to god, "But you will be part of my sailing as I am part of yours?" (94). He surrenders his self with humbleness of a 'bhakta', a devotee. He admits that he is not a great, or strong sailor and yet he dares to sail, 'navigate' through the Ocean. There is only one thing to give him strength and that is his memory of the homelands, "The Fountain of La Florida, The Fountains of South America (the Caribbean lands), and Asia (India) and a wildflower summer Canada" (94). Even the thought of his future gives him strength (94-5). Memory becomes his strength to affect elevation of his energy or the prana. Therefore, he prays for 'no closure' of his memory, "So please don't ask, but/ please don't ask for closure..." (95). He thus explores the positive aspect of memory to acquire spiritual dimension that may lead him to the final vision of 'Yogic Realism'.

Persaud's recent poetry in *A Writer Like You* (2002) conveys the final stage of yoga. Being a part of the poetry trilogy, it continues with the spiritual dimension that the poetry in *A Surf of Sparrows' Songs* and *The Hungry Sailor* explores to further explore the height of yogic vision. It is a realised state of mind, "samadhi" or realisation. The subjects explored in the

poetry are no different than those of earlier poetry, viz. exile, history, personal memory, poets of the west, African poets, poets of Indian origin in exile, agents and propagators patronizing poets and poetry, political biographies, literary awards, western practice of stealing, patenting and copyrighting, erosion of the Indian mind under the western influence and the like. Amidst these varied subjects, the poet conducts a search for Writer of his vision that can serve as goal to a writer-yogi. The title of the book "A Writer Like You", therefore, hints at the direction into which the writer's poetic quest moves. It corresponds to the discovery of the Self for the final union. The title implies a comparison between a writer of Persaud's vision and "You", God. Hence, a writer-yogi has to know God. Yogis and sages of India involved in an intensive search to know God that still remains inconclusive. However, they evolved a method of defining God. It is by eliminating worldly objects saying, 'Not this, not this'. It is an attempt of reaching the truth about God through negations. The Indian philosophical system calls it the "*Neti- Na iti*" way of knowing God. Earlier in the poem, "Returning to Miami" the poet refers to it in view of obtaining knowledge. Here he makes it a part of his quest, 'a writer like you'. He does it by shifting focus on different things that he comes across and then eliminating them as 'not this, not this', the 'Neti' way of the Indian philosophical system.

The quest opens with the 'Father-Son' imagery. The Father is god and the son is a writer-yogi. The imagery helps the poet's contemplation. The opening poem, "Father and Son Contemplating Boxing Day" describe poetry as a sensuous act, "softly softly falling...dots from the finest fountain pen nib" (1). However, he does not want it to be as sensuous as a whore's act, but as sensuous as a baby's act, "tugging at pants", "echoing children's laughter from the slopes below" and "wave/ child wave and monosyllable the precipitation/ ga, da, ma, ba". He says clearly, "- a word you scratch out not wanting/ to whore it, or whore this poem" (1). The poem

clearly, “- a word you scratch out not wanting/ to whore it, or whore this poem”. The poem ends on a note of waiting (half a century) “to articulate father-son laundry” that cleanses poetry (1).

The sense of ‘fathering’ is conveyed in the poem, “Fathering” through an image of a German couple leading their two dogs in a park. The dogs are missing their trail and then getting back home. The poet imagines him as passing the ‘dogwood tree’, “when these walks were all my own” (2). He says that it is through his father that he received his “inheritance”, his cultural identity. It is like “lighting spirit of spirit/ genes- ego covered in science- of souls”. He introspects, “(can I ever be good and proper father?)” (2). The story, “My Girl, This Indianness” (*Canada Geese and Apple Chatney*, 38) discusses the father image in a social context as rendering cultural identity to children that gives meaning to his existence. The present poem views its spiritual connotation. Another poem, “Passengers on the Vancouver Island Ferry” expresses the poet’s pride for his father, “My father made me the son/ he always wanted” (81). The vision leads him to contemplate on the Father who is the Writer above.

The poem, “Nibbling at Resentment” views a process of poetic creation like “an infant’s voice” to be “transmitted from the baby’s” into his heart (82). He wishes to negotiate his space in an alien world with delicacy of a baby’s voice and innocence of a baby’s laughter, “Yes, so it comes, nibbling/ at resentment: I need my space/ and you need yours” (82). He conveys his wish to interact with other cultures and peoples and calls interaction “dharma’s time: the antithesis of snowbirds- returned reluctantly”. The poem, “Driving the Baby” relates a baby’s innocence to a bird’s innocence and calls it “the darshan of a rishi”. He views ‘a bird’ as bridging distances between the south and the north that leads to “acceptance of a northern season”, although

reluctantly. The poet says that he is willing to sacrifice his happy days in Miami, 'warm and youthful Miami days' in the interest of interaction between the south and north (34).

The poet regrets on cruelty to birds and children. In the poem, "Birds", he compares cooing sound of a pigeon with an infant's delicate voice, "the first sound we heard from the infant" (39). He also finds a sparrow's songs penetrating through a place. It is like a call of the soul. He laments that the place suppresses such a voice with cruel acts of banging a door on children's shouting when they play in a park. Pigeons in fact are guides to lead birds correctly, but they become the prime target of cruelty. The poet counts on a bird's value as ranging from scientific, viz. Darwin's theory of evolution, to the religious, "Vishnu's divine transponder". Birds coming to North America are like the baby coming late in fall-snow. In the chilly cold of the North, he recalls warmth of the womb, the 'summer'. An analogy of a bird's sound and an infant's sound extends further to a poet's sound to make a triangle of innocence, in nature, man and poet. Out of concern for all three, he calls the summer for warmth of love. He questions degenerative state of poetry, "Are we who, or what intuition, we imitate?" (40).

The poet employs another bird image to convey his spiritual hunger. The poem, "The Hungriest Hawk" gives an image of 'a hawk' that circles over and around for 'holiday feast' on 'anything that moves' below. The image points at tyrants who target on any sensitive protests or movements. The poet says ironically, "the hawk might be Hindu and/ what would it be then?" (3). But the irony carries a dual implication. The first carries a social sense of self-criticism on Hindu leadership of the Temple Committee targeting on innocent youth's protests (*The Ghost of Bellow's Man*). The second carries spiritual connotation with altered meaning, 'the hungriest hawk' to mean 'a hungry sailor'. A writer-yogi is a hungry sailor who hunts for something that

moves. It is sensation of heart and energy of mind that feeds his creative urge. But the poet alleges that "the snowlit ground" of Canada fails to provide him any such thing for a festive feast to his creative urge. Like he feels sorry for a hawk's efforts, 'dives' (3) and likewise for his creative efforts. He finds that his current status is disgusting to nourish his creative urge.

In the poem, "Getting into History", he mentions disgusting things in his personal history through three images: doctor, pundit and writer. He holds all three responsible for loss of culture. There are three doctors that he refers to the first was the doctor at the hospital who treated his mother. His casual attitude was responsible for his mother's death, "a colour you would come to possess and redefine" (4) (*Dear Death*). It was a loss on personal ground. Another doctor is Dr Cheddi Jagan, an eminent Indian leader and the first premier of Guyana. The poem, "No Elegy for Dr J" presents a severe criticism on him. Although with fascinating and envious power position, people's reverence and power of negotiation, he failed to employ a true spirit of revolution, "the Corentyne Thunder" (8) for his people. He in stead betrayed his people with his compromising cowardice and indifference to people. Though he inspired people with 'a handbag of stories' of Gandhi's non-violence, Nehru's commingling with Marx and the Great October Revolutionist and though he was celebrated as supreme spirit of revolution by African poets like Martin Carter, Wilson Harris, Jan Crew and younger elected members in the BG legislator shouting 'Doc Doc Doc', he failed to ensure his people better living. The poet expresses his annoyance, "You were Indian/ and they were Indians. You were the son of the plantation and the bitter-sweet sugar"(8); "You daring to raise you thunder and your finger, / your rishi-wrath against the white god Booka" (8). He married a White woman who would supposedly "to accompany your thunder" (9), but as the first Premier of British Guyana in 1961 he witnessed coolly the Africans' atrocious acts and rapes (ironically) "as calm/ as a great and graying,

balding ancient rishi” and cowardly prevented Indians from resisting. Yet he wished that somebody should write a biography on him (10) as if he has done great things for his people. The poet’s response is sceptical, “I save my question. ‘Do you consider yourself Indian, Hindu?’” (12) He appeals to the thunder in him, “O Corentyne bhai come home come home” and contends that Jagan’s thunder turned out to be mere illusion to satisfy his political aspiration. He determines, “ashes of the Corentyne/ Thunder we will take with us to the corners of the earth...energizing us forever” (13). The poet conveys irony at Dr Jagan’s craze for biography, “Your/ excellency/ Jagan, the old doc back, the biographyhunters scenting/ megacontracts” (12). The poet holds him responsible for cultural erosion for the Indian community in Guyana, “no lamentation please” or “no elegy for Dr J” (12).

The third doctor is Deepak Chopra, an ayurvedic doctor by profession who aspired to be a writer. The poem, “Dr. Writer” refers to aspiration of this Indian celebrated in America as practitioner-teacher of yoga who lives on “an island” and “writes in vacuum” “away from literati”. He wants to shift to Manhattan, “The lamplight of literati” (25). In a poetic expression he calls him a “pain’s relative” (24) or “suffering’s relative” (25) who writes as “pain soars in poetry” (24). The poet says ironically, “the nobel of Arrowsmith, those books of Chopra/ the Ayurvedic man, Dr Chopra-/ Deepak Chopra who now writes novels/ The Dr/ and his publicists making him a novelist-” (26). The doctor treats poetry as a stepping-stone for novels. The poet questions Chopra’s aspiration to write, “writing’s a different thing from surgery” (26). He means that an writer-obsessed with a success-dream cannot write seriously and does serious damage to a concept of creativity.

The irony on writers in exile continues in the poem, "Poem Poem", "From today you pat my back and tomorrow me you" (26). The poet begins, "I'm writing this in secret and nobody must know" (26) and concludes, "So I'm writing this in secret and nobody knows" (27). The poet seems to strike a balance between a poet's expectation and the reality that marks the irony of situation. The 'doctor-turns-writer' dictum recurs at several places in the book: "the doctor wanting permission to write a book on my case" ("Lake Simcoe", 54); "I lost my pen/ until today...rectifying heartclogs/ or the epic pages-" and "no no no it's your voice/ you haven't found your voice/ as yet" ("Dear Doctor", 93-4); "I will have you know an MD's/ an author", "But why can't I/ heal too, good doctor? Ayurvedically/ you do-", "I've always/ wanted to be a great healer/ in the west i.e. rapping Hindu India" ("Timeless Money, Ageless Mind", 99-100). Each time, the irony shifts from a tone of ridicule to warning and to envy to reach a height of regrets that the poet feels about the degeneration of poetry. He views these doctor-turned-writers to be in lieu with lusty flatterers-turned-publishers. He contends in reference to Deepak Chopra's case that a doctor can be a writer of celebrity in the west if he is capable to capture the centre on any ground other than genuinely for a writer. It causes to him frustrating seclusion to contend that such a writer is NOT A WRITER of his vision.

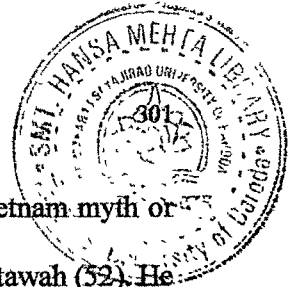
The second image of a celebrity is a pundit or a priest in the west. He too claims to be writers. In the poem, "Relative Passing", the poet views a pundit in the North America as "a rarity", "busy trading on dhoti". 'Dhoti', an Indian garment becomes not only his dress but also his philosophy and identity. The poet comments ironically that he prospers on his dhoti. In front of their charisma, the poet suffers a condition of deprivation, "write how many books/ and still missing something" (7). He has to join a public acclaim of a pundit at which he feels powerless. People in exile hold a pundits are the 'dharmakeepers' for a 'twice shipwrecked' Hindu

community in exile, “badges of courage” like the jhandi flages, and spirit of affirmation, “yet India, we haven’t deserted you entirely” (19). The poem, “Dharmakeepers” views that they form a link between the people and their cultural ancestry in India and serve them a binding factor. The poet regrets that in this land a poet is “the stereotype” and his poem too becomes stereotypical, “computerprintoutpoem”(21). And that people acclaim such poems. Young writers dream to be like Naipaul to pride on non-Hindu or anti-Hindu affiliations and identity, “non-meatness”(21). The poem, “Disremembering H-India” refers to two such poets who argue vehemently on India, “If a rotting caste system is Hinduism is madman’s fatawah” and, “India owes/ not a single new or original thought to Islam”. The poet’s concludes the debate with a remark, “conversion is the highest/ form of disrespect” (14-16). The poet recalls how they in Guyana and Trinidad called Naipaul “a Hindu (whore)”, and exposed pujaris and pundits who were ‘occasional scribblers hobbyist’ and “called themselves poets”. The poet says that it is “the thing we do and did and have to do for dharma” (21). This rebellious sentiment seems to be an extension of Raj’s spirit and commitment as delineated in the novel, *The Ghost of Bellow’s Man* (1992) and the stories of *Canada Geese and Apple Chatney* (1998).

The poet comments on publishing industry in the west. He remembers a portrait of a celebrity based in Manhatton. He walked around Manhatton in search of poems for his proposed publication, “The Collected: New and Selected” at the demand of the editor. He finds the portrait “haunting” (22). He remembers a dialogue on Hemmingway that ended on a note, “Hemmingway was a better educated writer”. He gives his reflection on it, “Education makes the/ educated. But it is writing makes the writer. Or the writer/ makes the writing, or writing makes the writing. Person/ and pens medium”(23). He further views that persons like a white liberal woman may get fascinated at the oppressed, for instance “the Eunuch” in India. They are

good at talking, but are as impotent as the Eunuch to generate anything concrete. He laments, “the spark we felt that first time not igniting now” (23). He means that writers in the west are incapable of receiving inspiration and igniting their souls with it. On returning to Toronto with another book he feels, “we are public persons after all, very private public persons” (23). It is the irony of his existence. The word ‘Dharmakeeper’ has double reference, the pundits holding the Hindu leadership and the poets holding people’s minds. The irony helps him to convey that a pundit is NOT A WRITER to comply with his vision of ‘a writer like you’.

Persaud refers to another tribe of pundits-priests. They belong to the Hare Krishna sect chanting ‘Hari Bol’ in high obsession. Through organising an Annual Hare Krishna Parade in most cities of the world, they gain astounding popularity. The poet witnessed one such parade in Toronto, called ‘yatra’. The poem, “Yatra” presents his reflections on the parade. It is a great show of Indian pride. However, despite being an Indian who prides on Hinduism poet takes a detached view. He reviews the claims of the Hare Krishna priests with ironic detachment. The priests claims: A). Prabhupada was the first to bring the Hare Krishan mahamantra and the idols of god Jagan-nauth into the west. B). It is acquiring a form of a powerful spiritual movement in the west to revolutionise peoples’ minds through Krishna’s name. The poet alleges that these pundits spread myth, “a lie, another lie”(50). He regrets that it ignores the pioneering contribution made by his ancestors, who were indentured Indian labourers in British Guyana and were the first to bring Hinduism into the west. It is lost in “opaque sheet of history” (50). In view of the second claim he presents an analysis of the show, “screaming Harinam”, “an evening raag of bansuri” and “and gopis coming out into a lovescented evening” (53). He views the global spread of the movement ironically, ““African Krishna”, “the Chinese looking Krishna”, “EuroKrishnas”, “Canadian Krishna”, “American Krishna”, and that “you are



convinced that Krishna himself is here” (53). The yatra is no better than the Vietnam myth or fatwah, “Harinam, Vietnam, rock n’ roll...lookalike Rushdie”, or blasphemy or fatawah (52). He tunes his comments of the yatra with the chanting, “Hari Bol” that recurs through the poem, “And yes-enjoy the showfolks- Haribol- Jai Jai Hari Bol” (51). It adds to an irony to it in a typical Indian way of rejecting a lie. These pundits who perpetuate myth and lies do not fit in to his vision of ‘A writer like You’.

A social worker-cum-anthropologist turned promoter is another type of pundit, a promoter “(of himself)”, ironically the ‘dharmakeepers’. The poem, “Sari” describes one such promoter, a woman, “a Maharani in brocaded sari” (37). ‘Sari’ becomes her trademark to exploit the ‘Indianness’ for personal gain. She spreads her charm to emerge as saviour and patron of art and culture and thus hides her immoral secrets. In her new dignity, she visits museums and displays of art to encourage and patronise young and budding writers and artists with her coaxing voice. She gives readings, paper presentations and programmes on the air in her ‘trademark sari’, ‘husky voice’ and ‘cultivated privacy’ to patent ‘the Indian High Culture’. The poet views it ironically as ‘literature’s whoredom’ that he discusses in the poem “Literature’s Whoredom” (110). The poet describes writers as parasites to prosper on whoredom, ironically calling them “writers of revolution”, “mere chanters of nonexistent/ virtues of the comrade great leader” (110). The poet shows clear distaste for them, “our lips hardened” and categorises their writing as “entering literature’s whoredom” (110).

The third category of writers is the poet’s contemporary writers. The focus shifts from one genre of writers to another, like from ‘coolie writers and poets’; to ‘writers of Indian origin writing in exile’ like Salman Rushdie and Arundhati Roy; to ‘African poets’ like Watson, Harris

and Martin Carter; to 'European writers' pilfering and patenting on Indian subjects. Persaud's poetry presents a scanning of these writers to expose their minds and motives with a diagnostic remark. Ironically he calls them writers of revolution. Coolie writers and poets of Indian and West Indian origin fall to his immediate observation. The poems, "Balgobin Kappah" describes a writer of the Guyanese character with the Creol tongue who feels lonely in Canada like once Sam Selvon and Ishmith Khan did in England. He once rebelled against the Burnham government. But now he remains unconcerned with his past. He finds life in Canada "sweet, sweet, sweet" (17) and is grateful to Canada for a name and an opportunity to publish. The poem, "Fragrances" mentions another poet with nostalgia for home. He is a misfit in the western environment, "No flowers of almond or amergis/ or seaweeds here" (27) and finds "a scent of souls mingling with western smells" (27). He remembers "ma's cake" with "the essence of fragrant/ Indian oil and spices sprinkled", and the Demerara sugar that originated from India. The past lingers in his mind like fragrances, yet it serves little purpose to him in Canada. The memory of "cooy cooy" sweet sound of birds and infants touches his heart with "wisps/ of longing and belonging and unbelonging" (28). He enjoys the nostalgia, but is unable to convert it in creative urge. As a result, his writing does not convey true love for home. Such writers do not comply with his vision of 'A writer like You'.

There is yet another type of coolie writers who burn with aspiration for success and name in the west. They hold V. S. Naipaul as the 'don sir' figure to be followed in every footstep. The poems "Coolie Poet" and "Another Coolie Poet" refer to them. He looks to conform to the British outfit, "intoning Britishly" and the British language, Solomon's "peacock language" with conviction that the British is inevitable (29). He seeks to follow the tradition of writing irreverently for the culture that was set by Rushdie and others. Such a writer is playing a coolie's

role, "laboured poems and/ novels and essays in the Euroform for the Euromistress". The poet raises a question, "isn't there Coolie/ abstraction too" (29). Such a writer claims that great dreams and vision drag him to London to get perfection in writing. He aspires to get a doctorate from a British university by which his "writing get authority". He forgets his past and the origin. The poet laments that though he pretends to write as a Hindu or Indian writer he merely sells his culture, "Hinduism or was that Indian/ ism-selling"(31). He lives like a sheep among Christian poets and writers. The poet envies such a writer ironically, "see how them dactarate mek them turn writa...sophisticated writa" (31).

The poem, "Mih Call Dhis Wan Coolie Writah" talks about a coolie writer's conversion under "miseducation" of the Canadian Presbyterian churchman that ensures a good job and living in Canada. This is 'literary whoredom', he says (110). Yet they claim to be writing about 'backdham people', plantation labourers, women victims, and pundits in Guyana. In the poem, "Backdham Poet" the poet laments on a Hindu writer in exile who seeks to prosper on "dalpuri and roti and curry". Like a whore he sells their conscience to please non-Hindu critics. To his people back home, he boasts, "I'm/ free as a butterfly" (34) with snobbish smile, "conspiratorially"(34). Like an obeah man, he adorns his house with a huge Shiva Lingam in the front yard, "like wearing Indianness on your chest in an Indian crowd" (34). To hint at his ridicule, he quotes Walcott's lines, "Poets are in one way nature's idiots...capable of speaking only in poetry"(34). Such a writer fancies Naipaul's visit to his house, as Rama's to visit Nishad ironically to fit Naipaul's Ramayana (35).

The poem, "West Indian in Snow" refers to a snobbish West Indian writer who, like an ostrich or a crab dog, buries his head in snow. It reflects on pretensions of two kinds. One, he

indulges in lust for wealth and sex and ignores his duty of writing with sincerity. Second, under pretension of intellectuality, he ignores his history that stores grim realities of the plantocracy and the sacrifices of Gandhi and Martin Luther King against racism. He pretends to write 'poems of affirmation', "see mih nah loose with kultyah" (45). But he in fact looks for the favours of markets and customers as "always right" and "come first". A microphone in his hand signifies his rape by the western promises of glitters. He questions such poetry, "poverty of poetry or poetry of poverty?" (45). The poem, "Battery Park" refers to another such poet who has settled permanently in America and pretends to write about his own native culture. The poet regrets, "Ma gone without goodbye -- no hugs no kisses we could remember" (58). He is worried about the void that is caused, "Our sleepy kids filling that void" (58). In the poem, "Do Not Be So Bitter", he requests writers not to be bitter like *neem* or *karilla* following the western practice of repackaging (13) for few dollars. He views his siding with the west as a coward's running away, "Warmth of friends and family and roots/ from which cowards flee and fools justify" (14). Following the footprints of Naipaul or Rushdie he disowns, disremembers and disrespects his mother culture calling it "a madman's fatwah" ("Disremembering H-India", 14). Such a writer is NOT A WRITER to fit in to his vision of 'a writer like You'.

Persaud alleges a western writer as a thief, "thieves/ lording nights of fitful sleep" (13). The poem, "Those Eyes Of The Exported Indian Bird" (94) he explains his act of stealing. The poet sees 'the twin peacocks on the wall'. Looking into their eyes, he finds them in a condition of dilemma, "between the dash and the coma". Their eyes tell the story of "that original steal of Solomon" of peacock feathers from Hind to impress beautiful Sheba. The story focuses on seduction of Indian riches by western people, "if we let you copyright our history and ancestry" (94), a loss of his "Holy land". American corporate companies continue acts of stealing in the

form of copyrighting and patenting. For instance, they copyright the patent of the Sanskrit *Neem*. The poet is ironic about Americans' bold and ungrateful attitude.

The poet views a dilemma of a West Indian writer in the wake of monopolistic tactics in the poems, "From Conversations in New York City" and "The Canadian National Exhibition". In this context, the poet prides on his culture, "- and don't forget I/ don't pretend I 'm Hindu, I let my churki fly" (59). 'Churki' is a tied bunch of hair that a traditional Hindu Brahmin keeps on his head, "*This symbol for the departed is my karma*" (59). The second poem describes a West Indian writer as a helpless witness to "the corporateamerica copyrights *neem* –/ our birthright, a Sanskrit word, Ayurvedic/ wonderplant" and that the Indian "Khanda" was turned in to "candy" (61); "let Columbus take the credit" and "we will hold our tongues" (62). The poet is annoyed, "This Sanskrit name: neem poem, my bitter/ sweet neem pen on a neem page – so sue me/ for my poetry book NEEM, my fiction NEEM" (61). The poet raises a question to his poem, "50th / Two hundred and forty thousand/ nobody asked" and "these thrice shipwrecked throws back to an indentured century" (61). He finds him in a condition of a 'coolie', "*Do I sound like Jagan*:" (104); or "*Or the Indian coolies*-" (106). This question gives a touch of ironic detachment with which he views his contemporary West Indian writers. They do not fit in his vision of, 'a writer like You', NOT THIS.

The poet cites another instance of western people's ungratefulness. The poem, "Under The Mulberry Tree in the Morningside Park" tells a story of a Mulberry Tree. One Chinese king gifted a mulberry tree to Marco Polo. He uprooted it from its home-earth and replanted it into foreign earth. The tree is reduced to "a weeping willow" losing its redness (41). The tree gave Marco Polo finest silk. The poet laments that the west did not value such an exquisite gift of the

east and did not maintain its sanctity. Dwarf dogs intrude into its shade and thwart its sanctity to which the tree shows resenting response, "No thank you?" (41) The silk of the mulberry tree in fact adds value to a Varanasi sari or a silk texture bursting red on fingers and faces (40). The poet cites an Indian story of King Vikramaditya to counteract Marco Polo's story. The king received the tree as a gift from the King of China with his new Chinese wife. The king and his wife paid great love and respect to the tree. As a result, the tree still stands for a feast, a dream of rich Varanasi sari and "of stillfresh love" (41). He juxtaposes the two stories to convey to highlight the ungrateful attitude of western people to seduce a gift of love. The poet regrets that eminent West Indian writers like Salman Rushdie, Walcott, and Harris remain passive witness to the seduction. The helpless eyes of a captive bird reflect on them a helpless witness trapped "between the dash and the comma" (94).

The poem, "Passengers on the Vancouver Island Ferry" presents the poet's comment on Indian writers in English. They are like as passengers 'moving' on an island ferry taking them away from the mainland. They 'move' on ideas and concepts imposed by their 'island' masters in the west. The poet targets on Salman Rushdie and Arundhati Roy particularly who claim to write with knowledge of India, "Shiva dancing/ in red rays pierced by peaks in the clouds" to end up in "*Ah yes, but these watered foothills/ these cloudkissed peaks is all home/ I'll ever know*" (81). They lack the genuine spirit of Indianness. Such is NOT A WRITER to fit in his vision of 'a writer like you'. Earlier in his poem, "From the Main" (*The Hungry Sailor*, 2000 46-47), the poet denies to be an islander who gives into the ivory tower attitude of western writers and critics. He affirms in the poem, "Another Land" that he belongs to another land. The denial and ironic detachment marks a shift in his perception.

Pre-emptying the question that if he does not like the western culture, why does he not leave North America, the poet says in the poem, "Waiting" that he is "awaiting transcription" of what he has experienced and felt" (68-70). In the poem, "It Is Never Easy to Say Goodbye" he asserts he has enjoyed the magic of the north and celebrated the memory of the past. Now there is no turning back. It may sound like "impossible mourning" (Vijay Mishra), but with determination and renewed understanding, he seeks to convert resistance into reconciliation, "O how difficult it is/ to say goodbye again-/ another land you hate/ and learn to love and hate/ and love" (67). Poetry empowers him to overcome clash of cultures and go ahead for interaction.

Poetry is a formation of words and words are innocent, transparent potent vehicle of a poet's intention and love of words. The poet discusses 'power of words' with a citing from Paramhansa Yogananda's *An Autobiography of a Yogi* (1967) that says:

The infinite potencies of sound derived from the Creative word, AUM, the cosmic vibratory power behind all cosmic energies. Any word spoken with clear realization and deep concentration has materializing value. Loud or silent repetition of inspiring words has been found effective in various system of psychotherapy; the secret lies in stepping-up of mind's vibratory rate. (11)

The definition highlights a word's impact on mind through its vibratory effect. It moves the mind in the positive direction to receive things positively. Mind's receptivity opens an avenue for interaction between two aliens. The poem, "Soufriere" offers such interaction through an analogy of poetry with 'a letter from nowhere'. A letter sets up conversation between two aliens that gives voice to the 'Volcano within', "how you finally understand/ my ache and anger- my pain/ of exile" (70). It appreciates a friend's condition, "you were luckier, my friend luckier" (70), and

explains the reasons for the volcano, "One day a home/ the next none"; "we saw ours erased before our eyes: home/ and history and existence"; "Our pride stolen, our folklore appropriated"; etc. (70). He wishes to have race-blind and colour-blind interactions with aliens. He reminds him that exile is the same everywhere "like blood" and appeals him to write about the history of exile, "in those poems of loss/ you must now write" (71).

The poet views poetry as a free venture. He says in the poem, "Midwinter", "No matter what you say...No matter what you see" (82). The poem, "Nibbling at Resentment" too views poetry as free sounding, "how we practise/ this infant's voice" (82), demanding enough space mutually, "I need my space/ and you need yours". Its effect is, "But/ there is laughter in our hearts today-/ transmitted from baby's" (82). Such poetry is innocent like "voting for peace", says the poet in the poem, "Not Irish Eyes" (96). The poet applies several analogies to explain poetry. The poem, "Playing Cricket in the Methodist Hospital, Brooklyn" compares it with a game of cricket, "if you/ could cross this boundary" (18). Such a game requires "a peculiar consciousness, mindset to come back", says the poet, like one's graduating in a new land (19). It "cleanses hearts soul and eyes"(19). The analogy of poetry and cricket gives a renewed vision of poetry. To outline the progress of the vision, the first analogy views poetry as a potent means to register resistance ("Call Him Babu", *The Hungry Sailor*, 34). The second vision views it an arena to fight out cultural differences ("Stumps", *The Hungry Sailor*, 76). The first perception gives a defensive stand for the Indian presence in the west, while the second gives an aggressive stand to assert it. The third analogy in the present poem views it as entering into interaction through poetry. Thus, poetry acquires a new dimension providing a platform for interaction between strangers to negotiate differences.

Poetry springs out of one's memory, says Persaud in the poem, "Waking Up", "waking up or surfacing of memories" (33). It is never a loss. He views memory as a medium to associate with one's roots. "Return to roots" remains a high pitched concern that he shares with many writers in exile across cultures. In the poem, "Love at First Sight", he appreciates Szymborska's gesture to go back to the source (7). He too wishes to take his poetry back to his ancestry to pay repentance for the loss of his cultural ties. In the poem, "Queen Who Would Be King", he recalls from his personal history and laments on his mother's untimely death with no hugs and kisses, "Ma dying slowly. Eight, and we couldn't afford even tears... not for years after" (63). He relates it to the loss of cultural ties. He determines to stick to his roots, "Give us roti" (63). Being among "brahminborns of the west" he understands that his karma is 'to write'. He regrets that writers in exile do not care to perform their karma and obligation to their culture (64).

Further, the poet values ancestral memory as breeding ground for poetry. In the poem, "Rouge River-on-the-Lake", he defines, "an ancestral memory/ like the butterfly's/ A Gangetic breeding ground" (80). One may grasp eternity with it, "If time could find eternity/ there!" (79). The poet talks about how the memory of his father and his music on that small mandolin still captures his mind. In the poem, "Daddy" he regrets that his father's music was silenced with his mother's departure. He means that with loss of cultural ties he has lost the essence of his identity and his voice is silenced. He wishes to revive that music, that voice in his poetry, "If pens could play/ such mandolins/ if only our pens could pluck intoxicating raag!" (73). Similarly, in the poem, "The Mountains Are Always North" he compares memory or the subconscious with paint splashed on a painting. It indicates a poet's transformation, "an exited glove gesticulating/ poet to a painter to poet" (73). Transformation being the basic spirit of yoga applies equally to writing as yoga. It embodies the concept of 'progressive comprehension and discovery of Truth'.

The first stage is a 'poet' that is exploration of human sensitivity and sensibility, the second stage is 'a painter' that is exploration of imaginative sensibility, viz. the poem "Other Summers" (38) and the final stage is the 'poet' that is exploration of spiritual dimension. The poetry trilogy works out the transformation in this progression in which Real or Truth can be perceived.

The above discourse on 'a writer like you' helps to frame the image of a writer of the poet's vision. First he applies the 'Neti' way to eliminate those who do not comply with the vision. Now he tries to project an image through perception that is derived from the flickering of realization that occurs to a writer-yogi during his contemplation on a word. The perception represents a progressive comprehension of the image of the Writer Above that corresponds to the 'Vishwaroopa' that Arjuna beholds on the battlefield of the Mahabharata (*Gita*, XI 15-30). It is an act of 'seeing' or yogic perception that comprises 'Yogic Realism', according to Persaud.

The writer is a "wordsmith", a maker of words, or "wordmendering" to invent a colour, "a whole vocabulary of these flames in baked earthen vessels". Poetry is a flame of soul flickering within a mortal body, "we lit/ to welcome the festival of light," and like "orangejuice fire" looks like "orangejuice butterfly" "in the orangejuice diyas of Diwal" ("Orange-Juice Flame", 71-72). He wishes to offer original creation and a pure delight to God, "our father's hands" ("This Northern Sky", 76-77). The writer seeks to elevate his mind to return to self, "a yogic concept of returning: all souls and life are equal" with "no politics, no/ talk of money; only serious laughter/ come join us". He declares ironically, "we make no pretence to knowledge with large moustaches, etc" ("Getting into Stride", 97-99). He chooses to keep away from such poets and fashions, "Not this poet" ("Book Package", 101-102) and also from pretension to conceal emptiness by a current fashion of giving "threebooks", "You know when your poems are/

empty". He insists on purity of language, "one cannot lie in poetry/ distillate of language". It assures him a wider space and loftier visions, "larger kites dot the skyline". He keeps on writing and feels that "The book still unfinished". It inspires him to write more ("Sibbald's Point: July 1", 107).

A writer holds writing as his 'karma', the work assigned to him. He sticks to his karma with devotion like a Hindu brahmin keeps 'churki on head, "-and don't forget I/ don't pretend I'm Hindu, I let my churki fly" ("From Conversations in New York City", 59). He relates "a sindhur" to a phenomenon in nature, "the flare of lights outcoloured by the red sun setting into a lake". He values it as link to his ancestry in conditions of exile to spur his memory and associate him to it. It is his nationality and his identity that he poses to counteract the spirit 'Canadian', "a spirit circumscribed by snow". Both 'churki' and 'sindhur' convey the spirit of "an odyssey" that an exiled Hindu undertakes in the north from the southern/ juggernaut spot of Lord Jagganauth ("The Canadian National Exhibition", 60). Such a writer is like a child Hanuman on an adventurous flight to the sun to get the ball, "Toss a ball lemon ball/ into sun and catch it". He soars high in the sky of imagination to capture lofty ideas and elevate his expression. Poetry is a 'lemon ball' and through its window love looks through with yearning, "wistfully: *Your/ safe palms and fingers!*" He keeps love a secret that gives out "scent all over". He waits for the rain. For him washing or cleansing is not enough. He seeks crossover to self/Self, "to reach up to realign stars" ("Realigning Stars", 102).

A writer is fearless like kiskadee to beat off a hawk, or like chickens running in dust. He searches for "flakes of life", or "the long/ sweet kiss of suppliant love- eyes relighting bodies reliving all that pleasure and pain" He waits, "yet you would rather not/ hear that word again"

("Again", 107). He demands freedom to move. He is fearless to face any authority in the west even if it is "next to god/ is a US consular officer/ granting- or not- immigrant visas" ("Next to God", 108). He aspires for "the literary life" that he misses in "America's barbaric/ moneydriving society", or "Canada's so good to writers" patronage. He avoids being a writer of success conforming to the western norms with all riches at his disposal. Ironically he tells his contemporary Indian writers in exile, "I would've been a writer too- a writer like you" ("A Writer Like You", 109) and fearlessly rejecting temptations he adheres to his vision of a writer-yogī, to be a writer like You.

Finally, Persaud arrives at an image of 'You', the Writer Above. The poem, "The Tick of Tock" describes Him as "a waveless/ ocean a windlessness/ the tick of tock" (109). Krishna's *Bhagavadgita* spells out an image of a 'samadhistha sthitisprajna' in the following two stanzas:

*Asaktabuddhihi sarvatra jitatma vigatahspruhah, neishkarmyasiddhim
paramamsanyasenadhigachchhati* (XVIII, 49),

which means that he is a person whose intellect is devoid of attachment and who has curbed his mind and senses, who has no desires (expectations) left. Such a person remains free of actions through their renunciation and attains Liberation and Realisation.

*Brahmabootah prasannatma na shochati na kankshati, samah sarveshu bhooteshu
madbhaktim labhate param* (XVIII, 54),

which means that such a person with blissful mind has attained the brahmahood, i.e. the merger with the Superconscious. He has no regrets and no passion (desires or expectations) left. Staying evenly in all beings, he eventually attains my devotion.

Patanjali's *Yogasutram* too describes a yogi in the final stage of yoga, 'Keivalyam':

Purusharthashoonyanam gunanam pratiprasavah keivalyam swaroopapratishtha va chittishakteriti (VI.34),

that is Keivalya is the state of staying in one's own form or in the energy of the mind when action becomes zero and attributes submerge in their very causes. Persaud's vision of a writer-yogi complies with these images. He gives his vision in the poem "Dharmakeeping", "So if you see no poems/ It is not that I've switched/ to a fiction of sorts/ or gaming with toys"; "if you don't see/ me for a while, or ever again/ mark it to love greater than 'nirvana'" this dharma/ greater than love/ no glossary can explain" (103-104).

In the interest of true literary life, Persaud wants to overcome conditions like: A. writing fallacies like practising mechanically on "do-it-yourself" kind of workshop poeting, B. surrendering to America's "barbaric money driving society" of Spaniards and Canada's "so good to writers" kind of deceptive patronage and C. betrayal of the ancestry. At the same time, in the larger interest of the human life, he is willing to enter into interaction with other cultures to erase differences and share common interests. At the end of each book in the poetry trilogy, he prays for an open mind, viz. "Happy New Year" in the poem, "Column Seven: Diwali" (*A Surf of Sparrow's Songs*, 89); "So please don't ask, but/ please don't ask for closure..." in the poem, "Please Don't Ask For Closure" (*The Hungry Sailor*, 95) and "an elusive quietude/ ripe like a mango to be pricked" in the poem, "The Tick of the Tock" (*A Writer Like You*, 109). It is a state of realisation. A writer-yogi's quest gets over with his discovery of a writer's self and the vision of the Writer Above. Yet the journey is unaccomplished until the union takes place. Knowing is not becoming. Knowing is not the end of yoga. It is in fact the beginning of yoga, 'to become

‘like You’. Becoming is its real end. Yoga is thus a journey from ‘being’ to ‘knowing’ to ‘becoming’. As the yoga of ancient yogis remained inconclusive to overlap over number of births, Persaud quest too remains inconclusive. Yet it certainly gives direction to writers and poets involved in ‘writing as yoga’.

In the concluding part of Persaud’s narration, the evolution of human self culminates into spiritual perception that complies with the concept of yoga that Patanjali’s *Yogasutram* delineates. Gangadhara Jha in his book, *The Yoga-Darshana* (1907) translates Patanjali’s definition, *yogaschittavritti-nirodhah* (*Yoga*. I, 2) as, “Yoga is the suppression of the functions of internal organ” (3). By ‘internal organ’ he means human mind and by ‘the functions’ he means human instincts that are two-fold: *klisha*- painful and *aklisha*- non-painful (*Yoga* I, 6). These five instincts are constituted by three troubles or *klesha* like pleasure or attachment, pain or envy and illusion or ignorance. Yoga teaches a method to suppress these instincts. As a result, mind becomes calm and steady. In this sense, yoga is effort towards quietness.

Jha further translates Patanjali’s Sutra, *Yogasutram*, *meitrikarunamuditopekshanam sukhadukhapunyapunyavishayanam bhavanatashchittaprasadanam* (I.33), “the peacefulness of the internal organ through friendliness, compassion, complacency and indifference in regard to pleasure and pain, and virtue and vice” (32). The Sutra defines the change as: a). ‘friendliness’ to those enjoying pleasures, it removes ‘envy’ from mind; b). ‘compassion’ to the distressed, it removes ‘pain’ from mind; c). ‘complacency’ towards the virtuous, it removes ‘envy’ from mind; and d). ‘indifference’ towards the vicious, it removes ‘anger’ from mind (4-5). He further says that the peacefulness of the internal organ may be acquired through transformation of mind; it brings about a total change in one’s approach and attitude (33).

Persaud's narration and poetry may be viewed in this respect. It presents three layers of perception of the world in progressive comprehension. It suggests transformation or change in one's mental attitude and approach with which he acquires capacity to 'sees' the world in gradually enhanced form. The three layered perception suggests enhancement in 'seeing' to progress from a sensitive artist or a common man's 'seeing' to a sensible writer-poet's 'seeing' to finally a writer-yogi's 'seeing'. With each stage of perception, memory too gets elevated to a higher quality level. Jha explains that memory is two-fold, memory of dream and memory in the waking state. It is constituted with 'the cause or the cognized' in the past and 'the impression or the samskaras or the cognition' in the present in the form of 'Recollection' (6-7). Since a writer writes out of memory, his writing acquires maturity gradually; sentiments of nostalgia and loss get converted into pondering and understanding that leads to a state of 'seeing'. The process is aided with interplay of the past and present that explains differences through juxtaposition between the two. One's understanding then leads him finally to a state of 'seeing' with steady and calm mind. This is the progression that one may read through Persaud's fictional autobiography. A writer's psyche proceeds through such a three layered or three staged transformation in 'seeing' to reach to the Yogic 'seeing'. This comprises Persaud's vision of the Yogic realism.

Persaud seeks to assert Indianness with high consciousness through 'writing a yoga'. Persaud's views thus project a clear culture-based standpoint that puts his writing in the category of diasporic and ethnocentric writing. Winfred Siemerling calls this trend 'writing ethnicity' that is common to cultures in exile. Focussing on the relationships of the diasporas, viz. Colonial Diaspora of indentured labours or *girmitias*, Mobile diasporas of 1970s and Indian diasporas of professionals and skilled workers, with India, the Government of India Report of the high Level

Committee on Indian Diaspora explains two models like “Hub and Spoke Relationship”, like that of the Jewish diaspora with a fixed center located at the ‘Holy Land’ and “Web Relationship”, globally beneficial and interactive. Archana Verma adds one more model, “spiral or circular relationship model” (262). Juneja views Archana Verma’s model in his essay, “Where is Here? Teleology of Return: The Homeland of Punjabi Diaspora in British Columbia” in the context of the Punjabi diaspora at Paldi village in Punjab, India and its replica Paldi village in British Columbia, “existed in different socio-cultural environments, an intricate web of linkages connected them more closely than mere proximity would have done” (264). Persaud’s association with the Indian ancestry displays a similar kind of relationship through an intricate web of linkages that spiritualism of India provides to him. Further, Juneja views the rôle of the Ramayana in the lives of the exiled Hindus remarks. He says that when Bhikhu Parekh views it as “a social treatise” and “a relatively casteless text” he overlooks its religious significance. Parekh, however, recognises religion as one of the three modes of self-identification, “namely caste, religion and their region of origin”. Juneja explains in this light, “Unlike the universalist religions of Islam and Christianity, Hinduism is an ethnic religion deeply embedded in the Hindu way of life and in the Indian soul” and that religion grants them belonging, self-identification and self-understanding with “an acute sense of rootedness”(268). Persaud’s writing reveals this kind of understanding of the role of religion through concepts like ‘writing as yoga’ and ‘yogic realism’ as they are deeply ingrained in spiritualism of India. This too marks his writing as spiritual ethnicity.

The term, “spiritual-ethnicity”, however, implies contradictions, as ethnicity cannot be spiritual and spiritual cannot be ethnic. But it can be found that Persaud’s endeavours at writing begin at writing ethnicity with high concern about the Indian culture and ancestry and its truthful

representation in literature, but he seeks to go further to elevate ethnic writing to acquire spirituality by assigning it a status of yoga to writing, “writing as yoga”. The process marks transformation of mind by overcoming contradictions implied in reality to acquire steady outlook to perceive Reality. It can be done through interaction across cultures and religions overcoming biases. It is in fact an attempt to go from general to personal to universal that is to know ancestry to know self in order to know Self. Writing, according to him, has to serve a “cross-over to self/Self”.

The relevance of Persaud’s literary vision may also be ascertained in view of Canada’s recent cultural crisis in the wake of implementation of the policy of economic globalisation with the concept of “free flow” to assume great significance. The concept, however, goes against the interest of Canada causing cultural dilemma to the nation. Abraham Rotstein elaborates on the cultural dilemma in his essay, “The Diaspora at Home: Canada’s Cultural Dilemma”. He quotes Antony Smith to hint at the condition, “no country in the world probably is more committed [than Canada] to the practice of free flow in its culture and no country is more completely its victim”. In this light, Rotstein remarks that in the present time “Culture has been subordinated to economics. Left to the whims of the economy, Canadian culture may become an oddity in its own country” (6).

Reflecting on the current crisis in Canada, Rotstein views, “Cultural policy in Canada now faces a bleak future. Under the guise of enhancing our trade prospects in the move to a globalised world, we have tied our hands in the field of culture policy” (20). Expressing his concern over preserving the national culture, Rotstein holds the Government of Canada responsible with its lethargy and indifference to the seriousness of the issue. He observes, “With the advent of the two treaties (FTA and NAFTA), the first national and the other continental, the

constraints are now external rather than domestic and legal rather than political" (20). In this respect, he views a biggest threat from the protective stance of the United States in relation to its own culture and Canada's direct competition with American cultural industries "with superior financial resources, lower unit costs and the benefit of transnational spill over advertising" (3, 6).

Rotstein views a solution to this dilemma. Canada's struggle for cultural diversity "seeks to release from a myopic view as culture as commodity". He cites an event of protests and lobbying against global corporatisation to which Americans too were party and in this context, he observes an acute need to promote cultural diversity in Canada (20). The concept of ethnicity goes in tune with Rotstein's assertion for cultural plurality. Fischer views culture or ethnicity as an ethical device that seeks "to explore connective difference" and "to activate reader through *communitas*" (Keefer, 100-102). It, thus, seeks to preserve differences and yet explores the 'cross-over' of boundaries to generate understanding through cross-cultural interactions. The problematique that Sasenarine Persaud looks forward to working out in writing is to avoid the two positions of assimilation and ghettoization in the Canadian context through his 'ethnic counter memory' to operate freely. Persaud's attempts at writing spiritual ethnicity looks for genuine interaction to elevate it to an egoless spiritual perception beyond the boundaries. In this light, it may acquire vital relevance in the present Canadian context too.

Representation of 'real' or 'truth' always remains a disputable subject among thinkers and scholars. It is seen as a closed system to assert 'real' or 'truth' as the absolute that allows no alternative reading. Taking a postcolonial viewpoint that is inculcated in him through his life in varied contexts, Persaud views 'real' or 'truth' as a relative term that allows multiple readings through discourses. Back home in India, the representation of India too sparks a controversy in the recent years between a native imaging of India and a diasporic imaging of India. The

perception he always insists on 'real' or truthful representation of India in literature. He shows great annoyance to writers of Indian origin like Rushdie and Roy and other non-Indian writers who perpetuate lies about India through writing just for popularity and success in the western markets. He targets severe criticism on such writers of Indian origin ironically calling them "midnight's children" ("The Moore's Last Lie", *The Hungry Sailor*, 58). He ever seeks to adopt a neutral stand free of biases or material interests, "I didn't care if I 'made it'", says he ("I hear a Voice... 537). "Real" India is his utmost concern. But it may be clarified that "Real" India in his view is not what it exists today, the contemporary India as a physical entity. It is the spiritual India of permanence and eternity that is revealed from mystical writing of the ancestry. That is where spiritual concern gets involved into writing. Persaud views spirituality as capable of offering remedies to all problems of the mankind. In this sense, his literary vision of Yogic Realism may appear to acquire universal dimension.